

'You said, we listened'

Two Year Anniversary Edition

May 2023

Two years of Samaritans Lived Experience Panel

In the second year of the panel, you have contributed to **10 surveys** and **3 polls**

In total, you have given over **880 individual responses**

Samaritans Lived Experience Panel celebrated its second anniversary on the 6th May 2023, and we would like to say a huge **thank you** to all of our panel members for their continued support and input!

"I am delighted that the Lived Experience Panel is marking its second year, the insights members bring to our work are so valuable and I greatly appreciate the time that you give to the panel and to Samaritans. Thank you so much."

- Julie Bentley, CEO

Every response you have given has provided valuable insights which has improved our understanding and helped inform Samaritans work including

- The Online Excellence Programme, through the **Online Signposting Survey** and the **Young Person's Online Safety Resource Survey**
- How Samaritans' work with people with lived experience of suicide and self-harm, through the **Hub of Hope Feedback Survey**, **Experts in Suicide/Self-Harm Survey** and **Lived Experience Panel Audit Survey**
- Samaritans' work with military veterans, through the **SSAFA Veteran Support Survey**
- Samaritans' awareness raising campaigns through the **Small Talk Saves Lives Phase 6 Survey**
- Samaritans' fundraising campaigns through the **Winter Cash Appeal Review Survey** and the **Cost-of-Living Campaign Survey**
- Samaritans' external voice through the **Brand Messaging Survey**



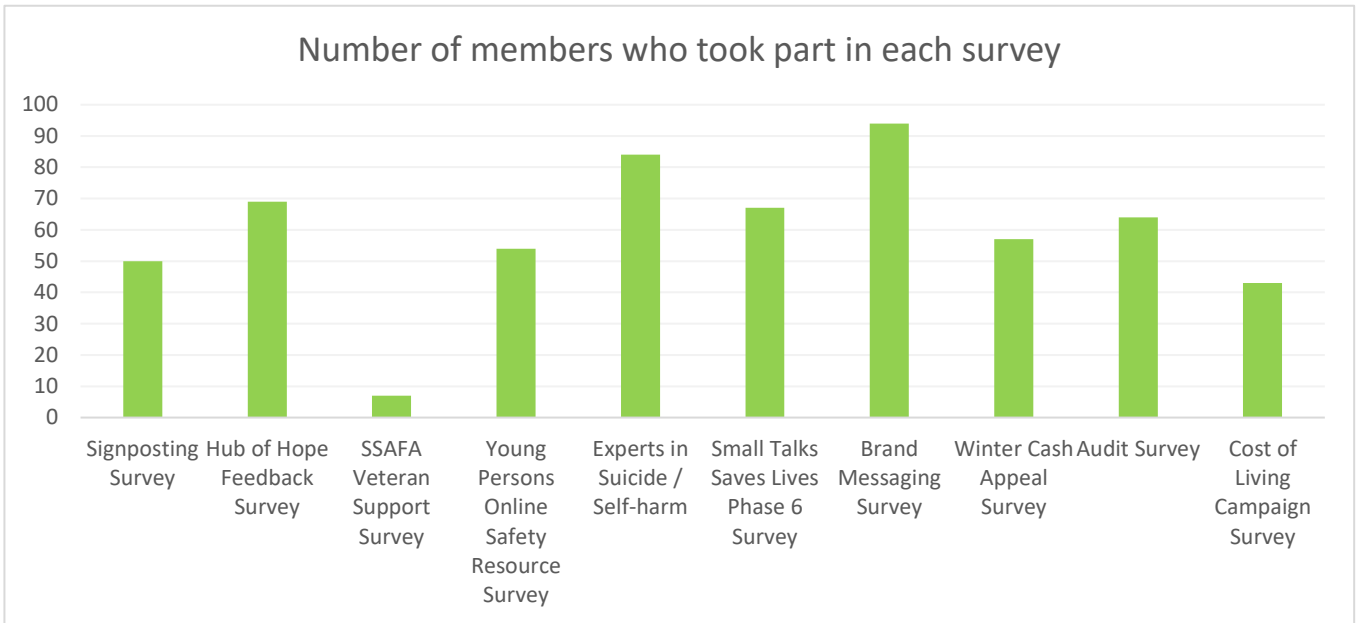
Remember: people can join the panel at any time. If you know someone who might be interested in joining, they can [sign up here](#).

