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# THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT ANNUAL REPORT 2019

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Presented to Parliament pursuant to section 2 of the Armed Forces Act 2011



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## **The Armed Forces Covenant**

An Enduring Covenant Between  
The People of the United Kingdom  
Her Majesty's Government

– and –

All those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces of the Crown  
and their Families

The first duty of Government is the defence of the realm. Our Armed Forces fulfil that responsibility on behalf of the Government, sacrificing some civilian freedoms, facing danger and, sometimes, suffering serious injury or death as a result of their duty. Families also play a vital role in supporting the operational effectiveness of our armed forces. In return, the whole nation has a moral obligation to the members of the Naval Service, the Army and the Royal Air Force, together with their families.

They deserve our respect and support, and fair treatment.

Those who serve in the armed forces, whether Regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved.

This obligation involves the whole of society: it includes voluntary and charitable bodies, private organisations, and the actions of individuals in supporting the armed forces. Recognising those who have performed military duty unites the country and demonstrates the value of their contribution. This has no greater expression than in upholding this Covenant.



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**ARMED FORCES**

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**COVENANT**

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# FOREWORD

## By the Rt. Hon. Ben Wallace MP, Secretary of State for Defence

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As Her Majesty The Queen made clear on the occasion of the State Opening of Parliament, it is vital we continue to invest in our Armed Forces and honour the Armed Forces Covenant. I am proud to be able to lay my first Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report before Parliament.

Our Armed Forces protect our nation with unwavering honour, courage and commitment. We owe them a vast debt of gratitude and have a duty to ensure that those who serve, or who have served in our Armed Forces, and their families, suffer no disadvantage in comparison to other citizens as a result of their service to our country.

Recognising that veterans are an asset to our nation, the Strategy for our Veterans sets out 11 outcomes that could improve their lives and commits to achieving them by 2028. This UK-wide strategy was the first of its kind, produced through an impressive collaboration of efforts across Whitehall and Devolved Governments, and with Service charities. Over the past year, each home nation has conducted its own consultation to inform how the strategy is implemented by each government. The results are being reviewed and will be published shortly.

There have been significant developments in veteran provision in the past year, including the launching of the Veterans Trauma Network Wales in October 2019, which provides a service to ensure that patients can be directed to the right provider.

The NHS has also published a Personalised care for veterans in England guide, and has continued engagement with the Care Quality Commission to ensure the Commission covers military and veterans as part of the GP accreditation framework.<sup>1</sup> As at the end of September 2019, there were 375 GP practices (including the 90 who joined in 2018) accredited as part of the scheme.<sup>2</sup>

Also, the Armed Forces Covenant: Local Grants programme in Northern Ireland has awarded an impressive £133,903 to projects this financial year so far, with two further decision rounds to come before it ends.

It is encouraging to see that the signing of the Armed Forces Covenant has continued to grow exponentially, with over 1,000 new signings and well over 4,000 total signings, with the 5,000th anticipated in 2020. Alongside this, there has been a record number of employers receiving awards this year as part of the Employer Recognition Scheme for their outstanding support to the Armed Forces community, including our Reserves and veterans, and their families.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) was also successful this year in securing funding to bolster the role of its JobcentrePlus Armed Forces Champions across the country and thus will be able to triple the resources it provides to support the Armed Forces community.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.england.nhs.uk/personalisedcare/upc/ipc-for-veterans/personalised-care-for-veterans/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.rcgp.org.uk/clinical-and-research/resources/a-to-z-clinical-resources/Veteran-friendly-gp-practices.aspx>

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I am also pleased to see the steps being taken to recognise that modern families increasingly involve two working parents and the efforts to ease some of the challenges that having a family member in the Armed Forces can present. A new approach of Flexible Service has been introduced this year, offering Regular Service personnel greater flexible working arrangements to help balance their careers with their personal responsibilities and changing circumstances.

Efforts to support Service children have also been a focus, with the Scottish Service Children's Strategy Group developing a wide range of guidance materials over the past year to support the education needs of children from Armed Forces families in Scotland. The Department for Education (in collaboration with the MOD's Directorate for Children and Young People) also introduced the 'Service child' flag to all three of the annual school censuses in England, which will ultimately allow greater understanding of the effects of school moves on Service children.

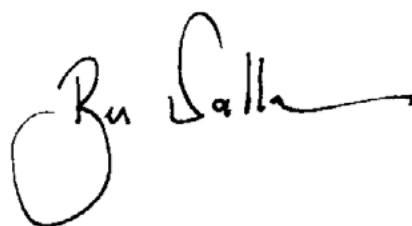
A Future Accommodation Model pilot was launched in September, with two further pilots scheduled for 2020, to gather evidence to refine policy around Service accommodation. Recognising the diverse make-up of modern Service families, the aim of this new approach is to offer a greater choice that reflects individual family circumstances. Alongside Service Family Accommodation, the Future Accommodation Model will include a wider variety of accommodation options to be offered to Service personnel, including support to home ownership. Home ownership is further supported by the extension of the Forces Help to Buy Scheme, which allows Service Personnel to borrow up to 50% of their annual salary (up to a maximum of £25,000) interest free to purchase their own property.

With greater choice comes new challenges, as increased dispersion will make the importance of strengthening and developing community integration, and promoting understanding of the Armed Forces, more relevant than ever. While I am proud to report on progress made this year, we must acknowledge that there is more to be done. As outlined in the Conservative Party manifesto and Queens Speech, we will seek to further incorporate the Armed Forces Covenant into law and over the course of this Parliament will continue to remove disadvantage faced by our Armed Forces Personnel and Veterans.

Next year I look forward to updating on the impact of our new holistic approach to transition and the publication of a new, ambitious families strategy. The UK Armed Forces Families Strategy 2016 runs through to 2020, and the first step in developing the new strategy will be to evaluate the impact of the current one, to understand where progress has been made for families and where further work is needed.

The Office for Veterans' Affairs has recently been set up in Cabinet Office to pull together support for veterans across all parts of government, building on the Strategy for our Veterans. This is the first time that veterans' affairs have been overseen by a dedicated ministerial team in the Cabinet Office and it is a real opportunity to ensure the whole of government is delivering the outcomes of the strategy.

I would like to thank not only my colleagues across Government, the Devolved Governments, and local authorities, but also those at every level and from every sector who are continuing to drive forward the work of the Covenant in support of our Armed Forces community. It is a collaborative effort with input from service providers and professionals from a diverse array of backgrounds and over 400 local authority signatories. I look forward to continuing to work together to bring about positive, lasting change to support our Armed Forces community.







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# INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

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## Function of this report

This report is intended under the Armed Forces Act 2011 to ensure that Parliament, on behalf of the people of the UK, can understand how the Covenant continues to be delivered. It is also made available to the public, so it is structured to make it as usable as possible for its two key audiences:

- the Armed Forces community, comprising service personnel (Regular and Reserve), their families and veterans, and the families of both groups
- those who work with and support the Armed Forces community, including service charities, local authorities, private sector Covenant signatories, and members of the public who support the Armed Forces

Since the Covenant was introduced in 2011, there have been myriad new initiatives by central and devolved governments, and local authorities, in partnership with charities and the private sector across the UK. These continue to run and deliver results for the Armed Forces community. But to include every one of them in every report would lead to documents too long and unwieldy to highlight to parliamentarians, beneficiaries and supporters the new initiatives that have been delivered in the reporting period. Therefore, this report focuses on new initiatives and progress made, leaving projects in the pipeline to be included in future reports. The overall outcomes being delivered for the Armed Forces community are summarised in the data tables in the Annex to this report, showing the cumulative effect of initiatives since 2011.

Each of the sections is structured in the same way. First is a narrative account of progress made in the last reporting period under the control of the UK Government (reserved issues and those pertaining to England, or England and Wales in the case of justice). Then there is detail of progress made in the devolved space in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, where appropriate. At the end, there is a summary of metrics, if applicable, giving the narrative behind the full metrics contained in the Annex.

## Period covered by this report

This report covers the period between 1 October 2018 (the point at which contributions for the 2018 report closed) and 30 September 2019. The major achievements later in 2019, such as the introduction of Joint Service Publication 100 “Defence Holistic Transition Policy”, Defence Transition Services and the launch of the Office for Veterans Affairs, will be covered in full in the 2020 report.

## Delivery of the Covenant across the UK

The Armed Forces Covenant continues to be a key element of government policy across all areas, including those reserved for the UK Government (such as defence policy and immigration) and devolved (such as housing, education and healthcare). The Government remains firmly committed to the delivery of the Armed Forces Covenant, which is matched by equal determination and focus by the Scottish and Welsh Governments. The Covenant continues to enjoy broad cross-party support across the three sitting legislatures of the UK.

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Although this report is laid before Parliament by the Secretary of State for Defence, he consults with other government departments and Devolved Administrations. It is important to emphasise that many of the areas of policy are devolved, so although every delivery body shares a common aim – the delivery of the Covenant as stated on the opening page of this report – the most effective way of reaching it may vary between regions and nations of the UK. The focus should be on what is achieved for the Armed Forces community.

### **The Armed Forces Covenant in Northern Ireland**

Northern Ireland continues to build upon its bespoke but successful arrangements to ensure that its application of the Armed Forces Covenant achieves comparable outputs to the rest of the UK. This takes place in the temporary absence of the Stormont Executive, during which the Northern Ireland Office has assumed a temporarily greater involvement in ensuring liaison between institutions such as the Veterans Support Office, and the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association, and central government departments such as the Ministry of Defence, in the delivery of the Covenant on the ground. In the clear majority of cases, veterans, Service personnel and their families enjoy the full spectrum of services in the areas of health, education and housing. Equally, Northern Ireland enjoys its own arrangements that facilitate engagement with the Armed Forces by businesses and institutions.

### **UK's exit from the European Union**

As for government departments across the UK, there has been substantial work carried out during this period by the MOD to ensure that it can continue to deliver its key tasks after Britain's exit from the EU. The MOD will continue to have Service personnel and their families in EU member states after the UK leaves the EU. The MOD is committed to maintaining its European defence bases and minimising any disruption to its people. The MOD has set up a team to consider the impact of Brexit on Defence people to ensure they do not face any direct disadvantage as a result of Brexit. The team has worked closely with different organisations across Government to understand and mitigate potential impacts and minimise any disruption to Defence people as the UK leaves the EU. This has included making sure that facilities are available for personnel currently based in the EU to purchase International Driving Permits and representing the interests of EU nationals when arrangements were made for the EU Settlement Scheme. The MOD has also issued regular communications to Defence people so that they know how Brexit will affect them – covering issues as wide-ranging as changes to their own passport validity and pet passports – and letting them know the arrangements to ensure they are prepared.



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## Summary of delivery in this reporting period

### Healthcare

In financial year 2018/19, 4,561 referrals were received for the Veterans' Mental Health Transition, Intervention and Liaison Service (TILS) and the Veterans' Mental Health Complex Treatment Service (CTS), which provide specialist NHS care pathways just for veterans. The cumulative referrals as at 30 September was 9,864. An additional £10 million was received in April 2019 as part of the NHS Long Term Plan to invest in these services to increase geographic coverage and service provision.

As at September 2019, additional 285 GP practices in England were accredited as 'veteran friendly', increasing the total accreditations to 375.

NHS England and NHS Improvement, together with the MOD, launched the Armed Forces personnel in transition, Integrated Personal Commissioning for Veterans Framework in March 2019.

In the 2018 Autumn Budget, £10 million was announced to be distributed by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust to support veterans' mental health and wellbeing needs.

The MOD joined the cross-government National Suicide Prevention Strategy Delivery Group in early 2019 to share best practice and ensure a joined-up and co-ordinated response towards deliberate self-harm and suicide prevention.

The Scottish Government, in partnership with NHS Ayrshire and Arran, continue to provide funding of £1.4 million per year until 2021 to Combat Stress for specialist mental health services. The Scottish Government and six local health boards also continue to jointly fund the Veterans First Point Network which offers a one-stop-shop for Veterans no matter their need.

The Scottish Government has strengthened its network of Armed Forces and Veterans Champions within NHS boards to improve the support available and help deliver the Veterans Commissioner's report recommendations.

The Veterans Trauma Network expanded into Wales in October 2019 to further increase provision for veterans with Service attributable physical health conditions.

NHS Wales granted additional funding to Valley Dental' practice in RAF Valley – to provide additional NHS dental places. With the addition of the Children's Dental Practice at Holyhead Hospital, this has provided enough provision for all families stationed at RAF Valley.

### Education

Service children were formally identified as an underrepresented group in Higher Education by the Office for Students.

The Service Children's Progression Alliance (SCiP) has established its UK-wide network, with a further six research-practice hubs launched in 2019.

The Service child' Flag Indicator in England was included on all three termly school censuses to help better identify and track Service children moves.

In 2019/20, over £23.1 million of Service Pupil Premium funding is being distributed to over 10,000 schools across England, to benefit over 77,000 Service children.

Department for Education has provided statistics that show the post-16 and post-18 education, and employment and training destinations of young people who had 'Service child status at the end of secondary school.

The Scottish Service Children's Strategy Group (SSCSG) has developed a range of guidance materials for children's services professionals, parents and carers during 2019 and hosted a best practice event in May 2019.

The Welsh Government is continuing the Supporting Service Children Wales Fund by providing an extra £250,000 for the academic year 2019/20.

The Welsh Government contributed a total of £200,442 in financial year 2018/19 towards the Armed Forces Bereavement Scholarship and the Publicly Funded Further Education/Higher Education schemes.

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Members of the SSCE Cymru Network produced the Service Children Funding Guidance for schools in Wales document to provide information and advice on the funding available to schools with Service children.

### **Accommodation**

In financial year 2018/19, £116 million was invested in improving and modernising Service Family Accommodation (SFA) – a 40% increase on the previous year. A further £123 million is being invested in financial year 2019/20.

A Future Accommodation Model pilot was launched at HMNB Clyde in September 2019.

As at 30 September 2019, the Forces Help to Buy scheme has helped around 19,400 Service personnel purchase their own property at a total cost of £293 million (an average of £15,000 per claim) since its introduction. The scheme has been extended until December 2022.

Following a change in policy in April 2019 to permit cohabitation in SFA, 250 Service personnel in long-term relationships or with residential responsibility for a child have been housed in surplus SFA, and a further 109 are waiting to move in.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) launched a consultation on new statutory guidance for local authorities designed to improve how members of the Armed Forces community are allocated social housing in January 2019.

In March 2019, MHCLG allocated an additional £1 million of bespoke funding to support vulnerable veterans who are or are at risk of becoming homeless.

The Scottish Government published refreshed Local Housing Strategy guidance that encourages local authorities to fully consider the housing requirements of the Armed Forces community in September 2019.

The Scottish Government awarded East Lothian Council over £350,000 to deliver six homes for veterans in Cockenzie. These homes are expected to be completed by the end of 2019.

In 2018/19, 75 new referrals were received for the Military Matters project in Scotland.

The Welsh Government commissioned an independent assessment of priority need in Wales to determine if amendments are required to support its aim of ensuring that veterans can access the support and services they need.

### **Inquests and judicial engagement**

Defence Inquests Unit attended 41 inquests between 1 September 2018 and 30 September 2019.

A new dedicated unit, the Northern Ireland Legacy Inquest team, was set up in 2019 to deal with the extensive Northern Ireland Legacy Inquest programme.

A 12-week public consultation was launched on 22 July 2019 on proposed legal protections measures for those who have served in operations outside the UK.

### **Family life**

Flexible Service became law on 1 April 2019, allowing Regular Service personnel to ask to temporarily work part-time and/or restrict their separation from their home base, subject to operational need.

The Covenant Fund Trust's Removing Barriers to Family Life grants programme was created to support the 2018–20 Families Action Plan.

The Forces Families Jobs website was launched by the Families Federations in September 2019.

A question on loneliness is now included in FAMCAS (first iteration was FAMCAS19) and is recommended for inclusion in AFCAS20.



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## Transition and through-life support

The Office for Veterans' Affairs was created to work with departments to coordinate and drive government policy on veterans' welfare, spanning mental and physical health, education, and employment.

The Strategy for our Veterans was jointly published by the UK, Scottish and Welsh Governments on 14 November 2018 and each home nation has subsequently conducted its own consultation to inform how they will implement the strategy.

A tri-Service non-UK nationals working group has been established and is meeting quarterly to take forward the recommendations of the review of provision.

The Veterans' ReGroup pathfinder service for veterans in the Criminal Justice System was launched in the Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire areas in August 2019.

HM Revenue and Customs launched an internship programme for Service personnel in transition in August 2019.

Skills Development Scotland established a network of veterans champions across its five regional areas to support Service leavers and veterans along their employment pathway.

The Welsh Government provided £500,000 to continue funding for Armed Forces Liaison Officers from 2019 to 2021.

The Welsh Government conducted a scoping exercise from October 2018 to February 2019 to identify gaps in the current service provision for veterans and their families in line with the themes of the Strategy for our Veterans.

In supporting the Transition of Military Personnel project, the Welsh Government has implemented its whole system pathway for veterans at the five Welsh prisons.

Funding for projects in Northern Ireland through the Armed Forces Covenant: Local Grants programme more than tripled to £221,410 in financial year 2018/19, compared with £67,630 in 2017/18. Already, £133,903 has been awarded in the first two rounds for financial year 2019/20.

## Business and the community

There were 1,000 new signings of the Armed Forces Covenant in 2019, taking the total to over 4,000 as at 30 September 2019.

The Defence Discount Service saw further growth in 2019 with over 500,000 members and 12,000 businesses signed up as at September 2019.

A record number of employers received Employer Recognition Service gold award (100 in total – an increase of 96% from the 51 awarded in 2018).

The MOD published the 'Welcome to England' guide to add to those already produced in Wales and Scotland.

The national Covenant in the Community conference was held in April and brought together Covenant practitioners and stakeholders from around the country.

The Forces in Mind Trust published the Benefit not Burden report in Spring 2019, following a review of the Covenant in business.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has secured funding to bolster the role of its Armed Forces Champions across the country and will be able to triple the resources dedicated to supporting the Armed Forces community.

The DWP, MOD and HMRC refreshed the advice on how eligible spouses and civil partners who accompanied their Service partner on postings outside the UK can apply for National Insurance credits.

The Officers' Association, together with BITC Cymru, delivered a workshop for businesses looking to attract veterans into roles within their organisations in January 2019.

The Welsh Government, in collaboration with members of the Armed Forces Expert Group, developed its Employment Pathway. Working in collaboration with BITC Cymru, the Welsh Government developed its Employers' Toolkit. Both these documents were launched in December 2018.

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## Summary of new commitments made in this report for delivery beyond 2019

### Healthcare

Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) is working across the UK, with the NHS and Service charities, to redefine what 'priority treatment' means, to make it more meaningful and future-proof for veterans and clinicians.

DHSC and the Department for Education have identified a number of trailblazer sites to test out proposals from the green paper on the mental health of children and young people. The trailblazers will go operational by the end of 2019.

Defence Statistics will publish the first report for all causes of death (2001–2018) in Spring 2020 as part of a large surveillance study, the 'Veterans Cohort Study' into causes of death for UK Service personnel.

NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with the Defence Medical Services on a scoping exercise to determine how many veterans might benefit from the services at the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre.

The Government has committed funding to the development of an NHS England led National Rehabilitation Centre to be co-located with the DMRC at the Stanford Hall site, to provide cutting-edge rehabilitation services to the public in England. The facility is scheduled to be operational in 2022.

The veteran-friendly GP practice accreditation is being rolled out across England over the next three years to help ensure practices are equipped to best care for veterans and their families as part of the commitments of the NHS Long Term Plan.

NHS England and NHS Improvement are progressing arrangements to commission a High Impact Mental Health Service (HIS) for veterans who are in a mental health crisis and need urgent and emergency care and treatment. This will commence with pathfinder services launching in April 2020.

NHS England and NHS Improvement will launch an engagement in early 2020 to better understand and explore the health needs of Armed Forces families with findings helping to inform the commissioning of a support service for this patient group.

The regional Veterans ReGroup programme will be delivered for a period of 18 months, with key insight and outcomes informing future commissioning arrangements for an England-wide service.

DHSC, NHS England and NHS Improvement have committed to introducing a 28 day standard cancer wait time by 2020 and spending an additional £300 million on diagnostics.

The Welsh Government has committed to funding free swimming for Service personnel and veterans until 2021.

### Education

The Service Children Progression Alliance will launch an interactive online mapping and targeting tool in January 2020. The alliance is also developing a Service children's support framework for schools, and a suite of evidence-based resources for practitioners.

The Scottish Government's funded early learning and childcare hours that all 3 and 4 year olds, and some 2 year olds, in Scotland are entitled to is set to almost double from 600 to 1,140 hours from August 2020.

The Scottish Government and Scottish Funding Council are continuing to engage with stakeholders to explore the barriers to Further and Higher Education that may exist for children of Service families.

By June 2020, the MOD policy for the Professional and Personal Development Plan as part of the Through Life Development Policy will be incorporated as guidance in JSP 822 in support of building a culture of personal development.

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## **Accommodation**

The MOD will issue a new Service Families Accommodation Customer Charter, with increased focus on responsibilities and outcomes, in December 2019.

The programme to deliver 917 modern new-build SFA at Salisbury Plain as part of the Army Basing Programme will be completed in July 2020.

In financial year 2019/20, £123 million will be invested to further improve and modernise SFA, including receipts from over 1,400 sub-let properties.

In early 2020, the Scottish Government will work with the MOD, local authorities and the third sector to develop and implement a pathway to prevent homelessness for people who have served in the Armed Forces.

In April 2020, the independent evaluation report commissioned by the Welsh Government to determine if amendment is required in the assessment of priority need in Wales to ensure that veterans are able to access support and services will report its findings.

## **Family life**

The findings of the review and recommendations on how to improve the coherence of current MOD policies and those of other government departments to ensure they reflect the needs of families with additional needs will be reported at the 2020 Forces Additional Needs and Disability Forum Conference.

## **Transition and through-life support**

The Government will publish a consultation response for the Strategy for our Veterans shortly.

The Secretary of State for Defence and other ministerial colleagues are considering how to take the issue of War Widows Pension forward.

The MOD is working to improve its understanding of non-UK nationals and the implications that cultural differences have for the type of support MOD should offer. The MOD and Home Office continue to discuss the challenges faced by the non-UK community on the wider issue of immigration policy.

Business in the Community Cymru/RBL Veteran-Friendly Employers Group will be organising its own networking and workshop sessions for employers and veteran jobseekers in Autumn 2019.

## **Business and the community**

The MOD will look to produce new tools and guidance, will arrange a National Covenant in the Community Conference, and will attend many local events arranged by Covenant partners.

The MOD will seek to improve the business section of the Covenant website to appeal to businesses and organisations who have signed or who want to support the Covenant continue to be developed.

The MOD will seek to address the key findings of the Forces in Mind Trust review of the Covenant in Business report throughout 2020.

The MOD's Defence Relationship Management team intends to utilise the Measurement of Effectiveness records to further develop regional performance measures and targets.



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# OBSERVATIONS

## by external members of the Covenant Reference Group

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### Naval Families Federation, Army Families Federation, RAF Families Federation

We are pleased to see that many of the issues that the Families Federations have raised over the past year have been highlighted in this report. While we welcome the discussion about these issues, we are still yet to see a real translation from discussion to delivery in many areas. We will continue to work closely with the MOD and government departments to ensure that Armed Forces families are supported.

#### Healthcare

The impact of mobility on accessing healthcare and mental health provision for families continues to be an issue raised with the Families Federations and is additionally evidenced in the Tri-Service Families Continuous Attitude Survey 2019, with a decrease in the number of families able to access medical, dental and mental health support without difficulty. It was somewhat disappointing that this was not addressed more fully in this year's report. However, we do appreciate our productive working relationship with the NHS, allowing us to raise our concerns at the appropriate level.

As a direct result of those discussions, we welcome the introduction of the UK Wide Services Families Health Working Group and the forthcoming NHS England and NHS Improvement consultation, which will consider the provision of healthcare to Service families. We look forward to the recommendations following collection of this much-needed evidence.

It is widely acknowledged that child and adolescent mental health services are under huge pressure, and many children and young people are facing delays in getting the care they need. We were therefore delighted to note that the Aneurin Bevan

University Health Board now offers Service children priority access to NHS mental health services as part of their commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant and hope that other health boards and trusts may consider adopting the same policy.

It is key that the healthcare system has a better understanding of the Armed Forces community, including families. We would therefore like to see the Veteran Covenant Healthcare Alliance and the veteran-friendly GP accreditation scheme expanded to include serving families, with the use of read codes to identify family members.

With a significant Service presence in Scotland, we are aware of families facing issues when moving between Scotland and other postings and are therefore pleased to have been invited to join the Scottish Government's Armed Forces Personnel and Veterans Health Strategic Oversight Group.

#### Education

**Childcare:** Childcare remains a significant issue for our families. It impacts upon our families in a number of ways, including spousal employment, and is often more complicated because of the nature of Service life, which can mean living away from extended family or a lack of choice due to location. It also represents a retention issue, especially for dual-serving couples. After several years of seemingly little progress in this area, we are pleased to see that work has commenced to better understand the issues and consider ways to resolve them. We await the results of the Andrew Selous report and the work undertaken on childcare and encourage the production of specific and tangible progress on this issue during 2020.

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**School admissions:** We have continued to see a rise in queries about school admissions, with mobile families citing the difficulties they can face due to navigating between different local authorities, with differing interpretations of the Covenant and the School Admissions Code. In addition, families can experience difficulties gaining school places on their final move, with some local authorities not considering them under the remit of the Armed Forces Covenant, as they are moving into their own home.

We have highlighted previously that we would welcome changes to the School Admissions Code to create a fairer system for Service children, with those children that have had frequent moves in a short period of time identified as vulnerable and given priority. While we welcome the ongoing work between the MOD and the Department of Education in this area, this is an issue that we have raised in our observations since 2016 and we would seek reassurance that specific changes will shortly be introduced.

**Special educational needs:** We know that Service children with special educational needs and disabilities can often face additional challenges because they are part of the Armed Forces community. The Families Federations have submitted evidence on this issue to the Department for Education. We therefore welcome the implementation of an agreement by the local authorities within the MOD's Local Authority Partnership to offer enhanced support to these families. It is hoped that this will be extended to include all local authorities in the future, so that children and young people within mobile Service families can experience better continuity of care and support.

## **Accommodation**

**Future Accommodation Model:** The Future Accommodation Model represents a potentially fundamental change in the way of living for Service families and it is crucial that the pilot fully tests all elements to ensure that the MOD is provided with robust evidence to determine whether the programme should be rolled out. Clear and timely communication with families is also vital, to ensure that they are informed and aware of the challenges and benefits of the programme, and we fully support the Defence Select Committee's recommendation that families are consulted throughout the process.

**Dispersed families:** Deployment and training are not the only reasons why Service families can be separated. Research by the Naval and RAF Families Federations has highlighted the issues faced by dispersed or unaccompanied families. The proposed Future Accommodation Model programme could also lead to an increase in families living apart or away from their unit.

In a recent RAF Families Federation dispersed families' survey, 43% of RAF spouses/partners stated that they could not access facilities on any RAF station. We therefore urge the MOD to ensure that appropriate support is provided to all dispersed families, including the consideration of access to the local unit or station. Given the complexities of the issues faced by dispersed families, and the expectation that this population may increase in the future, we request that this is introduced as a standalone heading within the 2020 Annual Report.

**Service Family Accommodation (SFA):** The report cites work to raise standards of SFA. While we have seen a decrease in our enquiries regarding repairs and maintenance, there remain difficulties with complex issues, which require significant communication between DIO and Amey Plc and often require multiple trade appointments and follow-on works.

We welcome the changes to the eligibility of SFA to include couples who are in long-term relationships. This is a positive move forward and the policy regarding co-habitation now reflects modern society. We would ask the MOD to consider inviting cohabiting couples to participate in FAMCAS.

**Single Living Accommodation (SLA):** The Naval and RAF Families Federations have previously highlighted that Service personnel frequently raise their dissatisfaction with SLA and the resulting morale issues. We note the changes to how the budget is managed but would like to have seen an update about the current condition of this section of the Defence estate and how the single Services are ensuring vital improvements are made.

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**Separated and divorced spouses:** In the 2018 report, we welcomed the consultation on the issue of divorced or separated spouses being recognised as having a local connection when applying for social housing. The consultation closed in March and we have been awaiting an update on its findings.

### **Family life**

Spousal employment remains a key topic for Service families and the Families Federations are delighted to have launched the tri-Service Forces Families Jobs spousal employment and training platform, welcoming support from Defence Relationship Management.

### **Through-life support**

**Non-UK personnel:** The Federations have continued to highlight the unique challenges faced by non-UK personnel and their families, with nearly 4,000 enquiries received by the Army Families Federation in the past three years. While we welcome the discussion at senior level about these issues, we have raised issues relating to non-UK personnel and their families in the report since 2011 and remain concerned that this has not yet translated into impact on the ground. We would welcome a shift of focus from discussion to delivery.

We continue to receive reports that non-UK personnel are recruited without a full understanding of the visa requirements and costs. In particular, it is important to ensure that the Minimum Income Requirement is fully understood by personnel and their families when moving to the UK to join our Armed Forces. This was also highlighted by the Defence Select Committee response to 2018's Armed Forces Covenant Report, and we welcome their recommendation that the MOD should implement an improved communication policy to serving and potential non-UK personnel, and look forward to seeing further progression on this. It is key that non-UK personnel and their families are supported in all stages – at recruitment, in service and on transition.

### **Transition and through-life support**

Successful transition of Service families into civilian life is key for both the Armed Forces and civilian communities. We were disappointed at the significant delay in the publication of the new transition policy under JSP100 but are pleased to note that it has now been published. However, we remain concerned that there is little reference in this year's Report to families as part of the policy. We will observe with interest how the Defence Transition Services will support both Service personnel and their families.

### **Business and the community**

We are acutely aware that the funding made available under the Armed Forces Covenant Fund to support local authorities will be coming to an end within the next 18 months. We would like clarification on how this might affect the Covenant Project Officer posts, which provide much-needed support to the Armed Forces community within local authorities.

### **Conclusion**

As the Defence Select Committee report recognised, there is still some further work needed to ensure that the Armed Forces Covenant continues to be meaningful for Service families. The Families Federations will continue to work with the MOD to ensure that the full impact of Service life on families is understood and recognised.



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## COBSEO – The Confederation of Service Charities

### Introduction

Delivery of the Covenant is a partnership between the Government, the third sector (in particular Service charities) and the private sector. The report summarises well what the Government is doing, but falls short in its current format in two regards. First, the scale of the third sector's contribution to delivering effect at the heart of this partnership is not clear. We record elsewhere in our observations the open and transparent relationship that exists and welcome the increasing commitment of the Government to veterans and their families through the establishment of the Office for Veteran Affairs and the imminent implementation of the Strategy for our Veterans. Yet, the recent DSC Report on Sector Trends estimates a total annual expenditure by Service charities at approximately £940 million and, accordingly, we take the opportunity in our comments that follow to highlight further the work of the Sector and draw attention to those areas where more remains to be done.

Second, the report is superficial in addressing progress and does not adequately highlight areas where improvement is still needed. We look for further review and evaluation in subsequent reports.

### Sustainability and collaboration

The work being undertaken by Service charities to improve the delivery of their services and ensure consistency and sustainability in the longer term continues, but there has been no let-up in the financial challenge faced. Members continue to see rising levels of need as regulatory costs increase, fundraising challenges remain, and public trust in charities continues to be fragile.

In these circumstances, cooperation and collaboration between the Government and the Service charities is more important than ever. The sector serves the Armed Forces community and stands alongside the Government in its endeavours but remains independent of it. There are well-established mechanisms to deliver cooperation including attendance now from government departments at Cobseo Clusters. We would wish to see these mechanisms sustained and developed both nationally and at a local level, not least as the Cluster structure evolves, with two additional groupings being considered: a female veterans' forum and a children's forum. In parallel,

the success of the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust programmes in shaping delivery of services to meet targeted outcomes needs to be tempered by increasing focus on sustaining those aspects that have worked well. The creation of veterans champions in Local Authorities has seen significant steps forward in the coordination of service delivery on the ground. Measures to ensure the sustainability of the benefits afforded by the programme need to be put in place and will require key stakeholders to plan long term.

