



**ARMED FORCES  
COVENANT**

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# The Strategy for our Veterans

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## UK Government Consultation Paper

Cm 9727





# **The Strategy for Our Veterans**

## **UK Government Consultation Paper**

Presented to Parliament  
by the Secretary of State for Defence  
by Command of Her Majesty

November 2018



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ISBN 978-1-5286-0857-2

ID CCS1118886970 12/18

Printed on paper containing 75% recycled fibre content minimum

Printed in the UK by the APS Group on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office

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# Introduction

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Today, the UK-wide Strategy for our Veterans was published. The Strategy set the principles and aims needed to continue to meet the needs of older Veterans as well as the wider Veteran community over the next ten years, and set the right conditions for society to empower – and support – them for the next 100 years. It provides an enduring Vision and Principles for the whole of the UK and is applicable across all sectors of life: public, private, charitable and individual. There are five cross-cutting factors that provide a backdrop to the overall system of Veterans service provision, and six identified key themes, that emerged as affecting the Veteran experience. For each of the cross-cutting factors and key themes there is a 2028 outcome to which all nations will work to deliver.

## Purpose of this Consultation Paper

This UK Government Consultation Paper complements the Strategy for our Veterans, by gathering information to inform how it could be implemented across the UK except for devolved matters in Scotland and Wales. It seeks broad public views on focused questions, to build on the research and engagement conducted to produce the Strategy, against a backdrop of what is already delivered. This paper should be read in conjunction with the Strategy, which is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategy-for-our-veterans>. The content of that document, focused on what the outcomes should be and why, is not subject to public consultation, as it is Government policy as agreed under Parliamentary mandate.

## VISION

This Strategy has a 10 year scope to 2028. Through the 10 year timescale, the Strategy addresses the immediate needs of older Veterans as well as setting the right conditions for society to empower – and support – the newer generation. Initiatives and proposals will work towards an enduring Vision articulated by three key principles.

**Those who have served in the UK Armed Forces, and their families, transition smoothly back into civilian life and contribute fully to a society that understands and values what they have done and what they have to offer.**

## PRINCIPLES

The principles articulate in greater detail the strategic objectives of the vision

**Veterans are first and foremost civilians and continue to be of benefit to wider society**

**Veterans are encouraged and enabled to maximise their potential as civilians**

**Veterans are able to access support that meets their needs when necessary, through public and voluntary sectors**

These Principles encompass Regular and Reservist Veterans and where appropriate, their families and the bereaved. The focus is on those Veterans of the UK Armed Forces resident in the UK. In due course, we will consider encompassing Veterans who return to or choose to live overseas. These Principles are consistent with, and underpinned by, the Armed Forces Covenant.

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Alongside this public consultation on implementation, the UK Government will continue to work on internal proposals that were raised during production of the Strategy and implementation plans.

Separate consultation arrangements will be made by the Scottish and Welsh Governments on areas that are devolved.

## Who is this document for?

This document is aimed at anyone with an interest in Veterans' issues in the UK, except for devolved matters. These will include, but are not limited to, Veterans themselves, their families, friends and communities, Parliamentarians, charities, academics, those commissioning services, those providing services, employers and local authorities. Responses are welcome from across the UK so long as they refer to an issue within the bounds of the above.

Serving members of the UK Armed Forces will be engaged in a separate internal Ministry of Defence consultation.

## Duration of Consultation

The consultation period runs from 15 November 2018 until 23:45 on 21 February 2019.

## Structure of this Consultation Paper

The Strategy for our Veterans contains five cross-cutting factors, that provide a backdrop to the overall system of Veterans service provision, and six identified key themes, which have been consistently raised as the most prevalent topics affecting Veterans' lives. These were, in alphabetical order:

### Cross-cutting Factors:

- Collaboration between organisations
- Coordination of Veterans' services
- Data on the Veterans community
- Public perception and understanding
- Recognition of Veterans

### Key Themes:

- Community and relationships
- Employment, education and skills
- Finance and debt
- Health and wellbeing
- Making a home in civilian society
- Veterans and the law

For each of these, the Strategy sets out a 2028 Outcome. This Consultation Paper builds on those by providing proposed Key Focus areas. Each chapter assesses the current experiences of Veterans and outlines what is already delivered by the public sector to support them, and to provide the reader with background. This is laid out against three stages of becoming a Veteran: in-service, transition and civilian (Veteran) life. While this document focuses on support for Veterans across the UK, issues devolved to Wales and Scotland will be consulted on separately. Having provided this background, there are questions seeking views on what more could be done towards delivery of those Key Focus areas and 2028 Outcomes.

As a government Strategy the focus was on the public sector. The extensive and valuable work of the Armed Forces charity sector is acknowledged and recognised. Separately, work has been done to summarise this, which will be circulated to stakeholders and partners to inform their understanding of this crucial element of the Veterans support system in the UK.

## The Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report

For further background on what the Armed Forces Covenant has helped to deliver for Veterans since its introduction, readers may wish to consult the archive of Annual Reports available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-covenant-annual-reports>.



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## Glossary

A glossary of frequently used terms is available at Annex A.

## How to respond

You should also read the Strategy for our Veterans itself before responding to this complementary Consultation Paper, which is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategy-for-our-veterans>

This Paper contains 24 questions spread across the cross-cutting factors and themes. You do not need to answer all the questions and may choose only to respond to those which you feel informed about.

You are encouraged to respond using the online survey found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/strategy-for-our-veterans-uk-government-consultation-paper>

If you would prefer to respond by email or post, please ensure you include the following at the beginning of your response:

- Whether you are Veteran or do you know a Veteran?
- Whether you are a current serving member of the UK Armed Forces or part of the Armed Forces community?
- Whether you live in England, Northern Ireland, Wales, Scotland or outside of the UK?
- Whether you are responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation and which organisation that is?

By email to:  
[Covenant-VeteransStrategy@mod.gov.uk](mailto:Covenant-VeteransStrategy@mod.gov.uk)

By post to:  
Veterans Strategy Consultation  
Armed Forces Covenant Team,  
Service Personnel Support  
6th floor Zone A  
Ministry of Defence Main Building  
Whitehall  
LONDON  
SW1A 2HB

## Response

All responses to this Consultation Paper will be analysed and a government report will be published within 3 months of the closing date above. Individual responses will not be responded to.

## How we consult

This consultation is being conducted in line with the [Cabinet Office consultation principles](#) published in March 2018. These principles give clear guidance to government departments on conducting public consultations. If you have any comments about the consultation process (as opposed to comments about the issues we are consulting on), including if you feel that the consultation does not adhere to the values expressed in the consultation principles or that the process could be improved, please respond to the address above.

## Freedom of Information

Information provided during this consultation, including personal information, may be published or disclosed in accordance with access to information regimes, primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 2018. If you want the information you provide to be treated confidentially, please be aware that, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, public authorities are required to comply with a statutory code of practice which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence. In view of this, it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you wish that information to be treated confidentially. If we receive a request for disclosure of that information, we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances.

We will process your personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 (and the General Data Protection Regulations) and, in most circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties. This consultation follows the UK Government's consultation principles. Details of the Ministry of Defence's Personal Information Charter can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-defence/about/personal-information-charter>



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# Cross-cutting Factor 1: Collaboration between organisations

## 2028 Outcome:

Improved collaboration between organisations offers Veterans coherent support.

## Key Focus Area:

- Establish where greater collaboration could be achieved in services for Veterans, especially between charitable and public-sector organisations.

Veterans receiving support from many different organisations, across the public, private and charitable sectors, will often have to repeat their circumstances and historic experiences to each new provider. This can be frustrating for the individual and inefficient for the organisations concerned. Some service provision is rightly very specific but can exclude consideration of other complex or interconnected issues, for example focusing solely on a medical issue without discussing associated social isolation. Greater collaboration between organisations would improve services for Veterans by increasing process-efficiency and being more rounded to understand the connection between their issues. There are recognised challenges with this, particularly respect for the independence of each organisation and the different regulations within which each may operate.