Samaritans Lived
Experience Panel
Newsletter

May 2023

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Note that some surveys are only relevant and available to specific groups of panel members (e.g. those who live in a particular area or who have a certain experience)

Survey Spotlight: Small Talks Saves Lives Campaign

Back in September 2022, we asked you to take part in a survey to provide your views and insights about the latest Small Talks Saves Lives Campaign.

We wanted to ensure that our new campaign material **‘The Lost Man’** reflected people’s experiences, was not triggering and would empower people to make small talk, and potentially save a life.

The campaign had three key messages

‘If you think somebody is in need of help, you should trust your instincts and start a conversation.’

‘Anybody can help save a life.’

‘Small talk / conversations could help save a life.’

Over **80%** of the panel members surveyed suggested that these key messages were clear in the campaign messaging.

Panel members also told us that the image of the main character was too scruffy and played into stereotypical images which were not reflective and countered the notion that **anyone can have suicidal thoughts**. In response to your feedback, we altered the character’s image to remove any negative stereotyping and provide a more inclusive message.

Survey Spotlight: SSAFA Veteran Support Survey

Panel members suggested that, as military veterans, they didn’t necessarily think that peer-to-peer support was as important as talking to someone with **sufficient learned experience** gained through training and awareness of the **challenges faced by members of the military community**.

Samaritans Lived Experience Panel Newsletter

May 2023

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Your responses meant we re-initiated our **Armed Forces Awareness Training for Samaritans Listening Volunteers**. To date, a further 1000 volunteers have been trained so far.

Survey Spotlight: Wellbeing Measures

In April 2022, we asked for your insights and experiences to better understand what would be **helpful or would support wellbeing** when taking part in activities related to discussing **your lived experience**.

Your insights suggested that the following would be useful

- Feeling comfortable to request to **take a break, pause the activity, or to leave**
- Being offered **immediate support**
- Being offered a **debrief or follow up**
- Being **signposted** to sources of support
- Feeling comfortable to **express why they feel upset**

62% of panel members suggested that it is **always** necessary to have **someone that is trained in talking about suicide and self-harm involved in activities**.

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. Our **helpline (116 123)** is available 24/7 if you need to talk to us.

Lived Experience Opportunity Spotlight: Relationship between alcohol and suicide for LGBTQ+ people

Samaritans, partnered with the The Suicide Prevention Consortium, conducted interviews with people with lived experience, some of whom were recruited from the panel to explore the **relationship between alcohol and suicide for LGBTQ+ people in England**.

This project calls for a more **person-centred approach** to healthcare which provides more inclusive joined up care to reduce alcohol related harms and suicide risk.

Building upon the findings and recommendations from our 2022 report exploring alcohol and suicide, we wanted to better understand people's experiences between **alcohol and suicide for LGBTQ+ people**. The findings of this report can be found [here](#).

As this report is centered on and amplifies the voices of people with lived experience it has been very impactful and received **positive feedback** from key policy decision-makers, such as those in the **Department of Health and Social Care**. These types of reports are useful for developing policy at a national level and Samaritans is hopeful that the findings and recommendations listed in the report will help inform the **new Suicide Prevention Strategy**.

Who is on the panel?

We have been overwhelmed by the support received and the growth of the panel – we currently have **527 members** across the UK and Ireland.

