

## STRATEGIC AGREEMENT BETWEEN

### MISSING PEOPLE

### AND

### NWG Network

#### Background

It is estimated that in the region of 250,000 reports of missing persons are made to police forces throughout the United Kingdom each year<sup>1</sup> and 140,000 of these are children. The link between Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and children and young people going missing is inextricable since going missing can be both a cause and a consequence of being sexually exploited. Barnardos (in 2011) identified that 50% of sexually exploited young people they worked with in 2009/10 went missing on a regular basis and 2011-12, 128 of the children and young people contacting Missing People were identified as experiencing or at risk of CSE. There is also a clear link between Child Sexual Exploitation and trafficking, both internationally but also within in the UK. Barnardo's noted a 'marked rise in internal trafficking' reporting that one in four of the snap shot of service users supported in one month, had been moved in 2010-11 (trafficked within the UK for the purpose of sexual exploitation). The actual numbers of children who were moved rose from 76 to 140 children.

Missing People is a UK charity which seeks to provide support for missing and vulnerable people of all ages, as well as their families left in limbo. We do this through our helplines, publicity and advocacy work, and by working in partnership with the police and other statutory and voluntary sector organisations. Missing People receives contact from young people via telephone, text and email and is accessible 24 hours a day 365 days of the year. Support is given for free and on a confidential basis and this often creates a space in which young people can explore their options and ultimately be supported to make safer choices and protect them from harm.

The NWG Network is a Charitable organisation formed as a UK network of over 1200 practitioners working on the issue of tackling child sexual exploitation (CSE) and trafficking within the UK. Our Network covers 160 voluntary and statutory services. We offer support, advice and raise the profile, provide updates, share national developments, influence the development of national and local policy informed by practice. We have developed 'Our Voice' Young People's Participation to enable their voices to be heard.

The NWG is the only child sexual exploitation network working across voluntary/statutory agencies tackling CSE, with links across Europe, South East Asia, Africa and USA exchanging knowledge, understanding and dedicated to seeking ways to find alternative solutions.

This Strategic Agreement recognises the continuing synergies, areas of cooperation and mutual dependencies between the NWG Network and Missing People in responding effectively to missing and sexually exploited children and young people.

#### Aim

This Strategic Agreement provides a framework to sustain cooperation and communication between Missing People and the NWG Network. The aim is to ensure that missing and sexually exploited children

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<sup>1</sup> Home Office (2010) *The Missing Persons Taskforce: A Report with Recommendations for Improving the Multi-Agency Response to Missing Incidents*. London: Home Office.

and young people are better safeguarded and prevented from harm and where appropriate reconnected with a place of safety

This Strategic Agreement should be a catalyst and a reference point for officials to stimulate more effective working between the parties. The primary aims of the Agreement are to:

- establish a shared view of priority tasks and ensure that they are successfully delivered together
- provide more effective identification and delivery of opportunities to develop and promote better services for those who go missing, are at risk of becoming missing, and those who are sexually exploited (or at risk of being)
- provide early warnings of potential tensions where we need to work closer together to resolve issues quickly
- add value to existing relationships by strengthening our collective understanding of missing and sexually exploited children and young people

### **Principles and values of working together**

The parties will aim:

- to understand the needs and concerns of each other;
- to work collaboratively to achieve respective goals;
- to be open and honest with one another;
- not to avoid difficult issues and
- to learn from experience and build on successes
- to work in a child focussed way

## Reviewing and Updating the Strategic Agreement

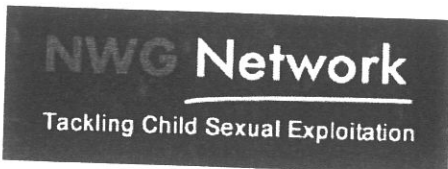
The Agreement will be reviewed annually from the date of signing.



Signed:

Date: 10.06.13

NWG Network CEO, Shelia Taylor



Signed:

Date: 11.06.13

Missing People CEO, Jo Youle



**missing  
people**

Registered Charity No. 1020419