SUPPORTLINE

England & Wales · Charity number 1097419

Details

Status	Registered
Legal form	Other
Registered	2003-05-08
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	1 Catesby Meadow Sudbury Suffolk CO10 2BD
Phone	01708765222
Email	info@supportline.org.uk
Website	www.supportline.org.uk

Activities

Objects: TO RELIEVE NEED EXPERIENCED BY PERSONS SUFFERING EMOTIONAL DISTRESS BY THE PROVISION OF A TELEPHONE LISTENING AND COUNSELLING SERVICE

Activities: Provides emotional support and information to children young adults and adults throughout UK by telephone helpline, email and post. Aimed at those who are vulnerable, isolated, at risk and victims of any form of abuse. Keeps details of support groups and counsellors throughout the country.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services
- **What:** General Charitable Purposes
- **Who:** The General Public/mankind

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Geography

- **Area of benefit:** NOT DEFINED. IN PRACTICE. NATIONAL
- Northern Ireland
- Scotland
- Throughout England And Wales

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£32,831	£32,590	-	-
2024-03-31	£20,579	£34,416	-	-
2023-03-31	£21,489	£34,800	-	-
2022-03-31	£47,363	£30,446	-	-
2021-03-31	£55,365	£44,157	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
PETER THOMAS BARRELL	Chair	
JAIYESH PATEL		
MICHAEL JOHN KNELL		

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SUPPORTLINE

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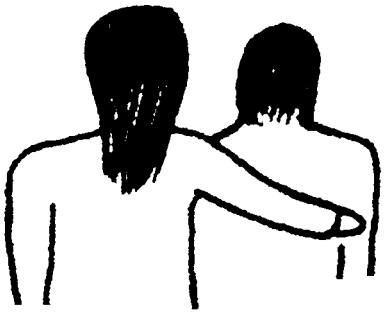
Accounts



SupportLine Helpline

Annual Report

2024-2025

Telephone, Email and Postal Support

Registered Charity No. 1097419

Providing vital services for those who are vulnerable, at risk, isolated and victims of any form of abuse

Member of the Helplines Partnership

Member of the Survivors Trust

SUPPORTLINE

VISION – That every person in the UK can find the help and information they need to support their emotional and physical wellbeing.

MISSION – SupportLine provides help by providing confidential emotional support and information and referral service working closely with other agencies and professionals.

OBJECTIVES – That those who are vulnerable, isolated, at risk, and victims of abuse will feel supported and cared for, will have increased self esteem, will be able to develop positive healthy coping strategies and an inner feeling of strength leading to happier, healthier and more emotionally balanced individuals in the community.

AIMS OF THE SERVICE

- To provide a telephone helpline offering confidential emotional support to any individual, children, young adults and adults, and in particular those who are socially isolated, vulnerable, at risk and victims of any form of abuse.

- To provide emotional support and information by email and post.

- To listen, support and respond to callers in need of emotional support.

- To support callers in a non-directive way and empower and encourage callers to take control of their own lives and come to their own decisions.

- To help callers to develop healthy positive coping strategies rather than negative destructive ones.

- To help callers to learn to value themselves in order that they may walk away from abusive situations.

- To provide accurate information on other support groups, agencies and counsellors throughout the United Kingdom.

- To provide a high quality and reliable service to all users.

- To provide continuous support, training and development for staff members/helpline workers.

- To continuously assess and review the service provided and to be committed to providing any improvement necessary in the service.

- To be committed to Equal Opportunities in all aspects of the service.

- To encourage feedback in order to evaluate the service provided to callers.

PATRON

GLEN MURPHY MBE

This has been another busy and challenging year for the charity, especially in light of its move to its new home in Suffolk, and all the work that entailed, while trying to limit as best as we could the disruption to services.

With the ever-changing world we live in, never has there been a greater need for Helplines such as SupportLine which offers easy access of service to those who are vulnerable, and as can be seen from the following report, the services offered cover a wide range of issues. As Patron, it is pleasing to see so many referring those in need of support to the charity and the feedback received is always good to see.

For those who are finding life difficult due to the cost of living, the highlighting of abuse issues in the media, concerns about world affairs and personal traumas taking a toll on mental health, having SupportLine to turn to can be a source of great comfort, as we are frequently told by those who kindly provide feedback on the charity's work.

Increased demand for the charity's service and more time spent on the support work does place extra pressure on funding, and I appeal to Charitable Trusts and Foundations to consider supporting the charity who are providing services on very limited funding and resources. To those who are already providing funding to the charity, my appreciation for your support which cannot be underestimated, as we would not be able to do the work we do without your help, and my personal thanks to you all.

To the dedicated team who keep the charity running, staff, trustees and volunteers, a massive thank you for all that has been achieved over the last year.

Glen Murphy MBE
Patron

SupportLine provides emotional support and information to children, young people and adults on a wide range of issues including child abuse, bullying, self harm, eating disorders, exam stress, rape and sexual assault, bereavement, domestic abuse, mental health, depression, anxiety, family and relationships.

The Helpline specialises in providing support to adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse and victims of rape and sexual assault.

This help is provided by a telephone helpline, email and post and through our website.

The service is particularly aimed at those who are vulnerable, isolated, at risk and victims of any form of abuse.

The Charity is a member of the Survivors Trust and the Helplines Partnership

CHAIR

Peter Barrell BEM

I am pleased to welcome you to our Annual Report featuring just some of the work which the charity has carried out over the last year from which you can see much has been achieved.

The last year has been an exceptionally busy one for SupportLine with some of the charity time taken up with preparing for the move of the charity base to Suffolk which took place last September. We were pleased that the move did not take us away for too long from the Helpline work, but quite naturally with the work entailed in moving, there was less time for us to focus on getting funds into the charity. Therefore, we cannot thank enough those Charitable Trusts and Foundations who have continued to support us, and those new to supporting the charity, our grateful thanks.

The charity is committed to providing the best support possible to those who are vulnerable, isolated, at risk, and victims of abuse. I think this shows in the work we do and the feedback we receive not only from those the charity supports, but Professionals and organisations who give their clients and patients our details and to those who come to us for advice for their own work in supporting their clients.

I would like to say a big thank you to the following who have kindly supported us over the last year. The Archer Trust, Tula Trust, The David Lister Charitable Trust, Ambergate Charitable Trust, The Persula Foundation, Rachel Charitable Trust, F.B Coales No.4 (Family) Trust, Gowling WLG (UK) Charitable Trust, The Dennis Alan Yardy Charitable Trust, The Gledswood Charitable Trust, The Nimar Trust, The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust, The Sir James Roll Trust, Enid Slater Charitable Settlement, The Ian Askew Charitable Trust, The Jessica Mathers Trust, Theodore Maxxy Charitable Settlement, The Fitton Trust, The Broughton Family Trust, The Ian Maidens Charitable Trust and for all those who wish to remain anonymous who have provided grants/donations to the charity.

I cannot emphasise enough how important funding from the above is to the charity. SupportLine is a small national charity and without the help we are given, the work that we do would not be possible so receiving grants and donations is invaluable to us. My thanks also to those who help by raising funds through fundraising and supporting our Give As You Live and Amazon websites when buying goods, as all helps to raise much needed funds.

As always, my appreciation to my fellow Trustees, Mike Knell, and Jaiyesh Patel for their continued support of the charity and our Co-ordinator/Support Worker, Geri Burnikell for her hard work over the last year managing the charity and to all volunteers who have assisted with admin and fundraising. Thank you also to Kirit Shah for the yearly auditing of our accounts and Spencer Morgan for his continued help and advice on our website and I.T. matters. As always, we look forward to the next challenging year.

Peter Barrell BEM
Chair

SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY AND AUTISTIC PEOPLE

Over the last few years SupportLine has noticed a marked increase in people with a learning disability and autistic people making contact with the Helpline looking for support. This could be reflected in a significant rise in autism assessment referrals and a growing demand and pressure on services.

In addition, research has shown that among people with a learning disability there is a high rate of mental health problems and due to lack of available services, people are often left to struggle on alone.

We find that the people who contact us for support, are often struggling to make sense of their emotions, and having someone to talk through how they are feeling and helping them to make sense of those feelings, can in itself be of great help.

We also find that people with a learning disability and autistic people, can often feel isolated and alone, and sometimes finding it difficult to form friendships and this can often lead to depression. Some also struggle with being heard and listened to by those around them. Some of our work involves assisting people in boosting their confidence and self-esteem, by helping people to develop assertive skills, to recognise the strengths they have and supporting people in becoming more independent and feeling they have more control over their own lives.

We are also able to look for local advocacy services for people where they can get support in dealing with local services and this can very much help lessen the feelings people get of becoming overwhelmed by tasks which they may have difficulty in dealing with, and also help in them being heard and listened to and having input into their own care.

We also get to know the person as much as we can and find out what they would enjoy doing in terms of activities, hobbies, and are able to look for local activities in their community and groups, clubs, they may wish to consider going along to. We also look to see if there is an appropriate befriending service in their community which would help them to gain more confidence in going out.

Anxiety is often a reason why people contact us and it can often be as a result of overthinking and constant worry which could be from the moment they wake up until they go to bed. This can be exhausting and draining and we are able to help with coping strategies to address this, to try and help people to take control over their anxiety rather than the anxiety controlling them.

Often people just need some reassurance about decisions they are taking and I think this is something which very much demonstrates the needs for helplines where people may not have others around to bounce things off and talk things through with.

A helpline can be very much a lifeline for people who are finding things difficult and very much takes away that feeling of isolation and leaves a person feeling supported and cared for.

SUPPORTLINE PROVIDES SUPPORT TO PEOPLE ON A WIDE RANGE OF ISSUES

HERE WE HIGHLIGHT SOME OF THE PROJECTS WE RUN

Stronger Together
Supporting People Impacted by Domestic Abuse

1 in 5 adults experience Domestic Abuse during their lifetime, This equates to: 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6-7 men. In the year ending March 2024, it is estimated 2.3 million people aged 16 and over were victims of domestic abuse. For every three victims, two are female and one is male (National Centre for Domestic Violence).

Domestic abuse is very much a hidden crime and less than one in five victims and survivors report to the Police. Victims are often isolated as their abuser will keep them away from friends and family thereby cutting off any means of support. A victim's self esteem and sense of worth can be destroyed by their abuser which can make it even harder for them to reach out to others. With victims often reluctant to contact the Police, it is so important to get out the message that there is help out there and Helplines such as SupportLine have an important role to play in helping to relieve the sense of isolation and helplessness that many victims feel. People who have no confidence, feel they have no value, will often find it hard to reach out to others and much of our work is about helping victims to increase their sense of worth and self esteem and helping them to recognise the abuse is not their fault. This often enables victims to then reach out to services like specialist counselling that they can be put in contact with, and organisations which can give legal advice, and also information about places of safety. The message has to be stronger together rather than try and cope with the abuse alone which can often lead to repeated physical injuries and in some cases, even death.

In recent years there has been an increase in reports of coercive control and emotional abuse which can be just as damaging, in some cases, more so than the physical abuse, according to what victims tell us. Children are very much hidden victims and the effect it can have on them is often immense. Working with children and young people in families where domestic abuse is taking place, is another important part of our work. SupportLine's details are frequently given to victims and survivors by National Domestic Abuse Helpline and Women's Aid. The charity is also regularly mentioned by agony aunts who write for national papers and magazines.

Sunshine Project – Telephone Befriending to those who are lonely and isolated

This Project has gone from strength to strength over recent years after being set up as a direct result of the covid pandemic and the isolation that was felt by many. The Project befriends not only those who are elderly but also others who may be feeling isolated in the community, possibly due to mental health issues, learning disabilities, or gender issues. Regular phone calls to have a friendly chat and see how people are doing means an immense amount to those we are supporting. It gives them a sense of feeling cared about and also helps to increase confidence in those we support.

Survive and Thrive
Supporting Victims and Survivors of Childhood Abuse,
Rape and Sexual Assault

This encompasses much of the work we do. There has been much publicity in the media about Jeffrey Epstein and also the abuse of young girls taking place in a number of our cities. Whenever these issues are prevalent in the media it can raise unwanted memories for survivors of abuse, some of whom had through a lot of hard work, been able to move forward with their lives only to find these memories coming back to the surface and struggling once again to cope with the trauma.

However, it is so important that these hidden issues are brought to the surface as people have been allowed for so long to get away with abuse due to the hidden nature of the crime. It is only by breaking that silence that any progress will be made towards a safer society where so much still remains hidden and abusers protected. Survivors often present with years of relationship breakdowns, drug or alcohol addictions, self harm, suicide attempts and feelings of worthlessness and, hopelessness. However, survivors often have such determination within themselves and with help and support they can see there is light at the end of the tunnel, they can work towards healing and although, those memories will always be there, they can get to a stage where they are not impacting their daily lives. We have seen the changes which can be made if people are given time, people are believed, and cared for and valued. A number of people who contact us have been given our details from organisations like NAPAC, Victim Support, and Police Officers.

One Step At A Time
Supporting People Impacted by Mental Health Difficulties

This also is a large part of the work we do, and sadly many of those who come to us for mental health support are survivors of childhood abuse. Our work with children, young people and adults struggling with their mental health demonstrates to us the need for helplines like SupportLine. Often people lead chaotic lives or have difficulty in going out and that can often prevent them from accessing structured counselling sessions so a helpline where they can be in control, contact us when they need to, can be of enormous help to people. We are aware of some who started counselling sessions which were ended because they missed a number of sessions. Helplines are very accessible to people and not only do we offer telephone help but also by email and post so can often be ideal for those who live unstructured lives and find it hard to keep to any kind of routine in their daily lives due to their illness.

Those who have depression and anxiety are often in a very dark place and it is part of our work to help them to see light through the darkness. We help people to see that very often the way they think can adversely affect their mood so working with people on positive ways of thinking, positive ways to calm themselves when they get anxious, ways in which they can relax, and safe ways to express their feelings rather then bottle them up inside, can make a great difference and help them to have hope for the future. People are often given our details by MIND, Samaritans, Community Mental Health Teams, Social Workers, GPs, and Police Officers and also by the media after tv and radio programmes where it is felt support may be needed by the public.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE – CASE STUDIES

(names have been changed for confidentiality)

Kiara struggling with bereavement, self harm, suicidal thoughts

Kiara, a 15 year old, had been struggling with the death of her mother to cancer. Her feelings were overwhelming her but she was keeping this to herself, afraid to talk to her father in case she upset him by talking about her mother. She was feeling isolated, struggling at school, was self harming and had suicidal thoughts. We supported Kiara emotionally with the way she was feeling, encouraged her to talk to her father about how she felt and safe ways in which she could let her feelings out. We also put her in touch with a charity which organised workshops for young people who had been bereaved so they could meet others in the same situation as them and also an online bereavement forum for young people, again where she could speak with other young people who had been bereaved.

