

Lewisham, Greenwich and Southwark Samaritans

Annual Report 2018-19

SAMARITANS

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Our Vision, Mission and Values

Samaritans' vision is that fewer people die by suicide

We work to achieve this vision by making it our mission to alleviate emotional distress and reduce the incidence of suicide feelings and suicidal behaviour.

We do this by:

Being available

24 hours a day to provide emotional support for people who are struggling to cope, including those who have had thoughts of suicide.

Reaching out

to high risk groups and communities to reduce the risk of suicide.

Working in partnership

with other organisations, agencies and experts.

Influencing public policy

and raising awareness of the challenges of reducing suicide.

Our Values

We are committed to the following values:

1. **Listening**, because exploring feelings alleviates distress and helps people to reach a better understanding of their situation and the options open to them.
2. **Confidentiality**, because if people feel safe, they are more likely to be open about their feelings.
3. **People making their own decisions** wherever possible, because we believe that people have the right to find their own solution; and telling people what to do takes responsibility away from them.
4. **Being non-judgemental**, because we want people to be able to talk to us without fear of prejudice or rejection.
5. **Human contact**, because giving people time, undivided attention and empathy meets a fundamental emotional need and reduces distress and despair.

What we do

Our volunteers support people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those which may lead to thoughts of suicide, by offering emotional support via telephone, email, text or face-to-face contact.

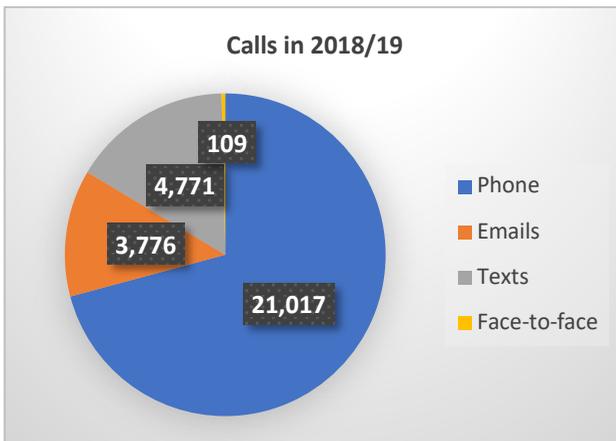
Our branch has over 130 dedicated listening volunteers from diverse and varied backgrounds but all sharing the same common values: they are non-judgemental, caring and genuinely wanting to support whoever calls, emails, texts or visits the branch. We also have a team of nine non-listening support volunteers, sharing the values but preferring to support the running of the branch.

Being available

From April 2018 to March 2019, Lewisham, Greenwich and Southwark Samaritans:

- **Spent 5,356 hours on the phone;**
- **Answered 21,017 calls;**
- **Replied to 3,776 emails;**
- **Replied to 4,771 texts;**
- **Spoke to 109 people face-to-face, either at our branch or at external events.**

Overall, our volunteers supported people through almost 30,000 contacts during the year. We also undertake a significant amount of Outreach activity to raise awareness of the services we provide. Last year we reached over 1,200 people through talks to schools, colleges and various other groups and during our Network Rail Outreach we raised awareness with over 9,000 people by handing out contact cards and travel wallets at local stations, as well as being available to listen to anyone who wanted to talk.



Celebrating our 50th Anniversary



"Samaritans, can I help you?" These words have been part of my life for over 46 years as I have been a volunteer at the Lewisham, Greenwich and Southwark branch of Samaritans since 1973. Currently the branch is located in Angus Street in New Cross overlooking Fordham Park. This is the branch's third centre, the first being close to the then Deptford Library in Lewisham Way, the second in New Cross Road. We have been at the current location for over 10 years. The branch has been very fortunate to have been supported by Lewisham Council throughout its existence by the council making premises available to us at a peppercorn rent.

During the time I have been a volunteer at the branch there have been well over 1,000,000 contacts from people needing support in their lives. When I started, people could contact the Samaritans by phone, by visiting the centre or by writing, saying how they were feeling. Additionally, people can now also contact Samaritans by email and text messages. In all of the time the branch has existed the Samaritan values and principles have not changed regardless of how someone contacts us. These include: what is said to the Samaritans is treated as confidential and we cannot trace calls; we do not advise people; the person is in control of the contact and their destiny and they can remain anonymous if they want to. The branch also has a diverse community Outreach programme.

Although I have been a volunteer at the branch for over 46 years, the branch was established in 1969 and is therefore celebrating its 50th Anniversary this year. As part of these celebrations to mark 50 years of service to the three boroughs and beyond, volunteers are attending a range of community events in Lewisham, Greenwich and Southwark.

