



2022/23 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 Luke Durbin's mother, Nicki.

**LUKE DURBIN
WAS 19 YEARS
OLD WHEN
HE WENT
MISSING,
FOLLOWING
A NIGHT OUT
IN IPSWICH,
ON 12 MAY
2006**



Right now, there are over 5,000 people in the UK who have been missing for over a year. Missing can be a matter of life and death, with over 1,000 people dying while missing in 2021-22.

Long-term missing cases present a unique challenge for families. The heartbreak of losing a loved one is coupled with uncertainty and feelings of helplessness. We know that, in the UK, there are over 320,000 missing incidents each year, meaning someone will be reported missing every 90 seconds. Many missing people are some of the most vulnerable members of society. Children make up over half of missing incidents, four in ten people diagnosed with dementia will go missing at some stage, and up to 80% of adults who go missing have expressed mental health issues. These statistics present a devastating reality, one which is even more striking when examining the issue of missing on an individual level.

“ My 19-year-old son, Luke, went missing 17 years ago. As a mother of a long-term missing child, all I can do is keep Luke's disappearance out there to try and get new information. I still live in hope that eventually we will receive the information as to where Luke is and what happened on that fateful night. ”

Luke Durbin was 19 years old when he went missing following a night out in Ipswich, on 12 May 2006. He became separated from his friends and decided to find his way back to the house of the friend he was staying with. Unfortunately, Luke didn't make it home, and his mother, Nicki Durbin, has not seen her son since. A teenager when Luke disappeared in 2006, he would now be 36 years old.

"The anguish and despair I felt was unbearable. And sometimes I thought the pain would kill me. Thankfully the charity Missing People has helped me. Their Helpline support have enabled me to learn skills to cope day-to-day. Crucially, the charity also finds and supports missing children and adults and helps them to reconnect with their families."

"With the passing of time, it becomes more difficult to retain media interest as there is no new news and no new photos. Missing People have continued to find creative avenues to keep Luke's face in the public domain." 2023 marks the 30th anniversary of the charity. As the only UK charity dedicated to those affected by missing, we are incredibly proud to have been supporting those who are missing and their loved ones during this time. This past year, we have sought to continue to develop our services, reach more people, and highlight the issue of missing in the public eye. All with the aim to be a lifeline to people like Nicki and her family, we remain open for free, confidential support 7 days a week. "Missing People assisting me has taken a huge emotional strain off my shoulders. I will forever be grateful for all they have done and continue to do for Luke and my family."

MISSING



Luke Durbin

Age at disappearance: **19**

Missing since: **12 May 2006**

Missing from: **Woodbridge, Suffolk**

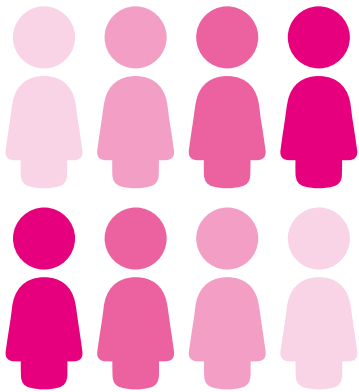
Luke we are here for you whenever you are ready; we can listen, talk you through what help you need, pass a message for you and help you to be safe. Call. Text. Free. Confidential. 116000

Please call or text 11600
9am-11pm Free.
Confidential.

IN 2022-23 WE HELPED

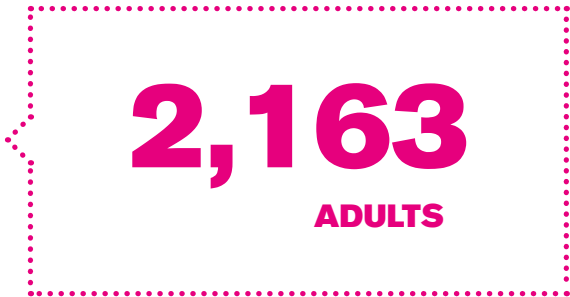
4,626

**CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE**



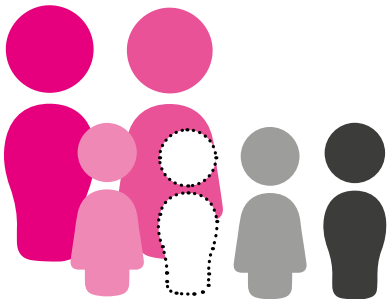
2,163

ADULTS



1,244

FAMILIES



CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

We helped
4,626
children and young people

- ▶ **1,119** were supported by our Helpline (phone, text, and email)
- ▶ **518** were supported via our Online Chat service
- ▶ **891** children were helped through our 'Is This OK?' pilot
- ▶ **42** children in Hertfordshire received intensive support
- ▶ **30** young people at risk of or experiencing criminal exploitation were helped through our dedicated SafeCall service
- ▶ **2,027** children got in touch after receiving a TextSafe® message, offering our support when they were reported missing to the police.

ADULTS

We helped

2,163

adults in crisis

- ▶ **1,269** adults were supported through our Helpline (phone, text or email)
- ▶ **539** were supported through our Online Chat service
- ▶ **355** adults got in touch after receiving a TextSafe® message, offering our support when they were reported missing to the police.



FAMILIES



We helped

1,244

families with a missing loved one

- ▶ **1,164** 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.

“ The charity was always there for me and my family, guiding us in the right direction with care, understanding and great knowledge. – A family member supported by our Family Support team ”

“ People responded to me quickly, were really empathetic and made me feel hopeful. They were really clear in explaining everything to me and made me feel like I wasn't alone. – A family member whose loved one was found through the Lost Contact Tracing Service ”

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



Thanks to the support of players of People Postcode Lottery, in 2022/23 funding from the Postcode Support Trust enabled Missing People to help 8,033 children, adults, and families affected by a disappearance.

The backing of players is helping many vulnerable people through the cost-of-living crisis. People in every community can get the right help, at the right time, when someone is missing. This is so vital as, sadly, people are reaching crisis point and going missing due to financial problems.