Kiara did manage to speak to her father and he told her he had often wanted to mention her mum but did not do so for fear of upsetting her. The result was that they both realised that talking about Kiara's mum would not only help Kiara but her father also, and she also set about getting a book of memories of her mum together and worked on this with her father. Kiara felt she could then talk to her father when her feelings became overwhelming and she also said she gained a great deal by meeting other young people who had lost a parent and also from the online forum. She was managing her emotions much better, was no longer self harming and no longer had suicidal thoughts. By opening up to her father it brought the two of them much closer together and Kiara felt supported and less alone.

Trisha struggling with sexual abuse, eating disorder, suicide attempts, low self esteem.

Trisha, a young lady of 17 years of age contacted us presenting with low self esteem and confidence, no sense of worth and had had two suicide attempts and struggling with an eating disorder. She was living with her grandparents and felt guilty about the amount of worry she said she was causing them. Trisha was no longer living at home due to being sexually abused by her father and had confided in her mother what was happening but had not been believed. She had, with a friend's support, reported this to the Police and it was found there was not enough evidence to bring a charge against Trisha's father. This had left her feeling worthless as she had not been believed by the very people she thought would protect her and had sent her into a downward spiral.

We have been working with Trisha for some time, have given her healthy ways of coping which do not involve harming herself, have talked through with extensively about her feelings and safe ways to deal with them when she feels overwhelmed. She had a lot of anger which she was taking out on herself and again we gave her ways to release the anger without harming herself. By talking to us for a period of time, she then felt she had the confidence to try counselling with a specialist organisation supporting survivors who could offer her face to face counselling so we were able to find her that information. Trisha is making progress, has stuck to the counselling and

still rings us periodically to let us know how she is doing and although there are times when she really struggles, she knows she is not alone, and can see a future for herself. She has also said that when she is stronger in herself she would love to work towards working with survivors of abuse and that has given her an aim and a goal to work towards.

Joshua struggling with bullying, depression, anxiety, low self esteem

Joshua, 13 years of age, was being bullied at school but afraid to talk to his parents as he thought it may make him look weak. He told us this made him feel very depressed and anxious and he hated the thought of school and sometimes said he was sick so he did not have to go in. We spoke at length with him to help him to see that reaching out to others was a sign of strength, not weakness, and in time, thankfully, he did reach out to his parents.

He told us he did not have many friends at school and often felt quite isolated and alone. We got to know what he would liked doing and his favourite sport was football and he loved following his team and when he was older he wanted to be a footballer. We worked a lot with Joshua on helping him to build up his confidence and self esteem, he wanted to learn how to be more assertive and we helped him with that also. We mentioned to him there was a local football team for boys in his age range who played games at the weekend and he spoke to his parents about this.

Joshua contacted us around six months later to say he was a regular team member of the football team and had made many friends there and felt that sense of belonging he was looking for. The confidence he gained while being a team member also benefited him at school and he was pleased to say he had made a couple of new friends there and no longer dreaded going into school. Joshua had worked hard on himself and was a changed boy, happier, more confident and had a higher self esteem and that was so good for us to see.

Leon, a young carer, struggling with anxiety and concern for his mother

Leon a young man of 22 years of age, contacted us with a lot of anxiety and concern for his mother who was suffering with depression and isolation, rarely leaving the house and spending most of her time in her room. Leon loved his mother and did not know what to do to help her and also felt that he was missing out a lot on life, seldom seeing friends or getting out himself as worried about leaving his mother. We were able to help by finding information on a local organisation which provided befriending for his mother and also an organisation which helped people with poor mental health and they were able to go in and work with his mother to support her and to build up her confidence in getting out and general support for her mental health and wellbeing. We put Leon in touch with a young carers group from which he gained a great deal of support from meeting up with other young carers and when the other services were visiting his mother it also gave him some free time to do other things.

Leon was pleased he had reached out for help and in doing so, his mother's situation improved, as did his. This greatly reduced his anxiety around his mother knowing she was well supported and was more able to make plans for his future and felt much happier and more settled.

SUPPORTING ADULTS – CASE STUDIES

(names have been changed for confidentiality)

Family impacted by mental health

Martin contacted SupportLine with concerns he and his wife had regarding the mental health of their adult son, Mark, 28 years of age. Mark was on the autistic spectrum and suffering with anxiety and depression and had difficulties in making friends. Martin felt he lacked motivation and showed little interest in anything, spending most of the time in his room. He had spoken to Mark who had agreed he needed some support and help to move forward with his life but they were at a loss what to do.

As Mark felt he could not cope with attending a support group in a community centre, we were able to find a local Men's Walk and Talk Group where men met up, went for a walk together, supported one another and if they wanted to talk about their problems whilst walking they would get support from each other. Martin agreed to accompany Mark for the first few sessions to see how his son got on and was pleased to report back to us some time later that Mark had continued to meet up for the Walk and Talk sessions, was going along on his own, and was getting some benefit from this and looking forward to the weekly sessions. In fact, he had also joined a local MIND group with another member of the Men's Walk and Talk Group he had become friendly with. We also found a local mental health project volunteering on a local allotment which Mark also joined.

Martin and his wife saw a marked improvement in their son's overall mood and general wellbeing and were pleased he was getting out and appearing to take an interest in life. This also led to a decrease in anxiety for Martin and his wife who had been so concerned about their son and his mental health and isolation.

Family impacted by domestic abuse

Alicia was a young woman who had not long before fled an abusive partner and had been rehoused with her young daughter in a location away from family and friends, for their own safety. Alicia was really struggling with life; her self esteem was very low and also very little confidence due to the time spent with her controlling partner. She also felt alone and isolated and unable to work due to her depression and anxiety, had no means to furnish the property which she had been rehoused in.

We were able to support her in a practical sense by getting a grant so she was able to get some furnishings for the property she was in and this helped in some way to boost her mood. We put her in touch with the Freedom Project which ran local workshops for women who had been through domestic abuse and trying to put their lives back together. We did a lot of work with Alicia in helping her with coping strategies when she got memories of the physical abuse she was subjected to, and helped her with assertive skills and ways in which she could improve her confidence. We were able to give her information on a counselling service in a local Women's Centre and found a service where her daughter could access play therapy as she had been deeply

disturbed by the abuse she had witnessed. Alicia still contacts us from time to time and it is clear she has made a marked improvement and feeling happier and more confident in herself but recognising it will take time to heal from the past abuse.

Darren struggling to cope with relationship breakdown, impacting on his mental health.

Darren was a gentleman in his mid-forties who had been through an acrimonious relationship breakup and was now living alone away from his wife and children. He was not coping with the breakup at all, was not looking after himself physically and was consoling himself by drinking. He felt he had nothing to live for and was talking about suicide.

Over a number of talks we had with Darren we were eventually able to get him to see that he was still the father of his children, had regular access and they wanted to see their dad and spend time with him and it was important for him to see that they were still very much a part of his life. He had a job but was putting that at risk by excessive drinking and in time he was able to work through the depression. It also helped that he was attending the local Andy Man's Club we had given him details of, and was able to share his feelings with others at the Club who had been through similar situations. We put Darren in touch with an alcohol support charity and felt that he was beginning to sort out the drinking issue, he felt he had more support, felt less depressed and assured us he no longer had suicidal thoughts, and could see a way forward which he could not see before. He felt his suicidal thoughts came more from feeling alone and not having support and was pleased he made the call to us as the first step for getting the right support.

Jill impacted by bereavement and loneliness

Jill contacted us having been given our details from her local surgery. She was an elderly lady who had lost her husband a few years before and felt very much alone. She found it hard to accept her husband was no longer around and the few friends she had who were a big support to her had also died. She enjoyed telling us what a full life she had led with her husband and the many activities they used to do together and the outings they went on. She felt she wanted to be able to get out more but lacked the confidence in doing things on her own.

We were able to find a local bereavement support group for Jill which she said was such a comfort to her being around others who had also been bereaved. We also found her a local befriending service which would visit her once a week and once she has been able to build up some confidence is aiming to join some of the Age UK activities in her area. We also provided our befriending support calls to Jill where we checked in on her every few weeks to have a chat and see how things were going and this is something she very much valued and knows that she does not have to feel alone.

SUPPORTLINE WEBSITE

We are proud to say that over the years, we have received excellent feedback about our website. This has come not only from individuals looking for support, advice, and other sources of help, but also from Professionals such as GPs, Social Workers, Community Mental Health Teams and other organisations. We are aware that many Professionals are referring people to our website and also had positive feedback on the resources which are included and the information on self help.

The site includes a lot of information on other national helplines and websites where people can access support which means when we are not available people can still access that part of our service. There is often help out there for people which they simply are not aware of, which can leave people feeling alone and isolated. Keeping the website updated takes a lot of work but we do it as often as we are able, to ensure that information is correct. Much time is also taken in researching new organisations which could be added to the site to give people as much choice as possible when trying to access support.

We very much welcome feedback from people we support and others, and are very proactive in looking for gaps in services, in responding to what people who contact us tell us and it is often as a result of that which prompts us to add new content to the site where we feel there may be a lack of information and resources.

Over the last year, partly due to our move to the Suffolk area, and calls we were receiving, we became very aware of the high rates of depression and isolation within the farming community. Research has suggested that farmers are at a higher risk of mental illness and suicide. Due to the nature of the physical work involved, farmers can also be at high risk of suffering with physical health problems which can also impact on general mental health and wellbeing. Changes in farming have also led to fewer and large farms which can also increase the sense of isolation and less of a community, leaving farmers often feeling alone and unsupported. We felt it important to raise awareness of this and included a new section on our website to highlight this matter and also to raise awareness of a number of national organisations which provide support specifically for the farming community.

In our work on our befriending service where we provide a friendly call to people who are isolated living alone, primarily older people, the issue of scams was raised in some of the conversations, and again we felt this was an important issue to highlight as often it is the most vulnerable people who are falling foul of scams which can have a devastating effect on their lives. We added a new section on this issue on our website with information and advice and organisations which provided specific support on this issue.

Over the last few years, the issue of Women's safety has been very much in the news, and much debate over failure of systems to protect women which are serious matters which governments need to take on board and do what they can to ensure that women can go about their daily lives in safety. We included on our website a new section on street safety with helpful tips and advice on how individuals can do what they can to minimise the risk of being targeted on the streets and again included helpful resources which specialised in that particular area of street safety.

During the year we were contacted by a manager of a security company which a few years previously had undertaken a study of the security industry which revealed alarming rates of PTSD and poor mental health among professionals in the industry. Over half of the respondents reported regular verbal abuse at work, and 57% indicated that incidents affected them for more than 24 hours. Additionally, 48% experienced flashbacks or nightmares related to their work. Overall, nearly 60% of the security professionals surveyed may be suffered from PTSD.

He suggested we put a link to the survey on our page relating to depression to highlight this issue and hopefully encourage men who worked in the industry to seek support. We were only too happy to do this as over the last few years we have done a lot of work on raising awareness on how hard it is for men to come forward and ask for help so this all fitted in with the work we had been doing.

The following is some of the feedback we have received over recent years in relation to our website.

Your page on Suicide on your website was a life saver for me. It helped me to calm down and really think about things and made me realise, I did not want to end my life, I just needed support when I was not coping. Reading that page was the first step for me in getting help and I now have mental health support and feeling less overwhelmed.

Just to thank you for your very comprehensive website, I refer many patients to it and have had excellent feedback from those who have used it and also patients supported by your helpline. A great service and good to know that there are agencies out there that we can refer people to and know they will get the support they need.

I would just like to say that your site is really helpful. I am going through bad times, I kinda self harmed the other day. Thank you for making such a good site. I am starting to recover now because my parents have found out, well I told them but only because your site made me realise that someone needed to help me. Thank you so much.

Hi, through reading your website I have just realised for the first time that the abuse I have suffered was not my fault.

I just wanted to say how much I enjoyed your website. I found it a superb resource on so many issues. You have helped me massively in gaining new information on subjects in which, to be honest, I previously knew little about. I don't believe that I am the first that this site has helped. This is just a simple thanks for your hard work and help.

The information on your website for adult survivors of abuse has been a great source of comfort and reassurance to me. It helped me make sense of my emotions and the importance of letting go of the negative feelings I still hold about myself. I understand the way I react to things a lot more and that is the first step to doing something about it. It was also a great help to my husband in understanding me more and how he could help me work through some of my demons from the past.

SOME OF THE ORGANISATIONS, PROFESSIONALS & PROJECTS WHICH SUPPORTLINE HAS SUPPORTED THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

In addition to supporting members of the public, an ever-growing part of our work is providing information, advice, resources, to other organisations, Professionals and statutory agencies throughout the UK. This has involved giving advice about the best way of supporting their clients, information on local services they can access, literature about SupportLine to use on Open Days and specific Projects and also to leave out our literature for clients and patients to take away with them to use as a source of support.

We have an extensive database and also our work involves a lot of research into what local services are available for people as well as researching new national agencies which open up. The following is just a small number of those we have supported throughout the last year.

SupportLine contributed information and resources to support York College Stalking Awareness Day.

Year 10 Pupil helped with information for her Citizenship campaign regarding child abuse relating to how the charity helps victims of child abuse and this would contribute to her Citizenship GCSE as well as raising awareness.

Information on local support services given to a helpline in Scotland providing help to individuals experiencing depression and those interested in self improvement.

Information given to a Level 2 counselling student to help with part of course on anger management and services that provide support.

A company dedicated to creating personalised keepsakes that honour loved ones made contact with us. As part of their commitment to supporting individuals navigating loss they strive to provide meaningful resources in the materials they share with their customers and wanted a trusted resource by including our details on their website and in their leaflets they gave to bereaved individuals.

Information sent to a band on the Isle of Wight who were raising awareness on men's mental health after the suicide of a colleague and wanted some literature to hand out at venues they were playing at to try and reach vulnerable people.

Leaflets provided to Gresleydale Healthcare Centre to use as a source of referral for their patients.

Leaflets provided to Barnardo's Beacon Project in Halesowen, West Midlands, for use as a source of referral for victims of child sexual abuse.

Information on service provided to Adult Mental Health West Kent Primary Care so that patients could be given details of service.

Information on service given to Social Prescribing Advisor, Community Action, Redbridge, to support clients with anxiety.

Information given on local services to Mental Health Social Worker, North Wiltshire Mental Health Social Care Team, for client with relationship issues.

Information on service given to Warwickshire County Council Supporting People Team to use as a source of referral for clients needing additional support.

Details of local counselling services given to Primary Care Mental Health Team, NHS Southern Health for support of a patient.

Details of local specialist counselling services for survivors of rape given to Salvation Army, London, to help client they were supporting.

CAMHS Staying Close Project, Nottinghamshire, given details of our service for use as a source of referral for young person in their care.

Details of service given to Social Services Kent County Council for family support.

Details of local services given to CPN Essex Health & Justice Service to support a client with their mental health.

Details given to Enfield Social Services on awareness programmes to parents for them to be able to know what sexual exploitation is and how they can protect their children.

