

Membership

Terms and Conditions

1. Introduction

These Membership Terms and Conditions supplement any reference to membership in Helplines Partnership (HLP)'s Articles of Association. Their purpose is to ensure that:

- A. membership of HLP is open to all organisations involved with helplines which meet HLP's Membership Terms and Conditions
- B. other organisations and people with an interest in HLP's work, the wider helplines sector or in the services offered by HLP are properly recognised and
- C. an appropriate balance in the membership is maintained.

Membership is available to all organisations involved in providing multi-channel support to the public or a specific sector with the aim of improving an individual's wellbeing.

<p>In this context, multi-channel communications are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Telephone• Smart-phone• Website information• Text based communication• Social media channels• Web chat• Video response e.g. Skype• One to one/group discussion forums	<p>The type of service that would meet the Membership Terms and Conditions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helpline• Advice line• Listening support line• Befriending line• Counselling line• Referral line• Information service
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To qualify for membership, the organisation running the helpline must have the following in place:

- a) a clear set of aims and objectives
- b) clear and easily accessible information about its service
- c) a written and publicly published confidentiality policy that considers safeguarding
- d) robust systems in place to protect the data of those who use the organisation's services and of those who work for it (paid or unpaid)
- e) a process for monitoring the level of service received by those that use the service
- f) a recruitment, selection, training and development process that adequately prepares and supports those working for it (paid or unpaid)
- g) a complaints or feedback process which is well communicated to those that work for it and is readily accessible to those that use the service

To ensure we maintain our terms and conditions for the benefit of our members we may request to view related policies/proof documentation either at membership application stage or at any time during the term of your membership.

2. An organisation shall be eligible for membership

of HLP if it:

- a) is a qualifying helpline or help and advice service offering support through a range of communication channels or
- b) includes one or more qualifying helplines as part of a range of services that it offers or
- c) authorises one or more other organisations to operate a qualifying helpline under licence or contract on its behalf or
- d) operates one or more qualifying helplines on behalf of another organisation.

Terms and Conditions

3. A qualifying telephone helpline

(for Voluntary sector membership)

- a) has sufficient staff, whether voluntary or paid, to provide the service offered
- b) is a help and/or advice service that offers multi-channel support to people in need through any non face to face contact
- c) provides advice, information, listening support, befriending, counselling and/or referral (for the general public or a specific sector)
- d) allows the caller to terminate the call at any point without recrimination
- e) allows the callers to receive the help they choose without any commitment to accept other services, even when the helpline is part of a wider range of activities
- f) recognises that callers have the right to make choices and therefore does not attempt to impose any particular belief or approach to the exclusion of all others
- g) does not make a profit from callers (national rate is maximum tariff)

4. A qualifying telephone helpline

(for Commercial, Supplier, Statutory or Public Sector membership)

- a) has sufficient staff, whether voluntary or paid, to provide the service offered
- b) is a help and/or advice service that offers multi-channel support to people in need through any non face to face contact
- c) provides advice, information, listening support, befriending, counselling and/or referral (for the general public or a specific sector)
- d) allows the callers to receive the help they choose without any commitment to accept other services, even when the helpline is part of a wider range of activities
- e) recognises that callers have the right to make choices and therefore does not attempt to impose any particular belief or approach to the exclusion of all others

5. Our Community

Applicants can opt to be part of Our Community of HLP. These are:

- a) organisations which are eligible for membership but do not choose to apply for it
- b) organisations which are interested in furthering the objectives of HLP
- c) organisations which include multi-channel support as part of their range of services but are not able to meet, or to work towards, the Membership Criteria
- d) commercial and other corporate organisations or public authorities with an interest in supporting the work of HLP
- e) individuals with an interest in supporting the work of HLP.

The Board of Trustees may determine the levels of subscription (if any) relating to Our Community and the basis on which they may be offered services by HLP. Our Community do not have the right to vote at HLP General Meetings and shall not be a member in terms of Helplines Partnership's Articles of Association.

In exceptional circumstances the Board of Trustees shall have the discretion, when it is in the best interests of HLP to do so:

- f) to admit as a member an organisation which is not able to fulfil all the criteria for membership as set out in Terms 2, 3 and 4 above and
- g) to decline to admit as a member an organisation which would be qualified under Terms 2, 3 and 4, on the grounds that its admission to membership would, in the opinion of the Board of Trustees, disturb the balance referred to in clause C. of the Introduction to these Terms.

Terms and Conditions

6. An organisation shall not be eligible

for membership unless it

- a) has as its main purpose, or if not its main purpose then on a permanent basis, the operation of one or more helpline(s)
- b) satisfies the requirements of HLP in relation to policies on confidentiality, data protection, safeguarding, equal opportunities, training and complaints.

7. Governance

7.1 Members may appoint representatives to participate in the work of HLP on their behalf:

- a) each Voluntary Sector Member may appoint one of its representatives to attend and vote on its behalf at General Meetings of the company. Members may be invited to send more than one representative to General Meetings, who may participate in the meeting at the discretion of the Chair, but they may not vote.
- b) Organisations or individuals who are part of Our Community may be invited to attend (or to send one or more representatives) to HLP General Meetings. They shall not be entitled to vote and may only participate in meetings at the discretion of the Chair.
- c) Members may appoint representatives to assist in other aspects of HLP's work and to establish eligibility for election to the Board of Trustees.

7.2 Honorary Membership shall be open to those persons who in the opinion of HLP have made a significant contribution to the field of helpline work. Candidates for Honorary Membership shall be proposed by the Board of Trustees and elected by simple majority at an Annual General Meeting of HLP. Honorary Members shall not be entitled to vote or hold office in Helplines Partnership unless they are also representatives of Members as described in Term 7.1a). Honorary Membership may be rescinded at any time at the discretion of the Board of Trustees.

8. Administration

8.1 Membership or Our Community may be terminated by HLP if:

- a) any subscriptions are not made within three months of any payment becoming due
- b) the organisation provided inaccurate or deceptive information within the application to join.
- c) the organisation has serious and/or continual procedural weaknesses particularly in the areas of safeguarding, data protection, confidentiality or equal opportunities such as will bring the helplines sector as a whole into disrepute.
- d) the organisation undertakes activities that fall significantly short of the standards set out within the qualifying criteria (see Terms 2. 3. and 4.) and/or brings the helplines sector as a whole into disrepute.

8.2 Membership or Our Community may be terminated by the member/subscriber at any time if:

- a) no other products or services are dependent on the payment of membership or subscription fees
- b) notice is given in writing

8.3 Applications will be considered upon receipt.

8.4 Membership is subject to payment of any fees on presentation of an invoice.

8.5 All fees paid are non-refundable.

8.6 HLP holds the right to review fees on an annual basis.

8.7 Members and subscribers are responsible for updating their own contact details with HLP.

8.8 The process of investigating complaints is set out within the [Feedback and Complaints Policy](#).