These include supporting the London Marathon runners in Deptford, attending a range of events run by organisations supporting positive mental health and well-being, being at railway stations to provide support and information about the Samaritans, with a major event at New Cross Gate station in June and working with community groups across the three boroughs.

We are also holding two "Green Door" events at our centre for invited organisations, one in July and one in August 2019 to inform them about the work of the Samaritans and how we can work together to support vulnerable people.



In all the events we are involved in during 2019 we aim to raise further people's awareness of Samaritans and also to encourage people to volunteer to support our work.

The branch is also aiming to raise £5,000 above our usual fund-raising efforts, mainly by encouraging 100 people or organisations to donate £50 each (£1 for each year of the branch's existence). There is also a party planned in October to take place at the Rivoli Ballroom in Crofton Park for volunteers, past and present, their families and friends and other people and organisations, to say thank you for supporting the branch over the years in so many ways.

It is good to know that our local MP, Vicky Foxcroft, recognises the contribution of the branch.

Vicky Foxcroft, Member of Parliament for Lewisham Deptford says:



"I am pleased to offer my support to the Samaritans and join them in celebrating their 50th Anniversary this year. The Samaritans carry out incredible work across the country, providing emotional support to thousands of people each year who are struggling and feel they have no one else to turn to.

I am particularly impressed by the work that Lewisham Samaritans do in the community, working in partnership with local organisations such as St Mungo's and the 999 Club as well as NHS partners in South East London. The role they play in helping people in Lewisham get the support they need is vital and undoubtedly saves lives."

The Mayor of Lewisham also recognises the work of the branch:

Damien Egan, Mayor of Lewisham, says: "We all have mental health and anyone can experience mental health problems at any time in their life. I am hugely grateful to Lewisham Samaritans for the support they have provided to those who need them over the last 50 years.

"Lewisham has a proud tradition of working alongside its diverse voluntary sector to help transform the lives of residents. We call it the 'Lewisham Way' and Lewisham Samaritans are very much part of it. The Council is pleased to provide workspace for volunteers at a peppercorn rent, so they can continue their vital work."



So, 2019 is a very busy year for the branch, but we are looking forward to the next 50 years!

Director's Report



I am honoured to take over as Director of Lewisham, Greenwich & Southwark Samaritans branch during our 50th anniversary year. As you can see from elsewhere in this report, while things may have changed over the last 50 years, we remain focused on our vision that fewer people die by suicide, answering over 30,000 calls each year.

There is, of course, a lot more that goes into enabling us to achieve this mission than answering the phones (and texts, and emails) – from ensuring our branch is fit for purpose, and welcoming for volunteers, to making sure we are well run as a charity and keeping us in good financial health which we are ably helped by our treasurer and growing work in fundraising. I'm pleased that we are able to capture the experience of some of our support volunteers in this report.

Of course all of this keeps us very busy and we've been working on ways to make the workload more digestible under the leadership of Will 547, and we are proposing some new ways of working which are outlined later on in this report. I hope you'll agree that should help share the work (and love!). We are also eagerly awaiting changes to the ways that we recruit, select and train volunteers, and of course the introduction of Instant Messaging – all of which make it an exciting time to be a Samaritan volunteer in whatever capacity.

As you will be able to see in this report, our branch and the wider work of Samaritans is valued greatly by the wider community, and we play a crucial role in supporting those in need in our society. I'm always struck by the feeling that I am making a difference when I volunteer, and I hope you do too.

It is truly astonishing and humbling to think of your generosity in giving up your time to the branch in terms of shifts, recruiting, training, leading shifts and our Outreach work which includes National Rail and listening work in prisons, (not to forget keeping us well fed with biscuits!). It is thanks to all of your hard work that we're in a strong position in our 50th year – here's to the next 50 (and another three of my tenure!).

I would also like to give a specific thank you to our supporters, who generously donate to our branch – either directly through financial support, or through benefit in kind support.

Adam 1156

Our Trustees

Adam Campbell
Michael O’Kane
Ruth Driscoll
Rachel Aistrop

Jean Gilardi
John Sabine
Hazel Wright

Thank Yous

Lewisham Council
Blackheath Choir
Peter & Theresa Harris Trust
Maxwell Majome (our branch handyperson)
Maureen Day for examining the accounts

Building for a Sustainable Future

This year, the Leadership Team at LGS Samaritans has taken a number of steps to strengthen the sustainability of our charity. We want to ensure our work is built on solid foundations, so we can continue supporting volunteers to deliver our listening service not just this year, but also well into the future.

