HELPLINES 2017 - 2019

Helplines
Partnership

TRENDS, CHANGES AND DEVELOPMENTS IN THE HELPLINE SECTOR

Research findings from our
Annual Member Survey - 2017- 2019

Survey Analysis (2017 – 2019)

executive summary

- In 2019, 5 out of 6 organisations had one helpline and 1 in 10 had two helplines.
  For 2 out of 3 organisations the helpline was one of many services provided.

- In 2019, 9 in 10 organisations classed their helpline as a charity and 1 in 4 as voluntary.
  Of those classifying their helpline as voluntary, nearly all also classed it as a charity.
  (As organisations can classify their helpline as more than type
  the percentages do not add up to 100 per cent.)

- In 2017, 2018, and 2019 the commonest source of funding was from general fundraising
  by members of the public (1 in 4 organisations), followed by grants and donations
  (each for 1 in 5 organisations), and local authority funding (1 in 7 organisations).

- In 2017, 2018, and 2019 the commonest themes handled by the helplines were mental health and
  emotional distress (1 in 3 helplines); followed by family-and-parents and health (1 in 4); and
  children-and-young-people, domestic violence, rape-and-sexual-abuse, and bereavement (1 in 5).

- In 2019 the helplines of 9 in 10 organisations used paid staff to answer their helpline
  (8 in 10 in 2017 and 2018); and 4 out of 10 used volunteers (the same in 2017, but 6 in 10 in 2018).
  The proportions included organisations which used both paid staff and volunteers.

background

The Helplines Partnership is the membership body for organisations that provide information,
support, or advice via phone, email, text, or online. They have around 350 members in the UK
and internationally, from large national charities to small local and specialist charities as well as
some businesses.

They support organisations that provide support and information to improve general wellbeing
(apart from face-to-face advice). They aim to monitor and develop their services in response to
the needs of users, members, and others; and to adapt their services in response to changes in
technology and other factors within society.

The Helplines Partnership have conducted annual surveys of their members in 2017, 2018, and
2019. Usable survey responses were 80 in the first year, 41 the second year (although 1 of the 41
appears to be blank), 50 and in the third year (although 1 of the 50 appears to be blank).

The aim of the surveys is to discover various proportions for the 340 members; for example, the proportion of member organisations classing themselves as a charity, a voluntary body, a commercial organisation, or something else. If every member organisation replied then the data collected would give the true proportions, but this never happens with any survey—even the 10-year Census for which there is a statutory legal obligation to complete it does not get 100 per cent response.

Annexe A gives the text of the 2017 survey invitation; the invitations for the other years were similar.

Each section of this report gives a screenshot of the actual question which was asked followed by the most up-to-date data (for 2019); and then a short summary of the 2019 data. This is then followed by the 2017 and 2018 data and their summaries.

The analyses in this report are based on anonymised data and do not include any answers which contain identifiable data.

There are screen shots of each question followed by the most up-to-date 2019 data, and then the 2017 and 2018 data.

Tables have been numbered by the question number followed by the year. If there is more than one table for a specific question a suffix is added (i, ii, iii, iv, …). For example, Table 21.19 refers to the data from question 21 in the 2019 survey and Table 24.17iv refers to the fourth table of data for question 24 in the 2017 survey. The 2019 data is the most up-to-date, so the tables of data from the 2017 and 2018 surveys have grey titles.

The Helplines survey is not strictly a sample survey: it is essentially a census, as all members are contacted (not just a sample of them). With most surveys the uncertainty surrounding the estimates of the population proportions is caused by the sample size and the level of response. With the Helplines survey the uncertainty is caused purely by the less-than-100% response level. Because (virtually) the same organisations are sampled each time it is not strictly valid to aggregate the results from differing surveys for some variables; the same organisation would give the same answer to some (particularly factual) questions each time.

The larger the response the more reliable the estimates. Small sample sizes can lead to unreliable estimates. Given the modest level of response to the 2019 survey and the two earlier surveys the statistics given in this report should be treated with caution as there were a few questions which only a small proportion of the already relatively small number of respondents answered. The reported results give only a general indication of the true proportions and percentages. It is important not to attach too much significance to small differences in the percentages for the different years. These small differences are unlikely to be meaningful.

A more detailed technical explanation of the issue is given in Annexe B.

detailed summary

- In 2019, 5 out of 6 organisations had one helpline and 1 in 10 had two helplines.
  For 2 out of 3 organisations the helpline was one of many services provided.
  The results were similar in 2017 and 2018, although in 2017 fewer organisations provided only
  one service and for more organisations the helpline was one of many services.

- In 2019, 9 in 10 organisations classed their helpline as a charity and 1 in 4 as voluntary.
  Of those classifying their helpline as voluntary, nearly all also classed it as a charity.
  (As organisations can classify their helpline as more than type
  the percentages do not add up to 100 per cent.)
  The results were similar in 2017 and 2018, although 1 in 3 organisations classed their helpline
  as voluntary (compared with 1 in 4 in 2019).

- In 2017, 2018, and 2019, 7 out of 10 organisations were open for between 6 and 8 hours a day
  for most weekdays (although in 2017 the helplines were a bit more likely to be open for longer).

- In 2019 the helplines of 7 in 10 organisations were open between 10 AM and 4 PM;
  and 6 out of 10 were open between 9 AM and 10 AM and between 4 PM and 5 PM.
  The results were similar in 2017 and 2018, although the helplines were a bit less likely
  to be open before 10 AM.

- In 2019 the helplines of 4 in 10 organisations were open at some time in the evening
  (between 6 PM and midnight).
  In 2017 the helplines were more likely to be at this time, and a bit more likely in 2018.

- In 2019 the helplines of 1 in 12 organisations were open at some time in the night
  (between midnight and 6 AM).
  In 2017 and 2018 the helplines were a bit more likely to be at this time.

- In 2017, 2018, and 2019 the commonest source of funding was from general fundraising
  by members of the public (1 in 4 organisations), followed by grants and donations
  (each for 1 in 5 organisations), and local authority funding (1 in 7 organisations).
  In 2017 the helplines were more likely to receive internal funding.

- In 2019, the helplines of 6 in 10 organisations supplied some kind of information,
  half gave listening support, and 1 in 3 offered some kind of advice.
  The percentages were a shade higher in 2017 and 2018 when 3 out of 4 supplied some
  kind of information, 2 in 3 gave listening support, and 4 in 10 offered some kind of advice.

- In 2017, 2018, and 2019 the commonest themes handled by the helplines were mental health and
  emotional distress (1 in 3 helplines); followed by family-and-parents and health (1 in 4); and
  children-and-young-people, domestic violence, rape-and-sexual-abuse, and bereavement (1 in 5).

- In 2019 the helplines of 9 in 10 organisations used paid staff to answer their helpline
  (8 in 10 in 2017 and 2018); and 4 out of 10 used volunteers (the same in 2017, but 6 in 10 in 2018).
  The proportions included organisations which used both paid staff and volunteers.

- In 2019, 1 in 4 organisations had paid staff who worked alone in the office
  (the same in 2017, but 1 in 3 in 2018);
  and 6 in 10 had paid staff who worked from home (1 in 3 in 2107 and 4 in 10 in 2018).

- In 2019, no organisations had volunteers who worked alone in the office at any time
  (there were 2 in 2017 and 1 in 2018); and half said that their volunteers
  always worked from home (1 in 3 in 2017 and 2018).

survey data

As organisations can classify their helpline as more than type
the percentages do not add up to 100 per cent.

Respondents to the survey were advised that if their organisation had more than one helpline they
should complete one survey for each helpline. And that if exact figures are not available their best
estimates should be entered (or the answer left blank)

- Please enter your "best estimate" or leave the answer blank
  and move to the next question.

number of helplines and services

Questions 1, 2, and 3
asked for basic information about the helpline.

Question 1: information about the organisation,
- name of organisation

Question 2: information about the helpline
- total number of helplines
- name of helpline
- number of hours open annually

Question 3: are other services provided by your organisation?
Is the helpline ...
- the only service provided?
- the core service provided?
- one of many services provided?
- other (please specify)

Table 2.19i
question 2a
number of organisations with specified number of helplines, 2019

number of helplines	one	two	three	four	five	six	seven
number of organisations	41	5	1	1	0	0	1
percentage	84%	10%	2%	2%	-	-	2%

In 2019, 5 out of 6 organisations had one helpline and 1 in 10 had two helplines.

Table 2.19ii
question 2c
number of hours open annually, 2019

annual hours open	<1,000	1,000-2,000	2,000-3,000	>3,000
number of organisations	2	12	12	9
percentage	6%	34%	34%	26%

In 2019, 35 of the 49 respondents provided a valid number for the number of hours open annually.
These answers varied from 658 hours to 8,760 hours.
The average was 2,764 hours.
2 out of 3 organisations were open for between 1,000 and 3,000 hours annually.

Table 3.19
question 3
other services provided, 2019

services provided	only service	core service	one of many services
number of organisations	3	13	30
percentage	7%	28%	65%

In 2019, 46 of the 49 respondents said how many services they provided.
For 2 out of 3 organisations the helpline was one of many services provided.

The results were similar in 2017 and 2018,
although in 2017 fewer organisations provided only one service and for more organisations
the helpline was one of many services.

