Fact Sheet

Tracing Missing Persons

This fact sheet aims to help those who have lost track of someone, usually a friend or relative, in the recent past. It is not intended for those looking for their ancestors or for adopted persons. Missing persons may include people who have decided to break with their family due to an underlying problem and it may therefore be necessary to carry out research with sensitivity. The suggestions listed below will give you some hints on how to approach the problem and some ideas of what sources are available.

This fact sheet has been produced by

Islington Central Reference Library
2 Fieldway Crescent
London
N5 1PF
E: centralref.library@islington.gov.uk
T: 020 7527 6931
F: 020 7527 6939
W: www.islington.gov.uk/libraries

December 2014
Urgent and worrying cases, including runaways and abductions

Report or Find a Missing Person  
https://www.gov.uk/report-missing-person  
This Government website giving practical advice on what to do if someone goes missing.

Local Police  
W: http://www.police.uk/  
If someone goes missing, contact anyone you think may know their whereabouts. Then, if you’re still concerned, you can contact your local police. You don’t have to wait 24 hours before contacting them. The police may ask you for: their photo; details of their friends or relatives; details of places they often visit; whether they had a medical condition; a sample of their DNA (e.g. from a toothbrush). With a relative’s permission, they may also ask to search the person’s home. The person will be recorded as missing and their details made available to other UK police forces within 48 hours.

If the police find a person aged under 18, their parent(s) or guardian(s) will usually be told their whereabouts unless police believe the child’s safety is at risk. If the person is aged over 18, the police won’t pass on their whereabouts without their permission.

UK Missing Persons Bureau  
New Scotland Yard, 10 Broadway, London, SW1H 0BG.  
T: 020 7230 1212 or 0800 496 3322  
E: enquiries@npia.pnn.police.uk;  
W: http://www.missingpersons.police.uk/  
The UK national and international point of contact for all missing person and unidentified body investigations. Provide support and advice to police forces in order to resolve cases and act as a hub for the exchange of information and expertise in this area. Maintain the national database of missing and unidentified records. You can search through some of our unidentified cases to see if you can help us establish their identity.

Missing Kids UK  
W: http://uk.missingkids.com  
Searchable by town, county, child’s name or alias. Information about what to do if your child is missing or has been abducted.

Missing People  
284, Upper Richmond Road West, London, SW14 7JE.  
T: 020 8392 4590 or Freefone 116 000  
E: info@missingpeople.org.uk.  
W: http://www.missingpeople.org.uk/  
This UK charity is dedicated to help missing people and support their families and run Runaway Helpline.
Runaway Helpline
T: 0808 800 70 70
Text 116 000
E: 116000@missingpeople.org.uk
This free confidential helpline is dedicated to children and young people under the age of 18 who have run away from home or care, or who have been forced to leave home. It offers advice and information to support and enable you to make the appropriate decisions. It will not contact anyone unless you give permission and will not trace calls.

Missing Abroad

British Red Cross International Tracing and Messaging Services
Aztec Row N1 0PW
T: 020 7704 5686
W: www.redcross.org.uk/what-we-do/finding-missing-family
To find your missing relatives as much information is needed as possible. They will help you fill out a form and send this information to the Red Cross or Red Crescent National Society in the country you think your relative is in, or to the International Committee of the Red Cross who will try to find your family. The ability to trace people depends on the information you can provide and local circumstances, including the security situation in the relevant country.

Missing Abroad
T: 020 7047 5060
E: operations@missingabroad.org
W: www.missingabroad.org
A free service established by the Lucie Blackman Trust to support the families of people who have gone missing abroad.

Other Resources for finding friends, colleagues, and relatives

The Salvation Army Family Tracing Service
101 Newington Causeway, London, SE1 6BN.
T: 0845 634 4747
E: family.tracing@salvationarmy.org.uk
W: www.salvationarmy.org.uk/uki/FamilyTracing
This tracing service exists to restore (or to sustain) family relationships by tracing relatives with whom contact has been lost.

Internet searches using engines such as Google, Yahoo, and Bing. Try Boolean searches (including “and”, “not” and “+”, or enclose names in quote marks) to focus your search. Try adding personal information, such as nicknames, schools and companies outside the quotes.

http://wikiworldbook.com/trace-lost-friends-and-relatives is a highly effective “message board” tool to find people using the internet and crowd-sourcing.
Facebook can be used without being a member. At www.facebook.com/find-friends, you can use the 'Search for People' to look up members and try 'Find People by Last Name' to look for family members. You can join Facebook to search for more details.

