

Remembering  
your loved ones

**Page 8**

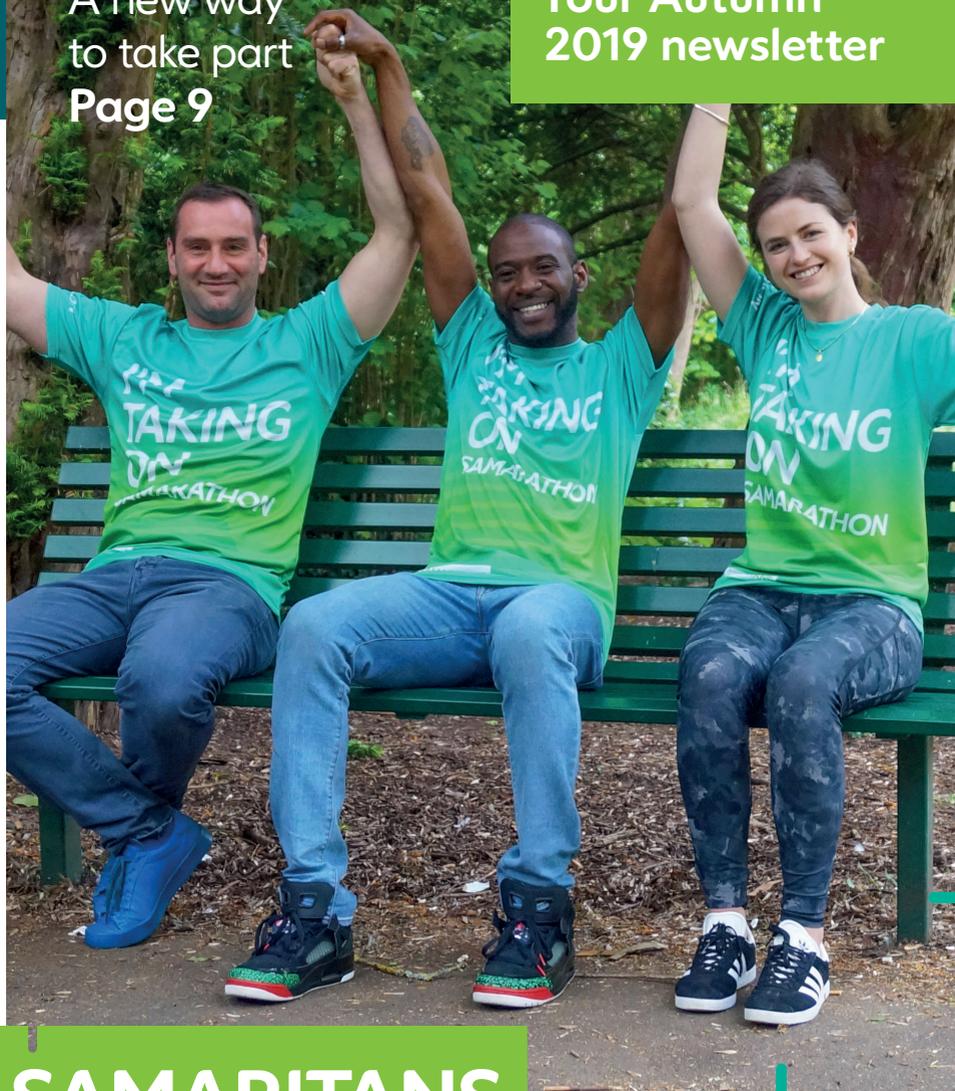
A new way  
to take part

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# 24/7

You help us be there  
round the clock

**Your Autumn  
2019 newsletter**



# SAMARITANS

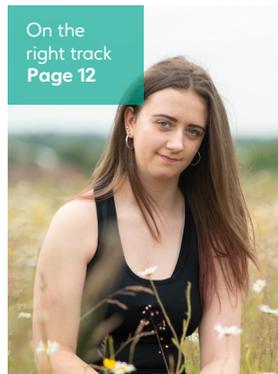
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Being there day and night  
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## Becoming a listening volunteer

We have 20,000 volunteers who make it possible for us to answer calls for help at any time, day or night.

