

# Helpline Insight 2017 - 2019

## Helpline teams

How helpline teams are made up, who's answering enquiries:



### 2017

Paid staff only: **56%**

Volunteers only: **16%**

Mixed teams: **27%**

### 2018

Paid staff only: **41%**

Volunteers only: **21%**

Mixed teams: **38%**

### 2019

Paid staff only: **61%**

Volunteers only: **13%**

Mixed teams: **26%**

## Opening hours



**70%** of helplines are open 6-8 hours a day on weekdays. Opening hours have declined since 2017 - opening later in the morning and fewer hours through the night.

## Funding



Local authority funding has dropped by **1%** each year since 2017. Fundraising is the most common source of funding in 2018 and 2019.

## Contact channels



After phone, email is the second most common channel for helplines. But the number of helplines offering it has dropped from **49%** in 2017 to **44%** in 2019.

## Social media



The number of helplines using Facebook and Twitter as a communication channel has increased since 2017.

## Safeguarding



The number of organisations receiving more than five safeguarding contacts per year has dropped by **31%** from 2017 to 2019.

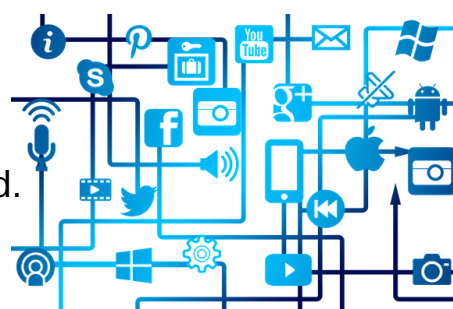
## Budgets



Since 2017 more helplines are reporting smaller budgets with the majority having a helpline budget of less than £1 million.

## Remote working

Over the last three years the number of member organisations with staff and volunteers who always work remotely, from home, has increased. Staff: from **11%** in 2017 to **27%** in 2019. Volunteers: from **33%** in 2017 to **53%** in 2019.



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## Topics covered

Top three areas member helplines report their service covers:



### 2017

Emotional distress  
Mental Health  
Health

### 2018

Health  
Emotional distress  
Children and young people

### 2019

Mental health  
Emotional distress  
Family and parents

## Call volumes



The number of helplines taking between 5,000 - 20,000 calls a year has increased from 1 in 7 in 2017 to 1 in 4 in 2019.

## Call length



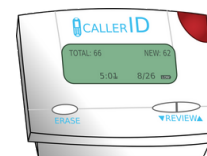
The number of calls between 20-30 minutes has increased by **19%** since 2017. Average helpline call length over the last three years is between 10 - 20 minutes.

## Volunteer hours



The majority of volunteers do one shift each week with an average volunteer shift length of three hours.

## Answerphones



The percentage of helplines with answerphone facilities increased by **20%** from 2017 to 2019.

## Night-time hours



Organisations with helplines open between 10:00 pm to midnight has dropped by around **8%** since 2017.

## Number of helplines



The number of organisations with two helplines dropped by **3%** from 2017 to 2019. The majority, around **80%**, have one helpline.

Helplines Partnership is the membership body for organisations that provide information, support or advice via phone, email, text or online.

Since 2017, we have carried out an Annual Member survey. All member organisations are invited to take part, completion is voluntary. This year, 2019, we were supported by Statisticians for Society, a pro bono initiative run by the Royal Statistical Society, to interpret three year's data.

A full version of the research will be available from the Helplines Partnership website.



**Helplines**  
Partnership

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