

Samaritans Lived Experience Panel

‘You said, we listened’

Thank you for being a member of Samaritans Lived Experience Panel. Your insight, knowledge and experience are already helping to shape the work we do.

In May we launched the Lived Experience Panel, increasing the opportunities for people with personal experience of suicide, self-harm, or Samaritans’ service use to have their voices heard.

We are thrilled that 339 people have joined the panel and would like to thank each and every one of you for your contribution and time so far. We recognise that drawing on your own personal experiences may be difficult at times, but your insight and knowledge is invaluable.

This newsletter shares findings from the surveys so far and how your contribution has helped shape and inform Samaritans’ work.

Key facts about Samaritans Lived Experience Panel:

- **339** people have joined the panel.
- **Six** surveys have been distributed to the panel so far.
- **72%** of panel members are women, **27%** men and **1%** non-binary.

Where do panel members live?

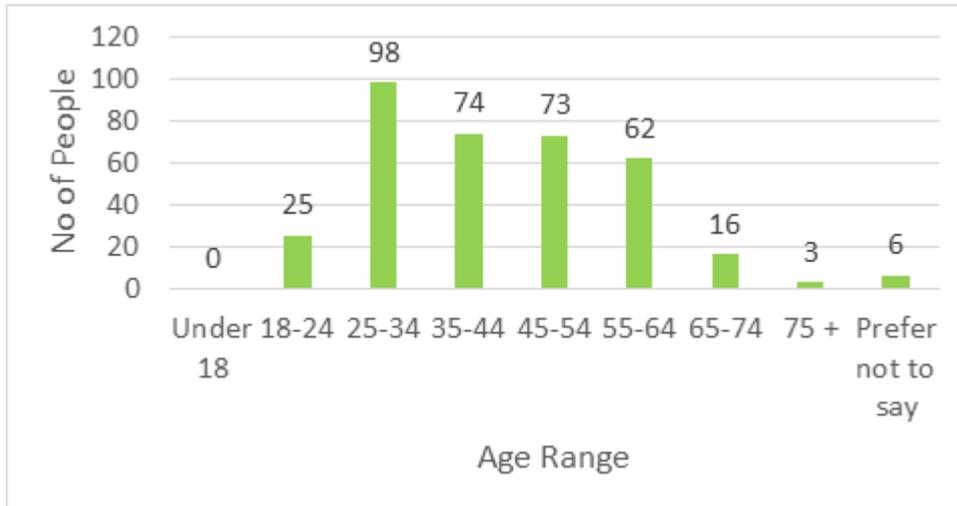
There are 339 panel members on the Samaritans Lived Experience Panel.

- 246 in England
- 35 in Scotland
- 29 in Wales
- 12 in Republic of Ireland
- 5 in Northern Ireland.

Remember: *people can join the panel at any time. If you know someone who might be interested in joining, they can sign up [here](#).*

What’s the age of panel members?

Adults of all ages can join the panel. Almost a hundred of our members are aged 25-34 – the most common age group.



In our first ever survey, we asked you....

How easy was it to join Samaritans Lived Experience Panel?

48% of you said it was very easy to join, but **8%** said it was moderate and **2%** said it was very hard to join the panel.

Remember: you can always contact us at myexperience@samaritans.org to provide feedback or for assistance with the panel.

Which areas of Samaritans work are you interested in?

93% of panel members stated they were interested in research, **90%** are interested in supporting existing Samaritans services and **89%** of you are interested in new Samaritans services.

Remember: Samaritans Lived Experience Panel is just one way you can be involved in our work, we also advertise opportunities for people to work alongside us [here](#) or in the fortnightly emails - so keep an eye on your inbox.

Your contributions have helped to shape and inform Samaritans' work in several ways.

Small Talk Saves Lives Campaign

In July, we asked you about the posters for Samaritans' **Small Talk Saves Lives** campaign. These three were your favourites:



Following your feedback, [we launched the campaign this week](#). Take a look at the full campaign materials – including tips on how to start a conversation and real-life stories demonstrating the positive impact a little small talk can have on somebody's life.

Redesigning our email service

In June, we asked for your help to **redesign Samaritans' email service**. Simon, the project lead told us why he sought insights from Lived Experience Panel members:

“it's very important for us to be able to hear from a diverse group of people with lived experience so that we can make sure the variety of needs and perspectives are considered in the design. Without that input, it's very difficult to understand the impact of different design decisions. “

The findings from this survey will help the team design prototypes for a new email service. These will be tested with current service users, volunteers providing support, and other teams within Samaritans. Ultimately, this will make sure any future changes to the email service have the needs of people with lived experience at the heart of them.

Informing our strategy development

We also asked for your input into the **development of the new Samaritans strategy**. You were asked for your thoughts about Samaritans as an organisation, and who we should be here for. The two groups that panel members most strongly felt Samaritans should support were:

- **61%** of panel members strongly agreed that we should be there for people who are feeling suicidal.
- **47%** agreed that Samaritans should support people who are in distress or crisis.

You were also asked about where you think Samaritans should focus their attention for the upcoming strategy. Panel members said the two most important areas were:

- **45%** of panel members said Samaritans should focus on influencing national governments and public bodies on suicide prevention policy.
- **43%** of panel members want Samaritans to focus on providing guidance to the media on responsible reporting and portrayal of suicide, including promoting information about suicide prevention.

The findings from this survey have been presented to **Samaritans' Board of Trustees** and will inform decisions about the next Samaritans strategy. If you would like to stay involved in developing our new strategy, soon you will be able to apply to join the Strategy Development Team's **Lived Experience Advisory Group**. Keep an eye on your inbox or the '[Lived Experience at Samaritans](#)' page for further information.

Thank you again for joining Samaritans Lived Experience Panel and taking the time to share your views. We will continue to send surveys or polls every fortnight and a newsletter every three months to show how your input is supporting Samaritans' work.

If you have any questions, please contact us at myexperience@samaritans.org