

SAMARITANS
Ireland



Tackling suicide together:

providing a safe space
in uncertain times

Samaritans Ireland
Strategic delivery plan 2022–27



About this document

The Samaritans Strategic Delivery Plan for Ireland 2022–27 should be read alongside the Samaritans five-year Strategic Plan, which set out the direction of travel for our organisation across all five jurisdictions in which we operate: Ireland, Northern Ireland, England, Scotland, and Wales.

The delivery objectives set out in this document are specific to Samaritans Ireland and will be delivered alongside wider organisational developments to meet our ultimate aim that fewer people die by suicide.

We will provide a review of our progress against these Samaritans Ireland-specific objectives each year and will publish an updated Ireland delivery plan in spring 2024, focused on the final three years of the overall Samaritans strategy.



“The five-year strategy has a number of important elements. The most important to me are that we continue to be there for anyone who needs us and help to ensure that fewer people die by suicide. I feel that capacity is very important and that as we grow our volunteer base, we must also ensure that we look after all our volunteers and give them the supports that they need.”

Rory Fitzgerald, Regional Director, Republic of Ireland (RoI), and volunteer with Samaritans Waterford & South East



“The Ireland strategy will ensure we continue to provide the emotional support that we have across the Irish region and that we will try to support even more vulnerable groups. In Northern Ireland our own Action Plan – which compliments the Ireland Strategy – will focus on greater levels of emotional support for vulnerable and isolated groups across the country.”

Alan Heron, Regional Director, Northern Ireland (NI), and volunteer with Belfast Samaritans

Foreword

The last two years have been unlike any we have encountered. Life across the island of Ireland has changed in ways we could never have imagined. For many people it has been very challenging and continues to be so.

Across our 21 branches, through our 2,000 volunteers in Ireland and Northern Ireland, Samaritans has continued to be here providing a listening ear for anyone who is struggling. Our listening service has been at the core of Samaritans' work for over 60 years, always offering a trusted space for those who need us. Because of the remarkable commitment of our volunteers and staff team, we keep our helpline services open 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year. The hope our volunteers provide saves lives.

With our new strategy, we want to do even more to reduce the levels of distress, anxiety, isolation, and hopelessness that lead people to contact us in the first place. Opportunities exist across the island of Ireland to make real and lasting change and ensure fewer lives are lost to suicide. We will work hand in hand with our funders to ensure our work is relevant and supportive of national policy objectives, bringing Samaritans' expertise, knowledge, and resource to the ongoing development of our work.

We know that structural inequities, poverty, addiction, poor physical health, isolation, discrimination, and the denial of people's basic human rights are factors fuelling poor mental health across the island of Ireland.

We know that people living in the most deprived of communities, including middle-aged men from low-income households and members of the Traveller community, are much more likely to take their own life than those in the wealthiest communities. It is incumbent upon all of us within Samaritans Ireland to support these communities where we can and speak out on these issues when we can.

Over the lifetime of this plan, we commit to the following:

- We will build our volunteering offer, becoming more reflective of the communities we serve, diversifying access and sustaining our listening service for all those who need us, resulting in a 20% increase in our overall volunteer numbers.
- We will work collaboratively - with those who have experience of suicide, self-harm and marginalisation, supporters, volunteers, and staff - to influence local and national structural change.
- We will pool our expertise with partners in other sectors to build our understanding of risk factors for suicide and campaign for change so that fewer people reach the point of distress or despair.
- We will do more to promote our range of services with workplaces, schools, communities, media, and civic leaders to support positive intervention and reductions in suicide on the island of Ireland.
- We will achieve the highest standards possible in the governance and management of Samaritans Ireland resulting in the Triple Lock Governance Standard by the end of 2023.

Our goal is to ensure fewer lives are lost to suicide. We aim to achieve this by always being there to listen, by bringing evidence and an experienced voice to suicide prevention, by challenging inequity, and by working hand in hand with people who need us every step of the way.



