

Arriva notice – locating missing persons on buses

A collaboration with Arriva UK Bus to share information and locate missing persons who use the bus network.

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Key details

Stage of practice	Untested
Purpose	Prevention
Topic	Adults at risk Missing persons Community engagement
Organisation	North Wales Police
HMICFRS report	PEEL 2023–25 Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy: An inspection of North Wales Police
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Region	Wales
Partners	Police Private sector

Key details

Stage of implementation	The practice is implemented.
Start date	December 2023
Scale of initiative	Local
Target group	Adults Children and young people General public

Aim

The Arriva protocol aims to inform bus drivers of the description of missing persons such as their sex, age, build and clothing, to assist police officers in locating missing persons who use the bus network.

Intended outcome

- improvements in the force's response to missing persons investigations
- reduction in harm of vulnerable missing persons
- increased flow of information between the force and Arriva UK Bus

Description

North Wales Police identified a need to collaborate with local transport companies to improve their response to missing persons investigations. The force had a meeting with Arriva Bus UK, to discuss how they could both support missing persons investigations.

Missing persons investigations often involve young and vulnerable people. Through reviewing missing persons logs, the force identified several cases where young and vulnerable people were using the bus network to travel. A proportion of these cases involved young people in the care system, who were linked to county lines operations.

Within Conwy and Denbigh Rural district, North Wales Police identified three individuals who were regularly reported as missing. It was established from previous investigations that they were using the buses to travel from their care homes across North Wales.

North Wales Police had a follow up meeting with Arriva Bus UK to discuss how the force could efficiently inform bus drivers of missing individuals. As a result of the discussion, the force found that the drivers could receive the information via their ticket machines. Once the officer in case (OIC) sends an email with descriptive details of the missing person investigation, the divisional depot manager would send the message to the bus driver.

For the first 12 months, the initiative was trialled within the central area of the force. North Wales Police designed an email template with the force's legal and data protection team and the Arriva depot manager. The template was designed to be able to be copied from the email to the ticket machine. This notice can be used for any type of missing person case.

Overall impact

- between January and November 2024, there were 1,604 missing person reports within the central area. 1,130 of these reports were young people. Between August and November 2024, the Arriva protocol initiative was utilised in over 50 cases
- the initiative has been identified as being innovative by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) in the most recent [PEEL inspection report](#)

Learning

- When initially implementing the initiative, it was clear that the communication between the force and Arriva Bus UK had to be improved to quicken the time taken to circulate the necessary information. Local contacts were established, and the delay in communication was reduced.
- The decision was made to remove the control from the communication chain. While they remain in the conversation, this has allowed the attending officer to provide accurate and timely information to partners.
- When the initiative began, officers were expected to be responsible for low and medium risk missing persons. The control room would be responsible for high risk missing persons. Due to staffing limitations within the control room, the process was changed to officers receiving all the information.

- It is essential to have buy-in from patrol inspectors and sergeants. As the project grew it was clear that officers were sending the report but not recording this on the missing person report. To ensure all information is recorded, clear instructions have been provided detailing on how to fill the email template.
- The notice can be used in any missing person case and bus drivers can receive multiple reports where necessary, though caution should be taken with the number of reports sent to optimise engagement with the bus service.

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