

## Festive boost as Samaritans receive £77,000 grant from Great Western Railway

December 20, 2022



**A significant £77,000 grant has been given to the Samaritans by [Great Western Railway](#) to support the charity's life-saving work and mission to reduce the number of people who die by suicide and be there for anyone who is struggling, particularly over the festive period.**

The funding will go a long way towards recruiting new volunteers, as well as delivering events and activities in the local communities near 23 Samaritans branches\* across the GWR network, from London to Plymouth, Swansea, Hereford and numerous towns in between, to support the wellbeing of residents.

The funding comes at a crucial time, helping to ensure that Samaritans volunteers are on hand to provide emotional support throughout the festive season. 13,000 listening volunteers at Samaritans branches across the UK and Ireland are expected to answer calls for help from people feeling overwhelmed this winter. Last year, Samaritans volunteers responded to 244,254 calls in the UK and Ireland over the festive period.

Samaritans successfully applied for a grant from the train operator's Community Fund, which was launched in May to support local communities and address areas of social need.

As part of GWR's National Rail Contract with the Department for Transport, the train operator is committed to supporting schools, colleges, councils, community and other not-for-profit organisations by aiding a number of initiatives.

Samaritans' activities will continue into next year, with talks at community groups, businesses, and local events, giving people useful tips on how to support a family member, friend or colleague who may be struggling and how to even help a stranger who might need help.

Olivia Cayley, Head of Rail at Samaritans said: "We're so grateful to GWR for supporting Samaritans branches across the route with this generous grant for the second year running. We know how valuable the funding was last year in helping the branches to deliver over 150 community events providing much needed emotional support. So, we're so pleased that they'll be able to continue their life-saving work again this year and continue to grow their volunteer base.

"We know the last few years including the pandemic and current economic uncertainty has had a huge impact on the nation's mental wellbeing, and that can be even harder at this time of year, so it's vital that the branches are on hand to boost wellbeing in their local communities and be there for those who need a listening ear.

"Our volunteers are available 24/7, free of charge, for anyone who is struggling to cope – call 116 123 or email [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)."

GWR Business Development Director, Tom Pierpoint, said: "We're really pleased to support Samaritans with this funding, which will specifically help to raise awareness and recruit new volunteers. Samaritans has worked in partnership with the rail industry and the British Transport Police for more than 10 years, carrying out vital work to reduce suicides on the railway and training staff to start conversations with someone who might need help to get them to safety."

Anyone can contact Samaritans confidentially for free any time from any phone on 116 123, or you can email [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org) or visit [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org).

\*Samaritans branch locations include: Barnstable, Bath, Bridgend, Bristol, Cardiff, Central London, Cheltenham, Exeter, Gloucester, Hereford, Newbury, Newport, Oxford, Plymouth, Reading, Slough, Swansea, Swindon, Taunton, Torquay, Truro, Weston-Super-Mare and Worcester