

The more eyes the better? A preliminary examination of the usefulness of child alert systems in the Netherlands, United Kingdom (UK), Czech Republic and Poland

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FOREWORD

The Centre for the Study of Missing Persons (CSMP) is a specialist research centre within the Institute of Criminal Justice Studies, at the University of Portsmouth (<http://www.port.ac.uk/departments/academic/icjs/csmp/>). The Centre was founded in April 2012, in partnership with the charity Missing People, to accommodate the growing interest in the field of missing persons. It aims to provide a clear focus for research, knowledge transfer and educational provision to academics, professionals in this community and relatives of missing people. The Centre also aims to function as a one-stop knowledge resource which researchers and other interested parties can access, and use to communicate and exchange knowledge about missing persons.

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AMBER Alert Europe is the European Child Rescue Alert and Police Network on Missing Children (<http://www.amberalert.eu>). It is an international not for profit organisation dedicated to the protection of endangered missing children and connects citizens with law enforcement when the police believe the public can help save the child's life. It has 22 members (law enforcement, ministries and NGOs) in 16 countries. Its Police Network consists of over 35 experts representing law enforcement from 12 countries. The goals of AMBER Alert Europe are backed by 150+ Members of the European Parliament.

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The authors of this report would like to acknowledge the effort and thank the participants who took part in this study and completed our survey.

Abstract

When a child alert system is activated law enforcement agencies rapidly disseminate information about the abducted child and their abductors to the public via media broadcasters. The aim of this study is to examine officers' opinions and experiences of using child alert systems in cases from the Netherlands, UK, Czech Republic and Poland. 14 participants in roles related to the use of alert systems and where the system had been used were approached by the researchers to ask if they would be willing to participate. The findings show that child alert systems have the potential to lead to the quick and safe recovery of an abducted child, as well as other important benefits, such as support the investigative process, improve the relationship between law enforcement and the child's relatives, and meet public expectations. The study also raises areas of concern, where the use of child alert systems may challenge the investigative efforts in terms of the management of calls from the public, volunteers and search efforts and added public scrutiny.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of this study is to examine officers' opinions and experiences of using child alert systems in cases from the Netherlands, UK, Czech Republic and Poland. The purpose of the alert was originally created to provide a rapid response to the most serious child abduction cases, where a child is taken and is feared to be in imminent danger of serious bodily harm or death (Sicafuse & Miller, 2010, p. 1238). When an alert is activated law enforcement agencies rapidly disseminate information about the abducted child and their abductors to the public via media broadcasters (TV, radio, social media, road signs, mobile phones, etc.).

The first child alert system was created in Texas, US in 1996 and, at this time, 23 countries around the world have similar alert systems. Several studies have highlighted the benefits of using a child alert system as well as 4 areas of its limitations. To date, the body of research evaluating child alert systems has been carried out in the US. Given its international use, there is a gap in knowledge regarding its use in European countries. Furthermore, previous research tries to determine its effectiveness, i.e., how successful these alerts are, using data from solved cases. However, as the literature establishes, the potential benefits of child alert systems are more multifaceted than whether or not the child was recovered alive. Thus, this study examines the broader issues surrounding the usefulness of child alert systems.

14 participants in roles related to the use of alert systems and where the system had been used were approached by the researchers to ask if they would be willing to participate. Participants from the Netherlands, UK, Czech Republic and Poland responded to the online survey. The participating countries in this study are among the most active users of child alert systems and issued 82% of all child alerts in the EU in 2015. The online survey was opened 17th September 2015 and closed on 17th January 2016. A total of 30 questions were presented to the respondents, which consisted of open and closed questions.

Given the exploratory nature of this study and the small sample, it is not possible to generalise our findings. However, according to our participants the majority of children in these types of cases were aged 10 or younger, and were mostly females. Cases included a mixture of stranger child abduction, parental abduction, kidnap, and lost/missing. In the majority of cases, according to participants, the alert system was activated 3 or more hours after the child was reported missing/abducted, and in most cases the child was found alive. These findings are similar to previous findings from the US (NCMEC, 2015).

There is no doubt the main goal of child alert systems is to lead to the quick and safe recovery of an abducted child. The study suggests the use of child alert systems has the potential to do that, as well as other important benefits, such as support the investigative process, improve the relationship between law enforcement and the child's relatives, and meet public expectations. The study also raises areas of concern, where the use of child alert systems may challenge the investigative efforts in terms of the management of calls from the public, volunteers and search efforts and added public scrutiny.

It is our hope that the results of this study will enrich the discussion regarding the use of child alert systems and encourage research to be carried out and explore these issues even further. We strongly recommend that future research will examine actual case files and actions generated as a direct result of child alert systems, and evaluate whether information received from the public following an alert system lead to information that was used to apprehend an offender and/or assist in their prosecution and conviction.

1. Introduction

The AMBER (America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response) alert system was created in Texas in 1996 as a result of the abduction and murder of 9 year old Amber Hagerman (Donnellan, 2001; Griffin et al, 2007). The purpose of the alert is to provide a rapid response to the most serious child abduction cases, where a child is taken and is feared to be in imminent danger of serious bodily harm or death (Sicafuse & Miller, 2010, p. 1238). When an alert is activated law enforcement agencies rapidly disseminate information about the abducted child and their abductors to the public via media broadcasters (tv, radio, social media, road signs, mobile phones, etc). This is because children who are abducted in such cases are typically murdered within the first 3 hours (Boudreaux et al., 1999; Hanfland et al., 1997; Newiss & Traynor, 2013). Thus, a rapid enlistment of the public as potential witnesses could lead to the child's quick and safe recovery.

