



Together  
we can make  
change that  
saves lives

Samaritans Impact  
Report 2017/18



# At a glance

SOMEONE  
DIES BY  
SUICIDE  
EVERY 90 MINUTES

WE RESPOND TO A  
CALL FOR HELP  
EVERY 6 SECONDS

OUR VOLUNTEERS  
SPENT OVER  
**1 MILLION**  
HOURS  
RESPONDING  
TO CALLS  
FOR HELP

 Samaritans branches  
(map not showing  
Festival branch or  
Correspondence branch)

WE HAVE  
**201**  
BRANCHES



IT'S  
FREE TO  
CALL US ON  
**116 123**

WE ARE OPEN  
**24** HOURS  
A DAY  
**365** DAYS  
A YEAR  
WE REACHED OVER  
**HALF A MILLION**  
PEOPLE THROUGH OUR  
WORK IN COMMUNITIES

WE RESPONDED TO  
**5.4** MILLION  
CALLS  
FOR HELP\*

THERE ARE MORE THAN  
**20,000**  
SAMARITANS  
VOLUNTEERS

THERE ARE AROUND  
**1,700**  
TRAINED  
LISTENERS  
ACROSS **141**  
PRISONS

\*A 'call for help' is any contact made to Samaritans for support, whether by phone, text, email, letter, face to face in branch, in prisons or through our outreach work. This figure is based on the 2017 calendar year. A 'caller' is anyone who has accessed our service, whether by phone or by any other means.



# Samaritans Impact Report

2017/18

## Contents

- 4** Welcome from the Chair and CEO
- 6** We are Samaritans
- 8** Our strategy
- 10** Service & access
- 14** Influence & evidence
- 18** People, brand & income
- 20** Your support adds up to change lives
- 22** Helping us be there



# Welcome from the Chair and CEO

Samaritans' vision is that fewer people die by suicide. It remains the biggest killer of young people and men under 50. Across the UK and Ireland, 6,364 people took their own lives in 2016.

The causes are complex, but we are passionate in our belief that suicide is not inevitable, it is preventable. And this year we've reached more people than ever before in our work to help people who are struggling to cope.

In 2017 Samaritans volunteers spent a staggering one million hours responding to calls for help.

Thanks to these 20,000 extraordinary people giving their time and skills across 201 branches, we answer a call for help every six seconds – that's more than five million times throughout the year.

But our work also spreads beyond our branches and into local communities across the UK and Ireland. This year we were there for more than half a million people in many different locations, often at times when they were in desperate need of support. This included helping people affected by the devastating terrorist attacks at Manchester Arena and London's Borough Market, and after the horrific fire at Grenfell Tower.

We are proud of our partnership with the rail industry which continues to help prevent suicides on the rail network. More than 1,700 life-saving interventions were reported this year, and our Small Talk Saves Lives campaign gave more people the confidence to approach someone in need of help. This is so important because the simple act of striking up a conversation may interrupt a person's suicidal thoughts and be the first step towards them seeking help.

We're also committed to helping people avoid the emotional crises that can lead to suicide. In this report you'll read about our expanding programme of work supporting children and adults to build emotional resilience and know when to ask for help.

Finally, we've been working hard to use our expertise to make changes that save lives. Once again this year our voice has been heard at the 'top tables' of local and national policy-making as decisions are made with the potential to prevent suicide.

Suicide is everyone's business, so thank you to everyone for everything you do to make our vital work possible.



*Ruth Sutherland*

Ruth Sutherland  
CEO



*Jenni McCartney*

Jenni McCartney  
Chair

“

Even though I listen a lot in my job, I think my Samaritans training has made me a better listener. Samaritans has helped me realise that everyone has a story to tell and listening to them is a real privilege.

CLaire, SAMARITANS VOLUNTEER

”



# We are Samaritans

Whatever you're facing, a Samaritan will face it with you.

Today, our unique 24 hour listening service will answer almost 15,000 calls for help.

We are there for anyone who's struggling to cope, who needs someone to listen without judgement or pressure.

Samaritans is not only for the moment of crisis, we're a charity taking action to prevent the crisis. We give people ways to cope and the skills to be there for others. And we encourage, promote and celebrate those moments of connection between people that can protect and even save lives.

Beyond our branches, we offer listening and support to communities in times of need. In prisons, schools, hospitals and on the rail network, Samaritans will be working with people who are going through a difficult time and training others to do the same.