There are good examples of collaboration within the public sector and the Armed Forces charity sector. Cobseo - The Confederation of Service Charities - demonstrates this through use of their cross-organisation Casework Management System which means that information is collected once and then accessible to other charities working to support that individual. In addition, the Veterans' Gateway allows greater collaboration between those organisations supporting Veterans. The Armed Forces Covenant has encouraged organisations to work together to share best practice, as demonstrated through the efforts of the Local Government Association.

The Ministry of Defence is introducing a Veterans Identification Card for all those leaving the UK Armed Forces. This will begin to assist organisations to verify an individual's previous service, without needing to confirm with the Ministry of Defence, and quicken access to services for the individual.

## Consultation Question

1. If you have experience of a successful multi-organisational collaboration that we could potentially learn from, please provide details including what sector it was in, who the recipients were, which organisations were involved, what was successful about this collaboration, how you were involved, and contact details of one of the organisations (if possible). Ideally this would involve both government and a charitable, voluntary or not-for-profit organisation – this does not have to be limited to the Armed Forces Sector.

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## Cross-cutting Factor 2: Coordination of Veterans' services

### 2028 Outcome:

The coordination of Veterans' provision delivers consistent aims and principles over time and throughout the UK, ensuring Veterans, their families and the bereaved are treated fairly compared to the local population.

### Key Focus Area:

- Mechanisms for the coordination of UK Government and wider public sector provision on Veterans issues.

The difficulty of coordinating Veterans' service provision reflects the complexity of the system discussed in the Strategy for our Veterans. Services for Veterans are provided by the UK, Scottish and Welsh Governments, local authorities and wider public sector, charities and private sector companies. Veterans are part of the Armed Forces community, and are a key beneficiary group from the Armed Forces Covenant, set up through the Armed Forces Act (2011). This Act seeks to ensure that everyone who serves or has served, and their families, is treated fairly, and that special provision is made for those most affected such as the injured and bereaved. There are numerous government bodies which provide coordinating governance for the system of service provision to the Armed Forces community generally and the Veterans community, in particular.

The Ministerial Covenant and Veterans Board, which sits biannually, is co-chaired by the Secretary of State for Defence and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. The Scottish and Welsh Governments' lead Ministers for Veterans and the Armed Forces are invited to this Board, which includes the UK Government departments that own the policy for issues affecting Veterans, Serving Personnel and their families. It provides coordination and oversight for public-sector service provision for Veterans. The biannual External Partners Group provides high-level coordination between the UK Government, charities and private sector. It is chaired by the Secretary of State for Defence and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and is attended by Cobseo - The Confederation of Service Charities - and some of the larger Armed Forces charities, Ministry of Defence and Cabinet Office officials. Separately, Government

and public-sector officials regularly meet at all levels to govern and coordinate delivery.

The established governance structures (see Annex B) have made good progress in coordinating services. The Ministerial Covenant and Veterans Board and supporting delivery Boards provide the coherency needed for effective delivery of services. It is important that this governance structure remains and is evaluated regularly to assess effectiveness. This will ensure that the Strategy for our Veterans delivers consistent aims and principles over time and throughout the UK.

As well as directly providing Veterans with services, charities act as an advocate for Veterans, influencing governments and Parliament. Cobseo promotes best practice and co-operation amongst its members, and provides a focus for communication with government. Cobseo encourages good governance across its membership through a series of sector specific guides. It also promotes co-operation and collaboration through a Cluster and Action Group network that includes charities, governmental and non-governmental organisations. Similar functions are provided by Veterans Scotland, the Northern Ireland Veterans' Support Committee, and the Armed Forces Expert Group in Wales. Other non-departmental government bodies perform a 'review' function within the system, such as the Charity Commission for England and Wales, the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator and the Scottish Veterans Commissioner. There are also further examples that provide very specific advice and not all can be captured here.

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## Consultation Questions

2. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being not at all, 5 being extremely effective), how effective is the UK Government in delivering support to Veterans to enable them to be valued, contributing and supported? What are your reasons for this score?
3. What other mechanism could be effectively used to coordinate provision?

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# Cross-cutting Factor 3: Data on the Veteran community

## 2028 Outcome:

Enhanced collection, use and analysis of data across the public, private and charitable sectors to build an evidence base to effectively identify and address the needs of Veterans.

## Key Focus Areas:

- Exploitation of existing data-sets, encouraging innovative use and analysis to provide a comprehensive evidence base.
- Identification of areas where organisations could collect more data on Veterans so that a richer evidence base may be developed.

Data is essential to understand the Veteran community, contributing to a robust evidence base which can inform policy making and service delivery more effectively. Across all the themes, the lack of dependable data was raised as an issue for those commissioning and providing services. Some reliable data already exists across the UK, Scottish and Welsh Governments and local authorities. For example, many providers are already required or encouraged to ask whether an individual was a member of the Armed Forces. However, it can be fragmented, making analysis and prediction of needs difficult. Data sharing and linking, across organisations or between sectors, can create a more comprehensive picture. To date there are only a few examples of this innovative approach being used and mostly there has been limited central coordination or consistency in approach. Some individuals will not want to identify as a Veteran and/or may want to remain anonymous, but better identification of Veterans within data would lead to a greater understanding of their needs, trends and geographical distribution to inform decision making. Any data must be handled in compliance with relevant legislation and ethical codes.

Work has already begun to build a richer picture of the Veteran community. The Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report has driven the collection of specific data across government departments to illustrate where the community has been supported or where there has been any disadvantage. NHS England and the Welsh Government now identify Veterans using mental health services. Between 2014 and 2017, the Annual Population Survey, administered by the Office for National Statistics, contained a question about service in the UK Armed Forces, allowing the Ministry of Defence to produce estimates of the size and socio-demographic characteristics of the Veteran population residing in Great Britain<sup>1</sup>. The Ministry of Defence has recently published estimates on the 2011 size and socio-demographic characteristics of the working age Armed Forces Veteran population in England and Wales<sup>2</sup>, by linking the Service Leavers Database, containing basic information at the time of discharge for those who have left since 1975, to the 2011 Census of England and Wales. A forecast of Regular Veteran numbers out to 2028 will be published shortly to complement these two publications. The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust has funded the Map of Need project, which plots existing data on uptake of public and charitable services by Veterans against location across the UK.

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1 Annual population survey: UK Armed Forces Veterans residing in Great Britain, Ministry of Defence, 2014-2016, <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/annual-population-survey-uk-armed-forces-veterans-residing-in-great-britain>

2 Census 2011: Working age UK Armed Forces Veterans residing in England and Wales, Ministry of Defence, 2018, <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/census-2011-working-age-uk-armed-forces-veterans-residing-in-england-and-wales-index>

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The Office for National Statistics for England and Wales and the National Records of Scotland have recommended the inclusion of a new question on past service in the UK Armed Forces in their respective 2021 Censuses. This will provide data on the size, location and profile of the Veteran population (including older Veterans who left prior to the commencement of the Ministry of Defence Service Leavers Database), filling a recognised gap and enabling further data linking.

### Consultation Questions

4. What barriers does your organisation currently face on sharing existing data on Veterans?
5. What more could be done to improve data collection?
6. What gaps do you perceive there are in the currently available data on Veterans and their families?
7. What more can be done to further encourage declaration and/or identification of service at the earliest opportunity to enable better data on the numbers of Veterans in the criminal justice system?

