Together we can make change that saves lives

SAMARITANS Cymru

Impact Report 2019/20
We are here for anyone who needs us round the clock, 365 days a year, through our 201 branches across the UK and Republic of Ireland. We give people time to untangle their thoughts and a safe space to share how they’re feeling without judgement. We offer our support by phone, email and letter. We also offer our service in Welsh through our Welsh Language Line and Welsh language correspondence service.

Offering emotional support

We are here for anyone who needs us round the clock, 365 days a year, through our 201 branches across the UK and Republic of Ireland. We give people time to untangle their thoughts and a safe space to share how they’re feeling without judgement. We offer our support by phone, email and letter. We also offer our service in Welsh through our Welsh Language Line and Welsh language correspondence service.

Working in partnership

Our partnership work includes:

- The Rail Industry Suicide Prevention Programme (RISPP) – a partnership between Samaritans, Network Rail and British Transport Police.
- Our work in prisons across the UK and Ireland – in Wales we work with Her Majesty’s Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), on suicide prevention through our Listener scheme.
- Our work in schools – we work with schools to support young people through our teaching resources and our suicide response service.

Training

Each year, we deliver training to hundreds of organisations and workplaces. Our award-winning training team delivers our Managing Suicidal Contacts course to rail staff and other organisations across the UK and the Republic of Ireland.
Reaching out

We reach out to high risk groups and communities, including farmers, young people, men, military personnel and those living in areas of deprivation.

Working with the media

International research has consistently drawn links between certain types of media coverage of suicide and increases in suicide rates. Our media advisory service works to ensure responsible and sensitive reporting of suicide by monitoring news reporting of suicide daily and contacting editors to request changes if we have significant concerns over the content. We also work with programme makers to advise on scripts and content for news, drama and documentaries, and provide educational training to media outlets.

We have produced guidelines for media coverage of suicides which are recognised as setting the expectations for media coverage. In Wales, we have continued to work with the press and media to encourage safe and responsible reporting. In 2019, we were pleased to arrange two media guidelines training events with South Wales Argus and Wales Online.

Research

We are at the forefront of research into suicide and actively measure the impact of our service. Research is vital in understanding how we can do more to support people’s emotional wellbeing and get better at preventing at-risk groups from reaching crisis point. This year our research centred around:

- **Less well-off middle-aged men.** Our report *Out of sight, out of mind* documented the findings of our research exploring the lived experience of these men, who we know are at increased risk of suicide. Opportunities to help this group are often missed, even though they have many well-known risk factors. Among other things, men told us that from support services they want the opportunity to make a contribution, and to feel like they’re not alone.

- **Self-harm** is a strong risk factor for suicide, and 1 in 10 of our calls for help are about self-harm. We carried out research this year to help improve our understanding of the experiences of people who self-harm and whether they are receiving the support they need, in both clinical and community settings. This research will be published in 2020.

- **Prison inmates.** We published our first ever report on prison suicide, *Unlocking the evidence*. It brought together data from our Prison Listener scheme with analysis of the wider literature on suicide in prisons, to deepen our understanding of the reasons behind the high rate of suicide in prisons.

Influencing public policy

We strive to influence policy and legislation across the UK and Republic of Ireland. In Wales we are part of the National Advisory Group to Welsh Government on Suicide and Self Harm Prevention and are active in local suicide prevention forums. The National Advisory Group guides the implementation of the Welsh Government’s suicide and self-harm prevention strategy, *Talk to Me 2*. We support the Welsh Parliament Cross Party group on Suicide Prevention through providing the secretariat.

This year, we contributed our evidence and opinion to government policymaking on a range of issues that affect people’s emotional wellbeing, including inequality, loneliness and isolation. Our manifesto for the May 2021 Welsh Parliament election outlined the steps that need to be taken to prevent people from dying by suicide and ensure support for those who need it most.
The latest statistics for Wales show that 330 people took their own life in 2019. 75% of these were men and 25% were women. The male suicide rate is three times higher than the female rate.

We are always here to listen, even during the most challenging times. Here at Samaritans we understand the power of human connection. Connecting with others and having the time and space to talk to someone you trust has never been so important. The coronavirus crisis has left many people isolated from friends and loved ones, worrying about their own health and the health of their families, and worried about losing their jobs and income.

