**VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES**

05 December 2022, 11.30-12.30

**ATTENDEES**

1. Officials: Jessie Owen, Director, Office for Veterans’ Affairs, Helen Helliwell, Director Armed Forces People Policy MoD
2. VAB Members: David Richmond CBE, Susanna Hamilton, James Phillips, Danny Kinahan, Prof Beverly Bergman OBE, Nicky Murdoch MBE, Louisa Clarke, Lee Buss-Blair, Leon Lloyd, Paul Findlay, Alistair Halliday, Cllr David Fothergill

| **ITEM** | **MINUTES** |
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| **1** | **Welcome and introductions** * Jessie Owen provided a short update on OVA policy and project developments, with a particular focus on the launch of the Veterans Survey and the successful response rate so far; the decision to award a medal to Nuclear Test Veterans and civilian staff as well as the successful event to mark their contribution; the publication of the Data and Research Framework; and the over 1,000 responses to the independent LGBT Veterans review.
* Jessie also welcomed the representative of the Veteran Employers Group to the board.
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| **2** | **NI Legacy Bill Update**The Veterans Commissioner for Northern Ireland, Danny Kinahan, provided an update on the NI Legacy Bill. The Commissioner asked the group to assist with improving the understanding of the BIll amongst the veterans community and feedback any responses. |
| **3** | **Data Update**The OVA summarised the high level findings from the veteran question in the England and Wales census, and updated on the launch of the Veterans Survey in partnership with the Office for National Statistics (ONS). With an impressive response rate so far, the group was asked to continue to promote the survey until February 2023. The group identified the opportunities that would be provided by the census data to inform local and national planning. Prof Beverly Bergman, provided a short summary of the work of the Academic Advisory Board, and asked the group to identify key research gaps. Three areas were raised: * The impact of service on social mobility.
* The value of military service to society.
* The commercial value of veterans to the employment sector.
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| **4** | **Perceptions of UK Armed Forces Ex-Service Personnel**The OVA presented initial key findings of YouGov research into the perceptions of veterans among the general public and employers. The group agreed that targeted campaigns to support the community were desirable. The group also identified the need to challenge stigma surrounding mental health and employability. The need to educate employers and veterans alike on transferable skills of military service was raised as an example of a targeted intervention.  |