



2021/22 IMPACT REPORT

A lifeline when someone disappears

missing people

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

INTRODUCTION

Written with the support of Katrice's sister, Natasha

Over 1 million people are impacted by a disappearance every year. However, for those not affected, it can be a complex issue to understand, while the effects it can have on those left behind are unimaginable.

We asked Natasha, the sibling of a missing person, to share her experience of missing and the charity; to shed some light on this complex issue, the effects it has on families across the UK and why we do the work we do:

"Gosh, where do I begin... who knew that nearly 41 years later I would be sitting here typing this, but here goes...

My name is Natasha Walker, and I am the sibling of someone who is missing. On the 28th of November 1981, my little sister Katrice Lee went missing. It was her second birthday.

I can still hear my dad's words "We can't find Katrice". I was 7 years old. My perfect world ended at that moment right there. Katrice disappeared from the Naafi supermarket in Schloss Neuhaus. The supermarket was not an army base, it was in the middle of a German Town, contrary to some reports. My mum put her down to get a bag of crisps and within 30 seconds she had vanished off the face of the earth, and the nightmare began.

We had no support from anyone, except for the families who were serving with my dad.

I have been in flight and fight mode for all this time. As I am typing this, I am reflecting on the impact this has had on my life. The small things like travelling, walking somewhere on my own, the overthinking



ON THE 28TH OF NOVEMBER 1981, MY LITTLE SISTER KATRICE LEE WENT MISSING.

“ As I am typing this, I am reflecting on the impact this has had on my life. The small things like travelling, walking somewhere on my own, the overthinking of everything ... ”

of everything ... I feel like my life is exhausting, trying to raise awareness for Katrice and keep her profile highlighted in the media. At times I feel like I can live my life, but I can't love my life because Katrice is still missing.

Unfortunately, when Katrice disappeared, Missing People did not exist, but I am going to fast forward to approximately 2001 when I first 'met' the charity Missing People. They are quite literally, as they say, 'a lifeline when someone goes missing.' They are at the end of the phone for you 7 days a week and I have a case worker called Amy since Katrice's case is quite complex. If I phone it means I do not have to go through everything from the start. Amy 'gets me' and understands my thought process. There is never any pressure, and I can choose when I speak to her.

2018 was the best and worst year of my life. I married the love of my life, my rock Mike, and they also dug for Katrice's body in Germany. There were so many emotions; I wanted them to find her there so Katrice would no longer be missing, but then I felt the most incredible sense of guilt for thinking that way. And if they did find her, what would I do with the rest of my life? I had spent most of it looking for her... and that's when the email came in from my case worker, "I am here if you need me, whenever you are ready." My saviour!

Then in 2019, out of the blue, there was a call to say they were digging for Katrice's body in Swindon. My heart stopped... the same emotions as in 2018 but this time I felt I really could not cope with life and was straight on the phone with my caseworker. We had previously discussed counselling in one of our catchups, but I was not ready and thought I had gotten this far through my life and done all right. Except for this time, my brain was shutting down, it was having an impact on my whole life, and I finally admitted I needed help to deal with the guilt and fear I had carried all these years.

As I am writing this, I am crying. The last few years have been incredibly challenging. I have come so far, small steps, but I am getting there. There is a lot to unravel after keeping everything in for so long. I have had my counselling through Missing People and got rid of some of my demons. It has had such a positive impact on my life.

Everyone at Missing People offers outstanding support and, hands on my heart, I do not know what I would do without them in my life. Thank you will never be enough."

We continue to support Natasha and will continue to for as long as she needs it. Our support services are free, confidential, and available for anyone missing a loved one. Whether you're a family member, friend, or co-worker of a missing person, we are here 7 days a week.

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A HUGE THANK YOU TO PLAYERS OF PEOPLE'S POSTCODE LOTTERY



In 2021-22, thanks to the support of players of People Postcode Lottery through Postcode Support Trust, we have directly helped almost 7,500 children, adults, and families affected by a disappearance.

Without this support and generous giving, we could not continue to be a lifeline to people in crisis seven days a week.

We are truly grateful to players of People's Postcode Lottery who have raised over an incredible £8M for the charity to date and continue to support us through these difficult economic times. A key moment that highlighted this important partnership was during our Virtual Evening of Hope 2021, where Lisa Belletty from the Charities Team at People's Postcode Lottery spoke

so passionately about the issue of 'missing'. Even though we could not yet be together in person, it was amazing to come together online to share some carols and remember those who are away from home.

“ Once again, a huge thank you to all players of People's Postcode Lottery for their ongoing support!

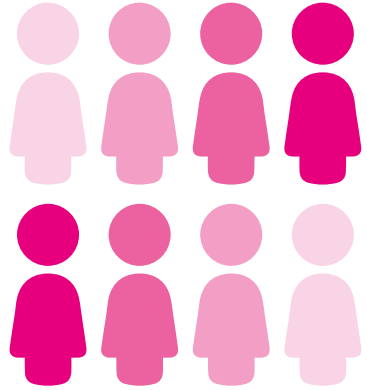
— Jo Youle, OBE, CEO



IN 2021-22 WE HELPED

3,832

**CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE**



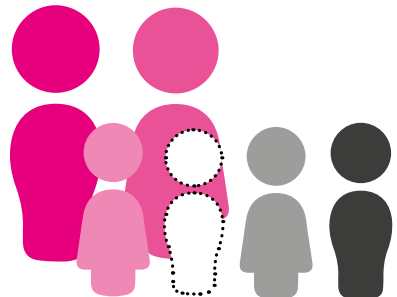
2,102

ADULTS



1,521

FAMILIES



CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

“ Thank you for
helping me to get
to a safe place.

– A child supported by the
Helpline while missing ”

We helped
3,832
children and young people

- ▶ **1,076** were supported by our Helpline (phone, text, and email).
- ▶ **477** were supported via our Online Chat service.
- ▶ **488** children were helped through our *Is This OK?* pilot.
- ▶ **38** children in Hertfordshire received intensive support.
- ▶ **44** young people at risk of or experiencing criminal exploitation were helped through our dedicated SafeCall service.
- ▶ **1,709** children got in touch after receiving a TextSafe® message, offering our support when they were reported missing to the police.



ADULTS

“ *Thank you for making me feel that I’m not alone.* – An adult supported by the Helpline ”

We helped
2,102
adults in crisis

- ▶ **1,248** adults were supported through our Helpline (phone, text or email).
- ▶ **514** were supported through our Online Chat service.
- ▶ **340** adults got in touch after receiving a TextSafe® message, offering our support when they were reported missing to the police.



FAMILIES

“ If it wasn't for your Charity, I simply wouldn't be here today. The support from Family Support and my Family Support Worker got me through some dark days. – A family member supported by our Family Support team ”

We helped

1,521

families with a missing loved one

- ▶ **1,441** families benefitted from our Family Support and Lost Contact services.
- ▶ **80** family members whose young missing person was at risk of criminal exploitation were supported by SafeCall, our exploitation specialist service.



