

SAMARITANS *in Scotland*

Recommendations for the future

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS October 2008

Overview of what we have learned

This is the first evaluation of the work of Samaritans in Scotland to measure the impact of investing in paid staff and additional activity co-ordinated at a national level in Scotland, and some of our learning points have been around the challenges in carrying out such an evaluation. With a range of diverse stakeholders and views, new relationships to negotiate and the lack of data because of the fact that this was a completely new development, we have identified clear gaps in how we monitor and measure success.

We have also learned that communication within our organisation is a key area for us to address in order to ensure we give as many volunteers in Scotland as possible the opportunity to be involved in what we do, and, importantly to empower them to contribute to the key decisions that will be made as we move forward with the next part of the Scottish Strategy.

Finally, we have seen a clear need to ensure that we balance what we do with external partners and agencies to promote our work and raise awareness and how we ensure that branches have the interest and capacity to support this work which does not always present an obvious or immediate benefit to volunteers or branches.

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the activity level recommendations included in this report there are also a number of things we will need to focus on strategically as we move forward.

Measurement

- There is a need to more strictly associate measurable outcomes with all of our strategic objectives and this should be an integral part of the next Scottish strategy
- All work should be evaluated and findings disseminated for organisation wide learning. All organisation wide work should take into account differing impact within nations. The Scottish staff team is responsible for ensuring this happens.

Resources and sustainability

- We need to review how staff time is spent and ensure that staff act to enable and empower volunteers rather than seeking to directly achieve outcomes themselves.
- We need to review the staff and volunteer infrastructure in Scotland so that we can ensure that our infrastructure will allow us to achieve our new strategy
- We need to invest in income generation in Scotland so we can establish sustainability and then move towards growth

SAMARITANS *in Scotland*

Recommendations for the future

Strategy and planning

- The new Scottish strategy needs to be closely aligned with the organisational strategy. In order to do this the new strategy should be published in March 09 to tie in with the timing of the new organisational strategy.
- Planning for the next phase must more tightly focus work on key priority areas. For example, this means that rather than increasing general awareness we need to establish more focussed outcomes.
- Opportunistic activity should only be undertaken where there is a clear and substantial contribution to the strategic outcomes and this has been agreed by the POG.

OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Communications

1. We retain the professional PR support for Scotland which is a cost effective way of maintaining the Scottish communications function which has enabled us to increase significantly our activity and to monitor that activity
2. We pursue a free media space strategy in Scotland and lead on this from the Scottish office.
3. We continue to focus on 4 key campaigns to target our activity and to link effectively with UK/ROI campaigns
4. We consider ways of raising awareness of services other than the helpline
5. We maintain the strong partnership with the RMO and the volunteers in Scotland to link national and local activity effectively and provide support to the Region
6. We find new ways of communicating national plans to volunteers and work harder with the RMO to ensure that branches feel informed and part of the national strategy
7. We continue to identify events we should attend, but that we make sure such activity is focussed on priority areas/issues.

Public Affairs

1. We should have a systematic approach to public affairs activity which would help us to plan, time and target activity more effectively.
2. We review how we are presenting our key messages and devise a method to contact external partners to address any misperceptions
3. We engage with branches at local level, and we consult with them to establish local opportunities and support needs and strive for consistency in our messages

SAMARITANS *in Scotland*

Recommendations for the future

4. We develop more tangible and clear outcomes from this activity and ensure our plan links activity to these outcomes, with a proactive approach to identifying more opportunities for joint working
5. We are more systematic in Scotland with monitoring parliamentary and other activity with national and local elected members for Scotland
6. We explore opportunities to be members of parliamentary groups and committees.

External Relations

1. We put in place effective monitoring and evaluation for the next phase of activity
2. We more tightly focus our external relations work on key objectives which support the strategic outcomes of the charity
3. We identify ways of working more effectively with branches to inform them of national activity and to support local work.
4. We identify appropriate budgets for events, venues and materials
5. We consider additional staffing to support identifying opportunities and following up contacts.

Service Development and Volunteer Support

1. We review these results with POG and the Chairmen to establish the future focus of volunteer support and how we find those branches who need and would benefit from support
2. We review these results with the Regional Rep to establish if there are any region-wide projects or areas of work which would benefit from staff co-ordination
3. We follow up the request for support from the Regional Training Officer
4. We continue to develop our contacts in Scotland to benefit our UK colleagues and ensure we are maximising the potential for the organisation
5. The e-bulletin should be maintained and readership extended to encourage better involvement of volunteers in the work of the Region

Organisational Change

1. POG continues to evolve as the volunteer-led decision-making body for our work in Scotland, implementing any changes brought about by the decisions of the Nations' Group
2. Staff continue to strengthen and develop their roles in the key areas of communications, public affairs and volunteer support for Scotland in partnership with GO colleagues to ensure appropriate services for Scotland

SAMARITANS *in Scotland*

Recommendations for the future

3. Staff work harder to identify opportunities to inform colleagues in GO about their roles – through Department and staff meetings, newsletters and attending other team meetings e.g. to bring about greater integration of Scottish work into the mainstream of Samaritans work
4. Staff consider volunteer meetings at which to profile our work such as Council, York and presenting information to relevant sub-committees or working groups
5. The SDM works with other staff to discuss the information available to the public and to volunteers about our work in Scotland
6. Until organisational change brings a different reporting structure, the SDM and Development and Evaluation Team Manager ensure that Scottish work and activity is reported on effectively through the Director to the Directorate and the Trustees

SAMARITANS *in Scotland*

Recommendations for the future

EVALUATION OVERVIEW

AIMS	OUTCOMES	OUTPUTS
<p>External relationships</p>	<p>We will have:</p> <p><i>Communications</i> Communicated our messages to the public Communicated our messages to external bodies Developed links with the media Run national and local Campaigns Created a Scottish communications function</p> <p><i>Public Affairs</i> Have developed relationships with others Raised the profile and influence of Samaritans in Scotland</p>	<p>Publicity Campaigns;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • value of this coverage estimated to be in the region of £1.1m (for an investment of £40,000) <p>Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exceeded target of 4 major events (29 in 3 years) • reached over 8,000 delegates <p>Materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • posters distributed to 1000 building sites <p>Work with media – including developing media volunteers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no media trained volunteers <p>Web information for Scotland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dedicated pages produced which receive 35 hits per day <p>Linking with elected representatives at national and local level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 parliamentary events • 2 parliamentary motions <p>Network membership / joint working</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • membership of 11 advisory groups/networks • working relationships developed with 19 national agencies <p>Policy Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • involved in three government consultations <p>research and information dissemination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • membership and participation in SIREN

SAMARITANS *in Scotland*

Recommendations for the future

AIMS	OUTCOMES	OUTPUTS
<p>Internal Relationships</p>	<p>We will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed local partnerships Developed local outreach work Rolled out UK/ROI developments in Scotland Developed services in health settings Become more available to people in rural areas – particularly in areas where there is no local branch Developed more effective work with young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Branch outreach activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relationships with 4 GP practices developed Local publicity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 roadshows in rural areas and information day in Ayrshire UK developments promoted in Scotland <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 copies of DEAL distributed via events and meetings Mapping, development planning, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearly 300 volunteers involved and an action plan produced for every branch Training events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to Regional Training team for 3 events Regional initiatives and events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEAL pilot group; Emergency Planning Working Group Internal communication processes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-Bulleting produced monthly Scottish base <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established Organisational structures changed and developed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and Operations Group forms cornerstone of volunteer-led decision-making for Scotland