

Monitoring is important as enables the Helpline to see if it is achieving its aims. Monitoring will happen in five ways:

1. Regular discussion between volunteers about details of their work and the phonenumber's operation.

This enables the development of guidelines and policies, helps volunteers to be fully involved in the Helpline's operation and alert them to foreseeable difficulties, as well as helping ensure the Helpline remains a cohesive body.

2. The keeping and analysis of proper records, including details on calls, administration and finances.

Call records enable the determination of trends, and whether the phonenumber is meeting its targets for helping actual and potential callers. It may point to potential sources of funding and will be usually required by such funders.

Administrative records enable the phonenumber to function effectively and help meet its service provision targets.

Financial records enable the phonenumber to satisfy funders that resources are being used properly. They also enable the phonenumber to be confident it remains financially viable, or to point out the need for action if it is to be so.

3. As part of the training and supervision process

During training, potential volunteers are carefully monitored for skills and suitability to inform the selection and training process.

Once accepted as volunteers, performance will be monitored through regular supervision meetings.

4. Tracking community and public perceptions of the phonenumber

Open meetings at events such as BiCon enable the bisexual community to report their experience of the phonenumber, whether as direct users of the service or as referral points.

Tracking how the phonenumber is seen in relation to other analogous services by the public is harder, but can be done by, for example, noticing mentions of the Helpline (including when it is not mentioned), and enquiring of referring bodies and individuals.

5. Sharing experiences with other phonelines

As well as the Edinburgh Bisexual Phonenumber and any other explicitly bisexual phonelines that may from time to time exist, these will include the other phonelines serving the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community as well as other analogous phonelines.

This enables best practice in other phonelines to inform the Helpline's operation as well as demonstrating to its peers that it is a worthwhile and effectively run resource.