

National Assembly for Wales  
Environment and Sustainability Committee  
WFG 15  
Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill  
Response from Samaritans



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Committee Clerk  
Environment and Sustainability Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

4 September 2014

Dear Sir/Madam

Samaritans welcomes the opportunity to respond to the inquiry into the general principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill. We are pleased to see Welsh Government is prepared to legislate in this area and provide a framework for the continual improvement of well-being in Wales. We welcome the purpose of the Act to ensure that the governance arrangements of public bodies for improving the well-being of Wales take the needs of future generations into account. The main points we wish to make are summarised here.

**1. Samaritans would want to see a clear definition of ‘well-being’ – the key concept in the Bill.**

Setting out what is meant by well-being for the purpose of the Bill will clarify what the Bill is aiming to achieve, help to galvanise support and establish measures of progress.

**2. Samaritans welcomes the ‘healthier Wales’ goal and the accompanying description which recognises mental well-being. However there is opportunity for this to be**

**strengthened to ensure the well-being goal and objectives reflect the importance of parity of esteem between physical and mental health.**

Central to this approach is the understanding that there is a strong relationship between mental health and physical health, and that this influence works in both directions. Poor mental health is associated with a greater risk of physical health problems, and poor physical health is associated with a greater risk of mental health problems.<sup>1</sup>

**3. Samaritans would want the Bill to refer to efforts to reduce suicide and self-harm.**

Suicide and self-harm are significant public health issues in Wales, which can be partly addressed through reducing health inequalities. The approach to measuring progress towards achieving well-being should draw on data relating to suicide and self-harm.

**4. Samaritans would like the Bill to explicitly refer to co-production; ensuring public bodies have a clear responsibility to engage individuals and communities in setting and meeting well-being objectives.**

In Part 2, Section 8.2 (c), the Bill refers to ‘the importance of involving those with an interest in the objectives, by seeking their views and taking them into account’. There is an opportunity to strengthen this to drive improvements in the effectiveness of the engagement of people in Wales.

Samaritans would be pleased to provide further evidence to the Committee as required.

Yours sincerely



Sarah Stone

Executive Director for Wales

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<sup>1</sup> Bailey, S., Thorpe, L. & Smith, G. (2013) Whole-person care: from rhetoric to reality. Royal College of Psychiatrists, p.9. Available at <https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/pdf/OP88.pdf>. Royal College of Psychiatrists' definition of 'parity of esteem' available at <https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/policyandparliamentary/whatsnew/parityofesteem.aspx>



## **APPENDIX 1**

### **About Samaritans:**

Samaritans' Vision is that fewer people die by suicide. We work to achieve this by making it our Mission to alleviate emotional distress and reduce the incidence of suicidal feelings and suicidal behaviour. We do this by being available 24 hours a day to provide emotional support, reaching out to high risk groups and communities, working in partnership with other organisations and influencing public policy and raising awareness.

Our service is guided by our values of listening, confidentiality, people making their own decisions, being non-judgemental and offering people human contact.

Samaritans has nine branches in Wales run by 691 volunteers across the country. In 2013, Samaritans in Wales received a total of 161,170 contacts, by phone, email, text message, and face-to-face.