**We could not exist without them.**

Want to find out more about our training and what it means to be a Samaritans listening volunteer?

Then please do get in touch or visit our website at

[samaritans.org/volunteer](https://www.samaritans.org/volunteer)

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

03705 62 72 82 (UK)

Thanks for answering the five questions about our newsletter in the Spring 2019 edition. Here's what you told us:

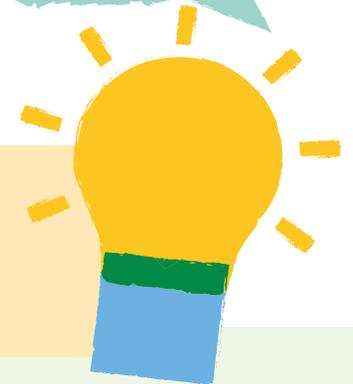
One respondent told us:

“Makes a terrifying topic something we can deal with.”



of you make regular donations. Thank you!

A whopping 91% of you said we had inspired you about the impact of your donation as a Samaritans supporter.



When we asked you how we could improve the newsletter, many of you were happy with it. However, some of you were concerned about the cost and suggested receiving it as an email instead.

We're looking into giving you the option to choose to receive the newsletter as an email version only and will keep you updated about this.

Thank you so much to the 1,049 of you who so very kindly responded. We'll be working on some changes and updating you soon.

The articles you like reading most are about research and the work we do in the community.



Both topics scored almost 70% for 'considerable interest'.

If you'd like to give us some feedback on the newsletter, please get in touch with our Supporter Care team by calling 03709 00 00 32 or emailing [supportercare@samaritans.org](mailto:supportercare@samaritans.org)

# Having a difficult conversation

## SHUSH - listening tips

Sometimes, we want to be there for someone but don't know where to start.

We recommend that if you're worried about someone, you try talking to them. It's OK if you're not an expert – just listening can help someone work through what's on their mind. Our SHUSH tips on how to be a good listener can help. When people feel listened to, it can save a life.

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

- S** **Show me you care**  
Focus on the other person, make eye contact, put away your phone.
- H** **Have patience**  
It may take time and several attempts before a person is ready to open up.
- U** **Use open questions**  
That need more than a yes/no answer, and follow up eg 'Tell me more'.
- S** **Say it back**  
To check you've understood, but don't interrupt or offer a solution.
- H** **Have courage**  
Don't be put off by a negative response and, most importantly, don't feel you have to fill a silence.

*giftaid it*

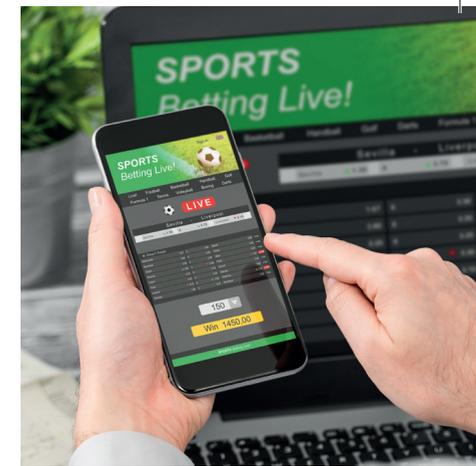
## Make your donation go further.

Gift Aid is money from the Government that makes your donations worth an extra 25% at no extra cost to you.

To sign up to Gift Aid please tick the box on the form enclosed. You can also sign up to Gift Aid online at [samaritans.org/GA](http://samaritans.org/GA)

If you have already signed up to Gift Aid - thank you! The message on the enclosed form will say so and you do not need to take any further action.

# Samaritans' work with the gambling industry



## One of Samaritans' priority issues this year is addressing and gaining a greater understanding of gambling-related harm.