Provided resources for Unlocked Graduates Programme helping an initiative at HMP Brixton around prison leavers and how they could be better supported on release.

Contributed resources to the Dartford & Gravesham NS Trust for their Quality Improvement Course supporting men struggling with mental health, anxiety, depression, and grief.

FEEDBACK

Thank you for the work you do. I have been referring patients to your service and received excellent feedback from them about the support they have received. Your website has also proved very useful with a wide range of resources listed on it.

The support you gave me when I was at my lowest, was outstanding, and if I had not come across your number on the internet I do not think I would be her now. I had given up all hope, and contacting yourselves was a last resort but it helped me to change my whole way of thinking to get out of the mess I was in. I did not see a way forward but now I do thanks to the support I have had and cannot thank you enough.

I always look forward to your calls, to hear that friendly voice at the end of the line. It is helping me so much just to have someone to share things with and put the world to rights! I certainly feel a lot less lonely than I did and just to know someone out there cares, brings a smile to my face. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

I don't know how you never gave up on me when everyone else has. Your belief in me helped me to believe in myself and to start challenging all that negative talk in my head. Coping with the memories and trauma I went through is less challenging when using the coping strategies you gave me. Your belief in me and what I can go on to achieve means everything. Would I still be alive if I had not contacted your service, I doubt it. Thank you for your care, patience and time and all the help you gave me.

Helping me to sort my head out makes me want to do the work you do supporting survivors.There's still a long way to go in my healing journey but you are an inspiration and give people like me a voice, when we've had to be silent for so long.

Hey SupportLine, remember me, how could you forget! All that negativity I used to come up with! You gave me hope when I had none, confidence when I had none. The support group you gave me has been a great help and things are starting to change in a positive way. You pulled me out of the depths of despair, encouraged me when I wanted to give up, listened to my trauma and pain and were there when I needed someone. Respect to your organisation and the extra mile you go.

"One of the most important things you can do on this earth is to let people know they are not alone."

Shannon L. Alder

FEEDBACK

My wife kept pushing me to talk to someone about my depression, but like a typical guy I thought I could manage ok. I was sinking lower and lower and knew I had to do something, if only for the sake of my wife and kids. I don't know what I expected but certainly got more than I could have hoped. Just offloading to someone was a relief and the time and care you showed made it easier than I thought it would be to discuss my worries with a complete stranger. Your positivity couldn't help but rub off on me.

How my life has changed from that one phone call. I am now a regular member of the men's walking group you gave me details off and that is amazing having so much support from the guys there, and while keeping fit at the same time. I realise now, we have to reach out to others when we cannot cope, and my heart goes out to those who have not done so and are no longer with us. I would happily recommend your Helpline to others, and a sincere thank you for your amazing support.

How glad I was that the Housing gave me your details as concerned about my loneliness and isolation. To be honest some weeks I hardly spoke to anyone and missing my husband immensely. I know after his death, he would have wanted me to get on with life but harder said than done especially when close friends have passed too.

To have the regular calls you offered me has been a life saver and as you know, I so look forward to the calls and chatting away which really lifts my spirits. I feel like I have a friend out there and someone who really cares about me. It is not easy when virtually housebound and I am so grateful also for details about the visiting befriending service run by a local organisation and have put my name down for that. Thank you for all your time and the work you do, it has certainly made a difference to me and feeling happier and more contented in myself. Talk soon, thank you.

ACHIEVEMENTS

SupportLine has provided help, emotional support, advice, information, advocacy, befriending to some 7677 people, an increase on the previous year's figures of 7578. This has included direct services to people who are vulnerable, at risk, isolated and victims of abuse who request help for themselves, family members, friends

Over the year we have supported a number of organisations with their health and wellbeing and awareness days with our literature, noticed an increased demand from NHS clinics and surgeries and Social Providers for information on our service and literature for their patients, as well as requests from professionals for information on local services to support their clients.

As can be seen on the section relating to our website, the charity very much responds to feedback received, identifies gaps in services and is always looking to improve our site in whichever way we can.

Over the last year we have included a number of new sections which we felt were much needed and also in response to requests to include specific information on the site. To know that Professionals are regularly using the site and referring their patients/clients to the site, is testament to the hard work which has been put into developing it and the time taken to regularly update the site also.

We have seen an increase in people looking for support who have been given our details by the media. This has included the Sun agony aunt page who have regularly given our details in relation to issues around relationships and domestic abuse, and teenage magazines agony aunts relating to relationships, eating disorders and self harm and the BBC after programmes such as Doctors on issues relating to bereavement.

We were contacted by two young men, who as a result of the tragic suicide of their friend, wanted to set up a local helpline to support men with depression and men who had suicidal thoughts. They wanted advice on setting up a helpline and a men's group, and the best way of doing it and where they could access help.

SupportLine has regularly helped other helplines including the Nightline for students when that was setting up, so we were able to assist and give them a lot of information and also useful local contacts of where they could access assistance with this. Out of something so traumatic as the loss of their friend, they were determined that something positive would come out of that and that local men would have a safe space to meet up and also make use of the helpline.

In September 2024 the Helpline base was moved from Essex to Suffolk and although there was a temporary lapse while making the move and sorting out the new phone lines, it was not long before the charity was back up and running. Due to the amount of work involved in moving, it has affected our funding as we had less time to focus on that part of our work. We have been working hard to try and secure funds into the charity.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2025

SupportLine raised £32,831 and incurred an expenditure of £32,590 for the year ending 31 March 2025.

SupportLine had a surplus of £4,980 from the previous financial year leading to a total surplus as at 31 March 2025 of £5,221.

Accounts prepared by an independent Accountant.

Kirit Shah BSc. FCCA
CS Property & Consultancy Services

TRUSTEES

Peter Barrell
Mike Knell
Jaiyesh Patel

Co-ordinator Geri Burnikell

SupportLine

PO Box 13594, Sudbury, CO10 3FB

Tel: Admin: 01708 765222 Tel.Helpline: 01708 765200

Email: info@supportline.org.uk

Website: www.supportline.org.uk

SUPPORT LINE

Charity Registration no. 1097419

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Support Line

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Chairman	Peter Barrell
Vice Chairman	Mike Knell
Treasurer	Jayesh Patel
Co-ordinator	Geri Burnikell

Bankers

Natwest
Wanstead Branch
51-53 High Street
Wanstead
London E11 2XX

Accountants

CS Property & Consultancy Services
Kirit Shah BSc FCCA

Support Line

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Profit and loss account	3
Balance sheet	4
Notes to the financial statements	5

Support Line

Forward to the Financial Statements

These Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with CC64 SORP 2000 as issued by the Charity Commission in October 2000.

Since Support Line's Income for the year has been less than £100,000, it is classed as "small" and hence is eligible to produce the accounts on a receipts and payments basis.

K. Shah, B Sc, FCCA

Independent Accountant

Support Line

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for:

- keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the funds held on trust and to enable them to ensure that the accounts comply with requirements in the Charities Act 1993 and those outlined in the directions issued by the Secretary of State;

- establishing and monitoring a system of internal control; and

- establishing arrangements for the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption.

The Trustees are required under the Charities Act 1993 and under the National Health Service Act 1977 to prepare accounts for each financial year. The Secretary of State, with the approval of the Treasury, directs that these accounts give a true and fair view of the financial position of the funds held on trust, in accordance with the Charities Act 1993. In preparing those accounts, the Trustees are required to:

- apply on a consistent basis accounting policies laid down by the Secretary of State with the approval of the Treasury;

- make judgements and estimates which are reasonable and prudent;

- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the accounts.

The Trustees confirm that they have met the responsibilities set out above and complied with the requirements for preparing the accounts.

By Order of the Trustees

Signed

Chairman Date 19/8/25

Trustee Date 14/08/25

Support Line

Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2025

	Notes	Total Funds £
Incoming resources		
Fundraising		-
Donations, Legacies and similar resources		9,920
Grants - Restricted Funds		22,250
Other incoming resources		611
		50
Total incoming resources	2	**32,831**
Resources expended		
Costs of generating funds		3,629
Grants paid		-
Activities in furtherance of charity's objectives		735
Management and administration		28,226
Total Resources expended	3	**32,590**
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources		**241**
Fund balances brought forward at 31 March 24		4,980
Fund balances carried forward at 31 March 25	4	**5,221**

Support Line

Consolidated Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2025

Fixed Assets	**Notes**	**£**
Intangible Assets		–
Tangible Assets		–
Current assets		
Stocks		–
Debtors		–
Cash at bank and in hand	**4**	5,221
Creditors/Overdraft: amounts falling due within one year		-
Net Current Assets		**5,221**
Total Net Assets		**5,221**
Funds of the Charity		
Unrestricted		-
Restricted		5,221
Total Funds		**5,221**

Signed:

Date: 14/08/25

14/08/25

Support Line

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1 Accounting policies

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements are prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities.

1.2 Compliance with accounting standards

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards

2 Total Incoming Resources

All incoming resources are included in full in the Statement of Financial Activities as soon as the following three factors can be met: Entitlement, Certainty and measurement.

This represents the total income received during the financial year ending 31st March 2025

3 Total Resources Expended

Cost of generating funds comprise those costs directly attributable to fund raising activities.

Grants payable are included in the Statement of Financial Activities when approved by the Trustees.

Management and administration comprises costs of running the charity.

Training/supervision is provided to the "Support Line" by a volunteer hence nil expenditure.

4 Cash

The financial year had started with a credit balance of £4,980. A surplus of £241 increased this credit balance to £5,221.

The current authorised overdraft limit with the bank is £6,000.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2025

SupportLine raised £32,831 and incurred an expenditure of £32,590 for the year ending 31 March 2025.

SupportLine had a surplus of £4,980 from the previous financial year leading to a total surplus as at 31 March 2025 of £5,221.

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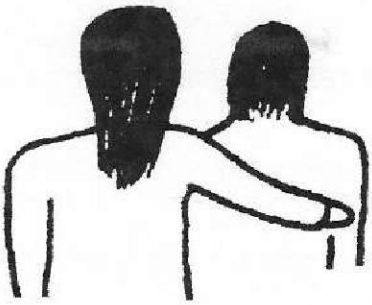
SUPPORTLINE

England & Wales - Charity number 1097419

Accounts



SupportLine Helpline

Annual Report

2021-2022

Telephone, Email and Postal Support

Registered Charity No. 1097419

Providing vital services for those who are vulnerable, at risk, isolated and victims of any form of abuse

Member of the Helplines Partnership

Member of the Survivors Trust

SUPPORTLINE

VISION – That every person in the UK can find the help and information they need to support their emotional and physical wellbeing.

MISSION – SupportLine provides help by providing confidential emotional support and information and referral service working closely with other agencies and professionals.

OBJECTIVES – That those who are vulnerable, isolated, at risk, and victims of abuse will feel supported and cared for, will have increased self esteem, will be able to develop positive healthy coping strategies and an inner feeling of strength leading to happier, healthier and more emotionally balanced individuals in the community.

AIMS OF THE SERVICE

- To provide a telephone helpline offering confidential emotional support to any individual, children, young adults and adults, and in particular those who are socially isolated, vulnerable, at risk and victims of any form of abuse.
- To provide emotional support and information by email and post.
- To listen, support and respond to callers in need of emotional support.
- To support callers in a non-directive way and empower and encourage callers to take control of their own lives and come to their own decisions.
- To help callers to develop healthy positive coping strategies rather than negative destructive ones.
- To help callers to learn to value themselves in order that they may walk away from abusive situations.
- To provide accurate information on other support groups, agencies and counsellors throughout the United Kingdom.
- To provide a high quality and reliable service to all users.
- To provide continuous support, training and development for staff members/helpline workers.
- To continuously assess and review the service provided and to be committed to providing any improvement necessary in the service.
- To be committed to Equal Opportunities in all aspects of the service.
- To encourage feedback in order to evaluate the service provided to callers.

PATRON

Glen Murphy MBE

A very warm welcome to all readers of our latest Annual Report highlighting some of SupportLine's work carried out over the financial year 2021/2022.

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, when many services were closed, there was never a more vital need for the existence of helplines and like many other services, SupportLine saw an increase in those wanting to use their services, and that demand continues to grow today. The impact of the pandemic has had a massive impact on many and especially those who are vulnerable in society.

It is down to the hard work of our dedicated small team of staff, trustees, volunteers, that the Charity has grown in recognition of its vital services to those who are vulnerable, isolated, at risk and victims of any form of abuse. I am pleased to see how the Charity is able to respond to need and adapt its services accordingly. I know that staff are working hard to try and secure funding which will allow the Charity to extend its services in certain areas and wish them every success with this over the coming year.

It is always helpful to the Charity to receive feedback from those the Charity supports, and to see the difference the Helpline can make in giving people time and space to explore their feelings, and support in healing and recovery.

As always my grateful thanks to all those who have supported the Charity's work, without which, we could not continue, and hope we can count on further support in years to come.

Glen Murphy MBE
Patron

SupportLine provides emotional support and information to children, young people and adults on a wide range of issues including child abuse, bullying, self harm, eating disorders, exam stress, rape and sexual assault, bereavement, domestic violence, mental health, depression, anxiety, family and relationships.

The Helpline specialises in providing support to adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse and victims of rape and sexual assault.

This help is provided by a telephone helpline, email and post and through our website.

The service is particularly aimed at those who are vulnerable, isolated, at risk and victims of any form of abuse.

The Charity is a member of the Survivors Trust and the Helplines Partnership

CHAIR

Peter Barrell BEM

I would like to start by thanking all of those who have shown support for the Charity, and who have believed in the work we do. Our supporters have seen from feedback the very real difference our service can make to those who are struggling with life, and have given SupportLine financial support which has been instrumental in being able to deliver our services.

We are forever grateful to all the Charitable Trusts and Foundations which have so kindly given funding to our Charity over the last financial year which has included The Barbara Ward Charitable Trust, The Annette Duvollet Charitable Trust, The Persula Foundation, The Jessica Mathers Trust, The Chapman Charitable Trust, The Edward Gostling Foundation, The Arnold Clark Community Fund, The JP Jacobs Charitable Trust, The Broughton Family Charitable Trust, Mrs. Margaret Rank Charitable Trust, The Masonic Charitable Foundation, Lyric Lodge L3016.

We were sad to learn in the New Year of the closure of The Annette Duvollet Charitable Trust who had supported the Charity many years ago and again over the last year. We were also most grateful to them for choosing SupportLine as one of the recipients who received the remaining funds they distributed as a result of the closure, and a very generous donation was made to the charity. This came at a very important time as the Charity was getting low on funds so very much appreciated.

Some of the Charitable Trusts and Foundations have supported the Charity over a number of years which is fantastic and a reason we are still here able to keep our services running and we are always pleased to see new Trusts and Foundations also offering support to us.

I would also like to thank all those who support the Charity through fundraising events, to those who use the Give As You Live website when doing online shopping which gives a percentage to the Charity, to those who have received support from us who kindly make donations.