Thanks to the dedication of our volunteers and team of staff, our telephone and email service continued to operate 24 hours a day – even at the very height of the pandemic, when one in three calls or email contacts were from people worried about the impact of coronavirus. Our dedicated Welsh speaking volunteers succeeded in ensuring that the Welsh language service continued to operate every day.

As well as giving people a safe space to talk, without judgement, we continue to work towards our vision that fewer people die by suicide by influencing policy and practice, and through project and outreach work. In Wales, our volunteers use their local expertise to reach out to those who may be at an increased risk of suicide and take part in local suicide prevention forums.

Suicide is the result of the interaction between many different factors and should not be attributed to one single cause. The complexity of suicide is why suicide prevention requires the involvement of many different sectors, agencies and services. At Samaritans, we are proud to work with our partners to try and reach high-risk groups and raise awareness of the risk factors connected with suicidal behaviour. Suicide prevention also requires a cross-governmental approach and one which recognises the interaction between suicide and health and social care, education, communities, economy, housing, families and culture. Suicide is everybody’s business.

Suicide is a major public health issue. It is also a major inequality issue. Whilst the causes of suicide are complex, suicide disproportionately affects those from vulnerable or disadvantaged backgrounds, and there are clear links with poor mental health, poverty, loneliness and social isolation and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). We know that men aged 40–44 currently have the highest suicide rate in Wales. The male suicide rate is three times higher than the female rate and this is a long-term trend. Men from the most socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds in Wales are one of the highest risk groups for suicide. We need a whole population approach to suicide prevention in Wales. We also need a co-existing, stand-alone approach to reducing suicide in men – one which is rooted in prevention and early intervention which can safeguard for our future generations. This approach should include giving people the opportunity to contribute in a meaningful way to society. We should ensure that the path to this is non-stigmatising, and that everyone is given an opportunity to form part of a community.

“Connecting with others is a fundamental human need. Reducing loneliness and isolation by responding to distress with compassion can save lives.”
Since the last Welsh Parliament election, we have seen significant progress in suicide prevention in Wales. Talk to Me 2, the suicide and self-harm prevention strategy for Wales, sets out a clear path for action. The funding of national and regional coordinators is welcome and an area of opportunity. Another area of opportunity is the new curriculum for Wales, which places a strong emphasis on health and wellbeing and a whole school approach.

It is crucial we provide training to staff who are often supporting the most vulnerable people in our society. It is not necessary to be an expert in suicide prevention to be able to respond compassionately to distress and make a difference. Whoever we are, as members of the public, from those involved with schools, to those involved with prisons, from job centres to A&E, we all have a responsibility to do all we can to prevent suicide. Connecting with others is a fundamental human need. Reducing loneliness and isolation by responding to distress with compassion can save lives. Understanding and acting on this is more important than ever as we face the Covid-19 pandemic and its social and economic consequences. We should never underestimate the power of listening and human empathy, both of which are core values of Samaritans. Everyone has moments in life where they struggle to cope and if given the right opportunities and support, people can often find their way through their problems.

“Helping a person will not necessarily change the world, but it can change the world for that person.”

In 2019, 330 people died by suicide in Wales; this is around three times higher than the number killed in road accidents.

Suicide rates are two to three times higher in the most deprived areas compared to the most affluent.

Men aged 40–44 have the highest suicide rates in Wales.

Sarah Stone
Executive Director for Wales

Ana Laing
Chair of Samaritans Cymru Board and Trustee for Wales
Our impact

Thank you for supporting our vital work

We answered 147,000 calls for help
This equates to one call every 3.5 minutes

Volunteers at branches in Wales gave 40,000 hours and over £580,000 of their time, based on the Office for National Statistics (ONS) median hourly rate of pay, to supporting people experiencing emotional distress

The primary concerns raised by callers were based on loneliness and isolation, family, mental health problems, physical health and illness, and relationship problems

We have a total of 714 volunteers in Wales.
587 of these are listening volunteers and 127 are support volunteers who work in areas such as fundraising, publicity and outreach

Branches organised and ran 624 outreach events where volunteers interacted with an estimated 34,000 people

Thank you for supporting our vital work
I emailed Samaritans because I wanted to explain my feelings to someone who had no pre-conceived idea about me. I wanted to get everything off my chest and Samaritans provided me with reassurance and the confidence to do something about how I was feeling.

