

Support services

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Investigators should consider the following agencies that are able to advise and support forces during a missing person investigation.

UK Missing Persons Unit (UKMPU)

The [UKMPU](#) is part of the National Crime Agency (NCA) National Investigative Capabilities Command. It works with the police and related organisations to improve services to missing person investigations.

The UKMPU is the UK's national and international point of contact for all missing persons and unidentified remains cases. It provides support to law enforcement agencies in the UK and overseas. The UKMPU is a part of a wider network of partners, including other government departments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and stakeholders. The UKMPU can be contacted about any missing person enquiry on 0800 234 6034.

Services

The UKMPU holds a national database of missing persons, unidentified bodies, remains and people found in the UK. This serves to match cases across police force boundaries.

In addition to this, the UKMPU also:

- provides support to any missing person enquiry that has been registered as a missing person with a police force
- advises and assists with [international](#) enquiries, such as INTERPOL notices and diffusions
- provides advice about forensics, and the collection and retention of DNA profiles in missing investigations, including kinship DNA
- facilitates national and international searches of the missing persons DNA database (MPDD)
- manages the National Dental Index

- liaises with the National Fingerprint Office (NFO) to provide advice on the use and retention of fingerprints taken as part of missing person and unidentified body investigations
- undertakes open source and desk-based enquiries on behalf of forces

Referring cases

Police forces are required to submit case details to the UKMPU in relation to all:

- people reported missing in the UK (who are still missing after 72 hours)
- foreign nationals reported as missing in the UK (via INTERPOL or any other means)
- UK nationals reported as missing abroad

If a case is of particular concern, it should be sent to the UKMPU immediately, so that advice and support can be provided at the earliest opportunity. For example, this may be if a serious crime is suspected and/or there is significant public or media interest.

In such cases, consideration should also be given to contacting the NCA [Major Crime Investigative Support](#) (MCIS), either via the UKMPU or directly on 0800 234 6034.

MCIS can offer assistance to support investigative and search activity, and has contact with a wide range of expert advisers. For more information, see the [MCIS poster](#) (which should be treated as official).

Case details are required for all missing persons who remain outstanding 72 hours after the report has been made to the police. Cancellations of cases must be notified to the UKMPU within 24 hours of a force confirming the missing person's return or location.

Unidentified cases

All unidentified body or people reports must be sent to the UKMPU within 48 hours of discovery. This requirement is to assist major crime investigations and bring closure to the families of missing people who are deceased. Once notified, the UKMPU will create a record and provide a Hermes reference number, which forces require to load DNA to the MPDD. Cancellation of such reports must be submitted to the UKMPU within 24 hours of an identification being made.

The UKMPU can assist forces in such cases by:

- completing cross-match searches of missing person reports to determine if the remains are linked to a missing person report
- providing advice around the use and retention of biometrics as part of missing person investigations
- providing access to the Dental Index – a collection of dental charts for all missing persons and unidentified remains cases
- support the uploading of DNA to the MPDD, using the Hermes reference number
- uploading DNA to the MPDD, requesting that the DNA is checked across all databases
- providing advice and support around international enquiries relating to unidentified remains cases, including INTERPOL's black notices, diffusions, international enquiry forms and loading DNA to I-Familia

Charity support

[Missing People](#) provides a 24-hour confidential helpline (116000) and can assist with family support, publicity and safeguarding alerts. Police can refer families at any stage of an investigation.

Missing People and [Listen Up](#) have published a toolkit for [Identifying and challenging bias in police responses to black and black mixed heritage missing people](#).

[LBT Global](#) can offer a wealth of support to the families of missing persons, from coordinating international searches, to simply being someone to talk to.

There are also a range of charities that work with families that require mental and emotional support and bereavement services.

Tags

APP Missing persons