

Dear Samantha Dixon MBE MP,

[Over the past decade](#), suicide-related callouts to Fire and Rescue Services have tripled. Firefighters across England are now attending an average of [62 suicide incidents every week](#), a number that has risen year on year since 2015.

Yet firefighters are being sent to these traumatic incidents without suicide prevention training or adequate wellbeing support. This must change.

These firefighters need your help. By ensuring that all firefighters receive mandatory suicide prevention training and workplace wellbeing support, you can assure that they are equipped with the confidence and skills to save lives, without it impacting their own mental health.

Firefighters are often among the first on the scene when someone is in suicidal crisis. These are high-pressure situations requiring rapid, life-saving decisions, yet there is still no consistent requirement for suicide prevention training across England.

This is why we're asking that firefighters be granted the same protected time for mandatory suicide prevention training that has recently been committed in the Policing Reform White Paper for police forces across the country.

While we welcome progress made by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), including their new Suicide Prevention Toolkit, this alone is not enough. **Firefighters deserve the same level of training and resource as their policing colleagues**, so that they are confident in spotting the signs when someone is suicidal, and can make life saving interventions in critical moments.

The role of this work is significant. In one survey, 60.2% of fire service staff and volunteers reported experiencing mental health problems linked to attending traumatic incidents. **In its first year, the Firefighters Charity's Crisis Line received over 200 calls from fire personnel in distress.**

Mark, who has been a Firefighter for nearly 20 years said: "The training currently on offer does not reflect the reality we face on the ground. We attend suicide-related incidents regularly and, in many cases, we are the best placed to intervene in those critical moments, practically speaking.

"However, a half hour, text heavy online course in Suicide prevention is nowhere near enough to prepare you for a real person in crisis who intends to take their own life. These situations are almost always complex and high-pressure. Without proper training, we are being asked to manage life or death situations without the tools we need. We need

proper, role play based training delivered in person by credible and trained personnel that gives us the confidence to respond effectively. That kind of training should be standard across all fire and rescue services in England.”

We therefore urge you to commit to protected training time for all Fire and Rescue staff in England, alongside strengthened wellbeing support for firefighters. Matching the provision recently announced for the police would demonstrate a clear and practical commitment to preventing suicide.

Every emergency service worker deserves the tools and confidence to act. And every person in crisis deserves the best possible support when help arrives.

We urge you to work with the National Fire Chiefs Council to make suicide prevention training mandatory across the fire service, with the time and support needed to make it effective.

Yours sincerely,

Samaritans