“ I cannot describe to you how grateful I am to you. Thanks to you, my hope for good people and good organisations has returned. I called my aunt, we have spoken! This is not a happy ending but a happy beginning. ”

– A family member whose loved one was found through the Lost Contact Tracing Service



SUPPORTING PROFESSIONALS WORKING WITH MISSING PERSONS

- ▶ We trained over **200** multi-agency professionals on issues related to missing, including communicating with missing children, good practice in delivering Return Home Interviews, and considerations when responding to children missing from care.
- ▶ We created a new e-learning course aimed at upskilling professionals in how best to support children in care who go missing. The content was developed with the voices and views of children who are care experienced.
- ▶ We developed a new training course for police forces called 'person centred responses to missing people'. This training was co-developed with people who have been affected by missing. One delegate said that as a result of attending our training they will now: 'Keep the [missing] person at the heart of everything we do'.



“ Thank you so much for the training. The staff are already talking about their improvement in practice.

– Training attendee feedback



“ Loved the young people’s comments and insights. – Training attendee feedback



OUR HELPLINE



In 2021-2022, our free and confidential Helpline was there for anyone affected by a disappearance: children or adults thinking about going missing, currently away, or having come back from being missing; family members; and the public with sightings or information about a disappearance.

We provide emotional and practical support, listening to what people are experiencing and trying to help people to stay safe.

Many people accessing Helpline support want to talk about what is going on for them with someone who won't judge them and will be able to listen and provide emotional support.

For others, they might want to pass a message home to their families or the police. We can also set up a 3-way call, staying on the phone with someone while we contact their family or someone else who can help them, including social workers or the police.



THE HELPLINE IN NUMBERS

- ▶ **2,324** adults and children were supported after contacting the Helpline in 2021-22.
- ▶ **1,248** adults were helped:
- ▶ Nearly **650** contacted the Helpline by phone.
- ▶ Around **600** contacted the Helpline by email or text.
- ▶ **1,076** children and young people were helped:
- ▶ Nearly **250** contacted the Helpline by phone.
- ▶ **830** contacted the Helpline by email or text.



Missing People is one of a select few Helpline providers assigned a 116 prefix by Ofcom. This recognises our role in helping the well-being of people who are in great difficulty.

This year, as we came out of the Covid restrictions, people have talked to us about the impact this has had on them, including their mental health and experiencing financial pressures.

If you have been affected by a disappearance, contact the Helpline on **116 000** or visit www.missingpeople.org.uk for more information.

MANY PEOPLE ACCESSING HELPLINE SUPPORT WANT TO TALK ABOUT WHAT IS GOING FOR THEM WITH SOMEONE WHO WON'T JUDGE THEM AND WILL BE ABLE TO LISTEN AND PROVIDE EMOTIONAL SUPPORT.

CASE STUDY

Alan* contacted us after being reported missing and having received a call from the Samaritans. He had just spoken with the police to discuss his missing status, and he wanted to talk to Missing People via text. Alan had been reported missing after struggling with a range of things, including his finances, homelessness, a recent relationship breakdown and the impact that was having on how often he saw his children, and, in Alan's words "an unseeing future." Missing People supported Alan during his distress, listening to him without judgement and providing emotional support. Alan wanted to remain anonymous, and we signposted him to organisations he could go to for support with his financial situation and for housing advice.



* Names have been changed to protect confidentiality.



116 000
free • confidential

**A LIFELINE
WHEN
SOMEONE
DISAPPEARS**

ONLINE CHAT



ONLINE CHAT IN NUMBERS

- ▶ **477** children and young people were supported through Online Chat.
- ▶ **514** adults were supported through Online Chat.



Our online chat service is available every day between 2.30pm and 9.30pm for people thinking about running away or currently missing. It is completely confidential and anonymous.

Children, young people and adults can chat online to a specially trained team,

getting emotional support and advice about how to stay safe. We can also support them to pass a message home or contact people who will be able to help them, including homeless services, local authorities, mental health services and the police.



CASE STUDY

Anna* made contact through our Online Chat service for adults to say she planned to leave home but wanted advice on whether she should tell the police so that “they won’t waste time looking for me”. We explained that, since Anna was over 18, she had the right to go missing if she chooses, but also explored with Anna the reasons why she felt like leaving. Anna explained that, as a stay-at-home parent, she was feeling isolated and had been struggling with her mental health over the last few months. She later divulged that she was feeling suicidal and that she felt she needed to leave and take her own life. We spent over an hour supporting Anna, reassuring her and acknowledging how she was feeling. We discussed support and Anna was signposted to other crisis support, including online counselling where she could get a quick appointment. We invited Anna to contact us any time she needs to.

“ I’m feeling much better. Talking to you helped me with my emotions. – A young person using the chat service ”

67%

(169 of 251 giving feedback) said that the chat had helped them

“ Thanks very much for your help, such a wonderful service. Your team is amazing. – A young person using the chat service ”

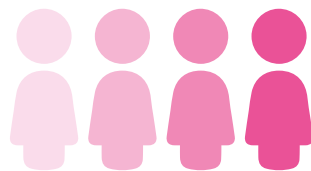
“ Very friendly helpful and supportive. The person [I spoke to] put my mind at ease and gave me some great advice. – An adult using the chat service ”

* Names have been changed to protect confidentiality.



TextSafe® is a way children and adults who are missing can be contacted with an offer of help and support. In partnership

with the police, we send a text message to let the person know they have been reported missing, and that they can contact us if they need any help or to talk to someone.



IN 2021-22:

We sent a record number of TextSafe® messages to:

- ▶ **23,620** missing children and young people.
- ▶ **12,506** missing adults.

Missing People, in partnership with Samaritans, can send out a Suicide Risk TextSafe® message to people who have gone missing in a situation suggesting they may take their own life. The message lets them know that they have been reported missing and that Samaritans will phone them to ensure they are OK and provide any support they need.

- ▶ In 2021-22 we sent **2,258** Suicide Risk TextSafe® messages to people at high risk of suicide



CASE STUDY

Hannah*, a Child TextSafe® recipient, called the Helpline to say she was safe but did not wish to return home. Hannah was distressed and tearful and described her home environment as 'stressful' and her guardians as very controlling. Hannah said she did not want to live there and that, if she is forced to return, she will take her own life. She also said she had discussed this with her social worker previously but felt she was not listened to. Hannah asked for messages to be passed to the police and her cousin, indicating she was safe but wanted some space and wished to stay with her cousin for a few days. We were able to contact the police and it was agreed that Hannah could do that. Hannah's final message to us said: *"You are the only people who have ever listened to me. No one listens. They talk over me and tell me how it's gonna be and I have no say. You really listened to me"*

* Names have been changed to protect confidentiality.

SPOTLIGHT ON SUICIDE RISK TEXTSAFE®

Missing and suicide are inextricably linked and sadly some people who go missing do take their own lives. We developed Suicide Risk TextSafe®, in partnership with Samaritans and the police, to offer support to missing adults thought to be at high risk of suicide.

When any person goes missing, it is important that they know they have options and are empowered to make informed decisions about their next actions. A missing adult who is believed to be suicidal may be experiencing extreme emotional distress, which could be minimised with confidential support from Missing People or Samaritans. Suicide Risk TextSafe® provides a way of proactively reaching out to missing adults via text message and telephone call.

Following a text message about the services of Missing People and Samaritans, the missing person will be telephoned by a Samaritans volunteer and offered emotional support. This lets the missing person know that we care for their safety and want to help and encourage them to get in touch.

