



Supporting Our Veterans: A Consultation

26 October 2023



Ministerial Foreword

We have a simple mission, to make the UK the best place in the world to be a veteran. This is a grand undertaking and not one I or the Government has committed to lightly. We are fully aware of the challenges ahead in achieving this goal. I and all my fellow ministers, along with parliamentarians, my colleagues in the devolved administrations and throughout all levels of government recognise the tremendous duty we owe to veterans and equally the tremendous potential veterans still have to contribute to our society.

I am proud to be the minister leading this ambitious piece of work. This consultation scope will look across the entire landscape of the government policy, including health, housing, employment, veterans communities and their economic and social contributions. It will move us from a fragmented evidence base to one that the Office for Veterans' Affairs can use to set strategy and support other departments and competent authorities as they design and deliver more joined up policy for veterans.

We have had many successes in improving services for veterans since establishing the Office for Veterans' Affairs, such as the dedicated referral pathways for mental and physical health and homelessness established by Op Courage, Op Restore and Op Fortitude. However, I know we can do more. Our efforts are often held back by a lack of evidence and we need to fill those gaps so that we can plan better, work better together and deliver better for veterans.

I want to prevent veterans or their families facing disadvantages compared to their civilian peers. Where such disadvantage does occur we need to level the playing field through targeted and tailored support for veterans. I understand that different veterans face different challenges. Therefore, the support provided must be tailored to the individual, recognising the unique challenges that women, disabled or LGBT veterans face for example, amongst others. To achieve this, it is vital that we understand more about veterans themselves, their aspirations and their capabilities, as well as the complex economic and social landscape that they face upon leaving service. Gathering detailed data on the needs of veterans and their families, how current policy interacts with those needs, and how we can best support them, is fundamental. Only then, can we evaluate if the policies and structures in place cause no disadvantages for veterans and their families in succeeding in society, the workplace and their personal lives post-Service.

Central to the Office for Veterans' Affairs ambitions, as set out in the Strategy for our Veterans, Data and Research Framework, is the pursuit of evidence-informed policy making. This consultation represents our most ambitious evidence gathering work to date and will inform the UK Government on veterans policies for years to come. This will ultimately ensure we better serve those who have spent their lives in service to us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J.M.', written in a cursive style.

Rt Hon. Johnny Mercer MP
Minister of State for Veterans' Affairs

Contents

Introduction	5
General information	8
Why we are consulting	8
Consultation details	8
How to respond	8
Confidentiality and data protection	9
Quality assurance	9
Glossary	10
General questions	11
Part One: Transforming services for veterans	17
Chapter 1: Housing	19
Section 1: General Housing Information	19
Section 2: Social Housing	21
Section 3: Private Renting	23
Section 4: Home Ownership	23
Section 5: Homelessness and rough sleeping	24
Section 6: Supported Housing	26
Chapter 2: Employment	28
Chapter 3: Health	32
Section 1: Physical health	32
Section 2: Mental health	33
Section 3: NHS awareness	34
Section 4: Transition	35
Section 5: Veterans in Care	35
Chapter 4: Finance and Welfare	37
Section 1: Pensions and Compensation	37
Section 2: Social security benefits	38
Section 3: Economic Engagement	39
Chapter 5: Justice	41
Section 1: Prisons and Probation	41
Chapter 6: Veterans and the Armed Forces Covenant	43
Equalities (all)	44
Part Two: Understanding our veteran community	45
Chapter 7: Post-Service Life Skills	46
Section 1 - Resettlement and military-to-civilian transition	46
Section 2 - Post-service life	46
Section 3: Financial skills	47
Chapter 8: Veteran Identity	49
Section 1: Who is a Veteran?	49
Section 2: Discrimination against veterans	50

Section 3: Disadvantages faced by veterans	51
Section 4: Protecting and enhancing veteran identity	51
Chapter 9: Non UK veterans	55
Section 1: General Support for non-UK veterans	55
Section 2: Immigration	56
Chapter 10: Groups within the Veteran population	59
Section 1: Government Commitment and Stereotype Reduction	59
Section 2: Women Veterans	59
Section 3: Disabled Veterans	61
Section 4: Neurodiverse Veterans	62
Section 5: Social mobility and socio-economic background	63
Section 6: LGBT Veterans	64
Section 7: Faith and belief groups amongst veterans	65
Section 8: Veterans from ethnic minority backgrounds	65
Chapter 11: Veterans' families	67
Chapter 12: Merchant Seafaring and Reservist Veterans	70
Section 1: Reservist veterans	70
Section 2: Merchant Seafaring Veterans who have seen duty on legally defined military operations	70
Chapter 13: Data collection and Statistics	72
Chapter 14: Veterans governance and advocacy	73
Section 1: Government and Veterans	73
Section 2: Veterans Commissioners	74
Section 3: Ombudsman	75
Chapter 15: Remembrance, recognition and memorialisation	76
Section 1: Education	76
Section 2: Arts	77
Section 3: Heritage	77
Section 4: Public monuments and events	78
Section 5: Monuments	78
Part Three: Recognising our veterans' contribution to society	80
Chapter 16: Recognition of veterans	80
Section 1 Promoting Positive Perception	80
Section 2: Impact of Recognition Initiatives	80
Chapter 17: The value Veterans bring to the workplace	81
Section 1: Veterans in your business or organisation	81
Next steps	85

