**VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES**

26 January 2023, 14.00-15.30

**ATTENDEES**

1. Office for Veterans’ Affairs Officials
2. VAB Members: Susanne Hamilton, James Phillips, Danny Kinahan, Sir Nick Pope KCB CBE, Prof Beverley Bergman OBE, Nicky Murdoch MBE, Louisa Clarke, Lee Buss-Blair, Leon Lloyd, Cllr David Fothergill, Alistair Halliday,
3. Guest speakers: Chief Executive of the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, Independent reviewer of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme

| **ITEM** | **MINUTES** |
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| **1** | **OVA Update**  The OVA provided an overview and update on recent activity, including: £8.5m to fund veterans supported housing and Op Fortitude; the successful response rate for the Veterans' Survey; the expected launch of the £200k nuclear test veterans community fund; the announcement of awards from the Veterans Health Innovation Fund; and forthcoming further census data releases. |
| **2** | **Quinquennial review of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme**  The independent reviewer provided an update including interim headline findings and progress report on the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme Quinquennial Review.  The progress report brings together a range of issues intended to improve the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme and enhance delivery for those who use it, ahead of the publication of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme Quinquennial Review later in 2023.  The group discussed areas for potential improvement highlighted by the interim report, and looked forward to the recommendations upon publication of the full report. |
| **3** | **Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust Update** The Chief Executive of the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust provided an overview of the Trust and its activities as a charity classified as a Non-Departmental Body, which looks after the Armed Forces Covenant Fund, providing £10 million each year to support programmes for Armed Forces communities across the UK.  The group discussed examples of successful programmes, the benefits of collaboration between charities and communities and the challenges faced on volunteer recruitment & retention and fundraising. |
| **4** | **Communications & Engagement**  A roundtable discussion was held on raising areas of existing best practice and opportunities for improvement in communication and engagement with veterans across the UK, including focusing on groups within the veteran population including e.g. LGBTQ+, ethnic minorities, women, young leavers and 50+ veterans.  The group resolved to explore this further to enhance understanding of current practices, of the barriers faced and return to a future meeting with recommended actions for improvement. |