Eleanor Farrell

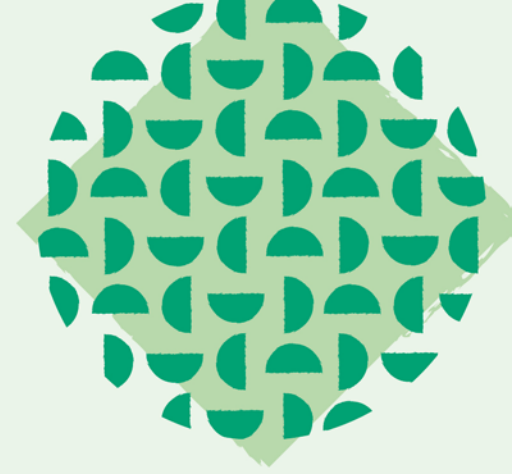
Eleanor Farrell
Chair, Samaritans Ireland Board



Niall Mulligan

Niall Mulligan
Executive Director, Samaritans Ireland

About Samaritans in Ireland



- Our listening service is always there, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year 
- We answer a call for help every 56 seconds* 
- Our volunteers spend over 100,000 hours a year responding to approximately 1,500 calls for help every day 
- Our trained prison Listeners offered 400 hours of support to fellow inmates and we saw a 400% increase in calls to our helpline from people in prison** 
- Our helpline supports Irish diaspora living in Poland, China, UAE, Australia and Canada 
- We have over 2,000 incredible Samaritans volunteers, in 21 branches, across the island of Ireland 

Making a difference within the community

We will improve our access, and our reach, across the island of Ireland

We will measure the impact our work has in reducing self-harm and suicide

We will ensure our volunteers are supported and valued during their time with Samaritans

We will place the voice of people with lived experience to the forefront of all our work

We will grow our volunteer base across the island of Ireland

We will work with government to influence and change policy

We will research the issues around self-harm and suicide, and make sure this informs the way we work

We will continue to partner with like-minded organisations

We will continue to work as part of Samaritans UK and Ireland

*A 'call for help' is any contact method made to Samaritans for support, for example by phone, email, letter or face to face in branch. All figures are based on the 2020 calendar year and represent both Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland, unless otherwise stated.

**Republic of Ireland only

Our vision, mission and strategic priorities

Samaritans' vision is that fewer people die by suicide

To achieve this, we believe Samaritans has a crucial role to play in:

- Reducing the risk factors that make some people more likely to take their own lives.
- Ensuring that people who are at increased risk of suicide are supported.
- Making it less likely that people who do experience suicidal thoughts act on them.
- Reducing the likelihood that people will develop suicidal thoughts.

Our mission

We are here every day and night of the year for anyone struggling to cope. We make sure people have somewhere to turn and support when they need it most. We work with communities to let people know we're here for them and we campaign to make suicide prevention a priority.

Our strategic priorities 2022–27

We have worked closely with people who have contacted Samaritans, been affected by suicide or suicidal thoughts, and those who volunteer and work with us or support us, to identify five major ambitions for our new organisational strategy: to improve **Access, Reach, Impact, Capacity and Sustainability**.

In Samaritans Ireland, we also have an additional sixth priority: to strengthen our organisational **Governance**.

Over five years, we will build on our strengths and tackle the major challenges that currently limit us. We are working towards six outcomes across the island of Ireland, essential for achieving our vision of fewer lives lost to suicide:

- **Access:** we will make it easier for people to access our support when they need it, by ensuring they can get through to us in a way that works for them.
- **Reach:** we will increase the proportion of people we support who are more likely to be feeling suicidal, by being visible and relevant to a more diverse range of people and communities.
- **Impact:** we will amplify our life-saving impact in society, by influencing public policy, legislation, institutions and services in ways that will prevent more suicides.
- **Capacity:** we will increase in size to meet demand, by recruiting more people and reducing the pressure on them so they stay with us longer.
- **Sustainability:** we will ensure our long-term sustainability, by securing the funding needed to keep us strong and by taking steps to ensure our activities and organisation are fit for the future.
- **Governance:** we will maintain a highly effective and professional organisation across the island of Ireland.

