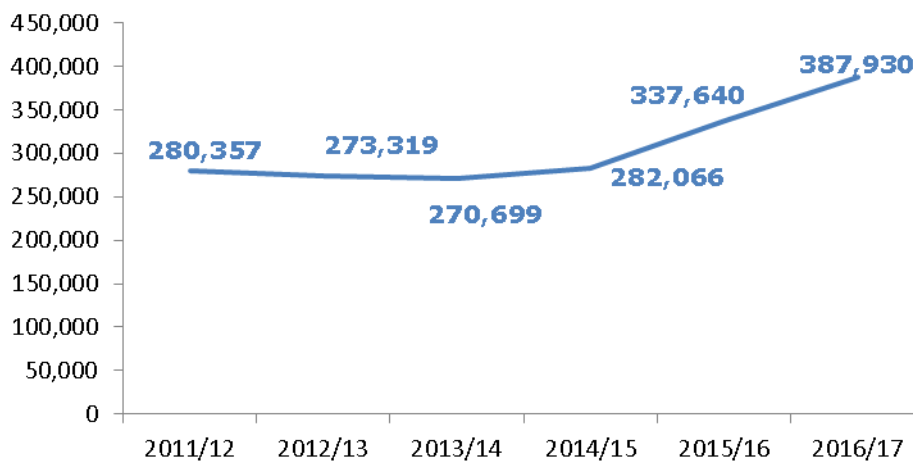# Missing Persons Data Report 2016/2017
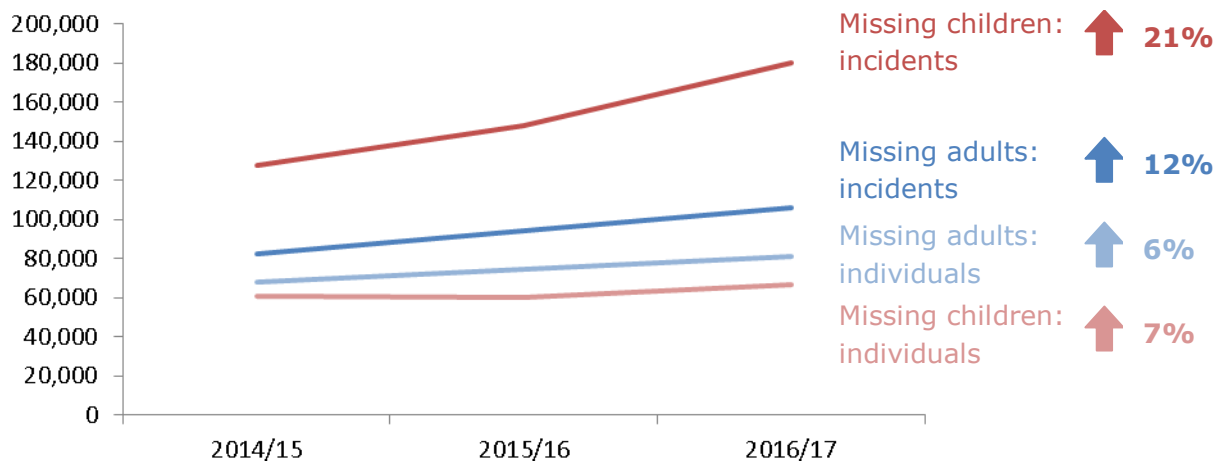
01 July 2019

Demand related to missing continues to rise

Calls made to Police forces in England & Wales (Missing & Absent)

This data comes from police forces in England & Wales, and reflects telephone calls made to them which are recorded on a command and control system. In a change to terminology, it should be noted that prior to 2013/14 these were reported as the incident figure.

Missing Incidents and Individuals recorded by Police forces in England & Wales

Change 16/17 on previous year

Missing children: incidents ⬆ **21%**

Missing adults: incidents ⬆ **12%**

Missing adults: individuals ⬆ **6%**

Missing children: individuals ⬆ **7%**

The overall number of incidents recorded continues to rise, more so for children than for adults, with a greater proportion of incidents involving children attributable to repeat incidents than in previous years.

Contents

List of Figures

1. Introduction

This report provides key statistical data regarding missing people and unidentified individuals/remains reported to UK police in the financial year 2016/17, where possible identifying any trends in comparison with data received for the financial year 2015/16[1]. This is based on information supplied to the UK Missing Persons Unit (UKMPU) under the 2009 Code of Practice.[2]

In a change from previous years, the underlying data will be published in supporting tables, rather than as Appendices to this report. This approach allows a greater set of data to be released, allowing those interested to explore in more detail the data supplied by UK Police.

In January 2017, the Authorised Professional Practice on Missing Persons was published by the College of Policing; this is national guidance for police forces, and it amended the definition of a missing person to:

> *Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established will be considered as missing until they have been located, and their well-being or otherwise confirmed.[3]*

Prior to this, national guidance distinguished between a report of a missing person[4], and someone deemed to be absent[5]. Those deemed to be missing were then assessed and classified as low, medium or high risk, with the police response tailored according to this risk assessment. The revision of the definition in January 2017, meant that all reports were to be classified as missing, with a four tier risk continuum, incorporating 'no apparent risk (absent)' as a fourth and lowest risk classification.

As this change was introduced late in the reporting year, this publication continues to distinguish between missing and absent reports. Adoption of the revised definition of a missing person has varied across the police forces, and it should be noted that prior to the change a number of forces had already chosen not to use, or had stopped using, absent as a separate category. This change and the variation in practice across the country should be borne in mind when comparing data between different forces, and with data reported from previous years.

Additionally, due to differences in the way in which Police Scotland records data for missing persons, its information has been separated from the call data for England and Wales for 2016/17. This is also the first year that the Police Service for Northern Ireland has been able to provide data for inclusion in the report.

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[1] National Crime Agency (2017) *Missing Person Data Report 2015/2016.*Available at: http://missingpersons.police.uk/en-gb/resources/downloads/missing-person-statistical-bulletins
[2] National Policing Improvement Agency (2009) *Code of Practice for the Police Service on the Collecting and Sharing of Data with Public Authorities.* The code establishes minimum standard in relation to timeliness, quantity and quality of data submissions by police forces to UKMPU for the purposes of*, inter alia*, collecting data on missing persons investigations, developing strategic assessments and publishing statistical bulletins.
[3] The Authorised Professional Practice is accessible at: http://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons/
[4] A missing person was classified as: "Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character or the context suggests the person may be subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another."
[5] An absent person was classified as "A person not at a place where they are expected or required to be and there is no apparent risk."

