Missing persons: Data and analysis 2009/2010

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Foreword

This is the first report outlining the returns of data supplied by police forces to the Missing Persons Bureau in 2009-10 under the Code of Practice on the collecting and sharing of data on missing persons. As the ACPO lead for this area, I would like to express my gratitude to the Forces who have supplied the data to make this bulletin possible.

The document highlights the huge scale of the issue, with around 350,000 missing persons incidents reported to the police each year. It is essential to gain an understanding of the number of people who go missing in Britain when developing and providing services to help safeguard vulnerable people and locate those who are missing. Understanding the size of the problem also illustrates the impact on police resources and other agencies throughout the country. The Missing Persons Bureau provides advice and assistance on how police forces can increase safeguarding whilst making significant cost savings in this area. The fact is that nearly 2,000 people remain outstanding a year going missing and approximately 20 people a week are found dead after being reported missing. These figures illustrate the importance of ensuring the police service takes a mature and responsible approach to investigating each of these incidents at the time of reporting and works with partners to uphold our safeguarding responsibilities.

Although this statistical bulletin includes estimates, it is a welcome first step towards a greater understanding of this area. This work will provide long term benefits by increasing the quality and availability of information to assist our understanding of how many people go missing and how to reduce the number who come to harm. I hope this document will be of value to police forces and the other agencies and charities involved in developing and delivering services to those who are missing and family and friends who have unanswered questions.

I am looking forward to working with police forces and agencies to improve our ongoing commitment in securing an accurate picture of missing persons. Your assistance with this is hugely appreciated.

Assistant Chief Constable Phil Thompson – ACPO Missing Persons Lead

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Executive summary

The estimated total number of missing incidents recorded by the police in 2009/10 was approximately 356,000. This means that police in Britain record about 1,000 missing reports every day.

Some individuals may be reported missing more than once. The data within this report indicates that adjusting for instances of individuals going missing repeatedly approximately 200,000 people went missing in 2009/10.

The vast majority of those people who go missing return or are found quickly, data within this report indicates that between 55 to 80 per cent of missing people return within 24 hours. Only around one per cent will remain outstanding after one year, approximately 2,000 people.

Some people may come to harm while they are missing. Given the estimate of 200,000 people going missing per annum the data indicates that approximately between eight and thirty five people will be found dead each week after being reported missing.

Introduction

This bulletin presents information relating to missing persons[1] and unidentified bodies under the code of practice on the collection of missing persons data made under Section 39 and 39A of the Police Act 1996 (more details of the background of this Code are available in appendix A). The report covers missing persons and unidentified bodies reported to the police in the period 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010 which is the first year that the code has applied. Prior to the development of the Code there was no national requirement for police forces to record incidents of missing persons or a mechanism for them to be collated nationally.

Data for this bulletin are taken from the Missing Persons Database held by the Missing Persons Bureau. Police forces in England and Wales are required under the Code of Practice to supply quarterly data on the number of missing persons and unidentified bodies reported to the police for inclusion on the database. Other UK forces, e.g. Scotland can supply data on a voluntary basis. The data are used to measure the extent of missing and unidentified incidents in England and Wales and to inform decision-making by the police, local authorities and non-governmental agencies on the provision of services to help find missing people and safeguard vulnerable people.

There are limitations with the data used to produce the report which are set out in appendix A. In particular, not all forces provided data and of those that did some only provided partial returns.

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[1] The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) definition of a missing person is "anyone whose whereabouts is unknown whatever the circumstances of disappearance. They will be considered missing until located and their well-being or otherwise established." A person does not have to be missing for 24 hours before they can be reported as missing to the police.

Missing incidents in 2009/10

Sixteen forces in England and Wales supplied data on missing persons reported to the police for all four quarters in 2009/10. One force supplied an aggregated figure for the year rather than data split by quarter (see Table 1).

Across the 16 forces that returned complete data there were 183,481 missing persons incidents reported to the police. The average number of missing persons incidents per 1,000 population was 6.9. The Metropolitan Police Service account for around half of all these incidents and if this force is excluded the average number of missing persons incidents per 1,000 population reduces to 4.9.

Table 1: Missing persons incidents reported to the police in 2009/10 in forces providing data for the whole year

Force	Missing incidents reported to the police 2009/10					
	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Total	Per 1,000 population[2]
Avon & Somerset	2,035	1,255	1,159	1,106	5,555	3.5
Cambridgeshire	531	581	509	585	2,206	2.8
Cheshire	966	726	795	782	3,269	3.3
Derbyshire	1,093	1,049	733	747	3,622	3.6
Hertfordshire	412	449	326	279	1,466	1.3
Humberside	1,638	1,533	1,232	1,252	5,655	6.2
Lancashire	2,969	2,853	2,561	2,652	11,035	7.6
Leicestershire	1,596	1,602	1,435	1,514	6,147	6.2
Lincolnshire	710	663	466	210	2,049	2.9
Merseyside	3,441	3,328	3,242	3,371	13,382	9.9
Metropolitan	21,711	21,800	24,335	22,815	90,661	11.7
South Wales	1,783	1,703	1.429	1,493	6,408	5.1
Suffolk	957	951	756	717	3,381	4.7
Surrey	454	443	418	413	1,728	1.6
Sussex	3,187	3,244	2,678	2,898	12,007	7.7
West Mercia	1,673	1,220	1,354	1,638	5,885	4.9
West Yorkshire	-	-	-	-	9,025	4.1
Total					**183,481**	**6.9**

Seventeen forces provided partial data returns covering three quarters or less. The data provided are presented in Table 2 overleaf.

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[2] Population figures from Office for National Statistic (ONS) mid-year estimates for forces in England and Wales.

Table 2: Missing incidents recorded in 2009-10 for forces who provided data for one, two or three quarters

Force	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Bedfordshire	899	-	-	-
Cleveland	-	-	1,618	1,125
Cumbria	-	571	486	467
Devon and Cornwall	2,719	2,675	-	-
Essex	1,998	-	-	-
Greater Manchester	-	4,687	4,875	-
Gwent	-	-	431	-
Hampshire	-	1,719	1,781	2,156
Kent	3,000	-	-	-
Norfolk Constabulary	696	680	551	-
Northamptonshire	763	-	-	-
Nottinghamshire	-	-	1,119	1,159
South Yorkshire	1,991	-	-	-
Staffordshire	-	1,399	1,155	-
Thames Valley	2,334	2,295	-	-
Warwickshire	472	447	-	406
North Wales	431	572	-	-

Note: "-" represents missing data

Nine forces did not submit any data for 2009/10. This is the first year that the code of practice has come into force and some forces require more time to adapt processes and systems to manage their recording and management of missing persons reports.

The Bureau is working with police forces to increase compliance and to provide support to enable them to comply with the minimum of manual effort. For example, by supporting the development of computer systems to automatically produce the quarterly return figures.

Estimating the total number of missing persons incidents reported to the police in 2009/10

As not all forces returned data on the number of missing persons incidents they recorded in 2009/10 it is not possible to state the total number of missing persons across England and Wales in the given year.

It is possible to estimate the possible number of incidents using the data from those forces that provided a full or partial return for the year. Where forces supplied one, two or three returns an overall figure for the year has been estimated based on the data that was supplied. The average number of missing persons incidents per quarter for each force was calculated and then used as an estimate for the quarters where no data were provided. The average figures used is provided in the table in Appendix B.

For the forces that did not supply any data an estimate of the number of missing persons incidents they were likely to record in the year was calculated using the average number of incidents per 1,000 of the population from the forces who have supplied a full data set for the year excluding the Metropolitan Police Service (4.9). These estimated figures are shown in the table in Appendix C.

This method does have its limitations, as it does not account for the demography of the force or other factors that may impact on the number of missing persons incidents likely to be recorded.