LGS Samaritans consistently recruits and trains applicants to become listening volunteers. This year we conducted new research into every aspect of the volunteer journey people undertake with us, to better understand how we can make the most of our fantastic volunteers.

The results of the study were reassuring in that almost without exception people reported extremely positive experiences of volunteer support from our branch. The research findings also helped us identify a number of small improvements needed to our practices around volunteer retention to maximise the productivity of our volunteers.

Finance and fundraising are fundamental to ensuring our charity is built on firm foundations. This year we recruited a qualified chartered accountant as our Treasurer, and she has taken steps to strengthen both the governance and management of our finances. Improvements include the introduction of clearer policies and procedures for invoicing, financial reporting to our Board, and reserves and investments.

On the fundraising side, our aim is to develop a secure and diversified funding base. Our branch has a small but highly committed group of community fundraisers who regularly raise funds through local events such as carol singing and local collections. This year, we have supplemented their efforts with those of a volunteer with skills and experience in trusts and foundations fundraising, and this resulted in a number of new grants.

This year, we have continued to strengthen the skills base of our Leadership Team, by recruiting from inside and outside our branch to fill key skills gaps such as digital communications.

Towards the end of the year, we held a Leadership Team Awayday to develop a strategic plan which sets out key challenges in our operating environment and concrete steps to be taken to meet these challenges. The plan covers all key areas of our branch's work, from community Outreach to premises management, and we will be actively using it to strengthen our organisation over the coming year.



We also introduced a new approach to running our Leadership Team, separating out the governance and operational aspects of our charity's work, to ensure we are able to perform well at both key functions.

Taken together, all these measures are helping to build a secure and sustainable future for LGS Samaritans.

Fundraising

The festive celebrations got into full swing at Canary Wharf in December thanks to rousing carols from the Blackheath Choir, and we collected over £3,000 in cash donations. We are also lucky to have a very active bunch of volunteers taking part in various events to support the branch. This year, ten runners laced up their trainers and braved the wind and rain in order to raise nearly £3,500 during The Big Half in March, and many are getting ready to take on the Samarathon challenge this July.

This year is a very special year for our branch and in order to celebrate our 50th Anniversary, we have launched a 50/50 campaign to try to get 100 individuals or local businesses to donate or raise £50 – £1 for every year we have been running. Thanks to the generosity of Clapham & Clapham Park Montessori and a number of individual donors, we have already reached almost £1,500 of our £5,000 target. Please visit: <https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/50years> for more details.

As part of this campaign, volunteers have also been clearing out their shelves and donating unwanted CDs, DVDs and books. The first couple of donations have already raised over £50 for our branch, and so we would happily welcome more! And a big thank you to University of West Scotland, London who collected a big bag of CDs and DVDs for us.

Finally, with a celebration evening organised in October by Debbie and Ros, this should be a year to remember!



Samaritans National Walk 2019

This year's Samaritans National Walk, organised by Teesside Branch on 8 June, was a pretty challenging experience but I'm glad I did it. I wasn't the only LGS walker present – Ian 1308 came north to do his first Samaritans Walk. We had done a couple of night shifts together shortly before the Walk but hadn't got around to mentioning our intentions to do it. So LGS Branch was fully represented. 2020's walk will be hosted by Truro Branch and we both intend to go west and do that one, so if you're a walker please consider giving it a go. It's on 13 June and there'll be more information by the New Year.

So going back to the walk, the challenge was in the weather and the terrain. Climbing up steep hills on the North York Moors and walking over rough rocky surfaces, descending down wobbly slippery slopes, stepping in squelchy mud and deep puddles in rain, strong winds and fog were a few of the features. But we did it – all 40 km/25 miles, and we've got the certificates.

It's great to receive the messages of encouragement and generous donations towards the Branch's 50th birthday fundraising target via <http://justgiving.com/fundraising/Marita-Sanders1>

Thank you so much – **Marita 306**

Trusts and Foundations



In February, we received a third donation of £10,000 from the Peter and Teresa Harris Charitable Trust who have supported our Outreach work since 2016.

The Vintners Foundation has also generously provided £5,000 towards the salary of our Community Outreach Manager. We have a number of other proposals under review with other grant makers and hope to step up this area of our fundraising in the new financial year.

50th Anniversary Party

To celebrate our anniversary and to thank you all we would like to invite all volunteers, friends and family to a party at the Rivoli Ballroom in Crofton Park on Friday 4 October at 8pm. The Rivoli Ballroom is an amazing venue and one of the last remaining intact 1950s-style ballrooms left in London. We are really lucky to have secured this venue – you might have seen it on TV recently in the latest series of Luther or in the film "Avengers: Age of Ultron" and countless music videos.