By 2005, all 50 states joined the national AMBER alert system. Since 1996, 23 countries around the world created similar alert systems (ICMEC, 2016a), which use different names, such as, child abduction alert, child rescue alert, etc. While each alert system is unique, with communities and countries developing their own criteria and ways of disseminating the information about the abducted child, the concept remains the same. Therefore, for the purpose of this report, they will now be referred to as child alert systems.

In a declaration adopted on 2 September 2008, the European Parliament called on the Member States to put alert mechanisms in place and to conclude cooperation agreements to allow for cross-border alerts. They set the minimum common criteria¹ to be: 1. The victim is a minor (under 18 years of age); 2. It is a proven abduction or there are clear elements indicating that it could be the case of abduction; 3. The health or life of the victim is at high risk; 4. Information is available which, once disseminated, will allow the victim to be located; 5. Publication of this information is not expected to add to the risk facing the victim.

Not all counties have exactly the same operating methods for activating alerts but in all cases it will be necessary for the police officer investigating the missing child to consider whether or not an alert is required. It is then generally the case that there will be some form of central support that can enable the activation of the alert and notify the media and the public. The more sophisticated systems will enable the automated dissemination of information nationally, regionally or locally and to those outlets that are appropriate to the case.

¹ Some countries in Europe have altered their criteria to remove the requirement for there to be abduction and, for example, include missing children where their life is in imminent danger (NL) or focus on the risk to the child rather than the circumstances (UK).

Donnellan (2001) and Zgoba (2004) highlight several benefits of using a child alert system. From a social perspective, (1) they are a powerful tool for law enforcement and a way for broadcasters to contribute to and engage with their community. (2) Extensive coverage can dramatically increase law enforcement's ability to locate witnesses and help resolve these cases more quickly; (3) Once an alert is out it engages the entire community to mobilise and assist with recovering the child and apprehend the offender; (4) An alert provides a sense of security to parents, caregivers as well as to the general public (Griffin, 2010).

The practical benefits are that (1) the alert is immediate and media broadcasters will receive the information quickly and simultaneously; (2) It is inexpensive to activate; (3) Broadcasters that use digital equipment and signals will be able to interrupt programming automatically. This benefits stations and systems that are not staffed 24 hours a day; (4) It is easily accessible to the public and can be received via their mobile phones, social media accounts, pagers and other devices, not only TV and radio.

Despite numerous success stories (NCMEC, 2016, ICMEC 2016b, AMBER Alert Europe, 2016) and support from the general public, policy makers and law enforcement (Sicafuse & Miller, 2010), there have been concerns regarding the effectiveness in four distinct areas:

1. Regardless of its intention to focus on only the most serious stranger child abduction cases, alerts have been issued on a much wider basis, including familial abductions, lost, injured or otherwise missing, endangered runaways and benign or even hoax cases (Hargrove, 2005; Griffin, 2010; Griffin et al, 2007, NCMEC, 2015). There is evidence that the most successful returns are in intra-familial abductions, rather than in stranger abductions, which boosts percentages of success rates but not necessarily in life threatening circumstances (Griffin, 2010).

2. The system assumes members of the public will recognise suspects and/or victims when they encounter them, and that they will be able to report them to the police (Miller & Clinkinbeard, 2006; Miller et al., 2009). However, a large body of research repeatedly questions people's ability to process, remember, and recognise information related to the identification of the other persons (pg. 4) (for example, Frowd, et. al., 2012; Gier et al., 2011; Lampinen et al., 2012, 2014, 2015; Sweeney & Lampinen, 2012).

3. The system assumes members of the public will be willing to report any sighting of the perpetrator and/or victim to the police. However, bystander intervention (also known as bystander effect) research suggests that people are not always willing intervene in an emergency situation (Hortensius & de Gelder, 2014; Levine, & Manning, 2013).

4. It is widely believed that most perpetrators who intend to kill their young victims do so immediately or shortly after the abduction (Boudreaux et al., 1999; Hanfland et al., 1997; Newiss & Traynor, 2013). However, most alerts are not issued in time to save the child's life (Griffin et al., 2007; Sicafuse & Miller, 2010).

To date, the body of research evaluating child alert systems has been carried out in the US. Given its international use, there is a gap in knowledge regarding its use in European countries. Furthermore, previous research tries to determine its effectiveness, i.e., how successful these alerts are, using data from solved cases. However, as stated above, the potential benefits of child alert systems are more multifaceted than whether or not the child was recovered alive. Therefore, the aim of this scoping exercise is to examine officers' opinions and experiences of using child alert systems in child abduction cases from the Netherlands, UK, Czech Republic and Poland.

2. Method

Out of the 28 European member states, 16 European countries have child alert systems and only 8 EU member states have used the system at least once. The participating countries in this study are among the most active users of child alert systems and issued 82% of all child alerts in the EU in 2015. These 4 countries issued 19 alerts in 2015 out of 23 alerts in total.

By the very nature of child alerts, the amount of usage is small, which inevitably leads to a small sample size. Persons responsible for alert systems in seven countries where the system had been used were approached by the researchers to ask if they would be willing to participate. This was done by email, telephone or meeting. They were then asked to identify personnel with experience in using the child alert to participate in the survey. The sample consists of 14 participants in roles related to the use of alert systems and whose identities are anonymous.

In order to maintain the anonymity of participants, there will not be any discussion regarding specific details of the cases officers were involved with.

The online survey was done via SurveyMonkey. The online survey was opened 17th September 2015 and closed on 17th January 2016. A combination of open and closed questions was identified as being appropriate (see a template of the survey in appendix 1). Closed questions (dealt with through a 'radio button' response) were used to generate the quantifiable data that was sought. Open questions (that invite unstructured narrative from the respondent) were included to ensure that an appropriate depth of qualitative data was also collected.