2. Key Statistics: Calls, incidents and individuals[6] (Tables A1-A3, B1-B3)

Figure 2.1: Key statistics for those reported missing in the UK in 2016-17

387,930 calls recorded by police in <u>England and Wales</u>	**286,763 missing incidents** across 43 police forces	**786** per day
		4.9 missing incidents per 1,000 population
	41,927 absent incidents across 30 police forces	**115** per day
		0.7 absent incidents per 1,000 population

147,859 missing individuals → **405** per day

20,392 absent individuals → **56** per day

12,821 missing reports in <u>Northern Ireland</u>[6]

35 per day

6.9 missing reports per 1,000 population

5,643 missing individuals → **16** per day

21,989 missing investigations in <u>Scotland</u>[6]

60 per day

4.1 missing investigations per 1,000

12,071 missing individuals → **33** per day

Although it is not possible to comment on trends for Northern Ireland or Scotland[7], there has continued to be an increase in the number of missing-related calls received by police in England and Wales, with a substantial increase in the number of missing incidents recorded since 2015/16; 124 more recorded per day. This trend is also reflected in the number of individuals recorded as missing, with 37 more per day. However, this increase is proportionately smaller, indicating an increase in the proportion of reports received relating to repeat missing episodes. This increase has largely been driven by an increase in the number of children[8] reported missing more than once, as shown in the section on repeated missing below. It is not possible to state whether this indicates an increase in the number of children who go missing on more than one occasion, or if a similar number of children are going missing a greater number of times.

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[6] **Calls** refer to telephone calls to the police relating to a missing or absent person, recorded on a command and control system. Multiple calls may relate to a single incident, or a call may relate to multiple different incidents/individuals. **Incidents** refer to a single episode of someone being reported as missing or absent. Multiple incidents may be attributable to a single individual, and some incidents may involve more than one individual.

[7] Police Service for Northern Ireland refer to their records as missing person reports, and Police Scotland as missing person investigations – these are deemed to be similar but not directly comparable to the incidents created on the police recording systems in England and Wales.

[8] For the purposes of this report, a child includes anyone under the age of 18.

It should also be noted that this trend is not observed for all police forces in England and Wales, with some reporting a decline in the number of calls, incidents and/or individuals recorded as missing.

Figure 2.2: Calls and missing incidents recorded by the police in England and Wales 2012 – 2017

Financial year	Total Missing related Calls	Year on year change	Missing incidents	Year on year change
2016/17	**387,930**	**15%**	**286,763**	**18%**
2015/16*	337,649	20%	242,317	15%
2014/15	282,066	4%	210,632	7%
2013/14	270,699	-1%	196,560	**
2012/13	273,319	-3%	**	**

* Figure for 2015/16 is from 42 police forces; does not include data from Dorset Police.

** Prior to 2013/14 the data was not reported in the same manner (the call figure was reported as the number of incidents), and therefore the incident figures are not known.

3. Repeat Missing (Tables B4,B5)

As in previous years, a higher proportion of reports for children are attributable to those who go missing more than once during the year ('repeat missing') than for adults (see Figure 5.1). There has been a slight increase in the number of reports attributable to repeat missing for both adults and children (up by approximately 4% for England and Wales).

Figure 3.1: Proportion of missing reports attributable to repeats
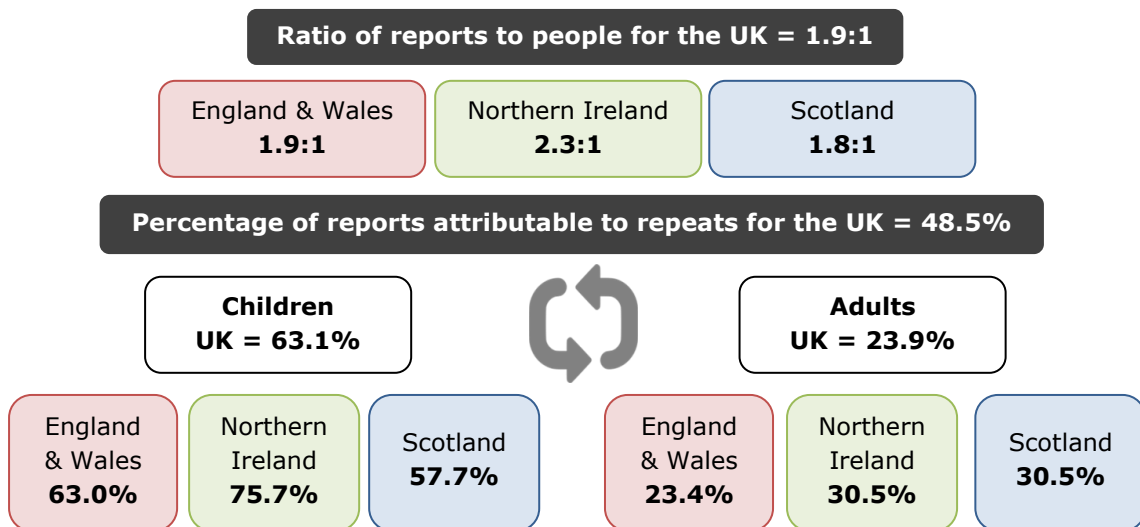
4. Demographics (Tables C1-C10)

Across nearly all UK forces[9], a greater number of incidents relate to children who go missing than adults (63% and 37% respectively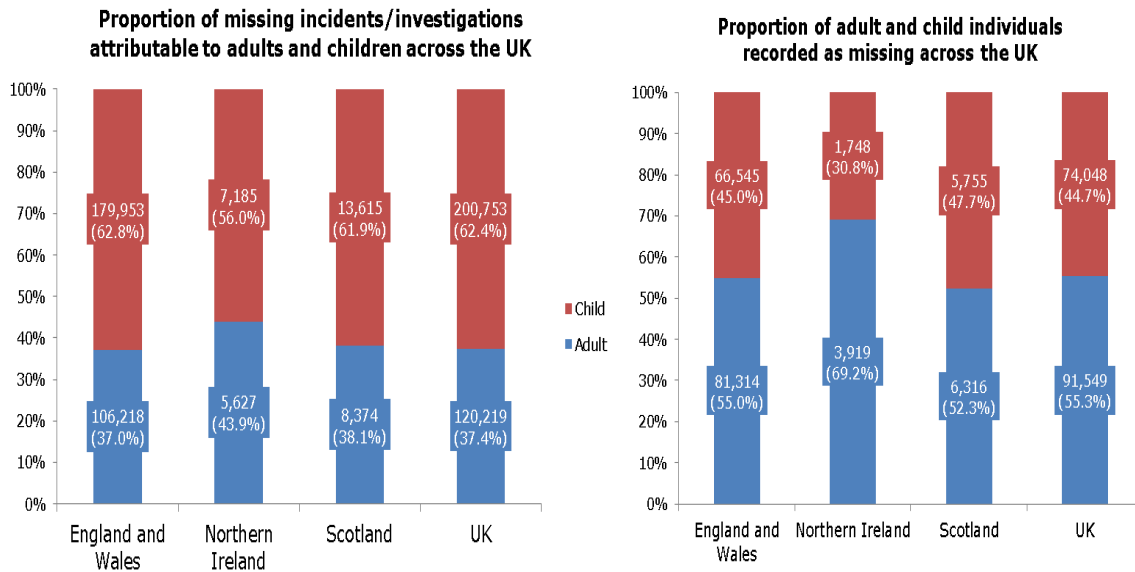), although this is more pronounced for England, Wales and Scotland than it is for Northern Ireland. However some people go missing more than once, and this appears to be more likely for children, with only 45% of individuals recorded being children.