### Office for Veterans Affairs and the Strategy for our Veterans

We welcome the establishment of the Office for Veteran's Affairs (OVA) at the heart of the Government. It is a bold move that we hope will enable the Cabinet Office to deliver more effective policy coordination and hold government departments to account for the way in which they support the Armed Forces community through the Covenant. The performance of departments since the creation of the Covenant has been variable and the Ministerial Covenant and Veteran's Board (MCVB) and the Covenant Reference Group (CRG) have had limited success in ensuring coherent cross-government delivery. The OVA will also have a central role in the development and subsequent execution of the Implementation Plan of the Strategy for our Veterans. This important initiative and the OVA's effectiveness in delivery will be a litmus test for the way the Office is or isn't able to make a tangible difference. We welcomed the MOD's consultation programme seeking stakeholders' views on the implementation of the Strategy for our Veterans, which brought unparalleled responses from the Service charity sector, the Armed Forces community and other key stakeholders. Engagement with the Government over the drafting of the implementation plan has also been comprehensive, with each Cobseo Cluster meeting with representatives from key government departments. We look forward to continuing to contribute to the development of the plan and subsequent publication of a targeted, costed and prioritised plan that takes account of government shortfalls and the priorities identified during the ongoing engagement with the sector.



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## Perception

The issue of the nation's perception of veterans and the effects of Service has been a subject of discussion at the MCVB and the CRG since 2017. Studies by Lord Ashcroft as the Veterans' Tsar, supported by more recent surveys by YouGov, indicate that the majority of the public believe that veterans will be damaged in body or mind by their Service. The national perception of veterans underpins a great deal of Covenant provision, but particularly affects employment. Furthermore, statistics indicate that efforts to address the issue are not succeeding. Lord Ashcroft called for concerted action back in 2017, and the MCVB agreed that a cross-government campaign was required which the 'Board' would own. However, while there has been a considerable amount of talk, very little activity seems to have taken place, and there is no evidence at all that the MCVB has gripped the issue. We would suggest that the OVA, sitting at the centre of the government, is the logical place for responsibility for a perceptions campaign to sit, and would encourage engagement as a priority.

## Special consideration

The report acknowledges the complexity of War Widows Pensions and the case for reinstatement of pensions for those who remarried or cohabited before 1 April 2015, but after nearly five years of consideration, an equitable way forward has yet to be agreed. The House of Commons Defence Committee has recently urged immediate engagement with HM Treasury to rectify what they described as "a grotesque injustice" and we strongly support their call. Upholding the Covenant's pledge to provide special consideration for the bereaved is paramount, and waiting yet another year for this to be resolved is unacceptable. In the interim, we welcome the growing inclusion of the bereaved in Covenant delivery; however, more needs to be done to raise the profile of, and increase support for, bereaved spouses and families.

## Non-UK nationals

This year we have welcomed the increased focus from the MOD and others on non-UK nationals, including the establishment of the tri-Service Non-UK Working Group. We are pleased to see progress delivered against some of the recommendations from the Forces in Mind Trust-sponsored Cobseo report into the needs of Commonwealth personnel. Yet, a number of the concerns raised last year are still to be resolved and little in real terms has changed for

many non-UK Service personnel and their families on the ground. Some individuals are still being recruited without fully understanding the impact of the UK immigration rules on their families. Charities continue to see veterans denied access to statutory support, housing or employment because of their immigration status. Current in-Service guidance and policy lacks depth and clarity, particularly for those families posted overseas, and immigration advice during transition – particularly for those medically discharging – is piecemeal. Spouses on overseas assignments continue to be disadvantaged: those who wish to work cannot do so if they don't have a National Insurance number, and those who are granted citizenship are still only getting one-year passports. The process to extend a visa while overseas is unnecessarily complicated, leading to additional expense being incurred by units and families. The wider issues of the minimum income requirement and visa fees for Service personnel on discharge, highlighted in the House of Commons Defence Committee's response to 2018 Report, remain unresolved and deeply unsatisfactory.

## Healthcare

**DMRC Stanford Hall:** We welcome confirmation in the report of both the ongoing work to identify niche capabilities at Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre (DMRC) at Stanford Hall that veterans with injuries attributable to Service would benefit from, and the specific scoping study to consider widening access to DMRC to include referral of veterans who meet the Complex Prosthetics Assessment Clinic referral criteria. We urge a speedy resolution of these ongoing discussions, and the widening of access where appropriate to injured veterans with ongoing complex rehabilitation needs.

**Personalised care for veterans (Incl. IPC4V):** We welcome the launch of IPC4V, which saw close and sustained engagement from Help for Heroes and Blesma in its evolution, and the wider work to adopt the same personalised care approach for veterans with longstanding health conditions. Further work, though, is needed to ensure that: caregivers and GPs are fully aware of the support available; review procedures reflect veterans' changing needs; and steps are in place to evaluate the improvements made to the quality of life of those affected. In this regard, the programme is starting to deliver tangible results beyond purely health-related benefits, with veteran care providers actively working to use the pathway, and the first veterans now moving into

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supported residential care. The Royal Star and Garter has its first resident through the pathway, and others are in active discussions with care providers.

**High Impact Service:** We welcome the development of a High Impact mental health service to sit alongside the Veterans' Mental Health Transition, Intervention and Liaison Service (TILS) and the Veterans' Mental Health Complex Treatment Service (CTS). We strongly encourage its rapid introduction in England and, in due course, through similar programmes in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It would also be helpful to understand which recommendations made by the House of Commons Defence Committee inquiry into military mental health last year are being adopted by the Government and whether they have been impactful.

**Suicide:** In addition to the research summarised in the report, and now under way, at the beginning of the reporting period, SSAFA launched a new specialist support service for Service families affected by suicide. This dedicated support group is for families and friends who are trying to come to terms with the suicide of a loved one.

**Visual impairment and sight loss:** Visual impairment, sight loss and associated older veteran issues are not as readily considered, accommodated or prioritised as other physical or mental health issues. Blind Veterans UK lead on behalf of the sector, and key themes to be considered and addressed further in partnership with the Government include:

- the additional implications for veterans with visual impairment / sight loss on other physical or mental health issues
- greater awareness and research into mild traumatic brain injury
- providing improved access to accommodation for older and visually impaired veterans, which is becoming increasingly difficult and creating further complications
- loneliness and social isolation for older and visually impaired veterans
- employment and education opportunities for working-age veterans with visual impairment, particularly in the long term

## **Accommodation**

**No Homeless Veterans Campaign:** The campaign, launched recently, is the result of significant collaboration between the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, and partners in the Charity Sector. It supports local authorities in meeting the requirements laid out in the Homeless Reduction Act and illustrates well what can be achieved in partnership.

## **Education**

**Additional evidence:** The impact of the Service Children's Progression Alliance (SCiP) is set out clearly in the report. However, there remains a need for better large-scale, systemic, coordinated collection of data on Service children – including consistency between national, devolved and local authorities. This data is fundamental to ensuring that we understand the complex experiences of Service children, and the impacts on their education progression, and are able to target limited resources and develop effective activity.

**Teacher training:** Kingston University and Reading Force, a small Service charity, are campaigning to see an appreciation of the particular needs and values of Service children embedded in the curriculum for teacher training. Such a move will help to equip teachers to support Service children as they transition between schools, and to be aware of ways they can support Service children more generally. We support them.

**Pupil premium:** The report records the significant reach of Service Pupil Premium but a number of schools appear to be losing their Service Pupil Champions, which has an impact on the children. This may well be because the Pupil Premium is being used to meet wider budgetary pressures and there is a need for schools to be more accountable for the spending of the Service Pupil Premium.

## **Inquests and judicial engagement**

### **The War Pensions and Armed Forces**

**Compensation Chamber (WPAFCC):** The WPAFCC deals with some of the most vulnerable members of the Armed Forces community. Those who come before the tribunals in all three administrations (England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland) deserve a prompt and efficient service. Unfortunately, there is a significant backlog of cases and appeals, and as a consequence of incomplete casework or a lack of support,

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adjournments are too frequent. Agreed key performance indicators are hardly ever achieved. While remedial action is being taken by the administrations, supported by Veterans UK and the Service charity sector, more focus and urgency is needed. In previous reports we have highlighted that those making appeals to the WPAFCC do so through the MOD, the respondent organisation. In all other cases the appeal is submitted directly to the appropriate tribunal – this is known as direct lodgement. The absence of direct lodgement causes delay and gives the impression that the WPAFCC is not independent. We have seen direct lodgement introduced successfully in Scotland and Northern Ireland, and while there is a commitment to follow suit in England and Wales, there has been no progress for yet another year. We would strongly support early inclusion in the reform programme and hope that we will not be making the same observation in next year's report.

**Northern Ireland legacy inquests:** The report summarises the significant work that has been done to date to support veterans and Service personnel affected by legacy inquests and implies that all is well – it is not. We remain concerned that despite ongoing discussion, three specific issues have yet to be resolved satisfactorily: the funding needed to meet additional veteran welfare and pastoral support, including the necessity to bridge the gap between statutory provision and immediate need for those with mental health challenges, has yet to be identified; further work is needed to ensure the veteran community is fully aware of the inquest programme and of Veterans UK's status as the Government's lead agency; and a process is needed to engage Regimental Associations at the same time as witnesses to ensure support from the outset.

### **Transition and through-life support**

**Caseworking:** Initiatives to improve case management for those seeking medical support are covered in chapter 2 of the report. Concurrently, the Service charity sector's casework management system, which is used annually by approximately 130 charities to almonise approximately 30,000 welfare grants to beneficiaries, is being renewed at a cost of approximately £2 million from Libor, Cobseo and MOD funds. The project, led by SSAFA and supported by the other eight major case working organisations, will continue to underpin the sector's through-life welfare support for veterans and their families.

**Holistic transition:** We welcome the additional caseworking capacity that the Defence Transition Services will bring in respect of the small minority of vulnerable Service personnel in transition. Concurrently, SSAFA's two-year trial in Catterick, mentoring non-wounded, injured or sick Service leavers will now be sustained and expanded, not least on the basis that prevention is the best form of cure. Both initiatives will sit alongside the significant work of the Career Transition Partnership and the Service charities, which already help significant numbers of Service personnel and veterans into employment each year.

**Social care:** We noted last year that social care was not addressed in the report. This year, with provision from the Service and general social care sector limited, and the availability of statutory funding under significant pressure, there is again little in the report to reflect this. Yet the need for social care continues to grow and is increasingly complex, compounded by social isolation and loneliness. This represents a significant omission.

### **Conclusion**

This year's Covenant Annual Report reflects the significant efforts made to deliver on the Covenant, although it is thin on evaluation of progress and the work that remains to be done. Furthermore, a number of our members have commented that the report leans heavily towards the serving community rather than the totality of the Armed Forces community, which also includes veterans and their families. Our observations have attempted to redress the balance in these two important areas while also highlighting the central role of the Service charities sector. Presumably, this year is the last time that the Covenant Annual Report will be published without an accompanying report on the implementation of the Strategy for our Veterans. We look forward to clarification of how the mechanisms and reporting procedures for the Covenant and the strategy will be integrated. In doing so, we will be working to ensure that the essential cooperation between the Government and the Confederation is sustained and enhanced.

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## The Royal British Legion

The Royal British Legion welcomes this year's Covenant Annual Report and the updates it contains. We were pleased this year to be able to respond comprehensively to the Strategy for our Veterans. This has the potential to identify important priorities for the future support of the veteran community, and we look forward to the production of an implementation plan and the opportunity to engage with it. We also look forward to working closely with the new Office for Veterans' Affairs (OVA). Improved government coordination, clear lines of responsibility and accountability, and greater priority given to the issues for which OVA is responsible are to be welcomed.

While not mentioned in the report, the further progress this year on securing a question in the next census on the Armed Forces community is welcome. Following the Legion's Count Them In campaign and the commitment made by National Records of Scotland, we greatly welcomed the announcement in the Cabinet Office's white paper on the census in December 2018. We were also encouraged by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency's continued engagement with the issue during 2019, so that a UK-wide picture can be achieved.

We note that several of the observations we have made are on the same matters as our comments in last year's report. We would therefore be keen to see greater progress over the next year as the Strategy for our Veterans is implemented and OVA begins operations.

### Healthcare

We welcome the recognition in the report of concerns about the implementation of the policy of priority treatment, in particular lack of awareness and understanding, inconsistency of and inability to measure implementation, and a lack of clarity about the interpretation of the policy by government, clinicians and the NHS. We welcome steps to address these, although we would not wish to see any existing entitlement by veterans consequently reduced. We also urge that any steps to improve the policy are applied consistently, in coordination with devolved administrations.

Last year's report had a commitment for the DHSC, Public Health England and NHS England to develop Covenant awareness in alcohol misuse services for veterans and feed into the 2019 Alcohol Strategy. We would welcome an update and progress on this pledge.

We note the reference to the previous Quinquennial Review of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme. The next review is due in 2020 and so we look forward to confirmation that this will be the case and early engagement with it.

### Education

We are disappointed that the Educational Support Fund is closing and are concerned about the potential impact on schools of this loss of funding. On the Service Pupil Premium (SPP), we look forward to the publication of updated guidelines on its usage and would like to see an assessment of its effectiveness and impact, along with consideration of extending its eligibility to early years and 16 to 18 year-olds.

### Accommodation

At the beginning of the year we were glad to be able to respond to the MHCLG consultation on statutory guidance for local authorities on access to social housing for members of the Armed Forces community. The proposals included the Legion's recommendation to remove the local connection test for divorced and separated spouses accessing housing support. We are, however, disappointed that the outcome of the consultation and the new guidance are yet to be published – we first raised this issue nearly four years ago and a commitment to consult was originally given in the 2017 Covenant Annual Report. As part of the MHCLG's call for evidence on the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, the Legion has made a series of recommendations that we believe will improve and support its operation, which we hope will be given consideration.

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## **Inquests and judicial engagement**

The Legion has expressed concerns about proposals in recent years that risk reducing access to justice for injured and bereaved veterans and their families, particularly in the context of ‘combat compensation’ and the civil litigation longstop. While these are not mentioned in the report, we reiterate the principles that should underlie consideration of these issues:

- injured Service personnel and bereaved families must be able to access adequate compensation, at least equivalent to civilian awards, and judgements must continue to provide the ability for lessons to be learnt
- fair access to justice must be maintained for Service personnel and their families, including independent assessment, legal support and a fair and transparent appeals process
- no new scheme must impact on current Armed Forces Compensation Scheme awards and eligibility

## **Family life**

We are glad to see the continued focus on addressing loneliness and social isolation in the Armed Forces community. In particular, we welcome the inclusion of relevant questions in the 2019 Service Families Continuous Attitudes Survey and the 2020 Armed Forces Continuous Attitudes Survey, both recommendations made by the Legion in our 2018 report on the topic.

## **Transition and through-life support**

We welcome the introduction of the new Defence Transition Services as an important step in improving support, particularly to those assessed as at greater risk of vulnerability to issues when leaving Service.

We continue to maintain that military compensation for social care means tests should be disregarded in Northern Ireland, as is now the case in the rest of the UK where this disadvantage has been addressed. We note that military compensation will be disregarded under Universal Credit (UC), but with full implementation of UC currently scheduled for the end of 2023, we would in the interim like to see a full disregard for War Pensioners claiming Employment Support Allowance. We would also like to see all remaining compensation disregard discrepancies addressed.

During 2019, the Legion has campaigned for the removal of the visa fees for Indefinite Leave to Remain faced by non-UK Service personnel and their families who wish to stay in the country they have served after leaving the Armed Forces. There has been widespread cross-party support for this proposal, and while it is disappointing that there has not yet been progress, we hope that the OVA will be able to use its new responsibilities to coordinate within government to address this injustice. This recommendation has the backing of the Service charity sector, and we also stand with partner organisations in supporting other improvements to issues facing non-UK personnel and their families, such as the minimum income threshold.

We are concerned that there is little in the report on veterans and the criminal justice system, in particular progress against the outstanding recommendations of the Phillips Review.

## **Business and the community**

We welcome the continuing increase in Covenant signings by organisations highlighted in the Report, but also the recognition that signing is just the first step, and that support for signatories to implement Covenant commitments is needed. This should be seen by organisations in its broadest sense – not just as employers but also as providers of services, given that more than half of veterans are not of working age.

There continue to be good examples of excellent practice by local authorities in delivering on Covenant commitments. However, we continue to be concerned about lack of progress in establishing basic Covenant infrastructure and that the self-assessment tool highlighted in last year’s report has not yet been introduced. The Report highlights success that has been achieved through Armed Forces Covenant Local Grants but concerns also remain about the sustainability of projects beyond this funding, and that the commitment to Covenant delivery should not be solely dependent on the injection of additional external resources.





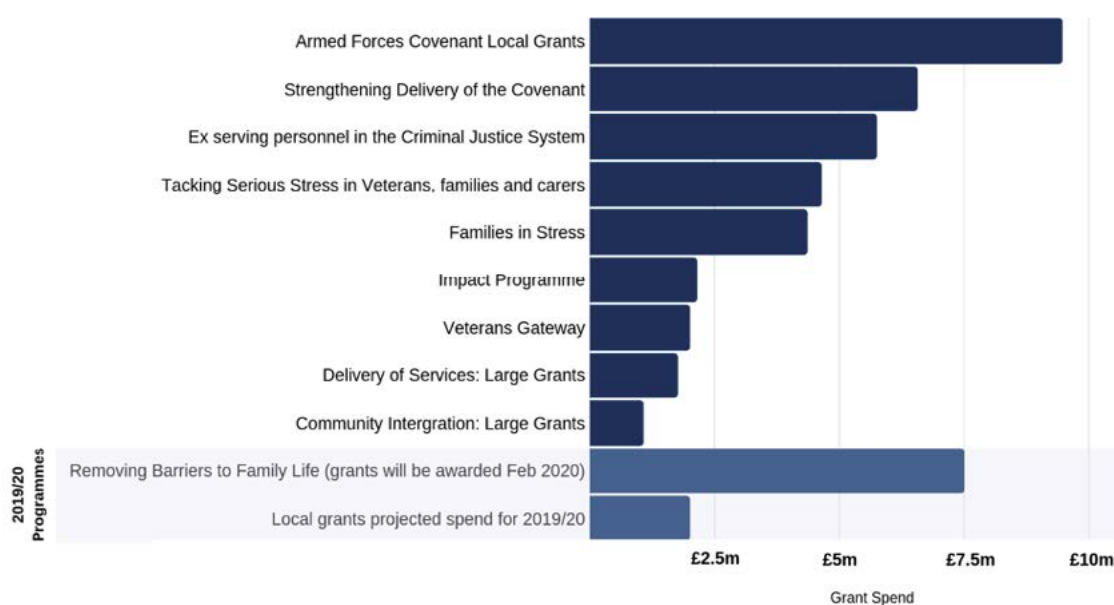
# DELIVERY

## by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund trust

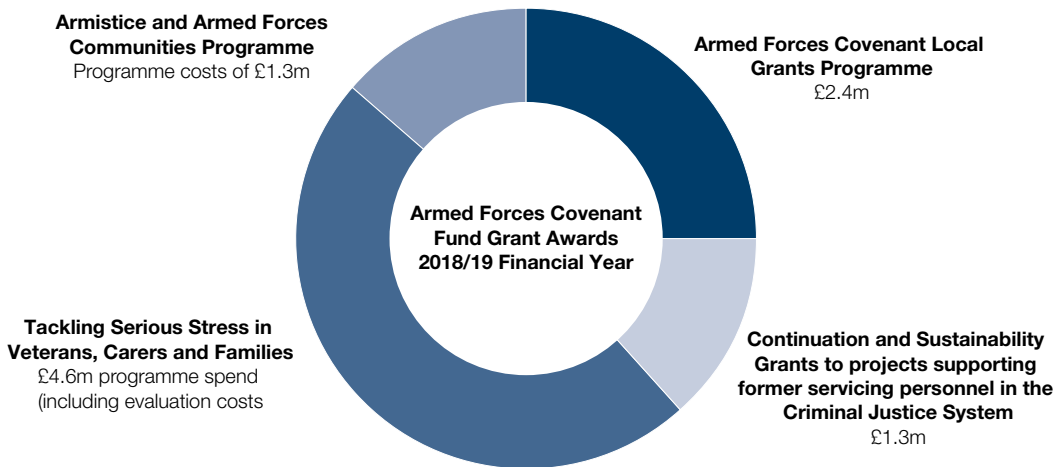
The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust is an independent body that makes grants that support the Armed Forces community. It looks after a substantial volume of grants, through both Covenant Fund Programmes and other funds that it manages, including LIBOR grants awarded by HM Treasury and the Aged Veterans Fund. To measure effectiveness, new ways of evidencing impact will be rolled out from December 2019. The total amount of grants in grant management is currently £946 million.

The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust has delivered four major funding programmes in its first year since achieving independence from the MOD in 2018: New Ways to Tackle Serious Stress in Veterans, Carers and Families; Continuation and Sustainability grants (awarded to projects supporting former Service personnel in the Criminal Justice System); the Armistice and Armed Forces Communities Programme; and the Armed Forces Covenant: Local Grants programme.

Figure 1: Armed Forces Covenant Grant Programmes May 2015 - 2020



**Figure 2: Armed Forces Covenant Fund Grant Awards 2018/19 Financial Year**



*details of all grants awarded can be found at [www.covenantfund.org.uk](http://www.covenantfund.org.uk)*

In the 2018 Autumn Budget, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced £10 million to support veterans' mental health and wellbeing needs and directed that it should be distributed by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust. The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund was launched in December 2018 and has two programmes:

- the Strategic Pathways Programme, which funded a small number of national organisations that provide support and mentoring to organisations delivering activities and opportunities under the Positive Pathways Programme over a two-year period
- the Positive Pathways Programme, which is open and will make grants to projects that develop and run activities that support the mental health and wellbeing of veterans

Eligibility and priorities for the programme are based on the outcomes from a programme consultation published in April 2019.<sup>3</sup> Of the responses to the consultation, 21% came directly from veterans and 23% came from Service charities. The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust made an award of £300,000 to support the Invictus UK Trials Sheffield 2019.

Veterans Community Centres is a £3 million programme funded by HM Treasury, paid to the MOD and the grant applications, assessments and decisions made by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust. The programme funds renovations and improvements to veterans' community centres. Applicants must be Service charities with an existing building that requires refurbishment.

### Case study

The Royal Marines Charity received £17,386 for a refit of part of the RMA Veterans Centre in Deal, Kent. Funding was awarded to improve the first-floor space within the branch. The club has installed a new carvery to cater for regular veterans' lunches, replacing an old kitchen and bar, as well as generally updating the club space. The centre is a valuable community hub that helps combat loneliness and isolation among the local veteran population. The programme will make further awards in February 2020.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.covenantfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Positive-Pathways-Consultation-Report.pdf>



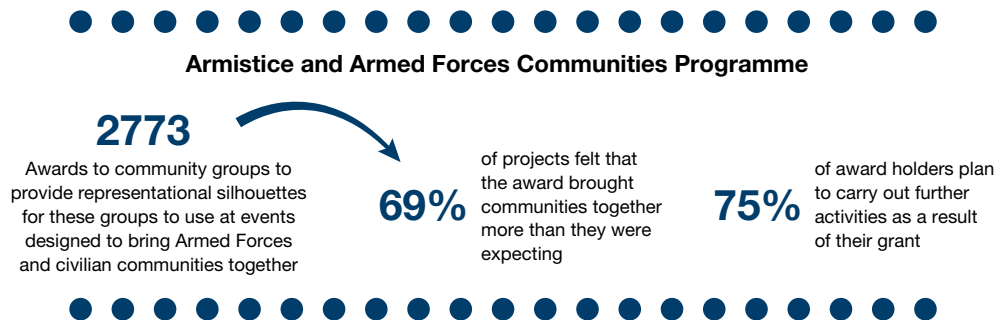
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## What impact do the grants have?

The Tackling Serious Stress programme is designed to provide funding for innovative and new ways of working to reduce serious stress in veterans and their carers and families. This programme has funded a small number of projects that will enable charities and health professionals to work together to develop and try new ideas that they have developed with veterans and their carers and families. The University of Chester is working with all the projects and will produce an evaluation report sharing the findings in 2022.

The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust published a report in April 2019 on the reach and impact of the Armistice and Armed Forces Communities

Programme.<sup>4</sup> This programme aimed to bring communities together, to think about the Armistice, and importantly, to think about Armed Forces communities today. Through this award scheme, communities could access evocative silhouettes to be used at community events. There was evidence to suggest that the projects might act as wider catalysts for future local projects. Of the award holders, 75% reported that they were intending to carry out additional projects in future following their award. Projects helped to bring people together, and intergenerational work was facilitated through events supported by this programme. For example, 982 of the 2773 awards had a focus on young people.



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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.covenantfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Armistice.pdf>



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# CHAPTER 1 – GOVERNANCE

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## Office for Veterans' Affairs

As announced by the Prime Minister on 29 July 2019, a new Office for Veterans' Affairs (OVA) has been created inside the Cabinet Office. It will be staffed by government officials and directed by Oliver Dowden MP, the Minister for the Cabinet Office, and Johnny Mercer MP, the Minister for Defence People and Veterans, which is now a joint MOD and Cabinet Office position. The OVA will work with departments to coordinate and drive government policy on veterans' welfare, spanning mental and physical health, education and employment. The Director of the OVA, Colonel (Ret'd) David Richmond, will report jointly to both Ministers. It is the first time that veterans' affairs will be overseen by a dedicated ministerial team in the centre of Government, enabling better coordination of the full machinery of government and other partners to deliver joined-up support for veterans. This will provide a comprehensive approach to maximising the potential of veterans while also supporting those who need it. In the September 2019 Spending Round, £5 million of government funding was secured for the delivery and operation of the OVA. The funding provides additional staff and resources, so that the OVA can drive cross-Whitehall action to support veterans' welfare. It will promote the outstanding contribution veterans are already making to our economy and society and ensure no individual who needs help is left behind after they leave service. The OVA will be taking forward the Government's response to the consultation on the Strategy for our Veterans and widely with veterans, charities, the Devolved Administrations, local authorities and parliamentarians so that the work of the OVA reflects the needs of veterans and their families.

## Governance and oversight

The Covenant Reference Group is the senior official-level meeting responsible for driving forward progress on Covenant commitments. The group has representation from central and local government, the devolved administrations, the Confederation of British Service Organisations (Cobseo) and the charitable sector. At the working level, there are various groups that ensure that those providing services to the Armed Forces community are represented within the governance of the Covenant.



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# CHAPTER 2 – HEALTHCARE

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## Healthcare across the UK

### Lifestyles, wellbeing and mental health

The MOD understands that optimising the physical fitness of people relies on reducing the effect of harmful lifestyle behaviours while increasing individuals' ability to make healthier and more informed choices. Defence lifestyle objectives include smoking cessation, alcohol reduction, weight management and nutrition, and sexual health and fertility. The MOD established the Defence Smoke-Free Working Environment Project Board during summer 2019 and the roll-out of four smoke-free trial sites in 2019 as the first stages of the implementation of a smoke-free work environment across Defence by 2022. The new Weight Management and Nutrition policy developed in 2019 alongside the implementation of Defence Health and Wellbeing Advisor training, aim to effectively support Service personnel to improve their health behaviours. The introduction of a Defence-wide Unit Alcohol Advisor's course and alcohol care pathway means Service personnel can receive peer-to-peer support from within their units, alongside support from other partnered campaigns with Drinkaware and Public Health England.

The MOD is committed to providing dedicated and bespoke services to reduce psychological ill health and mitigate both the operational and occupational stressors encountered by Service personnel and veterans. The Defence People Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy, introduced in 2017, is halfway into its five-year plan. Additionally, the MOD has introduced standardised mental resilience education and training, improved communication about existing through-life support pathways and encouraged non-medical and leadership-led Defence initiatives to raise awareness, reduce stigma and encourage help-seeking.

There has been a continued momentum from earlier campaigns, including stigma reduction. These have continued with current initiatives such as the Royal Foundation's Mental Fitness Training product, HeadFit, the Defence Senior Leaders Mental Fitness and Resilience educational package, and the Samaritans' Suicide Prevention and Peer Support in the Armed Forces. These run alongside the single Service and Civil Service specific mental resilience training and education currently being rolled out.

The Defence Safety Authority's review into suicide prevention of Service personnel has seen the establishment of a Defence-wide working group supported by NHS England and NHS Improvement. The working group has reviewed the 22 recommendations and implemented many of them. It has also continued to identify further work regarding suicide prevention and deliberate self-harm. The MOD joined the cross-government National Suicide Prevention Strategy Delivery Group in early 2019 to share best practice and ensure a joined up and co-ordinated response towards deliberate self-harm and suicide prevention.

### UK Service Families Health Working Group

The UK Services Families Health Working Group held its inaugural meeting in September 2019. This group works as subset of the MOD UK Departments of Health Partnership Board, which meets quarterly. The MOD has a formal partnership agreement with all the health authorities in the UK to tackle health issues faced by the Armed Forces community collaboratively. The UK Services Families Health Working Group is envisaged as a new way of working across the UK to tackle health issues that particularly impact Service families.

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Service families face a unique set of issues in accessing healthcare services. Some are long-standing problems that have proved difficult to resolve in the current health system. It was agreed that establishing a UK-wide Service family specific working group would enable the necessary unpicking of problems faced and facilitate substantial proposals for action.

In early 2020, NHS England and NHS Improvement will launch an engagement to better understand and explore the health needs of Armed Forces families, with findings helping to inform the commissioning of a support service for this patient group. This will be progressed in partnership with the MOD, the Armed Forces Family Federations and other key stakeholders to facilitate the development of high-quality, nationally consistent service specifications that will form the basis of the service.

### Priority treatment

The principle and policy that veterans should receive priority treatment where it relates to a condition resulting from their service in the Armed Forces, subject to clinical need, is enshrined in both the Armed Forces Covenant and the NHS Constitution. However, research by the Royal British Legion in 2016 into awareness among NHS staff of priority treatment found a continuing lack of knowledge about the policy and how to implement it. This was reiterated by the Defence Select Committee's report on Mental Health and the Armed Forces, which noted that confusion within the Government "over how it was being implemented may be adding to Veterans' perceptions that the health service is failing them".<sup>5</sup> The Department of Health and Social Care is already working across the UK, with the NHS and Service charities, to redefine priority treatment to make it more meaningful and future-proof for veterans and clinicians.

### The Contact Group

The Contact Group is the collaboration of military mental health service commissioners, providers, policymakers, and researchers in the UK.<sup>6</sup> It is making progress in working towards consistency of the definition of services. This is not just across the UK but between the NHS, the Defence Medical Services, Service charities and the independent sector. During 2019, the group has focused on the following UK strategic priorities.

**Performance dashboard:** Co-ordinated by the MOD this evolving dashboard gathers mental health strategic data on Service personnel and veterans in the four nations. Current data blends the MOD and NHS England and NHS Improvement mental health figures, but work is under way to incorporate the information from all the UK's nations and the third sector (currently only presented in isolation).

**Common assessment framework:** At present there is no consistency in the formats for data capture from Service mental health patients across the UK. This can result in both duplication and lost information during clinical handovers. Led by NHS England and NHS Improvement, a working group is presently developing a format for a common UK framework. After consultation with stakeholders on content and data migration, the resulting framework will be actively promoted to the four nations.

**Case management:** Contact is presently convening a working group to develop an architecture to link current clinical and non-clinical case management systems for the most seriously ill veterans. Linked to the common assessment work outline above, this system will enable a coherent and active management of veterans seeking help.

**Accreditation:** Contact is working with Department of Health and Social Care to pilot an accreditation scheme for non-NHS mental health treatment providers, particularly therapy practices. The scheme will use existing Royal College of Psychiatrists accreditation modules and, when expanded, is intended to result in a quality kitemark for active promotion to veterans by all stakeholders. It is hoped that this development will attract more

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<sup>5</sup> House of Commons Defence Select Committee, 14th Report of Session 2017-19: 'Mental Health and the Armed Forces, Part Two: The Provision of Care' (HC 1481), p. 32 (published February 2019).

<sup>6</sup> Full membership can be found at [www.contactarmedforces.co.uk](http://www.contactarmedforces.co.uk)

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high-performing providers into the military mental health sector, while assuring users of the adequacy of current operators. The Contact Group will investigate commissioning a qualitative study once the Scheme has been rolled out to measuring the impact of the Royal College of GP accreditation.

### **Armed Forces Compensation Scheme**

The 2016 Quinquennial Review (QQR) of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme concluded that the scheme was fundamentally sound and should not require major amendment in the future, especially as the Independent Medical Expert Group (IMEG) provides ongoing independent assurance that the scheme's policy and decision-making reflect contemporary medical understanding of the causes and progress of disorders and injuries. The QQR raised specific issues on mental health which were referred to IMEG, and their comments were included in their fourth report in December 2017.

Following clinical insights from literature and discussions with senior clinical colleagues – military and civilian – working in traumatic psychological injury, IMEG recommend that exceptionally, in a small number of cases, there should be a level four mental health award. Legislation was amended from 8 April 2019 raising the highest award for severe mental health disorder from £144,200 to £298,700. In addition, a 100% Guaranteed Income Payment, tax-free and paid for life from the termination of Service, was introduced. It is not a replacement for the previous highest (level 6) award but describes different typical symptoms and level of functional compromise and applies to new claims on or after 8 April 2019.