Feedback from police forces signed up to Suicide Risk TextSafe®:

“ A great example of partnership work in action to safeguard and support some of the most vulnerable members of our communities. – Phil Shakesheff, West Mercia Police, Supervisor at Harm Assessment Unit North (Shropshire) ”

“ The level of co-operation between the Police, Missing People and The Samaritans is like a beacon that brings me hope for other co-operative work – the Suicide TextSafe® facility is an example of a concept that is simple, but with many moving parts, involving so many real humans along the way to work successfully. – West Midlands Police ”

FAMILY SUPPORT

Family and friends of missing loved ones can get support from Missing People in a range of ways, including:

- Our dedicated Helpline: families can contact us whenever they need support and advice, from emotional support and practical help, to referring to specialist sources of support.
- Family support workers: families with a long-term missing loved one often have a dedicated family support worker who will be able to help them in the longer term.
- We do publicity, including working with families on media opportunities.
- We have an online support community for families and friends of missing people which enables those with a missing loved one to share information to get to know and support each other.
- We have weekly online video meetings facilitated by trained staff and volunteers. This provides a space where families can be supported by their peers, as well as creative and wellbeing sessions like yoga and creative writing.
- Our Family Advisory Group meets around once a month virtually. The group has been involved in co-creating material for the new website, developing guidance materials, and the planning of events including Family Day. They also provide advice and guidance to teams across the charity.



Having a missing loved one is incredibly difficult. Family and friends need to live with the uncertainty of not knowing what has happened to their loved one, and the ambiguity of that loss is often impossible to understand for those who have not experienced it.



► **1,441** families were supported through our family support work in 2021-22.

- The Missing People Choir uses music to build a community of support and connection for families of missing people: to remember those who are away from home and raise awareness of the issue of missing.

“ *The Family Zoom social is a safe place for anyone with a missing loved one or loved friend to share as much or as little as they want, a place where everyone just ‘gets it’, this awful missing situation even though everyone’s experience may be different.* – Feedback about the weekly online social group **”**

“ *My Family Support Worker is an angel, and I don’t know what I would do without them.* – Feedback from a family being supported by the dedicated family support team **”**



ONLINE SOCIAL GROUP

100%

(11 of 11) said that the group has been welcoming

91%

(10 of 11) said that they have been able to share their emotions in the group

91%

(10 of 11) said that the group has been supportive

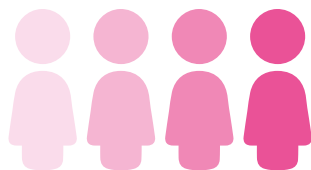
LOST CONTACT

Our Lost Contact Tracing Service, made possible thanks to LexisNexis Risk Solutions, can help people to reconnect with a relative where they have lost touch and there is not an open police missing investigation.

CASE STUDY

Cassie* had not had contact with her dad since she was 14, after her parents' divorce. Her father then lost his job, experienced a mental health crisis, and disappeared from their lives. As an adult, and with children of her own, Cassie realised how much she had missed out on by not having her father in her life, but was unable to find him - so reached out to the Lost Contact service. After 6 months of searching, Missing People was able to find him, living in a care home. He agreed to be put back in contact with Cassie, and we heard from her that they were planning to meet after nearly 2 decades apart. *"I am flying over from France this Saturday to see him after 18 years! I have spoken to him twice now, it feels surreal but so great to know where he is [...] I just know now I am back in his life I can bring him some joy and comfort after all those years alone."*

* Names have been changed to protect confidentiality.



IN 2021-22:

- Of the **174** cases we took on in 2021-22, we successfully traced 40% of the missing people.

Feedback about the Lost Contact service:

- **93%** (19 of 23 surveyed) agreed that Lost Contact 'helped you feel better able to cope with the emotional or practical challenges of having lost touch with a relative'
- **92%** (24 of 26) agreed that Lost Contact 'helped you feel other people cared about your situation'

“Everyone was warm, understanding and incredibly supportive. –

A person who used the Lost Contact service

“We would like to thank you for making the process so simple and for constantly keeping me informed as to the progress you had made in tracing my brother. We wish other families success and hope you have many happy and positive outcomes as we did! – A family member who was reconnected with their loved one via the service

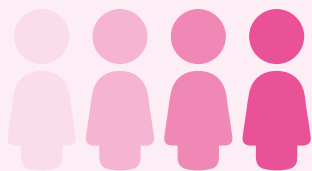
DIGITAL RESOURCES



We want to make sure that everybody who is impacted by a disappearance can find the help and information they need quickly and easily. We offer online resources and support options alongside our Helpline services to reach the most people possible affected by missing.

We provide information about a range of issues for children, young people, and adults who are thinking of going missing, away from home, or recently returned. This includes the options open to them, their rights, ways to stay safe, and how they can access further support.

For families and friends of a missing person, our online guidance includes how to report someone missing, practical advice linked to publicity and working with the media, and key actions to consider in the hours, weeks and, in some cases, months after a disappearance. They can also access peer support via our online support community, which offers a unique space for families and friends of missing people to share advice, support each other, and meet together virtually.

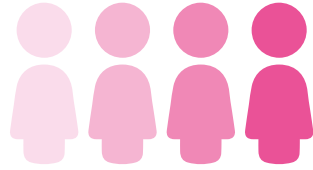


IN 2021-22:

- ▶ Around **31,500** people in the UK accessed our online support resources in a visit to one of our websites, lasting at least one minute:
- ▶ **17,249** families
- ▶ **6,478** missing children and young people
- ▶ **7,735** missing adults



COUNSELLING SERVICE



IN 2021-22:

- Our counsellors supported **12** people affected by missing or criminal exploitation.

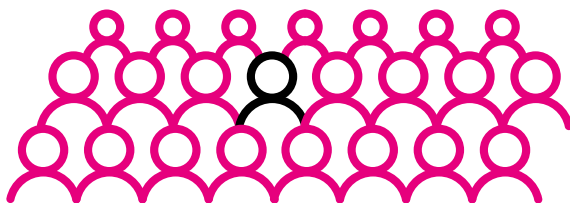
OUR COUNSELLING IS SUITABLE FOR ANYONE AFFECTED BY MISSING, AGED 12+. THE SERVICE IS FREE, CONFIDENTIAL AND DELIVERED BY PHONE OR VIDEOCALL.

We started the service because families of missing people told us that sometimes other counselling providers were not well-equipped to understand the impact of missing and ambiguous loss. Since its beginning, we have expanded the service's remit to support a wider range of people.

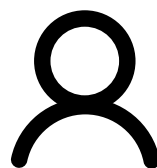
We have been providing counselling to families and young people affected by criminal exploitation since 2020. This year, we evaluated the part of our counselling to those impacted by criminal exploitation and interviewed four family members of exploited young people as part of the process. All four of the family members interviewed said that they would recommend the service to others in a similar situation to them.

**FREE
COUNSELLING
IS HARD TO
FIND AND
WAITING TIMES
ARE USUALLY
VERY LONG**

“ I was mentally stronger [after counselling]. I was in a better head space. I was able to handle what was going on a lot better. – A family member affected by criminal exploitation who received counselling ”



OUR QUALIFIED AND EXPERIENCED COUNSELLORS ARE TRAINED TO UNDERSTAND THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF PEOPLE AFFECTED BY MISSING.