A total of 30 questions were presented to the respondents. None of them were mandatory and the explanation was given that any of the questions could be skipped if required. There were a total of 6 completely closed questions (radio button response), 8 questions that were closed, but allowed for a supplementary narrative response and 6 completely open questions inviting free narrative.

3. Results

Overall 14 participants took part in the study. Countries represented in this study are the Netherlands (6), UK (4), Czech Republic (2), and Poland (2).

Participants' roles:

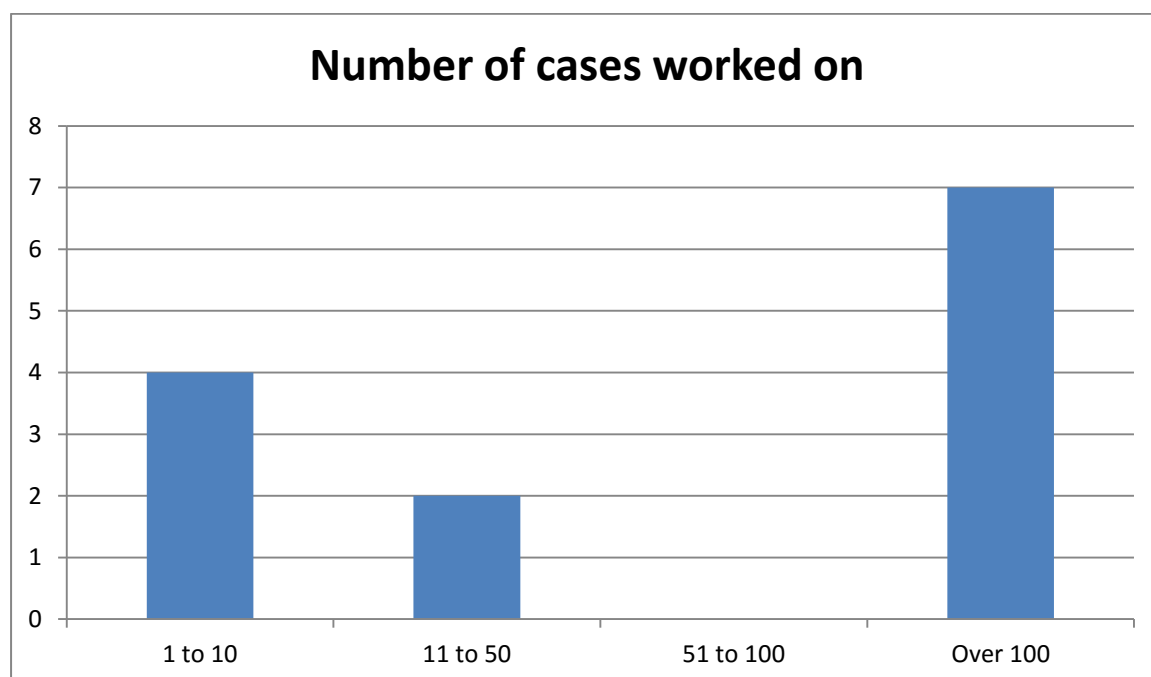
The roles of participants were fairly varied. One participant did not provide any information.

- Investigating officer x7
- Experts/advisor x4
- Spokesperson x2

Years of police/investigative experience

All of the participants in this study had a long working experience within law enforcement with 2 participants working 11-15 years and 11 participants with over 16 year experience.

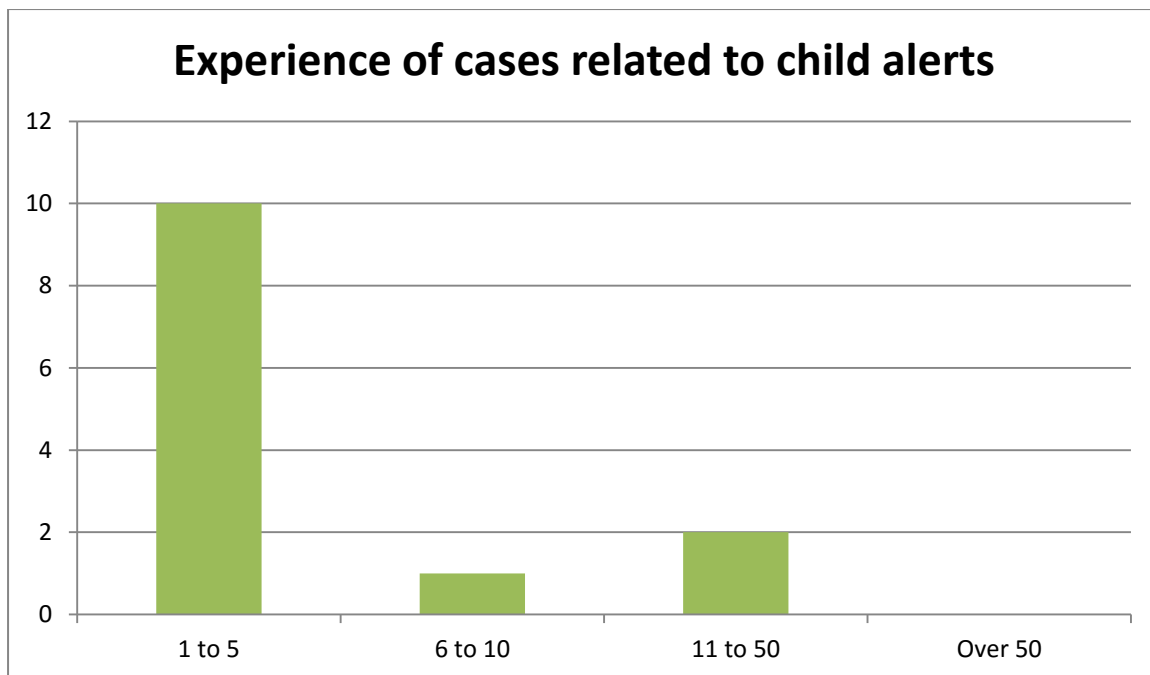
Previous experience working on missing children cases



The table shows a fair variation in previous work experience of participants in working on missing children cases. However, half of the participants had an extensive experience.