Every 90 minutes someone in the UK or Ireland dies by suicide. Tragically, suicide remains the biggest killer of men under the age of 50 and young people aged 20 to 34, and research shows that those living in more deprived areas are at increased risk.

That's why, today and every day, Samaritans will work tirelessly to reach more people and to push for changes in government policy that can save lives.

**Together, we can achieve our vision that fewer people die by suicide.**

Throughout my thirty-five years as a Samaritan, I have often been genuinely surprised how a listening ear and a few caring words can calm anxiety and help someone find hope.

DAVID, SAMARITANS VOLUNTEER



# Our strategy

We launched our strategy, *Working together to reduce suicide*, in 2015. It states our vision of fewer people dying by suicide and describes how we will realise it by doing even more in four priority areas:

## → Service

We will improve the quality and consistency of our service

## → Access

We will improve access to Samaritans' services

## → Influence

We will have stronger and more effective external influence and connections with partners

## → Evidence

We will improve collection and application of evidence

In order to deliver these priorities, we are working to make a step change in three areas:

- Volunteering
- Learning and development
- Digital technology

Underpinning all of this work are our **people**, our **brand** and the **income** we need to raise to be sustainable, as well as our shared values, which shape everything we do.

# Our values

## Listening

Exploring feelings alleviates distress and helps people to reach a better understanding of their situation and the options open to them.

## Confidentiality

If people feel safe, they are more likely to be open about their feelings.

## Non-judgemental

We want people to be able to talk to us without fear of prejudice or rejection.

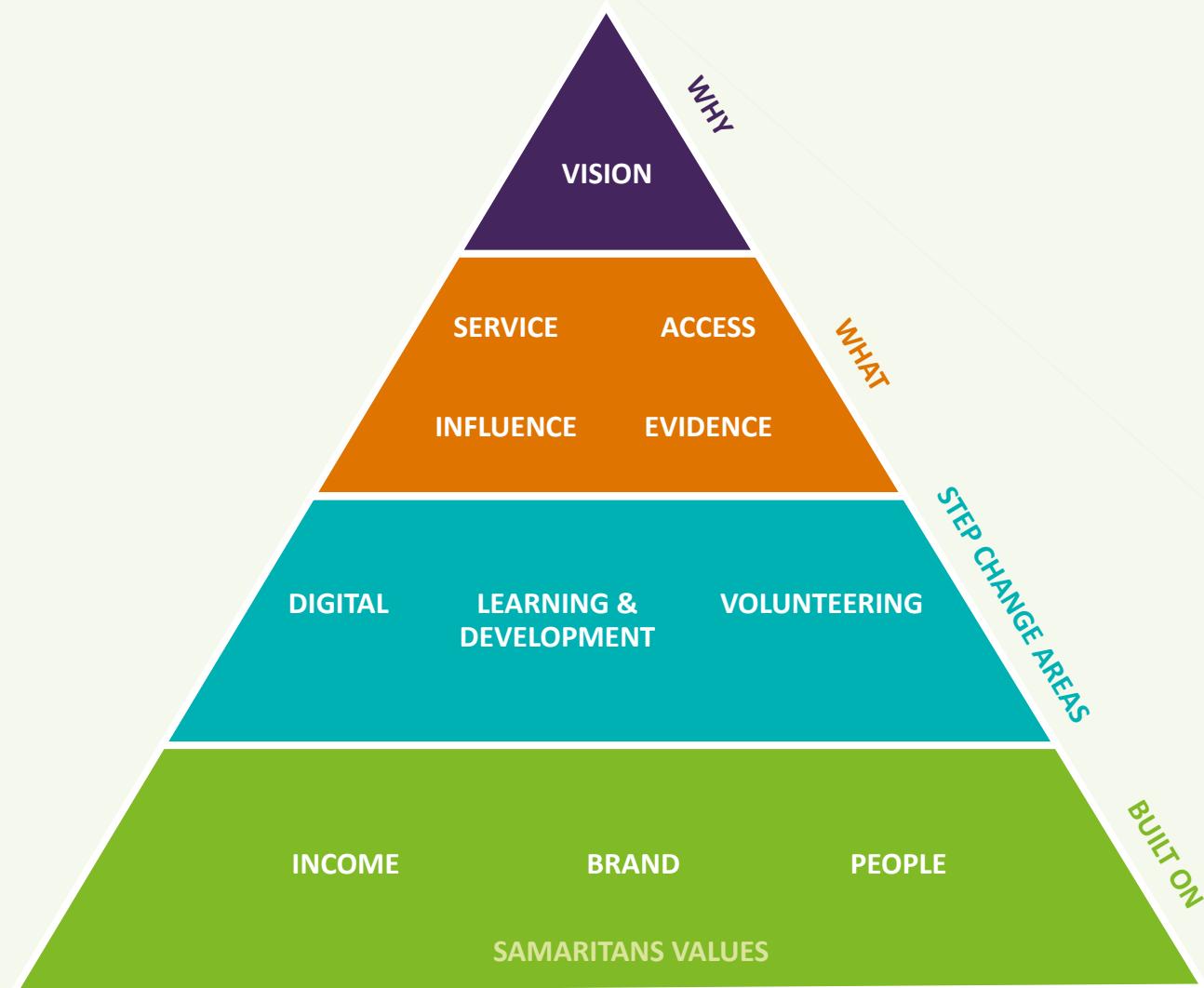
## People making their own decisions wherever possible