One of our supporters chose to run a 10K run for SupportLine which was very successful and brought in just under £1,000 to the Charity. We are always very grateful when people give up their time to support us in any way they can.

My thanks as always to my fellow Trustees, Mike Knell and Jaiyesh Patel, Co-ordinator/Support Worker, Geri Burnikell, and all volunteers who have helped the charity throughout the last year, and my thanks also to Kirit Shah for the auditing of our accounts.

We look forward to what I am sure will be another challenging year ahead.

Peter Barrell BEM
Chair

FEEDBACK

SupportLine regularly receives feedback from the people who contact us for support, as well as agencies who give out our details.

The feedback we receive is very important to us, and can often help us to see what gaps in services there are, what we can do as a Charity to address those gaps, if we need to adapt the work we do, what we can add to our website, ideas for future projects, and whether we are keeping on the right track supporting those who are vulnerable and in need of help and support.

The feedback we have included in this report really does show the value of Helplines and the important place they have in supporting those in need and helping people to make real and positive changes to their lives.

When people are struggling and keeping those thoughts and feelings to themselves, that struggle can be so much harder. The importance of talking and sharing thoughts and feelings is so important when a person feels overwhelmed and not knowing which way to turn or even where to go to access help.

Having a helping hand along a journey to healing and recovery, can be paramount and make a huge difference especially when a person has lost all hope and giving up on life.

Dear SupportLine,

This email is to convey my appreciation to you and your great squad.

For over six months, I was suicidal. I was afraid and certain that I would kill myself. But, out of nowhere, I felt a spark of hope and decided to contact your wonderful team. You listened intently to what I had to say without making irrational judgments or bullying me. I've been able to converse freely without fear of being judged or being bullied for a long time.

You bolstered my self-assurance. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. Thank you so much for taking the time to listen to me, calm me, and instill pleasure and tranquility in me.

Talking was really important to me since it made me feel less alone. I wish your organization continued global expansion because somewhere on this bizarre world, someone is about to end his life due to the pain.

COVID-19 AND BEYOND

Requests for Practical Help

Throughout the pandemic many charities found themselves, through necessity, adapting their work and responding to urgent needs among some of the most vulnerable people in the community.

During Covid-19 SupportLine found itself diversifying from its main area of work providing emotional support and information, to responding to requests for practical help.

This was primarily calls for assistance from elderly and vulnerable people, who had been left with no food and the charity responded with engaging with local groups like the Mutual Aid groups, local Councils and local charitable organisations and community groups across the country to ensure that practical help in terms of getting food to people was carried out.

Help was also sought for people who were isolating or unable to get out due to mobility problems and this was in terms of getting help with shopping and collecting prescriptions and a lot of our time was spent in sorting these issues out for people who were vulnerable, living alone, and not knowing where to turn.

Befriending

In the course of talking to people who contacted us with requests for practical help, it became evident that some of these mainly elderly people, had little if any contact with others. Some had lost partners, had no family or families who they were estranged from or did not see very often, and they were living very lonely and solitary lives.

We noticed the positive effect our interactions had on the elderly who seemed to gain a lot from speaking to us and enjoyed the opportunity to be able just to talk about their lives and they were very appreciative of us checking with them to see how they were coping.

We were able to offer befriending calls to some, and they have been extremely well received and calls which they very much look forward to. We have been told in some cases we have been the only people they have spoken to in weeks. Having someone interested in their lives, how they are doing, checking to see if there is anything they need, has made a difference to them.

We are trying to secure funding to enable us to initiate a new befriending project where we can devote more time to offering this service to more people who are coping with crippling loneliness. We are also able to direct those who are lonely to other means of support, local activities and clubs, and respond to any other help which is needed.

Financial Struggles

During Covid-19 and its aftermath we also noticed an increase in people contacting the charity who were struggling financially, many in debt and unable to make essential payments to energy suppliers and more and more people struggling to find money to feed themselves and their families.

The Church of England Child Poverty Action Group highlighted in their report how families and individuals were struggling, some employees were made redundant or saw a reduction in their salaries, due to lockdowns people were spending more time at home and increased energy and food costs, and the majority of low income families reported a worsening of their financial situation due to the pandemic.

The charity has been able to help people who are struggling, with information relating to local food banks, and where they can obtain grants for essential items they cannot afford to replace such as ovens, fridges, freezers, washing machines, clothing, beds, mobility and medical equipment and help with energy costs etc.

In some cases, the charity has been successful in applying for grants on behalf of those who are vulnerable who had no local organisation who could help them with the application.

We also have spent time on trying to secure donations of laptops and tablets for people who are isolated, getting items of furniture donated and although time consuming the benefit it brings to others who are struggling, is worth the time put into these issues.

How the Charity is adapting its work beyond Covid-19

In the course of our work supporting people throughout the pandemic, those who were elderly and isolated and lonely, people struggling with mental health and learning difficulties, one parent and low income families, it became very clear that in addition to emotional support that there is a very real need for practical help for people, more information needed in local means of support where people can access practical help, and more information needed where people can access financial assistance if they are struggling with debts and to make ends meet and not able to feed their families or themselves.

We envisage that this is something the charity will be spending more time on in the future and including more information on our website where people can access the help they need and aim to secure funding to address some of the isolation and loneliness which people are feeling.

SUPPORTLINE'S WORK WITH CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

In 2019 The Mental Health Foundation published the results of a survey of British teenagers aged 13 to 19 which was commissioned as part of Mental Health Awareness Week, which had the theme of body image.

It found that almost **one-third** (31%) of teenagers felt ashamed in relation to their body image.

Four in ten teenagers (40%) said images on social media had caused them to worry about body image.

More than a third of British teenagers (35 per cent) had stopped eating at some point or restricted their diets due to worrying about their body image.

Four in ten teenagers (40 per cent) said that things their friends have said have made them worry about their body image.

Thirty-five per cent of teenagers worried about their body image often or every day, and 37 per cent of teenagers felt upset and ashamed about their body image.

Jane Caro, Programme Lead for Families, Children and Young People at the Mental Health Foundation, said: "Our survey has shown that millions of young people in Britain are worrying about their body image. Worries about body image can lead to mental health problems and, in some instances, are linked to self-harm and suicidal thoughts and feelings.

"It is also clear from our survey that teenagers identify images on social media as a key factor that makes them worry about their body image. Conversations with their friends also have a major role in causing young people to worry."

The results of the survey were no surprise to SupportLine, and I imagine other charities who work with young people. The results reflected very much what the charity is told frequently by young people who contact us for support, and the survey very much highlighted the great importance which young people place on the way they look and how others perceive them.

It is evident that often what can start as a throwaway remark by someone on a young person's appearance can for that young person trigger off a spiral of self doubt, self loathing, anxiety, depression and sadly, suicidal thoughts.

The survey also highlighted what young people tell us about the influence that social media can have on them. We often see instances where celebrities are ridiculed in the media for the way they look, if not living up to that 'perfect' image. Comments are made in the media about a celebrity's weight, and often shamed

for putting on weight. This can lead a young person to believe that if they do not look 'perfect' and the 'right size' they are not acceptable. Young people may not realise that images which are presented to the public are often touched up, altered, to make celebrities look less than the size they are in reality.

As the Mental Health Foundation survey reported, this can lead to young people restricting their eating which can cause all sorts of health problems for them, going into depression, constantly worrying about the way they look and comparing themselves to their friends and others and too often struggling with suicidal thoughts.

SupportLine works with young people to help them to see that what is most important is the kind of person someone is, their character, how they treat others, and encourages young people to pay less importance to looks and to accept themselves and not to compare themselves to others. We work on building up a young person's confidence and self esteem, and to recognise that everyone is different, that is what makes a person special and unique, nobody has to look like anyone else, but to be happy in their own body and to focus more on other issues in life.

We have mentioned before in our Annual Reports the prevalence of self harm among young people. It is used as a way they deal with their feelings and once a person gets into a routine of self harm, and it becomes a habit whenever feeling angry, or upset or distressed, and feelings become overwhelming, then it can be a very difficult cycle to break.

SupportLine works with young people who self harm on self confidence issues, gives practical ways of expressing their feelings without harming themselves or anyone else, giving them the tools they can use when feelings become too much to handle.

We can also give a wide range of resources to young people by directing them to online courses, one to one counselling, group support, and other practical coping strategies they can use.

SupportLine provides not only short term support but where needed ongoing support of a young person until they feel confident enough that they know how to deal with their feelings without self harming.

The Charity also supports parents who contact us concerned about their child who is self harming and many feel helpless about what to do and how to understand what is going on. We can give parents advice on the best way of supporting their child, and also other resources to help them.

The media really does have a part to play in supporting the mental health of young people and it would be good to see less emphasis on the part of the media focussing on how people look, their image, which can have such a detrimental effect on young people.

SUPPORTLINE'S WORK WITH ADULTS

Rape and Sexual Assault

In January 2022 it was reported that a record number of rapes and sexual offences had been reported to Police over the last year. Figures from the National Office of Statistics showed that 63,136 in the year to September 2021 had been reported to Police. This was the highest recorded annual figure to date, up 13 per cent from the previous year, and made up for 37 per cent of all sexual offences recorded by police.

The ONS said figures show "noticeable increases since April 2021" following the kidnap, rape and murder of Sarah Everard in March. The 33-year-old was attacked and killed by Metropolitan Police officer Wayne Couzens, prompting a national debate about sexual violence, the safety of women and the response from government, police and prosecutors.

Over the last year, SupportLine has had an increase in victims of rape and sexual assault contacting us for support. While the majority are women the charity also has supported male victims of rape and sexual assault. In addition to supporting victims with the initial shock and trauma, we have a comprehensive database of specialist organisations and can refer, when needed, victims to local means of support such as face to face counselling and specialist rape support units. We also have victims contact us regarding abuse within relationships, and issues around consent.

Damage caused to victims can have a knock on effect to partners, parents and other family members who are at a complete loss what to say or do to help their loved one and feel very helpless and angry. It is essential that those who are supporting a victim of crime, also get support for themselves and we are able to help with that by giving emotional support and advice on ways in which they can be there for their loved one.

Adult Survivors of Childhood Abuse

Much of our work with adults is supporting adult survivors of childhood abuse, many of whom also struggle with mental health difficulties. This often includes survivors who have never disclosed before but are reaching out due to the enormous damage this has caused to their adult lives.

Some need practical skills to deal with trauma, nightmares, flashbacks, reoccurring memories, some need advice and help on disclosing to partners and families, some contact us after high profile cases have been in the media which has triggered off memories of their own abuse, some have had repeated damaged relationships, some have turned to drugs, alcohol, self harm, some have been in and out of the mental health system. It can be heartbreaking to see the damage that child abuse causes to its victims and the ongoing effect into their adult lives, but extremely rewarding to help them with their journey towards recovery and see them begin to heal, to become stronger individuals and to let go of the blame and guilt they may have carried for years and able to work towards a better quality of life.

Domestic Abuse

SupportLine receives a lot of requests for support from young people with their relationships and what is evident is that in some cases young people struggle to understand what constitutes a healthy relationship, to feel valued, respected, for there to be trust between partners, for kindness and caring. It seems that some young people are in controlling and abusive relationships, but not always able to recognise that this is the case. There is also lack of knowledge about consent and the law, and little understanding of the law around controlling and coercive behaviour.

Work in this respect includes educating about what a healthy relationship is, and working on lack of confidence and self esteem and helping an individual to become a stronger person, more knowledgeable, and more confident in taking decisions and making choices which will benefit them and their relationships.

It is very evident also in the damage that long term abuse can cause to its victims and we very often are supporting women who have for some time escaped an abusive relationship, but still very much suffering as a result of it. Victims, for instance, who have been in controlling relationships, may often find that their partner was instrumental in them cutting all contact with their family and friends so when they do leave a relationship it can be those family and friend relationships have become so broken down and fragmented, that the victims are left very isolated and alone. Getting the help they need to help them to process what happened, to be given the strategies to cope with the trauma of what they went through, and support to move forward with their lives is essential, so that in the future they have more chance to have positive and healthy relationships with others.

Mental Health

The number of people in need of mental health services continues to rise, and covid-19 accelerated this trend. There are so many people suffering and struggling with poor mental health, which is often exacerbated by being unable to get GP appointments which leads to frustration, depression, anger, but shows the value of charities such as SupportLine and others which support people with their mental health.

There seems to be lack of funding in the mental health services, long waiting lists to be seen, people feeling under supported, which is why SupportLine and many other charities are becoming overwhelmed with people desperate for help with their depression, suicidal feelings and attempts, chronic anxiety, PTSD, and other mental health conditions.

Men in particular seem to struggle with reaching out and voicing their feelings and over the last few years new voluntary groups have emerged specifically aimed at men supporting men which is great to see. So often we receive desperate pleas for help from men who tell us they can no longer go on, see no future for themselves and are ready to give up on life.

SupportLine is able to provide short and long term support to anyone struggling with their mental health. We have also offered advocacy help to those most isolated with no other means of help and directed callers to agencies which can assist them with benefit applications and appeals and support groups for anxiety and depression.

ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

"ASB is often downplayed as a petty, 'low-level' crime. But put yourself in their shoes – to suffer from ASB is an ordeal that causes misery, disturbs sleep, anxiety, work and relationships – leaving victims feeling unsafe and afraid in their own homes. It can feel like you are living a nightmare."

Former Victims Commissioner Baroness Newlove

Report: Anti-Social Behaviour: Living a Nightmare.

Before she left her post as Victims Commissioner, in 2019 Baroness Newlove released a report on anti-social behaviour in partnership with ASB Help and Nottingham University. The report has shown that anti-social behaviour is being ignored by the authorities in England and Wales.

From the increased number of people contacting charities such as SupportLine desperate for help with this issue, it seems that sadly little has changed since that report was published.

The Victims' Commissioner found examples of police and council staff failing to appreciate the cumulative impact of persistent anti-social behaviour on its victims with each incident being treated in isolation and the underlying causes being ignored. The report also found it was generally down played with no recognition or understanding on the enormous impact it had on its victim's mental health, ability to hold down employment, or the strain on relationships.

The report found that those responsible for helping victims such as local Councils, landlords, Police, in too many cases, were not doing so, and victims were being passed from one organisation to another.

The report also highlighted the importance of the Community Trigger which was set up to help Victims who had been through the usual reporting procedure but it was evident that many of those tasked to help victims and sort out anti-social behaviour were not publicising this to victims and some had never heard of it.

It is evident from what we are being told by victims, that although we are aware of pockets of the country where Police and Councils are doing outstanding work in this area, generally it seems nothing much has changed and that many of those who are involved in working in anti-social behaviour, are clearly not even aware of the report, let alone read it. This is such a shame as if the recommendations of the report were implemented victims would find that they did have the support they needed to stop this crime.

