



IMPACT REPORT 2025/26

**missing
people**

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

INTRODUCTION BY CHEREECE,

A YOUNG ADVISER WITH MISSING PEOPLE

At my lowest point, I went missing 27 times in a single month. People often assume that young people run away because they are being difficult or rebellious, but that was never my experience. I was trying to escape situations that felt overwhelming and unsafe, and I often felt that nobody was truly listening to what I was trying to say.

Growing up, I experienced instability, difficult relationships and challenges within the care system. I felt isolated and misunderstood, and there were times when being on the streets felt safer than the places that were supposed to protect me. Every time I went missing, there was a reason behind it.

The turning point came when I met a social worker who listened without judgement and genuinely cared about what I was going through. Having just one trusted adult who believed in me made an enormous difference. For the first time, I felt heard, supported and able to imagine a different future for myself.

Today, I am proud to use my experiences to help other young people. As a Young Adviser with Missing People, I worked alongside the charity to help shape SafeCall, a confidential service that supports children and young people who go missing or are at risk of going missing.

I know first-hand how important it is for young people to have someone they can talk to. SafeCall provides the kind of support I wish had been available to me when I was younger.

It gives young people a safe space to be heard, understood and supported through difficult times. Through my work, I hope to help other young people realise that they are not alone.



**“EVERY CHILD DESERVES TO FEEL SAFE, LISTENED TO AND VALUED,
AND I AM PROUD TO BE HELPING CREATE SERVICES
THAT CAN MAKE THAT HAPPEN.”**

**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 2025-26:

**WE DIRECTLY HELPED
OVER**

9,100

PEOPLE, INCLUDING:

5,387

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

3,742

**FAMILY MEMBERS,
FRIENDS AND
COLLEAGUES**

ALMOST

21,000

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

**THIS IMPACT WAS MADE
POSSIBLE THANKS TO
OUR SUPPORTERS**

FIND OUT WHAT MISSING
PEOPLE ACHIEVED
AGAINST EACH OF OUR
STRATEGIC GOALS
IN 2025-26:



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

PROFESSIONALS

We shared our expertise with over 5,000 professionals through training, presentations and webinars to police, local authorities and third sector agencies.

Topics included:

- ▶ Child criminal exploitation and missing
- ▶ The links between suicide and missing
- ▶ The delivery of return home interviews and return discussions
- ▶ Children going missing from care

In 2026, we launched our Train the Trainer course, focused on the delivery of safe and well checks (prevention interviews) and person-centered practice, and supporting care experienced young people on their return from being missing.

“I really enjoyed this training, it’s interactive and informative and will really help educate professionals within my locality when responding to missing people.”

- Police participant of Train The Trainer course.

PARLIAMENTARIANS

Alongside The Children’s Society, we re-launched the All Party Parliamentary Group on Missing Children and Adults, which aims to shape and strengthen policy and practice in relation to missing people to improve the response to the thousands of children and adults who go missing each year.





Special thanks to



MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

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

- ▶ Volunteers contributed 18,124 hours of their time
- ▶ Over 5,600 people signed up to be a Digital Search Hero
- ▶ Over 12,000 people and 465 partner organisations were part of our search efforts
- ▶ Over 18,000 people signed our campaign petition with The Mirror, calling for improved support and a more consistent response for families affected by a missing loved one.

We are incredibly grateful to The Independent who partnered on a Christmas fundraising appeal with us to launch a life-changing support service for young people who go missing in the UK. By sharing the real experiences of young people, the campaign helped people understand why children go missing and why having someone to talk to can make all the difference. Together, we raised an incredible £165,000 to launch SafeCall, which will help ensure more young people have access to free, confidential support at the moments they need it most.

"We are incredibly proud of what we've achieved with The Independent. This partnership has helped shine a light on the challenges many young people face and the importance of being there before a crisis escalates. The funds raised will have a direct impact on young lives, helping us provide vital support, guidance and hope to those who may feel they have nowhere else to turn."

- Ross Miller, Interim CEO, Missing People

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, we send a text message, and the missing person can then contact the charity if they need help, or to talk to someone.

