

**SAMARITANS**  
Cymru

# Compassion in Education

A toolkit for teaching staff  
and education professionals  
in Wales



[#CompassionInEducation](#)

[samaritans.org/compassionineducation](https://samaritans.org/compassionineducation)

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# Who is this toolkit for & how do I use it?

This toolkit has been designed to help teaching staff and education professionals in Wales develop compassionate approaches in schools, colleges and universities. It aims to improve outcomes through improving the interaction between staff and pupils or students.

Samaritans Cymru has worked with teaching staff and educational professionals in Wales on several initiatives and projects. We are aware of the increasing focus on promoting good mental health and wellbeing in schools, colleges and universities, and efforts to embed measures which protect staff, pupils and students. We also know every institution is different, with their own community and needs.

We welcome the increased commitment to improving mental health and minimising emotional distress in educational settings throughout Wales. This toolkit has been designed as an easy-to-use guide for all staff, which can help schools, colleges and universities adopt a compassionate approach to the emotional and mental health needs of pupils, students and staff.

This toolkit isn't just for educational settings; it has been designed to encourage you to act more compassionately in your own life, towards yourself and those around you. Acting with compassion has many benefits. It can improve your health, boost your wellbeing, and strengthen your relationships. Most importantly, compassion can change and save lives.

*Compassion in Education* has been designed to provide you with facts and information, alongside real tips and actions which can be used in your daily working life. This toolkit can assist you when talking to or helping pupils, students or staff who are experiencing emotional distress. It also promotes a preventative approach to poor mental health in pupils, students and staff, which is a core focus of Samaritans' work.

# What is compassion & why is it important in schools, colleges and universities?

“ Helping a person will not necessarily change the world, but it can change the world for that person ”

**Anonymous**

Compassion is the ability to understand the emotional state of another person or oneself. It is based on empathy, respect and dignity. While empathy is the ability to put yourself in the other person's place and understand their distress, compassion has the additional element of actively wanting to help them.

It's the ability to understand and sympathise with the emotional state of another person while having the motivation to help and prevent their distress.

We believe compassion should be a core component of education in Wales. A compassionate approach to teaching and pastoral roles can help staff better understand and assist pupils and students with varying degrees of backgrounds, behaviours and Additional Learning Needs (ALN). A greater and more compassionate understanding of pupils and students can improve outcomes for that child or young person and help shape a more positive future for them.

The compassion shown to pupils, students and staff can improve how they perceive their interaction or relationship and can make them feel valued and cared for. Most significantly, showing compassion – towards yourself and others – is a skill that can be learned. Acting compassionately does not require any specific resource, time or money. It just relies on you being able to relate to someone else’s emotional state and crucially, wanting to support them. The most important thing to remember is that you don’t need to be an expert to help someone experiencing distress. The most valuable thing is that they don’t feel alone and that they know someone cares.

# Mental health, emotional distress & suicide in Wales: Key facts

- Mental health problems affect **1 in 4 people**
- This includes **1 in 10 children and young people** – around 3 children in every average-sized classroom
- More than **1 in 10 women** experience mental health problems during pregnancy and the first year after childbirth
- There are approximately **5,500 hospital admissions** for self-harm related injury each year. It is one of the top five reasons for medical admissions
- Between **300 and 350 people** die by suicide each year in Wales; this is around 3 times the number who are killed in road accidents
- Men are **three times more likely** to take their own lives than women
- Suicide rates are **2 to 3 times higher** in the most deprived areas compared to the most affluent
- Suicide is the leading cause of death among **young people aged 20–34 years**

## Sources:

Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Mental Health in Wales: Fundamental Facts 2016 (Mental Health Foundation)

Socioeconomic disadvantage and suicidal behaviour – Finding a way forward for Wales (Samaritans Cymru)

# Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are traumatic experiences that children and young people are exposed to before the age of 18 and are remembered throughout adulthood.

Evidence shows children who experience ACEs are more likely to develop health-harming and anti-social behaviours, more likely to be involved in crime and more likely to perform poorly in school.

- Parental separation
- Domestic violence
- Drug abuse
- Physical, sexual or verbal abuse
- Mental illness
- Alcohol abuse
- Incarceration
- Physical or emotional neglect

People who have experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are at much greater risk of mental illness throughout life. Based on a study by Public Health Wales and Bangor University, adults who had suffered four or more types of ACEs were almost 10 times more likely to have felt suicidal or self-harmed than those who had experienced none.

Schools, local health services, local authorities, public services and the wider public sector must invest and work to reduce ACEs, their impact on individuals and, most significantly, understand the benefits of intervening in the cycle of ACEs.

To find out more about ACEs and how your school, college or university can get involved, please visit [aceawarewales.com](http://aceawarewales.com)

## Sources:

Adverse Childhood Experiences and their impact on health-harming behaviours in the Welsh adult population, Public Health Wales / Centre for Public Mental Health 2015.

Sources of resilience and their moderating relationships with harms from adverse childhood experiences, Public Health Wales / Bangor University 2018.



Photo: Matthew Horwood

# School exclusion: The wider causes & effects

“ If you're out of school, you can be out of your only source of support and community ”

Exclusion from school is linked to a much wider set of recurring inequalities, circumstances and consequences.

