

Spring 2026

niscu

www.niscu.org.uk

Listen up

NEWSLETTER FOR THE

 Listening
SERVICE

NO ONE
LISTENS
TO ME





“See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains.”

Have you ever started something that seemed like a really good idea at the time, then wondered why or even regretted it? The Listening Service has always seemed like such a profoundly good idea to me but, whilst

I have never regretted my involvement with it, I have sometimes wondered over the last 4.5 years, *“Lord, what is going on here? Why are things moving so slowly?”*

In James 5:7b we are encouraged to, *“See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains.”* In context, James is referring to the Second Coming of Jesus, but I think the principle applies in other situations. We live in such an “instant” world – pop something in the microwave or “just add boiling water,” and in 2 minutes, your tea is ready; write an email and hit, “send” and it’s in someone’s inbox on the other side of the world in an instant. We are not used to waiting for things to happen. James reminds us that nature doesn’t work in a speedy manner: we need time and patience for the harvest to come.

I can see this with the Listening Service. Progress was so painfully slow in the first couple of years but, with the encouragement and prayers of supporters and friends, the momentum is increasing and the harvest is growing. You can read more about this in the “Extra Fruit” section below.

The journey may be harder than we had imagined, with more ‘potholes and flat tyres’ than we’d anticipated, but we need to remember both James’ encouragement to be patient and Paul’s encouragement to keep going, as we read in

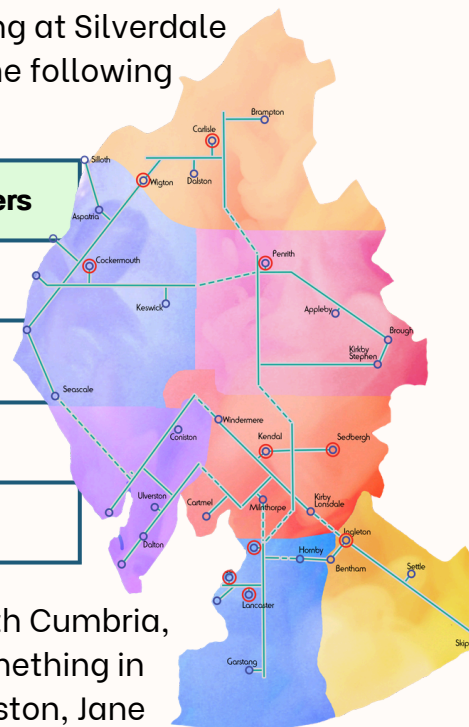
“Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 3:12 – 14

Good news

After the Easter holidays the Listening Service is going live at Silverdale St. John's CE Primary School. One of our Listeners from Scotforth St Paul's has seen the value in the Listening Service and, from 16th April, will generously be listening at Silverdale as well. This means the Listening Service is now operating in the following areas and number of schools:

Area	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools	Listeners
W.Cumbria	3	1	4
S. Lakes	1	1	2
N. Lancs	4	2	11
Totals	8	4	17



We are also on the verge of starting listening in a school in North Cumbria, a secondary school in Kendal and there is potential to start something in a primary school in Craven. Following listening training near Alston, Jane is now liaising with a confederation of local schools in the area, with the hope of getting our freshly trained new listeners in there, effectively 3 new schools in one go!

Primary Sessions

Secondary Sessions

1257 **451**
1708 ...with **232**
 Total Listening sessions... different pupils

Listening sessions since Sept 2025

Since January we have delivered...

2 listening training sessions in Alston
 Cockermouth Day 1- 18th April , with
 Day 2 on July 11th *

Winderemere - Day 2 on 25th April.

Any other training will be advertised.

*This training is being led by 2 of our schools' workers who have trained to be Listening trainers, another area of growth for the Listening Service.

Training sessions

Extra Fruit

As a result of simply going in to schools to just listen some listening teams have found other opportunities opening up. In listening sessions, apart from saying we're a volunteer from a local church and which church we belong to, we do not mention our faith, as we are there as part of the mental health support team. But "God works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform!"

Below are some anonymous encounters churches and individuals have had as a result of being involved with the Listening Service - read on and share the joy!

