

Online Harms Lived Experience Advisor Information Pack

- Two hours per month between February and September 2022
- £15 an hour for your time and expertise
- Home-based – all activities will take place online
- Application deadline: Monday 7th February 2022, 10am

Hello and thank you for your interest in being a Lived Experience Advisor for Samaritans. We are looking for people aged 18+ who live in the UK and have lived experience of self-harm or suicidal thoughts to join our Online Harms Lived Experience Advisory Groups. We are also looking for young people aged 18 to 25 with lived experience of supporting others online with self-harm or suicidal thoughts to take part. We particularly want to hear from people who are interested in making the internet a safer and more supportive space for individuals who experience self-harm or suicidal thoughts. These lived experience advisors will work alongside and advise the Online Harms team on their research projects and online safety training resources as part of the Online Excellence Programme.

The project

[The Online Excellence Programme](#) is a partnership between Samaritans, the Department of Health and Social Care, Facebook, Instagram, Google, YouTube, Twitter, Pinterest, and TikTok. The aim of the programme is to create a hub of excellence in suicide prevention and the online environment. The Online Excellence Programme includes:

- [A research and insight programme](#) to better understand the impact of self-harm and suicide content online and what makes content harmful, when, and to whom.
- [Industry guidelines](#) to support sites and platforms in managing self-harm and suicide related content online
- [An online harms advisory service](#) to provide bespoke and confidential advice and support on managing issues relating to self-harm and suicide content online
- [A hub of online safety resources](#) to help people to stay safe online when posting or viewing content relating to self-harm and suicide

To support this work, we are looking for people with lived experience of self-harm and suicidal thoughts who are interested in making the internet a safer and more supportive space. By sharing your experiences and expertise, you will help to inform and shape our projects to ensure that impact is meaningful.

The role

Given the breadth of the Online Excellence Programme, we are recruiting for two separate Online Harms Advisory Groups. Whilst each advisory group has distinct objectives and eligibility criteria, they both aim to make the internet a safer and more supportive place for individuals experiencing self-harm and suicidal feelings. If you are aged 18-25 years old, you can apply to join either (or both) of these advisory groups.

1. Online Harms Lived Experience Advisory Group

The aim of the Online Harms Lived Experience Advisory Group is to help shape our research and insight programme, advisory service, and online safety resources. This will involve providing valuable feedback on our online safety research projects, reviewing materials for the advisory service, and advising on our online safety resources.

For this group, we are looking for people aged 18+ based in the UK who have lived experience of self-harm or suicidal thoughts.

2. Young Person's Lived Experience Advisory Group

The aim of the Young Person's Lived Experience Advisory Group is to co-develop an innovative online safety training resource that helps young people keep themselves, and others, stay safe when seeking support for suicide and self-harm online.

You will work closely with the Samaritans Online Harms team to shape the look, feel and content of the online safety training resource. If you are interested, there is also the opportunity to create your own content – such as a blog, video, or illustrations – that will help to form part of the online safety training resource.

For this group, we are looking for people aged 18 to 25 based in the UK who have lived experience of self-harm or suicidal thoughts, or who have supported someone else online with these experiences.

As a lived experience advisor in either of these groups, you will provide valuable feedback and advice to the Online Harms team based on your personal experiences. By sharing your perspectives, you will help to shape our work so that we can reduce access to harmful content and increase opportunities to find support online. We will provide any training needed to do this effectively and confidently.

As part of each of these roles, there will also be an opportunity to help us learn and develop the ways in which we involve people with lived experience in our work. We will discuss how this might work best for you, but it will include giving regular feedback about your involvement in the project.

We particularly encourage applications from people from marginalised communities, as they are currently underrepresented in our Lived Experience projects.

What's involved?

For each Lived Experience Advisory Group, there will be eight virtual meetings with the advisors and the Online Harms team between February and September 2022. These meetings will take place at key points in our projects, and we will try to agree a day and time that suits everyone. The meetings will take the form of an informal group discussion with no more than 11 people. We want the atmosphere to be relaxed, safe and enjoyable!

1. Online Harms Lived Experience Advisory Group

The Online Harms Lived Experience Advisory Group meetings will be structured around a mixed agenda depending on the needs of our projects. We will ask for your feedback and advice, and examples of activities that you might take part in during these meetings include:

- Providing feedback on our research findings or reports relating to online safety
- Reviewing social media platform policies, guidelines, and materials
- Advising on and reviewing online safety training resources for groups of people such as healthcare professionals, parents, and friends

2. Young Person's Lived Experience Advisory Group

The Young Person's Lived Experience Advisory Group meetings will focus on co-designing the online safety training resource for young people. Examples of activities that you might take part in during these meetings include:

- Designing what the online safety training resource might look like – for example an online training module that people can complete in their own time, or tips that people can share from their social media account to help their friends to stay safe online
- Creating a plan to promote the online safety training resource, and deciding who we should be targeting
- Developing your own content (optional) – such as a video or audio recording, a written blog, photography or illustration - for the training resource
- There is the option to co-present the online safety training resource to individuals and organisations who might be interested in the project alongside Samaritans staff. We will give you training in this so that you feel confident.