### Case Study: Map of Need Project

The Map of Need project was commissioned by Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, to provide a geographical evidence-base of need in Veterans, military families and the wider Armed Forces community. The project will generate specialist maps showing the take up of services for specific needs, to assist targeting of future funding. It has established partnerships across the state and charity sectors, using publicly available data and bespoke data-sharing agreements across service providers. This enables a more sophisticated level of data interpretation by triangulating a variety of data sources to build a more comprehensive picture rather than considering data in isolation. Early findings of the project have exposed localised differences in service provision, promotion, usage and access, as well as the different average age of those accessing different types of provision. One current example of the emerging geographical patterns is how Veterans access mental health care. Analysis between NHS and charity data indicates that in some areas in the UK Veteran populations with mental health problems appear in different numbers in NHS statistics compared to in the charity sector data. In Stafford, Worcester and the West Midlands, Veterans data showed lower use of NHS care, compared to higher use of provision from leading Veteran mental health charities. At this stage of the research it is still not possible to explain why these patterns arise, or what factors could be driving them. This case study demonstrates the potential complexities in service usage that providers may be unaware of, and the possible benefit of more innovative ways of using a variety of data.



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# Cross-cutting Factor 4: Public perception and understanding

## 2028 Outcome:

The UK population value Veterans and understand their diverse experiences and culture.

## Key Focus Areas:

- Identify how a more balanced national conversation about Veterans can be achieved.
- Address public misperceptions about Veterans.

The support of UK society is crucial to the motivation and morale of the Armed Forces community. Public understanding of the Armed Forces determines the climate into which they return on leaving the Services, as well as the willingness of the taxpayer to adequately finance them. In recent years, a number of studies have identified that public perceptions of Veterans are often negative and do not always reflect the actual position<sup>3</sup>. This included a widespread public perception that Veterans are likely to be physically, mentally or emotionally damaged by their time in the Armed Forces. Other perceptions can include that individuals find it difficult to adjust outside the military, that a significant number of Veterans are homeless or that they struggle to find employment. These perceptions present a potential barrier for Veterans trying to establish careers and new lives in civilian society, as well as potentially affecting recruitment into the Armed Forces.

While these separate studies have provided valuable insights, they have not provided a robust baseline to inform future communication plans and against which the effectiveness of those communications could be measured. The Ministry of Defence and the Forces in Mind Trust, an independent charity funded by the Big Lottery Fund, recently commissioned research by YouGov to understand the UK perception of UK Armed Forces Veterans. The findings show that the UK public generally feel very positive towards Veterans, with 87% saying they have respect for ex-Service people, and recognise they have a lot to offer society after leaving the Armed Forces. Public opinion is divided on whether military service has a positive or negative impact on those returning to civilian

life - 35% believe positive and 39% believe negative. While military service is believed to develop positive attributes such as self-discipline (65% agree), loyalty (53%) and self-reliance (48%), it is also seen by some as resulting in Veterans who are institutionalised (34% agree), psychologically impaired (42%) and less able to build relationships outside the Armed Forces. In terms of Veterans seeking employment, while 59% of the public believe they are employable, they are also seen to struggle with understanding the job market and securing the right job. For those polled by this research, all this added to the view that Veterans were not always able to easily adjust to a civilian environment and that government should do more to support those in need.

This research supports that more could be done to build a more nuanced public understanding of Veterans, especially to dispel popular myths, to improve experiences across all the themes. The UK Government will now develop a communications plan to continue to influence public perceptions about Veterans and use the 2018 baseline to measure impact, with the potential for future measurements to gauge effect.

## Consultation Question

8. How could the misconceptions about Veterans be effectively challenged?  
Please include the relevant key theme if your response is targeted.

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<sup>3</sup> The Veterans' Transition Review and subsequent reports, Lord Ashcroft KCMG PC, 2014-2017, <http://www.veteranstransition.co.uk/reports.html>; A UK Household Survey of the Ex-Service Community, The Royal British Legion, 2014, <https://media.britishlegion.org.uk/Media/2275/2014householdsurveyreport.pdf>



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# Cross-cutting Factor 5: Recognition of Veterans

## 2028 Outcome:

Veterans feel that their service and experience is recognised and valued by society.

## Key Focus Area:

- Recognition for those who have served in the UK Armed Forces, especially for those who have sacrificed the most, so they feel their service was appreciated and their experience is valued.

Everyone who has served in the UK Armed Forces should feel that their service is valued and recognised by the nation they have served. As discussed in Cross-cutting Factor 4 on Perception, the UK public are generally positive towards Veterans. Any recognition must be aware of the public sentiment and not risk creating resentment by favouring one group over another or undermining the widespread respect for our Armed Forces. While it is vital that Veterans feel their service has been valued and appreciated by society, there is a risk that enhanced recognition could prove divisive, risk public resentment, and ultimately be detrimental to Veterans and their families. Any enhancement of recognition must therefore reflect a genuine need, to avoid disrupting the existing balance. The increasing diversity of the Armed Forces and its recruitment from all communities across the UK represents the breadth of society and should be celebrated.

Whilst in the Armed Forces, the Terms and Conditions of Service provide Serving Personnel and their families with *'adequate safeguards, rewards and compensation for those who risk their lives in obedience to military orders derived from the policy of the elected civilian government'*. There are a range of services and support in place to deliver this in areas such as housing, healthcare and education. The honours and awards system recognises service of outstanding merit, participation in specific operations and length of service, usually by the presentation of medals. For the Next of Kin of those who have been killed in action or as a result of terrorist activity, their loss is recognised by the Elizabeth Cross. Those leaving the UK Armed Forces receive a 'Veteran' pin-badge and will soon also receive a Veterans Identification Card.

The Armed Forces Covenant is the nation's recognition of a life-long commitment to the military community, including Veterans. It is a pact involving government, businesses, local authorities, charities and the public. The principles are that no individual should suffer disadvantage due to their service and those who have given the most – the seriously injured and bereaved – should be afforded special consideration. Civilian organisations from government departments employing many thousands to tiny private companies of just a few employees can demonstrate their support by championing the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant.

Public recognition currently includes Armed Forces Day, on the last Saturday of each June, and Remembrance Sunday in November. The Armed Forces are publicly supported by the Royal Family, elected leaders from all parties, religious leaders of all faiths and the overwhelming majority of the media. Private individuals from all backgrounds show support through donating to Service charities.

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## Consultation Questions

9. Do Veterans and their families deserve greater recognition than they receive currently?
- a) Yes  
If yes, how could this be shown?
  - b) No  
If no, why not?
  - c) Don't know
10. Do the families of deceased Service Personnel, whose deaths are attributable to Service, receive appropriate support and recognition?
- a) Yes  
If yes, why?
  - b) No  
If no, why?
  - c) Don't know
11. Should there be recognition for those suffering life-changing injury in the service of their country?
- a) Yes  
If yes, why?
  - b) No  
If no, why?
  - c) Don't know

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# Key Theme 1: Community and relationships

## 2028 Outcome:

Veterans are able to build healthy relationships and integrate into their communities.

## Key Focus Areas:

- Exploring how existing loneliness initiatives can be inclusive of Veterans.
- Encouraging integration into a Veteran's chosen communities, whether retaining a link to the Service or not.

Leaving the Armed Forces, and its associated camaraderie and sense of purpose, can create the challenge of establishing new relationships within civilian communities. This experience will be different for each Veteran. It may be a temporary feeling, as most people will experience at some point in their lives, or more long-term. For some their service will continue to define their identity, while for others their military experience is less important for their civilian life. Some will already have links within communities and others may be starting from scratch. That it is a personal issue and varies greatly between individuals presents a challenge in how to sufficiently support our ex-Service Personnel while respecting their private life.

Evidence on loneliness and social isolation within the Veterans community is limited, making it difficult to assess the size of the issue, but Armed Forces charities report that most of their clients experience it in addition to the need they originally presented with. It is not only experienced by older Veterans, and the causes can be complex and often linked to other issues. Research<sup>4</sup> suggests that loneliness can be triggered by life transitions (for example moving house, having a child) and certain characteristics may leave a person more vulnerable to experiencing it than others (for example, disability or long-term illness).

Recent Royal British Legion research<sup>5</sup> suggested that the main aspects of military life that may exacerbate the risk of a Veteran feeling lonely or socially isolated and hinder integration into a local community are:

- transition out of the Armed Forces;
- divergence of military culture from civilian culture creating a perceived barrier to social connections;
- frequent relocations;
- previous periods of duty away affecting relationships with family and community;
- poor health.

