



**MISSING
PEOPLE:
TWO YEAR
STRATEGY
2021-2023**

**missing
people**

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

A lifeline when someone disappears

THE WORLD AS WE WANT IT TO BE – OUR VISION IS THAT EVERY MISSING PERSON IS FOUND SAFE.

Our mission is to be a lifeline when someone disappears.

Our focus will be to ensure that every missing person and every family missing a loved one can find the help they need, to reduce the harm linked to people being missing, and to support people with lived experience to improve the response when someone is reported missing.

OUR STRATEGIC AIMS FOR 2021-23 ARE:

- to provide help, hope and a way to reconnect for missing children, adults, and families.
- to put people with lived experience at the heart of our work, amplifying their voices to achieve change.
- to build networks of support for and with missing children, adults, and families.

We will focus on the work we uniquely do and the difference we believe we can make, as the only charity dedicated to missing people in the UK.

170,000 people go missing every year in the UK and many people are reported missing more than once – with more than 350,000 missing incidents reported to the police each year. This is one person reported missing every 90 seconds.

And if we conservatively estimate that for every person who goes missing, five close friends and family members are affected, this issue touches one million people each and every year.



I am a Lifeline
www.missingpeople.org.uk

THE WORLD AS WE SEE IT NOW – STARTING FROM WHERE WE ARE.

The world has been changing.

Over the last two years the changes have been big. We are living through a pandemic. There are devastating impacts. On people's lives. On our economy. On the social contact that defines our humanity. We know, as if we ever needed reminding, the value of people and communities and life.

At Missing People, we are concerned about mental health issues, financial pressures, and the economic picture – and how these issues will increase the likelihood that adults go missing and increase their vulnerability. We are concerned that the pressures on young people linked to the pandemic are also making young people at greater risk of going missing.

- It is vital that there is support for young people who are going missing and are the victims of exploitation, coming to harm and are being criminalised.
- We must address the fact that almost a thousand people die whilst missing each year, and that many thousands come to serious harm.
- We are concerned about the isolation, worry and devastation experienced by families left behind.
- We know that Black people are over-represented in missing statistics, and that people from Black and other



AT MISSING PEOPLE WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES, FINANCIAL PRESSURES, AND THE ECONOMIC PICTURE.

minoritised ethnic groups are reporting discrimination in the response from agencies including the media when their loved one is missing.

- We know that when missing children and adults return many face further harm and stigma if they are not given the support they need, leading to many people going missing again.

This plan aims to tackle these serious issues.

And we are mindful that none of it will be possible with the generous support of people like you reading this.

THE HISTORY THAT BROUGHT US HERE

For the first time, we all embark into the next era of Missing People without our Founders, Mary Asprey OBE and Janet Newman OBE.

They saw the desperate need to provide support for a family to find their child in 1986 when Suzy Lamplugh went missing.

They created an ethos for a pragmatic, dynamic and emotional support service: appealing for and finding missing people, responding to the calls for help from people deep in crisis, supporting a family in loss and devastation and demanding for the world to respond, and to respond better.

A battle fought then as now, on many fronts, from mental health to child sexual exploitation, to crime, to gangs, to family conflict and to endless mysteries.

That ethos, that spirit, lives on. In this plan. In the team of people and supporters across the years, in a relay from one person to the next. Together as a community. That is the charity, registered in 1993. That is Missing People. We will be recognising our 30th anniversary in April 2023.

If we look back to the more recent history of 2017, we set off on a 5-year plan, but the changes brought by the pandemic meant that we needed to pause that plan in 2020 and review our priorities.



**THEY CREATED
AN ETHOS FOR
A PRAGMATIC,
DYNAMIC AND
EMOTIONAL
SUPPORT SERVICE.
THAT ETHOS, THAT
SPIRIT, LIVES ON.**

**PEOPLE WHO HAVE LIVED THROUGH MISSING
HAVE BECOME A KEY PART OF OUR SUPPORT
SERVICES, THEY ARE PART OF THE LIFELINE.**

In our 2017 plan, we aimed to significantly increase the number of people we help. We reached out to many more people than we had ever done before. However, we didn't get to our target of 20,000 people helped before we had to pause the plan, and now realise that we need to do things differently to stay relevant in a fast-changing world.

At the same time, through a growing set of online resources, we helped thousands more missing people and families than we expected – sharing years

of knowledge and expertise. Over the past year, we have also created new ways to support people and to enable people to support each other through online forums and online groups from across the country in one go. And this has felt like a breakthrough.

More than this, people who have lived through missing have become a key part of our support services, they are part of the lifeline and this feels right and critical going forwards. An organisation of, and for, the people.

