



2022-23

# Annual Report

Working together  
to save lives

**SAMARITANS**

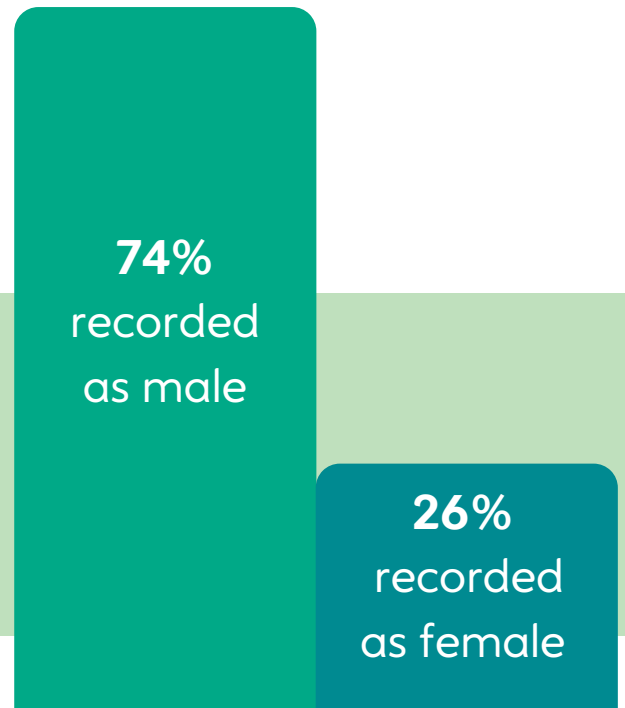
South West Herts

# Our **VISION**

is that fewer people die by suicide.

**5219** suicides were registered in England in 2021.\*

\*Source: Office for National Statistics (latest available figures)



# Our **MISSION**

We listen and provide a human connection so that nobody has to face their struggles alone. We take action to prevent people reaching crisis point, help people find ways to cope and learn the skills to be there for others. We work with communities to let people know that we are here for them, and we campaign to make suicide prevention a priority.

Every life lost to suicide is a tragedy and has a devastating effect on family, friends, colleagues and the community.

# FOREWORD from our Director

As the world seems to change at an overwhelming pace, Samaritans offers a constant, in terms of support offered to individuals and our communities at large. We are constant in our availability 24/7, constant in our empathy offered generously to those in distress, and constant in our service for 70 years. But we could not do it without the volunteers and donors who have enabled us to be there.

Our Branch, based in Watford, has been around for almost 55 years and is dedicated to bringing the magic of Samaritans to the communities of South West Herts - and what a community that is. We are grateful for a steady flow of people who wish to volunteer, not only on our phone line, but also on our webchat service, and in Outreach which takes Samaritans into our local community - in schools, in HM Prison The Mount, on local train stations and in hospitals, at Herts Pride and at other events. Not to mention helping to keep the Branch running in a myriad of support and leadership roles.

We also see this community spirit in those who give to our charity. As a Branch we are responsible for our own fundraising, so donations from local people have an immediate impact in the area we serve. When collecting we see enormous generosity, often paired with words of gratitude, which is vital for us to keep doing what we do. We've also seen some brilliant teamwork in fundraising, whether that be a charity football match, colleague skydive, or family marathon. As the cost-of-living crisis pinches, it becomes harder for all to give in the way that we wish we could. But for those who can, a little can go a long way.

Enjoy reading about our activities in the following pages! We hope you feel pride in our community for being able to achieve what we have - after all, we are South West Herts and South West Herts is us! And... if you ever need to talk, know that there is always someone there: call free on 116 123.



