

Children aged 1 to 16 years

- a. **Category definition:** children whose chronological age is in the range 1 to 16 years and who have had a history of normal development. If the child's history of development has not been normal then another category might be more appropriate, for example Developmental Problems or Psychological Illness.

The category was formed by merging the data collected for children aged 1 to 6, children aged 7 to 12 and youths aged 13 to 16. It had been shown that there was no statistically significant difference between the data for these three age groups with regard to condition when found, the location in which they were found and how far they had travelled from the IPP. There was nothing to be gained therefore by reporting them as three separate categories; in fact, merging them into one brings with it a greater degree of confidence in the results due to the increased volume of data.

Note: we are *not* saying that children of all age groups behave in a similar manner. Children's skills and abilities, and thus their likely behaviours when lost, will change with age. They will follow developmental stages – physical, social, emotional and intellectual, which are well detailed by psychologists. It is important to investigate levels of development through a detailed subject profile. Particularly relevant in the context of 'missing' is their level of spatial awareness and understanding of the concept of 'lost'. For a youngster below 3 years of age these are most likely to be non-existent and will not become fully developed until about 8 or 9 years. Their developing abilities and understanding of situations leading up to 9, viewed on a sliding scale of development are not the same for all children of a similar age, can both help and make matters worse when 'missing'. We recommend that you read Gibb and Woolnough¹, which offers a description of how the behaviour of children might change as their age changes.

b. All searches: n = 113

Table 5: Children aged 1 to 16 years, by terrain and gender, all searches

	female	male	other*	total
urban	17	25	3	45
farmland	5	18	2	25
moorland	4	8	4	16
plantation	4	4	0	8
water margin	1	6	0	7
woodland	3	4	0	7
crag / broken ground	1	3	1	5
	35	68	10	113

* 'other' means that the gender was not reported

c. Fatality rate: the fatality rate for children was 3%, which is significantly lower than the fatality rate for the other categories in the study.

d. Outcome - condition if found: children were significantly different from the other categories in the study in all respects. More children were found unhurt, and fewer were either found injured or not found at all. There was no discernible gender difference or difference between different types of terrain.

Table 6: Children aged 1 to 16 years, outcome, all searches

	all searches	
	n	%
fatal	3	3
injured	1	1
unhurt	109	96
no trace	0	0

- e. Location found:** there was no discernible gender difference. There were, however, significant differences between terrain types relating in particular to the likelihood of the missing child being found in a building.

Table 7: Children aged 1 to 16 years, location found by terrain type

	urban		farmland		others	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
building	32	71	13	52	14	33
travel aid	5	11	2	8	14	33
trees	1	2	5	20	5	12
open ground	4	9	2	8	5	12
water	0	0	1	4	3	7
linear feature	2	4	2	8	1	2
not recorded	1	2	0	0	1	2

Table 8: Children aged 1 to 16 years, location found by terrain type, detail

	urban		farmland		others	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
building						
building / shelter	9	20	6	24	6	14
habitation	23	51	7	28	8	19
travel aid						
path / track	1	2	0	0	5	12
road	4	9	2	8	9	21
trees						
forest / woodland	1	2	3	12	5	12
forest edge / clearing	0	0	2	8	0	0
linear feature						
stream / ditch	0	0	2	8	0	0
wall / fence line	2	4	0	0	1	2

The following additional information was provided with regard to one incident for which the location was reported as 'open ground': found sheltering under bushes.

- f. Distance found from IPP:** there was no significant difference between the distances travelled by children and all the other categories. However, there was a significant difference between the distances travelled by children missing in terrain described as farmland compared with children missing in all the other types of terrain. There was no discernible gender difference.

Table 9: Children aged 1 to 16 years, distance found from IPP, by terrain type

farmland		others	
percentile	km	percentile	km
20	0.10	10	0.00
40	0.50	20	0.50
60	0.70	30	0.58
80	2.0	40	1.0
100	5.0	50	1.1
		60	2.0
		70	2.2
		80	5.0
		90	9.2
		100	130

- g. Possible scenarios:** based on the information given above for this category, some of the following comments will probably occur in the most likely scenarios for missing children. In practice, the search manager should not rule out other plausible scenarios.

- the missing child is likely to be found alive (96% of incidents)
- in an urban environment, a missing child is likely to be found in a building (71%), the majority of which (51%) are classed as habitation
- a child missing in farmland is likely to be found in a building (52%), which is almost equally likely to be classed as habitation or building / shelter, or in trees (20%)
- in environments other than urban or farmland the missing child is equally likely (33% of incidents each) to be found in a building (habitation and building / shelter equally likely) or on a travel aid (almost twice as likely to be on a road as on a path or track)
- a child missing in farmland is likely to be found closer to the IPP than a child missing in other environments; in farmland, 50% are found within 0.5 km of the IPP, whereas in other environments 50% are found within 1.1 km of the IPP.