



**ASSOCIATION OF
CHIEF POLICE OFFICERS**



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ACPO Practitioners Manual of Guidance for Child Rescue Alert

The Association of Chief Police Officers has agreed to this guidance being circulated to, and adopted by, Police Forces in England, Wales, Scotland & Northern Ireland.

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Author	CEO Peter Davies
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This guidance has been produced and approved by the National Policing Crime Business Area. This document was considered and approved by the Professional Practice Gateway Group on the 17th September 2013. This guidance updates the CRA Activation Protocol published in 2010. The purpose of this document is to develop the existing protocol and amends the activation criteria to bring greater focus to the risk of the child and to allow for activation if there is a reasonable belief of risk of serious harm to the child if no action was taken. CRA is a partnership between the police, the media and the public that seeks the assistance of the public where it is feared that a child may be at risk of serious harm. It will be updated and re-published as necessary.

Any queries relating to this document should be directed to either the author detailed above or the ACPO Programme Support Office on 020 7084 8959/8958.

Contents

Section	Page
	Background to CRA
1	Introduction
2	Criteria for Launching a CRA
3	Reasoning for not Launching
4	Brief Overview of Launching a CRA
5	Tactical Advice/NCA Control Centre
6	Elements of CRA Activation
7	Mutual Aid Requirements
8	Media
9	Information Management
10	Technical Considerations
11	Contingencies
12	Roles and Responsibilities
	- Force Control Room Duty Officer
	- First Officer Attending
	- Senior Investigating Officer
	- Chief Officers/Duty Gold
	- Media Liaison/Press Office
	- System Manager(s)

Appendix A	Pre-Launch Request Proforma (Page 19)
Appendix B	CRA Launched e-mail (Page 21)

Appendix C	Media Release Initial (Page 22)
Appendix D	Cancellation Proforma (Page 23)
Appendix E	Cancellation Proforma – for Media (Page 24)
Appendix F	Contact Information (Page 25)

BACKGROUND TO CHILD RESCUE ALERT

Child Rescue Alert (CRA) is based on an American concept called "Amber Alert" and was first piloted by Sussex Police following the abduction and murder of Sarah Payne. Statistics show that the early hours after a child is abducted are crucial. CRA is intended to alert members of the public to abduction or other high risk disappearance quickly and to provide a mechanism for handling a high volume of calls. It also acts as a central and trusted point of reference for enquirers.

CRA is a partnership between the police, the media and the public that seeks the assistance of the public where it is feared that a child may be at risk of serious harm. The aim is to quickly engage the entire community via media (TV and radio) and social media in the search for the child, offender or any specified vehicle through reports of relevant information to the police. An automated distribution system for digital, social and internet media is being developed and will be launched early in 2014.

It is a unique scheme where media will send out urgent information to the public to help recover a child. The intention of activating Child Rescue Alert is to quickly recover a child in imminent danger of serious harm. The child's safety is paramount and arrest of the offender is an ancillary benefit.

CRA has been running as a nationally co-ordinated system in the UK since 2010 when the CRA Activation Protocol was published. The National Crime Agency (NCA) CEOP Command now manages CRA on behalf of police forces. The NCA offers advice and operational support, to help investigate and publicise cases where a child has been abducted with 24 hour tactical advice available through its control centre (0870 785 1033).

In 2012 a review was undertaken of the nature and application of CRA with a particular focus on concerns over the frequency of its use, relative to potential. A number of recommendations were made but a key decision was made to amend the activation criterion to bring a greater focus on 'risk to the child'.

There is an important distinction between two types of 'crime in action':

- Kidnap for ransom; and
- Child abduction (with possible sexual motive or where the child is in imminent danger of serious harm or death).

Each will require a different, police response, i.e. covert or overt. It may be difficult to determine which offence type is being dealt with from the initial information and it is important that the Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) gives due consideration to Kidnap and Extortion (K&E) procedures.

If it is suspected the child has been abducted and is being held for some form of ransom, either for monetary gain or other demand it is essential that contact is made with the on call Kidnap and Extortion SIO to establish if a covert response is required.

It is recommended that the SIO for Child Rescue Alert activation is a suitably trained and experienced senior Detective. It is preferable but not essential that the SIO is trained in Kidnap and Extortion investigation.

Child Rescue Alert is a tactical option for an SIO to consider as part of an overt police response to child abduction where the release of specific information to the public via media agencies may assist in the safe recovery of a child.

The priority must always be to rescue the child, although it is still important to give due consideration to the impact that such a high profile media alert will have and contingencies must be in place to ensure that police services are properly prepared to receive and investigate a high volume of calls. They must also be in a position to respond to and maximise the investigative opportunities arising from those calls. If calls are likely to be received from outside the investigating force area, 101 is unlikely to be able to service this and does not capture the information in one place. Self-generated social and internet messages cannot be managed or stopped but a strong message from the police will provide a place to go to for definitive information.

Such cases will attract a high level of public interest, potentially resulting in a high call volume and a proliferation of messages circulated by interested parties on social media.

CRA is of benefit in three regards:

- Provide a single national number for the public to call that links immediately to the investigating force;
- Significant call handling support by linking all police forces together and feeding the information to the investigating force's CRA HOLMES account; and
- A trusted place to go to for accurate information in light of the proliferation of the use of social media and the internet.

1. SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The objective of this Manual of Guidance is to develop the existing guidance as found within the CRA Activation Protocol published in 2010. Specifically this amends the activation criteria to bring greater focus to the risk to the child and to allow for activation if there is a reasonable belief of risk of serious harm to the child if no action was taken.
- 1.2 There are also associated Technical Notes which give detailed guidance for the use of NMAT, MIIRWEB, HOLMES 2 and CLIO from the point of view of both activating and supporting forces.

2. SECTION 2 – CRITERIA FOR LAUNCHING A CHILD RESCUE ALERT

- 2.1 In the amended activation criterion **ALL** three criteria must be met before a CRA incident can be launched, as the next three sub heading will explain.

2.2 THE CHILD IS APPARENTLY UNDER 18 YEARS OLD

- 2.2.1 For the purposes of CRA the definition of a child as any person under the age of 18 will apply throughout the UK (including Scotland where a child is otherwise a person under 16) in line with the European definition for child alerts.
- 2.2.2 It is accepted that on some occasions it may not be possible to confirm the exact age of the victim, in which case the individual circumstances of the case will be subject to the judgement of the SIO.

2.3 THERE IS A PRECEPTION THAT THE CHILD IS IN IMMINENT DANGER OF SERIOUS HARM OR DEATH

- 2.3.1 This criterion has been varied from those originally set to focus more on the risk to the child rather than the circumstances of the disappearance.
- 2.3.2 Serious harm can be difficult to define and will always be related to physical or sexual harm and may include the psychological harm of being taken away. It may also be necessary to consider implied threats which may arise, for example from the offender's history, or the offender's behaviour to another person such as the child's mother.
- 2.3.3 The rationale for decisions will be recorded in the SIO's policy file. Should a CRA response be activated SIOs should consider utilising the IT supported policy file functionality within either HOLMES2 or CLIO.

2.4 THERE IS SUFFICIENT INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO ENABLE THE PUBLIC TO ASSIST POLICE IN LOCATING THE CHILD

- 2.4.1 The alert should not be used if the information received is too vague or general as this would result in a large number of calls that would be of little assistance to the enquiry.
- 2.4.2 Descriptive features of the victim and / or suspect, their photograph or sufficient information about a vehicle to make it distinguishable will assist in getting relevant calls from the public. It is important to give as much clarity as possible to minimise the number of inappropriate calls. A good quality recent photograph should be obtained as soon as possible.

3. SECTION 3 – REASONING FOR NOT LAUNCHING

- 3.1 It is obvious that there will be borderline cases where an alert will not be launched. In such cases it is crucial that the SIO records decisions on the basis of all information available to him or her.

- 3.2 Such recording will enable the organisation to defend its position in the face of scrutiny and / or criticism.
- 3.3 A decision not to launch an alert is as subjective as a decision to launch.
- 3.4 Key issues to take into account when considering activation are:
- Inappropriate launches will desensitise the public;
 - Could the launch save a child's life or prevent serious harm being caused to a child? If this answer is NO do not launch;
 - Do not use the system as a safety net; and
 - The issuing of an alert in the wrong situation could adversely affect the perception of the scheme and, by consequence, activating police forces.

4. SECTION 4 – BRIEF OVERVIEW OF LAUNCHING A CHILD RESCUE ALERT

- 4.1 Whilst the decision to launch is the responsibility of a SIO, it is imperative that consideration of activating and undertaking early actions starts as soon as a CRA seems likely. Bearing in mind this will be a critical incident for the police and will impact on other forces, the decision to launch should be ratified by the duty Gold or ACPO or equivalent ranking officer.
- 4.2 The time from the initial information being received to making the decision to launch CRA should be used effectively and avoid making it into a lengthy process. These actions can be split into two parts, the first being investigative actions to recover the child and second the preparatory actions to enable CRA to be launched.
- 4.3 There are three key questions to consider before making the final decision:
- Does CRA fit with the investigative strategy?
 - Is there sufficient corroboration of the information to be sure the criteria are met?
 - Is the activating force capable of handling the volume of calls and associated investigative activity?
- 4.4 The focus underlying all actions at this point must be to maximise the chances of recovering the child and ensuring that all relevant processes are put in place to manage the activation.
- 4.5 Use of 101 does not offer the benefits of a national number linked to major investigation systems and the following should be considered:
- How will callers be linked to the investigating force if calling from outside of that force area?
 - Who will answer the calls and how will they be briefed?
 - Where will information from calls be recorded and fed into the investigation?
 - Can 101 cope with high call volumes?
- 4.6 Child Rescue Alert, and the associated use of NMAT2 and MIRWeb software, precludes these issues.

5. SECTION 5 – TACTICAL ADVICE/NCA CONTROL CENTRE

- 5.1 The NCA can provide an on-call tactical advisory service which is available 24/7 and contact with the advisor should be considered at the earliest opportunity. The adviser will be able to discuss the criteria for the use of CRA, assist with getting the sequence of launch events right, act as a point of reference for detailed requirements associated with the launch of a CRA and identify other sources of expert help that may be of benefit.
- 5.2 The adviser can be contacted via the National Crime Agency Control Centre on the dedicated number 0870 785 1033.
- 5.3 The on call anti-kidnap adviser can also be contacted via the NCA Control Centre on 0207 238 8418.

