

# Are you thinking of going missing?

### What is causing you to want to go missing?

Many issues that cause people to go missing, such as financial problems or relationship breakdowns can often be addressed without the need to leave. Often help is available to face these difficulties without having to go missing. However, if you do feel you need to leave, we remain here to help you explore your options and be safe.

Missing People's confidential helpline is open around the clock and we can help you to discuss your options and put you in touch with organisations who can support you. Call or text us on **116 000** to speak with us in total confidence.

A number of organisations who can help to support you in a variety of circumstances can also be found in our guidance sheet entitled **Who can help?** (you can download this from the [Adult Guidance homepage](#)).

### Will I be in trouble if I go missing?

If you are 18 years or older you have a legal right to go missing, unless you are detained ('sectioned') under the Mental Health Act, or you are legally in the care of another person. Whilst you will not be in trouble with the police, choosing to go missing may create a range of difficulties in dealing with your accommodation, finances, employment, and relationships.

### Will the police look for me?

Whilst adults have a right to go missing, if you are reported missing to the police by your family, friends, employer, landlord or anyone else, the police may search for you. The police's decision will depend on whether they believe you are at risk or in danger. However this does not mean you are in trouble or will be arrested, the police simply wish to be sure you are safe and not at in danger.

You can stop the police searching for you by going to a local police station and confirming your identity and that you are safe and well. They will not disclose your whereabouts to the person who reported you missing if you don't want them to. For further information see our information sheets on **The police investigation** and **How can I stop people**

looking for me? (you can download these from the [Adult Guidance homepage](#)).

Also, if you would like us to, we can help you to speak with the police. Contacting us is confidential, so you can talk through your options without identifying yourself or your location.

## Practical considerations

If you are thinking of going missing there are a number of practical considerations that it may be helpful to think about before you make a decision. If you wish to discuss your options or any of these practical considerations in greater detail then call or text Missing People's confidential 24 hour helpline on **116 000**, or email us at [116000@missingpeople.org.uk](mailto:116000@missingpeople.org.uk)

### Do you have a place to stay?

Before leaving you should consider whether you have a safe place to stay in the short and longer term. If you leave your current place of residence for a long period of time you may not be able to return, particularly if you rent your accommodation or it is a housing association property. For further guidance on this issue see [Finding accommodation when missing](#) (forthcoming).

## Finances

If you have debt or other financial problems a number of organisations can help you to overcome this. For details of these organisations see [Who can help?](#) (you can download this from the [Adult Guidance homepage](#)) or call us on **116 000** to discuss any problems you may be facing.

Many of your financial and practical affairs, such as banking, mortgages and insurance, may only be able to be administered by you. This can be a particular problem if you have people who are dependent on you, or if you have joint accounts or mortgages and other contracts with a spouse or partner.

Leaving your financial affairs unresolved can both cause great difficulty to those you leave behind who may depend on your or share contracts with you, and may create a challenging financial situation if you choose to return.

### What do you need to take with you?

As well as essential items such as medication, you may find that you need certain documents whilst you are away- this may include a passport or other form of identification.

If you are leaving to escape an unsafe situation at home then it is important to realise that the police will not be able to collect anything you leave behind. They will however accompany you back to your residence if you ask them to do so. If you are leaving to escape an unsafe situation you can contact the police or Missing People who will ensure you have the support and protection you need.

This guidance has been produced with the kind assistance of the Missing Persons Bureau

**116 000** is the number for advice, support, help and options if you, or someone you care about goes missing. Call or text the charity Missing People on 116 000 - it's free, 24 hour and confidential.

You can also email us at [116000@missingpeople.org.uk](mailto:116000@missingpeople.org.uk) for advice and support.