There will be music and a bar, but unfortunately there will be no food. The evening will begin at 8pm so that should give you enough time to grab something to eat before you arrive.

We are asking people to book tickets online here so we have an idea of numbers. Tickets are selling fast so get them before it's too late!

Tickets are £5 each – please leave the payment for Debbie and your name in an envelope in the phone room next time you're on shift. Debbie will then get your ticket(s) to you.

If you have any questions about this please don't hesitate to contact **Ros 1026** or **Debbie 1091**.



Our Balances



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Lewisham Greenwich and Southwark Samaritans			1167963		CC16a
Receipts and payments accounts					
For the period from	1st April 2018	To	31st March 2019		

Section A: Receipts and Payments

	Notes	Restricted Funds (Outreach)		General Funds		Total	
		2018/19	2017/18	2018/19	2017/18	2018/19	2017/18
Receipts							
Donations		£ -	£ 10,000	£ 22,152	£ 13,850	£ 22,152	£ 23,850
Funds Raised			£ -	£ 14,690	£ 16,261	£ 14,690	£ 16,261
Grants - Outreach*		£ 5,000	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 5,000	£ 5,778
Grants - Other*		£ -	£ -	£ 8,781	£ 5,778	£ 8,781	£ -
Room Hire		£ -	£ -	£ 2,375	£ 2,608	£ 2,375	£ 2,608
Bank Deposit Interest		£ -	£ -	£ 44	£ 24	£ 44	£ 24
Reversal of Accruals - Extraordinary Income		£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 1,572	£ -	£ 1,572
Total		£ 5,000	£ 10,000	£ 48,042	£ 40,093	£ 53,042	£ 50,093
Payments							
Premises Overheads	1	£ -	£ 187	£ 16,616	£ 13,693	£ 16,616	£ 13,880
Direct Charitable Expenditure	2	£ -	£ 518	£ 14,513	£ 16,610	£ 14,513	£ 17,128
Fundraising and Publicity	3	£ -	£ -	£ 1,200	£ 672	£ 1,200	£ 672
Management and Administration	4	£ -	£ -	£ 9,077	£ 3,060	£ 9,077	£ 3,060
Community Outreach Activity	5	£ 10,446	£ 4,871	£ 10,446	£ 15,715	£ 20,892	£ 20,586
Total		£ 10,446	£ 5,576	£ 51,852	£ 49,750	£ 62,298	£ 55,326
Deficit/Surplus		-£ 5,446	£ 4,424	-£ 3,810	-£ 9,657	-£ 9,256	-£ 5,233

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

	2019	2018
Brought forward from previous year	£170,075	£175,307
(Deficit)/surplus for the year	£0	-£5,232
Carried forward to next year	£170,075	£170,075
Assets		
Fixed assets	£107,733	£115,481
Cash	£53,085	£54,594
	£160,818	£170,075
Liabilities (Funding)		
General funds	£46,503	£50,319
<i>Restricted funds:</i>		
Building project	£27,799	£33,240
Outreach project	£6,582	£6,582
Designated funds - building project	£79,934	£79,934
Total Funds	£160,818	£170,075

Print Name	Role	Signature	Date of Approval
Adam Campbell	Branch Director		07/08/2019
Rachel Aistrop	Branch Treasurer		08/08/2019

Notes

Note 1 - Premises Overheads	
Fixed Asset	£ 503
Insurance and Bank	£ 245
Utilities	£ 3,163
Repairs & Maintenance	£ 1,066
Housekeeping	£ 3,892
Depreciation	£ 7,748
Total	£ 16,616

Note 2 - Direct Charitable Expenditure	
Telephone & internet	£ 3,032
Travel	£ 7,131
Prison Expenses	£ 2,265
Publicity	£ 1,002
Training and Conferences	£ 1,082
Total	£ 14,513

Note 3 - Fundraising and Publicity	
Food and Hospitality	£ 827
Fundraising Costs	£ 373
Total	£ 1,200

Note 4 - Management and Administration	
Administrative Support	£ 2,805
Office	£ 4,784
NBC Contribution	£ 1,488
Total	£ 9,077

Note 5 - Community Outreach Activity	
Community Outreach - COM travel	£ 675
Community Outreach - Salary, NI and Pension	£ 20,216
Total	£ 20,891

Note 6. Building Leasehold Improvements

The branch acquired a 30-year lease for 1, Angus Street, London SE14 6LU from the London Borough of Lewisham for a peppercorn rent. Refurbishment work started in November 2008 and the branch moved in and started operating there in April 2009. Funds spent on the refurbishment of the building have been shown as a capitalised asset. The depreciation for the refurbishment is expensed annually to premises overheads.

