

GPS trackers to be made available as part of Dementia Safeguarding Scheme



Avon and Somerset Police are making GPS Tracking devices available to vulnerable adults in the latest phase in our [Dementia Safeguarding Scheme](#).

Thirty GPS trackers will be supplied by Somerset-based company Mindme, thanks to £7,000 in funding from partners Bristol Water and Wessex Water.

They will be allocated by the force's specialist Missing Person Coordinators on a referral basis to those recipients considered most at risk of becoming a missing person.

Around 70 per cent of people living with dementia may go missing at least once, with some at risk of going missing multiple times. Sadly, this can sometimes have life threatening consequences.

Sgt Stuart King, who runs the Dementia Safeguarding Scheme on a voluntary basis, said: "I'm delighted to be able to announce the launch of this much-needed addition to our safeguarding scheme and would like to thank our external partners for contributing the necessary funding to make it possible.

"Wearable devices are not a substitute for good care, but when a vulnerable person is reported missing, every minute counts and that is where modern technology can make a crucial difference. I'd strongly encourage anyone caring for a person living with dementia to look into GPS tracking devices if they can.

"While the number of devices we can supply is limited, we hope to be able to offer this service to those known to be at the greatest risk."



Kate Robbins, head of customer policy at Wessex Water, said: "As a company that provides essential services, we are committed to providing extra support to customers who are in vulnerable circumstances and need extra care, so we are very pleased to be funding this initiative which will go a long way to help people living with dementia and their families."

Steph Martin, Customer Experience Project Manager at Bristol Water, said: "This is a great initiative and something Bristol Water is pleased to be involved with, for the second year running. We are always

looking at ways to reach people who would benefit from being on our priority services register, which supports members of our community who may need a little extra help.”

The Avon and Somerset Dementia Safeguarding Scheme was established in 2015 in response to an increasing number of missing person and welfare concern reports involving people living with dementia.

The scheme, also known as the Herbert Protocol, enables families to upload vital information about their loved one via our website, which can be quickly accessed by the police should the need arise to conduct a missing person search.

The new GPS trackers follow the hugely successful rollout of Near-Field Communication (NFC) assistance wristbands and tags which store the wearer’s vital information.

This can then be retrieved by emergency services, health professionals or members of the public using a smartphone, to help return the wearer to safety if they are found lost or in need of assistance.

An embedded video link also provides the person scanning with advice on what action they can consider taking to assist the wearer.

The wristbands are bright yellow in colour and feature the Forget Me Not flower which is synonymous with dementia. Since their launch, the scheme has been adopted by a number of police forces nationwide and has even received international interest.



More than 1,600 assistance devices have already been allocated, with a further 1,000 being made available with £2,000 in additional funding now secured from Bristol Water, Wessex Water and Western Power Distribution.

Richard Allcock, WPD’s Stakeholder Engagement Manager said: “We are delighted to support this vital project and help people who are living with dementia. In addition, this project enables those with assistance wristbands and tags to be added to our Priority Services Register so we can support them in the event of a power cut. For more information about the register and to join go to www.westernpower.co.uk/psr

The wristbands are available free of charge via an online application to the Avon and Somerset Dementia Safeguarding Scheme. [Register for the Dementia Safeguarding Scheme here.](#)

Useful links and information

[Learn more about how the NFC wristband works.](#)

In addition to offering the wearable tech, the Dementia Safeguarding Scheme also has a support group on Facebook. We would invite the public to visit to find out more: [click here](#)

NHS dementia leads, care homes and dementia support groups can all apply for bulk amounts of the wristbands to be sent out by emailing; stuart.king@avonandsomerset.police.uk.