Given the data supplied by forces and the estimates based on this data an overall estimate for the total number of incidents in England and Wales can be produced. The total number of missing incidents estimated[3] to have been recorded by the police in England and Wales in the financial year 2009/10 is around 329,000. This equates to an estimated 6.0 missing incidents per 1,000 population.

The same process was completed for the data supplied by Scottish forces.

Two forces in Scotland supplied data on missing persons reported to the police for all four quarters in 2009/10. (see Table 3).

Table 3: Missing persons incidents reported to the police in Scotland 2009/10 in forces providing data for the whole year

Force	Missing incidents reported to the police 2009/10					
	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Total	Per 1,000 population[4]
Grampian	650	633	457	558	2,298	4.4
Northern	141	127	126	125	519	1.7
Total					**2,817**	**3.4**

Two Scottish forces provided partial data returns covering three quarters or less. The data provided are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Missing incidents recorded in Scotland 2009/10 for forces who provided data for one, two or three quarters

Force	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Central Scotland		637	544	620
Dumfries & Galloway	238	-	-	-

Four Scottish forces did not submit any data for 2009/10. This is the first year that the code of practice has come into force and some forces require more time to adapt processes and systems to manage their recording and management of

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[3] Not all forces were able to supply information on the number of missing incidents but estimates have been calculated for these forces based on the averaged data from other forces and the force population.

[4] Population figures from ACPO/ACPOS official police directory 2010 for Scotland

missing persons reports. The Bureau is working with police forces to increase compliance and to provide support to enable forces to comply.

Across the 16 forces in England and Wales that returned complete data there were 183,481 missing persons incidents reported to the police. The average number of missing persons incidents per 1,000 population was 6.9. The Metropolitan Police Service account for around half of all these incidents and if this force is excluded the average number of missing persons incidents per 1,000 population reduces to 4.9. Across the two forces in Scotland that returned complete data there were 2,817 missing persons incidents reported to the police. Estimates for the six other Scottish forces were produced using the same process applied to the forces in England and Wales.

The estimated figure for Britain[5] is around 354,000. This means that police in Britain record about 1,000 missing reports every day.

It is not compulsory for police forces in Scotland, Northern Ireland or the various non-geographic forces to comply with the code and send data to the Bureau. However, the code is available for adoption on a voluntary basis by these forces.

Data, including estimates and calculations of the number of missing incidents per 1,000 of the population are available for all English, Welsh and Scottish police forces in Appendix D, together with population figures for all of these police forces.

A geographical representation of the data and estimates in tables 2-4 is available in Appendix F. This is a heat map showing the approximate number of missing person incidents reported to police forces across Britain (Figure 3).

A map has also been created to show the number of missing incidents per 1,000 population where this can be estimated using data from the quarterly returns and population figures from the Office of National Statistics (Figure 4). This map is shown in Appendix G.

Estimating the total number of missing individuals
The number of missing incidents will not directly equate to the total number of **individuals** reported missing during the year, as some people are reported missing more than once.

Not all forces are able to supply information on the number of separate individuals who went missing. Five forces have however been able to provide this information These forces supplied details of the total number of missing incidents and the total number of missing individuals for the financial year 2009/10. Dividing the number of incidents by the number of people who went missing provides an indication of the percentage of missing incidents which relate to repeat incidents by individuals who have previously been reported missing.

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[5] For England, Wales and Scotland. Data was not available for Northern Ireland.

Table 5: Estimated number of incidents and individuals for 2009-10

Force	Total incidents	% of cases attributable to individuals who only went missing once	% of cases attributable to repeat incidents
West Mercia	3,702	58	42
Derbyshire	747	47	53
Leicestershire	4,369	49	51
Nottinghamshire	5,336	66	34
Hampshire	1,877	51	49
Total	**16,031**	Average 54%	Average 46%

The information available indicates that, on average across these five forces, the number of individuals reported missing make up 54 per cent of the total number of missing persons incidents; in other words repeat missing persons account for just under a half of missing incidents.

Within the five forces that supplied data, the percentage of individuals ranged from 47 to 66 per cent of reports. Assuming the pattern in these forces was similar to that experienced in the other forces where data were not available, these figures could be used to provide an upper and lower estimate of the number of individuals who go missing nationally. This would indicate a lower estimate of around 167,000 and an upper estimate of around 235,000 individuals for the year (see Table 7).

Table 6: High, medium and low estimated number of incidents and individuals for 2009/10

Force	Population	Estimated No of Missing Incidents	No of Missing individuals Low Estimate	No of Missing individuals Mid Estimate	No of Missing individuals High Estimate
England &Wales	54,809,060	329,000	155,000	178,000	217,000
Scotland	5,154,850	25,000	12,000	14,000	17,000
Total[6]	**59,963,910**	**354,000**	**166,000**	**191,000**	**234,000**

*Note: Figures have been rounded to the nearest 1,000 to reflect the fact that they are estimates

It is likely that both the number of missing incidents and missing individuals are underestimates of the actual national picture as police forces advise that some missing person cases may be recorded on command and control systems under

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[6] This does not include figures for Isle of Man, Channel Islands forces or Northern Ireland which did not provide any information.

other incident types (e.g. concern for welfare or absent) in which case they will not be recorded as a missing person, so will not be captured in these figures.

Using this figure it can be estimated that in Britain around 200,000 people go missing a year. However, the rate at which people go missing is likely to vary from force to force depending on the demographics of the force population and what procedures are in place to reduce instances of people who repeatedly go missing.

Who goes missing?

Thirty forces provided information on the demographic breakdown of those who went missing for at least one of the quarters. Twenty eight forces were English or Welsh and two forces were Scottish. No data has been estimated, the data provided by forces has been collated in order to provide the estimates. Although these data only represent a partial picture of those who went missing they provide an indication of the demographic make-up of people reported missing to the police and are therefore reported below. Some types of areas may be over or under represented (e.g. urban or rural areas) and this may influence the demographic breakdown seen. The data received from forces comprises 106,684 incidents.

Gender
The data (n=106,684) provided by thirty forces suggests that approximately equal numbers of men and women go missing. The quarterly returns show 52 per cent of the individuals was male and 48 per cent female. This is consistent with the make up of the general population (49 per cent male and 51 per cent female). [7]

Age
In total children and young people aged under 18 years made up 64 per cent of the missing reports. The data suggest that people in the 15-17 year old age group went missing most frequently, with this group making up 34 per cent of the missing reports (see figure 2 overleaf and the table in Appendix E). These figures could include multiple incidents relating to the same young person if they have gone missing repeatedly.

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[7] Population figures from ONS mid-year estimates 2009 for England and Wales.

Figure 1:

Missing incidents as a percentage of the population in England and Wales
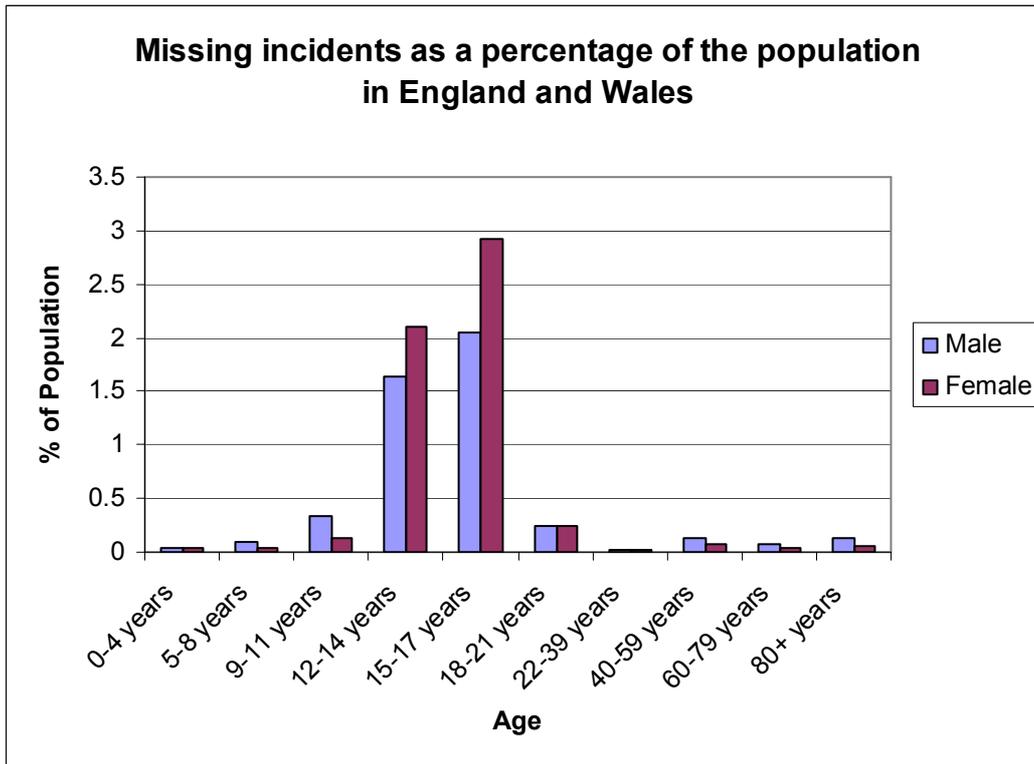
Note: Data used was that supplied by the 28 English and Welsh forces for 2009/10, compared to the population figures[8] for those 28 force areas.

Figure 2:

Missing incidents recorded by the police in 2009/10 by age group

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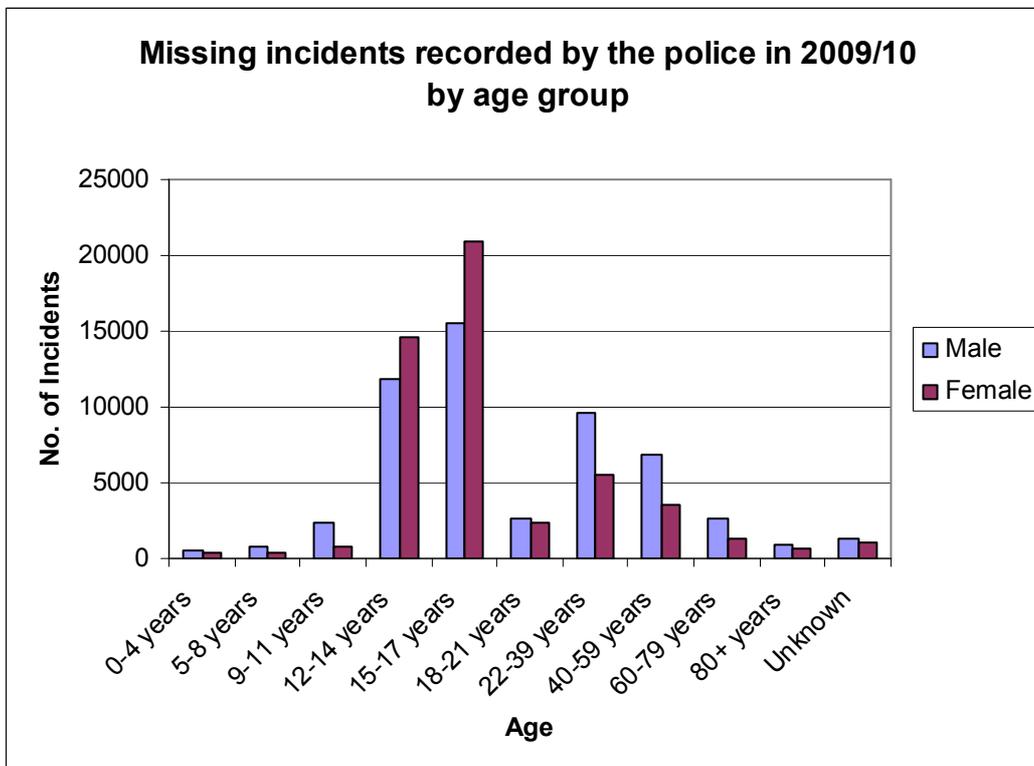
[8] Population figures from ONS mid-year estimates 2009 for England and Wales.

The data are supplied by forces aggregated into specified age groups.[9] The number of incidents of missing persons recorded in each age group is shown in figure 2 above.

An analysis by age and gender indicates that although overall a similar number of men (52 per cent) and women (48 per cent) went missing, for young people aged 12 to 17 years more females were recorded missing by the police than males. Conversely, more males were recorded missing than females in each of the age groups over the age of 18 years. This data supports previous research findings[10] and also suggests that for the age group 0 to 11 more boys go missing than girls, for example, 74 per cent of missing reports for the 9 to 11 age group relate to boys (please see appendix E for a table of this data).

How long do people go missing for?

Information on the length of time people were missing is not included within the quarterly returns. However, four police forces that use the Compact system to record their data provided details of the number of missing people who returned within 24 hours for the year 2009/10. The data is extracted only from their Compact systems and does not include the cases of missing incidents which have only been recorded on their command and control system. In some cases if a missing person is found or returns quickly the case is not transferred onto the Compact system but remains only on the command and control system.

Table 7: Proportion of missing people who returned within 24 hours in 2009/10 for four forces

Force	Missing incidents recorded on Compact	% on Compact returned within 24 hours
West Mercia	3,681	80
Bedfordshire	1,074	55
Lincolnshire	2,261	79
Derbyshire	3,516	74

Across the four forces that supplied data, the percentage of missing people who returned within 24 hours ranged from 55 to 80 per cent of all those reported missing. These data are in line with previous research which indicated that the majority (three quarters) of missing persons were found or returned within 48 hours and only one per cent remained outstanding after a year.[11]

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[9] In an attempt to reduce the data burden on forces, they are asked to supply data in these age groups rather than for every individual case.
[10]Rees, G. & Lee, J. (2005). Still running II, findings from the second national survey of young runaways. London: *The Children's Society* and Missing People – Research to date.
[11] Tarling, R., & Burrows, J. (2004). The nature and outcome of going missing: the challenge of developing effective risk assessment procedures. *International Journal of Police Science and Management.* Vol. 6, No.1 16-26.

Fatal outcomes

Data on the outcome of each incident are not included within the quarterly returns. However, recent figures have been obtained from West Mercia, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Hampshire police forces relating to fatal missing outcomes for the financial year 2009-10, and these are shown in table 9 (below).

Some of the forces show a lower proportion of cases resulting in a fatal outcome than others. This may be due to the differences in the type of missing persons reported to the forces and other demographic or geographic differences (for example, location/number of suicide hot spots). More data would be needed to provide a more accurate picture.

Table 8: The number of fatal outcomes recorded in 2009-10[12]

	West Mercia[13]	**Leics**	**Notts[14]**	**Derby**	**Hants**
No of Fatal Outcomes	20	5	8[15]	9	21
Percentage of Incidents	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.3
Percentage of Individuals	0.9	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.6

These figures are comparable to previous research[16] which suggests that less than one per cent of missing person cases were found dead, in a sample of over 32,000 cases from the Metropolitan Police Service.

Given the estimate of 200,000 people going missing per annum, these findings suggest that between 400 and 1,800 missing people will be found dead each year in Great Britain. More research needs to be completed to provide better estimates and a deeper understanding of this area.

Some of the individuals who are found dead by the police may not immediately be identified, perhaps due to not having any documents on them when they are found. The link between missing and unidentified cases is very important as the Bureau uses details of both kinds of cases to help identify these unidentified people, unidentified bodies and remains and find missing people. Some more information and data on the number of unidentified people, unidentified bodies and remains may be found in appendix H.

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[12] Total number of reports over all five forces = 16,031

[13] Based on missing persons cases held on their COMPACT computer system which currently records only 52 per cent of missing reports, 7108 reports were recorded on command and control for that period.