**Sally Phillips**

**Branch Director & Chair**

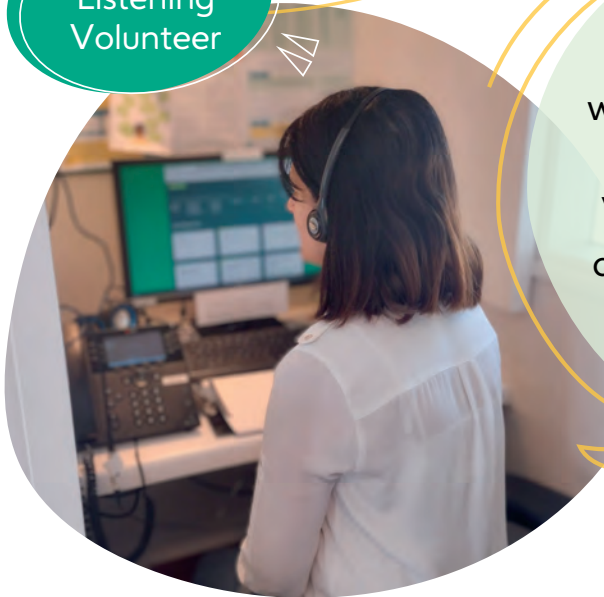
**South West Herts Samaritans**



# Our VOLUNTEERS

Being trusted to listen to a caller and be there for them, no matter what they are going through, is such a privilege, and I love being a part of an organisation that is truly making a difference.

Ife,  
Listening  
Volunteer



Our volunteers are an amazing crowd. You don't need to have been through a particular life experience or be from a certain walk of life. What all our volunteers have in common is a shared desire to be alongside anyone who is struggling to cope and to reduce suicide.

Many Listening Volunteers juggle Samaritan shifts, work and other responsibilities to be able to contribute their time. As a Support Volunteer, I make sure the kitchen is clean and the refreshments are kept well stocked to enable them to continue their valuable work. Amazing people.

Di,  
Support  
Volunteer



We currently have 162 Listening Volunteers who answer the telephones, reply to emails and webchat, and 14 Support Volunteers who help to keep the Branch running. 29 Leaders support Listening Volunteers throughout their shift by providing guidance and emotional support. We trained an additional 33 volunteers this year.

## Diversity and inclusion within the Branch

We have continued to work hard to incorporate diversity and inclusion into everything that we do. We have, for example, made the technology we use more accessible, implemented a more flexible rota, increased Diversity and Inclusion training, highlighted LGBT+ History Month, instituted open recruitment to leadership roles, and shared our learnings with the Samaritans Central Charity.

# How we **HELP**

The telephone helpline together with our email and webchat service are at the heart of what we do – enabling callers to be in touch with us at any time of the day or night on every day of the year and to talk to us for as long as they need.

We're there for anyone who's struggling to cope, who needs someone to listen without judgement or pressure. We give people a space to be themselves, we don't tell them what to do but encourage them to explore their options, and we support the decisions they make for themselves. If they need specific advice, we can signpost them to other appropriate organisations.

## Last year, we answered:



**21,285**  
calls



**1,125**  
emails



**621**  
webchats

I called as I was in some distress and felt I needed someone to speak to. Thank God for your service and the genuine gentleman, [Watford volunteer], who answered and was so patient/not awkward at all when I burst out crying on the phone. I had a conversation with him that made me feel so much better...I think it's an amazing thing you guys do that is really needed especially today and I just want to thank you again for listening.

**Caller**  
to South West  
Herts Branch

When people contact Samaritans for emotional support, they often mention several concerns. Some of the primary concerns raised relate to mental health or illness, family, isolation or loneliness, and relationship problems. Suicidal feelings are expressed in almost 1 in 4 calls for help that involve emotional support.



Several of our volunteers continue to be engaged with Facing the Future facilitating online groups for those bereaved by suicide to share feelings and experiences with others in similar situations.

## Our work at HMP The Mount

The Branch supports 10 Listeners. This year the prison team's main focus has been on the Postvention Training for our Listeners and the staff at The Mount. This training has been to allow our Listeners and officers to know exactly what should happen when there is a death in custody.

We are now aiming to train more prisoners in the coming months to become Samaritan Listeners.



# OUTREACH

and

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



## Brew Monday

On 16 January we turned Blue Monday into Brew Monday at St Albans City, Watford and Hemel Hempstead train stations, getting the message out to 'have a cuppa and have a chat'.



## Hemel Hempstead Football Club

The Tudors have supported SW Herts and raised awareness of Samaritans with pitch-side billboards and carpark advertising, articles in matchday programmes, their club website, on local radio and matchday collections.



## Operation London Bridge

In September, some of our volunteers provided emotional support to the public in central London following the death of The Queen.



## St Albans carparks

Following some tragic incidents we have arranged for our crisis signage to be placed in two locations.



13 train station visits



7 prison visitor centre visits



6 hospital visits



5 secondary school talks



4 talks to local businesses & organisations



3 outdoor events



### Opening our doors

In October, we held our first Branch Open Morning for local community leaders, giving them an opportunity to see the Branch in action and hear more about our Outreach work.



