

Our vision



Every life lost to suicide is a tragedy, and our vision is that fewer people die by suicide.

Our mission



To be there for anyone who needs someone. To give people ways to cope and be there for others. And to campaign to make suicide prevention a priority.

Our values



Listening

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

Non-judgmental

We want people to be able to talk to us without fear of prejudice or rejection.

Confidentiality

If people feel safe, they are more likely to be open about their feelings.

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

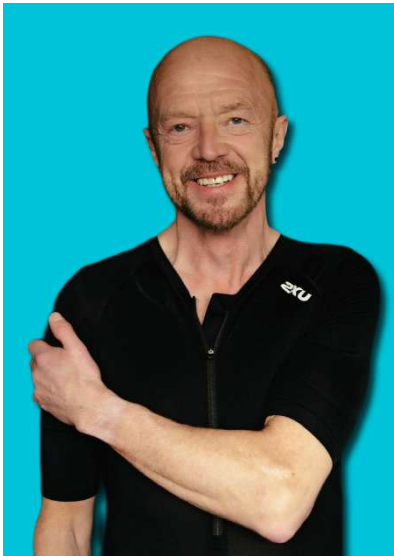
Giving people time, undivided attention and empathy meets a fundamental emotional need and reduces distress and despair.

What we do

Lewisham, Greenwich and Southwark Samaritans are an independent charity, and we are part of the national network of Samaritan branches, available 24/7 for anyone who is experiencing pain in their lives.

We want to make sure that people know they can call us to talk about their feelings regardless of whether they are feeling suicidal.

Director's report



I would like to thank everyone who supports our branch whether that be by volunteering directly, contributing financially or helping out in other ways, for example, the local businesses which donate services or goods to assist with the running of the branch.

I have only been in post a few months, so this is my first report as Director. It seems that the voluntary sector, in general, is facing a number of challenges, most notably in relation to fundraising. Our branch, an independent charity, is one of approximately 200 in the national Samaritans Charity which recently announced a

series of proposals aimed at securing the future of the organisation and underpinning its primary objective that less people will feel that they want to take their own lives as a result of the support we are able to offer.

Although funding is a significant challenge, in many respects Lewisham Samaritans is in a very strong position. We have a very dedicated group of fantastic volunteers whose joint efforts enabled us to provide support to almost 18,000 people during 2024/2025. Our phone lines are manned round the clock. We provide support via email and in face-to-face contacts within the branch and at various outreach activities such as our regular visits to St Mungo's which is an assessment centre for homeless adults in New Cross. We also visit Belmarsh prison several times most weeks where we train and support selected prisoners to become listeners so that they, in turn, can support fellow prisoners who are emotionally distressed or suicidal.

I am immensely proud of the services which our branch provides and of the remarkable efforts of its volunteers, but the sad fact is that the demand for those services very often outstrips our capacity. This can result in unacceptably long wait times for callers who want to speak to a volunteer.

The plan we have developed for the three-year term of my directorship is very clearly aimed at increasing our numbers by recruiting more new volunteers and making sure that we continue to care for and support our

existing volunteers. This will allow us to answer more calls and to support more callers. We are fortunate to have a fairly constant stream of contacts from people who are interested in becoming volunteers. The challenge we face is the effort needed to train and support these new volunteers especially given that we have to devote considerable efforts to raising funds so that the branch can operate.

Our running costs are not huge, mainly because we have no paid employees, and because the London Borough of Lewisham provides us with the building from which we operate but we do have to maintain the building, pay for heat and light, as well as many of the other costs any small charity or business would incur.

If you feel that you would like to support us please visit our website where you can make a donation or register an interest to become a volunteer.

David 490





Vineeta distributing Samaritan fans at Flackstock 2025 in Crystal Palace Bowl, where we joined volunteers from Central London, Bromley & Orpington and Croydon to raise awareness.

Outreach report

Although sadly we had to lose our Community Outreach Manager position in September 2024, we have continued to develop links with our local community. Since January 2025 we have reinstated regular visits to the local St Mungo's Centre, and also invited callers to speak to us face to face in the Branch. We supported three national initiatives with Network Rail, at Waterloo, London Bridge and Lewisham stations, and also made six visits to local stations across the year, raising awareness of our service. Our volunteers also attended events to raise awareness at local colleges, universities, and at other community and commercial organisations. These included Crisis at Christmas, HMRC's Staff well-being and community day.

