

*E-mailed 11/12*



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

*From the Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP  
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care*

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Dr Sarah Wollaston MP  
Chair  
Health & Social Care Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
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11 DEC 2018

Dear Sarah,

## **ZERO SUICIDE ALLIANCE**

Thank you for your letter of 31 July about the issues you raised about suicide prevention at the Health & Social Care Committee I attended that month and for enclosing correspondence from Steve Mallen, co-founder of the Zero Suicide Alliance (ZSA). Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding to you.

I welcome the continued interest that you and the Health & Social Care Committee have shown in the implementation of the Cross-Government National Suicide Prevention Strategy. Suicide prevention is a priority for the Government and I welcome the appointment of Jackie Doyle-Price as the UK's first Minister for Suicide Prevention. She is working across national and local government to drive implementation of the National Suicide Prevention Strategy to ensure that fewer families and communities experience the devastating impact of suicide.

You will be aware that the Prime Minister announced the Government is providing £2 million of funding for the ZSA over the next two years at the first Global Ministerial Mental Health Summit in October. This will ensure the ZSA can grow its initiative to provide suicide prevention awareness training across the NHS and within local communities as well as supporting its work on using data for improving suicide risk assessments. My officials are working with the ZSA to finalise the business case to provide this funding from April 2019.

I am aware that Jackie Doyle-Price has met recently with you and Steve Mallen and the other co-founders of the ZSA. I am also aware that the Health & Social Care Committee plans to follow-up its suicide prevention inquiry in January 2019, which I welcome.

When I attended the Health & Social Care Committee in July you asked me to address issues with arrangements between the Department of Health & Social Care and the local government sector for assessing the quality of local suicide prevention plans. I am pleased that the first part of the process started in October with local authorities providing self-assessments of their plans. We will publish a detailed report of the findings of this assessment in the spring, which will identify areas for improvement and best practice. This will inform a longer-term national programme to support local authorities to further improve and embed their suicide prevention plans.

I hope this reply is helpful.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matt', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**MATT HANCOCK**