Note 7. Depreciation Policy

The Charity capitalises fixed assets and depreciates them over the following periods:

Leasehold improvements	30 years
Fixtures and fittings	5 years
Computers and telephones	3 years

The Charity performed an assessment of fixed assets during the year and wrote off all except for the leasehold improvements in line with a new capitalisation policy agreed by the Trustees.

Note 8. Prison Expenditure

Prison expenditure has been reimbursed by a grant from HMPPS (formerly the National Offender Management Service).

Note 9. Reserves

The Charity seeks to maintain its reserves at the equivalent of 9 months` normal running costs. The current general reserve of £46,503 is in line with this target range.

Note 10. Restricted Funds

Our income in FY17/18 included a grant of £10,000 from the Peter and Teresa Harris Trust (Charity number 1161183). It was specifically provided to support the branch's outreach work and therefore we have recorded it as restricted funds to be used for outreach activities. In FY18/19 we received a grant of £5,000 from the Vintners' Foundation Committee. As intended, these funds have been and continue to be used in support of the branch's outreach work.

Note 12. Accounting Policies

12.1 Basis of Accounting

These accounts have been prepared on the receipts and payments basis in accordance with The Charities Commission guidance CC15d (Charity Reporting and Accounting: The Essentials - November 2016).

12.3 Fundraising monies from events organised by the Charity or on behalf of the Charity are included within payments as received.

12.4 Expenditure has been included as paid.

12.5 In previous years both income and expenditure was included on an accruals basis rather than a received and paid basis, but no prior year adjustment has been made as the net impact of the change is not considered material.

12.6 Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets of material value held by the Charity for its own use on a straight-line basis so as to write off their cost over their useful economic lives.

Note 13. Payment to Trustees

No payments have been made to Trustees except to reimburse purchases made for the Charity or expenses in the usual course of volunteering.



**CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES**

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name
Lewisham, Greenwich and Southwark Samaritans

On accounts for the year
ended

31 March 2019	Charity no (if any)	1167963
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Set out on pages

Responsibilities and basis of
report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/03/2019
As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").
I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's
statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act
- or the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.
* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed: Mr Day

Date: 25/07/2019

Name: MRS MAUREEN DAY

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body (if any):

N/A

Address:

18 FERNEY ROAD
EAST BARNET
EN4 8LF

Working in the Local Community

Reaching out to High-Risk Groups and Communities

In a time in which the way we interact as a society is changing rapidly, it is vital that we continue to try to reach out to those groups and communities we consider to be at the highest risk of suicidal feelings and behaviours.

Statistics show that middle-aged (45–49 years) men are still the group at the highest risk of suicide so the need to increase awareness of Samaritans services and encouraging people to talk are still at the heart of the strategy report issued by Samaritans Central charity. However, there is also now a greater recognition of how online interactions are impacting people's mental health as well as an increased focus on developing partnerships with local organisations also looking to support mental health in their areas. Using this guidance provided by Samaritans Central charity we aim to utilise our resources as efficiently as possible and ultimately work towards reducing rates of suicide across all demographics.

Oxleas and SLAM NHS Trusts

Our health partnerships with Oxleas NHS Trust and SLAM (South London and Maudsley) NHS Trust continue this year with 79 referrals received from the partners. Our focus has been changing our method of referral from fax to email in line with the national drive to end the use of fax machines within NHS services by 31 March 2020. To ensure a smooth transfer implementation, sessions were held with our partners' clinical teams. Though the change from fax to email referral has coincided with a drop in referrals we are continuing to work together to increase referrals as both partners see the services as a valuable complementary option for patients.

The 999 Club and St Mungo's

This year we have strengthened our homeless night shelter team. Training further volunteers has enabled us to provide more sessions over the course of the winter months to the 999 Club night shelter guests. In total we provided emotional support to 81 visitors at the 999 Club.

In line with our plan outlined in last year's annual report, at St Mungo's we now provide information stalls and attended the residents' meetings to raise awareness of our service. Additionally we delivered "the Power of Active Listening" training to St Mungo's staff at their awayday in May 2018.

Young People

Throughout this year we continued our work in local schools, further education (FE) colleges and universities. Assemblies delivered by Samaritans volunteers reached 580 secondary school pupils and 1 hour workshops were delivered to 120 secondary school pupils. Additionally we had the opportunity to provide a Suicide Trends and Myths information session to health care students at a local university. The feedback was excellent and many felt it would help them in understanding more about the clients that they worked with. This year we were also able to deliver training to teaching staff at a local school and an information session to teachers in southern England via a talk at the NASUWT regional meeting.

