



IMPACT REPORT 2024/25

**missing
people**

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

INTRODUCTION BY EVIDENCE JOEL

EVIDENCE IS THE MOTHER OF RICHARD OKOROGHEYE, WHO WENT MISSING IN 2021

In March 2021, Richard Okorogheye went missing. His mum, Evidence Joel, repeatedly tried to report this to the police, highlighting that Richard suffered with Sickle Cell anaemia and had mental health concerns. Had Evidence's pleas been heard and acted on, Richard may still be here today.

I remember my son Richard as a kind, loving young man with a bright future ahead of him. He was a wonderful boy, popular at university and deeply engaged in his studies. Entrepreneurial and sporty, he was a fighter who never let his illness stand in his way.

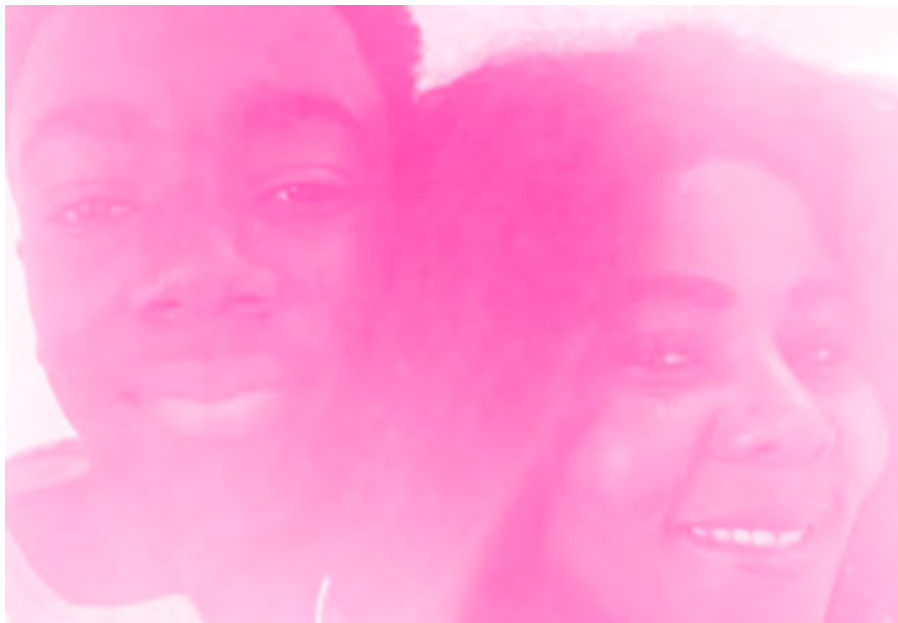
During the desperate search for Richard, I was dismissed, and I couldn't shake the feeling that race played a role in the way my concerns were handled. This painful experience highlighted the urgent need for change.

Despite my overwhelming grief, I have chosen to turn my pain into power. I have partnered with Missing People, Missing Black People, and Listen Up to advocate for better police responses when ethnic minorities go missing. My voice has become a force for justice, ensuring that no other family suffers this heartbreak without the support and urgency they deserve.

Since his tragic passing, Richard's memory lives on through the Richard Okorogheye Foundation. I have been deeply moved by the countless people who have come forward to donate blood in his honour.

Through all of this, I find pride in these accomplishments—not just as a tribute to my son, but as a legacy for all those fighting for a better response when their loved ones go missing.

Evidence Joel



“KNOWING THAT I HAVE SOMEONE ON THE OTHER END OF THE LINE THAT I CAN CALL, OR JUST RELY ON THEM CALLING TO CHECK ON ME, IS AN INCREDIBLE COMFORT IN MY DARK DAYS”



**MISSING PEOPLE IS
THE ONLY UK CHARITY
DEDICATED TO
SUPPORTING MISSING
CHILDREN AND ADULTS,
AND THEIR LOVED ONES.
OUR MISSION IS TO
BE A LIFELINE WHEN
SOMEONE DISAPPEARS.**



IN 2024-25:

**WE DIRECTLY HELPED
NEARLY**

10,700

PEOPLE, INCLUDING:

7,295

**CHILDREN AND ADULTS
WHO WERE MISSING
OR THINKING OF GOING
MISSING**

3,388

**FAMILY MEMBERS,
FRIENDS AND
COLLEAGUES**

ALMOST

35,000

**PEOPLE ACCESSED
OUR ONLINE SUPPORT
AND INFORMATION
RESOURCES**

FIND OUT WHAT MISSING
PEOPLE ACHIEVED
AGAINST EACH OF OUR
STRATEGIC GOALS
IN 2024-25:



GOAL 1

*Going missing
is understood*

**AS A CRISIS
THAT CAN BE
A MATTER OF
LIFE AND DEATH**

GOAL 1

ENSURING MISSING IS UNDERSTOOD AS CRISIS THAT CAN BE A MATTER OF DEATH

PARLIAMENTARIANS

Following the 2024 general election, Missing People worked hard to build relationships with MPs and the new government.

