

Listen up!

Newsletter for the niscu  Listening service



New Year - New Hopes and Dreams

Hello! I trust we all still have hopes and dreams for the year ahead and a sense of anticipation as to how God may use us and even surprise us, as we seek, both individually and corporately, to see 'His kingdom come and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven'. I feel excited as I dream about how the 1-2-1 Listening Service might flourish in 2022.

This newsletter will give an update as to what has been achieved in the Autumn term and the plans for this term and we will also hear from Sue Gorman, who will tell us about her experiences as a 1-2-1 Listening Service Volunteer in West Cumbria.

Looking Back - Autumn Term 2021



To be candid during the autumn term I learnt that setbacks are all part of the process of rolling out the 1-2-1 Listening Service! I was disappointed that we didn't get the Listening Service fully up and running in West Cumbria before Christmas, but when I stopped to think about it, I realised we had in fact, achieved a lot. Some highlights being:

- I now feel a part of the wider NISCU team and very much supported by my colleagues in my role as Listening Service Manager. Rachel (North Cumbria) even dyed her hair pink as a Fundraiser for the Listening Service. If you'd like to give - <https://crowdfunding.justgiving.com/rachel-gleave-hair-dye-challenge>

- A 'Refresher Course' was devised for people who did their training before the pandemic impacted the strategy to roll out the service and used with 7 lovely West Cumbria volunteers. We will be able to use this 'Refresher' with volunteers from other areas who also completed their training pre- Covid.
- Meeting people in person and on Zoom! I have got to know the lovely volunteers, mentioned above and now have 3 that are 'all set' to go into schools this term, once I have been formally able to introduce the 1-2-1 Listening Service to the school. It is so encouraging to spend time with people who have a passion and a heart to support children in their local area.
- Reading this quote in NSPCC Childline Report: ***"At school, emphasis must be placed on supporting children's wellbeing. Teachers must be supported to identify and respond to pupils who've suffered adversity during the pandemic. Yet schools alone can't meet children's emotional needs. They must backed-up with community-based early intervention services to ensure no child's future is put at risk by the pandemic."*** (NSPCC (2020) The impact of the coronavirus pandemic on child welfare: School Insight briefing. London). The 1-2-1 Listening Service is just such a community-based early intervention service!

Looking Ahead - Spring Term

There are many exciting things scheduled for the Listening Service this coming term, the main ones being:

- Getting our 3 West Cumbria 'Refreshed' volunteers actually listening in schools
- Running the Acorn Listening Training in North Cumbria (dates currently TBC)
- As a result of this training, inducting more volunteers and getting the service 'up and running' in North Cumbria
- In response to a request from a local minister and having good contacts in 2 nearby schools, running the 'Refresher' training in N. Lancs. (Dates currently TBC) and getting the service 'up and running' in Morecambe

Meet the Listener...

Sue Gorman (former West Cumbria NISCU Area Manager) shares her experience of being involved with the Listening Service.

I completed the Listening Service training course just as I started work for NISCU. This was in the October of 2019 just before lockdown. I felt it was an amazing tool to use with people of all ages, but especially with children.

Obviously, the biggest hurdle regarding getting into schools was the pandemic and many schools struggled to allow visitors. Nick organised further listening training for school staff and during one of these sessions the Head of a local school said she felt that there were children in her school who would benefit from being listened to, so I contacted her to discuss this further. She allowed me into her school and I went once a week to listen to 2 children initially who were identified by the Head and whose parents had given permission. I was not allowed in for a number of weeks during full lockdown, but then I went back in under new rules and continued to listen to one of the children I had started the service with. When entering the school I had to have my temperature taken and wear a mask until seated. I needed to fill in the visitor log and have a visitor pass and use hand gel. This ended at the end of the Summer term 2021, when I left NISCU.