- Exclusion is more common among children of lower socio-economic status, boys, and those with language difficulties, lower educational attainment or special educational needs. Family characteristics, such as poor parental mental health and engagement with education, are also associated with exclusion.
- Exclusion from school can result in loneliness and social isolation. We know that this is connected to a lack of belongingness for children and young people. This is the human emotional need to be an accepted member of a group or community. Loneliness and isolation can have a serious impact on physical and mental health and are a risk factor for suicidal behaviour and suicide.



- Based on surveys during six inspections by the HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales in 2017/18, 89% of children reported exclusion from school before they came into detention, 74% reported previous truancy, and 41% said they were 14 or younger when they last attended school.

In many cases of exclusion, we believe we must shift our focus from firefighting to prevention across schools in Wales. Investment in being able to identify and help those at risk of experiencing exclusion is urgently needed.

For more information on school exclusion in Wales and our approach to reducing it, please visit [samaritans.org/wales](https://www.samaritans.org/wales) and select 'Exclusion from school in Wales: the hidden cost'.

**Sources:**

Exclusion from school in Wales: The Hidden Cost, Samaritans Cymru 2019. Available at [samaritans.org/wales](https://www.samaritans.org/wales)

# Emotional & mental health education: Why include it in schools, colleges or universities?

Mental health education in schools, colleges or universities, through lessons, personal and social education (PSE) provision, talks, workshops or lectures, is a crucial form of prevention and early intervention.

Being taught about emotional and mental health can prevent and reduce poor mental health, emotional distress and suicidal feelings. It is also a core focus of the new curriculum for Wales.

Building our emotional resilience and managing our mental health may seem like a natural part of life to some. But for many, it is not an intuitive act – it is one we must learn or be taught. Learning these skills can help us develop an understanding of what emotional and mental health is, recognise when we need help and learn positive coping strategies. This is why it's so important that we teach children and young people how to take charge of their emotional health so they can face the future with optimism.

There are a number of mental health resources available to schools in Wales, all of which can be accessed through <https://hwb.gov.wales>

At Samaritans, we have a free bilingual resource called DEAL (Developing Emotional Awareness and Listening) for teachers and other educational professionals designed to help develop resilience in young people.

**DEAL (Developing Emotional Awareness and Listening) aims to:**

- raise awareness of emotional health and the importance of recognising when you need help
- develop positive coping strategies
- reduce stigma and break down barriers around talking about emotional health.
- develop communication skills
- develop supportive and help-seeking behaviour in young people.

You can access DEAL for free at [samaritans.org/DEAL](https://www.samaritans.org/DEAL)

# Teaching or talking about mental health, emotional distress or suicide: Activity

When teaching and learning about ourselves, in PSHE or any other curriculum subject, we need to create a safe and positive climate where it is OK for students to talk and share ideas. What can we do to enable this to happen?



In groups of three or four, ask participants to list three 'rules' that they would like to set so the session feels safe and comfortable. Allow a few minutes, then collect ideas from groups and record on a board. Merge similar responses. When everyone's contribution has been recorded, ask if there is anything else anyone would like to add, or that they are concerned about.

Agree that these are the ground rules that you will follow for these sessions. Look at each post-it from the previous activity in turn, read it aloud and ask if the concern would be overcome by having these new ground rules in place? If yes, put to one side, if no then put back in a pile.

Most concerns about taking part in these sessions would be addressed by having ground rules for everyone to agree on. It has been shown that people engage more readily when they have ownership of the rules that have been set.

Download this staff training session and find out more at [samaritans.org/DEAL](https://www.samaritans.org/DEAL)

# Teaching or talking about mental health, emotional distress or suicide: What-ifs



## What if I get upset when talking or teaching about something that affects me?

**Response:** The message we want to give to all pupils and students is that it is OK to not feel happy. This applies to you too. If you feel unable to continue a lesson, then send a student to find a member of staff to cover for you. If you feel able to, explain to the students that you are feeling upset. They don't need to know why, but this also shows them that adults experience difficult feelings too and have to find ways to cope with these. You may also want to call Samaritans if you are feeling upset, worried or distressed about anything you have heard.



## What if someone brings up suicide in a lesson and says they know someone who took their own life?

**Response:** Respond by saying that you are sorry to hear that and that it must have been a very sad time for them. Don't feel concerned that someone has mentioned suicide. It's a sign that they feel safe to talk about this and it can lead to a very helpful and healthy discussion. Research shows that talking about suicide does not increase suicidal intention in young people. Do not talk about methods of suicide, or talk about suicide in a way that glamorises or romanticises suicide or presents it as a reasonable solution to a problem. This would include talking about celebrities who have died by suicide. Talking about suicide statistics of young people is also not helpful as it can normalise suicide as an option. A teenager might think, 'if such a high number are dying by suicide, this must be an acceptable and normal way of coping with my problems.'