We know that, as well as difficulties sourcing a counsellor who understands missing, free counselling is hard to find and waiting times are usually very long, so our counselling service is much needed, alongside the support offered by our Helpline, Family Support, and specialist child exploitation teams.

Our qualified and experienced counsellors are trained to understand the unique needs of people affected by missing. Counselling sessions give people the opportunity to talk about how they are feeling, and to develop ways of coping with experiences like ambiguous loss, complex grief or criminal exploitation.

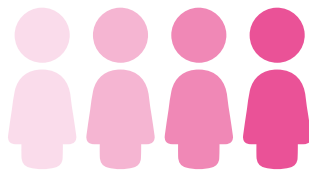
“ I cannot put into words the sadness, anguish and severe pain in my chest. I knew that I needed help. I still experience the sadness and pain, I feel sure that I always will, but [my counsellor] over time taught me to try and live a life alongside all the pain. This I feel sure will be a lifetime skill that will always be with me and always be needed. – An adult affected by missing who received counselling ”

“ The counselling provided by Missing People is invaluable. Having someone listen and appreciate the suffering and trauma did help and will help others in many ways. – An adult affected by missing who received counselling ”

Is This OK?

Following an initial pilot in 2019-20, a second phase of *Is This OK?* went live in May 2021. Phase 2 of the project saw tech development, a brand-new marketing strategy, continued staff development, consultancy with young people, new local authority initiatives, and an expansion of the service into 5 new areas. This meant that, by the end of 2021-22, *Is This OK?* was live in 7 local authority areas.

- ▶ **3,795** children and young people engaged with the *Is This OK?* chatbot between May 2021 and March 2022.
- ▶ **276** young people were also supported by the Missing People and NSPCC Childline teams through an engaged online chat.



IN 2021-22:

REACH OF *IS THIS OK?*:

- ▶ A new digital strategy was launched in August 2021, and led to **13,829,236** impressions across Snapchat and TikTok, and reached **1,167,565** unique individuals on Instagram.
- ▶ The three social media platforms have led to **127,904** swipe ups/ad clicks, generating **156,683** landing page views on the *Is This OK?* website.
- ▶ A video focused on child criminal exploitation was developed for *Is This OK?* and shared on YouTube. Between October 2021 to April 2022 the video has been viewed **20,942** times.

“Thank you so much, you’ve really helped me today. I thought I was going to end it today, but you’ve really helped me see that it isn’t my fault – thank you again.”

– Connie*, aged between 15-18

* Names have been changed to protect confidentiality.



A key factor of *Is This OK?* is that it is completely anonymous and confidential. Young people told us that this was very important to them: 79% gave either 4 or 5 stars when asked 'how important is it that we do not know who you are (anonymous) and that the service doesn't share your conversation with anyone (confidential)' (189 of 240).

IS THIS *OK*?

SafeCall

SafeCall, funded by the Home Office, is a dedicated, confidential, non-judgemental phone support service for young people at risk of or currently experiencing criminal exploitation, including through going missing, and their parents and carers.

People can access support in a number of ways:

- **Emotional support:** people affected by gangs and exploitation can be supported to share what they are experiencing, talking to someone who understands the challenges of the issues and who can provide emotional support.
- **Practical support and advocacy:** navigating the range of challenges that come with exploitation is extremely difficult. SafeCall can provide practical advice about these challenges, as well as advocating for the young person or their families with other professionals involved in their lives.



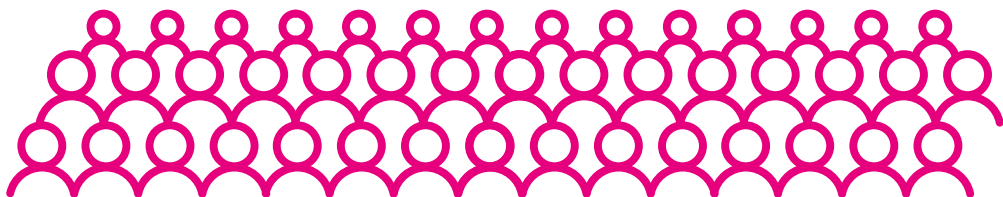
IN 2021-22:

- We directly supported **87** families and young people through SafeCall and took positive actions to help a further **37** people.

“ If it wasn’t for the help received, I would have been in a very deep depression. It helped me to stand up and be alive.

– A parent supported through SafeCall

“ I know I can talk to you about anything and you will give me the best advice. – A young person supported through SafeCall



“ It’s a safe space to share and connect with others about similar feelings and experiences. – A parent who attended the Safe and Social group ”

- ▶ **100%** (17 of 17 who provided feedback on the service) said that SafeCall ‘helped me feel listened to’ and ‘helped me feel supported with my emotions’.
- ▶ **94%** (17 of 18) said that SafeCall met all or some of their needs.
- ▶ **86%** (18 of 21) said that they would definitely recommend SafeCall, with a further 14% (3 of 21) saying maybe/it depends.

- ▶ We also provide a monthly online ‘Safe and Social’ support group, bringing families together for peer support.
- ▶ **100%** (16 of 16 who provided feedback) would recommend the Safe and Social group to a person affected by exploitation.

CASE STUDY

SafeCall contacted **Tyler*** after supporting his mum who was worried she could no longer keep him safe at home. Tyler, who was being exploited, was at risk of exclusion and awaiting a court date for being caught carrying drugs and a weapon. Tyler had lots of professionals involved in his life and at first was reluctant to engage with SafeCall. We continued to check in with Tyler by text, and after a few weeks he engaged and agreed for us to call him. SafeCall provided a non-judgemental confidential space for him to talk about everything that was going on at home, school and with his involvement in County Lines. We also spoke to his school to advocate for alternatives to exclusion.

* Names have been changed to protect confidentiality.

INTENSIVE SUPPORT AND RETURN HOME INTERVIEW SERVICE

Missing People is commissioned by Hertfordshire County Council to support the most vulnerable young people at risk of going missing, and those that return, via one-to-one intensive support with a dedicated worker, including support sessions and return home interviews.

The young people are helped with what is happening in their lives, including emotional support, advocacy, and working on coping strategies and how to stay safe. Our team also works together with parents, carers and other professionals involved in the young people's lives to make sure they are safe and supported.

“ I liked being listened to by someone who took my thoughts and feelings seriously. – A young person receiving intensive support ”



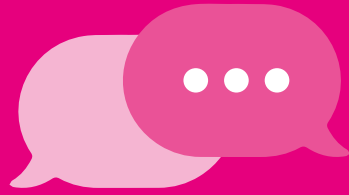
IN 2021-22:

- ▶ **38** young people in Hertfordshire were supported through intensive one-to-one support or through a return home interview.
- ▶ We completed **240** one-to-one sessions with the young people as well as **59** return home interviews.
- ▶ **77%** of the young people we supported had a reduction in missing episodes in the six months after one-to-one support ended, including **two in five** who did not go missing at all.



**THE YOUNG PEOPLE
ARE HELPED WITH
WHAT IS HAPPENING
IN THEIR LIVES.**

“ I was able to be myself and could talk about my problems without it being difficult. – A young person receiving intensive support ”



100%

(9 of 9 young people who provided feedback) said the one-to-one support they received was very or fairly helpful

100%

(9 of 9) said it 'helped you to feel better about yourself and your situation'; 'gave you ideas about how to cope if things are difficult or stressful in the future'; and 'gave you information about where you can go for any advice and support for any problems.'

