



## 2023 Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing

Acting Inspector Stuart King  
Avon and Somerset Police  
UK

### Summary

#### Dementia Safeguarding Scheme

In 2015 Acting Inspector Stuart King identified an increasing number of people across the force area of Avon and Somerset, who were living with dementia and becoming a missing person.

This was placing significant demand on policing with high risk missing person searches as well as an impact on partner agencies such as Fire and Rescue, NHS and social care. Families were left concerned and in fear for their loved ones and policing was being diverted away from other areas of policing.

As Inspector Stuart King devised and developed a unique and bespoke '**Dementia Safeguarding Scheme**' which has 4 distinct strands;

1. **GPS tracking pendant allocation**- allocated to people living with dementia who are the most at-risk of going missing in the future.
2. **NFC assistance device allocation**- these are wristbands, hangtags, key cards and lanyards which are provided for free to the public and to groups (dementia support groups, hospitals, GP surgeries, care homes) for people living with dementia to wear. The NFC device holds information about the wearer along with their NOK contact details who can be telephoned if they need assistance.
3. **Dementia Safeguarding Scheme registration (Herbert Protocol)**- this allows next of kin/carer to record vital information (such as former addresses, places frequented, photo) about a person living with dementia that they care for on the force website. This data is then stored



## 2023 Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing

**Acting Inspector Stuart King  
Avon and Somerset Police  
UK**

on police systems for instant access if they are report as missing.

4. '**Avon and Somerset Dementia Forum**' support group- found on Facebook and is self-sustaining and runs through volunteers.

The GPS element of the wider scheme has continued over the past 8 years with extremely positive results in reducing missing episodes.

The scheme was expanded in 2020 to incorporate NFC and later QR technology to reach a wider number of people. To date over 2,000 NFC devices have been provided free of charge with over 800 people signed up to the Herbert Protocol.

### **Scanning**

**The problem identified was the number of people who were being reported to police as missing or found confused and/or distressed living with dementia.**

This problem was identified by A'Inspector Stuart King and was based on the increased number of calls that police were receiving and through his own experience of assisting members of the public in the circumstances outlined.

The problem was selected as it was identified as an area of safeguarding which was set to place a greater demand on policing and partner agencies.

Whilst this issue affected the entire force area, it generally only affected the older population. This presented greater risks as they can also be targeted for other crimes such as fraud and dishonesty offences.



## **2023 Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing**

**Acting Inspector Stuart King  
Avon and Somerset Police  
UK**

### **Analysis**

Statistical information was sourced from charities and NHS data (current and future predictions).

Nationally across the UK Dementia is becoming one of the most significant conditions that affects the older population, this is predicted to continue with an estimated diagnosis by 2025 to over 1 million people.

\* See appendices 1 for statistics

Dementia support groups were consulted on the problem by Stuart King during all aspects of the project and continue to be. This was both through public meetings, social media, individual phone calls, emails and conversation.

Data on missing persons living with dementia within the UK was utilised from the National Crime Agency along with data specific to Avon and Somerset Police. This did highlight the growing problem and risk of people living with dementia who were being reported as missing.

\* See appendices 2 for statistics

### **Response**

A problem-solving approach was implemented and has been evolving since the programme was launched in 2015.



## **2023 Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing**

**Acting Inspector Stuart King  
Avon and Somerset Police  
UK**

The project goals are to safeguard people living with dementia through reducing missing person calls for service along with calls-for-concern for a person's welfare.

GPS enabled devices were allocated during three separate periods to people living with dementia. The criteria for allocation were that they have gone missing previously and are at risk of a future missing episode.

If a person living with dementia is found as a missing person or at significant risk of becoming a future missing person, a GPS enabled device is allocated and a bespoke information record made for the person at risk of going missing. This is predominately done through police referrals from Officers and staff encountering missing people.

Prior to the GPS devices being issued, the people allocated the devices would simply be reported as missing resulting in a missing person search.

The success rate of reducing the missing incident episodes evidence that the devices and background processes that were implemented have had clear results at reducing missing episodes.