Experience with cases related to child alerts

While most participants had limited experience with child alert systems, 3 participants had a more extensive experience.



Age of child subject to the alert (N=11)

It seems that child alert systems are issued in cases where children are more likely to be very young, i.e. 10 years old or younger (8). 3 participants indicated 11 to 15 years old were also subject to an alert. It is important to note that this is a general overview based on participants' recollection, rather than statistical data based on case files. However, it is similar to previous findings (NCMEC, 2015, p.19; AMBER Alert Europe, 2016).

Gender of child subject to the alert (N=11)

Participants in this sample indicated that it is more common for cases involving girls (7) to be subject to an alert than boys (4). While this is based on participant's recollection rather than official data, the findings are supported by previous findings (NCMEC, 2015, p. 17; AMBER Alert Europe, 2016).

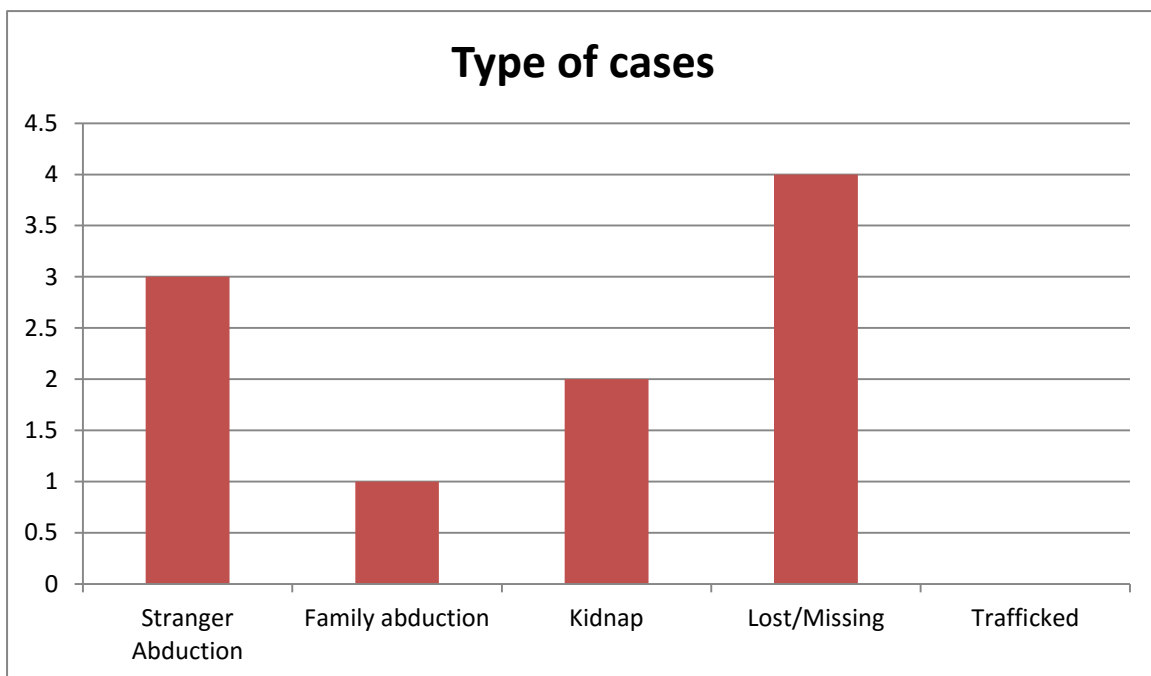
Type of case (N=11)

For the purpose of this study, cases of child alerts were categorised into 5 categories of cases, similar to types used in AMBER alert cases in the US (NCMEC, 2015, p. 6):

- **Stranger abduction-** cases where there was an unauthorised taking, retention, luring, confinement, or concealment of a child younger than the age of 18 by someone other than a family member.
- **Family abduction-** cases involving the taking, retention or concealment of a child younger than 18 years of age, by a parent, other person with a family relationship to

the child, or his or her agent, in violation of the custody rights, including visitation rights of a parent or legal guardian.

- **Kidnap**- Cases where a child younger than 18 years of age is restrained against their will and transported a substantial distance or held in a place of isolation through the use of force. Kidnapping statutes also define a set of purposes for kidnapping including: collecting ransom, facilitating the commission of a felony, inflicting bodily injury, or terrorizing someone (Criminal Law- Free Advice, 2016).
- **Lost or missing**- any missing child younger than the age of 18 where there are insufficient facts to determine the cause of the child’s disappearance or any child 10 years or younger who is missing on his or her own accord.
- **Trafficked**- the movement of children younger than the age of 18 for the purpose of their exploitation (Unicef, 2007)