I found that once the initial meeting took place with the child, subsequent meets were much easier as the children liked to talk. They were both from homes where parents had divorced and they seemed to really enjoy having someone who was able to just sit and listen to all that they had to say. They were very open and honest and told me all about home issues, their like/dislikes, favourite things/subjects. They were absolutely "lovely" and it was a joy to see them open up.

The feedback from the school was that the service was making a difference to the children in their classroom. The children were very open and really relaxed in my company. I would wholly recommend getting involved. Children often struggle when there is a family breakup and often they are not able to talk to their parents about how they feel. Sometimes they just wanted to chat about their friends and their favourite games or family members and I feel it was good to be a neutral person who they could be open with.

If you are looking for a meaningful way to support your local children and young peoples' community then I would definitely recommend becoming a "listener"!



Events and News

To follow all our news, and for up to date information about volunteer events and training visit www.niscu.org.uk/121listening



Prayer Points

Thanks to God for:

- Being part of NISCU and the huge potential there is for the 1-2-1 Listening Service to meet an urgent and very definite need in our school communities
- Good working relationships with other colleagues and volunteers
- Staff who trained and volunteers that attended the Refresher Training
- Volunteers with passion
- Team work across the many segments of NISCU, churches and schools

Please ask God for:

- Strength for all Headteachers, teachers, TA's, site supervisors, dinner ladies, school Governors and all involved in education at this time
- Good time management for me
- Good strategic planning and implementation of the 1-2-1 Listening Service, especially wisdom in getting 1-2-1 Listening Service volunteers into schools when there are still issues of COVID within our communities
- More volunteers to train as listeners



Get involved - The 1-2-1 Listening Needs You!



You can get involved by:

1. Becoming a prayer partner and pray for the on-going roll out of the Listening Service. (sign up for or newsletter and prayer requests by emailing jane.callow@niscu.org.uk with 'sign me up' as the subject to the email).
2. Get trained as an 'effective listener' and volunteer as a listener to meet the need in a school near you.
3. Promote the 1-2-1 Listening Service in your church and get people to sign up to receive future newsletters about the listening needs across our NISCU areas.

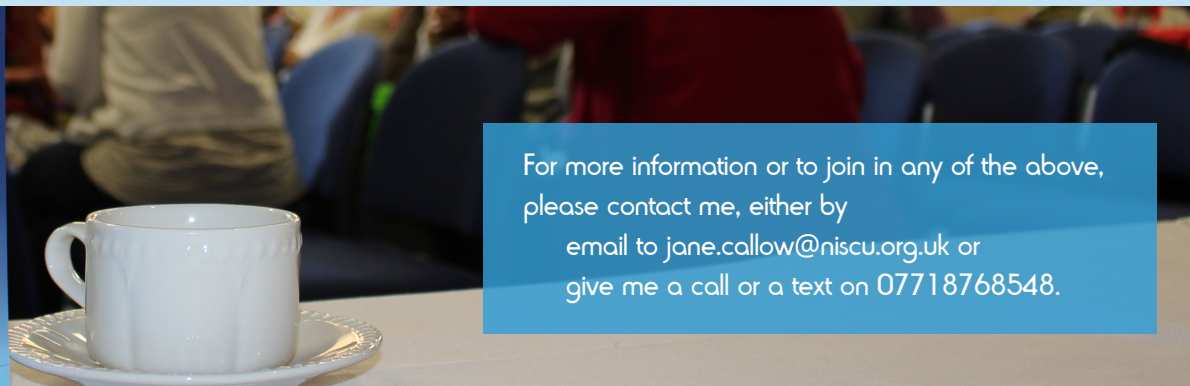
Week of Vision and Prayer

Find out how you can join with us for our week of Vision and Prayer by visiting www.niscu.org.uk/prayer.



niscu
Northern Inter Schools Christian Union

We believe every child and young person has a right to hear about the good news of Jesus, that there is a God who truly cares for them, as written in John 3:16.



For more information or to join in any of the above, please contact me, either by email to jane.callow@niscu.org.uk or give me a call or a text on 07718768548.