Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Baroness Blake of Leeds CBE
Minister for Building Safety, Fire and Resilience
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Your reference: BB107785
Our reference: MC2026/23604

Bob Blackman MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

17 September 2026

Dear Bob,

Thank you for your letter of 20 August regarding Samaritans' 'United with the Frontline' campaign and suicide prevention training for firefighters. I am replying as the Minister responsible for fire and rescue services.

We recognise the devastating impact of suicide on individuals, families and communities, and the important role firefighters can play when responding to people in crisis. Suicide prevention training can support emergency service personnel to identify and respond appropriately to people who may be at risk. However, decisions on firefighter training, workforce development and wellbeing support are matters for individual Fire and Rescue Authorities as employers. They are responsible for ensuring that their staff receive the training, equipment and support needed to carry out their duties safely and effectively.

The fire and rescue sector is already taking action in this area. The National Fire Chiefs Council has developed a Suicide Prevention and Postvention Toolkit to help services strengthen prevention, early intervention, and workforce wellbeing arrangements. Many fire and rescue services also work with Samaritans and other specialist organisations to support both their workforce and the communities they serve.

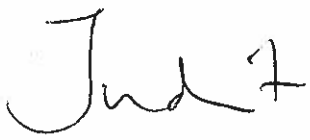
We are also working with the Department of Health and Social Care and sector partners through the Firefighter Health and Wellbeing Programme to strengthen the evidence base on firefighter health outcomes, including the impact of exposure to traumatic incidents. Officials have engaged with Samaritans and other interested organisations, and we welcome their continued contribution as this work develops.

While the Government has no current plans to mandate suicide prevention training nationally or to introduce a national standard through the proposed College for Fire and Rescue, we will consider responses to the consultation carefully before determining next steps.

You also referred to recent commitments on suicide prevention training within policing. While there are similarities in the challenges faced by police officers and firefighters, governance arrangements for the two sectors are different. Policing operates within a more nationally directed framework, whereas fire and rescue services are locally delivered and employer-led.

Thank you again for writing on this important matter. We value the contribution that Samaritans continues to make to suicide prevention and crisis support, and we will continue to work with partners across government and the fire and rescue sector through the Firefighter Health and Wellbeing Programme to support improvements in firefighter wellbeing and public safety.

Yours sincerely,



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