### **Widening access to the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre for Veterans**

In July 2019, the MOD, Department of Health and Social Care and the Devolved Administrations agreed to explore high-pressure areas within the NHS that could be supported by the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre at Stanford Hall, to determine whether and how it could benefit the veteran community.

Work is ongoing between officials to identify other niche capabilities that veterans with injuries attributable to Service could also benefit from at Stanford Hall, to promote sharing expertise between civilian and military medical professionals for the benefit of the veteran community.

In early September 2019, NHS England and NHS Improvement met with the Defence Medical Services to discuss referrals to Stanford Hall. They have agreed to work together on a scoping exercise to determine how many veterans might also benefit from the services there. These would be veterans who meet the Complex Prosthetics Assessment Clinic referral criteria but have not yet applied to the NHS prosthetics centre. The proposal is not to broaden the referral criteria but, to try and accurately determine what the actual size of the patient cohort is.

In addition to the services provided to Service personnel and veterans at the Defence DMRC, the Government has also committed funding to the development of an NHS England led National Rehabilitation Centre (NRC). The NRC will be co-located with the DMRC at the Stanford Hall site, enabling collaboration and sharing of best practice. The NRC's role will be to provide cutting-edge rehabilitation services to the public in England, including being able to make use of the facilities available at the DMRC. The NRC will also have training and research facilities to ensure their services remain cutting edge and that their learning can be shared with the wider NHS. The programme for developing the NRC is an ambitious one, with plans for the facility to be operational in 2022.

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## Healthcare in England

### **The Veterans' Mental Health Transition, Intervention and Liaison Service (TILS) and the Veterans' Mental Health Complex Treatment Service (CTS)**

The NHS Long Term Plan announced £10 million extra funding to increase service capacity including addressing longer than expected waiting times. This was received in April 2019. In financial year 2018/19, 4,561 referrals were received for the TILS and the CTS, which provide specialist NHS care pathways just for veterans. The cumulative referrals as at 30 September was 9,864. This is in addition to the over 20,000 veterans seen each year in the mainstream Improving Access to Psychological Therapies services.

### **Veterans' Mental Health High Impact Service (HIS)**

NHS England and NHS Improvement launched the commissioning of a high impact mental health service on 10 October 2019, which aims to capture individuals who are nearing crisis. The service will commence with the provision of regional pathfinders from April 2020. HIS pathfinder services are about to go out to tender, so at the time of writing details are embargoed. However, these pathfinder collaboratives will be commissioned on a regional basis with the aim of providing veterans with crisis care, therapeutic in-patient support, care co-ordination across organisations that are able to support them, and support and care for their family members / carers where appropriate. Findings from the pathfinders, together with a programme of engagement, will inform a final service model that will launch in April 2022.

Achievements in the healthcare sector during 2018 show a common focus on improving the lived experience for the individual and providing effective treatment options, regardless of the provider. This is being achieved through cross-organisational working, raising awareness of issues faced by the Armed Forces community and improving communication to Service personnel, families and veterans about the services available and the variance between regions.

### **Suicide**

NHS England and NHS Improvement, together with the MOD, have jointly commissioned a study, Understanding the scale and drivers for suicide amongst veterans of the UK Armed Forces, 1996–2017, by the University of Manchester. This follows on and builds on Prof. Nav Kapur's original and definitive study of 2009. This new study will examine the rate, timing and risk factors for suicide in individuals who have left the UK Armed Forces using information from the National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Safety in Mental Health and Coroners Inquests. The research's findings are due in 2022.

Defence Statistics is also in the process of conducting a large surveillance study of all UK Service personnel who have served in the UK Armed Forces since 2001 (including those deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan) for all causes of death, including suicide and cancers, using the UK National Registries. The study is called the Veterans Cohort Study' and will initially monitor all Service personnel and veterans who served between 2001 and 2018. The second phase of the study will be to monitor all future veterans from 2019. The first report for all causes of death (2001–2018) will be published in Spring 2020.

### **Personalised care for the most severely injured Service personnel and veterans**

In March 2019, NHS England and NHS Improvement, together with the MOD, launched the Armed Forces personnel in transition, Integrated Personal Commissioning for Veterans Framework (IPC4V), which represents a new personalised care approach for the small number of Armed Forces personnel who have the most complex and enduring physical, neurological and mental health conditions that are attributable to injury while in Service. Integrated Personal Commissioning for Veterans provides a framework for effectively planning and delivering personalised care in line with the Armed Forces Covenant. Central to this is an improved discharge planning process, starting approximately nine months before these individuals leave the military.



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This is in addition to the new personalised care for veterans programme for individuals with complex and life-long health conditions. Eligible individuals benefit from a single personalised care plan for all their health and wellbeing needs that is developed with them and a range of organisations, including health and social care and Service charities. As part of this, they may get a personal budget to pay for some of the care and support they need, as well as more support in the community, such as emotional and practical support from people who have similar health conditions or disabilities.

### **Veteran-friendly GP practice and NHS provider accreditation**

The Royal College of General Practitioners, together with NHS England and NHS Improvement, have developed an accreditation scheme designed

to equip GP practices to better understand the specific needs of veterans and their families (including bereaved families). Since piloting the scheme in the West Midlands in 2018, it has commenced roll-out to GP practices across England, which will continue over the next three years. As at the end of September 2019, 375 practices (including the 90 that joined in 2018) have been accredited, and there have been frequent requests from practices to join the scheme.<sup>7</sup> The next phase is to roll out into Yorkshire, North East and Humberside. There are engagement and information events planned to inform Armed Forces networks, clinical commissioning groups and practices about the initiative, with the view to significantly increase the number of practices accredited. Proposals to evaluate the impact of these accreditations are being developed.

### **Case study: Milton Keynes, England**

In 2018, in partnership with three other councils, Milton Keynes Council appointed a dedicated Covenant Officer, Johanna – a local reservist with 23 years' service.

The council is supporting the Milton Keynes's Armed Forces community in various ways, including:

- changing their HR policy to guarantee job interviews to veterans who have left within the past five years
- setting up a 'Forces Family Focus Group' for council employees
- welcoming the Forces Connect South East team earlier this year to deliver a full package of training for more than 90 councillors, employees and partners

They also invited four local reserve units and cadet instructors to bring in information stands to engage with attendees and council staff during the event.

Dr Nguyen, a local GP who is both a reservist in the Royal Army Medical Corps and chair of the Milton Keynes GP Federation, is working with Johanna to promote the Veteran-friendly GP scheme. Together they have delivered veteran awareness training sessions to local GPs and front of house colleagues, and to trainee GPs as part of their protected learning time. Not only has Dr Nguyen's surgery signed up to the scheme, she runs veteran health awareness / wellbeing sessions there too, which have been very well received from the local veteran and reservist community. They hope to support and assist other surgeries who are signing up.

Milton Keynes Council are also working closely with the MK Dons Sports and Education Trust to promote coaching courses and security qualifications to local veterans with disability or mental health conditions. MK Dons are huge supporters of disability football and actively encourage the ex-forces community to get involved with their various sports teams. Milton Keynes council have recently received the Employer Recognition Scheme Silver award for their work directly and with partners, and have been part of the award ceremony on HMS Victory.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.rcgp.org.uk/clinical-and-research/resources/a-to-z-clinical-resources/Veteran-friendly-gp-practices.aspx>

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## **The Care Quality Commission's veteran-friendly GP engagement**

The Care Quality Commission now covers military and veterans as part of the framework for assessment of GP accreditation.<sup>8</sup> This has been achieved through NHS England and NHS Improvement's continued engagement with the Care Quality Commission. NHS England assesses that this has a substantial potential over time as it puts military and veterans firmly on the agenda. NHS England and NHS Improvement will investigate to see if something similar could happen with the Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance initiative.

## **Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance**

The Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance (VCHA) is a group of NHS providers that have volunteered to be exemplars of the best care for the Armed Forces community.<sup>9</sup> So far, 41 providers have been accredited as meeting 'Veteran Aware' standards, including acute hospitals, mental health and community trusts.

Members of the VCHA that are accredited as Veteran Aware trusts, have implemented a set of standards that demonstrate their commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant. These standards include being 'forces-friendly' employers, providing veteran aware treatment and care and linking in with other NHS services and the service charities.

As forces-friendly employers, Veteran Aware trusts are working with initiatives such as the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme and Step into Health. Accredited trusts must also ensure relevant staff are trained and educated in the needs of the Armed Forces community and that veterans are identified to ensure they receive appropriate care. The standards also require that trusts have established links and can signpost members of the Armed Forces community to other NHS services, such as Armed Forces mental health services, and services provided by charities.

Implementing best practices for the Armed Forces community will at the same time raise standards across the NHS for all users. The VCHA is delivered through the Getting It Right First Time programme and supports NHS England and NHS Improvement's objective of reducing unwarranted clinical variation in the quality and efficiency of NHS services.

The VCHA expects 70 providers to be accredited in 2019/20, including more health boards in Scotland and Wales. The VCHA is developing Veteran Aware standards for other NHS settings including ambulance trusts.

## **Veterans Trauma Network**

The Veterans Trauma Network (VTN) is the first NHS pathway for veterans' physical health, providing care and treatment to those with Service-attributable health problems. Located in 10 major trauma centres across England, with links to five specialist NHS trusts, the network works closely with Defence Medical Services (DMS), national centres of clinical expertise, the Transition, Intervention and Liaison Service and the Veterans' Mental Health Complex Treatment Service, as well as Service charities to provide a complete package of care. It is run largely by healthcare professionals who are either veterans or Service personnel. The service continues to expand its geographic coverage and in October 2019 was launched in Wales.

The Veterans Trauma Network Wales will provide a service to ensure that patients can be directed to the right provider, be that local NHS services or referral to national experts, sometimes in other parts of the UK. Cardiff and Vale has been selected to be the Major Trauma Centre for South and West Wales and South Powys. The Veterans Trauma Network will initially be hosted by the Major Trauma Directorate within the Specialist Services Board of Cardiff and Vale University Health Board.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/gps/nigels-surgery-93-caring-veterans-their-families>

<sup>9</sup> More information on the Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance can be found at [www.gettingitrightfirsttime.co.uk/veterans](http://www.gettingitrightfirsttime.co.uk/veterans)



Launch of the Veterans Trauma Network Wales at the Welsh Government Armed Forces conference by David O'Reilly, Hannah Blythyn AM Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government, Fiona Jenkins, Shehan Hettiaratchy

### **E-learning modules**

Registration for the e-learning modules developed by Health Education England to increase awareness among healthcare professionals continues to grow. As at September 2019, there were 21,637 registered users – an increase of 7,633, which is almost double the total registration last year. The Department of Health and Social Care will be looking to work with Health Education England to update the modules further to keep them relevant for all members of the Armed Forces community.

### **Patient involvement**

NHS Improvement's Armed Forces Patient and Public Participation and Involvement Group is now chaired by a veteran for the first time, and has been instrumental in influencing NHS Armed Forces policy over the last year. The group has representation from the Service personnel and veterans community and their family members. Each member has their own "lived experience" that informs the specific areas of commissioning for the Armed Forces. This has included significant input from those with lived experience of mental ill health during the engagement on the development of the High Impact Service. Families and carers have been involved at all stages and have been involved in their own specific workshop.

### **Mental health support teams – trailblazer sites**

The MOD continues to work with the Department of Health and Social Care and the Department for Education on implementing the findings of Transforming children and young people's mental health provision: a green paper.<sup>10</sup>

Part of the proposals of the green paper was to fund new mental health support teams to provide specific extra capacity for early intervention and ongoing help. The teams will be supervised by NHS children and young people's mental health staff, whose work will be jointly managed by schools and the NHS. These teams will be linked to groups of primary and secondary schools, and colleges. They will provide interventions to support those with mild to moderate needs and support the promotion of good mental health and wellbeing. The Departments of Health and Education have identified several trailblazer sites to test out these proposals. The first wave of training for staff began in September 2018 and the trailblazers will go operational by the end of 2019. The MOD has been involved in the design of the trial and will be closely involved in its evaluation.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/transforming-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-provision-a-green-paper>

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## Healthcare in Scotland

The Scottish Veterans Commissioner published a progress report in May 2019 covering all recommendations from the five previous reports, including those set out in the 2018 publication, *Veterans Health and Wellbeing: a distinctive Scottish approach*.<sup>11</sup> In respect of health, the progress report recognises that overall, good progress has been made. The report is the Scottish Government's main driver to delivering better health outcomes in Scotland, ensuring that Service personnel, veterans and their families should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens as a result of military service.

The Scottish Government has strengthened its network of Armed Forces and Veterans Champions within NHS boards to improve the support available and help deliver the Veterans Commissioner's report recommendations. To achieve this, since May 2018, the Scottish Government has provided two network events to provide champions with information and development on areas of mutual interest, encouraging the sharing of good practice and providing the opportunity to make and build connections within the cohort. The Scottish Government will continue to provide these events on a regular basis, evolving the content to meet Scottish Government and champions' priorities.

The results of the Scottish Government's two surveys to identify champions' views provided insight into the roles and responsibilities of the champion, and their desire for enhanced structure and content of networking opportunities for champions as a group. The most significant message was that the Scottish Government has a more engaged network which can operate in an evolving, collaborative way, and that a two-way channel of communication is open and mutually beneficial.

In terms of policy development, the Scottish Government has used the strong working relationships with these champions to gather views on key issues, (e.g. on the proposed redefinition of priority treatment); learn from good practice in individual board areas; and have champion representation on both elements of the Armed Forces Personnel and Veterans Health Joint Group, which is critical to the strategic oversight and governance of policy development. The Armed Forces Personnel and Veterans Health Joint Group has been refreshed and restructured, with the establishment of a strategic oversight group to set priorities and an implementation group to take these actions forward. The restructured groups will focus on high-level strategic themes to drive progress towards the commitments to meeting the health needs of Armed Forces personnel and veterans.

### **Specialist Mental Health Services and Veterans First Point Network**

The Scottish Government, in partnership with NHS Ayrshire and Arran, continues to provide funding of £1.4 million per year until 2021 to Combat Stress for the provision of a range of specialist and community based services for veterans resident in Scotland. The Scottish Government and six local health boards also continue to jointly fund the Veterans First Point Network, which offers a one stop shop for veterans no matter their need. In 2017/18, the Scottish Government provided £825,000 to support the Veterans First Point services network. Additionally, following a matched funding offer in 2017, the Scottish Government has further provided £1.6 million over 2018/19 and 2019/20. Discussion around funding after 2019/20 is ongoing.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/veterans-health-wellbeing-distinctive-scottish-approach/>

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## Healthcare in Wales

### Veterans NHS Wales

The Welsh Government provides approximately £700,000 annually to Veterans NHS Wales, enabling the service to deliver evidence-based treatments for Service-related mental health conditions for veterans. The service – the only fully coordinated national service in the UK – employs therapists across all local health boards to deliver treatment and support to improve the mental health and wellbeing of veterans with Service-related mental health problems.

Veterans NHS Wales works with partners to ensure veterans can access services that meet their specific needs. As at September 2019, it has received over 4,500 referrals since it was set up in 2010. Veterans NHS Wales is, in partnership with Cardiff University, leading research into modular motion-assisted memory desensitisation and reconsolidation therapy, which is investigating whether ‘virtual reality’ therapy with the aid of a treadmill can reduce symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.

The Welsh Government and NHS Wales are also working with the Royal College of General Practitioners to examine the introduction of Veteran-friendly GP practice accreditation in Wales. The Welsh Government and local health board champions will work collaboratively to explore the introduction of the scheme in Wales and the training needs of frontline staff.

#### Veterans NHS Wales testimonial

I was reluctant to ask for help from anybody and thought if I just carried on, time would be a healer, but after 13 years of avoiding my PTSD symptoms it was worse than ever. I finally listened to my wife – “see a doctor, or that’s it.”

I felt at ease with my therapist, who targeted my issues and prioritised my immediate thoughts to become more stable. It was welcoming to hear that I was not alone. It did really help me that I didn’t have to feel so guilty about having a different point of view from the therapist. I know my PTSD will never be healed but I am now in charge of it rather than it being in charge of me. My veteran’s therapist saved my life and I, my wife and two little boys will always be thankful. I gave trauma-focused therapy a go and it saved my life. What have you got to lose?

### Suicide support – Talk to Me 2 Strategy

The Welsh Government will target new mental health investment initiatives to prevent and reduce suicide rates in Wales. The Talk to Me 2 Strategy has led to an increased focus on multi-agency working to prevent suicide, with plans established in all areas of Wales. This will be supported by an additional £500,000 a year to be invested in specific national and regional approaches to tackle suicide and self-harm prevention.

### Priority treatment

In May 2019, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board became the first health board in Wales to extend its commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant by offering priority access to NHS Mental Health Services for Service children with mental health issues as it does for veterans, where their conditions (mental and/or physical) are likely to be related to or have resulted from their military service.

Cardiff and the Vale Action on Mental Health produced a leaflet on veterans’ mental health and support service organisations and distributed to all key partners within the locality. This leaflet identifies organisations that are available to support the Armed Forces community and includes a brief description of what each organisation provides.

During Armed Forces Week 2019, the Welsh Government and NHS Wales encouraged former members of the Armed Forces to ensure they inform their GPs that they have served their country and may be entitled to priority treatment. Statements by the Welsh Health Minister and the Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government coincided with the launch of a bilingual poster in GP surgeries highlighting the importance of making GPs aware.

### Dentistry

Following discussions at the Welsh Government Armed Forces Expert Group, Betsi Cadwaladr UHB commissioned additional primary care dental services. During Autumn 2018 NHS Wales granted additional funding to the Valley Dental practice in RAF Valley to provide additional NHS dental places. With the addition of the Children’s Dental Practice at Holyhead Hospital, this ensures enough provision for all families stationed at RAF Valley.



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## Change Step

In 2019 the Welsh Government provided £40,000 to the charity CAIS to supplement the grant made by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust and to enable them to continue to deliver Change Step's Peer Mentoring Service, which is delivered by veterans for veterans. Working in partnership with a range of support organisations, Change Step provides dedicated services for those in crisis, older veterans, and people with mental health and substance misuse issues.

## Gambling

The Welsh Government has facilitated the listing of the National Gambling Treatment Service in the Veteran's Gateway to ensure that people who use the Gateway are able to access support, information and treatment in relation to gambling.

## Healthcare in Northern Ireland

Under the New Ways to Tackle Serious Stress programme delivered by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, two applications were successful. These were for the Inspire for the 'Recovery Together' programme and the Ely Centre's extension to Brooke House capability. Together these awards amounted to £923,000.

Bespoke arrangements with Belfast Health and Social Care Trust guarantee access for Service personnel. (Service families face the same restrictions as the civilian population, including longer waiting lists than elsewhere in the UK).

### Case study: Inspire, Recovery Together, Northern Ireland

Inspire was awarded £703,000 by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust's Tackling Serious Stress programme in April 2019 to deliver the Recovery Together project. The project is based on needs identified from the Current and Future Needs of Veterans in Northern Ireland Report in November 2017 by the Northern Ireland Veterans' Health and Wellbeing Study. The report showed that Northern Ireland has one of the highest prevalence rates of probable post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in the world and that there is a strain on statutory mental health services.

The project offers a portfolio of innovative wellbeing and support services to veterans and their families/carers in Northern Ireland who feel they are unable to access, or have not received, appropriate support. It offers integrated services that remove barriers to family life, extra support to integrate Service and civilian communities and a single point of contact to access to a range of health and wellbeing interventions for veterans, their families and carers, with a focus on empowering and enabling them to access suitable support. The group offers a mix of music therapy, equine therapy, mindfulness sessions, addiction support services and sessions for families to better understand PTSD.

Through various identified referral partners, beneficiaries have been identified and referred for assessment. A referral can be made through a dedicated helpline number for a needs-based veteran and their family-centred assessment.

Individual case management is offered to each veteran to ensure they are properly supported, and their changing needs are recognised. There is a mixture of bespoke care, 24-hour telephone counselling support, individual needs assessment, onward referral as needed, and peer development to assist with the legacy of the project.

Psycho-education including advocacy training for key stakeholders across Northern Ireland, group support for families and carers, wellness planning and wellness recovery action planning and specialist dual diagnosis provision are also provided to facilitate better access to mental health treatment for those in need.

As at September 2019, 64 clients had been referred to and engaged with the project. The programme is being assessed and evaluated by the University of Chester, which continues to identify the needs of the project. The legacy of the wider Northern Ireland context does raise its own unique challenges, such as veteran trust within statutory and wider support services, however the project is utilising previous experience and working extensively and collaboratively with local stakeholders to overcome these concerns.

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## Health metrics (Annex B Tables 1-15)

The health metrics cover military-provided healthcare, Service families' access to NHS healthcare, cancer wait times for Service personnel in England and veterans' access to: Improving Access to Psychological Therapies in England, Transition, Intervention and Liaison Services (TILS) in England, Complex Treatment Services (CTS) in England and Veterans Mental Health Service Wales (VMHSW) in Wales.

### Service-provided medical treatment and families' access to the NHS

Most UK Regular Service personnel continued to be satisfied with the Service provided healthcare received (medical treatment 2019: 80%, Annex B Table 1) and most of their families continued to be satisfied with their ability to access healthcare (GP access 2019: 98%, Annex B Table 2). A small number of families moved while they were undergoing treatment, however, the majority were able to continue their treatment (GP access 2019: 92%, Annex B Table 3).

### Cancer wait times

UK Armed Forces personnel requiring cancer treatment receive care through the NHS. The assessed wait times for cancer were similar or better for all four measures, illustrating no systematic disadvantage for UK Armed Forces personnel when compared to England (Annex B Table 4). However, for both England and the UK Armed Forces, two of the measures (wait for all cancers and wait for symptomatic breast patients) were below the target. Cancer wait times are a priority for the Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England and NHS Improvement: the government has committed to introducing a 28 day standard by 2020 and spending an additional £300 million on diagnostics. A cancer dashboard has been introduced to improve accountability, and ways to speed up the start of the pathway are being identified.

### England Mental health (IAPT, TILS and CTS)

Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) was the first national mental health dataset to contain an indicator for UK Armed Forces veterans and their families. For the past five years, UK Armed Forces veterans who were referred for psychological therapies in England were seen as quickly as the non-veteran population, and for both six -week and 18-week pathways, waiting times were above the respective targets (6 weeks or less wait times 2018/19: veteran 89.5%; non-veteran 89.3%, Annex B Table 5). Over the past five years a higher proportion of UK Armed Forces veterans compared to non-veterans entered and completed treatment (Referral completed treatment 2018/19: veterans 43.6%; non-veterans 35.6%: Annex B Table 6). The recovery rate for UK Armed Forces veterans was at least as good as that for non-veterans (Referrals moved to recovery 2018/19: veterans 48.1%; non-veterans 47.3%, Annex B Table 7). However, recovery rates continued to be below the 50% Government target. NHS England and NHS Improvement have instigated a number of initiatives to improve the recovery rates and have seen an increase since 2014/15 (Referrals moved to recovery 2014/15: veterans 41.5%; non-veterans 40.3%, Annex B Table 7). Initiatives include supporting the lowest-performing clinical commissioning groups and offering workshops to share best practice to all commissioners and providers.

In April 2017, NHS England launched the Veterans' Mental Health Transition, Intervention and Liaison Services (TILS) as part of the NHS Five Year Forward View. The service supports those approaching discharge and veterans by providing a range of treatment, from access to early support to therapeutic treatments for complex mental health difficulties and psychological trauma. As at 30 September, 8,864 veterans have been referred to this service, which offers a holistic care package that may include help with housing, employment, alcohol misuse and social support. Those assessed may be referred to other NHS services, such as IAPT. Self-referrals make up 32% of referrals, while 25% are made by charities. In 2018/19 the wait times to be offered a face-to-face assessment (39 days) were outside the target of 14 days (Annex B Table 9). Additional resources have been approved, which will increase capacity and reduce wait times.



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The NHS Veterans' Mental Health Complex Treatment Service provides intensive care and treatment for veterans whose military complex mental health problem hasn't improved with earlier care and treatment. As at 30 September 2019, 1,000 veterans have been referred this service. Of these, 95% were accepted resulting in over 5,000 appointments being delivered. In 2018/19 the wait times to be offered a face-to-face assessment was 18 days, which was above the target of 10 days (Annex B Table 11). As part of the NHS Long Term Plan commitments, additional resources have been allocated to both of these services, which will increase capacity and geographic coverage.

### **Veterans NHS Wales**

Veterans NHS Wales (VNHSW) is the first point of contact for veterans residing in Wales who have a suspected service related mental health problem. During 2017/18 there was a substantial improvement seen in both time to assessment and time to treatment. Compared to the last financial year, the percentage receiving an assessment within four weeks increased by 44 percentage points to 74% (Annex B Table 13). The percentage receiving treatment within 24 weeks rose by 10 percentage points to 90% compared to two years ago (Annex B Table 13). The reduction in wait times is partly due to a temporary increase in the number of psychological therapists. VNHSW has also seen an increase in the percentage of veterans demonstrating reliable improvement from 74% in 2016/17 to 94% in 2017/8 (Annex B Table 14). This is in part due to VNHSW using a novel Dutch psychological therapy, 3MDR (motion assisted, multi modular, memory desensitisation reprocessing therapy), with 42 treatment-resistant post traumatic stress disorder veterans residing in Wales.

### **Wales substance misuse**

Working Together to Reduce Harm is the Welsh Government's substance misuse delivery plan. Focusing on both mental and physical wellbeing, it also considers substance misuse. In Wales, area planning boards have been established in each health board area. The boards are responsible for the development and management of substance misuse services. The number of veterans receiving support for substance misuse has remained stable over the past five years, with 315 receiving support between 1 April 2018 and 28 February 2019 (Annex B Table 15).

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# CHAPTER 3 – EDUCATION

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## Education across the UK

### **The Service Children's Progression (SCiP) Alliance**

The Service Children's Progression Alliance has established its UK-wide network, with a further six research-practice Hubs launched in 2019.<sup>12</sup> The growth of the Hub's network has more than doubled the Alliance's level of engagement of schools, colleges, universities and community organisations across the UK.

Consequently, the scale of support for Service children's progression has increased significantly. This is reflected, for example, in the fivefold increase in the number of institutions registered with the Office for Students explicitly targeting work with Service children. The Office for Students is presently reviewing widening access and participation submissions from the higher education sector. The Department for Education will know how many more higher education institutions have stated that they are going to actively engage with Service children when the results are published in early 2020. Creative Forces university experience events have taken place in a number of universities across the UK with the desire to understand how to engage with Service children and monitor how informed the children are about their post-16, post-19 and higher education options.

The scale of research investment and impact also continues to increase. The Alliance is led by the University of Winchester and fulfils a pivotal role in ensuring a coherent approach to research across the sector. For example, it convened the

first international research symposium dedicated to Service children's progression in July 2019. At the event, researchers shared good practice and insight in the area and stated their ambition to have such further events. The practical impact of research remains a priority. This can be seen in the translation of international research into an expanded research briefing series and an interactive online mapping and targeting tool to be launched in January 2020. Additionally, a Service children's support framework for schools, and a suite of evidence-based resources for practitioners is being developed. These would help a wide variety of stakeholders to understand the geographical spread of Service children and target resources effectively.

### **The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service**

Service, with support from the MOD and Service Children's Progression Alliance, has released a new student information and advice page for Service children, veterans, and spouses or partners on their website.<sup>13</sup>

### **Service child flag indicator**

The Service child flag was introduced to all three of the annual school censuses in England in the latter part of 2018. Previously, the Service child flag had only appeared on the spring census, and it is this indicator which triggers the Service Pupil Premium funding. The Department for Education (in collaboration with the MOD's Directorate for Children and Young People) added the flag to the May and October censuses. This means there will be greater opportunities to track the 'in-year' and

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<sup>12</sup> A partnership of organisations focused on improving outcomes for Service children. The alliance includes academic institutions, local authorities and the Families Federations.

<sup>13</sup> [www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/individual-needs/students-uk-armed-forces-background](http://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/individual-needs/students-uk-armed-forces-background)

‘mid-year’ moves of Service children. This will add a greater understanding of the effects of school moves on Service children.

### **MOD Education Support Fund (ESF)**

In July 2018, the Secretary of State for Defence announced the extension of the ESF for an additional two years: £3 million for 2019/20 and £2 million for 2020/21 to support the ongoing drawdown from Germany and provide time for the educational authorities across the UK to bring in longer-term provision for Service children as necessary. The ESF is available to support UK-maintained schools with Service children to embed practices that can benefit both Service children and the school itself.

The 2019 ESF allocated £3 million to 76 successful applicants, directly benefitting approximately 32,000 Service children across the UK. The 2020 ESF bidding round closed on 30 September 2019 and 142 applications were received; result letters will be circulated in December 2019.

### **School admissions**

The MOD and Department for Education have been exploring options around the issue of school admissions and Service children in England. Because of this work, MOD is now represented at the Department for Education’s School Admissions Group to advocate for Service children. Presently, there is a great deal of work taking place focusing on ‘in-year’ admissions and the Fair Access Protocols, of which draft proposals were outlined in October 2019. These proposals will look to offer greater support to all children who often find themselves moving school, including service children.

### **Children’s education and childcare**

Addressing the challenges Service families face with childcare is a priority for the Secretary of State for Defence. Officials are considering options to mitigate disadvantage, to ensure that support is provided to those in greatest need. The three single Service welfare organisations have professional play and youth workers who facilitate activities that provide support across the age ranges. Childcare facilities are provided on the Defence Estate at 95 of the 119 military bases in the UK that have more than 100 Service personnel on their establishment. The majority of these settings cater for children under statutory school age and offer differing provision in terms of opening times and ages. A Defence Instruction and Notice giving direction and guidance on how units should establish such facilities is being drafted. Some of the single Services have launched their own initiatives to improve local provision.

Funding of up to £20 million from LIBOR fines was allocated in financial year 2013/14 to improve childcare facilities for Service families at 39 locations in the UK and Cyprus. The full amount was spent, and the last upgrade was completed in early 2019.

### **Publicly Funded Further Education/Higher Education scheme**

The Publicly Funded Further Education/Higher Education scheme provides Service leavers and personnel in their qualifying resettlement phase with access to a first full level 3 or higher education qualification free from tuition fees.

Since the start of the scheme, 8,482 claims have been made across the UK at a cost of £50.3 million.

The scheme which is jointly funded by MOD, DfE and the devolved administrations has paid for 8,482 claims across the UK at a cost of £50.3 million since its start.

**Table 1: Claims for higher education (HE) and further education (FE) in financial year 2018/19 across the UK<sup>14</sup>**

	Number of HE claims	Amount of HE claims	Number of FE claims	Amount of FE claims
England	1,118	£7.2 million	1	£15,700
Scotland	25	£71,600	0	0
Wales	46	£297,600	0	0
Northern Ireland	1	£4,100	0	0

<sup>14</sup> These figures include any ELC contributions made towards the fees.

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Additionally, 9,450 claims have been made for Enhanced Learning Credits in financial year 2018/19 at a total cost of £14.3 million.

### **Armed Forces Bereavement Scholarship Scheme**

The Armed Forces Bereavement Scholarship Scheme was established in 2011. It gives the children of Service personnel whose death is attributable to Service since 1990 a scholarship to support their post-16 education. The Armed Forces Bereavement Scholarship Scheme is funded by the Department for Education and is administered by Veterans UK. Applications can be made by either the parent/guardian or the bereaved child. In the financial year 2018/19, the scheme paid for 84 students, a total £812,690.

The Welsh Government contributed a total of £200,442 towards the Armed Forces Bereavement Scholarship Scheme and the Publicly Funded Further Education/Higher Education Scheme in financial year 2018/19. In addition to support for tuition fees through enhanced learning credits, there is additional financial help, depending on household income and the study institution, from the Welsh Government towards living costs for students wishing to study for their first higher education qualification.

## **Education in England**

### **The MOD's Local Authority Partnership (MODLAP)**

The overall purpose of the Local Authority Partnership is to identify and generate best practice and practice guidance in the support of all local authorities' work with Service children. The group's core membership comprises the 15 local authorities from England with the highest populations of Service children (representing approximately two-thirds of service children in England). The group has focused on two key areas of activity in the past year: gathering Service children's outcomes data at an individual local authority level and improving the transition of Service children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) into and out of local authority areas. The Local Authority Partnership's agreed set of SEND principles have been adopted by three additional local authorities beyond its core membership.

Key within these principles is an agreement that each local authority will actively seek to secure a school placement for children with SEND prior to their arrival into a local authority area. In addition, each local authority has agreed to identify a named local authority officer to oversee the transition of Service children into and out of local authority areas. These officers will be supported with continued professional development by the MOD and will facilitate a regular opportunity for this group of professionals to share best practice and develop SEND-specific guidance for the benefit of Service children.