Figure 4.1: Number of incidents and individuals recorded as missing across the UK (n=45 forces)

This reflects a greater year on year rise in the number of adults being reported missing in England and Wales, up 16% since 2014/15, compared with only 2% for children.

Gender (Tables C1-C2, C4, C6, C8, C10)

As in previous years, more men and boys go missing (161,983; 53.9%), a pattern evident for Northern Ireland (7,137; 55.7%) and Scotland (12,283; 55.9%) as well as England and Wales (142,563; 53.6%). For England and Wales, it remains true that this pattern reverses for children aged 12-17, with more girls reported missing (76,370; 51.9%) than boys (70,168; 47.7%), but this does not appear to be the case in Northern Ireland, where a similar number of boys were reported missing (3,352; 49.8%) compared with girls (3,302; 49.0%); Police Scotland is not able to provide this level of breakdown.

Men aged 22-39 remain over represented. In England and Wales, 43.9% (24,409) of adult males reported missing were aged 22-39, compared with 34% of the general adult population. Similarly in Northern Ireland, this age-group made up 31% of the general adult male population, but comprised 45.6% (1,610) of those reported missing.

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[9] The exception is the City of London Police, who reported 84 incidents relating to adults, and only 18 incidents relating to children.

Of the relatively small number of reports relating to trans[10] individuals (349), nearly three quarters were children aged 15-17 (200; 72.5%); the next largest age group was those aged 22-39 (35; 12.7%).

Figure 4.2: Gender breakdown of those reported missing

300,613*
missing reports in England and Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland

53.9%
(161,983)
males

0.1%
(349)
trans

0.8%
(2,488)
unknown

45.2%
(135,793)
females

262,136
missing reports in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Under 18	Over 18
57.8%	**42.1%**
(81,131)	(59,069)

Unknown
0.1%
(178)

Under 18	Over 18
76.8%	**23.2%**
(212)	(64)

Under 18	Over 18	Unknown
41.3%	**41.5%**	**17.2%**
(706)	(709)	(293)

Under 18	Over 18
69.3%	**30.6%**
(82,964)	(36,618)

Unknown
0.1%
(130)
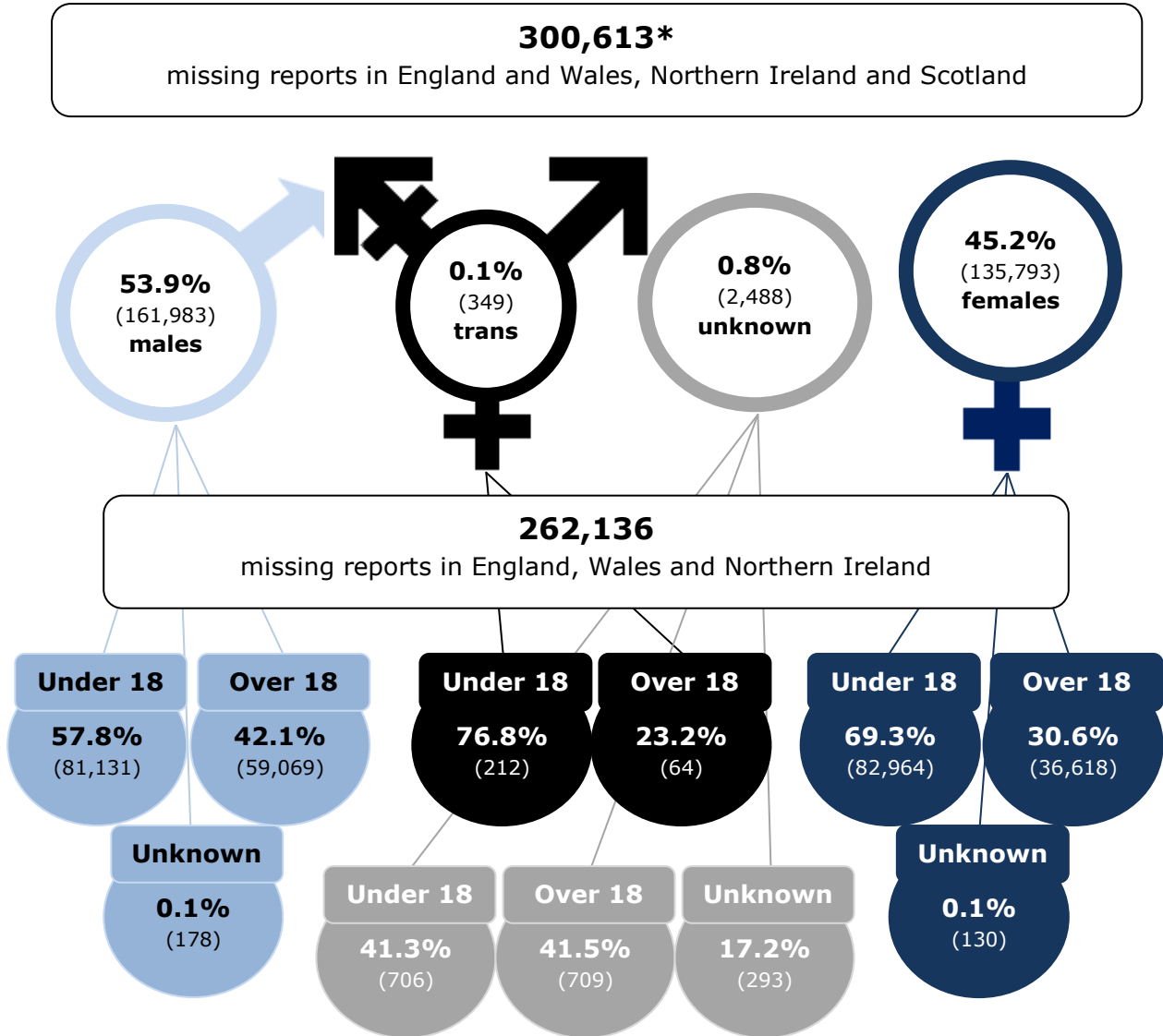
*It should be noted that the incident figure is lower than that shown in figure 4.1 due to the information supplied by Bedfordshire and Lincolnshire Police coming from a different system (COMPACT), in order to be able to provide the more detailed breakdown.

Age (Tables B2-B3, C3-C6)

Forty three forces in England, Wales and Northern Ireland provided a full demographic breakdown of those reported missing. This showed that children aged 12-17 continue to be responsible for the majority of reports (55.8%). Of 31 forces using the absent

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[10] The term 'trans' is used throughout the report to describe the full spectrum of people who do not identify themselves as either male or female.

category, only 26 could provide a full demographic breakdown of the reports, with a further 4 able to indicate if they related to children or adults.