In July, we announced that we are working with the Gambling Commission and the gambling charity GamCare to develop guidance for gambling operators on responsible action in response to suicide risks. This will strengthen the existing requirements on the gambling industry to identify those at risk and to take action to address and reduce harm.

We are also working to review the tools and resources available to operators around suicide prevention, with a view to establishing a toolkit that includes a training module for the industry that will sit within GamCare's existing suite of resources. As a priority issue, we are also looking at undertaking more research on gambling-related harm in order to be better informed on what needs to be done to protect and support people.

Separately to this, Paddy Power Betfair (PPB) selected Samaritans as their Charity of the Year in April after members of its head office staff chose

to support us. As well as their dedicated fundraising for Samaritans until April 2020, we will be working with PPB to share our insight and expertise to inform their activity on reducing gambling harm and supporting vulnerable customers.

We will be supporting the development of existing PPB vulnerable customer training and their Customer Activity & Awareness Programme, which looks at interventions with at-risk customers, including self-exclusion policies. Samaritans is also helping to improve the mental wellbeing of Paddy Power Betfair's head office staff through our Wellbeing in the Workplace training and resources. These promote wellbeing, boost resilience and will equip their staff with the skills and confidence to support anyone in distress.

We believe our work in the gambling industry will contribute towards our vision of reducing the number of deaths by suicide, and will help Samaritans continue to deliver our vital service which provides support to anyone struggling to cope, **24 hours a day, 365 days a year.**

# Taking on the military

Over the past two years, we've been developing new Samaritans' support services for the armed forces. We've also released a training programme to help our volunteers better understand the language, culture and challenges of this community which includes serving personnel, veterans and their families.

Our services involve giving listening support on a face-to-face basis, developing listening skills in others and raising awareness of the services we offer.

It's not a new idea. Many of our Samaritans branches have been doing outreach work with the armed forces for a while. Last year saw a huge increase in this work, with our volunteers visiting local military establishments and veterans' centres UK-wide.



We've run workplace training with the British Army to help improve understanding of emotional health and the best ways to have a conversation with someone who may be in a vulnerable position. This year alone, we've trained over 1,000 soldiers and officers.

One serving member who carried out our training says: "It's made me a lot more confident about speaking to vulnerable people."

We're developing further tailored training to help us improve peer support within the armed forces. For example, we're currently working on a learning tool that will help veterans cope with the emotional side of getting back into civilian life.

We're also working on an internationally accessible version of the Samaritans webchat, in partnership with the Ministry of Defence. This will mean serving personnel posted outside the UK and their families will be able to access our volunteers' support.

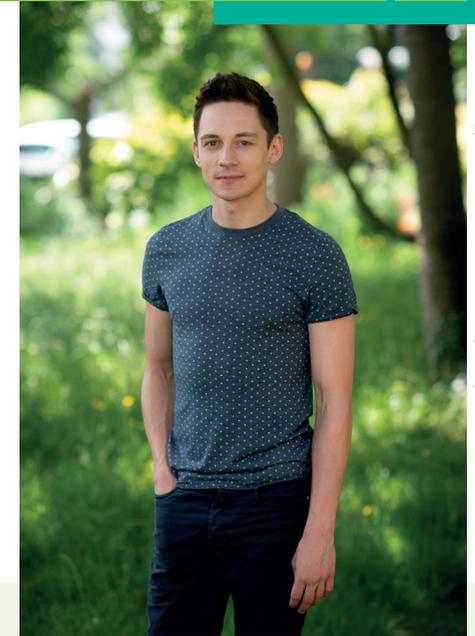


Read about our webchat service – another way we're reaching out to people who are struggling – on page 10.

# Talking saved my life

James Downs' experience with Samaritans inspired him to become a listening volunteer at our Cambridge branch, and support others who are finding things tough. James is now studying for a Masters degree at the University of Cambridge.