"I went to stay with a friend when I got kicked out of my home but when I got a text from the charity about being missing, I didn't want to get him in trouble.

Because it was them who texted me, not the police, I felt ok calling them back to tell them I was fine and I was going home.

I wasn't sure about speaking to the police, but they said I should tell them I was safe and I didn't want them to keep looking for me – and I wanted to be the one to deal with it, not my mum.

The police took my details but just in case they needed to get hold of me again. And the guy from the charity stayed on the phone the whole time to make sure everything was okay.

They said I could ring again if I wanted. I'm pretty sure I would if I needed to."

–Young person who received a TextSafe® message

IN 2025-26, TEXTSAFE®
MESSAGES WERE SENT TO:

16,848

MISSING CHILDREN
AND YOUNG PEOPLE

13,024

MISSING ADULTS

FIND OUT WHAT MISSING
PEOPLE ACHIEVED
AGAINST EACH OF OUR
STRATEGIC GOALS
IN 2025-26:

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

3,742

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:

FAMILY SUPPORT:

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

“When I first made contact, I didn’t really know what help I needed. I felt a bit like a rabbit in the headlights but once I started talking, it was like the person could read my mind and almost knew what I needed before I did. This really helped me”

– Feedback for our Family Support service

“It just helps me know I’m not alone and gives me support when I really don’t know who else I could turn to”

– Feedback for our Family Support service

LOST CONTACT TRACING SERVICE:

Thanks to the support of LexisNexis Risk Solutions, we can help people to trace/reconnect with a relative who they have lost touch with, where there is no open police investigation.

“Dealing with [Missing People team member] has been an absolute joy. [the Lost Contact team] are amazing and always showed a great interest in pursuing my case [...] thank you for all you did for me and my [family member]”

– Feedback for our Lost Contact Tracing Service

EXPLOITATION SERVICE:

We provide a dedicated, confidential, non-judgmental and anonymous Helpline and support service for young people at risk of or currently experiencing criminal exploitation, including through going missing, and their parents, carers and family members.

94% (17 of 18) of parents supported through Missing People’s exploitation service would recommend the service to a parent who was worried about their child and exploitation.

“[Missing People] were helpful, reassuring, calm and empathetic, with a real understanding of the situation”

– Feedback for our Exploitation Service

GOAL 2

HELPING THE SEARCH

IN 2025-26:

WE LAUNCHED

297

NEW PUBLICITY APPEALS

In March 2026, we introduced a family led approach to publicity, designed to make the process more supportive and collaborative. We now ask for a single point of contact who knows the missing person - this might be a family member, friend, partner, colleague, housemate, or a professional in a caring role.

How our updated publicity model works:

- ▶ We confirm the right level of publicity with the police before sharing an appeal
- ▶ We tailor every appeal to the individual, their circumstances, and what feels right for both the search and the family
- ▶ We continue to support appeals for people missing in the UK, as well as British nationals missing abroad.

COMMUNITY ACTION IN A MISSING CHILD CASE

Bradley was just 13, a school student from London, when he disappeared from home and was missing for almost two weeks. His mum was beside herself with worry - this wasn't like him at all. He'd been struggling at school, yes, but leaving home without a trace? Completely out of character. Every hour felt endless.

In her desperation, she reached out for help.

That's when Missing People put out appeals and made a difference.

Together, we turned concern into action. Bradley's face was shared across social media, displayed on the Trainline app, and pushed through urgent safeguarding alerts and Royal Mail briefings. His story reached people everywhere - strangers who suddenly became part of the search.

And then, the moment everyone had been hoping for: Bradley was found safe and well.

This is what happens when people come together.

GOAL 2

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

TOOLKIT TO IMPROVE POLICE RESPONSES TO BLACK MISSING PEOPLE

In partnership with Listen Up and people with lived experience of missing, we have developed a toolkit for use by police forces to improve the response to Black missing people and their families.