Emily
Suicide and socioeconomic disadvantage

Following the launch of our report *Dying from Inequality – Finding a way forward for Wales* in 2018 we continued our work to highlight the link between socioeconomic disadvantage and suicide. We know that financial hardship and socioeconomic disadvantage are well recognised risk factors for suicide. We know that people who are unemployed are two to three times more likely to die by suicide than those in employment.

Inequality is an overarching theme in our manifesto, *How to Save Lives in Wales*, which outlines our calls to the next Welsh Government ahead of the 2021 Welsh Parliament election. We have, as part of the Wales Alliance on Mental Health, successfully pressed to make addressing inequality a specific part of the Together for Mental Health delivery plan.

We continue to build our evidence base so that we can successfully campaign for the reduction of poverty and its impact on individuals and communities. This year, we launched our UK and Ireland report *Out of sight, out of mind: Why less well-off, middle-aged men don’t get the support they need*. The report explores the lived experience of middle-aged men on low incomes and highlights significant missed opportunities to intervene and support them before they reached crisis. The men, who we found to be socially disconnected and struggling with feelings of suicidality, told us that the ability to make a contribution, a feeling of inclusivity, and the opportunity to work towards common goals were some of a number of key elements of an engaging service.

Children and young people

We have continued our work on policy relating to the emotional and mental health of children and young people. We have called for teaching staff in all schools across Wales to be provided with mental health awareness training to increase confidence in dealing with pupils who are experiencing emotional distress. We have also called for emotional and mental health education to be included on the curriculum on a statutory basis so that every pupil in every school is given the opportunity to learn emotional literacy. We believe the new curriculum offers the opportunity to introduce a new culture and support the mental wellbeing of the whole school community. It can help build emotional resilience for children and crucially, help them learn when and how to seek help. These measures, alongside effective suicide prevention and response plans in each school, would ensure all schools have a structured and effective approach to emotional health and wellbeing.
During 2019-20 we built our evidence base so we could continue influencing policy and practice in this area. Following discussions at a roundtable event we held in Wales, last August we launched our report *Exclusion from school in Wales: the hidden cost*, which explores the link between school exclusion and cycles of inequality. This report is rooted in previous Samaritans Cymru work on socioeconomic disadvantage and suicidal behaviour, which recognised exclusion as a major inequality area which can increase the risk of loneliness, social isolation, poor mental health and suicide risk. Our report successfully raised the profile of this much needed debate and the need for further thinking, understanding and action.

This year, the Children, Young People and Education Committee of the Welsh Parliament launched an inquiry into Education Other Than at School (EOTAS) and we provided written and oral evidence to this inquiry. Following a meeting with the Future Generation Commissioner to discuss the adverse childhood experiences agenda, we were pleased to be heavily referenced in the Future Generations report. Both pieces of work gave us an opportunity to highlight the importance of investment in prevention and early intervention for improving the life trajectory of children at risk of lifelong disadvantage.

In November, to mark International Stress Awareness Week, we launched *Compassion in Education: A toolkit for teaching staff and education professionals in Wales*. It is designed for all educational professionals and guides a compassionate response to pupils, students or fellow staff who are experiencing emotional distress. It also promotes a preventative approach to poor mental health in pupils, students and staff, which is a core focus of Samaritans work. The toolkit was widely circulated and received a positive response from secondary schools, pupil referral units, universities and youth offending teams.

**Loneliness and isolation**

We have continued to raise awareness of the links between loneliness and isolation and suicidal behaviour. Loneliness and isolation can have a serious impact on physical and mental health and are risk factors for suicidal behaviour and suicide; they are one of the most common reasons that people call our helpline in the UK. We have also worked to highlight the different groups affected by loneliness and those at risk. Through our policy work we have emphasised the importance of human connection for good mental health and wellbeing.

We are members of the Welsh Government loneliness and isolation development board. At these meetings we have put forward our policy asks, including the importance of community facilities and recognising the link between poverty and exclusion from school.

