

# SANE: BLACK DOG CAMPAIGN

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## 1. AIMS AND ACTIVITIES

SANE is a specialist national mental health charity. Our mission is to improve the quality of life of anyone affected by mental illness in the UK. We achieve this through three main activities:

**SERVICES:** Providing confidential, specialist emotional support and expert information to anyone affected by mental illness (including family, friends and carers), 365 days a year via:

- Personalised support: helpline, email, online forum, caller care, text care, carers' circle
- Social media: support and information via Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn
- Websites: information and resources, and a place to express oneself, communicate with an informed community and give/receive peer support

90p of every £1 donated is used to help people deal with and recover from mental illness. SANE provides support and guidance to 750,000 people every year – all without government funding.

**RESEARCH:** Conducting neuroscientific and psychosocial research into mental illness and its consequences. Recent projects include suicide, self-harm, schizophrenia, bipolar and eating disorders.

**EDUCATION:** Raising awareness and tackling the stigma/prejudice surrounding mental illness. SANE's flagship initiative is the Black Dog Campaign. It promotes access to help and challenges stigma by making mental health visible/tangible in public spaces, schools, colleges, and the workplace.

**All of these resources are available free of charge 365 days a year to anyone who needs them.**

## 2. CHANGING ATTITUDES ABOUT MENTAL ILLNESS

SANE realised that the time had come for a fresh approach to mental health; to find a creative way to convey a true understanding of what mental illness is really about. The result is the Black Dog Campaign.



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### 3. THE BLACK DOG CAMPAIGN

The table below summarises the vision, aims and objectives of the Black Dog Campaign:

CAMPAIGN VISION		
<p>The Black Dog Campaign aims to reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness. Normalising mental illness means that it will be perceived like any physical condition. The campaign will put mental health on the same level of importance as physical health: in terms of priority, range of treatments, funding, research and public understanding. SANE plans to involve, reach or help 2,000,000 people in support of the campaign aims.</p>		
AIM	PLAN	OBJECTIVE
<b>1. Reduce stigma</b>	750 press, media, social media, celebrity and profile activities.	Increase the understanding of mental health conditions
<b>2. Encourage more people to seek help</b>	Distribute 60,000 campaign brochures to new audiences	Disseminate more information on accessing SANE Services
<b>3. Engage members of the public</b>	Launch new initiative: <b>Send a Text – Save a Life</b>	Create an innovative concept of care and mutual support
<b>4. Create a new language for mental illness</b>	Place Black Dog sculptures on display around the UK	Help people define the invisible condition: mental illness
<b>5. Influence Government and business leaders to adopt the campaign</b>	Connect with all MP's; Lobby APPG's; Events with Ministers; Partner with leading firms.	Bring mental health education into schools, the workplace and the public domain
<b>6. Demonstrate the importance of research</b>	Communicate research work at POWIC; disseminate findings of psychosocial research team	Wider availability of effective treatments; better insight & understanding of mental illness
<b>7. Involve young people in mental health</b>	Launch and run #StopStigma & <u>#healingwords</u>	Use social media to 'normalise' mental illness – Stop Stigma wristbands
<b>8. Change attitudes of future generations</b>	Take the Black Dog statues to schools. Educate children about good mental health	Leave an enduring symbol of acceptance, understanding and compassion.

There has been a significant groundswell of support and positive response to the first phase of the campaign from members of the public, service users, celebrities and professionals:

**“The work of organisations such as SANE is a key part of tackling mental illness. We need to be treating mental health the way we are treating coronary care: preventively and proactively.”**

**Professor Guy Goodwin**

**“SANE and their Black Dog Campaign has my fullest possible support. What they are doing is wonderful and important.”** Stephen Fry

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## Campaign Structure and Key Facts

The campaign runs from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2011 until 30 June 2017. This duration allows support to accumulate consistently and sustainably. It creates the space for a meaningful level of influence, adoption of new modes of caring and support, and a change in attitudes. The core themes of the campaign will be embedded within SANE's organisational structure and continue indefinitely.

The Black Dog has been used from classical mythology through medieval folklore to modern times as a universal metaphor for depression. Sir Winston Churchill talked about his 'black dog', as had Samuel Johnson and others before him, such as Horace, the ancient Roman poet. We have chosen the Black Dog to symbolise how powerful, dominating and unpredictable mental illness can be.

To bring the campaign to life we have designed visually striking statues. The Black Dogs are a physical symbol to externalise moods and thoughts that can be hard to communicate. The statues will help people to:

- i. define their experience of the 'invisible' condition: mental illness
- ii. find a new language to express difficult inner feelings like anxiety, depression and loneliness
- iii. discuss mental illness more openly, thereby promoting greater understanding and acceptance

Most of us have experienced Black Dog days or felt the Black Dog on our shoulder. But when those days turn to weeks and months, few people know where and how to find help.