Figure 4.3: Missing and absent incidents by age group in England and Wales[11]
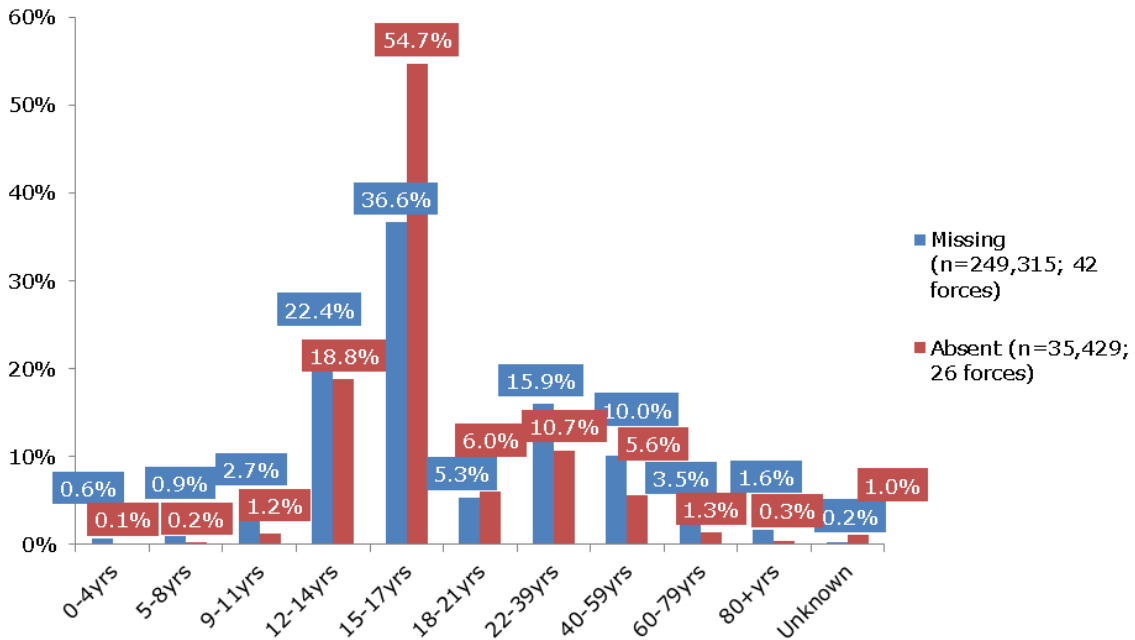
As with missing, the majority of absent incidents related to children (32,123; 76.6%), but unlike missing reports, this was also true of the individuals recorded (12,744; 62.5%). There was also a higher proportion of reports attributed to males (23,860; 67.4%), and this generally holds true for all age ranges, including the peak age 15-17. The one exception being the very young (0-4 years), where more girls were recorded as absent (16, 51.6%) than boys (13, 41.9%).

Ethnicity (Tables C7-C10)

A review of the ethnicity data received for England and Wales shows little difference to previous years. The proportion of reports where the ethnicity is unknown, and differences in the categories used during the 2001 Census compared with those captured by police when someone is report missing, makes it difficult to draw any meaningful comparisons. However, it would appear that reports related to those of Black ethnicity in England and Wales are over-represented in the missing statistics (11.3% compared with approximately 3% of the general population), whilst other minority ethnicities and those of Black ethnicity in Scotland and Northern Ireland appear to be under-represented[12].

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[11] As Northern Ireland do not use the absent category, the missing data has been excluded from this figure, but is shown in Table C4.
[12] A comparison has been made with the 2011 Census data available for the three regions; each uses different categories and are not directly comparable with the categories used when an individual is recorded as missing by police. This report uses the user-defined ethnic appearance codes (known as IC 6+1 identity codes) which are used on the Police National Computer. The Census data is based on different, self-defined ethnicity codes. It is therefore not possible to report the ethnic breakdown for the general population in each region using the same categories for comparison.

As in previous years, there are more males reported in each group except for the Chinese, Japanese and South East Asian population, where more females than males were recorded as missing.

Data from the 27 English and Welsh forces able to supply it, shows a similar ethnic distribution amongst those recorded as absent, although a slightly higher proportion were IC0 – other/unknown (6,250; 17.6%).

Figure 4.5: Ethnicity breakdown for those reported missing in England & Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland (n=44 forces*)

Ethnicity coding	England & Wales		Northern Ireland		Scotland	
	Totals	%	Totals	%	Totals	%
IC1 White – N. European	168,607	67.6	11,788	91.9	17,717	80.6
IC2 White – S. European	6,949	2.8	0	0	0	0
IC3 Black	28,253	11.3	95	0.7	83	0.4
IC4 Asian	10,953	4.4	73	0.6	158	0.7
IC5 Chinese, Japanese & SE. Asian	944	0.4	11	<0.1	9	<0.1
IC6 Middle Eastern	2,184	0.9	0	0	0	0
IC0 Other/Unknown	31,425	12.6	854	6.7	4,022	18.3
Total	**249,315**		**12,821**		**21,989**	

*Greater Manchester Police is unable to provide this detail.

5. Risk (Table D1)

Although a new four tier risk continuum was introduced in the UK part way through 2016/17, this was late in the reporting year, and as many police forces had not implemented this change by end of March 2017, it was felt appropriate to report on the breakdown of incidents by the three tier risk assessment in place prior to January 2017. This also allows the data from Northern Ireland and Scotland to be considered alongside the data from England and Wales for the first time. This shows that as in previous years, and for all areas of the UK, the majority of reports were categorised as medium risk (see Figure 5.1).

42 police forces in England and Wales were able to provide this information (n=229,840), and had the highest proportion of high risk incidents (14.0%) compared with Northern Ireland (6.9%) and Scotland (10.3%). Scotland had the highest proportion of low risk cases (18.2%) compared with England and Wales (8.3%) and Northern Ireland (7.4%).

It should be noted that both Northern Ireland and Scotland reported figures for cases that had not been graded, often due to the report being closed before an assessment had been completed (1,784 and 7,492 respectively). It is not possible to determine the level of ungraded reports for England and Wales due to inconsistencies in the information provided.

Figure 5.1: Proportion of incidents/investigations by risk assessment for the UK (n=44 forces)

■ High (n=34,300)
■ Medium (n=198,702)
■ Low (n=22,372)
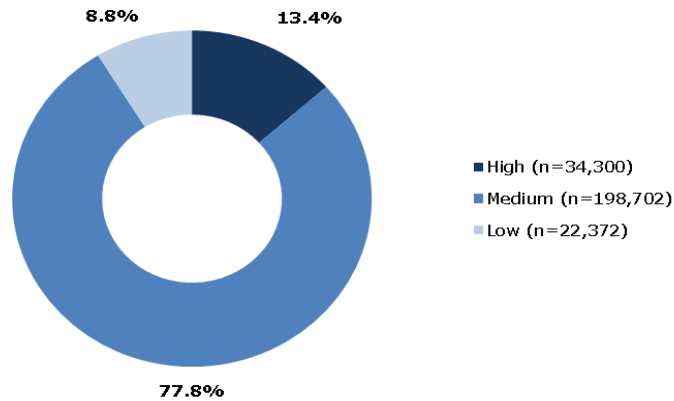
Whilst the level of investigation depends on the circumstances of the case, and the risk assessment applied may change during an investigation in order to take into account evolving information[13], it is estimated that a medium risk, medium term missing person investigation costs between £1,325.44 - £2,415.80[14]. This equates to a cost of between £263m and £480m to the UK forces for 2016/17 (based on recording 198,702 medium risk investigations).