Players have now raised a total of over £10 million pounds for the cause. Missing People was thrilled to recognise this incredible support during the charity's 30th Anniversary. David Pullan, a Managing Director at People's Postcode Lottery, accepted the Lifeline Award on behalf of players.

“ Players have been funding our life-saving services for over 10 years. They continue to care for those affected by missing. Our heartfelt thanks go to every player. Your unwavering support has meant that we can continue to help those in need, every day, providing help, hope and a safe way to reconnect.

– Jo Youle, OBE, CEO



SUPPORTING PROFESSIONALS WORKING WITH MISSING PERSONS

“ The passion shown by the presenters and other staff members is intoxicating and good to see, it is contagious. –

Police delegate after attending Missing People training

”

We shared our expertise with over

1,000

multi-agency professionals on issues related to missing

We delivered a wide range of training, conferences, workshops and e-learning to local authority staff, police forces and third sector agencies.

Topics included:

- ▶ Supporting children missing from care
- ▶ Return Home Interviews/ Return Discussions
- ▶ Transitional safeguarding (support for young people approaching the age of 18)
- ▶ Person-centred responses to missing children and adults
- ▶ Missing adults, mental health and harm.



OUR HELPLINE

In 2022-23, our accredited Helpline was there, for free and in confidence for anyone affected by a disappearance: children or adults thinking about going missing, currently away, or those who have 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.

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

If you have been affected by



a disappearance, contact the Helpline on **116 000** or visit **www.missingpeople.org.uk** for more information.



THE HELPLINE IN NUMBERS

- ▶ **2,388** adults and children were supported after contacting the Helpline in 2022-23
- ▶ **1,269** adults were helped:
- ▶ Over **600** contacted the Helpline by phone
- ▶ Over **660** contacted the Helpline by email or text
- ▶ **1,119** children and young people were helped
- ▶ Nearly **250** contacted the Helpline by phone
- ▶ Nearly **900** contacted the Helpline by email or text.



“ You are working on Xmas day - you must be an exceptional person. You might just think you are listening to me, but you might be saving my life.

– A young person using our Helpline

”

CASE STUDY

Ben* contacted the Helpline by SMS. He described feeling suicidal and wanting to disappear because of “a number of things, debt, divorce, job ... I’ve been in a dark place for months ... my brain has turned to mush, all I can think about is either running away or ending it ... can’t seem to snap out of it”

The Helpline team supported Ben by SMS over a period of days. He explained that he finds it difficult to talk and feels like asking for help is an admission of failure. Ben described feelings of hopelessness and admitted he could not see a way out of his situation. He went on to say how much financial difficulties have been a factor, as his finances did not recover after Covid. Missing People explored these feelings and signposted Ben to support services, the charity, CALM and financial advice in his area. The Helpline team continues to support Ben when he makes contact.

* Name and some details have been changed to protect confidentiality.

ONLINE CHAT



ONLINE CHAT IN NUMBERS

- ▶ **518** children and young people were supported through Online Chat
- ▶ **539** adults were supported through Online Chat.

Our 1-2-1 chat service is available every day between 2.30pm and 9.30pm for people thinking about running away or those currently missing. It is completely confidential and anonymous.

Children, young people and adults can chat online with 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

A 16-year-old who was thinking of running away from home wanted a safe place to explore their options and the practicalities of leaving home. Our Chat Supervisor talked through all the information with them, explaining they could leave home at 16 but also highlighting some of the difficulties of living independently while under the age of 18 and without an income. The young person was very much looking for information and the Chat Supervisor respected that and focused on their needs while also offering some emotional support through the chat.

“ Thanks to Laura, I now feel as though I will get support for the situation ahead.

– A young person using the chat service

”

“ Nel was a great person to talk to. I had many questions answered and many unanswered but this is ok because I believe that this service is great. Thank you.

– A young person using the chat service

”

“ Very good and professional. The conversation feels personal and trustworthy and they provide places for you to move on to when you’ve finished the conversation.

– An adult using the chat service

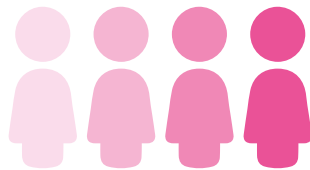
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TEXTSAFE®



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 2022-23:

We sent TextSafe® messages to:

- ▶ **22,879** missing children and young people
- ▶ **12,185** missing adults

Missing People, in partnership with the 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 the Samaritans will phone them to make sure they are OK and to provide the support that they need

- ▶ In 2022-23 we sent **2,960** Suicide Risk TextSafe® messages to people at high risk of suicide.

CASE STUDY

Chris*, contacted Missing People after receiving a TextSafe® message. He had been reported as missing via his mental health team. He had been experiencing an abusive relationship and had gone missing with the intention to take his own life. He received the TextSafe® message when he was at his friend's house and knew that he could not stay there, but also knew that he could not go back to his partner's house. Missing People talked through his options with him and we gave him the contact numbers for CALM and the Men's Advice Line. After a while, we discussed talking to the police, and ultimately he agreed that we could pass on his details to his local police force and ask them to contact him. He thanked us for supporting him, and we were able to contact the relevant police force, who confirmed that they were trying to find him and would make contact with him.



* Name and some details have been changed to protect confidentiality.

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. 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 once a month virtually. The group has been involved in co-creating material for the new website, developing guidance



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.

► **1,164** families were supported through our Family Support work in 2022-23.

materials, and planning events including Family Day. They also provide advice and guidance to teams across the charity.

- 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.
- We have events where families can meet, including the Family Day, a hybrid event where families can meet together in person or online, and the 'Together to Remember' event, where staff and volunteers come together to remember those missing in a Facebook live broadcast.

