

# missing people

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



**Supporting care experienced young people:  
before, during and after missing**

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**#Missing**



# Missing People: An introduction

- Missing People have 30 years of experience in supporting missing people in the UK
- We are experts at delivering independent discussions when someone returns from being missing (known in UK as Return Home Discussions/Return Home Interviews/Prevention Interviews/Safe and Well Checks)
- We regularly deliver training, conferences and consultancy to help professionals across the UK to provide the best response to missing people
- Our trainers have operational experience managing teams of workers completing return discussions

# Agenda

1. Understanding the national picture: care experienced young people and missing
2. Why children and young people go missing – push & pull factors
3. Tools and tips for staff on supporting young people before/ during/ after missing
4. Ethnicity and Missing
5. Children Missing from Care Framework
6. Missing People Services

**1. UNDERSTANDING THE  
NATIONAL PICTURE – CARE  
EXPERIENCED YOUNG  
PEOPLE AND MISSING**

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# The Current Picture: True or False

1. Someone is reported missing every 90 seconds in the UK.
2. You have to wait 24 hours before reporting someone as missing.
3. Children are more likely to be reported missing than adults.



# The Current Picture: True or False

1. Someone is reported missing every 90 seconds in the UK. **True.**
2. You have to wait 24 hours before reporting someone as missing. **False.**
3. Children are more likely to be reported missing than adults. **True.**

# Who is most at risk of being reported missing?



In 2022, over **12,000** children in care went missing in over **76,500** missing incidents.

Repeat missing incidents account for **more than 50%** of all reports received by police forces in the UK

*Population of England and Wales who are Black*

**3%**

*Make up of the missing persons population*



**14%**



# Why children in care go missing

## PUSH

Unhappy with care placement



Issues with the boundaries or rules set by placements

Wanting time to themselves

Becoming more independent

## PULL

Seeing family and friends, without the restriction of care



Drug or alcohol abuse

Exploited by external forces

# The most common issues raised by children contacting our helpline

Problems  
at home

Mental health  
issues



Abuse, domestic  
violence or child  
sexual exploitation

Living in care

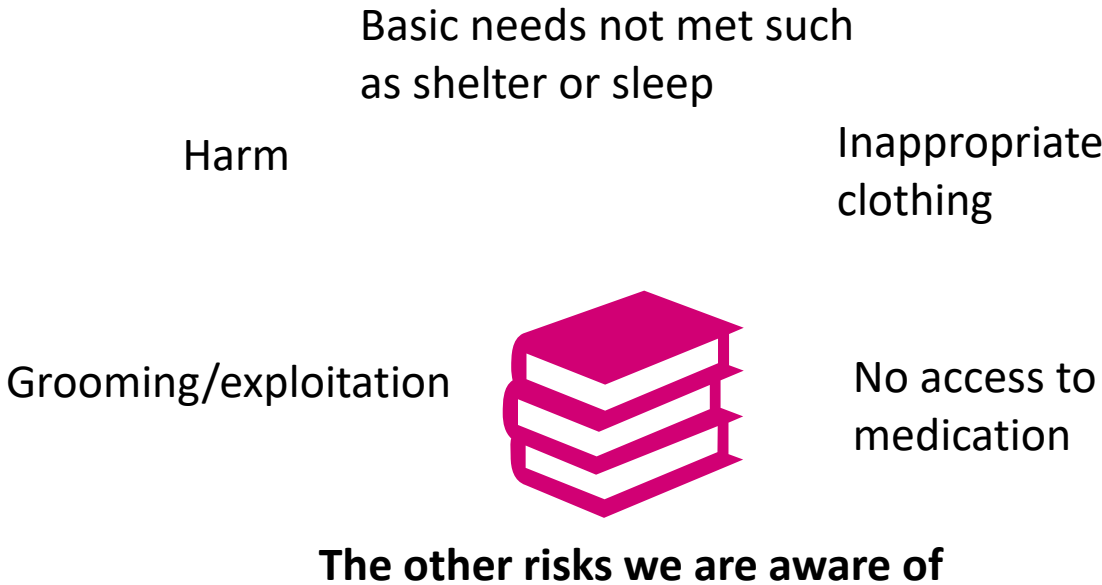
## Exploitation

- **7 in 10** young people who have been sexually exploited have also been reported missing
- **1 in 7** of the children who completed Return Interviews with Missing People had been sexually exploited and nearly **1 in 10** had been criminally exploited.

