# Missing Persons Data Code of Practice
## Guidance for the completion of Quarterly Returns

Police forces are required to submit data returns to the Missing Persons Bureau every quarter. This data requirement is outlined in the code of practice for the Police Service on collecting and sharing data on missing persons with public authorities which came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009. This collection of data will inform the analysis of the national picture of missing in the UK.

Please note, this information varies slightly from that issued in the ACPO (2009) Interim Guidance on Missing Persons distributed to forces in April 2009. This is following consultation with a number of forces in order to ensure that the current requirements are feasible for forces to comply with. The information required may be varied by the Bureau in the future as recording practices for missing person investigations changes. Any concerns about the information required should be directed to the Missing Persons Bureau at 01256 602979 or via email to: missingpersonsbureau@npia.pnn.police.uk.

This document has been produced in conjunction with an excel spreadsheet which should act as the template on which to submit the quarterly return data. The template has been designed to be as flexible as possible, whilst also ensuring that information from one force can be directly compared with that of another. This will enable the Bureau to provide forces and other stakeholders with an accurate overview of the nature of the missing phenomenon in the UK. Any queries about the template should be directed to the Bureau on the above contact details.

Where a force is unable to break down the information as outlined, an explanation is required in order for the Bureau to have an accurate picture of the challenges this requirements poses for forces. Alternative formats/spreadsheets should **not** be used as this will hinder the comparison of information on a national scale. **Appendix A** (attached with this guidance) provides a template for identifying which information cannot be supplied as outlined in the spreadsheet, and the reason(s) why. It also requires details of any action planned in order to be able to provide all information.

<u>Please note:</u> Every force, including those who do not currently submit data through the automated data transfer process, is required to submit quarterly returns.

**Timetable**

The timetable for quarterly returns data submission is:

| Quarter | Submission Deadline |
|---------|---------------------|
| Q1 -  1st April – 30th June | 21st July 2012 |
| Q2 - 1st July – 30th September | 21st October 2012 |
| Q3 - 1st October – 31st December | 21st January 2012 |
| Q4 - 1st January – 31st March | 21st April 2013 |
| And so on for subsequent quarters | |

**Data**

The data required is:

- Total number of Missing Person <u>incidents</u> reported during the quarter
- Incidents during the quarter split by:
  - **Demographics -**
    - Age
    - Gender
    - Ethnic grouping
  - **Categories –**
    - Risk assessment
    - Disability
    - Missing person category
    - location from which those persons are missing
- Total number of unidentified bodies, body parts and people reported during the quarter

The template is separated into four tabs:

## 1. High level figures

This tab contains the number of all missing person reports made during the quarter. There is a field to enter the number registered on the Command and Control system (column B), and the number entered on the specific Missing Persons Management System (e.g. COMPACT, Sleuth, iTrace, etc.; column C).

Please note, for those on the C&C system, only those which have been classified as missing person reports (when finalised) should be included. This therefore should not include unauthorised absences (where this category is used by forces). This will be reviewed as information from the quarterly reports is

received, to determine whether some forces are assigning alternative classifications (e.g. concern for welfare). Please contact the Bureau if you have any concerns about this.

The fourth column (D – 'Outstanding') refers to how many cases reported during that quarter are still open (i.e. not returned/found/cancelled as per the ACPO 2005 Guidance) on the last day of the reporting period (e.g. 30$^{th}$ June 2009 for the 1$^{st}$ return). For those who classify some missing person reports as 'inactive', please include these within this figure.

If forces are able to provide the number of individual missing people from their systems, in addition to the number of recorded incidents, it would be greatly appreciated if this information could also be supplied in the notes section on the first tab of the spreadsheet. It is appreciated that not all forces may be able to provide this information.

## 2. Demographic breakdown

The second tab includes details of all missing person incidents, broken down by age, ethnicity and gender. Please include as detailed a break down as possible.

- Age

Age should be grouped as follows:

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0 – 4
5 – 8
9 – 11
12 – 14
15 – 17
18 – 21
22 – 39
40 – 59
60 – 79
80 +
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These age ranges have been determined using the breakdown identified in the Grampian guidance document – 'Missing Persons: Understanding, Planning, Responding' – and through consideration of how the information may be used. Where the age of the missing person changes within the three month period the missing person should be included within the age group which relates to their actual age when they went missing. Where they have been reported missing more than once within the same three month period it should relate to the age they were when they first went missing within that period.

If it is not possible to break down the information as detailed above, please contact the Bureau to discuss how to record the information. Do not simply use your own breakdown as we need to ensure the information is comparable across forces.

- Ethnicity

Ethnicity categorisation is based on PNC categories:

IC1 – White European
IC2 – Dark European
IC3 – Afro-Caribbean
IC4 – Asian (Indian, Bangladeshi or Pakistani)
IC5 – Oriental
IC6 – Arab/North African
IC0 – Unknown ethnicity

- Gender

This includes:

Male
Female
Transgender

## 3. Categories

The third tab asks for information broken down by:

- Risk assessment

This is based upon the three tier risk assessment within the ACPO 2005 Guidance – High/Medium/Low. This should be the risk assessment when the record was closed if report has been cancelled, or the current risk assessment as at the end of the reporting period (e.g. 30th June 2012 for the 1st return).

- Disability

This is classified as simply Yes/No/Unknown. This information is only to be completed if it is possible to determine this within force without manually checking every record. Please state N/A if unable to provide this information. We have received queries as to what constitutes a disability. Below are the standard categories used for disability within PND, the Home Office and the Criminal Justice System Exchange.

| D | Dyslexia |
|---|---|
| HD | Hearing Difficulties |
| LD | Learning Difficulties |
| MI | Mental Illness |
| ND | No Disability |
| OD | Other Disability |
| PC | Progressive Condition |
| RC | Reduced Physical Capacity |
| RD | Refusal to Disclose |
| RM | Reduced Mobility |
| SD | Severe Disfigurement |
| SI | Speech Impediment |
| VI | Visual Impairment |

- Categorisation

This is based upon the Missing Status, section 1 of the National Reporting Form:

Missing Child/Youth (under 18 years) cared for by Local Authority

Missing Child/Youth under 18 years

Absconder from hospital

Missing Adult

- Location Missing From

This information is similar to the above, but will enable us to distinguish if there are a large number of adults missing from care/hospital. As with disability, if it is not possible to determine this without considerable time and effort, please enter N/A.

## 4. Unidentified

This final tab asks for details of any unidentified bodies (dead), body parts or people (alive) which have been reported to the police during that quarter. The template requires this to be broken down by gender, and to indicate whether they are still unidentified ('outstanding'). This should not include those who have died suddenly or been taken ill and attempts are being made to identify/inform the next of kin. This should only be people whose true identity is not known at time of reporting.

If it is not possible to provide this information please outline this in your response.

## Method of Submission

All details should be entered onto the template and the spreadsheet saved with a name using the following protocol:

- Force name – YYMMM-YYMMM – MPB Quarterly return, for example:
- AvonandSomerset – 09Apr-09Jul – MPB Quarterly return.

This should then be attached to an email entitled 'Quarterly Return Submission', along with the completed form from Appendix A. Within the email please include any information which may assist with interpreting your data. This should then be sent to:

missingpersonsbureau@npia.pnn.police.uk

Thank you for providing this helpful data. The latest version of the Missing Persons Data and Analysis report which is produced using the data provided by police forces is available and may be obtained from the Missing Persons Bureau or downloaded from our website here:

http://www.soca.gov.uk/about-soca/missing-persons-bureau