It can be helpful to remind students that suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem, that suicide is final, that it puts an

end to the possibility that things can get better and it leaves behind devastation on many levels. Talking about suicide in an open and honest way can help to prevent it. You can talk about someone who has died by suicide by remembering the good things that they have achieved, sensitively focus on their life achievements and the wastefulness of their death.

You can remind students that there is always someone to talk to, no matter whether their problem seems big or small, or even if they don't know what to say but are feeling down. Refer students to support both in and out of school. Make sure that you get the support you need too.



### What if I don't know the answer to something the students ask?

**Response:** That's OK, be honest and say that you don't know. Say that you are glad they have asked and that you will find out the information they need.



### What if someone shares that they are feeling suicidal or are self-harming?

**Response:** Be sensitive, thank them for sharing the information and say that you are sorry to hear that and that you would like to talk to them after the lesson to make sure they have the help they need. Remind the class or group of ground rules and that you expect them to be sensitive about the information that has been shared with them. Talk to the student afterwards and offer to listen and support them and tell them that you are glad that they have talked about this. You can find out more about responding to suicidal students through ASSIST or Samaritans training. Your school,

college or university should also provide guidance, policies and training on this subject. Ensure that the student feels ownership of any referrals and reports that you make, and that they are involved in anything that happens next according to your policy. The pupil or student should feel in control and, most importantly, able to talk. Keep the communication and listening going. Tell them there is hope and that talking about how they are feeling can help them begin to sort out what is happening and decide what to do.

You may need to talk to the rest of the class or group who are probably feeling very concerned about the pupil or student. You can all share ideas about how to support them and can let the group know that they can talk to you or other available staff about their concerns at any time. Emphasise the strength it took to talk about something so personal, that this was a brave thing to do. Remind the class to treat one another respectfully. As a staff member you will need to talk to the Safeguarding Officer or relevant officer in your setting to make sure the young person is referred for support and help. If the student has actively made plans, or you have any concern that they will try to take their own life, you must take action.

Download this staff training session and find out more at [samaritans.org/DEAL](https://www.samaritans.org/DEAL)

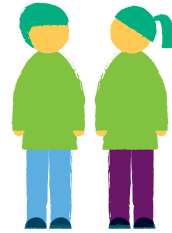
For more information on handling self-harm and suicidal thoughts, please access the Welsh Government 'Responding to issues of self-harm and thoughts of suicide in young people' guidance

# Emotional distress: Spotting the signs

It's not always possible to identify people who are going through emotional distress or experiencing suicidal feelings.

However, there are certain signs that may indicate someone is in poor mental health:

- Lacking energy or appearing particularly tired
- Appearing more tearful
- Not wanting to talk or be with people
- Not wanting to do things they usually enjoy
- A change in routine, such as sleeping or eating more or less than normal
- Using alcohol or drugs to cope with feelings
- Finding it hard to cope with everyday things
- Appearing restless and agitated
- Not liking or taking care of themselves or feeling they don't matter
- Being untypically clumsy or accident-prone
- Becoming withdrawn or losing touch with friends and family



Sometimes people say things which might help you recognise they are struggling to cope:

- Making leading statements, such as "You wouldn't believe what I've been through" or "It's like the whole world is against me". People sometimes say these things in the hope you will pick up on them and ask what they mean so that they can talk about it.
- Negative statements about themselves, such as "Oh, no one loves me" or "I'm a waste of space", even if it sounds like they are joking.



# Mental health crisis: What is it & what can I do?

A mental health crisis is when someone needs urgent help. When an individual is going through a mental health crisis, they may be experiencing:



- suicidal feelings or self-harming behaviour
- extreme anxiety or panic attacks
- psychotic episodes (such as delusions or hallucinations)
- behaviour that seems out of control, and may endanger the individual or others.

In the moment, you may feel it's difficult to remain calm when someone is experiencing a mental health crisis and you may find it alarming. However, it's important to remember that acting compassionately can go a long way in guiding someone in distress. Have confidence in your ability to help them – it could save a life. Remember, you don't need to be an expert.

Your school, educational setting, college or university should have a policy or plan in place for how they support a pupil, student or member of staff during and after a mental health crisis. Make sure you are familiar with this policy or plan, or if there doesn't seem to be one in place, feel confident to suggest there should be one.

Alongside your established policy and actions, here are some simple, important tips to remember when someone is experiencing a mental health crisis.

## 1. Communication

Communication is key. Make sure you focus entirely on the individual and show that you're listening. Our listening tips can help with this (see page 21). The most important thing is to show that you care and make sure the individual doesn't feel alone.

## 2. Urgency

If you encounter an individual who is experiencing a mental health crisis and you believe they are at risk of acting on their suicidal feelings and hurting themselves, you should call the emergency services on 999 and ask for an ambulance.

### 3. Signpost

If an individual needs urgent support for their mental health crisis, but you believe there is no immediate danger to their safety or the safety of others, the following steps will help:

1. If possible, ask the individual or a family member/carer if they are already in touch with their local mental health services or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). If they are, they will be able to access their local crisis team (known as a CRHT). The individual may already be aware of this or could already be in contact with their CRHT team, but you should encourage the individual or their family member/carer to call them.
2. If possible, advise the individual, or a family member/carer, to make an emergency GP appointment. Individuals can access this service by contacting their local GP surgery.
3. Encourage the individual to call a listening service, such as ChildLine, Meic or Samaritans. (Please see page 27 for information about listening services and organisations)

There are helplines available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and they can be very helpful to someone who is going through a difficult time.

