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HOW TO REDUCE THE RISKS WHEN A PERSON WITH DEMENTIA GOES MISSING.

The **Rotherham Dementia Action Alliance**, the local Police, Alzheimer's Society and others are now actively involved in helping to establish the so-called '**Herbert Protocol**' across the Borough. It is relevant to all people with dementia and other memory related issues as well as their families.

The phrase **Herbert Protocol** sounds like a Frederick Forsyth thriller but, in fact, it is a practical risk reduction tool for people and families living with Dementia. It is particularly aimed at people living at home and was officially launched at Rotherham Town Hall. The **Herbert Protocol** is a document intended to provide the Police with *early* access to accurate and comprehensive information relating to a vulnerable person who goes missing. *Herbert* was just one such person.

A lady from Whiston whose husband went missing as a result of dementia explained, at the launch event, about the trauma this type of experience can create even though her husband was happily found safe and well, though very distressed, a few hours later. I can also well remember my own father-in-law explaining how he had been unable to find my mother-in-law when she went missing whilst on holiday in Bulgaria during the early stages of her Dementia. Again she was fortunately found quickly, safe and sound.

The document is straightforward and something that people can complete at their leisure. But the information it contains, such as previous addresses or favourite walks, past and present, can really help speed up the process of finding a person who has memory problems. They may well have set out for some past haunt such as a relative's address - of maybe many years ago - where they feel they would be safe. The forms are freely available from the local Alzheimer's Society, South Yorkshire Police and Home Instead Senior Care, amongst others. The official download links will also be publicised widely over the coming year. I would strongly encourage those with Dementia and their families to ensure signing up as well as helping to raise awareness in general of this new safeguard at any community events you may attend.

The form does *not* need to be lodged with the authorities. They do not need it until it is needed! *But* it can be quickly handed over to the Police, along with a *recent* photograph, at a point of crisis where time and detailed knowledge of the person's possible movements will be of the essence. This reduces stress, the possibility of errors and speeds up the whole process. That is crucial - especially in the winter months. The Police are good at finding people but it is vital they have the information they need.