National Helplines Launch #ReadytoTalk Campaign as Lockdown Eases

Thursday 11 June, 2020

A group of the UK's leading helplines have today launched the **#readytotalk** campaign, encouraging people to seek support for problems that may have been aggravated as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, or which they may not have spoken to anyone about while in lockdown.

As lockdown restrictions begin to ease, these organisations want to reassure the British public that whenever they are **#readytotalk**, their helplines are ready to listen.

The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown has affected people across the country differently. Whether it has meant new difficulties, exacerbated existing issues, or meant that people couldn't find the space to speak about their issues confidentially, the #**readytotalk** campaign is aimed at raising awareness of the support services available to help people when they need it most.

The campaign is supported by GamCare, which runs the National Gambling Helpline, alongside Samaritans, Refuge and Cruse Bereavement Care.

The key helpline numbers are:

- **National Gambling Helpline** – 0808 80 20 133
- **Samaritans** – 116 123
- **National Domestic Abuse Helpline (Refuge)** – 0808 2000 247
- **Cruse Bereavement Care** – 0808 808 1677

Anna Hemmings, Chief Executive of GamCare, says: "*With lockdown easing, people have the chance to look up and take stock, to deal with the issues that may have been put to one side. We know that addictions, and gambling problems specifically, can be aggravated by feelings of isolation and distress that have been so prevalent through lockdown. We want people to know we are here to help and ready to listen whenever they are ready to talk. It is great to have support services and helplines united in their desire to help people across the country, especially during uncertain times.*"

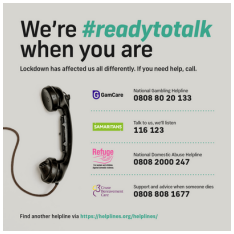
Ruth Sutherland CBE, CEO of Samaritans, says: *"We know that human connection is vital for our mental health, and that uncertainty can have an impact on our emotional wellbeing. There are a lot of unknowns right now which is leaving many feeling anxious or worried. We encourage anyone who is struggling in these challenging times to talk to someone. Our volunteers are available 24 hours a day to provide emotional support to anyone who needs a listening ear."*

Sandra Horley CBE, CEO of Refuge, says: *"Since the Government's request for people to stay at home in March, calls and contacts to Refuge's National Domestic Abuse Helpline have rocketed by 66 per cent, with visits to our website rising ten-fold. As restrictions slowly lift and an end to lockdown is in sight, it's important to remember that for women living with abusive partners, their experiences of isolation do not begin and end with the lockdown and many of them will continue to experience abuse. Our message to each and every woman who needs our support, and any concerned friends or family, is clear – the expert female staff on the Freephone National Domestic Abuse Helpline is here for you twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. You are not alone."*

Andy Langford, Cruse Bereavement Care Clinical Director says: *"The coronavirus pandemic has meant it is an incredibly distressing time to be grieving, whenever your bereavement occurred. Many people have been grieving in isolation, unable to attend funerals, say goodbye, and be close to those they love. When you feel you have no control over how you can experience those last moments with someone, this can*

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have a profound impact on the grieving process.

Our advice to people who are struggling has always been to reach out and speak to someone. That hasn't changed. Our Freephone National Helpline has been operating as normal throughout the pandemic, and we would encourage anyone who feels they need support to get in touch, when they are ready. We are here to listen."

Support from other helplines can also be found with the 'Find a Helpline' tool from Helplines Partnership: https://helplines.org/helplines/

ENDS

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- **Cruse Bereavement Care**

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Notes to Editors

About GamCare

- GamCare is the UK's largest provider of support and treatment for those affected by gambling harms.
- GamCare operates the National Gambling Helpline, funded by GambleAware, on Freephone 0808 8020 133 or via web chat at www.gamcare.org.uk. Advisers are available 24 hours a day, every day of the year.
- GamCare also provides a range of free treatment (face to face, online or over the phone) for anyone affected by gambling harms across Great Britain, as well as Forum and daily chatrooms so that people can speak to others experiencing similar issues and seek support.
- GamCare recently launched a new online CBT course for gamblers who would like to change their relationship with gambling, called GameChange. Find out more at www.gamcare.org.uk
- Information, advice and support for young people, parents and teachers is available at www.bigdeal.org.uk
- GamCare's organisational strategy, latest Annual Review and Statistics are available to download at www.gamcare.org.uk/publications

About Samaritans

- Anyone can contact Samaritans FREE any time from any phone 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.

- Samaritans is a charity and it's the public's kind donations and more than 20,000 volunteers that mean we are always there for anyone struggling to cope. Find out how you can support us or volunteer with us.
- You can follow Samaritans on social media on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

About Refuge

- Refuge opened the world's first refuge in Chiswick, West London, in 1971. Since then it has grown to become the country's largest single provider of specialist support to women and children escaping domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence. On any given day, Refuge supports more than 6,500 women and children.
- Refuge's national network of specialist services include: safe emergency accommodation through refuges in secret locations across the country; community-based outreach services; culturally specific services for women from South Asian, African and Caribbean, Eastern European and Vietnamese backgrounds; a modern slavery service; independent advocacy services for women at the highest risk of serious injury and homicide; a range of single point of access services for women, children and men across entire regions.
- Refuge also runs award-winning public awareness campaigns, advises Governments and was voted 'Charity of the Year' 2016 at The Charity Times Awards.
- For more information, please visit www.refuge.org.uk or follow Refuge's work on www.facebook.com/RefugeCharity and Twitter @RefugeCharity
- Refuge's Freephone 24 Hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline call 0808 2000 247 or visit www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk

About Cruse Bereavement Care

- Cruse Bereavement Care is the leading national charity for bereaved people in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Cruse offers support, advice and information to children, young people and adults when someone dies, and works to enhance societies care of bereaved people.
- Cruse offers telephone and website support and, until Covid-19, had been providing face to face support for 60 years. It has a free National Helpline (0808 808 1677) local services and a website specifically for children and young people called Hope Again.
- Its services are provided by trained volunteers and are confidential and free. Cruse also provides training and consultancy for external organisations and for those who may encounter bereaved people in the course of their work.
- Cruse is here to support anyone grieving at this time. Our new website resources are available: www.cruse.org.uk/coronavirus.

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GamCare

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Additional Assets:
https://www.gamcare.org.uk/news-and-blog/article/when-youre-readytotalk-were-here-to-listen/

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