Since summer 2011 the SANE Black Dogs have appeared in public and corporate spaces. We hope to display Black Dogs around the UK in a phased rollout. There are good, practical reasons for this approach. SANE aims to change attitudes toward mental illness; this kind of change cannot be achieved quickly and so the campaign will be maintained over time.

Each dog has a 'Collar of Hope' around its neck. The plinth supporting the Black Dog statue has details of SANE's website and how people can access SANE's emotional support services. There is also recognition for sponsors. Artists and celebrities have designed coats for the dogs to enhance the visual appeal.

SANE has divided the campaign into three distinct phases. These are set out below. There is more information available via the SANE website: [http://www.sane.org.uk/what\\_we\\_do/black\\_dog/](http://www.sane.org.uk/what_we_do/black_dog/).

- 1. Phase 1: 1 March – 31 October 2011:** Establish the campaign concept; gain support from stakeholders; obtain initial funding; organise celebrity launch; get media support and social media following; implement the first stage rollout.
- 2. Phase 2: 1 November 2011 – 31 March 2017:** Full campaign implementation; Press, media and events; Corporate partners; MP's, Ministers and Government departments; Send a Text Save a Life; Spotify and music sharing; Schools initiative; Mental health Summit focusing on workplace issues; Black Dog Auction.
- 3. Phase 3: 1 April 2017 – 30 June 2017:** Distribute Black Dog statues to schools; do follow up media and communications; disseminate final campaign report and summary of achievements.

SANE has been successfully implemented Phase 1, and is working on delivery of Phases 2 and 3.

**"Ignorance and prejudice are terrifying partners; SANE has bravely and consistently held high the banners of care and compassion. This is why I support their 25th anniversary Black Dog Campaign. With the impact of the recession and closure of services, there will be an even greater need for somewhere to turn."**

Alastair Stewart OBE

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### 4. WHY SANE NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

The World Health Organisation (WHO) rates mental illness as the most debilitating of all conditions, ahead of heart disease and cancer. The WHO predicts that by 2030 depression will be the largest global burden of disease. One in five people will experience depression at some point in their lives, and it underscores most mental illness. We still do not know what causes the condition.

Mental illness – *depression (inc. post-natal), anxiety, obsessive thoughts and impulses, phobias, eating disorders, bipolar disorder, personality disorders, post traumatic stress disorder, schizophrenia, self-harm, suicide* – touches everyone in society. It is a frightening, debilitating and lonely experience. Finding effective treatments is not straightforward. SANE provides specialist, confidential help and expert information on all aspects of mental health, including support for family, friends and carers.

The unique element of SANE's service provision is the nature, quality and depth of the emotional support offered, and the many different ways people can access help.

Free, easily accessible help is vital, because high-quality, long-term emotional support is the missing element from statutory provision. SANE's psychological guidance covers every detail of mental illness.

In the UK, up to eleven million adults and two million children/young people experience mental health problems at any one time. The stigma attached to the condition exacerbates the difficulties. People affected by mental illness find it harder to obtain work, have lower incomes, are more likely to be homeless or insecurely housed, and are more likely to live in areas of high social deprivation. People with severe mental illnesses die on average 20 years earlier than the general population.

A distinctive characteristic of mental illness is the often long 'recovery' phase after crisis and the frequency of relapse. Many people need to learn to manage their condition indefinitely.

Mental ill health represents 23% of the total burden of ill health in the UK – the largest single cause of disability. Yet mental illness is significantly underfunded compared to physical illness. Cancer and neurological disease account for 40% of total research funding, while mental health receives just 6.5%.

Improving mental health is one of the biggest challenges facing our society.

### 5. USEFUL LINKS

**Black Dog Campaign:** This video conveys how it works: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=PscZwcRGWg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PscZwcRGWg)

SANE has chosen the Black Dog to symbolise how powerful, dominating and unpredictable mental illness can be: [http://sane.org.uk/what\\_we\\_do/black\\_dog/](http://sane.org.uk/what_we_do/black_dog/)

**Mental Health Fact Sheets:** [http://sane.org.uk/resources/mental\\_health\\_conditions/](http://sane.org.uk/resources/mental_health_conditions/) and a video explaining how people experience mental ill-health:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vS1fMsnmBwk&index=49&list=UUHsXtHMSU7PVK8RPhnnSU8g>

**Emotional Support Services:** [http://sane.org.uk/what\\_we\\_do/support/](http://sane.org.uk/what_we_do/support/)

**Fundraising is Fun:** [www.youtube.com/watch?v=NYEDwhU6CRc&list=UUHsXtHMSU7PVK8RPhnnSU8g](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NYEDwhU6CRc&list=UUHsXtHMSU7PVK8RPhnnSU8g)

**SANE Research:** [http://sane.org.uk/what\\_we\\_do/research/](http://sane.org.uk/what_we_do/research/)

**SANE on Suicide:** [www.sane.org.uk/sane\\_on\\_suicide](http://www.sane.org.uk/sane_on_suicide)