CALLING ALL NORTH EAST POLITICIANS: WE NEED EVERYBODY'S HELP TO SAVE LIVES, SAYS SAMARITANS

Thursday 5 May, 2016

Samaritans is calling on politicians standing for election in the North East today to make preventing suicide a priority in the places they represent.

Samaritans offer a listening service to people who are struggling to cope, and have found that the mental health and medical help available to those reporting symptoms of anxiety and depression is inconsistent and can vary between postcodes.

Samaritans are calling for all politicians, health professionals and agencies to work together to formulate suicide prevention plans that are targeted at the most vulnerable people in their areas.

Around a third of local authorities in England currently do not have suicide preventions plans*, yet evidence suggests that they can save lives.

As part of these plans, health professionals collect detailed information about suicides locally and work in partnership with the police and health professionals to put into practice the most effective measures to protect and support.

Samaritans believes suicide is not inevitable but is preventable and collecting information about suicide, working in partnership with other agencies will bring down the numbers of people taking their own lives.

More than 4700 people in England took their own lives in 2014**. The suicide rate in the North East between 2012 and 2014 was 11 per 100,000, or 4.5 per 100,000 for women and 17.9 per 100,000 for men.

"We know that the measures recommended in local suicide prevention plans work," said Samaritans CEO Ruth Sutherland. "The Government has already highlighted their importance by calling for all local authorities to put them in place by 2017 in the Mental Health Taskforce report, published in February.

"We need to highlight the areas which have been successful using local plans, and encourage local politicians to champion them.

"Samaritans is calling on local politicians to make implementing suicide prevention plans a priority on this polling day."

Ends

Based on 2014 figures, so may have changed slightly

****ONS Feb 2016**

For further information, please contact Samaritans' press office on 020 8394 8300 or press@samaritans.org.

For further information from Teesside Samaritans, please contact Publicity Officer Anthony Nelson on 07523019810 or publicity@teessidesamaritans.org.

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Anyone can call Samaritans, you don't have to be suicidal. Whatever you're going through, call us for free any time from any phone on 116 123 (this number is FREE to call and will not appear on your phone bill), email jo@samaritans.org, or visit www.samaritans.org to find details of your nearest branch.

Samaritans responds to more than 5.3 million calls for help every year, offering emotional support by phone, email, text and face to face in its 201 branches across the UK and Republic of Ireland. For more information please see www.samaritans.org.

It's the public's kind donations and more than 21,000 trained volunteers that mean Samaritans is always there for anyone struggling to cope. Find out how you can support us: http://www.samaritans.org/support-us

– ENDS –

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