Introduction

The UK Armed Forces are made up of people who show commitment, courage and dedication to protecting and defending our nation. It is therefore only right that, upon leaving service, these individuals receive world-class provision of services, and appropriate support during their transition to civilian life and beyond, to ensure they can continue to thrive throughout their lifetime.

The UK armed forces are also fortunate to have volunteers come from all over the world to serve. These come from our nearest neighbour to our most distant commonwealth cousins.

Armed forces personnel and families are supported throughout their service by the MOD. When they leave the armed forces the support for individuals and their families is spread across government.

It is only right that those individuals who have served in the UK Armed Forces do not suffer disadvantage for their time away from civilian life, and are supported as they return to civilian life. The UK government and the devolved administrations recognise the unique challenges current and former service personnel and their families face. This is why veterans were included in the Armed Forces Covenant, and why the UK Government has committed itself to making the UK the best place in the world to be a veteran.

The UK Government established the Office for Veterans' Affairs to better coordinate veterans policy, bring together and improve our knowledge of veterans, and provide dedicated policy work on veterans. The OVA leads on those areas that are reserved or for England, It works in partnership with similar units in devolved administrations which perform similar functions for devolved policy areas.

This consultation is a comprehensive evidence gathering effort to understand veterans, their identities, their communities and the value they bring. We seek to gather information on existing issues to help develop remedies, on existing services to evaluate their effectiveness and emerging issues so we can ensure our strategies are fit for the future.

This consultation is focused on veterans living now. We are interested in understanding their experiences and in the support veterans receive from others: UK and devolved governments, competent authorities, charities, family, social groups, clubs, associations and employers.

The UK Government will incorporate the evidence we gather into the other streams of evidence we collect. This will help policy officials in the design of better policies to support veterans and prevent disadvantage.

Overarching policy objective

The UK Government has committed to making the UK the best place in the world to be a veteran. The policies that affect veterans are spread across government departments and are managed centrally, at a devolved level and by local authorities. We want to bring coherence and coordination across these policies, to maximise their value for veterans. This requires collaboration across government and at all levels to deliver effectively for our veterans. This is why the Office for Veterans' Affairs has been placed in the Cabinet Office to better coordinate this work centrally. The Office for Veterans' Affairs works in partnership with the devolved administrations to deliver support throughout the UK so that veterans can enjoy the same outcomes, regardless of where they live.

Our veterans are also a tremendous resource, socially, culturally and economically. They are afforded unique skills through their training and experience that we need to better harness in civil society and the economy to maximise their benefit both to themselves and the country.

Scope

We are focused solely on veteran related areas. This is a broad scope of policy areas, across health, housing and education to mention a few. This consultation will seek evidence UK wide, recognising the variance in services and approaches between the UK government devolved administrations in devolved policy areas and different approaches to delivery by competent authorities.

This consultation covers both UK and non-UK veterans, their families. For the purposes of this consultation, we will use the shorthand "veterans and their families" to refer to the aforementioned cohorts.

This exercise does not cover the experiences, issues, or policies related to serving armed forces personnel or their families, including bereaved families of those who died in service.

The problem the government is aiming to solve

The vast majority of veterans and their families transition successfully into civilian life. We know that is not the case for all veterans. This consultation seeks evidence on the needs of veterans, their families. In line with our commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant, we would like to enhance our understanding of the needs of veterans and how current policy interacts with those needs. We are especially interested in the areas aligned to the six key themes and five cross-cutting factors outlined in the Strategy For Our Veterans.

Six Themes

- Health and Wellbeing
- Employment, Education and Skills
- Making a Home in Civilian Society
- Finance and Debt
- Veterans and the Law
- Community and Relationships

Five Cross-cutting Factors

- Collaboration between organisations
- Coordination of Veterans' services
- Data on the Veteran community
- Public perception and understanding
- Recognition of Veterans

Audience

This consultation is open to all, but we expect it to be of particular interest to:

- Academic experts and other third sector organisations that focus on veterans issue
- Charities, competent authorities, and other groups that provide services to, otherwise support veterans.
- Individual companies and organisations that employ veterans, business groups and economic research organisations.

- Veterans, veteran groups, and those who provide support to veterans.

We particularly welcome responses that provide supporting evidence.

