

BANGOR AND NORTH DOWN SAMARITANS

TRUSTEES' REPORT

for the year to 31st March 2023

The Trustees hereby present their report and the unaudited financial statements for the period ended 31 March 2023

These documents are prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and, voluntarily, in accordance with international best practice (Statement of Recommended Practice in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102 effective 2019) as recommended by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland. The Trustees' Report contains the information required to be provided in the Trustee's Annual Report under the Statements of Recommended Practice guidelines.

1. Structure, Governance and Management

Bangor and North Down Samaritans (CLG NI 644431; CCNI 106780) is, and is recognised by the Organisation as an affiliated branch of the Organisation.

The Organisation called Samaritans was incorporated under the Companies Act 1948 on 11 April 1963 and is a company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital, registered in England and Wales with company number 757372, and a charity registered in England and Wales (charity registered number 219432) and in Scotland (Scottish charity number SC040604) ("the Central Charity").

The Organisation's Trustee Board shall have power to dissolve, suspend or withdraw recognition of the Charity as a branch of the Organisation.

Bangor and North Down Samaritans (NI 644431; CCNI 106780) was registered as a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG) in March 2017 and is affiliated to the Central Samaritans of United Kingdom and Ireland (the Organisation)

2. Management, Internal Control and Risk Management

The day to day management of the Charity is the responsibility of the Trustees of the Charity who are responsible for the implementation of Samaritans strategy and to support the work of Samaritan volunteers in the Charity.

The Trustees have overall responsibility for the system of internal control for the charity including the safety of Charity assets and the integrity of the accounting procedures.

The Committee is comprised of:

- a) A minimum of three Trustees and a maximum of thirteen Trustees
- b) The Branch Director is a Trustee
- c) Trustees shall be elected as Treasurer and Secretary (these may be the same person).
- d) Up to eight additional Trustees may be appointed.
- e) Where necessary, there may be Trustees co-opted but this shall not exceed two in number.

At the AGM each year all Trustees except the Branch Director will stand down and fresh elections will take place.

In addition the Branch Director may appoint one of the Trustees as Vice Director.

The Committee shall meet as often as may be required but at least three times a year. Three members of the Committee shall be a quorum.

3. Public Benefit Statement

In planning our activities for the year Trustees have kept in mind the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit.

Samaritans offers support to those at risk of suicide by being there to listen and encourage the recognition and exploration of their options. By doing so we aim to help people find ways of coping with their distress without choosing to die by

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suicide. We also seek to support those whose distress is less acute, in the hope that they will not reach the point of feeling that they wish to end their lives.

4. Objectives and Activities

4.1 Objectives

Bangor and North Down Samaritans' main objects are:

- To provide confidential emotional support for people who are experiencing feelings of emotional distress or despair including those that may lead to suicide;
- To promote a better understanding in society of suicide, suicidal behaviour and the value of expressing feelings which may otherwise lead to suicide or impaired emotional health; and
- To support the Organisation, Samaritans, registered in England and Wales with company number 757372, registered charity number 219432.

4.2 Principal Activities

Bangor and North Down Samaritans' principal activities include the following:

- Providing confidential emotional support via telephone, on-line chat and through face to face contacts.
- Raising awareness and understanding of Samaritans;
- Developing partnerships with related agencies, voluntary groups and statutory bodies to better implement Samaritans strategic objectives and improve our service for 'callers';
- Supporting prisoners in prisons;
- Liaising with statutory bodies on behalf of the charity; and
- Implementing the research policy and best practice standards generated by Samaritans.

5. Vision, Mission and Values

Our Vision

Our 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're 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 Values

Our support services adapt to the changing environment, but the values at the core of our listening service remain constant:

- **Listening**
Exploring feelings alleviates distress and helps people to reach a better understanding of their situation and the options open to them.

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- **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**
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.