[14] Data extracted from Nottinghamshire Police's Compact Missing Persons Database for the period 01/04/2009 - 31/03/2010.

[15] Deaths have been identified by searching the Found debrief report for 'unexplained death' in the 'harmed' text box. Other misper deaths may have occurred where the Found debrief was not populated in this way, such incidents (if any) will not be included in this data.

[16] Newiss, G. (2006). Understanding the risk of going missing: estimating the risk of fatal outcomes in cancelled cases. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management,* Vol. 29, pp 246-260.

Future Data Collection

This report highlights a number of limitations relating to the data. However, this is the first time this data has been collated and work is ongoing with forces to improve compliance with the Code of Practice and improve the data quality.

Data collection from police forces under the Code of Practice could potentially benefit from review including consultation with stakeholders and possibly the development of an action plan to increase compliance with the Code, and extend the data supplied, for example the data returns from the Code do not cover the duration for which people are missing.

Appendix A: Notes on statistics used in this bulletin

Background on data collection

When the UK Missing Persons Bureau became part of the NPIA in 2008 it was identified that at that time it was not possible to measure the total number of missing people in the UK as there was no national collation of the number of people reported missing to the police. The last government and the current government together with an All Party Parliamentary Group have all identified the need for comprehensive data on missing people.

The Bureau subsequently developed, under guidance of the ACPO lead DAC Richard Bryan, and put into place, a Code of Practice for the Police Service on collecting and sharing data on missing persons[17]. The aim of the Code is to facilitate operational cross border work and provide a clearer understanding of the number of missing people in the UK. The Code requires police forces in England and Wales to submit case details to the Bureau and to provide prompt updates and case cancellations (when the missing person has been found). It also requires forces to send information quarterly on the number of recorded missing incidents and, where available, additional data on the demographic breakdown (e.g. age and gender) and categorisation (e.g. risk assessment and location they are missing from). The quarterly return is the number of missing incidents recorded by the police in that quarter; it does not include people who were recorded missing in the previous quarter and who have not been found.

A template for the quarterly return was provided to forces to standardise the information being received and enable meaningful analysis to be undertaken. The minimum submission accepted was the total number of incidents, as some forces need to implement changes to data collection procedures to enable them to provide further details without significant manual effort.

The Code of Practice came into force in April 2009 with a staged implementation process to provide police forces with enough time to respond to the requirements of the Code. This staged implementation afforded forces who could not automatically produce data on missing persons the time to obtain or configure IT systems which could provide the data with minimal manual effort.

All police forces in England and Wales were required to comply with the code by April 2010. The Code is available for adoption on a voluntary basis by other police forces within the UK, for example, Scottish police forces, Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), British Transport Police, military police forces etc.

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[17] 'Missing persons' is a policing term used to describe the police business area relating to people who are missing. The term 'missing people' is also used in this document and should not be confused with the leading charity in this area called "Missing People".

Limitations of the data

Although the majority of police forces supplied data there are a number of limitations, in particular:

- Not all forces provided data to the Bureau. 35 of the English and Welsh forces and four of the Scottish forces provided at least one quarterly return.
- Many of the forces who provided data did not give returns for each quarter in the year. 16 English and Welsh forces and two Scottish forces provided a return for all four quarters.

There are also potential issues with the quality and completeness of the data returned. Data has been taken from police forces command and control computer systems. This is because although many forces have dedicated missing persons systems the figures from these systems may not provide a full picture and may underestimate the total number of cases reported to that force. This underestimation is caused by cases which are closed (i.e. because the person has been found) on the force command and control system, before they can be transferred onto a dedicated missing persons system.

Looking at the data received from forces in some cases it appears that as little as 30 per cent of the total number of incidents was transferred onto their dedicated system, the average being around 60 per cent. Many of the forces that provided figures from command and control also provided data from their dedicated missing person's computer systems but this was not utilised within the calculations to avoid double counting.

Where only data from dedicated missing persons systems was provided this was not used as it would have been unlikely to have been comparable to the data provided on command and control systems. Two forces supplied data from their Niche RMS[18] system. This system is used for both command and control and to record missing persons and this data was used as the two forces advised the figures supplied provide a complete picture of their missing persons incidents.

It should be recognised that even figures taken from command and control systems may also be underestimations as one force indicated that as many as 60 per cent of the missing persons cases on their system were misclassified (e.g. recorded as 'concern for welfare' or 'concern for safety' instead of 'missing person'). Additionally, not all missing people are officially reported to the police or recorded as missing and it is beyond the scope of this report to identify the extent of the number of missing people who are unreported to the police.

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[18] Niche Records Management System is a computer system used by four police forces. Niche RMS is used to manage all police data for various different functions within a single system.

Accounting for incomplete data returns

Where forces have not sent a return for every quarter of the year, an overall figure for the year has been estimated based on the average of the data they had supplied.

Where forces have not submitted any data to the Bureau, an estimate of missing incidents has been calculated. This estimate is based on the force's population, and the average number of incidents per 1,000 of the population calculated for forces which had supplied data for all quarters (excluding the Metropolitan Police to avoid distorting the data). Population figures were taken from ONS mid-year estimates for England and Wales, and from the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO)/Association of Chief Police Officers Scotland (ACPOS) official police directory 2010 for the Scottish forces.

The method for arriving at national estimates is not without its limitations because figures for many of the forces have been wholly or partially estimated. The accuracy of the calculations may also be affected by the differences in recording practices used within police forces, such as the incomplete transfer of cases from command and control, to missing person systems. Calculations may be further distorted by the number of individuals who have gone missing repeatedly during the period in question. Although everything has been done to ensure as accurate a picture as possible, estimated data has its limitations and this should be borne in mind when reviewing the figures and conclusions within this report.

Appendix B: Missing incident estimates for partial returns

Table 9: Missing incident estimates for partial returns from England and Wales

Force	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Av*	Estimated Incidents	Per 1,000
Bedfordshire	899	899	899	899	899	3,596	5.9
Cleveland	1372	1372	1618	1125	1372	5,486	9.8
Cumbria	508	571	486	467	508	2,032	4.1
Devon and Cornwall	2719	2675	2697	2697		10,788	6.5
Essex	1998	1998	1998	1998	1998	7,992	4.6
Greater Manchester	4781	4687	4875	4781	4781	19,124	7.4
Gwent	431	431	431	431	431	1,724	3.1
Hampshire	1885	1719	1781	2156	1885	7,391	4.0
Kent	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000	12,000	7.2
Norfolk Constabulary	696	680	551	642	642	2,569	3.0
Northamptonshire	763	763	763	763	763	3,052	4.5
Nottinghamshire	1139	1139	1119	1159	1139	4,556	4.2
South Yorkshire	1991	1991	1991	1991	1991	7,964	6.0
Staffordshire	1277	1399	1155	1277	1277	5,108	4.8
Thames Valley	2334	2295	2315	2315	2315	9,259	4.2
Warwickshire	472	447	442	406	442	1,767	3.3
North Wales	431	572	502	502	502	2,007	3.0
Total	**26,696**	**26,638**	**26,622**	**26,609**		**106,414**	**5.3**

*Average

Table 10: Missing incident estimates for partial returns from Scotland

Force	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Average	Estimated Incidents	Per 1,000
Central Scotland	600	637	544	620	600	2,401	8.5
Dumfries & Galloway	238	238	238	238	238	952	6.4
Total	**838**	**875**	**782**	**858**		**3,353**	**7.8**

Appendix C: Missing incident estimates for nil returns

Table 11: Estimated number of missing incidents for forces who did not supply any data

Force	Population	Per 1,000	Estimated Incidents
City of London	11,487	4.9	56
Dorset	710,202	4.9	3,480
Durham	606,875	4.9	2,974
Dyfed Powys	506,328	4.9	2,481
Gloucestershire	589,132	4.9	2,887
North Yorkshire	796,454	4.9	3,903
Wiltshire	654,925	4.9	3,209
Northumbria	1,417,403	4.9	6,945
West Midlands	2,638,658	4.9	12,929