This year the Welsh Government published its strategy for tackling loneliness and social isolation and building stronger social connections, *Connected Communities*. We had an active role in the consultation and our report on the impact of exclusion from school is referenced in the strategy. There is also a commitment to analyse existing data to explore correlations between exclusions, or being educated other than at school, and mental wellbeing, including loneliness and social isolation. We are glad to have been able to significantly influence the strategy.
Suicide prevention

Since the last Welsh Parliament election, we have seen significant progress in suicide prevention in Wales. *Talk to Me 2*, the suicide and self-harm prevention strategy for Wales, sets out a clear path for action and the additional investment from Welsh Government into suicide prevention. We have continued to call for:

- Emotional health and wellbeing education to be included on the curriculum on a statutory basis.
- A continued focus on high risk groups, such as middle-aged men and those living in poverty.
- Suicide prevention to be recognised as a whole population public health issue.

Last year, we supported the setting up of the Welsh Parliament Cross-Party Group on Suicide Prevention and we provide the secretariat. This group is a major step forward for informing all parties of the issues involved in suicide prevention. The group can produce reports on areas of concern and can provide scrutiny of progress on government commitments.

Samaritans Cymru manifesto launch

We formally launched our manifesto ahead of the Welsh Parliament election in May 2021, *How to Save Lives in Wales*, which outlines the steps the next Welsh Government should take to help prevent people from dying by suicide in Wales. These steps include breaking cycles of lifelong disadvantage, reaching high risk groups, reducing poverty and its impact, increasing emotional literacy amongst children and young people and committing to the continuation of a well-resourced action plan for suicide and self-harm prevention for Wales.

Recently we have adapted our manifesto asks to reflect the pandemic and its impact. Our calls to the next Welsh Government continue to focus on tackling poverty, building emotional literacy and resilience in children and young people, reaching high-risk groups, tackling loneliness and isolation, and ensuring compassionate responses to distress.
Rural roadshows

A rural roadshow is an event led by Samaritans Cymru and volunteers which engages with local charities and organisations in rural areas in Wales. The roadshow is designed to inform participants of suicide risk in Wales and most importantly, how to help people in distress and signpost them to sources of support.


Supporting schools

Samaritans in Wales supports schools, college communities and other youth settings in a variety of ways:

- We offer our free online teaching resources (DEAL – Developing Emotional Awareness and Listening).
- We provide talks on emotional health and wellbeing given by our volunteers.
- We support schools and colleges in the planning and implementation of a postvention response in the aftermath of an attempted or suspected suicide (Step by Step).

Samaritans Cymru, South Wales Valleys Samaritans and Newport Samaritans ran a DEAL (Developing Emotional Awareness and Listening) training day with schools across five local authority areas (Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen). We organised this in collaboration with the Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes who want to increase awareness of the benefits of teaching emotional health lessons in secondary schools and teachers from 25 schools were in attendance. Earlier in the year, we also arranged for the Children’s Commissioner for Wales to visit Corpus Christi School with us to watch one of our DEAL resources being delivered in a lesson.
Supporting prisons

The Listener Scheme started in HMP Swansea in 1991 and now operates in nearly every prison in the UK, including in every prison in Wales. The Listener Scheme is a peer support service, that aims to reduce suicide and self-harm in prisons. Samaritans volunteers train and support prisoners to become Listeners, who in turn provide confidential, emotional support to their fellow inmates who are struggling to cope. In 2019–20, Listeners in Wales responded to more than 4,400 requests for emotional support from fellow inmates.

Supporting the rail industry

In 2010, Samaritans formed a partnership with Network Rail. Since then we have been working together with the British Transport Police and the wider rail industry on a programme to prevent railway suicides and support those affected by them.

In 2019–20, we trained 134 rail staff in Wales through our Managing Suicidal Contacts course, which provides attendees with the skills and confidence to approach a person in distress at a railway. Together with Transport for Wales and Network Rail we’ve seen positive progress in implementing the route’s joint suicide prevention plan, including the utilisation of Samaritans campaign materials, training frontline staff and improving station facilities.

Samaritans branches continue to support the rail suicide prevention programme. On 20 January 2020, 9 branches across Wales attended 10 local railway stations as part of Samaritans’ Brew Monday. This included a large event at Cardiff Central Station with support from the Cardiff Rock Choir.

