



Population Projections: UK Armed Forces Veterans residing in Great Britain, 2016 to 2028

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This statistical bulletin presents population projections for UK Armed Forces veterans residing in Great Britain to 2028.

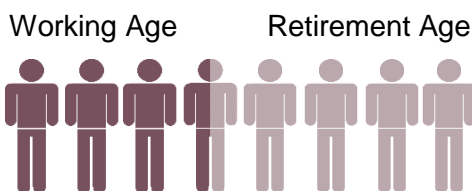
Note: Population projections are not forecasts and will inevitably differ to a greater or lesser extent from actual future population change. In addition to the uncertainties in the underlying 2016 baseline data, our assumptions about the future cannot be certain as patterns of both those entering the veteran population and deaths are always liable to change and can be influenced by many factors.

Key points:

It is projected that **in 2028** there will be approximately **1.6 million** UK Armed Forces veterans residing in Great Britain.

For every 80 veterans residing in Great Britain in 2028, it is projected that:

35 veterans will be of working age (aged 16-64), and 45 veterans will be of retirement age (aged 65+).



Ten veterans will be female, and 70 veterans will be male.



Changes in the veteran population over the next ten years:

It was estimated that in 2016 there were approximately 2.5 million veterans residing in Great Britain, this is projected to decrease year-on-year to 1.6 million by 2028.

In 2016 the veteran population represented 5% of household residents aged over 16, this is projected to decrease to 2-3% by 2028.

Whilst the overall number of veterans residing in Great Britain is projected to decrease over the next ten years, the percentage of veterans of working age is projected to increase from 37% in 2016 to 44% by 2028.

The percentage of veterans who are female is also projected to increase from 10% in 2016 to 13% by 2028.

Responsible Statistician: Deputy Head of Health - Vets Tel: 030 679 84424
Email: DefStrat-Stat-Health-DepHd-Vets@mod.gov.uk

Further Information/Mailing list: DefStrat-Stat-Health-PQ-FOI@mod.gov.uk

Background Quality Report: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/population-projections-uk-armed-forces-veterans-residing-in-great-britain-2016-to-2028>

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This statistical bulletin, supplementary Excel and ODS tables (presented as Annex A and Annex B), and accompanying Background Quality Report can found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/population-projections-uk-armed-forces-veterans-residing-in-great-britain-2016-to-2028>.

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to present projected population estimates for UK Armed Forces Veterans residing in Great Britain (GB) to 2028, by age group and gender.

The projections presented in this report will support the UK Government's Veterans Strategy¹ and will provide an indication of the size and demographic changes of the GB veteran population, enabling MOD, other Government departments for example the NHS, the Devolved Administrations, and the charitable sector to develop policies and service deliveries which continue to meet the needs of veterans in the future.

Projections in the report use data from the Annual Population Survey² as the baseline number of UK Armed Forces Veterans residing in GB in 2016. Annual projected numbers of Service personnel leaving the UK Armed Forces were added to the baseline veteran population, and ONS survival rates were applied to project the number of deaths to the veteran population each year. There are uncertainties around the veteran population projection as it is based on survey data, model outputs and assumptions that historic trends will remain stable. Further information on these uncertainties are available in the methodology section and the Background Quality Report.

Historic and projected numbers of veterans between 2016 and 2028 presented in the report have been rounded to the nearest thousand as outputs from the model should be treated as estimates. The veteran population projections should only be used to demonstrate that the number of veterans will continue to reduce year-on-year to 2028.

Projected percentages of veterans by age group and gender have been presented instead of numbers, as the projections are not to be used to determine the absolute numbers of veterans within each cohort but rather to indicate potential change within the demographic profile of the veteran population between 2016 and 2028.

Veterans: Individuals aged 16 and over who have served at least one day in the UK Armed Forces.

Note: UK Armed Forces veterans residing in Great Britain will be referred to veterans throughout this report.

Results

The veteran population in GB is projected to decrease year on year to approximately **1.6 million veterans in 2028**. Alongside an overall reduction in numbers, the age and gender profile of veterans is also projected to change. The percentage of the veterans of working age (aged 16-64) is projected to increase from **37% to 44%**; and the percentage of veterans who are female is projected to increase from **10% to 13%**.