During his worst times, James, now 30, lived with thoughts of suicide every day. He had anorexia and felt he had little space to talk about his feelings. Shortly after trying to end his life, he reached out to Samaritans.



Chris O'Donovan photography/Samaritans

*"Powerful suicidal thoughts were made more frightening by not being able to talk about them. A lot of the time I didn't really want to die – I just didn't want to live the life I had, and there seemed little prospect things would become easier."*

*"After having to drop out of my studies, I decided to take my own life. I can't remember much of what happened, or even how I got to hospital that night. But I do remember calling Samaritans. Growing up, my mum was a volunteer, so I was lucky to have an awareness of their work from a young age."*

*"The power of someone finally listening to me without judgement – I realised there were other options. It was talking that saved my life."*

*"I was nervous about opening up – I'd had experiences of people not really understanding. But this wasn't the case – I was encouraged to speak in my own time, without being pushed."*

*"One of the great powers of emotional distress is its ability to make you feel alone with your struggles. Talking can help break this, especially when you're met with compassion, as you are at Samaritans."*

*"I was encouraged to speak in my own time, without being pushed. It was talking that saved my life."*

# Kerry's tribute to Ken

**Kerry and her husband Brett were in shock when Brett's grandad Ken took his own life. They were determined to create a fitting tribute to Ken and spread the message that Samaritans will always be there for anyone who's struggling.**

*"On Saturday 9 June 2018, we were waiting for Ken to arrive for lunch. When he didn't arrive at 1pm, we knew something was wrong. A short while after, we learnt he had taken his own life. We don't know why. There were no signs of depression, illness or anything that suggested he was struggling."*

*"We just wish he'd talked to someone about what he was going through. This experience showed me suicide can affect anyone. Since that day, I've wanted to raise awareness of Samaritans as they are available 24/7, 365 days a year and will always be there for you."*

Kerry set up a Tribute Fund in memory of Ken. Tribute Funds are a central place



where you can share photos, collect thoughts and light candles to honour your loved one. You can also track any money you're raising for Samaritans in their memory.

*"I would encourage anyone thinking of setting up a Tribute Fund for Samaritans to do it. It has been really comforting to know the money is going towards helping others, and it's important to have somewhere to upload your favourite photos for you and the family to share. Samaritans has been very grateful and provided excellent support to help raise money to create a fitting tribute for Grandad."*

Find out how you can set up a Tribute Fund at [samaritans.org/inmemory](https://www.samaritans.org/inmemory)



# Samarathon success

**An amazing 1,750 supporters signed up for our first-ever Samarathon this July and wow what a month it was! Samarathon is a virtual event, so anyone could take part by running, jogging or walking the marathon distance of 26.2 miles in their own time and at their own pace throughout July.**

Presenters Gail Porter and Lorraine Kelly were talking about Samarathon on the breakfast TV sofa in the build-up to the event. And a number of other ambassadors showed their support on social media, including footballer Leon McKenzie, campaigner Natasha Devon and reality TV star Pete Wicks.

Hundreds of participants shared their Samarathon stories on Twitter too, using the hashtag #Samarathon to help

Samaritans raise awareness and funds. We're truly humbled by everyone's efforts, with participants clocking up a grand total of 30,000 miles and an incredible £100,000. This will mean we can fund, recruit and train 500 new listening volunteers, so we're here for more people when they need us most.

Samarathon may be done and dusted but it doesn't have to stop there. Join **#TeamSamaritans** and let us inspire your next crusade or fundraiser! Sign up for our new fundraising pack at [samaritans.org/DIY](https://www.samaritans.org/DIY)



**Date for your diary!  
Choose any Monday in  
January or February.**

## Brew Monday

Share the warmth this winter. When it's cold and grey outside, getting people together for a big warming cuppa to connect over a good conversation can make everyone feel a little better. This coming February we're asking supporters to share the warmth with friends, family or colleagues by hosting

a Brew Monday get-together. The free Brew Monday fundraising kit – with helpful conversation starters, free tea and fundraising ideas – will be available later this year.