We hosted visits to our office from the Home Office Safeguarding and Violence Against Women and Girls Minister, and from senior civil servants in the Department for Education. Both visits included an opportunity for people with lived experience of going missing, or reporting a loved one as missing, to directly share their experiences and priorities for future change.

We also met with more than 20 MPs, engaging them with the issues impacting missing children and adults. This engagement means that missing people are being considered in policy development across parliament.

After a visit to our office where she met with families whom we support, Home Office Minister Jess Phillips said:

“Imagine the worst thing- it’s torture. It seems like torture to me. These mothers sat in front of me today, feeling like they can’t get what they need for their kids, that’s torture in and of itself.”

PROFESSIONALS

We shared our expertise with over 5,550 professionals working with missing children and adults through training, presentations and webinars. Attendees included professionals from police forces, local authorities and third sector agencies.

Topics included:

- ▶ Child criminal exploitation and missing
- ▶ The ethnicity of missing people and the experiences of Black missing people and their families
- ▶ Repeat missing children
- ▶ Children going missing from care, including our evaluation of the pilot implementation of the Children Missing from Care Framework in West Yorkshire police force area
- ▶ The multi-agency response for adults missing from health and care settings



MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Members of the public continued to engage with the cause, from visiting the Missing People website to find out more about the issue of missing, sharing our appeals and generously donating their time and money to furthering our efforts.

- ▶ Volunteers contributed 12,452 hours of their time
- ▶ Over 3,000 people signed up to be a Digital Search Hero
- ▶ 7,132 people and 465 partner organisations were part of our search efforts

We were incredibly grateful when The Metro chose us as their Lifeline Challenge partner, leading to a group of hardy fundraisers trekking across the Isle of Wight and raising over £33,000.

‘From the cliff tops to walking along the seafront, we were all walking in solidarity with people missing loved ones – raising awareness and vital funds.’

- Jo Youle, CEO of Missing People

We were honoured to be chosen as The Mirror’s Christmas Appeal with their readers donating nearly £15,000. The Appeal not only raised much needed donations but also featured many families whom we support, bringing further attention to their missing loved one.

‘Knowing that so many people care about families like ours gives us strength during the most difficult times. When Georgina went missing, Missing People was there for us when we felt lost and overwhelmed. Their support has been a lifeline – offering guidance, hope, and a community that understands what we’re going through.’

- Andrea, whose daughter Georgina, mother of two, vanished six years ago

GOAL 1

REACHING MISSING PEOPLE

TEXTSAFE

TextSafe® is a targeted way to reach children and adults reported missing, to let them know support exists. In partnership with the police, Missing People send a text message, and the missing person can then contact the charity if they need help, or to talk to someone.

Last September, we received three urgent referrals in just one evening, asking us to send a TextSafe® message to three different young people. Aged between 12 and 14, each recipient responded. One was on the streets and lost. Two were experiencing suicidal thoughts. The Helpline Team supported all three sensitively. We kept them safe and sent help with their consent.

PREVENTION CAMPAIGN

We also continue to reach out to people who are missing, or thinking of disappearing, through our prevention campaign. This is widely distributed by JCDecaux, our transport network partners, and promoted on social media channels. In 2024-25, we reached over one million people on social media channels with our prevention message.

IN 2024-25, WE SENT:

55,028
TEXTSAFE® MESSAGES

40,595
TO MISSING CHILDREN
AND YOUNG PEOPLE

14,433
TO MISSING ADULTS

SPOTLIGHT ON SUICIDE RISK TEXTSAFE®

Through Missing People's award-winning partnership with the police and Samaritans, we can send a Suicide Risk TextSafe® message to people who have gone missing and may be thinking of taking their own life. The message lets them know that they have been reported missing and gives them details of both charities. Samaritans then proactively calls the person, offering them direct outreach to access support if they need it.

