

# 'You said, we listened'

## November 2021

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Samaritans Lived Experience Panel launched 6 months ago, and this is our second quarterly newsletter!

Firstly, we want to say a huge **thank you** for your input and support. We know that drawing on your personal experiences can be difficult at times, but your knowledge and insight is invaluable and really makes a difference.

The aim of the panel is to create the space for people with personal experience of suicide, self-harm, or Samaritans' service-use to have their voices heard, and most importantly, influence the work that we do.

Within this newsletter, we share some of the key findings from panel surveys over the last 3 months, and how your contribution has helped shape Samaritans' work.

### Key Facts about the Panel:

- The panel launched in May 2021
- There are currently 357 members
  - 266 from England
  - 42 from Scotland
  - 24 from Wales
  - 17 from the Republic of Ireland
  - 6 from Northern Ireland
  - 2 from the Channel Islands / Isle of Man
- In the last quarter (August to October), we sent out 4 surveys, 1 poll, and 1 other newsletter

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

### Online Harms Safety Bill Survey:

We asked for your views and insights related to the UK Government's proposals for the new [Online Harms Safety Bill](#).

- 30% of panel members who responded to the survey were aware of the proposed Bill
- 70% thought that online websites which allow people to post their own content can be helpful for people who experience self-harm or suicidal feelings or behaviours
- 74% said that online spaces (such as social media sites and forums) should have helpline numbers or signposting related to suicide or mental health support
- 67% suggested that moderators on online websites should have training in Mental Health Awareness

Lydia, our Online Harms programme lead, shared how important your input was when informing Samaritans' response to the Government's proposal:

*'Hearing the voices of people with lived experience has been invaluable to our online harms work. Through the panel survey, you have helped inform our policy position and our asks to the government about what changes are needed to make the internet a safer space.'*

### Practitioner Guidance Survey:

Alongside the Online Harms Safety Bill survey, we also asked for your input to develop guidance for practitioners (e.g. GPs, Nurses, Mental Health Practitioners, or Social Workers). This will help them to have supportive conversations with

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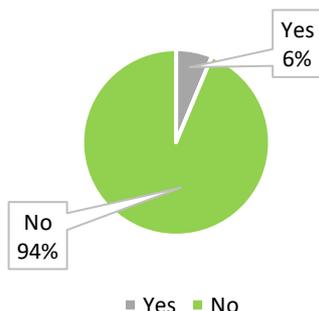
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patients about how they use the internet to seek support for self-harm and suicidal feelings.

Most respondents to the survey said that a practitioner had never talked to them about their use of the internet in relation to suicide or self-harm.

Number of respondents who have been asked by a practitioner about their use of the internet in relation to suicide or self-harm:



69% of respondents felt that practitioners had misconceptions or gaps in their knowledge about how people might use the internet in relation to self-harm and suicide.

We asked what practitioners might do to support individuals who might be viewing harmful content online. Some common suggestions were:

- Actively **listen** and be **non-judgemental**
- Have **knowledge** and **training** to be able to **signpost** people to safe spaces
- Offer or provide **guidance** about alternative **copng strategies**.

Lydia, the Project Lead said:

*'You've helped us to shape our guidelines for practitioners on how they can best support individuals who may be using the internet to seek help. We were really grateful for the great tips that you suggested and your insights on the barriers to*

*talking to practitioners has really helped us to provide more tailored training that is more sensitive to these issues.'*

## Samaritans Lived Experience Panel 3-month Survey:

Keen to hear your thoughts about being a member of the panel, we sent a survey asking for your feedback, what you've enjoyed doing (or not), and input about language and panel membership.

- The survey that panel members most enjoyed responding to was the '**Small Talks Saves Lives Campaign**' survey
- **42%** of panel members suggested that the term '**lived experience**' was more inclusive than the term '**living experience**' as it included those with past and current experiences
- **4 out of 5 panel members** stated that they had had a positive experience being a member of Samaritans Lived Experience Panel

For those that didn't have such a positive experience, we received some great feedback about changes that could be made - for example:

- For some people, some survey topics could be triggering. We made some changes such as; all of our surveys and survey questions are voluntary and we now include detailed trigger warnings for questions that have the potential to be upsetting or ask for your detailed experiences.
- Surveys could be sent more frequently e.g., weekly rather than fortnightly. It's great to know people would appreciate more opportunities, but we're also conscious we don't want to overload people. So, we're

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currently looking into how this could be done carefully.

## Lived Experience Opportunities:

Since August, we've advertised several opportunities for people with lived experience to work alongside us on Samaritans' projects in either paid roles, or to take part in research.

### Paid roles advertised:

- **Policy, Partnerships and Research Committee member:** an opportunity to be on one of our key governance committees to input into Samaritans public policy positions, research activities, and strategic partnerships
- **Samaritans' Strategy Lived Experience Advisory Group member:** an opportunity to be part of an advisory group to help shape Samaritans new five-year strategy

### Research Opportunities:

**These opportunities are still open if you want to take part!**

- **Frequent Callers Research** – we want to understand more about the needs of people who use our helpline quite frequently. To [find out more or to take part](#) in please email [myexperience@samaritans.org](mailto:myexperience@samaritans.org) for further information.
- **Research about posting online content about suicide or self-harm** – we want to understand more about your experiences seeing or posting content online. To [find out more or to take part](#) in this survey please [click here](#).

**Remember:** keep an eye on your inbox or visit ['Lived Experience at Samaritans'](#) to find out more.

Thank you again for being part of Samaritans' Lived Experience Panel. We really appreciate the time and effort it takes to share your experiences and thoughts with us. We will continue to send surveys or polls every fortnight and a newsletter to show how your input is supporting Samaritans' work.

In the meantime, if you would like to get in touch or have any feedback, please contact us at [myexperience@samaritans.org](mailto:myexperience@samaritans.org).

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