### Local NHS Hospitals

During May and October, we were invited into our local NHS hospitals to participate in various staff wellbeing events. Locations were Watford General, St Albans Hospital and Hemel Hempstead Hospital. We spoke with nurses and hospital staff, getting the word out that we are here for those in crisis or suffering with work stress.



### Small Talk Saves Lives

Two of our volunteers took part in a Samaritans flagship event at Liverpool Street Station to promote this campaign to encourage the general public to engage and be empowered to prevent suicide on the railways.

In November, Watford MP Dean Russell referred to his visit in a speech in the House of Commons on International Men's Day:

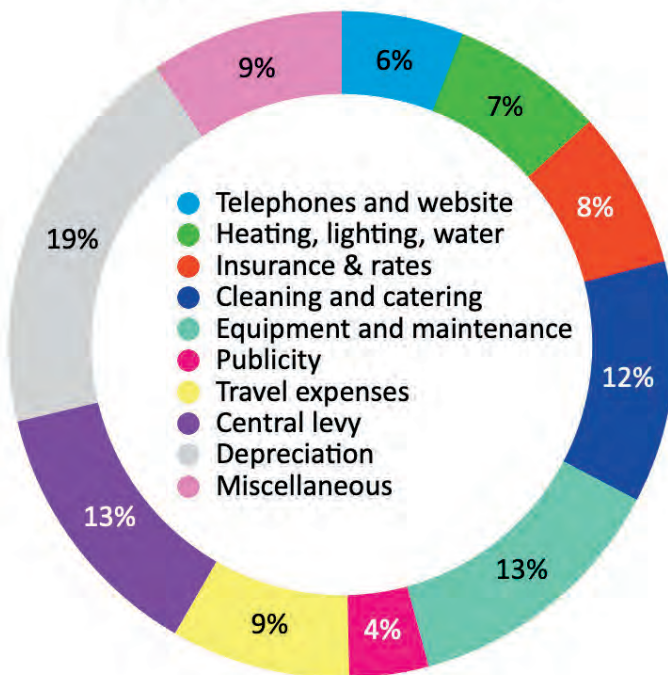


***“I visited the Samaritans in Watford recently and found that they do incredible work in ensuring that they are at the end of the telephone line for somebody.”***

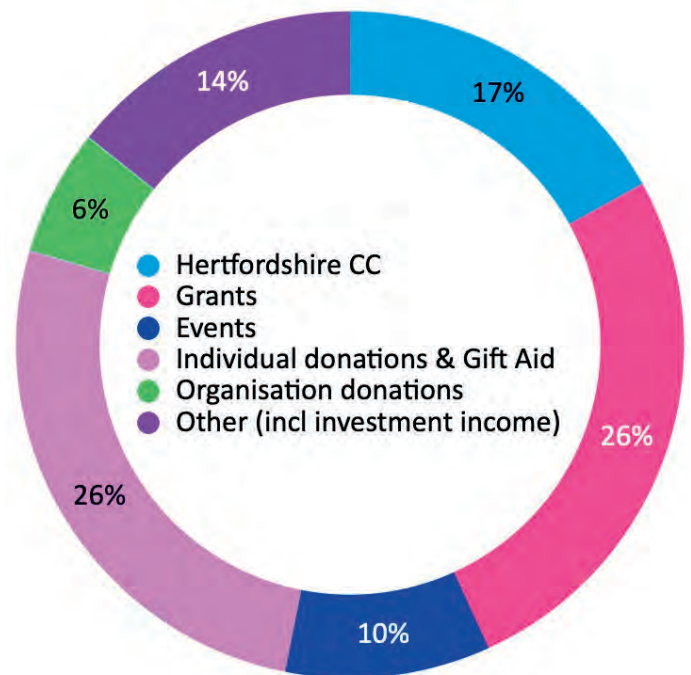
# Our FINANCES

Thanks to generous support from our major supporters and our donors the Charity was again able to cover its running costs. Grant income was down sharply following the end of pandemic support, but we trimmed back expenditure accordingly. Our income totaled £35,308. Total expenditure was £34,142. Our financial position remains strong with unrestricted reserves equal to just over twice our current annual expenditure.