**missing
people**
Registered Charity No. 102419

**MISSING PEOPLE WAS
REGISTERED IN 1993.**

**WE WILL BE RECOGNISING
OUR 30TH ANNIVERSARY
IN APRIL 2023.**



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

This plan represents the thinking, the ideas, and the imagining from people across the missing people community. From people who are living through the experience of missing, from our partners, frontline team delivering the services, from our policy thinkers, fundraisers, our trustees, our finance people, the people who look after our staff and volunteers, the technical people that make it all happen. It also draws on, and stands on the shoulders of, everyone who has been part of Missing People from the beginning.

Thank you to every one of you.

We set off with our ambition high.
It can be no other way, given the gravity of missing.

The world will be changing around us.
Some of those changes will be because of us, and some will happen to us, that is for sure. This plan and our values will provide the guiding light.

Jo Youle
Chief Executive

“ *Every generation of human beings has lived with uncertainty and unpredictability: that’s how we developed the staggering human capacity for invention, discovery, improvisation and creativity.* ”

Margaret Heffernan. Uncharted



GOING MISSING IN THE UK



350,000
missing incidents reported
to the police every year

The scale of the challenge we face is huge.

Someone in the UK is reported missing every 90 seconds – with 350,000 missing incidents reported to the police every year. Children who are being exploited or escaping abuse, adults in mental health crisis, and older people living with dementia. We know that when someone is missing, it is almost always a sign that they need support. Our role is to ensure every missing child, adult and the loved ones left behind are able to access the help they need.



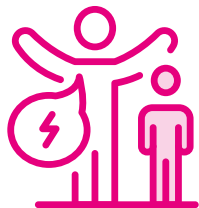
THE CAUSE

RELATIONSHIP BREAKDOWN

1 in 5 young people



ABUSE



More than half of missing children have experienced conflict, abuse and neglect and **1 in 5** felt forced to leave

ISSUES at SCHOOL

1 in 8 young people



MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

1 in 5 young people

Missing People supported disclosed mental health issues

EXPLOITATION and TRAFFICKING

1 in 4 trafficked young people have been reported missing from local authority care



7 in 10 young people who have been sexually exploited have also been reported missing

LIVING IN CARE

Young people living in care are 20x more likely to be reported missing than young people living in their family home



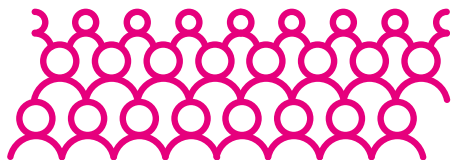
ESCAPING VIOLENCE

1 in 50
missing adults



DEMENTIA

4 in every 10
people living with
dementia will be
reported missing
at some point



1 in 17 missing adults
intend to take their own life



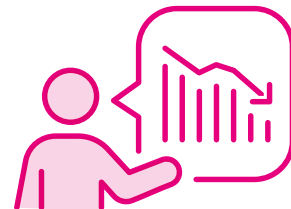
Diagnosed or
undiagnosed

MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

up to **8 in every 10**
missing adults

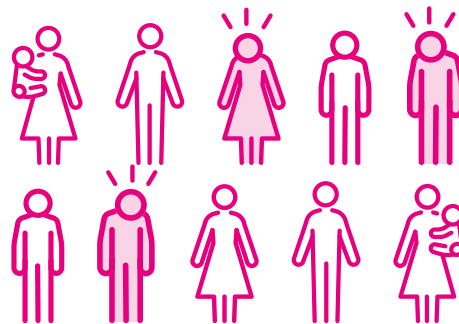
FINANCIAL PROBLEMS

1 in 50
missing
adults



RELATIONSHIP BREAKDOWN

3 in 10 missing adults



HOW WE WORK

We support missing children and adults through our Helpline and online chat service.



.....

In 2021-22 we aim to support between 4,000 and 6,000 children and adults.

We support families of missing people, offering expert practical and emotional help and a range of ways to help to find their missing loved one.



.....

In 2021-22, we aim to help 750 - 1,250 families through our family support and publicity services.

We deliver innovative projects providing in-depth support.



.....

These include a specialist counselling for families, an intensive support service for children who have been missing several times, and a national support and advocacy service for young victims of exploitation and their families. In 2021-22, we aim to help up to 170 people affected by missing through these projects

We are growing our online resources and support options, to help more people access the information and help they need.



.....

In 2021-22, we aim for up to 35,000 people accessing our online support resources, 120 people accessing our online family forum and also plan to offer more than 60 online support group sessions for families.