Figure 1a: UK Armed Forces Veterans residing in GB, by year, numbers¹
2016 to 2028

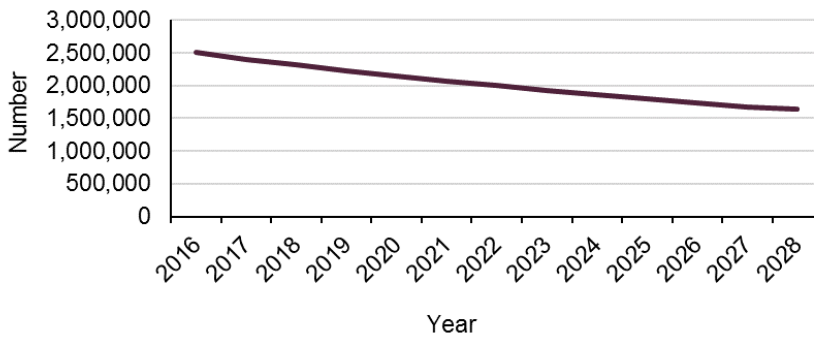


Figure 1b: UK Armed Forces Veterans residing in GB, by age group², percentages³

As at 2016 and 2028

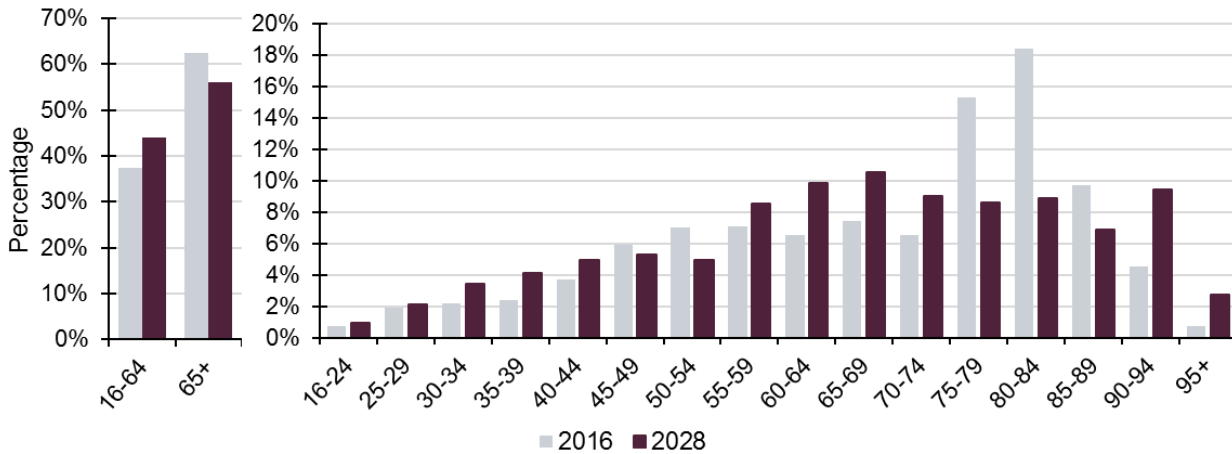
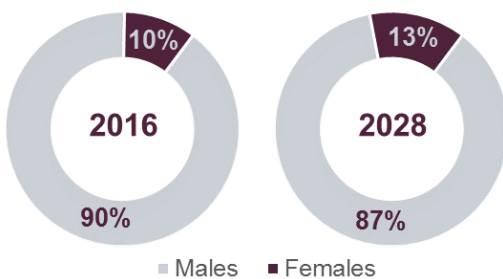


Figure 1c: UK Armed Forces Veterans residing in GB, by gender, percentages³

As at 2016 and 2028



Source: 2018 GB Veterans Model. See the Methodology section for further detail on model input data sources.

¹ Estimated numbers for 2016; Projected numbers for 2028. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 1,000.

² 16-64 age group represents veterans of working age; 65+ age group represents veterans of retirement age.

³ Estimated percentages for 2016; Projected percentages for 2028.

How is the size of the veteran population in Great Britain projected to change?