### **Service Pupil Premium**

The Service Pupil Premium was introduced by the Department for Education in 2011 as additional funding to help schools improve the educational outcomes and wider wellbeing of pupils from Service families. Pupils aged 5–16 in state-funded education who are currently classed as Service children, or have had this status at any point in the past six years, attract SPP funding to the schools they attend, at the rate of £300 per pupil annually. In 2019/20, over £23.1 million of SPP funding is being distributed to over 10,000 schools across England, to benefit over 77,000 Service children.

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## Education in Scotland

Scotland's education system is underpinned by policy and legislation designed so that services adapt to meet the individual needs of children, and work to identify and overcome disadvantage. This year, the Scottish Government has seen developments in these overarching policies, which are expected to serve Armed Forces children and families well. Examples include the expansion of early learning and childcare, which is set to increase from August 2020; further funding to support implementation of additional support for learning; and the Scottish Government's commitment to developing counselling services for schools. In delivery of policies, there has also been targeted work to support Service children and their families, as summarised below.

### Early learning and childcare

A targeted approach has been taken in both Moray and Argyll and Bute, with leaflets being distributed across Service welfare centres, family centres and outreach hubs to ensure Service families understand their eligibility for funded early learning and childcare (ELC) hours. Additionally, the Scottish Government's ELC Division has engaged with the Veterans Employability Strategic Group. This was principally to raise awareness of the opportunities the ELC expansion offers and to further develop the Scottish Government's network of contacts within the Armed Forces, Service leavers, veterans and their families.

### Scottish Service Children's Strategy Group

The Scottish Government chairs the Scottish Service Children Strategy Group whose core purpose is to work in collaboration with key stakeholders to support the education needs of children from Armed Forces families in schools in Scotland. The group members have collaborated on a number of projects this year. They held a Scotland-wide good practice event for education professionals and Armed Forces personnel in May 2019 to celebrate and share work and explore future priorities, and supported the National Transitions Officer to continue to develop resources for the Forces Children's Education website, including guidance on Early Stages Transitions and a National Parent Forum for Scotland resource.<sup>15</sup>

The group also contributed to the Education Support Fund process, including managing and participating in the regional panel, and engaging with Family Federations to understand families' concerns and priorities.

### Support for Service children in Scottish schools

The Scottish Government is improving universal and targeted services that help mitigate some of the challenges Service children may face. The Scottish Government will provide £12 million in 2019/20 and £16 million in the following years from 2020 for education authorities to develop counselling services. The Scottish Government is aware that Service children are a particular group that may face challenges that affect their mental wellbeing, and should they need support, school counsellors will provide a quicker, more effective response. In addition, in 2019, Education Scotland launched a suite of resources – The Compassionate and Connected Community and Classroom. The first is a professional learning resource to raise awareness of the effects of adversity and trauma and provides a range of supportive relational approaches to use with children and young people. Almost all education authorities have received coaching in the use of this resource. A second free curricular resource is now available to support children in upper primary to cope with challenges and adversity and develop their confidence, resilience, compassion and empathy. These resources are beginning to be used in schools to support Service children.

The Scottish Government is also undertaking a review of the implementation of Additional Support for Learning to ensure every child and young person gets the support they need when they need it. This includes children and young people who need support for a short time – to help them transition to a new school, or because a parent is deployed, for example. Service families, their children and practitioners supporting them can feed into the review via the Scottish Government website.<sup>16</sup> Further, as committed to in Learning Together: Scotland's national action plan on

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<sup>15</sup> <https://forceschildrenseducation.org.uk/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/groups/additional-support-for-learning-review/>



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parental involvement, parental engagement, family learning and learning at home 2018–2021, the Scottish Government is supporting the positive involvement and engagement by specific groups, including Service families.

### **Scottish higher and further education**

The Scottish Government is committed to ensuring all learners, including veterans and their families, have the same opportunities to access further and higher education, and is working with partners from the education sector and the Armed Forces on this. A veterans group, led by the Scottish Funding Council, is driving forward progress of the specific actions around information, advice and guidance for the Armed Forces community, and has a dedicated page on its website outlining these. The Scottish Funding Council is also developing a network of champions for further and higher education.

In addition, the Scottish Funding Council is funding a Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership project on mapping learning pathways and accrediting prior learning for Service leavers and veterans. The Scottish Government and Scottish Funding Council are continuing to engage with stakeholders to explore the barriers to further and higher education that may exist for children of Service families. This includes continuing to support the work of the Service Children's Progression Alliance Scottish Hub, which was established in 2018.

## **Education in Wales**

The Welsh Government recognises the particular challenges faced by Service children. Last year, the Welsh Minister for Education announced a continuation of the Supporting Service Children Wales Fund by providing an extra £250,000 for the academic year 2019/20.

The Supporting Service Children in Education (SSCE) Cymru project helps schools to support Service children in Wales. This year, two stakeholder days have been arranged to share best practice and information. SSCE Cymru, University of South Wales and Arad Research are also conducting new research into Service children with additional learning needs, along with a new survey with schools. These will provide greater understanding of the experiences of education in Wales for Service children and their families. The school survey was completed by nearly 200 schools in Wales and its findings are available at [www.sscecymru.co.uk](http://www.sscecymru.co.uk).

Members of the SSCE Cymru Network collaboratively produced the Service children funding guidance for schools in Wales document. It provides information and advice on the funding available to schools with Service children.

In June 2019, MOD organised a visit for the Welsh Minister for Education, Kirsty Williams, to a school with high number of Service children in Brecon. The event gave the Minister an opportunity to talk to Service parents about their experiences of educational transition and meet with Service children in lessons. It provided an excellent opportunity to discuss some of the key areas MOD would like to support in Wales, including the new Additional Learning Needs Code of Practice and tracking pupils transitioning between schools both in Wales, the UK and overseas.

The 2019 Welsh stakeholder day was held at RAF Valley in Anglesey. This event brought practitioners together to share good practice in Wales that supports Service children. Much of the work demonstrated at the event was funded through the Welsh Government Fund, the MOD's Educational Support Fund and the Armed Forces Covenant Trust Fund.

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## Additional learning needs

The new additional learning needs system in Wales has been designed to support all children and young people with additional needs to enable them to meet their full potential regardless of their circumstances. The Welsh Government is mindful of the stresses and vulnerabilities Service children and young people may experience, and how these experiences can be exacerbated if the correct support and consideration is not provided. The draft Additional Learning Needs Code provides guidance to schools, further education institutions and local authorities to be more aware of the experiences that Service children and young people may be facing when discharging their responsibilities in assessing and supporting learners with additional needs.

## Service Children's Progression (SCiP) Alliance – Hub Cymru

The University of South Wales is working in collaboration with Supporting Service Children in Education Cymru and the SCiP Alliance to establish a hub in Wales to enhance the research, knowledge and awareness of Service children and provide an opportunity for partners to share good practice on improving outcomes for children from Service families.

## Recognition of prior learning

The Welsh Government is supportive of the Armed Forces Learning Credits Scheme in helping support personal development. It has worked with education providers such as the University of South Wales in Cardiff to support veterans to determine the number of higher education credits they have accrued through Standard Learning Credits, Enhanced Learning Credits or others, and helps them decide options for a new career.

## Education in Northern Ireland

Data from 38 (Irish) Brigade unit welfare show that all Service children currently have secured places in a school within easy reach. The clear majority of Service children have secured places in their first-choice schools.

In 2018, there were 23 Service family school leavers. All of these chose university, higher education, apprenticeships or employment. Of the spouses of Service personnel, 60% are in employment and 19% are seeking employment.

## Education metrics (children from service families) (Annex B Tables 16–29)

The education metrics cover both children from Service families' education and Service personnel training and education.

## Children from Service families' education metrics

As in previous years, the Department for Education has provided updated statistics on how Service children and non-Service children without free school meals in state schools in England perform across key progress and attainment measures, and their distribution across schools according to Ofsted rating.<sup>17</sup> The Department for Education has also provided figures to show how, in 2017/18, Service children and non-Service children's attainment at the end of primary school and at age 16 varied according to the number of times they have moved school during each educational phase. In addition, for the first time the Department for Education has provided statistics that show the post-16 and post-18 education, employment and training destinations of young people who had Service child status at the end of secondary school.

The progress and attainment statistics for academic year 2017/18 show that on average, the performance of Service children as a group is, as in previous years, largely on a par with that of non-Service children across most measures. However, there remains a disparity in relation to the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) measure: in comparison to non-Service children, a smaller proportion of

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<sup>17</sup> RAIL mentions of 'non-Service children' refer to pupils without Service child status who are not in receipt of free school meals.

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Service children are entered for the EBacc (Entered for the EBacc 2017/18: service children 36.6%; non-service children 40.6%, Annex B Table 20), and of these pupils, a lower percentage achieve a grade 4 or higher in all pillars (Achieved EBacc for all components, grades 9-4 pass, 2017/18: service children 23.3%; non-service children 26.1%, Annex B Table 20).

Service children are more likely to have moved schools at least once, compared to non-Service children in both Key Stages 2 and 4 (Moved schools at least once Key Stage 4 2017/18: service children 28.8%; non-service children 17.6%, Annex B Tables 22 and 23). Levels of mobility are correlated with attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4, with average attainment being lower among those who move schools more frequently. However, Service children who move schools twice or more during primary or secondary education perform better than non-Service children who make the same number of school moves. It should be noted that the figures on mobility and attainment for 2017/18 are not directly comparable to previously published data due to improvements in the methodology – pupils at schools that change identifier (e.g. because they have converted to an academy) no longer count as having moved.

Across England, Service children are less likely than non-Service children to attend schools rated by Ofsted as Outstanding (18.4% and 22.2% respectively) – but a higher proportion attend schools rated as Good (64.7% compared with 60.9%) (Annex B Table 24). This is the same pattern as noted in the 2018 Covenant Annual Report, though it is not consistent across the country. For example, in the East Midlands, a higher proportion of Service children (28.2%) attend an Outstanding school compared to non-Service children (18.5%) – and a much smaller proportion attend schools rated as Requires Improvement or Inadequate (11.7% compared to 21.2%).

The statistics on the education, employment and training destinations of Service children indicate that after the end of Key Stage 4, they are as likely as non-Service children to stay in sustained education or employment (96% and 95% respectively). However, the pattern is different after the end of Key Stage 5 (Annex B Tables 25 and 26).

Young people completing Key Stage 5 studies who had Service child status at the end of Key Stage 4 are as likely to stay in any sustained education or employment destination as non-Service children. They are however less likely to go on to higher education (47% compared with 51%) and are instead more likely to be in sustained employment (26% compared with 22%).

### **In-service training and education metrics**

While UK Armed Forces veterans' employment levels are on a par with (or better than) national averages, the percentage of UK Regular Service personnel satisfied with the opportunities to gain civilian accreditation and opportunities for personal development has remained consistently low, with only 48% satisfied with civilian accreditation opportunities and 57% satisfied with personnel development opportunities in 2019 (Annex B Table 27 and 28).<sup>18</sup>

The MOD is focused on developing a culture of personal development in which personnel are continually encouraged to optimise their contribution to military capability and prepare them for employment thereafter. By June 2020, the MOD policy for the Professional and Personal Development Plan as part of the Through Life Development Policy will be incorporated as guidance in JSP 822 in support of building a culture of personal development. In addition, the MOD is the UK's largest provider of apprenticeships and invests significantly in schemes that support elective education, such as learning credits and the Army Skills Offer.

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/timeseries/lf24>



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# CHAPTER 4 – ACCOMMODATION

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## Observations from 2018 Annual Report

In their 2018 observations, the Families Federations indicated that Service families wished to see continued improvements in Service Families Accommodation (SFA) service delivery following the problems encountered in the early years of the National Housing Prime contract. The MOD has worked hard to sustain the momentum of service delivery improvement throughout 2019. Key performance indicator (KPI) targets are now met consistently. In particular, response maintenance now regularly meets the 95% target, while Stage 1 complaints reduced by 30% in the 12 months to March 2019 (965 complaints compared to 670).<sup>19</sup> With increased confidence of consistently delivering the level of service expected by Service families, a new SFA Customer Charter, with increased focus on responsibilities and outcomes, will be issued in December 2019), as the MOD's formal commitment to provide quality accommodation and excellent customer service for Service personnel and their families.

## Accommodation across the UK

### Service Family Accommodation (SFA)

The provision of decent living standards and excellent customer service is essential to supporting operational capability and maintaining morale on the front line. The MOD recognises that continued effort is required to support Service personnel and their families and remains committed to improving the condition and standard of the SFA estate. This will be achieved through more flexible and modern housing provision; improving the standard and condition of accommodation; sustaining current improved levels of maintenance and repair performance; and enhancing customer service. Taken together, these steps will help to further improve the lived experience of our Armed Forces and their families.

### Raising standards

During 2018/19, the improvement and modernisation of SFA continued. A total of £116 million was invested – a 40% increase on the 2017/18 final figure of £83 million. The focus again continued on improving thermal comfort by installing external wall insulation and doubled-glazed doors and windows, while replacing boilers, heating systems and roofs. Additionally, kitchens and bathrooms were updated to meet occupants' aspirations for more modern living space. The increased investment included receipts from the short-term letting of approximately 1,400 empty properties across the UK.

As part of the Army Basing Programme, the first tranche of 917 new build properties on Salisbury Plain was handed over by the developer for allocation to Service families relocating from Germany. Along with 242 SFA at Ludgershall,

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<sup>19</sup> Refers to all complaints raised by occupants about Amey Plc's work.

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225 are being built at Bulford and 450 at Larkhill with a programme completion date of July 2020. These properties are of a modern design and construction and are in line with the standard of new properties available for sale on the open market. The progressive release of these homes is a result of close collaboration between MOD and the developer.

A further £27 million was invested in purchasing 112 new properties in Hereford, Thorney Island and Catterick to increase domestic stability and reduce the high cost of leasing private rented and bulk lease hire accommodation. These purchases, together with the new builds on Salisbury Plain, further increase the MOD's portfolio of modern homes.

This investment has enabled our commitment to only allocate properties at Decent Homes Standard to be maintained. Currently 97% of Service families properties are at the Government's Decent Homes Standard, with 86% at Decent Homes+ (with enhanced thermal comfort). In addition, more than 99% of properties meet statutory and mandatory safety requirements.

In the current financial year, £123 million has been earmarked for investment in similar improvement and modernisation works. Good progress is being made, with two-thirds of the planned work instructed by September 2019.

### **Service delivery**

Amey Plc has continued to build on its good start to delivering the National Housing Prime contract following the liquidation of Carillion Plc. The delivery improvements highlighted in last year's report have been maintained, on a consistent basis, and the response repair service is now regularly above the Key Performance Indicator target. In addition, Amey continues to meet its performance targets for timely allocations and move-in preparations.

These improvements have been reflected in gradually increased customer satisfaction levels in the main MOD surveys. While satisfaction with the overall standard of accommodation levels was unchanged from 2018, both the Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey and Families Continuous Attitude Survey 2019 results reported increases in satisfaction levels with repair and

maintenance response and their quality (for both categories: AFCAS saw a four and FAMCAS saw a six percentage points increase). In addition, the MOD's independent survey recorded a five percent increase in overall satisfaction (to 64%) during a 12-month rolling period to March 2019. The MOD has set a target of 68% for the same 12-month rolling period to March 2020.

While these results are welcome, ongoing financial constraints mean the pace of improvement and modernisation to SFA overall is not as quick as MOD would wish to provide. The MOD shall continue to invest to maintain properties at Decent Homes Standard, mainly through life-cycle replacement, to allow their allocation to Service families. As financial circumstances allow, MOD plans to increase both the scope and pace of improvement and modernisation to further benefit Service families, while making available for allocation newly built and purchased properties.

### **Managing the SFA estate**

Efficiently managing the SFA estate has taken on greater significance following observations by the Public Accounts Committee relating to, among other things, the high number of empty properties.<sup>20</sup> MOD has committed to reducing the number of empty properties to the required 10% management margin (approximately 5,000 properties) by Autumn 2021. This will be achieved through handing back properties to Annington Homes; demolishing properties that are no longer required and that cannot be used by other agencies (mainly in Northern Ireland); widening eligibility to cohabiting couples and Service leavers; and accelerating our sub-let programme. The MOD currently has approximately 3,000 temporary surplus properties that are gradually being sub-let to screened members of the public at prevailing market rent levels. This approach aims to maximise revenue from rental receipts, while protecting the availability of homes for Service families so they are not disadvantaged, and providing flexibility to return homes back to MOD stock as and when required. The programme has seen more than 1,400 properties sub-let to date across some 68 UK sites, with plans to extend the programme to 3,000 properties across approximately 100 sites by 2021.

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<sup>20</sup> Military Homes (HC 2136) published on 21 June 19.



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## Single Living Accommodation (SLA)

The 2019 Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey reports that approximately two in five (39%) Service personnel live in SLA and one in three (32%) live in families' accommodation during the working week. Although there has been an increase in the overall satisfaction with the quality of maintenance/repair work since 2018 (up by five percentage points), this is still below levels previously reported.

In April 2018, the budget to maintain and improve accommodation for individuals was delegated to the single Services as key users giving Top Level Budget Holders greater responsibility and control of SLA spend, and therefore allowing them to prioritise and target funding accordingly. Additionally, the MOD instigated a review of the grading for all SLA, to ensure that Service personnel are being charged correctly. While ongoing, it is expected that this review will be completed by March 2020. The new SLA Management Information System project aims to pull together condition-related data sets into one area, thereby allowing key users to access and assess collective data to make fully informed investment decisions and set a more targeted approach towards continued upgrades and modernisation of SLA. The project has been funded for financial year 2019/20.

## Options for the modern Service family

The mobile nature of Service life can be disruptive for Service personnel and their families and providing a variety of accommodation options is one way of easing the impact. A Future Accommodation Model pilot was launched in September 2019 at Her Majesty's Naval Base HMS Clyde. Two further pilot sites, Aldershot Garrison and RAF Wittering, will be launched in 2020. The pilot will last approximately three years and evidence will be gathered over the pilot period to refine the final policy as the pilot develops. The Future Accommodation Model will provide more choice to Service personnel regarding where, how and with whom they live, making use of the private rental sector and support to home ownership, alongside existing options of MOD-provided accommodation, as the Future Accommodation Model policy has been designed so that the cost to Service personnel to rent property will be broadly the same as the charges for the equivalent type of SFA. In promoting fairness and ensuring that homes are fit for purpose, accommodation entitlement

will change to reflect the size of the family, rather than rank as is current policy. Following the pilot, a decision will be taken on whether to implement the Future Accommodation Model across the UK.

## Getting on the property ladder

Forces Help to Buy, introduced in April 2014, helps Service personnel to get on or stay on the property ladder by borrowing up to 50% of their annual salary (up to a maximum of £25,000) to purchase their first property. As at 30 September 2019, the scheme has helped around 19,400 Service personnel purchase their own property at a total cost of £293 million (an average of £15,000 per claim) since its introduction. In October 2019, the Secretary of State for Defence announced that the popular scheme is being extended until the end of December 2022.

## Help into civilian life

From March 2019, subject to availability, Service leavers and their families have been able to stay in Service Family Accommodation for up to 12 months by paying the market rate. Previously, Service leavers could only stay for up to three months. Service leavers who are medically discharged may also be granted an extension of 93 days to remain in their property. This policy change helps Service personnel and their families to adjust to civilian life by giving them more time to make arrangements, such as for permanent accommodation.

## Cohabitation in surplus Service Family Accommodation

A change in policy on the allocation of Service Family Accommodation came into effect on 1 April 2019. From this date, Service personnel with more than four years' service who are in a long-term relationship, or have residential responsibility for a child, have been able to apply to live together in surplus SFA, subject to availability. This is a significant change to the Armed Forces culture, and specifically the longstanding accommodation policy that prohibited cohabitation in MOD-provided accommodation. Before 1 April 2019, only Service personnel who were married, in a civil partnership or who had legally dependent children could be allocated Service families' accommodation. As of September 2019, 250 Service personnel in long-term relationships have been housed in surplus Service Family Accommodation, and a further 109 are waiting to move in.



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## Accommodation in England

### Access to social housing

In January 2019, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) launched a consultation on new statutory guidance for local authorities, designed to improve how members of the Armed Forces community are allocated social housing. The proposals brought together, updated and built on existing guidance issued in 2012 and 2013. They set out how local authorities can identify applications from members of the Armed Forces community to ensure they are considered appropriately and how they can ensure that members of the Armed Forces and veterans living with mental illness are given appropriate priority; and make clear that local authorities are expected to disapply any local connection requirements from divorced or separated spouses or civil partners of Service personnel required to move out of accommodation provided by the MOD. The consultation closed in March 2019 and new statutory guidance will be published in due course.

### Homelessness

In March 2019, MHCLG allocated an additional £1 million of bespoke funding to support vulnerable veterans who are or are at risk of becoming homeless. The funding was allocated between 10 Combined Authorities and the Greater London Authority, and used to develop new services and produce/improve procedural guidance on supporting homeless veterans. Authorities provided the MHCLG with plans on how they would spend their funds and followed up with a six-month report outlining their progress. The Ministry's Homelessness and Advice Support Team has provided support to authorities with developing their spending plans and implementing services. For example, the West Midlands Combined Authority, one of the authorities allocated funding and also a signatory to the Armed Forces Covenant, has used their funds to recruit a full-time homelessness veteran staff member who works alongside a veterans taskforce co-ordinator on employment and skills. This new role will help to: coordinate and link existing services; identify gaps and map interventions; raise awareness of homeless veterans; collect and analyse data on veterans and homelessness/housing; train staff; and promote best practice among services and network partners. They will also ensure best use of existing materials and networks. In March 2020, local authorities

will provide the MHCLG with an appraisal on the effectiveness of the services provided.

This support builds on the important changes the MHCLG made in 2018 with the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act. It placed new duties on local housing authorities to take reasonable steps to try to prevent and relieve a person's homelessness. Local authorities must now work with applicants to develop personalised housing plans, tailored to the needs and circumstances of their household. This considers their background – for example, whether they previously served in the Armed Forces and their support needs arising from this – and reflects this in the personalised housing plan. In 2018/19, 1,780 households were assessed as having support needs resulting from having served in the Armed Forces. These new duties apply irrespective of whether a person has 'priority need' or may be regarded as being 'intentionally homeless'. Acting earlier and for a broader range of people means more people will get the help they need before they face a homelessness crisis.

As part of the Homelessness Reduction Act's Duty to Refer, which came into force in October 2018, the Secretary of State for Defence and other public named authorities are required to refer members of the regular Armed Forces in England, to a local housing authority within 56 days, if they believed they may be homeless or threatened with homelessness, with the individual's consent. The MHCLG is committed to reviewing the implementation of the Act, including the resourcing of it and how it is working in practice, by March 2020.

Alongside the Homelessness Reduction Act, the Government introduced a new data capturing tool, the Homelessness Case Level Information Collection. The new tool captures the support needs of a household, including if someone has a support need as a result of being in the Armed Forces. The latest data for January to March 2019 shows, of the 70,430 households owed a homelessness duty, 450 required additional support because they formerly served in the Armed Forces.

MHCLG does not collect statistics on whether people sleeping rough have served in the Armed Forces. However, statistics from the Combined Homelessness and Information Network suggest

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that two percent of the rough sleeping population in London are UK nationals who have served in the Armed Forces, and other independent research shows that the rough sleeping figures for veterans are around 3 percent across the UK.<sup>21</sup>

## **Accommodation in Scotland**

### **Affordable Housing Supply Programme**

The Scottish Government is working to increase the number of homes across Scotland so that everyone has a good quality home that they can afford and that meets their needs.

Funding is available through the affordable housing supply programme to deliver homes for veterans with varying standards of housing needs. For example, over £350,000 was awarded to East Lothian Council to deliver six homes for veterans in Cockenzie (three of which will be fully wheelchair accessible). These homes are expected to be completed by the end of 2019.

The Scottish Government's Open Market Shared Equity scheme is marketed in Armed Forces publications and continues to be available to members of the Armed Forces, veterans who have left the Armed Forces within the past two years, and widows, widowers and other partners of Service personnel for up to two years after their partner has lost their life while serving. These households have priority access to the scheme, which means that they do not need to be first-time buyers to benefit from it.

### **Local housing strategies**

Local authorities have a statutory duty to prepare and submit a Local Housing Strategy, which is at the heart of the arrangements for housing and planning through its links with Development Plans and its strategic role in directing investment in housing and housing-related services locally. In September 2019, the Scottish Government published refreshed Local Housing Strategy guidance, which encourages local authorities to fully consider the housing requirements of the Armed Forces community. The guidance has also been strengthened to encourage appropriate engagement with relevant organisations, such as Veterans Scotland, to better

understand <https://www.gov.scot/publications/ending-homelessness-together-high-level-action-plan/> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/ending-homelessness-together-high-level-action-plan/> the needs of the Armed Forces community when developing Local Housing Strategies.

### **Social housing allocations**

The Scottish Government published new practice guidance on social housing allocations in February 2019. Social Housing Allocations in Scotland – A Practice Guide contains practical advice for social landlords on allocations for people leaving the Armed Forces.<sup>22</sup> It includes guidance on giving priority to Service leavers and on ensuring that veterans are not at a disadvantage when applying for social housing due to Service time spent outside of the area.

### **Military Matters**

The Scottish Government is continuing to support Housing Options Scotland to provide its Military Matters project. This service focuses on housing issues affecting people in Scotland who serve in the Armed Forces, including those Service personnel transitioning into civilian life in Scotland, and veterans – helping them to find the right home in the right place. Since it began in 2012, the project has helped over 600 people, with 75 new referrals in 2018/19.

### **Homelessness**

In November 2018, the Scottish Government published, jointly with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, Ending Homelessness Together: High Level Action Plan.<sup>23</sup> This sets out actions in response to the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group's final recommendations to end homelessness and transform temporary accommodation. This includes an action to develop preventative pathways for the groups at

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<sup>21</sup> Mackie, P. and Thomas, I. (2014) Nations apart? Experiences of single homeless people across Great Britain. London: Crisis.

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/social-housing-allocations-scotland-practice-guide/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/ending-homelessness-together-high-level-action-plan/>

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highest risk of rough sleeping and homelessness. Recognising that some veterans are at high risk of homelessness, the Scottish Government is committed to developing and implementing a pathway to prevent homelessness for people with experience of the Armed Forces. The Scottish Government will work with relevant stakeholders, including the MOD, local authorities and third sector partners, to develop the pathway in early 2020.

### **Housing to 2040**

The Scottish Government has made a commitment to plan, together with stakeholders, how its homes and communities should look and feel in 2040, and the options and choices to get there. Since making this commitment, it has been engaging extensively with a variety of stakeholders, including veterans' organisations, to help shape a draft vision and principles for 2040. In July 2019, the Scottish Government published its draft vision and the principles that will underpin and inform the development of policy choices and options. The Scottish Government will ensure that veterans' organisations can further input into this work as it progresses.

## **Accommodation in Wales**

### **Priority need**

Service personnel and their families are classed as priority if they are homeless when leaving the Services. This provides an important safety net during transition. The Welsh Government has commissioned an independent assessment of priority need in Wales to determine if amendments are required that will continue to support its aim of ensuring that veterans are able to access the support and services they need. The independent evaluation will report in April 2020.

### **Case study**

Wales homes for veterans (run by the charity Alabare) provide dedicated housing provision and support to veterans in Cardiff, Pontypridd, Swansea, Carmarthen and Conwy. Key workers work with veterans to provide tailored support, engaging with local partners, Armed Forces charities and statutory agencies to provide holistic support to meet the individual needs of the veteran.

### **Gwent housing allocations policy**

Working with the Gwent Armed Forces Liaison Officer, local authorities in the area have amended their housing policy to take account of time served in the Armed Forces when it comes to housing waiting lists. To help alleviate any disadvantage that being away with the Services may have led to with regard to housing waiting lists, the local authorities are taking the date of when someone joined the Armed Forces as effective date of registration on the housing waiting list.

This rule is applied to those who are likely to be homeless upon discharge from the Armed Forces. For example, a veteran who applies for rehousing within three months of discharge, and in extenuating circumstance, where a veteran applies for rehousing beyond three months and up to two years from their date of discharge and can demonstrate that during this time they have been unable to establish stable accommodation.

### **Case study – Clos Parc Morgannwg**

Clos Parc Morgannwg in Cardiff consists of 35 homes made up of 18 apartments and 17 houses. A section of Clos Parc Morgannwg was allocated as a housing cluster for veterans and their families, and they were housed as part of a joint initiative between Taff Housing Association and the Welsh Veterans Partnership (WVP). The initiative is part of the WVP Coming Home Project, which aims to ensure veterans and Service families have full support and helps to aid a smooth transition to civilian life to allow them to prosper and lead productive lives. The scheme was developed by the Jehu Group and completed in October 2017 with the Welsh Government providing Social Housing Grant funding of over £2.5 million towards the cost of the scheme.

## **Accommodation in Northern Ireland**

The regular garrison in Northern Ireland faces no particular problems in accessing services. There is a surplus of service accommodation, which continues to be subsidised.

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## Accommodation metrics (Annex B Tables 30–37)

Accommodation metrics cover Service accommodation, and social and private renting.

### Service accommodation

Satisfaction with the standard of both Service Family Accommodation (SFA) and Single Living Accommodation (SLA) has remained consistent with 2018 (Annex B Table 30). However, it is hoped those levels will increase in line with the continued investment in improving and modernising both sets of accommodation. There has been a welcome increase in Service family satisfaction with the repair and maintenance of SFA (Annex B Tables 31 and 32), both in terms of response timeliness and quality of works, which is attributed to the continued efforts of MOD and Amey Plc to improve service delivery in this area.

### Social and private renters

In 2017/18 almost three-quarters (74%) of Service personnel or veterans (in England) lived in owner-occupied households (owned outright or buying with a mortgage), which is higher than that seen in the general population (64%). There was no difference in the proportion of current Service personnel or veterans living in the social rented sector (14%) and the private rented sector (11%). This was different to the general population, where the size of the private rented sector was bigger than the social rented sector.

The percentage of recent Service leavers in England allocated social housing despite not having lived in the local authority for five years has been higher than that seen for non-veterans over the past two years (Annex B Table 34). In addition, the percentage of recent Service leavers in England who have been allocated a social housing letting within six months of entering the waiting list has consistently been higher than that for non-veterans. In 2017/18 the figure was 11 percentage points higher than in 2015/16 (Annex B Table 35).<sup>24</sup> This data enables the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to monitor the package of measures introduced in 2012 to ensure that members of the Armed Forces community have the same access to social housing

and are not disadvantaged by the requirement for mobility while in Service. The package includes ensuring that veterans with urgent housing needs and Service personnel with serious illnesses or disabilities are always given high priority for social housing, and that councils do not apply a local connection test to disqualify Service personnel and those who have recently left the Services.

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<sup>24</sup> Left Service within the past five years.



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# CHAPTER 5 – INQUESTS AND JUDICIAL ENGAGEMENT

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## **Inquests: The Defence Inquests Unit**

The Defence Inquests Unit is the MOD's single point of contact for UK coroners investigating the deaths of Service personnel, veterans and MOD civilians where an inquest has been called. The unit is responsible for ensuring that all material relevant to inquests (e.g. personal file, medical records, career history) have been provided to UK coroners. It also provides briefings and support to both veterans and current Service personnel as well as MOD civilians who are called as witnesses. Between 1 September 2018 and 30 September 2019, the Defence Inquests Unit attended 41 inquests.

The Defence Inquests Unit is integral to ensuring that the MOD meets its moral obligations to support any veteran, Service personnel or MOD civilian involved in inquest proceedings. Experienced members of the unit provide practical guidance and advice alongside access to an established support network of experts who deliver legal and pastoral support. This includes experienced senior counsel, mental health experts and access to welfare support provided through individual Chain of Command or organisations such as the Service Association network and Service charities. Each case is reviewed to ensure the MOD provides the necessary legal and pastoral support tailored to the nature of the process under way.

## **Northern Ireland legacy issues**

The MOD continues to work closely with the Northern Ireland Office to ensure that proposals to respond to the legacy of the past in Northern Ireland are balanced and proportionate and do not unfairly focus on members of the security forces. The Northern Ireland Office ran a public consultation exercise on proposals about the Stormont House Agreement legacy institutions last year. It worked with the MOD to encourage the veteran community to engage with this, including through utilising the Army's network of Regimental Associations.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland will consider the responses received to this consultation and continue to work with the Secretary of State for Defence and others to find a way forward that is effective, legally robust and commands consensus. As this work develops, the MOD will continue to engage closely with the Northern Ireland Office to ensure that the need to treat veterans fairly is fully considered.

A new dedicated unit, the Northern Ireland Legacy Inquest team, has been set up this year to deal with the extensive Northern Ireland Legacy Inquest programme. The Presiding Coroner has committed to dealing with all outstanding inquests (52 in total) within five years, starting in April 2020. A key part of this is providing support and assistance to all those veterans and Service personnel who are affected by the inquests. As part of this, the MOD offers legal advice and support to all veterans who are contacted by the Coroners Service Northern Ireland and work closely with the Regimental Associations and with Service charities to ensure that they are supported every step of the way.