**If you're talking to someone who may benefit from calling Samaritans, you can tell them the following information:**

#### Samaritans

Samaritans are available day or night, 365 days a year, to listen and offer support to anyone is struggling to cope.

They offer a safe place for you to talk any time you like, in your own way – about whatever's getting to you.

You can call Samaritans free, anytime on **116 123**.

Samaritans also have a free Welsh Language Line on **0808 164 0123** (please visit [samaritans.org/wales](https://www.samaritans.org/wales) for opening times).

This information has been supported by advice on Crisis Support from Mind (2019). Further support and advice can be found at [mind.org](https://www.mind.org)

For more information on handling self-harm and suicidal thoughts, please access the Welsh Government's guidance on 'Responding to issues of self-harm and thoughts of suicide in young people'.

# Acting compassionately: Conversation tips

If you feel that a pupil, student or member of staff is struggling to cope or experiencing emotional distress and don't know how to tackle a difficult conversation, there are some things you can do to help them open up.

You might feel that you don't know how to help them because you don't know what to tell them or how to solve their problems. Perhaps you just feel a lack of confidence when having a difficult conversation; this is completely normal. However, it's important to remember that the simple act of talking and listening to someone is powerful in itself and can significantly help someone in distress.



## Open questions

Often people want to talk, but wait until someone asks how they are. Questions that help someone talk through their problems instead of saying 'yes' or 'no' are the most useful. Instead of closing the conversation down into a yes or no response, open questions encourage the other person to keep talking.

### Questions like:

- **When** "When did you realise?"
- **Where** "Where did that happen?"
- **Why** be careful with this one as it can make someone defensive. "What made you choose that" or "What were you thinking about at the time" can be more effective.
- **What** "What else happened?"
- **How** "How did that feel?"

At Samaritans, we call this style of conversation active listening. With active listening, although you actually do some talking, you're really acting as a sounding board. Whatever you say doesn't influence what the other person has to say. It just helps them talk.

## Find out how they feel

It sounds obvious, but remember to ask how the person is feeling. Sometimes people will talk you through all the facts of what happened, why it happened and what actions they are thinking of taking, but never say how they actually feel.

Revealing your innermost emotions – anger, sadness, fear, hope, jealousy, despair and so on – can be a huge relief. It sometimes also gives clues about what the person is really most worried about.

## Check they know where to get help

If someone has been feeling low for some time it's probably a good idea for them to get some support, whether it is through talking to their GP or getting some practical help.

Useful questions you might ask them include:

- "Have you talked to anyone else about this?"
- "Would you like me to direct you to some help?"

## Respect what they tell you, don't pressure them

If the individual doesn't want help, don't push them. Sometimes it's easy to want to try and fix a person's problems or give them advice.

It's usually better for people to make their own decisions. Help them think of all the options, but leave the choice to them.

Being there for them in other ways, like helping with practical things, can also be a great source of support.

## If you say the wrong thing, don't panic

There is no perfect way to handle a difficult conversation, so don't be too hard on yourself if it didn't go as well as you had hoped. If you have shown compassion and made sure the person knows they are not alone and how to access further support, you will have made a real difference.

## Look after yourself and talk to someone too

Hearing someone else's worries or problems can affect you too. Take time for yourself to do the things you enjoy. If you need to talk, find somebody you trust to confide in. (See page 25)

# Acting compassionately: Listening tips

Samaritans volunteers are trained to be good listeners, but this is a skill we can all learn.

The simple act of listening is powerful and can make a huge difference. When people feel listened to, it can save a life. It can be the first step in an individual seeking help, whether it's a pupil, student or member of staff.



## #1 Show you care

Focus on the other person, make eye contact, put away your phone.

Life can be extremely busy and in this age of constant digital connectivity, multi-tasking has become the norm. To really listen to somebody, you need to give them your full attention, maintain eye contact and be engaged.

**“Giving someone your undivided attention is a non-verbal way of showing them how much you care. It has an amazing effect. I try to remove anything from my line of sight that could distract me and I really focus on learning something new about the person who is talking to keep me engaged.”**

## #2

### Have patience

It may take time and several attempts before a person is ready to open up. This may not be achieved in your first conversation but it could be helpful in building up a compassionate interaction.

Time is key when listening to someone. The person sharing shouldn't feel rushed, or they won't feel it's a safe environment. If the other person has paused in their response, wait. They may not have finished speaking. Remember it might take them some time to formulate what they are saying, or they may find it difficult to articulate how they are feeling. Effective listening is about trusting the other person.

**"Once a person pauses I count to three in my head. This gives them time to elaborate further if they need to. It also shows you are thinking about what they are saying which will hopefully give them confidence to keep talking."**

## #3

### Use open questions

Use open questions that need more than a yes/no answer, and follow up with questions like "Can you tell me more?" (See page 19 for further suggestions)

An open-ended question means not jumping in with your own ideas about how the other person may be feeling. These questions are objective and require a person to pause, think and reflect and then hopefully expand.