We amplify the voices of people with lived experience to achieve change.



.....

In 2021-22, we will set up advisory groups of adults and children with experience of being missing, to guide our work, alongside our family advisory group. We also aim to share expertise from our work with missing people and families with at least 700 professionals through conferences, forums, consultancy projects and our research and consultation reports.

We ensure that people who need our support know how we can help.



.....

In 2021-22, we aim to send 30,000 TextSafe messages to inform missing people about our support, at the moment they need it most.



CASE STUDY

Lori* called Missing People when her friend Martin* went missing. Martin lives with dementia and disappeared one evening – fortunately he was found the next day.

“ It was incredible to be able to call you and have this kind and gentle response, to hold our hand through the process and also to apply pressure to the right people to help escalate the situation. We are the lucky ones tonight - with the rain pouring down and having the relief that our missing person is in safe hands. Martin was found several miles from home, [lives with] dementia and is now in hospital - thanks to your help and interventions. ”



CASE STUDY

Jay* contacted Missing People after he had left home with plans to take his own life. A recent relationship breakdown, combined with pressures of managing his mental health while in lockdown and feeling isolated from his family was proving too much. Over several hours, the Helpline team were able to support Jay to the point where he was comfortable and confident enough to ask us to pass messages on to two friends, as well as a message to the police. We were also able to pass messages back to Jay and highlight that he had people in his life that loved and cared about him so much. That evening, Jay decided to make his way to an assessment centre for treatment. Jay told us that he then planned to return home.

OUR STRATEGY IN A NUTSHELL

AIM 1

TO PROVIDE HELP, HOPE AND A WAY TO RECONNECT FOR MISSING CHILDREN, ADULTS AND FAMILIES

We will embed and continue to develop our new model of support for missing children, missing adults and families offering:

- Our Helpline for missing people and families, open **9am-11pm, 365 days a year**, offering practical and emotional support for people in urgent need via phone, online chat, text and email.
- Our one-to-one support – providing individual, in-depth support via our family support team, specialist commissioned services and counselling service.
- Our services to find missing people safely, and reconnect them with loved ones.
- Our digital support – offering online resources to help people affected by missing at every stage of their journey including resources created by people with lived experience.
- Our support services for young people at risk of missing and exploitation.

AIM 2

TO PUT PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE AT THE HEART OF OUR WORK, AMPLIFYING THEIR VOICES TO ACHIEVE BETTER SUPPORT

- We will develop our understanding of the diverse experiences of missing people and families, and the support they need.
- We will improve the support available to missing people and families, working with them to influence policy and practice.
- We will work to improve the response to missing people with mental health issues.
- We will improve access to support for victims of exploitation and their families, ensuring the support we and other agencies provide is in line with their needs.

AIM 3

BUILD NETWORKS OF SUPPORT FOR AND WITH MISSING CHILDREN, ADULTS AND FAMILIES

- We will build networks of people with lived experience by connecting them to other people who are affected by the issue.
- We will build a team of people who help and volunteer to expand the reach, the response and the diversity of our networks of support.
- We will use digital technology to promote peer to peer connection, and to reach people safely.

HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE OUR PLAN

- We will ensure the charity is sustainable in the long-term.
- We will ensure the charity is a great place to work and volunteer.
- We will build and maintain partnerships to support missing people and families.

OUR VALUES

Let Fly

- Be constructive
- See the potential in others and actively develop it
- View challenge as an opportunity to grow
- Celebrate achievement



Make Things Happen

- Be dedicated and inspiring
- Take generous ownership, let other people in and share your ideas and expertise
- Go the extra mile
- Show passion and energy



Be Human

- Be proud of what we do
- Be more than a job title
- Look out for one another
- Have the courage to question ourselves and others



Be Future-minded

- Be prepared to take risks
- Build relationships for now and for the future
- Think with the bigger picture in mind
- Invest in people, knowledge and our organisation



Be Grounded

- Ground our work in compassion for missing people and their loved ones
- Continue to learn more about missing people and their families
- Tell the story



.....

Missing People
284 Upper Richmond Road West
London
SW14 7JE
020 8392 4590

missingpeople.org.uk



info@missingpeople.org.uk



[/missingpeople.uk](https://www.facebook.com/missingpeople)



[@missingpeople](https://twitter.com/missingpeople)



[@missingpeople.uk](https://www.instagram.com/missingpeople)



.....

Registered office at the above address.
Throughout this report we have used some stock
imagery and changed details of the stories of
missing people and their families to preserve
their anonymity.

A lifeline when someone disappears

missing people

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