In 2024-25, **3,186** people were sent a Suicide Risk TextSafe® message

"Sending them a text message, reaching out to them, keeping in touch, that's a great approach."

- Feedback about SRTS shared by someone with experience of going missing while suicidal

Missing People and Samaritans were delighted to win the Charity Partnership of the Year category at the Third Sector Awards for this partnership project.

"All at Missing People are thrilled to share this accolade with Samaritans for our joint work with vulnerable people who are missing and suicidal. I feel particularly proud, as this was my first project responsibility when I started working with Missing People, over six years ago. It feels so special having this joint involvement, and I think it's the most important work we can do, trying to prevent suicide."

- Martha, Helpline Manager at Missing People and listening volunteer at Samaritans

FIND OUT WHAT MISSING
PEOPLE ACHIEVED
AGAINST EACH OF OUR
STRATEGIC GOALS
IN 2024-25:

GOAL 2

ALL MISSING
PEOPLE
AND THEIR
FAMILIES
get the right help
HELP AT THE
RIGHT TIME.

GOAL 2

ENSURING ALL MISSING PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES GET THE RIGHT HELP AT THE RIGHT TIME

3,388

FAMILY MEMBERS, FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES ACCESSED HELP FROM MISSING PEOPLE

We have a number of frontline services through which people affected by missing can get help:

HELPLINE:

Our helpline provides anonymous, confidential practical and emotional support to those left behind when someone goes missing.

FAMILY SUPPORT:

We provide specialist emotional and practical support. We also connect people to each other, as they navigate the trauma and challenges of ambiguous loss.

Our regular events continue, including our Family Day in the summer, where family and friends of the missing can come together, our autumnal day of remembering – Together to Remember – and our Evening of Hope and Remembrance at Christmas, planned and facilitated by families with Missing People's support.

"I was deeply moved. Events like this provide a safe and supportive space for people to share their stories, to remember, to have hope. Occasions like the Evening of Hope and Remembrance show how very special this charity is."

– Tina Rosenow, Missing People Trustee with experience of a loved one being missing

LOST CONTACT TRACING SERVICE:

We help people to trace/reconnect with a relative who they have lost touch with, where there is no open police investigation.

COUNTY LINES:

We provide a dedicated, confidential, non-judgmental and anonymous Helpline and support service for young people at risk of or currently experiencing criminal exploitation and related issues including missing. We also provide confidential support for parents, carers and family members who are worried about or impacted by exploitation and missing.

COUNSELLING:

Our counselling is for anyone with a missing loved one aged 12+. Our qualified and experienced counsellors are trained to understand their unique trauma.

GOAL 2

HELPING THE SEARCH

IN 2024-25:

602

PEOPLE WE SEARCHED FOR WERE FOUND SAFE

This year, our partnerships helped us reach more people affected by someone going missing. NEXT launched a bouquet campaign and awarded us £5,000 through their Charity Committee, while Richer Sounds funded a Police Toolkit to improve professional responses to missing. Royal Mail's alert system has led to 286 people being found since its launch, including 40 of 56 alerts last year. LexisNexis Risk Solutions supported our Lost Contact service, which saw a 20% rise in cases and a 50% success rate. Trainline's geo-targeted appeals drove over 250,000 clicks to our website, boosting visibility for missing individuals.

"My missing son was found yesterday. He has been living rough in the streets and is suffering from mental and physical issues. I sincerely thank you and the team for your efforts and support, without which it would have been extremely difficult for me."

*— Father of a missing son
for whom we had publicised appeals.*

HELPING A POLICE OFFICER SEARCH FOR HER MISSING BROTHER

A police officer – who has sought Missing People's help before on a professional level – this time contacted us as a concerned sister, desperate for our help in searching for her vulnerable brother, who had travelled from his hometown in Liverpool to London after leaving his family a worrying note.

*Caroline requested all possible publicity, adding: 'I am also aware you have a pop-up message to commuters which we would appreciate ... Can I please ask that you do anything you can to support us in the London area at this very worrying time.'

We discussed publicity with the police and family, including a Royal Mail Alert in the Liverpool and Central London areas, in the hopes of covering all bases in his search. Caroline's brother was thankfully found a week later.

GOAL 2

WORKING WITH OTHERS TO IMPROVE THE RESPONSE FOR MISSING PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES

PRINCIPLES FOR THE POLICE RESPONSE TO MISSING PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES.

