

HELPLINES PARTNERSHIP

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED) (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Helplines Freephone Range (HFR) – offering affordable telecoms exclusively for helplines via a dedicated range of Freephone numbers. Helplines Partnership works with Ofcom and the telecoms sector to operate the scheme which offers free and confidential access for service users and affordable costs for helplines.

Member helplines operating any Freephone number also benefit from the Payphone Access Charge being waived by BT.

Access to Products and Services - Helplines Partnership has relationships with trusted suppliers of services that are relevant to helplines. These include telecoms, language interpreting, communications and marketing and a new counselling service for helpline workers and volunteers. Through the relationships that have been developed, helplines can access appropriate solutions at competitive rates.

Communication - Helplines Partnership's website and other communication channels such as regular newsletters, surveys and social media help to keep members and stakeholders informed. The website also includes a publicly available, 'Find a Helpline' directory of services.

Profile and Partnership - Helplines Partnership is a member of various partnerships and collaborations. Through these networks HLP works to raise its profile, provide the voice of the helpline sector and strive to improve mental health and wellbeing for all.

National helpline champion - Helplines Partnership actively promotes the voice and value of the helpline sector and the public benefit it provides.

Achievements and performance

Key achievements during the period have been:

- Maintained a membership retention and renewal rate of 92% across the year, whilst also welcoming new members.
- Reviewed the member offer for 2024/25 to increase value for money and subsequently the continuation in member retention.
- Virtual Member Space Events (MSE'S) continue to be well attended, averaging approximately 50 bookings per event. Topics included promoting your helpline, delivering formal and informal supervision, and introduced new networking focused events for members and non-members across the sector.
- Introduced an annual Membership Satisfaction Survey, receiving a 12.5% response rate. Responses provided useful feedback on developments within membership and the perceived value of proposed new membership benefits.
- The Helpline Freephone Range (HFR) continued to fulfil an important function in keeping call costs affordable for service providers by capping the rate charged by the telephone provider at 2.1 ppm.
- BTs agreement to waive the Payphone Access Charge for members resulted in a saving of £60,204 during 2024/25.

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- Delivered 131 training sessions to 1,376 delegates, supporting 174 different organisations. 779 delegates completed training feedback, of these 99% said their expectations were met, 98% said the training was relevant to their needs and 99% said they would recommend our training.
- Helplines continue to recognise the value of certifying their services against the Helplines Standard. To support organisations at every stage of the journey, assessors now offer pre-assessment chats, giving helplines the opportunity to discuss the process in depth and prepare confidently ahead of the assessment day. One-to-one video calls also continue to be available for those exploring whether certification is the right fit for their service.
- In the 2024/25 financial year, 14 helplines achieved certification — comprising 3 new certifications and 11 successful recertifications. As of 31 March 2025, 21 organisations are actively working towards certification, reflecting continued engagement and commitment across the sector.
- The fifteenth AGM was held in October 2024 along with a successful Annual Conference in November 2024.
- We received a regular stream of consultancy enquiries for workshops, policy reviews, and support setting up helplines or digital channels. This is an area we are experiencing growing interest and gaining valuable insights to help shape the future of our services and products.
- The third Helplines Awareness Day took place on 23 February 2025, with a week-long campaign to raise awareness of Helplines Partnership, to encourage use of the Find a Helpline online directory, and to promote the amazing work of the helpline sector. Building on previous years, the campaign targeted both the public and the helpline community, featuring in-person events, workshops, a podcast interview, digital screen advertising in offices, a fitness challenge, a helpline sector networking event, and a video and social media campaign.
- We established a presence at the Labour Party Conference by securing a high demand stand in a prominent location. During the conference we were able to engage with delegates and several high-profile politicians and stakeholders. We were also able to engage with potential members and partners in attendance. We distributed information about HLP and our products/services. We will be looking to expand our influence at the conference over future years.
- Conducted a website refresh project, revitalising the entire site with a focus on accessibility and our Find a Helpline directory. The new design is cleaner and easier to navigate, as well as having a more modern feel. The increased customisability of the new site allows us to reduce our reliance on development time from professional services
- The Finance Sub Committee held quarterly review meetings. The Board continued to monitor progress, whilst aiming to develop and protect the charity.
- The budget was produced for the 2024/25 financial year with an October 2024 re-forecast. The risk register was also reviewed.

The Board receives regular updates on the operational performance of the charity.

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Future plans include:

- Strengthen the skills and diversity of the Board.
- Strengthen the resource, skills and diversity within the staff team.
- Establish and implement a new five-year strategic plan.
- Develop the number and diversity of organisations represented as members.
- Develop new ways of engaging with members and potential members.
- Increase HLP's training presence to wider audiences.
- Improve training course content and identify new training course material.
- Promote the benefits of achieving the Helplines Standard Accreditation to demonstrate the development of quality within the helpline sector.
- Introduce 'Commercial Collective' for professionals in other sectors such as health and social care, public services, and the private sector. Training courses crafted to elevate performance, protect teams and strengthen staff wellbeing and resilience, while continuing to build on our expertise in supporting helplines.
- Explore the creation of a Helpline Sector Magazine with a view to launching during 2026.
- Identify and deliver policy and external affairs priorities to develop a wider understanding of the importance of the helpline sector and the issues affecting helplines.
- Expand HLP's reach and influence on social media platforms to attract and retain members through interactive video content.
- Identify and develop new partnerships to enhance and add value to the work by HLP.
- Strengthen strategic partnerships, working together with all stakeholders to develop sector capacity, success, voice and influence.
- Continue the long-term financial sustainability of the charity.

Financial review

The charity has reviewed additional commitments which would need to be met if the organisation ceased operating. A designated fund has been created, comprising redundancy costs (including contractual notice payments).

Our experience over previous years has led us to focus upon building sustainable reserves, with unrestricted funds maintained at a level of not less than between 3 months and 6 months anticipated expenditure. As at 31 March 2025, the unrestricted fund was equivalent to 5.5 months expenditure, within the stated target. The Trustees have aspirations for further investments for the development of membership, marketing and communications, CRM and the website

The total incoming resources for the period were £549,657 while total resources expended were £634,621 leaving net deficit of £84,964.

The principal funding sources for the charity were from membership fees, member services, notably training and helplines standards.

The financial operation of the charity is closely scrutinised through the Finance Sub-Committee and at full quarterly meetings of the Board.

Helplines Partnership is committed to delivering a strong membership proposition. It seeks to deliver this through the provision of high-quality services to helplines and by strongly advocating more widely the value that helplines contribute to the wellbeing of individuals and society.

The Board receives regular updates on the operational performance of the charity.