The following tables give the data from the 2017 and 2018 surveys

Table 2.17i
question 2a
number of organisations with specified number of helplines, 2017

number of helplines	one	two	three	four	five	six	>six
number of organisations	57	9	3	1	0	0	2
percentage	79%	13%	4%	1%	-	-	3%

Table 2.17ii
question 2c
number of hours open annually, 2017

annual hours open	<1,000	1,000-2,000	2,000-3,000	>3,000
number of organisations	6	22	24	15
percentage	8%	31%	33%	21%

Table 3.17
question 3
other services provided, 2017

services provided	only service	core service	one of many services
number of organisations	2	16	51
percentage	3%	23%	74%

Table 2.18i
question 2a
number of organisations with specified number of helplines, 2018

number of helplines	one	two	three	four	five	six	>six
number of organisations	32	4	2	0	0	0	1
percentage	82%	10%	5%	-	-	-	3%

Table 2.18ii
question 2c
number of hours open annually, 2018

annual hours open	<1,000	1,000-2,000	2,000-3,000	>3,000
number of organisations	5	4	11	17
percentage	14%	11%	30%	46%

Table 3.18
question 3
other services provided, 2018

services provided	only service	core service	one of many services
number of organisations	5	7	23
percentage	14%	20%	66%

Figure 1
percentage of organisations with specified number of helplines, 2017 - 2019

number of helplines			percentage of organisations
one	2017	79%	
	2018	82%	
	2019	84%	
two	2017	13%	
	2018	10%	
	2019	10%	
three	2017	4%	
	2018	5%	
	2019	2%	
four	2017	1%	
	2018	0	
	2019	2%	
five	2017	0	
	2018	0	
	2019	0	
six	2017	0	
	2018	0	
	2019	0	
>six	2017	3%	
	2018	3%	
	2019	2%	
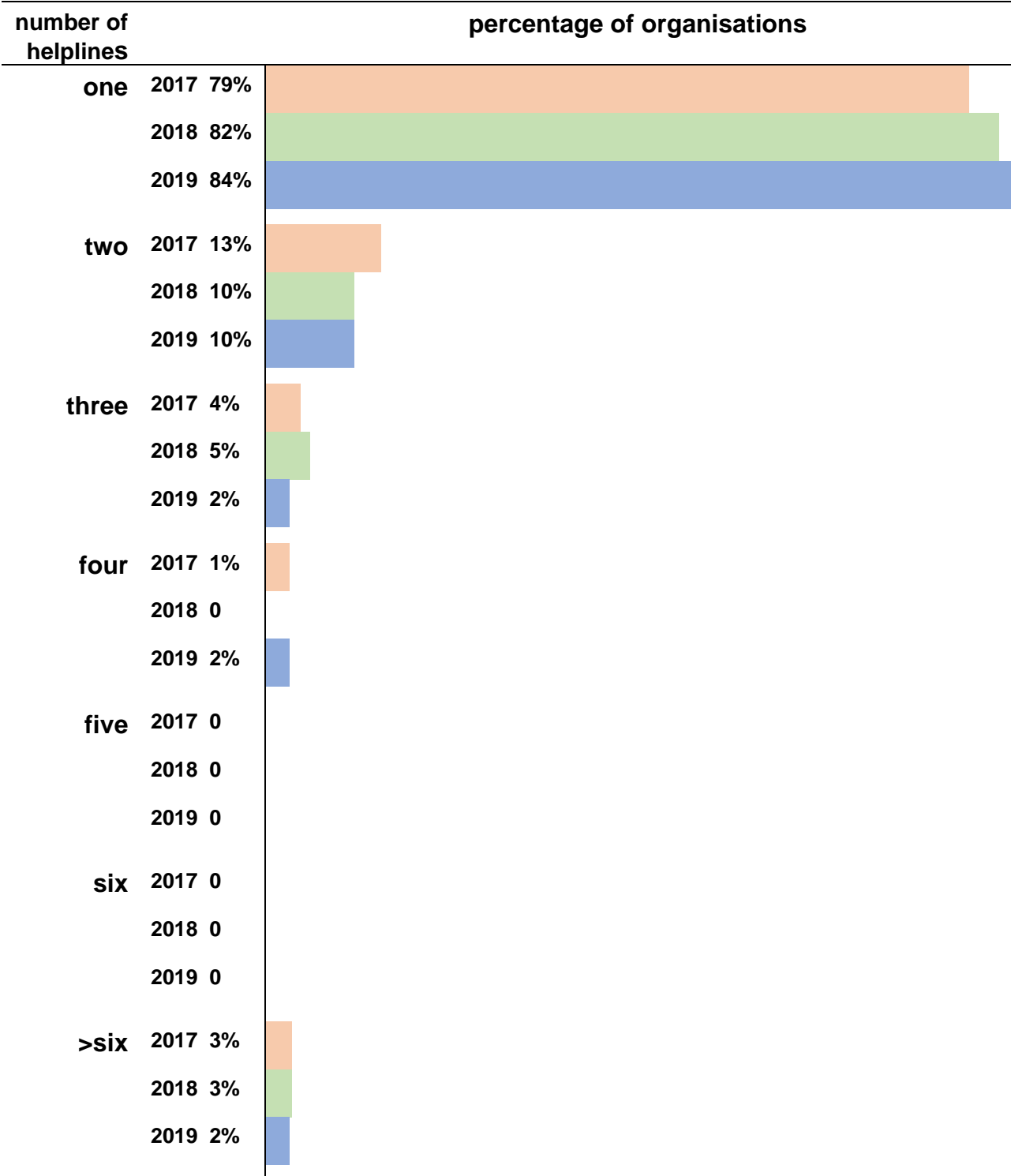
based on data from Tables 2.17i, 2.18i, and 2.19i

kinds of helpline

Question 4

asked about the type of helpline.

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4. Type of helpline
Please tick all options that apply

☐  Charity

☐  Voluntary

☐  Statutory e.g. Council

☐  Public Sector e.g. NHS Trust

☐  Commercial

☐  Community Interest Company

☐  Other (please specify)