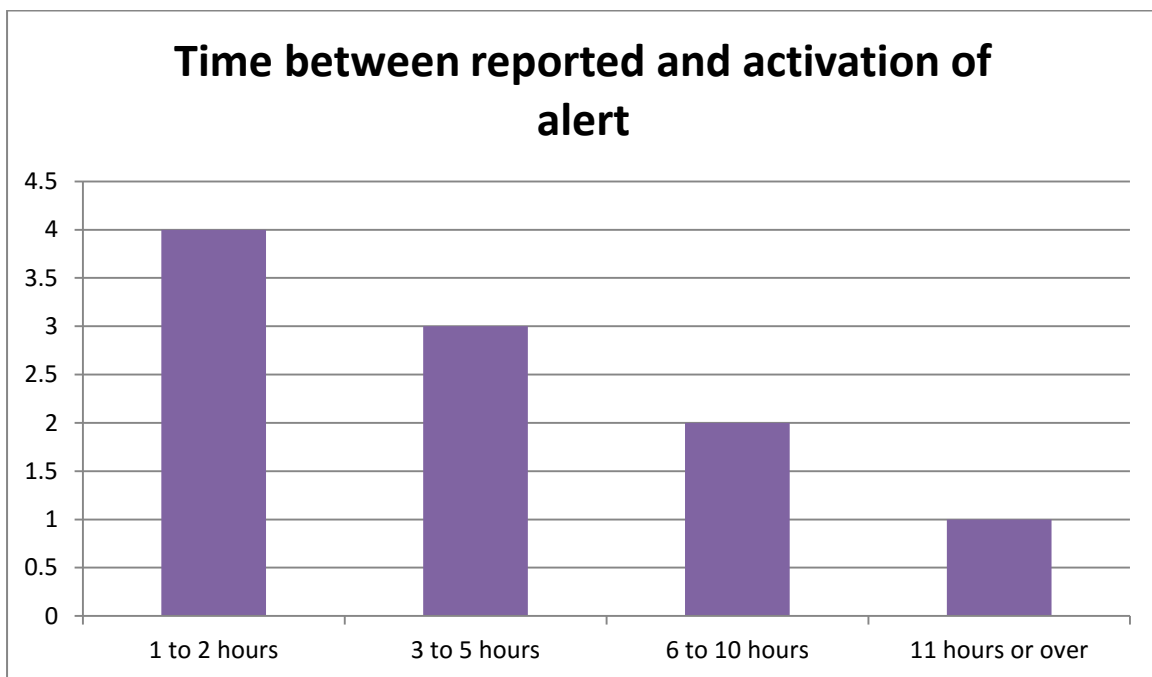


There is no information about the level of risk of harm identified for each of these cases prior to activating the alert. It is worth noting that there may be some overlap between abduction and kidnap cases as there is variation in use of categories between countries. However, the main finding here is that, as previously discussed, child alert systems are used to a wider type of cases than originally designed.

It is also important to highlight that almost half of participants (5 out of 11 who answered), indicated that these type of cases involve collaboration with other countries. 4 participants claimed they were involved with 2 other countries, which one participant stated they were involved with 3 other countries.

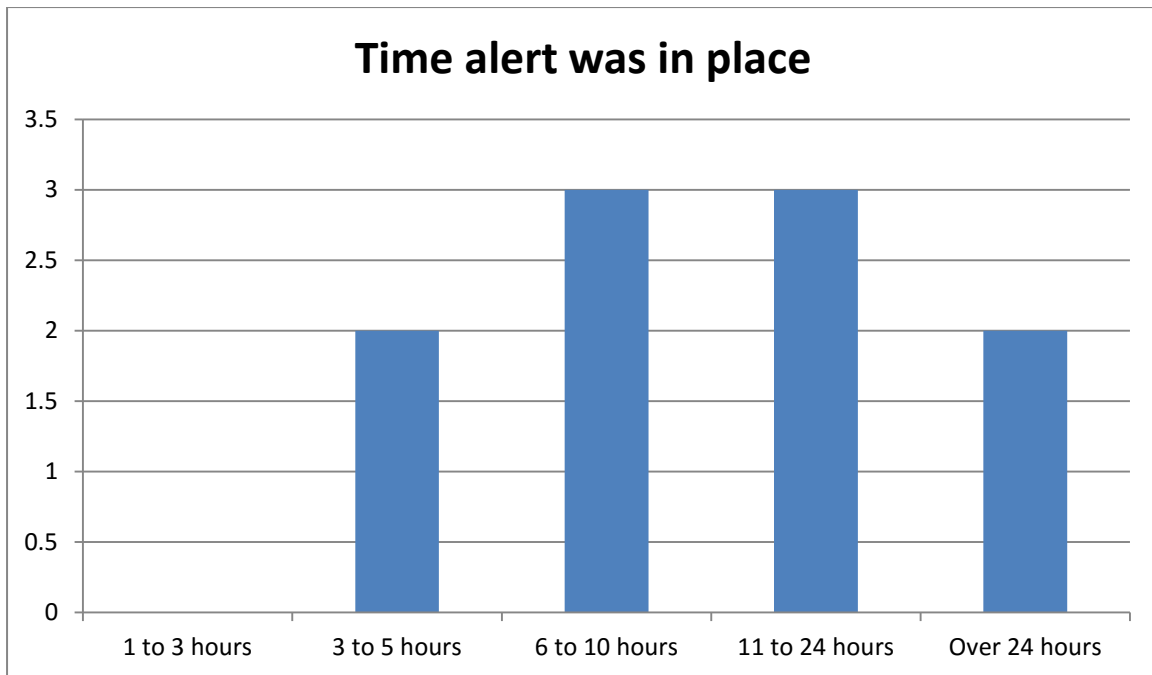
Time between reported missing and activation of alert (N=10)

4 participants indicated that it only took 1 to 2 hours for the activation of the alert system. 6 participants indicated that it took 3 to over 11 hours. Overall, 70% of the alerts were activated within 5 hours. This is an important finding due to academic literature suggesting that children who are abducted and murdered, they are likely to be killed within the first 3 hours (Boudreaux et al., 1999; Hanfland et al., 1997; Newiss & Traynor, 2013). However, it is important to be aware that the sample did NOT include child abduction/homicide cases, thus the time frame of 3 hours is not relevant to the sample but demonstrates the capability to launch an alert quickly.