## Mental health

- **1 in 5** children who completed Return Interviews with Missing People disclosed information about mental health issues
- **1 in 10** was at risk of self-harm
- **4%** were at risk of suicide

# Risks whilst missing



**What are the challenges  
you face in responding to  
children missing from  
care?**



**2. WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE  
HAVE TOLD US WORKS –  
PREVENTING AND  
SUPPORTING THEM**

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**3. TOOLS AND  
TIPS: PREVENTING &  
RESPONDING WHEN A  
CHILD IS REPORTED  
MISSING**

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# Finding balance in reporting

## Under-reporting

- Young people left at risk
- No access to return interview leading to misunderstanding risks/ reasons for repeat
- Adultification?



## Over-reporting

- Feel being treated differently to other young people
- Damaging relationship with staff
- Too much police contact
- Potential criminalisation

# Prevention Good practice - Philomena Protocol

Preventing missing and finding missing young people more quickly by compiling with a young person:

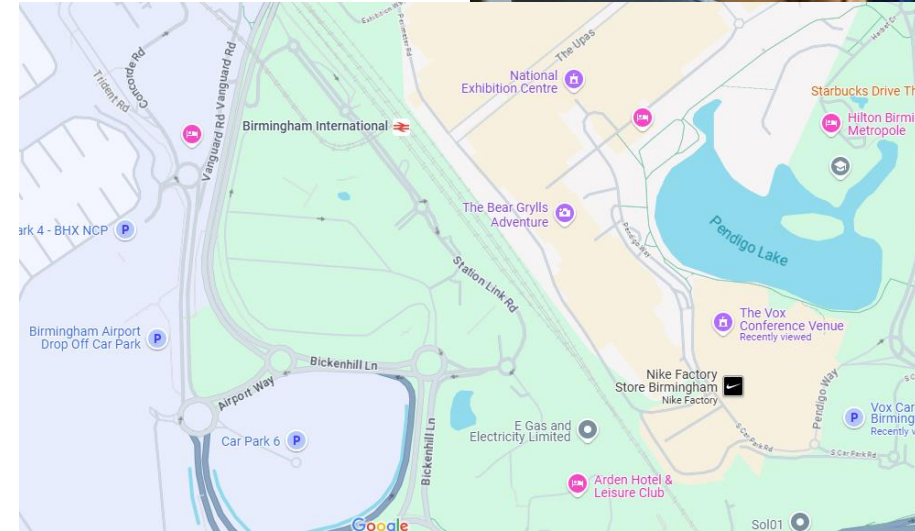
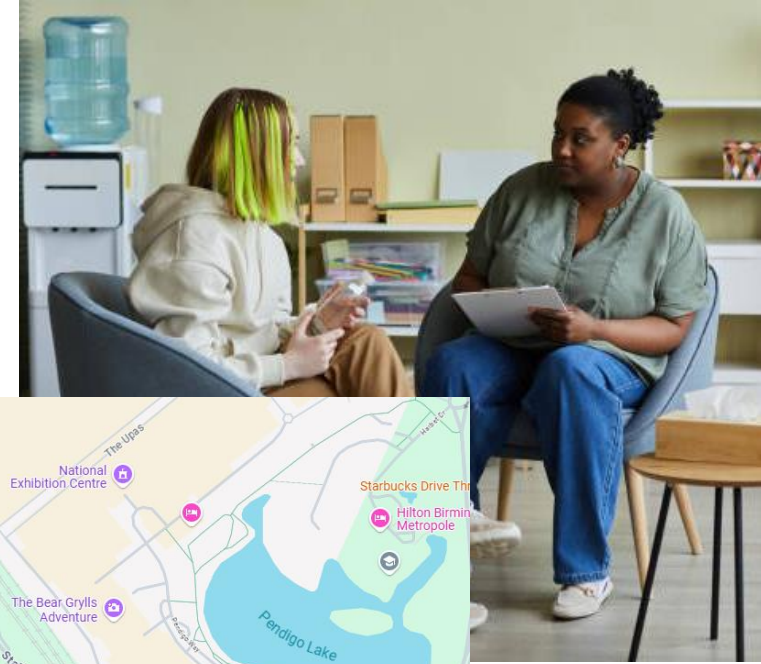
- Likely triggers for going missing (and how to prevent those happening)
- What will happen if they disappear
- Staying in touch ground rules
- Whether they've gone missing before and what happened – where they were found
- Risks they face
- Physical description + photos

# Safety Planning

What you would do, and who might help, in a crisis.