Appendix D: Data for all police forces for 2009/10

Table 12: Missing Incidents in England and Wales 2009-10

Force	Population	No of Missing Incidents	Incidents Per 1,000 Population
Avon and Somerset	1,605,623	5,555	3.5
Bedfordshire*	605,253	3,596	5.9
Cambridgeshire	778,186	2,206	2.8
Cheshire	1,005,684	3,269	3.3
City of London**	11,487	59	5.1
Cleveland	559,984	5,486	9.8
Cumbria	495,043	2,032	4.1
Derbyshire	1,004,369	3,622	3.6
Devon and Cornwall*	1,671,361	10,777	6.4
Dorset**	710,202	3,656	5.1
Durham**	606,875	3,124	5.1
Dyfed Powys**	506,328	2,606	5.1
Essex*	1,720,375	7,992	4.6
Gloucestershire**	589,132	3,033	5.1
Greater Manchester*	2,600,900	19,124	7.4
Gwent*	560,409	1,724	3.1
Hampshire	1,869,775	7,391	4.0
Hertfordshire	1,095,470	1,466	1.3
Humberside	917,637	5,655	6.2
Kent*	1,665,855	12,000	7.2
Lancashire	1,445,701	11,035	7.6
Leicestershire	987,784	6,147	6.2
Lincolnshire	697,925	2,049	2.9
Merseyside Police	1,350,577	13,382	9.9
Metropolitan	7,742,068	90,661	11.7
Norfolk*	853,368	2,569	3.0
Northamptonshire*	683,791	3,052	4.5
Northumbria**	1,417,403	7,296	5.1
North Wales Police*	678,750	2,007	3.0
North Yorkshire**	796,454	4,100	5.1
Nottinghamshire*	1,077,371	4,556	4.2
South Wales	1,253,832	6,408	5.1
South Yorkshire*	1,317,311	7,964	6.0
Staffordshire*	1,067,597	5,108	4.8
Suffolk	713,973	3,381	4.7
Surrey	1,113,108	1,728	1.6
Sussex Police	1,561,379	12,007	7.7
Thames Valley*	2,225,601	9,259	4.2
Warwickshire*	535,073	1,767	3.3
West Mercia	1,189,751	5,885	4.9
West Midlands**	2,638,658	13,583	5.1
West Yorkshire*	2,226,712	9,025	4.1
Wiltshire**	654,925	3,371	5.1
Total E&W	**54,809,060**	**330,713**	**6.0**

*Forces which have not sent a return for every quarter of the year. For these forces an overall figure for the year has been estimated based on the data they have supplied.
**Forces which have not submitted any data to the Bureau. For these forces an estimate of missing incidents has been calculated based on the force's population.

Table 13: Missing Incidents in Scotland 2009-10

Force	Population	No of Missing Incidents	Per 1,000 Population
Central Scotland*	281,000	2,401	8.5
Dumfries & Galloway*	148,000	952	6.4
Fife**	356,740	1,762	4.9
Grampian	520,000	2,298	4.4
Lothian & Borders**	911,570	4,503	4.9
Northern	300,000	519	1.7
Strathclyde**	2,244,540	11,089	4.9
Tayside**	393,000	1,942	4.9
Total	**5,154,850**	**25,466**	**4.9**

*Forces which have not sent a return for every quarter of the year. For these forces an overall figure for the year has been estimated based on the data they have supplied.
**Forces which have not submitted any data to the Bureau. For these forces an estimate of missing incidents has been calculated based on the force's population.

Missing Incidents in Other Forces 2009-10

As no returns were received from Guernsey, Isle of Man, States of Jersey or Northern Ireland figures for these forces have not been included within this report. The Code of Practice only requires forces in England and Wales to submit data to the Missing Persons Bureau.

Table 14: Missing Incidents in Britain 2009-10

Force	Population	No of Missing Incidents
England & Wales	54,809,060	330,713
Scotland	5,154,850	25,446
Total	**61,893,910**	**356,157**

Appendix E: Gender of Missing Incidents by Age Group

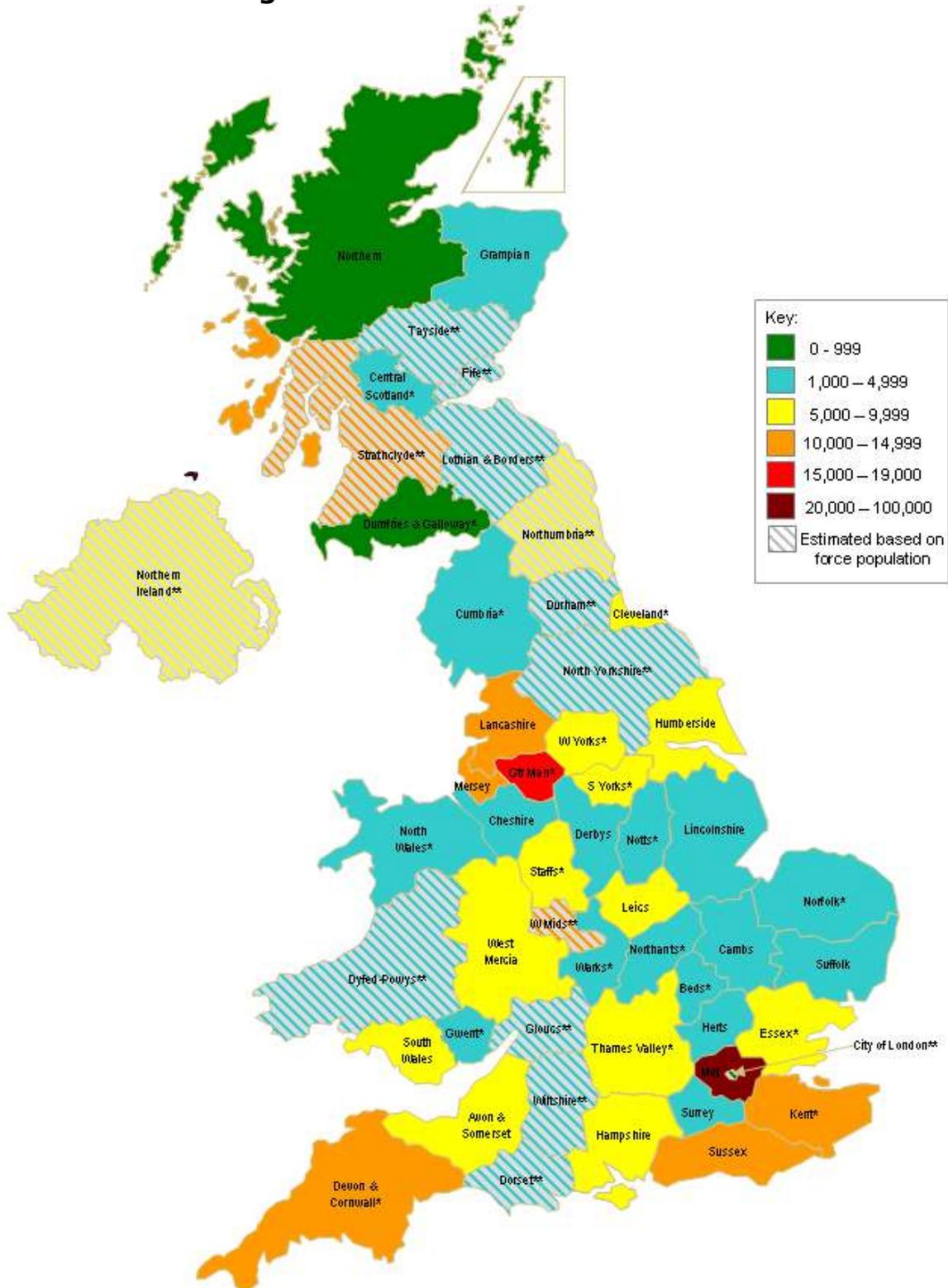**Table 15: Gender of Missing Incidents by Age Group[19] (n=106,684)**