For bereaved families, the experience may be very different, managing the loss of a loved one and potential isolation from the Armed Forces community they were once part of in addition to reintegrating into a society which may not understand their perspective on their loss. For Foreign and Commonwealth families who choose to settle in the UK, they may also face language and cultural barriers. For those caring for Veterans, they may be isolated by their responsibilities. For Veterans of specific operations, they may not feel comfortable sharing their experiences.

<sup>4</sup> *A call to action*, Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness, 2017, [https://www.jocoxloneliness.org/pdf/a\\_call\\_to\\_action.pdf](https://www.jocoxloneliness.org/pdf/a_call_to_action.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> *Loneliness and Social Isolation in the Armed Forces Community*, The Royal British Legion, 2018, <https://media.britishlegion.org.uk/Media/13539/social-isolation-report-full.pdf>

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For those Veterans who wish to sustain social interactions with their former Service, an extensive network of military Associations already exists or, fitness and age permitting, they could join a volunteer Reserve Unit. Many of the thousands of volunteers supporting Service charities also have a link to the Armed Forces, either through their own or a loved one's service. A number of organisations offer befriending or connection services for those feeling lonely. The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust has as one of its core funding themes "measures to integrate military and civilian communities and allow the Armed Forces community to participate as citizens". Within this it has funded many small-scale, locally based projects designed to tackle social isolation and the community integration of Veterans.

Government has recently recognised both the potential impact loneliness can have on a person's physical and mental health, and the importance of building socially and economically stronger, more confident and integrated communities within which people can have meaningful relationships. The UK Government has published an Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper and a Loneliness Strategy (both of which apply only in England), the Scottish Government has published its A Connected Scotland Strategy and the Welsh Government intend to publish a Strategy in 2019. While these Strategies have not contained separate initiatives for Veterans, the policies contained are aimed at all members of society and will cater for ex-members of the UK Armed Forces as any other citizen. Creation of separate support networks solely for Veterans may be counter-intuitive by further embedding disconnection from communities, particularly for those who do not wish to retain a strong link to the Services.

The Ministry of Defence is introducing a Defence Holistic Transition Policy, which will contain life-skills material to help better prepare Service Personnel and their families for civilian life, building on work by the Career Transition Partnership supporting Service Leavers into appropriate employment.

### Consultation Questions

12. Do you specifically include Veterans in your initiatives to tackle loneliness and/or social isolation?
  - a) Yes  
If yes, why?
  - b) No  
If no, why?
13. Where they have not already, how could Veterans be encouraged to integrate into communities?



## Key Theme 2: Employment, education and skills

### 2028 Outcome:

Veterans enter appropriate employment and can continue to enhance their careers throughout their working lives.

### Key Focus Areas:

- Continuing to prepare Service Personnel while in-service for employment outside the military environment and understanding what barriers they may face.
- Supporting those leaving the Armed Forces, by offering services that are flexible to an individual's needs.

For those who left the UK Armed Forces in 2016/17 and used a billable Career Transition Partnership service, 82% were employed, 10% were economically inactive and 9% were unemployed within 6 months of leaving<sup>6</sup>. However, those leaving the UK Armed Forces face distinct challenges compared to their civilian counterparts in entering employment which maximises their skills and experience. After potentially many years of working within the military workplace, Veterans must navigate different recruitment processes and translate their experiences for non-military employers. Further, some employers also have limited understanding of the military workplace which adds to the challenge of gaining employment that maximises their skills, experience and attitudes.

During a career in the UK Armed Forces, Service Personnel have access to multiple education opportunities to build skills for both military service and a future career. The Ministry of Defence is the single largest deliverer of apprenticeships in the UK. Over 90% of non-commissioned recruits are enrolled on an Apprenticeship during their initial training and many go on to undertake apprenticeships at a higher level. The apprenticeships standards on which Service Personnel are trained have been developed in conjunction with industry partners and are therefore directly relevant and transferable to many future employers. As well as military-provided training, when serving military personnel enter their final two years of service they are eligible

for Enhanced Learning Credits to fund education equivalent to Level 3 (e.g. A Levels, Scottish Highers or NVQ level 3) and above to support their transition. Eligible Veterans retain access to this funding for five years after they are discharged. They may also be eligible for the joint Ministry of Defence and Department for Education Funded Further Education and Higher Education scheme, which tops up their Enhanced Learning Credits to fund a degree-level course, capped at £9,000 per year.

The Ministry of Defence recognises the need to enable its people to secure further employment, should they want it, once they leave the Regular Services. As part of the Defence Resettlement policy, the Career Transition Partnership offers everyone who has decided to leave the Armed Forces access to one-to-one guidance, training and employment opportunities for two years following exit, based on an eligibility related to length of service.

Opportunities exist for Veterans<sup>7</sup> to continue their education and development of skills to improve employment prospects. The Education and Training Foundation (funded by the Department for Education), working with the Gatsby Charitable Foundation and the Ministry of Defence, runs the Further Forces programme, which support Service Leavers with relevant technical knowledge, skills and experience, to train as teachers in the further education and skills sector. The National Retraining Scheme, announced in the 2017 Autumn Budget,

<sup>6</sup> Career Transition Partnership ex-Service Personnel employment outcomes statistics, Ministry of Defence, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/675956/20180125\\_-\\_CTP\\_Statistical\\_Bulletin\\_-\\_0.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/675956/20180125_-_CTP_Statistical_Bulletin_-_0.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Reservists may not have the same eligibility to some provisions as former-Regular personnel.

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is an ambitious, far-reaching programme to drive adult learning and retraining. It will aim to give individuals the skills they need to thrive and support employers to adapt as the economy changes. The Department for Education will work with the Ministry of Defence to help them consider how Service Leavers could benefit from the National Retraining Scheme as it develops. Other examples include the Department for Education Veterans Bursary Scheme, the Open University Disabled Veterans Bursary Scheme, the University of Brighton Troops to Teachers scheme and a similar scheme in the University of South Wales. Step in to Health is a similar scheme run by the NHS in England for those seeking employment in health. For some, joining the volunteer Reserves is a way to maintain skills that they may not be able to use directly in their new employment. Any Veterans who become volunteer Reservists are, exceptionally, allowed to earn £20 a week from their reserve service before it affects their entitlement to Jobseeker's Allowance. Additionally, the Department for Work and Pensions exceptionally treats Reservists as actively seeking employment during any week in which they are engaged in their annual continuous training for not less than 3 days. This concession allows their entitlement to Jobseeker's Allowance to carry on throughout the period of annual training.

Former members of the Armed Forces can have many transferable skills, including teamwork, leadership and communication, as well as vocational skills in areas like cyber, engineering, electronics and project management. Access to this unique pool of talent offers many benefits to the UK economy and society and to an organisation looking to strengthen its workforce. With some 5.5 million employers in the UK and only around 15,000 Service leavers each year, employers cannot be expected to understand the intricacies of the military workplace. The onus is on government to assist employers in recognising the value and expertise that Veterans offer, and being sufficiently informed to recognise it. The Career Transition Partnership and Defence Relationship Management have worked with businesses to debunk myths and champion their valuable transferrable skills. The Defence Employer Recognition Scheme plays a major role here, encouraging employers to support the UK's Armed Forces community and inspire others to do the same. Bronze, Silver and Gold awards recognise increasing levels of support for and alignment with the Armed Forces Covenant, with a major theme

being the employment of Veterans. Currently there are 128 Gold, over 1,000 Silver and more than 1,600 Bronze award holders across the UK, and their reach is growing all the time.

### Consultation Questions

14. If you are an employer, what else do you think Veterans need to prepare them for civilian employment?
15. If you are an employer, what do you do to maximise the previous experience of employees like Armed Forces Veterans?
16. What are the potential barriers (systemic, cultural, psychological, educational, experience, etc) to Veterans sustaining employment?

