

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **YOUNG WITH 'TIME ON THEIR HANDS' - AND KEEN TO HELP OTHERS**

### ***Samaritans' 24:7 survey shows young want to help - but they're too tempted by TV or sleep!***

Young people in the UK and Ireland have plenty of spare time on their hands - but most let the days slip by without putting it to good use.

As many as 65.4% of 16-24 year olds say they have *thought* about helping their community in their spare time yet just two per cent say they actually turn out and volunteer. These are among the results of the '24:7 Time for You' internet survey by Tickbox.net for Samaritans - launched today as part of Samaritans annual 24:7 campaign.

Dominic Rudd, chief executive with Samaritans, said: "This is clearly a case of kind thoughts but lack of action. We'd like to ask people to stay with those thoughts and for many more of us to take it that step further and volunteer ... preferably for Samaritans! "

The results are released as Samaritans launches a new volunteer recruitment pack, as part of its second annual fundraising and awareness 24:7 campaign. The survey looks at the spare time habits of over 2,000 working people across the UK and Republic of Ireland and shows that 95% of people have between an hour and over eight hours 'free' time daily - which adds up to between seven and over 56 hours spare time every week. By contrast, the over 55's are the most willing to give up more than 10 hours a week to volunteer - 4.4% of them say they will do this. However the 16-24 year olds show high figures, at 32.7% and 24.3%, at being willing to give up two hours a week or four hours a week respectively to volunteer to help others.

Those aged 25-34 are the most willing, at 35.2% and 25.1%, to give up either two hours or four hours respectively. The 16-24 year olds came top at having three to five hours spare time daily at 37.1% - while the over 55's were highest at 19% for having more than eight hours free time every day. This shows that younger people could give a few hours a week to help others if they actually put their thoughts into actions - while the over 55's can give far more time for their community and the survey shows they're also more willing to do so.

### **The young dream of being film stars - the elderly want to fly you!**

The survey shows that a young person's dream perfect day is to become a film star - while the over 55's would rather be piloting your plane! The 16-24 year olds put being a film star as their top choice at 21.3% while they pick being a supermodel second at 19.3% and waking up as a pop star third at 13.4%. The over 55's reckon becoming a pilot tomorrow would be their perfect day at 22.8% or if not that, a chief executive, at 19.5%.

Being a film star for the day is the top choice for all ages when people are asked what their perfect day would be. This choice comes first at 22.3% while being a pilot or a vet comes equal second at 12.9%. It is the massive 27.2% women's vote for being a film star which pushes that choice into overall first choice - the men prefer being a soccer star at 20.1% but the women only rate this role at 1.3%!

### **What are we up to in our spare time?**

But the young also came out top at watching TV (79.2%) sleeping or resting (53.5%) and listening to music (53%). As many as 69% of us, across all ages, say we just 'flake out' for hours in front of the TV, although 63.6% of us say we have thought of helping local people - but only seven per cent of us manage to get out there and do it! This shows there is a huge gulf between thinking about and actually doing something for others.

### **16-24 year olds can volunteer in the evenings and early hours**

The survey looked at the time 'pattern' for people's spare time. The 16-24 year olds enjoy the latest spare time slots - 12.4 % of them choose 11pm to 3 am as their free time period - higher than other age groups. And when it comes to 5am to 7am 6.4% of the 16-24 year olds are still up and 5.4% of the over 55's are now saying it's their spare time period too - and by 7 am to noon only 3% of the 16-24 year olds are enjoying themselves while 7.7% of the over 55's are more than happy to have their quality time!

The survey shows how the generations' spare time revolves around the 24 hour clock and clearly shows that if they do volunteer, young people can 'take on' shifts in the evenings and early hours.

**Rachael Bayley, Volunteering Manager with Samaritans said:** “Volunteering can be a life-changing gateway to new perspectives. Our volunteers have met new people, built strong friendships, mastered new skills, changed jobs, become public speakers, returned to education - found the confidence to try new things.

Our support volunteers provide publicity, fundraising and ensure that important administrative functions are carried out. Our listening volunteers are here so that people can talk and email about anything that is troubling them, in confidence, for as long as is needed.”

Ed Vaizey MP, Chair of the All Party Group at the House of Commons which supports the work of Samaritans said:” It is so important for people to use their spare time for the good of others. Volunteering can be such a rewarding experience not only for those being helped but for those doing the work too. So many volunteers I meet say how it enriches their lives.”

For a Samaritans’ fundraising pack with lots of easy-to-do ideas, call 0208 394 8393, e-mail [247@samaritans.org](mailto:247@samaritans.org) or check Samaritans’ web site on [www.samaritans247.org](http://www.samaritans247.org) and help Samaritans continue their vital emotional support, round-the-clock, by phone, e-mail, letter and face to face.

**The survey also showed that across the UK and Ireland:-**

People know Samaritans is *virtually* unique in ‘being there’ 24 hours a day to support those who need emotional support - every day of the year - taking a call every six seconds. This was especially so with the over 55’s. When asked who they thought the public could call for help 24:7 82.3% of them said Samaritans. This put Samaritans into the same ‘support’ awareness level as the emergency services. Police rated 86.7%, the Fire Brigade and Ambulance Service both 89.2%. A third of the over 55’s (33.8%) still wrongly assume there is a 24-hour GP service.

Men have more afternoon and late evening spare time! From noon to 5pm 7.4% of men say they are enjoying some spare time as against just 4.6% of women. Later in the evening from 11pm through to 3am 12.5% of men are enjoying their free time as against just 9.9% of women. At other times the genders are more evenly matched.

More men answer that they have more spare time over the ‘longer’ time periods - at five to eight hours they ‘score’ 22.5% and women just 16% and at eight hours or more men rate 13.7% and women 7.8%.

However, at the shorter time periods women score higher - so women clearly have shorter, more rushed, periods of spare time - at one to three hours daily women rate 39.5% and men 30.8% and at three to five hours women score 31.7% and men 28.7%.

The age group which turns out to help others the most is the over 55's - 16.9% of whom say they spend their spare time this way.

Almost a third of people asked (30.5%) have three to five hours free time every day.

Nearly a fifth (18.5%) have five to eight hours free and almost a tenth (10.1%) have eight or more hours free every day - that's an incredible 56 or more hours free every week to fill.

That would presumably be at least 40 hours a week in front of the TV!

-ENDS-

**Editor's Note:**

It is the aim of Samaritans to make emotional health a mainstream issue. Samaritans' vision is for a society where fewer people die by suicide because people are able to share feelings of emotional distress openly without fear of being judged. Samaritans believes that offering people the opportunity to be listened to in confidence, and accepted without prejudice, can alleviate despair and suicidal feelings.

Samaritans is a registered charity, founded in 1953, which offers 24-hour confidential emotional support to anyone in emotional distress. The service is offered by 17,000 trained volunteers and is entirely dependent on voluntary support. Across the UK, you can call Samaritans on 08457 90 90 90 in the UK (1850 60 90 90 in the Republic of Ireland) for the price of a local call. You can also write to Samaritans at Chris, PO Box 9090, Stirling, FK8 2SA, send an e-mail to [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org) or if you are deaf or hard of hearing use the single national minicom number 08457 90 91 92.