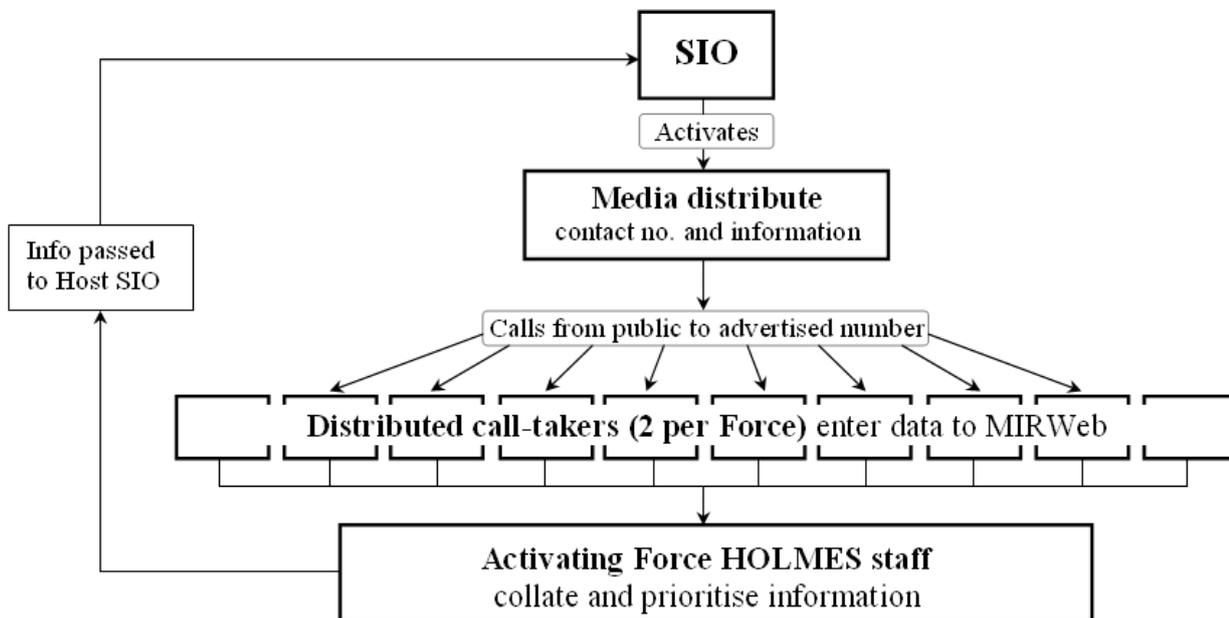
6. SECTION 6 – ELEMENTS OF CRA ACTIVATION

- 6.1 There are three elements to CRA:
- Initial, update and cancellation messages to other forces/media;
 - The wider story that will be generated by the CRA; and
 - The ongoing story after the CRA.

7. SECTION 7 – MUTUAL AID REQUIREMENTS

- 7.1 Each police force should have one or two direct dial in (DDI) numbers that have been notified to National Mutual Aid Telephony (NMAT2) for the purposes of CRA. It is recommended that these are located within the force control room to enable a swift response to an alert and allows for the utilisation of staff who are experienced in dealing with emergency calls and incidents in action. Staff would then utilise the Major Incident Room Web (MIRWeb) to record and transmit the information received from the public to the investigating force.
- 7.2 The MIRWeb software is an internet-based input interface for HOLMES which allows the call-taker to complete electronic message forms from any police computer and transmit them directly to the investigating force for assessment and action as required.
- 7.3 The NMAT2 software allows the call-taker to control incoming and outgoing calls from their physical telephone (a dedicated CRA line not in the normal FCC telephony loops).
- 7.4 For effective use of NMAT2 and MIRWeb, forces will need to consider staff training to be able to provide a 24 hour response. Training only takes a very short period of time and will not cause a significant impact on resources. Training should be backed up by simple guides on how to use the system for operators to refer to.
- 7.5 Each force area should have an existing pre-prepared operation on HOLMES2 for specific use in the event of them being a CRA activating force.
- 7.6 In order for mutual aid to be effective each force area has notified an email address that is monitored 24 hours, preferably in the force control room, for receipt of CRA alert messages which will work in tandem with PNC broadcasts. This information is recorded on a list that is updated and circulated to police forces by the NCA.
- 7.7 CRA should be considered as an immediate response option and the mutual aid described fits with this.

As part of the early planning process at the activating force, and in any case as soon as the decision to launch has been made, thought must be given to longer-term resilience. This will be either a more formal request to forces, possibly on a regional basis, or consideration of the investigating force's capability to manage the volume of calls.