[                                    ]
```

Please tick all options that apply.
- charity
- voluntary
- statutory; for example, council
- public sector; for example, NHS Trust
- commercial
- community interest company
- other (please specify)

Table 4.19
type of helpline (an organisation can be more than one type), 2019

type of helpline	charity	voluntary	statutory	public sector
number of organisations	44	12	1	1
percentage	90%	24%	2%	2%

type of helpline	commercial	community interest	other
number of organisations	0	0	3
percentage	-	-	6%

As organisations can classify their helpline as more than type
the percentages do not add up to 100 per cent.
In 2019, 9 in 10 organisations classed their helpline as a charity and 1 in 4 as voluntary.
Of the 12 organisations which classed their helpline as voluntary, 11 also classed it as a charity

The results were similar in 2017 and 2018,
although 1 in 3 organisations classed their helpline as voluntary (compared with 1 in 4 in 2019).

The following tables give the data from the 2017 and 2018 surveys.

Table 4.17
type of helpline (an organisation can be more than one type), 2017

type of helpline	charity	voluntary	statutory	public sector
number of organisations	74	25	0	1
percentage	93%	31%	-	1%

type of helpline	commercial	community interest	other
number of organisations	0	1	1
percentage	-	1%	1%

Table 4.18
type of helpline (an organisation can be more than one type), 2018

type of helpline	charity	voluntary	statutory	public sector
number of organisations	35	14	0	1
percentage	92%	37%	0%	3%

type of helpline	commercial	community interest	other
number of organisations	0	1	1
percentage	-	3%	3%

opening hours of helplines

Question 5

asked for the total number of hours the helpline was open on a regular weekday?

number of hours for …
- Monday
- Tuesday
- Wednesday
- Thursday
- Friday

Table 5.19
hours each helpline was open for each weekday, 2019

daily hours open	not open	< 8 hours	8-12 hours	>12 hours
Monday	3	19	21	2
Tuesday	0	22	21	2
Wednesday	2	19	22	2
Thursday	3	19	21	2
Friday	5	18	20	2

45 of the 49 respondents said how long the helpline was open for on a weekday
7 out of 10 organisations were open for between 6 and 8 hours a day for most weekdays.

The results were similar in 2017 and 2018,
although in 2017 the helplines were a bit more likely to be open for longer.

The following tables give the data from the 2017 and 2018 surveys.

Table 5.17
hours each helpline was open for each weekday, 2017

daily hours open	not open	< 8 hours	8-12 hours	>12 hours
Monday	1	28	39	9
Tuesday	0	33	35	9
Wednesday	1	29	38	9
Thursday	1	32	35	9
Friday	4	27	37	9

Table 5.18
hours each helpline was open for each weekday, 2018

daily hours open	not open	< 8 hours	8-12 hours	>12 hours
Monday	4	16	15	3
Tuesday	2	18	15	3
Wednesday	4	16	15	3
Thursday	4	16	15	3
Friday	3	17	15	3

Question 6

asked for which hours the helpline was open during the day?

Please tick all options that apply.
- 08:00-09:00
- 09:00-10:00
- 10:00-11:00
- 11:00-12:00
- 12:00-13:00

- 13:00-14:00
- 14:00-15:00
- 15:00-16:00
- 16:00-17:00
- 17:00-18:00

Table 6.19
which hours each helpline was open for during the day, 2019

time open	08:00-09:00	09:00-10:00	10:00-11:00	11:00-12:00	12:00-13:00
number of organisations	10	30	38	38	37
percentage	20%	60%	76%	76%	74%

time open	13:00-14:00	14:00-15:00	15:00-16:00	16:00-17:00	17:00-18:00
number of organisations	37	37	36	30	17
percentage	74%	74%	72%	60%	34%

In 2019, of the organisations which answered this question, the helplines of 7 in 10 were open between 10 AM and 4 PM. 6 out of 10 were open between 9 AM and 10 AM, and between 4 PM and 5 PM.

The results were similar in 2017 and 2018, although the helplines were a bit less likely to be open before 10 AM.

The following tables give the data from the 2017 and 2018 surveys.

Table 6.17
which hours each helpline was open for during the day, 2017

time open	08:00-09:00	09:00-10:00	10:00-11:00	11:00-12:00	12:00-13:00
number of organisations	9	43	59	59	58
percentage	11%	54%	74%	74%	73%

time open	13:00-14:00	14:00-15:00	15:00-16:00	16:00-17:00	17:00-18:00
number of organisations	55	59	58	47	30
percentage	69%	74%	73%	59%	38%

Table 6.18
which hours each helpline was open for during the day, 2018

time open	08:00-09:00	09:00-10:00	10:00-11:00	11:00-12:00	12:00-13:00
number of organisations	6	24	31	31	31
percentage	15%	60%	78%	78%	78%

time open	13:00-14:00	14:00-15:00	15:00-16:00	16:00-17:00	17:00-18:00
number of organisations	29	31	32	25	11
percentage	73%	78%	80%	63%	28%

Question 7

asked for which hours the helpline was open during the evening?

7. What hours is your helpline open during the EVENING?
Please tick all options that apply

- 18:00-19:00
- 19:00-20:00
- 20:00-21:00
- 21:00-22:00
- 22:00-23:00
- 23:00-Midnight

Please tick all options that apply.
- 18:00-19:00
- 19:00-20:00
- 20:00-21:00
- 21:00-22:00
- 22:00-23:00
- 23:00-midnight

Table 7.19
which hours each helpline was open for during the evening, 2019

time open	18:00-19:00	19:00-20:00	20:00-21:00
number of organisations	13	17	12
percentage	26%	34%	24%

time open	21:00-22:00	22:00-23:00	23:00-midnight
number of organisations	10	4	4
percentage	20%	8%	8%

In 2019, 19 of the 49 respondents (that is, 4 in 10) said that their organisation's helplines were open at some time in the evening (between 6 PM and midnight).
Of the 19 organisations open during the evening all of them were open for some time between 6 PM and 9 PM (but not all the time), but were increasingly less likely to be open approaching midnight.

In 2017 the helplines were more likely to be open between 6 PM and midnight, and a bit more likely in 2018.

The following tables give the data from the 2017 and 2018 surveys.

Table 7.17
which hours each helpline was open for during the evening, 2017

time open	18:00-19:00	19:00-20:00	20:00-21:00
number of organisations	33	38	34
percentage	41%	48%	43%

time open	21:00-22:00	22:00-23:00	23:00-midnight
number of organisations	27	13	12
percentage	34%	16%	15%

Table 7.18
which hours each helpline was open for during the evening, 2018

time open	18:00-19:00	19:00-20:00	20:00-21:00
number of organisations	13	16	14
percentage	33%	40%	35%

time open	21:00-22:00	22:00-23:00	23:00-midnight
number of organisations	11	9	8
percentage	14%	11%	10%

Question 8

asked for which hours the helpline was open during the night?

8. What hours is your helpline open during the NIGHT?
Please tick all options that apply

☐ Midnight-01:00

☐ 01:00-02:00

☐ 02:00-03:00

☐ 03:00-04:00

☐ 04:00-05:00

☐ 05:00-06:00

Please tick all options that apply.
- midnight-01:00
- 01:00-02:00
- 02:00-03:00
- 03:00-04:00
- 04:00-05:00
- 05:00-06:00

Table 8.19
which hours each helpline was open for during the night, 2019

time open	midnight-01:00	01:00-02:00	02:00-03:00
number of organisations	3	3	2

time open	03:00-04:00	04:00-05:00	05:00-06:00
number of organisations	4	2	2

In 2019, 4 of the 49 respondents said that their organisation's helpline was open at some time in the night (between midnight and 6 AM).
2 of these 4 said that their helpline was open all the time between midnight and 6 AM.

In 2017 and 2018 the helplines were a bit more likely to be open between midnight and 6 AM.

The following tables give the data from the 2017 and 2018 surveys.

Table 8.17
which hours each helpline was open for during the night, 2017

time open	midnight-01:00	01:00-02:00	02:00-03:00
number of organisations	10	8	8

time open	03:00-04:00	04:00-05:00	05:00-06:00
number of organisations	8	8	8

Table 8.18
which hours each helpline was open for during the night, 2018

time open	midnight-01:00	01:00-02:00	02:00-03:00
number of organisations	6	6	5

time open	03:00-04:00	04:00-05:00	05:00-06:00
number of organisations	5	5	5

Question 9

asked for which other hours the helpline was open?

Please note the actual open times; for example, Saturday - 09:00-13:00
- Saturday
- Sunday
- bank holiday
- other

Table 9.19
which other times each helpline was open for, 2019

when open	Saturday	Sunday	bank holiday	other
number of organisations	16	15	17	6

In 2019, 1 in 3 of the respondents said that their organisation's helpline was open at some time at weekends and bank holidays.

The results were similar in 2018, but in 2017 the helplines were more likely to be open at weekends and bank holidays.

The following tables give the data from the 2017 and 2018 surveys.

Table 9.17
which other times each helpline was open for, 2017

when open	Saturday	Sunday	bank holiday	other
number of organisations	30	20	27	8

Table 9.18
which other times each helpline was open for, 2018

when open	Saturday	Sunday	bank holiday	other
number of organisations	14	12	14	5

helpline funding

Question 10

asked what were the helpline sources of funding?

What is the percentage of total funding (please ensure answers add up to 100 per cent)?
What period does the funding cover (if applicable)?

- internal funding   period?
- local authority   period?
- Government Funding - Department of Education   period?
- Government Funding - Department of Health   period?
- Government Funding - Ministry of Justice   period?
- digital fundraising   period?
- fundraising   period?
- lottery   period?
- grants   period?
- donations   period?
- legacies   period?

other (please specify)

Please note the percentage of total funding and the period it covers,

Table 10.19
helpline funding sources, 2019

funding source	internal funding	local authority	government (Health)	government (Education)
number of organisations	0	7	0	3
percentage	0%	14%	-	6%

funding source	government (Justice)	digital	fundraising	lottery
number of organisations	3	2	13	2
percentage	6%	4%	27%	4%

funding source	grants	donations	legacies
number of organisations	10	11	1
percentage	20%	22%	2%

In 2019, of organisations which answered the question the commonest source of funding was from general fundraising by members of the public (1 in 4 organisations), followed by grants and donations (each for 1 in 5 organisations), and local authority funding (1 in 7 organisations).

