

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: NI644575 (Northern Ireland)  
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: NIC 106795

Report of the Trustees and  
Unaudited Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023  
for  
Belfast Samaritans  
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

Lynn Drake & Co Ltd  
Chartered Accountants  
1st Floor  
34 B-D Main Street  
Moira  
Co. Armagh  
BT67 0LE

**Belfast Samaritans**

**Reference and Administrative Details**  
**for the Year Ended 31 March 2023**

<b>TRUSTEES</b>	Kenneth Bamford Robert Bell (appointed 14/6/2022) Bernard O Loughlin (appointed 23/8/2022) Susan Cunningham (resigned 14/6/2022) Dorothy McKeown Rosanna O'Hagan (resigned 5/5/2022) James Ramsey Heather McKinstry Heather Cardosi
<b>COMPANY SECRETARY</b>	Heather Cardosi
<b>REGISTERED OFFICE</b>	5 Wellesley Avenue Belfast Co. Antrim BT9 6DG
<b>REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER</b>	NI644575 (Northern Ireland)
<b>REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER</b>	NIC 106795
<b>INDEPENDENT EXAMINER</b>	Lynn Drake & Co Ltd Chartered Accountants 1st Floor 34 B-D Main Street Moira Co. Armagh BT67 0LE
<b>STOCKBROKERS</b>	Evelyn Partners The Ewart 3 Bedford Street Belfast BT2 7EP
<b>BANKERS</b>	Ulster Bank Limited 91 -93 University Road Belfast BT7 1NG

## Belfast Samaritans

### Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

#### **ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE**

Belfast Samaritans has been serving the community since it first opened its doors in 1961 and has continued to be available 365 days of the year since then.

Although somewhat less affected by the pandemic this year, the last 12 months have still proved challenging as the branch seeks to operate 24 hours/day, 7 days/week. There have been some minimal ad hoc duty closures.

We continue to monitor and improve the standard and consistency of our service by ensuring quality and safeguarding processes are updated and implemented across all areas of the service, and following guidance from Samaritans Central Charity. During the year Updated training in Safeguarding and in the consistent application of Key mandatory policies was rolled out to volunteers.

Belfast law firm Carson McDowell continued their support of the branch as their Charity partner for the year 2022. Truly impressive fundraising efforts throughout the year included a Retro Sports Day for staff and clients, Bake sales and Carol-singing at Belfast City Hall and many other events, all of which meant that at the conclusion over £16,000 had been raised for branch funds.

Samaritans Central Charity launched a new five-year strategy at the heart of which is the promotion of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. As part of this, the branch brought forward plans to improve access to the branch with the installation of a substantial ramp and automatic doors which were implanted during the Spring of 2023. Grant support for a significant proportion of this work was secured from Samaritans Ireland project funds.

#### **Contacts**

During the 12-month period to 31 March 2023, Belfast branch has supported our callers in the following ways:

Responded to almost 30,000 telephone calls, involving volunteers spending 7600 hours on the phone  
Replied to 260 emails  
Had approximately 280 online chat conversations.

As part of a reorganisation of how services are delivered to callers, in October 2022 the email service delivered by volunteers in branches was brought to a close and migrated to a volunteer 'hub' managed elsewhere in Samaritans. This completed a journey for the branch that began in 2001. In the time since, Belfast volunteers responded to over 57,000 emails from callers.

Belfast continues to be one of a limited number of branches engaging in the continued pilot of an online chat service, which is receiving positive feedback from callers and appears to encourage those that may not consider contact by any other means.

#### **Volunteers**

Belfast Samaritans could not operate without the dedication and skill of our volunteers who lead the branch in every aspect of its work. We thank each and every one of them for their continued commitment to the needs of our callers. It should be noted that in addition to time spent during caller contact, significant hours are spent by those volunteers who fulfil the many and varied roles including volunteer recruitment, training and mentoring and charity governance, all of which keep the branch operational.

## Belfast Samaritans

### Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

#### **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

The charity had a net deficit for the year of £1,176 (2022: Surplus £25,521). Investment income losses for the year amounted to £19,068 (2022:Gains £5,126).

This summates to a total net deficit of funds for the year of £20,244 (2022: Surplus £30,647. This is sub divided by a decrease in unrestricted funds, of £21,703 and an increase in restricted funds of £1,459.

In line with Samaritans guidelines the Trustees are required to maintain a reserve of up to 12 months trading. The Trustees feel it is prudent to maintain extra reserves that are designated to cover the substantial costs that may be associated with improving our premises.

To maintain the on-going work of the branch, we are extremely grateful to individuals,organisations, businesses, the public and many of the branch's own volunteers who have raised funds for us/donated.

#### **FUTURE PLANS**

As the pandemic situation has stabilised and abated the branch is increasingly returning to more typical style of operation. However, the face-to-face support of callers within the branch remains suspended. This was in response to a central decision by Samaritans. This situation has now been updated to enable branches to make a phased return to such support of callers. However, the turnover of volunteers since March 2020 mean that a majority of current volunteers are unfamiliar with this activity. A return to face to face support will require substantial training effort as well as appropriate risk assessment and additional measures to meet the new enhanced Samaritans specification for how the service is to be delivered.

Whilst both General and Schools Outreach and Prisons Outreach teams are beginning to re-establish their activities, the extended period of suspension of these activities has meant that the teams will need a period of recovery and re-building to ensure robust availability.

It continues to be our aspiration to provide improved facilities for volunteers, staff and visitors to the branch in Wellesley Avenue. In addition to the above-mentioned ramp and automation of doors, some firm plans are being developed to improve the general operating environment for volunteers including updates to furniture and fittings during the incoming year.

In the longer term, it is intended to commence a comprehensive assessment of future needs. This was delayed due to Covid restrictions. However, there is now an aim to start addressing the limitations of the current premises, but the advice of outside professionals will need to be sought before any significant choices are made.

**Belfast Samaritans**

**Report of the Trustees**  
**for the Year Ended 31 March 2023**

**STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES - continued**

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 20 June 2023 and signed on its behalf by:



Heather Cardosi - Secretary