8. SECTION 8 – MEDIA

- 8.1 Each force area will be responsible for maintaining media contacts within its area. This will include awareness of CRA and ensuring that contacts can be made quickly in the event of launching an alert.
- 8.2 The circumstances of the incident leading to the alert may indicate that it should be launched locally. In this case the activating force area would contact their local media. It is likely, especially if the story is sufficiently newsworthy, that it will be picked up by the national media. Experience shows that where the story is newsworthy and captures the public imagination it will take on an extremely high profile, generating a significant number of calls very quickly. The police must proactively cascade accurate information about the case to the media to counter the inaccuracies that will inevitably arise from the proliferation of public interest. This makes the CRA even more valuable as it is designed to quickly provide a large call handling response and mechanism for recording the information on HOLMES.
- 8.3 Significant cases can generate calls numbered in the thousands. Appeals to the public for information should clearly indicate that the purpose of the alert is to locate the child and only information that will lead to this should be passed via the CRA number. Careful focussing of the media messages will assist in limiting the number of irrelevant calls.

9. SECTION 9 – INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

- 9.1 Given the emotiveness of the subject matter the Police, as an organisation, would be naïve to underestimate the management challenges associated with a decision to initiate, or conversely not to initiate, a Child Rescue Alert.
- 9.2 Irrespective of initiation or otherwise, external pressures will include intrusive public, media and political scrutiny. It should be noted that the effectiveness of any response relies on the collective and inter-dependant involvement of various partners and processes.

10. SECTION 10 – TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 10.1 Should a CRA be ratified the investigating force will, in all likelihood, seek mutual aid from other forces based on a distributed call centre model, utilising NMAT2 and MIRWeb capability as previously highlighted.
- 10.2 Mutual aid provision should be scaled to both expedite the response to, and manage the call volumes, resulting from any media alert with dedicated CRA call takers. SIO questions provided by the investigating force will help to elicit and record information from members of the public.
- 10.3 Should time critical information, for example a sighting of the victim, perpetrator and / or vehicle be received, whether that be via dedicated CRA call takers or as a result of members of the public making contact with the police by any other means, this information must be immediately passed to the investigating force by telephone as well as being recorded on MIRWeb.
- 10.4 Regardless of priority or provenance, once input onto MIRWeb, information is automatically transmitted to the investigating force's CRA standby HOLMES2 account, affording the investigating force access to all information received and input by forces.
- 10.5 The investigating force should thereafter re-assess the information received in respect of content and priority with actions being raised and progressed in alignment with the SIO's parameters.
- 10.6 The longer-term response to call management will be determined by considerations such as force resource and technical availability and capability, the professional judgment of the SIO and the particular circumstances of the crime in action etc.
- 10.7 Consideration must be given to how the information received on the investigating force's standby CRA HOLMES2 account will be managed. This could be recorded on the HOLMES2 Message Assessment Unit and this system could also be used to support the wider investigative response. Alternatively, this system could be used to receive the messages which could then be printed out and managed as part of a paper-based Message Assessment Unit or they could be transferred to a system such as CLIO to manage them electronically.

11. SECTION 11 – CONTINGENCIES

- 11.1 Should HOLMES2 be unavailable, word based message templates could be populated by CRA call takers and e-mailed to the investigating force, thereby allowing for the initiation of a paper based message assessment unit. This MAU could be further supplemented by an IT supported action management system, e.g. CLIO.
- 11.2 Decision making would be in line with force capability, SIO considerations and practical considerations such as the anticipated period of HOLMES downtime, allied with progression of the CRA incident itself etc.

12. SECTION 12 – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

12.1 FORCE CONTROL ROOM DUTY OFFICER

- 12.1.1 On initial notification of any incident that fits the CRA criteria, the force control room duty officer should immediately notify the on call Duty SIO as a matter of urgency.
- 12.1.2 The force control room duty officer should ensure that an immediate response is given to any such incident and that an officer is deployed to the scene or witness location without delay, **UNLESS:**

- If it is suspected the child has been abducted and is being held for some form of ransom, either for monetary gain or other demand it is essential that contact is made with the on call Kidnap and Extortion SIO to establish if a covert response is required **PRIOR** to dispatching any resources.
- 12.1.3 If an incident appears suitable for a CRA, the force control room duty officer will remind the duty SIO that the launch of a CRA should be considered. It is crucial for this to be suggested to the SIO should the information presented merit this and that preparatory actions are taken to minimise delay in the event of a launch.
- 12.1.4 It must be remembered that a CRA should only be issued following ratification from the duty Gold however it remains the SIO's decision and their responsibility to seek this ratification.
- 12.1.5 Contact with the on call CRA Tactical Advisor will provide advice on all aspects of using CRA and they will be able to access and facilitate some of the actions required for effective use of the system.
- 12.1.6 The launch of a CRA will be a critical incident and should be dealt with in this manner.
- 12.1.7 If the SIO is considering launching a CRA, the force control room duty officer will assist to ensure the following actions are carried out:
- Send pre-launch e-mail using 24 hour e-mail contact list (supplied by the NCA) and PNC broadcast (in the format provided) to inform other forces of consideration of CRA and to request that they prepare for call handling mutual aid. See Pre Launch Request Proforma.
 - Identify dedicated operations to take CRA related calls;
 - Consider resource requirements in the force control room and incident room;
 - Prepare to activate the CRA number (0300 200 0200 or 0300 200 0333) by notifying Hendon and checking which number is in use;
 - Call out force media department as directed by the SIO;
 - The SIO will instigate HOLMES/MIRWeb facility for the management of the anticipated high volume of calls. The force control room duty officer should then;
 - Send the completed proforma by PNC Broadcast to all forces confirming launch of the CRA including details of the incident approved by the SIO, investigation contact information and the HOLMES/MIRWeb incident number. See Pre Launch Request Proforma.
 - Send the completed proforma by e-mail to all forces confirming launch of the CRA including details of the incident approved by the SIO, investigation contact information and the HOLMES/MIRWeb incident number. Experience shows that calls are likely to be made to national call lines and in particular via the 116,000 national missing persons number operated by Missing People. It is essential that they are included in the information about the investigation, see CRA Launched E-mail.
 - Ensure that a Wanted / Missing PNC circulation is completed for the child (and any relevant suspect and/or vehicle);
 - Use local broadcast procedures and other methods of rapidly disseminating time critical information to all relevant staff within the activating force area to ensure universal awareness of the circumstances of the activation of CRA. (Ensure force resources are used appropriately taking account of the incident and likely media scrutiny. The risk of a perceived inappropriate use of police resources at such a critical time must be considered);
 - Trigger the force plan for a critical incident and the setting up of a strategic command suite;