The results were similar in 2018, but in 2017 the helplines were more likely to receive internal funding; however, internal funding was not listed as a possible response after 2017 for administrative reasons

The following tables give the data from the 2017 and 2018 surveys.

Table 10.17
helpline funding sources, 2017

funding source	internal funding	local authority	government (Health)	government (Education)
number of organisations	24	8	0	2
percentage	48%	16%	-	4%

funding source	government (Justice)	digital	fundraising	lottery
number of organisations	3	0	4	4
percentage	6%	-	8%	8%

funding source	grants	donations	legacies
number of organisations	14	13	0
percentage	28%	26%	-

Table 10.18
helpline funding sources, 2018

funding source	internal funding	local authority	government (Health)	government (Education)
number of organisations	0	6	2	1
percentage	-	15%	5%	3%

funding source	government (Justice)	digital	fundraising	lottery
number of organisations	1	1	12	1
percentage	3%	3%	30%	3%

funding source	grants	donations	legacies
number of organisations	12	10	2
percentage	30%	25%	5%

Question 11

asked about current budgets.

11. What is the current annual BUDGET for...

The organisation?

The helpline?

What is the current annual budget for ...

- the organisation?
- the helpline?

Table 11.19
helpline budgets, 2019

organisation budget	<£1m	£1m - £10m	£10m - £100m	>£100m
number of organisations	10	4	0	2

helpline budget	<£50k	£50k - £100k	£100k - £500k	>£500k
number of organisations	9	3	5	2

In 2019, 2 out of 3 organisations which replied had a budget of less than £1 million, and a half had a helpline budget of less than £50k.

In 2017, half of the organisations which replied had a budget of less than £1 million, and 1 in 3 had a helpline budget of less than £50k.
In 2018, 2 out of 3 organisations which replied had a budget of less than £1 million, and 1 in 3 had a helpline budget of less than £50k.

The following tables give the data from the 2017 and 2018 surveys.

Table 11.17
helpline budgets, 2017

organisation budget	<£1m	£1m - £10m	£10m - £100m	>£100m
number of organisations	22	8	6	4

helpline budget	<£50k	£50k - £100k	£100k - £500k	>£500k
number of organisations	16	6	15	9

Table 11.18
helpline budgets, 2018

organisation budget	<£1m	£1m - £10m	£10m - £100m	>£100m
number of organisations	10	2	3	1

helpline budget	<£50k	£50k - £100k	£100k - £500k	>£500k
number of organisations	4	2	5	3

helpline aims and coverage

19

Question 12

asked about the purpose or remit of the helpline and the percentage of contacts?

What is the purpose or remit of the helpline?
You can complete more than one option.

• advice	for example; practical clinical, medical, financial, welfare, legal, benefits advice	percentage
• listening support	for example; emotional support	percentage
• information	for example; signposting to other services	percentage
• counselling	for example; qualified counsellor speaks to service use	percentage
• befriending	for example; acting as a friend to support service user	percentage
• referral	for example; directing a service user to another professional service	percentage

other (please specify) and include the percentage of contacts figure

Table 12.19
helpline aims, 2019

helpline aim	advice	listening	information
number of organisations	16	26	30
percentage (of 49)	33%	53%	61%

helpline aim	counselling	befriending	referral
number of organisations	2	6	17
percentage (of 49)	4%	12%	35%

In 2019, of the 49 organisations which replied to the survey 6 in 10 supplied some kind of information, half gave listening support, and 1 in 3 offered some kind of advice.

The percentages were a shade higher in 2017 and 2018 when 3 out of 4 supplied some kind of information, 2 in 3 gave listening support, and 4 in 10 offered some kind of advice.

The following tables give the data from the 2017 and 2018 surveys.

Table 12.17
helpline aims, 2017

helpline aim	advice	listening	information
number of organisations	32	54	60
percentage (of 80)	40%	68%	75%

helpline aim	counselling	befriending	referral
number of organisations	7	7	28
percentage (of 80)	9%	9%	35%

Table 12.18
helpline aims, 2018

helpline aim	advice	listening	information
number of organisations	17	28	30
percentage (of 40)	43%	70%	75%

helpline aim	counselling	befriending	referral
number of organisations	2	2	13
percentage (of 40)	43%	70%	75%

Question 13

asked about the main themes of your helpline?

What are the main themes of your helpline?
Please tick all options that apply

• addictions	• dyslexia	• learning disability
• animals	• education	• legal, civil and welfare rights
• bereavement	• emotional distress	• lesbians, gay men, bisexuals
• carers	• employment	• mental health
• children and young people	• family and parents	• missing people
• consumer	• gender identity	• money and debt
• crime	• health	• occupations and forces
• cults	• HIV and AIDS	• older people
• disability	• housing and homelessness	• pregnancy
• domestic violence	• immigration and asylum	• rape and sexual abuse
• other (please specify)		

Table 13.19
number of organisations with a range of helpline themes, 2019

theme	number	theme	number
addictions	6	gender identity	3
animals	1	health	12
bereavement	9	HIV and AIDS	1
carers	8	housing and homelessness	8
children and young people	11	immigration and asylum	2
consumer	1	learning disability	2
crime	2	legal, civil and welfare rights	6
cults	1	lesbians, gay men, bisexuals	3
disability	7	mental health	18
domestic violence	10	missing people	0
dyslexia	0	money and debt	5
education	4	occupations and forces	3
emotional distress	17	older people	5
employment	5	pregnancy	4
family and parents	13	rape and sexual abuse	10
		other	5

In 2019 the commonest themes handled by the helplines were mental health and emotional distress (1 in 3 helplines); followed by family-and-parents and health (1 in 4); and children-and-young-people, domestic violence, rape-and-sexual-abuse, and bereavement (1 in 5).

The results were broadly similar in 2017 and 2018.

The following tables give the data from the 2017 and 2018 surveys.

Table 13.17
number of organisations with a range of helpline themes, 2017

theme	number	theme	number
addictions	7	gender identity	2
animals	1	health	24
bereavement	13	HIV and AIDS	0
carers	11	housing and homelessness	7
children and young people	16	immigration and asylum	2
consumer	0	learning disability	4
crime	3	legal, civil and welfare rights	4
cults	1	lesbians, gay men, bisexuals	2
disability	14	mental health	27
domestic violence	11	missing people	0
dyslexia	1	money and debt	7
education	5	occupations and forces	1
emotional distress	28	older people	4
employment	4	pregnancy	4
family and parents	14	rape and sexual abuse	11
		other	17

Table 13.18
number of organisations with a range of helpline themes, 2018

theme	number	theme	number
addictions	6	gender identity	6
animals	0	health	16
bereavement	8	HIV and AIDS	1
carers	10	housing and homelessness	4
children and young people	12	immigration and asylum	1
consumer	1	learning disability	4
crime	0	legal, civil and welfare rights	4
cults	0	lesbians, gay men, bisexuals	3
disability	12	mental health	11
domestic violence	5	missing people	0
dyslexia	1	money and debt	5
education	6	occupations and forces	0
emotional distress	12	older people	3
employment	5	pregnancy	3
family and parents	9	rape and sexual abuse	7
		other	8

Question 14

asked many KPIs the helpline had?

14. How many KPIs does your helpline have?

How many KPIs does your helpline have?

Table 14.19
number of organisations with specified number of KPIs, 2019

number of helplines	one	two	three	four	five	>five
number of organisations	5	3	4	4	2	3

In 2019, 4 in 10 of the 49 organisations which replied to the survey reported having at least one Key Performance Indicator (KPI); 3 out of 4 of these had more than one KPI.

In 2017 and 2018 organisations were more likely to have a larger number of KPIs.

The following tables give the data from the 2017 and 2018 surveys.

Table 14.17
number of organisations with specified number of KPIs, 2017

number of helplines	one	two	three	four	five	>five
number of organisations	1	5	6	4	8	12
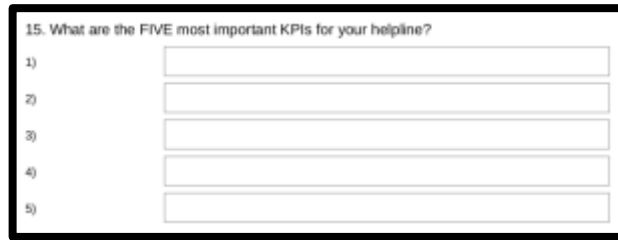
Table 14.18
number of organisations with specified number of KPIs, 2018

number of helplines	one	two	three	four	five	>five
number of organisations	0	4	1	3	1	9

Question 15

asked for the five most important KPIs for the helpline?

> **15. What are the FIVE most important KPIs for your helpline?**
> 1)
> 2)
> 3)
> 4)
> 5)

What are the five most important KPIs for your helpline?
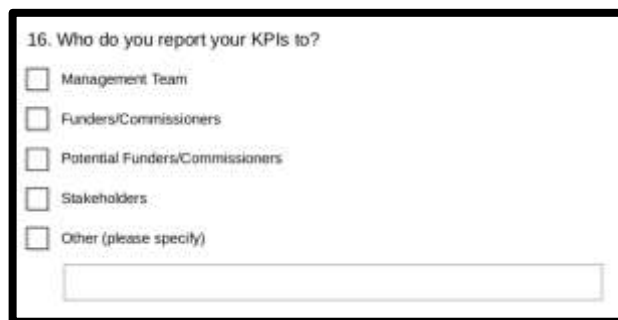
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

In 2109, of the respondents which listed their KPIs 3 in 4 of them were based on the number of calls received.

In 2017 and 2018, of the respondents which listed their KPIs 7 in 10 of them were based on the number of calls received.

Question 16

asked about the reporting of KPIs?

> **16. Who do you report your KPIs to?**
> ☐ Management Team
> ☐ Funders/Commissioners
> ☐ Potential Funders/Commissioners
> ☐ Stakeholders
> ☐ Other (please specify)

Who do you report your KPIs to?

- management team
- funders or commissioners
- potential funders or commissioners
- stakeholders
- other (please specify)

Table 16.19
number of organisations reporting KPIs to a range of contacts, 2019

KPI reporting contact	management team	funders or commissioners	potential funders or commissioners	stakeholders	other
number of organisations	22	15	8	7	3

In 2019, of the organisations which replied 8 in 10 reported their KPIs to a management team.

In 2017, of the organisations which replied 9 in 10 reported their KPIs to a management team.
In 2018, of the organisations which replied 8 in 10 reported their KPIs to a management team.

The following tables give the data from the 2017 and 2018 surveys.

Table 16.17