We ourselves have seen the massive impact that anti-social behaviour has taken on its victims and because so little help is being given, and the anti-social behaviour is not being sorted out, it is very common for victims to have their lives blighted for years and years. Damage to their mental health with increased anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, some people too scared to even leave their homes, children becoming

targets of anti-social neighbours as well as adults, and the damaged caused cannot be overestimated. Everyone should have the right to live in their own homes peacefully without living in fear.

What we have also found is very often those who are targeted by anti-social behaviour are the most vulnerable people in their communities, and can include the elderly and people struggling with mental health difficulties, learning difficulties and physical disabilities.

This makes it all the more shameful that victims are being let down time and time again feeling nobody is listening or even cares. In many cases victims report that they feel like they are being treated as a criminal while the perpetrator is being protected.

SupportLine can support victims with advice on what they can do to try and help get their case looked at seriously, emotional support for their mental health and wellbeing. However, we often feel very helpless and frustrated ourselves when those who have the power and authority to sort these matters out, are not doing so, leaving vulnerable people often living a nightmare.

Just a few examples of comments from victims of anti-social behaviour

'I am at my wits end, I cannot live my life like this any longer, I am exhausted and worn out and feel like I am going round and round in circles with nobody doing anything. I shouldn't have to live this way and no longer able to work as came crashing down after years and years of anti-social behaviour. Nobody is stopping it; I cannot take it anymore'.

'The constant noise, the threats, the taunts, abuse, all on camera yet nobody does anything. This has gone on for years and years and nobody cares. I've had enough'.

'All the authorities do is pass you backwards and forwards between them hoping you will give up and go away. They know I've got mental health problems and that's why they are doing it but nobody is stopping them'.

'My husband is dying and worrying about how I will cope when he is gone. Nobody respects the elderly; he is worried for my safety. The neighbours are allowed to do what they like making our lives a misery day after day. Where do we go from here?'

We can but hope with more awareness and increasing publicity given to this issue that more will be done, that all the recommendations of Baroness Newlove's report will be implemented and that victims will be put first and anti-social behaviour will be dealt with appropriately. We hope that those areas of the country which are doing outstanding work in this field, will be replicated elsewhere so victims no longer have to live a nightmare.

FEEDBACK

Dear SupportLine, I had to write to thank your wonderful charity for your continued support to me when going through such a difficult time. As a typical man, not used to speaking about feelings, it took a while to open up, but so glad I did, To be able to talk without being judged or bullied was a refreshing change for me. You greatly increased my confidence and belief in myself.

I was so sure I was going to kill myself, so saying thank you does not seem enough. Thank you for your patience, for somehow managing to calm me down, goodness knows how you did it, but so grateful to you for being there at the right time when I needed someone.

I know there must be others out there like me, lost and alone, desperately trying to find someone just to be there, to listen and to care. Finding your number online was a godsend to me, you literally saved my life, and helped me to see a reason for living. I thought I would be doing my family a favour by ending it all, but thanks to you realise that was the last thing they would have wanted.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for being there when I needed you. So patient with me and encouraging me not to give up and take things slowly. I had not been out for ages and now manage to get to local places. I know I have a long way to go but a massive achievement for me just doing that. Knowing I can ring or email when I am struggling makes a great difference and so thankful for your support.

Long may your Charity continue as you have helped me enormously in facing my fears and helped me with healing from my past. It has helped knowing practical ways to deal with the flashbacks and memories I was getting from my childhood and it helps me to manage that trauma. I would love one day to be able to do the work you do and help others as I know how much your helpline has helped me.

FEEDBACK

The advice you gave me helped motivate myself to get out of the dark place my mind was in. I wish I had reached out sooner and would always recommend to others to do so sooner rather than later. Your helpline has set me on the right path to getting well and hopefully back to work in the not-too-distant future.

Hi SupportLine, thank you so much for your help recently. I wanted you to know the bullying has been sorted out and telling my mum was the best thing I did, and you were right, she just wanted to support me. Wish I had contacted you guys sooner as maybe the self-harm would not have got so bad. I really appreciate all the information you gave me on that and the self help course, I have started is really good and helpful.

Just wanted to say you have brought a little sunshine into an old person's life. I look forward to your calls and having a chat as do not get to speak to many people now I am unable to get out very often. Having problems with my mobility and declining health make it very difficult to get out and about as I once did and it is hard to keep positive when loneliness sets in.

Thanks so much for the email and all the information. Thank you also for the details of the organisation which managed to sort out the benefits for me so that is a weight of my mind. The local mental health charity you put me in touch with have done an assessment and will be able to allocate me a support worker so am feeling in a much better place than I was. It is hard when you do not know where to turn for help and what help is out there so really glad I found your details. It's been a lifesaver.

You pulled me out of despair and helped me to have hope.Thanks to you have managed to deal with stress without harming myself, am also eating a lot better now and not missing meals. My parents and friends have noticed the change in me and working hard to keep on top of everything. Speaking to the Helpline has stopped me from getting overwhelmed with life and I am a much happier person so thank you with all my heart.

SOME OF THE ORGANISATIONS, PROFESSIONALS & PROJECTS WHICH SUPPORTLINE HAS SUPPORTED THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

Warwick District Nursing Team, information provided on SupportLine for signposting to service

Brent Occupational Therapy Early Intervention Service, Central & NW NHS foundation Trust – update on SupportLine services included in their database

HM Prison & Probation Service – information on SupportLine provided for signposting to service.

Community Mental Health Team Gainsborough, Gainsborough CMHT – information provided on local services for a client

Mental Health Integrated Response Hub Northamptonshire – details of SupportLine services provided for signposting patients to service

Kent Social Care Health and Wellbeing – information provided on local services for client with disability

NHS Social Prescribing Link Worker, Birmingham – information on SupportLine and services for one of their patients

NHS Medical Practice Lancashire, information on supporting clients in acute mental health emergency

Youth In Mind Oldham, Lancashire details on SupportLine for signposting to service

Adult Lead Worker Services Trident Reach Birmingham, information on SupportLine for signposting to service and information on befriending services

Healthwatch Essex – information on infertility groups provided

Wellbeing Team, Hand in Hand Winchester Hampshire, information on local services to assist elderly client

NHS Warwick, District Nursing Team, provided leaflets for patients

Production Company producing documentary for Channel 4 on self harm, information provided

Healthy Lifestyle Programme West Midlands, information on SupportLine provided for referrals to service

NHS Birmingham and Solihull CCG, Medical Centre, information on SupportLine provided for signposting to service

NHS Social Prescriber, Surgery in Ipswich, information provided on local services supporting client with mental health difficulties

Community Wellbeing Officer supporting young people in Runcorn, details on SupportLine for signposting to service

NHS Foundation Trust, South Warwickshire, Department of Clinical Psychology, leaflets provided for signposting to service

NHS Social Prescriber Redbridge GP surgery, information provided on befriending for patient

NHS Nottingham local mental health team information provided for client adult survivor of sexual abuse

Independent Sexual Violence Advisor Manchester, information provided on local services of support for client

NHS Royal Devon and Exeter Foundation Trust – information provided on local services for adult survivor of childhood sexual abuse

Housing Association Wallasey Birkenhead, information provided on local services to support client with alcohol addiction

Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner Liverpool Bootle, information provided on SupportLine signposting to service

Hammersmith Central Mental Health Integrated Network Team & GP surgeries, London, information given to support client

London Borough of Barking & Dagenham, information provided to support client with bereavement

Mental Health Practitioner South Fulham Mental Health Integrated Network Team & GP PCN, information on SupportLine provided for signposting to service

Child Social Worker Warrington, information provided on local services to support adult survivor of childhood sexual abuse

NHS Blackpool Teaching Hospitals Foundation Trust, information provided on SupportLine for signposting to service to support survivors of domestic abuse.

Therapy & Wellbeing Centre in Bishop Auckland, leaflets and posters provided on SupportLine for signposting patients from their clinics.

Aerospace Company in Havant, information provided on service for employees Reflection Room

Mental Health Sanctuary based in Swansea information on service for signposting visitors in need of additional support.

Wellbeing Café for elderly people experiencing loneliness, information provided on SupportLine for signposting visitors to the Café.

ACHIEVEMENTS THROUGHOUT THE LAST YEAR

SupportLine has provided help, emotional support, advice, information, advocacy, befriending to some 7,148 people. This has been an increase on the previous year's figures of 6,734.

This has included direct services to people who are vulnerable, at risk, isolated and victims of abuse who request help for themselves, family members or friends.

Information and support given to Professionals, Statutory services, other charities and voluntary agencies from our database in respect of local and/or specialist services in order that they could pass to their clients' local sources of face to face support.

Advice and a listening ear given to Professionals, other charities and voluntary agencies over issues of concern and the best way of handling cases.

SupportLine is frequently asked for advice on setting up local support groups and over the last year this has included starting groups for partners of individuals with aspergers, and individuals with depression. We were also contacted by a gentleman who, as a result of his own past feelings of suicide, wanted advice on starting up a group for those with suicidal feelings. We were able to help with advice on setting up such a group including funding opportunities.

Where possible SupportLine tries to assist students with information for their dissertations and research projects. Over the last year this has included issues such as how Covid 19 impacted on the work of domestic abuse services, how Covid 19 impacted on homelessness, effects of childhood trauma on criminality in adulthood.

The Charity continues to be used by the media including agony aunts such as Deidre Sanders who has an agony column in the Sun newspaper. Deidre regularly gives out our details to readers on issues which have in the last year included relationships and relationship breakdowns, domestic abuse, and depression.

SupportLine was also used as a source of referral by the Sun and other papers to support victims of domestic abuse in relation to the high profile assault on celebrity Katie Price.

Over the last year SupportLine was contacted by a representative of the ex professional footballer Gavin Holligan. Gavin had released a single entitled 'No Man Is An Island'. It is a song of hope, with a message of solidarity and unconditional love.

After researching SupportLine, an invitation was extended to the charity to be part of a project Gavin was running to raise awareness around the support that organisations such as SupportLine provided. SupportLine was one of the charities chosen to have its details featured in a video to accompany the release of his song so people could be directed to organisations who they could turn to in support if they were in need, alongside the powerful message of the song being that 'you are not alone'.

The Charity continues to respond to need in any way we can and very much take on feedback from those we help and work to expand and adapt our services accordingly.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2022

SupportLine raised £47,363 and incurred an expenditure of £30,446 for the year ending 31 March 2022.

SupportLine had a surplus of £15,211.50 from the previous financial year leading to a total surplus as at 31 March 2022 of £32,128

Accounts prepared by an independent Accountant.

Kirit Shah BSc. FCCA
CS Property & Consultancy Services

TRUSTEES

Peter Barrell
Mike Knell
Jaiyesh Patel

Co-ordinator Geri Burnikell

SupportLine

PO Box 2860, Romford, Essex RM7 1JA

Tel: Admin: 01708 765222 Tel.Helpline: 01708 765200

Email: info@supportline.org.uk

Website: www.supportline.org.uk

SUPPORT LINE

Charity Registration no. 1097419

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Support Line

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Chairman	Peter Barrell
Vice Chairman	Mike Knell
Treasurer	Jayesh Patel
Co-ordinator	Geri Burnikell

Bankers

Natwest
Wanstead Branch
51-53 High Street
Wanstead
London E11 2XX

Accountants

CS Property & Consultancy Services
Kirit Shah BSc FCCA

Support Line

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Balance sheet	4
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Support Line

Forward to the Financial Statements

These Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with CC64 SORP 2000 as issued by the Charity Commission in October 2000.

Since Support Line's Income for the year has been less than £100,000, it is classed as "small" and hence is eligible to produce the accounts on a receipts and payments basis.

K. Shah, B Sc, FCCA

Independent Accountant

Support Line

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for:

- keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the funds held on trust and to enable them to ensure that the accounts comply with requirements in the Charities Act 1993 and those outlined in the directions issued by the Secretary of State;

- establishing and monitoring a system of internal control; and

- establishing arrangements for the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption.

The Trustees are required under the Charities Act 1993 and under the National Health Service Act 1977 to prepare accounts for each financial year. The Secretary of State, with the approval of the Treasury, directs that these accounts give a true and fair view of the financial position of the funds held on trust, in accordance with the Charities Act 1993. In preparing those accounts, the Trustees are required to:

- apply on a consistent basis accounting policies laid down by the Secretary of State with the approval of the Treasury;

- make judgements and estimates which are reasonable and prudent;

- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the accounts.

The Trustees confirm that they have met the responsibilities set out above and complied with the requirements for preparing the accounts.

By Order of the Trustees

Signed

Chairman

Date 25/11/22

Trustee

Date 21/11/22

Support Line

Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2022

	Notes	Total Funds £
Incoming resources		
Fundraising		978
Donations, Legacies and similar resources		2,735
Grants - Restricted Funds (Please refer to the note below)		43,650
Other incoming resources		
Total incoming resources	**2**	**47,363**
Resources expended		
Costs of generating funds		3,695
Grants paid		
Activities in furtherance of charity's objectives		419
Management and administration		26,332
Total Resources expended	**3**	**30,446**
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources		**16,917**
Fund balances brought forward at 31 March 20		15,211
Fund balances carried forward at 31 March 21	**4**	**32,128**

Support Line

Consolidated Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2022

Fixed Assets	**Notes**	£
Intangible Assets		–
Tangible Assets		–
Current assets		
Stocks		–
Debtors		–
Cash at bank and in hand	4	32.128
Creditors/Overdraft: amounts falling due within one year		-
Net Current Assets		**32,128**
Total Net Assets		**32.128**
Funds of the Charity		
Unrestricted		-
Restricted		32,128
Total Funds		**32,128**

Signed: P Barnes

Date: 25/11/22

21/11/22.

Support Line

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1 **Accounting policies**

1.1 **Accounting convention**

The financial statements are prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities.

1.2 **Compliance with accounting standards**

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards

2 **Total Incoming Resources**

All incoming resources are included in full in the Statement of Financial Activities as soon as the following three factors can be met: Entitlement, Certainty and measurement.

This represents the total income received during the financial year ending 31st March 2022

3 **Total Resources Expended**

Cost of generating funds comprise those costs directly attributable to fund raising activities.

Grants payable are included in the Statement of Financial Activities when approved by the Trustees.

Management and administration comprises costs of running the charity.

Training/supervision is provided to the "Support Line" by a volunteer hence nil expenditure.

4 **Cash**

The financial year had started with a credit balance of £15,211. A surplus of £16,917 increased this credit balance to £32,128.

The current authorised overdraft limit with the bank is £6,000.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2022

SupportLine raised £47,363 and incurred an expenditure of £30446 for the year ending 31 March 2022.

SupportLine had a surplus of £15,212 from the previous financial year leading to a total surplus as at 31 March 2022 of £32,129

Accounts prepared by an independent accountant.

