

# Informant Engagement & Support Expectations

Family Liaison Officers (FLO) are often considered for high risk cases. However, we must be mindful of the needs of the informant in **all cases**, whether or not a FLO is considered. How we approach contact and encourage engagement with the informant, **particularly with family members and friends**, can have huge value for investigations, as well as deliver appropriate and necessary care and support for those distressed by the disappearance of someone close to them.

Supply the [contact e-factsheet](#) in all relevant cases (download and email as .pdf attachment)

## Manage Expectations

- In all cases we must listen carefully to the informant and seek to understand the concern for the safety they have for the missing person– remember someone whose actions are described as out of character should be given suitable attention. **An absolute and sudden break from routine can be a serious concern.**
- Where appropriate the informant should be provided with an overview of the steps police will take to attempt to locate the missing person.
- The informant should be notified how they will be updated on progress in the investigation and the expected frequency of updates.
- Let the informant know who is dealing and, if necessary, when the investigation is likely to be handed over to another team.

## Offer a Point of Contact

- When the informant is a family member a point of contact should always be offered. This could be a contact phone number in the BCU RaDT, MPU or Ops Room.
- Wherever possible the informant should not have to go over the same information multiple times – a potential issue if they are directed to 101.
- Families should be informed that the national charity ‘Missing People’ can provide emotional and practical support on request – call or text for free 11600. They can also assist with public and non-public appeals.

## Partnership Responsibilities

- Where the informant is a professional partner (e.g. childrens’ care home staff, hospital staff) ensure that partnership responsibilities and expectations are understood and appropriately undertaken.
- Consider raising planning and prevention under Op Resolute.

## Encourage Engagement

- In many cases the informant will hold the most essential information related to the background and behaviour of the missing person.
- The informant should be encouraged to share all relevant information to form a full and accurate intel picture.
- This should be considered an ongoing processes for the duration of the investigation with the informant encouraged to report new information that may come to mind following the initial reporting.

## Support Responsible Participation

- In some cases it is understandable for the informant to want to become involved in the investigation or to take matters in to their own hands.
- We should not seek to discourage this entirely, but carefully manage how participation could be effectively given.
- Common attempts at participation by the informant might be launching publicity (e.g. on social media) or arranging searches of outdoor areas. The circumstances of the case must be carefully considered and relevant guidance offered. Publicity may actually increase the risk to the missing person, whereas ill-advised outdoor searches could destroy evidence or put the search party at unnecessary risk.