**"I try to remember to ask one open-ended question a day. Asking an open question demonstrates that you want to listen to the person and that you care."**

## #4

### Say it back

Check you've understood, but don't interrupt or offer a solution.

Repeating something back to somebody is a really good way to reassure them that they have your undivided attention and you can check to see that you're hearing what they want you to hear, not putting your own interpretation on the conversation.

**"You are asking someone if you have understood them properly. They will know you are paying proper attention to them, and you care about what they are saying."**

## #5

### Have courage

Don't be put off by a negative response and, most importantly, don't feel you have to fill a silence.

It can feel really intrusive and counter-intuitive to ask someone how they feel. You'll soon see if someone is uncomfortable and doesn't want to engage with you at that level.

You will be surprised at how willing people are to open up and how, sometimes, it is exactly what somebody needs to be able to share what is going on their mind.

**"Being listened to can help people to be brave enough to talk about what is really bothering them, it helps them to feel that they, and what they are going through, matter."**

Samaritans wants to encourage people to listen to the really important things their friends, family and colleagues need to tell them, and to devote some time and attention to being better listeners.



## Show you care

**Focus on the other person, make eye contact, put away your phone.**



## Have patience

**It may take time and several attempts before a person is ready to open up.**



## Use open questions

**That need more than a yes/no answer, and follow up eg 'Tell me more'.**



## Say it back

**To check you've understood, but don't interrupt or offer a solution.**



## Have courage

**Don't be put off by a negative response and, most importantly, don't feel you have to fill a silence.**



[samaritans.org/shush](https://www.samaritans.org/shush)





# Practical ways to look after yourself if you're feeling low or struggling to cope

## First of all, remember it's OK. It's common to feel this way.

You're not alone in feeling like this. Many people struggle to cope at one point or another and going through a range of emotions during this time is common.

You can contact Samaritans any time you like. You might also want to speak to someone else you trust like a family member, your GP or arrange to see a counsellor. There may be support available to you through your school, educational setting, college or university and this would be a good time to contact your HR department to find out about possible options.



Chris O'Donovan Photography/Samaritans

## You are never alone

When people are going through a tough time they often experience negative thoughts about themselves and feel they have no-one to turn to.

Even if you don't have family or friends close by, you are never alone. There are many support organisations in Wales who can help you through a tough time, including Samaritans.

## These feelings may not last forever

Everyone feels low at some point in their lives and if you're struggling to cope it may be difficult to see beyond your current situation. Talking about how you're feeling can help put things into perspective and help you to feel more positive about the future.

## Identify trigger situations

There are all sorts of reasons why you may be finding it hard to cope. Often it's due to a combination of things.

Perhaps you're going through:

- relationship and family problems
- loss, including loss of a friend or a family member through bereavement
- financial worries
- job-related stress
- college or study-related stress
- loneliness and isolation
- depression
- painful and/or disabling physical illness
- heavy use of or dependency on alcohol or other drugs
- thoughts of suicide.

## There are lots of things you can do to help yourself:

- make time for yourself, relax and do things you enjoy
- eat healthily; get plenty of sleep and exercise
- spend time with people you love
- talk about your problems with people you trust
- be proud of what you're good at, as well as aware of what you struggle with
- pay attention to what you're feeling.

If you've stopped doing things you usually love, you're tearful, not eating or sleeping properly, drifting away from people close to you, taking alcohol or drugs to cope or self-harming, then talk to us, or someone you trust.

**SAMARITANS  
SAMARIAID**

A registered charity

**Whatever  
you're facing  
We're here to listen**

Contact Samaritans free –  
day or night, 365 days a year.

Call free on

**116 123**

**0808 164 0123**

Welsh language line – for opening times,  
please visit [samaritans.org/wales](http://samaritans.org/wales)  
This number is free to call.

[samaritans.org](http://samaritans.org)

# Signposting: Helpful contacts & helplines

Below is a list of useful contacts and helplines for pupils, students, staff and yourself.

You can suggest or even write these down for people who you think may need support so they know how to get help when they need it.

Please note that the listed opening hours are for the helplines. For opening hours for online chat or email, please encourage people to visit the listed website.

## Samaritans

**Samaritans is available day or night, 365 days a year, listen and offer a safe space to talk whenever things are getting to you.**

**Freephone:** 116 123

This number is FREE to call and will not show up on your phone bill

**Freephone:** 0808 164 0123 – Welsh Language Line

This number is FREE to call.

Please visit [samaritans.org/wales](http://samaritans.org/wales) for opening times.

**Email:** [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

**Website:** [samaritans.org/branches](http://samaritans.org/branches) to find details of the nearest branch.

**Opening hours:** 7 days a week, 24 hours a day

## Addiction

### **Wales Drug and Alcohol Helpline (DAN 24/7)**

A free and bilingual telephone drugs helpline providing a single point of contact for anyone in Wales wanting further information or help relating to drugs or alcohol.