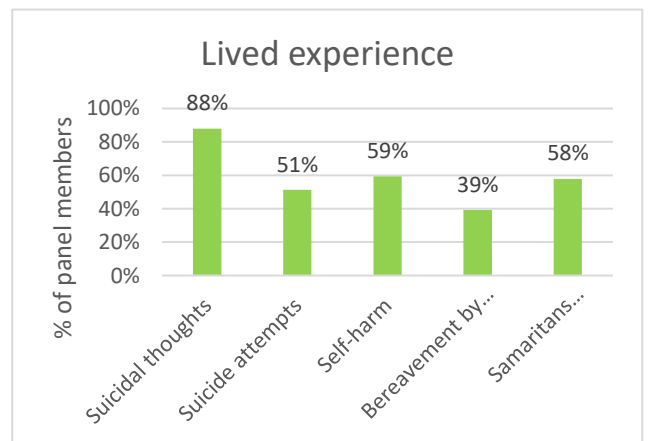
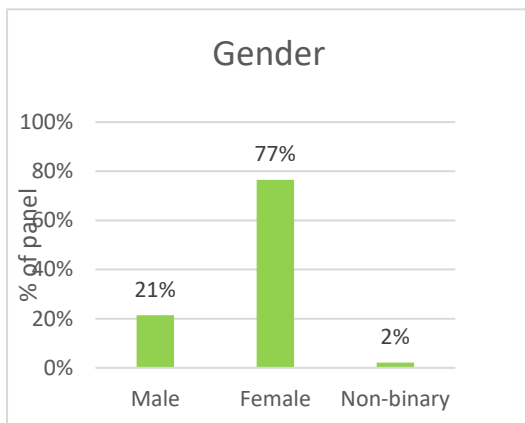
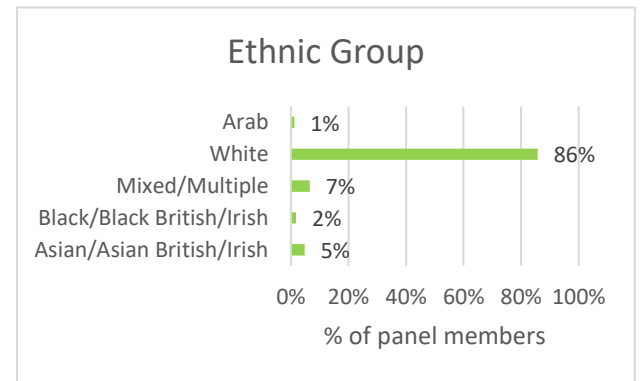
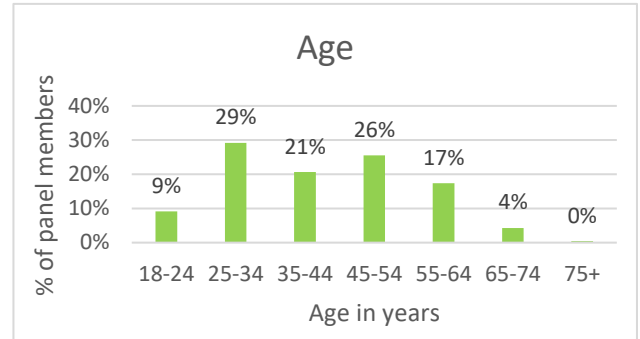
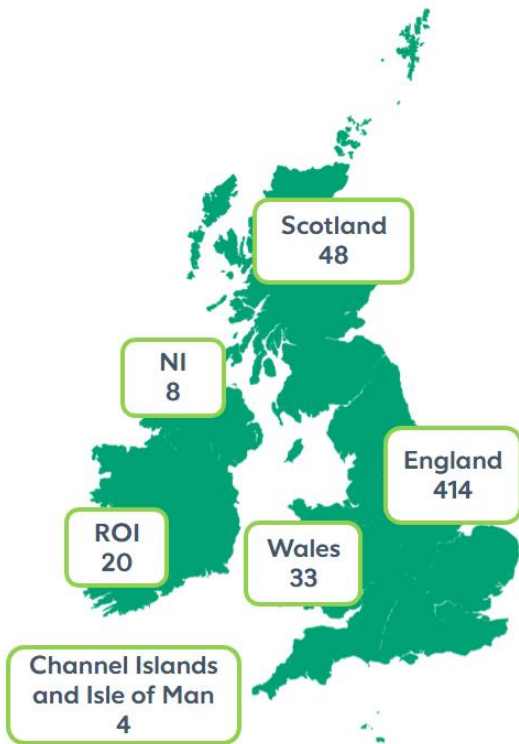
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May 2023

