

# Purple Alert Preventative Toolkit For Carers

## What you can do to help prevent someone with dementia from going missing.

This Preventative Toolkit has been developed by Alzheimer Scotland in partnership with Police Scotland to help families keep their loved ones safe and to advise on steps they can take now that may be helpful if their loved one is missing in the future.

### The Herbert Protocol

Fill in the Herbert Protocol and keep it ready. The Herbert Protocol is a form recording information on a person who is at risk of going missing and it's referred to by the Police when there is a missing occurrence for that person. It can be downloaded from the Purple Alert or Police Scotland's website or requested directly from the Police. Having the Herbert Protocol to hand when your loved one is missing could speed up the search and mean you don't have to struggle recalling information when you are stressed. You could share a copy of the Herbert Protocol with others in the family and care team.

### Purple Alert

Download Purple Alert app and set up a profile for the person you care for. Purple Alert is a missing persons mobile app for people with dementia that allows the community to help if someone with dementia is missing. The app allows the main carer to share information regarding the missing person at the point of crisis and allows for eyes and

ears on the ground immediately helping with the search. It complements existing services and is free. Download it now from [PurpleAlert.org.uk](http://PurpleAlert.org.uk)

### Alzheimer Scotland

Connect with your local Dementia Advisor or Link Worker on [www.AlzScot.org](http://www.AlzScot.org). In the Purple Alert app, select 'Find local support', then search by postcode to get contact details for Alzheimer Scotland resources in your areas. Your local Dementia Advisor can help you to think about how to reduce the risk of your loved one going missing, and what to do if you think it is likely. If you need support after a missing occurrence then they can offer a 'Return Discussion', to help you mitigate the risk of the person you care for going missing again.

### Establish a support network.

Identify family, friends and neighbours who are known and trusted by you and the person you are caring for and create a WhatsApp or messenger group, so that they can be of help if the person living with dementia is missing.

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## Plan ahead

In the event of the person you care for going missing, the Police will coordinate the search, however there are things that you and your support network can do to help, in terms of communication and the search itself.

Dividing tasks before the moment of crisis might help:

- Identify a person of reference for the Police: this person should know the person living with dementia well and preferably be their main carer.
- If you're planning to share the alert on social media, you'll need someone who can update social networks, including Purple Alert.
- Help with the search. If your helpers live in the area, identify area of interest where the person living with dementia might go and decide who is going where.

## Technology

There are a variety of technology devices that can help keep the person you care for safe and mitigate the risks of them going missing. If you are concerned about a person living with dementia going missing you should consider what they would be likely to take with them when they go out, such as a wallet, favourite jacket or mobile phone, as this can be the key to being able to find them when they are missing. Some mobile phones have built-in GPS tracking and small GPS devices can be

attached to bags and keys or placed in jacket pockets. Many GPS devices share their location through apps and alerts, and accept incoming voice calls from pre-set numbers, so that families can easily give support from wherever they are.

In the home, technology like door exit sensors can notify family and carers if a person living with dementia leaves home unexpectedly and help them to react quickly.

For more information on technology visit **DementiaCircle.org** to hear about what families with lived experience have been doing to stay safe and well or have a conversation with your Dementia Advisor.

There isn't a one size fits all solution but there are many options to choose from.

## Helpful links:

**Alzheimer Scotland** is the leading organisation in Scotland for people living with dementia and their carers.  
[www.alzscot.org](http://www.alzscot.org)

**Missing People** is a UK charity which is dedicated to bringing missing children and adults back together with their families.  
[www.missingpeople.org.uk](http://www.missingpeople.org.uk)

**Police Scotland** is responsible for policing across the whole of Scotland focusing on Keeping People Safe in line with their values of Integrity, Fairness and Respect.  
[www.scotland.police.uk](http://www.scotland.police.uk)

# Missing Alert Toolkit For Carers

## What to do to when someone with dementia is missing.

Once you have done a quick check of the immediate area around their home and garden, or location where they were last seen, then go to step one below

### Step 1

**Phone 999 immediately**, specify the missing person has dementia.

Helpful details are:

- What they're wearing
- Age
- Description
- Where and when they're missing from
- Are they likely to get on public transport
- If you have the Herbert Protocol, mention it now.

### Step 2

Retrieve the Herbert Protocol and make sure the information and the photo are up to date. Hand it to the Police as soon as possible.

### Step 3

If you have Purple Alert, please send an alert. If you don't have it, you may ask someone you trust to download it and create an alert.

### Step 4

If you have a support network of family and friends, notify them now.

Helpful tips, divide tasks:

The main carer should be the point of reference for emergency services. They should keep one phone as free as possible and be able to be contacted easily.

In the 'Golden minutes' immediately after a person with dementia is missing it's important to act quickly, as within that short time, they can be on public transport and miles away from the search radius. **Remember, if someone with dementia is missing you must phone 999 as soon as possible so that the Police can begin the search.**

Identify someone who can handle all communication, messaging, social media including Purple Alert. They may keep a note of who they are contacting (they will need to notify them when the search is over)

Identify someone who knows the missing person well and can help with the search. Where is the person with dementia likely to go – previous home addresses? Ensure someone stays home in case the missing person returns.

### Step 5

When the missing person is found, make sure they are ok and notify the Police.

### Step 6

If you sent a Purple Alert, mark the person 'Found'.

If you alerted other people, organisations, families when the person was missing, notify them that the person is now safe.

Edit/delete all posts on social media.

You will be able to retain all Purple Alert conversations in the 'Missing Occurrence Log' section. You may want to save some conversations and comments for future reference and you can do this by taking a screen-shot or by copying and pasting in a private document.

Now please refer to the '**Reflective Toolkit**'.

# Purple Alert Reflective Toolkit **For Carers**

## What to do to when someone with dementia returns home after a missing occurrence.

### 24 hours from return – Debrief

Within 24h from return, while all the important details are still vivid, you should try to understand what happened. If you have a support network of family and friends who helped you during the missing occurrence, it might be helpful if you involve them in the debrief.

Helpful details are:

- When did the person get lost?
- Where did they go?
- What did they do whilst missing?
- How did they move from A to B? e.g. public transport, taxi etc.
- Did they use money, bank cards etc.?
- How did they find their way back? Was anyone involved?
- Was there something that triggered the event?

### Return Discussions

'Return Discussions' is a new service offered by Alzheimer Scotland, to offer comfort, advice and additional services to families who experienced someone with dementia going missing.

In the Purple Alert app, tap on the purple circles at the bottom of the map screen, then tap 'organise return discussions'. You can then get in touch with your local

The purpose of this toolkit is to support you and the person you are caring for and to help prevent a missing occurrence from happening again. There are a number of steps that you can take in the next 24/48 hours which will make a big difference in the future.

Alzheimer Scotland Dementia Advisor.

A Return Discussion can be carried out in person or over the phone at your earliest convenience, it lasts between 15 to 60 min. and it's free. It's important you organise this as soon as possible whilst all the important details are still vivid.

### Plan ahead

Make sure the person with dementia has the right level of care and consider reviewing care plans with family and professional carers. You may want to check with the GP that the person you care for doesn't have an infection or something that could lead to higher than usual levels of anxiety or disorientation.

During the Return Discussion, your Dementia Advisor may have suggested some helpful measures you can put into place to mitigate the risk of another missing occurrence. These may be technology for your home, or a telecare package offered by your local council. It's important that you now consider these suggestions, if you're not sure how, your Dementia Advisor will be able to help.

Please refer to the '**Preventative Toolkit**' and put the adequate measure into place.