Copies of the consultation paper are being sent to:

- Veterans' Advisory Board
- Veterans' Academic Advisory Board members
- NI Veterans' Support Office
- COBSEO
- Royal British Legion
- SSAFA
- Help For Heroes
- Combat Stress
- Veterans' Scotland
- FiMT
- ASDIC
- Forces Employment Charity
- WRAC
- BLESMA
- Local Government Association
- COSLA
- NHS Confederation
- Universities UK
- Trade Union Congress
- British Chamber of Commerce
- Confederation of British Industry
- Federation of Small Business
- National Housing Federation
- Equality and Human Rights commission
- Social Mobility Foundation
- Social Enterprise UK
- Citizen Advice Bureau

General information

Why we are consulting

The objective of this consultation is to develop the UK Government's evidence base, to identify issues, inform policy making and evaluate existing provision of support to veterans and their families. The evidence gathered will form part of a wider evidence base such as surveys, census, academic and economic data. This will support future policy development across government.

Consultation details

Issued: 26th October 2023

Respond by: 4th January 2024

Enquiries to: veteransconsultation@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

Consultation reference: Supporting Our Veterans: A Consultation

Audiences: We want to hear from the broad range of stakeholders, including charities, academics, businesses, and veterans themselves.

Territorial extent: We are interested in gathering evidence on a UK-wide basis.

How to respond

The simplest way to respond to this consultation is through our online questionnaire using the link below. We encourage submitting information via online where possible as this is the Government's preferred method of receiving responses which supports timely and efficient analysis. Alternatively, responses via e-mail or a Microsoft Word document via e-mail will also be accepted. If responding via e-mail or a Microsoft Word document, please indicate which question your answer relates to in order to support timely analysis.

The evidence received will be taken into account by HM Government in future policy development and evaluation. When responding, please state whether you are responding as an individual or representing the view of an organisation. Your response will be most useful if it is framed in direct response to the questions posed, though further comments and evidence are also welcome.

All questions are optional please feel free to skip to sections that are of most interest or relevance to you, they should provide a useful guide to your response whatever form it may take.

Respond online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/supporting-our-veterans-a-consultation>

or

Email to: veteransconsultation@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

A response form is available on the GOV.UK consultation page: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/supporting-our-veterans-a-consultation>

Confidentiality and data protection

Information you provide in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be disclosed in accordance with UK legislation (the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please tell us, but be aware that we cannot guarantee confidentiality in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not be regarded by us as a confidentiality request.

The questions forming part of this review include requests for information which may be commercially sensitive. Such information will be used by the Cabinet Office solely for the purposes of formulating policy and developing analysis and will not be published in an individually identifiable way.

We will process your personal data in accordance with all applicable data protection laws. See our [privacy policy](#).

Anonymised data sets created from the information collected via this consultation may be shared with Other Government Departments to improve policy making process and ensure strategic coherence across policy in all departments. Information will be shared between the legal personages of the relevant Secretaries of State and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on behalf of the Cabinet Office.

The lawful basis we are relying on to process your personal data is article 6(1)(e) of the UK GDPR, which allows us to process personal data when this is necessary for the performance of our public tasks in the exercise of our official authority.

We will summarise all responses and publish this summary on [GOV.UK](#). The summary will include a list of names or organisations that responded, but not people's personal names, addresses or other contact details.

All questions are optional.

Quality assurance

This consultation has been carried out in accordance with the government's [consultation principles](#).

If you have any complaints about the way this consultation has been conducted, please email: veteransconsultation@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

Glossary

HMG – His Majesty’s Government

CO – Cabinet Office

DA - devolved administration

SG - Scottish Government

WG - Welsh Government

NIE - Northern Ireland Executive

OVA – Office for Veterans’ Affairs

MOD – Ministry of Defence

Competent authority - a body or authority having supervisory or regulatory functions in the United Kingdom in relation to service activities (and includes in particular a professional body, professional association or other professional organisation, that regulates access to, or the exercise of, a service activity).

Local Connection Test - the test that Local Authorities use to establish an individual’s connection to a local area, for the purpose of allocating social housing.

Statutory Service - public services that are required by law and funded by the Government. These can include national services such as the armed forces or healthcare. Local authorities also have a statutory duty to provide a range of services to their communities. These can include education, adult social care, housing, road maintenance and library services.

Social Housing - accommodation with below market level rents provided by housing associations or local authorities to individuals in need.

Supported Housing - accommodation where residents receive support, supervision or care.

Veteran - A person who has served in the UK armed forces but has now left.

Veteran Families - A family member of a person who has served in the UK armed forces but that person has subsequently left the armed forces.

Jurisdiction of Service Discipline - This covers all UK Armed Forces personnel as well as some civilians in certain designated areas. It means they are bound by the rules of service discipline and can be tried in a military court for their breach. Examples of designated areas include onboard military ship when afloat, Iraq and Afghanistan.

General questions

Location questions

1. Do you live/are you based in the UK?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. [If "yes" to previous Q] Please enter the first part of your postcode: (e.g. If your postcode is "AB1C 2DE" - please enter "AB1C"). If you are responding as an individual, this should be your home postcode. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, this should be the organisation's office postcode.
3. Are you replying as an individual, or on behalf of an organisation?
 - a. Individual
 - b. Organisation

[Questions for individuals (Organisations please skip to question 22)].