These Samaritans Ireland specific objectives sit alongside objectives that will apply right across Ireland and the UK, as set out in the overarching five-year strategy for Samaritans. Each priority maps most strongly to one of the outcomes – noted below in bold – but will also contribute to others also noted.

We will take a phased approach to working on the above priorities, over five years, meaning that not everything will happen at once. More detailed plans on how we will deliver them will be developed during year one, as we work to increase capacity and capability, making sure we have a solid base from which to grow.

Our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion is one of the key principles in our new strategy. It will connect with everything we do at Samaritans, guiding the way we work and behave.

Our EDI commitment is available on our website.

1. Make sure anyone who needs us can access our support

Our challenge

We cannot always meet the demand for Samaritans' services and there is a risk that people who are trying to contact us cannot get through or get the response they need.

Our ambition

People will be able to access our support whenever they need it and get through to us in a way that works for them.

We will work hard to ensure people who seek our support can reach us how and when they need to, by training more volunteers and working innovatively on new ways to connect with us, like online chat, alongside continually reviewing and improving our phone, email and in-person listening services.

Samaritans Ireland objectives:

1. Strengthen RoI phone line technological capacity, improving both caller and volunteer experience by bringing RoI technology in line with UK baseline, optimising phone line performance and supporting new contact methods.
2. Increase access for callers in high risk or harder to reach groups by identifying and delivering new service approaches.
3. Strengthen awareness and influence in communities across Ireland by engaging at regional and local levels, and by promoting Samaritans' services in a meaningful way.
4. Deliver outcomes of the Ireland Governance Review, strengthening Samaritans Ireland capability ensuring continued delivery of quality services and best practice governance and operations.
5. Support Ireland branches and volunteers to deliver high quality services by ensuring the provision of technology and other centralised support services in conjunction with Samaritans Central Charity (SCC), as well as exploring new service models and supporting their delivery when appropriate.
6. Continue to grow Samaritans Ireland presence and impact in Northern Ireland to address the disparity in suicide rates in NI vs RoI.

2. Reach more people to let them know we're here

Our challenge

We are not yet good enough at reaching people whose circumstances mean they might have a higher risk of suicide, such as those living in deprivation or who are marginalised.

Our ambition

To be more visible and relevant, particularly to a more diverse range of people and communities, so those who might need us most trust us and know we are here for them.

We will actively go out into a more diverse range of communities so that the people who need us most see us, trust us, and know we are here for them. We will do this together with the most relevant people, organisations, and industries, as well as strengthening our existing work within local communities.

Samaritans Ireland objectives:

1. Reduce the impact of self-harm and suicide in Ireland with particular focus on priority groups identified within our national strategies to reduce suicide, *Connecting for Life* in Ireland and *Protect Life 2* in Northern Ireland, for example, middle-aged men, members of the Traveller Community and other minority groups, those who have engaged in repeated acts of self-harm, etc.
2. Address suicide and self-harm in the criminal justice system, with a particular emphasis on supporting and developing the Listener scheme.
3. Raise awareness of Samaritans and our work across the island of Ireland so that people who may need our service know how to access it and are able to do so.
4. As part of the wider SCC review on Samaritans working with young people, review Samaritans Ireland work in second and third level education, and decide what level and scope of involvement is appropriate.
5. Identify potential partners with whom we can achieve 1), 2), 3) and 4) above.
6. Develop an Employer Scheme 'business case' to promote our work with employers in relation to the mental health and wellbeing of their staff and customers.
7. Promote and develop the role and work of Festival branch across the island of Ireland.

3. Make our voice heard at a national, regional and local level for maximum impact

Our challenge

As policymaking becomes increasingly de-centralised, we lack the capacity or systems to be effective changemakers locally, and the capacity to influence change as much as we would like at national levels.

Our ambition

To make suicide prevention a priority nationally, regionally and locally for governments, public services and businesses, so that fewer people die by suicide.

We will push harder to make suicide prevention a priority nationally, regionally, and locally across Ireland, working collaboratively to make changes that save lives. We will listen to people affected by suicide or suicidal thoughts and identify key areas that need more research, in order to help us make the greatest change.

