



The Rt Hon Kemi Badenoch MP
Secretary of State for Business
and Trade
Old Admiralty Building
Admiralty Place
London, SW1A 2DY

1 November 2023

Dear Ms Badenoch MP,

Help for Heroes and Combat Stress, the veterans' mental health charity, are jointly writing to request that you commission an independent review of the current firework legislation with a remit to consider tighter restrictions on their sale in England and Wales.

As you will be aware, the fireworks season can be a distressing time for many veterans. Sudden loud noises, unexpected flashes and the smell of fireworks and bonfires can bring back painful and traumatic memories of combat.

In the 2021 census, 1.85 million people in England and Wales reported they had served in the UK Armed Forces. New research published this week shows that almost a quarter (23 per cent) of veterans said fireworks have triggered a negative experience for them personally, ranging from feeling jumpy and hypervigilant through to panic attacks. Furthermore, 74 per cent of veterans want to see the days and times when fireworks can be set off to be restricted further; whilst 67 per cent want a reduction in the overall number of days fireworks can be sold to the public.

We would like to arrange a meeting with your officials to discuss these matters. Please let us know dates and times that would be convenient via the Help for Heroes Senior Public Affairs and Policy Manager Rachel Taggart-Ryan: rachel.taggart-ryan@helpforheroes.org.uk

We have also attached our joint full briefing on the negative impact of fireworks on veterans and our case for reform of existing legislation.

We look forward to working with you to better support veterans and their families to live well after service.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Needham'.

James Needham
Chief Executive
Help for Heroes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeff Harrison'.

Jeff Harrison
CEO
Combat Stress