Demographic Questions

This section asks questions related to demographic characteristics (e.g. your nationality or age). These questions will allow us to analyse the responses by identifiable groups. This will allow us to track any trends in responses and segment the data so that it is more useful in drawing conclusions when developing policy.

4. What is your nationality?
 - a. British
 - b. English
 - c. Welsh
 - d. Scottish
 - e. Northern Irish
 - f. Other, please describe
 - g. Prefer not to say
5. What is your sex?
 - a. Female
 - b. Male
 - c. Prefer not to say
6. Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - i.
 - c. Prefer not to say
 - i. If no, please specify your gender identity: [Free Text]

7. How old are you?

- a. 17 or younger
- b. 18-20
- c. 21-29
- d. 30-39
- e. 40-49
- f. 50-59
- g. 60 -69
- h. 70-79
- i. 80-89
- j. 90-99
- k. 100 or or older
- l. Prefer not to say

8. What is your ethnic group? (Choose one option that best describes your ethnic group or background)

- a. White
 - i. English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
 - ii. Irish
 - iii. Gypsy or Irish Traveller
 - iv. Any other White background, please describe
- b. Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups
 - i. White and Black Caribbean
 - ii. White and Black African
 - iii. White and Asian
 - iv. Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background, please describe
- c. Asian / Asian British
 - i. Indian
 - ii. Pakistani
 - iii. Bangladeshi
 - iv. Chinese
 - v. Any other Asian background, please describe
- d. Black / African / Caribbean / Black British
 - i. African
 - ii. Caribbean
 - iii. Any other Black / African / Caribbean background, please describe
- e. Other ethnic group
 - i. Arab
 - ii. Any other ethnic group, please describe
- f. Prefer not to say

9. What is your religion?

- a. No religion
- b. Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)
- c. Buddhist

- d. Hindu
- e. Jewish
- f. Muslim
- g. Sikh
- h. Any other religion, please describe
- i. Prefer not to say

10. What was the occupation of your main household earner when you were about aged 14?

- a. Modern professional & traditional professional occupations such as: teacher, nurse, physiotherapist, social worker, musician, police officer (sergeant or above), software designer, accountant, solicitor, medical practitioner, scientist, civil / mechanical engineer.
- b. Senior, middle or junior managers or administrators such as: finance manager, chief executive, large business owner, office manager, retail manager, bank manager, restaurant manager, warehouse manager.
- c. Clerical and intermediate occupations such as: secretary, personal assistant, call centre agent, clerical worker, nursery nurse.
- d. Technical and craft occupations such as: motor mechanic, plumber, printer, electrician, gardener, train driver.
- e. Routine, semi-routine manual and service occupations such as: postal worker, machine operative, security guard, caretaker, farm worker, catering assistant, sales assistant, HGV driver, cleaner, porter, packer, labourer, waiter/waitress, bar staff.
- f. Long-term unemployed (claimed Jobseeker's Allowance or earlier unemployment benefit for more than a year).
- g. Small business owners who employed less than 25 people such as: corner shop owners, small plumbing companies, retail shop owner, single restaurant or cafe owner, taxi owner, garage owner.
- h. Other such as: retired, this question does not apply to me, I don't know.
- i. I prefer not to say.

11. Which type of school did you attend for the most time between the ages of 11 and 16?

- a. A state-run or state-funded school
- b. Independent or fee-paying school
- c. Independent or fee-paying school, where I received a means tested bursary covering 90% or more of the total cost of attending throughout my time there
- d. Attended school outside the UK
- e. I don't know
- f. I prefer not to say

12. If you finished school after 1980, were you eligible for free school meals at any point during your school years?
- Yes
 - No
 - Not applicable (finished school before 1980 or went to school overseas)
 - I don't know
 - I prefer not to say
13. Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?.
- Yes
 - No
 - Prefer not to say
14. [If "yes" to previous Q] Do any of your conditions or illnesses reduce your ability to carry-out day-to-day activities?
- No
 - Yes, a little
 - Yes, a lot
15. Are you a current serving member of the regular or reserve UK Armed Forces?
- Yes
 - No
16. [If "no" to previous Q] Have you previously served in the UK Armed Forces? (select all that apply)
- Yes, previously served in regular armed forces
 - Yes, previously served in reserve armed forces
 - Yes, previously served in National Service
 - None of the above
17. [If "yes" to current or previous service] How many years have you served in the UK Armed Forces?
- Less than 1 year
 - 1 - 2 years
 - 3 to 6 years
 - 7 to 12 years
 - 13 to 24 years
 - 25 to 48 years
 - 49 years or more
18. [If "yes" to current or previous service] Were you a UK citizen throughout your service in the UK Armed Forces?
- Yes
 - Yes and I also held dual citizenship
 - No, but I got UK citizenship during my service

