

the
listening
place

Strategic Plan 2024–2027

Introduction

In London, suicide accounts for seven deaths per 100,000 people. There were 6,069 deaths by suicide in England and Wales in 2023.

Suicide is now the biggest killer of men under 50 and all people under the age of 35. In the last decade, suicidal intentions amongst women have risen at a worrying rate.

Of the recorded suicides in the UK each year, only 27% have been in contact with NHS secondary mental health services in the previous 12 months. So we know that despite many charities, NHS and other statutory organisations providing support, it isn't yet enough for so many.

In 2016, a handful of volunteers supported 200 suicidal individuals. Since then, we have grown month on month, and have in total received 27,000 referrals of adults living with suicidal thoughts.

We are now open in three sites across London – giving our visitors a welcoming, private space where they can speak and be heard.

Our volunteers save lives, one person at a time.

Our responsive and consistent model of volunteer-led support is well-evidenced in reducing suicidal feelings and self-reported distress and increasing experience of support.

We get extraordinarily touching feedback:

“This is my lifeline and I think, quite frankly, I would not be alive today without this support.”

We are seeing a dramatic increase in referrals every month. We know the demand is high and our challenge remains to build the capacity to meet more of it.

We have therefore set an ambitious strategy to continue to scale our model and operations during the next three years. During that time, we will open our fourth site, increase our reach, make our support easier to access, grow our volunteer base further, expand our range of partnerships and continue to invest in our evidence base.

All to ensure we can continue to provide face-to-face support for even more people who feel life is no longer worth living.

Sarah Anderson

Sarah Anderson CBE, CEO

Valerie Michie

Valerie Michie, Chair

The Listening Place

Vision

Anyone who feels life is no longer worth living can find a confidential place with a compassionate listener who will give them time.

Mission

To provide face-to-face support for people who feel life is no longer worth living.



Values



Caring



Collaborative



Courageous



Resolute



Respectful



Principles underpinning our model



Face-to-face

Our support is in person, face-to-face, from one of our centres.



Sustained

Support is ongoing, with reviews at three-monthly intervals.



Confidential

We offer complete confidentiality to all visitors.