Prisons

It's been another busy year at Belmarsh, Thameside and ISIS for the prison team, made up of volunteers from Lewisham, Bexley and Bromley. We generally select and train Listeners twice a year at each prison, which is quite demanding for our volunteers.

We also regularly visit each prison to provide support to the Listeners who are providing emotional support to other prisoners.

Suicide and self-harm in prisons occurs at a much higher rate than in the non-prison population so the work that Listeners do to try to support their fellow prisoners is vitally important and very much appreciated by the prison service.

As a team we must work closely with the Safer Custody teams in each prison to ensure that we support the Listeners and that they in turn are supported by prison staff, enabling the Listening support to happen.

It can be time-demanding and the environment creates its own challenges, but for volunteers it is very rewarding, seeing the benefits not only to those in distress but for the Listeners themselves who not only learn new skills but also get a sense of self-worth from doing something positive for others.

Working in Partnership

While the work of Samaritans can often seem focused on supporting individuals it works best when we are making ourselves known and accessible to the individuals and organisations within our local communities. That is why as far as is possible the community Outreach manager regularly attends the networking events and forums organised by the voluntary action umbrella organisations within our three boroughs and participates in local community fairs and events.

LGS is equally committed to actively developing locally partnerships which also have a national profile. These include the Network Rail and Prison Listener Scheme projects.

Network Rail

In 2018/19 we have worked very effectively with our local rail stations as part of the national Network Rail and Samaritans partnership. This year we visited stations across the LGS catchment area 11 times. We have raised awareness by providing information to 9500+ people. Our Network Rail activities consist of a mix of awareness-raising work, usually carried out during the busy weekday morning hours, and more in-depth support work provided in response to specific incidents.



Training and Information Sessions



Workplace and partnership training programmes are a showcase for the expertise and support that Samaritans offers; they help to build our reputation as a trusted organisation and can also provide an income stream. Importantly, our awareness-raising, Outreach and training promote the great work that Samaritans does by creating high quality learning and development sessions to raise awareness and build suicide prevention skills in workplaces and organisations. These activities also provide an important way for branches to forge relationships in communities and help us to meet our strategic goals of reducing suicide and increasing social awareness of suicide prevention.

LGS works with local organisations to provide training to staff and clients of those organisations in line with needs that they have themselves identified. This year our most popular session has been the Power of Active Listening workshop which we have delivered to several different cohorts of carers at Greenwich Carers Centre, as well as to St Mungo's staff from Lewisham Assessment and Recovery Centre in New Cross. We have also had the opportunity this year to provide

sessions to teaching staff in a Greenwich borough school and at a regional teachers' union meeting. In the coming year we will be seeking to share more of this work in the borough of Southwark and in probation services.

Influencing Public Policy

In February 2016 the independent Mental Health Taskforce to the NHS in England published "The Five Year Forward View for Mental Health". This report included recommendations to "to reduce the number of suicides by 10% by the year ending March 2021 and for every local area to have a multi-agency suicide prevention plan in place by the end of 2017". More details can be found in the report: www.gov.uk/government/publications/suicide-prevention-third-annual-report

London boroughs have brought together Suicide Prevention Steering Groups (SPSG) to develop plans for their local areas. Lewisham, Greenwich and Southwark branch are active members of the local Suicide Prevention Groups in the three boroughs that we serve. These groups meet on a regular basis and are tasked with developing and implementing a suicide prevention strategy in their boroughs. LGS has been particularly active in the communication task group for the Greenwich SPSPG and provided feedback on the strategies and action plans of each of the three boroughs we work in.

Life as a Listening Volunteer

Just before my first shift going solo, over 11 years ago, I was very nervous. Without the outstanding training and mentoring, the encouragement of fellow volunteers and my admiration for the work of the Samaritans, I wouldn't have felt able to go ahead. Today, I'm no longer so apprehensive – except, it seems, when I'm returning from holiday! – but, as I set off to do my shifts, I'm definitely still keyed up.

Our branch has changed a lot since I joined in 2007. We have moved buildings and there are many more volunteers. We have significantly expanded and developed Outreach. We have a team dedicated to prisons. Now, we do texting, safeguarding and signposting and there is more discretion about how we might approach discussing suicidal feelings. The Referrals system is more extensive, including covering requests from Oxleas and SLAM, our local mental health trusts. Constitutionally, we have more autonomy as a branch.



Occasionally I feel nostalgic. I did have a soft spot for the handwritten log! On the other hand, I welcome having the shift rota in Three Rings, rather than hanging on the wall awaiting our pens – or the pen of whichever volunteer took our call when we rang in to ask if the slot we wanted was still available.