Alongside families and previously missing people, Missing People has developed a set of 13 Principles to help people to understand what should happen if they are reported missing or report someone as missing. Police forces across England and Wales are being asked to ensure that these principles are followed.

SPOTLIGHT ON CAMPAIGNING FOR CHANGE

Throughout 2024, we continued to explore the disparities facing Black missing people and their loved ones. We published the 'Experiences of Black missing children' report, hearing directly from Black young people and their families about the response they received from professionals when reported missing.

We continued to influence the National Police Race Action Plan, supporting three webinars for all UK police forces, and helping to arrange a symposium to bring more third sector organisations into policy development for improving the response.

We contributed to conferences and training events, engaging more than 500 professionals with the issue.

"To know that the charity is campaigning for a better police and community response to missing, support for those going missing and potentially coming to harm while away, is just incredible. I am so grateful to be supported by Missing People who campaign to have our voices heard, and always offer an ear to listen."

- Evidence Joel, mother of Richard Okorogheye.

SPOTLIGHT ON NEW MEDIA GUIDANCE – WITH EMMERDALE LEADING THE WAY

In 2024, Missing People launched a new Media Guidance on Reporting Missing Persons, aimed at supporting journalists, broadcasters, and content creators in portraying missing people and their families with accuracy, sensitivity, and care. The guidance was created to challenge damaging stereotypes, protect those affected, and ensure media stories do not cause further harm.

We were proud to see this guidance brought to life through a powerful and thoughtful Emmerdale storyline, which broke on 26 December 2024 and ran until April 2025. The plot followed the disappearance of a key character and explored the emotional toll on loved ones.

Emmerdale's production team consulted with us to ensure the depiction was grounded in the real experiences of families, and handled with authenticity and care.

Seeing one of the UK's most watched soaps adopt our guidance so fully was a proud milestone. We hope it inspires more media makers to do the same — because behind every case is a real person, and a family longing for answers.

FIND OUT WHAT MISSING
PEOPLE ACHIEVED
AGAINST EACH OF OUR
STRATEGIC GOALS
IN 2024-25:

GOAL 3

Fewer
**MISSING
COME TO
HARM.**

GOAL 3

ENSURING FEWER MISSING PEOPLE COME TO HARM

IN 2024-25, MISSING
PEOPLE HELPED:

4,780

CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE

2,515

ADULTS

WE HAVE FRONTLINE SERVICES FOR PEOPLE AFFECTED TO GET HELP:

HELPLINE:

We provide emotional and practical support, every day. We can also pass a message home to families or the police or set up a three-way call. The Helpline is available, for free, via text, phone, email and online chat.

ONLINE GUIDANCE:

www.missingpeople.org.uk offers a wealth of free information for anyone who is missing or thinking about going. In 2024-25, over 16,000 adults and children accessed these resources.

COUNTY LINES:

We provide a dedicated, confidential, non-judgmental and anonymous Helpline and support service for young people at risk of or currently experiencing criminal exploitation and related issues including missing. We also provide confidential support for parents, carers and family members who are worried about or impacted by exploitation and missing.

CHATBOT:

Children and young people at risk of, or experiencing, exploitation can access information and receive support about a range of issues. From the Chatbot, they can also chat online to someone real about their concerns and worries.

RETURN SUPPORT:

Commissioned by Hertfordshire Police, we provide support to young people who are going missing, with one-to-one intensive support and a dedicated worker. This support includes return home discussions and tailored sessions.

CHRISTMAS ON THE HELPLINE

**Lily's Story*

25 December, 17:20

On Christmas Day, Lily, 17, called Missing People's Helpline. She'd gone missing three days earlier to escape abuse at home. Too scared to talk to police, she was staying with friends, confused and anxious.

25 December, 20:10

She called again. With one of our team, she spoke to police through a 3-way call, explaining she didn't feel safe going home or making a statement.

26 December, 09:04 & 20:00

Lily rang twice. Still frightened, now uncertain where she'd stay. We reassured her, answered questions, and helped her respond to police who needed to confirm her identity.

27 December, 10:20

Police asked us to pass a message: "We won't take you home. We'll help you find safety."

27 December, 13:17

Moved by their compassion, Lily asked to be connected. She disclosed her location and was safely taken to emergency accommodation.