Can include:

- Distraction techniques for moments of overwhelm
- Where safe/ unsafe places are
- Who you can contact to get safe



# Ofsted

- **Ofsted**, the regulatory body in England, conducts inspections of various care settings, including children's homes and daycare providers.
- Ofsted reports directly to parliament, parents, carers, and commissioners.
- Ofsted inspects Children's homes based on the **Social Care Common Inspection Framework** (SCCIF).
- Full report of the findings will be published on the Ofsted reports website within a maximum of 38 working days from the end of the inspection.

[Ofsted - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

## 4. Ethnicity and Missing

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[Missing Ethnicity-report.pdf](#)

[The Ethnicity of  
Missing People report  
- One year on -  
Missing People](#)

# THE ETHNICITY OF MISSING PEOPLE

Findings from police and local authority  
data, 2021-22

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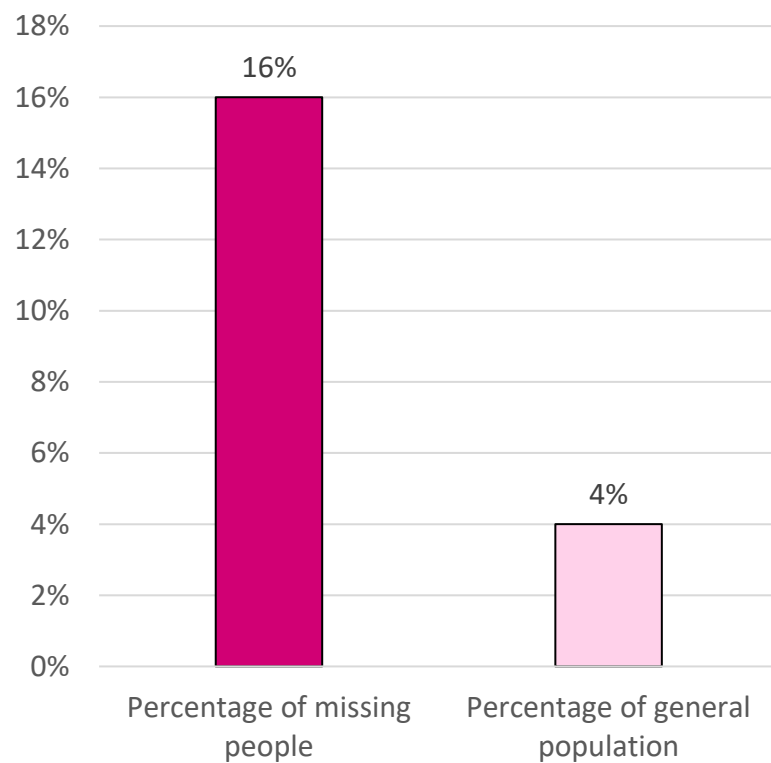