“ *I think just being in a safe environment with people who understand what you are going through is of enormous benefit.* – Feedback about the weekly online social group **”**

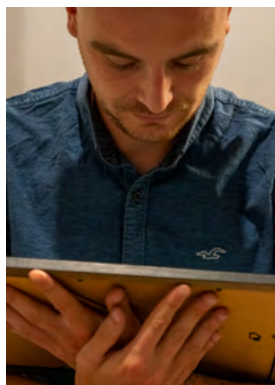
ONLINE SOCIAL GROUP

83%

(**10** of **12**) said that the online support group has been welcoming and supportive

“ *The assistance / understanding etc., that your charity gives cannot really be expressed in words. Thank you for all that you do, and through that, the help it has definitely given me.* – Feedback from a family being supported by the dedicated family support team **”**

FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE



93%

(**52** of **56** of those who gave feedback) said that the support from the charity helped them to feel that others care that their loved one is missing

91%

(**50** of **55**) said that the support helped them to feel that something was or is being done to raise awareness of their missing loved one

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

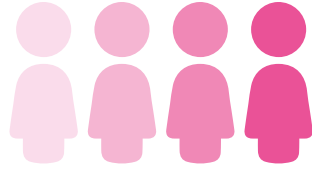
Oliver* contacted us towards the end of 2022. He was a person we had tried to trace 16 years ago, but despite some traces, we had not heard from him and the case had been closed. Oliver explained that, as a veteran with severe PTSD, he had not felt able to respond to those trace letters in 2006.

But now he was in a place where he felt strong enough to rebuild his sibling relationships and wanted nothing more than another chance.

We reached out to Oliver's sister, Maggie*, who was overjoyed to hear from us after all these years. She described herself as overcome, just knowing her little brother was alive after 27 years of no contact. Through this, Oliver was able to reconnect with both sisters and meet his nieces for the first time. He described this life-changing moment as a new beginning for them all.

* Name and some details have been changed to protect confidentiality.

“ So caring and professional and they found the person. What more could anyone ask? ”



IN 2022-23:

- Of the **164** cases we took on in 2022-23, we successfully traced 40% of the missing people.

Feedback about the Lost Contact service:

- **88%** (22 of 25 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'
- **96%** (24 of 25) agreed that Lost Contact 'helped you feel other people cared about your situation'.



DIGITAL RESOURCES

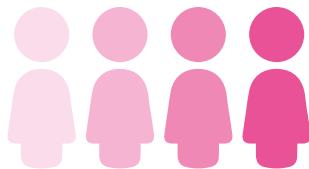


We want to make sure that everybody who is impacted by a disappearance can find the help and information they need quickly and easily. We offer online resources and support options.

Alongside our Helpline services to reach the most people possible affected by missing.

We provide information for children, young people and adults who are thinking of going missing, are away from home, or recently returned, about a range of issues. These include 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 2022-23:

- ▶ Around **33,000** people in the UK accessed our online support resources in a visit to one of our websites lasting at least one minute:
- ▶ **18,679** families
- ▶ **4,828** missing children and young people
- ▶ **8,879** missing adults.

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.

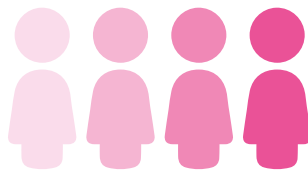
COUNSELLING SERVICE

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

.....

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.

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 criminal exploitation teams.

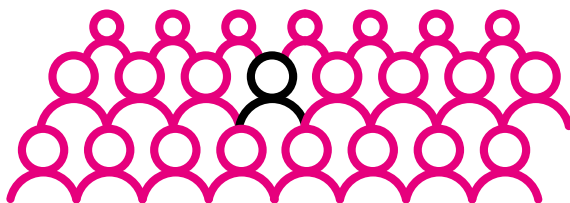


IN 2022-23:

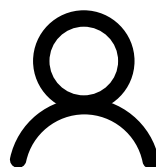
- ▶ Our counsellors supported **29** people affected by missing or criminal exploitation.

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

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.



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



*“ Thanks for the skilled
way in which (my
counsellor) supported me ...
The counselling benefitted
me greatly. ”*

*“ I’m much more
confident with
setting boundaries and
communicating with
(my child experiencing
exploitation) ...
Counselling is a really
meaningful talking
and listening space ”*

*“ The consistency of (the counselling) has been very
important ... Being able to express myself without
judgement has felt really different and valuable for me. ”*

Is This OK?

After a successful second stage of the Is This OK? pilot, the service continued to develop in 2022-23. Funding from London Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) has meant we now have dedicated members of staff that support the Is This OK? project opening hours from 4pm-11pm every day.

- ▶ **485** young people were supported by Missing People through an Is This OK? online chat
- ▶ **406** young people accessed advice on the Is This OK? chatbot
- ▶ **655** young people also accessed advice on the support pages on the dedicated Is This OK? website.

THAT THING YOU
CAN'T TELL ANYONE
ABOUT... YOU CAN ASK
US ANONYMOUSLY.

IS THIS **OK?**



Young people continue to use the service for a range of topics when they are questioning 'Is This OK?' including mental health, sexuality and relationships. The anonymity of the service remains paramount.

We have continued consultation with young people to spread the word about Is This OK? so that young people get the support they need. We delivered a "lunch and learn" for professionals and will continue to do these to spread the word. We are set to begin promotion with outdoor advertising company JCDecaux and in local communities to reach young people when they need us too.

CASE STUDY

Ava*, a 10-year-old girl contacted Is This OK? Ava described being sexually exploited. Ava chatted for nearly an hour with Missing People and we very gently explored what was going on, reassuring Ava, especially about confidentiality. She felt safe enough to describe the horrendous circumstances she was facing. We supported Ava emotionally, and explained her options for support, all the while being ready to take action to safeguard her. Ava did not feel able to disclose to anyone else at the time. Before Ava left the chat, she told us she would come back and chat to us again if she needed to.



* Name and some details have been changed to protect confidentiality.

SafeCall

SafeCall, a service funded by the Home Office, is a dedicated, confidential, non-judgemental and anonymous Helpline and support service for young people at risk of, or currently experiencing criminal exploitation, including through going missing. It also supports their, carers and family members.