MIRROR CAMPAIGN

The Mirror's "Missed" campaign demonstrated the public's deep interest in helping to find missing people and supporting the families left searching for answers. The extensive coverage shone a spotlight on long-term missing cases, raising awareness, inspiring action and keeping hope alive for families across the UK, with over 18,000 people signing the campaign's petition.

SPOTLIGHT ON BLACK & MISSING TOOLKIT

Previous research has shown that Black people are over-represented in the missing population, and that Black people face significant disparities when they go missing. It is vital that every effort is made to reduce the disparities that Black missing people face, and to challenge any discrimination they and their families experience.

Funded by Richer Sounds Foundation, Missing People and Listen Up worked with lived experience advisers to develop **a toolkit** for use by police in improving their response to Black missing people and their families.

The toolkit includes 10 tools:

- ▶ Guidance on conducting a statistical and case record review of the force's response to Black missing people and their families
- ▶ 7 different resources for use in training. These include resources for use in identifying vulnerability and challenging bias; training videos; and better understanding adultification
- ▶ Guidance on feedback and complaints
- ▶ A support services directory

The toolkit has been shared with over 1,500 police contacts and sent to all UK Police and Crime Commissioners.

We have secured funding to ensure the toolkit is implemented as widely as possible, and to conduct follow-up research to identify whether there have been any changes in the response to Black missing people.

"One good officer can change someone's entire perception of the police"

– Previously missing young person

SPOTLIGHT ON “BASED ON A TRUE STORY” CAMPAIGN

We are challenging the way true-life tragedy is consumed as entertainment with a new campaign created as a gift in kind by creative agency BBH London and Merman, Sharon Horgan’s production company. The work launched alongside our Responsible Narratives Charter, which asks creators to tell stories with greater care, respect and sensitivity for families.

At the centre of the campaign is a sharp, satirical film directed by Rachel Stubbings. Set in a sterile writers’ room, it follows a cast including Paterson Joseph, Anna Crilly and Rosie Cavaliero as they rifle through potential cases for the next hit true crime show, discussing pacing, plot and audience appeal as if human lives were rough drafts. The twist is that every case mentioned is real.

The film serves as a reminder that tragedy is not entertainment, urging audiences and creators to remember the people and families behind each case.

BBH and Merman worked closely with people with lived experience throughout to keep the work authentic and respectful. Thank you to everyone who shared their views and took part in the filming.

The campaign holds a mirror up to true crime culture and calls for a more responsible narrative. We’re asking everyone to **add their voice.**

The film has generated significant interest with **over half a million views** and extensive media coverage. It has been awarded the prestigious **Cannes Lion Gold for Use of humour in Film**.

“This is going to hit hard. It’s long overdue. I live this every day. Our whole lives are open for everyone to say what they want and make judgements.”

- Nerissa Tivy, mother of Alexander Soley, who went missing in August 2008

FIND OUT WHAT MISSING
PEOPLE ACHIEVED
AGAINST EACH OF OUR
STRATEGIC GOALS
IN 2025-26:

GOAL 3

Fewer
**MISSING
PEOPLE COME
TO HARM.**

GOAL 3

ENSURING FEWER MISSING PEOPLE COME TO HARM

IN 2025-26, MISSING
PEOPLE HELPED:

3,717

CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE

1,670

ADULTS

WE HAVE FRONTLINE SERVICES FOR PEOPLE AFFECTED TO GET HELP:

HELPLINE:

Provides 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, and online chat.

ONLINE GUIDANCE:

The websites missingpeople.org.uk and safecall.org.uk offer a wealth of free information for anyone who is missing or thinking about going. In 2025-26, over 11,000 adults and children accessed these resources.

EXPLOITATION SERVICE:

Provides dedicated, confidential, non-judgmental and anonymous support for young people at risk of, or currently experiencing, criminal exploitation, including those going missing. Support is extended to their parents, carers and family members.

RETURN SUPPORT:

Commissioned by Hertfordshire County Council, 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.