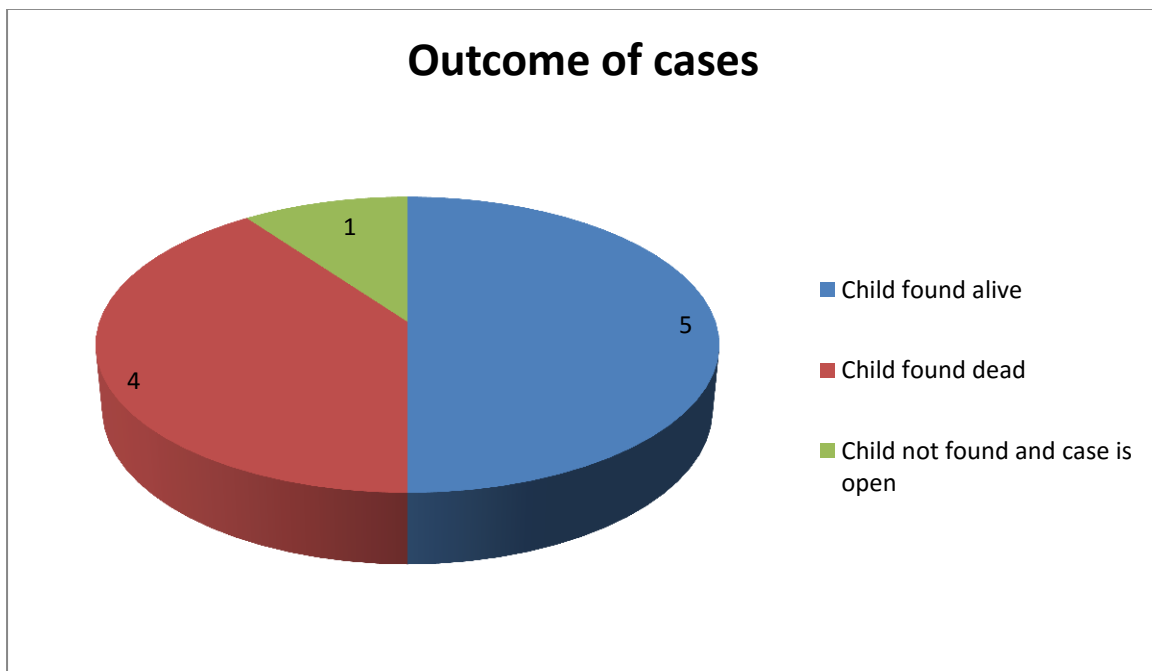
Time alert was in place for (N=10)

Once a child alert system was activated it was in place for several hours, ranging between 3 to over 24 hours.



Outcome of cases (N=10)

The outcome of cases seem to be varied with half of participants indicated children were found alive, while the other half stated that children were found deceased. One participant indicated that the case is open as the child has still not been recovered and the case remains open.



When participants were asked whether they thought the child alert system assisted to find the child 5 participants responded positively. The other 9 participants did not respond to

this question. Participants explained why they believed the alert directly assist resolved these cases:

- Public pressure the offenders surrendered to the authorities
- The child was identified by a member of the public
- The alert and coordination that followed led to a police force in a different country found the child and brought them to safety
- Members of the public volunteered to search for the child, which assisted the police's efforts
- There was an integrated rescue system which was very useful

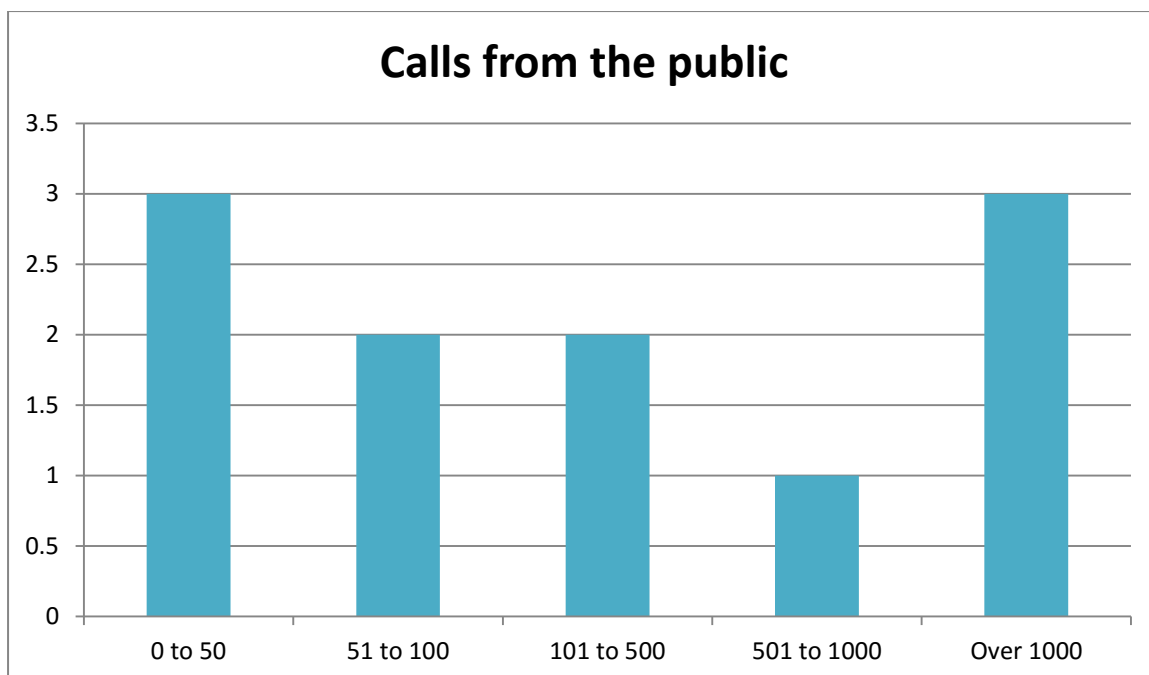
Type of media used for an alert (N=10)