- Notify force control room staff of the alert and consider the requirement to retain staff on duty in case of a potential surge in calls;
- A dedicated communications staff member should be appointed to take any further calls and to act as the single point of contact until a major incident room has been established. This staff member will also be responsible for keeping all forces up to date with developments in the case;
- Liaise with the designated press officer so that they may issue the alert to appropriate media and transport outlets; and
- Inform and provide relevant contact numbers to those agencies who are likely to receive calls from the public. Ensure that missing people is included in this dissemination.

12.1.8 If there is reason to believe that an abducted child may be in another force area, the appropriate force control room should be contacted and notification passed to the ACPO or duty Gold for that force area. It is important that there is clarity over the primacy of the investigation which should normally remain with the police force where the abduction took place.

12.2 FIRST OFFICER ATTENDING

12.2.1 Any police officer taking a report of, or investigating, a missing child is expected to adhere to the requirements within the investigating force's missing person policy.

12.2.2 All officers taking a report of a missing child must start with the viewpoint that it is potentially a serious crime enquiry. All aspects of a missing child enquiry must be dealt with expeditiously, particularly the interviewing of witnesses, and if the criteria for CRA appear to be met a supervisory officer and the force control room duty officer must be notified immediately of the circumstances.

12.2.3 It may be that officers who attend will not be in receipt of this document but the following checklist should be passed to the officer by the force control room or another member of staff to ensure all elements have been asked of the informant within the crucial period:

- Obtain a recent good quality photograph of the missing child;
- Obtain full details and description of the child including name, clothing and physical description and any mobile phone numbers;
- Location where the child is missing from or where last seen;
- Full descriptions of persons suspected of taking part in the abduction;
- Details, including make and model of any vehicle used and the direction of travel;
- The who/what/why where and how questions to be asked that will assist the investigation;
- The initial investigative actions and searches must be properly carried out; and
- Time is of the greatest importance and if it is obvious from the outset of a child being reported missing that a serious crime is suspected the duty SIO must be informed immediately.

SPEED IS OF THE ESSENCE – EVERY MINUTE COUNTS

12.3 SENIOR INVESTIGATING OFFICER

12.3.1 The decision to launch Child Rescue Alert will be made by the duty SIO and ratified by the duty Gold. It is recommended that the SIO is trained in Kidnap and Extortion investigation.

- 12.3.2 By definition the launch of a Child Rescue Alert will be a critical incident.
- 12.3.3 The SIO must determine whether the circumstances meet all three criteria. This decision will involve an element of professional judgment for both SIO and Gold, taking into account such issues as proportionality, best interests of the investigation, force reputation and public confidence.
- 12.3.4 The SIO will assume overall command of the investigation into the circumstances of the abducted child and should appoint a deputy SIO to be responsible for the activation and management of CRA.
- 12.3.5 While these matters are being considered, it is important that the pre-launch actions are followed to enable a rapid response when the decision is made.
- 12.3.6 Experienced SIOs often use the term the Golden Hour to describe the principle that effective early action can result in securing significant material that would otherwise be lost to the investigation.

12.3.7 PRELAUNCH ACTIONS FOR ACTIVATING FORCE

12.3.7.1 The following checklist is a guide for the SIO to consider for pre-launch:

1. Contact CRA on call tactical adviser and NCA Control Room on 0870 785 1033;
2. Check warning e-mail and PNC broadcast have been sent to inform other forces of consideration of CRA and request to prepare for call handling mutual aid;
3. Notify media department and prepare text of alert proforma, see Media Release Initial;
4. Ensure Duty Officer, Force Control Room, has identified dedicated operators to take CRA related calls and considered resource requirements in Force Control Room.
5. Consider structure and resource demands for Major Investigation/incident Room;
6. Ensure that CRA number is activated via Hendon;
7. Prepare briefing to on duty staff and other forces, Missing People and the NCA Control Centre;
8. Consider how to communicate with other forces and what electronic system is appropriate as this may be a crime in action that crosses force boundaries;
9. Provide telephone numbers for other forces to be able to make contact with investigation team. Ensure that these numbers are included in the initial broadcast alert. See Pre Launch Request Proforma (PNC) and CRA Launched e-mail;
10. HOLMES2 will have to be utilised to access MIRWeb system but the implementation of a paper based or electronic message assessment unit (MAU) and / or CLIO will be a decision for the SIO;
11. Consider who to contact to manage the efficient running of systems in 10 above; and
12. Consider contacting the Anti-Kidnap and Extortion Unit on-call officer on 020 7238 8418.