number of organisations reporting KPIs to a range of contacts, 2017

KPI reporting contact	management team	funders or commissioners	potential funders or commissioners	stakeholders	other
number of organisations	47	34	15	13	8

Table 16.18
number of organisations reporting KPIs to a range of contacts, 2018

KPI reporting contact	management team	funders or commissioners	potential funders or commissioners	stakeholders	other
number of organisations	20	10	6	7	6

helpline staffing issues

Question 17
asked who answered the helpline queries?

17. Who answers the helpline queries?
☐ Paid Staff
☐ Volunteers

Who answers the helpline queries?

- Paid Staff
- Volunteers

Table 17.19
who answers the helpline queries, 2019

person answering	only paid staff	only volunteers	paid staff and volunteers
number of organisations	19	4	8
percentage (of 31)	61%	13%	26%

In 2019, of the 31 organisations which answered this question 9 out of 10 used paid staff to answer their helpline and 4 out of 10 used volunteers (both proportions included organisations which used both paid staff and volunteers).

In 2017, of the 55 organisations which answered this question 8 out of 10 used paid staff to answer their helpline and 4 out of 10 used volunteers (both proportions included organisations which used both paid staff and volunteers).
In 2018, of the 29 organisations which answered this question 8 out of 10 used paid staff to answer their helpline and 6 out of 10 used volunteers (both proportions included organisations which used both paid staff and volunteers).

The following tables give the data from the 2017 and 2018 surveys.

Table 17.17
who answers the helpline queries, 2017

person answering	only paid staff	only volunteers	paid staff and volunteers
number of organisations	31	9	15
percentage (of 55)	56%	16%	27%

Table 17.18
who answers the helpline queries, 2018

person answering	only paid staff	only volunteers	paid staff and volunteers
number of organisations	12	6	11
percentage (of 29)	41%	21%	38%

Figure 2
percentage of organisations with paid staff or volunteers (or both)
answering helpline queries, 2017 - 2019

percentage of organisations

only paid staff	2017	56%
	2018	41%
	2019	61%
only volunteers	2017	16%
	2018	21%
	2019	13%
paid staff & volunteers	2017	27%
	2018	38%
	2019	26%
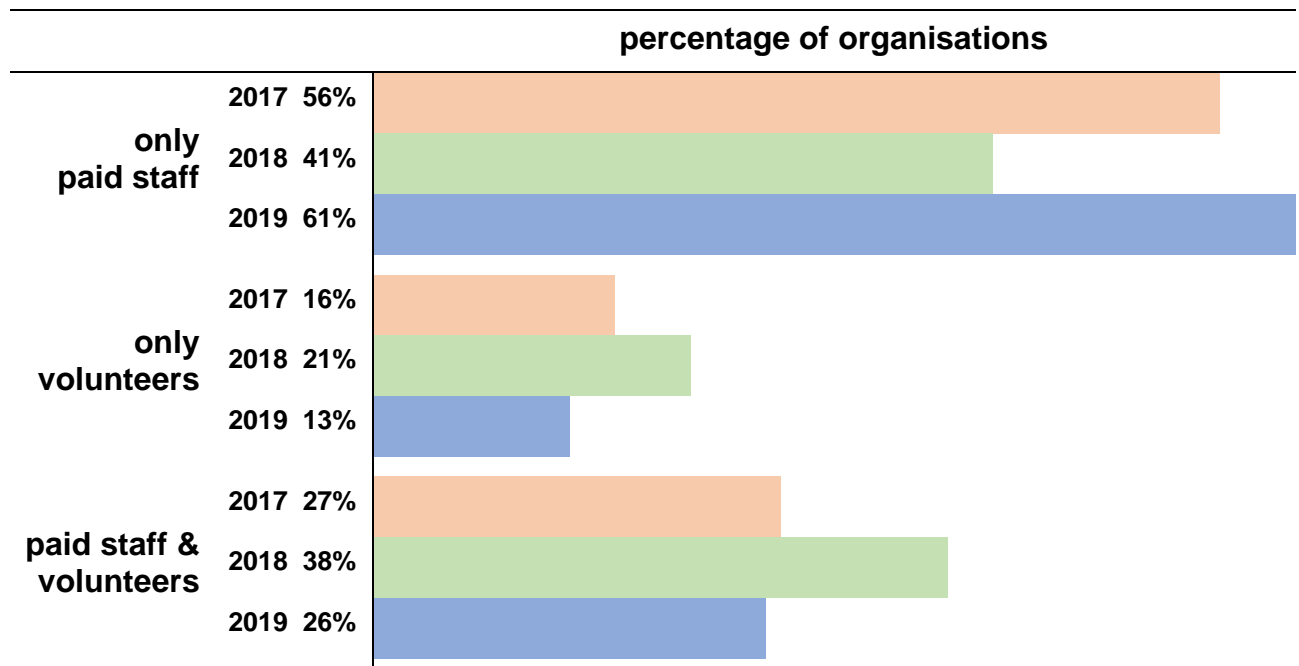
based on data from Tables 17.17, 17.18, and 17.19

Question 18

asked about helpline paid staff.

Answer these questions if your helpline employs paid staff.

- helpline managers or   number of FTEs   average FTE salary
  helpline co-ordinator
- helpline advisors include any number of FTEs   average FTE salary
  non-specialist staff
  responding to enquiries
- specialist helpline worker -   number of FTEs   average FTE salary
  social worker
- specialist helpline worker -   number of FTEs   average FTE salary
  nurse

Other helpline workers (please specify).
Please enter number of FTEs and average annual FTE salary for each type.

Table 18.19
number of full time equivalent (FTE) staff, 2019

number of FTEs	<one	one	two	three	>three
number of …					
helpline managers	4	16	3	3	1
helpline advisors	3	5	2	3	9
social worker	0	0	2	0	1
nurse	1	0	0	0	1

In 2019, the commonest kind of staff were helpline managers followed by advisors.

The results were similar in 2017 and 2018.

The following tables give the data from the 2017 and 2018 surveys.

Table 18.17
number of full time equivalent (FTE) staff, 2017

number of FTEs	<one	one	two	three	>three
number of …					
helpline managers	13	24	8	1	6
helpline advisors	4	6	6	2	18
social worker	1	0	1	1	1
nurse	0	0	2	1	3

Table 18.18
number of full time equivalent (FTE) staff, 2018

number of FTEs	<one	one	two	three	>three
number of …					
helpline managers	6	14	2	1	2
helpline advisors	0	5	4	2	3
social worker	1	1	1	0	1
nurse	1	0	0	0	2

Question 19

asked about home and office work patterns for paid staff.

Do any paid staff …
- Work alone in the office at any time?
- Work from home?

Table 19.19i
paid staff who work alone in the office, 2019

frequency	frequently	never
number of organisations	7	19
percentage (of 26)	27%	73%

Table 19.19ii
paid staff who work from home, 2019

frequency	always	frequently	never
number of organisations	7	8	11
percentage (of 26)	27%	31%	42%

In 2019, of the 26 organisations who answered this question 1 in 4 had paid staff who worked alone in the office, and 6 in 10 had paid staff who worked from home.

In 2017, of the 47 organisations who answered this question just over 1 in 4 had paid staff who worked alone in the office, and 1 in 3 had paid staff who worked from home.

In 2018, of the 22 organisations who answered this question 1 in 3 had paid staff who worked alone in the office, and 4 in 10 had paid staff who worked from home.

The following tables give the data from the 2017 and 2018 surveys.

Table 19.17i
paid staff who work alone in the office, 2017

frequency	frequently	never
number of organisations	13	34
percentage (of 47)	28%	72%

Table 19.17ii
paid staff who work from home, 2017

frequency	always	frequently	never
number of organisations	6	14	34
percentage (of 54)	11%	26%	63%

Table 19.18i
paid staff who work alone in the office, 2018

frequency	frequently	never
number of organisations	8	14
percentage (of 22)	36%	64%

Table 19.18ii
paid staff who work from home, 2018

frequency	always	frequently	never
number of organisations	5	5	13
percentage (of 23)	22%	22%	56%

Figure 3
percentage of organisations with paid staff who work from home, 2017 - 2019

percentage of organisations

always work from home	2017 11%	
	2018 22%	
	2019 27%	
frequently work from home	2017 26%	
	2018 22%	
	2019 31%	
never work from home	2017 63%	
	2018 56%	
	2019 42%	
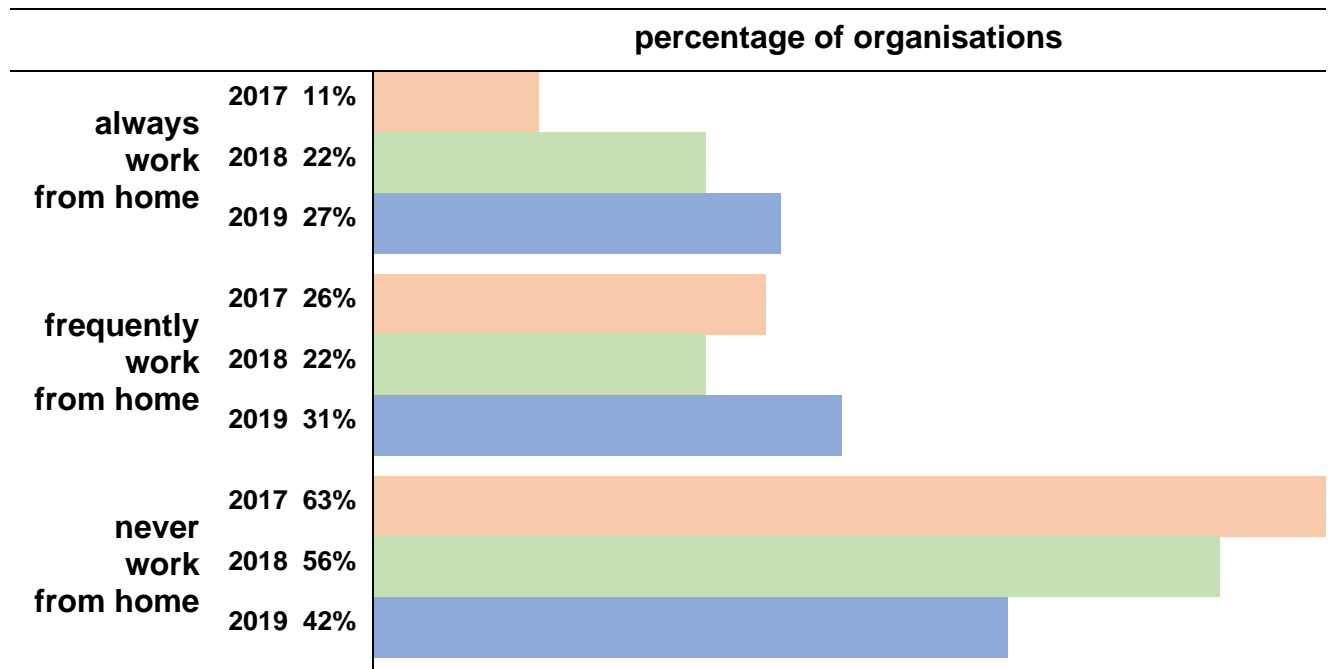
based on data from Tables 17.17, 17.18, and 17.19

Question 20
asked about paid staff working from home.

> 20. If any paid staff work from home, what is the FTE?

If any paid staff work from home, what is the FTE?

Of the organisations that answered this question in 2019 the FTEs usually varied between 0.4 and 1.0.

Of the organisations that answered this question in 2017 the FTEs usually varied between 0.4 and 3.0.

Of the organisations that answered this question in 2018 the FTEs usually varied between 0.4 and 3.0.

Question 21

asked about helpline volunteers.

21. Answer these questions if your helpline has VOLUNTEERS.

Number of annual volunteer hours?	
Average shift length (in hours)?	
Average number of shifts per person per week?	

Answer these questions if your helpline has volunteers.
- number of annual volunteer hours
- average shift length (in hours)
- average number of shifts per person per week

Table 21.19
helpline volunteers, 2019

annual volunteer hours	<2,000 hours	2,000 – 10,000	>10,000 hours
number of organisations	3	3	3

average shift length	<3 hours	3 – 4 hours	>4 hours
number of organisations	3	7	2

number of weekly shifts	<1 shift	1 shift	>1 shift
number of organisations	1	8	1

In 2019, the average number of volunteer hours varied greatly from 135 hours a year to 15,000. Most volunteers did 1 shift each week with an average shift length volunteers of around 3 hours.

The working patterns were broadly similar in 2017 and 2018.

The following tables give the data from the 2017 and 2018 surveys.

Table 21.17
helpline volunteers, 2017

annual volunteer hours	<2,000 hours	2,000 – 10,000	>10,000 hours
number of organisations	13	9	2

average shift length	<3 hours	3 – 4 hours	>4 hours
number of organisations	5	15	6

number of weekly shifts	<1 shift	1 shift	>1 shift
number of organisations	3	20	3

Table 21.18
helpline volunteers, 2018

annual volunteer hours	<2,000 hours	2,000 – 10,000	>10,000 hours
number of organisations	9	5	2

average shift length	<3 hours	3 – 4 hours	>4 hours
number of organisations	3	11	3

number of weekly shifts	<1 shift	1 shift	>1 shift
number of organisations	1	14	1

Question 22

asked about home and office work patterns for volunteers.

Do any volunteers ...
- operate alone in the office at any time?
- operate from home?

Table 22.19i
volunteers who work alone in the office, 2019

frequency	frequently	never
number of organisations	0	13
percentage (of 13)	-	100%

Table 22.19ii
volunteers who work from home, 2019

frequency	always	frequently	never
number of organisations	8	2	5
percentage (of 15)	53%	13%	33%

In 2019, all of the 13 organisations which answered this question said that no volunteers ever operated alone in the office at any time. Half of the volunteers always worked from home.

In 2017, of the 26 organisations which answered this question 2 said that volunteers operated alone in the office at some time. 1 in 3 of the volunteers always worked from home.
In 2018, of the 18 organisations which answered this question 1 said that volunteers operated alone in the office at some time. 1 in 3 of the volunteers always worked from home.

The following tables give the data from the 2017 and 2018 surveys.

Table 22.17i
volunteers who work alone in the office, 2017

frequency	frequently	never
number of organisations	2	24
percentage (of 26)	8%	92%

Table 22.17ii
volunteers who work from home, 2017

frequency	always	frequently	never
number of organisations	10	2	18
percentage (of 30)	33%	7%	60%

Table 22.18i
volunteers who work alone in the office, 2018

frequency	frequently	never
number of organisations	1	16
percentage (of 17)	6%	94%

Table 22.18ii
volunteers who work from home, 2018

frequency	always	frequently	never
number of organisations	6	1	11
percentage (of 18)	33%	6%	61%

helplines and communications

Question 23

asked about telephone calls.

> **23. Does your helpline take TELEPHONE calls?**
>
> ◯ Yes
>
> ◯ No

Does your helpline take telephone calls?
- yes
- no

In 2019, all of the 28 organisations which replied to this question said that their helpline took telephone calls.

In 2017, 50 of the 51 organisations which replied to this question said that their helpline took telephone calls.

