

# About Lifeline

Northern Ireland's crisis response helpline.

## What is Lifeline?

Lifeline is Northern Ireland's crisis response helpline for people experiencing distress or despair. Lifeline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year. Calls to Lifeline are free. Lifeline will support everyone living in Northern Ireland regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexuality.

## Who is Lifeline for?

Lifeline is for anyone living in Northern Ireland who is struggling to cope or feeling overwhelmed by what is or what is not happening in their life.

Lifeline provides compassionate, trauma-informed support for those who are experiencing crisis or despair, and those feeling suicidal. You do not need to be at immediate risk of harming yourself to call Lifeline. Reaching out for help early is a good thing, as it can stop things becoming too much to cope with. [Find out more about how Lifeline can support you.](#)

Lifeline also offers support for people who are worried about someone else. [Find out more about the support Lifeline can offer to those worried about someone else.](#)

## What should I expect when I call Lifeline?

When you phone Lifeline one of our trained counsellors will answer your call and tell you their name. Most people who phone Lifeline don't know why they call and that's okay.

The Lifeline counsellor will ask some questions about you and how you are feeling. It is up to you how much information you share with the Lifeline counsellor. The counsellor will also give you an overview of [confidentiality](#).

The Lifeline counsellor will listen to you and work with you to provide the help and support that you need.

## Support available

The following types of support are available from Lifeline:

## **Helpline support**

Lifeline provides 24/7 telephone support via our helpline. When you call Lifeline, you will speak to a qualified and experienced counsellor who will listen to you and give you the help and support you need.

## **Follow-on calls**

Lifeline can support people by contacting them by telephone, as agreed, to offer more support. This can include:

- Safety check-in: a call to an individual to continue developing a collaborative safety plan.
- Follow-up: a call within 24 hours to a person that has agreed to a referral by someone they know.
- Support call: a routine call to provide information and education about Lifeline and to talk about options for ongoing support.

## **Signposting**

Lifeline aims to provide the right support at the right time – anytime. We will work with you to understand your current difficulties and the best support mechanism for you at this time. This may involve signposting to other organisations or services that can better meet your needs.

## **Short-term counselling**

Where suitable, Lifeline may offer you a course of short-term counselling (either remote or in-person). Lifeline adopts a solution-focussed approach and our counsellors aim to support individuals during difficult periods in their life.

Our counsellors are experienced in working with suicide, self-harm, abuse, trauma, depression, anxiety and many other issues.

## **Our counsellors**

Lifeline counsellors are professionally qualified with a minimum of a Diploma in Counselling and hold membership with the British Association of Counselling (BACP) and/or the National Counselling Society (NCS).

## **Questions and answers**

### **Is Lifeline a confidential service?**

It is your choice whether you share your personal details with Lifeline. When you contact Lifeline, you can remain completely anonymous, however if you do provide personal details, Lifeline can offer you more help and support. Before you share your personal information, the Lifeline counsellor will explain how this information will be handled.

The Lifeline counsellor may decide that sharing some information outside Lifeline is necessary because you are (or someone you know is) at serious risk of harm. In this situation, the Lifeline counsellor will discuss this with you in the hope that you agree to share your personal details with support services outside of Lifeline.

In some exceptional circumstances, a Lifeline counsellor may make the decision to share information outside of the Lifeline service without the consent (but with the knowledge) of the caller in order to protect life. For example, Lifeline may share your personal details with the emergency services if there is a risk to your own or others' safety.

### **Is Lifeline only for people who are feeling suicidal?**

No. You don't have to be at immediate risk of harming yourself to phone Lifeline. If you are worried about how you are feeling and coping, it is a good idea to seek help before you feel overwhelmed by your problems or emotions.

Lifeline is here to help people living in Northern Ireland who are experiencing distress or despair. Lifeline counsellors are experienced in helping with many types of issues including suicide, self-harm, abuse, trauma, depression, anxiety and many other issues. You can call Lifeline about anything that might be troubling you.

[www.mindingyourhead.info](http://www.mindingyourhead.info) has more information for those who are worried about poor mental health or would like to know how to maintain good mental health. The website provides a directory of services for Northern Ireland relating to a wide range of issues.

### **Who will I speak to when I call Lifeline?**

When you phone Lifeline you will speak to a qualified counsellor. Lifeline counsellors are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to listen and work together with you to provide support and establish a way forward.

Lifeline counsellors are experienced in working with suicide, self-harm, abuse, trauma, depression, anxiety and many other issues. You will receive immediate help on the phone.

### **Will my call to Lifeline show up on my phone bill?**

No. Calls to Lifeline are not recorded on itemised phone bills. Calls from Lifeline always display on phones as a withheld number. The Lifeline telephone number will not show up on a mobile phone log or be discovered by using the 1571 phone service.

### **I'm under 18. Will you tell my parent/carers that I have called lifeline?**

Lifeline counsellors will encourage callers under the age of 18 to seek support from their parent(s) or main carer. We understand that you may be worried about telling a parent or carer. In this case, alternative options can be explored to make sure you get all the support you need.

### **How do I make a complaint about the Lifeline service?**

Lifeline is Northern Ireland's crisis response helpline service for people experiencing distress or despair.

The Lifeline service is commissioned by the Public Health Agency and delivered by Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, on behalf of wider Health and Social Care.

If you are dissatisfied with the Lifeline service provided, you can make a complaint by:

**Writing to:**

Complaints Department  
McKinney House (7th floor)  
Musgrave Park Hospital  
Belfast  
BT9 7JB

**Emailing:**

[complaints@belfasttrust.hscni.net](mailto:complaints@belfasttrust.hscni.net)

**Telephone:**

028 9504 8000

**Website:**

<https://belfasttrust.hscni.net>

[More information can be found in the Privacy policy](#)