The service also provides confidential support and advice for professionals in relation to their work with an exploited young person or family.

SafeCall offers support by providing:

- **Emotional support:** SafeCall provides a safe and non-judgemental space where individuals who have been affected by exploitation can share what they are experiencing, in confidence. SafeCall will never judge someone or tell them what to do; support is all led by the individual and at their pace.
- **Practical support and advocacy:** navigating the range of challenges that come with exploitation is extremely difficult. SafeCall can provide practical advice about these challenges, support with understanding options and next steps planning. This ensures that young people and families have the support and information available to them to keep themselves safe.



IN 2022-23:

- ▶ We supported **110** families and young people through SafeCall
- ▶ We also provide a monthly online 'Safe and Social' support group, bringing families together for peer support.

SafeCall can also advocate for young people or their families, helping them to share their wishes and views and be heard by other professionals involved in their lives.

“ It made me feel like I was not alone. – A parent supported through SafeCall ”

“ I can't praise [the team] enough. It was a very difficult time and it never ever felt time constrained or rushed, they listened to everything. I honestly can't praise them enough. – A parent supported through SafeCall ”

SAFECALL
It's your call.

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.

* Name and some details have been changed to protect confidentiality.

**“ This service can help
save people’s lives.
– A parent supported through
SafeCall ”**

- ▶ **100%** (13 of 13) who provided feedback on the service said that SafeCall ‘helped me feel supported with my emotions’
- ▶ **100%** (13 of 13) 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.

CASE STUDY

Sharon* initially contacted SafeCall via Missing People’s Helpline and received support anonymously. There were concerns about her being made to sell drugs, risks around involvement with an older individual, as well as physical health concerns which were disclosed by Sharon to SafeCall. After some time, Sharon decided to share information with SafeCall about who she is, so that the service could take practical action to support her. With her consent, a safeguarding disclosure was made, which quickly resulted in a strategy meeting being held and a home visit carried out by professionals. SafeCall worked with Sharon and the professionals involved in her care to implement support for both her and her family. SafeCall continues to provide confidential support to Sharon on a regular basis.

INTENSIVE SUPPORT AND RETURN HOME INTERVIEW SERVICE



Missing People is commissioned by Hertfordshire County Council to provide support to young people who are going missing, via one-to-one intensive support with a dedicated worker, including Return Home discussions and tailored support sessions.

Support is young person-led and is offered both face-to-face and virtually, depending on their wishes. Young people are given a safe and non-judgemental space to talk about what is happening in their lives, whilst receiving emotional support, advocacy, information about how to stay safe and coping strategies. 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.



IN 2022-23:

- ▶ **42** young people in Hertfordshire were supported through intensive one-to-one support
- ▶ We completed **298** one-to-one sessions with the young people as well as **62** return home interviews
- ▶ **74%** 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.

“ Could talk without being moaned at. It helped me understand things, and I could ring her if I needed to talk. – 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

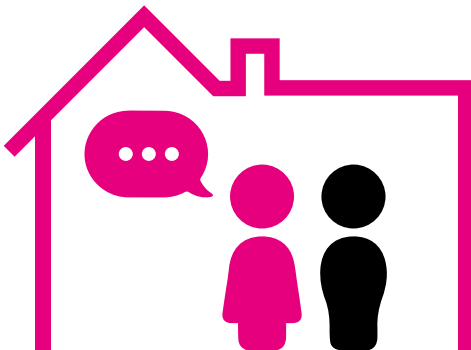
100%

(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

Tia* was referred to the service due to missing episodes, non-attendance at school, concerns about her behaviour in the community and her relationships with older males. She was supported via Return Home discussions and one-to-one sessions, all completed by her designated worker. By the end of support, Tia was no longer going missing and said that she had a better understanding of safe, positive relationships. Tia began attending school and spoke about her aspirations for the future.

* Name and some details have been changed to protect confidentiality.



“ I was able to be myself and could talk about my problems without it being difficult.

– A young person receiving intensive support ”

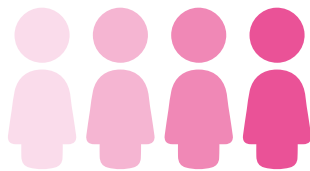
SEARCHING FOR MISSING PEOPLE



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

missing, Missing People has made 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).

“ From the recent information provided by the missing persons’ charity and sightings by members of the public, we have managed to locate Michael safe and well and we have now closed the missing investigation. Can I thank you for your help in this matter. – A police officer in April 2022, following a sighting from our website of someone who went missing in 2018 ”*



IN 2022-23:

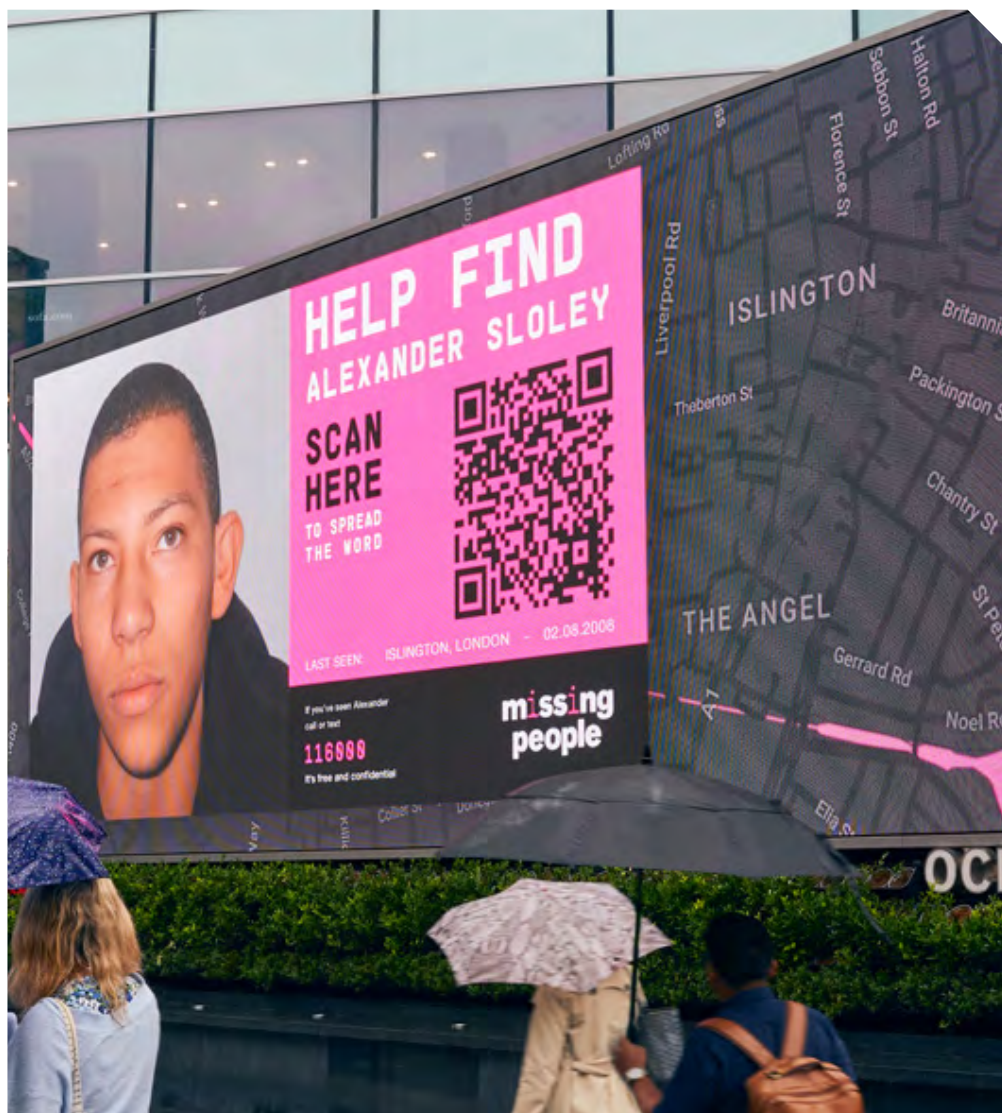
- ▶ **295** children and young people we searched for were found safe and well
- ▶ **570** adults we searched for were found safe and well.

We introduced a new form of publicity last summer, named ‘Digital Search Heroes’: a weekly email including recent missing person appeals and information about our work. The email also includes a long-term missing person in the week of their missing anniversary/birthday, keeping the search alive on behalf of loved ones.

“ I so appreciate all you are doing - it gives me a bit of fresh hope. – A family member whose loved one was featured in a Digital Search Heroes newsletter ”

“ I have checked the Missing Person Investigation for Warren. His family have advised that he is no longer missing. Many thanks for all the assistance by Missing People, we had a few positive sightings for Warren following your help.*

– Feedback from a Police Officer after an appeal was shared via our Safeguarding Briefing Network ”



POLICY AND CAMPAIGNS

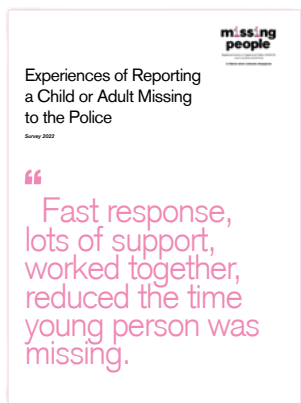


OUR POLICY AND CAMPAIGNS TEAM ADVOCATES FOR BETTER SUPPORT FOR THOSE AFFECTED BY MISSING, WORKING WITH PARLIAMENTARIANS, POLICYMAKERS, THE POLICE AND OTHER PROFESSIONALS TO AFFECT STRATEGIC AND PRACTICAL CHANGE IN THE RESPONSE TO MISSING PEOPLE.



In May 2022, the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and the College of Policing published a draft of the Police Race Action Plan. This document sets out steps towards achieving their vision for 'a police service that is anti-racist and trusted by Black people'. For the first time on a national scale, the response to missing people from Black communities was specifically identified as an area for improvement in police practice.

This followed campaigning from the charity alongside others like Missing Black People and Black Lives Matter UK. We submitted a response to the consultation on the plan and have since worked with the team responsible for its development to try and ensure meaningful changes are implemented. We also joined the Independent Office for Police Conduct's Race Discrimination National Advisory Group.



In July, we published *“Experiences of Reporting a Child or Adult Missing to the Police”*, following a survey of professionals and families of missing people.

This research helped to inform developing practices around how the police respond to missing reports from hotspot locations such as care and health settings.



Over the year, we developed our understanding of transitional safeguarding as part of the response to missing children and young people. There is growing acknowledgement that there are unique challenges for young people between the ages of 16 and 25, including those who are at risk of going missing repeatedly. Support can drop off despite the needs of those young people continuing or even escalating.

In October, alongside the NWG, we published a report exploring what is happening currently for this group and setting out good practice recommendations. This has contributed to developments in practice nationally to implement better support for young adults.

RESEARCH



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

IN 2022-23:

We completed **2** research projects:

"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

The Ethnicity of Missing People



The ethnicity of missing people: findings from police and local authority data, 2021-22

Alongside Listen Up, we conducted research into the ethnicity of missing people. This research revealed that:

- ▶ Black people are over-represented both as missing individuals and missing incidents, and Asian people are under-represented in both missing individuals and missing incident reports

- ▶ Black looked-after children are over-represented in missing reports
- ▶ Missing children from Black or Asian communities are less likely to be recorded as being at risk due to their mental health or being at risk of exploitation than White missing children
- ▶ Black children and adults were the most likely to be missing for over **48** hours and over **7** days
- ▶ Black children are less likely to be found by the police than White children

This research was covered in local and national media, including The Guardian, The Times and The Independent, as well as on Good Morning Britain and LBC Radio. We are already starting to see the impact of this research and will continue to advocate for the implementation of the research recommendations over the coming year.