We may occasionally send you information and tasks to complete independently outside of these meetings. These tasks could include reviewing and designing materials, conducting independent research, or writing reports or blogs about our research findings. You will be

provided with any information and support you need during this time.

There may also be additional opportunities to contribute to the work of our Online Excellence Programme. These opportunities may include co-presenting at research webinars, co-facilitating workshops or focus groups, or participating in roundtable discussions with health professionals, government officials, or academics. There may also be opportunities to participate in meetings with representatives from the world's biggest social media platforms. You may also be able to use your lived experience to influence future Samaritans campaigns and national conversations around suicide and self-harm. Any additional opportunities will be optional, and you will be reimbursed for your time. You will receive any training that you need to feel comfortable completing these tasks.

Throughout the project we will invite you to complete some short surveys about your experience as a Lived Experience Advisor. This will help us to learn from your experience and make improvements to how we work with Lived Experience Advisors in the future.

In total, you will spend a maximum of two hours per month contributing to the project. This time will mainly be spent in group meetings.

What skills and experience do I need?

- No previous experience or knowledge of research or lived experience advisory work is necessary.

Essential

- Relevant lived experience is essential given the focus of these roles.
 - Applicants for the **Online Harms Lived Experience Advisory Group** must have lived experience of self-harm or suicidal thoughts.
 - Applicants for the **Young Person's Advisory Group** must have lived experience of self-harm or suicidal thoughts, or of supporting someone else online through these experiences.
 - Within the context of this project, *self-harm* is defined as any deliberate act of self-poisoning or self-injury without suicidal intent. This excludes accidents, substance misuse and eating disorders.
- Experience of using the internet, social media or online forums, and an interest in making the internet safer for people who experience self-harm and suicidal thoughts.
- Proven ability to work well in a group and contribute to discussions whilst being respectful of other people's ideas and experiences.
- Excellent organisation and time management skills, and the ability to complete tasks by set deadlines.

- Ability to think creatively and come up with ideas and suggestions for online safety resources
- Willingness to provide feedback on the experience of taking part, and to let us know if you are having any problems.

Desirable

- Strong written and verbal communication skills
- Willingness to access training and develop new skills
- Experience of seeking help for self-harm or suicidal thoughts in an online setting (e.g., online forums or social media)

What will we offer you?

Samaritans recognises the value of including people with lived experience in our work and we want to make your involvement engaging and rewarding. We will support you to gain experience in aspects of developing digital content and using your lived experience to help make the internet a safer place. All Lived Experience Advisors will be offered the following:

1. Financial Package

- £15/hour for a maximum of 16 hours as financial recognition for your time and the work you conduct.
- Access to equipment if needed to participate in the project

2. Well-being Support

- Access to emotional support from Samaritans' listening volunteers via our helpline.
- Access to Mental Health First Aiders if needed during or after meetings.

3. Professional development opportunities

- Invitation to attend or present at events related to these projects and other Samaritans' research projects, for example 'Research Lunches' where recent Samaritans' publications are presented and discussed.
- Access to Samaritans' 'Wellbeing in the Workplace' online learning suite.
- Access to a suite of learning and professional development courses hosted by Samaritans' Learning & Development team.
- Opportunities to learn and develop new skills during the project.
- There may be opportunities to attend meetings with the world's biggest platforms including Google, Instagram and Facebook to help make them safer places for users.

What is the selection process?

You can apply by [completing this application form](#) and [this diversity and monitoring form](#). Please send your application to onlineharms@samaritans.org by **10am on Monday 7th February 2022**. Include the name of the advisory group you are applying for in the subject header of the email. You will receive an email notification to confirm that we have received your application. If you would like to apply by post or an alternative method, please see the application form for further details.

We will assess all applicants against the skills outlined in the 'What skills and experience do I need?' section. As selection of applicants is skills-based, we do not need any details about your lived experience unless you feel that this is necessary and feel comfortable sharing this information. We will not see your name or any other personal information during the selection process.

We encourage all candidates to use a STAR approach when answering questions in the application form. How to use the STAR technique:

- describe the **Situation** and when did it take place
- explain the **Task** and what was the objective
- give details about the **Action** you took to achieve this
- close with the **Result** of your action.

You will be notified whether you have been shortlisted by **Friday 18th February 2022**. We will use your preferred mode of contact (e.g., email, phone, or post) to get in touch with you.

If you have been shortlisted, you will be invited to an introductory chat (by phone or online) with a member of the Online Harms team. This will give you the chance to ask any questions about the project. We will also discuss any extra support or adjustments you might need to take part.

If your application is not successful on this occasion, we are happy to provide feedback.

Additional information

- As a Lived Experience Advisor, you will be contracted to provide advice and support to the Samaritans Online Harms team in a consultant capacity. This means that you will be asked to sign a contract stating your responsibilities in relation to this project and that you will be paid for your contribution to the specific project.
- This project will involve discussions of sensitive topics around self-harm, suicidal thoughts, and the online environment. Whilst there will be support systems in place, if you think you may find this triggering or distressing, we recommend that you do not apply for this project.



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We support applicants to be able to participate, including offering reasonable adjustments where required.

Get in touch

If you have any questions or would like to hear more about the project, please contact onlineharms@samaritans.org.