The Welsh language

Samaritans has a Welsh Language Scheme which was approved by the Welsh Language Commissioner in 2014. We have a dedicated Welsh Language line which was first set up in 2010 to help Welsh speakers who needed emotional support. We also extended our correspondence service so that it is available in Welsh. This service means anyone who needs emotional support in Welsh can send a freepost letter, which some find to be a more personal, thought-provoking way to get their feelings across.

Cardiff Branch Director Marcie said:

“We had a great response from commuters as we gave out our listening tips and over 1,000 packs of teabags to encourage people to stop and have a chat over a cuppa. A huge thank you to the Cardiff Rock Choir who kept everyone entertained by doing two separate sets for us, and to our colleagues at Network Rail for their ongoing support.”
In January 2019 we began an important piece of work on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in our Welsh branches. The aim of the project is to deepen our understanding of the motivations for, and barriers to, volunteering, particularly for those from minority groups and to increase the diversity of our volunteers.

Year 1 of the project focused on research and communication:

- Building our understanding of our volunteer base and our communities.
- Identifying the factors across the third sector that impact diversity and inclusion.
- Raising awareness and support for the project across Wales and the wider organisation.
- We produced a report which is guiding the next stage of the project and influencing the wider organisation.

We began Year 2 with development of training and resources for our branches. We are very grateful for the support of the Waterloo Foundation for this work.

“Full inclusion is never something you achieve. It is never ‘job done’. It is something you have to constantly work towards.”

Support volunteer
I would like to say a huge thank you to all the volunteers in every branch across Wales. It is their time and dedication which ensures that your calls and emails are answered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

They have also been hard at work fundraising for their local branches and undertaking vital outreach work in their local communities which helps raise awareness of the remarkable service Samaritans offers.

714 Samaritans volunteers
day and night, 365 days a year
Bridgend Samaritans

Bridgend branch continues to work in partnership with South Wales Police to provide emotional support to detainees in the local custody suite. Volunteers also attend the Princess of Wales Hospital to provide emotional support and raise awareness of our service. The branch has delivered various other outreach events at the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show, Vale of Glamorgan County show and Pride Cymru. Volunteers also continued their regular ‘Feet on the Street’ presence in Bridgend town centre to provide emotional support and raise awareness of our services to those who are out at the local bars and pubs.

The branch delivered interactive emotional health and wellbeing workshops to students in secondary schools and students at Bridgend College and Rhondda College. Volunteers also delivered Crucial Crew emotional health and wellbeing events to over 2,000 young people.

Volunteers participated in Samaritans events in partnership with Transport for Wales and Network Rail, raising awareness of our service at Bridgend train station on World Mental Health Day and for Brew Monday, a Samaritans awareness raising day in January. Volunteers also engaged with many local groups including the Porthcawl branch of Andy’s Man Club, Parc Prisons, Men’s Sheds, various churches and libraries and local Women’s Institute groups.

Cardiff and District Samaritans

It’s been an exciting year for Cardiff Samaritans as they officially opened their new branch. The event was opened by the First Minister, Mark Drakeford and Julie Morgan MS and was a brilliant demonstration of the support Samaritans has in Cardiff. The move has also been a real catalyst for change and the branch has contributed to Samaritans Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) pilot and has been able to build on its outreach and community-based activities.

Volunteers regularly attended train stations in Cardiff to raise awareness of Samaritans’ services throughout the year. Volunteers continue to visit Cardiff prison on a weekly basis as part of Samaritans Listener scheme. The branch also delivered talks on emotional health and wellbeing in schools and worked with Cardiff University to provide emotional support to students.

The branch represented Samaritans at the Cardiff and Vale Suicide and Self-harm prevention forum. The branch also raised awareness of Samaritans’ services by delivering talks at Ely and Canton Community Hubs and by attending Cardiff Soroptimists Women’s Wellbeing Day, RHS Flower Show and HMRC Mental Health Group Wellbeing Day. Volunteers also attended a meeting at Penarth RNLI station with various other emergency services to discuss vulnerable people and suicide at sea. Volunteers attended Pride Cymru and Barry Pride to raise awareness of the service and provide emotional support.
Swansea Samaritans

It’s been another busy year for Swansea branch as they continue to visit the Police Custody Suite in Swansea and the local Bail hostel to offer emotional support. Volunteers also attended several freshers’ fayres in Carmarthenshire and have delivered emotional health and wellbeing talks to young farmers at Gelli Aur Agricultural College and to school pupils.