6. Volunteers

The Bangor and North Down Samaritans Branch could not operate without the dedication, skill and commitment of its volunteers. We currently have 73 volunteers, all of whom fully recognise the importance of being available, and providing a safe place, where people can be themselves when they need us most.

We are committed to ensuring that all volunteers develop and maintain the necessary skills and knowledge, in order to provide the best service to those who contact us. We invest substantially in both initial training for new volunteers, and on-going continuous development for all volunteers, to facilitate the delivery of consistently high-quality, effective and safe services within the Branch. In addition, all new listening volunteers are required to clear Samaritans safeguarding procedures before commencing emotional support duties.

Our volunteers are ordinary people who do extraordinary things, and we could do nothing without them. We owe them an enormous debt of gratitude.

7. Helpline

Samaritans branches collectively operate a 24-hour, free telephone and email helpline service. In addition, the new Online Chat facility has continued to operate on a pilot basis, with the intention being to expand its availability and opening hours in the future. Currently our Branch provides the service on one evening per week, although this will expand over the next twelve months.

Bangor and North Down Samaritans is one of the eight branches in Northern Ireland connected to the UK telephony network, *Link*. The *Link* system is a digital platform which ensures that callers are connected to the service as quickly as possible and that capacity can be monitored to ensure that the service offers optimal capacity. Samaritans is also signposted to by other service providers, and many other helplines, which are not in a position to offer a 24-hour service.

8. Awareness raising, outreach and face to face

The relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions has enabled volunteers within the Bangor and North Down Samaritans Branch to deliver an extensive range of awareness raising sessions in the community, during the year.

Activity during the period of this report includes:

- Delivery of Samaritans emotional awareness presentations in a number of schools in the Bangor and North Down area, including provision of information on mental health and wellbeing, and reaching out to over 250 teenagers in the process.

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- Presenting to students at the South Eastern Regional College
 - Providing talks on the role of Samaritans to various local community and mental health groups
 - Assisting at the Ards Cycling Club annual sportive
 - Provision of emotional support to young offenders and women prisoners in the Hydebank Wood, Young Offenders Centre and Prison, in conjunction with Belfast Branch;
 - Continuing to develop a relationship with North Down Community Network, Bangor, and Ards and North Down Borough Council, to improve our network of contacts and spread the Samaritans word;

The Branch has not yet been able to re-introduce the drop-in service at our premises whereby people can call into the Branch to avail of face-to-face emotional support. This is being kept under review, in line with guidance from Samaritans Central Office.

9. Achievements, performance and plans for the future

In the 12-month period to the end of March 2023, the Branch volunteers provided emotional support to 15,275 callers. There were 14,642 callers supported by telephone, 332 callers supported by email and 301 callers supported by Online Chat. All were provided with confidential, non-judgemental, emotional support, with our selfless volunteers giving up 3,300 hours of their time in the process.

The Branch Recruitment Team ran one campaign to attract new volunteers, up to the end of March 2023. This resulted in 5 new Listening Volunteers being appointed. Currently a further 4 potential volunteers are undergoing training. Applications to join our Branch can now be made online through the Samaritans Website (www.samaritans.org)

Following the relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions, the Training Team continued with the revised format of initial training for new volunteers, involving a blend of both face-to-face tutoring and online training. Current volunteers are required to undergo 5 hours continuous development each year, with the emphasis, this year, being on safeguarding and our own self-care. Ongoing training was also provided at various levels for those involved in managing the Branch, including for Day Leaders. We are grateful for the collective effort, resilience and dedication of all those volunteers who have helped in the roll-out of training across the Branch.