Age group	Male	Female	% Male	% Female	Total
0-4 years	484	342	59	41	826
5-8 years	781	392	67	33	1,173
9-11 years	2325	807	74	26	3,132
12-14 years	11904	14632	45	55	26,536
15-17 years	15586	20961	43	57	36,547
18-21 years	2573	2370	52	48	4,943
22-39 years	9570	5530	63	37	15,100
40-59 years	6860	3595	66	34	10,455
60-79 years	2650	1325	67	33	3,975
80+ years	903	689	57	43	1,592
Unknown	1341	1064	56	44	2,405
Total	**54,977**	**51,707**			**106,684**

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[19] Total number of reports = 106,684

Appendix F: Map of Missing Incidents
Figure 3: Missing persons incidents by force 2009-10 including estimates and missing data

Key:
- 0 - 999
- 1,000 – 4,999
- 5,000 – 9,999
- 10,000 – 14,999
- 15,000 – 19,000
- 20,000 – 100,000
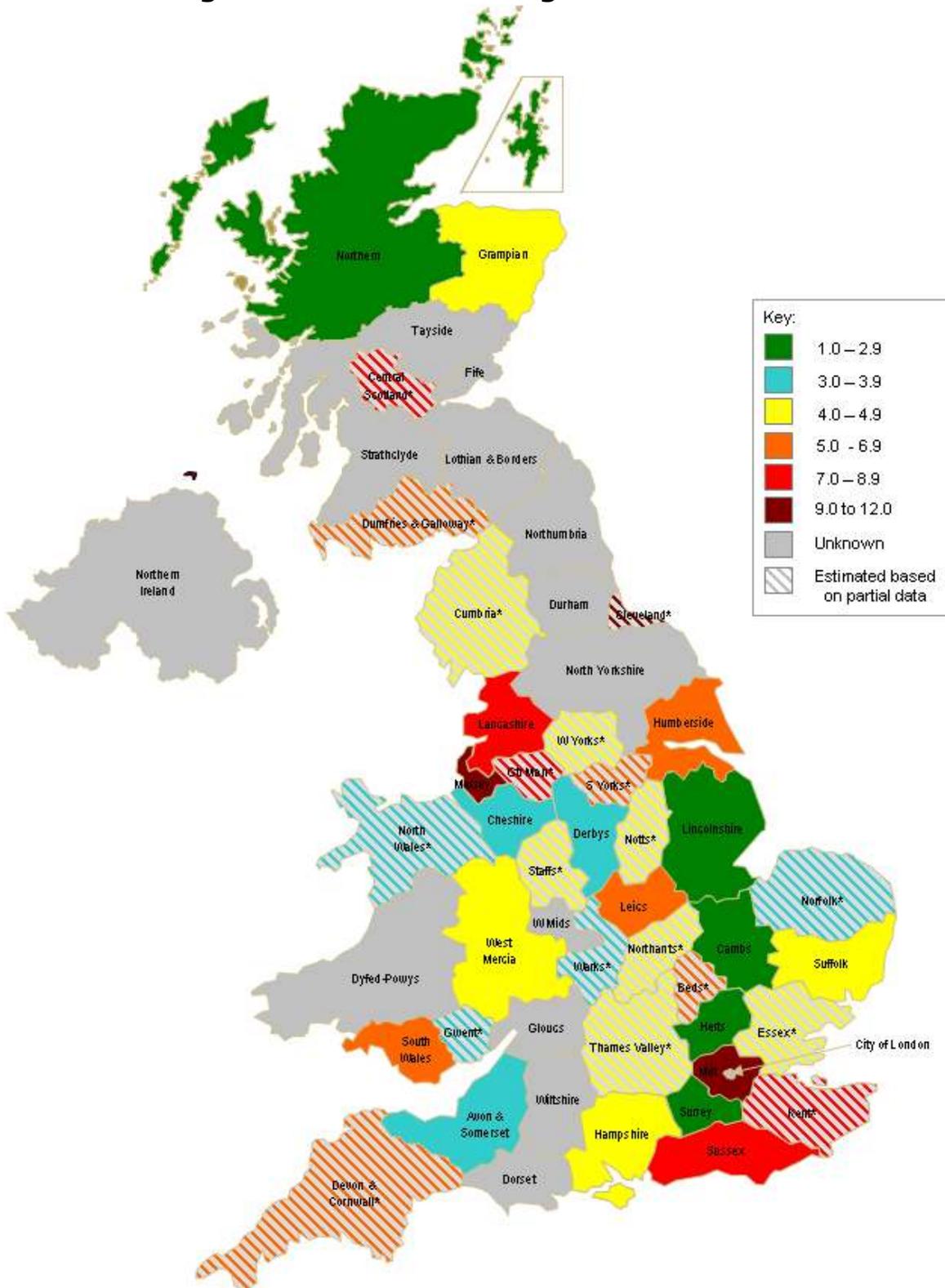- Estimated based on force population

Note: Figures for Ministry of Defence Police unknown. British Transport Police do not have responsibility for missing persons reports, these are allocated to the relevant geographic force.
*Estimated using partial data for FY2009-10 supplied to the Bureau
**Estimated based on force population only- no data supplied to Bureau

Appendix G: Map of Incidents per 1,000 Population
Figure 4: Missing persons incidents per 1,000 Population 2009-10 including estimates and missing data

Key:

(dark green)	1.0 – 2.9
(cyan)	3.0 – 3.9
(yellow)	4.0 – 4.9
(orange)	5.0 - 6.9
(red)	7.0 – 8.9
(dark red)	9.0 to 12.0
(grey)	Unknown
(hatched)	Estimated based on partial data

Note: British Transport Police do not have responsibility for missing person reports, these are allocated to the relevant geographic force.
*Estimated using partial data for FY2009-10 supplied to the Bureau

Appendix H: Unidentified people, bodies and remains

The Missing Persons Bureau also collects information on people found alive, but who can not be identified, unidentified bodies, and remains. Unidentified people are individuals who, when found by police or other authorities, are unable to provide personal details. This may be due to injuries they have sustained or a medical condition such as amnesia or dementia. The link between missing people and unidentified cases is important as the Bureau uses details from both kinds of case to help match unidentified people, unidentified bodies or remains to missing person reports.

The Code of Practice, previously outlined, requires forces in England and Wales to send in details of any unidentified people, unidentified bodies or remains to the Bureau within 48 hours of their discovery to help with the matching process. Data on the number of unidentified people, unidentified bodies and remains recorded are also to be submitted regularly to the Bureau as part of the quarterly return requirement.

Very few forces provided details of their unidentified cases in the quarterly returns for the year 2009-10, possibly due to the lower number generally encountered by forces compared to the number of missing person incidents. However, several forces also commented that they did not hold the data. The lack of data meant that the quarterly returns could not be used to provide an analysis of unidentified persons in Britain for 2009/10.

As an alternative, data was obtained from Hermes (the Bureau's database) and the Bureau's ongoing review of outstanding unidentified bodies and remains, named Operation Kharon[20]. There are limitations to these data as not all forces may have notified the Bureau of every unidentified person or body they have recorded within their force areas.