- d. No, I was a non-UK citizen throughout my service
19. Are you a member of the non-UK community? (e.g. a foreign national who volunteered for service in the UK armed forces)
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Prefer not to say
20. [If “yes” to non-UK community] Do you have UK citizenship now?
- a. Yes
 - b. No

Questions for organisations

21. Name of organisation
- (Free text)
22. What is the nature of your organisation or service you provide?
- a. Free text
23. What type of organisation is this?
- a. An independent competent authority
 - b. A government competent authority
 - c. A local authority
 - d. A business or social enterprise providing services
 - e. Other business or employer
 - f. Charity
 - g. Academic
 - h. Other (please specify)
24. If you are an organisation delivering a service, can you estimate how many users your organisation serves?
- a. Free text
25. How did you hear about this consultation?
- a. Email from this department
 - b. Email from elsewhere
 - c. GOV.UK alert
 - d. Newsletter
 - e. X (Formally known as Twitter)

f. Other (please specify)

26. Are you happy for quotes from your response and used by the government and publicly associated with your organisation? (for example, in the Government's response to the consultation or an Impact Assessment).

a. Yes

b. No

27. If you would like to be potentially contacted about future engagement on the subject of this consultation, please provide an email address: (Please note, this data will be held separately to and not analysed with data collected in the rest of the consultation).

Part One: Transforming services for veterans

Background

The UK Government and devolved administrations are committed to ensuring that, where veterans and their families have specific needs as a result of service in the UK Armed Forces, they can, where appropriate, access bespoke services that are readily accessible. In order to achieve this, the UK and devolved governments and their partners design, commission and deliver services for veterans and their families.

There are a number of services and some statutory duties aimed at supporting veterans. The House of Commons Research report on [Support for UK Veterans](#) includes further details of this, and includes areas of continuous support offered to veterans after their initial transition to civilian life:

Healthcare

- The provision of veterans' healthcare, including for those affected by post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental health conditions, is primarily the responsibility of the constituent National Health Services across the UK. There is specific support for veterans accessing prosthetics services.

Housing

- Housing policy is devolved; the assistance available differs in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Armed Forces Act 2021 placed a duty on local authorities, when exercising a relevant housing function, to have due regard to:
 - (a) the unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the armed forces,
 - (b) the principle that it is desirable to remove disadvantages arising for service people from membership, or former membership, of the armed forces, and;
 - (c) the principle that special provision for service people may be justified by the effects on such people of membership, or former membership, of the armed forces.

In Scotland, guidance on the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 states that landlords can take the needs of other groups (such as those leaving the armed services) into account as well as the reasonable preference groups.

The Welsh Government's approach to housing allocations is, as in England, governed by the Housing Act 1996. In guidance, the Welsh Government believes that it is important that Service Personnel who have been seriously injured or disabled in Service and who have an urgent need for social housing should be given high priority within Local Authorities' allocation schemes in recognition of their Service. It also advises prioritising people needing accommodation as a result of leaving the Armed Forces and those with an injury, medical condition or disability which they have sustained as a result of service in the armed forces.

In Northern Ireland the Housing Selection Scheme operates as a single gateway into social housing let on a permanent basis by the Housing Executive or any housing associations. The statutory basis of this scheme is Article 22 of the Housing (NI) Order 1981.

Employment

- The Work and Health Programme provides support to people in England and Wales to find and keep a job. It is available, on a voluntary basis, to those with health conditions or disabilities, and to various groups of vulnerable people. Former armed forces personnel are a “priority group” for this programme, which allows for “early voluntary entry to the programme at the most appropriate time in their claim for those who would benefit from specialist employment support to find work.” Employment support programmes are now devolved in Scotland. The Fair Start Scotland employment support service provides “tailored, person centred support”, delivered by public, private and third sector bodies under nine separate regional contracts.

These services may be delivered differently depending on your location, with the UK Government and the devolved administrations all tailoring their services to meet the needs of the areas they administer. Locally the face of these services will be local councils, NHS trusts, and other competent authorities.

This consultation provides an opportunity for you to highlight to the Government, areas where you believe more action is necessary, and the role that you can play in helping to make this happen.

Chapter 1: Housing

Ensuring that every veteran has the opportunity to find a secure place to live following service is one of the key elements of a successful transition to a fulfilling civilian life. Housing policy is devolved; the assistance available differs in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Section 1: General Housing Information

Questions for individual veterans

28. Whilst in the service, were you offered help and advice to prepare you for securing accommodation when you left the service?
- a. Civilian Housing Brief
 - b. Defence Transition Service
 - c. MOD Referral Scheme
 - d. None
 - e. Other
29. To what extent do you agree / disagree that this was useful?
- a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neither agree nor disagree
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
30. During service, how could you have been better supported to access housing, including rented, buying or social housing?
31. Post service, how could you have been better supported to access housing, including rented, buying or social housing?
32. Have you ever felt your status as a veteran has disadvantaged you in relation to your housing situation?
- a. Yes, please explain your answer

- b. No
- c. I don't know

33. Have you ever made contact with Operation FORTITUDE, the hotline supporting veterans into housing?

- a. If so, please tell us about your experience

(Questions for local authorities and competent authorities)

34. Do you have any evidence regarding the housing status of veterans in your area? If so, please provide further details of this data and whether you are willing to share this with the OVA. (Please do not share personal data).