In 2018, all of the 26 organisations which replied to this question said that their helpline took telephone calls.

Question 24

asked about the details of telephone calls.

> **24. Answer these questions if your helpline takes TELEPHONE calls.**
>
> Annual demand i.e. call attempts (last financial year)?
>
> Answered calls (last financial year)?
>
> Number of individual callers, if known (last financial year)?
>
> Do you have a target call answer rate? If you do, what is it?
>
> What is your actual answer rate?
>
> What is the average call length?
>
> What is the average length of post-call work?

Answer these questions if your helpline takes telephone calls.

- Annual demand, that is, call attempts (last financial year)?
- Answered calls (last financial year)?
- Number of individual callers, if known (last financial year)?
- Do you have a target call answer rate? If you do, what is it?
- What is your actual answer rate?
- What is the average call length?
- What is the average length of post-call work?

Table 24.19i
annual telephone call data (demand), 2019

demand	<5,000 calls	5,000 – 20,000	20,000 – 100,000	>100,000
number of organisations	10	5	3	2
percentage	50%	25%	15%	10%

Table 24.19ii
annual telephone call data (answered calls), 2019

answered calls	<5,000 calls	5,000 – 20,000	20,000 – 100,000	>100,000
number of organisations	13	8	3	1
percentage	52%	32%	12%	4%

Table 24.19iii
annual telephone call data (number of callers), 2019

number of callers	<500	500 – 1,000	>1,000
number of organisations	2	2	1

Table 24.19iv
annual telephone call data (answer target), 2019

answer target	<50%	50% – 99%	100%
number of organisations	0	5	3

Table 24.19v
annual telephone call data (actual answer rate), 2019

actual answer rate	<50%	50% – 99%	100%
number of organisations	1	9	3

Table 24.19vi
annual telephone call data (average call length), 2019

average length	<10 minutes	10 – 20	20 - 30	>30 minutes
number of organisations	5	9	10	2
percentage	19%	35%	38%	8%

Table 24.19vii
annual telephone call data (average post call length), 2019

average length (post call work)	<10 minutes	10 – 20	20 - 30	>30 minutes
number of organisations	10	5	3	0
percentage	56%	28%	17%	-

In 2019, half of the organisations took fewer than 5,000 calls a year (mostly around 2,000 calls), and another 1 in 4 took between 5,000 and 20,000 calls.
Of the few organisations that replied to the question about the number of callers the usual answer was that they had between 300 and 900 callers a year.
3 out 4 calls lasted between 10 and 30 minutes.

In 2017, half of the organisations took fewer than 5,000 calls a year (mostly around 2,000 calls), and another 1 in 7 took between 5,000 and 20,000 calls.
Of the few organisations that replied to the question about the number of callers they were as likely to have more than 1,000 callers a year as fewer than 500.
2 out of 3 calls lasted between 10 and 30 minutes.
In 2018, just under half of the organisations took fewer than 5,000 calls a year (mostly around 2,000 calls), and a similar proportion took between 5,000 and 20,000 calls.
Of the few organisations that replied to the question about the number of callers the usual answer was that they had between over 1,000 callers each year.
8 in 10 calls lasted between 10 and 30 minutes.

The following tables give the data from the 2017 and 2018 surveys.

Table 24.17i
annual telephone call data (demand), 2017

demand	<5,000 calls	5,000 – 20,000	20,000 – 100,000	>100,000
number of organisations	16	5	8	4
percentage	48%	15%	24%	12%

Table 24.17ii
annual telephone call data (answered calls), 2017

answered calls	<5,000 calls	5,000 – 20,000	20,000 – 100,000	>100,000
number of organisations	26	8	5	3
percentage	62%	19%	12%	7%

Table 24.17iii
annual telephone call data (number of callers), 2017

number of callers	<500	500 – 1,000	>1,000
number of organisations	5	2	4

Table 24.17iv
annual telephone call data (answer target), 2017

answer target	<50%	50% – 99%	100%
number of organisations	1	18	0

Table 24.17v
annual telephone call data (actual answer rate), 2017

actual answer rate	<50%	50% – 99%	100%
number of organisations	5	20	2

Table 24.17vi
annual telephone call data (average call length), 2017

average length	<10 minutes	10 – 20	20 - 30	>30 minutes
number of organisations	9	16	7	4
percentage	25%	44%	19%	11%

Table 24.17vii
annual telephone call data (average post call length), 2017

average length (post call work)	<10 minutes	10 – 20	20 - 30	>30 minutes
number of organisations	14	12	2	0
percentage	50%	43%	7%	-

Table 24.18i
annual telephone call data (demand), 2018

demand	<5,000 calls	5,000 – 20,000	20,000 – 100,000	>100,000
number of organisations	8	5	3	2
percentage	44%	28%	17%	11%

Table 24.18ii
annual telephone call data (answered calls), 2018

answered calls	<5,000 calls	5,000 – 20,000	20,000 – 100,000	>100,000
number of organisations	14	5	4	1
percentage	58%	21%	17%	4%

Table 24.18iii
annual telephone call data (number of callers), 2018

number of callers	<500	500 – 1,000	>1,000
number of organisations	0	2	5

Table 24.18iv
annual telephone call data (answer target), 2018

answer target	<50%	50% – 99%	100%
number of organisations	0	7	0

Table 24.18v
annual telephone call data (actual answer rate), 2018

actual answer rate	<50%	50% – 99%	100%
number of organisations	3	10	0

Table 24.18vi
annual telephone call data (average call length), 2018

average length	<10 minutes	10 – 20	20 - 30	>30 minutes
number of organisations	3	12	7	1
percentage	13%	52%	30%	4%

Table 24.18vii
annual telephone call data (average post call length), 2018

average length (post call work)	<10 minutes	10 – 20	20 - 30	>30 minutes
number of organisations	10	7	1	0
percentage	56%	39%	5%	-

Question 25

asked about answerphone call backs.

- If you are unable to answer the call immediately,
  does the call go to answerphone?   yes/no
- Do you offer call backs as part of the helpline service?   yes/no

In 2019, 7 in 10 organisations said that they had an answerphone facility, and a slightly smaller proportion said that they offered call backs.

In 2017, half of the organisations said that they had an answerphone facility, but 2 out of 3 said that they offered call backs.
In 2018, 3 out of 4 organisations said that they had an answerphone facility, and 2 out of 3 said that they offered call backs.

The following tables give the data from the 2017 and 2018 surveys.

Table 25.19i
answerphone call backs, 2019

Do you have an answerphone facility?	yes	no
number of organisations	20	8
percentage	71%	29%

Table 25.19ii
answerphone call backs, 2019

Do you offer call backs?	yes	no
number of organisations	17	10
percentage	63%	37%

Table 25.17i
answerphone call backs, 2017

Do you have an answerphone facility?	yes	no
number of organisations	25	24
percentage	51%	49%

Table 25.17ii
answerphone call backs, 2017

Do you offer call backs?	yes	no
number of organisations	31	17
percentage	65%	35%

Table 25.18i
answerphone call backs, 2018

Do you have an answerphone facility?	yes	no
number of organisations	18	5
percentage	78%	22%

Table 25.18ii
answerphone call backs, 2018

Do you offer call backs?	yes	no
number of organisations	16	8
percentage	67%	33%

Question 26

asked about communication channels.

What other channels do you operate?
Please tick all options that apply

- email
- SMS text
- web chat (121)
- web forum
- other channels (please specify)

- Twitter
- Facebook
- other social media
- letters

Table 26.19
communication channels operated, 2019

communication channel	email	SMS text	web chat (121)
number of organisations	22	3	8
percentage	44%	6%	16%

communication channel	web forum	Twitter	Facebook
number of organisations	2	10	11
percentage	4%	20%	22%

communication channel	other social media	letters	other channels
number of organisations	4	8	5
percentage	8%	16%	10%

The following tables give the data from the 2017 and 2018 surveys.

Table 26.17
communication channels operated, 2017

communication channel	email	SMS text	web chat (121)
number of organisations	39	6	7
percentage	49%	8%	9%

communication channel	web forum	Twitter	Facebook
number of organisations	9	10	14
percentage	11%	13%	18%

communication channel	other social media	letters	other channels
number of organisations	5	17	8
percentage	6%	21%	10%

Table 26.18
communication channels operated, 2018

communication channel	email	SMS text	web chat (121)
number of organisations	22	8	11
percentage	55%	20%	28%

communication channel	web forum	Twitter	Facebook
number of organisations	3	5	11
percentage	8%	13%	28%

communication channel	other social media	letters	other channels
number of organisations	3	10	6
percentage	8%	25%	15%

Question 27

asked about the details of any communication channels.

Please complete the following information …
- annual demand (last financial year)
- number of individual contacts (last answer financial year)
- rate for incoming enquiries (last financial year)

… for each channel your helpline operates,
- email
- SMS text
- web chat (121)
- web forum
- Twitter
- Facebook
- other social media
- letters
- other channels

Table 27.19i
details of communication channels operated (email), 2019

annual demand	<1,000 emails	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	10	6	2

individual contacts	<500 contacts	500 – 1,000	>1,000
number of organisations	5	1	5

enquiry rate	<1 per day	1 – 3 per day	<5 per day
number of organisations	6	5	2

Table 27.19ii
details of communication channels operated (SMS text), 2019

annual demand	<1,000 texts	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	1	0	2

individual contacts	<1,000 contacts	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	1	0	1

enquiry rate	<1 per day	1 – 3 per day	<5 per day
number of organisations	3	0	0

Table 27.19iii
details of communication channels operated (web chat 121), 2019

annual demand	<1,000 chats	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	3	2	1

individual contacts	<1,000 contacts	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	2	0	1