For the 33[15] forces using the Absent and/or No Apparent Risk category, it appears that the majority of reports were still classified as medium risk (63.4%). However, there was significant variation across the forces, with some recording less than 1% as No Apparent Risk/Absent whilst another force used this classification in nearly half of their cases (47.8%).

Figure 5.2: Proportion of incidents by risk assessment including No Apparent Risk/Absent (n=33 forces)

■ High (n=28,452)

■ Medium (n=157,119)

■ Low (n=16,383)

■ No Apparent Risk/Absent (n=26,009)

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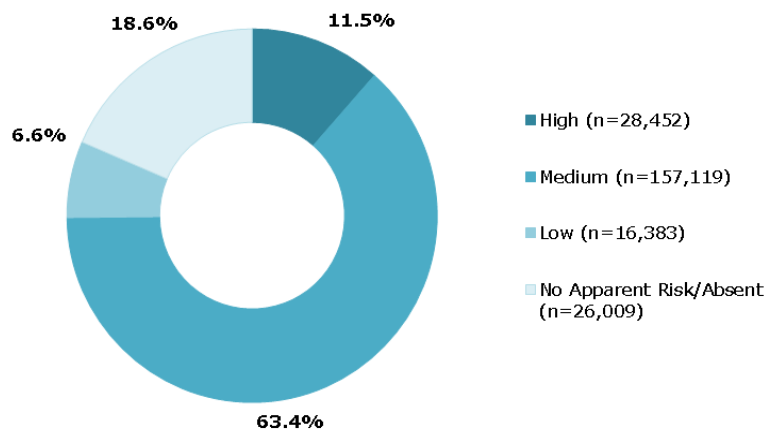
[13] Police forces were requested to send the 'closing' risk assessments data for this 2015/16 report.

[14] Shalev-Greene, K. and Pakes, F. (2012) *Establishing the Cost of Missing Person Investigations* (page 3).

[15] Avon and Somerset Constabulary's data has been excluded from the summary as it reported that three quarters of the reports were classified as No Apparent Risk, but contact with the force indicates these may be cases where no risk assessment was recorded, due to the case being concluded without a risk assessment having been completed.

6. Harm suffered (Tables E1-E3)

Twenty five police forces in England and Wales have provided an indication of the harm suffered by those reported missing. This information is subject to the assessment of the officer at the time the report is closed. This does not take into account harm that may only come to light at a later date, for example, during an independent return home interview which must be offered to all children in England[16], and is generally conducted by a third party some time after the missing report itself has been closed. It is possible the level of harm suffered is likely to be higher than that indicated in the data reported.

Additionally, officers may endorse more than one outcome, making it difficult to determine what proportion of reports result in harm of any kind. It is also evident that whether the individual suffered any form of harm is not accurately recorded for all incidents, as the total number of reported outcomes is less than the number of incidents reported from these forces. Therefore this should be considered only as indicative of the risk to those who go missing.

Due to changes in the way in which data received is interpreted, the figures presented are not directly comparable with previous reports. Percentages reported relate to percentage of all missing incidents recorded by the forces who have contributed this data; n=102,404 (children = 68,090; adults = 34,314). As it has not been possible to obtain figures for how many incidents remained unresolved as at 31 March 2016, it is not possible to confirm how many incidents actually resulted in some harm (as known at the time of closure) or remain outstanding.

As in previous years, a majority of reports appear to result in no known harm to the individual (96,698; 94.4%), with less than 1% resulting in a fatal outcome (341, 0.3%). This suggests that around 6 per cent of cases (5,706) either resulted in some form of harm, or the individual had not been located by the 31st April 2017.

Adults appear to be more likely to come to harm or remain missing (8.7%) compared to children (4.0%) and accounted for 94 per cent of the fatal outcomes (321; in 15 cases the age of the individual is not known). Adults were more likely to experience all forms of harm except for sexual offences (see Figure 6.1).

Additionally, 16 police forces unable to provide the more detailed harm breakdown provided data on the number of fatal outcomes, to give a total of 593 for 2016/17 in England and Wales (compared with 599 in 2015/16). The Police Service of Northern Ireland also reported 27 fatalities, all of which were adults, and Police Scotland reported 91 fatalities (ages unknown).

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[16] This is a requirement within the Department for Educations statutory guidance on those who go missing from home and care; this can be accessed at:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/307867/Statuotory_Guidance_-_Missing_from_care_3_pdf

Figure 6.1: Indication of harm suffered by adult and child incidents (n=24 forces)

*Only reported by Cheshire and Cumbria
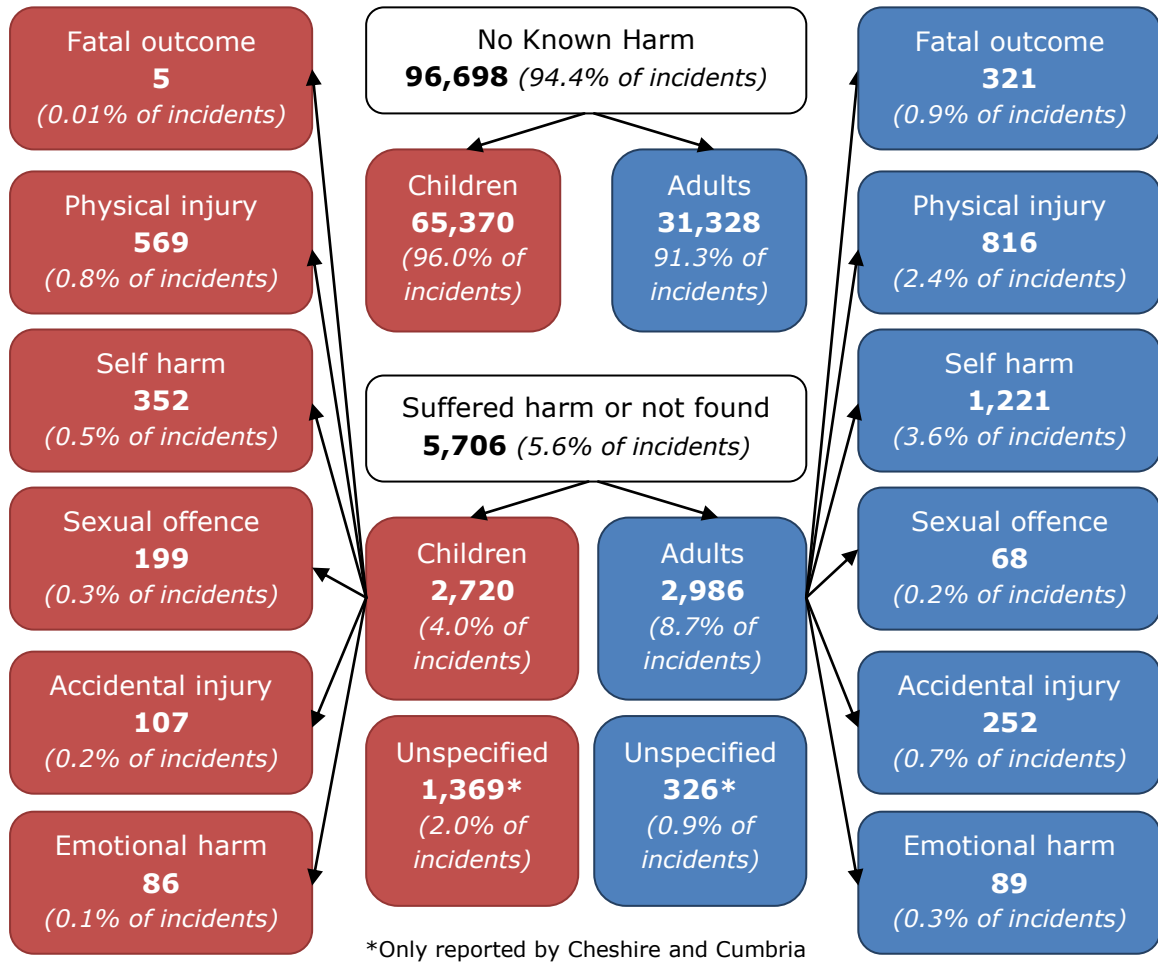
7. **Reason for missing episode** (Table E4)