We believe that people have the right to find their own solution and that telling people what to do takes responsibility away from them.

## Human contact

Giving people time, undivided attention and empathy meets a fundamental emotional need and reduces distress and despair.

# Working towards our vision



## Service & access

# Whatever's going on in your life, a Samaritan will face it with you

### Service

We're working to provide the best service possible to every caller. That means having the right people, with the right skills, in the right roles, and supporting our teams to maintain the standards our callers deserve.

### Access

We want to make sure that anyone who needs us can reach us.

That means all our helpline services are free, and we embrace technology so callers can get in touch in a way that suits them. Beyond our 201 branches, we strive to provide a human presence in the places and at the times that we can help the most.

## More than half a million people reached by our work in local communities

### What did we do this year?

#### There for people when it matters

This year we responded to 5.4 million calls for help.

That means that every six seconds we were there for someone struggling to cope. These calls for help reached us via phone, email, SMS, letter, in person and through our prison Listener scheme. This year, we expanded our Welsh language helpline, which is now available 49 hours a week.

We are there for people no matter what challenges they are facing. Our callers' main concerns this year included isolation and loneliness, family, mental and physical health, and relationship problems.

#### Where people need us most

Samaritans' work spreads beyond our branches, with volunteers working in many different places where people may be struggling to cope. This year, we were on the ground to help the communities affected by the terrorist attacks at Manchester Arena and London's Borough Market, and after the fire at Grenfell Tower.

## Samaritans volunteers spent more than one million hours responding to calls for help

People in prison are at much greater risk of suicide so Samaritans trains people in prisons across the UK and Ireland to become Listeners, who provide emotional support to their peers. This year, we also launched an innovative training tool to increase the confidence of prison staff to approach someone who may be at risk. With support from Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service, we trained people with lived experience of the prisons system to run 'coping with life in prison' sessions in two London prisons.

In South Wales, we began a pilot scheme to provide emotional support for people being held in custody at Merthyr Bridewell police station. More than 70 custody sergeants were trained to raise awareness of the scheme and our contact details were spray-painted on the walls of the cells.

We continued our work to address rural isolation and loneliness in Ireland by attending the National Ploughing Championships, which attracts more than 290,000 people. Our presence raises awareness of the service and encourages people to reach out.



“

Samaritans is a service I've used when I've been at my lowest point.

I'm not the only one – suicide continues to be the biggest killer of men under 50. Samaritans listens to people, often these people are profoundly lonely but Samaritans are always there.

LIAM, SAMARITANS SUPPORTER

”

### There at the right time

We want to make it as easy as possible for people to get emotional support when they're struggling to cope. That's why we run projects that reach out to people during difficult times.

Our *Think Samaritans* initiative – funded by the Department of Health – meant we could be there for more people under the care of the NHS in England. Fourteen partnerships between Samaritans branches and A&E departments, GP surgeries and mental health teams are involved in the project.

We were there for people bereaved by suicide through our *Facing the Future* project with Cruse Bereavement Care. After losing a loved one to suicide, people can feel very alone, suffering from a kind of loss they feel others may not understand. In 2017, nearly 9 in 10 participants across 23 support groups told us they felt better emotionally after the sessions.

Our *Step by Step* team supported 153 schools or youth settings following an attempted or suspected suicide. That's almost twice as many as the previous year, and includes a 12 per cent rise in the number of schools coming to us for support. Research showed that staff at Higher Education Institutions who used the service were more confident in their ability to respond to a suicide.

### Building resilience

Samaritans are there at times of emotional crisis, but we also work proactively to help people look after themselves and others.