**What we spend our funds on**



**Sources of income**



## Thank you to our major supporters

Arnold Clark  
Community  
Fund

Hertfordshire  
County  
Council

HM Prison &  
Probation  
Service

St Albans  
Cathedral &  
Abbey Church

TK Maxx

St Albans City  
& District  
Council

Waitrose

The  
Childwick  
Trust



And thank you to the many individual donors who have supported us. For example:



We collected £536 at the annual Matt Lovell memorial match held by Tring Tornados Junior Football Club to remember a former club member who took his life a number of years ago.

Martin and his colleagues at 4PS raised £916 in a parachute jump.

Comedian Sarah Millican invited Samaritans to have a bucket collection after her shows during her British tour – we collected £316 in St Albans.

Our Director Sally and some of her family ran the Brighton Marathon in April and raised £2,217.



Paul and Cathy celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary and, with their family and friends, raised £735 for the Branch.

Dee raised £408 by completing Samarathon - a national fundraising challenge where people walk, jog or run 26.2 miles over the month of July.

# How **YOU CAN** **VOLUNTEER** with us

SW Herts Samaritans is run entirely by volunteers – we have no paid staff.

We welcome volunteers from a broad range of background and circumstance. You don't need previous experience or qualifications, but you do need to be interested in people and be open-minded. We need Listening Volunteers and Support Volunteers.

Listening Volunteers are trained and mentored to provide emotional support to our callers – mostly by phone, but also by email and webchat. Listening Volunteers can also deliver emotional support outside the Branch through our Outreach service.

The training for Listening Volunteers builds on your natural instincts to care for someone in difficulty, so you can give support in a way that makes a real difference.

Becoming a Listening Volunteer requires you to commit to a rigorous initial and ongoing training programme and to regular participation in shifts at the Branch.



If you want to help in other ways, then consider being a Support Volunteer and make a difference by helping with activities such as communications, fundraising, and admin where you can build on your professional skills and experience – or learn something new.

To find out more contact:  
[recruitment@swhertssamaritans.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@swhertssamaritans.org.uk)

## All volunteers commit to the Samaritans **FIVE CORE 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

### **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 need and reduces distress and despair

### **Non-judgemental**

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

# HELP US

## Support us FINANCIALLY

We depend on public and business donations so that we can continue to be here – whenever and however people need us most – now and in the future.

### Make a **DONATION**

#### Use our website

[www.samaritans.org/southwestherts](http://www.samaritans.org/southwestherts). You can set up a regular or a one-off donation by clicking 'Donate to this Branch'.

#### Use your phone

Text SWHSAMS to 70085 to donate £5 to fund a call that can save someone's life.

#### Go shopping

Use [Easyfundraising.org.uk](http://Easyfundraising.org.uk) to raise a donation when shopping online (at no additional cost to you). Select South West Herts Samaritans as your charity.

### Raise funds through **SPONSORSHIP**

Walk, run, cycle, have a birthday, or create a specific challenge. Link to our JustGiving page from our website. Each £100 you raise keeps our branch going for another day.

### Become a **REGULAR SUPPORTER**

Like any other organisation we have regular bills to pay even though we have no paid staff. Consider how you can help us meet these commitments – for example our weekly heating and lighting bill to keep the branch open every day of the year is £90, and our quarterly telecoms bill is just over £400.

### Leave a **BEQUEST** in your Will

By remembering Samaritans in your will, you keep on helping people who are struggling to cope, and your kindness will live on.

For help contact: [treasurer@swhertssamaritans.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@swhertssamaritans.org.uk)

### Spread the **WORD**

Tell others about our service!

We can provide speakers, posters, leaflets, or articles to raise awareness of Samaritans in your school, place of employment, or other organisations such as clubs or community groups.

For information contact:

[outreach@swhertssamaritans.org.uk](mailto:outreach@swhertssamaritans.org.uk)

### Involve your **EMPLOYER**

There are many ways in which an employer or organisation can support us. These include:

Nomination as a Charity of the Year

Donations of time, money, or products

Encouragement to volunteer

Sponsored activities to raise funds





The Queen's Award  
for Voluntary Service

# We're here to listen

Call free day or night on

# 116 123

Email

[jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

Web

[samaritans.org/  
southwestherts](http://samaritans.org/southwestherts)

General enquiries  
**01923 233614**

Address  
**Milly Apthorp House  
45 St John's Road  
Watford  
WD17 1QL**

# SAMARITANS

## South West Herts

South West Herts Samaritans is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered in England and Wales (1170559). Our registered office is located at 45 St John's Road, Watford, Hertfordshire WD17 1QL.