CASE STUDY

Naomi* was referred to the service due to missing episodes, arguments with her mum, and disciplinary action at school. She was supported via Return Home Interviews and one-to-one sessions, all completed by her designated worker. By the end of support, Naomi was no longer going missing, and her school reported an improvement in her behaviour and engagement with lessons. Her relationship with her mum also improved and Naomi says she now feels able to talk calmly to her mum about things that are bothering her and understands that the boundaries in place are there for her safety. As the missing episodes stopped, the family don't need as much involvement with their social worker.



* Names have been changed to protect confidentiality.

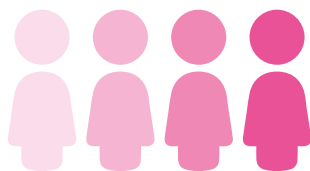
SEARCHING FOR MISSING PEOPLE



Missing People has a range of ways to alert communities, and the missing person themselves, when someone goes

missing. We can make public appeals for people reported missing to the police on our website, social media, and across a network of businesses, media and advertising partners. We also engage people and agencies who may be working with people reported missing, such as homeless shelters, to ask if they have seen them via our Safeguarding Briefing Network (SBN).

In November 2021, we changed how we do publicity at Missing People. This decision was linked to feedback from missing adults who have told us that a public appeal can negatively affect their mental health, their relationships with family and friends, and their future prospects - because of the digital footprint a publicity appeal can leave.



IN 2021-22:

- ▶ **468** children and young people we searched for were found safe and well.
- ▶ **591** adults we searched for were found safe and well.

However, there are steps we can take to help find missing people using non-public appeals: when someone has been missing for between 48 hours and 7 days, we can send appeals non-publicly within our Poster Partner and Safeguarding Briefing Network. If someone is missing for more than 7 days, we can share their appeal publicly, including on social media and on digital boards.

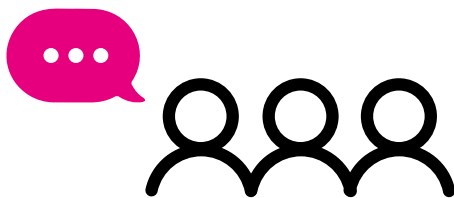
If there is reason to believe that the missing person is in real and immediate danger or that they cannot keep themselves safe, then we can send out a public-facing 'Urgent Missing Appeal'. This can be done at any time, including within the first 48 hours of their missing episode.

“ Thank you, I don't know what we would do without your help.

– Feedback from a mother on our publicity appeal for her son



FEEDBACK ON THE SAFEGUARDING BRIEFING NETWORK



95%

of our safeguarding briefing partners told us that what we are asking them to do on the briefing is clear (40 of 42).

“ Being an open door service for rough sleepers, it is important that staff are aware of any known missing people in the area. We operate 12 hours a day, every day of the year, so it is really important information for us. – Feedback from a SBN member

Of the 42 people who gave us feedback about the SBN,

10%

(4 people) had identified at least one missing person as a result of the briefing.

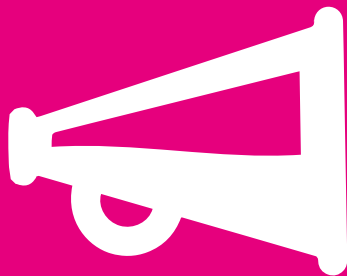
“ I spoke to [the missing person] about it and showed him the poster. He was interested and asked for a copy. He was pleased to know that people cared about him. – Feedback from a SBN partner who identified a missing person

- ▶ We also received feedback from the investigating officer of an adult missing person case that the information shared via the Safeguarding Briefing Network assisted in the safe return of the missing person:

“ Many thanks for all the assistance by Missing People, we had a few positive sightings following your help. – Feedback from a police officer

WHAT WE DO

POLICY AND CAMPAIGNS



OUR POLICY AND CAMPAIGNS TEAM ADVOCATES FOR BETTER SUPPORT FOR THOSE AFFECTED BY MISSING, WORKING WITH PARLIAMENTARIANS, POLICY MAKERS, THE POLICE AND OTHER PROFESSIONALS TO AFFECT STRATEGIC AND PRACTICAL CHANGE IN THE RESPONSE TO MISSING PEOPLE.



In April 2021, we published *“Don’t make me feel guilty or punish me, going missing might be how I cope when I can’t ask for help: Children’s views on being*

reported missing from care”. The report was based on consultation with care-experienced young people who had been missing and set out their views on how carers, social workers and the police should respond when a looked after child goes missing. The Alex Timpson Foundation provided further funding for us to develop online training for carers and residential home staff on their response when children go missing.

We continued to promote implementation of “The multi-agency response for adults missing from health and care settings – A national framework for England” this year, and in August, the framework received official endorsement from the Home Office.



In January 2021, we published *“What we know so far – Experiences of racial discrimination against missing people and their families”*.

This followed consultation with people of colour who have had a loved one go missing and experienced discrimination in the response from the police and the media. We also worked with police forces to scrutinise their response to missing people from Black and other ethnic minority communities. This has led to at least two forces carrying out deep-dive research projects looking at potential discrimination in their areas. This area of work continues to be a priority, with further research planned.

RESEARCH AND CONSULTATION



IN 2021-22:

MISSING PEOPLE'S RESEARCH TEAM CONDUCTS ORIGINAL RESEARCH TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE EXPERIENCES OF THOSE AFFECTED BY MISSING.

We completed **3** research projects, all of which were published in spring 2022:

"My world was falling apart": the nature and scale of harm experienced by missing adults in the UK. This research focuses on the experiences of missing adults, including why they go missing, the harm experienced while missing, and the impact that being missing has on return.

Key findings from the research include:

- ▶ **3** in **4** adults who have been missing disclosed experiencing harm while away (49 of 64)
- ▶ **40%** of returned missing adults disclosed trying to take their own life (26 of 63)
- ▶ **60%** disclosed experiencing some other form of harm, including being threatened, sexually assaulted or experiencing physical violence while away

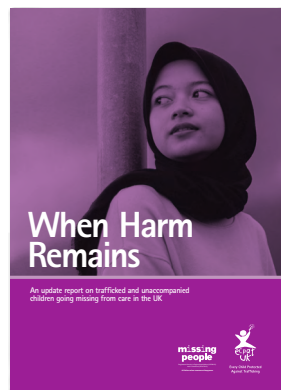
"Away and at risk: the scale of exploited children going missing from care in the UK, 2018 – 2020":

Alongside the charity ECPAT, we conducted research into the scale of exploited looked after children going missing from care, finding that this group of children are amongst those at highest risk of going missing, and going missing repeatedly. This research revealed that, in 2020:

- ▶ Almost half (**48%**) of looked after children who were identified as being exploited were reported missing from care (1,468 of 3,033)
- ▶ Each child who went missing in 2020 went missing an average of **10.6** times

This research was covered in local and national media, including in the Independent and the Evening Standard, and was published on National Exploitation Day to raise awareness of this issue across the country.