This year, funded by a new partnership with the Lord Mayor's Appeal and supported by PwC, we launched our *Wellbeing in the City* programme with two interactive online training courses which bring our active listening expertise into the workplace. These resources aim to improve the listening skills among half a million workers, with a positive impact on their wellbeing.

Our three-year military programme aims to help serving personnel, reservists, veterans and their families cope with their unique circumstances as well as the day-to-day struggles we all face. This year we developed a printed pocket guide for serving personnel to help them look out for their teammates when they're going through a tough time and learn about the support that's available to them.

Samaritans' work with young people continued this year, with trained volunteers delivering talks about emotional health in education and youth settings. And our *Developing Emotional Awareness and Listening* (DEAL) teaching resources were accessed by 2,000 people on average every month.

### Behind the scenes

We're investing in technology to ensure we are there for anyone, any time they need us, now and into the future.

This year – as part of our step change in digital infrastructure – we've started working to update the technology in our branches for greater reliability and developing an instant messaging service as another way to get in touch.

We're also working hard to develop a new system that volunteers will be able to use to respond to calls from a variety of channels: emails, SMS and instant messages.

**More than 115,000 young people listened to a talk by a Samaritans volunteer**

**Samaritans has more than 20,000 volunteers across the UK and Ireland**

# Wellbeing in the City – providing tools for a healthier workplace



Back in 2007, I was seen as someone who was enjoying life. My career was on track, I'd been promoted quickly and I was settled in London. And in my own head I thought everything was completely fine, but in reality, it wasn't.

I was one of those people who kept a very clear distinction between my work life and my home life. I kept them separate. I'd had a difficult experience coming out as gay and there was a part of me that just wasn't ready to take that on at work.

When the opportunity came to move to Hong Kong with work, I jumped at the chance. But within a month or so, I realised I'd made a mistake. My long-distance relationship wasn't working, I wasn't settling into the work environment and I was also finding it hard to make new friends.

I came home for my annual visit. On the last day I went to the office to see the partner who was sponsoring my secondment and told her I was finding it hard. Because in all honesty, I just couldn't face getting back on the plane.

I can tell you the relief of it just being out there was huge. We talked about it all, and just by doing that I started to think about what I could do to make things better. And it worked.

That prompted me to become a Samaritans volunteer and support people in a crisis or distress. And learning those skills made me better at work.

When the opportunity came up to bring Samaritans' skills into the workplace and help them develop new learning tools for staff, I jumped at the chance.

Samaritans, in partnership with The Lord Mayor's Appeal and the This Is Me campaign, have developed an online wellbeing programme that gives employees the skills they need to manage their own emotional health as well as being able to support those around them, well before those feelings reach crisis point.

What I like most about it is that it's simple and practical. We found that there's lots out there to deal with the theory of mental health, but this is something that shows how anyone can help and start those conversations. It shows you how to listen. And it's for everyone. It's not about being a manager, leader or supervisor – it's just about being a human being.

**BEN HIGGIN, PARTNER, PWC**

To find out more or sign up for the training, visit [samaritans.org/wellbeinginthecity](http://samaritans.org/wellbeinginthecity)

# Suicide is everyone's business

### Influence

We work closely with others to find and reach the people who need us most today. And we position ourselves at the heart of policy-making to make change for a hopeful tomorrow.

### Evidence

We're constantly improving the way we collect and use evidence. It informs the way we shape and develop our services and helps us keep track of how we're doing.

## What did we do this year?

### Working with the railways

Our range of work with the rail industry is helping us to reach more people before it's too late, and in supporting those affected by suicide.

This year, we partnered with Network Rail, British Transport Police and the wider rail industry in a campaign called Small Talk Saves Lives. Its aim was to give people the confidence to trust their instincts when they think someone needs help and simply strike up a conversation. It was our most successful digital campaign to date. Small Talk Saves Lives reached 17 million people via social media and, crucially, research showed it increased people's

awareness of when someone might need help, their knowledge of how to intervene safely and their intent to take action.

On 15 January 2018, we turned what's known as 'Blue Monday' into 'Brew Monday' by celebrating that great tradition of getting together to talk over a cup of tea or coffee. Volunteers from 88 branches encouraged commuters to get together for a chat over a cuppa by giving out tea bags at 108 railway stations across England, Wales and Scotland. A host of celebrities from Ross Noble to Dame Barbara Windsor got on board, helping this annual campaign to reach 4.8 million people on social media.