12.3.8 ACTIVATION ACTIONS – SIO CHECKLIST

- 12.3.8.1 Once the decision to launch has been made other actions will need to be put in place. Timing of the notification to the media in relation to ability to respond to public calls needs consideration and discussion with the force media department. Actions 1-7 below must be completed before the media are notified of the activation:
1. Determine which forces are supplying mutual aid for call taking;

2. Ensure that NMAT2 is activated, linking participating forces to CRA number;
3. Ensure that launch PNC Broadcast and e-mail to 24 hour addresses is sent to inform all police forces that an alert is being launched, see Pre Launch Request Proforma and CRA Launched e-mail;
4. Ensure briefing to officers and staff within investigating force;
5. Ensure briefing note sent to all forces via 24 hour e-mail address and PNC Broadcast of the circumstances and reinforcing contact number of investigating force;
6. Direct Media Relations regarding the wording of the alert;
7. Establish a major incident room which will be fully resourced (speed of launch may necessitate that a basic resource requirement is met in the early stages);
8. Ensure media release stating that CRA is being launched. See Media Release – Initial;
9. Ensure that a policy file is commenced and updated;
10. Consider the appointment of a Family Liaison Officer;
11. Consider the need for a Community Impact Assessment;
12. Notify CRA on call adviser of launch if they are not engaged with tactical advice;
13. Notify Missing People on 116 000 advising them of launch, circumstances and contact information;
14. Ensure that the information management response has been initiated with this including MIRWeb and the agreed Message Assessment Unit (MAU) capability;
15. Ensure update notification to police forces, the Missing People and media where appropriate;
16. Consider what covert assets may be operating in the relevant area and disseminate details of activation to them; and
17. Prepare for mutual aid or in-force management of calls beyond the initial 4-6 hours.

12.3.8.2 As soon as the alert has been launched consideration must be given to how long the initial mutual aid request will be required as it is intended as an emergency response to manage the calls received over the first few hours. Subsequent capacity should be considered in terms of either an ongoing mutual aid request to selected forces or a region or whether the capacity exists to manage the calls within the investigating force.

12.3.9 ALERT CANCELLATION – SIO CHECKLIST

12.3.9.1 Cancellation of an alert will need careful management as this may have an effect on the perceptions of the public:

1. Investigating force to direct all NMAT2 calls to itself and have capability to manage residue of calls;
2. PNC Broadcast and e-mail to all forces to stand down call takers, see Cancellation Proforma;
3. Media contacted to notify of cancellation, see Cancellation Proforma – for Media;
4. Continuing media liaison with regard to the ongoing investigation;

5. Consultation with the on call CRA tactical adviser; and
6. Update to Missing People.

12.4 CHIEF OFFICERS/DUTY GOLD

- 12.4.1 The duty Gold for the investigating force will be consulted directly by the SIO prior to any activation of Child Rescue Alert and will ratify the decision to launch.
- 12.4.2 The duty Gold will ensure that sufficient resources are available to the SIO for the duration of the investigation.
- 12.4.3 Any incident where consideration is given to activation of CRA will fit the definition of a critical incident in that it is "Any incident where the **effectiveness** of the police response is **likely** to have a **significant** impact on the **confidence** of the victim, their family and / or the community."
- 12.4.4 Upon identification of a critical incident the duty Gold will take the strategic lead and set the overall strategy that all other plans will take account of. Gold will have responsibility for the incident / investigation and the critical incident considerations as per local force procedures.

12.5 MEDIA LIAISON/PRESS OFFICE

- 12.5.1 The force control room or SIO should contact the media officer during the pre-launch stage to allow time for preparation.
- 12.5.2 Contact with the media is likely to be national and local and media officers should be aware of both perspectives. It is also important to be aware that approaches may also be made by the media to other police forces to gather information and a consistent message needs to be presented.
- 12.5.3 The force media relations lead should ensure that contact details for the scheme are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are current. It is highly unlikely that a police force will issue an alert except on rare occasions. It is important therefore that the system is regularly tested and that contact details are reviewed and updated. This may require coordination between adjacent forces to avoid being overwhelmed by media enquiries.
- 12.5.4 Details of media organisations will be contained on the e-mail system and the department responsible for media liaison will have responsibility for keeping the list up to date.
- 12.5.5 Managing the alert message and the associated news stories should be considered as separate issues and may need to be resourced accordingly. Consideration should also be given to the need for mutual aid from other forces.

12.5.6 ON LAUNCH OF A CRA

- 12.5.6.1 The Media Officer should liaise with the SIO to consider what extra resources may be needed to deal with the media related elements of the incident.
- 12.5.6.2 The media officer, in conjunction with the SIO, will be responsible for creating the National Mutual Aid Telephony (NMAT2) alert message, see CRA Launched e-mail.
- 12.5.6.3 The media officer will have responsibility for updating the alert message in consultation with the SIO, see Media Release – Initial.
- 12.5.6.4 Careful consideration must be given to the wording of the alert to ensure that sufficient information is made available and that there is no ambiguity.
- 12.5.6.5 Pro forma covering letters should be prepared and held within the media relations department providing an explanation of CRA. These will be issued with the CRA to media outlets reminding them of the scheme and the expectation of their support for the launch of an alert.

