

## Samaritans Lived Experience Panel Summary of 2023 audit

### What is the Lived Experience Panel?



Samaritans Lived Experience Panel was launched in May 2021 and is an online panel of over 500 people who have lived experience of suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, self-harm, bereavement by suicide or Samaritans' service use.

Samaritans' internal staff teams can send the panel online surveys about a range of topics to get timely lived experience input in their work.

### The purpose of the panel audit



Two years on, we have done some research into the panel to understand how well it's working in three key areas: **the experience of panel members, how Samaritans teams are using the panel, and the accessibility and diversity of the panel.**

This involved engagement with Samaritans' staff and panel members using surveys, a focus group and analysis of pre-existing data.

### The panel was used for six areas of work in 2021/22:



### The panel in figures:

**30** surveys sent between May 2021 – May 2023

**527** current members

**62** responses per survey on average

### What types of lived experience do panel members have?

- 88%** suicidal thoughts
- 59%** self-harm
- 58%** Samaritans' service use
- 51%** suicide attempts
- 39%** bereavement by suicide



# Understanding the Samaritans panel member experience

Panel member



## Joining the panel

**89%** said the joining process was easy, but may be better with less information

Going forward, we will work to accurately understand how inclusive the panel is, particularly hearing from those who don't currently find the format accessible such as those who are not digitally literate.



## Completing surveys

**3 in 4** panel members feel survey questions are easy to understand.



## Wellbeing and support



**4%** said they had been negatively affected or distressed by a survey

**83%** are happy with the current channels to feedback about issues with surveys

**69%** feel support is available if they were to become distressed by a survey

The wellbeing measures in place to support panel members when completing surveys include:

- Signposting (to mental health support, Samaritans' services and self-care), visible before, throughout and after surveys.
- Ensuring panel members can take a break or stop the survey.
- Having every question as optional.
- Trigger warnings clearly visible before the survey.

**Ensuring surveys are accessible and panel members know how their responses are being used are also key to supporting wellbeing.**

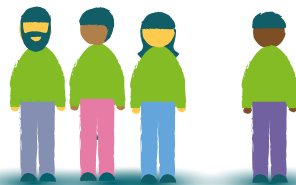
**It is vital to clearly set expectations around what the support is going to look like.**



## Understanding impact



**3 in 4** panel members agreed that they understand how their responses to panel surveys help shape and inform projects at Samaritans.



To support more people to understand how their contribution makes a difference, panel members suggested:

- sharing more summary information that can be read quickly
- sharing information more visually
- sharing information in multiple formats (eg, a newsletter and a podcast).

# Developing Samaritans Lived Experience Panel

## Staff suggestions for increasing the panel's usefulness:

**Ensure the panel is visible within the organisation**, eg, by including information about the panel in the staff induction process.

**Share more information and guidance for using the panel** eg, examples of where the panel could add value to different areas of work.

**Grow the panel and increase its diversity** to ensure the panel represents key groups relevant to Samaritans' work.

**Provide different methods of engaging with the panel** eg, focus groups.



## What's next for Samaritans Lived Experience Panel?

We will use these valuable learnings from the audit to develop the panel and ensure that it is both a useful tool for Samaritans' staff and a positive experience for our panel members.



**i** To find out more and join the panel visit Samaritans' Lived Experience page at [samaritans.org](https://www.samaritans.org)