

Sevenoaks Samaritans Newsletter

October to December 2023

Being there for callers

(Leader Ops Rm 1) [sign up]
Hours Of Need (Ops Room 1 GF) [sign up] [sign up] [sign up]
(Leader Ops Rm 2 and Admin Rm) [sign up]
Hours Of Need (E-mail Shift) [sign up] [sign up]

Illustration shows a section of our rota, ready for volunteers to sign up to shifts

New research from central Samaritans has shown us the times of day and night where there's a high need for volunteers. To help meet this need, in the last three months we've introduced new sessions at these times, which we're calling the Hours of Need shifts. This helps our listening volunteers decide where they can make their time – which is so valuable – count most. We've also given volunteers new, shorter shifts and sessions at times to suit them.

Debrief encounter

To support our listeners, we created training notes on how to debrief effectively after a shift – we don't run a session if we don't have a leader supporting listeners on safeguarding and emergency issues, and with difficult calls and technical problems. At the end of each shift leaders 'debrief' listeners – this means our volunteers can talk over any problems or issues they've encountered so they can go home without the emotion from the calls coming with them.

Answering the inbox

We also answer emails at Sevenoaks Samaritans, and we've introduced new, supported shifts where we try to answer as many as possible, with an email leader in the room to guide listeners on the best way to respond to callers.

Listening round the clock

We ran a festive 24/7 shift, where some 50 listeners, shift leaders, service directors and rota coordinators ensured we could listen round the clock for an entire weekend day (and night).

It was just before Christmas, so each of the shifts coming on treated the shift coming off to some Christmas bakes and nibbles. And of course, we had to wear Christmas hats, at least for the photos!



Pic shows (clockwise from top left) volunteers Lorraine, Judy, Jane, Mike, Rosalind, Victoria and Vicki very early on Sunday morning!

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SAMARITANS

Sevenoaks

Sevenoaks Samaritans is part of Samaritans, a charity registered in England & Wales (219432) and in Scotland (SC040604)

What we've achieved

In the last three months we:

- continued our food bank outreach programme with visits to Edenbridge and Sevenoaks Loaves and Fishes
- ran an interactive training session for around 30 volunteers where we asked attendees to role play the relationship between listener and caller
- had a lively stall at Sevenoaks Station during the town's Christmas lights switch on, serenaded by a jazz band led by one of our own listening volunteers
- set up our stall at Bligh's Christmas Market to help recruit new volunteers
- visited Sevenoaks Fire Station to explore ways of working together (*see pic, below*)
- and attended the Kent and Medway Suicide and Self Harm Prevention conference, raising our profile and renewing our commitment to the network.



Saving energy

We recently put in a new boiler, loft insulation and other improvements at our premises at 105, St John's Hill, which has improved our Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating from D to C. The work makes our building more efficient and comfortable for volunteers – and saves money.

Fundraising news

Huge thanks to all our supporters who've helped us meet our annual fundraising target. It takes more than £36K to deliver our service every year, which includes renting and maintaining our premises and IT and recruiting and training new volunteers.

Special thanks to **Sevenoaks Round Table, Sevenoaks Chamber of Commerce, Sevenoaks District Council, Sevenoaks Town Council, Dunton Green Parish Council, Halls Fresh Produce UK, West Kent Quakers** and **St Mary's Church, Kippington**, which all gave us generous donations, and to **The Listening Room** music agency, which put on the wonderful Jazzy Christmas Concert at Walthamstow Hall School with proceeds to Sevenoaks Samaritans.

Stories of hope

Central Samaritans has released its 22/23 Impact Report, 'Bringing Hope in Difficult Times':

https://media.samaritans.org/documents/SamaritansImpactReport2022_23_WEB.pdf

The report is designed to help people understand the charity's purposes and share progress and key achievements (including nearly one million hours spent answering calls for help in 2022-2023).

The charity also released a series of Stories of Hope, about survival, moving on from suicide and the difference the charity has made to people's lives, part of the winter publicity campaign Break the Silence:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gnvmo9lxlVE>

<https://www.samaritans.org/about-samaritans/stories-of-hope/>

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