The MOD estimated that there were 2.5 million UK Armed Forces veterans residing in households across Great Britain (GB) in 2016, based on responses to the Annual Population Survey² conducted by the Office for National Statistics. The veteran population in GB is projected to decrease year on year to approximately **1.6 million veterans by 2028**. Annual projected veteran estimates are presented for each year until 2028 in Table 1, Annexes A and B.

Why is this decrease likely to occur?

In 2016 it was estimated that half (49%) of UK Armed Forces veterans were aged 75 and over². Due to the number of older veterans it is projected that the number of deaths within the veteran cohort will be greater than the number of Service personnel projected to leave the UK Armed Forces, and therefore entering the veteran population, over the same period.

Will the demographic profile of veterans change?

The demographic profile of the veteran population in 2028 is projected to be different to veteran population in 2016. Table 2, Annexes A and B, presents the projected percentages of veterans in 2028 within each age group and of each gender; the 2016 estimated percentages are also presented for comparison.

Change in age group profile

Changes were seen in certain age groups amongst veterans of retirement age when comparing 2016 estimates to 2028 projections. The percentage of veterans who are of working age (aged 16-64) is projected to increase from 37% in 2016² to approximately 44% in 2028. This will result in just under half of the veteran population in 2028 being of working age, and just over half (56%) being of retirement age.

In 2016 it was estimated that 49% of veterans were aged 75 and over², this age group is projected to reduce to 37% of veterans in 2028. Noting that the percentage of veterans aged 90 and over is projected to double from 6% in 2016² to 12% in 2028; likely to be the result of a combination of increasing life expectancy and those who undertook National Service³.

Change in gender profile

The percentage of veterans who are female is projected to increase from 10% in 2016² to 13% in 2028.

In 2016, a higher percentage of veterans aged 75 and over, were male compared to those under 75. The majority of personnel aged 75 and over joined during National Service which only applied to males. Thus, the loss of veterans aged 75 and over are expected to be mainly male. This along with the fact of females have a longer life expectancy⁴, are possible drivers behind the projected increase in the percentage of female veterans.

How will the veteran population in GB change after 2028?

Beyond 2028 the number of veteran deaths is expected to continue to be higher than the numbers leaving the UK Armed Forces and entering the veteran population; this is expected to continue whilst there is still a large proportion of older veterans. Thus, the overall number of veterans is expected to continue to decrease beyond 2028.

Methodology

This section provides a summary of the methodology and data sources; more detailed information is available in the Background Quality Report (BQR) published at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/population-projections-uk-armed-forces-veterans-residing-in-great-britain-2016-to-2028>

Model Input Data

The 2018 GB Veterans Model is a deterministic model which used four primary sets of data:

- a) *Baseline data on UK Armed Forces veterans*
The baseline data was sourced from 2016 Annual Population Survey (APS) responses which are used by Defence Statistics to compile estimated summary veteran statistics as at 2016². Veterans in this dataset were defined as those who were previously Regular and/or Reserve (both trained and untrained) upon leaving the UK Armed Forces.
Note the APS veteran questions were not asked in Northern Ireland due to security concerns. Therefore, the baseline data only includes veterans residing in GB. In addition, the APS was only asked of those residing in households and therefore the baseline data excludes individuals who were homeless or were living in communal establishments such as care homes or prisons.
- b) *Historical 2017 and 2018 data on Service personnel who left the UK Armed Forces and joined the veteran cohort*
Historical data were extracted from the Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) System for personnel leaving the UK Armed Forces during 2017 and 2018.
- c) *Projected numbers of Service personnel leaving the UK Armed Forces and joining the veteran cohort each year to 2028*
Defence Statistics' projections of the numbers of trained Regular Service personnel leaving the UK Armed Forces in each year to 2028 were used to project the numbers joining the veteran cohort. Historical data on Service personnel leaving the UK Armed Forces, extracted from the JPA system, were used to make assumptions for future untrained Regulars and Reservists leaving the UK Armed Forces.
- d) *Projected veteran mortality each year to 2028*
Office for National Statistics' (ONS) England and Wales cohort life expectancy tables⁴, published as National Statistics, were applied to the baseline data and veterans 'joiners' data to estimate the numbers of veteran survivors each year between 2016 and 2028.