### Case Study: Further Forces programme

The Further Forces programme aims to recruit Service Leavers with relevant technical knowledge, skills and experience to train to teach science, engineering and technology in further education. The Department for Education supports the scheme through its funding of the Education and Training Foundation, which oversees the programme and is supported by the Gatsby Charitable Trust and the Ministry of Defence. It is delivered by the University of Portsmouth and the Association of Colleges, with the University of Brighton, providing subject specialist mentoring for trainees. It aims to recruit and train 110 further education teachers by 2020. There are currently around 100 Service Leavers engaged in the programme and The Department for Education has secured additional resources to expand the programme by up to 100 further places.





## Key Theme 3: Finance and debt

### 2028 Outcome:

Veterans leave the Armed Forces with sufficient financial education, awareness and skills to be financially self-supporting and resilient.

### Key Focus Areas:

- Preparing serving personnel for the financial realities of civilian life.
- Reducing potential financial disadvantage encountered due to Service by Veterans.

The Veterans' Gateway report that finance is continually in the top three areas of need, though frequently in combination with another issue, for those using their service. Members of the Armed Forces community can encounter many of the same financial issues as the general population, for non-Service related reasons, but Service life, often starting in very early adulthood, can leave them uniquely financially unprepared. During service, many costs are subsidised or free, for example housing or dental treatment respectively, and may be taken directly from salary. This means that some people can be unfamiliar with managing their personal financial outgoings compared to their civilian peers who have had years of experience in doing so. Veterans can also face financial disadvantage because of some aspects of serving e.g. time overseas resulting in problems securing a mortgage post-service. For Foreign and Commonwealth personnel, upon discharge from the UK Armed Forces they lose their exemption to UK immigration control and must apply to legally remain in the UK or must return home. Many have difficulty funding either of these and may not have saved towards them during their service.

The Ministry of Defence has a duty to assist its personnel to obtain some financial understanding, acknowledging that the military way of life can contribute to later difficulties in managing personal finances. In addition to the resources available to any UK citizen, such as Citizens Advice, there are several specifically for the Armed Forces community, including Joining Forces Credit Union services for the Armed Forces, Veterans UK run by the Ministry of Defence and charitable support, such as the MoneyForce website. Financial support across these can include signposting, financial

advice (where accredited) and benevolence grants to those experiencing financial hardship. Service Personnel receive financial skills training as part of Defence Resettlement as they are transitioning out of the Armed Forces. They also receive information about benefits and Jobcentre Plus support from the Department for Work and Pensions. For Foreign and Commonwealth personnel, they are specifically given information on how the end of their service will affect their immigration status and the options available to them. Recognising that some have had difficulties with funding the associated costs and to encourage them to better prepare, the Ministry of Defence is exploring the establishment of a savings plan scheme with Joining Forces Credit Unions. More widely, the Ministry of Defence is introducing a Defence Holistic Transition Policy, which will provide life-skills material earlier in an individual's career.

The Armed Forces Covenant tackles any form of financial disadvantage as a result of Service through the Financial Services Steering Group. As part of the Covenant, the Department for Work and Pensions has Armed Forces Champions in each Jobcentre Plus District, who, for example, help staff understand some of the challenges faced by ex-Service Personnel and their families compared to other job-seekers.

Members of the UK Armed Forces receive one of the most generous public sector pension schemes available in the UK, in recognition of the unique service they have provided their country. They are automatically enrolled and unlike almost all other schemes, pay 0% in contributions each month. For some, depending on length of service, their pension will provide an early departure payment or immediate pension. Building on the pension

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calculator and the 'Service to Civvy' pension awareness campaign already in place, work is underway to improve communications of the Armed Forces Pension Schemes. For Veterans, this means simplified literature and websites; simplified annual pension statements; and joint messages and material between Ministry of Defence and Service charities.

The Ministry of Defence introduced the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme in 2005 to reflect the changing conditions of military operations and the continuing moral obligation to ensure that Service Personnel were adequately compensated for deaths, injuries or illnesses caused by service. An independent review in 2016 found the scheme remained fit for purpose and recommended both the uplift of the lump sum tariff awards and a review of the maximum tariff level award for mental health conditions.

### **Consultation Questions**

17. What are the current financial issues faced by Veterans and their families?
18. How can the current financial issues be tackled?
19. What financial information, training or support would Service Personnel benefit from receiving before they left the Armed Forces?



## Key Theme 4: Health and wellbeing

### 2028 Outcome:

All Veterans enjoy a state of positive physical and mental health and wellbeing, enabling them to contribute to wider aspects of society.

### Key Focus Areas:

- Enabling consistency of medical outcomes for Veterans, through a smooth transition of provision from in-Service to post-Service and sharing effective practices amongst clinical and healthcare communities.
- Providing bespoke treatment for those Veterans who have bespoke needs because of their service.
- Targeting any identified health and wellbeing needs of Veterans in comparison to the general population.

A broad body of evidence indicates that Veterans' health and wellbeing is generally aligned with that of the rest of the general population. For most Veterans their health requirements are sufficiently met by existing NHS provision. As for any civilian, experiences of provision can vary between locations because the funding of services has been delegated to local decision makers (Clinical Commissioning Groups in England). Several tailored initiatives are already in place to cater for specific Veteran needs. Medical advances mean that Veterans with Service-attributable physical and/or mental trauma injuries are more likely to live longer than previous generations. This may have an impact on their long-term health and wellbeing needs. Overcoming the stigma associated with seeking help for mental health issues is not unique to Veterans, although it may be more prevalent due to military culture. It is a societal issue and as awareness of mental health and wellbeing matters increases, there may be an overall increase in demand for associated support services. While Health and Wellbeing are presented here as a separate key theme, experiencing poor relationships, financial distress, unemployment or homelessness can also impact upon the health and wellbeing of an individual.

The physical and mental health needs of Serving Personnel are met through an integrated package of services provided by the Ministry of Defence, including primary care, occupational health services, mental health and rehabilitation. Most of their community and secondary care is provided and

paid for by the relevant NHS, except when they are deployed overseas. Service families generally have their medical needs met by the NHS. The Ministry of Defence promotes healthier choices in partnership with local authorities around alcohol and substance misuse, smoking, sexual health, weight management, nutrition and fitness through the Defence People Health and Wellbeing Strategy. This seeks to establish a healthy lifestyle throughout a career enabling an individual a positive start in the next part of their life. Separately there are bespoke policies for those with complex or specific care needs. These policies are routinely developed in collaboration with the National Health Services and charities.

A smooth transition of healthcare provision from in-Service to post-Service is enabled through the Veterans Transition Protocol. This permits Service Leavers with mental health needs to access both the Ministry of Defence's Departments of Community Mental Health for up to six months post discharge, and NHS mental health services in England prior to discharge. The Ministry of Defence is also currently developing a system to transfer medical records between the Defence Joint Medical Group and the UK Health Services.

Much work has been done to improve the transition of Service Personnel from Defence prosthetic services to NHS Centres, with the development of nine centres across England offering additional support to Veterans and with the establishment of the Complex Prosthetics Assessment Clinic to

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provide support to Veterans with particularly complex prosthetic socket needs. LIBOR funding has also been used for an evaluative programme on the use of Direct Skeletal Fixation for those Veterans who are unable to use conventional socket technologies.

Once an individual leaves the Armed Forces, depending on where they choose to live, statutory responsibility for their health and wellbeing reverts to the UK Government Department of Health and Social Care, or the Scottish Health and Social Care Directorate, or the Welsh Department of Health and Social Services, or the Department of Health Northern Ireland, with healthcare being provided by the appropriate NHS. In England, Clinical Commissioning Groups are the statutory NHS bodies responsible for the planning and commissioning of health care services for their local area. This can result in different experiences between local areas as they must assess the needs and specific vulnerabilities of their community, including Veterans, to decide priorities and procure the services to meet these.