Friends Reunited (www.friendsreunited.co.uk) to look for people who attended your former schools, colleges or workplaces. You may not find the missing person, but you could find friends of that person who could help you.

LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com) can help you trace friends and former work colleagues.

Pipl (www.pipl.com) searches social networks such as Myspace, Facebook and Bebo, as well as blog posts.

The BT Directory Enquiries website at www.118500.com gives details of people with landlines, and you can also use the ‘Find a Person’ tab at http://www.btxchanges.com/. However many people now just have mobile phones or are ex directory and so will not be found.

Peopletracer (www.peopletracer.co.uk) provides a free 14-day trial with up to 25 free searches. Will search phone directories, electoral registers, as well as Births, Deaths or Marriages indexes.

192.com http://www.192.com/people/ also searches phone books, electoral registers, and birth, marriage, and death indexes. Whilst phone directory entries are free, you will need to register and buy credits in order to access fuller content.

Birth, Marriages and Death Indexes

If necessary, you can get useful information from birth, marriage, or death certificates. First you will have to search the General Register Office’s (GRO) indexes for the person/event concerned. You can access these on various websites, such as http://www.freebmd.org.uk/. Then, using the index number, order copies of relevant birth, marriage and death certificates from the GRO, https://www.gov.uk/order-copy-birth-death-marriage-certificate. By this means you may be able to discover, for instance, if someone had died, the address where this happened, and the name and address of the informant (who may have known the deceased). For further information see: http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Governmentcitizensandrights/Registeringlifeevents/Familyhistoryandresearch/DG_175464.

Wills

If you suspect the person you are looking for may have died, and you cannot find an entry in the death indexes (see above) it may be worth checking the index to wills kept by the Probate Registry, especially if the missing person may have died abroad on holiday, on business or while on duty with the armed services. You can do this online (for deaths after 1996), or by post (for deaths before 1996- see website for form). For more information go to https://www.gov.uk/wills-probate-inheritance/searching-for-probate-records. There is a charge (currently £10) for postal searches and/or copies of probate records.
Electoral registers

If you have an address, or near address, try searching the relevant voters’ registers. They may help you establish how long a person lived at an address, and who else lived there. The disappearance of a family member from the registers often means that they have moved home, married or died. The British Library holds a set of Electoral Registers for the UK from 1832 onwards. The collection is complete from 1947 onwards but is patchy before WW2. There may be copies in local reference libraries and county record offices.

For Islington, Electoral Services at 222 Upper Street, Tel: 020 7527 3110
http://www.islington.gov.uk/involved/involvedvoting/votingregister/Pages/default.aspx holds the current register, and back copies can be viewed at the Islington Local History Centre, Tel. 020 7527 7988
http://www.islington.gov.uk/islington/history-heritage/heritage_lhc/Pages/default.aspx

Please note that Islington Libraries no longer hold copies of the current voters’ register.

If you do not have an address, commercial websites such as Peopletracer and 192.com (see above) have the advantage of being searchable by name, unlike the paper registers which have no name index.
Every effort has been made to ensure the information included is accurate. We cannot accept responsibility if an organisation no longer exists or if information has changed.

Islington Library & Heritage Services

Archway Library                  Hamlyn House, Highgate Hill N19 5PH
Tel: 020 7527 7820               Email: archway.library@islington.gov.uk

Central Library                 2 Fieldway Crescent N5 1PF
Tel: 020 7527 6900               Email: centrallending.library@islington.gov.uk

Finsbury Library                245 St John Street EC1V 4NB
Tel: 020 7527 7960               Email: finsbury.library@islington.gov.uk

John Barnes Library             275 Camden Road N7 0JN
Tel: 020 7527 7900               Email: johnbarnes.library@islington.gov.uk

Lewis Carroll Library           166 Copenhagen Street N1 0ST
Tel: 020 7527 7936               Email: lewiscarroll.library@islington.gov.uk

Mildmay Library                 21-23 Mildmay Park N1 4NA
Tel: 020 7527 7880               Email: mildmay.library@islington.gov.uk

N4 Library                      26 Blackstock Road N4 2DW
Tel: 020 7527 7800               Email: n4.library@islington.gov.uk

North Library                   Manor Gardens N7 6JX
Tel: 020 7527 7840               Email: north.library@islington.gov.uk

South Library                   115-117 Essex Road N1 2SL
Tel: 020 7527 7860               Email: south.library@islington.gov.uk

West Library                    Bridgeman Road N1 1BD
Tel: 020 7527 7920               Email: west.library@islington.gov.uk