And Suicide Prevention Awareness workshops run in conjunction with the London Borough of Hackney and the Corporation of the City of London.

Training Report

When someone mentions the word 'Training' at Lewisham I have simultaneous feelings of pride and anxiety – pride because over the last three years we have achieved our goal of streamlining the 'training journey' so that all the cogs in the training machine run smoothly and in a state of mutual awareness of one another. Recruitment feeds Core Training, Core links to Mentoring, Mentoring knows when Embedding rounds are planned – and then, newly fledged, and keen-as-mustard, our post-Probationer Volunteers are kept stimulated by Continuous Development sessions.

I can honestly say we are a training 'team' with some stalwart and wonderful leads for each of these strands. Peter 808, Chloe1411, Barbara 567, Helen1266 stand up and take a bow right now!

And there are some absolutely terrific co-facilitators, event organisers, 'step-in-at-the-last-minute-ers' who similarly deserve applause. So many I may cause slight by omission, but Louise, Susan, Roshan, Karen, Ian, Adam, Ben you can all bask in the glow of my thanks for stepping up to the plate to help with aspects of training this last year.

My own training was so good I'd have spent hard-earned money on it. It gave me feelings, instincts and skills, I didn't know I could develop. Listening with complete acceptance of the caller; and not judging, which came hard to me as a bossy SME Company Director. There hasn't been a week in 13 years of volunteering when I haven't learned something new about how to listen.

Our goals over the next year are to increase our intake of new volunteers and find entertaining ways to keep a high percentage of our current volunteers with us.



Rosie with David, Barbara, Helen, Adam and Karen

Our work in Prisons

The healthy relationship of mutual trust and respect that our branch has enjoyed for many years with Belmarsh prison has continued strongly in 2024-

2025, and the Listener Scheme we run there – like the work of the Samaritans more generally – remains highly valued by prisoners and prison staff.

Our team of prison support volunteers numbers 22 at present, including 13 from our neighbouring branches Bexley and Dartford and Bromley and Orpington. Over the year we have trained 41 new Listeners, but as ever several of these have left, usually as the result of being transferred to another prison. We currently have 18 active Listeners in our team.

At the end of August 2025 our Branch Prison Support Officer, Debbie Wilkinson, stood down after an incredible 13 years of devoted service in the role, and we are hugely grateful for the wonderful work she has done over that unusually long period, supporting Belmarsh prisoners and staff and leading the Listener and prison volunteer teams.

We thank David Cope for agreeing to take over from her as BPSO Belmarsh from the beginning of September 2025. We are also grateful for the support of our new Regional Prison Support Officer for the London region, Lesley Hart. With her encouragement we plan to do everything we can to maintain and improve our well-established Listener Scheme at HMP Belmarsh and continue to offer high-quality training and support.

Finance Report and Accounts

2024-25

Introduction

2023-24 was a challenging year from a financial point of view which saw a significant reduction in our reserves due to decreased income from fund-raising and grants. In 2024-25, the Trustees took significant steps to reduce expenditure while the fund-raising team have redoubled their efforts to very good effect. As a result, the Trustees are pleased to report that our financial position has improved very significantly and that the branch is now on a stable financial footing.

We have reviewed and updated our Financial Policies to ensure they reflect best practice. We have also made significant improvements to the financial reporting which the Trustees scrutinise on a monthly basis to monitor our income and expenditure.

We are very grateful to Mrs Carolyn Holbrook who has agreed to continue as our Independent Financial Examiner.

Income

	Notes	2024-25	2023-24
Bank interest		633	776
Donations		21,947	12,122
Funds raised		20,209	7,615
Grants	1	22,039	0
Total		64,828	20,513

Expenditure

	Notes	2024-25	2023-24
Premises overheads	2	18,517	19,434
Direct charitable expenditure	3	6,891	4,860
Management & administration	4	3,835	6,030
Community outreach activity	5	8,859	17,936
Total		38,148	48,535

Surplus/Deficit

2024-25 **2023-24**
£26,680 **-£28,022**

Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at 31 March

Cash balance brought forward from previous year	24,377	52,399
Surplus/Deficit for the year	26,680	(28,022)
Carried forward to next year	51,057	24,377

Fixed Assets

Leasehold improvements brought forward	79,383
Depreciation charge for the year	5,670
Carried forward	73,713

In 2009, the Branch acquired a 30-year lease for 1-5 Angus Street London SE1 6LU from the London Borough of Lewisham for a peppercorn rent. Refurbishment work started in November 2008 and the Branch moved in and started operating there in April 2009. Funds spent on the refurbishment of the building have been shown as a capitalised asset. The depreciation for the refurbishment is deducted annually on a straight line basis.