**THREE DAYS. SIX CALLS.
ONE YOUNG PERSON
FINDING SAFETY.**

GOAL 3

EVIDENCE FOR THE LINKS BETWEEN GOING MISSING AND HARM

Missing People conducts original research, and evidence gathering, to better understand the experiences of those affected by missing.

In 2024-25, this included:

- ▶ Research into the experiences of families whose loved one died while missing
- ▶ A co-delivered evidence gather with the Counselling team, exploring the experiences of those whose loved one has not been found, but where the family thinks that they may have died. Our Head of Research was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to further explore this issue in Canada, linked to missing indigenous people, and Bosnia, linked to conflict-related missing issues
- ▶ Research with Samaritans focused on better understanding the links between missing and suicide
- ▶ Research with Listen Up, exploring the experiences of Black missing children
- ▶ An evaluation of West Yorkshire's pilot implementation of the Missing from Care Framework

SPOTLIGHT ON EVALUATION

Missing People, alongside the University of South Wales, was funded by the Home Office to conduct an evaluation of West Yorkshire's pilot implementation of the Missing from Care Framework.

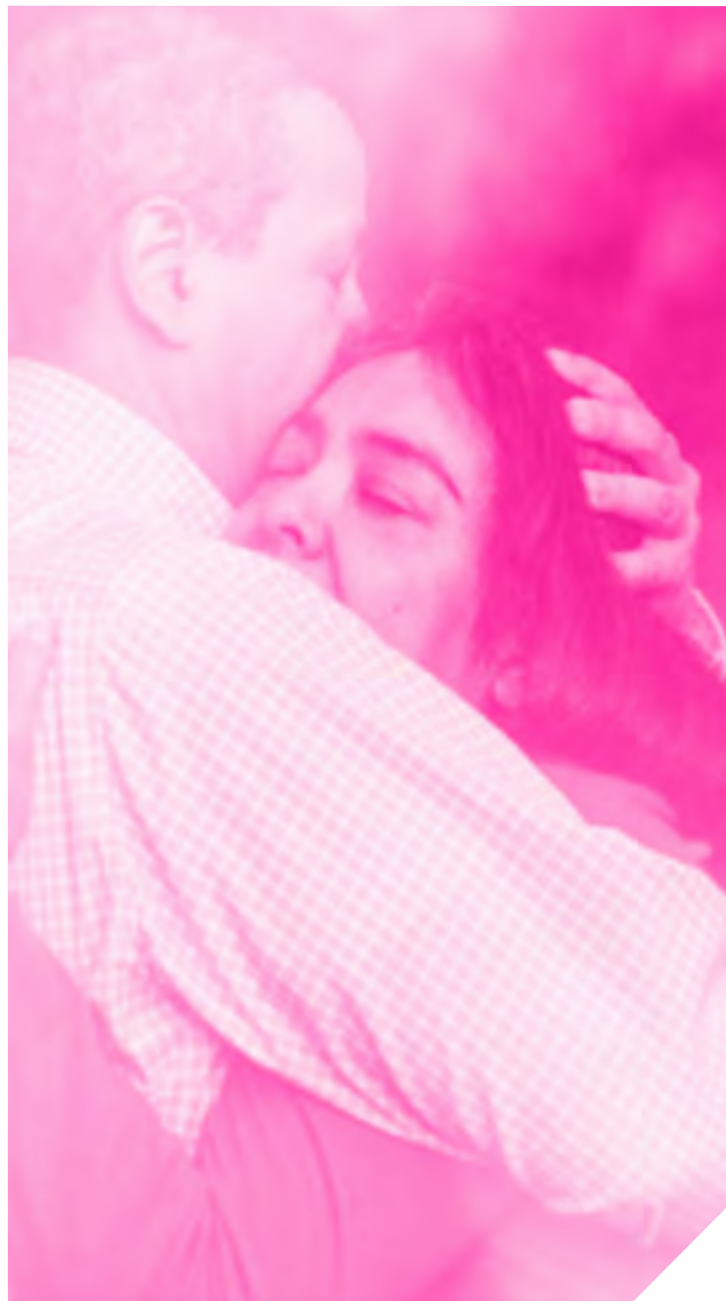
Children who are looked after in the care system are disproportionately more likely to be reported missing, as well as being likely to be reported missing on multiple occasions. While going missing can be a warning sign of a range of serious harms, there is also evidence that care-experienced children are more likely to be reported missing inappropriately. The Framework was developed in England in response to the challenges faced due to this inappropriate reporting.