National Health Services have embedded the Armed Forces Covenant in their Constitutions, pledging that no Veteran should be disadvantaged when accessing healthcare and that Veterans with Service-attributable conditions should receive priority treatment, subject to the clinical need of all patients. The important philosophy that the NHS will provide treatment based on clinical need is carefully balanced with treatment provided by tailored and specialist clinical pathways for those Veterans with specific service-attributable needs, such as the NHS England's Veterans Mental Health Transition, Intervention and Liaison Service and their Veterans' Mental Health Complex Treatment Service. Other measures already in place include the Ministry of Defence's Veterans and Reserves Mental Health Programme, and the NHS England Veterans Trauma Network. The Veterans Covenant Hospital Alliance continues with its own accreditation programme, working with NHS Improvement to bring together a group of acute NHS hospitals to showcase the best standard of care for Veterans in line with the commitments set out in the Armed Forces Covenant.

Following a successful pilot in the West Midlands, the Military Veteran Aware Accreditation scheme for NHS GP Practices will be rolled out more widely over the next three to five years. The scheme, backed by NHS England and the Royal College of General Practitioners, encourages NHS GPs and practices to become 'Veteran friendly' to improve their understanding of the needs of, identification of and medical care and treatment of Veterans. Veterans with Service-attributable prosthetic needs are supported by the Veterans' Prosthetics Panel, which was established in 2012 in response to Dr Murrison's report "A better deal for military amputees". The Panel provides additional funding to NHS Disablement Services Centres to enable access for those eligible to the latest prosthetics in line with those offered by Defence Medical Rehabilitation Services.

### Consultation Questions

20. What are the shortfalls in current provisions of ongoing rehabilitation, recovery and continuous health care through life for those Veterans with service attributable physical and/or mental illnesses or injuries?
21. Is there evidence that there are further physical and/or mental health and wellbeing issues that affect Veterans more or differently than the general population?
  - a) Yes  
If yes, what is the identified issue and what is the evidence to support that it affects Veterans more than the general population?
  - b) No
  - c) Don't know

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## **Case Study: City of York Integrated Referral Model**

City of York Integrated Referral Model - to support equality of access to services and in particular to support adult social services to adjust their policies to take account of the Covenant.

The Integrated Referral Model identifies benefits of asking the Armed Forces question to recipients of adult social care. This provides identification of the Armed Forces community and provision of data. It enables financial savings, provides better social outcomes and compliance with the Armed Forces Covenant and Care Act.

The framework of assessment has been devised to document covenant implementation. This includes documented consideration of the local Armed Forces community when devising new strategies, revision of policies linked to delivery of services. A questionnaire for each pathway has been produced with the aim of supporting other local authorities to adopt it.



## Key Theme 5: Making a home in civilian society

### 2028 Outcome:

Veterans have a secure place to live either through buying, renting or social housing.

### Key Focus Areas:

- Enabling Service Personnel to find suitable private accommodation.
- Assisting those leaving the Service early to find accommodation.

Veterans are as likely as the general population to own their own home and, as for all civilians, have a range of accommodation opportunities available to them once they leave the UK Armed Forces. The experiences of finding private accommodation may be different depending on the circumstances of the individual, whether they are single, have a family or are leaving unexpectedly early. Members of the Armed Forces are offered a package of transition support as they leave the military. The public perception is that there is a significant problem with Veteran homelessness. However, there is no evidence to suggest they are overrepresented in the homeless population<sup>8</sup> and the 2017/18 Greater London Authority's CHAIN report showed that 3% of rough sleepers were UK Veterans, at the time of the snapshot. Those individuals who are homeless are likely to have complex and interconnected needs. The UK Government is committed to ending rough sleeping and reducing homelessness across society not just for Veterans, and is clear that no one should be without a roof over their head.

During service, an individual is eligible to rent accommodation from the Ministry of Defence at a subsidised cost. While many Service Personnel own property, those who live solely in Service accommodation can be unfamiliar with the private renting or house buying market, particularly young, single personnel. The Joint Service Housing Advice Office provides housing advice to all Service Personnel throughout an individual's career by hosting briefings, which may also include regional experts

such as service charities. The Forces Help to Buy Scheme pilot has allowed Service Personnel to borrow up to half their salary (to a maximum of £25,000) to buy their first home, move to another or in exceptional circumstances extend an existing property. Since its inception, this has enabled 14,300 Service Personnel to get on to the property ladder<sup>9</sup>. Priority is also given to members of the Armed Forces for government-funded shared ownership schemes and they retain their priority status for up to 24 months after service. Service Personnel receive accommodation information as part of Defence Resettlement as they are transitioning out of the Armed Forces. The Ministry of Defence is introducing a Defence Holistic Transition Policy, which will provide more material about accommodation options for those leaving the services and a process for assessing whether an individual needs to be proactively referred to a local housing authority. As mentioned in the Finance and debt key theme, Foreign and Commonwealth personnel, lose their exemption to UK immigration control upon discharge from the UK Armed Forces and must apply to legally remain in the UK or must return home. This Holistic Transition Policy will provide tailored information to this cohort and encourage them to prepare the paperwork prior to discharge.

Once an individual has left the Armed Forces, the Veterans UK agency helpline provides housing and welfare advice to Veterans in need. In 2017, the Veterans' Gateway was launched, using £2M of Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust money, to provide a single point of contact to help Veterans

8 Jones A., Quilgars D., O'Malley L., Rhodes D., Bevan M. and Pleace N. Meeting the Housing and Support Needs of Single Veterans in Great Britain Centre for Housing Policy, University of York 2014 <http://www.fim-trust.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Stollveteransreportweb.pdf>

9 Forces Help to Buy Scheme quarterly statistics, Ministry of Defence, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/701878/FHTB\\_Official\\_Statistics\\_Q4\\_201718.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/701878/FHTB_Official_Statistics_Q4_201718.pdf)

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and their families to find sources of support or information, including on seeking accommodation. The Veterans Housing Advice Office, as part of Veterans' Gateway, provides specialist housing advice to those who need it.

Service Leavers and existing Veterans may seek accommodation in the private rented sector or apply for social housing in the same ways as any other citizen. Housing policy is devolved and is the responsibility of the UK Government in England and devolved government. Social housing services are provided by local authorities and housing associations.

In England, the main route to access social housing is via the local authority waiting list. Local authorities are responsible for allocating social housing which is prioritised for those in housing need by virtue of the statutory reasonable preference categories, including people who are homeless, those who live in overcrowded housing and those with medical and welfare needs, including those with disabilities. In line with the Armed Forces Covenant, Veterans who have 'reasonable preference' and more urgent housing needs must be given 'additional preference' - high priority - for social housing. This requirement also applies to bereaved spouses of Armed Forces personnel and seriously injured or disabled Reservists. These are the only groups whose priority is based on prior employment compared to other citizens. These groups also have an exemption from proving a local connection to qualify for social housing for five years after they have left the Services. This recognises that they may have moved frequently during their career and be new to the area they choose to settle in.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is leading the UK Government's commitment to halve rough sleeping in England by 2022 and end it by 2027. The Rough Sleeping and Homelessness Reduction Taskforce was established to support the production and delivery of a truly cross-Government rough sleeping strategy involving all departments with a responsibility for those sleeping rough. The Rough Sleeping Strategy was published in August 2018. During its development, the Taskforce agreed that there is a lack of data to establish the number of people sleeping rough, not just Veterans. Data can be difficult to collect because the rough sleeping community can be transient and unwilling to engage with those trying to collect data, while other individuals may be "sofa-surfing" or sleeping in squats and so are excluded. After consulting with homelessness charities, other organisations, local

authorities and their IT providers, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government set up a specific homelessness data collection system, Homeless-Case Level Information Collection. This includes new fields to monitor local authority case activity under the Homelessness Reduction Act (2017), including information about support needs, such as whether an individual was formerly in the Armed Forces. Once finalised, this data should help to better understand the number of Veterans presenting to local authorities as homeless and inform the current public perceptions of the extent of homelessness within the Veterans community.

