

Protocol launched to help police trace people with dementia



Police in Edinburgh with the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership have launched a new protocol locally to help officers in searching for missing people with dementia.

The Herbert Protocol is a comprehensive form for those who have a loved one or a caring responsibility for someone with dementia, which can assist officers with their inquiries should that person go missing.

The Protocol originated in Norfolk and is named after Normandy veteran, George Herbert who lived with dementia and sadly died in 2011 after he went missing looking for his childhood home.

As part of national Dementia Awareness Week and Scottish Missing Person Week, police and the council have formally launched the Herbert Protocol in Edinburgh, which has been supported by Alzheimer Scotland and welcomed by Scottish Care.

Chief Inspector Alan Carson of Edinburgh Division said: "Last year, we received 125 reports of a person with dementia being missing in Edinburgh, and this is a hugely anxious time for their loved ones.

“The risks to a person’s safety are high and a robust response is an absolute necessity.

“The Herbert Protocol enables people to be assured that all relevant information can be passed quickly to police, and will provide vital assistance to officers in their search efforts.”

Councillor Ricky Henderson, Chair of the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board, said: “When someone with dementia goes missing, it’s a race against the clock to find them safe and well.

“But by adopting The Herbert Protocol in Edinburgh, we hope to make it easier for families and carers and everyone who works in health and social care to compile important information about their loved ones and patients.

“Details like where somebody with dementia went to school, the streets and buildings which might be familiar to them or a note of their hobbies and a recent photograph.

“By investing a bit of time now and filling out Herbert Protocol forms, together we could save precious minutes should the worst happen and somebody in our care goes missing.

“It could help the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership and the Police trace people, and it could save lives.”

Joyce Gray, Deputy Director of Development for Alzheimer Scotland said: “We are delighted to welcome the launch of the Herbert Protocol in Edinburgh during Dementia Awareness Week.

“If someone with dementia does not return home or becomes missing, it’s a distressing time for families, so having vital information to hand relieves some of that pressure and helps focus searches on places meaningful to the individual concerned.

“We would encourage anyone to get in touch to find out how to complete a form for their loved ones. If you have any

questions about dementia, or want to find out about support in your area, call Alzheimer Scotland's 24 Freephone Helpline on 0808 808 3000."