As part of this review questionnaires were sent to HM Coroners, Holmes[21] Account Managers[22] and Procurators Fiscal requesting the details of all unidentified people, unidentified bodies, and remains, held by them. Police forces were then contacted with a list of the cases believed to be held by them and checks carried out by the Bureau to ensure Hermes records were compared with HM Coroner and police force records. This check ensured cases were not duplicated and a total number of outstanding cases were identified for each force. Of all forces contacted (England, Wales and Scotland) 75 per cent responded at the point this data was complied. Although some cases were closed as a result of updates received, the total number of cases has remained at around one thousand. This is because the review prompted forces to notify the Bureau of cases they had not previously sent in. There are some limitations to the data as not all forces responded to the Bureau's questionnaires, however,

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[20] Figures provided by Intelligence Officer Karen Curran, project lead for Operation Kharon.
[21] HOLMES is the Home Office Large Major Enquiry System computer software package used by police forces.
[22] HOLMES Account Managers manage the use of the HOLMES computer system within their police force.

considerable work was undertaken by the Operation Kharon team to ensure that the records held by the Bureau are as accurate as possible. Operation Kharon is still ongoing and due to this the number of forces responding to the questionnaire will increase as the review continues. Once the review is complete the final data will be analysed and a separate report produced. The data available from Operation Kharon, together with the cases notified on an ongoing basis to the Bureau by forces and recorded on the Hermes database, has been used to identify the total number of cases notified to the Bureau where an unidentified person, body or body part was found in the financial year 2009/10.

Table 16: The number of unidentified people, unidentified bodies and remains found and recorded in 2009/10 by force.

Force	Body	Body Part	Alive	Total
England				
Avon and Somerset	0	1	0	**1**
Cambridgeshire	0	0	1	**1**
Cheshire	1	0	0	**1**
City of London	2	0	0	**2**
Essex	0	0	1	**1**
Manchester	1	0	0	**1**
Hampshire	1	0	0	**1**
Kent	0	1	0	**1**
Lincolnshire	1	0	0	**1**
Merseyside	1	0	0	**1**
Metropolitan Police	9	1	19	**29**
Norfolk	1	0	0	**1**
Northumbria	1	0	0	**1**
Suffolk	0	0	1	**1**
Surrey	1	0	0	**1**
Sussex	6	0	2	**8**
Thames Valley	2	0	1	**3**
West Yorkshire	1	0	0	**1**
Wales				
Dyfed-Powys	1	0	0	**1**
Gwent	1	0	0	**1**
North Wales	1	0	2	**3**
Scotland				
Lothian and Borders	2	0	0	**2**
Other				
British Transport Police	13	0	5	**18**
Interpol[23]	12	0	2	**14**
Overseas	0	1	0	**1**
Total	**58**	**4**	**34**	**96**

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[23] Interpol notify the Bureau of unidentified people, bodies or body parts found overseas whose identity and nationality is not known but who may be British.

According to Bureau records, 24 forces recorded at least one unidentified person, unidentified body or body part found during 2009/10, with a total of 81 found in Britain, and 15 found overseas or reported to the Bureau by Interpol[24]. These Interpol cases form part of the Bureau's work as some UK nationals unfortunately go missing while overseas and unidentified people, unidentified bodies and remains from other countries are occasionally linked by the Bureau to reports of missing persons from the UK.

Thirty seven (39 per cent) of these cases remain open as no identification has been made. This includes 25 unidentified bodies, one body part and 11 people found alive who have yet to be identified.

The number of unidentified cases recorded in England, Wales and Scotland which still remain unidentified, up to the end of March 2010 are shown in table 11 below. This data from Operation Kharon, together with the cases notified on an ongoing basis to the Bureau by forces and recorded on the Hermes database. This data includes all known outstanding cases, including those notified to the Bureau in the years before 2009/10 if they still remain unidentified, whereas table 10 only includes notified cases from 2009/10.

Table 17: The number of unidentified people, unidentified bodies and remains on record which remain outstanding (correct to the end of 2009-10)

Force	Body	Body Part	Alive	Total
England				
Avon and Somerset	16	1	0	**17**
Bedfordshire	2	0	0	**2**
Cambridgeshire	2	0	0	**2**
Cheshire	5	0	0	**5**
City of London	8	0	0	**8**
Cleveland	2	1	0	**3**
Cumbria	6	2	1	**9**
Derbyshire	5	0	0	**5**
Devon and Cornwall	20	5	0	**25**
Dorset	13	0	0	**13**
Durham	3	0	2	**5**
Essex	8	2	1	**11**
Gloucestershire	3	1	0	**4**
Greater Manchester	7	2	1	**10**
Hampshire	4	8	0	**12**
Hertfordshire	4	0	3	**7**
Humberside	5	1	0	**6**
Kent	27	2	1	**30**
Lancashire	6	2	0	**8**
Leicestershire	2	0	1	**3**
Lincolnshire	1	1	0	**2**

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[24] The Code of Practice stipulates that the Bureau should receive notifications regarding all foreign nationals missing in the UK and all UK nationals reported as missing abroad.

Table 17: The number of unidentified people, unidentified bodies and remains on record which remain outstanding (correct to the end of 2009-10) (Continued from previous page)

Force	Body	Body Part	Alive	Total
Merseyside	9	2	1	**12**
Metropolitan Police	273	10	26	**309**
Norfolk	5	2	0	**7**
North Yorkshire	7	1	0	**8**
Northamptonshire	6	0	0	**6**
Northumbria	3	3	0	**6**
Nottinghamshire	2	0	1	**3**
South Yorkshire	0	0	1	**1**
Staffordshire	5	0	0	**5**
Suffolk	6	2	1	**9**
Surrey	12	1	1	**14**
Sussex	42	6	0	**48**
Tayside	1	3	0	**4**
Thames Valley	11	1	1	**13**
Warwickshire	1	0	0	**1**
West Mercia	3	1	2	**6**
West Midlands	5	3	1	**9**
West Yorkshire	6	0	1	**7**
Wales				
Dyfed-Powys	6	1	0	**7**
Gwent	7	0	0	**7**
North Wales	12	4	0	**16**
South Wales	9	0	0	**9**
Scotland				
Central Scotland	2	0	0	**2**
Dumfries and Galloway	8	2	0	**10**
Fife	2	0	0	**2**
Grampian	0	1	0	**1**
Lothian and Borders	7	0	0	**7**
Northern	5	2	0	**7**
Strathclyde	24	3	0	**27**
Other				
British Transport Police	46	1	0	**47**
Guernsey	4	0	0	**4**
Interpol	142	30	3	**175**
Isle of Man	3	0	0	**3**
Ministry of Defence	1	0	0	**1**
Overseas	2	0	0	**2**
Northern Ireland	3	2	0	**5**
States of Jersey	1	1	0	**2**
Total	**830**	**110**	**49**	**989**

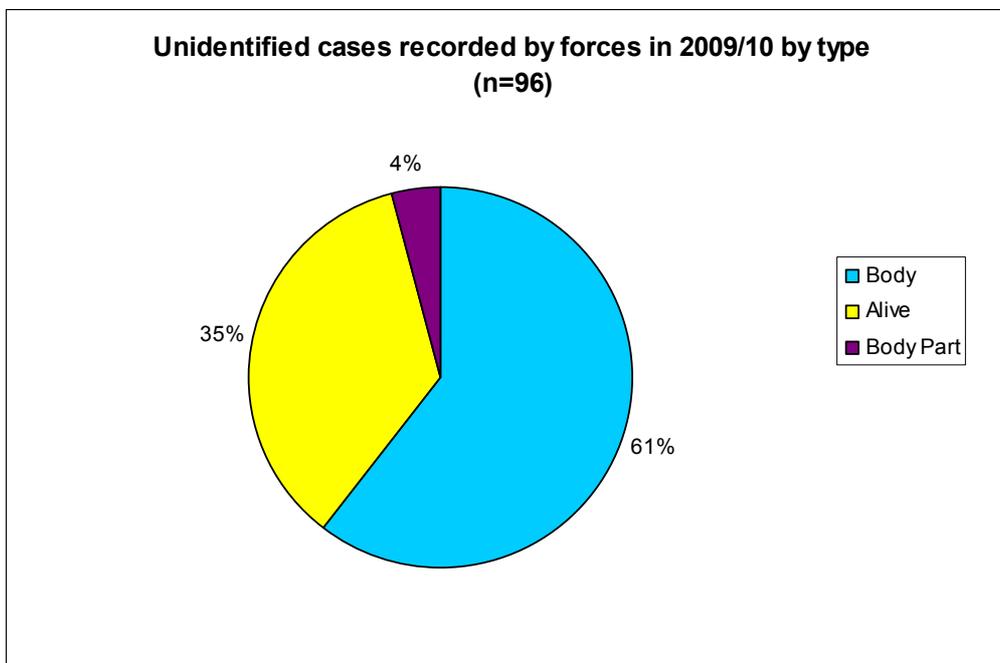## Unidentified people, unidentified bodies and remains cases

A heat map has been created based on data from Hermes and Operation Kharon to indicate the number of cases, no matter what year they were recorded by the force, which remained unidentified up to the end of March 2010 (see Figure 1).