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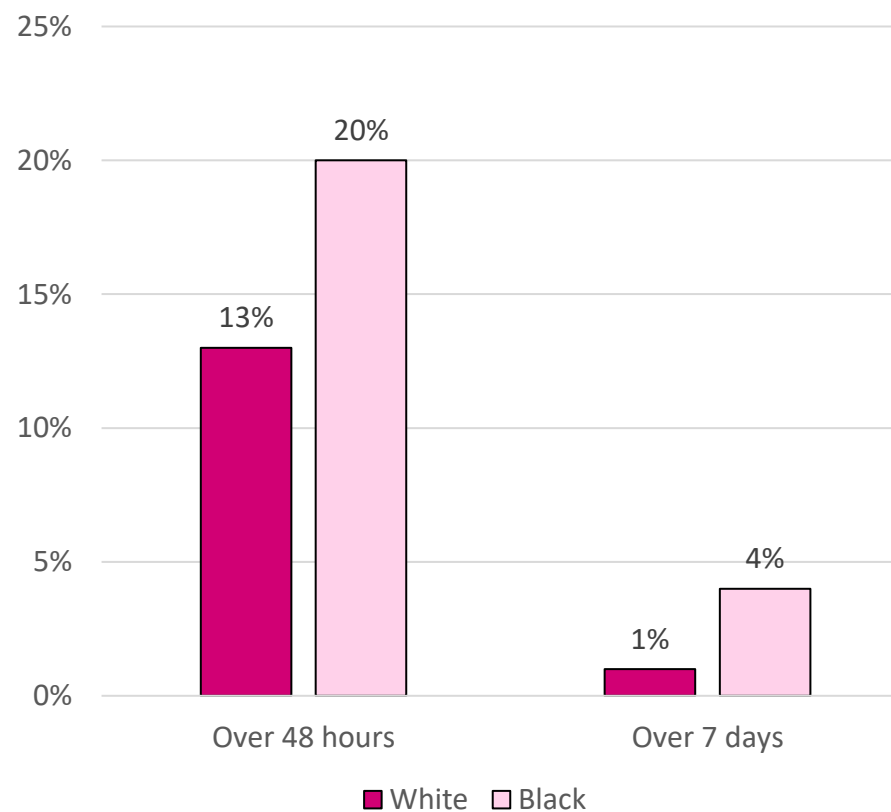
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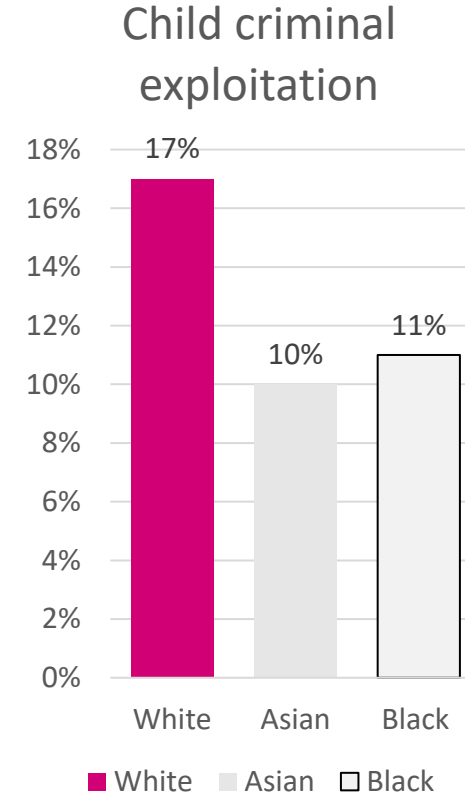
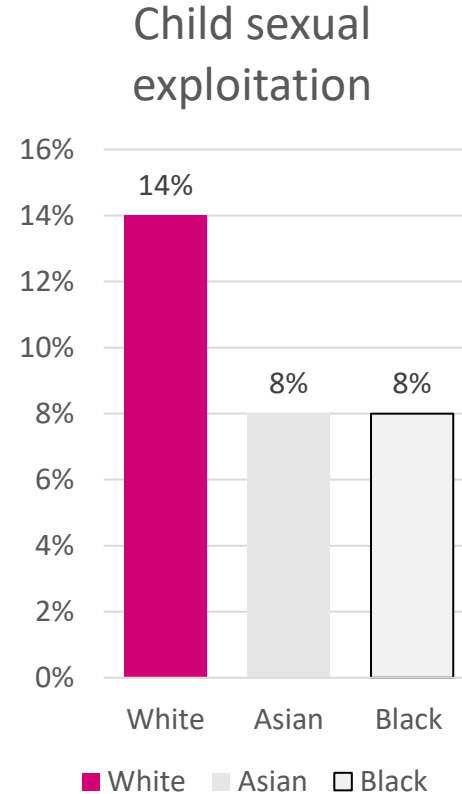
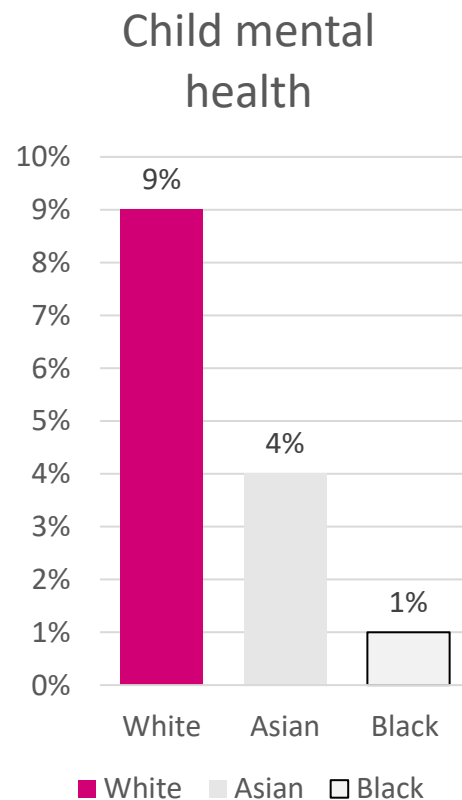
### Over-representation of Black children in missing incidents



