# BLACK

# &

# MISSING

A toolkit for identifying and challenging bias in police responses to Black and Black mixed heritage missing people

## FEEDBACK & COMPLAINTS

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**Services cannot improve if they don't know how they are succeeding and failing.**

Nationally there have been very few initiatives to explore public opinions on police responses to missing people. There are few opportunities for people to share their experience, provide feedback, or consult on policy or new guidance. It is rare that Independent Advisory Groups consider missing person investigations, and there are few examples of public consultations relating to missing.

All police forces will have a clear process for people who have had been in contact with the police, including people who have been reported missing or reported a loved one missing, to make a complaint. However, there are relatively few complaints made to the police about their response to missing incidents. While this may seem like a positive, suggesting few people are dissatisfied, research into the experiences of Black missing people and their families, as well as social media discourse, actually suggests that issues just aren't being reported.

It is possible that Black people may be even less likely to make a complaint, or provide feedback, than others, due to a history of poor trust in policing.
To improve responses to Black missing people in your force area, it is vital to consider how you can better seek feedback, identify issues, and create an open

dialogue with the community to build trust.

While the necessary steps to do this will depend on your individual force and the existing setup for community engagement, the following prompts may help to begin planning.

**Feedback checklist**

**►Ensure all officers involved in the response to missing people:**
• Understand the importance of feedback and complaints.
• Know not to be defensive in the face of criticism or complaints.
• Actively signpost people to the complaints process when appropriate.
• Can signpost people to support services, community groups or charities that can help people to make a complaint (using the support services directory included in this toolkit).

**►Engage an Independent Advisory Group to review the response to missing Black people and their families** (using the guidance on conducting a review included in this toolkit).

**► Ensure staff are familiar with the IOPC guidance** on complaints about discrimination: Discrimination toolkit: Resources and links | Independent Olice for Police Conduct (IOPC).

**► Seek feedback through surveys to previously missing people and their families.** This could follow the model of 'victim surveys'. Ensure that demographic information is included and analyse the responses with consideration of race and ethnicity in mind.

**►Commission community consultation in your police force area** through an independent agency (for example Listen Up, Missing People or local community or third sector organisations).

► **MISSING PEOPLE**
is the only UK charity providing a lifeline to those affected by a disappearance or thinking of going missing. For support talk to us on 116 000.

https://www.missingpeople.org.uk

► **LISTEN UP**
is a national research and training organisation established to amplify the experiences of Black and racialised children in child protection research, policy and practice. Listen Up is the leading organisation increasing awareness about adultification bias and its implications for child protection.

 https://listenupresearch.org/

**missing people**

Registered charity in England and Wales (1020419)
and in Scotland (SC047419)

**LISTEN UP**