As with the above harm data, this information is taken from the assessment made by the officer at the time the report is closed, and more than one category can be selected. The data is supplied by the 22 police forces using the COMPACT case management system[17], and it should be noted that police forces using later versions of the system have a greater number of options available to select.

As in previous years, the reason chosen for a significant proportion of reports (54%) was 'unknown' (10,363), 'declined' (6,564), 'unspecified' (13) or 'other' (40,805). It appears that children were less likely to provide a clear reason for going missing than adults (65% classed one of the four categories, compared with 36% for adults). As in previous years, these reports have been removed to assist review of the cases where a reason was endorsed.

- Health (physical and mental) remains a significant factor, accounting for over three quarters of the reports for adults (19,653; 78.8%) but only 28.7% of reports for children (6,752).

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[17] COMPACT is a missing person case management system currently used within 22 police forces.

- There was a similar incidence of accidental causes for children and adults, with 1,720 reports for children (7.3%) and 2,035 reports for adults (8.2%) attributed to 'lost', 'disoriented', or 'misunderstanding'.

- The number of reports indicating female genital mutilation or terrorist causes has grown, although are still rare (10 and 24 respectively, up from 2 and 7 in 2015/16), and there has been a substantial increase in the number of reports categorised as 'gang related' (287 compared with 81 in 2015/16). It is suspected this is due to greater recognition of county line activity[18].

- There has also been a significant increase in the number of reports categorised as 'Asylum Seeker' or 'Unaccompanied Juvenile', with 4,924 reports compared with 1,368 in 2015/16, of which 4,870 relate to children.

8. Length of time missing (Table E5)

More police forces have been able to supply data indicating the length of time the person was missing than in the previous year, with 31 supplying data. This is based on incidents, and indicates a slight increase in the length of time people are missing, with only 73 per cent being resolved within 24 hours, compared with 79 per cent in 2015/16.

Figure 8.1: Length of time missing for adult and children incidents for England and Wales (n=31 forces)
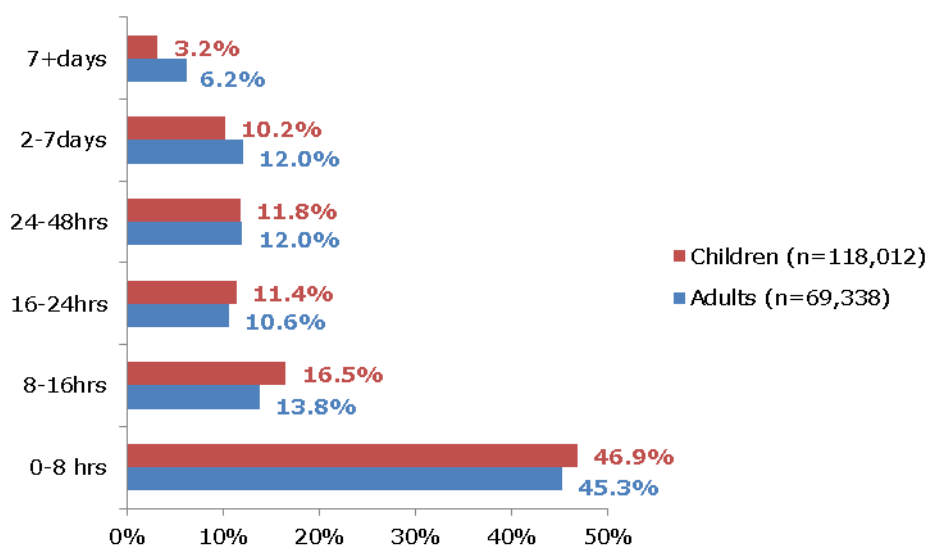

NB. There were 8 incidents reported where the time missing wasn't specified, and 10 where the age of the person wasn't known.

For the first time we also have data from Northern Ireland, showing that their missing cases are generally resolved more quickly, with 88 per cent resolved within 24 hours.

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[18] 'County Lines' is a term used when drug gangs from big cities expand their operations to smaller towns, often using violence to drive out local dealers and exploiting children and vulnerable people to sell drugs. See http://nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/countylines for more information.

Figure 8.2: Length of time missing for adult and children incidents for Northern Ireland
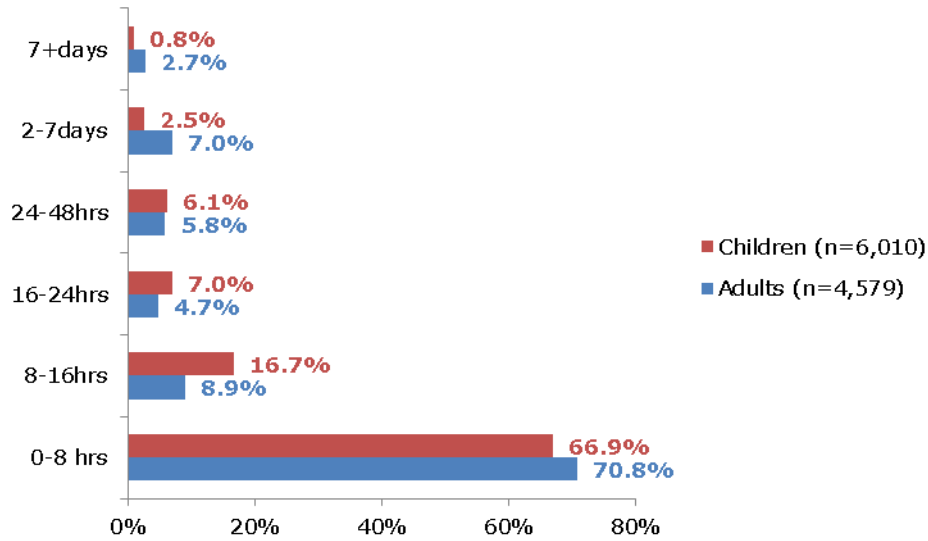
9. Who finds missing people? (Table E6)

Twenty five forces in England and Wales have been able to provide data indicating how the person was found, an increase from the 22 forces able to supply this in 2015/16. This shows a reduction in the proportion of incidents where the person was found by Police; 39.6 per cent, down from 43 per cent. There has been a substantial increase in the numbers who returned of their own free will; 24.5 per cent compared with just 8 per cent in 2015/16.