In Northern Ireland we worked with Translink to relaunch our award-winning 'We Listen' campaign across railway stations and throughout Belfast city centre in time for World Mental Health Day.

### Advocating for media and internet safety

Last year we reported on Samaritans research with the University of Bristol about the online behaviour of people who are having suicidal thoughts. This year we took that work forward by discussing the findings with online providers at a round table event in London and working with healthcare professionals to highlight the importance of asking vulnerable patients about their internet use.

In Ireland we hosted a symposium on Internet Safety and Suicidal Behaviour in partnership with the National Office of Suicide Prevention.

We continued to promote our internationally-recognised Media Guidelines and worked with the media to ensure suicide is reported and portrayed responsibly, reaching editors, journalists and programme makers from major media outlets. This included running 45 advice sessions for media outlets and production teams, and advising on 76 articles and programmes, including two award-winning Hollyoaks storylines. We also monitored more than 6,000 relevant articles, contacting editors 138 times about articles of concern.

In Northern Ireland we worked in partnership with the Public Health Agency (PHA) to deliver information sessions to media groups, students, and other interested groups, raising awareness of our Media Guidelines.

**3,000 more railway staff trained in suicide prevention or trauma support in 2017/18**

**More than 1,700 railway suicide interventions in 2017/18**

“

I hope people will share the video and that it will encourage them to trust their gut instinct and start a conversation if they think someone could be vulnerable. You won't make things worse, and you could save a life.

SARAH\*, WHOSE STORY HELPED TO INSPIRE THE SMALL TALK SAVES LIVES CAMPAIGN

”





“

My niece took her own life in 2012 and we really struggled as a family to come to terms with it. We were at a loss to understand why she felt unable to tell us what she was going through. Becoming a Samaritans volunteer has helped me to understand and has enabled me to share what I have learnt with my family to take away some of the blame we felt.

SANDRA, SAMARITANS VOLUNTEER

”

### Influencing local and national policy

Suicide is preventable and Samaritans has a critical role in working with decision-makers in central and devolved governments and at a local level, as they develop and implement policies with the potential to save lives from suicide.

This year we influenced local and national suicide prevention policy in a range of ways. The evidence we provided to the UK Parliamentary Inquiry into Suicide Prevention was cited extensively in its report published in March 2017 and our work was well referenced in the government's response. We also campaigned with local councils in England and Wales to ensure self-harm is part of their suicide prevention plans. In Wales, we called on all local authorities to make sure they have effective local suicide prevention plans in place. And, through our leading role in England's National Suicide Prevention Alliance (NSPA), we developed a series of assets to support and inform local suicide prevention planning more broadly.

In Scotland we helped people who've been affected by suicide to inform the government's forthcoming Suicide Prevention Action Plan, by leading a series of workshops to explore the issues.

Our work this year in Wales has sparked action at the highest level. A Samaritans report on socioeconomic disadvantage and finding a way forward for Wales was quoted in the midpoint review of the Suicide and Self Harm Prevention Strategy for Wales, resulting in a greater focus on deprivation and suicide. And our evidence to the National Assembly on the link between loneliness and suicide led to an inquiry into suicide prevention. We also played an influential role in the Inquiry into the Emotional and Mental Health of Children and Young People, which has been reflected in the Assembly Committee's recommendations to Welsh Government.

In Ireland, we are working with the Minister of State at the Department of Health and officials in the Health Service Executive on a proposal to expand the support available to people with mental health concerns. The Minister also launched our new email [jo@samaritans.ie](mailto:jo@samaritans.ie) which generated significant media coverage.

### Understanding our impact

The confidentiality of our service is absolutely vital, but it presents challenges for measuring the difference we make to callers. This year we completed a significant feasibility study to test how we can assess our impact without compromising our values.

With caller permission we collected data on the helpline during a small number of emotional support calls, in order to follow up with the person later. Importantly, the study showed that this is possible. It also gave us some promising preliminary data from a small sample of callers, showing a positive reduction in distress and suicidal feelings.

**Thanks to the campaigning work of Samaritans and others, 96 per cent of Local Authorities in England now have a suicide prevention plan in place, compared to just 70 per cent in 2015**

# Together we are Samaritans

Underpinning all of Samaritans' work are our **people**, our **brand** and the **income** we must raise to keep listening.