12.5.6.6 The media officer will send the alert message by email together with appropriate photographs. The message will be sent automatically to the pre-determined e-mails of participating media outlets. To ensure that the message has been received, consideration should be given to gaining confirmation by telephone.

12.5.6.7 In the unlikely event of the email system not being available, the media officer will issue the alert to the broadcast media outlets by telephone and / or fax. The media officer will ensure that neighbouring police force media offices are aware of the activation of an alert and are able to give assistance if required.

12.5.6.8 Ensure that regular liaison is maintained with the SIO throughout the alert process.

12.6 SYSTEM MANAGER(S)

12.6.1 Individuals with responsibility for NMAT2, MIRWEB and HOLMES2 should be notified by the SIO so that they can undertake any preparatory activities. ¹ Managers of other IT systems, which may be used to augment those mentioned above, should also be contacted as appropriate.

12.6.2 Force processes should be activated to ensure that sufficient resources are available for the effective operation of these systems.

12.6.3 System managers should be notified as soon as the decision to launch an alert has been made.

12.6.4 During a 'live' response Child Rescue Alert, the System Manager(s) will assist with all required system administration tasks within their designated portfolio, with this including the following sections.

12.6.5 NMAT2 REFERENCE ACTIVITY

12.6.5.1 Ensure Force network allows access to all National Mutual Aid Telephony (NMAT2) internet-based software.

12.6.5.2 Ensure two working CRA-exclusive Direct Dial In (DDI) telephone lines are in place for each Force, situated in Force Control Centre, with headsets and computer terminals and appropriate generic login information available. Ensure Hunt Group has been set up for DDI lines for NMAT2 Disaster Recovery system.

12.6.5.3 If 0300 200 0200 number has been activated, ensure CRA generic logins are moved to secondary number 0300 200 0333.

12.6.5.4 Ensure Integrated Communication Control System (ICCS) has pre-programmed CRA number 0300 200 0200, to allow non-CRA call-takers to divert callers to the national CRA loop.

12.6.5.5 Assist with any call management and monitoring tasks and provide advice and guidance, as required, for the duration of the CRA response.

12.6.6 MIRWEB REFERENCED ACTIVITY

1. Liaise with the SIO to establish any MIRWeb instructions;
2. Ensure all mutual aid call takers have access to MIRWeb for the current HOLMES account;
3. Ensure Supervisor is aware of process of resetting locked accounts; and
4. Ensure that relevant staff is aware of their roles and responsibilities.

¹ It is worthy of note that NMAT2 and MIRWEB considerations, are relevant should a force be investigating and / or supporting a CRA activation.

12.6.7 HOLMES2 REFERENCED ACTIVITY

- 12.6.7.1 Ensure that the force has a CRA standby HOLMES2 account and that all housekeeping tasks have been completed to facilitate an investigating force CRA response e.g. High Volume Messaging has been enabled and that the appropriate links are in place in respect of MIRWeb functionality.
- 12.6.7.2 On initiating a live CRA response, as an investigating force, re-title the standby account with the designated operation name and pass this information to the SIO for distribution to mutual aid forces.
- 12.6.7.3 Assist with any system management tasks and provide advice and guidance, as required, for the duration of the CRA response and during any wider investigative activity supported by HOLMES2 functionality.
- 12.6.7.4 Ensure that relevant staff is aware of their roles and responsibilities in respect of a HOLMES2 Message Assessment Unit (MAU). Similarly, for a wider investigative response, ensure that all HOLMES Major Incident Room personnel are sighted on the inter-operability between a MAU and HOLMES MIR.
- 12.6.7.5 Create a replacement CRA standby HOLMES2 account, ensuring that all housekeeping activities are completed, as outlined within point 1.
- 12.6.7.6 While there is an appreciation that other systems may be used in addition to those highlighted, this section has focused on those with a universal application and established national footprint.
- 12.6.7.7 Some further detail has been provided with regards to CLIO, given that this may be considered as a mainstream alternative to HOLMES2 as outlined within the Technical Considerations section. It also offers an alternative action management regime should HOLMES2 be subject to a critical technical fault.

Appendix A

PRE-LAUNCH REQUEST PROFORMA

PRE LAUNCH REQUEST PROFORMA

PNC BROADCAST



Please note that Child Rescue Alert activation is being considered by **[Activating Force]**

You are requested to place two call handlers on standby for a potential activation. Please prepare for confirmation of activation.

EMAIL

A Child Rescue Alert is being considered by **[Activating Force]** in relation to an incident that occurred at **[time]** on **[date]**

The location of the incident was

You are requested to take preliminary action in respect of this by making one or, if possible, two call handlers available to receive calls on the CRA number for a period of approximately 4 - 6 hours. As soon as the decision has been made as to whether or not an alert should be launched, you will be notified accordingly.

This notification of a launch will be accompanied by a briefing to the call taker containing details of the incident and contact information for the investigation in this force.

Please advise if you are unable to provide Mutual Aid from CRA by return of email.