The Homelessness Reduction Act, introduced in April 2017, placed legal responsibility on local housing authorities to ensure that more people are helped at an earlier stage. The Act moved local authorities from crisis intervention to prevention, by requiring them to take reasonable steps to try and prevent and/ or relieve a person's homelessness irrespective of priority need. From October 2018, the Duty to Refer came into force. This requires specified public authorities to refer any service user they believe to be homeless or threatened with homelessness in the next 56 days to a local authority of their choice for assistance. When the local authority receives the referral, they should contact the individual to make an assessment. Under this new duty the Ministry of Defence must refer those about to leave the Armed Forces where they believe the individual may become homeless on discharge, subject to eligibility.

### Consultation Questions

22. Do Service Personnel and their families need to be better prepared to find accommodation on leaving the Armed Forces?
  - a) Yes  
If yes, why?
  - b) No  
If no, why not?
  - c) Don't know
23. What more could be done to specifically assist those leaving the Armed Forces earlier than planned to find suitable housing?





## Key Theme 6: Veterans and the law

### 2028 Outcome:

Veterans leave the Armed Forces with the resilience and awareness to remain law-abiding civilians.

### Key Focus Areas:

- Building on provisions in-service and during transition to lower the risk that future Veterans will engage with the criminal justice system.
- Expanding the good practice initiatives that work collaboratively across sectors to support Veterans and reduce the likelihood of reoffending.

The majority of Veterans are law abiding citizens. However, a small minority do enter into the criminal justice system, with around 3% of those entering the prison system for the first time, and answering the relevant question, declaring themselves to be former members of the Armed Forces<sup>10</sup>. These individuals are often among the most vulnerable, with complex, interconnected needs.

Provisions exist for those serving or transitioning out of the Armed Forces who have allegedly committed crimes whilst serving. Pastoral care and legal advice is offered to those under investigation, which continues if a case moves to prosecution. The new Defence Holistic Transition Policy will include services that support those who are most vulnerable during transition into civilian life.

The UK Government's specific focus on Veterans addresses the recommendations from the 2014 'Phillips' Review<sup>11</sup>, which looked at Veterans in the criminal justice system in 2014. The Ministry of Justice has committed to improving upon each of the 15 recommendations, including improving data recording and developing pathways specific to Veterans. HM Prisons and Probation Service has introduced measures in England and Wales that routinely capture information on those entering custody or on community sentences. Better data is now available to identify former Service Personnel in need of support. In 2015, the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust awarded 14 grants, totalling £4.6 million, to support projects that aimed to reduce Veterans reoffending. The Fund Trust have

recently decided that their future funding priority will be to support existing Veterans in the criminal justice system.

For Veterans already in the criminal justice system, the integration of other provisions, such as healthcare, in with criminal justice services has proved successful. NHS England commissioned and published the 'Gate to Gate' report, which considered a range of issues including working in partnership with charities in the engagement of Veterans with their families. This has included: Nottingham Healthcare Trust working in partnership with a military charity covering 6 path finders for Veterans in the criminal justice system; investment in London for joint enhanced training between Health and Liaison and Diversion and other criminal justice services for Veterans (police, prisons, probation etc.); the Devon and Cornwall Liaison and Diversion programme; HMP Hewell West Midlands training for Veterans with the Veterans Trauma centre; and London Prisons Interventions with Veterans UK and Kings College. One of the most successful projects is Project Nova, which works mainly in the East of England with Veterans who are arrested and are in custody. It supports Veterans who have been arrested and enter police custody, including those referred by specialist police teams, or other statutory organisations, because they are at risk of arrest. It organises support, working with their charity partners, on a range of issues such as accommodation; employment, education and training; drugs and alcohol; finances and debt; mental health for the individual and their family.

<sup>10</sup> Offender management statistics quarterly, January to March 2018, Ministry of Justice, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-january-to-march-2018>

<sup>11</sup> Former Members of the Armed Forces and the Criminal Justice System, Stephen Phillips QC, 2014, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/389964/former-members-of-the-armed-forces-and-the-criminal-justice-system.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/389964/former-members-of-the-armed-forces-and-the-criminal-justice-system.pdf)



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Collaboration between the public and charitable sector has also proved effective, with initiatives across the UK providing excellent examples of best practice. The Scottish Veterans Prison In-Reach Group, established in 2010, brings together Scottish Prison Service staff and charity sector representation (such as Poppy Scotland and Combat Stress) to promote the interests and welfare of ex-Service Personnel in custody and through Veteran association groups. The group gathers and provides information to Veterans and Veterans' families. It also pursues relevant research to inform policy and practice. The Group aims to ensure that imprisoned ex-Service Personnel benefit from the full range of services and interventions currently provided by the Scottish Prison Service and partner agencies. The Welsh Government has developed a Veterans Pathfinder – a 'whole system' approach – that combines public and voluntary sector resources to deliver more effective services for ex-Service Personnel in the criminal justice system. The Veterans Pathfinder will provide more effective services and reduce re-offending, including investigating barriers to non-disclosure and a "Veterans Question" at point of custody. In Wales, the Supporting the Transition of Military Personnel project adopts a whole system approach to supporting Veterans who come into contact with the criminal justice system in Wales. In the past year it has implemented its ex-Service Personnel whole system pathway at five Welsh prisons. The project team worked closely with all prisons in Wales to scope their existing processes of identification, support and referrals of ex-Service Personnel, and develop a shared, consistent approach. The pathway includes identification, recording and signposting stages with consideration of transferring ex-Service Personnel where appropriate to HMP Parc and HMP Berwyn's dedicated ex-Service Personnel units.

For the few Veterans that it does affect, investigation into historical allegations of wrong-doing in the course of their Service is particularly difficult. A dedicated team has been established within the Ministry of Defence to consider whether serving and former personnel are receiving the legal protection and certainty that they deserve. This team is currently working to identify options regarding legal protections as well as the legal and welfare support for all Veterans in the case that they find themselves prosecuted for incidents that occurred on any historical operations.

### Consultation Question

24. What more can be done to support Veterans in the criminal justice system, including reducing likelihood of reoffending?

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## Summary of Consultation questions

1. If you have experience of a successful multi-organisational collaboration that we could potentially learn from, please provide details including what sector it was in, who the recipients were, which organisations were involved, what was successful about this collaboration, how you were involved, and contact details of one of the organisations (if possible).
2. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being not at all, 5 being extremely effective), how effective is the UK Government in delivering support to Veterans to enable them to be valued, contributing and supported? What are your reasons for this score?
3. What other mechanism could be effectively used to coordinate provision?
4. What barriers does your organisation currently face on sharing existing data on Veterans?
5. What more could be done to improve data collection?
6. What gaps do you perceive there are in the currently available data on Veterans and their families?
7. What more can be done to further encourage declaration and/or identification of service at the earliest opportunity to enable better data on the numbers of Veterans in the criminal justice system?
8. How could the misconceptions about Veterans be effectively challenged?
9. Do Veterans and their families deserve greater recognition than they receive currently?
10. Do the families of deceased Service Personnel, whose deaths are attributable to Service, receive appropriate support and recognition?
11. Should there be recognition for those suffering life-changing injury in the service of their country?
12. Do you specifically include Veterans in your initiatives to tackle loneliness and/or social isolation?
13. Where they have not already, how could Veterans be encouraged to integrate into communities?
14. If you are an employer, what else do you think Veterans need to prepare them for civilian employment?
15. If you are an employer, what do you do to maximise the previous experience of employees like Armed Forces Veterans?
16. What are the potential barriers (systemic, cultural, psychological, educational, experience, etc) to Veterans sustaining employment?
17. What are the current financial issues faced by Veterans and their families?
18. How can the current financial issues be tackled?
19. What financial information, training or support would Service Personnel benefit from receiving before they left the Armed Forces?
20. What are the shortfalls in current provisions of ongoing rehabilitation, recovery and continuous health care through life for those Veterans with service attributable physical and/or mental illnesses or injuries?
21. Is there evidence that there are further physical and/or mental health and wellbeing issues that affect Veterans more or differently than the general population?
22. Do Service Personnel and their families need to be better prepared to find accommodation on leaving the Armed Forces?