SPOTLIGHT ON INTENSIVE SUPPORT FOR RETURNED MISSING CHILDREN

Missing People was commissioned by Hertfordshire County Council to provide one-to-one intensive support to young people who are going missing. In 2025, this service was independently evaluated by the University of Liverpool. This evaluation demonstrated the significant impact of the service, on both the young people supported, but also wider economic impacts to policing.

For the 46 children for whom outcome data on repeat missing episodes were available, at the six-month follow-up stage:

- ▶ 25 (54%) had had no further missing episodes, reflecting 102 fewer incidents than in the same period prior to being supported
- ▶ A further 15 (33%) showed reduced missing, reflecting 59 fewer episodes than in the same period prior to being supported

For every £1 invested, the service generated between £2.26 to £8.66 in socio-economic saving, reflecting savings to the police as well as potential avoided harm and improved longer-term outcomes for the children.

100% (25 of 25) of the children giving feedback said that they found the support they received from Missing People helpful. This was primarily linked to:

- ▶ Having a trusted adult they could rely on
- ▶ Feeling listened to, valued and heard by their support worker
- ▶ Empathy, understanding and patience of support workers

"I felt safe talking to her and sharing things I needed to. She didn't speak to me like a child"

100% (20 of 20) said that they felt better about their life in general after receiving support from Missing People. This was primarily linked to:

- ▶ Feeling able to make better choices
- ▶ Improved wellbeing and self-esteem

"No one is ever proud of me, but you made me proud of myself"



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 2025-26, this included:

- ▶ Research with Samaritans focused on better understanding the links between missing and suicide
- ▶ A review of Reports to Prevent Future Deaths and Safeguarding Adult Reviews to evidence the importance of improving health, care and policing responses to people going missing from hospital, health and care settings
- ▶ Research with ECPAT UK further evidencing the scale of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children going missing from care
- ▶ Research into the nature and scale of harm experienced by missing children, with the support of CIL and RELX
- ▶ Research into the links between parental conflict and missing.

SPOTLIGHT ON EVIDENCING THE LINKS BETWEEN PARENTAL CONFLICT AND MISSING

We were funded by the Department of Work and Pensions to undertake [research exploring the links between parental conflict and missing.](#)

Through this research, we heard from 25 young people, three parents, and over 110 professionals. We also reviewed data from English police forces and local authorities, and reviewed our own records. We heard from 1,000 young people and 512 parents via public insights surveys.

This research found strong links between going missing and parental conflict, with the majority of professionals feeling that parental conflict can be an influence in children going missing.

However, we also found significant and varied barriers to disclosing parental conflict, and very few examples of good practice in supporting children or parents where parental conflict was a factor in the child going missing. The report includes various recommendations as a result of the research.

“When they come back home, when they’re hit with another layer of arguing, they can feel drained and distressed. And they may think they’re responsible in order to keep the peace between the parents [...] and this can put unnecessary pressure on the child.”

- Young person taking part in the research

A SAFER WAY

SPOTLIGHT ON SAFECALL

This year, we launched SafeCall, a new free and confidential support service for children and young people up to 25 who feel unsafe, are at risk of going missing or being exploited, or don't know where to turn.

SafeCall is a response to these shocking facts: a child is reported missing every 2.5 minutes in the UK, totalling around 210,000 incidents each year. These cases affect more than 430,000 people annually, and 48 children died while missing in 2023–24. Currently, we reach only one in four missing children, prompting the creation of SafeCall to expand support.

SafeCall has been shaped by participation every step of the way – from sessions across the UK with young people with lived experience, to Young Advisers being part of the project group, as well as our Services colleagues who support young people every day. Bringing these voices together has helped create a service that is grounded in real needs and real lives.

“SafeCall is first and foremost about safety. It exists to support young people at moments when things feel uncertain, overwhelming or unsafe, and to help them find a way forward before problems escalate. SafeCall offers a trusted space where young people can talk openly, ask questions and be taken seriously, without fear or judgement. When choices feel confusing and support feels out of reach, SafeCall provides reassurance, practical help and a clear route to safety.”

