For the Appointment of Chair of the Samaritans Scotland Committee (Trustee)
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Thank you for your interest in joining Samaritans as the Scotland Committee Chair, and as our Scotland Trustee on the UK & ROI Board.

We have been at the forefront of reducing deaths by suicide for seven decades, ever since our founder Chad Varah took the very first Samaritans call back in 1953, describing himself as ‘just a man willing to listen, with a base and an emergency telephone’. From these humble beginnings, we’ve grown into one of the UK and Ireland’s most recognisable charities, with 201 branches and over 20,000 volunteers answering a call for help every six seconds. Around 1,000 of these volunteers are in Scotland, delivering our listening service and local outreach across 19 branches. In addition, our Scotland staff team, led by our Executive Director, Rachel Cackett, deliver a busy programme of national work.

This is a critical time in Samaritans’ history, as we face an external environment that is increasingly complex and challenging. The COVID-19 pandemic will alter society in ways none of us could have imagined. The political situation remains uncertain and important issues such as inclusion and diversity rightly continue to be prominent. Against this backdrop, we know our work is needed now more than ever. We are very fortunate, in this context, to be in a position of good financial health. Our task now is to ensure that we remain in this position, and that we can continue to be relevant and to create impact for the people we support in the future both in Scotland, and across the UK and ROI.

Our 2015-2021 strategy is about to come to end, and we have made huge progress over recent years. This includes significant growth in our reach and impact in Scotland. But we know there is more that we can do together in support of our vision to reduce suicide. It is imperative that we have the capacity and capability in place to design, develop and implement a UK & ROI strategy – and a Scotland delivery plan - that will deliver our aspirations in future years.

We cannot achieve our vision that fewer people die by suicide without inspirational, visionary, values-driven leadership from the very top of our organisation. A Trustee and Committee Chair for Scotland with the right skills, experience and knowledge, is pivotal to our future success. You will be instrumental in developing our governance function in Scotland to meet future need, and in ensuring we are trusted and recognised as a well-run, managed and governed charity.

Please find included in this pack a more detailed role description for our Scotland Chair, and broader Trustee role. I hope you feel inspired to consider working with us, and if you feel you bring the skills to be our next Scotland Committee Chair and Trustee, we will be delighted to receive an application from you. You will work alongside a highly talented leadership team and Board of Trustees, and in partnership with a community of volunteers and staff who are all hugely committed to achieving our vision.

I hope that you will be excited by this opportunity to shape the future of Samaritans, and our work in Scotland, and I look forward to receiving your application.

Keith Leslie
Chair of Samaritans
Why what we do matters

Every life lost to suicide is a tragedy, and Samaritans’ vision is that fewer people die by suicide. That’s why we work tirelessly to reach more people and make suicide prevention a priority.

Suicide in Scotland

About Us

Samaritans’ vision is that fewer people die by suicide. To achieve this vision across all nations of the UK and the Republic of Ireland, our current strategy has focused on:

- reducing the feelings of distress and crisis that can lead to suicide
- increasing access to support for people in distress and crisis reducing the risk of suicide in specific settings and vulnerable groups
- influencing governments and other agencies to take action to reduce suicide, and
- providing evidence through our own research.

We are now in the process of developing a new UK & ROI strategy to launch in 2022, alongside a strategy delivery plan for Scotland.

Our 20,000 volunteers operate a confidential listening service by phone and email 24 hours a day, 365 days a week through 201 branches spread across the UK & ROI. Listeners can be contacted by letter and, increasingly, through online chat as we roll out this service. In non-Covid times, Listeners also provide face-to-face support. We offer services or outreach in prisons, communities, schools and through major corporate partnerships, such as our suicide prevention activity with the rail network.
Our staff team of 250 across the UK & ROI is led by our CEO, Julie Bentley, and Executive Leadership Team. In Scotland, the Executive Director for Scotland, Rachel Cackett, is responsible for supporting the Scotland Committee Board and for the delivery of the Scotland plan. She acts as the public face of Samaritans in Scotland. She is accountable for Scotland’s part in the overall business, developing and delivering the national plan with the Scotland committee, raising awareness of suicide, developing and maintaining strategic partnerships and influencing policy and legislation. She is currently responsible for a team of five and works closely with the Scottish Network Rail Development Lead. She also engages extensively with our volunteer leadership in Scotland, including the Regional Director, who is the most senior volunteer leader in Scotland.

In Scotland our influencing activity has grown significantly in the last two years. We are core members of the National Suicide Prevention Leadership Group, which oversees the delivery of the national suicide prevention action plan and have sponsored work on improving suicidal crisis response. We have led national work on campaigning for a new approach to self-harm as a public health issue, securing a ministerial commitment to a new strategy and action plan. We have driven forward a new partnership on locations of concern to support reductions in suicide in public spaces. We have been central to the mental health response in Scotland through COVID – whether as a lead partner in the Scottish Government’s Clear Your Head campaign, collaborating on research on mental health and COVID, or ensuring Samaritans’ service is promoted as a source of support for those who are struggling.