The evaluation involved interviewing and surveying 264 police and local authority professionals and 13 young people, reviewing police and local authority data, training materials, and undertaking a field visit to hear directly from those involved in the Framework's implementation.

The findings have been used to develop a set of conditions necessary for a national roll out, as well as potential barriers to effective implementation.

GOAL 3

LIVED EXPERIENCE AT OUR HEART



Missing People has two lived experience Advisory Groups: for families of missing people and for people who have been missing themselves. They meet regularly to advise on a range of things: from Missing People's strategy, policy projects, service delivery, to fundraising and awareness activities.

People with lived experience are also directly engaged with work across the charity, including:

- ▶ Chairing Missing People's Good Practice Conference in Scotland
- ▶ The Missing People Choir, which provides a special space for anyone affected to sing together
- ▶ Directly influencing our policy, campaigns and public affairs work, sharing their experiences with MPs and policy makers
- ▶ Advising our research projects
- ▶ Leading our creative writing sessions for families with a missing person
- ▶ Supporting developing new ideas for services and funding applications

We continued to develop our approach to embedding lived experience in everything we do by recruiting two new roles: a Participation Manager and Peer Support Manager.

missing people

Registered Charity No. 1020419

SPOTLIGHT ON UNDER 25s

Throughout 2024-25, Missing People has been reviewing how its services are marketed and delivered to young people under the age of 25.

We have recruited four young advisors who all have experience of going missing to help us to co-deliver this project. The young advisors have co-delivered focus groups with young people across the UK, hearing from them about their views on what we should call our service for young people, how we should market it, and how they want to access support from us.

The young advisors will continue to work on the project during 2025, working with us to further develop our new brand, messaging, and website.

"The involvement of young people's voices in this project motivates me to consult and deliver sessions, ensuring the project is inclusive and meaningful. Ultimately, it's all about them!"

- Leonita, Young Advisor

www.missingpeople.org.uk

Thank you

TO OUR PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS FOR BEING A LIFELINE, INCLUDING...

TRUSTEE BOARD

- › Justin McLaren, Chair
- › Nunziatina Rosenow, Vice Chair
- › Sam Waterfall, Vice Chair
- › Paul Boughton, Treasurer
- › Sarah Godwin
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- › Sam Waterfall
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- › Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru (4C's)
- › Hertfordshire Police
- › Home Office
- › London Violence Reduction Unit
- › Scottish Government

GIFT IN WILLS

- › Ms Janet Barney
- › Miss Andronika Ferentinos
- › Ms Mary Oldfield-Jones
- › Mrs Veronica Startup
- › Ms Valerie McLean

PHILANTHROPISTS

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- › David & Barbara Woods
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- › Dulverton Trust
- › Garfield Weston Foundation
- › London Freemasons' Charity
- › The National Lottery Community Fund (Reaching Communities - England)
- › The Underwood Trust
- › St. James's Place Charitable Foundation
- › Zochonis Charitable Trust

CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS

- › Arriva Rail London
- › Britannia Stakes (via the Betting and Gaming Council)
- › c2c Rail
- › CIL Management Consultants
- › Flutter
- › Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR)
- › LexisNexis Risk Solutions
- › Morrisons Foundation
- › Next plc
- › Norton Rose Fulbright
- › People's Postcode Lottery (Postcode Support Trust)
- › RELX Group
- › Richer Sounds Foundation
- › Royal Mail Group
- › Stagecoach
- › Trainline

SOMEONE IS REPORTED MISSING EVERY 90 SECONDS IN THE UK.

That means life is lonely, scary and uncertain for 170,000 families every year.

Right now, people are searching for children, fearing for their safety. Searching too for mums, dads, siblings and grandparents who suddenly feel very vulnerable.

But, with donations and Gifts in Wills we can be there for the missing and those who love them.

PLEASE DONATE TODAY AND HELP SOMEONE FIND SUPPORT AND SAFETY.

**MISSINGPEOPLE.ORG.UK/
DONATE**

GET HELP

If you need advice or support around the issue of missing, we are here for you.

Missing People's Helpline is available every day. It is for people who are missing or thinking of going missing, as well as families and friends who are worried about someone.

You can call or text our free, confidential Helpline on 116000.

We also have an Online Chat service on our website.

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

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

missingpeople.org.uk

info@missingpeople.org.uk

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

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

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



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people**

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