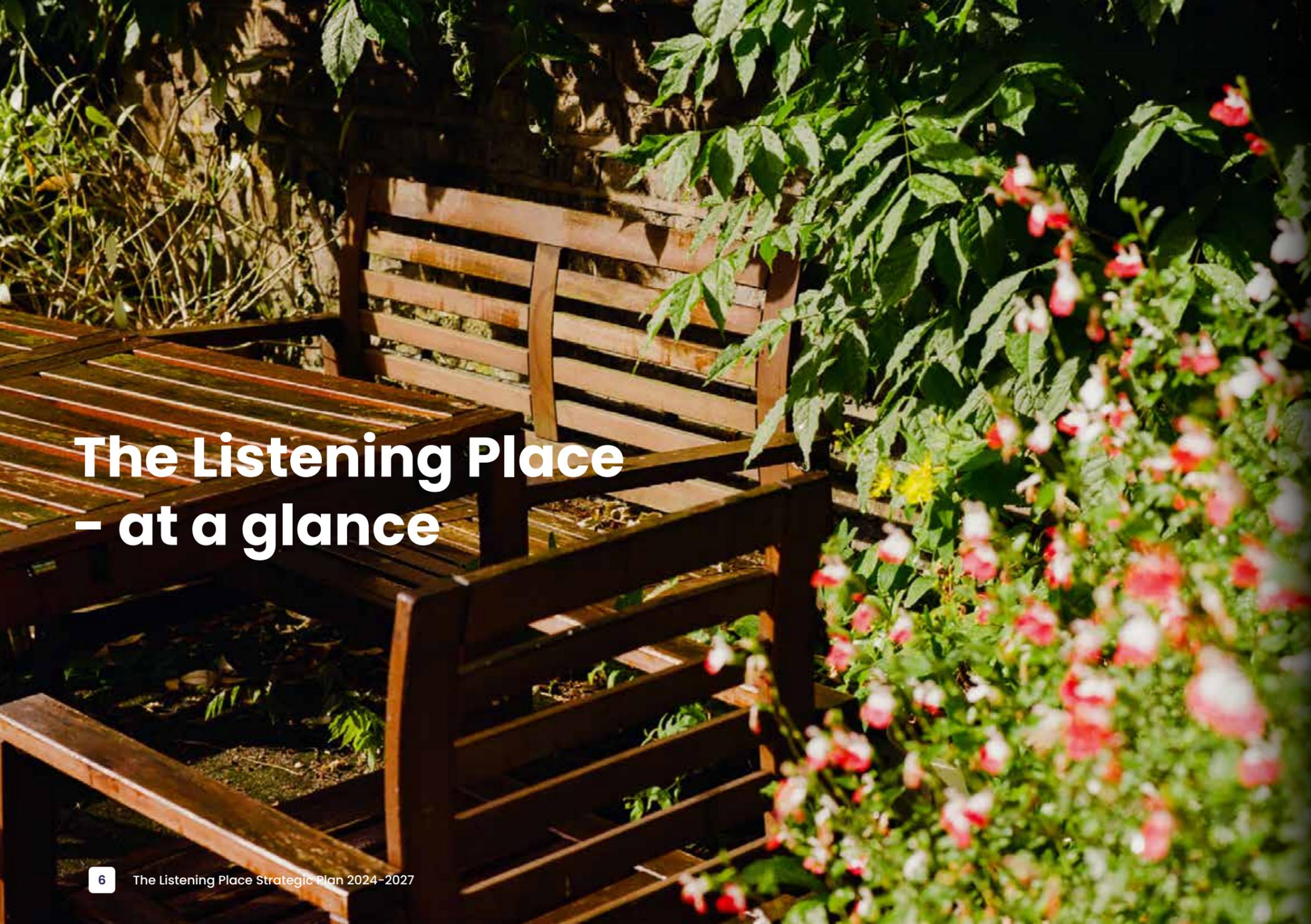
Responsive

We contact all referrals within 24 hours and offer a first appointment within one week.



Relational

Wherever possible, we ensure that the visitor sees the same person every time.



The Listening Place – at a glance

In 2023/24...



27,000

Total Referrals
to date



£1.23m

Value of time
donated by our
volunteers



1,400

Visitors supported at
any time



8,000

Referrals



720

Total active
volunteers



27 FTE

Our staff
team



£300

Cost of supporting a
single visitor for as
long as they need



99%

Visitors who rated
their overall
experience of TLP as
“Very Good”

Strategic priorities 2024-27



Support more people across London

Over 40% of our referrals are from just three London boroughs, highlighting significant unmet demand across the capital. We will explore new ways to reach those who need us and make it even easier to access our support.

We will:

- Reach more people, focusing on currently underserved groups and areas of the city.
- Pilot online face-to-face support for Londoners unable to access our sites.
- Pilot direct marketing to the public to reach those not in contact with our current referrers.



Collaborate with other organisations

Effective partnerships are critical for reaching potential visitors, and for influencing the policies and practices that affect those living with suicidal thoughts and feelings.

We will:

- Expand and diversify our referral partners to address unmet need and reach new communities.
- Work with others to improve the experience for current and potential visitors.
- Share what we've learned and our philosophy to shape policy and practice, while learning from others.



Invest in our volunteers, staff and culture

We know our volunteer-led model of support is central to how effective we are in supporting our visitors. We strive to create the best possible environment for both our volunteers and the staff who support them.

We will:

- Ensure volunteer numbers are sufficient to run all sites at 90%+ utilisation.
- Engage and expand our pool of volunteers, particularly those in specialist roles such as supervising volunteers and trainers.
- Ensure The Listening Place is an inclusive and welcoming place for all current and prospective volunteers and staff.



We will scale and manage the organisation responsibly

We must continue to expand at a steady pace to ensure we can support the increasing numbers of people referred to our service, while maintaining our commitment to operating without a waiting list.

We will:

- Continue to increase our income to meet ambitious plans to scale our support, while maximising our social value and minimising environmental harm.
- Build our profile and reputation steadily, to ensure more people who need us know we are here, and to continue to attract volunteers and funding.
- Create more opportunities for visitors to influence our approach and operations.

In our visitors' words...

“ Out of all the services there to support me, the best one I feel has been The Listening Place. I feel that I have been listened to and that they have been there to help me.

“ I feel safe here. I'm able to open up to feelings with Annie that I hadn't thought about. I feel relief because I have pressure inside that I cannot share with anyone I trust. Coming here is like a tap and I feel the release.

“ It has been one of the biggest things to save my life and I'll never not appreciate that it exists.

“ My experience at The Listening Place has been a life saver . . . Although not all my trauma and problems have been sorted, the help I've received at The Listening Place has helped to change me from a nervous wreck to a calmer and less fraught individual and it has stopped me from being totally isolated, which is something that I have been prone to do when the black dog makes his presence known for a stay.

Thank you for helping me to be able to continue on my journey.

“ Without TLP, I simply wouldn't be here.

the
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listeningplace.org.uk

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The Listening Place is a charitable incorporated organisation. Charity No. 1164739.