## Figure 5: Unidentified cases which remained unsolved to end of 2009-10
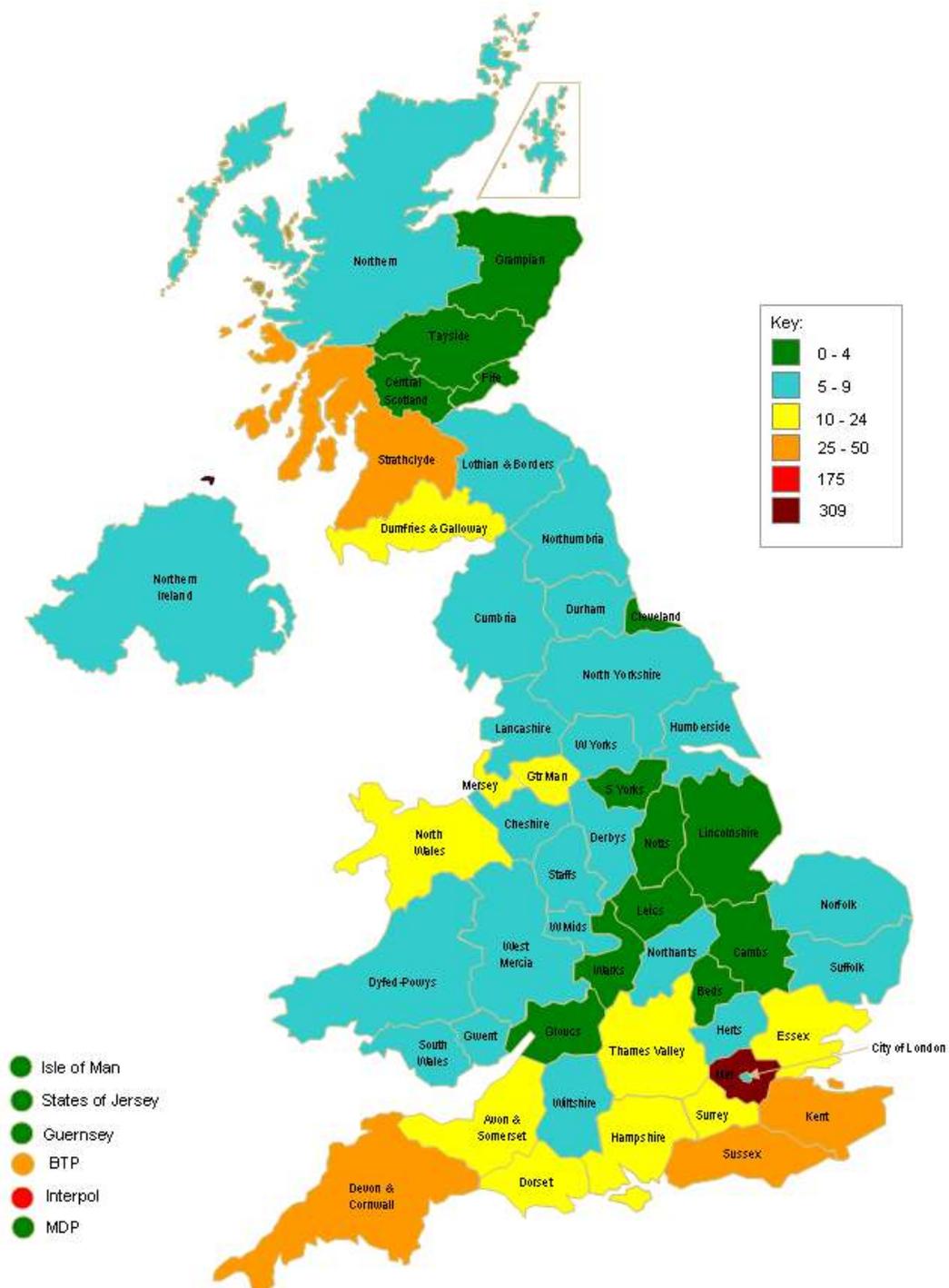
Of all of the unidentified cases recorded by forces in 2009/10, according to Bureau records, around two thirds were unidentified bodies, one third unknown alive individuals and only a small number related to body parts (see Figure 6).

Figure 6[25]:

Unidentified cases recorded by forces in 2009/10 by type
(n=96)

For all the cases which remain unidentified the percentage relating to unidentified bodies is higher at 84 per cent, with 11 per cent relating to body parts and only five relating to alive individuals (see Figure 7).

Figure 7:

Unidentified cases which remain unidentified at the end of 2009/10
(n=989)

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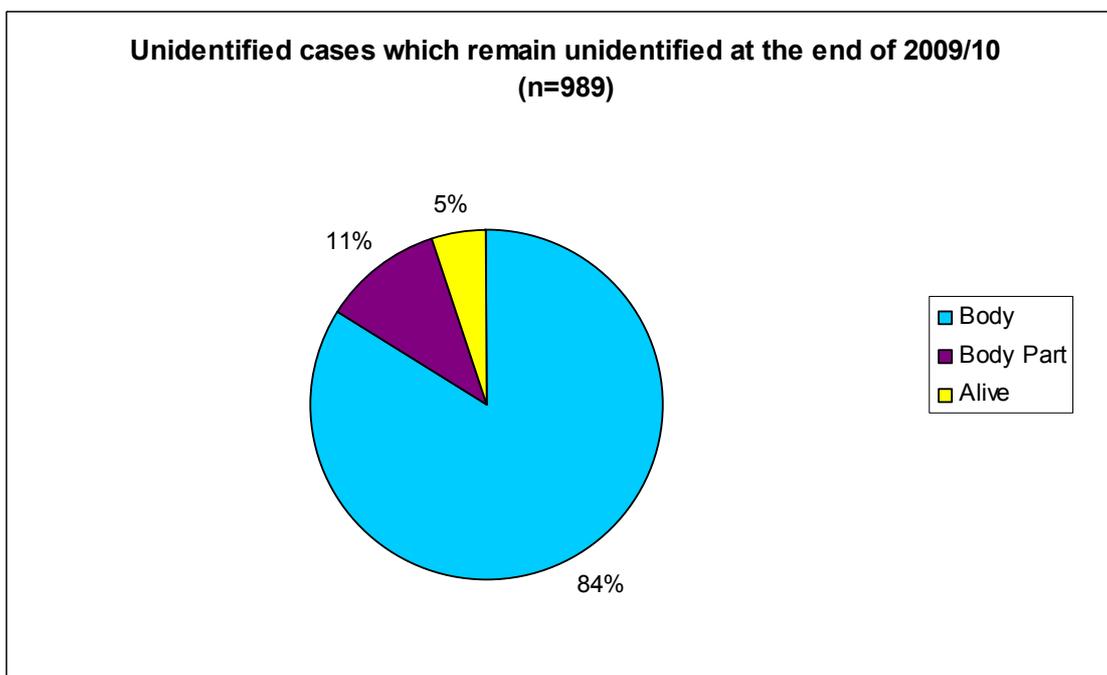
[25] n=96 indicates that the total number of cases was 96.

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