We are also developing new community activity in the West Highlands and are early in the delivery of a three-year Scotland-wide programme to increase diversity and inclusion in our volunteer base.

This is an exciting time in Scotland for Samaritans, with significant opportunity to shape future approaches to suicide and self-harm in a new parliamentary term and with significant new investment in mental health improvement.
Our Values

We have five core values. They’re supported by these behaviours, which we share within the Samaritans organisation: support, trust, aspirational and respect.

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.

Non-judgemental
We want people to be able to talk to us without fear of prejudice or rejection. People making their own decisions wherever possible.

People making their own decisions
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 emotional need and reduces distress and despair.
In 2020, our volunteers spent **1.1 million** hours of their time on the core listening service alone, which is estimated at a value of **£16.5 million**. The total value of the time devoted by volunteers is considerably higher if recruitment, training, branch management, fundraising and outreach work is included. Volunteers are the foundation on which the strength of the Samaritans’ service is built.

Our annual income, depicted below, is maximised across our work. Our financial reserves are in a strong position and we have investments and property that add to our assurance of sustainability. We have a strong finance team to ensure that our plans to grow and innovate are formed from a position of financial strength and with the support of sound financial planning.

It is our intention to invest in our fundraising efforts. At present we do not realise the full potential of our known and trusted brand identity. Therefore, we seek to grow and diversify our income streams. The purpose of our growth is to do more to reduce deaths by suicide. We want to increase the accessibility and impact of our current services whilst innovating new approaches to engage underserved generations and demographics.

Like most other organisations in the charity sector, we were concerned about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic upon our income and overall financial position. Thankfully, our healthy existing reserves, combined with a highly productive Emergency Appeal, a successful bid for government funding and the development of new income streams, give us confidence at this stage that we will emerge from the current challenging situation in robust shape.
The Central Charity supports our 201 branches and volunteer network of 20,000 amazing people, in ensuring our services are constantly available to callers across our multiple platforms. The Central Samaritans team also carries out research, development and evaluation to support our influencing work and service development supports our volunteer recruitment and development activity; raises income to underpin the whole organisation.

Branches are run by volunteer Branch Directors and operate either as part of Samaritans Central Charity or as an incorporated charity operating through an affiliation agreement. 57 of these branches are part of Central Charity and 144 branches are affiliated. The relationship with all Samaritans branches is governed by the same operating agreement.

We are governed by Samaritans’ Articles of Association. The governing body is our Board of Trustees, which has a maximum of 15 members, a majority of whom must be members of Samaritans branches. In carrying out their responsibilities for governance and setting the strategic direction of the organisation, the Board is supported by a number of committees. We have recently appointed our first chair from outside of the traditional branch structure, Keith Leslie. The appointment follows our members agreeing a number of changes to modernise Samaritans’ governance and our ongoing board recruitment will help shape the development of Samaritans under Keith’s leadership. Since the appointment of our Chair, Keith Leslie, in January 2021 there has been significant development to our Trustee Board, including a number of exciting appointments to committee chair roles and the appointment our joint vice-chairs. The UK & ROI Trustee Board has a good balance of new appointments, members with more experience of Samaritans and skills to lead us into an exciting new strategy period. The governance structure is completed by the Regional Councils and the Council of Samaritans as described below.

Regional Councils
The Board is advised on key strategic and policy issues by the Regional Councils. The role of Regional Councils is to challenge, advise and guide the Board of Trustees on key policy issues affecting the wider Samaritans organisation and to act as a channel of communication between the Board of Trustees and the branches. Regions have separate meetings for operational service matters, regional plans and policy implementation in the region.

Council of Samaritans
The Council of Samaritans meets annually. It is comprised of 201 Branch Directors, 14 Regional Directors, ten Functional Leads and the Vice-Chair. The legal members of Samaritans are similar, namely the Branch Directors, Regional Directors, Functional Leads and the Chair. The Board reports to the Council of Samaritans annually on its activities and provides an update and review of progress against the strategic plan. The Council of Samaritans is the forum for Samaritans’ volunteer leadership to consider and discuss the work and direction of Samaritans and foster a sense of unity and collaboration across the organisation.
Scotland Committee

The Board of Trustees delegates authority to a number of committees. This includes the Scotland Committee. The current Terms of Reference for the Scotland Committee are due for review and the new Scotland Chair / Trustee will work with the Chair of Trustees to support the development of the wider scheme of delegation that will support delivery of the new Samaritans’ strategy in Scotland from 2022. There is also the opportunity for the new Chair to recruit to a number of vacant posts on the committee.