Of course, much has stayed the same. I'm still struck by the talent, commitment and diversity of the branch's volunteers, the friendly atmosphere and constantly supportive culture, all contributing to our responding as best we can to the individuals who contact us. We can never know what the next call will be like, but it could be the most significant conversation you ever have as a Samaritan.

David 978



I joined the Samaritans in 1988. As with everything, things were different then... In those days our branch was open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. I'm sure I'm not the only one who wonders how that was achieved!

Our office was in a large old 4-storey house on New Cross Road which brought with it the creaks and groans of a building of its age. We did shifts in pairs or alone; I wasn't a fan of doing shifts on my own. The stress and anticipation involved in going into your shift and seeing your shift buddy's name scribbled out in biro on the paper rota was enough to strike fear into even the most robust of us.

Night shifts were spent curled up in the big swivel chairs, hearing every rattle and creak of the walls and floors – never totally convinced I was actually alone. I was grateful for the lock on the phone room door... although there was always the inevitable toilet visit... unlocking the door... venturing out into the ice-cold corridor, trying to be as quick as possible so that I could get back to the safety of the warm phone room and lock the door behind me!

Things were different then – when you went into the phone room you were met with a wall of smoke; people speaking intently on the phone, cigarette in the overflowing ashtray beside them, sending

wisps of smoke towards the nicotine-stained ceiling (OK, maybe I'm exaggerating now for dramatic effect). I remember being in a meeting where a small, lone voice tried to feebly protest about the fog of smoke in the phone room – to be met with startled stares of disbelief from her colleagues; non-smokers didn't last long in those days...

Although many things have changed in the Samaritans, the service and the callers haven't. I still think it's an amazing concept that anyone can call and speak to a person 24 hours a day about whatever problems or issues they have – no ten minute slots or unwanted advice – just an empathetic ear – let's hope that never changes!

Carmel 539

Becoming a Samaritan has definitely been a really positive decision which I've made in my life (I have no regrets at all so far!). The training I received was very thorough and did a good job of helping me to feel ready to go into the phone room. Yet nothing can make you feel truly prepared for your first ever call. That was where my fantastic mentor Debbie 1091 came in, who definitely threw me in at the deep end – such is her teaching style! She taught me a great deal in terms of how to handle a call and help people explore their feelings. Now, as a probationer, I'm taking calls by myself and find the vast majority of them very rewarding.



I'd say the main reasons why I enjoy Samaritans so much is firstly because I have been able to meet some really like-minded people who hold similar values, and I always feel very welcome and at home whenever I come into the branch for my shift. The second reason is that it enables me to feel a great sense of fulfilment in helping other people. Even when I am unable to help a caller see their predicament differently, simply being with them in their pain can be rewarding in itself. And finally, the last reason why I enjoy Samaritans is because it has enabled me to develop as a person. I've definitely become at least a slightly better listener compared to my former self, and I've come to hold people in a less judgemental and more open-minded light! I look forward to continuing with my volunteering.

Will 1355



I'm really glad that I've had the opportunity to become a Samaritan. I was motivated in two ways, one was to support people experiencing psychological distress, and the other was to hear people's stories and find out first-hand about their experiences. There is so much in the news about mental health and the stresses people are coping with, but it felt like I was watching from a distance. I wanted to hear directly about what people are going through and to see if by listening I could help.

I had hoped to become a Samaritan for a while but other things got in the way as they do, so I finally started the training in April 2018. The information evening was really useful. Two areas stood out for me: self-determination and the emphasis on listening and not giving advice. I find this liberating.

I have found that being a Samaritan is being part of a community of very different but like-minded people. The spirit of mutual support is strong. For me this started with the group I trained with who I liked very much. Then the support from my mentor Will 574 was great. I learnt a lot and gained confidence. Moving into being a probationer and going it alone on the phones was a bit daunting but other Sams on shift have been really supportive and I like the way each call is different and we share experiences and ideas. I'm not sure that you'd meet people with such a diverse range of backgrounds and interests all doing the same thing anywhere else.

Each shift is different. This keeps you on your toes. Some calls are very challenging.

The thing I appreciate the most is how, by actively listening you can enable callers to identify and access resources they never realised they had, so although their lives are not perfect they are a bit easier to cope with. Of course, each call is different but taking the time listen to has real value for many people and I'm glad I can contribute.

One final thing to mention is the importance of tea and biscuits to being a Samaritan!