“Going missing and being missing are complex situations, and harm is not always reported. It is therefore likely to be an underestimate. It is crucial that agencies work together in a supportive way to prevent future missing episodes and correctly record harm. This report is just the beginning of that journey, but it is a significant beginning. – Tanja Conway-Grim, from the foreword of “My world was falling apart”



When harm remains: an update report on trafficked and unaccompanied children going missing from care in the UK:

Alongside ECPAT UK, we published research showing the scale of trafficked and unaccompanied children going missing from care, finding that:

- ▶ Almost **1 in 3** trafficked children were reported missing from care in 2020
- ▶ **13%** of unaccompanied children went missing from care in 2020

In addition to the more substantial research projects, we have conducted a number of consultations and evidence gathering projects this year, including:

- ▶ A survey with professionals about young people transitioning from under-18 to over-18, and how the response to them going missing changes. We have heard from nearly **100** people in this survey
- ▶ A consultation through which we are seeking to understand people's experiences of reporting someone as missing to the police, and whether any changes to practice are needed. We heard from nearly **150** people during this consultation
- ▶ A consultation aiming to understand the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the related measures on the mental health of missing people and their loved ones. We heard from nearly **150** people during this consultation

CONSULTANCY WORK

MISSING PEOPLE PROVIDES EXPERT CONSULTANCY TO HELP LOCAL PROFESSIONALS TACKLE CHALLENGES WITH RESPONDING TO MISSING ADULTS, CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES.

This includes bespoke multi-agency and training, conferences, multiagency workshops and e-learning packages. We work with police, local authority leads, front-line local authority practitioners, health, education and the voluntary sector.

In 2021-22, our consultancy work included delivering multi-agency user journey mapping workshops and training in Bexley.

As a result of our consultancy, professionals' knowledge and confidence in working with missing children improved and they told us they will now:

- *"Remember the importance of keeping the child/young person at the heart of the discussion."*
- *"Make the Return Home Interview more child focused and make it a positive experience."*
- *"Engage young people in more conversation rather than trying to judge them at the beginning."*

Commissioners in Bexley said:

"The workshop helped local partners working with children and young people to capture the multi-agency response to a variety of scenarios relating to when a child or young person goes missing [...] As a multi-agency team building exercise, highly recommended!" – Tim Woodings, Programme Manager, Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. Safeguarding Partnership for Children and Young People



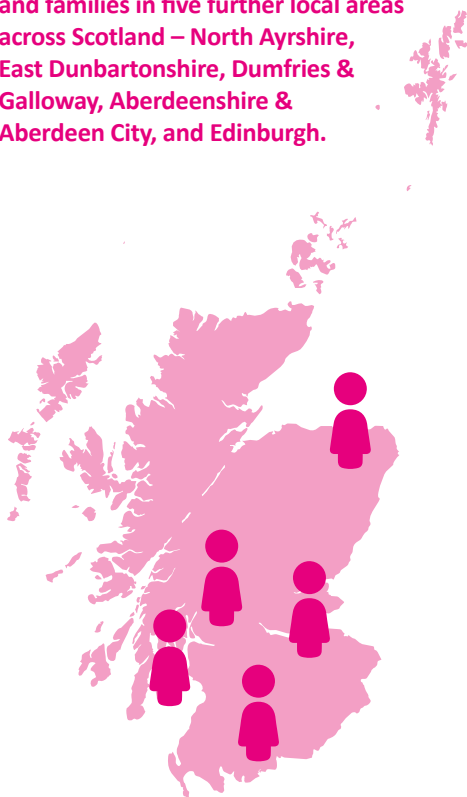
We also worked with a police force on a substantial project reviewing their end-to-end responses to missing adults and children. This project involved reviewing their existing policies, conducting journey mapping workshops, reviewing call logs, prevention interview records, and end-to-end missing records. It also involved

conducting interviews with a range of police officers and multi-agency partners, as well as consulting with people who had been missing in that police force area and their families. We combined all findings into a detailed evaluation report, making key policy and practical recommendations to the police force.



OUR WORK IN SCOTLAND

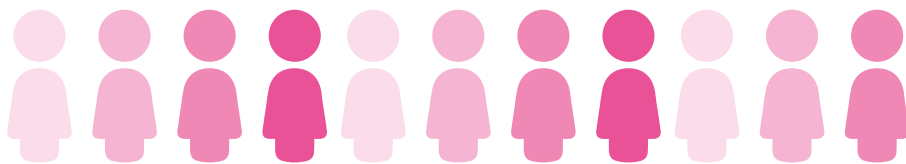
Following work in three areas the previous year, we were funded by the Scottish Government in 2021-22 to support multi-agency professionals who work with missing adults, children and families in five further local areas across Scotland – North Ayrshire, East Dunbartonshire, Dumfries & Galloway, Aberdeenshire & Aberdeen City, and Edinburgh.



Our work ensured that local partnership arrangements and practice continue to reflect The National Missing Persons Framework, and builds upon existing good practice around the response and support delivered to missing people and their families.

Our work has included:

- Mapping and reviewing local policy and protocols for missing adults and children
- Developing bespoke recommendations for the improvement and identification of good practice locally
- Journey Mapping Workshops with professionals to clarify local roles and responsibilities
- Delivering Return Discussion (i.e. Return Home Interviews) training to professionals across Scotland. Nearly 500 training licenses have been used in Scotland so far
- Delivering a national 'Missing and Good Practice' conference in 2021, attended by 128 professionals
- Webinars for professionals to discuss the challenges around missing and mental health. Each webinar was attended by between 40 and 60 professionals



PROFESSIONALS RECEIVING OUR SUPPORT IN 2021-22 HAVE SAID:

“ *Communication was excellent, and any queries were responded to in a timely manner.* – Feedback from professional ”

“ *[The Missing People team was] available, responsive, [and had a] wealth of knowledge and experience.* – Feedback from professional ”

“ *Communication and expectations were defined, pace was set to achieve outcomes.* – Feedback from professional ”

100%

of professionals (6 of 6 giving feedback from across 5 areas) said that the project led to “the identification of areas of work that require support, guidance, and/or training to better support missing persons and their families”.

We have been funded from 2022-23 to deliver support to a further 7 local areas across Scotland, and have an additional National Coordinator for Scotland in post.

IMPACTING COMMUNITIES



CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS



Royal Mail has been a trusted corporate supporter since a child was reported missing

on a postman's round in 2014. The idea to send images of high-risk missing people to postmen and women on their handheld digital devices was devised by one of their employees as a result. Since the partnership started in 2014, over 247 alerts for missing people have been issued to Royal Mail's hand-held PDA Network, 188 of which have been found safe and well.

Last year, with support from Royal Mail, we ran our 'Home for Christmas' campaign. As part of the campaign, they matched public donations of up to £10,000. To further support the campaign, Royal Mail also:

- Ran a 12-hour social media takeover, allowing Missing People to take over their Instagram and Facebook pages with access to over 57.5k followers. This raised awareness around the issue of missing people, what Missing People does as a charity and to celebrate our partnership.
- Raised £2,600 from their annual Christmas stamp enlargement auction.

CHALLENGE EVENTS

In 2021, Missing People launched its inaugural **90-90-90 Virtual Challenge**, to help build more awareness for the charity and share stories about families affected by missing. It gave participants the opportunity to get involved in a challenge on their own terms at a time when Covid was still having an impact on people's lives, but still allowing people to support a cause close to their heart.