enquiry rate	<1 per day	1 – 3 per day	<5 per day
number of organisations	4	0	0

Table 27.19iv
details of communication channels operated (web forum), 2019

annual demand	<1,000 uses	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	1	1	0

individual contacts	<1,000 contacts	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	1	0	0

enquiry rate	<1 per day	1 – 3 per day	<5 per day
number of organisations	0	1	0

Table 27.19v
details of communication channels operated (Twitter), 2019

annual demand	<1,000 tweets	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	3	0	0

individual contacts	<1,000 contacts	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	2	0	0

enquiry rate	<1 per day	1 – 3 per day	<5 per day
number of organisations	1	1	0

Table 27.19vi
details of communication channels operated (Facebook), 2019

annual demand	<1,000 uses	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	5	0	0

individual contacts	<1,000 contacts	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	3	0	0

enquiry rate	<1 per day	1 – 3 per day	<5 per day
number of organisations	2	1	0

Table 27.19vii
details of communication channels operated (other social media), 2019

annual demand	<1,000 uses	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	0	0	0

individual contacts	<1,000 contacts	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	0	0	0

enquiry rate	<1 per day	1 – 3 per day	<5 per day
number of organisations	0	0	0

Table 27.19viii
details of communication channels operated (letters), 2019

annual demand	<1,000 uses	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	3	1	0

individual contacts	<1,000 contacts	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	2	0	0

enquiry rate	<1 per day	1 – 3 per day	<5 per day
number of organisations	0	2	1

Table 27.19ix
details of communication channels operated (other channels), 2019

annual demand	<1,000 uses	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	1	0	0

individual contacts	<1,000 contacts	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	0	0	0

enquiry rate	<1 per day	1 – 3 per day	<5 per day
number of organisations	0	0	0

In 2019, email contact was used by 1 in 3 of the respondents but the other methods (not counting the phone) did not appear to be used much.

The results were similar in 2017 and 2018.

The following tables give the data from the 2017 and 2018 surveys.

Table 27.17i
details of communication channels operated (email), 2017

annual demand	<1,000 emails	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	19	13	3

individual contacts	<500 contacts	500 – 1,000	>1,000
number of organisations	2	1	6

enquiry rate	<1 per day	1 – 3 per day	<5 per day
number of organisations	10	11	6

Table 27.17ii
details of communication channels operated (SMS text), 2017

annual demand	<1,000 texts	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	3	2	1

individual contacts	<1,000 contacts	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	2	0	0

enquiry rate	<1 per day	1 – 3 per day	<5 per day
number of organisations	6	0	0

Table 27.17iii
details of communication channels operated (web chat 121), 2017

annual demand	<1,000 chats	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	4	1	1

individual contacts	<1,000 contacts	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	2	0	1

enquiry rate	<1 per day	1 – 3 per day	<5 per day
number of organisations	5	0	0

Table 27.17iv
details of communication channels operated (web forum), 2017

annual demand	<1,000 uses	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	5	2	0

individual contacts	<1,000 contacts	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	3	1	0

enquiry rate	<1 per day	1 – 3 per day	<5 per day
number of organisations	3	2	0

Table 27.17v
details of communication channels operated (Twitter), 2017

annual demand	<1,000 tweets	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	5	0	0

individual contacts	<1,000 contacts	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	1	0	0

enquiry rate	<1 per day	1 – 3 per day	<5 per day
number of organisations	2	0	0

Table 27.17vi
details of communication channels operated (Facebook), 2017

annual demand	<1,000 uses	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	9	0	0

individual contacts	<1,000 contacts	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	4	0	0

enquiry rate	<1 per day	1 – 3 per day	<5 per day
number of organisations	5	1	0

Table 27.17vii
details of communication channels operated (other social media), 2017

annual demand	<1,000 uses	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	0	0	0

individual contacts	<1,000 contacts	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	0	0	0

enquiry rate	<1 per day	1 – 3 per day	<5 per day
number of organisations	1	0	0

Table 27.17viii
details of communication channels operated (letters), 2017

annual demand	<1,000 uses	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	11	0	0

individual contacts	<1,000 contacts	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	4	0	0

enquiry rate	<1 per day	1 – 3 per day	<5 per day
number of organisations	0	5	1

Table 27.17ix
details of communication channels operated (other channels), 2017

annual demand	<1,000 uses	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	3	0	0

individual contacts	<1,000 contacts	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	1	0	0

enquiry rate	<1 per day	1 – 3 per day	<5 per day
number of organisations	1	0	1

Table 27.18i
details of communication channels operated (email), 2018

annual demand	<1,000 emails	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	12	5	2

individual contacts	<500 contacts	500 – 1,000	>1,000
number of organisations	6	2	3

enquiry rate	<1 per day	1 – 3 per day	<5 per day
number of organisations	8	7	1

Table 27.18ii
details of communication channels operated (SMS text), 2018

annual demand	<1,000 texts	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	3	1	3

individual contacts	<1,000 contacts	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	3	0	2

enquiry rate	<1 per day	1 – 3 per day	<5 per day
number of organisations	4	1	0

Table 27.18iii
details of communication channels operated (web chat 121), 2018

annual demand	<1,000 chats	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	4	2	4

individual contacts	<1,000 contacts	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	2	1	3

enquiry rate	<1 per day	1 – 3 per day	<5 per day
number of organisations	8	0	0

Table 27.18iv
details of communication channels operated (web forum), 2018

annual demand	<1,000 uses	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	2	1	0

individual contacts	<1,000 contacts	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	1	1	0

enquiry rate	<1 per day	1 – 3 per day	<5 per day
number of organisations	1	1	0

Table 27.18v
details of communication channels operated (Twitter), 2018

annual demand	<1,000 tweets	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	2	0	0

individual contacts	<1,000 contacts	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	1	0	0

enquiry rate	<1 per day	1 – 3 per day	<5 per day
number of organisations	2	0	0

Table 27.18vi
details of communication channels operated (Facebook), 2018

annual demand	<1,000 uses	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	6	1	0

individual contacts	<1,000 contacts	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	4	1	0

enquiry rate	<1 per day	1 – 3 per day	<5 per day
number of organisations	6	0	0

Table 27.18vii
details of communication channels operated (other social media), 2018

annual demand	<1,000 uses	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	2	0	0

individual contacts	<1,000 contacts	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	2	0	0

enquiry rate	<1 per day	1 – 3 per day	<5 per day
number of organisations	2	0	0

Table 27.18viii
details of communication channels operated (letters), 2018

annual demand	<1,000 uses	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	7	0	0

individual contacts	<1,000 contacts	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	5	0	0

enquiry rate	<1 per day	1 – 3 per day	<5 per day
number of organisations	2	4	1

Table 27.18ix
details of communication channels operated (other channels), 2018

annual demand	<1,000 uses	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	2	0	1

individual contacts	<1,000 contacts	1,000 – 5,000	>5,000
number of organisations	1	0	0

enquiry rate	<1 per day	1 – 3 per day	<5 per day
number of organisations	1	0	0

general helpline issues

Question 28

asked about safeguarding.

- In the last financial year, how many identified safeguarding issue contacts did the helpline take?
- Was it necessary to break confidentiality and involve the emergency services or another agency? If yes, for how many contacts?
- How many calls involved the risk of suicide?

Table 28.19i
safeguarding issues, 2019

safeguarding contacts	0	1 - 5	>5
number of organisations	7	7	4

Table 28.19ii
safeguarding issues, 2019

breaking confidentiality	0	1 - 5	>5
number of organisations	9	4	3

Table 28.19iii
safeguarding issues, 2019

suicide risk	0	1 - 5	>5
number of organisations	4	6	5

The patterns were similar in all three surveys,
although in 2017 the suicide risk appeared to be a shade higher.

The following tables give the data from the 2017 and 2018 surveys

Table 28.17i
safeguarding issues, 2017

safeguarding contacts	0	1 - 5	>5
number of organisations	14	7	13

Table 28.17ii
safeguarding issues, 2017

breaking confidentiality	0	1 - 5	>5
number of organisations	17	12	6

Table 28.17iii
safeguarding issues, 2017

suicide risk	0	1 - 5	>5
number of organisations	5	6	16

Table 28.18i
safeguarding issues, 2018

safeguarding contacts	0	1 - 5	>5
number of organisations	4	5	6

Table 28.18ii
safeguarding issues, 2018

breaking confidentiality	0	1 - 5	>5
number of organisations	8	3	5

Table 28.18iii
safeguarding issues, 2018

suicide risk	0	1 - 5	>5
number of organisations	5	3	9