## People

This year, more than 20,000 people volunteered their time for Samaritans. Following improvements to our volunteer recruitment we saw a 10 per cent rise in enquiries. This included enquiries about night-time volunteering during a pilot recruitment drive supported by the Big Lottery Fund. This is crucial as it will help us provide a listening ear to more people overnight, when many find their feelings overwhelm them. We also launched an accessibility guide for branches so that we can be as inclusive as possible to new volunteers.

- **There are more than 20,000 Samaritans volunteers**
- **17,000 are trained listening volunteers**
- **2,000 are helping to run our branches and shops**
- **1,700 are prison Listener volunteers**
- **5,600 new volunteers were trained this year**

## Brand

Samaritans is a household name and the public have a huge amount of trust in us. This year we began building on this solid foundation by updating the way we portray Samaritans and the range of work that we do. By shining new light on the organisation and the ways we can help, we hope to reach more people who are struggling to cope, and recruit new volunteers and supporters.



You are a friend to many.  
A lifeline for many.

SAMARITANS DONOR



## Income

Samaritans is a charity and we depend on donations to fund our vital services. Anyone can support Samaritans – whether it's by taking part in a sporting challenge, signing up to be a regular donor, leaving a gift in their Will, taking part in a workplace fundraiser or organising their own event. Our donors make it possible for Samaritans to be here 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

We are constantly working to find new ways to raise funds so we can continue to deliver our vital services. An exciting and innovative project took place across our shop network this year. As part of the John Lewis Partnership's Golden Jubilee Trust scheme, 18 John Lewis and Waitrose employees completed 10-week secondments at Samaritans charity shops and at our central office. They worked alongside our regular shop volunteers and Samaritans benefited from their wealth of retail experience to identify potential areas for improvement and ways to increase sales. Together, they created a 'toolkit' for Samaritans shops so that these insights can be retained and shared across the network.

“

I was proud and honoured to wear the shirt for Samaritans through the streets of London. Without the support of Samaritans on the end of the phone I might not be running marathons today.

TONY, SAMARITANS SUPPORTER

”



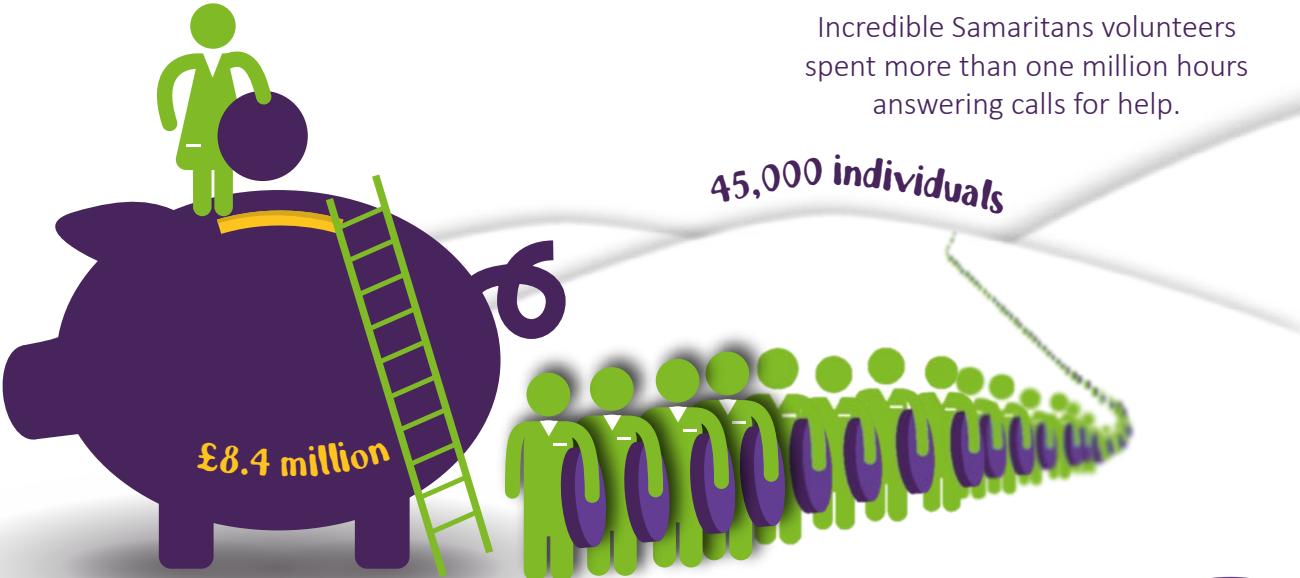
# Your support adds up to change lives

Thank you to everyone who supported Samaritans this year. By giving money or time, you helped us be there for anyone who needed someone. Your continued generosity will help us realise our vision that fewer people die by suicide.