The concept was focused on 3 key areas, initially focused on raising awareness that **'a person is reported missing every 90 seconds in the UK'**. From this important message, we encouraged people to take on a challenge involving the number 90, and to then go on and fundraise £90, which would help pay for a publicity campaign for a missing loved one. Therefore, each person that took part could have a direct impact on trying to find somebody that had gone missing.

The event had 28 participants across a variety of backgrounds all across the UK, including families affected by missing, Major Donors, children and animals, as well as new supporters and even colleagues – including those in our Services and Fundraising teams. It generated **£14,000**, which has helped to support the funding for **155 publicity campaigns** for missing people.

CAMPAIGNS

**ENGINE[™]
CREATIVE**

OO
OCEAN

Every year for the charity, Missing Children's Day on the 25th May is a chance to raise the profile of the issues around missing children. This year we partnered with creative agency **ENGINE Creative** and **Ocean Outdoor** to raise awareness of the issue across prime locations in London, Birmingham, Manchester and Scotland. Digital billboards displayed stories of missing children, before revealing the number of children who go missing every day within that region. Each story was based on a missing child, such as Andrew Gosden, who disappeared in 2007 when he was only 14 years old. The campaign was supported by a week of social media posts across all our channels with a focus on children.

missing people **HOME FOR CHRISTMAS APPEAL**



VOLUNTEERS

VOLUNTEERS SUPPORT PEOPLE THROUGH THE HELPLINE, AND ARE CENTRAL TO SHARING PUBLICITY APPEALS AND MAKING SURE EVENTS TAKE PLACE.

Volunteers make a real difference to people who have gone missing: by devoting their time, assisting with events and offering support and expertise. Volunteers of all ages, experiences and interests work across the organisation and play a central role in embodying the charity's vision.

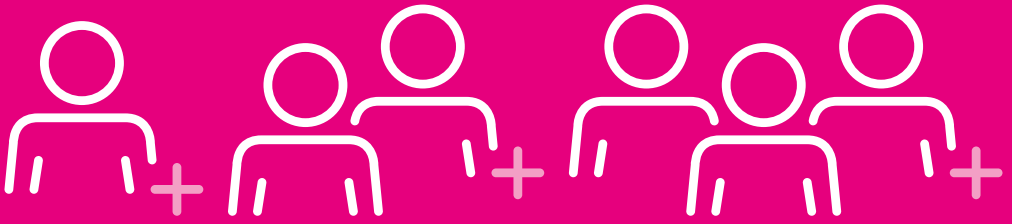
Due to the pandemic and stay at home order, most volunteering was paused in 2020 to ensure the safety of our volunteers and staff. This led us to adapt volunteer roles to be carried out from home so that volunteers could continue to support us with vital work for the charity. This included training our established Helpline Volunteers to provide vulnerable young people and adults support via our Online Chat service.

Building on the success of our remote volunteering programme, we have recruited new Online Chat volunteers who are based remotely across the UK to continue this amazing method of support and to raise awareness of the work we do. We have also recruited 5 remote volunteers across the Fundraising and Communications department as well as signing up over 100 volunteers in a one-off role to support us at the band G4's

Christmas Tour, collecting donations on our behalf at 25 venues across the UK.

Over the last year, we have re-introduced a number of our volunteers back into our office to work alongside our teams on the Helpline, Search Support, Publicity and Lost Contact. This year across the charity, 30 volunteers spent just over 514 hours volunteering with Missing People, with another one-off 100 volunteers dedicating numerous more hours to ensure that we're able to continue providing a lifeline to those affected by missing.

Next year, we will continue to reintroduce volunteers back to front-line services roles in our office as well as carrying out an ongoing review and development of our volunteer roles remotely and in the office. We are planning another recruitment drive for Online Chat Volunteers in the coming months as well as looking into the development of other volunteer roles across the charity. We will also be recruiting volunteers to support us again at G4's upcoming Christmas Tour in 2022. A massive thank you to G4 for allowing us this amazing opportunity that will widen the awareness of the charity's work and help us support more people affected by missing.



We have recruited

5

volunteers across
the Fundraising and
Communications
department.



We signed up over

100

volunteers in a one-
off role to support
us at the band G4's
Christmas Tour



This year across the charity

30

volunteers spent just over

514

hours volunteering
with Missing People.

OUR CHALLENGES

1. INTRODUCING OUR NEW MODEL OF SUPPORT

At the start of this year, we introduced our new model of support for missing people and their families. The new model was based on engagement with people with lived experience about the support they valued and needed the most, a review of our service demand data, balanced with the limitations of our resources and capacity.

Children and adults who had previously been missing told us that public appeals to find them can sometimes make it harder for them to return. They shared that appeals can leave a long-lasting digital footprint, and make their private lives feel very public. As most missing people return or are found in the first few days, we now start our search for many missing people in less intrusive ways. In partnership with the police, we send a TextSafe message to the phone of people reported missing, letting them know we can help them. And we can discreetly notify professionals in our growing national network of 1,400 safeguarding partners, like train companies, outreach and support services that missing people are likely to access. We continue to use public appeals when someone remains missing and, more

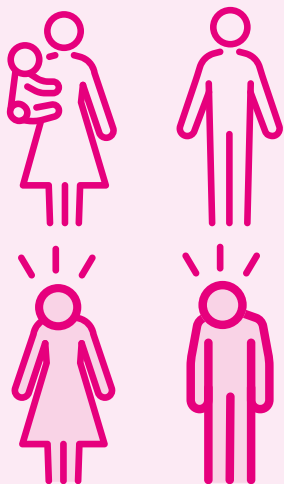
immediately, for those whose lives are believed to be in immediate danger.

As predicted, our new model has led to an initial drop in the overall numbers of people we publicised in 2021-22. This new model is agile and enables services to grow and develop in line with people's changing needs.

Another aspect of our new model of support was changing our Helpline's opening hours from 24 hours a day, to 9am to 11pm, 7 days a week. This change ensures we are there at the times that most people reach out for help, and when most safeguarding work is needed, whilst ensuring our front-line services are sustainable. We continue to monitor the impact of this change and outside of the Helpline's operating hours, we are focused on ensuring that information and advice is available 24/7 on our website.

2. MENTAL HEALTH AND MISSING

We are very concerned about the increasing number of young people and adults contacting us in mental health crisis, feeling they have no option but to try to disappear. We have seen the number of people dying while missing increase year on year



for the past three years, with suicide the most common cause. Our recent research showed that 4 in 10 missing adults tried to take their own life while missing. We know that the long-term impacts of the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis are continuing to have a huge impact on children and adults' mental health.

Within the current capacity of the organisation, we are not able to support everyone who needs our help. We estimate that, each month, around 100 contacts from children, adults and families seeking support currently go unanswered. Put simply, we urgently need additional funding and donations to do more, to ensure that everyone who needs our help is able to access it, in ways that meet their needs.

At the same time, our role as a campaigning organisation has never been more needed. We know that many missing people, especially adults, will receive no support on return to help them to deal

with whatever caused them to go missing in the first place, or with any trauma they faced while missing. Many people will go missing more than once, with their downward spiral continuing. We are therefore prioritising work to reduce the harm linked to repeat missing.