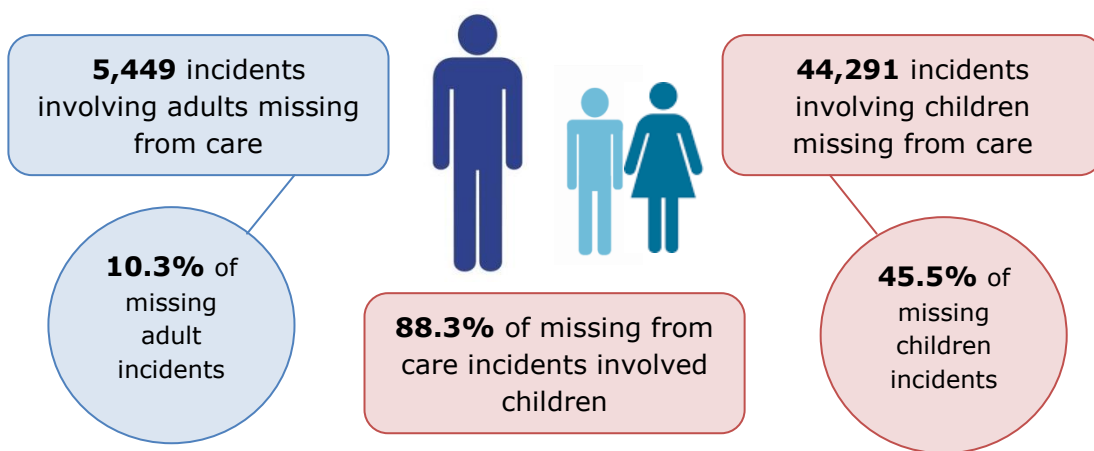**Figure 9.1: Who missing people are found by (n=25 forces)**
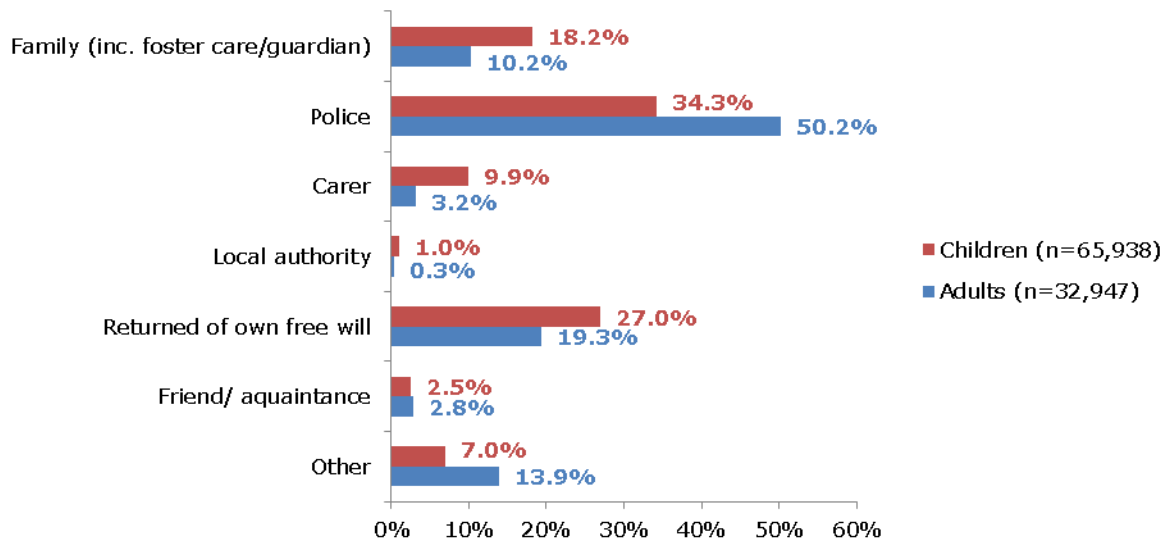
10. Missing from care (Tables F1, F2)

Twenty six police forces, including Scotland and Northern Ireland for the first time, provided data for those missing from care.

It should be noted that definitions of a child in care and an adult in care applied may differ to statutory definitions across the UK, as police reports are based on an officer's assessment and dependent on police force guidelines and training received.
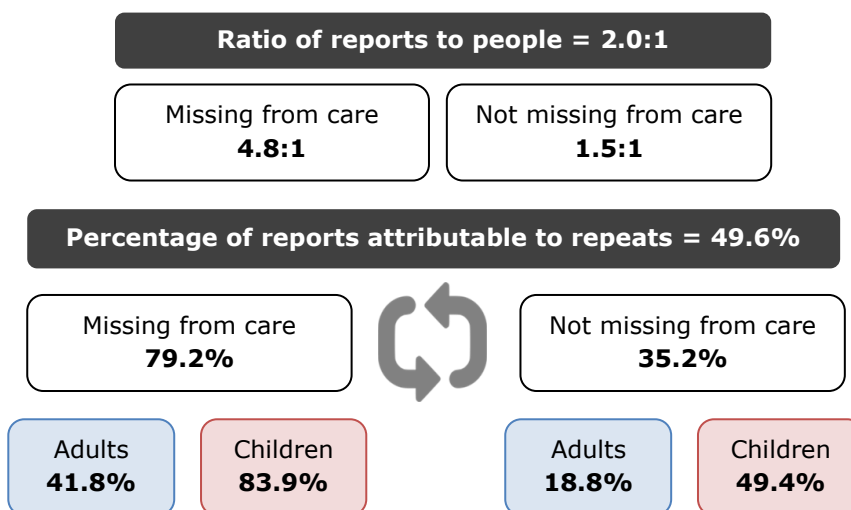
For the purposes of this report, 'missing from care' refers to reports where an officer has endorsed the child/adult as being 'in care', or where the address the person is missing from is known to be a residential care unit (including psychiatric care). This may therefore include individuals in a range of care situations, including those living in children's homes, in foster care, those living with parents/guardians in family homes, in health placements and in care homes or nursing homes.