Alerts were broadcasted via multiple outlets, in no particular order and on a national level:

- TV
- Social media
- Text messaging (SMS)
- Digital advertising
- Traffic signs
- Radio
- Newspapers

Public response to the child alert system (N=10)

Overall, the public response was fairly positive, if not intense, with most participants stating they received hundreds or thousands of calls from the public. It is recommended that future studies using case files will generate objective accounts as to the exact number of calls from the public in each country, and ascertain whether there are differences in public response to alerts between countries and type of cases.



Effective use of media in informing the public of an abducted child (N=10)

Participants were asked to assess from their own experiences how effective were the different types of media in relation to informing the public of the abduction of the child. Most responses were very positive, with TV, radio, Internet, social media, newspapers and apps viewed as the most effective types of media to assist in informing the public. Participants were more mixed in their assessments of the effectiveness of digital advertising boards and traffic signs.

	Not effective	Slightly effective	Moderately effective	Effective	Very effective	Total
TV	1	0	0	0	8	9
Radio	0	1	0	4	4	9
Newspaper	0	1	0	3	2	6
Internet	0	1	0	3	5	9
Social media	0	0	0	3	4	7
SMS	1	0	0	2	2	5
App	1	0	0	1	2	4
Digital advertising	2	0	1	1	3	7
Traffic signs	2	0	2	0	0	4

**One participant answered 'not effective' where type of media was not utilised.*

It is important to note that this finding is based purely on the participants' subjective assessment rather than an objective test, and due to the small number of participants these findings cannot be generalised. Furthermore, the effectiveness of some cases might depend

on the case itself. For example, traffic signs will be mostly effective when there is information about the vehicle of an abductor (license plate, etc.). Thus, we encourage future studies to examine this issue further.

Effective use of media in recovery of children (N=10)

Participants were asked to assess from their own experiences how effective were the different types of media in relation to the recovery of the child. Most responses were fairly neutral or positive, with TV, SMS, Internet and social media as deemed the most effective types of media to assist in recovery of child. Participants were more mix in their assessments of the effectiveness of radio, newspapers, apps, digital advertising boards and traffic signs.

	Not effective	Slightly effective	Moderately effective	Effective	Very effective	Total
TV	1	1	3	3	2	10
Radio	0	2	5	2	1	10
Newspaper	0	2	3	2	0	7
Internet	0	2	3	4	1	10
Social media	0	0	2	2	1	5
SMS	1	0	1	2	0	4
App	1	0	1	1	0	3
Digital advertising	2	1	1	1	0	5
Traffic signs	2	0	1	0	0	3

**One participant answered 'not effective' where type of media was not utilised.*

It is important to note that this finding is based purely on the participants' subjective assessment rather than an objective test, and due to the small number of participants these findings cannot be generalised. However, we would encourage future studies to examine this issue further.

Impact of publicity of child's safety (N=10)

One of the main concerns officers often express, in informal conversations, in relation to activating child alert system is that publicity may put pressure on the offender and the child will come to harm as a result. When asked about this, participants gave mixed responses.

- **Negative impact** was in one case where as a result of the publicity a parent left the country with the children who were abducted.
- **Positive impact** was in a case where the children were identified by members of the public and in a case where the parent surrendered to the police as a direct result of the publicity and public pressure.

- **No impact** was in a case where the child was murdered before the child was even reported missing.

It is recommended that future studies will examine case files where child alert systems were used and ascertain (where possible) whether or not an alert had any direct impact on the child's safety.

Training and awareness of the alert system (N=13)

The vast majority of participants (12) had some previous knowledge of the alert system. Only one participant did not. 12 participants also indicated that they received some training about the alert system, but 4 out of 12 participants stated it was only after considering using it.

Training took place in the form of:

- Information available on Internet
- Regional and/or national workshops and conferences
- Live or simulated exercises

The training consisted of:

- Police procedure (Guidelines, criteria for issuing an alert)
- Types of search
- Cooperation
- Communication with the public
- Psychological support to relatives

Benefits of using a child alert system (N=10)

Participants were asked to assess in their own words and from their own experience the main benefits in using a child alert system in relation to:

- **The investigation**
 - The child alert reassured officers that all that could be done was being done to locate the child
 - The child alert reassured the public that all that could be done was being done to locate the child
 - The public was engaged with the case and the investigation
 - As a result of the publicity officers received quality information from the public that led to new tactical options.
 - The set-up of an a child alert system facilitated good cooperation between various agencies and EU countries

- **Relationship between police and family of abducted child**
 - The use of a child alert system seem to strengthen the relationship between law enforcement and relatives of the child, as they are reassured that all was being done to find the child.
 - In some cases of parental abduction/homicide, the publicity and public pressure led to parent's confession.
 - In cases where the parent was the abductor and case was resolved in an arrest and conviction, the child alert system laid the foundation to an effective relationship with the wider family of the child.
- **Public expectation-** A child alert system leads to public interest and involvement in these cases. As a result
 - The public has a sense of involvement with safeguarding the children in their community.
 - Mobilises the public to assist in search efforts.
 - The alert and increase communication with the public about the case and investigation enhanced understanding of police work and improved its credibility.
- **Safety of the child**
 - The more eyes the better. Participants indicated previously that in a number of cases public exposure led to the resolution of the case and safe return of the child.