Samaritans Ireland objectives:

1. Define policy priorities for both RoI and NI, leveraging existing Policy, Partnerships and Research Committee (PPRC), SCC or Nations work where relevant, identifying Ireland specific priorities as appropriate. Develop Ireland policies.
2. Define and deliver an Ireland research and evidence roadmap, leveraging existing SCC plans where possible, secure funding, commission high quality research and integrate outputs into an Ireland policy and influence plan, framed within an intersectional Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) & Human Rights context.
3. Develop and deliver an influencing plan and policy priorities for both RoI and NI, and identify opportunities to increase impact through partnerships.
4. Ensure the voice and experiences of people with lived experience are core to our policy, research and influencing work in Ireland and consider the intersectionality of their experiences.
5. Define a partnership strategy for Ireland, including partnership purpose (eg access, influence, service delivery, etc) and a clear approach to defining partnership selection criteria (eg impact, reputation risk/opportunity, values alignment, EDI commitment) to deliver on Samaritans Ireland goals. To include recommendations on how best to benefit from existing partnerships (eg GAA).
6. Strengthen existing service delivery partnership with the HSE to reflect the positive impact of Samaritans Ireland's contribution to Connecting Ireland and our goal of reducing deaths by suicide, broadening out HSE funded delivery beyond current helpline services.
7. Set up NI Advisory Board to strengthen Samaritans Ireland's links to NI community, supporting implementation of NI Regional Plan alongside the NI branches, and including NI policy and influencing priorities.

Priority 4: Capacity

4. Increase our capacity to become one team of valued, diverse, skilled people



Our challenge

Samaritans' impact is limited by a lack of diverse representation in our people, by our capacity issues and the pressure some roles are under, and by our existing organisational structure.

Our ambition

To meet the demand for our services by recruiting more people, from a diverse range of communities, giving them the best support so they stay with us longer and work effectively together as one Samaritans team.

We will strive to become more flexible and supportive so that a wider range of people can fit volunteering into their lives and so we fully reflect the communities we serve. We will support personal development, which will encourage and inspire volunteers and staff to commit to us for as long as possible.

Samaritans Ireland objectives:

1. Inform, engage, and inspire volunteers and staff through existing channels and events, managing key strategic change communications and introducing new ways of working to optimise internal engagement.
2. Provide support to Ireland branches on volunteer recruitment and retention, including supporting any Ireland-specific needs and creating robust and meaningful non-listening volunteer support roles, including the potential development of satellite hubs.
3. Ensure the Samaritans Ireland staff, Board, Board committees, branches and volunteers have the necessary breadth of expertise and organisation capability in place to deliver on the strategy, including the proper systems and processes.
4. Strengthen our commitment to EDI, helping to ensure that our volunteers, staff and services reflect the diversity of Ireland.
5. Play an active role in the wider Samaritans organisation, collaborating with colleagues (both staff and volunteers) across Samaritans to coordinate work, share expertise and optimise resources (eg reporting lines, goals, etc).

5. Build meaningful relationships with our supporters to ensure our sustainability

Our challenge

To remain fit for the future, Samaritans needs more long-term supporters who will be part of the journey with us.

Our ambition

To ensure our long-term sustainability by securing the support needed to keep us strong and taking steps to ensure our activities and organisation are fit for the future.

We will create ways for the people and organisations who support us to add their energy, resources and experience to our work so that together we can be there for those who need us for years to come.

Samaritans Ireland objectives:

1. Create and deliver a fundraising strategy for Ireland, growing Samaritans Ireland's fundraising capability and team, and work in partnership with SCC to deliver sustainable sources of income for Samaritans Ireland in both Rol and NI, supporting and growing branch income streams.
2. Develop a supporter engagement strategy within Samaritans Ireland, growing organisational focus on our supporters and delivering growth in awareness and support for Samaritans Ireland, along with meaningful opportunities for supporters to contribute to the delivery of goals for Samaritans Ireland and Ireland branches.
3. Develop a brand and reputation strategy within Samaritans Ireland, leveraging existing Samaritans brand strengths and Samaritans Central Charity brand expertise to raise awareness of, and strengthen perception of, Samaritans in both Rol and NI.