Find out more and register for your kit at [samaritans.org/brewmonday](https://www.samaritans.org/brewmonday)



## Reaching out online

**The way people communicate is changing. And though mobile phones are everywhere, traditional voice calls are in decline. Younger people in particular are more likely to communicate via chat, messaging and social media, with older generations increasingly using the same means of communication.**

These changes pose challenges for Samaritans. We want to be there for people any time – day or night – in a way that works for them. So we carried out research with volunteers, callers and others to understand what people need from a new service. This led us to start developing a webchat service, which will soon be available on our website, enabling anyone who is struggling right now to contact us online.

We've recently completed a series of four live pilots at branches UK-wide – with 75 volunteers from 38 branches representing nine regions taking part. Feedback from volunteers and people who took part in the pilots has been extremely positive.

Emma, a volunteer who took part in the pilot, says:

*“ Much to my surprise, it was so much easier than I had ever anticipated. All the fears I had from ‘not hearing a voice’ to ‘how do you know when they are silent?’ totally diminished. I was able to put my Sams hat on and literally talk.”*

We hope to make the webchat service available to the public regularly, with reliable opening hours. To do this, we'll need to train and support many of our current volunteers – and recruit and train many more. We'll grow the service gradually, and hope to make it eventually available 24/7 every day of the year, just like our other channels.

# Samaritans partner for online suicide prevention

**Some of the world's largest social media firms and technology companies have signed up to fund a new partnership with Samaritans to tackle harmful suicide and self-harm content online.**

Google, Facebook/Instagram, Twitter and Pinterest are all involved in the new £1m programme, in a move supported by the Department for Health and Social Care. The hub of excellence will be a world first – bringing together the views of academics, industry experts and young people. The aim is to help everyone, especially children and young people, stay safe online.

At Samaritans, we'll start the work with an innovative research project focused on self-harm and suicide-related harm online. This will be the foundation for

building shared knowledge and will allow us to create industry standards that ensure quicker removal of harmful content. We also hope to improve access to support for people who need it.

To do all this, we need to know more about how certain content affects different people. So we'll include evidence on how to manage harmful content effectively, and advice for organisations and professionals concerned about online content.

Ruth Sutherland, CEO, says:

*“ We look forward to building a strategic partnership with government and the world's leading technology companies that will help us all tackle the issue of dangerous online content relating to self-harm and suicide together.”*

*“ We all have a role to play in suicide prevention and, by working together, we believe this hub of online excellence will drive meaningful change on an issue that needs urgent attention.”*



If you or someone you know is struggling to cope, remember you can call us for free, day or night, on **116 123** or email us at [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

# Catching up with Emily

You may remember reading about Emily in March. Emily emailed Samaritans for support when her anxiety became so severe it started affecting her everyday life. We spoke with her recently to see how she is now and this is what she told us.



Chris O'Donovan photography/Samaritans

*“Since I last spoke with everyone at Samaritans, I have been rather busy. Alongside my job as a Kids’ Club leader at a local gym, I’m still studying on my Mental Health Awareness course and aiming to finish within the next couple of months. I am looking to start a fitness instructor course in late autumn, so I can eventually go on to train as a personal trainer.*”

*“I have recently taken part in two national figure skating competitions where I was placed second and first. I am working towards to taking my NISA (National Ice Skating Association) level 1 tests in the upcoming months.*”

*“My anxiety is still up and down and I have my good days and my bad days.*”

*But I am still seeing a counsellor and am on the right track to getting it under control. Samaritans, among other people, gave me the push and support I needed to seek help from a professional. I am so glad that happened as it has changed my life massively.”*

Thank you to everyone who supported our March appeal – your donations, which raised over £50,000, help ensure we can be there for people like Emily.

If you know someone who needs help, they can call us on **116 123** for free or email [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

# Handwritten support

**Maria volunteers at a branch with a difference. She tells us about this little-known Samaritans’ service.**



There’s something so personal and authentic about putting pen to paper and getting all your thoughts and feelings out in your own handwriting.