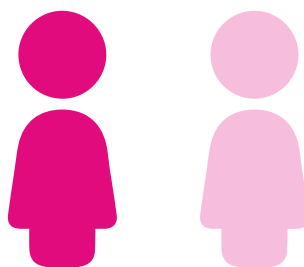
In addition to the more substantial research projects, we have conducted a number of consultations and evidence-gathering projects this year, including:

- ▶ A survey with friends, colleagues and friends of missing people, seeking their views about the support they wanted and needed when their loved one went missing

- ▶ A consultation in Scotland 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 **40** people during this consultation
- ▶ A survey with young people in Wales, exploring their views of, and experience with, the police. We heard from **80** people through this consultation
- ▶ A survey with the public about what they would like to see in an alert system. We heard from **309** people through this survey.

We also began exploring research that will continue into 2023-24:

- ▶ An evidence-gathering project exploring good practice in response to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children going missing
- ▶ A research project exploring the links between autism and missing
- ▶ An evidence-gathering project collating data about fatalities while missing.



CONSULTANCY WORK

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

This year, we particularly enjoyed working across Wales to share our expertise around children in care.

We were funded by Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru (4Cs) to create a new practical toolkit for professionals. Our toolkit and training aim to reduce the criminalisation of care experienced children and young adults in Wales. We partnered with Llamau (a homelessness charity) and Claire Sands (an independent specialist in decriminalisation and youth justice).

We developed the toolkit and resources, consulting with over 60 young people and young adults across Wales who were care experienced. Their ideas and views were represented in the toolkit and training.

We delivered in-person training on the toolkit to over 200 professionals across all regions of Wales. Delegates in Swansea said their favourite part of the training was:

- *"The voices from the young people in the videos. Helped to put things into perspective"*

- *"Listening to the young people's point of view"*
- *"Sharing ideas, skills and thoughts"*

We were funded by Essex Police to design and host a multi-agency conference called 'the right professional at the right time for missing adults and children in Essex'. Professionals made pledges during the event about how they commit to making changes for people affected by missing.

“ Working with Missing People was a great experience. They listened to what we wanted from our conference and worked with us on the content and slides, answering queries quickly and providing solutions. The speakers they arranged were relevant and powerful. –

Jules Bottazzi, Public Protection, Essex Police



“ Improving return interviews and how we think about missing children was a high priority for us. We had 20 staff on the training who have given really positive feedback and I feel confident it’s made them rethink and do things differently. We have a lot of plans now following the training on how we can improve things even more in North Tyneside. I would definitely recommend it as a package, affordable and great service. – Children’s Participation Manager, North Tyneside ”

All of our training is grounded in the experience of people who have been missing, as well as their loved ones. People with lived experience speak at our events to share their experiences with professionals.

“ Hearing the lived experience is difficult to listen to. However, this is where police can learn the most” ”

“ Thank you so much for the training. The staff are already talking about their improvement in practice. – Local Authority delegate ”

OUR WORK IN SCOTLAND

Following work in five areas the previous year, we were funded by the Scottish Government in 2022-23 to support multi-agency professionals who work with missing adults, children and families in seven further local areas across Scotland: Forth Valley, Glasgow City, South Ayrshire, West Lothian, East Lothian, Dundee and Perth & Kinross.

Our work ensured that local partnership arrangements and practices continue to reflect The National Missing Persons Framework and build 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 training to professionals across Scotland. Nearly 657 training licenses have been used in Scotland so far

- Delivering a national 'Missing and Good Practice' conference in February 2023, attended by over 122 professionals
- Delivering 'missing awareness' sessions for Adult Services staff that 60 staff members attended. The sessions focused on raising the issue of missing locally, and good practice on how to respond to, and support, missing persons within a Single Point of Access Service, in line with the National Missing Persons Framework for Scotland
- An online session for professionals across Scotland: to learn about the current trends and issues in missing that had been coming up on our national helpline. We also discussed with colleagues in other areas what is happening locally in terms of issues and good practice in response to missing people
- Launched our online professionals' forum which has over 55 members across Scotland
- Created a short video for Police Scotland that focuses on good practice responses to missing. This video is now available to all of Police Scotland.



PROFESSIONALS RECEIVING OUR SUPPORT IN 2022-23 HAVE SAID:

“ Missing People are often our initial go-to place if we have queries or comments to make around national processes ”

“ There was good communication. They were easy to work with and came back to us quickly on thoughts or questions ”

“ They helped identify gaps. They were then able to support us by using their own expertise or that of others to look at ways that we might fill those gaps. Bringing partners together was very effective and the facilitation of discussions was extremely helpful. Getting all partners on the same page was essential ”

WE HAVE BEEN FUNDED FROM 2023-24 TO DELIVER SUPPORT TO A FURTHER 7 LOCAL AREAS ACROSS SCOTLAND.

IMPACTING COMMUNITIES



CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS



Royal Mail has been a trusted corporate supporter ever 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 275 alerts for missing people have been issued to Royal Mail's hand-held PDA Network, 214 of which have been found safe and well.

To mark our 30th Anniversary, Royal Mail donated £30,000 to Missing People in 2022-23 to support our Helpline services. Alongside this donation, we are delivering training to Royal Mail Customer Services team to help support their vulnerable customers in 2023.

CHALLENGE EVENTS

In 2022, Missing People continued its virtual challenge success with the **90k 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 hearts.

The concept was 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 the challenge of trying to cover 90k across the month of April.

The event had 18 participants from a variety of backgrounds all across the UK, including families affected by missing, Major Donors, colleagues, as well as new supporters. It generated over £3,000, which could help us find 30 missing people in crisis.



CAMPAIGNS

Every year, Missing Children's Day on the 25th May is a chance for the charity to raise the profile of the issues around missing children. This year, we partnered with creative agency, **ENGINE Creative**, and **JCDcaux** to launch the new design of our digital appeals going forward. For this day alone, the images were also brought to life and moved.

This year also saw us launch our Messages of **Hope campaign**, where we asked



people to send families with a missing loved one a message of support and hope.