- a. Free text

35. To what extent do you feel that there is sufficient information available to veterans to help them secure housing? Rate:

- a. Extremely sufficient
- b. Very sufficient
- c. Somewhat sufficient
- d. Not so sufficient
- e. Not at all sufficient

36. Is there more the Government could be doing to enable veterans to secure housing post service?

- a. Yes
- b. No
 - i. If yes, please explain [Free text]

37. Have you ever engaged with Operation FORTITUDE, the hotline supporting veterans into housing?

- a. Yes
- b. No
 - i. If yes, please tell us about your experience

Section 2: Social Housing

Social housing is low cost rental accommodation for those whose needs cannot be met by the private rented sector or commercial property market (e.g. homes to rent at below the market rate or housing to buy through low-cost home ownership schemes). Rented social housing is provided by local authorities and housing associations. Most rented social housing is allocated by local authorities although you can apply directly to housing associations in some instances.

(Questions for individual veterans)

38. Have you ever applied for social housing since you began serving as a member of the regular or reserve UK Armed Forces?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
39. Are you aware of a priority status being applied to your application due to your veteran status?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
40. When applying for social housing, did you disclose that you were a veteran?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
41. Were you aware that in England, veterans are exempted from having their local connection to a local authority tested for the purpose of allocating housing in the five years preceding their application?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
42. If you were eligible for a local connection exemption, what was your experience? (e.g. Were you asked to prove your status as a veteran? What evidence were you asked to provide to prove your identity as a veteran? Were you referred to another council because you hadn't lived in the area long enough?)
- a. (Free text)

(Questions for local authorities and competent authorities):

43. How often do you ask if someone is a veteran?
- a. Never
 - b. Rarely

- c. Sometimes
 - d. Often
 - e. Always
44. What evidence, if any, are veterans asked to provide to receive priority preference or exemption from the local connection test?
- a. ID
 - b. Certificate of service
 - c. Other (please specify)
45. Are you aware of the priority status given to veterans who are injured, ill or disabled as a result of their service?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
46. Are you aware that veterans are exempt from local connection for five years from the moment of application?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
47. How often are you referring veterans to other local authorities on the basis of local connection?
- a. Never
 - b. Rarely
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Often
 - e. Always
48. What is your experience of applying the local connection test to veterans?
- a. Very good
 - b. Good
 - c. Neither good nor poor
 - d. Poor
 - e. Very poor
 - i. Please explain your answer Free text (300 words)

Section 3: Private Renting

Some veterans leaving service seek to secure accommodation via the private rented sector. The private rented sector can offer secure accommodation to veterans as they settle back into civilian life.

(Questions for individual veterans)

49. Have you ever wanted to secure privately rented accommodation since you began serving as a member of the regular or reserve UK Armed Forces?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
50. Did you face any challenges accessing private rented accommodation? (select all that apply)
- a. None
 - b. Cost of rent
 - c. Lack of deposit
 - d. Lack of reference
 - e. Lack of credit history
 - f. Lack of availability in my area
 - g. Due to my status as a veteran
 - h. Other (please specify)

(Questions for charities, local authorities and competent authorities):

51. Do you think that landlords are less likely to rent their property to someone who identifies themselves as a veteran?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. I don't know
 - i. Please explain your answer

Section 4: Home Ownership

Veterans are just as likely as the general population to own their own home. The Government is committed to helping all service personnel access information and support to help them buy their own property.

(Questions for individual veterans)

52. Have you ever bought your own home since you began serving as a member of the regular or reserve UK Armed Forces?
- Yes
 - No
53. Did you experience any difficulties when buying your home related to service? (select all that apply)
- None
 - Lack of savings or deposit
 - Lack of credit history
 - Lack of availability in my area
 - Lack of understanding of process of purchasing a home
 - Due to my status as a veteran
 - Other (please specify)
54. Did you take advantage of any government support scheme, other than Forces Help to Buy?
- Forces Help to Buy
 - Shared ownership
 - First Homes Scheme
 - Help to Buy: Equity Loan
 - Help to Buy: ISA or Lifetime ISA
 - Other (please specify)

Section 5: Homelessness and rough sleeping

Background

While rough sleeping is the most immediately recognisable form of homelessness, the statutory definition encompasses a range of different housing situations. To be legally considered homeless, an individual must either lack a secure place to live or not reasonably be able to remain here.