Assumptions and Uncertainties

There are uncertainties around the veteran population projections since the input data was based on survey data, model outputs and assumptions that historical trends will remain stable.

Appendix A provides full details of all input data sets, assumptions and uncertainties used within the model. A Red, Amber Green (RAG) rating system has been used to identify the level of risk for each set of input data. However, in summary, the projections are likely to be an undercount of veterans residing in GB by a minimum of 100,000. This potential undercount is driven by the exclusion of veterans who were homeless or were living in communal establishments, such as care homes or prisons, from the 2016 baseline data.

These uncertainties should be taken into consideration when using the veteran population projections.

Sensitivity Analysis

Where possible, sensitivity analysis has been performed to assess the uncertainty around the input data. Full details of sensitivity analysis conducted is provided in Appendix A. Specifically, sensitivity analysis was conducted around the following assumptions:

- a) Annual Population baseline estimates
- b) That the number of projected untrained Regulars leaving the UK Armed Forces would remain stable, in line with historical trends for the past three years.
- c) That the number of projected Reservists leaving the UK Armed Forces would remain stable, in line with historical trends for the past three years.

Glossary

Deterministic Model	A deterministic model is one in which outcomes are determined, without any room for variation or randomness. In such models, given input data will always produce the same output. Converse to this is a stochastic model .
Great Britain (GB)	Great Britain comprises of England, Scotland, and Wales (UK excluding Northern Ireland).
Margin of Error	The 2016 APS baseline estimates carry a margin of error; a measure of the level of uncertainty in the estimate, or a measure of how reliable the survey is. The higher the margin of error, the less likely the results of the survey are true for the population.
Retirement age veterans	Veterans aged 65 and over.
Stochastic Model	A stochastic model is one where randomness is present, and outputs are determined by probability distributions within the input data. Therefore, different outputs will be produced each time a stochastic model is run with the same input data.
United Kingdom (UK)	Comprises of England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.
Veterans	Veterans include those aged 16+ who have previously served in the UK Armed Forces. This excludes those currently serving.
Working age veterans	Veterans aged 16 to 64

References

1. The Strategy for our Veterans:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategy-for-our-veterans>
2. Annual population survey: UK armed forces veterans residing in Great Britain 2016:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/annual-population-survey-uk-armed-forces-veterans-residing-in-great-britain-2016>
3. National Service in Britain: <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/private-lives/yourcountry/overview/nationalservice/>
4. ONS cohort life tables: Number surviving at exact age (lx), 2016-based, England and Wales, 1841 to 2066:
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/lifeexpectancies/bulletins/nationallifetablesunitedkingdom/2015to2017>

Further Information

Contact Us

Defence Statistics welcome feedback on our statistical products. If you have any comments or questions about this publication or about our statistics in general, you can contact us as follows:

Defence Statistics Health Telephone: 030 6798 4423
Email: DefStrat-Stat-Health-Hd@mod.gov.uk

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Other contact points within Defence Statistics are:

Defence Expenditure Analysis	030 6793 4531	DefStrat-Econ-ESES-DEA-Hd@mod.gov.uk
Price Indices	030 6793 2100	DefStrat-Econ-ESES-PI-Hd@mod.gov.uk
Naval Service Manpower	023 9254 7426	DefStrat-Stat-Navy-Hd@mod.gov.uk
Army Manpower	01264 886175	DefStrat-Stat-Army-Hd@mod.gov.uk
RAF Manpower	01494 496822	DefStrat-Stat-Air-Hd@mod.gov.uk
Tri-Service Manpower	020 7807 8896	DefStrat-Stat-Tri-Hd@mod.gov.uk
Civilian Manpower	020 7218 1359	DefStrat-Stat-Civ-Hd@mod.gov.uk

If you wish to correspond by mail, our postal address is:

Defence Statistics Health
Ministry of Defence
Abbey Wood North
Oak 0 West
#6028
Bristol
BS34 8JH

For general MOD enquiries, please call: 020 7218 9000

For press enquiries, please call our Press Office: 020 7218 325