***– Paul Joseph, Head of Helplines
and Reconnections at Missing People***

Find out more at safecall.org.uk

GOAL 3

LIVED EXPERIENCE AT OUR HEART



We have 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:

- ▶ Co-producing the creation of a new service for young people
- ▶ The Missing People Choir 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 in developing new ideas for services and funding applications
- ▶ Influencing our awareness campaigns and advertising creative.

Thank you

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

CURRENT TRUSTEES

- › Lisa Jones - Chair
- › Paul Boughton - Treasurer
- › Nunziatina (Tina) Rosenow – Vice Chair
- › Sam Waterfall – Vice Chair
- › Sarah Godwin
- › Louise Lloyd
- › Rachel Murphy
- › Caroline Rawes
- › Vijay Samtani
- › James Walker

FUNDRAISING BOARD

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- › Joshua Games
- › Rebecca Healey
- › Gareth Lazell
- › Gavin Rankin
- › Sam Waterfall
- › Tom Willett

STATUTORY FUNDERS

- › Cambridgeshire Constabulary
- › Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru (4Cs)
- › Department for Work and Pensions
- › Derbyshire PCC
- › Gwent PCC
- › Hertfordshire Police
- › Home Office
- › Scottish Government

TRUSTS AND FOUNDATIONS

- › Adint Charitable Trust
- › Borrows Charitable Trust
- › Calleva Foundation
- › Dulverton Trust
- › EBM Charitable Trust
- › Garfield Weston Foundation
- › Lockwood Charitable Foundation
- › National Lottery Community Fund (Awards for All)
- › National Lottery Community Fund (Reaching Communities - England)
- › St. James's Place Charitable Foundation
- › The Underwood Trust

CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS

- › Avanti
- › Barclays
- › Britannia Stakes (via the Betting and Gaming Council)
- › CIL Management Consultants
- › Flutter
- › FPS (Federation of piling specialists)
- › JCDecaux
- › Jet2.com
- › LexisNexis Risk Solutions
- › Marks and Spencer
- › Nationwide
- › Next plc
- › Norton Rose Fulbright
- › Postcode Lottery (Postcode Support Trust)
- › RELX
- › Richer Sounds Foundation
- › Royal Mail Group
- › Southeastern Railway
- › Trainline

GIFT IN WILLS

- › The late Dorothy Jones

PHILANTHROPISTS

- › Craig Abrahams
- › Paul & Selina Burdell
- › Richard Burston
- › Katja Butler
- › Katy Christopher
- › John Drury
- › Richard Ewbank
- › Phil Hodgkinson
- › Karen & Jon Horton-Palmstrom
- › Lisa Jones
- › Rose J. Leigh
- › Poppy Ludwig
- › Justin McLaren
- › Tom & Emma Murray
- › William Norris
- › Caroline Rawes
- › John Reiss
- › Jason Richards
- › Dora Rickford
- › Charles Roast
- › Caroline & John L. Shelford
- › Peter & Jane Thorne
- › Mandy & Stephen Winyard
- › Barbara & David Woods
- › Richard & Anna Youle

MEDIA PARTNERS

- › BBH London
- › Big Issue
- › The Daily Mirror
- › Havas
- › Hope & Glory
- › The Independent – and everyone who supported the appeal
- › JCDecaux
- › Lippincott
- › The Metro
- › Timpson
- › Wildish & Co.

PRO BONO SUPPORT

- › John Lewis Partnership
- › Kapow
- › Trademark Wizards

We are incredibly grateful for the support received from players of Postcode Lottery. Their generous £1 million of funding helps ensure that our vital services remain available to missing people and the families who love them. Their continued commitment allows us to be there when people need us most, both during a disappearance and in the journey that follows. We simply could not reach as many people without their ongoing support.



GET HELP

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

Our 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.

SOMEONE IS REPORTED MISSING EVERY 90 SECONDS IN THE UK.

That means life is lonely, scary and uncertain for around 160,000 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**

Missing People
284 Upper Richmond Road West
London
SW14 7JE

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.facebook.com/missingpeople)

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

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

**missing
people**

Registered charity in England and Wales (1020419)
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