(Questions for individual veterans)

55. Are you a veteran who has experience of, or is currently, homeless or rough sleeping?
- Yes
 - No

[Filter: only for veterans with experience of homeless]

56. Do you believe that your service, either directly or indirectly, was a contributing factor that resulted in your experience being homeless or rough sleeping?

- a. Yes (please explain)
- b. No

57. How long after service did you lose your home?

- a. 0-3 years post-service
- b. 4-7 years post service
- c. 8-10 years post service
- d. 10+ years post service

58. What were the factors that led to you experiencing homelessness or rough sleeping? (select all that apply)

- a. Left military with no home to go to
- b. Left prison with no home to go to
- c. Lack of money
- d. Lack of affordable housing
- e. Relationship breakdown
- f. Loss of job or employment
- g. Mental health
- h. Addiction
- i. Other (please specify)

59. Was your homelessness or rough sleeping a singular or repeated occurrence?

- a. Singular
- b. Repeated

60. Did you face any challenges securing housing following your experience of homelessness or rough sleeping?

- a. None
- b. There were no suitable homes to support me with my specific needs
- c. There were no homes available in my area
- d. Referred by my local authority to a different local authority
- e. Other, please explain

(Questions for local authorities, competent authorities, charities, business/social enterprise providing services):

61. What are the most common causes of homelessness or rough sleeping you see veterans presenting with? You can select up to 5 options.

- a. Mortgage repossession
- b. End of rented tenancy

- c. Landlord wishing to sell or re-let the property
- d. Illegal eviction
- e. Rent arrears
- f. Breach of tenancy, not related to rent arrears
- g. Tenant abandoned property
- h. No longer eligible for supported housing
- i. Eviction from supported housing
- j. Family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate
- k. Relationship with partner ended (nonviolent breakdown)
- l. Domestic abuse
- m. Non-racially motivated violence or harassment
- n. Racially motivated violence or harassment
- o. Left institution with no accommodation available
- p. Left HM Forces
- q. Fire, flood or other emergency
- r. Property disrepair
- s. Other (please specify)
- t. Not applicable

62. What is the last settled accommodation occupied by the veteran(s) you have encountered seeking homelessness support? Select all relevant options.

- a. Private rented sector
- b. Living with family
- c. Social rented sector
- d. Living with friends
- e. Owner-occupier / shared ownership
- f. Temporary accommodation
- g. National Asylum Seeker Support (NASS) accommodation
- h. Refuge
- i. Other (please specify)
- j. Not applicable

Section 6: Supported Housing

Supported housing can offer many veterans with the help and resources they need, whether in the long or short term, to get them back on their feet and transitioning towards independent living.

The UK Government will soon be consulting on measures in the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023. The Act will introduce a locally led licensing scheme for supported housing meeting the definition of supported exempt accommodation in the Act.

This licensing scheme will include compliance with the National Supported Housing Standards, which will set out what good support in supported housing looks like. We welcome veterans' views on this consultation once it is published.

(Questions for individual veterans)

63. Have you ever lived in supported housing?
- a. Yes - (Please describe the type of supported housing) Free text (max 300 words)
 - b. No
 - c. Unsure
64. If so, why were you in need of supported housing at this time?
Free text (max 250 words)
65. What was the referral route you used to access supported housing?
- a. Referred by the local authority
 - b. Referred by the National Health Service
 - c. Referred by a charity
 - d. Self-referral (please specify how)
 - e. Other (please provide details)

(Questions for charities, competent authorities and local authorities):

66. What are the most common support needs veterans present with? (select all that apply)
- a. Mental health support
 - b. Addiction support
 - c. Financial support
 - d. Other (please specify)

Chapter 2: Employment

Making sure that every veteran who wants to, has access to opportunities for gainful employment after their time in service is a critical aspect of achieving a successful transition to a fulfilling civilian life.

Across the UK, respective governments have identified transitioning from Service into stable and fulfilling employment as priority. The UKG and each of the DAs have developed their own bespoke action plans to implement in their jurisdictions. The OVA's Veterans' Strategy Action Plan (2022-2024) identifies that "*Stable long-term employment opportunities after service are the foundation of positive life outcomes for veterans, and we know that veterans all over the country are leaving service equipped with skills and expertise that benefit not only themselves but our economy too.*"

Section 1: Employment Information (Questions for Individual Veterans)

67. [Filter question] What is your current employment status?
- Employed
 - Self-employed
 - Unemployed (for less than 6 months)
 - Unemployed (6 months or more)
 - Retired
 - In education or training
 - If unemployed, is there a barrier that has prevented you from being employed? (Free text)
68. Has being a veteran been an advantage to you in securing your current or a previous employment role?
- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neither agree or disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
69. Have you chosen to share your status as a veteran or service-leaver with your current employer? (Please explain your reasoning)
- Yes
 - No
 - If no, please identify your reasoning
 - I did not think it was relevant

- I did not consider it at the time
- I was worried about stigma
- Other (please specify)

70. Please rate the extent to which you feel that your current employment makes full use of the skills, strengths, experience and qualifications you have to offer? (Options: Full use, Quite a lot of use, Moderate use, Little use, No use)). Please explain your rating (free text).