Every year it costs Samaritans £25m to answer more than 5 million calls for help through 20,000 trained volunteers.

- It costs Samaritans £5 to be there for someone struggling to cope
- A donation of £46 could train and support an existing volunteer for a year
- £200 covers the cost for a new volunteer to build the skills they need to answer a call for help
- A donation of £5,000 could keep Samaritans' phone line open for 24 hours.
- It costs £69,000 per day to deliver our service through 20,000 trained volunteers

*The cost above are based on figures across the whole organisation, including affiliated branches.*



Generous donations from more than 45,000 individuals totalled £8.4 million (including gifts left in Wills).

The illustrations above reflect the income of Samaritans Central Charity in 2017/18 (not including affiliated branches).

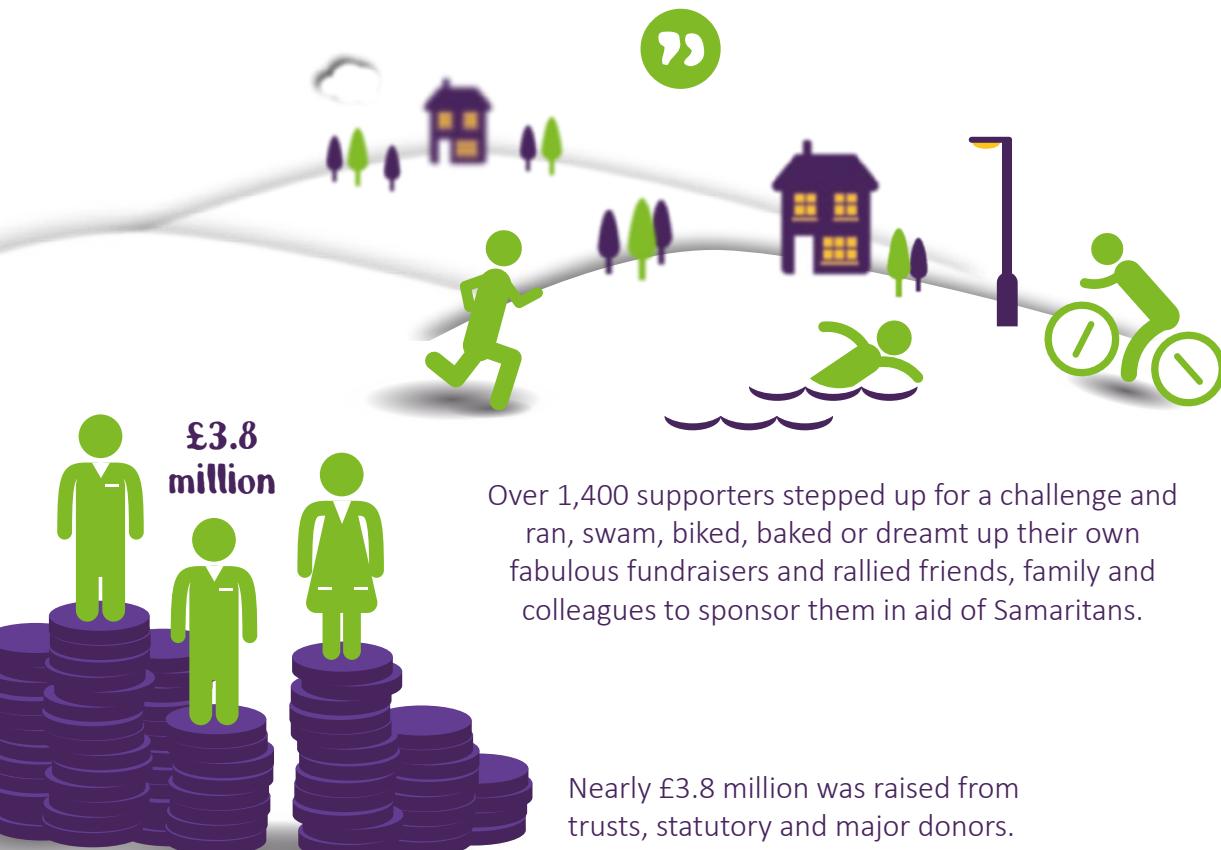


“

Listening is an incredibly important part of how we choose to operate as a business and this sits at the heart of what makes Samaritans such a special charity – they listen to those struggling to cope. We're really proud to have chosen Samaritans for our first charity partnership.