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## Summary of Consultation questions

23. What more could be done to specifically assist those leaving the Armed Forces earlier than planned to find suitable housing?
24. What more can be done to support Veterans in the criminal justice system, including reducing likelihood of reoffending?

## Contributors

We would like to thank all the people and organisations who have contributed to the Strategy for our Veterans and this Consultation Paper to date. These include:

The Veterans Strategy Steering Group and Working Group, comprising of UK government, Scottish Government and Welsh Government colleagues.

The Veterans Strategy Charities Group:

- ABF The Soldiers' Charity
- Army Families Federation
- Cobseo – The Confederation of Service Charities
- Combat Stress
- Forces in Mind Trust
- Help for Heroes
- Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund
- Royal Air Force Families Federation
- SSAFA – The Armed Forces charity
- The Naval Families Federation
- The Royal British Legion
- The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity
- Veterans Scotland

Cobseo Cluster Leads and members of Cobseo who contributed separately from the Charities Group.

Special thanks to Meri Mayhew, supported by the Cobseo Executive Board and generously funded by the Forces in Mind Trust.

The Veterans Breakfast Club and the small sample of Veterans it gathered for the Veterans Reference Group.

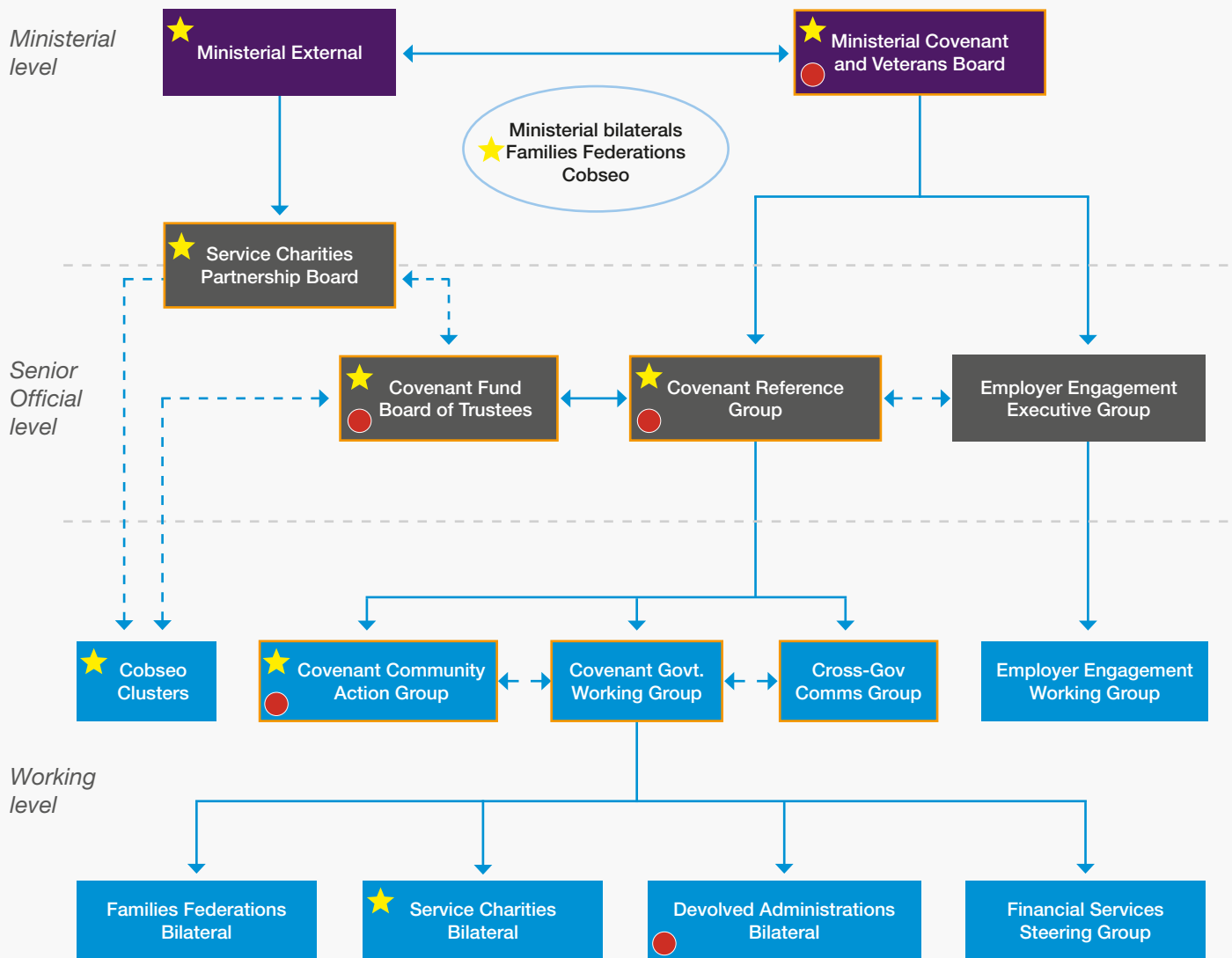
The Veterans Strategy Academic Group, a virtual network encompassing academic colleagues from a range of disciplines.

We look forward to continuing to work with them and more organisations over the coming years.

# Annex A – Glossary

Term	Definition
Armed Forces Champions	An Armed Forces Champion raises the profiles and specific needs of the Armed Forces community within their organisation. Exact roles will differ between organisations.
Armed Forces Community	The Armed Forces community includes Serving Personnel (both Regular and Reserve), their families and Veterans.
Armed Forces Covenant	The Armed Forces Covenant, which was enshrined in law in the Armed Forces Act (2011), has at its core the principles that Service Personnel, Veterans, and their families are not disadvantaged by their Service and that special provision is made for those who have sacrificed the most, including the injured and the bereaved.
Cobseo – The Confederation of Service Charities	Cobseo provides a single point of contact for interaction with Government, including local government and the Devolved Administrations; with the Royal Household; with the Private Sector; and, of course, with other members of the Armed Forces Community. <a href="https://www.cobseo.org.uk/about-us/">https://www.cobseo.org.uk/about-us/</a>
Defence Holistic Transition Policy	Transition support currently provided by the MOD largely focuses on employment support which is delivered by the Career Transition Partnership (CTP), so called 'resettlement'. The new Defence Holistic Transition Policy is far wider than just finding employment, relating to the holistic and significant life changing processes that affect both the Service Person and their immediate family through the entire time they are within or connected to the Armed Forces, through to discharge and beyond, which need to be appropriately addressed to ensure successful transition into civilian life.
In-Service	The time during which an individual is a serving member of the UK Armed Forces; they are not a Veteran at this point.
Local Government Association	The LGA are the national voice of local government, working with councils to support, promote and improve local government.
Military Associations	In this document, this term refers to any association with a military connection, for example an association linked to a particular military Regiment.
Ministerial Covenant and Veterans Board	The Ministerial Covenant and Veterans Board agrees priorities and coordinates activities for the UK Government, working with the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and government in Northern Ireland to enable the best outcomes for Veterans wherever they are in the UK.
Post-Service	The time after an individual has left the UK Armed Forces, when they have become a Veteran.
Reserved matters	Reserved matters are decisions that are still taken by the UK Parliament at Westminster even though they have effect in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland or the regions of England.
Service Leaver	Service Leavers are Serving Personnel who are planning to leave.
Statutory	Relating to the law.
Transition	The process of leaving the UK Armed Forces to return to civilian life.
Veteran Ex-Service Person	Government defines a Veteran as anyone who has served for at least one day in Her Majesty's Armed Forces (Regular or Reserve), or Merchant Mariners who have seen duty on legally defined military operations. Veterans have already left the UK Armed Forces. Some non-governmental organisations have other definitions, though these differences are minor.
Veterans' Gateway	Veterans' Gateway provides a single point of contact for Veterans seeking advice and support, run by a consortium of organisations and Armed Forces charities funded by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust.

# Annex B – Governance of the Armed Forces Covenant







CCS1118886970

ISBN 978-1-5286-0857-2