## **Legal protections**

The Secretary of State for Defence remains strongly opposed to Service personnel and veterans being subject to the threat of repeated investigations and potential prosecution in connection with historical operations many years after the events in question – and providing greater legal protections for them remains a priority. As a first step, a 12-week public consultation was launched on 22 July 2019 on proposed legal protections measures for those who have served in operations outside the UK. Analysis of the responses will help to determine and develop the measures to be taken forward in legislation, as soon as parliamentary time allows. The MOD also continues to work with the Northern Ireland Office on a solution to the legacy of Northern Ireland's past that meets the needs of victims and survivors and ensures that members of the Armed Forces and police are treated fairly.





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## CHAPTER 6 – FAMILY LIFE

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### **Update on UK Armed Forces Families Strategy and Action Plan**

In 2019, there has been a renewed focus on the families of Service personnel, following publication of the Strategy for our Veterans in 2018. The Covenant Fund Trust's Removing Barriers to Family Life Grants Programme was created to support the 2018–20 Families Action Plan.

The four-year UK Armed Forces Families Strategy runs through to 2020. The MOD Families Policy Team has initiated an evaluation of the impact of the strategy as the first step in developing a new Families Strategy for 2020 and beyond.

The 2018–20 Action Plan, which underpins the strategy, has targeted areas identified by the Service Families Working Group as particular concerns, including accessibility and availability of childcare, support for non-UK families, families with additional needs, and those requiring specialist support. Progress in each area is described below.

The independent review of the support provided to Service families being led by Andrew Selous MP is expected to be published in early 2020. Alongside evaluation of the UK Armed Forces Families Strategy, the recommendations of this review will be important in informing principles and priorities for the new strategy.

The changing nature of operations mean the need for a coherent approach to supporting families is greater than ever before. Reflecting the principles of the Government's Family Test, the new Families Strategy will guide officials in developing policy which meets the needs of modern diverse families, in the context of the changing nature of Defence,

ensuring that families are empowered to make decisions that are right for them.

### **Families Strategy 2020 and beyond**

The evaluation of the Families Strategy will continue to enhance the themes of fairness, choice, empowerment and resilience within its current intent, but will also look to address those emerging societal issues that have an influence on the modern-day Service family. MOD will seek to identify the issues that are affecting dual servers, and better understand diversity and the cultural barriers that affect our non-UK community, while building greater support for the bereaved and those living in disperse locations. The MOD will underpin this by placing the Families Test at the heart of our emerging policy-making processes.

### **Flexible Service**

A new approach of Flexible Service became law on 1 April 2019, allowing Regular Service personnel of the Armed Forces to ask to temporarily work part-time and/or restrict their separation from their home base, subject to operational need. This allows Regular Service personnel to enter into two new flexible working arrangements for up to three years – subject to operational need. These are part-time working, which reduces normal working patterns (and expected output) by either 20% or 40%, and restricted separation, which prevents personnel from spending more than 35 days away from their normal home base each year. These can be taken together or independently, and the flexibility is balanced by a commensurate and fair reduction to the individual's pay and pension.

All Regular Service personnel have the right to apply for Flexible Service, but operational capability comes first. When Flexible Service is not possible, other Flexible Working options, such as remote

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working, or variable start and finish times may meet the individual's needs.<sup>25</sup> Flexible Service's new, modern terms of Service offer Regular Service personnel more choice and new opportunities to balance busy committed careers with personal responsibilities and changing circumstances. Over 100 Regulars have served on Flexible Service arrangements since the new measures were introduced. This has enabled them to continue to serve while fulfilling caring responsibilities, taking respite or pursuing personal development. Those on Flexible Service have said its benefits include reduced stress, an improved work-life balance and greater peace of mind over where and when they work, which benefits Service families too. Longer term, this type of flexibility will help Defence to recruit the people it needs, from a broader spectrum of society, and help to retain them and their family.

### **MOD Domestic Abuse Strategy**

Since the launch of the MOD's Domestic Abuse Strategy, No Defence for Abuse, in 2018, Armed Forces People Support has initiated a review of the Joint Services Publication 913: Tri-Service Policy on Domestic Abuse and Violence. An action plan has been compiled that incorporates the recommendations from The Service Justice System Review, February 2019; the Mark Guinness Review 29 March 2018; the Alice Ruggles' Domestic Homicide Review, December 2018; and Air Chief Marshal Wigston's Report on Inappropriate Behaviours, July 2019. Additionally, the MOD has engaged with a charity called Everyone's Business to help with the JSP review. Through the charity, MOD has been put in contact with the Employers Initiative on Domestic Abuse, and as a result it has been able to engage with industry leads on domestic abuse allowing the MOD to learn from industry best practice.

### **Loneliness/social isolation (dispersed families)**

MOD continues to engage with the three Service Families Federations and is actively engaged with the welfare and issues of families in isolated locations. A question on loneliness was included for the first time in the 2019 iteration of the MOD's Service Families Continuous Attitude Survey and is recommended for inclusion in the 2020 version of the Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey.<sup>26</sup> This will give the MOD a better understanding of the prevalence of loneliness, how this may change over time and whether there are any associated factors that increase or reduce the risk. The data would also contribute to the cross-government efforts to build a richer picture of the prevalence across society. The MOD is also supporting initiatives on loneliness led by the Department for Culture Media and Sports team under the Cabinet Office-sponsored Loneliness Initiative.

The four key principles of the Families Strategy are fairness, choice, empowerment and resilience, and these guide the development of MOD policy. Efforts to modernise the employment offer for Service personnel include the introduction of flexible working and the development of a Future Accommodation Model, recognising the diverse make-up of modern families and the importance of providing greater choice where possible. The MOD recognises that providing greater choice and opportunity for families to live off base brings its own challenges for dispersed families. The Action Plan, which sits underneath the strategy, is looking at ways in which this impact can be mitigated, including how to improve access to civilian support networks and maintaining links to the Service community from remote locations. A priority is to improve understanding of the impact of separation on dispersed families. Two research studies have been undertaken by the Naval and RAF Families Federations, which looked at the impact of separation on dispersed families. The reports, published in February 2019, provide a starting point to improve understanding of the most effective means to provide support to this cohort under the Armed Forces Covenant.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Search Flexible Service on <https://www.gov.uk/> for more information.

<sup>26</sup> Note: The Loneliness Strategy does not recognise the term 'social isolation'.

<sup>27</sup> <https://nff.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Non-Operational-Separations.pdf>  
<https://www.raf-ff.org.uk/dispersed-families/dispersed-families-survey-snapshot/>

## Case study

Lincolnshire County Council was awarded £20,000 from the Armed Forces Covenant: Local Grants programme to deliver the year-long 'Wings to the Past' project. The project was designed to bring RAF personnel and their families, and the wider community together to research, investigate and excavate a Roman building.

The project showed that participating Service families were making new, positive relationships within their community and archaeology is playing a vital role in bringing people together and building community cohesion. The project enabled new friendships to be discovered and shared interests unearthed.

The year-long project has been a huge success and a testament to the vital role funding – such as the Armed Forces Covenant Local Grants programme – can make!



## Specialist support

In acknowledgment of the profound impact that the mobility of Service life can have on families with additional needs, the then Minister for Defence People and Veterans, Tobias Ellwood MP, met with the Forces Additional Needs and Disability Forum Committee in November 2018 to discuss their concerns. Following that meeting, a review was initiated to improve the coherence of current MOD policies and those of other government departments to ensure they reflect the needs of these families. The findings of the review and recommendations will be reported at the 2020 Forces Additional Needs and Disability Forum Conference.

## Armed Forces families

The Removing Barriers to Family Life programme was open for applications until September 2019 and will make awards in February 2020.<sup>28</sup> This programme will award grants to charities and community interest companies with substantial experience in supporting Armed Forces families; and Armed Forces units.

This programme supports Armed Forces families facing challenges. Large grants will help to address substantial issues, providing funding for transformative ideas. Medium grants will support projects that make a proven difference to Armed Forces families and will support existing work. There is an overall budget of £7.5 million.

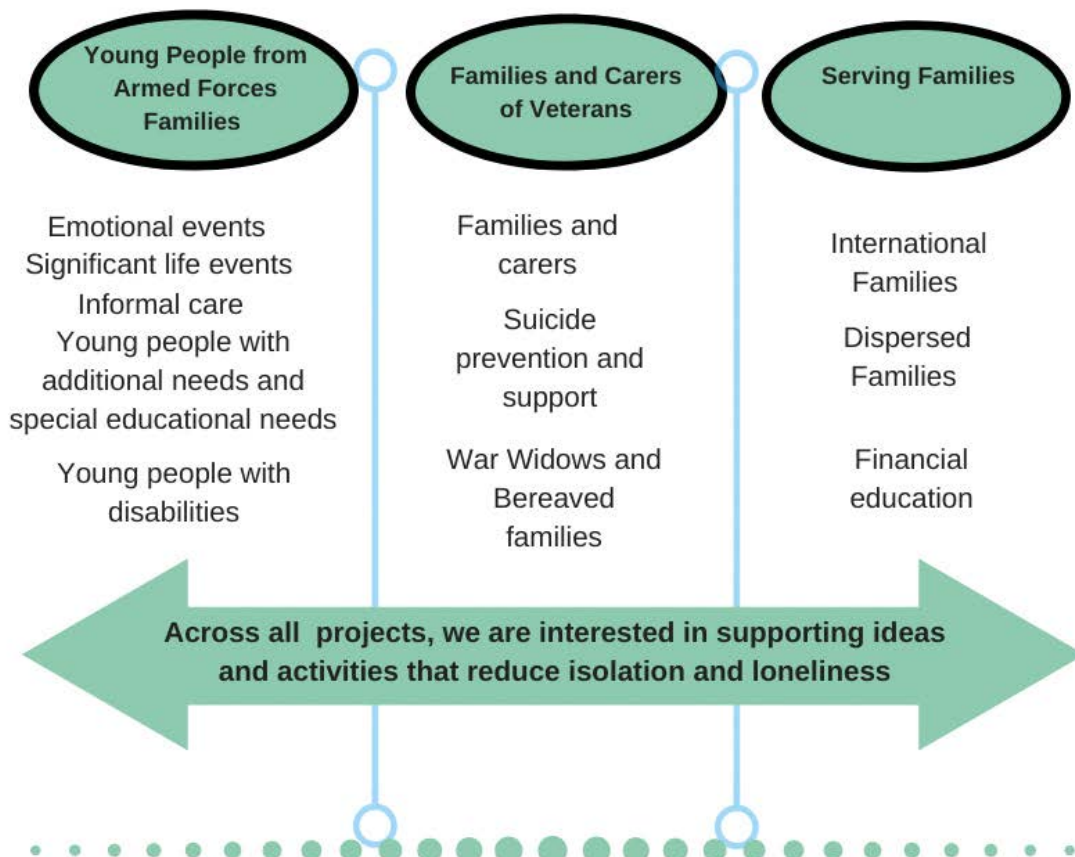
<sup>28</sup> <https://www.covenantfund.org.uk/removing-barriers-to-family-life/>

The programme will make grants to projects that can demonstrate that they are addressing a clear need and will be of practical benefit to Armed

Forces families. The focus of the project should be on supporting the family rather than the Service personnel or veterans.



## Removing barriers to family life



*When thinking about larger projects, we are particularly interested in how*



**digital solutions**

or

**networking ideas**

to bring people together



*Can help to reduce isolation and loneliness*



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## Families in Stress

In February 2018, the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust made 13 grants of up to £300,000 for projects that are supporting the families of Service personnel facing stressful circumstances requiring immediate short-term intervention. Projects funded cover a wide range of issues for both partners and children, from domestic abuse through to debt management, caring responsibilities, bereavement, personnel in the criminal justice system and supporting families with young children who are experiencing a particularly difficult challenge.

Projects began in April 2018. In one of them, Southern Domestic Abuse Service was awarded £299,832 to work with people affected by domestic abuse in South East Hampshire. This is a partnership project with SDAS, Portsmouth City Council, University of Portsmouth and Royal Navy/Royal Marines Welfare (RNRMW) Service. Southern Domestic Abuse Service are providing and evaluating a healthy relationships programme for Royal Navy personnel and their families, working with those affected by unhealthy relationships and/or domestic violence and abuse, including support for both partners. This innovative approach will support the development of healthy relationships.

Other projects funded under the second round of the Families in Stress programme included £123,224 to Home-Start York for the project Supporting Military Families in the Community and £149,319 to Test Valley Community Services for their Strengthening families through positive parenting project.

## Forces Families Jobs

The Forces Families Jobs website was launched by the Families Federations in September 2019.<sup>29</sup> It followed research commissioned by the Army Families Federation and conducted by the Warwick Institute for Employment Research, which resulted in a key recommendation to create a central portal for employment and training opportunities for Service spouses and family members. The platform was produced through collaborative working between the Naval, Army and RAF Families Federations, in conjunction with the MOD's Defence Relationship Management Team and Manpower Plc. It provides free access to employment and training opportunities to families in the UK Armed Forces, and

allows them to apply for jobs with companies and organisations who are 'Forces family-friendly' – who understand the unique challenges that come with being a family member in the Armed Forces. The website is free to use. Employers advertising their job vacancies have either signed the Armed Forces Covenant or demonstrate their commitment to the Armed Forces. The platform also offers additional support for those seeking employment, such as how to write a CV and prepare for an interview, as well as news about career events and insight days. The Welsh Government has worked with the Families' Federations to promote Forces Families Jobs.

## Military Coworking Hubs

Military Coworking Hubs are places where the partners and children of Service personnel can use as meeting places or to study for qualifications. Established in 2017, there are currently more than 25 hubs in various stages of development in UK military bases at home and overseas. They are communal meeting areas that inspire innovation and creativity, and offer opportunities to make new friends and strengthen the bonds of community. They offer:

- a place where the partners of service personnel can use to study or as meeting places (either remotely for an employer or for self-employed work)
- a community offering opportunities for collaboration, networking and signposting to support services
- a way for employers and civilian organisations to engage directly with spouses, service leavers and children of Service personnel

The hubs are a non-commercial operation, run by volunteer Service spouses and partners working in partnership with their bases. The first hub was opened at Leuchars Station in Fife, Scotland. In its two years since opening, it has had a transformational impact on the local military community. Members using the hub reported decreased loneliness, increased productivity and a greater sense of community. The success of the first hub at Leuchars prompted enquiries from Service spouses and partners in other bases, and the initiative has spread since then, driven

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<sup>29</sup> <https://www.forcesfamiliesjobs.co.uk/>

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solely by word of mouth and demand. There are currently around 100 military spouses and partners involved in delivering the project, and around 1,000 accessing the network, which continues to grow.

## Support available in Scotland

### Can Do Hubs / spousal employment

In addition to the UK-wide co-working network detailed above, the Scottish Government is working with the Army and Navy to promote and develop links to the newly launched Scottish Libraries Co-Working Hubs in five key locations in Scotland – Inverness, Dundee, Troon, Edinburgh and Dunfermline.

### Social isolation

In December 2018 the Scottish Government published A Connected Scotland, which seeks to ensure everyone in Scotland can build meaningful

social relationships regardless of age, stage or circumstance. The strategy recognises that particular groups of people, such as veterans, may be at increased risk of social isolation and loneliness and commits to continuing to work with veterans and veterans' organisations to better identify how to support the Armed Forces community to strengthen social connections. The Scottish Government has committed up to an additional £1 million over 2018–20 to back their commitments to tackle social isolation and loneliness, build capacity in the system and pilot innovative approaches.

### Case study – Outfit Moray, Scotland

Outfit Moray were awarded £20,000 from the Armed Forces Covenant: Local Grants programme to deliver outdoor learning and adventure for mixed groups of Service families and local young people to strengthen and develop community integration.

Activities include climbing, canoeing, biking, orienteering and map reading and are designed to develop friendships through shared learning. The project also includes two community cycling events, open to the whole community, featuring family ride-outs and a bike skills course.

The group is eager to increase the number of people within the Armed Forces community making the most of the activities on offer in the area, as there was previously a stark contrast between uptake in local clubs and groups from this community compared to their civilian counterparts.

The group met with Service families when designing the project, and took a collaborative approach, working with the Army Welfare Service team at Kinloss Barracks to ensure they reach the right people and that the activities on offer are best meeting the needs of those involved.

There is a close-knit Service community at Kinloss Barracks, but a low uptake in local opportunities. This project seeks to tackle that issue and help Service families overcome the feeling that they 'aren't confident to engage' in what's on offer.

Feedback from participants and families of participants has been very positive and highlights the impact the project has had on allowing young people to build new, positive relationships and broaden their horizons.



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### Local Grants award brings new skills in Scotland

Community-led organisation, Gorebridge Community Cares, received £20,000 from the Local Grants Programme in October 2018 to deliver the 'food for thought' project – a series of cooking classes, 'talking and doing' workshops and education and employment sessions for local Service personnel, their families and veterans.

All of these sessions have been designed to help improve both physical and mental health, build team work and encourage discussion.

Feedback on the project earlier in 2019 included:

"This project has so far been a great success! We've just celebrated the end of our cooking workshops with Service spouses at Scots Corner, Penicuik, and we're delighted that those involved were eager for more with 10 so far even going on to obtain a REHIS Elementary Food and Hygiene qualification! We put on an extra week due to the project's popularity and even hosted an awards ceremony to present the participants with their certificates.

"It's been a great way to bring people together in a supportive environment to learn new skills and talk to one another – especially important if their serving partners are deployed."



### Teaching

The General Teaching Council for Scotland continues to develop their relationships with all three Services and carry on the successful work to overcome barriers experienced by spouses who qualified as teachers in other parts of the UK, to allow them to teach in Scotland. They are working closely with the Naval Families Federation on a joint publication detailing the requirements for teaching in Scotland. Most enquiries are from spouses of service personnel and the Council continues to identify routes to registration. To date, two spouses of Naval personnel have been registered to teach in Scotland.



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## Support available in Wales

### Improving advice and information

The Welsh Government has provided over £8m for the coordination and delivery of social welfare information and advice services in Wales. From 2020, these will be delivered via one national and six regional advice provider consortia. These will link with newly established regional advice networks, which will focus on the targeting and linking up of social welfare advice and information services across each region. Key links have been made with the Armed Forces sector, including Armed Forces Liaison Officers, and the Welsh Government is working to ensure the advice networks have access to key welfare information relevant to members of the Armed Forces community.

### Loneliness and social isolation

The Welsh Government is committed to developing a cross-government and cross-sector approach to tackling loneliness and isolation in Wales. It is working with partners to ensure veterans are given access to facilities and services within their communities. The Welsh Government's engagement has included with the public, the charities sector and veterans support groups to consider research, evidence and prevention of loneliness and social isolation. Examples of good practice in supporting this include Woody's Lodge, Change Step, The Royal British Legion, Valleys Veterans and the Regimental Associations where veterans are supported through drops-ins, veterans' peer support groups, and are provided access to or are signposted to relevant charities and statutory services.

The Welsh Government is also aware that the issue does not only affect older veterans and continues to work with groups including those outlined above to promote services where veterans of all ages can come together and engage.

### Case study

Valleys Veterans is an independent support group in Pentre, Rhondda Cynon Taf. It is run by a former Welsh Guardsman and Falklands Island Veteran. Every week, up to 50 veterans attend the group to enjoy breakfast, a raffle and have a catch up. Providers such as Veterans UK, the local authority and the Royal British Legion provide advice and support when required to the veterans in attendance.

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# CHAPTER 7 – TRANSITION AND THROUGH-LIFE SUPPORT

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## **Holistic transition**

Transition is a core pillar of the MOD's Armed Forces Families Strategy but is also key to MOD's contribution to the delivery of the 2018 government-wide Strategy for our Veterans. Together this will ensure that the Government continues to fully consider not only Service personnel but also their family as equal partners in preparing for successful transition.

The MOD has long provided an unparalleled level of support to only Service personnel to help them find employment outside the Armed Forces, which has been delivered for the past 20 years through resettlement policy and the Career Transition Partnership. Service personnel will now also benefit from a new, holistic approach to transition, which is the responsibility of the Service person, their chain of command, and, when they leave, the new Defence Transition Services.

Every Service leaver – some 15,000 people each year – will benefit from the guidance and support from the new policy to ensure that they consider all aspects of civilian life that may differ from military provision, such as housing, healthcare, finance and taxation, and family life. The new standardised policy will now ensure that every Service leaver can benefit from this holistic approach, while still giving individual units and commanders the flexibility to tailor their approach.

In addition, Defence Transition Services will provide a dedicated case-worker support service to the small minority of Service personnel who are assessed by their chain of command to be vulnerable when they re-enter civilian life.

Defence will continue to review this policy and its implementation for the coming year to ensure that it works as smoothly as possible for the greatest number of people. Amendments are likely as the new policy beds into the military culture, and as greater links are built between the Armed Forces, Defence Transition Services, and service providers, whether statutory or charitable, which provide support beyond employment to veterans. Defence Transition Services will have a regional footprint across the UK and caseworkers will assist Service leavers both in the location of their final duty unit, and where they have moved (or intend moving) to as part of their return to civilian life.

## **The Strategy for our Veterans**

On 14 November 2018, the Strategy for our Veterans was jointly published by the UK, Scottish and Welsh Governments.<sup>30</sup> It was the first time that such a strategy had been published, having been developed collaboratively across Whitehall and Devolved governments, with the Northern Ireland Office representing Northern Ireland in the absence of the Northern Ireland Executive. It set an enduring vision and principles for support to veterans across the UK. Together, they state the long-term goal against which the Government will deliver services for veterans throughout the UK. To deliver the vision and principles, outcomes have been set for 2028 for five cross-cutting factors and six key themes that give tangible aspirations against which success can be measured.

Since veterans draw on services from across governments and departments, all nations will work to deliver the strategy in line with local needs and

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<sup>30</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategy-for-our-veterans>

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delivery mechanisms. The new Office for Veterans Affairs will oversee the delivery of the strategy. Since the publication of the Strategy for our Veterans, each home nation has conducted their own consultation to inform how they will implement the strategy.

The UK Government Consultation Paper sought public views on how the strategy's outcomes for 2028 could be implemented across the UK (except for devolved matters in Scotland and Wales), against the background of what provision already exists. This consultation was open between November 2018 and February 2019, receiving a large volume of responses from both individuals and organisations, and excellent attendance at a range of consultation events. This wealth of qualitative data offered a highly valuable insight into veteran issues and a professional qualitative analyst company undertook the primary analysis. The Government will publish its consultation response shortly.

The Scottish Government Consultation was conducted in tandem with the UK Government consultation and built on the work already done by the Scottish Veterans Commissioner, by conducting a series of face-to-face engagements with around 450 people across the public, private and third sectors. The Scottish Government continues to work with stakeholders to consider the feedback gathered from its consultation and from the wider UK consultation. Additionally, the Scottish Government's Veterans Minister updated the Scottish Parliament on the Strategy for our Veterans, through a Ministerial Statement given in Holyrood on 12 June 2019.<sup>31</sup>

From October 2018 to February 2019, the Welsh Government conducted a scoping exercise to identify gaps in the current service provision for veterans and their families in line with the themes of the Strategy for our Veterans. In addition to an online survey, there were over 45 engagement events and meetings held with support groups, sector representatives and stakeholders. Feedback was received from over 1,000 veterans, their families and organisations. The findings from the scoping exercise will inform policy delivery moving forward. The Welsh Government is working in collaboration with its Armed Forces Expert Group to develop a delivery plan during Autumn 2019.

## **Non-UK nationals**

In response to concerns raised in the 2018 external observations, the MOD has prioritised improving the support provided to non-UK Service personnel and their families. Following a review of provision, a tri-Service working group has been established and is meeting quarterly to take forward the recommendations of the review. This includes: ensuring potential non-UK recruits are receiving correct and clear information on visa costs and minimum income requirements early in the recruitment process; increasing awareness among unit staff to support personnel and their families in-service; and supporting personnel and unit staff to prepare for transition. An implementation plan has been endorsed and will be delivered by the working group. A key element of this work is improving understanding of these diverse communities and the implications that cultural differences have for the type of support MOD should offer.

In October 2019, in recognition of the unique circumstances facing non-UK Service personnel and their families, the MOD endorsed a three-pronged action plan that will improve the support available to this cohort. To supplement the Anglia Ruskin University Cobseo report: Meeting the needs of Commonwealth Personnel and Families, activity is under way to improve the evidence base and understanding of the key issues and to identify those in greatest need. Through analysis of attitudinal survey data and by adopting a consistent approach to data collection across the Services, MOD is working with the Families Federations to analyse data, which can inform new policy allowing targeted support. Capturing the lived experience of non-UK families and strengthening connections with non-UK communities through existing networks is critical to this work.

Equally important is the need to empower non-UK Service personnel with information so that they are aware of the costs of naturalisation and the implications of minimum income requirements on their family members. The MOD is targeting improved information at recruitment, in-Service and on transitioning out of Service so that families can take timely decisions that are right for them in the context of the stage of the Service person's career.

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<sup>31</sup> [http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=12182&mode=html#iob\\_110023](http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=12182&mode=html#iob_110023)

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Complimenting the drive to empower families, the MOD is also initiating a wider review of policies and support packages to ensure they meet the needs of non-UK Service Personnel and their families. This includes the promotion of existing savings schemes to minimise the impact of visa costs, consideration of other bespoke financial products and services, and factoring the needs of non-UK Service Personnel and their families into the roll-out of JSP 100, the new holistic Transition Policy. On the wider issue of immigration policy, the Home Office and MOD continue to discuss the challenges faced by the non-UK community.

### **War widows pensions**

The MOD and the Government recognise the unique commitment that Service families make to our country and remains sympathetic to the circumstances of those widows who remarried or cohabited before 1 April 2015. However, this is a complex policy area and is taking time to carefully consider the potential options within both financial and legal constraints. The Secretary of State for Defence and other Ministerial colleagues are currently considering how to take this issue forward.

### **HMRC launches internship for Service leavers**

In August 2019, HMRC launched a recruitment programme for service personnel in transition. This unique programme offers an eight-week internship followed by a two-year fixed-term appointment for those meeting the required standards for the role. During the eight-week programme, interns continue to be paid by the MOD as part of the resettlement process. Interns are placed into a role within a key line of business offering an opportunity to learn first-hand from subject matter experts and experienced colleagues with an established reputation in their profession. To aid transition, Service leavers are matched with a buddy from the HMRC Veterans Advocates network and also join a virtual cohort of other Service leavers for mutual support.

## **Support available in England**

### **The Further Forces programme**

The Further Forces programme aims to recruit Service leavers with relevant technical knowledge, skills and experience in science, engineering and technology to be trained as teachers in the further education sector. The Department for Education supports the scheme through its funding of the Education and Training Foundation, which oversees the programme in partnership with the Gatsby Charitable Foundation. Initial teacher education, mentoring and support to secure employment in a further education technical teaching role are delivered by two partners – the University of Portsmouth in the south, and the Association of Colleges in the north. The University of Brighton delivers subject specialist mentoring for trainees to support technical knowledge enhancement. The ambition is to recruit up to 210 participants onto the programme by July 2020. As of September 2019, there were over 200 Service leavers engaged on the programme, with 91 participants undertaking initial teacher education (of which 46 are undertaking in-service training).

### **Veterans in the Criminal Justice System**

The Veterans ReGroup pathfinder service is for veterans in the criminal justice system in the Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire areas in August 2019. The service provides a joined-up and holistic care pathway for veterans on the verge of criminal behaviour, those within the Criminal Justice System and those exiting prison, with a key aim of reducing the risk of these individuals offending or reoffending. Veterans ReGroup will be delivered for a period of 18 months with key insight and outcomes, informing future commissioning arrangements for an England-wide service.

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## Support available in Scotland

### Expansion of Armed Forces and veterans network in Scotland

The Scottish Government continues to have a strong network of champions across local authorities, the NHS and other public sector bodies in Scotland. In March 2019, Skills Development Scotland established a network of veterans champions across its five regional areas to support Service leavers and veterans along their employment pathway.

### Veterans Employability Strategic Group

The Veterans Employability Strategic Group, formed in 2017 as a response to a recommendation from the Scottish Veterans' Commissioner, continues to build on and strengthen the Scottish Government's partnership approach to employability, as it works in collaboration to identify and strengthen pathways into employment for Service leavers and veterans and identify ways to promote the value, skills and attributes veterans and early Service leavers bring.

### A96 Corridor Pilot

The Pilot continues its promotion of partnership services with Continuing Professional Development sessions offered to Resettlement Officers, Careers Transition Partnership (CTP) and Skills Development Scotland (SDS) staff. So far, 17 transitioning personnel have accessed the Inverness SDS centre. Not all have come via CTP referral – the majority have self-referred following a briefing from an Individual Education and Resettlement Officer or through word of mouth. This highlights the evolution of the process and partnership engagement to a business-as-usual approach. A dedicated Scottish-specific page developed collaboratively by the MOD, SDS and the CTP is now live on the latter's website. Partnership work continues with Leuchars Co-Working Hub, and Skills Development Scotland piloted an offer to the Co-Working Hub Helensburgh (Drumfork) in September 2019.

### Recognition of skills

Following a recommendation of the Scottish Veterans, the Scottish Government, the Scottish Funding Council and Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership have been working in partnership to seek a way of substantiating military-gained skills and qualifications into recognised skills to civilian employers. On 25 September 2019, the Scottish Government launched the new resources to help employers and educational institutions understand the range of skills and expertise that those leaving the Armed Forces have to offer. In addition, these support individuals to articulate their skills clearly to find employment or education.<sup>32</sup>

### Workplace Equality Fund

The Scottish Government has provided £800,000 in 2019/20 to the Workplace Equality Fund. The purpose of the fund is to support employers to address long-standing barriers particular groups face to entering and progressing in the labour market so that everyone in Scotland has the opportunity to fulfil their potential. The criteria for the fund have now been amended to include the Armed Forces community, which includes veterans and spouses.

### Scottish Veterans Commissioner

The role of the independent Veterans Commissioner has now been firmly embedded five years after it was established. The current commissioner began his tenure by establishing the baseline and used that and the recent Strategy for our Veterans consultation to inform his priorities going forward. In June 2019, the commissioner published an independent assessment of the Scottish Government's progress against each of the former commissioner's 63 recommendations made over four in-depth reports.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> <https://scqf.org.uk/support/support-for-learners-parents/support-for-veterans/>

<sup>33</sup> A copy can be found at <https://scottishveteranscommissioner.org/sgprogress/>



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## Support available in Wales

### Project 360

Project 360, which has 5,310 veteran beneficiaries, is a national partnership project in which Age Cymru is working alongside veterans' charity Woody's Lodge and Age Alliance Wales members.

Project 360, in collaboration with Veterans UK, now runs a promotional campaign to signpost older veterans to information on pension queries. There was a soft launch in July 2019, with its formal launch occurring in October 2019.

Project 360 has also funded a new bereavement support service provided by Cruse Cymru. Veterans aged 65 and over who are struggling with bereavement can access support through trained volunteers. To improve advocacy for older veterans, the project has also provided funding to train volunteer peer advocates from the Armed Forces community in West Wales and Gwynedd to support clients to access services. In addition, the project has funded some support focused on older veterans with caring responsibilities, and a scheme to help older veterans with hearing loss to get active and be more connected by developing their confidence with online technology.

### Armed Forces Liaison Officers

The Welsh Government provided £500,000 to continue funding for Armed Forces Liaison Officers for 2019–2021. Armed Forces Liaison Officers provide the Welsh Government with a unique means of supporting local authorities to ensure consistent delivery of policies and procedures that support the Armed Forces community. Local authorities have worked with the Armed Forces Liaison Officers to identify regional and local needs of the Armed Forces community. Following engagement with local authorities across Wales, each local authority has embedded the principles within Our Community – Our Covenant in the discharge of their functions.

### Supporting the Transition of Military Personnel (SToMP)

The SToMP project adopts a whole system approach to supporting veterans who come into contact with the Criminal Justice System in Wales. In the past year, SToMP has implemented its whole system pathway for former Service personnel at the five Welsh prisons. The SToMP team worked closely with all prisons in Wales to scope their existing processes of identification, support and referrals of former Service personnel, and develop a shared, consistent approach. The pathway includes identification, recording and signposting stages with consideration of transferring former Service personnel where appropriate to HMP Parc and HMP Berwyn's dedicated veterans units.

### Resilience building for veterans in custody

In Summer 2019, the University of South Wales ran an intervention in Parc Prison. It worked with veterans to help them better understand how thoughts and feelings interact to affect behaviours. The aim of the intervention was to deliver a complimentary wrap-around support structure that comprised of coping and resilience building for veterans in custody. The intervention, led by former Royal Engineer and psychologist Dr Ross Hall, complemented the existing work of the Endeavour Wing. Using weekly one-to-one sessions and family workshops, prison staff and families have seen positive results of the programme in improving prisoners' emotional wellbeing.

