

Firefighters to benefit from bespoke health support

16.4.2026 - | Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs

Government to back firefighters with tailor made, research backed health support during and after service

- Government announces a Firefighters Concordat, focused on health and wellbeing and built in partnership with the profession – to drive improvements in prevention, early diagnosis and support
- Firefighters will receive consistent, regular health checks for every single firefighter in the country, recognising the unique risks they're exposed to
- Government will back and fund research into the hazards they face to improve our physical and mental health support offer to all firefighters

Recognising the extraordinary bravery of firefighters, this Government is backing them with tailor-made, research-backed health monitoring to better support their health and wellbeing during and after service.

The potential danger associated with tackling burning buildings, mounting rescues and attending road traffic incidents are well documented, but there is little research in the UK into the long-term effects of working within the service.

Speaking at the Fire Brigade Union, Health and Social Care Secretary Wes Streeting announced today that this government will establish a Firefighters' Concordat on Health and Wellbeing—an agreement amongst key organisations to work together to improving firefighters' health and wellbeing.

Under this agreement, rather than waiting until firefighters become ill, the government is committing to prevention first — one that keeps firefighters healthier for longer, reduces NHS costs, and ensures the fire and rescue service can retain experienced, fit and skilled workers.

Health and Social Care Secretary, Wes Streeting, said:

Firefighters run towards danger knowing full well the risks they face during an emergency, but we know very little about how the speed and courage of their work impacts their health.

That is because for too long their concerns have been ignored – but this new agreement promises to change things: to boost funding for research that is well overdue, and work in partnership with firefighters and their unions, alongside employers and fire chiefs to better protect and support them in the long term.

We cannot continue to ask people to give everything in service of others and then fail them when they need help themselves.

Despite the unique hazards of their profession, the evidence base on firefighter health and wellbeing remains limited. That is why the government is directing new funding for research via the National

Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) to build the evidence base and better support understanding of how best to tackle firefighters' health risks — from mental health to musculoskeletal health, and from cancer to cardiovascular disease.

There will be a specific focus on underrepresented groups in the profession, including women, who have too often had to do their jobs in kit and protective equipment that was not designed for them.

This agreement - a Firefighters Concordat on Health and Wellbeing - builds on commitments made in the 10 Year Health Plan, which will also raise awareness of the NHS services that could most benefit and support firefighters as well as better information on how they can access them at times that work best for them.

The agreement is part of our work with the Ministerial Advisory Group on Fire and Rescue Reform.

National Fire Chiefs Council Chair, Phil Garrigan, said:

Firefighter health and wellbeing is a long-standing priority for the National Fire Chiefs Council, and we welcome continued recognition of the unique risks firefighters face through their work.

Firefighters' work sees them encounter hazardous environments and harmful contaminants, often with long-term consequences that may only become apparent years down the line. A shared, coordinated approach across employers, representative bodies, health services and partners is essential if those risks are to be understood, reduced and properly monitored.

We have been clear that prevention, early intervention and consistent standards are key. Work to strengthen contamination controls, improve facilities and enhance health monitoring must be informed by the best available evidence and applied consistently across all fire and rescue services.

Supporting further research and building a stronger evidence base will be vital to improving understanding of occupational risk and ensuring firefighters receive appropriate, timely support throughout their careers. NFCC will continue to work constructively with partners across the sector, including through the Ministerial Advisory Group, to advance firefighter health and wellbeing.

Those who protect our communities deserve the highest possible standards of care and protection in return.

Significant progress has already been made to reduce risks on the job, including improvements to health and safety practices, protective equipment, breathing apparatus and decontamination standards.

But prevention must go further — supporting firefighters' long-term health and wellbeing, including cardiovascular health, musculoskeletal conditions, mental wellbeing and awareness of cancer risks.

The Concordat will send a clear message that firefighter health matters, both during service and beyond. By setting out shared expectations, building on best practice and evidence, it will provide a mechanism for working in partnership to improve health and wellbeing outcomes.

Building on commitments in our 10 Year Health Plan, the agreement will raise awareness of the NHS services that could most benefit and support firefighters — like mental health support, cancer screening and musculoskeletal care — and how they can access them at times that work best for them. Firefighter occupation will be recorded in NHS records so doctors can make better-informed decisions.

Building safety Minister Samantha Dixon said:

Behind every emergency response is a person who puts themselves in harm's way to protect the lives of others time and time again. This partnership is our commitment to them.

It's a serious, long-term promise to understand the risks they take and make sure every firefighter gets the health support they deserve - during their career and beyond.

I'll be working closely with firefighters, unions, employers, chief fire officers and health partners to make that a reality.

Steve Wright, General Secretary, Fire Brigades Union said:

The commitment from the Health Secretary to increase health monitoring for firefighters is a very welcome and important step forward.

It reflects the constructive work that has taken place between the union and government, and shows what can be achieved when firefighters' voices are properly represented.

Our members put themselves in harm's way to protect the public, often in extremely challenging and dangerous conditions. It is right that their health and safety is recognised and taken seriously.

Today's commitment is an important milestone, and we are pleased to see this progress being made.

The Firefighters' Concordat on Health and Wellbeing will be delivered through a working group established under the Ministerial Advisory Group on Fire and Rescue Reform, bringing together the government, fire and rescue services, employers and representative bodies to deliver a comprehensive programme of improvements, including working to establish monitoring to better assess firefighter health and better spot risks.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/firefighters-to-benefit-from-bespoke-health-support>