**Freephone:** 0808 808 2234

**Text:** DAN to: 81066

**Website:** [dan247.org.uk](http://dan247.org.uk)

**Opening hours:** 7 days a week, 24 hours a day

### **Alcoholics Anonymous**

AA is concerned solely with the personal recovery and continued sobriety of individual alcoholics who turn to the Fellowship for help.

**Freephone:** 0800 9177 650

**Opening hours:** Please visit the website

**Email:** [help@aamail.org](mailto:help@aamail.org)

**Website:** [alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk](http://alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk)

## Talk to Frank

A helpline and website that provides information and answers questions for young people, parents and carers who are concerned about drugs.

**Helpline:** 0300 123 6600

**Opening hours:** 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

**Text:** 82111

**Email:** frank@talktofrank.com

**Website:** talktofrank.co.uk

## Benefits and rights

### Citizens Advice Wales – Adviceline

Impartial advice on rights and responsibilities across Wales.

**Telephone:** 03444 77 20 20

**Website:** citizensadvice.org.uk

**Opening hours:** Please visit the website

## Bereavement

### Child Bereavement UK

Child Bereavement UK supports families when a baby or child of any age dies or is dying, or when a child is facing bereavement.

**Freephone:** 0800 028 8840

**Email:**  
support@childbereavementuk.org

**Website:** childbereavementuk.org

**Opening hours:** Please visit the website

## Cruse Bereavement Care

Cruse Bereavement Care is the leading national charity for bereaved people. They offer support, advice and information to children, young people and adults when someone dies and work to enhance society's care of bereaved people.

**Freephone:** 0808 808 1677

**Website:** cruse.org.uk

**Opening hours:** Please visit the website

## Bullying

### The National Bullying Helpline

The National Bullying Helpline is the UK's only charitable organisation addressing Adult Bullying and Child Bullying.

**Helpline:** 0845 22 55 787

**Opening hours:** 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday

**Website:** nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk

## Carers

### Carers UK

Carers UK is a national charity for carers which offers support to those who need help with looking after a friend or family member.

**Freephone:** 0808 808 7777

**Website:** carersuk.org/help-and-advice

**Opening hours:** Please visit the website

## Child abuse

### **NPSCC**

The NSPCC is the UK's leading children's charity, preventing abuse and helping those affected to recover. If you're worried about a child, even if you're unsure, contact their professional counsellors for help, advice and support.

**Helpline:** 0808 800 5000

**Opening hours:** Monday to Friday 8am-10pm or 9am-6pm at the weekends

**Email:** 0808 800 5000

**Website:** [nspcc.org.uk](http://nspcc.org.uk)

## Debt

### **Step Change**

Debt advice for people in the UK.

**Freephone:** 0800 138 1111

**Online support:**  
[stepchange.org/Debtremedy](http://stepchange.org/Debtremedy)

**Website:** [stepchange.org](http://stepchange.org)

**Opening hours:** Please visit the website

## Dementia

### **Wales Dementia Helpline**

The Wales Dementia Helpline is there to support those living with dementia and their carers.

**Freephone:** 0808 808 2235

**Opening hours:** Please visit the website

## Disability

### **Scope**

Scope provide free, independent and impartial information and support on issues that matter to disabled people and their families.

**Freephone:** 0808 800 3333

**Email:** [helpline@scope.org.uk](mailto:helpline@scope.org.uk)

**Website:** [scope.org.uk](http://scope.org.uk)

**Opening hours:** Please visit the website

## Eating disorders

### **BEAT**

Beat is the UK's eating disorder charity and offers support and information relating to all eating disorders.

#### **Helpline (Adult Support)**

**Freephone:** 0808 801 0677

**Email:**  
[help@beateatingdisorders.org.uk](mailto:help@beateatingdisorders.org.uk)

#### **Youthline (Under 18)**

**Freephone:** 0808 801 0711

**Email:** [fyp@beateatingdisorders.org.uk](mailto:fyp@beateatingdisorders.org.uk)

#### **Studentline (Available for all students)**

**Freephone:** 0808 801 0811

**Email:**  
[studentline@beateatingdisorders.org.uk](mailto:studentline@beateatingdisorders.org.uk)

**Website:** [beateatingdisorders.org.uk](http://beateatingdisorders.org.uk)

**Opening hours:** 365 days a year from 12pm-8pm during the week, and 4pm-8pm on weekends and bank holidays

## Education support

Education Support Partnership is the only UK charity dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of the entire education workforce. Their trained counsellors will listen to you without judgement and will help you think through the problems you are facing, whether personal or professional, to find a way forwards and feel better. Their helpline is available to all teachers, lecturers and staff in education (primary, secondary, further or higher education) in England, Wales and Scotland.

**Freephone:** 08000 562 561

**Opening hours:** 7 days a week, 24 hours a day

**Text:** 07909 341229

**Website:**  
[educationsupportpartnership.org.uk](http://educationsupportpartnership.org.uk)

## Family support

### Family Lives

Family Lives is a charity with over three decades of experience helping parents to deal with the changes that are a constant part of family life. They recognise that the best way to support families is to provide professional, non-judgmental support and advice in a way that all members of the family can freely access. Family Lives offers a confidential helpline service for families in England and Wales (previously known as Parentline).