Currently the Scotland committee board is largely advisory in nature and aims to:

1. To work with the Executive Director for Scotland and the nation office to inform and support the nation plan which is developed to help deliver the Samaritans Strategy set by the Central Charity Board;
2. To inform, advise and support the Samaritans Central Charity on matters relevant to Scotland and on the delivery and development of the Central Charity Strategy;
3. Within the context of the nation plan and Samaritans Strategy, to support the Executive Director for Scotland and Central Charity External Affairs Team in public policy positions relevant to Scotland, influencing and profile building work for Samaritans;
4. To support the activities of Samaritans by providing oversight of any nation-specific programmes of activity that have been approved by the Central Charity Board.

Senior volunteers and staff

The 14 Regional Directors and Chair of Regional Directors provide a key link and communication channel between the Board of Trustees and the wider organisation and play a vital role in supporting our branches and implementing agreed policy.

Up to ten Functional Leads are appointed to have oversight of a particular area of the services provided by Samaritans, for example Caller Support or Prisons. Branch Directors, Regional Directors and Functional Leads are all volunteer roles.

Our CEO, Julie Bentley, is supported by an Executive Leadership and staff team, and working with the Regional Directors, is responsible for the delivery of the Central Charity’s strategy, operational plans and budgets that have been approved by the Board.
Our Organisation

Find out who we are, what we do, how we’re structured.

What we do
Samaritans is a unique charity dedicated to reducing feelings of isolation and disconnection that can lead to suicide.

Our vision, mission and values
Our vision is that fewer people die by suicide.

Our strategy
We know that the world is changing, and that we need to adapt to continue to provide and improve our vital services.

Our governance and structure
There are 201 local Samaritans branches and over 20,000 trained volunteers supported by our staff and leadership team.

Annual and impact reports
We’ve made our Annual Reports and Accounts, and Impact Report available to make sure we’re being as transparent as possible.

Administrative contact details
Samaritans Central Office is based in Surrey, England and we also have offices in Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Our safeguarding policy
In these specific situations, we may need to tell someone that you’ve got in touch with us.

National Suicide Prevention Alliance
The National Suicide Prevention Alliance (NSPA) is a cross-sector, England-wide coalition working to reduce suicide in England.

Support after Suicide Partnership
Samaritans is host to the Support after Suicide Partnership (SASP) and proud to support its work as an autonomous programme.
“As a military spouse, I’m used to moving from place to place. But I know I can join the local Samaritans branch and have a ready-made community around me.”

Polly, Samaritans volunteer
Role Description

Main purpose of role

The Scotland Committee is a sub-committee of Samaritans’ Trustee Board, providing governance over delivery of the Samaritans’ strategy in Scotland. The Scotland Committee Chair provides leadership to the committee and works with the Executive Director for Scotland to support effective in-nation delivery.

The Scotland Committee Chair is also a Trustee of Samaritans. The Trustee Board leads Samaritans to best achieve our vision that fewer people die by suicide, both through Samaritans’ direct service provision and our influencing work. The Trustee Board’s purpose is to be collectively responsible for the overall governance and strategic direction of the charity, and for developing the organisation’s aims, objectives and goals in accordance with the governing documents and legal and regulatory guidelines.

The Scotland Trustee will bring the voice of Scotland to the collective governance of our work across all four UK nations and the Republic of Ireland and help ensure the Samaritans’ strategic direction fully takes account of the Scotland context.

Role and support in organisation

Accountable to: Members of the charity, Board of Trustees
Liaises with Executive Director for Scotland, Samaritans Central Office Executive Leadership Team & other staff as appropriate; volunteers in senior roles
Works within a team of: Board of Trustees, Scotland Committee
Key Responsibilities

Role-specific responsibilities

- Lead/chair the Scotland Nation Committee in the development, approval and oversight of Samaritans strategy in Scotland.
- Work collaboratively with the Executive Director for Scotland and the Scotland staff and volunteer teams to support effective delivery of Samaritans’ vision in Scotland.
- Lead the committee in providing oversight to the Executive Director for Scotland to ensure Samaritans’ Scotland-specific public policy positions remain relevant, innovative and impact focussed and that organisation-wide public policy positions are applicable and effective within Scotland.
- Lead committee oversight of priorities for external influencing and engagement in Scotland within the parameters of Samaritans strategic framework.
- Lead committee oversight of priorities for the development of Scotland-specific strategic partnerships, in alignment with Samaritans’ strategy.
- Working with the Executive Director for Scotland, to identify and provide oversight of, nation-specific programmes.
- Support the development and implementation of fundraising relationships and funding opportunities within Scotland.
- Inform, advise and support the Trustee Board on all matters relevant to Scotland.
- Represent the Board of Trustees in the Samaritans organisation and externally, in particular, within a Scotland context.
- To ensure committee alignment with other committees of the board, in particular Policy, Partnerships & Research Committee with respect to public policy and influencing work.