Extra Fruit Encounters

Towards the end of the Friday night youth club, two students from a nearby secondary school turned up, one of which I 'listen' to. I wasn't there that evening but the team related that they were hesitant to come inside but did have hot chocolate outside. They returned a few weeks later, happy to engage. At the end of the evening we always ask the 'Big Question', that week's question was "What do they like about coming to 'Meet Up'?", one of the students responses was on the lines of feeling safe and people were able to listen to her.

As times change, it seems our communities have become more fragmented with fewer focal points for people to gather as banks, post offices, shops and pubs disappear. This is one reason why schools and churches, and how they relate together, is so important. We've worked with NISCU on providing a Listening service in our local school for nearly four years. The regular and intentional presence of our small team, week by week, has transformed our relationship with the school. The children and the staff - indeed, the whole school - feel that the church values them as important. Our relationship has developed and we have been able help practically in various ways, teaching lessons, both in school and at the church, and running an after-school club. Schools have a huge amount on their plate and are often looking for trusted help and support with all they have to handle. Offering a listening ear is a simple,

I've been listening in a secondary school for a couple of years and the school staff I liaise with know I am a Christian. This term one of them said to me 'extra-curricular provision' had cropped up at a staff meeting and she had said she thought the school needed a Christian Union. The response from other staff members was luke-warm, but she said she would be the staff member and she was sure NISCU would help with the actual running of the club, as NISCU was already involved in the school through the Listening Service. The CU has yet to become a reality and it may be that a Schools' Worker goes in and runs the 'Rooted' course instead. But it is a door that we are looking to walk through - and it has only opened because of the Listening Service being in the school.

but profound, act that expresses the dignity and value of each child. Perhaps this is a way your church can support your school? NISCU have vast experience and would be a good place to start a conversation.

It is more than just listening. It is trust. Demonstrating love. Going in the name of Jesus to every school. Praying for that child in our hearts as we speak to them and during the week. Jesus has the power to change lives. He doesn't need our help but He chooses to use us in His work, for His glory.

I didn't really understand what the Listening Service was at first - you can't pray? You can't talk about Jesus? What was the point I thought? Today, I am now the biggest fan of the Listening Service and am amazed that we, the church, have the privilege of sitting 1:1 with a child; someone's son, daughter, grandson or granddaughter. The school is entrusting them to our care and we have the joy of getting to know them and listening to all that is on their minds. If the church can't serve in this way, then no one will. I first started listening at a primary school after they had a tragedy, so I reached out and simply offered the Listening Service to them if they needed it. After a few terms there I asked if the school would like anything else - I suggested various clubs to them and I now do a weekly lunch club called 'Recharge' where we do a Big Questions or Bible story and a craft. Children feel chosen and special to take part. I have also run the Scripture Union 'Rooted' programme, off the back of the Listening Service, which is a 10-week course, looking at issues such as self-esteem, self-worth, mental health, friendships etc.

Please Pray

Thanks

- For all the listening volunteers, faithfully going into schools to listen each week
- The growth of the Listening Service
- All the “Extra Fruit” mentioned in this newsletter
- The hardworking members of staff who make time to liaise with Jane to establish the Listening Service in their schools.

Requests

- For the momentum to continue and for more people to catch the vision as to what the Listening Service can achieve
- For more volunteers to do the training
- For wisdom as we plan and strategise regarding future training - which includes the development of online training for volunteers beyond NISCU’s current areas
- For the implementation of ‘Listening Schools’ in Carlisle, Alston, Kendal and Craven

WEEK OF VISION & PRAYER



niscu

MAY 4TH - 10TH 2026

You are invited to join with us as we pray for our schools' communities across our areas.

More info -

WWW.NISCU.ORG.UK/PRAYER



You can get involved by:

Get involved

The 1-2-1 Listening Needs You!

1. Becoming a prayer partner and praying for the on-going roll out of the Listening Service (sign up for our 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.

4. By giving financially to the work, either online via the website (Please designate any donations 'Listening Service') or by cheque (payable to NISCU) posted to Jane Callow, 1-2-1 Listening Service, NISCU, 57, Lancaster Road, Carnforth LA5 9LE.

Thank you from all the listening team

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.



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.