RICHARD FEARON, LEEDS BUILDING SOCIETY

”



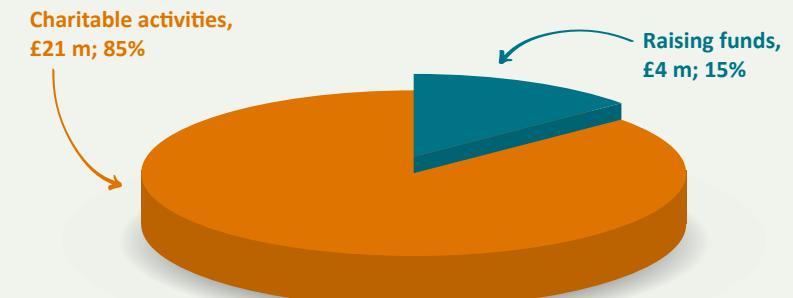
## Income (Total: £26 million)



Thanks to the £26 million you helped us raise, Samaritans volunteers were able to answer more than 5 million calls for help.

This year we spent 85 pence in every pound on reaching out to people, responding to calls for help, and improving our services. The rest was invested in fundraising to help us raise enough income next year and beyond. Any surplus funds are spent on developing our vital services for the future.

## Expenditure (Total: £25 million)



The charts above show the income and expenditure of the whole organisation, including affiliated branches, in 2016/17.

# Helping us be there

Thank you to all our donors and benefactors, including those who wish to remain anonymous.

## Corporate donors

CMC  
MarketsPlus1  
Legal & General  
MoneySavingExpert.com  
nGAGE Recruitment  
PwC  
ScotMid  
Spirax Sarco  
UK Greetings Ltd  
VGC Group  
Woodmansterne

## Major benefactors

Dr Vik Bansal  
Chris and Gilda Haskins

## Statutory and similar bodies

The Big Lottery Fund  
Department of Health (England)  
Department of Health (Northern Ireland)  
National Office for Suicide Prevention (Ireland)  
Irish Prison Service  
Ministry of Justice HMPPS  
Northern Ireland Prison Service  
Scottish Government  
Scottish Prison Service  
Welsh Government/  
Llywodraeth Cymru

## Trusts and foundations

29th May 1961 Charitable Trust  
A D Power Will Trust  
Adrians Charity  
Albert Hunt Trust  
Alice Ellen Cooper Dean Charitable Foundation  
Anthony Scholefield Foundation  
Atlas Fund  
The Baillie Gifford Foundation  
Band Trust  
Barbara Cairns Trust  
Boltini Trust  
Cadogan Charity  
Ernest Kleinwort Charitable Trust  
Hutchinson Charitable Trust  
Inman Charity  
James and Patricia Hamilton Charitable Trust  
John Coates Charitable Trust  
Jordan Foundation  
Kristina Martin Charitable Trust  
Leslie Mary Carter Charitable Trust  
Michael Cornish Charitable Trust  
Misses Robinson Charitable Trust  
Monument Trust  
P F Charitable Trust  
Peacock Charitable Trust  
Pears Foundation  
Persula Foundation  
Peter and Teresa Harris Charitable Trust  
Pilkington Charities Fund  
The Stone Family Foundation  
Swire Charitable Trust  
Trott Family Charitable Trust  
Tudor Foundation  
Waterloo Foundation





 **116 123** 

This number is **FREE** to call

**0808 164 0123**

Welsh language line – for opening times,  
please visit [samaritans.org/wales](http://samaritans.org/wales).  
This number is **FREE** to call

Llinell Gymraeg – i weld yr oriau agor,  
ewch i [samaritans.org/wales](http://samaritans.org/wales).  
Gellir galw'r rhif hwn **AM DDIM**

 **07725 90 90 90**

 **jo@samaritans.org**



**FREEPOST RSRB-KKBY-CYJK**  
**Chris, PO Box 9090**  
**Stirling**  
**FK8 2SA**



**samaritans.org**

Samaritans Registered Office  
The Upper Mill, Kingston Road, Ewell, Surrey KT17 2AF  
**T** 020 8394 8300



[facebook.com/samaritanscharity](https://facebook.com/samaritanscharity)



[twitter.com/samaritans](https://twitter.com/samaritans)

COVER PHOTO: Chris O'Donovan Photography/Samaritans

A company limited by guarantee registered in England & Wales (757372) and a charity registered in England & Wales (219432) and in Scotland (SC040604).