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We have also included some interesting graphs below to highlight the different age groups, ethnic groups, and the type of lived experience our panel members have.



77% of panel members identify as female, 21% as male, and 2% identified as non-binary when asked about their gender identity.

Samaritans Lived Experience Panel Newsletter

May 2023

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Lived Experience opportunities

Over the past year, we advertised **30 opportunities** to the panel for people with lived experience to work alongside us on Samaritans' projects. This has resulted in Samaritans working with:

- Eleven Lived Experience Advisors for the **Strategy Lived Experience Advisory Group** who worked with us on key elements of Samaritans 2022-27 strategy
- Eight Lived Experience Advisors for our **Online Harms Lived Experience Advisory Group** who provide feedback on various aspects of the Online Excellence research and insight programme
- Eight Lived Experience Advisors for our **Young Person's Lived Experience Advisory Group** to help us develop an online safety training resource to help young people stay safe online
- Three Lived Experience Advisors for our research on **people who use Samaritans' helpline frequently**

Keep an eye on our [website](#) for future opportunities!



The impact of your involvement

Staff at Samaritans recognise the important contribution your voice and input has on the work that they do, and would like to take this opportunity to reflect on the impact of your involvement.

"We'd like to say a huge thank you to every single person who took part. Your insights and opinions are incredibly valuable and will help us craft better messaging to use in the future, which will hopefully inspire more people to reach out to Samaritans or support our work." (Bertie, Production and Brand Lead).

"The insights gained from military veterans within the panel will enable us to build a clearer picture of how veterans interact with our listening service." (Joseph, Military Programme Manager).

"We'd like to thank all of the panel members who took time to review the storyboard and provide feedback. The feedback provided was used to further develop the storyboard and directly contributed to the final campaign film." (Nikki, Small Talks Saves Lives Campaign Manager).

"It's been so valuable to get panel member's feedback on their experience of taking part in the Lived Experience Panel and how we can improve and develop the panel. I'd like to give a massive thank you to those who shared their views through the survey, and the 6 members who took part in the focus group. The insights on how we can improve the process of completing surveys, support panel members to understand the impact of their contribution and consider wellbeing and support are being fed right back into the panel. This will ensure that people who choose to give up their time to share their insights are experiences with us are having the best possible experience." (Ellie, Lived Experience Panel Audit Lead).

Samaritans Lived Experience Panel Newsletter

May 2023

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What's next for Samaritans Lived Experience Panel?

- We will continue to send **surveys or polls every month** direct to your inbox.
- The **'You said, We Listened'** newsletter will be shared with you every quarter so you can find out more about the impact of your contributions.
- There will be lots more **lived experience opportunities** for you to be involved and work alongside us at Samaritans – please keep an eye on your inbox or visit ['Lived Experience at Samaritans'](#) to find out more.
- We will continue to **promote the panel** across Samaritans, as well as externally. We shared news of the panel on our social media channels.
- If you are involved in a group or would like to **share or invite people to the panel**, please get in touch at myexperience@samaritans.org and we can send you some handy links.
- **Sneak Preview:** in Summer 2023, we will be releasing some findings from the recent audit about the panel. You can find out more about the suggestions received and how we will work on these to improve your experience of using **Samaritans Lived Experience Panel**.

Thank you so much again for joining **Samaritans Lived Experience Panel**. We appreciate you taking the time to share your views and experiences with us, and we are looking forward to seeing what more the panel achieves in the next year!