### Length of time children are missing



- Black children are less likely to be found by the police
- Black children are less likely to have risk factors identified and recorded in relation to their missing episodes



# What might be contributing to these disparities?



[Final Experiences-of-Black-missing-children-Voices-report.pdf](#)

***“We’re told not to  
make everything  
about race, but it is  
about race.”***

The experiences of Black missing children  
and their parents

July 2024



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# Reasons for missing

- Home life, including family conflict and feeling unsafe at home
- Experiencing a lack of belonging, identity and acceptance
- Exploitation and risks outside the home

*“I don’t think that Black children are given the space to be themselves in this society, in this culture”*

*“He’s looking, he’s just looking for somewhere to belong. And his crook friends make him feel like he belongs. And he hasn’t had that acceptance [anywhere else]”*



*“It’s almost like a forgotten person. It’s like they’re forgotten about, and it’s not taken seriously. It’s not taken seriously as other people who have gone missing, who are not Black.”*

*“We’re overlooked. Basically. Like, just...yeah, being overlooked, not being listened to, not being understood”*

## Responses when Black children go missing

- Sense of being valued less, and that this impacted the response
- Poor coverage in the media
- Stereotyping, adultification, criminalisation
- Emotional wellbeing and neurodiversity





**Adultification:  
what is it and how  
does it present?**



## 5. Children Missing from Care Framework

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# Children Missing from Care Framework

- Prevention
- Planning
- Decision to report
- Return

[Children Missing from Care Framework](#)



# Levels of intervention...





## Children and young people's voices

- A balanced approach in the decision to report
- When the police should be contacted
- Perceptions of safeguarding and identifying risk
- Views on delaying a police response
- Relationships between young people and professionals
- Police resource and demand
- How the police respond when they do attend
- What would help to prevent missing episodes

# Specialist Consultancy and Training Services



## What support we can provide

- Training
- Bespoke Consultancy
- Systems Change
- Conferences

[For professionals - Missing People](#)



# Supporting Care Experienced Young People on their Return from Being Missing

- Understanding the national picture of children missing from care
- Why children in care go missing – push & pull factors
- Finding the balance in reporting missing episodes
- What does a good return de-brief/conversation look like
- Building rapport and engaging CYPs who are care-experienced
- Report writing & appropriate language
- Safety planning
- **£1,650 online / £1,850 in-person**

Email [consultancy@missingpeople.org.uk](mailto:consultancy@missingpeople.org.uk) to find out more

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# Train the Trainer



- We have developed a comprehensive two-day training course in response to requests from care agencies
- This course is specifically designed to equip care professionals with the skills and knowledge needed to effectively support care-experienced young people who have been missing.

Email [consultancy@missingpeople.org.uk](mailto:consultancy@missingpeople.org.uk) to find out more

# Train the Trainer – Individual Ticketed Event

- Our next training date is in **March 2025**.
- Receive an introductory reduced cost of **£1,789pp**.
- We can offer this training privately to your organisation for a cohort of up to 5 people.
- Our trainers are experts and have front line operational experience.

Email [consultancy@missingpeople.org.uk](mailto:consultancy@missingpeople.org.uk) to find out more

*"Fantastic training session - very inclusive and interactive and the materials were 'spot on'. Presenters were fab (not boring) and it's the first training I've given my full attention rather than checking emails"* 👍

Delegate feedback from our last online training course

**\*Our training continues to receive feedback from delegates of 4.5 stars and above out of 5.**

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# Thank you



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## Get in touch

- Email: [consultancy@missingpeople.org.uk](mailto:consultancy@missingpeople.org.uk)
- Website: [Contact us - Partnerships - Missing People](#)
- LinkedIn: [Missing Specialists](#)