Challenges of using a child alert system (N=10)

Participants were asked to assess in the own words and from their own experience the key challenges in using a child alert system in relation to:

- **The investigation**
 - The volume of calls generated in a short timeframe can be challenging in terms of assessing the information and prioritising the action required.
 - The volume of volunteer searchers can be challenging in terms of coordination, systematic approach and safety of the public.
 - There is a need to ensure that officers have resources, are appropriately trained and equipped place before the launch of the alert in order to meet the demand.
- **Relationship between police and family of abducted child**
 - Consideration must be given to the scope of published information on the child and/or family
 - Law enforcement must be understanding of family concerns
- **Public expectation**
 - Child alert systems lead to an even greater public expectation.

- **Safety of the child**
 - There is always a risk of unexpected and dangerous actions of a perpetrator

4. Discussion and Conclusions

Child alert systems have been used in Europe since 2006. While previous research has been done in the US about the use of such systems, research in the area in European countries has not existed until now. Out of the 28 European member states only 8 countries have used their system at least once. The participating countries are among the most active users of child alert systems and issued 82% of all child alerts in the EU in 2015.

Given the exploratory nature of this study and the small sample, it is not possible to generalise our findings. However, the study shows that the type of cases used for alert system across Europe are fairly similar to the cases used in the US, thus leading to possible comparisons of their established benefits and limitations.

There is no doubt the main goal of child alert systems is to lead to the quick and safe recovery of children whose life is in imminent danger. The study suggests the use of child alert systems has the potential to do that, as well as other important benefits, such as support the investigative process, improve the relationship between law enforcement and the child's relatives, and meet public expectations. The study also raises areas of concern, where the use of child alert systems may challenge the investigative efforts in terms of the management of calls from the public, volunteers and search efforts and added public scrutiny.

This report shows that the systems, similar to the US (refer to annual report) are not only used for abduction cases. In the best interest of the child, countries have issued child alerts for non-abduction cases because specialist assessed the child's life was in imminent danger.

Following the results, it must be noted that child alerts cannot be researched on its own. Further research should focus more on the processes (relating time and cross border information exchange) preceding issuing the actual alert.

It is our hope that the results of this study will enrich the discussion regarding the use of child alert systems and encourage research to be carried out and explore these issues even further. We strongly recommend that future research will also examine actual case files and actions generated as a direct result of child alert systems, and evaluate how effective the use of media was to inform the public of the case, whether information received from the public following an alert system lead to information that was used to apprehend an offender and/or assist in their prosecution and conviction, what was the impact of public response to the alert on the investigation and whether the publicity generated by the alert had any impact on the child's safety.

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APPENDIX: The Survey

1. Name of country

2. Your role

3. How many missing child cases have you worked on?

1-10, 11-50, 51-100 100+

4. How many cases related to child alerts have you worked on?

1-5, 6-10, 11-50, 50+

5. How many years of police/investigative (?) experience do you have?

0-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16+

6. Were you aware of alert systems before considering the alert?

7. Is any training and awareness raising available to you and the rest of your organisation? Yes/No

Sub question to yes – please state what this is

8. Did you receive any training regarding the alert system prior to your involvement in this case?

Yes/No

Sub questions to those who answered No above. Would you have benefitted from training in the alert system? Yes/No/Don't know. Why?

9. Case specific information (please tick where relevant)

Age of the child 1-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-18 years

Gender M/F

Circumstances of the case, known or suspected

Stranger abduction

Parental abduction

Kidnap

Lost/missing

Trafficked

Other, please specify

10. Did the case involve collaboration with other countries?

If so, how many?

11. How long did it take to launch the alert from the time of the initial information being received?

1-2 hours, 3-5 hours, 6-10 hours, 11+ hours

If over 11 hours, was this based on new information or thinking? Free text

12. How long was the alert in place?

1-2 hours, 3-5 hours, 6 – 10 hours, 11-24 hours 24 + hours

13. What was the outcome?

Child found alive

Child found/presumed dead

Child not found and case is still open

Linked question to child found alive - Do you think the alert helped to find the child? If so, how?

14. What media types were used? (please tick where relevant)

TV

Radio

Newspapers

Internet

Social media

SMS

App

Digital advertising boards

Traffic signs

Other, please specify

15. Was the media alert

Local

Regional

National

International

16. How many calls did the alert generate approximately?

0-50, 51-100, 100-500, 500-1000, 1000+

17. How many of those calls provided information that assisted in locating the child?

0-5, 6-10, 11-20, 21-50, 51+

18. Can you indicate how effective you think the below were in relation to the recovery of the child – scale of 1(not effective) to 5 (very effective)

TV

Radio

Newspapers

Internet

Social media

SMS

App

Digital advertising boards

Traffic signs

Other, please specify

19. Can you indicate how effective you think the below were in relation to informing the public – scale of 1(not effective) to 5 (very effective)

TV

Radio

Newspapers

Internet

Social media

SMS

App

Digital advertising boards

Traffic signs

Other, please specify

20. Do you think that its use had an impact on the child's safety? (positive and/or negative)

Yes/no/don't know/box to explain

21. Can you describe any benefits in the areas set out below?

The investigation

Relationship with the family

Public expectations

Safety of the child

22. Can you describe any challenges in the areas set out below?

The investigation

Relationship with the family

Public expectations

Safety of the child

23. What are the lessons that you have learnt from this experience?

24. Would you recommend use of the alert? Why?