Question 29
asked equality and diversity questions.
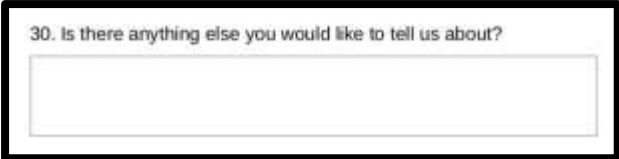

Equality and diversity questions.
- What measures does your helpline take to reach hard-to-engage service users?
- How does your helpline demonstrate it is fully inclusive?
- Is this part of your funder requirements?

In 2019, 1 in 3 of the respondents gave details of their diversity policies.

In 2017, 4 in 10 of the respondents gave details of their diversity policies.
In 2018, half of the respondents gave details of their diversity policies.

Question 30
asked for any further information.

30. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about?

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about?

In 2019, 4 of the 49 responding organisations gave additional information about funding difficulties, resource problems, and the unpopularity of KPIs.

In 2017, 14 of the 80 responding organisations gave additional information about funding difficulties, the difficulty of answering some of the questions, an interest in the survey results.
In 2018, 4 of the 40 responding organisations gave additional information about the administration of their helplines.

Question 31
asked for contact details

31. Please enter your details so we can contact you if we have any queries.

Name:

Telephone number:

Email address:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey

Please enter your details so we can contact you if we have any queries.
- name:
- telephone number:
- email address:

This data is confidential.

Annexe A

This is the text of the 2017 survey invitation (with the layout removed).

Background
Helplines Partnership (HLP) is launching important research into the helpline sector as it is today. This is the first survey of its kind for over 5 years. With the continuing pressure on services and reductions in funding, increasing numbers of people are becoming reliant on helplines.

Why are we conducting the research and what is the benefit?
The aim of the research is to gather key data which is relevant to all member helplines regardless of their size, remit or geographical area.
The research will demonstrate the importance of helplines. All members will receive a summary of the findings and the full results will be available to members who complete the survey. It will provide important evidence about why helplines are essential, supporting purposes such as funding applications, marketing and promotion.
HLP will also gain vital evidence to effectively lobby and campaign on behalf of the helpline sector. It is important that government and other influential stakeholders are aware of the role helplines play supporting individuals' wellbeing.
What type of data is required and how long will the survey take to complete?
We hope to gather key helpline information that should be readily available. Some of the questions are quite specific and there are notes explaining what is required. This is so that every member completing the survey supplies comparable information.
The higher the response rate, the stronger evidence base HLP will have. We have consulted with members in a number of focus groups to create a survey that is quick and easy to complete – no more than 20 minutes.

Who should complete the survey?
Helpline Managers or staff with accurate information would be best placed to complete the survey.

What if we need to come back to the survey?
If you exit a partially completed survey, you won't be able to go back to it. You can, however, move back and forward through the pages as you go. If you have all the relevant information to hand it will make the process easier. We would encourage you to complete as much of the data as possible but please leave any questions you cannot answer.

What is the long term plan with the research?
HLP aims to gather an increasingly comprehensive view of the helpline sector, year on year. In time, if funding is available, the research may be widened to cover specific areas in more depth.

Data protection
HLP will process the data in accordance with Data Protection principles. We do not anticipate that any personally identifiable or sensitive information will be required.
While HLP may refer to the organisations that took part in the survey, the findings will be collated to produce an overall summary and your helpline will not be individually identified.
CLOSING DATE: Friday 9 June 2017

Questions?
If you have any questions contact Nicola James, Head of Membership: 0300 330 7777
nicola.james@helplines.org

Annexe B

The aim of the surveys is to discover various proportions for the 340 members; for example, the proportion of member organisations classing themselves as a charity, a voluntary body, a commercial organisation, or something else. If every member organisation replied then the data collected would give the true proportions, but this never happens with any survey—even the 10-year Census for which there is a statutory legal obligation to complete it does not get 100 per cent response.

It is possible to calculate confidence intervals for the sample size of a survey. For example the range of values within which it is possible to be 95 per cent confident that the true population value lies. The larger the sample the more reliable the estimates. Small sample sizes can lead to unreliable estimates. The following table gives the lower and upper confidence limits for a population proportion of 50 per cent and for a range of sample sizes.

sample size	lower 95% confidence limit	upper 95% confidence limit
50	36.1	63.9
100	40.2	59.8
500	45.6	54.4
1,000	46.9	53.1
5,000	48.6	51.4
10,000	49.0	51.0

It can be seen that for samples of 5,000 and 10,000 the 95 per cent confidence interval is relatively narrow; that is; it is possible to be 95 per cent sure that the true population proportions lies between 48.6% and 51.4%, and 49.0% and 51.0% respectively. But for smaller samples the confidence interval is so wide as to be more or less useless; for example, for a sample size of 100 all that can be said is that it is possible to be 95 per cent sure that the true population proportion lies between 40% and 60%, which for many subject areas could be reasonably guessed without a survey.

The responses received in the earlier surveys are small and, in ordinary circumstances, would lead to unreliable estimates. However they are reasonable large relative to the population from which they come. In fact, the Helplines survey is not a sample survey at all but is essentially a census of all Helplines Partnership member organisations. The uncertainty which has to be estimated derives from the less than 100 per cent response.

This is the formula for the standard error of a proportion p based on a random sample of size n when the aim of the survey is to estimate the proportion π in a population of size N with some particular attribute.

$$SE(p) = \sqrt{\left\{\left(1 - \frac{n}{N}\right)\left(\frac{\pi(1-\pi)}{n}\right)\right\}}$$

$\sqrt{\left(1 - \frac{n}{N}\right)}$ is the finite population correction which is usually left out.
as it approaches 1 when N ≫ n.

For example, for a sample of 50,000 drawn from the population of England

$\sqrt{\left(1 - \frac{n}{N}\right)} = 0.9996$. This would be a massive sample but the finite population correction is so close to 1 that it has no appreciable effect on the confidence interval.

Because for most surveys the sample size is much smaller than the population size, the population can be considered to be effectively infinite in size and the formula simplifies to:

$$SE(p) = \sqrt{\left(\frac{\pi(1 - \pi)}{n}\right)}$$

Adding together the samples from the 2017 and 2018 Helplines surveys gives a sample size of 120 which would lead to a confidence interval (for a population proportion of 50 per cent) of 41.1 to 58.9 which is probably too wide to be useful. But the finite population correction for a sample of 120 from a population of 340 is 0.804 which narrows the confidence interval to 42.8 to 57.2. Which is still relatively wide.

The Helplines survey is not strictly a sample survey: it is essentially a census, as all members are contacted (not just a sample of them). With most surveys the uncertainty surrounding the estimates of the population proportions is caused by the sample size and the level of response. With the Helplines survey the uncertainty is caused purely by the less-than-100% response level.

Because the same organisations are sampled each time it is not strictly valid to aggregate the results from differing surveys for some variables; the same organisation would give the same answer to some (particularly factual) questions each time.

As an illustration, assume that a group of 100 people consisted of 50 men and 50 women and all 100 were surveyed; and only the 50 women replied. If the survey were repeated and again only the 50 women responded then aggregating the two results would lead to the erroneous conclusion that all 100 people were women.

The best way to get reliable results would be for the 2019 survey to get as large a response as possible. The following table gives the lower and upper confidence limits for a population proportion of 50 per cent and for a range of response rates from a population of 340, taking into account the finite population correction.

response rate	sample size	lower 95% confidence limit	upper 95% confidence limit
30%	102	41.9	58.1
40%	136	43.5	56.5
50%	170	44.7	55.3
60%	204	45.7	54.3
70%	238	46.5	53.5
75%	255	46.9	53.1
80%	272	47.3	52.7
85%	289	47.8	52.2
90%	306	48.2	51.8
95%	323	48.8	51.2

It can be seen that a response rate of over 80 per cent gives acceptably narrow confidence intervals, and that response rates of between 70 per cent and 80 per cent give reasonably narrow ones. However, the 2017 and 2018 surveys had response rates of 21 per cent and 15 per cent. Therefore it is important to improve the response rate of the 2019 survey, preferably to at least 3 out of 4.