



Annual Review

2023 – 2024



Welcome to our Annual Review 2023 – 2024

As we reflect on the past year, we would like to extend our thanks to the dedicated Helplines Partnership team, members and partners for their continued commitment, dedication and support to the vital work of helplines across the UK and internationally.

This year has brought its share of challenges in our sector and for the wider society. The helpline landscape continues to evolve, shaped by external pressures and the growing demand and complexities of the issues faced by those in need of support.

The change in government has also had a direct impact on work within the sector. Policy shifts and new approaches require our sector to be agile, adapting to new opportunities and services, while managing uncertainty.

Despite the many challenges, the passion, dedication and commitment of the helpline sector remains strong. To reflect and celebrate this, the theme of our Annual Conference this year is Shaping, Sustaining and Showcasing — delivering services in a changing society. It speaks to our shared mission of ensuring helplines continue to be responsive, effective and forward-thinking.

Thank you to all of you for your dedication, innovation, and unwavering belief in the power of helplines. Together, we will continue to adapt and thrive, ensuring that helpline services remain a lifeline for those in need.

Clodagh Crowe *Elizabeth Rimmer*

Clodagh Crowe and Elizabeth Rimmer
Co-Chairs of Trustees

About Helplines Partnership

Helplines Partnership is the membership body for organisations that provide information, support or advice via phone, email, text or online. We support our members to provide a quality helpline service to callers.

We offer a range of products and services. This includes CPD-accredited training courses, both online and in-person, designed to enhance skills and improve practice. The Helplines Standard, a nationally recognised quality standard which defines and certifies best practice in helpline work. We also offer the Helpline Freephone Range, providing affordable telecom services, and partner with trusted suppliers for competitive solutions.

As an organisation, we actively promote the voice and value of the helpline sector and raise awareness of the public benefits it provides.

Highlights from 2023 to 2024

It's been another busy and fantastic year for Helplines Partnership. We have worked hard to strengthen our services, from maintaining a high membership retention rate to enhancing our training courses and Helplines Standard certification. Our events, including the popular Member Space Events and the second Helplines Awareness Day, saw excellent participation and engagement. With a dedicated team and ongoing feedback from our community, we remain committed to supporting helplines across the UK and internationally.

Here are some of our key achievements from 2023 to 2024.



We're proud to have maintained a high membership retention rate while welcoming new members and enhancing our member offer to ensure continued value for money.



Our virtual Member Space Events continue to be popular. We consistently receive bookings from around 70 members, with approximately 75% joining us on the day. This year, we've reintroduced engaging trainer-led sessions and interactive panel discussions, along with an insightful research project overview.



We launched our first annual Member Satisfaction Survey, and the feedback has been incredibly valuable. Members shared their thoughts on our membership developments and the value of proposed new benefits. We were pleased to find that 81% of respondents rated their satisfaction with HLP membership at seven or higher out of 10, with 33.4% giving us a nine or 10. When it comes to our team, 78.62% rated their relationship with HLP staff at seven or more, with 31% giving a 10.



We're delighted to have delivered 120 training sessions this year, reaching 1,386 delegates across 147 organisations. The feedback has been fantastic, with 99% of delegates saying we met their expectations, 98% finding the training relevant to their needs, and another 98% saying they would recommend us to others. It's great to see our training making such a positive impact.



Helplines increasingly recognise the value of certifying their services against the Helplines Standard, and we're delighted to see the momentum growing. This year,

our assessors offered one-to-one video calls to support organisations on their certification journey. As a result, 14 helplines successfully achieved the standard, with an additional 16 working towards certification by the end of the 2023/24 year. It's fantastic to see so many helplines committed to raising their standards and delivering top-quality support.

BT's agreement to waive the Payphone Access Charge for members resulted in a saving of £88,343 during 2023/24.



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 pence per minute.

The second Helplines Awareness Day, held on 23 February 2024, was a resounding success, generating fantastic online engagement from both members and non-members alike. Helplines Awareness Day reached over one million accounts thanks to the buzz on social media—and all of this was achieved through organic reach, with no sponsored posts. It was an amazing day of raising awareness about the important work of helplines.



In other news...

We held our fourteenth AGM in November 2023, along with a successful Annual Conference. The Chair, Ruth Ingman, stepped down on 6 December 2023. HLP currently has two trustees acting as Co-Chairs, Clodagh Crowe and Elizabeth Rimmer.

We welcomed two new Helplines Standard Co-ordinators and Assessors, a Membership and Events Co-ordinator and a Senior Marketing and Communications Lead to the team.