Notes to the Accounts

Note 1 Grants	22,039
National Lottery Grant (£5,000 of which is restricted for refurbishment of the branch)	20,000
Listener scheme branch grant payment	2,039

Note 2 Premises Overheads Total	18,517
Insurance and bank charges	920
Housekeeping	1,177
Premises Overheads	2,520
Rates	1,421
Repairs and maintenance	6,176
Utilities	6,303
Note 3 Direct Charitable Expenditure	6,936
Branch contribution to Central Charity	1,983
Telephone and internet	1,680
Prison expenses	1,156
Volunteers' travel expenses	2,117
Note 4 Management and administration	3,835
Administrative Support	3,345
IT software and stationery	490
Note 5 Community Outreach Activity	8,859
Community Outreach Manager pension	626
Community Outreach Manager Salary, PAYE & NI	8,233

Note 6: Payment to Trustees

No payments have been made to Trustees except to reimburse purchases made for the Charity or expenses in the usual course of volunteering.

Note 7: Reserves

The Charity seeks to maintain its reserves at the equivalent of no less than six months' normal running costs.

Approval of Financial Statements and Accounts

Approved David Waugh – Director 1 September 2025

Approved Chloe Vaughan – Treasurer 1 September 2025

Independent Examiner's Report

Independent Examiner's Report on the Accounts Report to the Trustees/Members of Lewisham, Greenwich and Southwark Samaritans on accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025 set out on pages 9-13.

I report to the Trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity (The Trust) for the year ended 31 March 2023. As the charity trustees of The Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act of 2011 (The Act). I report in respect of my examination carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed the applicable Directions given by The Charity Commission under section 145 (5)(b) of The Act.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that, in any material respect:

- Accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or

- The accounts do not accord with the accounting records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed Mrs Carolyn Holbrook, Independent Examiner

11 September 2025

5 Croftside, Bures St Mary, CO8 9LL

Trustees 2024-25

Jean Gilardi – Director (to June 2025)

David Waugh – Secretary (to June 2025) Director (from June 2025)

Eleftherios Italos – Secretary (from June 2025)

Sandra Snelgrove – Treasurer (to June 2025)

Chloe Vaughan - Treasurer (from June 2025)

Rosalie Allen

Ian Buchan

David Cope

Deborah Dowdall

John Sabine (to June 2025)

Thank you

We owe a huge thank you to our 120 volunteers for giving so much of their time to deliver our service – listening to callers, responding to emails, reaching out

to our local community including the local prisons. Also training and mentoring new volunteers and keeping the branch running as an effective and well managed charity.

We could not do this without our generous supporters either –

The National Lottery Awards for All Fund

London Borough of Lewisham

Maggie Tetlow and the Dulwich Golf Club members

Louise Eldridge for running the London Marathon, and her sponsors

Blackheath Choral Society

Citibank Ireland

The late Caroline Adie, and all who made donations in her memory.

Diamond Digital Print

And many donors who prefer to remain anonymous

Fundraising report

For the financial year 2024-25 the Branch raised £61,741 in donations, grants and fundraising – including a generous donation from the National Lottery Awards for All Fund, and massive efforts from volunteers undertaking sponsored triathlon and marathon events, Carol singing with Blackheath Choir at Canary Wharf, and great generosity from individuals.

Costs continue to rise, and we cannot be complacent. If we want to expand our outreach, and secure our branch for the future, we need to keep raising awareness of our service, and raising funds to keep the Branch running.

Ways to support our Branch

- **Donate** directly via our website www.samaritans.org/branches/lewisham and click on the donate button on our web-page. You can make this a one-off gift or set up a regular donation.
- **Select us as your charity** if you are undertaking a sponsored challenge or fundraising event.
- **Support us through Give as You Live** – a free and easy way to raise money when you shop online, with more than 6000 stores and services signed up: www.giveasyoulive.org
- **Hire our meeting rooms** for a meeting, small conference or course – all proceeds go back into supporting our work. You can find a link and full details of the rooms available and the costs on our website: www.samaritans.org/lewisham

You can also scan the QR code below which will take you our donation portal. If you would like to find out more about supporting us, please contact lewisham.director@samaritans.org or lewisham.fundraising@samaritans.org