Figure 10.1: Incidents attributable to those missing from care (n=26 UK forces)

5,449 incidents involving adults missing from care

10.3% of missing adult incidents

88.3% of missing from care incidents involved children

44,291 incidents involving children missing from care

45.5% of missing children incidents

A smaller number of forces (23 including Northern Ireland) were able to provide data for the number of individuals as well as the number of incidents for those missing from care, which shows that those missing from care are significantly more likely to go missing more than once.

Figure 10.2: Reports attributable to repeat missing people by care status (n=23 forces)

Ratio of reports to people = 2.0:1

Missing from care
4.8:1

Not missing from care
1.5:1

Percentage of reports attributable to repeats = 49.6%

Missing from care
79.2%

Not missing from care
35.2%

Adults
41.8%

Children
83.9%

Adults
18.8%

Children
49.4%

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11. Unidentified individuals, bodies and remains (Tables G1, G2)

UKMPU collects information from police forces on individuals who are found alive but cannot be immediately identified. These individuals may be unable to provide personal details at the time of being found for reasons such as injuries sustained or medical conditions, e.g. amnesia or dementia. Information is also collected from police forces and coroners on unidentified deceased bodies and remains (body parts), and from overseas law enforcement agencies where it is believed there may be a link to the UK. The UKMPU stores this information on its database, Hermes, and uses it, together with details of missing person reports to cross match (link) the missing and the found.

There has been a slight decrease in the number of cases reported to the UKMPU, with 66 unidentified cases recorded for UK police forces in 2016/17, a reduction of 15 from 2015/16. No cases were suspected to be children, although in 9 cases (4 bodies and 5 partial remains) only a very broad age range was specified (e.g. 1-100) which meant this could not be ruled out. A similar number of international cases were recorded (10 compared with 11 the previous year).

Figure 11.1: Number of unidentified cases found in 2016/17 reported to UKMPU by UK police forces
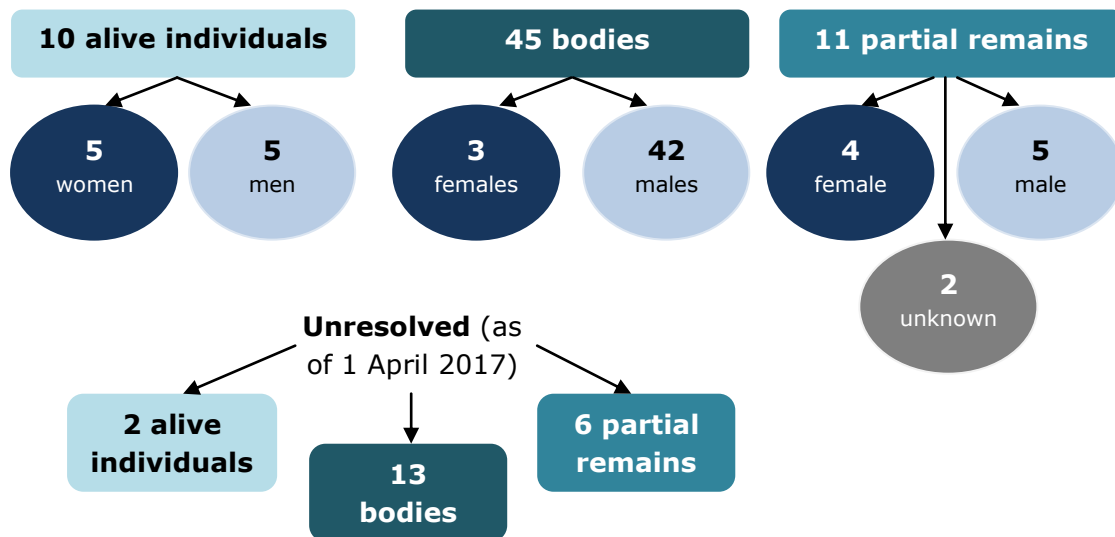
At the 31 March 2017, the UKMPU held a total of **913** unidentified cases from across the UK. This includes **734** bodies, **124** body parts and **61** alive individuals. This is a **decrease** in comparison to the 2015/16 total of 925. Including cases notified from the Crown Dependencies, Ministry of Defence Police and those found overseas, the UKMPU maintains details of **1,234** unresolved unidentified cases.

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12. Data quality and limitations

This report has been produced to provide a detailed assessment of missing person cases, including absent, for the financial year 2016/17, where possible identifying any trends in the data in comparison with data received for the financial year 2015/16.[19]

The data used has been taken from both police force command and control and missing person case management systems. For the first time data has been obtained from all 45 UK territorial police forces across England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. A variety of recording systems and practices are used, restricting the opportunity to compare data across police forces, for example, not all use the absent category and the interpretation of the absent definition differs across police forces, making it difficult to compare data directly.

Whilst every effort has been taken to standardise the reporting of data to UKMPU to allow year-on-year comparisons, changes to recording practices in some police forces mean that year-on-year comparisons should be considered with caution. Additionally, understanding of the nature of the data has improved, in some instances leading to changes in the way it is reported. This includes introduction of 'call data' in 2013/14, in recognition of the nature of the data previously reported as 'incident data' for 2011/12 and 2012/13.

The primary issue with the data supplied was that on some occasions it was incomplete, this was mainly due to varying IT systems being unable to generate all the data requested. Greater Manchester Police and Police Scotland could not provide a breakdown of gender and age or for ethnicity; this limits the ability to draw comparisons and identify national trends.

Incident data

For a small number of police forces, the number of incidents is higher or equal to the number of calls received. This will partly be due to calls to the police which involve the reporting of more than one person as missing at the same time. However, it will also be due to the manner in which data is extracted from a command and control system. Command and control systems use 'opening' and 'closing' codes for all occurrences, including missing persons. An opening code reflects information received at the time of a first call to the police, whereas a closing code reflects final information acquired during the course of the whole occurrence/incident. Searching data by using one or other code, or both codes, may produce different results. As an example, an incident may have an opening code of 'absent' but then be closed as 'missing'. UKMPU requests that closing codes only are used to report data.

Individual data

Data used in this report is provided to UKMPU under a statutory code of practice.[20] The code requires the provision of quarterly data returns to aid collation of the relevant information. In this report the four quarters' call and incident figures have been added together to produce annual call and incident figures. The majority of police forces have

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[19] National Crime Agency (2017) *Missing Person Data Report 2015/2016.*

[20] National Policing Improvement Agency (2009) *Code of Practice for the Police Service on the Collecting and Sharing of Data with Public Authorities.*

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been able to provide annual figures for individuals recorded as missing, which will exclude duplicates recorded across the quarters. However, three police forces have only been able to provide quarterly data which has been summed to show an annual figure. This summing means there may be some duplication within the individual figure, while the extent of this is likely to be minimal, based upon comparisons with other police forces' data, it cannot be estimated reliably. In 2017, a decision was taken to only collect data on an annual basis, which should remove this issue for future reports.

It is also possible there is some duplication of reports across police force areas. Part of this duplication may be due to the collection of information about missing and absent children in out of area placements (i.e. care placements outside a young person's home local authority). The level of duplication is assessed as having the potential to produce some over- and under-estimates in the report, and is particularly relevant to the missing from care section of this report.