

**SAMARITANS**  
Cymru



# Tackling suicide together:

providing a safe space  
in uncertain times

Samaritans Cymru  
Strategic delivery plan 2022–24



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# About this document

The Samaritans Cymru Strategic Delivery Plan 2022–24 should be read alongside the **Samaritans 2022–27 strategy** which set outs the direction of travel for our organisation across all five jurisdictions in which we operate: England, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. The two-year delivery objectives set out in this document are specific to Wales and will be delivered alongside wider UK and Republic of Ireland developments to meet our aim, that fewer people die by suicide.

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# Foreword

We are sharing our strategy in times of continuing uncertainty. We have experienced a pandemic that has affected us in so many ways, and one that has both highlighted and widened inequalities. Anyone, at any time, can find themselves needing emotional support. We face many challenges as individuals and as a society; including climate change, global conflicts, the negative effects of digital and social media and the need for safety online, the increasing cost of living, and the imperative to tackle exclusion and discrimination. The continuing effects of the pandemic are likely to increase the risk factors for poor mental health and suicide. It is therefore so important that we act on all that we know about how to mitigate those risks. Our purpose, to be there for people in times of need and crisis, is now more critical than ever before.

We are very proud of our dedicated volunteers who deliver our service, and who continued this vital work throughout the course of the pandemic. We're at the heart of local communities across Wales through our 10 service locations. We work with schools, workplaces, railways, prisons and hospitals to deliver training, provide support and help people turn their lives around. We are building on our pioneering project in Wales to increase our diversity and inclusivity. We will strive to significantly improve our understanding of the challenges faced by marginalised communities, particularly in relation to risk factors for suicide and self-harm. We will act to become more equitable in our services, making sure that we're responding to people's needs in a way that is relevant and meaningful to them and their circumstances. We will address barriers in accessing support, including improving access to our own services.

We know that the causes of suicide are complex, and in order to prevent it we need many organisations and individuals to work together. We already partner with a wide range of organisations, including the railways, the prison and probation service, and with third sector and public bodies. We will seek further collaborations over the coming years to increase our reach and relevance to those who need our support.

We are best known for providing human connection to those struggling to cope. We also have a key role to play in influencing awareness, policy and practice in wider society. In Wales we have been an active contributor to, and supporter of, Wales' suicide and self-harm prevention strategy *Talk to me 2*. We have also produced reports and recommendations on issues such as self-harm and disadvantage, and we've promoted the importance of compassion in responding to distress. In the coming five years we will strive to adapt, expand and improve our unique 24-hour listening service by phone, online chat, email, letter, face to face, and through our Welsh language service. We'll also grow our campaigning and lobbying work, helping our branches to influence local decision making. We will do more to offer support, tools, resources and services online that help people look after their own emotional health and wellbeing, whilst helping them understand more about suicide and how to support others. We will continue to encourage, promote and celebrate those moments of connection between people that can protect and save lives.

To address the causes of suicide and self-harm we must take more meaningful action to challenge discrimination and injustice, working hand in hand with people affected by both. It's crucial we take steps as a nation to identify and address the social determinants of poor mental health. Suicide is a major public health issue, but is also a major inequality issue.

We've worked closely with our volunteers, staff, supporters and partner organisations, as well as people who have had suicidal thoughts or have been affected by suicide, to shape a strategy that builds on everything we've learned over the years. In Wales, we're building on the strong foundations of a developed national presence, a track record of recognition of our service, our branches and local activity, and of policy influence and research.

We invite you to join us in this next chapter of our journey as we continue to respond to a changing world, and as we innovate to keep up with new demands and opportunities, and as we ensure that support is there for people when they need it most. Our understanding of the vital role of listening, compassion and human connection informs all that we do and will guide us as we meet the challenges ahead.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Stone".

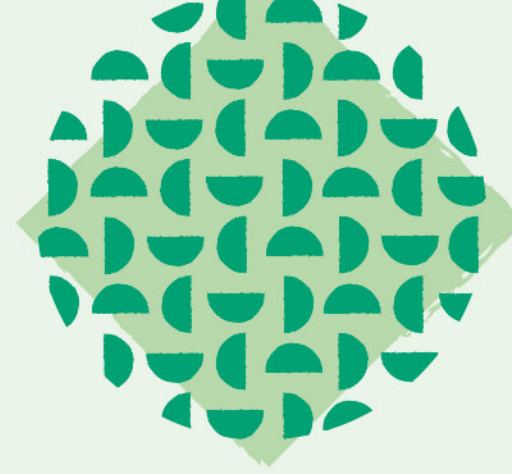
**Sarah Stone**  
Executive Director for Wales



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ana Laing".