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## Support available in Northern Ireland

The veterans' support structure and application of the Covenant in Northern Ireland as it affects veterans is overseen by Reserved Forces and Cadets Association in Northern Ireland through its administration and management of the Veterans' Support Office (VSO). The VSO works with charities, Veterans' support organisations and statutory bodies across the UK to identify best practice and to sponsor their introduction, where appropriate, in Northern Ireland. It intervenes in established practice or takes up individual cases where and when charitable or statutory bodies are not able to address an individual issue or case. As at September 2019, the total number of cases that the VSO was working with was 51. This includes 17 of last year's cases that were brought forward and 34 new cases. Individual case examples range from the securing of a school place for a veteran's child, facilitating social housing transfer based on need, securing funding for further education courses and emergency funding for heating bills.

A number of projects have been supported in Northern Ireland by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, including 83 awards under the Armistice and Armed Forces Communities Programme. In the 2017/18 financial year, £67,630 was awarded to four projects under the Armed Forces Covenant: Local Grants programme in Northern Ireland. By the end of the 2018/19 financial year, this had increased to £221,410 to 14 projects and in the first two rounds for the 2019/20 financial year, £133,903 has been awarded to eight projects. There are a further two decision rounds for the 2019/20 Financial Year under this programme.

The Veterans' Support Office has been supporting the development of a network of local community centres to provide dedicated spaces for delivery of services, advice and social activities to veterans. There are nine full-time and 50 part-time centres that have been identified as either existing already or being in a position to be provided by existing community interest groups focused on veterans' support. These centres are eligible for local government funding, but only if match funding can be secured.

### **Northern Ireland Aftercare Service**

A key element of the delivery structure in Northern Ireland is the Aftercare Service. This is a unique MOD welfare organisation embedded within 38 (Irish) Brigade to support veterans and their families, specifically from the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) and the Royal Irish Regiment (Home Service) who served during Operation Banner and those wounded, injured and sick from other Services being discharged in Northern Ireland via the personnel recovery process. The Aftercare Service works closely with the Veterans Support Office and in partnership with range of accredited agencies both statutory and voluntary in the delivery of services to achieve the required holistic resolution of each case. There are more than 60,000 UDR and Home Service Veterans. The Aftercare Service has assisted approximately 3,500 cases per year.

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# CHAPTER 8 – BUSINESS AND THE COMMUNITY

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## The Covenant in business across the UK

The Armed Forces Covenant in business is delivered by MOD's Defence Relationship Management organisation (DRM). DRM partners with organisations throughout the UK to support civilian employment for the Armed Forces community, including Reservists, military spouses/partners, veterans and Cadet Force Adult Volunteers. It advises organisations on how to improve fairness for the Armed Forces community in the consumer market and encourages forces-friendly human resource policies. DRM supports employers across the UK to recruit and retain members of the Armed Forces community, so that businesses can access the transferable skills that former Service personnel bring to the civilian workplace.

### Armed Forces Covenant signings

In 2019, the signings of the Armed Forces Covenant continued to grow. As at September 2019, there were 1,000 new signings, taking the total to over 4,000, which suggests that the 5,000th signing will likely take place in 2020. The rate of signings is increasing, and currently there are approximately 27 new signatories on average per week. Key signings this year include:

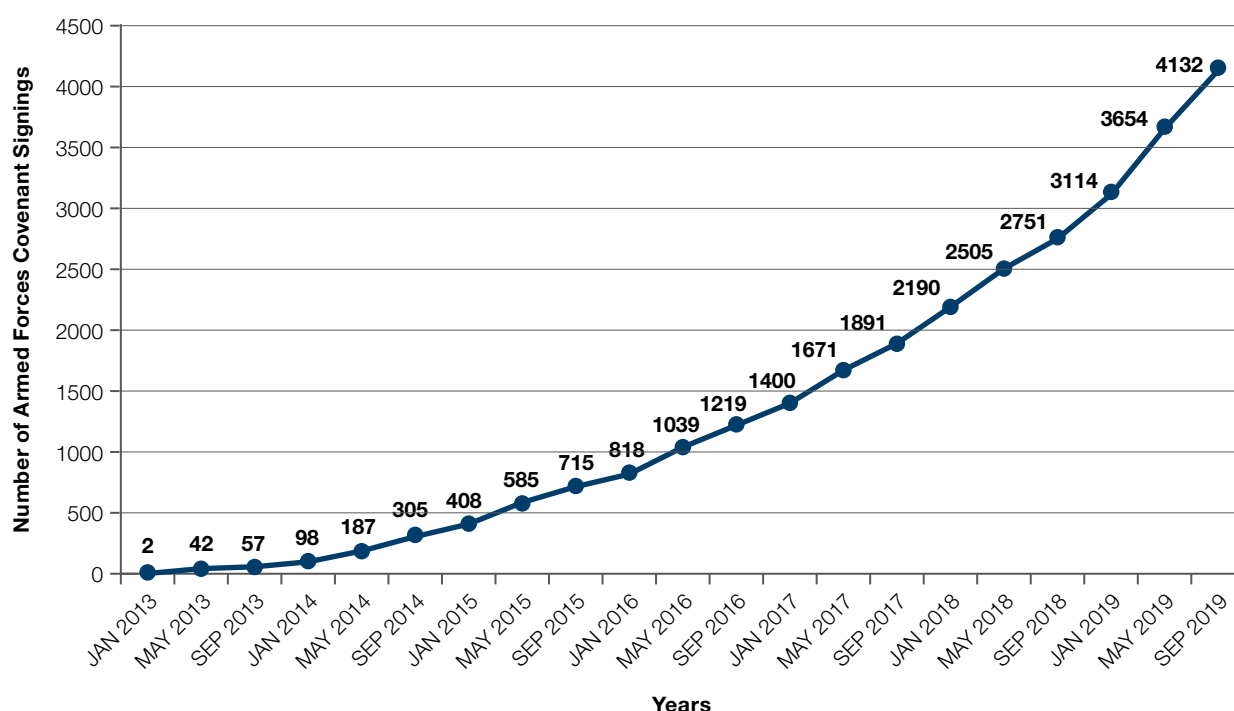
- Facebook, which signed the Covenant at a Facebook Boost event for the Armed Forces community
- Salesforce, which, through its established Vetforce Programme, offer free Salesforce training and certification available to Service personnel, veterans and their spouses

- Halfords, which in the first four months after signing the Covenant interviewed 320 veterans and Reservists because of its guaranteed interviews pledge, resulting in veterans and Reservists filling nearly a quarter of the 200 full- and part-time positions on offer

### Communicating the Covenant

Communications activity has supported a number of Covenant events, including key signings such as Facebook, Sky, Rangers Football Club, Morgan Stanley and Salesforce. Comms activity promoted announcements such as the Strategy for our Veterans consultation, the extension of the Forces Help to Buy scheme, the trial Veterans Gateway outreach call service, the launch of the Positive Pathways programme, 100 employers winning ERS Gold awards, the ERS Gold Awards ceremony and the launch of the Office for Veterans Affairs. The new DRM Menu of Benefits site has been launched ([www.ersmenuofbenefits.com](http://www.ersmenuofbenefits.com)) and work continues on refreshing the Covenant website ([www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk](http://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk)).

**Figure 3: The Progression of the Armed Forces Covenant signings**



### Measurement of effectiveness (MoE)

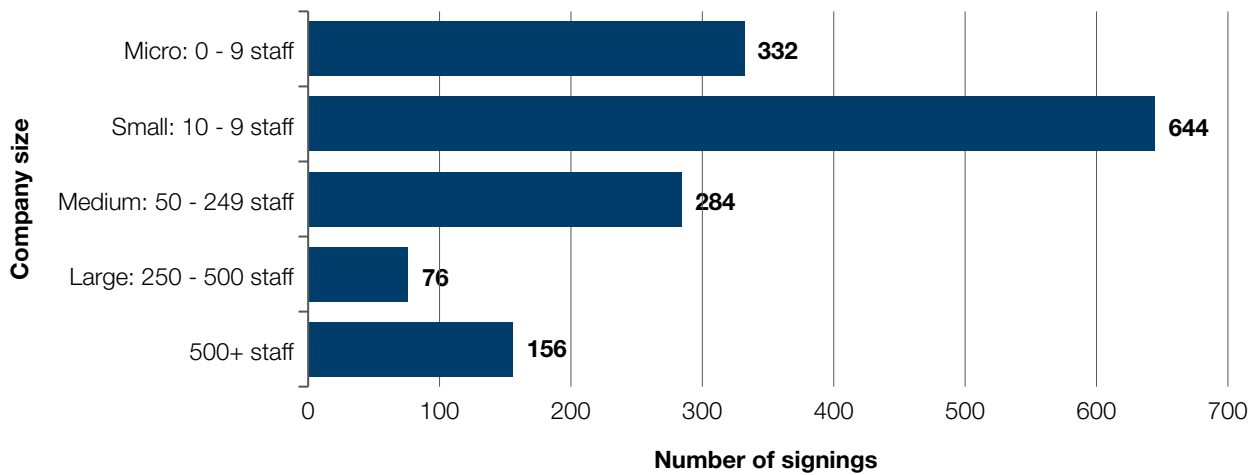
A major focus of 2019 has been to improve the process of measuring the effectiveness of the pledges made by businesses in support of the Covenant. This measurement of effectiveness model was created to report empirically and credibly on the effect of Defence's employer engagement activity and demonstrate value for money in the use of Covenant funding. The model provides greater understanding of what is – and what is not – making a real difference in the Armed Forces community.

Measurement of effectiveness provides an ongoing record of the activity carried out by those who have signed the Armed Forces Covenant since its conception and are engaged with Defence. It captures information against several categories

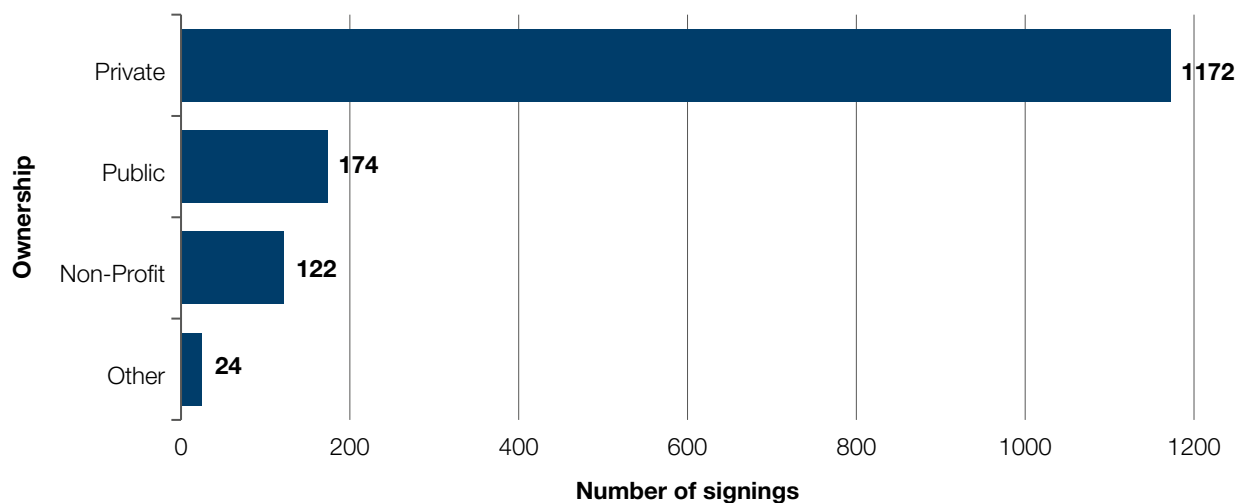
with strong links to the Covenant and the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme. These categories include advocacy and mentoring, collaborations, commercial fairness, communications campaigns, defence discussion forums, event attendance, human resources, internal military network, and workplace employer engagement, with sub-categories within each of these.

An employer can have more than one record logged against them, and although some criteria, such as 10 days paid leave, can only be recorded once, others, such as event attendance, are logged per event (i.e. there can be multiple logs in a year). This means that there are more records of measurement of effectiveness than there are Covenant signatories.

**Figure 4: Armed Forces Covenant signings by company size, numbers from 1 October 2018 to 30 September 2019**



**Figure 5: Armed Forces Covenant signings by company ownership, numbers from 1 October 2018 to 30 September 2019**





**Table 2: Numbers of Covenant signatories providing against specific categories of support between 1 October 2018 and September 2019**

Category	Numbers of activity recorded <sup>34</sup>
Implemented HR policy or process supporting of Defence people objectives	1,581
Attendance at Defence events	1,087
Collaborations (e.g. with Career Transition Partnership or charities)	1,018
Communications campaigns	1,127
Internal military network	227
Advocacy and mentoring	461
Commercial fairness	345
Defence discussion forums	171
Workplace employer engagement	74
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,091</b>

Many organisations have put HR policies in place, with more willing to offer the higher rate of 10 days additional paid leave for Service-related activities (Gold ERS standard), as opposed to the five days or more additional paid leave (ERS Silver standard). The most popular HR policy has been positive recruitment for those within the Armed Forces community. This includes guaranteed interviews, connecting with the MOD's Career Transition Partnership and having dedicated members of HR teams to liaise with veterans and help translate their CVs into civilian language.

**Table 3: Number of Covenant signatories recorded as providing supportive HR policies between 1 October 2018 and 30 September 2019**

Type of activity	Number of organisations recording such activity
Positive recruitment for Defence people community	539
Flexible or remote working for partners and spouses	496
= 10 days paid leave	160
Additional leave for CFAVs	153
>=5 days paid leave	123
Internal transition / buddy scheme	38
>= 5 days unpaid leave	27
=10 days unpaid leave	22
>10 days unpaid leave	16
>10 days paid leave	7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,581</b>

### Armed Forces champions

Armed Forces champions make up 66% of the internal military network within signatory organisations, highlighting traction in this area. Armed Forces champions help to prioritise Defence matters within the organisation and ensure those from the Armed Forces community are not disadvantaged. MOD is supporting organisations to put the necessary governance and steering groups in place to ensure effectiveness, and hope to see these numbers grow in 2020. There is more work to be done as there have been a lower number of records placed against defence discussion forums, commercial fairness and workplace employer engagement (where an employer hosts an event within their organisation including inviting in the single Services to present to their staff).

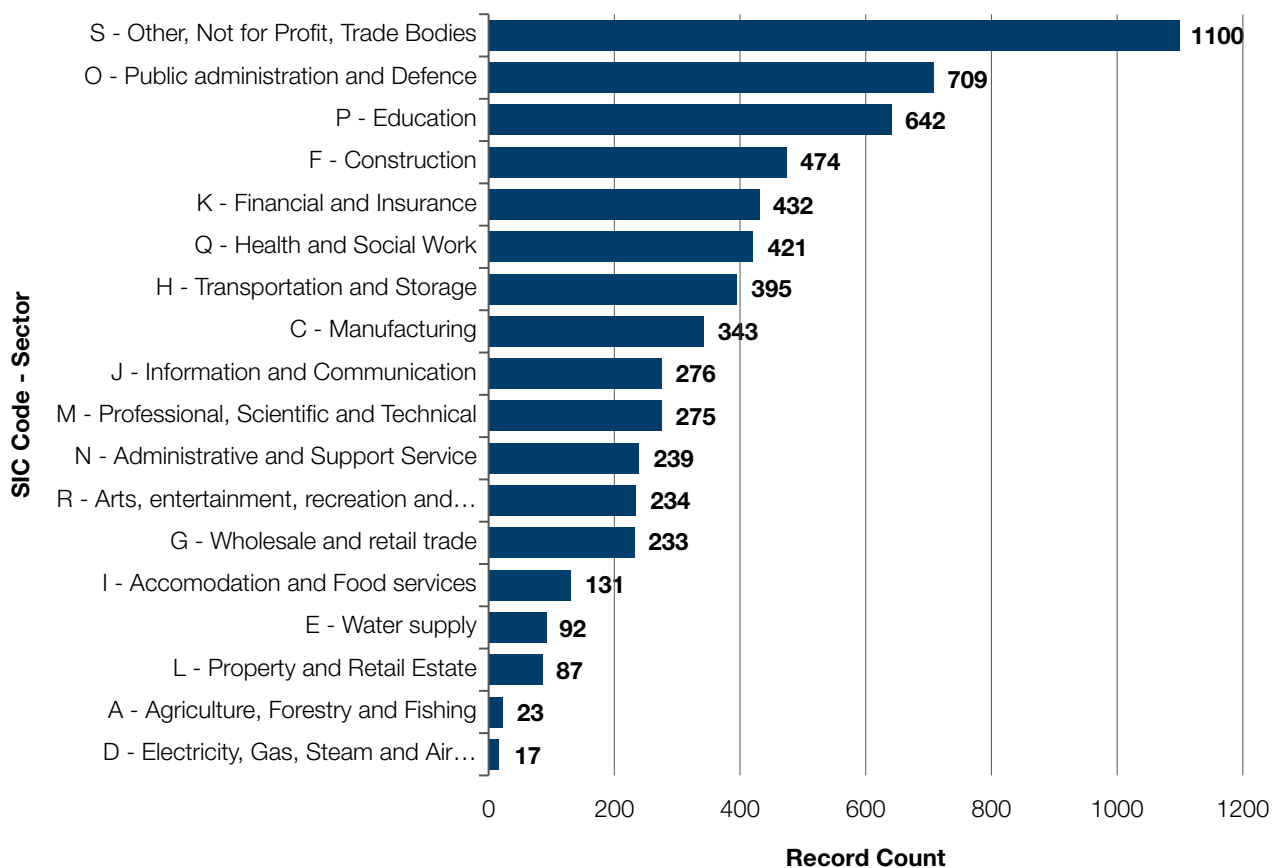
<sup>34</sup> Each signing can have multiple activities, hence companies can also be recorded on multiple times.

### Trade bodies, public sector and defence

There has been significant growth in Covenant signing for trade bodies, public sector and defence (see Fig 4 below). These sectors have also shown significant growth over the last 12 months. Technology and telecommunications signings are growing strongly and recently organisations such as Facebook and Sky have signed the Covenant at large-scale high-profile events, which are exploited to publicise the Covenant to peer and sectoral organisations. It is unsurprising that industries such as construction, manufacturing, finance and transport are doing well, as traditionally these are very supportive sectors for Covenant agenda.

Energy and utilities have traditionally been slow growth sectors and Defence Relationship Management is looking to focus on these sectors over the coming year, with various planned Covenant signings and sector-wide advocacy events. Defence Relationship Management is also looking to increase the number of signings in lower-growth sectors and capitalise further on sectors where it has seen more significant growth.

**Figure 6: Number of Covenant signatories with new records of support by industry sector between 1 October and 30 September 2019**



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## **Defence Employer Recognition Scheme awards<sup>35</sup>**

The results recorded in the 12-month period are encouraging. It points to which types of employer engagement activity employers are more responsive to, enabling us to focus on engagement in these areas, as well as to understand and develop weaker areas. Defence Relationship Management intends to utilise this data to further develop regional performance measures and targets. Since its launch in 2014, the Employer Recognition Scheme has presented 228 Gold awards to a wide variety of organisations, in recognition of their outstanding support to the Armed Forces. In 2019, there has again been a record number of employers receiving the award (100 in total: an increase of 96% from the 51 awarded in 2018). These consist of 23 local authorities, 13 NHS Hospitals and Trusts, and 29 small or medium-sized enterprises, along with FTSE100 companies. These include Flintshire County Council, Northumbria NHS Foundation Trust, IED Training Solutions and Rolls Royce. Many of the achievements are a direct result of initiatives proposed and work undertaken alongside employers.

## **Forces in Mind Trust review of the Covenant in business**

The Forces in Mind Trust commissioned a review of the Covenant in business, which led to the Benefit not Burden report, published in Spring 2019. The report presented several recommendations for improving the delivery of pledges made by organisations under the Covenant.<sup>36</sup> A working group has been set up to review and consider how best to deliver the recommendations that will improve the quality and delivery of pledges, through an action plan. The action plan will consider ways in which the key findings of the report can be addressed throughout 2020. A key finding such as improving the awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant among organisations could be addressed by helping to communicate how best to support the local Armed Forces community, increasing knowledge of their presence within

local communities, and through organisations sharing best practice and promoting the benefits to business to other companies. There is also a role for the Armed Forces champions network to consider how individuals can play a part in raising awareness of the Covenant, encouraging them to be ambassadors for the Covenant within their workplaces and with their clients and suppliers. Improving the business section of the Covenant website to appeal to businesses and organisations who have signed or who want to support the Covenant will be developed.

## **Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Armed Forces champions**

The DWP champions play a pivotal role in helping to maintain and raise awareness of how each Jobcentre can support veterans, Service personnel and their families. In response to stakeholder feedback and recent research reports, the DWP has secured funding to bolster the role of its Armed Forces champions across the country and will be able to nearly triple the resources dedicated to supporting the Armed Forces community during 2020/21. The champions develop strong partnerships working closely with the Armed Forces community, Service charities and support organisations in their district, as well as local and national employers to continuously improve the support on offer. While not customer-facing, the champions maintain close contact with Jobcentre Plus Work Coaches and other DWP staff.

Champions can offer a bespoke service to match the needs of their local Armed Forces community. In 2019, champions delivered personal independence payment workshops to organisations that support veterans and their families, to enhance their knowledge of this benefit. Work coach workshops have also been arranged to raise awareness of the barriers and challenges that some people leaving the Armed Forces face. These have covered issues such as mental health, debt and money management, and reinforced to staff the skills that veterans can bring to civilian employers.

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<sup>35</sup> The Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) encourages employers to support defence and inspire others to do the same. The scheme encompasses bronze, silver and gold awards for employer organisations that pledge, demonstrate or advocate support to defence and the Armed Forces community, and align their values with the Armed Forces Covenant.

<sup>36</sup> The private sector, public sector (except for local authorities), and the third sector.

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## **DWP's National Employer and Partnership Team**

NEPT promotes the Armed Forces Covenant to employers, partner organisations and trade bodies, encouraging them to sign the Covenant, develop their pledges and share good practice.

For those signing the Covenant, NEPT helps them translate their commitment into practical action and achieve recognition of their support through the Employer Recognition Scheme. In undertaking this work, NEPT has strengthened its relationship with the Defence Relationship Management team, enabling both to target and co-ordinate their activities.

During 2019, NEPT has continued to work with selected employers and sector representational bodies including John Lewis, Marks and Spencer, Hilton and UPS. They have also worked with sector representative bodies, such as Energy and

Utility Skills, over the past year, with the intent of raising awareness and support for the Covenant among their members. This work led to nine new signatories formalising their commitment, including three new employers signing and one re-signing at a 'mass signing' of the Covenant in September 2019.

## **National Insurance credits: partners of people in the Armed Forces**

In 2019, the Department for Work and Pensions, Ministry of Defence, and HM Revenue and Customs have worked together to refresh the advice available on GOV.UK on how eligible spouses and civil partners who accompanied their Service partner on postings outside the UK can apply for National Insurance credits.<sup>37</sup> These credits help partners to protect their National Insurance record and can add qualifying years for future State Pension entitlement. As at September 2019, there have been over 7,390 online applications.

### **Case study – DWP supporting returning soldiers and their families**

The DWP continue to work collaboratively with the MOD and other key local stakeholders to support the return of Service personnel and their families from their bases in Germany to Salisbury Plain.

The local DWP Employer and Partnership team are working proactively with the Army, Wiltshire Council, Wiltshire College and employers to support the settlement of the families into the local community.

The DWP Employer and Partnership Manager said: "DWP has established a strong working relationship with the Army through the Jobs and Employment for Military Spouses project and the British Forces Broadcasting Service (BFBS) to support the returning families. Awareness of Universal Credit has been at the heart of our messaging and that local support is available to families looking to claim benefit. ...It's an exciting undertaking for our rural community. There is a buoyant labour market and local employers will welcome a new workforce coming into the area."

DWP have recorded videos for the BFBS and written a piece for their newsletter to explain how DWP can assist families on their return. These explain how staff are on hand, in the local Jobcentres, to support any Service personnel and their dependants who make a claim to Universal Credit or who need help to find work. DWP also produced and shared with the Army a localised flyer, containing details about how to claim Universal Credit along with, information about local employment agencies, and job search websites.

Local Jobcentre staff will continue to raise further awareness of the local labour market and its requirements, the benefits system and support for Service personnel and their families at events such as the Military Community Education and Employment Fair in Tidworth (Autumn 2019).

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<sup>37</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-insurance-credits-for-partners-of-armed-forces-personnel-overseas>

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### **Case study: Employment and benefit advice – Richmond Jobcentre Plus, DWP working in partnership with Catterick Garrison**

During 2019, Richmond Jobcentre Plus has continued to strengthen its close working relationship with Catterick Garrison. Their work involves helping to support spouses/partners and families of Service personnel into employment, providing benefit advice to Service families and Early Service Leavers (ESL), and briefing Catterick Unit Welfare Officers to enhance their knowledge of the welfare system.

The Employment and Support fairs, run collaboratively by the Jobcentre and the Garrison, have gone from strength to strength, trebling in size since they began in 2017. Jobcentre Plus staff actively promote the fairs to their Service community customers and the MOD co-ordinates military support for the fairs and advertise them to units, spouses and partners.

DWP staff hold weekly group information sessions for all ESLs about benefits at the Infantry Training Centre. DWP staff are on hand to provide one-to-one support, ensuring that the ESLs get the advice and the holistic package of support they need prior to leaving. This is a pivotal role in co-ordinating support for the most vulnerable leavers. In January 2019, a fortnightly surgery was introduced, staffed by local Jobcentre Plus staff aimed at providing benefit advice and employment support to Service personnel and their families.

In May 2019, Baroness Buscombe, Minister for Work and Pensions (Lords), responsible for the Armed Forces Covenant, visited both Richmond Jobcentre and Catterick Garrison in recognition of the strong collaboration between them.

### **DWP work coaches supporting veterans**

The DWP Jobcentre Plus work coaches provide invaluable assistance to veterans and their families helping them settle back into civilian life by providing personalised and tailored support.

Work coaches provide support in a variety of ways, helping people on their journey to securing employment, advising and helping them navigate the benefit system and also signposting them to support offered by other organisations.

In 2019, DWP held another successful Universal Credit (UC) workshop for external stakeholders from the Armed Forces community, focusing on issues within the UC system particularly relevant for veterans, Service personnel and their families. This package of support forms part of the DWP's commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant.

### **Case study – Work coach supports a veteran into a permanent employment**

One such example is when John (not his real name), a veteran who had served in the Royal Air Force for nine years, lost his job and home. His work coach at the local Jobcentre supported him to “get back on his feet”, helping with his CV and finding him a temporary job within the retail sector. This met his short-term goal. The work coach then helped John to secure permanent work, referring him to an employment opportunity with a food manufacturing company through ‘Movement to Work’. This was a three-week trial with the chance of being offered a permanent job at the end.

John's work coach said, “Once John was referred to the ‘Movement to Work’ opportunity, he was noticeably lifted and came in afterwards with a smile on his face and a positive outlook to his future.” John successfully completed the trial and was offered a permanent job in quality assurance.

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## Support for the Covenant in the Community

The MOD has seen local partnerships continue to take forward their Covenant pledges throughout the UK.<sup>38</sup> For example, a new website and film designed to provide support to the Army and training for those working with Service personnel in communities has been launched in the South West. Wiltshire Council, alongside partnering neighbouring authorities, has launched the digital support as part of the South West Armed Forces Covenant Project. The councils, led by Wiltshire Council, include Bristol City, Cornwall, Devon, Gloucestershire, North Somerset and Somerset. They are working together to improve delivery of the Covenant, raise awareness and promote understanding to benefit military communities. Referred to as Forces Connect South West, the authorities won £190,000 government funding in 2016 and an extra £150,000 early in 2018 to fund initiatives. The film, called Change Step, and website raise awareness of the Covenant and provide information on services available.<sup>39</sup>

The MOD published the 'Welcome to England' guide to add to those already produced in Wales and Scotland. A similar document for Northern Ireland is currently being drafted. This will help veterans, Service personnel and their families when they move around the UK. Additionally, our local Covenant partnerships, led by their local authorities, around the country were involved in the original scoping and consultations of the Strategy for our Veterans work as they will be in the discussion of the implementation of recommendations as they are key Covenant partners in supporting our Armed Forces community.

The national Covenant in the Community conference in April brought together Covenant practitioners and stakeholders from around the country. Among sessions focusing on new initiatives such as the Defence Transition Services and the Map of Need project, a key part of the day saw representatives from Newcastle City Council and Gateshead Councils, both awarded Employer Recognition Scheme Gold, share their experiences, challenges and successes with their peers. Another 11 local authorities received Gold Employer Recognition Scheme Awards this year, which clearly shows how our partners in local government are leading on the Covenant in their local areas. More information on Gold Award winners can be found here.<sup>40</sup>

Looking to 2020, the MOD remains committed to ensuring that Covenant practitioners at the local level have the tools and guidance they need to help them deliver their objectives under the Covenant. As well as looking to produce new tools and guidance, the MOD will also arrange a National Covenant in the Community Conference and will attend the many local events arranged by our Covenant partners.

### Defence Discount Service

The Defence Discount Service supports the Armed Forces community, including Regular and Reserve personnel, their families and veterans. It has seen further growth with over 500,000 members and 12,000 businesses signed up as at September 2019. The Defence Discount Service has continued to invest in and promote its services including on its mobile app which allows members to search for offers near to them and save money on the go. In addition, the back of the Privilege Card has been designed to contain Veterans UK and Veterans' Gateway contact information. The Defence Discount Service continues to play an integral part in Armed Forces Day, attending the national event and helping in advance with introductions to corporate sponsors.

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<sup>38</sup> <https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/covenantinaction/>

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.forcesconnectsouthwest.org.uk/>

<sup>40</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/832516/20190918\\_ERS\\_Gold\\_Award\\_Holders\\_clean.ods](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/832516/20190918_ERS_Gold_Award_Holders_clean.ods)



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### **Case study – Military and Police Support West Tyrone, Northern Ireland**

Military and Police Support West Tyrone were awarded £12,730 from the Armed Forces Covenant Local Grants programme to create a veterans' garden. Set in an area of outstanding natural beauty, the garden can be used as a means of improving wellbeing through nature-based therapy. In addition, the garden will provide a place for learning and healing through organised surgeries to be held there.

Some of those involved in creating the garden have even been through health and wellbeing therapy themselves and are now involved as volunteers, passing on their skills to others.

Community integration within West Tyrone is difficult for the tri-Service community, with some veterans fearing potential stigma regarding the Service career. The group see this project as a way for veterans to integrate in the community as a volunteer who takes pride in the environment. This builds trust and enables veterans to share their experiences and their newly found skills with others.

It is not just about the gardening, the people involved have taken pride in the space they have developed and now regularly entertain visitors, showing them around and allowing them access to rest for a while.

Such has been the success of the project, visitors have added to the area by purchasing picnic benches, chairs and a microwave for the cabin. For years, a veteran and his wife lived in isolation never exposing the fact he served. That couple were one of the first to visit the fledgling garden and have visited regularly in the intervening months enjoying the company of the gardeners and the opportunity to relax in peaceful surroundings. The experience has been so positive that they have now donated a table and chairs for a patio area so that others can appreciate what they have witnessed since the start of the year. The garden has drastically improved their circumstances.

An attendee of the project commented: "This has been a lovely day, especially going around the amazing garden with all the beautiful vegetables. Such a lovely, peaceful setting for gardening. this project will give so much pleasure and therapy to all those who avail of it





## Case Study Flintshire County Council, Planes of Talacre – WW2 living history, Wales

Planes over Talacre – WW2 Living History is a project to bring together the secrets of Talacre's WW2 efforts through the stories and memories of those who lived alongside the firing ranges and underneath aerial dog-fights with terrifying near-misses from dropping bombs. Match funding for the project was also secured from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

A living history with a modern-day twist, this project focused on WW2 education, with a key focus being to provide educational resources for Key Stage 2 children (and older). The project has been supported by field trips, a guide book with a trail taking in points of interest and re-enactments that bring history to life.

A core focus for this inclusive project was educational activities involving a class of both year five and six pupils from each of the five local primary schools. This involved an introductory 'Talacre in WW2' workshop, and a series of activities about different aspects of life in Talacre during WW2, covering rationing, rag-rugging, aircraft spotting and military personnel stationed at Talacre. Each class then spent a full day at Talacre Warren learning about the area in WW2 through hands-on activities.



Feedback from the schools was very positive, with one school commenting: "I thought the educational value of the whole 'Then and now' topic was excellent. In the classroom they listened carefully to the first-hand memories of living at Talacre during that period and the pictures that went with it illustrated the points being made perfectly. The activities in the classroom were well considered, relevant and suitable for the age group. They particularly enjoyed dressing up and I was very interested in the beach defences."