Moirá 1339

The Importance of Non-listening Volunteers

I had been a Listening volunteer at the branch for around 12 years, but other factors in my life meant I was unable to meet the regular commitment to telephone shifts. While the interaction with our callers is the core of the branch, it cannot run effectively without a well-supported "back office", and I have subsequently been a support volunteer helping the branch function.

Although I have undertaken a number of support roles including publicity and fundraising, my current role is supporting our volunteer rota system (Three Rings), the Samaritans Intranet (Samaritansnet) and payroll services to our salaried employees. I am able to do this "remotely" – I moved out of London in 2018 and I am an infrequent visitor to the branch these days – I do miss my Samaritans colleagues!

Notwithstanding this, I still get a tremendous amount out of providing support to the volunteers supporting our callers, and I am lucky to be well supported by the LGS Samaritans team.

Peter 808

I feel really lucky to be able to use the skills I have developed through my career to help support Lewisham, Greenwich and Southwark Samaritans. It's rare to find a local volunteering role where I can really add value and see my work benefit the charity. And it's a two-way road, for everything I put in I gain back in experience, opportunity and support.

This year in particular I have enjoyed helping out on the 50th birthday celebrations by designing a flyer, increasing our social media presence on Twitter and rebuilding our branch webpages on the new Samaritans website.

To anyone thinking about becoming a volunteer, I would say go for it!

Hazel 1317

Our Premises are for Hire

The Angus Suite is the ground floor of our branch in New Cross: two meeting rooms and an attractive garden fully supported by kitchen and toilet/baby changing facilities. The Angus Suite (wheelchair accessible) is particularly suitable for activity group meetings, interview sessions, training and conferences, with or without light refreshments. For a one-off meeting, or a short course, our premises are ideal, and well situated, in walking distance of two stations.



Hiring the Angus Suite directly supports the work of Lewisham, Greenwich & Southwark Samaritans, with almost all hire costs going straight into funding listening support.



Hire rates

Concessionary: £28 per hour
 Voluntary sector & community organisations
 e.g. tenants' associations, charities etc

Standard: £33 per hour
 Statutory companies, local authority
 departments, colleges etc

Commercial: £38 per hour
 Corporate and business organisations

To book

Room Hire Co-ordinator
 Victoria Hyam is happy to
 show you round the rooms
 and discuss hire.

Contact Victoria on:
victoriahyam@yahoo.co.uk
 or 07899 994039



Standing Order Form

Send a regular gift and help us help those experiencing feelings of distress or despair including those which may lead to suicide

Your Name and Address

Title: First Name: Surname:

Address:

Postcode: Telephone: Email:

I wish to pay Lewisham, Greenwich & Southwark Samaritans the sum of:

£ monthly £ quarterly £ annually

£ a one-off donation

Standing Order

Please complete this section if you wish to pay by Standing Order

To the Manager of: (Name of Bank)

at: (Bank address)

(Postcode)

Account no. to be debited: Sort Code:

Please pay Lewisham, Greenwich & Southwark Samaritans the sum stated at the frequency stated above starting on __/__/____ and thereafter until further notice.

Payable to CAFBank Ltd, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4JQ for the account of Lewisham, Greenwich & Southwark Samaritans, account no. 00013640 sort code 40-52-40.

Signature:

THANK YOU!

Gift Aid Declaration

Yes, I want Lewisham, Greenwich & Southwark Samaritans to treat all donations I have made for the six years prior to this year, and all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise, as gift aid donations. I confirm that I pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax that the charity will reclaim on my donations in the tax year.



Please tick and date __/__/____

Please post your completed form to:

The Treasurer, Lewisham, Greenwich & Southwark Samaritans, 1 Angus Street, London SE14 6LU

Freecall 116 123 (free to call from any phone)
SMS 07725 909090

Email jo@samaritans.org

www.samaritans.org/branches/lewisham-greenwich-and-southwark-samaritans

Visit us – 1 Angus Street, London SE14 6LU

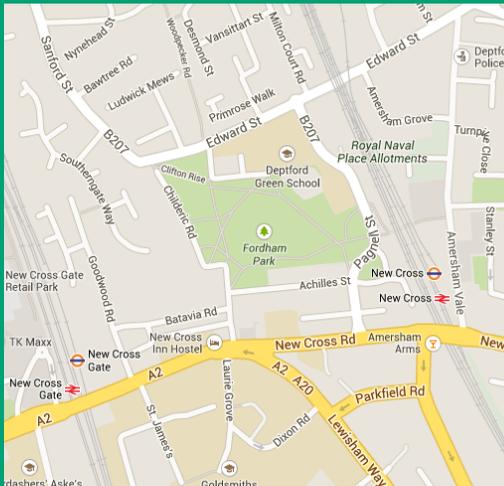
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