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Minister for Veterans' Affairs
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Dear veterans and their families,

Last week the Prime Minister appointed me to be the Minister for Veterans' Affairs - further delivering on a long term promise to the UK's veteran community to get the whole of Her Majesty's Government operating in the most effective way to support you and your families.

This Government has committed to making this country the best country to be a veteran in the world by 2028. It is my job to deliver on that commitment; I am determined to do so, and I will make myself accountable to you for doing so.

While veterans care has advanced significantly over the last fifteen years, I recognise that this has not been felt equally by everybody, or experienced equally across every community of the United Kingdom. Huge strides have been made to meet the increase in demand for support since 2003, and I pay tribute to the thousands of brilliant people who have worked incredibly hard - often as volunteers - to improve life after service for our veterans.

The vast majority of our veterans go on to live fulfilled and empowered lives after service. You all know that veterans make fantastic employees, go on to great careers, give back to their communities and hugely benefit from their time in military service. I am determined that we change the narrative around the UK's veteran population so that your service is recognised and your successes celebrated.

But some veterans do face deep struggles, which I will relentlessly strive to tackle. We will forge a path towards ensuring that every one of our community who needs help knows where to turn, and is met by good quality, evidence based care that will improve their lives.

The Office for Veterans' Affairs has achieved great things since its conception in 2019, and will continue to ensure that the Nation's debt to those who serve is honoured. We are already taking action to protect veterans from vexatious legal pursuit into old age. We are delivering England's first complete mental health care pathway for veterans in Op COURAGE. And we will be addressing the harm to our LGBT community from the years of the ban. The Government set out bold commitments in the Veterans' Strategy Action Plan 2022-24 in January this year to improve veteran healthcare, employment, access to digital services and more, and we will meet them all.

This is a significant moment of change. I hope that the Nation looks back in the years ahead with pride at what we achieve, and that this step change is felt by every one of you. I look forward to the challenge.

JOHNNY MERCER MP
MINISTER FOR VETERANS' AFFAIRS