To celebrate our partnership with **Lowland Rescue** on our **Search Dogs Heroes** project, we worked with creative agency **COW** and celebrity **Tanya Bardsley**, who launched a new perfume 'Chien'. Tanya was a great sport and got behind the perfume launch with a full photo shoot. When it was revealed that the perfume launch was to raise awareness of the Search Dog Heroes project, Tanya was able to tell people all about the importance of storing scents for anyone with Dementia who might be at risk of going missing.

In the summer, Missing People worked with **JCDecaux's The Community Channel** and creative agency, **The Raised Eyebrow Society** on our first-ever prevention campaign. The campaign sought to let people know that you don't need to be away from home yet to get support from our Helpline. 'If you ever feel

like disappearing, find us first'. The appeal has appeared in digital advertising space across the country this year and continues to do so. The Helpline team have seen an uplift in calls coming from people who have seen the posters. Bus service **Stagecoach** also adopted the campaign and even printed our Helpline number across their tickets. South Western Railway has also adopted the campaign, realising that missing people may well be using their networks while away from home.

The Christmas period saw **HRH The Duchess of Gloucester** share her experiences of being our Patron with Good Housekeeping readers. We also had a Radio 4 appeal slot in the week before Christmas, made so poignant thanks to Nicki Durbin, mother of Luke Durbin, presenting the appeal for us. This was all part of a hugely successful Home 4 Christmas campaign.

Call or text **116 000**

**missing
people**

If you ever feel like
running away from home,
find us first.



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 affected by a disappearance by devoting their time to 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 the shift to remote working, most volunteering was paused in 2020-21 to ensure the safety of our volunteers and staff, before welcoming volunteers back in 2021-22 to support the charity remotely. However, we are now in a period of review, looking at re-establishing volunteers back into the charity and looking at the development of our volunteering in the context of hybrid working. We currently have 38 active volunteers with roles across the Helpline, our Lost Contact service, family support,

fundraising, publicity and appeals, research, and our trustees. This year, we also signed up over 175 volunteers in a one-off role to support us at the band G4's Christmas Tour, collecting donations on our behalf at 29 venues across the UK.

Alongside this, we also have:

- A range of ongoing advisory groups, including those with lived experience of missing, and families affected by missing, and fundraising input made up of volunteers
- A large base of community champions, who support us with fundraising, micro-volunteering and regional events such as the G4 Christmas tours
- A community of over 400 people who have signed up to hear about upcoming roles and opportunities.

WE CURRENTLY HAVE 38 ACTIVE VOLUNTEERS WITH ROLES ACROSS THE HELPLINE, OUR LOST CONTACT SERVICE, FAMILY SUPPORT, FUNDRAISING, PUBLICITY AND APPEALS, RESEARCH, AND OUR TRUSTEES.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Sarah A is one of our services volunteers who has volunteered for an amazing 15 years with the charity. She is Helpline trained and initially provided support this way but has now moved over to our family support service. During the pandemic, Sarah took on a crucial role in quickly learning to facilitate online the new family Zoom social provision that was set up for families of missing people during such a challenging time. This enabled her to build relationships with many of the families we support on an ongoing basis, and she now has a caseload of families she supports directly. In the coming year, 'Women & Home' Magazine are featuring Sarah in their article for Volunteers Week 2023, celebrating the outstanding contribution of time and energy she has made to the charity. We are incredibly grateful to Sarah and all our volunteers, and are looking forward to consolidating and growing our volunteer offer further in the coming year.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Ray L, who has volunteered with Missing People for 12 years now, had this to say about his experience volunteering with the charity:

“ I initially volunteered some years ago with the charity, working as an archivist helping to digitise older paper records. I then began working with the Policy and Research team. The work I do mostly involves designing and analysing surveys, extracting information from case records, and doing literature reviews. The work is rewarding and I enjoy it immensely. I especially value the fact that the people on the team I work with are both highly professional and extremely friendly. It is a real pleasure to work with them. ”

OUR CHALLENGES



1. COST OF LIVING

The increasing cost of living has been affecting many people across the UK, and we are seeing that impact at Missing People.

The charity is hearing first-hand that financial issues like not being able to pay bills, unpaid debt, and food insecurity are driving people to think about going missing. The surge in the cost of living is having a significant financial impact on people across the UK, especially in disadvantaged communities. Young people in deprived areas are already at high risk of going missing, often linked to sexual and criminal exploitation.

The charity is deeply concerned about reports that desperate children trying to make money for their families are being coerced by gangs to sell drugs.

Research published by Missing People this year found that 41% of adults were influenced to go missing due to financial problems, with the most common influences being 'I had trouble making ends meet' and 'I had a lot of debt.' We are concerned that this will only get worse in the context of the cost of living crisis.

2. HARM AND FATALITIES WHILE SOMEONE IS MISSING

Going missing is a crisis that can be a matter of life or death.

Up to 8 in 10 adults who go missing are experiencing mental health problems, and 4 in 10 are feeling suicidal. The charity's recent research also found that over 3 in 4 adults experience harm while missing.

For children and young people, the strong links between exploitation, trafficking and going missing mean that a significant number of children will experience sexual and physical violence, threats and significant trauma while missing. Half (48%) of exploited children, and a third (31%) of trafficked children are reported missing from care each year. Concerningly, more than 1 in 10 young people who contact the charity's Helpline are experiencing mental health issues when missing, with 1 in 20 telling us about risks or plans for suicide.

Tragically, the number of people dying while missing is increasing. Based on Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to police forces, an estimated 1,000 people died while missing in 2021-22: the highest ever recorded number of fatalities while missing.



The number of people dying while missing is consistently higher than the number of deaths from homicide.

The need for Missing People to campaign for change has never been more needed. Many missing people, especially adults, will receive no support on their 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, their downward spiral continuing. The charity is therefore prioritising work to reduce the harm linked to people going missing repeatedly. Governments in all four nations must make 'missing' a national priority.