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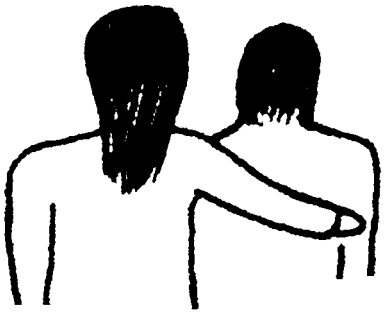
SUPPORTLINE

England & Wales - Charity number 1097419

Accounts



SupportLine Helpline

Annual Report

2020-2021

Telephone, Email and Postal Support

Registered Charity No. 1097419

Providing vital services for those who are vulnerable, at risk, isolated and victims of any form of abuse

Member of the Helplines Partnership **Member of the Survivors Trust**

SUPPORTLINE

VISION – That every person in the UK can find the help and information they need to support their emotional and physical wellbeing.

MISSION – SupportLine provides help by providing confidential emotional support and information and referral service working closely with other agencies and professionals.

OBJECTIVES – That those who are vulnerable, isolated, at risk, and victims of abuse will feel supported and cared for, will have increased self esteem, will be able to develop positive healthy coping strategies and an inner feeling of strength leading to happier, healthier and more emotionally balanced individuals in the community.

AIMS OF THE SERVICE

- To provide a telephone helpline offering confidential emotional support to any individual, children, young adults and adults, and in particular those who are socially isolated, vulnerable, at risk and victims of any form of abuse.

- To provide emotional support and information by email and post.

- To listen, support and respond to callers in need of emotional support.

- To support callers in a non-directive way and empower and encourage callers to take control of their own lives and come to their own decisions.

- To help callers to develop healthy positive coping strategies rather than negative destructive ones.

- To help callers to learn to value themselves in order that they may walk away from abusive situations.

- To provide accurate information on other support groups, agencies and counsellors throughout the United Kingdom.

- To provide a high quality and reliable service to all users.

- To provide continuous support, training and development for staff members/helpline workers.

- To continuously assess and review the service provided and to be committed to providing any improvement necessary in the service.

- To be committed to Equal Opportunities in all aspects of the service.

- To encourage feedback in order to evaluate the service provided to callers.

PATRON

Glen Murphy MBE

Welcome to our Annual Report covering the period of our work from 2020/2021, and I hope the following pages will help in understanding some of the work carried out by SupportLine.

The last year has seen heightened fears, anxieties, confusion, disruption of lives, breakdown of families, isolation of the elderly and most vulnerable, unexpected deaths of loved ones, and a decline in mental health and well being for many.

I am extremely proud in the way in which our small national charity was able to respond to the crisis to be here for those who were struggling when they most needed us and especially in light of so many other services closing or being put on hold for a period of time. Never before have Helplines such as SupportLine been more important in supporting the vulnerable and I am very proud of the way in which staff have responded and coped so admirably with the additional stress and workload.

I know that Peter will be mentioning those who have supported the charity throughout the year and I too would like to give a big thank you to our supporters. Some have been supporting the charity for many years and that support has been crucial in enabling our work to continue and grow over the years. We also very much welcomed new support from Charitable Trusts and Foundations and all this support is vital and so needed for the smaller charities who so often struggle when competing for funds against the larger high profile charities, many of whom refer callers to SupportLine.

Making a difference is why we are here and feedback shows we are doing that and long may our work continue.

Glen Murphy MBE
Patron

SupportLine provides emotional support and information to children, young people and adults on a wide range of issues including child abuse, bullying, self harm, eating disorders, exam stress, rape and sexual assault, bereavement, domestic violence, mental health, depression, anxiety, family and relationships.

The Helpline specialises in providing support to adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse and victims of rape and sexual assault.

This help is provided by a telephone helpline, email and post and through our website.

The service is particularly aimed at those who are vulnerable, isolated, at risk and victims of any form of abuse.

CHAIRMAN

Peter Barrell BEM

Thank you, Glen, for introducing us to the Annual Report which gives a snapshot of the work SupportLine has undertaken over the last financial year.

As Glen has said, a very challenging year, impacted largely by Covid with lockdowns, social distancing, shielding, and a year none of us anticipated. When we first saw the emergence of Covid none of us expected that it would last so long with the impact still having such an effect today.

Covid has in many ways touched upon our lives and affected most of us in some form or another and none more so than those who SupportLine help, those who are vulnerable, at risk, isolated and victims of any form of abuse.

I am pleased in the way our service was able to adapt and respond to those most in need. We are a small team who are all very passionate about our work in supporting others, empowering people to feel stronger in themselves and promoting positive wellbeing.

Feedback we receive shows how the work we do can make a real and positive difference in the lives of those who are struggling. This is why we believe so much in the importance of Helplines like SupportLine as we see how people feel cared for, become stronger in themselves, more confident, more able to express their feelings and emotions, become more integrated into their communities, have a better quality of life, and feel an overall improvement in their mental health and wellbeing.

I would like to give our thanks to all of those who have supported us by providing funding over the past year and we were lucky to have been successful in receiving some of the Emergency Response Funding which had been set up. We were facing increased demand for our service with very low funding so cannot thank the following enough for so kindly supporting our work and believing in what we do.

My grateful thanks to Archer Trust, The Jessica Mathers Trust, Crisis, National Lottery Awards For All, Marsh Christian Charitable Trust, The Edward Gostling Foundation, City of London Response Fund/Bridge House Estates, Groundwork UK, Leach Foundation, The Broughton Family Charitable Trust, N. Vassiliou Charitable Trust, I Vassiliou Charitable Trust, J. Vassiliou Charitable Trust, The Fairness Foundation, The Annette Duvollett Trust, The Tula Trust, London Catalyst, and to all those who have donated to our charity and also to those who have supported us and wish to remain anonymous.

Thank you to my fellow Trustees, Mike Knell and Jaiyesh Patel and Co-ordinator/Support Worker Geri Burnikell and volunteers who have helped the charity throughout what has been a very challenging year for us all. My grateful thanks also to Kirit Shah for the auditing of our accounts.

Peter Barrell BEM
Chairman

CORONAVIRUS

With the emergence of Covid-19 which dominated the headlines from March 2020, SupportLine saw at first hand the massive impact this had on people throughout the UK and how it affected people's health and wellbeing and created so many difficulties and fears among the nation.

SupportLine was quick to respond to this emergency situation and extended its email support service to be open every day due to the increased demand it was seeing for its services.

We quickly gathered as much information as we could and a new section was added to our website which gave information relating to covid-19 including information from Government, NHS, listing support organisations, practical coping strategies for depression and anxiety, information for survivors of abuse and those who had been bereaved, information relating to working from home, relaxation time, how to keep children busy, etc.

We know from feedback that this addition to the website was well received and used by the public and professionals referring clients to it for information and support.

The charity also put in for grant funding and was fortunate to receive some grants and donations to enable its work to continue and this was essential as we were able to be here to support those affected by covid-19 and without the funding received this would not have been possible.

OLDER PEOPLE & PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES & SEVERE HEALTH PROBLEMS

It became evident throughout the year that there were vulnerable people out there who were feeling isolated and people who were shielding being left without food and had somehow been missed for delivery of food parcels or only received one food parcel instead of receiving them on a regular basis. This mainly affected older people and those with disabilities and those with severe health problems which meant they had to shield and they were turning to the Charity for help particularly as they had no family or friends local to them who could assist them in getting food and other help they needed.

SupportLine was able to respond by engaging with the local Covid19 volunteer groups which had been set up throughout the UK whereby volunteers could collect and deliver food to the vulnerable and also help with errands such as collecting medication, and also providing some telephone befriending to local people in their areas. We were able to put people in touch with local volunteer services who could assist them on a practical level and this was a great relief to those who had been left without assistance. We also engaged with a number of Councils who ran helplines for those who needed practical assistance in their local areas to arrange help for those who contacted us and ensure that nobody was left without food and were also able to give details of Government related services.

Those who were advised to shield and not to leave the house reported a massive decline in their overall health and wellbeing. Not being able to get out to carry out their usual day to day activities led to a lot of depression and anxiety, low mood, and not being able to get around as they did before led for many to a decline in physical health and mobility and also feelings of hopelessness and despair and worry for themselves and their families. Sometimes going out to the shop may be the only time an older person living on their own may have the chance to talk and engage with others as this is so important for overall mental health and having this taken away and feelings of being left alone certainly took its toll. Families have reported seeing a decline in the mental health and physical health of their loved ones who were living in Care Homes or in their own homes and worsening of conditions like dementia, increased confusion and not understanding why their families could not visit them as they usually would. Not being able to visit Day Centres, not being able to socialise and see loved ones hit people very badly and sadly many had to cope with deaths of friends, particularly those who were in Care homes. When people were able to go out some of the older population and those with severe health problems were too afraid to go out and many seemed to despair and lost hope for their futures and felt they had nothing to live for.

In addition to putting vulnerable people into contact with practical means of help SupportLine also arranged call backs to those who were most isolated to check in with them periodically to see how they were doing and if any further help was needed.

'I am so very grateful for your intervention in getting the food parcels sent to me and for checking that I was alright. Your kindness meant a great deal to me when at my lowest ebb and I had no idea of who to contact.' (feedback)

SURVIVORS OF CHILDHOOD ABUSE AND ADULT SEXUAL ABUSE

With the country put into lockdown and Government restrictions on meeting up, social distancing etc., meant that survivors of abuse were unable to access their usual methods of support with Day Centres and Support Groups closed, counselling services closed, family unable to visit and being unable to visit family and friends due to travel restrictions and the need to stay at home, meant that survivors were left isolated and struggling to cope. They reported a decline in their mental health, increase in flashbacks and panic attacks, overwhelming feeling of being unsafe, and a general decline in their overall health and wellbeing and increased feelings of isolation. .

Survivors of abuse found the restrictions and controls put in place very hard to cope with as loss of freedom in being able to do what they chose brought back for many recollections of being abused and controlled by others. Some reported great difficulty in wearing masks which meant that some who were exempt from wearing masks had to endure abuse directed at them from members of the public and some felt forced to wear them in order that they did not get abuse directed at themselves and in doing so suffered increase in panic and anxiety attacks.

SupportLine was able to work with survivors to give them practical coping strategies and information on online resources to help them cope more easily and gave a lot of self help initiatives they could try and were always on hand to give emotional support when needed.

'The abuse was horrific and had a major impact on my life and I thought I was starting to move forward but this whole pandemic has brought me crashing right down, and experiencing a lot more flashbacks and constantly feel in a state of panic. With my support group stopped, your support has been amazing and kept me going.' (feedback)

SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

Survivors of domestic abuse reported that their situation worsened during the Covid-19 restrictions. those who were living with their abuser felt trapped and had their usual means of support taken away with day centres, support groups, closed and unable to access family and friends support, unable to leave the house to have some respite from the abuse, and feeling trapped and isolated. Children who are often the hidden victims of domestic abuse were increasingly witnessing abuse in the home and the restrictions of staying at home often triggered increasing anger and aggressiveness in the abusers.

SupportLine was able to work with survivors of domestic abuse in helping them to create safety plans in case they needed to leave the home urgently, to ensure that they knew ways in keeping themselves as safe as possible and how they could access support outside the home if they needed to leave for their safety.

'So glad I found you online and forever grateful for letting me know where I could get emergency help if I needed to leave. I have been through hell and back finding it more and more difficult to deal with my partner's aggression.' (feedback)

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

As with adults SupportLine also has seen an increasing number of children and young people turn to its service for support during the pandemic. It was very hard for them to make sense of what was going on around them. Some had concerns over their future as university courses had stopped, some who had recently started jobs had had those jobs stopped, many were concerned about their parents dying, some had to cope with their grandparents dying, and there were feelings of isolation as not being able to get the support they usually did from their friends.

Young people often keep their feelings hidden from parents, and not having the support from their friends in the same way that they were used to led to feelings of isolation. As a way of trying to express their feelings and cope with feelings many young people turned to self harm and some coped by not eating or binging and turning everything inward.

Some reported difficulties in returning to school when the lockdown restrictions were eased and adjusting to the school routine after such a long absence. Many reported being consumed with fears over the future in general and concerns for their families.

SupportLine has been able to work with children and young people to address their worries and fears and to provide reassurance where we can and ways of coping which

do not entail harming themselves and have helped with boosting their confidence and self esteem and giving them healthy positive ways of coping with the uncertainty and overall fears and anxieties.

'I've spoken to my mum about making a Safe Box to use when I feel stressed and anxious and she will help me get it together, a great idea, thank you'. (feedback)

BEREAVEMENT

Those who have lost loved ones during the pandemic were not only traumatised by their loss but then having in many cases to deal with the fact they were not allowed to see their loved ones before they died, in many cases those who had lost loved ones were not able to attend funerals, some were traumatised at the way their loved ones were dealt with in Care Homes and not being physically able to be with their loved ones when ill and dying. This all added to their loss and living with their loss was much more profound. There were a lot of feelings not only of loss but also of anger and frustration and helplessness and feelings of letting their loved ones down by not being able to physically be with them at the end of their lives and this was very difficult for them to make any sense of and made their grief and pain even harder for them to bear. .

During restrictions and lockdowns, the bereaved were unable to have their family and friends support they so desperately needed and once again that brought up terrible feelings of being alone and SupportLine was able to offer emotional support, in some cases telephone befriending and giving information on support groups to use online when they were opened.

'Thank you for the coping strategies, these are so helpful, especially the memory box and writing a letter to granddad to say all the things I never got a chance to say.' (feedback)

HOMELESSNESS

During the pandemic Local Authorities and services were doing their best to help homeless people into emergency accommodation. Some fell through the net and needed help with contact numbers and details of local services. Some of those who were homeless were already struggling with poor mental health and some who contacted us were survivors of abuse. Being homeless during such strange and worrying times caused considerable distress to those who were on the streets or sofa surfing and without permanent accommodation who also had problems with accessing services which had closed and therefore struggling to find the support they needed.

In addition to all the emotional upset and upheaval, those who were homeless had additional stresses of where to stay, not easily having access to masks or facilities to wash their hands, and this section of the community were at higher risk of becoming ill.

SupportLine was able to support people who were homeless by providing emotional support and advice and also directing them to emergency and local sources of help

and directing them to sources of practical help where needed and specialist services.

'Thanks so much for all the time you gave me, not knowing which way to turn I was so glad I found details of your service and for all you have done for me. Just knowing someone out there cares makes a difference.' (feedback)

MENTAL HEALTH

During the year Covid-19 had a considerable impact on mental health and wellbeing with those who were already struggling with mental health difficulties reporting a deterioration in their overall mental health. People who never before had experienced any problems with their mental health were now reporting mental health difficulties such as severe anxiety and depression. Those who were already suffering with extreme anxiety conditions found the anxiety surrounding the pandemic and what was safe and not safe and trying to keep distance from people and being locked down totally overwhelming. Those who already had fears about going out were hearing it was not safe to go out and when restrictions eased found the anxiety of going out all consuming and that their recovery had been set back due to their heightened anxiety and fears.