Funding has also presented as a challenge to the scheme in providing GPS devices. They are costly and only allow a small number of people to be allocated safeguarding devices. As a result of this a cheaper safeguarding device was sought and identified- this resulted in NFC (Near Field Communication) devices being purchased through external funding.

Since 2020, over 2,000 NFC assistance devices have been allocated to groups (care homes, hospitals, surgeries, support groups) and through individual applications.

The NFC devices store vital information about the wearer which can be retrieved by emergency services, health professionals or the public



## **2023 Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing**

**Acting Inspector Stuart King  
Avon and Somerset Police  
UK**

using a smartphone to help return the wearer to safety if they are found or in need of assistance. This can potentially negate the involvement of police and prevents a missing episode materialising.

The NFC devices were initially introduced in 2020/2021 and in partnership with Avon Fire and Rescue to provide an additional safeguarding measure which would allow for a greater number of people to be supported.

In addition to the NFC allocation, we have also introduced the Herbert protocol. People can be registered to this protocol via our on-line reporting form, it allows vital information (such as former addresses, places frequented, medical issues, photos) to be recorded which is instantly accessible to police if a person registered is reported missing.

To date over 800 people have been signed up to this element of the scheme alone via our on-line reporting form.

The risk of harm from a missing incident for a person living with dementia can range from a minor outcome to potentially fatal. The GPS and NFC elements of the wider scheme can prevent or reduce these risks dramatically.

In practice, risks can be reduced through the wearer's family/carer applying geo-safe zones to the tracking software on the GPS device so that an alert is created if the wearer exits out of the defined "safe area".

The GPS device will also allow the wearer to be tracked by their family member/next of kin if they believe them to be missing. Crucially this does not require the police involvement to locate the device.

During trial period 1 the NOK was not able to track the device and had to call a NHS call centre for the wearer's location. This meant that the NOK



## **2023 Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing**

**Acting Inspector Stuart King  
Avon and Somerset Police  
UK**

was unable to intervene and act if the wearer was in an at-risk area or wandering away from a considered “safe area”.

That feedback was assessed and in trial period 2 onwards the NOK have been able to directly access the mapping on the device. The statistical results show that this has had an improved effect on reducing missing episodes.

The NFC devices provide passive assistance- they have been designed to be highly visible and allow the wearer to present them or a member of the public/emergency services to scan the device if they are helping the wearer.

Once the NFC device (wristband, hangtag, key card) is scanned it will return information to the phone of the person scanning the device about the wearer as well as the details of their next of kin and their contact number.

Through a simple click, the next of kin can then be telephoned and the wearer re-united with their family member/carer.

The devices were designed with public consultation (meetings, social media feedback, wearer and next of kin feedback) and have continued to be improved.

We are now on our 4<sup>th</sup> generation devices which incorporate QR technology alongside NFC, have embedded video links within the device and are also glow-in-the-dark for improved low-light visibility.

\*See appendices 3 for photos of devices.

The force media department has been utilised and have successfully promoted the scheme on a national and international stage. A'Inspector Stuart King has appeared on BBC One live TV, Sky News along with regional and national newspaper and social media talking about the Dementia Safeguarding Scheme. This has resulted in a number of



## 2023 Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing

**Acting Inspector Stuart King  
Avon and Somerset Police  
UK**

forces across England, Wales and Scotland adopting and implementing elements of the scheme.

\*See appendices 4 for extracts from the media.

### **Assessment**

The **project goals were and continue to be achieved** in reducing missing incidents.

The results of the GPS scheme were measured by police staff against police reporting system (Niche) which records all missing person incidents. This was clear in presenting the success that the GPS devices have had in protecting the wearer from becoming a missing person.

Obtaining the data on the effectiveness of the GPS devices does present a challenge. The process is not automated and requires a member of the police to search every individual record of the GPS wearer against our police recording system to establish if they have been reported missing since they were allocated a device. However, due to the smaller volume of these devices we have been able to do this and evidence their results.

The results for Trial period 3 will require continued monitoring for a further 6 months to establish the final assessment of this period.

