

Has someone you know gone missing? What you need to know

Factsheet 1

It is a traumatic experience when someone goes missing; however, it is critical that you take immediate action, especially when the person could be in danger.

- Search their home or the place the person was last seen, in case the person is hiding or may have fallen and been injured. Remember that children can hide in very small spaces
- Look out for any notes or clues that may suggest where they may be
- Check to see if they have left you a message on your phone voicemail or email
- Contact family members, friends and the person's place of work to verify that they are actually missing and not simply somewhere unexpected.

It may be helpful to keep a record in a notebook of what you have done (including all phone calls) and anything that seems out of the ordinary or suspicious, to assist the police and help keep track of what still needs to be done.

Most people who go missing return, or are found within 48 hours, with only around 1% still remaining

missing after a year. However, if you have established that someone is missing and you are concerned, report them as missing to your local police force immediately – remember, you **do not** have to wait 24 hours before reporting them.

Report the person missing

Phone your local police force or visit your local police station. Many police forces in England and Wales now use the 101 non-emergency number. The number for your local force can be found in the phone book, the police force website or online

http://www.police.uk/?view=force_sites



If it is an emergency and you feel that the missing person may be at risk of harm, dial 999.

The police will take some details from you and provide a reference

number. Make a note of this and any other details that they provide you.

Provide detailed information to the police

The police will take a detailed report and it will be helpful if you can provide as much of the following information as possible. There is a form on page 3 of this leaflet that will help:

- Full name and date of birth for the missing person
- A physical description of the missing person, including what clothes and jewellery they were wearing (if known)
- A recent photograph of the missing person
- When they were last seen and by whom
- What their intentions were when last seen and whether they completed these (e.g. they left to go to work or visit a friend)
- Tell the police whether or not the missing person has a mobile phone with them and give the police the number. Tell the police what response you get when calling that number
- Names, addresses and contact numbers of family members and their close friends
- If the missing person is a child, provide contact details for the parents of their close friends
- Any other relevant circumstances that may increase the risk to the missing person. For example:
 - Recent changes in behaviour or behaviour that is out of character
 - Relevant medical conditions that may affect their vulnerability, details of any prescription medication they take and whether they have this medication with them
 - Family or relationship problems
 - Employment or financial problems
 - School or college problems
 - Being a victim of bullying or harassment
 - Drug or alcohol dependency
 - Suffering from depression or you suspect that they may self-harm
 - Having previously considered or attempted suicide
 - Any suspicion that the missing person may have been abducted or may have been harmed by someone else
 - Any other information which may suggest that they are vulnerable or at risk.

What the police do

The police will use the information that you supply to assess the level of risk that the person may be at while missing. The police will then consider all lines of enquiry which are appropriate and necessary in the

circumstances. Should the missing person not be found following the initial lines of enquiry, then the investigation will be passed to a nominated officer within the police station who will deal with all further enquiries. This may be a specific named officer, or, in some instances, may be the officer on duty at the time.

Typical lines of enquiry may include, for example:

- Searching the home address of the missing person
- Searching the area where the person was last seen (if different to their home)
- Checking with local hospitals
- Checks on mobile phones and computers used by the missing person
- House to house enquiries

- Reviewing CCTV footage
- Co-ordinating media coverage to raise awareness and appeal for sightings
- Specialist searches (for example, using helicopters, divers or dogs) for high risk cases in particular

Accessing additional support

It can be very distressing when someone goes missing. Take care of yourself and do not be afraid to ask others for help and support. The charity Missing People may be able to provide you with some additional advice, support and assistance with publicity. In some circumstances, Missing People may be able to assist by attempting to make contact with the missing person and communicate with them on your behalf.

Contact Missing People:

116 000 (freephone number)
Website: www.missingpeople.org
Email: info@missingpeople.org

What to do when the missing person is found or returns

If your friend or relative returns after you have reported them missing to police, you must contact the police to let them know. The police may wish to see the person to confirm that they have returned and that they are safe and well.

If you require further information, there is a more detailed factsheet on what to do when someone goes missing which can be downloaded from the Missing Persons Bureau website (along with police missing persons guidance): www.missingpersons.police.uk/

You may find it useful to use the table overleaf to record information and make notes, especially if a police officer is coming to speak to you. Don't worry if you cannot fill in all of the information, just complete as much as you can in order to assist the police with their investigation.

1. About the missing person	Complete as much information as you can here
Full name and address	
Age and date of birth	
Physical description <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Height • Build (e.g. thin, medium, large) • Ethnic appearance (e.g. White, Asian, Afro-Caribbean) • Eye colour • Hair colour and style • Any glasses or contact lenses worn 	
Any distinctive features such as tattoos, scars, birthmarks or any other distinguishing features?	
Do you have a recent photograph?	
If the missing person has a mobile phone with them, write down the number and the network (e.g. Orange, Vodafone) if you know it	
Does the missing person suffer from any medical condition, including mental health conditions? Do they need medication for this and do they have it with them?	
What are the circumstances of this person going missing and where were they last seen?	
2. Information to keep handy	
Police officer name and contact number:	
Police reference number:	