Those who were doing well in recovery and visiting day centres regularly and seeing support workers, found those services no longer accessible to them and felt totally alone at a loss what to do. Having spent a long time on working on their wellbeing and confidence and engaging in activities in the community and gaining confidence in socialising with others, suddenly this all came to an end and it was very difficult for people to adjust to that lack of support.

Families and friends are often those who provide a lot of support to people suffering with mental health and this too was disrupted and not so easily available which also had a great impact on people who were struggling to get through the day with their conditions. People who had no trouble with their mental health and wellbeing before were reporting feelings of panic, feeling unsafe, constantly feeling anxious and unsettled, low moods and depression and overwhelmed by feelings which were alien to them. In addition to providing emotional support, we were able to direct people to online resources and information on services they could use when restrictions were eased and were able to offer call backs to those most vulnerable and isolated.

'I will definitely try a few of the techniques you have listed until I get through to one of the counselling sessions, thank you so much for all your help and for being there.' (feedback)'

SUICIDE

Sadly, we had an increase in people contacting us for help with suicidal thoughts and some had already made attempts on their lives. Some could not cope with the decline in their mental health, some saw no hope in their future, some could not bear the pain of loss of loved ones, and some were totally consumed with anxiety and depression so much so that they saw no other way out for them but to take their lives.

SupportLine worked with those with suicidal thoughts to help them to see there are alternatives to suicide and that having support is so important rather than try and cope alone with overwhelming feelings. As well as providing emotional support and helping people to adopt healthy positive coping strategies to help with anxiety and depression and suicidal thoughts, we also provided telephone/email befriending to those most isolated and at risk and encouraged people to share their thoughts with others if they could. So often people feel they have to be strong all the time and if they are not coping it is a sign of weakness. We always impress upon people that recognising when you are not coping and reaching out for help is a sign of strength, not weakness.

'Thank you from the bottom of my heart, I was going to do it and you helped me see there was a way through without killing myself. Having your support has made so much difference and given me hope which I did not have before'. (feedback)

GENERAL

Covid-19 impacted on the population in so many ways and in addition to the above there were people who were laid off from their jobs, people who were not furloughed and finance was a major worry for many individuals and families many of whom were already struggling before the pandemic. This led to all kinds of financial difficulties for many individuals and families with all the added stresses and worries that that entailed.

Having structure and routine in one's life is very important and when that was totally disrupted for many it was very difficult to re-establish it with so many overwhelming thoughts and feelings going on.

During lockdowns where partners and families were spending so much time together it often led to strained and fractious relationships, people feeling they were trapped and unable to get some space on their own, and parents trying to juggle work with children being at home and for some they were overwhelmed with the situation they found themselves in and having our Helpline to talk to was for many a life saviour and helped those who were struggling to keep things in perspective, to keep positive, to have ways of coping which were healthy and not self destructive.

As with many other charities we have seen an increase in people contacting us for help and also an increase in people viewing the information on our website. This reinforces the importance of Helplines such as SupportLine who are able to be there for those who are vulnerable and struggling with life and we feel the uncertainty that continues and the impacts of covid-19 we have seen on people's mental health will be ongoing for some time.

People will need a lot of support to get their recoveries back on track, and to help people to regain confidence and feel safer in themselves and more able to engage with others in their communities.

FEEDBACK

The abuse I went through has affected me for so many years, years which I can never get back. I feel a glimmer of hope after speaking to your Helpline, I feel more positive than I have ever been and will use your coping strategies every day. Talking to myself like I would talk to a good friend has already helped me enormously and I no longer feel like a frightened child but a grown woman more able to deal with my past and be in control of my life. Thank you for all your support.

I have already imagined my abuser getting small and smaller until he is so small like a tiny ant who holds no power over me anymore. It feels really good to know there is something I can visualise where he has no control over me. I am starting to see I am not helpless but have control over my own life and choices. My family have noticed I am coping better and sleeping better too.

Really love the idea of creating safe places in my mind, I think a lot of beaches where I went on holiday and focus on feeling safe. It is helping me to feel calmer and knowing that there is something I can do practically to help myself. Your Helpline has really helped me to feel stronger in myself, thank you

I have already created a Safe Box and added lots of things which make me feel happy and safe and have lots more to add. It makes me feel less anxious when I use it and much better than cutting myself like I was doing before I contacted you. Thank you for being there when I need you and when I have the odd wobble, it means so much.

Thank you so much for all the helpful tips and advice especially those which help with flashbacks. After all the times I reached out to others and felt like a lost cause it feels fantastic to find ways I can cope. It truly has saved my life contacting yourselves as was so close to giving up. Thank you so much for all your kindness and support.

Totally shocked at how detailed and personal your email was in response to my cry for help. Never before have I been given so much information from anyone I went to for help. The way you replied made me feel you really cared; it was not the usual general response I normally get when contacting others for help! Just wish I had known about your agency years ago as I know this will help me and just the way you replied made me feel worth something! From all my heart thank you.

SOME OF THE ORGANISATIONS, PROFESSIONALS & PROJECTS WHICH SUPPORTLINE HAS SUPPORTED THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

Information and leaflets given to North Tyneside Social Prescribing Service Primary Care Network to support young adults with mental health difficulties who are struggling with anxiety and isolation.

Information on local sources of help given to Oxfordshire MIND to support one of their clients.

Information on local resources given to Nottingham City Council, Adult Duty Team, Whole Life Disabilities North, to help an elderly client who was isolated

Information on support services given to Social Prescriber Wokingham Borough North Primary Care Network in relation to a client who had been through domestic abuse.

Information on support services given to Camden Carers Service to support a young man who was self harming.

Information on coping strategies and local resources given to Bromley, Lewisham & Greenwich MIND for adult survivor of childhood sexual abuse

Inclusion of SupportLine details into database of Maytree Suicide Respite Centre

Inclusion of SupportLine's details into NHS Choices website

Resources and coping strategies given to Integrated Mental Health Practitioner Epping Forest North, Primary Care Network to support a male survivors of childhood abuse

Local resources given to support male survivor of childhood abuse to Social Prescribing Link Worker Wolseley Trust, Plymouth

Big Life Group Manchester provided with information on local resources to support a bereaved client.

Information on local sources of support given to Knowsley Mental Health Social Work Team to support adult survivors of childhood abuse

DWP Falkirk information on SupportLine services to be used for their vulnerable clients

Local resources given to Hillingdon Talking Therapies Central and N.W. London NHS Foundation Trust for supporting a young person who was struggling to cope

Information on local services and SupportLine literature provided to British Transport Police Vulnerability Unit to support people who are suicidal and those with mental health difficulties.

Information on SupportLine and local resources given to Avon & Somerset Police to support vulnerable member of community

Information on SupportLine and local resources given to Kent Police to support vulnerable individual in the local community who was much in need of support.

SupportLine regularly assists students with their Projects on many of the issues we cover.

SupportLine is frequently contacted by sections of the media for contacts and help for articles which are being written and this has included a number of nationals and ITV News Network.

SupportLine is used on a regular basis by agony aunts who write for national papers and magazines.

SupportLine continues to be used as a source of referral by television companies and radio stations where it is thought support would be needed for viewers and listeners.

This has included Channel 4's programme relating to Victims of Crime and also Bullying & Harassment.

BBC Scotland's programme River City which is a drama serious set in a tight knit community in Glasgow and covered a wide range of issues.

SupportLine empowers people to develop their own inner strength, and to adopt healthy positive ways of coping so that when they are faced with difficulties in the future, they are more able to cope without harming themselves.

SupportLine works with victims of abuse to help them to increase their confidence and self esteem, to learn to value themselves, to believe in themselves and to stop blaming themselves for abuse which was not their fault. Freeing themselves of guilt and blame can lift an enormous weight from their shoulders and help them along the way in their journey to recovery.

Men often struggle with talking about feelings, believing they have to be strong all the time. SupportLine encourages men to reach out to others, and that recognising when you are not coping and getting support, is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Children and Young People often are suffering in silence, scared to tell their parents their worries and fears and often turning to harm themselves. SupportLine encourages all young people where possible to reach out to their families to support them and help them address the concerns they have.

CORONAVIRUS CRISIS: THE SUN ARTICLE 14 MARCH 2020
A GLIMPSE INTO SOME OF SUPPORTLINE'S WORK HELPING VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

Abusers use coronavirus isolation to gain power… I would be dead by now, says survivor Roxy

IT is only 11am and SupportLine's inbox is already filling up.

An email drops from Lauren, a woman in her fifties, who is in shock.

Last night, she was attacked by her partner — a horrifying first that left her shaken and scared, trapped in her home. Her partner has been emotionally and verbally abusive before. But now it has turned physical. Losing his job while in lockdown has "tipped him over the edge", she writes.

Due to the ongoing crisis, she has been unable to get out of the house to seek support. She is anxious her situation will escalate further. And her situation is far from unique. As we read her email, another five appear — making similar pleas for help.

As families across the country stay home to keep safe from Covid-19, for women in abusive relationships those four walls feel like a prison. Domestic Abuse charity Refuge reports a 25 per cent rise in calls to its helpline since lockdown began in March. Avon and Somerset Police, meanwhile, say domestic abuse incidents rose 21 per cent in the first two weeks of lockdown. Many women are now isolated with their abuser, unable to escape or find respite.

Charities have taken their helplines and meetings online but getting in contact is difficult when abusive partners often monitor their victim's every move. A spokesman for Women's Aid says: "Perpetrators of abuse may use restrictions due to Covid-19 to exercise power and control over their partners — further reducing their access to services, help and support from formal and informal networks." "They might do things like restrict access to necessary items such as soap and hand sanitiser, or exert control by spreading misinformation about the disease to confuse and worry partners."

'THINGS GOT BAD'

SupportLine is a national helpline for those at risk of any form of abuse. Over a period of 24 hours, its team gave us a chilling insight into the scale of abuse behind closed doors.

The next call comes from Sarah, a woman in her twenties who managed to phone while alone on her designated walk of the day.

Her partner has been abusive before, is becoming more agitated due to staying inside and is increasingly taking out his aggression on her. Sarah is concerned not just for her own wellbeing but the safety of her three children. Previously, she could stay elsewhere when "things got bad". But now she feels trapped. SupportLine staff talk through her fears and advise Sarah to keep a mobile phone close by at all times — and to contact the police immediately if the situation escalates.

Sarah, who grew noticeably calmer during the call, feels reassured she has the support of those at the end of the line. But the situation for women like her is graver than ever with the imposed lockdown.

Sarah Davidge, of Women's Aid, says: "If you live with an abuser, home is not a place of safety. Women will be in lockdown with their abuser, unable to get any breathing space." "It will be harder to text or phone to get support. Child survivors no longer have the respite of school or nursery, which can often be a safe place to access help." It is not uncommon for periods of social isolation, such as Christmas, to worsen cases of domestic abuse.

Roxy Freebury, 23, from Newport, Gwent, is a survivor of domestic abuse who believes she would not have lived through the lockdown in her violent previous relationship.

'A WAY OF GAINING POWER'

The nursery worker says: "When Britain went into lockdown, my heart went out to all the women and men living in abusive relationships. As a former victim, I know how perpetrators use isolation as a way of gaining power."

“I met my ex-partner John* in March 2018. As soon as we had our own flat, things dramatically changed. He slowly stopped me seeing my family and became increasingly aggressive." “During winter weekends, when it was snowing and people weren’t going out, he would be agitated with everything I did and, in such a small space, the violence came easily. Christmas is another example." "Everyone is at home with their families for a week or so and victims are often stuck inside with the abuser at a time of increased alcohol consumption and financial struggles and there isn’t anywhere for them to go to find an outlet for their anger. So they take it out on their partners.”

On December 28, 2018, life for Roxy changed as the violence peaked. She says: “We were in bed when a friend from work texted me and my ex flew into a rage. He beat me so hard I could barely breathe — punches to my face, knees, to my ribs and he repeatedly tried to choke me." “He ripped out my hair and smashed my head on the floor. It was only when he stopped to catch his breath that I managed to run out on to the street and flag down help from a neighbour outside, who bundled me into their car and called the police." “My ex was charged with assault by beating on March 6, 2019, and given a 12-month community service order, a restraining order and had to pay me £200. That is nothing for the damage he caused.”

The authorities are aware of potential damage lockdown could do. Last week the Government announced domestic abuse services in the UK will receive an extra £2 million, alongside the Home Office’s new support campaign during the coronavirus lockdown. Priti Patel launched the You Are Not Alone initiative in which people are encouraged to share a photo of a heart on their palm on social media with the hashtag #YouAreNotAlone. Other countries in lockdown are facing a similar rise in abuse cases.

The French government said it would pay for hotel rooms for victims of domestic violence after cases rose 36 per cent in Paris during lockdown week one. In China’s Hubei province — the one-time centre of the coronavirus outbreak — domestic violence calls to police tripled. Spain has a scheme that sees women visit pharmacies and request “Mask 19” — a codeword alerting the pharmacist to call the authorities and report domestic abuse. Women’s Aid says such initiatives are vital.

Sarah Davidge, of the charity, adds: “We have been telling women to familiarise themselves with the Silent Solution. This is a system for victims of domestic abuse who might be afraid of further danger if they are overheard calling 999."

'HEARTBREAKING'

"If you need to call 999 on a mobile, an operator will ask which emergency service is required. If you are not able to ask for help, your call will be forwarded to a police system. If you then press 55, the system will transfer the call to the relevant police force, who can arrange for help.”

The helplessness of victims’ families is made all too clear in a call to SupportLine at 7.15pm. It is from David, a man in his seventies. He has called because he is extremely concerned about his daughter who is living with an abusive partner.

He is angry that he can no longer visit her to check on her situation and tells staff he feels at a loss. He knows her local support group has closed due to the lockdown and is worried for her safety because online services cannot replicate the work of one-to-one contact.

It is heartbreaking to hear a dad so frightened for the safety of his daughter. SupportLine urges him to use video calls to make regular contact with her so he can see his daughter and send a clear message to the abusive partner that people are checking in on her wellbeing.
He is told he should tell his daughter to keep her phone close at hand and call 999 if she ever feels her life is in danger. Sarah adds: “Three women are murdered by their partner or ex-partner every fortnight in England and Wales."

“With reported domestic abuse cases rising worldwide during the pandemic, there is a real risk that murders may rise further. It is critical to remember, however, that Covid-19 will not CAUSE domestic homicides." “Only abusers are responsible for their appalling actions. The pandemic does, however, threaten to escalate abuse and close down routes to safety for women to escape.”

*Names of all those who contacted support agencies have been changed

FEEDBACK

I am moved by your reply and that you have taken time over Christmas to get back to me. I was in such a state when I emailed you and your reply helped me to calm down and see there is a way forward. Never been given these practical strategies before from all the professionals and counsellors I have seen, and ways in which I can help myself. Makes me feel less helpless and worthless and already seeing improvements in my mental health.