CRA LAUNCHED PNC BROADCAST

Please note that a Child Rescue Alert has now been activated by **[Activating Force]**

Any enquiries should be made to [telephone number or email] for the attention of [SIO Details or designated officer for ongoing investigation]

Further information on activation will be sent by email to your Force Control Room email address.

All media enquiries should be referred to **[media enquiry telephone number]**

Appendix B

CRA LAUNCHED e-MAIL

CRA LAUNCHED EMAIL



A Child Rescue Alert has been issued by **[Activating Force]** at **[time]** on **[date]**

Time/date of incident

Location of incident

Lead force MIR contact number.....

Lead force reference.....

Senior Investigating Officer.....

Name of MIRWeb Incident

Force

Instance

CRA public number: 0300 200 2000 / 0300 200 0333 (delete as appropriate)

Circumstances

INSERT WORDING FROM SIO

Victim details and description including availability of photograph

Offender details and description including availability of photograph

Vehicle details

Action to be taken regarding callers and any relevant policy decisions

Information to be passed to (if different from contact details above)

All information elicited from calls from members of the public should be passed to the investigating force via MIRWeb.

Information which may be deemed critical should, in addition to the MIRWeb transmission, be passed to the investigating Force's major incident room (MIR) by telephone.

Appendix C

MEDIA RELEASE – INITIAL



MEDIA RELEASE – INITIAL

Investigating force have activated a Child Rescue Alert as a **(age)**-year-old child has been abducted from **(location, town)**.

(Name of child) was taken from (more details of location, if relevant) when s/he is believed to have been abducted by (name of offender if known or a man/woman) and driven off in a (make and model of car) car.

People should look out for the **(colour of vehicle)** car, registration plate **(insert here)**.

(Brief description of child)

(Brief description of alleged abductor)

(Brief circumstances of what the child was doing and with whom if known).

Any information about the incident should be reported by calling the special, dedicated number on **0300 200 0200** or **0300 200 0333 (delete as applicable)**

-ends-

Notes to Editors:

A photograph of (name of child) and (an image of a similar vehicle, if appropriate) is available and is attached.

Media personnel are being called in to staff the incident as swiftly as possible. In the meantime it is vital that all members of the public in **(relevant areas if known)** be vigilant and look out for the car **(repeat details)**.

We have no further details at this very early stage and all further release of information will be managed by the Media Office at

Please do not call the dedicated Child Rescue Alert number as call handlers will not be able to provide you with information about this incident. A dedicated CRA press officer has been appointed and can be contacted on **(insert number)**.

Appendix D

CANCELLATION PROFORMA

CANCELLATION PROFORMA

PNC BROADCAST



Please note that the Child Rescue Alert issued by **[Activating Force]** at **[time]** on **[date]** has now been cancelled.

You call handlers can now be stood down. Further calls to the national number will be dealt with by **[Activating Force]**. Should you receive information via other channels, please pass this to **[Activating Force]** as previously advised.

Further information on cancellation will be sent by email to your Force Control Room email address.

All media enquiries should be referred to **[media enquiry telephone number]**

EMAIL

Please note that the Child Rescue Alert issued by **[Activating Force]** at **[time]** on **[date]** has now been cancelled.

You call handlers can now be stood down. Further calls to the national number will be dealt with by **[Activating Force]**. Should you receive information via other channels, please pass this to **[Activating Force]** as previously advised.

All media enquiries should be referred to **[media enquiry telephone number]**

Circumstances

INSERT WORDING FROM SIO

Update on circumstances as appropriate

CANCELLATION PROFORM – FOR MEDIA

CANCELLATION PROFORMA – FOR MEDIA

(Name of child), who went missing from **(location)** on **(date and/or time)** has been found. **Investigating force** has therefore, at **(time)** on **(date)** cancelled its Child Rescue Alert. No further Child Rescue Alert media appeals should be broadcast.

(First name of child) was found at (location and circumstances, avoiding identification of alleged suspect)

(Has an arrest been made? If so, details?)

(Are forces still appealing for information? If so, what number should this now be reported on?)

Notes to Editors:

Investigating force would like to thank you for your assistance in this incident. The CRA press officer will be able to assist you with any further information that you may need in relation to the incident. Please call **XXXXXXXXXX**

Should you wish to discuss any issues relating to the management of the alert or any improvements that you consider worthy of note, we would be happy discuss these at a later date.

Appendix F

CONTACT INFORMATION

CONTACT	24 HR	TELEPHONE	EMAIL
On call CRA tactical adviser	√	0870 785 1033	
On call Anti-Kidnap Unit adviser	√	0207 238 8418	
Hendon	√	0208 358 5000 – option 4	Pnc.service-desk@homeoffice.pnn.police.uk
Missing People	√	116 000	116000@missingpeople.org.uk
UK Missing Persons Bureau		0845 000 5481	missingpersons bureau@nca.x.gsi.gov.uk
CEOP		0207 238 2367/2369	missingchildrenteam@nca-ceop.gsi.gov.uk
National Ports Office	√	0208 721 6000	
Interpol	√	0207 238 8115	manchester@nca.x.gsi.gov.uk
NCA Specialist Operations Centre	√	0845 000 5463	soc@nca.x.gsi.gov.uk