

Dementia Safeguarding Tag

During the summer of 2021, the [Herbert Protocol](#) was launched in Argyll and Bute. This involved promotion of the Herbert Protocol for every person living with dementia whether they are living at home, or within another setting in the event they go missing in order that Police Scotland can use the information on the form to find them sooner and therefore, safer. This work has been well received and continued to be promoted with both statutory and third sector services as well as featuring regularly on social media and other platforms.

Police Scotland are experiencing an increase in incidents pertaining to people living with dementia, who have been out in their community and have become distressed, confused or disorientated. Often this happens in cafes, retail outlets or on public transport. The normal response to this is that members of the public, normally those working in these premises, will engage with the person and try and lessen their distress. They will try and establish their name and an emergency contact. In most incidents, Police Scotland are contacted to assist as what we would class as a “concern for person” incident. Upon officers attendance, normally 2 officers in high visibility police uniform and a marked police car, they will try and establish their identity and of course, their wellbeing. Whilst officers will always be compassionate in their response, their very presence can often increase someone’s distress, mainly owing to the uniform and police car.

The principal aim of the Dementia Safeguarding Tag is to provide everyone living with dementia, at least one Dementia Safeguarding Tag which can be attached to a handbag, mobile phone, walking aid, house keys, or item of clothing most worn. This would be for the person themselves or their family/support network to agree on based on the individual. The Dementia Safeguarding Tag looks like a keyring (around the size of a 2p coin) and contains what is known as Near Field Communication (NFC). NFC is the mechanism that enables chip and pin cards to work and can be operated by a mobile phone to use for payment means such as Apple Pay. Every modern mobile telephone has NFC technology within it, it simply needs to be enabled in the same way as Bluetooth or WIFI. This doesn’t require an app and does not cost any money.

Each tag is individually programmed and when tapped against a mobile telephone populates a message relative to the wearer. Police Scotland have held a number of focus groups throughout Argyll and Bute involving people with lived experience of dementia. This has included those with their own diagnosis, those who have a family member living with dementia, or those providing support to people living with dementia. The focus groups have provided the design of the device itself as well as the wording to be contained when the device is tapped with a mobile phone. The focus groups have provided an overwhelming support of this project to be launched with 100% of those discussed saying this is a good idea and should be rolled out further. When tapped with a mobile phone, the tags will reveal the following:

*My name is [insert name] and I live in [insert town].
I am living with dementia.
If I require assistance, please contact [insert emergency contact name and telephone number].*

This ensures no sensitive information is provided on the person that could make them more vulnerable. The town of residence is included in the event an emergency contact cannot be contacted. The way the tag works is that when this message comes up on the screen, you simply tap the number of the emergency contact and it will call them. To programme each device takes around 2 minutes and is extremely simple to carry out with a free app being downloaded to facilitate this. At the focus groups this was demonstrated and trialled by a number of members all succeeding in this quickly.

We are aiming to launch the Dementia Safeguarding Tag at the end of November 2022 with support from Alzheimer Scotland which will include a video that can be shared on social media as well as posters and leaflets that partners can share for wider awareness. For more information please contact laura.evans@scotland.police.uk