Another key element to this successful project included a Talacre Story Shop, where over 800 people came to see displays and listen to recordings – many bringing photographs and artefacts of their own and sharing their own memories including coming to Talacre as evacuees. Visitors were also invited to work with a print-maker to print fabric flags with wildlife and WW2 images, from stencils made by Ysgol Gronant pupils. All the flags were made into bunting for the WW2 weekend by a team of volunteers.

As part of the project, the group also produced a computer generated (CGI) film, showing the Spitfire training above Talacre. This dramatic film was shown to a packed audience in the community centre, used as part of the school workshops, played at the WW2 weekend and is now available on YouTube where it has already had over 1,000 views.

Stills from the film were used in displays at the Story Shop and WW2 weekend.

To conclude the project, the group held a WW2 weekend in July 2019. Visitors were able to experience being in a (virtual reality) aircraft cockpit, handle 'home front' artefacts such as gas masks, and dress up in period clothing. Pride of place at the event was a replica Spitfire.

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## The Covenant in business in Wales

### Veterans into business

Business Wales is the Welsh Government's bilingual business support service that provides impartial, independent support and advice to people starting, running and growing a business in Wales. It offers a single point of contact for businesses and entrepreneurs to advice and support from public, private and voluntary sectors.

#### Case study

Neil, a former Royal Marine and personal trainer from Aberystwyth, now based in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Business Wales for me was extremely helpful in helping me with my business idea. I had three meetings with a member of the team. I was met with great professionalism and enthusiasm. They listened to my ideas and acted accordingly based on my plans. Together, Business Wales and I set small targets to achieve and they were always on hand via email or phone if I required any assistance. They also provided me with a business plan template which was very easy to follow.

I wouldn't be making the progressive steps I am today if I didn't get involved with Business Wales.

### Business in the Community Cymru/Royal British Legion Veteran-Friendly Employers Group

In September 2018, Business in the Community Cymru launched its Veteran-Friendly Employers Group. With support and funding from the Royal British Legion, the group has brought together employers from across south Wales who see the benefits of capitalising on talents of veterans. The group meets regularly to discuss opportunities to develop new human resource and recruitment approaches and to share examples of best practice. Veteran employees have been invited to speak to the group to share first-hand their experiences of entering the workforce. As part of their commitment to joining the group, many of the businesses have also signed the Armed Forces Covenant. The group has also supported the Welsh Government's Inspire, Hire, Grow Armed Forces Employers' Toolkit. The group has been contributing to and promoting employability events throughout the year and in Autumn 2019 will be organising its own networking and workshop sessions for employers and veteran jobseekers.

### Officers' Association

In January 2019, the Officers' Association employment charity, together with Business in the Community Cymru, delivered a workshop for businesses looking to attract veterans into roles within their organisations.<sup>41</sup>

The workshop, hosted by Wales and West Utilities, focused on how best to engage with service leavers as well as select them for potential roles. Over 15 employers attended on the day. This demonstrates the growing interest in veteran recruitment from Welsh employers who are keen to access the skills and qualities of this unique talent pool. The Welsh Government supported the event, highlighting its key policy documents: the Employment Pathway and Employers' Toolkit.

### Guaranteed interview schemes for the Armed Forces

Several local authorities in Wales have introduced voluntary guaranteed interview schemes for the Armed Forces as part of their commitment to the Covenant. These schemes broadly commit to offer those who have served in the Armed Forces and who have met the minimum criteria for a job vacancy to be invited for interview. The local authorities include Torfaen, Newport and Flintshire. Others including Monmouthshire, Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent have agreed in principle and are in the process of implementing such schemes.

### Employment Pathway and Employers' Toolkit

The Welsh Government, in collaboration with members of the Armed Forces Expert Group, has developed an Employment Pathway. The Pathway outlines the employment options and services that are available to offer employment assistance. It aims to lessen the challenge facing Service personnel finding new employment during transition.

The Welsh Government in partnership with BITC Cymru developed an Employers' Toolkit to complement the Employment Pathway. It provides clear guidance for employers on the added benefits of employing veterans. The toolkit will help inform recruitment processes that are accessible

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<sup>41</sup> [www.officersassociation.org.uk](http://www.officersassociation.org.uk)

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to Veterans, ensure recruiters and managers understand how to interpret military experience and provide practical workplace experience, offering skills and conversion training. Both these documents were launched in December 2018.

## **Covenant in business across Northern Ireland**





Northern Ireland has its own bespoke arrangement for engagement with businesses in Northern Ireland, developed over many years. This considers Northern Ireland-specific legislation that flows from the 1998 Peace Agreement, facilitating engagement with business without alienating any particular part of the community. These arrangements underpin a positive, proactive relationship with some 800 “supportive” employers and positive contacts with a further 1,200. These arrangements, set up and managed by the Defence Relationship Management team, impact positively on the eight percent of the UK’s Reservists who reside in Northern Ireland. In addition, a range of initiatives are being explored to extend engagement between employers to cadets, cadet adult volunteers, Service leavers and spouses.



# ANNEX A: TABLE OF COMMITMENTS

This table shows the commitments that were made for the first time in the Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report that was published in December 2016 and those that were recorded in the table at the back of that report as “to be completed”.




## KEY TO RED/AMBER/GREEN STATUS

Completed/Terminated	
On target for delivery	
More work needed to achieve target	
At risk of not being delivered	

## GOVERNANCE

Commitment	Applies to	Progress	RAG
The Government will implement the new cross-government communications strategy in order to increase awareness and understanding of the Covenant.	UK	The strategy is being implemented and a number of key milestones have been delivered.	

## HEALTHCARE

Commitment	Applies to	Progress	RAG
Defence Statistics will publish the first report on the causes of deaths among veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts in 2015/16.	UK	The study has been renamed the Veteran Cohort Study. In May 2019, the Secretary of State for Defence announced the remit of the study would be expanded to include the most recent Service leavers and would continue to be updated to report near real time monitoring. Defence Statistics are currently working through the required protocols to enable death records to be shared by NHS Digital and the Devolved Administration equivalents. The initial report is due this financial year and will cover the period 2001–2018 with a commitment to monitor all future veterans.	
All GP registration forms in England will include a specific question about whether a patient has served in the UK Armed Forces.	England	DHSC has confirmed that the question was included in forms with effect from December 2018.	
The Welsh Government will implement a national action plan across Wales, aimed at expanding the provision of psychological therapies.	Wales	The Welsh Government is committed to continuing the provision of psychological therapies in adult services and from 2018 has provided health boards with an additional £4 million in funding. A national action plan that takes into account the cognitive behaviour therapy needs of all the population, including veterans, is being implemented across Wales.	

## EDUCATION

Commitment	Applies to	Progress	RAG
The Department for Education will produce guidelines for schools on the use of Service Pupil Premium funding.	England	The Department for Education and the Directorate of Children and Young People are working together to produce an updated and developed resource for all state schools in England by the end of 2019, focussing upon highlighting the Service Pupil Premium and associated good practice.	
The MOD will consider options for providing increased notice to Service families to allow more time for the school admissions process.	UK	The initial (Stage 1) review of application of assignment policy to mitigate perceived disadvantage with school admissions was completed in February 2019. The scope of Stage 2 of the review is under consideration but it is likely to involve further analysis of the career management process, specifically the use of JPA welfare fields to identify families with SEND/ANDA and other vulnerabilities to mobility, and to understand how this information is used during career management. The proposal would be to report the findings of stage 2 in the 2020 Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report.	
The MOD will continue to strengthen its partnerships with education departments, local authorities of main Armed Forces areas, professional bodies and networks to promote the needs of children from Service families.	UK	Working with the local authorities the Directorate of Children and Young People has drafted an agreed set of principles for the transition of Service children with SEND in England. This set of principles will shortly be presented to Local Authorities Chief Executives and Lead elected members for endorsement.	
The MOD will continue to work with colleagues in the Department for Education to seek to resolve the issue of transfer of information for children from Service families, particularly those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities; modify and promote the Pupil Information Profile (PIP) for overseas and Devolved Administrations schools.	UK	The Department for Education will review and revise the existing SEND Code of Practice by end 2020 – so there is opportunity to revisit the sections of the Code that relate to provision for Service children with SEND, including the requirement to ensure mechanisms are in place to enable effective and timely receipt and dispatch of all relevant records for Service children with SEND moving between schools in the UK and overseas, ideally in advance of the child's arrival in school.	
The MOD will work with Devolved Administrations and local authorities to ease the transition for Service personnel returning to the UK from Germany.	UK	Engagement with Devolved Administrations and local authorities are ongoing to ease transition for Service children back into UK education.	
The MOD will complete an additional 50,000 apprenticeships by 2020.	UK	MOD is on track to meet the 50,000 target by 2020.	
Education Scotland will develop accessible national and local information to support Service families' transition into Scotland.	Scotland	The Scottish Government has published guidance for teachers, local authorities and parents on supporting early stages transitions between different education systems which can be a particular area of concern. The National Training Organisation also worked with the National Parent Forum Scotland to develop a 'Nutshell' – a series of parent friendly information – specifically about supporting Armed Forces children.	



In England, from September 2018 the Common Transfer File will include a richer set of data on Service pupils. This data will aid the development of policies to ensure that children from Service families are not disadvantaged.	England	The changes to the Common Transfer File were implemented in September 2018.	
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## ACCOMMODATION

Commitment	Applies to	Progress	RAG
By 2019 the MOD will establish a Single Living Accommodation Management System to provide critical information on the condition of the estate and inform key investment decisions.	UK	The design and development of a Management Information System to provide a single source of accurate data regarding SLA, thus allowing informed strategic financial investment decisions to be made regarding the SLA estate, is ongoing. The Project was placed on operational pause in March 2018 and restarted in April 2019 and, therefore, will not deliver a Management Information System by 2019. On current planning, it is anticipated that the Project will be able to deliver a single source of accurate SLA condition data during 2020.	
Develop an alternative approach to the provision of accommodation for Service personnel and their families.	UK	The Future Accommodation Model pilot was rolled out September 2019 starting with HMNB Clyde. The pilot, which will last for approximately three years, will also be established at Aldershot Garrison and RAF Wittering in 2020.	
Continue to support Service personnel with the Forces Help to Buy Scheme.	UK	The Forces Help to Buy Scheme has been extended beyond December 2022.	
Continue to ensure that the National Housing Prime contract meets contracted standards and that this is reflected in satisfaction levels.	UK	Significant investment has been made in Service Family Accommodation, with over £116 million being spent on improving 3,800 properties based on greatest need first. Amey Plc continue to improve the response repair service – meeting the Key Performance Indicator target on a regular basis. The Future Defence Infrastructure Service contracts for Accommodation continue to be developed to ensure they provide the best possible service delivery and customer service.	
The MOD will spend some £1.85 billion on accommodation by 2020/21 in order to deliver 18,500 SLA bed spaces and 3,000 homes.	UK	MOD Accommodation policy has created an SLA expert advisory group involving all TLB's with stakeholders from personnel and Infrastructure. The Group aims to design and agree an SLA Governance Framework and to identify and prioritise SLA opportunities that will assist with improvement of SLA.	
MHCLG proposes to remove the age restriction for eligibility for starter homes for injured Service personnel and bereaved spouses by Spring 2017.	England	Provisions are included in the draft regulations, which are waiting to be laid before Parliament.	
MHCLG intends to go out to consultation on new statutory guidance for local authorities which will remove the local connection requirement for divorced and separated spouses and civil partners of Service personnel.	England	A consultation on the new guidance will be published imminently. The document updates guidance for local authorities on the wider allocation of social housing to the Armed Forces community.	



## FAMILY LIFE

Commitment	Applies to	Progress	RAG
Following thorough consultation in 2017, MOD will formally consider options for strengthening the childcare support offer for the families of Service personnel early in 2018.	England	The Directorate of Childcare and Young People has provided direction and advice to local commands regarding the governance of childcare provision operating on the Defence estate. Proposals are currently being considered for 2020/21 regarding the development of an Early Years Fund to support the closure of evidenced childcare gaps for military communities. Evidence and options to be provided to the MOD remuneration team.	
The Home Office will work to resolve issues experienced by non-UK families applying for visas and passports.	UK	The Home Office advise the passport issues refer to limited validity documents and this has been resolved. Regarding residency time spent overseas with a Service personnel partner will count towards settlement, so individuals are not disadvantaged.	
The MOD will continue working with the Families Federations to gather further evidence on the inclusion of divorced spouses in the categories of the Armed Forces community and report on the subject in this year's report.	UK	The Government is working with the Families Federations and charitable sector to consider the needs of this cohort of the Armed Forces community. As part of the future evaluation of the Armed Forces Families Strategy MOD will aim to better understand by engagement with stakeholders the societal and welfare needs of this cohort within the Service community.	
The Welsh Government to introduce an enhanced flexible childcare offer for working parents of 3 and 4 year olds by 2020.	Wales	Taking Wales Forward commits the Welsh Government to providing 30 hours a week of government-funded early education and childcare for working parents of three and four year olds, for up to 48 weeks of the year. From April 2019 the scheme was fully rolled out across all local authorities, and will benefit both Serving and ex-Service families.	

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## TRANSITION AND THROUGH-LIFE SUPPORT

Commitment	Applies to	Progress	RAG
The Welsh Government will develop proposals for a veterans' employment pathway.	Wales	<p>The Welsh Government, in collaboration with members of the Armed Forces Expert Group, has developed an Employment Pathway. The Pathway outlines the employment options and services that are available to offer assistance. It aims to lessen the challenge facing Service personnel finding new employment during transition.</p> <p>In partnership with Business in the Community Cymru, the Welsh Government also developed an Employers Toolkit to complement the Employment Pathway. It provides clear guidance for employers on the added benefits of employing ex-Service personnel, the toolkit will help inform recruitment processes that are accessible to veterans, ensure recruiters and managers understand how to interpret military experience and provide practical workplace experience, offering skills and conversion training. Both the pathway and toolkit were launched in December 2018.</p>	

## BUSINESS AND THE COMMUNITY

Commitment	Applies to	Progress	RAG
The MOD will work with the Financial Services Sector to address any potential disadvantages associated with Service overseas.	UK	The MOD engages with industry to review and address disadvantages where this arises.	
During 2018 credit reference agencies and lenders are aiming to complete system changes to improve the recognition and transfer of individuals' credit history while they are based at British Forces Post Office addresses, building on recent improvements in this area.	UK	Changes are in place to improve the recognition and managing of the online application process to accommodate BFPO address format by major lenders. Credit Reference Agencies to update on their work to support BFPO post codes.	
The Government will continue to drive delivery of the recommendations of the Our Community Our Covenant report via the newly formed Action Group.	UK	The Community Action Group was originally set up to take forward the recommendations of the Our Community Our Covenant report. The group met in early July 2019 and agreed their new terms of reference which broadened the remit of the group to consider actions from other sources and to include representatives from the Scottish and Welsh Governments and from key stakeholders in Northern Ireland. Key initiatives include work on e-learning modules and online tools to help local Covenant partnerships adopt good practice.	
MOD will, in consultation with business, introduce key performance indicators for the Covenant in Business.	UK	The findings of the Defence Relationship Management Measurement of Effect work will be published in 2019 and form the basis for introducing KPIs.	
An independent review of the Covenant in Business will publish its findings in 2018.	UK	The report was published 22 January 2019. Working group set up to consider and develop an action plan for the report recommendations.	

## ANNEX B: ARMED FORCES COVENANT METRICS

### Health metrics: Service-provided medical treatment and families access to the NHS

**Table 1: UK regular Armed Forces Personnel satisfied with Service-provided medical treatment received over the past two years, estimated percentage 2010 – 2019**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Medical treatment	..	..	..	..	..	77	76	76	76	80
Dental treatment	85	87	86	85	86	87	86	86	87	89

Source: Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey 2019

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-continuous-attitude-survey-index>)

1. Only includes respondents who answered 'yes' to having received Service-provided medical or dental treatment over the past two years
2. Excludes n/a responses
- .. represents data unavailable

**Table 2: UK Armed Forces families able to access medical care in the past 12months, estimated percentage 2012 – 2019**

	2012	2013	2014 <sup>4</sup>	2015	2016	2017	2018	2018
GP (including nurse/midwife)	97	96	96	98	98	98	98	98
Dentist	88	89	90	91	90	90	90	89
Hospital or specialist services	..	..	..	98	96	97	97	96

Source: Tri-Service Families Continuous Attitude Survey 2014 and 2018

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/tri-service-families-continuous-attitude-survey-index>)

1. 2012-2014 – excludes N/A
2. 2015-2019 – Includes 'Yes, without difficulties' and 'Yes, but with some difficulties'; Excludes missing and 'No, I did not need to' responses
3. Responses are filtered for those who required access to respective medical care [GP: 93%, Dentist: 87% and Hospital: 63% for 2019]
4. Break in time series due to change in response options and population reported on
- .. represents data unavailable

**Table 3: UK Armed Forces families able to continue medical treatment<sup>1</sup> following a move<sup>2</sup> in the past 12 months, estimated percentage 2012 – 2019**

	2012	2013	2014 <sup>7</sup>	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
GP (including nurse/midwife)	93	90	92	96	95	93	95	92
Dentist	79	70	74	75	82	81	82	78
Hospital or specialist services	..	..	..	91	90	85	84	83

Source: Tri-Service Families Continuous Attitude Survey 2014 and 2019

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/tri-service-families-continuous-attitude-survey-index>)

1. Includes: if moved for own reasons and; if due to Service

2. Refers to whether spouses/dependants were able to continue treatment in new location if moved

3. 2012-2014 – excludes N/A

4. 2015-2019 – Includes 'Yes, without difficulties' and 'Yes, but with some difficulties'; Excludes missing and 'No, I did not need to' responses

5. Respondents are filtered for those who moved in the last 12 months whilst undergoing treatment [GP: 12% Dental: 7% Hospital: 9% for 2019]

6. Numbers based on a small subset: people who have moved and needed to continue treatment

7. Break in time series due to change in population reported on

.. represents data unavailable

## Health metrics: Cancer wait times

**Table 4: UK Armed Forces personnel<sup>1</sup>, wait times for cancer treatment in England, numbers and percentages 2017/18 – 2018/19**

		2017/18		2018/19	
		number	%	number	%
Two week wait for all cancers <sup>2</sup>	Service personnel	1,729 <sup>r</sup>	93.4	1,886	91.7
	England	1,833,138 <sup>r</sup>	94.1	2,066,264	92.0
	Target <sup>5</sup>		93		93
Two week wait for symptomatic breast patients (where cancer was not initially suspected) <sup>2</sup>	Service personnel	264 <sup>r</sup>	87.4	230	85.8
	England	179,996	92.8	164,485	85.8
	Target <sup>5</sup>		93		93
One Month (31-day) diagnosis to first treatment wait for all cancers <sup>3</sup>	Service personnel	82 <sup>r</sup>	96.5	123	97.6
	England	287,270	97.5	303,569	96.8
	Target <sup>5</sup>		96		96
62-day wait for first treatment following an urgent GP referral for all cancers <sup>4</sup>	Service personnel	26 <sup>r</sup>	83.9	57	87.7
	England	122,631	82.3	129,724	79.1
	Target <sup>5</sup>		85		85

Source: Cancer Waiting Times Database (CWT-Db), NHS England

1. All Defence Medical Services registered patients; will include Service families who are DMS registered

2. Patients seen within 14 days of referral

3. Patients treated within 31 days of the decision to treat date

4. Patients received a first definitive anti-cancer treatment within 62 days of the urgent referral date

5. Operational Standard: expected level of performance based on case mix, clinical requirements, potential numbers of patients unfit for treatment or electing to delay treatment (patient choice)

r - numbers revised since the Armed Forces Covenant Report 2018

## Health metrics: England Mental Health (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies, Transition Intervention and Liaison Service and Complex Treatment Services)

**Table 5: UK Armed Forces Veterans, IAPT<sup>1</sup> waiting times for referrals entering treatment<sup>1</sup>, numbers and percentages<sup>2</sup>  
2014/15 – 2018/19**

Waiting times		2014/15		2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		2018/19	
		number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
6 weeks or less	Veteran	5,990	81.1	7,335	84.5	8,565	88.3	8,610	89.5	8,900	89.5
	non-veteran	356,050	77.1	430,560	82.0	482,355 <sup>r</sup>	87.3	480,810 <sup>r</sup>	89.0	504,970	89.3
	Target		75		75		75		75		75
18 weeks or less	Veteran	7,105	96.2	8,415	96.9	9,525 <sup>r</sup>	98.1	9,475	98.5 <sup>r</sup>	9,815	98.7
	non-veteran	438,255	94.9	505,400	96.2	541,615 <sup>r</sup>	98.0	533,830 <sup>r</sup>	98.8	559,275	99
	Target		95		95		95		95		95

Source: The data analysed was sourced from the National Commissioning Data Repository (NCDR). The NCDR is hosted by Arden & Gem CSU, operated by NHS England and the data is owned by NHS Digital.

1. IAPT - Improving access to psychological therapies, NHS England
  2. For new referrals that completed a course of treatment in the year, the wait between referral received date and the first therapeutic assessment
  3. Please note that the information presented contains compressed figures (rounded to the nearest five) in line with NHS Digital reporting.
- p The data provided by NHS England is provisional and may be subject to change when the final report is published in February. The data has not yet been reconciled back to the main IAPT data and so there may be small differences caused by definitions used in the data presented

**Table 6: UK Armed Forces Veterans, IAPT<sup>1</sup> referrals entering treatment and completing treatment<sup>2</sup>, numbers and percentages<sup>3</sup>  
2014/15 – 2018/19**

Outcome		2014/15		2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		2018/19	
		number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
Referrals entered treatment	Veteran	12,310	79.4	15,265	80.2	15,770 <sup>r</sup>	78.8	16,690 <sup>r</sup>	79.7	17,430	81.4
	non-veteran	803,185	63.6	938,175	67.1	948,270 <sup>r</sup>	68.7	990,505 <sup>r</sup>	70.9 <sup>r</sup>	1,071,935	73.2
Referrals completed treatment	Veteran	7,380	47.6	8,680	45.6	9,695	48.4	9,615 <sup>r</sup>	45.9 <sup>r</sup>	9,935	46.4
	non-veteran	461,460	36.5	524,935	37.5	552,110 <sup>r</sup>	40.0	539,920 <sup>r</sup>	38.7	564,870	38.5

Source: The data analysed was sourced from the National Commissioning Data Repository (NCDR). The NCDR is hosted by Arden & Gem CSU, operated by NHS England & NHS Improvement and the data is owned by NHS Digital.

1. IAPT - Improving access to psychological therapies, NHS England & NHS Improvement
  2. A referral has entered treatment if the patient attends one or more appointments. The majority of referrals end with the patient completing a course of treatment, however some patients decline treatment, are only treated once, are seen but not treated, or are discharged.
  3. Please note that the information presented contains compressed figures (rounded to the nearest five) in line with NHS Digital reporting.
- p - The data provided by NHS England & NHS Improvement is provisional and may be subject to change when the final report is published in February. The data has not yet been reconciled back to the main IAPT data and so there may be small differences caused by definitions used in the data presented.

**Table 7: UK Armed Forces Veterans, IAPT<sup>1</sup> referrals showing reliable improvement<sup>2</sup>, recovery<sup>3</sup>, and reliable recovery<sup>4</sup>, numbers and percentages<sup>5</sup>  
2014/15 – 2018/19**

Outcome		2014/15		2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		2018/19	
		number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
Reliable improvement	Veteran	4,600	62.3	5,535	63.7	6,495 <sup>r</sup>	66.5 <sup>r</sup>	6,495 <sup>r</sup>	67.5	6,770	68.1
	non-veteran	280,445	60.7	325,845	62	359,775 <sup>r</sup>	65.1	359,500 <sup>r</sup>	66.5	381,910	67.6
Referrals moved to recovery	Veteran	3,070	41.5	3,820	44.0	4,325	44.6	4,525	47.0	4,785	48.1
	non-veteran	186,065	40.3	221,015	42.1	247,625 <sup>r</sup>	44.8	250,120 <sup>r</sup>	46.3	267,575	47.3
	Target		50		50		50		50		50
Referrals showing reliable recovery	Veteran	2,945	39.9	3,660	42.1	4,140	42.7	4,325	44.9	4,565	45.9
	non-veteran	177,340	38.4	210,345	40.0	235,750 <sup>r</sup>	42.6	237,855 <sup>r</sup>	44.0	254,320	45.0

Source: The data analysed was sourced from the National Commissioning Data Repository (NCDR). The NCDR is hosted by Arden & Gem CSU, operated by NHS England & NHS Improvement and the data is owned by NHS Digital.

1. IAPT - Improving access to psychological therapies, NHS England & NHS Improvement
  2. Reliable improvement = if when discharged the patient's ADSM score has decreased by 4 or more, or their PHQ-9 score has decreased by 6 or more, and both have not deteriorated by the same number
  3. Recovery = if the patient were at caseness on their first appointment and upon discharge have scored less than the threshold scores for ADSM and PHQ-9
  4. Reliable recovery = a combination of the above, where a referral has both shown reliable improvement in ADSM and PHQ-9 assessment scores, and changed from caseness to not caseness between the first and last appointments.
  5. Please note that the information presented contains compressed figures (rounded to the nearest five) in line with NHS Digital reporting.
- p - The data provided by NHS England & NHS Improvement is provisional and may be subject to change when the final report is published in February. The data has not yet been reconciled back to the main IAPT data and so there may be small differences caused by definitions used in the data presented

**Table 8: UK Armed Forces Veterans, TILS<sup>1</sup> referrals receiving assessment, treatment and discharging, numbers and percentages<sup>2</sup>  
2017/18 – 2018/19**

	2017/18		2018/19	
	number	%	number	%
Number of referrals	2,879 <sup>r</sup>		3,913	
Appropriate for assessment	2,414 <sup>r</sup>	83.9 <sup>r</sup>	2,684	69
Assessment attended <sup>3</sup>	1,649 <sup>r</sup>	68.3 <sup>r</sup>	2,120	79
Of assessed, received treatment in TILS <sup>4, 5</sup>	581 <sup>r</sup>	35.2 <sup>r</sup>	613	29

Source: NHS England & NHS Improvement

1. Transition, Intervention and Liaison Services
2. "Appropriate for assessment" data not available for all regions prior to Sept-17; figures are estimated for this time period
3. Face to face assessment
4. Seen in TILS service/clinical appointment
5. Note: Assessment may results in appropriate referrals to other external Mental Health services such as Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT), Complex Treatment Service (CTS) or Community Mental Health Trust (CMHT)



**Table 9: UK Armed Forces Veterans, TILS<sup>1</sup> waiting times<sup>2</sup> for assessment and treatment<sup>3</sup> 2018/19**

		2018/19
		Average wait days
Face to face appointment	Offered <sup>4</sup>	39
	Attended	47
Treatment	Offered	55
	Attended	57

Source: NHS England & NHS Improvement

1. Transition, Intervention and Liaison Services

2. Wait time from referral to assessment and from referral to treatment

3. Seen in TILS service / clinical appointment

4. Target: 14 days

**Table 10: UK Armed Forces Veterans, CTS<sup>1</sup> referrals accepted and appointments delivered, Numbers and Percentage 2018/19**

	2018/19	
	Number	%
Number of referrals	648	
Referrals accepted	617	95.2
Appointments delivered in pathway	5,739	

Source: NHS England & NHS Improvement

1. Complex Treatment Services

**Table 11: UK Armed Forces Veterans, CTI<sup>1</sup> waiting times<sup>2</sup> for assessment and treatment<sup>3</sup>, days 2018/19**

		2018/19
		Average wait (days)
Face to face appointment <sup>2</sup>	Offered <sup>4</sup>	18
	Attended	24
Treatment <sup>3</sup>	Offered	N/A
	Attended	N/A

Source: NHS England & NHS Improvement

1. Complex Treatment Services

2. Wait time from referral to assessment and from referral to treatment

3. Seen in clinical appointment

4. Target: 10 days from referral from TILS

## Health metrics: Wales Mental Health (Veterans NHS Wales)

**Table 12: UK Armed Forces Veterans, VNHSW<sup>1</sup> referrals receiving an assessment and treatment, numbers and percentages**  
**2010/11 – 2017/18**

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Number of referrals <sup>2</sup>	191	205	329	390	542	607	633	614
% referrals receive assessment <sup>3,4</sup>					60-70	73	57	67
% referrals receive treatment <sup>3,5</sup>					30-50	58	39	..

Source: Veteran NHS Wales Annual reports: 2010-2012 to 2017-2018

(<https://www.veteranswales.co.uk/resources.html>)

1. Veteran NHS Wales
  2. 2017/18: There were gaps in administration cover in 2017-2018 which may have resulted in some referrals not being recorded until after the end of the reporting period. Consequently, the true figure is likely to be higher.
  3. 2010/11 to 2016/17: estimated percentage based on the outcome of referrals received in the first half of year.
  4. 2017/18: shows estimated percentage of referrals offered an assessment based on the first 11 months of the year; March 2018 was excluded as assessments were less likely to have taken place and recorded in the reporting period.
  5. 2017/18: The method of data collection combined with the gaps in administration cover in the 2017-2018 year resulted in too few data points to provide a confident estimate of the number of referrals who received treatment.
- .. Represents data unavailable

**Table 13: UK Armed Forces Veterans, VNHSW<sup>1</sup> waiting times for assessment and treatment, percentages**  
**2015/16 – 2017/18**

		2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
		%	%	%
Referral to assessment <sup>2</sup>	4 weeks or less	29	30	74
	10 weeks or less	80	80	..
Assessment to treatment <sup>3</sup>	4 weeks or less	28	19	..
	24 weeks or less	80	..	90

Source: Veteran NHS Wales Annual reports: 2010-2012 to 2017-2018

(<https://www.veteranswales.co.uk/resources.html>)

1. Veteran NHS Wales
  2. Welsh Government target for assessment is 4 weeks. Clock starts at opt-in and not referral. Therefore the measurement here is opt-in to assessment.
  3. Welsh Government target for treatment is 26 weeks.
- .. Represents data unavailable

**Table 14: UK Armed Forces Veterans, VNHSW<sup>1</sup> reliable improvement<sup>2,3</sup>, percentages**  
**2015/16 – 2018/19**

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
	%	%	%
Reliable improvement	88	74	94

Source: Veteran NHS Wales Annual reports: 2010-2012 to 2016-2017 (<https://www.veteranswales.co.uk/resources.html>)

1. Veteran NHS Wales
2. Demonstrated reliable improvement on at least one of the three core measures for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, depression and anxiety
3. Pre and post therapy measure available for: 48 veterans in 2015/16, 31 veterans in 2016/17 and 34 veterans in 2017/18

**Table 15: UK Armed Forces Veterans in Wales, receiving treatment for substance misuse<sup>1</sup> numbers 2014/15 – 2018/19**

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19 <sup>2</sup>
Number receiving or have received treatment	302	345	280	293	315

Source: NHS Wales Informatics Service's Information Services Division (ISD)

[www.wales.nhs.uk/informatics23](http://www.wales.nhs.uk/informatics23)

1. alcohol or drug misuse

2. 1 April 2018 to 28 February 2019

## Education metrics: Children from service families

**Table 16: Service children<sup>1</sup> and non-Service children<sup>1,2</sup> meeting the expected standard in phonic decoding at the end of year 1, numbers and percentages 'percentages'**

**2013/14 – 2017/18**

	Service Children					Non-Service and Non-FSM children				
	Number of eligible pupils	Percentage of year 1 pupils meeting the expected standard of phonic decoding <sup>3</sup>	% of year 1 pupils not meeting the expected standard of phonic decoding	% absent	% disapplied	Number of eligible pupils	Percentage of year 1 pupils meeting the expected standard of phonic decoding <sup>3</sup>	% of year 1 pupils not meeting the expected standard of phonic decoding	% absent	% disapplied
2013/14	5,330	77	22	0	1	514,930	77	21	0	1
2014/15	5,444	80	19	0	1	521,841	80	19	0	1
2015/16	5,900	83	16	0	1	549,157	83	16	0	1
2016/17	6,078	84	15	0	1	562,470	84	15	0	1
2017/18	6,208	84	15	0	1	566,895	84	14	0	1

Source: National Pupil Database

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/phonics-screening-check-and-key-stage-1-assessments-england-2018>

Coverage: England

1. Includes pupils at state-funded schools in England with a valid phonics record in the phonics screening check. Excludes pupils in alternative provision, pupil referral units and international schools.
2. Excludes pupils who are eligible for free school meals (FSM). This comparison was chosen to be similar to the service child cohort
3. The mark for the phonics screening check can be between 0 and 40. If a pupil's mark is at or above the threshold mark of 32, they are considered to have met the expected standard.