Thanks so much for being there. It was hard reaching out but glad I did. Everything you said made sense and great to hear what someone had to say who does not know me and someone who doesn't judge me. The work you do is amazing and cannot thank you enough for all you have done for me.

I don't think you will ever realise how much it meant that you were there this evening. I was close to giving up and just wanted the pain to go away. I struggle so much with flashbacks of my ex attacking me and knowing that the children saw it and the guilt that I did not leave sooner. You gave me ways to cope with that and for that I am forever grateful. I cannot turn back the clock but know there are ways to move forward and thank you so much for letting me know about the programme to help women who had been through domestic abuse, I will certainly sign up for it.

I didn't know which way to turn, whether I was coming or going, covid covid covid is all I was hearing, it was stressing me out so much and just didn't know what to do. Thanks for calming me down and letting me know what I could do to help myself if I get in that state again. Great service.

I was haunted by what happened to my dad, not being with him when he needed me the most. Covid has a lot to answer for. I don't know what to say other than thank you for being there, for helping me to see through everything that went on, for helping me to focus not only on dad's death but his life, all the happy years I had with them. You are right, that is what he would have wanted. The guilt is slowly easing, miss him like mad but so thankful for your help and support.

FUNDRAISING

Covid has had a great effect on the fundraising activities of many charities, of which SupportLine is no exception.

A fundraising Celebrity Charity Cricket Match we had been planning had to be put on hold due to the Covid restrictions and hopefully this is something that we will be able to take up once again in the future.

We have always been very grateful to the celebrities who freely have given up their time to support our charity over many years of Celebrity Charity Football Matches, Gold Days and Cricket Matches and it will be good to meet up with them all again at some stage and raise vital funds for the Charity.

Due to covid restrictions and increased demand on our services fundraising has very much had to take a back seat but we hope in the near future to be able to organise an Online Auction which has proved to be successful in the past and also when restrictions permitted resume our Celebrity Charity events which have proved so popular over the years.

SupportLine also continues to receive some funding by people choosing our charity on the website Give As You Live whereby a percentage of what people spend is donated to the charity and also when people spend on Amazon.

Lack of fundraising opportunities over recent past has made the funds we have received from Charitable Trusts and Foundations and donations even more invaluable and we are so grateful to all our supporters who have believed in the work we do and given us financial support, some over many years. The support we have received has kept the charity going and hopefully we will be successful in securing more funds which are needed to enable our work to continue over the coming year.

WEBSITE

We are very proud of our website which continues to receive very positive feedback from people who use it and also from professionals to refer people to it for resources, information and support. We very much welcome feedback and often include new sections and additional information to existing sections when we hear that people are struggling to find information on specific issues.

For some time, we have wanted to work on a new site which will encompass a lot more of the practical coping strategies we give to people which they find really helpful and is a way in which people are able to regain some control over their lives and help themselves.

Due to increased demand on the service and especially in light of covid and spending more time helping people in relation to the virus, we have not been able to get the new site up and running. This is something we will be working on over the coming year and hope to be able to have this up and running as a complement to our existing site in the near future.

SUICIDE

Over the last year our Charity has noticed a marked increase in the number of people contacting us with suicidal thoughts and in many cases some have already made attempts on their lives.

Suicide is a significant national social issue in the United Kingdom. In 2019 there were 5,691 registered deaths by suicide in England and Wales, equating to an average of 18 suicides per day in the country. Suicide is the **single biggest killer of men under the age of 45** in the country.

Men are three times more likely to take their own lives than women. Boys are often taught and have instilled in them that they need to be strong, that boys don't cry, and men often see it as a weakness if they cannot cope and deal with things themselves. They often find it more difficult to talk about their feelings to their friends and families and may cope by turning to alcohol, withdrawing into themselves and isolating themselves.

We are often contacted by partners of men who are suffering with depression and suicidal thoughts and they always tell us their partner refuses to get help and the loved ones of a person who is suffering feel very helpless and at a loss what to do.

Thankfully in society in general we are seeing a slight change and this has been helped by high profile celebrities speaking out about their own depression. This has included members of the Royal Family, celebrities from the world of entertainment and sport and this is a very positive move in encouraging men and others to see that reaching out for help is a sign of strength and not weakness.

People can be suicidal for all kinds of reasons where they feel overwhelmed in what is going on in their lives and sadly see no other way out of their situation.

Rates of suicidal thoughts have increased during lockdown, especially among young adults, a longitudinal study has found. Research published in the *British Journal of Psychiatry* found that women, young adults, socially disadvantaged people, and people with pre-existing mental health problems reported the worst mental health outcomes in the initial six week period of national lockdown.

Example of some of the calls and emails we get in relation to suicide

'I want to end my life today'

'Feeling so low and want to hang myself now'.

'I've let my family down, since breakdown of relationship never get to see my kids, can't cope with the pain anymore. Better for everyone if I was not here'

'I cannot see a way out and am ending my life tonight'

'My sickness and poor health makes me a burden to my family, the guilt is eating me up inside, there is no point in carrying on '.

'I don't want to live any more, better for everyone if I kill myself'.

'Can't cope with this anymore, it's all too much, taking an overdose tonight.'

'Our son has made another attempt on his life. He doesn't see a future and we are at a loss how best to support him'.

'I am not going to be able to face another lockdown, I am seeing nobody and this is not the way I want to live. I've had enough and now want to die.'

We are also seeing that the age of **young people** presenting with suicidal feelings is getting younger and not uncommon for young people who contact us to have already made serious attempts on their lives.

We find that young people often are reluctant to talk to their families through fear of upsetting them, not being believed, families not caring about them, parent ill, tried to talk to them before and not listening, dismissing what they have said.

Example of some of the calls/emails we get in relation to suicide from young people

'Feel so depressed, constantly crying and so sad since my nan died, just want to end it all'

'My friend is suicidal; I don't know what to do and am begging you to help him.'

'I feel like a failure, everything goes wrong, everyone hates me, nobody talks to me at school and a boy is spreading rumours about me, I hate life, I'm taking the pills.'

'I feel alone and I'm sick of struggling, I really don't want to be here anymore,'

Again, this demonstrates the importance of Helplines such as SupportLine where people who are struggling can feel safe and not judged, where they can be open and honest about how they are feeling. Thankfully very often people do see an alternative to suicide and recognise that with the right support they can get through difficult times and that they are stronger than they think. Sadly as we know some people in society do go on to take their lives and the more work that can be done about encouraging people to seek support the better.

SupportLine also supports survivors of bereavement by suicide. It is never easy to cope when a loved one ends their life and survivors are left with so much confusion, often struggling with the guilt of whether they could or should have done more, how things could have been different and many survivors blame themselves. some will, feel anger towards their loved one for leaving them. So many raw emotions to deal with when grieving for their loved one is never easy.

FEEDBACK

I contacted you about help for my son but you saw I needed support too. Thank you for all the information you gave me and your care. I didn't know where to get help for him and you have made an old lady very happy that now I know where to get that support locally for him and will be sure to contact the Carers group too.

I just had to contact you for saying a big thank you for sorting out the food parcels and volunteers to help me. It is very lonely living alone and not being able to have family and friends around and was feeling very forgotten about. Thank you for the befriending service you gave me too and I can see myself making use of that. Knowing there is someone out there to turn to is a help in itself. Thank you

Thank you for believing me, that meant a lot. It is hard for a male survivor of abuse to reach out, men are supposed to be strong aren't they! You know I have actually taken your advice and confided in a close friend and he has been astounding in his support. I know I should have told him before but talking things through with you gave me the strength to do that. I know I can't bury my head in the sand forever when this has such a negative impact on my life, and the support group you told me about seems like exactly what I need. Keep up the good work.

I was glad my friend told me to contact you and thanks for helping me like you helped her. I have not self harmed for some time and using distractions you suggested and also working through the online course you told me about. Things are better at home and less arguments and feeling a lot happier in myself all thanks to your help. I did not expect to get so much support and understanding.

My deepest thanks to SupportLine for keeping me sane and helping me keep it together when I couldn't see my counsellor or get to support group as everything closed down because of covid. I thought I would be ok coping on my own but it all got too much as you know, I felt I was going over the edge. If you had not been there, I don't know what I would have done but I will always be grateful for your help. You do a great job for people like me and given your number to a few people at the support group too.

ACHIEVEMENTS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

SupportLine has provided help, emotional support, advice, information, advocacy, befriending to some 6,734 people. This has been an increase on the previous year's figures of 6,036.

This has included direct services to people who are vulnerable, at risk, isolated and victims of abuse who request help for themselves, family members or friends.

Information and support given to Professionals, Statutory services, other charities and voluntary agencies from our database in respect of local and/or specialist services in order that they could pass to their clients' local sources of face to face support.

Advice and a listening ear given to Professionals, other charities and voluntary agencies over issues of concern and the best way of handling cases.

As can be seen on the section 'Some of the Organisations, Professionals, and Projects SupportLine has supported throughout the year', there is an ever increasing demand for help and advice from our service supporting people throughout the UK and those who work with them.

SupportLine was able to respond with speed to the Covid Pandemic. This happened at a time when the charity was getting low on funding and a lot of time needed to be spent in trying to secure funds. Thankfully we were successful in securing emergency funding to help charities support people in relation to the Pandemic in addition to securing funding from Charitable Trusts, a number of whom had supported our charity in the past and this was a tremendous help to us and enabled our work to continue.

In response to Covid we extended opening hours for our email support service, did a lot of research to find out about different covid-19 support services throughout the UK. We adapted some of our work to involve helping vulnerable people more on a practical level in liaising with local covid-19 groups and local Councils ensuring that people who had been left without food were given access to food parcels and volunteers to collect food and medication to those who were shielding.

Our work supporting people in relation to covid also involved call backs to vulnerable and isolated people giving befriending and checking they were coping and if they needed any further assistance.

Some of the content on our website in relation to Rape & Sexual Assault was used by a young lady in a You Tube video which she made to help victims and families of rape victims. Her own mother had been beaten and raped visiting the grave of her son on the anniversary of his death. The young lady told the story of the trauma that had happened to her mother in the hope it helps those who are going through similar trauma. She highlighted the courage and fight of her mother throughout and how it had impacted on her as her daughter and the importance of getting support.

We continue to receive good feedback about our website from people looking directly for support for themselves and their loved ones and it is well used by Professionals and other agencies who frequently refer their clients to it. We regularly include new content which is often based on feedback from people we support where they have found difficulty in accessing information on certain issues which we include on the site.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2021

SupportLine raised £55,365 and incurred an expenditure of £44,157 for the year ending 31 March 2021.

SupportLine had a surplus of £4,003 from the previous financial year leading to a total surplus as at 31 March 2021 of £15,211.50

Accounts prepared by an independent Accountant.

Kirit Shah BSc. FCCA
CS Property & Consultancy Services

TRUSTEES

Peter Barrell
Mike Knell
Jaiyesh Patel

Co-ordinator Geri Burnikell

SupportLine

PO Box 2860, Romford, Essex RM7 1JA

Tel: Admin: 01708 765222 Tel.Helpline: 01708 765200

Email: info@supportline.org.uk

Website: www.supportline.org.uk

SUPPORT LINE

Charity Registration no. 1097419

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Support Line

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Chairman	Peter Barrell
Vice Chairman	Mike Knell
Treasurer	Jayesh Patel
Co-ordinator	Geri Burnikell

Bankers

Natwest
Wanstead Branch
51-53 High Street
Wanstead
London E11 2XX

Accountants

CS Property & Consultancy Services
Kirit Shah BSc FCCA

Support Line

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Support Line

Forward to the Financial Statements

These Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with CC64 SORP 2000 as issued by the Charity Commission in October 2000.

Since Support Line's Income for the year has been less than £100,000, it is classed as "small" and hence is eligible to produce the accounts on a receipts and payments basis.

K. Shah, B Sc, FCCA

Independent Accountant

Support Line

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for:

- keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the funds held on trust and to enable them to ensure that the accounts comply with requirements in the Charities Act 1993 and those outlined in the directions issued by the Secretary of State;

- establishing and monitoring a system of internal control; and

- establishing arrangements for the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption.

The Trustees are required under the Charities Act 1993 and under the National Health Service Act 1977 to prepare accounts for each financial year. The Secretary of State, with the approval of the Treasury, directs that these accounts give a true and fair view of the financial position of the funds held on trust, in accordance with the Charities Act 1993. In preparing those accounts, the Trustees are required to:

- apply on a consistent basis accounting policies laid down by the Secretary of State with the approval of the Treasury;

- make judgements and estimates which are reasonable and prudent;

- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the accounts.

The Trustees confirm that they have met the responsibilities set out above and complied with the requirements for preparing the accounts.

By Order of the Trustees

Signed

Chairman Date 29/9/21

Trustee Date 31/08/21

Support Line

Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2021

	Notes	Total Funds £
Incoming resources		
Fundraising		634
Donations, Legacies and similar resources		177
Grants - Restricted Funds (Please refer to the note below)		54,554
Other incoming resources		
Total incoming resources	**2**	**55,365**
Resources expended		
Costs of generating funds		3,301
Grants paid		-
Activities in furtherance of charity's objectives		1,199
Management and administration		39,657
Total Resources expended	**3**	**44,157**
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources		**11,209**
Fund balances brought forward at 31 March 20		4,003
Fund balances carried forward at 31 March 21	**4**	**15,211**

Support Line

Consolidated Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2020

Fixed Assets	**Notes**	**£**
Intangible Assets		–
Tangible Assets		–
Current assets		
Stocks		–
Debtors		–
Cash at bank and in hand	**4**	15,211
Creditors/Overdraft: amounts falling due within one year		-
Net Current Assets		**15,211**
Total Net Assets		**15,211**
Funds of the Charity		
Unrestricted		-
Restricted		15,211
Total Funds		**15,211**

Signed:

Date: 29/21

Support Line

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1 Accounting policies

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements are prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities.

1.2 Compliance with accounting standards

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards

2 Total Incoming Resources

All incoming resources are included in full in the Statement of Financial Activities as soon as the following three factors can be met: Entitlement, Certainty and measurement.

This represents the total income received during the financial year ending 31st March 2021

3 Total Resources Expended

Cost of generating funds comprise those costs directly attributable to fund raising activities.

Grants payable are included in the Statement of Financial Activities when approved by the Trustees.

Management and administration comprises costs of running the charity.

Training/supervision is provided to the "Support Line" by a volunteer hence nil expenditure.

4 Cash

The financial year had started with a credit balance of £4,003. A surplus of £11,209 increased this credit balance to £15,211

The current authorised overdraft limit with the bank is £6,000.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2021
FROM INDEPENDENT AUDITOR

SupportLine raised £55,365 and incurred an expenditure of £44,157 for the year ending 31 March 2021.

SupportLine had a surplus of £4,003 from the previous financial year leading to a total surplus as at 31 March 2021 of £15,211.50

Accounts prepared by an independent Accountant.

Kirit Shah BSc. FCCA
CS Property & Consultancy Services