The Finance Sub Committee held quarterly review meetings. The Board continued to monitor progress, while aiming to develop and protect the charity.

The finance team produced the budget for the 2023/24 financial year with an October 2024 re-forecast. They also continued to review the risk register.

We held the final Board meeting of the 2023/24 financial year on 23 February 2024.



Helplines Awareness Day



Helplines Awareness Day

On Friday 23 February 2024, we celebrated Helplines Awareness Day, shining a spotlight on the incredible work of helplines and the everyday superheroes behind them.

While millions have benefited from the vital support helplines provide, their remarkable efforts often go unseen. Our Helplines Awareness Day Superheroes Campaign aimed to change that by encouraging those who've used, worked for, or volunteered with helplines to share their inspiring stories.

The theme was secret superheroes.

Like secret superheroes, helplines are supporting people day and night to help them through the most difficult of times. Their work may often go unseen, but the impact they have is clear to all who come into contact with them. Raising awareness of these critical services through Helplines Awareness Day helps show the world how much helplines mean to us.



Results



Across all the hashtags being used by organisations on social media, Helplines Awareness Day reached more than one million accounts.

266 organisations engaged with us

Post impressions on Twitter / X was

26.3K



helplinespartnership Happy Helplines Awareness Day 2024!

Like secret superheroes, helplines are supporting people day and night to help them through the most difficult of times. Their work may often go unseen, but the impact they have is clear to all who come into contact with them.

Help raise awareness of these critical services and show Helplines some love today 🍷

#helplinesawarenessday2024 #Helplines #MentalHealth



Gemma Khairi @gemska · Feb 24

Keep #HelplinesAwarenessDay2024 going this weekend....coffee is helping me to reach you all ❤️



Helplines Awareness Day 2025

Exciting plans for Helplines Awareness Day 2025 are already underway! Since the day falls on a Sunday, we're preparing for an entire week of activities to celebrate. Our theme, 'The Impact of Helplines,' will highlight the important role helplines play and the significant difference they make in people's lives.

Looking ahead to 2024 -2025

This year is already shaping up to be an exciting one for Helplines Partnership with new projects and opportunities underway to build on the progress we've made so far. From expanding our training programmes and membership base to enhancing the diversity of our team and Board.

The year promises to be an even more impactful one as we continue to support the helpline sector's growth and success.



Future plans

Skills and diversity

We aim to strengthen the skills and diversity of our Board, enhance the resources and expertise within our staff team, and grow the number and diversity of organisations represented within our membership.

Networking opportunities

As part of our new membership strategy, we're excited to introduce new Networking Events to the programme of Member Space Events, offering opportunities for members to connect, collaborate and share insights.

Helplines Standard

The Helplines Standard is the nationally recognised quality standard which defines and certifies best practice in helpline work. We developed the Standard over 20 years ago, recognising the diverse challenges and issues faced by helplines and the varied ways in which service users wish to make contact. We are currently updating the Standard to version six, launching in November 2024.





Policy and Research

We identify and address key policy and external affairs priorities to develop a wider understanding of the importance of the sector and the issues affecting helplines.

We partnered with New Philanthropy Capital (NPC) to fund and conduct essential new research to fully understand the impact helplines have. The report, based on extensive desk-based research and interviews with key helpline organisations, highlights several major findings, including the growing importance of digital helplines, the continuing dominance of telephone-based support, and the complex challenge of measuring helpline impact.



Training

We are expanding our training to reach a wider audience, underpinned by a focused marketing and communications strategy. As part of our commitment to improvement, we have plans to update the Essential Helplines Skills courses (levels 1-3) to maintain their relevance and effectiveness. We are also rewriting the Digital Helpline Skills course to reflect the latest technology. Plus, we'll continue seeking CPD accreditation for both new and existing courses, ensuring our training continues to meet high professional standards.



Raising awareness of the work of helplines

At Helplines Partnership, we're committed to raising awareness of the vital work of helplines. We're enhancing our social media presence with engaging and diverse content for both current and potential members. We're also strengthening partnerships, working closely with our members and stakeholders to grow the sector, raise awareness of the impact of helplines and ensure the voice of the sector is heard.



Financial sustainability

We are committed to continuing the long-term financial sustainability of the charity.

Thank you for your continued support.

For more information about Helplines Partnership and our services, please email info@helplines.org or visit www.helplines.org.



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Registered charity No. 1125840. Company No. 6484279