Swansea Samaritans were invited by Transport for Wales and Eluned Morgan MS to support the launch of the #IPledge2Talk campaign, encouraging people to open up and talk about their mental health. Volunteers boarded a train from Carmarthen to Milford Haven to chat to passengers and hand out publicity materials to raise awareness of our service.

Volunteers visited the local Amazon warehouse, Cefn Coed Hospital and attended a Swansea City football match; to raise awareness of the service and provide emotional support. The branch has also been involved in a Carmarthenshire venture called the ‘missing middle’ which supports people with mental health problems who do not qualify for NHS treatment. The branch formed a new partnership with Mal’s Marauders whose vision is improving men’s wellbeing through walking and talking and serves the whole Swansea Bay region.

The branch continued to represent Samaritans at mental health forums in Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and Carmarthenshire and has taken part in the Together for Mental Health Consultation organised by the University of Wales.

North West Wales Samaritans

The volunteers have made great use of their Samaritans branded community vehicle, which is an excellent way for the branch to promote Samaritans’ work and extend its community outreach. It was first used at the National Eisteddfod in Llanrwst and then at the Anglesey Show. It has also been used to reach some of the groups most at risk of suicide, including the agricultural community, with volunteers visiting the livestock markets and delivering talks to young farmers.

Volunteers from the branch attended freshers’ days at Coleg Menai Bangor to provide emotional support and raise awareness of Samaritans’ services. Volunteers were invited to attend Bangor University for Stress Awareness week in November and for Samaritans’ Brew Monday in January. The branch also attended Conwy Secondary Schools Health Research Network Conference and the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board joint task and finish suicide prevention group.

The branch provided Samaritans listening skills training to all North Wales Natwest bank managers and delivered training to call centre helpline staff at Cartrefi Gwynedd. The branch held a ceremony on Saturday 24 November where a special plaque was unveiled in memory of Rev Elwyn Jones. Elwyn held numerous roles in Bangor branch over 34 years and was a great support to volunteers when they faced challenges of their own.
The Samaritans of Rhyl and North East Wales

Volunteers from the branch continued to attend HMP Berwyn to train new listeners and provide emotional support.

Volunteers have been giving awareness raising talks in the community including at local churches and Women’s Institute groups where they discussed Samaritans Welsh language line and outreach in local rural areas. The branch attended Abergele, Prestatyn and Rhyl train stations to raise awareness of our services and to support their trespass campaign after local incidents on the railway. Volunteers from the branch also supported the Brew Monday campaign by handing out tea bags and listening tips to commuters. Volunteers gave a talk on emotional health and our service to Llandrillo and Wrexham university students.

The branch met with Men’s Sheds in Denbighshire and discussed how Samaritans could work with them to support men with mental health issues and loneliness. Volunteers are planning to visit the group again and talk about our Working with Compassion toolkit and are also planning to reach out to the Flintshire group.

Volunteers also attended Jobcentre Plus and a Trussell Trust Foodbank event to raise awareness of our service and provide emotional support. The branch has begun to reach out to young farmers groups and local faith groups.

Powys Samaritans in Llandrindod Wells

The branch continued to play an active role in the community and delivered awareness raising talks to Newbridge Women’s Institute. Volunteers attended Ystradgynlais Health and Safety Community Wellbeing day and Newtown College Health and Social Care Mental Health Awareness Day. The branch has reached members of the public by hosting a Brew Monday event in the local Tesco and by attending the St David’s Day campaign at the local railway station. In total, the branch has reached over 10,000 people.

Volunteers delivered awareness raising talks to Knighton Rotary Club, Knucklas Ladies Guild and Clyro Women’s Institute. Volunteers have given Crucial Crew emotional health and wellbeing talks at all eight high schools in Powys and attended the freshers’ fair at Newtown and Brecon Colleges, promoting Samaritans emotional support services and volunteering opportunities.