The GPS scheme could be more effective if we were able to provide a greater volume of GPS devices but funding makes this not possible at present.

The statistics for the effectiveness of the NFC devices and Herbert Protocol present a similar challenge due to the volume (over 2,000 NFC





## **2023 Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing**

**Acting Inspector Stuart King  
Avon and Somerset Police  
UK**

devices and 800 people signed up to the Herbert Protocol). This will also require a member of the police to research each person allocated the devices to establish if they have gone missing.

The scheme does require continued monitoring and effort to maintain the results. Examples of this work will include phone calls to the NOK if the GPS device battery is low or the device is not being switched on. We also re-allocate GPS devices if they are no longer required.

In relation to the GPS strand there is evidence of displacement but that is away from policing demand towards the NOK. This therefore requires the NOK to manage that risk by monitoring the device and intervening if the risk presents. However, what this displacement of demand means is that the wearer is better protected as intervention from the NOK is preventing the missing person episode even materialising.

There was and continues to be clear evidence of diffusion of benefits. The NOK (family members and carers) often report back how the scheme has provided them and the person living with dementia some of their freedom back along with reassurance. Whilst subjective, it is always very nice to hear this feedback and was not the original intended outcome of the scheme.

Further challenges with the scheme are a clear factor of time. Acting Inspector Stuart King leads the project on a voluntary basis alongside his core policing duties. This can result in the level of time that he is able to dedicate to the project is not as much as he'd like to improve the overall effectiveness of the scheme. This may be some-what alleviated with the recruitment of a police volunteer under the Citizens in Policing model in early 2023.





## 2023 Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing

Acting Inspector Stuart King  
Avon and Somerset Police  
UK

### GPS device results

- Trial period 1 (15 people) (2015-16) **87% success** in preventing the wearing being reported as a missing person.
- Trial period 2 (30 people) (2017-18) **100% success** in preventing the wearing being reported as a missing person.
- Trial period 3 (30 people) (2022- onwards) **96% success to date** in preventing the wearing being reported as a missing person.

### Key Project Team Members

Stuart King

Acting Inspector

Avon and Somerset Police,  
Police and Fire Headquarters,  
37 Valley Road,  
Portishead,  
Bristol



## 2023 Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing

Acting Inspector Stuart King  
Avon and Somerset Police  
UK

BS20 8QJ

Stuart.king@avonandsomerset.police.uk

### Appendices

(1) [Dementia UK report | Alzheimer's Society](#)

<https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-us/policy-and-influencing/dementia-uk-report>

(2)



#### Statistical Tables for UK Missing Persons Data Report, 2019/2020

Time series data of missing related reports in England and Wales



Website: [missingpersons.police.uk](https://missingpersons.police.uk)  
Contact email: [ukmpu@nca.gov.uk](mailto:ukmpu@nca.gov.uk)

• Dementia= 2,158 incidents in 2019/20 which is 2.7% across England & Wales

•

• Estimated Cost of £5,395,000 (\$7,055,581.00) to policing alone!

• \*(based on average search cost @ £2500)

• \*<https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/who-we-are/publications/503-uk-missing-persons-unit-statistics-report-2019-2020-1/file>





**2023 Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing**

**Acting Inspector Stuart King  
Avon and Somerset Police  
UK**

(3)





**2023 Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing**

**Acting Inspector Stuart King  
Avon and Somerset Police  
UK**





**2023 Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing**

**Acting Inspector Stuart King  
Avon and Somerset Police  
UK**







**2023 Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing**

**Acting Inspector Stuart King  
Avon and Somerset Police  
UK**





**2023 Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing**

**Acting Inspector Stuart King  
Avon and Somerset Police  
UK**







## 2023 Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing

**Acting Inspector Stuart King  
Avon and Somerset Police  
UK**

(4)

Sky news

<https://news.sky.com/story/dementia-gps-trackers-given-to-sufferers-to-help-stop-tragic-incidents-12613115>

News Article; [Dementia missing person safeguarding scheme celebrates its seventh year | Avon and Somerset Police](#)

BBC article; <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-bristol-55059003>