**Ana Laing**  
Chair of Samaritans Cymru  
Board and Trustee for Wales

# About Samaritans in Wales



▶ We're always here to listen, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year



▶ We have a Welsh language line, open every day between 7pm and 11pm



▶ We answer a call for help every 3½ minutes in Wales



▶ Volunteers at branches in Wales spend over 40,000 hours answering calls for help each year



▶ We have over 700 incredible Samaritans volunteers across 10 branches in Wales



## Working in partnership

Our partnership work includes:

- **Our work in prisons across the UK and Ireland** – in Wales we work with Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) on suicide prevention through our Listener scheme.
- **Our work with the rail industry** – a national partnership with Network Rail and the wider rail industry including British Transport Police and the train operating companies to reduce suicide on the railways and to support everyone affected.
- **Our work in schools** – we work with schools to support young people through our teaching resources and offer special support if there's a suicide in a school community.

# Our vision is that fewer people die by suicide



## Samaritans Cymru priorities 2022–24

1.

Increase access to our emotional support services through scaling up new service delivery models, innovating and using digital technology to develop new service approaches and consolidating the quality and capacity of existing service models.



2.

Ensure our services are reaching those people and communities who are most in need of support, including through partnerships and collaboration with different organisations, industries and sectors.



3.

Campaign, influence, and advocate at a national, regional and local level, providing a centre of excellence around suicide prevention that is informed by lived experience and robust evidence.



4.

Increase our capacity to become one team of valued, diverse, people, optimising the skills and talents of volunteers and paid staff.



5.

Harness the energy and passion of supporters to campaign, make their voices heard and raise funds to offer better support to those who need it.



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# Our vision, mission and strategic priorities

## Samaritans' vision is that fewer people die by suicide

To achieve this, we believe Samaritans has a crucial role to play in:

- Reducing the risk factors that make some people more likely to take their own lives.
- Reducing the likelihood that people will develop suicidal thoughts.
- Ensuring that people who experience increased risk are supported.
- Making it less likely that people who do experience suicidal thoughts act on them.

## Our mission

We're here every day and night of the year for anyone struggling to cope. We make sure people have somewhere to turn and support when they need it most. We work with communities to let people know we're here for them and we campaign to make suicide prevention a priority.

## Our strategic priorities 2022–27

We've worked closely with people who have contacted Samaritans, been affected by suicide or suicidal thoughts, and those who volunteer and work with us or support us, to identify five major ambitions for our new strategy to improve **Access, Reach, Impact, Capacity and Sustainability**.

Our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion is one of the key principles in our new strategy. It will connect with everything we do at Samaritans, guiding the way we work and behave.

**Our EDI commitment is available on our website.**

# 1. Make sure anyone who needs us can access our support

### Our challenge

We cannot always meet the demand for Samaritans' services and there is a risk that people who are trying to contact us can't get through or get the response they need.

### Our ambition

People will be able to access our support whenever they need it and get through to us in a way that works for them.

We'll work hard to ensure people who seek our support can reach us how and when they need to, by training more volunteers and working innovatively on new ways to connect with us, like online chat, alongside continually reviewing and improving our phone, email and in-person listening services.

### We will:

- Work with branches to promote and support diverse recruitment and retention of volunteers, supporting branches to reach out to their communities and building on the EDI project.
- Increase awareness and understanding of the nature and relevance of Samaritans services to those struggling to cope, and of our relevance to the communities and individuals we serve.
- Support new approaches to volunteer roles and address issues of capacity to meet the demands on our service.
- Promote and increase understanding of our service and our expertise among local, regional and national organisations, enabling more effective collaborations.



# 2. Reach more people to let them know we're here



### Our challenge

We are not yet good enough at reaching people whose circumstances mean they might have a higher risk of suicide, such as those living in deprivation or who are marginalised.

### Our ambition

To be more visible and relevant, particularly to a more diverse range of people and communities, so those who might need us most see us, trust us and know we're here for them.

We'll actively go out into a more diverse range of communities so that the people who need us most see us, trust us and know we're here for them. We will do this together with the most relevant people, organisations and industries, as well as strengthening our existing work within local communities.

### We will:

- Promote a compassionate response to distress, building on and developing the tools we have created.
- Promote our service and the importance of seeking help through campaigns, especially focusing on priority groups and individuals, including those experiencing disadvantage and those who self-harm.
- Complete and implement, and evaluate the outcomes of, the review of our Welsh Language Scheme.
- Support local engagement with regional and local suicide and self-harm prevention fora so that Samaritans has a credible, influential and consistent presence and contribution.
- Increase the reach of Samaritans into communities which need us most.
- Support the prison and railway partnerships.
- Work with partners to mitigate risks at sites of concern.
- Support local and regional collaborations, where they will assist the people we support.
- Increase the accessibility of our emotional distress resources and links to wider sources of help, including through resource held on our website.

# 3. Make our voice heard at a national, regional and local level for maximum impact

## Our challenge

As decisions are increasingly taken at a local and regional level which impact on suicide prevention, we lack the resources and systems to make effective change at national, regional and local levels.

## Our ambition

To make suicide prevention a priority nationally, regionally and locally for governments, public services and businesses, so that fewer people die by suicide.