**Table 17a: Service children<sup>1</sup> and non-Service children<sup>1,2</sup> achieving level 2 and above and reaching the expected standard<sup>3</sup> at the end of Key Stage 1, percentages 2013/14 – 2017/18**

	Service Children								Non-Service and Non-FSM Children							
	Percentage achieving level 2 or above				Percentage reaching the expected standard <sup>3</sup>				Percentage achieving level 2 or above				Percentage reaching the expected standard <sup>3</sup>			
	Reading	Writing	Maths	Science	Reading	Writing	Maths	Science	Reading	Writing	Maths	Science	Reading	Writing	Maths	Science
2013/14	93	90	95	95	-	-	-	-	92	89	94	93	-	-	-	-
2014/15	94	91	96	95	-	-	-	-	92	90	94	93	-	-	-	-
2015/16 <sup>4</sup>	-	-	-	-	78	69	75	86	-	-	-	-	77	68	76	84
2016/17 <sup>4</sup>	-	-	-	-	80	72	78	87	-	-	-	-	78	71	78	85
2017/18 <sup>4</sup>	-	-	-	-	80	73	79	87	-	-	-	-	78	73	78	85

Source: National Pupil Database

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/phonics-screening-check-and-key-stage-1-assessments-england-2018>

Coverage: England

1. Includes pupils at state-funded schools in England with a valid school census record and eligible pupils at the end of KS2. Excludes pupils in alternative provision, pupil referral units and international schools.
2. Excludes pupils who are eligible for free school meals (FSM). This comparison was chosen to be similar to the service child cohort
3. Includes pupils working at the expected standard and pupils working at greater depth within the expected standard
4. Due to changes in national curriculum assessments, the expected and higher standards in 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 are not comparable with previous years

**Table 17b: Service children<sup>1</sup> and non-Service children<sup>1,2</sup> achieving level 3 and above and working at greater depth at the end of Key Stage 1, percentages 2013/14 – 2017/18**

	Service Children					Non-Service and Non-FSM Children								
	Percentage achieving level 3 or above			Percentage working at greater depth within the expected <sup>3</sup>			Percentage achieving level 3 or above				Percentage working at greater depth within the expected <sup>3</sup>			
	Reading	Writing	Maths	Science	Reading	Writing	Science	Reading	Writing	Maths	Science	Reading	Writing	Science
2013/14	37	18	28	27	-	-	-	34	18	27	25	-	-	-
2014/15	37	19	28	27	-	-	-	35	20	29	26	-	-	-
2015/16 <sup>3</sup>	-	-	-	-	27	14	18	-	-	-	-	26	15	19
2016/17 <sup>3</sup>	-	-	-	-	29	17	22	-	-	-	-	27	17	22
2017/18 <sup>3</sup>	-	-	-	-	30	18	23	-	-	-	-	28	17	24

Source: National Pupil Database

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/phonics-screening-check-and-key-stage-1-assessments-england-2018>

Coverage: England

1. Includes pupils at state-funded schools in England with a valid school census record and eligible pupils at the end of KS2. Excludes pupils in alternative provision, pupil referral units and international schools.
2. Excludes pupils who are eligible for free school meals (FSM). This comparison was chosen to be similar to the service child cohort
3. Due to changes in national curriculum assessments, the expected and higher standards in 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 are not comparable with previous years

**Table 18a: Service children<sup>1</sup> and non-Service children<sup>1,2</sup> achieving level 4 and above and reaching the expected standard<sup>3</sup> at the end of Key Stage 2, percentages  
2013/14 – 2017/18**

		Percentage achieving level 4 or above in reading, writing and maths	Percentage reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths <sup>3</sup>
2013/14	Service children	79.9	-
	Non-FSM, non-service children	81.6	-
2014/15	Service children	82.3	-
	Non-FSM, non-service children	82.7	-
2015/16 <sup>4</sup>	Service children	-	56.7
	Non-FSM, non-service children	-	56.7
2016/17 <sup>4</sup>	Service children	-	63.9
	Non-FSM, non-service children	-	64.4
2017/18 <sup>4</sup>	Service children	-	68.3
	Non-FSM, non-service children	-	67.5

Source: National Pupil Database

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-curriculum-assessments-key-stage-2-2018-provisional>

Coverage: England

1. Includes pupils at state-funded schools in England with a valid school census record and eligible pupils at the end of KS2. Excludes pupils in alternative provision, pupil referral units and international schools.
2. Excludes pupils who are eligible for free school meals (FSM). This comparison was chosen to be similar to the service child cohort
3. Includes those pupils who reached the expected standard in all of reading, writing and mathematics. The expected standard in reading and mathematics is a scaled score of 100 or above, and pupils assessed as working at greater depth within the expected standard (GDS) in writing.
4. Due to changes in national curriculum assessments, the expected and higher standards in 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 are not comparable with previous years.



**Table 18b: Service children<sup>1</sup> and non-Service children<sup>1,2</sup> achieving level 5 and above and working at greater depth<sup>3</sup> at the end of Key Stage 2, percentages  
2013/14 – 2017/18**

		Percentage achieving level 5 or above in reading, writing and maths	Percentage achieving level 5 or above in reading, writing and maths <sup>3</sup>
2013/14	Service children	24.1	-
	Non-FSM, non-service children	26.3	-
2014/15	Service children	24.5	-
	Non-FSM, non-service children	26.7	-
2015/16 <sup>4</sup>	Service children	-	6
	Non-FSM, non-service children	-	6.1
2016/17 <sup>4</sup>	Service children	-	8.5
	Non-FSM, non-service children	-	9.7
2017/18 <sup>4</sup>	Service children	-	10.6
	Non-FSM, non-service children	-	11

Source: National Pupil Database

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-curriculum-assessments-key-stage-2-2018-provisional>

Coverage: England

1. Includes pupils at state-funded schools in England with a valid school census record and eligible pupils at the end of KS2. Excludes pupils in alternative provision, pupil referral units and international schools.
2. Excludes pupils who are eligible for free school meals (FSM). This comparison was chosen to be similar to the service child cohort
3. Includes those pupils who reached a higher standard in all of reading, writing and mathematics. A higher standard is a scaled score of 110 or more in reading and mathematics and pupils assessed as working at greater depth within the expected standard (GDS) in writing.
4. Due to changes in national curriculum assessments, the expected and higher standards in 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 are not comparable with previous years.

**Table 18c: Service children<sup>1</sup> and non-Service children<sup>1,2</sup> Progress Score at the end of Key Stage 2, score 2015/16 – 2017/18**

	Service Children						Non-Service and Non-FSM Children					
	Reading			Writing			Maths			Reading		
	Progress Score	Confidence interval		Progress Score	Confidence interval		Progress Score	Confidence interval		Progress Score	Confidence interval	
2015/16	0.3	(0.1 - 0.5)		0	(-0.2 - 0.2)		-0.4	(-0.5 - 0.2)		0.1	(0.1 - 0.1)	
2016/17	0.3	(0.1 - 0.5)		0	(-0.2 - 0.2)		-0.5	(-0.6 - -0.3)		0.1	(0.1 - 0.1)	
2017/18	0.2	(0.0 - 0.3)		-0.1	(-0.2 - 0.1)		-0.3	(-0.4 - -0.1)		0.1	(0.1 - 0.2)	

Source: National Pupil Database

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-curriculum-assessments-key-stage-2-2018-provisional>

Coverage: England

1. Includes pupils at state-funded schools in England with a valid school census record and eligible pupils at the end of KS2. Excludes pupils in alternative provision, pupil referral units and international schools.

2. Excludes pupils who are eligible for free school meals (FSM). This comparison was chosen to be similar to the service child cohort

**Table 19: Service children<sup>1</sup> and non-Service children<sup>1,2</sup> reaching the threshold in English and maths at the end of Key Stage 4, percentage  
2013/14 – 2017/18**

		% of pupils achieving A*-C in both English and mathematics GCSEs	% of pupils achieving grades 9-4 in English and mathematics <sup>3</sup>	% of pupils achieving grades 9-5 in English and mathematics <sup>4</sup>
2013/14	Service children	62.8		
	Non-FSM, non-service children	62.7	-	-
2014/15	Service children	65.0	-	-
	Non-FSM, non-service children	63.0	-	-
2015/16 <sup>4</sup>	Service children	69.6	-	-
	Non-FSM, non-service children	66.7	-	-
2016/17 <sup>4</sup>	Service children	-	68.7	45.0
	Non-FSM, non-service children	-	67.5	45.9
2017/18 <sup>4</sup>	Service children	-	68.7	45.3
	Non-FSM, non-service children	-	67.7	46.4

Source: National Pupil Database

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/gcse-and-equivalent-results-2017-to-2018-provisional>

Coverage: England

1. Includes pupils at state-funded schools in England with a valid school census record and eligible pupils at the end of KS4. Excludes pupils in alternative provision, pupil referral units and international schools.
2. Excludes pupils who are eligible for free school meals (FSM). This comparison was chosen to be similar to the service child cohort
3. The 9-4 pass shows pupils who achieved a grade 4 or above in English and mathematics, and is provided alongside the headline measure for transparency and comparability to the old measure.
4. From 2017, headline threshold attainment measures use grade 5 for reformed English and mathematics.

**Table 20: Service children<sup>1</sup> and non-Service children<sup>1,2</sup> in English Baccalaureate, numbers and percentage**  
**2013/14 – 2017/18**

	Service Children				Non-Service and Non-FSM children			
	Number of pupils at the end of key stage 4	Percentage of pupils entered for all Ebacc components	Percentage of pupils who achieved Ebacc for all components (grades A*-C/9-4 pass) <sup>3</sup>	Percentage of pupils who achieved all Ebacc components (grades 9-5 pass in English and maths) <sup>4</sup>	Number of pupils at the end of key stage 4	Percentage of pupils entered for all Ebacc components	Percentage of pupils who achieved Ebacc for all components (grades A*-C/9-4 pass) <sup>3</sup>	Percentage of pupils who achieved all Ebacc components (grades 9-5 pass in English and maths) <sup>4</sup>
2013/14	3,304	41.4	25.5	-	474,442	41.7	26.6	-
2014/15	3,486	42.5	24.9	-	473,312	41.5	26.6	-
2015/16	3,662	42.2	25.7	-	463,801	42.3	27	-
2016/17	3,773	38	22.4	20	453,777	40.6	25.9	23.3
2017/18	3,805	36.6	23.3	15.6	453,559	40.6	26.1	18.3

Source: National Pupil Database

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/gcse-and-equivalent-results-2017-to-2018-provisional>

Coverage: England

1. Includes pupils at the end of key stage 4 in state-funded schools in England and excluding pupils in alternative provision, pupil referral units and international schools
2. Excludes pupils who are eligible for free school meals (FSM). This comparison was chosen to be similar to the service child cohort
3. The 9-4 pass shows pupils who achieved a grade 4 or above in English and mathematics, and is provided alongside the headline measure for transparency and comparability to the old measure.
4. From 2017, headline threshold attainment measures use grade 5 for reformed English and mathematics.

**Table 21: Service children<sup>1</sup> and non-Service children<sup>1,2</sup> attainment 8 and progress 8 at end of Key Stage 4, score**  
**2015/16 – 2017/18**

		Average Attainment 8 score per pupil	Average Progress 8 score	Lower confidence interval for Progress 8	Upper confidence interval for Progress 8
2015/16 <sup>3</sup>	Service children	52.4	0.11	0.08	0.14
	Non FSM and Non Service children	51.6	0.04	0.03	0.04
2016/17 <sup>3</sup>	Service children	47.8	0.03	0.00	0.07
	Non FSM and Non Service children	48.0	0.04	0.03	0.04
2017/18	Service children	48.0	0.00	-0.03	0.04
	Non FSM and Non Service children	48.3	0.05	0.05	0.06

Source: National Pupil Database

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/gcse-and-equivalent-results-2017-to-2018-provisional>

Coverage: England

1. Includes pupils at state-funded schools in England with a valid school census record and eligible pupils at the end of KS4. Excludes pupils in alternative provision, pupil referral units and international schools.
2. Excludes pupils who are eligible for free school meals (FSM). This comparison was chosen to be similar to the service child cohort
3. Figures have been revised to include confidence intervals for Progress 8 scores

**Table 22: Pupils achieving the expected standard, by number of school moves<sup>1</sup> from years 1 to 6 for service children and non-FSM, non-service children<sup>2</sup>, percentage 2016/17 – 2017/18**

		Number of moves from year 1 - year 6 <sup>3</sup>							
		Pupils reported in Spring census				% of pupils achieving the expected standard			
		0	1	2	3+	0	1	2	3+
2016/17 (revised) <sup>4</sup>	Service children	29.7	42.1	19.1	9.1	69.3	64.9	59.7	54.0
	Non FSM and Non Service children	62.6	30.5	5.5	1.4	67.9	63.7	55.9	49.5
2017/18	Service children <sup>5</sup>	29.0	43.1	19.1	8.8	71.4	66.5	61.4	54.6
	Non FSM and Non Service children	63.2	30.1	5.3	1.3	71.0	66.7	59.5	53.4

Source: National Pupil Database, , KS2 results data

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/revised-gcse-and-equivalent-results-in-england-2016-to-2017>

Coverage: England

1. These figures are not comparable to previously published data. The definition of school move has changed from last year's publication due to improvements in the methodology. Pupils at schools that change identifier (e.g. when converting to an academy) are no longer counted as having moved.
2. Excludes pupils who are eligible for free school meals (FSM). This comparison was chosen to be similar to the service child cohort
3. Number of school moves between years 1 and 6 for pupils finishing year 6 in the academic year stated
4. Revised in line with above changes to methodology.
5. Percentages for moves of 3+ are volatile, based on very small numbers of pupils and conclusions should be treated with caution

**Table 23: Pupils with English & maths grades 5-9, by number of school moves<sup>1</sup> from years 7 to 11 for service children and non-FSM, non-service children<sup>2</sup>, by percentage 2016/17 – 2017/18**

		Number of moves from year 7 - year 11 <sup>3</sup>							
		Pupils reported in Spring census				% of pupils achieving English & maths grades 9-5			
		0	1	2	3+	0	1	2	3+
2016/17 (revised) <sup>4</sup>	Service children	71.0	23.7	4.3	1.0	49.8	36.8	27.2	12.5
	Non FSM and Non Service children	82.6	14.6	2.2	0.6	48.2	36.3	22.7	15.4
2017/18	Service children <sup>5</sup>	71.2	22.5	5.2	1.1	49.0	35.4	26.2	14.3
	Non FSM and Non Service children	82.5	14.6	2.4	0.6	48.9	36.3	23.1	13.8

Source: National Pupil Database

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/revised-gcse-and-equivalent-results-in-england-2016-to-2017>

Coverage: England

1. These figures are not comparable to previously published data. The definition of school move has changed from last year's publication due to improvements in the methodology. Pupils at schools that change identifier (e.g. when converting to an academy) are no longer counted as having moved.
2. Excludes pupils who are eligible for free school meals (FSM). This comparison was chosen to be similar to the service child cohort
3. Number of school moves between years 7 and 11 for pupils finishing year 11 in the academic year stated
4. Revised in line with above changes to methodology.
5. Percentages for moves of 3+ are volatile, based on very small numbers of pupils and conclusions should be treated with caution

**Table 24: Ofsted rating<sup>1</sup> of schools attended by Service children and non-Service children, by region, percentage June 2019**

		Ofsted rating <sup>1</sup>			
		1 (Outstanding)	2 (Good)	3 (Requires Improvement)	4 (Inadequate)
England	Service children	18.4	64.7	12.7	3.5
	Non FSM and Non Service children	22.2	60.9	12.0	3.9
East Midlands	Service children	28	59	9	2
	Non FSM and Non Service children	18	59	15	7
East of England	Service children	15	66	12	6
	Non FSM and Non Service children	19	65	11	4
London	Service children	34	56	8	1
	Non FSM and Non Service children	33	58	6	2
North East	Service children	23	56	16	2
	Non FSM and Non Service children	23	55	16	5
North West	Service children	21	63	14	1
	Non FSM and Non Service children	22	59	15	3
South East	Service children	19	69	9	2
	Non FSM and Non Service children	22	67	9	2
South West	Service children	14	64	16	5
	Non FSM and Non Service children	19	60	14	5
West Midlands	Service children	13	70	14	2
	Non FSM and Non Service children	19	62	13	5
Yorkshire and The Humber	Service children	19	62	13	6
	Non FSM and Non Service children	20	57	16	6

Source: National Pupil Database, Ofsted June 2019

Coverage: England

1 School attended as recorded in Spring Census 2018/19, Ofsted rating as of 31 March 2019 reported in Get Information About Schools. This data may need to be revised, as Ofsted inspection ratings in Get Information About Schools have not yet been updated with changes to the Ofsted methodology published in June 2018 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/changes-to-ofsteds-statistical-reporting-of-inspection-outcomes-for-state-funded-schools-an-analysis-of-the-changes>

2 Includes pupils at schools that are new and have not been inspected. Does not include pupils at MoD overseas schools, which are not subject to Ofsted inspection.

**Table 25: Pupil destinations of service children and non-FSM, non-service children after completing KS4, percentage 2012/13 – 2016/17**

Destination year <sup>2</sup>	Pupil type	Number of eligible pupils	Percentage of eligible pupils					Activity not captured in the data
			Any sustained education or employment	Any sustained education destination	Sustained apprenticeships	Sustained employment destination	Destination not sustained	
2012/13	Service children	2,990	90	85	3	2	6	3
	Non-FSM, non-service children	478,562	92	86	4	2	7	1
2013/14	Service children	3,090	92	87	4	1	5	3
	Non-FSM, non-service children	483,477	93	88	4	1	5	1
2014/15 <sup>3</sup>	Service children	3,307	94	88	4	3	4	2
	Non-FSM, non-service children	474,905	95	88	5	2	4	1
2015/16 <sup>4</sup>	Service children	3,482	95	89	4	3	3	1
	Non-FSM, non-service children	473,879	95	88	5	3	4	1
2016/17	Service children	3,662	96	88	5	3	3	1
	Non-FSM, non-service children	464,827	95	87	5	3	4	1

Source: Longitudinal Education Outcomes dataset

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/destinations-of-ks4-and-ks5-pupils-2017>

1. State-funded schools include local authority maintained schools, academies, free schools, city technology colleges, further education colleges with provision for 14- to 16-year-olds, state-funded special schools and non-maintained special schools.
2. Not the academic year of the cohort. The academic year will be the year prior to the destination year. Please see the main text of the destinations publication for more information.
3. Employment and benefits data from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) from the LEO dataset was included for the first time in 2014-15 and accounted for a 1 percentage point increase in employment destinations. Direct comparison with previous years' employment estimates should be treated with caution. Education destinations are not affected.
4. Self-employment information from HMRC has been included in 2015-16. It accounted for an increase of less than 0.5 percentage point nationally.



**Table 26: Student destinations of service children and non-FSM, non-service children after completing KS5, percentage 2012/13 – 2016/17**

Destination year <sup>2</sup>	Pupil type	Number of eligible pupils	Percentage of eligible pupils								Destination not sustained	Activity not captured in the data
			Any sustained education or employment	Any sustained education destination	Further education (level 3 and below)	Higher education (level 4 and above)	Other education destinations	Sustained apprenticeships	Sustained employment destination			
2012/13	Service children	1,380	89	56	8	45	3	5	28	9	2	
	Non-FSM, non-service children	312,770	88	59	9	48	3	5	23	9	2	
2013/14	Service children	1,764	90	56	9	44	3	8	26	8	2	
	Non-FSM, non-service children	321,832	90	61	10	48	3	6	23	8	2	
2014/15 <sup>4</sup>	Service children	2,000	90	59	9	48	2	6	25	7	3	
	Non-FSM, non-service children	323,773	89	61	10	49	3	6	22	8	3	
2015/16 <sup>5</sup>	Service children	1,988	91	58	9	47	2	7	27	7	2	
	Non-FSM, non-service children	325,386	90	62	8	51	2	6	22	7	3	
2016/17 <sup>6</sup>	Service children	2,211	90	57	7	47	3	7	26	8	2	
	Non-FSM, non-service children	337,111	89	61	7	51	3	7	22	7	4	

Source: Longitudinal Education Outcomes dataset

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/destinations-of-ks4-and-ks5-pupils-2017>

1. Service child status was determined by looking across three academic year cohorts before students reached the end of 16 to 18 study. The majority of them would have been at the end of key stage 4 study two years prior.
2. Employment and benefits data from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) from the LEO dataset have increased coverage and estimates of employment substantially from 2014/15. This time series for the years 2010/11 to 2013/14 has been updated to include LEO data. These revised statistics were first published in the statistical working paper on improvements to destination measures in August 2016.
3. Not the academic year of the cohort. The majority of pupils would have been at the end of key stage 4 two years prior. Please see the main text of the destinations publication for more information <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/destinations-of-ks4-and-ks5-pupils-2017>.
4. From 2014/15, data on employment, training and NEET from the NCCIS dataset is not included, as local authorities are no longer required to collect for young people aged 18 or over. Removal of NCCIS data means there is a small break in the time series and comparison with previous years should be treated with caution. However, the impact is small as almost all employment destinations are available in LEO data.
5. From 2015/16, self-employment information from HMRC has been included. At the national level, the inclusion of this data will not impact on the employment destinations. Among colleges, there will be an expected increase of around 1 percentage point in overall employment destinations compared to the national average. HE alternative provider data has also been included. This data is collected on UK domiciled students attending non-mainstream (independent) HE institutions in England that provide designated undergraduate courses funding by the Student Loan Company (SLC). This data was collected by HESA for the first time in 2014/15.

6. From 2015/16, only students who entered approved level 3 qualifications (designated as academic, applied general or tech level) are included and there are some changes to how students and qualifications are counted.

Altogether around 6000 more students are included than last year, an increase of 1.7%. The impact is expected to be small but the exclusion of some students entering unapproved vocational qualifications and the inclusion of some students entering qualifications worth only one AS level in size at level 3 may have affected the change in destinations seen between years.

There may also be very small changes to HE destinations due to a different algorithm used in the matching of the 2016/17 which resulted in lower match rates for young people treated as overseas or Scottish domiciled.

## Education metrics: In Service training and education

**Table 27: UK Armed Forces personnel satisfied with opportunities to gain civilian accreditation<sup>1</sup>, estimated percentage 2010 – 2019**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Satisfied	50	51	46	43	42	47	48	46	47	48

Source: Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey 2019

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-continuous-attitude-survey-index>)

1. Relates only to Service training courses and not training received prior to leaving the Services (Resettlement training)
2. Minor wording change in 2011

**Table 28: UK Armed Forces personnel satisfied with opportunities for personal development, estimated percentage 2010 – 2019**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Satisfied	56	57	54	52	52	57	57	54	55	57

Source: Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey 2019

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-continuous-attitude-survey-index>)

1. Minor wording change in 2011

**Table 29: UK Armed Forces personnel who used Career Transition Partnership and were employed within 6 months of leaving the Armed Forces, estimated percentage 2010/11 – 2017/18**

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15 <sup>2</sup>	2015/16 <sup>3</sup>	2016/17	2017/18
Employment rate	85	85	83	83	85	80	82	84

Source: ADAPT (Career Transition Partnership ex-Service personnel employment outcomes)

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/career-transition-partnership-ex-service-personnel-employment-outcomes-statistics-index>)

1. 2010/11-2014/15 - Estimated from a 20% sample of those who used billable Career Transition Partnership services
- p. Estimated employment outcomes for 2015/16 are provisional (see the Education commentary above for full details).
- 2 Break in time series. Service leavers prior to 1 October 2015 who used the CTP Future Horizons programme were excluded from analysis. Since 1 October 2015 all Service leavers who have used a billable CTP service have been included.
- 3 Break in time series. The 2016/17 FY is the first year in which all Service leavers who used a billable CTP service have been followed up. This coupled with methodology changes has resulted in comparisons with previous years invalid.

## Accommodation metrics: Service accommodation

**Table 30: UK Armed Forces personnel and families satisfied with the standard of Service accommodation, estimated percentage 2010 – 2019**

		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
UK Armed Forces personnel	Service Family Accommodation	..	..	56	57	60	57	50	46	51	51
	Single Living Accommodation	50	..	55	56	56	58	55	50	49	52
Service families	Service Family Accommodation	..	..	..	..	..	63	53	57	57	57

Source: Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey (AFCAS) 2019 and Tri-Service Families Continuous Attitude Survey (FAMCAS) 2019

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-continuous-attitude-survey-index>)

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/tri-service-families-continuous-attitude-survey-index>)

1. AFCAS: Service Family Accommodation: minor wording change 2013 and 2015
  2. AFCAS: Single Living Accommodation: minor wording change 2012, 2013 and 2015; comparative analysis has indicated that a change to the wording of the response options in 2011 has resulted in some respondents ticking 'SFA - inside the base/camp' when they should have ticked 'SLA of any type'. Therefore, no reliable figures can be given for 2011
  3. AFCAS: Excludes n/a and 'don't know'
  4. AFCAS: Relates to those living in Service Family Accommodation and Single Living Accommodation
  5. FAMCAS: Responses are filtered for those respondents who live in Service family accommodation or substitute service family accommodation, and answered the questions, and did not answer 'Don't know'. [58% in 2019]
  6. FAMCAS: Comparisons with years prior to 2015 are not possible. This question was introduced in 2015 to bring it in line with AFCAS.
  7. FAMCAS: Only relates to those living in Service Family Accommodation and Substitute Service Family Accommodation.
- .. represents data unavailable

**Table 31: UK Armed Forces personnel and families satisfied with response to maintenance request (Service accommodation), estimated percentage 2011 – 2019**

		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
UK Armed Forces personnel	Service Family Accommodation	..	46	46	46	42	32	28	29	33
	Single Living Accommodation	..	39	35	36	38	33	28	26	30
Service families	Service Family Accommodation	..	..	..	..	45	32	34	35	41

Source: Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey (AFCAS) 2019 and Tri-Service Families Continuous Attitude Survey (FAMCAS) 2019

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-continuous-attitude-survey-index>)

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/tri-service-families-continuous-attitude-survey-index>)

1. AFCAS: New questions in 2011
  2. AFCAS: Minor wording change in 2012, 2013 and 2015
  3. AFCAS: Excludes n/a and 'don't know'
  4. FAMCAS: Responses are filtered for those respondents who live in Service family accommodation or substitute service family accommodation, and answered the questions, and did not answer 'Don't know'. [57% in 2019]
  5. FAMCAS: Comparisons with years prior to 2015 are not possible. This question was introduced in 2015 to bring it in line with AFCAS
  6. FAMCAS: Only relates to those living in Service Family Accommodation and Substitute Service Family Accommodation
- .. represents data unavailable

**Table 32: UK Armed Forces personnel and families satisfied with quality of maintenance service (Service accommodation), estimated percentage 2011 – 2019**

		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
UK Armed Forces personnel	Service Family Accommodation	..	38	39	40	37	29	26	27	30
	Single Living Accommodation	..	39	38	38	41	35	30	28	33
Service families	Service Family Accommodation	..	..	..	..	42	29	29	30	36

Source: Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey (AFCAS) 2019 and Tri-Service Families Continuous Attitude Survey (FAMCAS) 2019

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-continuous-attitude-survey-index>)

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/tri-service-families-continuous-attitude-survey-index>)

1. AFCAS: New questions in 2011
  2. AFCAS: Minor wording change in 2012, 2013 and 2015
  3. AFCAS: Excludes n/a and 'don't know'
  4. FAMCAS: Responses are filtered for those respondents who live in Service family accommodation or substitute service family accommodation, and answered the questions, and did not answer 'Don't know'. [57% in 2019]
  5. FAMCAS: Comparisons with years prior to 2015 are not possible. This questions was introduced in 2015 to bring it in line with AFCAS
  6. FAMCAS: Only relates to those living in Service Family Accommodation and Substitute Service Family Accommodation
- .. represents data unavailable

**Table 33: UK Armed Forces personnel and families satisfied with value for money of Service accommodation, estimated percentage 2010 – 2019**

		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
UK Armed Forces personnel	Service Family Accommodation	..	..	72	71	74	71	63	63	60	60
	Single Living Accommodation	59	..	64	66	63	64	59	57	56	58
Service families	Service Family Accommodation	..	..	..	..	..	75	64	70	68	67

Source: Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey (AFCAS) 2019 and Tri-Service Families Continuous Attitude Survey (FAMCAS) 2019

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-continuous-attitude-survey-index>)

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/tri-service-families-continuous-attitude-survey-index>)

1. AFCAS: Minor wording change in 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2015
  2. AFCAS: N/A and Don't know option added in 2011
  3. AFCAS: Excludes n/a and 'don't know'
  4. FAMCAS: Responses are filtered for those respondents who live in Service family accommodation or substitute service family accommodation, and answered the questions, and did not answer 'Don't know'. [58% in 2019]
  5. FAMCAS: Comparisons with years prior to 2015 are not possible. This questions was introduced in 2015 to bring it in line with AFCAS
  6. FAMCAS: Only relates to those living in Service Family Accommodation and Substitute Service Family Accommodation
- .. represents data unavailable

## Accommodation metrics: Service accommodation

**Table 34: New social housing lettings to UK Armed Forces veterans<sup>1</sup> and non-veterans in England, length of time in local authority prior to new social housing letting, number and estimated percentage  
2016/17 – 2017/18**

Length of time in Local Authority prior to allocation	2016/17			2017/18		
	UK Armed Forces veteran population		non-veteran population	UK Armed Forces veteran population		non-veteran population
	Left within the past five years	Left more than five years ago		Left within the past five years	Left more than five years ago	
	%	%	%	%	%	%
New to Local Authority	17.3	13.4	9.7	21.2	14.9	11.1
Less than 1 year	6.9	4.5	5.4	9.6	4.5	4.9
1-2 years	7.2	4.3	5.0	6.9	3.0	4.1
2-3 years	13.7	9.0	10.1	5.1	2.1	3.2
3-4 years				4.4	2.8	3.3
4-5 years				2.6	3.2	3.3
More than 5 years	55.0	68.8	69.9	50.2	69.6	70.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<i>Number</i>	760	4,230	173,710	550	2,480	147,840

Source: CORE Social Housing Lettings 2016/17 and 2017/18, MHCLG

1. Has previously served in the UK Armed Forces

2. Sample is presented at household level

**Table 35: UK Service population<sup>1</sup> and non-Service population in England, length of time on waiting list for current social housing/accommodation, estimated percentage  
2015/16 – 2017/18**

Length of time on waiting list prior to allocation	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18	
	Service population and families	Non-service population and families	Service population and families	Non-service population and families	Service population and families	Non-service population and families
Less than 6 months	57.9	56.3	67.8	52.9	69.1	57.2
6 months - 1 year	14.6	13.3	15.2	16.6	8.5	15.2
1-2 years	8.1	10.3	6.5	10.1	6.1	9.5
2-3 years	6.6	5.9	2.1	7.3	3.2	5.4
3-5 years	3.7	6.2	3.4	5.2	4.3	6.2
More than 5 years	9.1	8.0	5.0	7.9	8.7	6.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<i>Sample size<sup>2</sup></i>	303	4,653	259	4,140	271	4,485

Source: English Housing Survey 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18, full household sample

1. Has served or were currently serving in the Armed Forces

2. Sample is presented at individual rather than household level

3. Excludes those at address for 10 years or more

4. u indicates sample size too small for reliable estimate

**Table 36: UK Service population<sup>1</sup> and non-Service population in England, satisfaction with social rented sector<sup>2</sup>, estimated percentage 2017/18**

Satisfaction with social rented sector		Service population and families	Non-service population and families
Satisfaction with accommodation	Satisfied	80.1	76.6
	Sample size <sup>3</sup>	466	5,953
Satisfaction with tenure	Satisfied	76.5	80.3
	Sample size <sup>3</sup>	453	6,311
Satisfaction with area	Satisfied	85.4	79.3
	Sample size <sup>3</sup>	467	6,148
Satisfaction with repairs/maintenance	Satisfied	62.0	62.0
	Sample size <sup>3</sup>	381	4,938

Source: English Housing Survey 2017-18, full household sample

1. Has served or were currently serving in the Armed Forces

2. All social renters

3. Sample is presented at individual rather than household level

**Table 37: UK Service population<sup>1</sup> and non-Service population in England, satisfaction with private rented sector, estimated percentage 2017/18**

Satisfaction with private rented sector		Service population and families	Non-service population and families
Satisfaction with accommodation	Satisfied	81.5	81.4
	Sample size <sup>3</sup>	268	4,498
Satisfaction with tenure	Satisfied	69.1	67.4
	Sample size <sup>3</sup>	222	4,498
Satisfaction with area	Satisfied	88.1	85.6
	Sample size <sup>3</sup>	272	4,657
Satisfaction with repairs/maintenance	Satisfied	58.7	72.8
	Sample size <sup>3</sup>	324	3,903

Source: English Housing Survey 2017-18, full household sample

1. Has served or were currently serving in the Armed Forces

2. Sample is presented at individual rather than household level