Fundraising is the cornerstone of our continued existence and we must thank the community in Bangor and North Down, for their continued support, financially and otherwise, particularly given the current cost of living crisis. Those volunteers who take on the extra duties in relation to fundraising are essential and much appreciated. We must also express our gratitude to those members of the community who help us in different ways with our fundraising, including ex volunteers and their friends and relatives, and a number of the local supermarket chains who allowed us to do collections on their premises. Donations were received from a variety of sources including Ards Cycling Club, St Galls, Auld Bangor Historical and Cultural Society, SupermotoNI, Bangor Ukes and Sacred Heart Missionaries. We were also in receipt of funds collected from attendees at the Sarah Millican concert, in December 2022, Waterfront Hall Belfast, as part of her recent sell-out UK and Ireland tour. We are very grateful for the ongoing support given to the Samaritans organisation by Sarah Millican, and for the welcome opportunity to collect funds, after her concert, directly for the Branch.

The Branch made a number of successful applications to Funding Bodies to provide funding for Social Media Campaigns, and to make provisions for the continued operation of the Branch. We would like to thank those Funding Bodies for their support, including Click Energy, Ards and North Down Borough Council and the Community Foundation Northern Ireland.

Members of the local community remember us in their wills and leave legacies for our continued work, and we are very grateful for the contributions received from them.

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Social Media Campaign

To improve the Samaritans ability to reach out to those 'hard-to-reach' members of our community, it was decided to continue to run Social Media campaigns across Northern Ireland, managed by the Bangor and North Down Branch. In this respect, funding was received from the Community Foundation to target young people across Northern Ireland and to make them more aware of Samaritans.

These campaigns have continued to show excellent results and have been well supported by selected Influencers who displayed their support for Samaritans and those in distress. The results show an overall audience Reach of 370,396, gaining 937,551 Impressions, along with 1549 clicks across Facebook and Twitter. These campaigns have been made possible by Ardmore Advertising, in Holywood, who devised and managed the campaign for Samaritans, free of charge. We are extremely grateful for their support.

10. Financial Review

10.1 Results for the year

Financial results for the year ended 31 March 2023 are shown in the Statement of Financial Activities on page 10.

10.2 Income Generation

Bangor and North Down Samaritans raised total income of £27,903 in the year to 31st March 2023 (2022 – £17,880)

An additional £21,068 of deferred income was received in the year to fund the annual Samaritans conference for Ireland which is being hosted by Bangor and North Down Samaritans in September 2023 as part of our 50th Anniversary celebrations.

10.3 Resources Expended

Total resources expended by Bangor and North Down Samaritans amounted to £29,993 for the year to 31 March 2023 (2022 – £25,958). Of the Charity's expenditure 87% was spent on direct charitable activities and 5% on governance.

10.4 Reserve Policy

In accordance with recommended best practice, the Trustees have adopted a Reserves Policy which is concerned with how much 'free' (or unallocated) reserves the charity retains.

This excludes the following:

- Restricted funds
- Designated funds
- Income funds that could only be realised by disposing of fixed assets held for charity use.

Bangor and North Down Samaritans has the responsibility for establishing an appropriate Reserve Policy. Having reviewed the reserves of the charity, the policy of the Trustees is to retain sufficient reserves to ensure the continuity of operations and to absorb periodic setbacks, while committing the maximum amount available for the provision of services.

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The Trustees have agreed that the most appropriate level of reserves should be kept at the level representing 12-24 months expenditure. In light of the recent pandemic it was deemed prudent and appropriate to exceed this level of reserves in the short-term.

11. Statement of responsibilities of members of the Board in respect of the financial statements

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustee's Report and the financial statements in accordance with UK Law and regulation.

The Trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice, including SORP Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK.

In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies for the Charity financial statements and then apply them consistently;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards, identify those standards, and note the effect and the reasons for any material departure from those standards; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for ensuring that the Charity keeps or causes to be kept adequate accounting records which correctly explain and record the transactions of the Charity, enable at any time the assets, liabilities, financial position and profit or loss of the Charity to be determined with reasonable accuracy and enable them to ensure that the financial statements and Directors' Report comply with legislation. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees:

Nuala Meier
Trustee



Date:

28/7/23

Heather Hamilton
Trustee



Date:

28/7/23