**Helpline:** 0808 800 2222

**Opening hours:** 9am-9pm, Monday to Friday and 10am-3pm Saturday and Sunday

**Email support:**  
[askus@familylives.org.uk](mailto:askus@familylives.org.uk)

**Website:** [familylives.org.uk](http://familylives.org.uk)

## Gambling

### National Gambling Helpline

The National Gambling Helpline provides confidential advice, information and emotional support to anyone experiencing problems with gambling.

**Freephone:** 0808 8020 133

**Live chat:** [gamcare.org.uk](http://gamcare.org.uk)

**Website:** [gamcare.org.uk](http://gamcare.org.uk)

**Opening hours:** Please visit the website

## Health advice

### NHS Direct Wales

**Telephone:** 0845 4647

**Website:** [nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk](http://nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk)

**Opening hours:** Please visit the website

## Housing and homelessness

### Shelter Cymru

Housing and homelessness charity offering advice and information.

**Telephone:** 0345 075 5005 (Wales)

**Website:** [sheltercymru.org.uk](http://sheltercymru.org.uk)

**Opening hours:** Please visit the website

### Youth Homeless Helpline

The Youth Homeless Helpline is an out-of-hours freephone helpline for homeless young people in Wales.

**Helpline:** 0800 328 0292

**Opening hours:** Monday to Thursday 5pm-9am and Friday 5pm to Monday 9am

**Website:** [llamau.org.uk](http://llamau.org.uk)

## Learning disabilities

### Mencap

The Learning Disability Helpline is the free helpline service offering advice and support for people with a learning disability, and their families and carers.

**Freephone:** 0808 808 1111

**Email:** [helpline@mencap.org.uk](mailto:helpline@mencap.org.uk)

**Website:** [mencap.org.uk](http://mencap.org.uk)

Opening hours: Monday to Friday,  
9am-5pm

## Mental health and emotional distress

### Childline

Childline is there to help anyone under 19 in the UK with any issue they're going through.

**Freephone:** 0800 1111

**Opening hours:** Please visit the website

**Online chat:** [childline.org.uk](http://childline.org.uk)

**Website:** [childline.org.uk](http://childline.org.uk)

### MEIC

MEIC is the Wales helpline service for children and young people up to the age of 25, who are struggling to cope.

**Freephone:** 0808 802 3456

**Opening hours:** 7 days a week,  
8am-midnight

**SMS Text:** 84001

**IM/online chat:** [meic.cymu](http://meic.cymu)

**Website:** [meiccymru.org](http://meiccymru.org)

### The Mix

The Mix is there to take on the embarrassing problems, weird questions, and please-don't-make-me-say-it-out-loud thoughts that people under 25 have in order to give them the best support through their digital and phone services.

**Helpline:** 0808 808 4994

**Opening hours:** Open 4pm-11pm  
every day

**Website:** [themix.org.uk](http://themix.org.uk)

The Mix also offers email support, a crisis messenger service, one to one chat and counselling services. Please visit [themix.org.uk/get-support](http://themix.org.uk/get-support)

### HOPELINE UK

If a child or young person is having thoughts of suicide or are concerned for a young person they can contact HOPELINEUK for confidential support and practical advice.

**Freephone:** 0800 068 4141

**Opening hours:** Please visit the website

**Text:** 07786209697

**Email:** [pat@papyrus-uk.org](mailto:pat@papyrus-uk.org)

**Website:** [papyrus-uk.org](http://papyrus-uk.org)

## Nightline

Nightline is a listening, emotional support, information and supplies service, run by students for students.

Nightlines are open at night, run by trained, caring, fellow student volunteers. Nightline can be contacted by phone, face to face, by email or by online chat.

Students can find out whether their university has a Nightline at [nightline.ac.uk/want-to-talk](http://nightline.ac.uk/want-to-talk)

## **C.A.L.L. (Community Advice & Listening Line)**

C.A.L.L. offers emotional support and information on mental health and related matters to the people of Wales.

**Freephone:** 0800 132 737

**Website:** [callhelpline.org.uk](http://callhelpline.org.uk)

**Opening hours:** Please visit the website

## **Young Minds**

Young Minds is the UK's leading charity fighting for children and young people's mental health.

### **For parents or carers worried about their child**

**Freephone:** 0808 802 5544

### **For children and young people looking for urgent help and support**

Text the YoungMinds Crisis Messenger, for free 24/7 support across the UK if you are experiencing a mental health crisis.

- If you need urgent help text YM to 85258
- All texts are answered by trained volunteers, with support from experienced clinical supervisors
- Texts are free from EE, O2, Vodafone, 3, Virgin Mobile, BT Mobile, GiffGaff, Tesco Mobile and Telecom Plus.

**Website:** [youngminds.org.uk](http://youngminds.org.uk)

## **Older people**

### **Age Cymru**

Age Cymru Advice is committed to being the foremost information and advice service to older people in Wales.

