

No. 032/2020

20 January 2020

Our Ref: P26/20

To: All Branches

Dear Colleagues,

"Blue Monday" - Samaritans "Brew Monday" National Rail Suicide Campaign Launched Today:

More than 150 events are being held at railway stations across the UK today to encourage people to make "time to talk" on what has become known as 'Blue Monday', which is claimed to be the most depressing day of the year.

The Samaritans 'Brew Monday' campaign hopes to spark conversations between family, friends and colleagues by handing out thousands of tea bags. The charity wants to turn the third Monday of the year – known by some as 'Blue Monday' – into a positive day.

The Government, Network Rail and Train Operators are supporting the Charity's campaign and urging train commuters to look out for their fellow passengers in a bid to reduce the number of suicides on the rail network.

Around 4.4 per cent of all suicides in the UK take place on the railways, with figures from 2018-19 showing there were 279 suicides or suspected suicides on the network. Sadly this included a CWU member on his way to work last year.

The Government is supporting the Samaritans in an effort to rebrand 'Blue Monday' as 'Brew Monday', with commuters urged to spark up conversations with fellow passengers and get together with family, friends or colleagues to chat over a warming brew.

Any suicide on the rail network is tragic. It is the brave efforts of people who have stepped in to prevent tragedy on the railways and charities such as 'Samaritans' and 'Calm' which deserve recognition.

So far, the Samaritans have trained more than 20,000 railway employees in prevention techniques which is a tremendous achievement.

However, the charity and Government ministers are promoting the message that passengers too can help by just offering a friendly conversation, an opportunity to chat, which might be all the difference between suicide and being saved. To avoid rail suicides they are urging people to trust their instincts and help those in need.

Official figures show there were nearly 2,000 lifesaving interventions on the railways last year, meaning that six people were saved for every one that took their own life through suicide.

Please support Samaritans volunteers across the country as they hand out thousands of leaflets and tea bags to commuters.

The rail industry is working with the government to reach a target of a 10 per cent reduction in suicides by 2020-21.

See the Samaritans "Small Talk Saves Lives" Rail Suicide Prevention Video at this link:- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLIRZzZdwBo>

The Samaritans is a registered charity aimed at providing emotional support to anyone in emotional distress, struggling to cope, or at risk of suicide throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland, often through their telephone helpline.

Whatever people are going through, a Samaritan aim is to help people by facing it with them. They are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and can be called any time, day or night. Whatever people are going through, they can call at any time, from any phone for FREE.

Call 116 123

Alternatively **email:- jo@samaritans.org** - Response time: 24 hours

Or **write** to:-

Chris

Freepost RSRB-KKBY-CYJK

PO Box 9090

STIRLING

FK8 2SA

Emotional support in Welsh is also available on the Samaritans' free Welsh language line - **Call 0808 164 0123**

Yours sincerely



Dave Joyce
National Health, Safety & Environment Officer