6. A highly effective and professional organisation across the island of Ireland

Our challenge

To deliver on this plan, Samaritans Ireland must develop and improve its internal organisational systems, processes, and expertise.

Our ambition:

To enhance the organisational effectiveness and efficiencies of Samaritans Ireland.

Samaritans Ireland objectives:

1. Implement all agreed recommendations and actions arising from the Samaritans Ireland Governance & Structure Review.
2. Ensure Samaritans Ireland governance structures and systems are in line with all relevant charity and company law and best practice standards.
3. Achieve the Triple Lock Governance standard for Samaritans Ireland, and its equivalent in Northern Ireland.
4. Ensure Samaritans Ireland has the appropriate staffing complement to enable it to achieve its strategic objectives.
5. Establish a strong risk awareness culture within Samaritans Ireland, supported by a Samaritans Ireland Audit & Risk Committee and a comprehensive SI Risk Register.
6. Strengthen mechanisms and systems for assessing the outcomes and impacts of our work.
7. Review the governance arrangements for Festival branch in Ireland.

Join us

In the next day, Samaritans Ireland will respond to almost 1,500 calls for help.

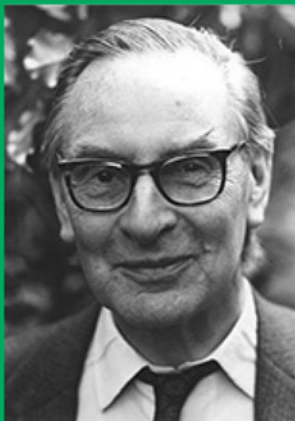
Behind the scenes, we will be working all hours to help people feel more hopeful about the future. We will strive to be seen and trusted by anyone who needs support, pushing for change to prevent suicide and ensuring that we remain fit for the future and that in five years' time we can answer each and every person who is in need of support in the way that is most beneficial for them.

Of course, none of these plans can be realised unless individuals and organisations continue to choose to support us, whether through campaigning, sharing their experiences or volunteering, as well as fundraising or donating, and we are so thankful to everyone who does, even during the most difficult times.

We need your help. These are some of the ways you can join us to make sure fewer lives are lost to suicide:

- Please consider volunteering with your local Samaritans Ireland branch.
- Learn more about our work and speak to your family, friends, colleagues, and local politicians about what we do and why we do it.
- Help us raise funds to keep our telephone helpline open 24/7, and to allow us to develop other innovative ways of reaching out to people at risk of self-harm and suicide.
- If you ever find yourself in need of support, please ring us on 116 123.
- For information on volunteering, supporting, or donating to Samaritans Ireland please contact: adminireland@samaritans.org

SAMARITANS



“

There are in this world, in every country, people who seem to be 'ordinary', but who turn out to be extraordinary. They give their total attention. They listen and listen and listen, without interrupting. They do not preach. They have nothing to sell. We call them Samaritans.

”

Chad Varah
Founder of Samaritans

samaritans.ie

Samaritans Ireland

4-5 Usher's Court, Usher's Quay, Dublin 8 D08 Y223
T +353 1 671 0071



twitter.com/samaritansirl



facebook.com/samaritansirl

samaritans.org

Samaritans Ireland (Northern Ireland)

The Mount Business Centre, 2 Woodstock Link
Belfast BT6 8DD



twitter.com/samaritansni

Samaritans Ireland is a charity registered in the Republic of Ireland (20033668) and incorporated as a company limited by guarantee (450409). Samaritans Ireland's registered office is located at 4-5 Usher's Court, Usher's Quay, Dublin 8, D08Y223. CHY number: CHY11880. The directors/trustees of Samaritans Ireland are as follows: E. Farrell, K. Flood, D. O'Cruidain, C. Skelly, G. Danton (United Kingdom) J. Trenaman, É. Ní Mhuircheartaigh, R. Fitzgerald, A. Heron (United Kingdom).