3. DISCRIMINATION AND MISSING

Our research from this year has shown that families of missing people may experience discrimination when they report a loved one as missing, and we are working with police forces and other agencies to respond to this. We also know that we need to do more as a charity to understand why Black people are over-represented in the missing statistics, and to work towards becoming an anti-racist organisation ourselves.

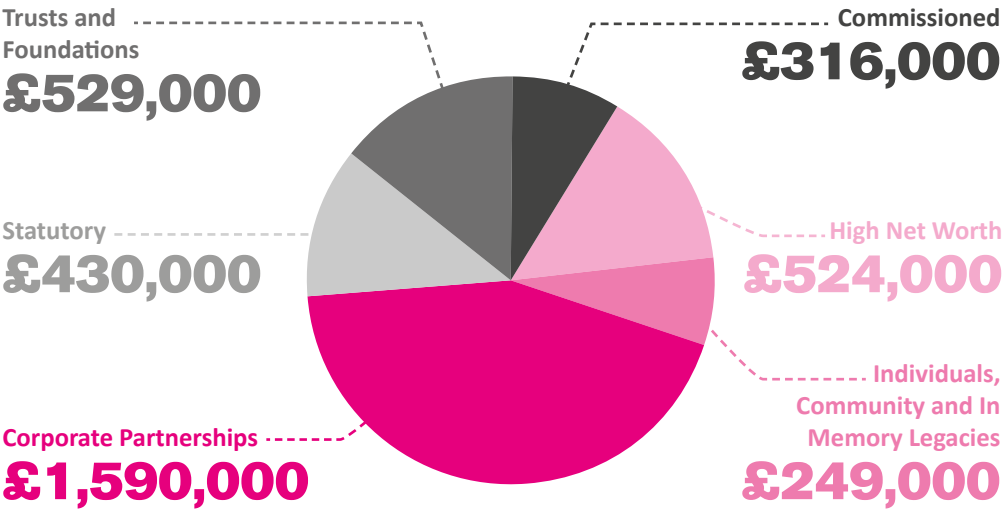
FINANCIAL INFO AND EXPENDITURE

INCOME DETAIL

Missing People raised £3.6m in 2021-22. We achieved a surplus of £488,000 which will be invested in the charity’s activities in 2022-23. On average, we generate £5 - £6 for every £1 invested in fundraising. We continue to make long term investment in sustainable and diverse income sources. Missing People is a paying member of the Fundraising Regulator and raises funds in accordance with our Ethical Policy and

Fundraising Promise. We have guidelines in place to ensure we take extra care with supporters who may be vulnerable. This year, we were delighted to welcome significant new supporters and several new major donors. They joined long-term supporters, including players of People’s Postcode Lottery. We couldn’t continue to be a lifeline without their help.

Income: £3.6m

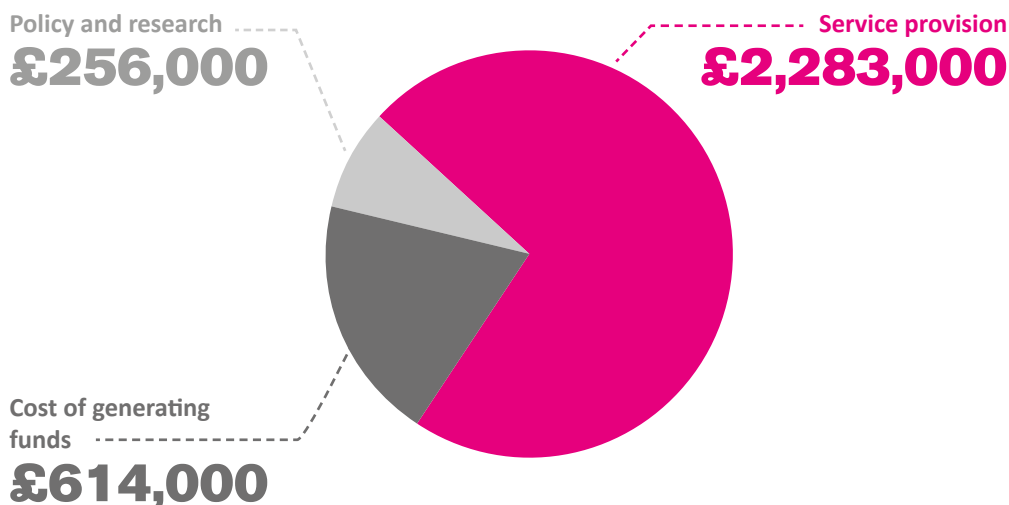


EXPENDITURE DETAIL

Our total expenditure showed a decrease of 2 per cent on 2020-21, as a result of a cautious budget set during the Covid pandemic. We are grateful to our volunteers and our pro bono supporters who have again contributed significantly to the charity's activities. We would also like to thank the out-of-home media owners and many other print and digital partners for advertising space, and Kapow for free text (SMS) messages. We are so grateful to the charity's solicitors, Clifford Chance, for their ongoing services provided on a pro bono basis, as well as office space provided by Waitrose.

Our free reserves policy is to hold no less than three and no more than six months' current operating costs. This is to safeguard against fluctuations that may arise in funding, and to maximise the amount available for Missing People's charitable activities in the current economic climate. At the end of the year, the level of free reserves was £1.8 million, which is six months' worth of current operating costs.

Expenditure: £3.15m



THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS FOR BEING A LIFELINE:

Trustees

Justin McLaren
(Chair)
Jane Harwood
(Vice-Chair)
Paul Boughton
(Treasurer)
Caryl Agard OBE
Radha Chakraborty
Rachel Eyre
Sarah Godwin
Andy McKay MBE
Sam Waterfall

Luminaries

Paul & Selina Burdell
Richard Burston
Phil Hodgkinson
Nic Humphries/Hg Capital
Richard Lockwood
Stephen & Mandy Winyard
Richard & Anna Youle

Leading Lights

Kate Adams & Ruth Berry
Adrok Ltd
Paul Boughton
Katja Butler
Richard Davies
Monica Dolan
John Drury
Richard Ewbank
Henry Gardener
Jane Harwood
Karen Horton-Palmstrom
Rose Leigh
Poppy Ludwig
Clive Marshall
Justin McLaren
Farina Melwani
Tom Murray
William & Catherine Norris
Gavin Rankin
John Reiss
Jason Richards/Hg Capital
Charles Roast
John & Caroline Shelford
Melanie Steele

Peter & Jane Thorne
Oliver Watson
Richard Wheeler
Tom & Polly Willett
Matthew & Clare Wood
David & Barbara Woods

Fundraising Board

Mark Pumfrey (Chair)
Sir Trevor McDonald OBE
(Honorary Member)
Alex Bigg
Selina Burdell
Katy Christopher
(Volunteer General Secretary)
Emma-Jane Fowler
Giles Johnson
Poppy Ludwig
Gavin Rankin
Jason Richards
Charles Roast
Martyn Ward
Sam Waterfall
Oliver Watson
Tom Willett

Thank you

Enterprise Board

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Karen Horton-Palmstrom
(Co-Chair)
Katy Christopher
(Volunteer General Secretary)
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Emma Cullingford
Rebecca de Rome
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W Communications
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**And thank you to our many other donors,
we couldn't do it without you!**

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SW14 7JE
020 8392 4590

missingpeople.org.uk



info@missingpeople.org.uk



/missingpeople.uk



@missingpeople



@missingpeople.uk



.....

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)