**THE NEED FOR
MISSING PEOPLE
TO CAMPAIGN
FOR CHANGE
HAS NEVER BEEN
MORE NEEDED.**

3. DISCRIMINATION AND INEQUITY OF RESPONSE

Our research this year showed that people from a Black or Asian community are not receiving the same response when reported missing.

Previous research has also shown that families of missing people may experience discrimination when they report a loved missing. Many families feel that the response from police and other agencies is not what they would expect. They highlighted challenges with the police not always recognising risk, a lack of communication during the investigation, and insufficient support from any agency on the missing person's return.

Missing People will continue to focus on addressing the inequality people face when missing or when reporting someone missing. This will include supporting further research into the experiences of Black missing children, continuing to influence the Police Race Action Plan, and supporting local areas to review and address what is happening in their community. Developed with families, the charity will publish a Charter for police to adopt, to help clarify what families and missing people can expect during a missing person's investigation.

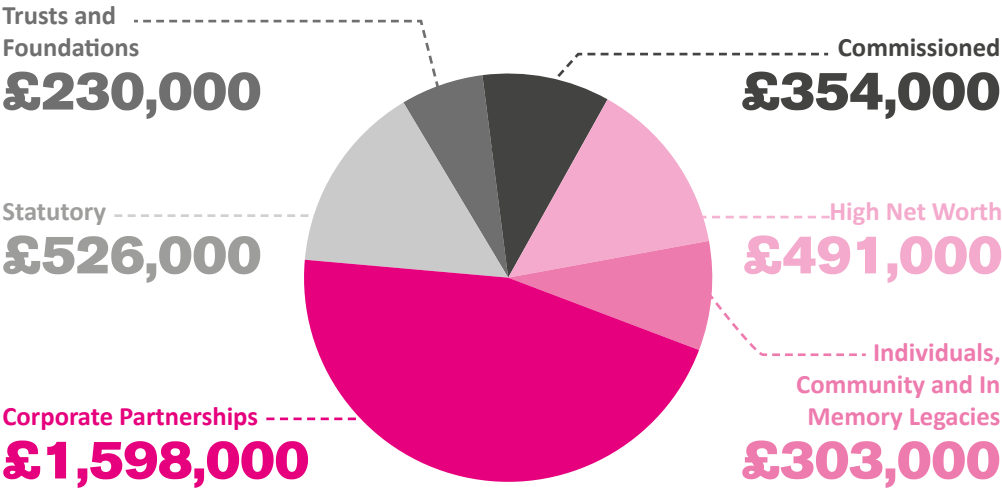
FINANCIAL INFO AND EXPENDITURE

INCOME

Missing People raised £3.5m in 2022-23. We achieved a surplus of £122,000 which will be invested in the charity’s activities in 2023-24. 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: £3.5m



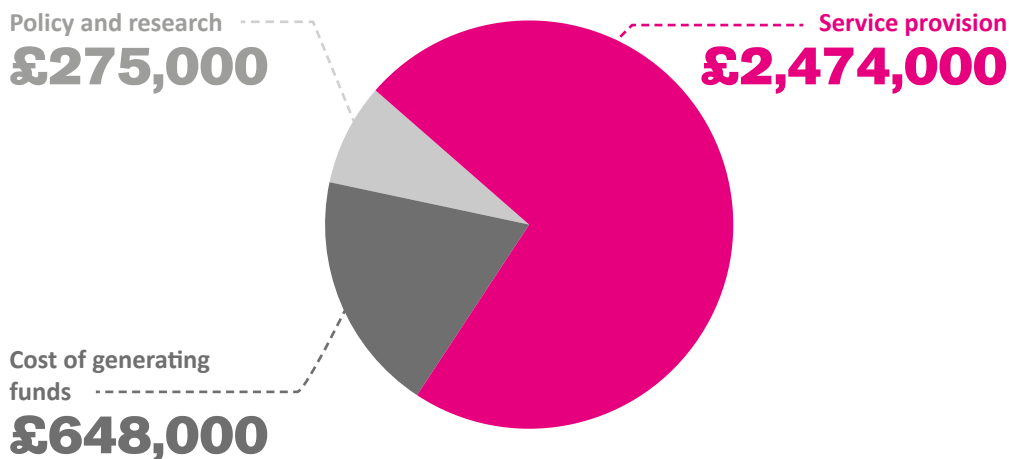
EXPENDITURE

Our total expenditure showed an increase of 7 per cent on 2021-22, as a result of investing in our charitable services and inflation. 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 £1.9 million, which is six months' worth of current operating costs.

Expenditure: £3.4m



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
(Stepped down formally as a
trustee 7 February 2023)
Rachel Eyre
(Stepped down formally as a
trustee 5 December 2022)
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
Lynn Anderson
Anonymous
Katja Butler
Richard Davies
Monica Dolan
John Drury
Richard Ewbank
Henry Gardener
Karen Horton-Palmstrom
Rose Leigh
Poppy Ludwig
Clive Marshall
Justin McLaren
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
Matthew & Clare Wood
David & Barbara Woods

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Stuart Higgins
Ben Kott
Giles Johnson
Laura-Jane McClenaghan
Gavin Rankin
Megan Savage-Shaw
Martyn Ward
Sam Waterfall
Tom Willett

Thank you

Enterprise Board

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Katy Christopher (Volunteer General Secretary)
Ciorsdan Brown
Emma Cullingford
Rebecca de Rome
Sophie England
Joshua Games
Shoaib Raza
Megan Savage Shaw
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The Raised Eyebrow Society
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London Violence Reduction Unit
Norfolk County Council
North Tyneside Council
Scottish Government
Stockton on Tees Council
Stoke on Trent Council

**And thank you to our many other donors -
we couldn't do it without you!**

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info@missingpeople.org.uk



[/missingpeople.uk](https://www.missingpeople.org.uk)



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



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



Registered with
**FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR**



.....

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

Creative kindly provided by the Raised Eyebrow Society
and JCDecaux.

Document designed by Txabi Jones.

missing people

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