

‘Learn 2 Listen’ wellbeing workshops roll out to Dublin Bus and An Post

Dublin Samaritans’ ‘Learn to Listen’ workshops help workers to provide emotional support in their work context.

[Dublin Samaritans](#) has launched a new corporate wellbeing programme entitled ‘Learn 2 Listen’ (L2L) that is currently being rolled out to Dublin Bus and An Post.

Learn 2 Listen has shown to help companies achieve an Ibec KeepWell Mark.

The practical workshop aims to help companies build their emotional-support toolkit, support colleagues who may not be coping and to listen more effectively.

Active listening

The half-day programme has been developed by trained Dublin Samaritan volunteers to offer key employees the skills and tools needed to recognise the early warning signs of stress, increase awareness of mental health issues in the workplace and practise the key skill of ‘active listening’.

Trained volunteers deliver the workshop, to small groups of employees to ensure that participants are personally supported throughout. Topics covered in the workshop include understanding emotional health, the stress continuum, barriers to listening in the workplace, active listening tools and demonstrations.

“This has been developed by a dedicated team of experienced volunteers in the Dublin Samaritans branch,” said Nicholas Nally, Volunteer Outreach director with Dublin Samaritans.

“The objective of the workshops is to give managers an increased understanding of mental health support in the workplace and to give them the knowledge and tools to provide emotional support to colleagues. The content of the workshop is based on Samaritan’s extensive body of knowledge and experience in active listening skills gained over the 50 years of the Dublin branch.”

The workshops are interactive and experiential involving roleplay with trained Samaritans and colleagues. Participants will witness and experience ‘active listening’ and support techniques from volunteer demonstrations and will get the opportunity to try these new skills in small, supportive breakout groups

Dublin Bus piloted the L2L project and An Post is among the first to sign up for the wellbeing

workshops which are taking place in June. Feedback from Dublin Bus employees who attended the pilot workshop was very positive and the company had continued to run the programme.

“There is no doubt that Dublin Samaritans are the experts when it comes to offering that all-important listening ear,” said Vivienne Kavanagh, Employee Development and Equality executive at Dublin Bus.

“The workshops they deliver are authentic and have provided a toolkit for our managers which is beneficial and practical. We know that the volunteers delivering the course are also working on the ground. They've heard every problem imaginable in their 50 years in Ireland.”

Learn 2 Listen is offered online while restrictions are in place. Once it is safe to do so, Dublin Samaritans will deliver the training inhouse.

There are significant costs associated with offering Dublin Samaritan free phone line to the public. The organisation hopes that “Learn 2 Listen’ will help to ensure the future of the 24/7 service by offering the half-day course to corporate clients for a nominal fee. The volunteers who deliver the course do so on a voluntary (unpaid) basis and all proceeds from the workshops go towards running costs of the free phone service throughout Ireland.

“The online workshop experience is designed to replicate an in-house workshop as much as possible and is led by experienced Samaritan volunteers,” Lally explained.

“The workshops to date have been very well received by attendees. The feedback we have received strongly indicates that the experience has helped them to better understand how to provide emotional support in their work context and has given them the confidence to apply these new techniques in their day to day working environments.”

Main image: ***Former Irish rally driver Rosemary Smith, Louisa Murray, Volunteer with Dublin Samaritans and Head of HR and Development, Phil Donohue of Dublin Bus***

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