All Trustees

- Work with the Board to ensure that the charity has maximum impact for its beneficiaries, both in relation to service-related and influencing work.
- Participate in the development, monitoring and approval of strategic direction of the charity, which take account of the external environment and ensure its long-term future as a relevant and financially sustainable organisation.
- Ensure the charity continuously works towards its delivery of an excellent service, remaining accessible, relevant, available, sustainable and consistently driven to delivering its mission and vision.
- Ensure the effective and efficient administration of the charity and its resources, in line with accepted standards, policies and the organisation’s governing documents.
- Ensure that the charity and its representatives function properly within the legal and regulatory framework of the sector and in line with the organisation’s governing documents and accepted best practice.
In meeting the responsibilities, trustees shall

- Use any specific skills, knowledge or experience to enhance the Board of Trustees’ effectiveness and efficiency.
- Maintain confidentiality about all sensitive/confidential information received in the course of a Trustee’s responsibilities to the charity.
- Recognise the impact of Samaritans’ work across the nations in which we operate.
- Ensure that respect for equality, diversity & inclusion is embedded into decision-making at Samaritans.
- Discharge the duties of a Trustee, as identified by the Charity Commission for England & Wales: The Essential Trustee and other guidance relevant to Samaritans’ nations, including that provided by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).
General qualities & experience required of trustees

Ideally, candidates will bring as many of the following skills and experience as possible:

Role specific requirements

- Based in Scotland.
- Good understanding of the Scottish civic, political, legislative and funding landscape we work in.
- Experience of working cross-border in previous executive-level and/or governance roles.
- An understanding of the mental health and equalities priorities current in Scotland.
- Proven ability to develop and lead on governance committees or at executive-level in large organisations.
- The ability to chair meetings, prioritise agenda items and work across governance committees and structures.

All Trustees

Experience

- Significant senior management and leadership role(s) in a complex organisation.
- Experience of charity and/or corporate governance and working with, or as part of, a Board as a non-executive director or trustee.
- Demonstrable experience of providing guidance to senior management and to working collaboratively in developing the strategy and monitoring the performance of the organisation and delivering an ambitious agenda.
- Successful leadership of, or participation in, organisational change.

Knowledge and skills

- Strong leadership skills, ability to motivate staff and volunteers and bring people together.
- Proven ability to act strategically, able to prioritise effectively and focus on matters of maximum impact to beneficiaries.
- Knowledge gained of the voluntary sector and its role in the public domain.
- Outstanding communication and interpersonal skills.
- The ability to recognise the differing requirements of a wide range of stakeholders (callers, volunteers, partner organisations, donors, supporters, staff and regulators) and to discern the appropriate responses to them.
- A broad understanding of finance issues.
- Listening, influencing and consensus-building skills.
- A reasonable understanding of digital tools and common software.
Attributes

- Alignment with Samaritans’ mission, vision and values
- Commitment to Nolan’s seven principles of public life (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership)
- A commitment to enhancing diversity and inclusion

Terms of appointment

Appointment and timescales

- The term of office is three years with the possibility of a further three-year term.

Location, time commitment and expenses

- This role is home-based.
- This post is voluntary and unpaid but all out of pocket expenses related to the role will be reimbursed in line with Samaritans’ volunteer expenses policy.
- The role involves some travel within the UK and Republic of Ireland. As a minimum, attendance is required at at least four Scotland Committee meetings each year, four Board of Trustee meetings each year, two Board away days, two Regional Council meetings and the annual meeting of Council of Samaritans. Trustees are also encouraged to attend other events where possible.
- In order to balance commitments of board members, meetings are mix of in-person and videoconference and split between weekends and weekdays.

Recruitment and selection process

- Applications will be reviewed to determine that candidates meet the person criteria and essential qualities and experience for the role before any invite to interview.
- References will be requested and taken up.
- Because of the nature of our work, we carry out criminal record checks, bankruptcy checks and we check the removed trustee list and the register of disqualified directors.

Samaritans recognises the enormous benefits and social justice imperatives of a diverse organisation at every level. We actively and warmly encourage applications from a broad range of backgrounds and experiences.
How to Apply

To apply please send your CV and covering letter to Ailsa Sutherland at:

fwb@fwbparkbrown.com

For further information or a confidential discussion, please contact Ailsa Sutherland at our Edinburgh office on +44 131 539 7087.

Closing date for applications is 10th January 2022.