*“Not everyone knows this, but people can (and do) write freepost letters to Samaritans. You can post a letter to ‘Chris’ and it will be read and responded to – with a handwritten reply – by our Correspondence branch.*”

*“I’m a Samaritan at my local branch, and also a member of Correspondence branch. Everyone’s surprised when they hear about us. Plenty of people write to Samaritans, even in this digital age.*”

*“When I joined this branch, I had the idea we’d correspond with people who didn’t like technology or have access to it. I quickly learnt how wrong I was. It could be the writer doesn’t have access to a computer or phone, but more often it’s people who prefer to write their thoughts down – and find this a cathartic process.*”

*“Correspondence branch volunteers tend to reply to the same person, so you can go on a journey with the individual person, supporting them emotionally through the struggles they’re going through. It’s an honour to be there, by their side.*”

*“Being able to offer people the choice of how they want to contact us is part of our continued commitment to be there for everyone. It’s the best feeling in the world when someone thanks you for taking the time to write back to them.”*

Write to us:  
**Chris, Freepost RSRB-KKBY-CYJK,  
PO Box 9090, Stirling FK8 2SA**

# Why I'm a listening volunteer



Nick Martin is a listening volunteer at our Guildford branch. He tells us what the role means to him.

*“Volunteering with Samaritans is the best thing I've ever done. It's given me a real sense of purpose – something I've been looking for all my life. I have struggled with my own mental and emotional health, especially when I was at university. And I am so grateful to be able to do something to help others going through tough times.”*

*“The difference it can make to someone is profound. I help with outreach at our local station and it is so humbling when someone comes up and says: 'Thank you so much – you saved my life.'”*

**“Volunteering with Samaritans is the best thing I've ever done.”**

*“I love the simplicity of what we do – we listen: to anyone, about anything. It can be very challenging. It is difficult even to imagine some of the things we hear. But it is also very rewarding, particularly when someone feels able to share something with you that they have never spoken to anyone else about.”*



If you're interested in finding out more about volunteering for Samaritans, visit [samaritans.org/volunteer](http://samaritans.org/volunteer)

SAMARITANS

# Christmas Raffle 2019

Imagine winning £5,000 this Christmas. What would you do with the money?

1st prize  
£5,000

2nd prize  
£500

3rd prize  
£100

Plus  
10 prizes of  
£40

Just  
£1 per  
Ticket

*“This was the first time I'd ever won anything in a raffle, it made me realise that sometimes you can get lucky.”*

Jerry, previous raffle winner

Play today for your chance to win the top prize of £5,000 – not to mention the other 12 prizes up for grabs!

**Closing date:**  
Tuesday 19 November 2019

**Draw date:**  
Tuesday 3 December 2019

Play online at [samaritans.charitylotteries.co.uk](http://samaritans.charitylotteries.co.uk)  
If you'd like more tickets, call our hotline on 0370 034 0789

## SAMARITANS

Did you know what your donations could help fund?

- £ It costs £6.50 for a trained volunteer to offer emotional support to someone at a festival.
- £ £20 a month could train a new volunteer to be there when it matters.
- £ A donation of £46 could help us train and support an existing volunteer to be there for someone struggling to cope.
- £ A donation of £208 could keep Samaritans' phone line open for 24 hours.
- £ It costs £2,800 an hour to deliver our service through 20,000 trained volunteers.

Chris O'Donovan photography/Samaritans

Thank you for your continued support. If you'd like to make a donation, please use the form and freepost envelope enclosed, visit [samaritans.org/donate](https://www.samaritans.org/donate) or call our Supporter Care Team on **03709 00 00 32**.

Samaritans is a charity registered in England and Wales (219432) and in Scotland (SC040604).  
Samaritans, The Upper Mill, Kingston Road, Ewell KT17 2AF.