Training undertaken with Brecon Police Custody Team was a success – volunteers delivered a session on our SHUSH listening tips and our Working with Compassion toolkit. Volunteers from Powys joined Aberystwyth, Cardiff, Bridgend and Swansea Samaritans at the Royal Welsh Show and promoted Samaritans’ services. The branch has been chosen as one of Powys County Council’s and Mayor of Llandrindod Wells charities of the year. This is a huge achievement for the branch.
Volunteers from South Wales Valleys Samaritans have been instrumental in the delivery of our package of rural roadshows. They delivered the presentation, which outlines how to guide compassionate responses to distress, to the Cwm Taf Third Sector Mental Health forum and the Cwm Taf Suicide and Self-harm subgroup. Volunteers also delivered rural roadshow presentations to Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and Caerphilly County Borough Council, reaching over 300 council supervisors.

Volunteers have spoken about how to guide compassionate responses to distress in educational settings to staff at local colleges, and have delivered DEAL training, Crucial Crew sessions and wellbeing workshops across the South Wales Valleys.

South Wales Valleys Samaritans continues to deliver outreach and awareness raising activities. The branch has provided emotional support in a wide-range of community settings including; custody suites, hospitals, pharmacies, job centres, foodbanks and through ‘Feet on the Street’, night-time shifts which offer the public emotional support in busy areas in Merthyr Tydfil, Pontypridd and Aberdare. Volunteers from the branch also had a presence at Merthyr Tydfil and Pontypridd train stations as part of the Brew Monday campaign. They encouraged people to get together for a chat and a cuppa by handing out teabags and listening tips.

The Samaritans of Haverfordwest and Pembrokeshire

Volunteers have been busy providing outreach in the community, attending Beat Herder and Kendal Calling festivals, and Pride Cymru to raise awareness of our services and provide emotional support. The branch worked with the local police to arrange for Samaritans signage to be erected at areas of concern. This work was successful and the signage is now in place. The branch has also been promoting our Compassion in Education toolkit and volunteers have been distributing it to education professionals in the area.

Volunteers have worked with Pembrokeshire College to establish a listening service for students. The branch has also trained a group of Royal Voluntary Service drivers in how to help passengers when they are distressed. Volunteers have provided emotional support to the local fire service.

Volunteers from the branch have given awareness raising talks to local Women’s Institute groups. The branch has provided support to a local school as part of Samaritans’ Step by Step service.

Several volunteers and family members took part in the New Year’s Day swim at Saundersfoot to fundraise for the branch. Next year, branch volunteers hope to enter sponsored events dressed as green telephones!
Newport and Gwent Samaritans

The branch continues to have a presence in the community, with volunteers attending a suicide prevention workshop held by Aneurin Bevan University Health board, Pwll Wellbeing Fayre and Ringland Wellbeing Fayre, where they raised awareness of Samaritans’ services. As part of the Brew Monday campaign, volunteers from the branch handed out teabags and listening tips to commuters at Newport train station.

Newport and Gwent Samaritans is currently developing its outreach team and are looking to hold drop-in sessions for members of the community on a regular basis later in the year.

The branch attended a Pub Watch meeting in the local area, an initiative developed by Gwent Police which brings together representatives from the community. The branch supplied 2000 Samaritans branded drinks coasters and posters to bars and pubs in the area and spoke at a Pub Watch meeting and promoted our Working with Compassion toolkit.

The Samaritans of Aberystwyth and Mid Wales

The branch has been busy delivering training in the community. Volunteers provided four training sessions in Mid Wales for a total of 30 Welsh Government staff based in several locations throughout Wales. The training consisted of Samaritans ‘Learning to Listen’ module of Samaritans Initial Training. The sessions also covered our Working with Compassion toolkit and provided staff with tips for supporting others. In addition to this, volunteers provided Samaritans skills practice training for nine compassionate listeners at the Welsh Government office in Aberystwyth, whose names are displayed beside the list of first aiders for anyone in the office to contact if they need emotional support.

Volunteers from the branch have attended Aberystwyth University twice where they have promoted Samaritans’ services and provided emotional support to students. They also supported the Brew Monday campaign by handing out teabags and listening tips to commuters at Aberystwyth train station. In October, volunteers attended a Mental Health Awareness Day event at The Hub in Penparcau to promote our services to attendees.

Samaritans Cymru is grateful for the support of the Welsh Government and the Waterloo Foundation.
SAMARITANS Cymru

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