

Listening this Christmas – Samaritans operate every day of the year

Christmas is a lovely time for some but not for all. Volunteers at Samaritans' Edinburgh will be at the end of a phone line throughout the festive season for those who need someone to talk to.

Last year the charity responded to 10,000 calls on Christmas Day across the UK from people feeling overwhelmed at this time of the year. In Scotland around 150 volunteers work on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day to make sure that all calls are answered.

Eddie Carmichael, Director of Samaritans' Edinburgh branch, is among the volunteers in Scotland who will be there to listen this Christmas season. He says: "We know that life's problems don't melt-away when we switch the Christmas lights on. For many people – especially those spending Christmas time alone or who are going through a difficult time – the festive season can be a pressure point.

That's why it's so important that no one who is struggling has to face this time of year alone. Myself and other volunteers at the Edinburgh branch will be there throughout the holidays, including Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, to make sure that there is always someone there to listen.

"With rates of suicide rising here in Scotland and across the UK, Samaritans has never been a more vital lifeline. If you can make a donation to support our work this festive season,

you'll be helping to ensure that we can be there to listen not just on Christmas but throughout the year.

“If you are finding the festive season tough, you don't have to face things alone. Every call for help to Samaritans is answered by a trained volunteer and talking to us is always free and confidential. So whatever is on your mind, you can talk to us this Christmas.”



Samaritans is asking people to send a [Christmas gift](#) to help Samaritans continue to be there for those who need emotional support. Making a donation for as little as £4.99 will help Samaritans answer a call for help from somebody struggling this Christmas – and change someone's story for the better.

Sophie, 26, knows how hard the festive build up can be. After going through a marital breakup in the months leading up to Christmas she was also struggling with severe depression. Samaritans was there to support her as her marriage reached

breaking point.

She said: “Last year was a real struggle for me with my mental health, which led to the cracks in my marriage, usually I’m like a big kid at Christmas, but I couldn’t think of anything worse than playing the fake ‘happy’ charade.

“It made me feel even more depressed when all my family and friends were excited in the run up to the big day. The pressure of enjoying yourself and everything being perfect can make mental health issues a thousand times worse as you’re supposed to be bubbly and joyful. I didn’t want to ruin it for anyone else.

“The only people I could show my true feelings to, even the deep dark ones, was Samaritans. It was a relief to speak to someone that wasn’t expecting you to be jolly.

“Samaritans’ help gave me my life back and I will be forever thankful for that.”

Be a part of someone’s story – send a gift to help them change it for the better by visiting: <http://www.samaritans.org/christmas> Samaritans’ services are there for anyone who needs them this Christmas and every single day of the year.

Follow the campaign on social media by searching for the hashtag, #bepartofthestory. Watch the Samaritans Christmas campaign video featuring Sophie here: <http://www.samaritans.org/sophieandbob>

Anyone can contact Samaritans for free, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year on 116 123, even a mobile without credit. This number won’t show up on your phone bill. Or you can email jo@samaritans.org or visit www.samaritans.org to find details of your nearest branch, where you can talk to one of our trained volunteers face to face.