**Freephone:** 08000 223 444

**Email:** [advice@agecymru.org.uk](mailto:advice@agecymru.org.uk)

**Website:** [ageuk.org.uk/cymru](http://ageuk.org.uk/cymru)

**Opening hours:** Monday – Friday, 9am-5pm

### **The Silver Line**

The Silver Line is a free confidential helpline providing information, friendship and advice to older people.

**Freephone:** 0800 4 70 80 90

**Opening hours:** Please visit the website

## **Relationships**

### **Relate Cymru**

Relate provide Relationship Counselling for individuals and couples, Family Counselling, Mediation, Children and Young People's Counselling and Sex Therapy. They also provide friendly and informal workshops for people at important stages in their relationships.

**Information line:** 0300 003 2340

**Email:** [enquiries@relatecymru.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@relatecymru.org.uk)

**Website:** [relate.org.uk](http://relate.org.uk)

**Opening hours:** Please visit the website



## Special Educational Needs

### **SNAP Cymru**

SNAP Cymru provides information, advice and support for parents, children and young people who have, or may have, special educational needs or disabilities.

**Freephone:** 0808 801 0608

**Opening hours:** Please visit the website

**Website:** [snapcymru.org](http://snapcymru.org)

## Self Harm

### **Heads Above the Waves**

Heads Above The Waves is a not-for-profit organisation that raises awareness of depression and self-harm in young people. They promote positive, creative ways of dealing with the bad days.

They run workshops in schools across Wales and have a website with lots of advice for young people.

To find out more about school workshops [hatw.co.uk/workshops](http://hatw.co.uk/workshops)

For straight-up advice for young people and adults

[hatw.co.uk/straight-up-advice](http://hatw.co.uk/straight-up-advice)

## Sexuality and gender

### **LGBT Cymru Helpline**

The LGBT Cymru Helpline offers general information, advice and confidential support in many areas of life and around various issues that LGBT people, their family, and friends might experience.

**Freephone:** 0800 980 4021

**Email:** [info@lgbtcymru.org.uk](mailto:info@lgbtcymru.org.uk)

**Opening hours:** Please visit the website

**Website:** [lgbtcymru.org.uk](http://lgbtcymru.org.uk)

### **Stonewall Information Service**

Stonewall are there to help with any issues affecting LGBT people or their families. Whatever your situation, you're not on your own. Please be aware that this is an information service, not an advice service. Although they can put you in touch with organisations who provide counselling services and legal advice, they don't offer these services themselves.

**Freephone:** 0800 0502020

**Opening hours:** 9.30-4.30 Monday to Friday

**Website:** [stonewall.org.uk/help-and-advice](http://stonewall.org.uk/help-and-advice)

## Sexual or domestic abuse

### Live Fear Free Helpline

For those who have experienced domestic abuse, sexual violence and/or violence against women, or are worried about a friend or relative.

**Freephone:** 0808 80 10 800

**Opening hours:** Please visit the website

**Email:** [info@livefearfreehelpline.wales](mailto:info@livefearfreehelpline.wales)

**Live chat:** [livefearfree.gov.wales](https://livefearfree.gov.wales)

**Website:** [livefearfree.gov.wales](https://livefearfree.gov.wales)

### Survivors UK (Male Rape and Sexual Abuse Support)

Survivors UK are there to help sexually abused men as well as their friends and family, no matter when the abuse happened, and challenge the silence and attitudes.

**Webchat:** [survivorsuk.org](https://survivorsuk.org)

**Opening hours:** Mon –Sun 12-8pm

**Website:** [survivorsuk.org](https://survivorsuk.org)

## Sexual health

### Terrence Higgins Trust

Terrence Higgins Trust is a British charity that campaigns on and provides services relating to HIV and sexual health.

**Helpline:** 0808 802 1221

**Opening hours:** Monday to Friday, 10am-8pm

**Email:** [info@tht.org.uk](mailto:info@tht.org.uk)

**Website:** [tht.org.uk](https://tht.org.uk)

## Refugees and asylum seekers

### Migrant Help UK

Migrant Help UK supports asylum seekers, refugees and victims of human trafficking and modern slavery.

**Freephone:** 0808 8010 503

**Opening hours:** Please visit the website

**Website:** [migranthelpuk.org](https://migranthelpuk.org)

## Victims of crime

### Victim Support

Victim support offers help for victims of crime, witnesses and their families and friends.

**Freephone:** 0808 168 9111

**Opening hours:** 7 days a week, 24 hours a day

**Website:** [victimsupport.org.uk](https://victimsupport.org.uk)

# Samaritans in Wales

Samaritans has branches across Wales which run their vital emotional support service and work with their local community, including schools, colleges and universities. To link up with your local branch, please visit [samaritans.org/branches](http://samaritans.org/branches)



## Step by Step

Step by Step is a Samaritans service that provides practical support to help schools, colleges and universities prepare for and recover from a suspected or attempted suicide.

Samaritans' Step by Step service is here to support organisations working with young people so that they can respond effectively following the suspected or attempted suicide of someone from within their community; taking practical steps to reduce the risk of further deaths in the area.

### **To access the Step by Step service:**

If you work in a school

[samaritans.org/education](https://www.samaritans.org/education)

If you work in a college or university

[samaritans.org/universities](https://www.samaritans.org/universities)