We'll push harder to make suicide prevention a priority nationally, regionally and locally across the UK and Republic of Ireland, working collaboratively to make changes that saves lives. We will listen to people who have been affected by suicide or suicidal thoughts and identify key areas that need more research, in order to help us make the greatest change.

## We will:

- Play a lead role in the implementation of Wales' suicide and self-harm prevention strategy, *Talk to me 2*, and in the development of its successor.
- Support the Cross-Party Group on Suicide Prevention in the Welsh Parliament.
- Influence policy and practice relating to suicide prevention in Wales proactively through engagement with politicians, policy makers and practitioners, reports, roundtables, surveys, briefings and consultation responses.
- Influence action on priority issues such as self-harm, at risk groups, poverty mitigation, young people and crisis response.
- Increase understanding of suicide prevention through the promotion of our media guidelines, media work, use of Samaritans service insights and increasing use of the voices of lived experience.
- Seek collaboration with other organisations where this will add value to our work.

# 4. Increase our capacity to become one team of valued, diverse, skilled people



### Our challenge

Samaritans' impact is limited by a lack of diverse representation in our people, by our capacity issues and the pressure some roles are under, and by our existing organisational structure.

### Our ambition

To meet the demand for our services by recruiting more people, giving them the best support so they stay with us longer and work effectively together as one Samaritans team.

We'll strive to become more flexible and supportive so that a wider range of people can fit volunteering into their lives and so we fully reflect the communities we serve. We will support personal development, which will encourage and inspire volunteers and staff to commit to us for as long as possible.

### We will:

- Ensure the Samaritans Wales staff and Board Committee have the necessary breadth of expertise and organisational capability to deliver on the strategy.
- Support and promote understanding of all the activities of Samaritans in Wales, sharing learning and supporting effective communication.
- Support the wider organisational work to prioritise equity, diversity and inclusion, building on the work of the EDI pilot with branches in Wales.
- Collaborate with colleagues, supporting the identification and carrying out of key cross-jurisdiction work.

# 5. Build meaningful relationships with our supporters to ensure our sustainability

### Our challenge

To remain fit for the future, Samaritans needs more long-term supporters who will be part of the journey with us.

### Our ambition

To ensure our long-term sustainability by securing the support needed to keep us strong and taking steps to ensure our activities and organisation are fit for the future.

We'll create ways for the people and organisations who support us to add their energy and experience to our work so that together we can be there for those who need us for years to come.

We will take a phased approach to working on the above priorities, over five years, meaning that not everything will happen at once. As this is a five-year strategy, our priorities will remain the same, but we will develop more detailed plans on how we will deliver them during year one, as we work to increase capacity and capability, making sure we have a solid base from which to grow.

### We will:

- Further develop and implement the fundraising strategy for Wales.
- Work with colleagues to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of fundraising campaigns for Wales.
- Demonstrate the effectiveness of the work of Samaritans in Wales to our supporters and campaigners, including through the launch of an impact report.
- Develop and support new ways of supporters making their voices heard through our campaigns, including the voices of those with lived experience.

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# Join us

## In the next hour, Samaritans will respond to almost 400 calls for help.

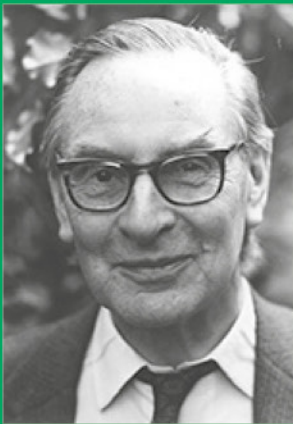
Behind the scenes, we will be working all hours to help people feel more hopeful about the future. We will strive to be seen and trusted by anyone who needs support, pushing for change to prevent suicide and ensuring that we remain fit for the future and that in five years' time we can answer each and every person who is in need of support in the way that is most beneficial for them.

Of course, none of these plans can be realised unless individuals and organisations continue to choose to support us, whether through campaigning, sharing their experiences or volunteering, as well as fundraising or donating, and we are so thankful to everyone who does, even during the most difficult times.

### **We need your help. These are some of the ways you can join us to make sure fewer lives are lost to suicide:**

- Donate now and help us be there for someone struggling to cope.
- Sign up for an event and raise money to help us answer the next call for help.
- Leave a gift in your Will to help us in the future.
- Find out about volunteering or working for Samaritans, including helping to run our Welsh Language helpline.
- Share your personal experience of reaching crisis point or losing someone to suicide, to help inform our work in Wales.
- Help us create change in Wales, by becoming a Samaritans campaigner.

# SAMARITANS Cymru



“

There are in this world, in every country, people who seem to be 'ordinary', but who turn out to be extraordinary. They give their total attention. They listen and listen and listen, without interrupting. They do not preach. They have nothing to sell. We call them Samaritans.

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**Chad Varah**  
Founder of Samaritans

[samaritans.org](http://samaritans.org)

**Samaritans Cymru**

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