71. To your knowledge, does your employer have any veteran specific employment support in place? (select all that apply)

- a. Tailored training & recruitment programmes
- b. Engagement & outreach
- c. Veteran-specific talent development schemes
- d. Coaching and / or mentorship programmes
- e. Staff Networks (also known as Employee Resource Groups)
- f. Self-ID of veterans in your employee workforce
- g. Signatory to Armed Forces Covenant
- h. Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Award holder
- i. Other (please explain)

72. Are there any other forms of support you think would be useful for employers to have in place for veterans recruitment and career development? (Please describe).

73. A variety of guidance or support may have been available to you during your time of military service, to help you prepare for a civilian career. How helpful or unhelpful did you find each type of guidance/support? (If you did not access the guidance/support, please select 'not applicable') [Presented in matrix format]

- i. Career Transition Partnership
 - Very helpful
 - Helpful
 - Neither helpful or unhelpful
 - Unhelpful
 - Very unhelpful
 - Not applicable
- ii. Briefings
 - Very helpful
 - Helpful
 - Neither helpful or unhelpful
 - Unhelpful
 - Very unhelpful
 - Not applicable
- iii. Department for Work & Pensions) Armed Forces Champion, Work Coach or Disability Employment Advisor
 - Very helpful
 - Helpful
 - Neither helpful or unhelpful
 - Unhelpful
 - Very unhelpful

- Not applicable
- iv. A Charity or 3rd Sector Group
 - Very helpful
 - Helpful
 - Neither helpful or unhelpful
 - Unhelpful
 - Very unhelpful
 - Not applicable
- v. A veterans or service leaver recruitment specialist
 - Very helpful
 - Helpful
 - Neither helpful or unhelpful
 - Unhelpful
 - Very unhelpful
 - Not applicable
- vi. A tailored veterans work placement or employment programmeVery helpful
 - Helpful
 - Neither helpful or unhelpful
 - Unhelpful
 - Very unhelpful
 - Not applicable

74. Is there more that could be done to help prepare veterans to secure employment post service? (Free text)

75. Have you ever considered starting your own business?

- a. Yes, but I have not started it yet
- b. Yes, and it is successful
- c. Yes, but I decided not to due to barrier
- d. Yes, but I was unable to get financial backing, e.g a bank loan.
- e. Yes, but it was not viable
- f. Yes, but it is yet to turn a profit
- g. Yes, but I have since left into employment
- h. Yes, but I am now in education
- i. Yes, but I am now unemployed
- j. No

76. In your experience, do you believe veterans face any specific barriers compared to civilians in starting a business?

- a. Yes (please explain your answer - 300 words)
- b. No
- c. I don't know

77. After Service have you entered into any course of study? (e.g. university undergraduate and postgraduate degrees)

- a. Yes (please describe - 300 words)

- b. No
- c. I don't know

Chapter 3: Health

It is our duty to ensure that those that have been injured, whether physically or mentally, in connection with their service, receive the very best possible care and support. Ensuring veterans have the right health and wellbeing support is a key priority for this government. Health is primarily a devolved matter. All national health services across the UK are available to veterans and their families.

Section 1: Physical health

Veterans will encounter many of the same physical health issues as the rest of the population, and are eligible to receive all NHS services. Health is devolved, so bespoke support available to veterans and their families will differ depending on where you live.

(Questions for all)

78. What is your experience of physical health support for veterans with service-related issues?

- a. Very good
- b. Good
- c. Average
- d. Poor
- e. Very poor
 - i. Please explain your answer
- f. I don't know

79. Are there certain physical conditions that may affect veterans which you feel are not properly supported through current services?

- a. Yes (please explain your answer - 300 words)
- b. No
- c. I don't know

80. Are there any gaps in physical health support provision for female veterans?

- Yes
- No
 - If yes, please explain your answer

England-only [FILTER QUESTION]

Op RESTORE delivers comprehensive medical care to veterans with physical service-related health problems.

81. Before this consultation, were you aware of Op RESTORE in England?

- a. Yes
- b. No

82. Before this consultation, were you aware of the Veterans Prosthetics Panel in England?

- a. Yes
- b. No

83. Before this consultation, were you aware of IPC4V in England?

- a. Yes
- b. No

84. How could physical health support for veterans be improved? (Free text)

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland [FILTER QUESTION]

85. Are you aware of specific physical health support for veterans and their families in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland? If so, what?

Section 2: Mental health

Questions for individual veterans, families, charities, business and social enterprise providing services, local authorities, competent authorities.

86. What is your experience of mental health support for veterans with problems related to their time in service?

- a. Very good
- b. Good
- c. Average
- d. Poor
- e. Very poor

87. Are there certain mental health conditions that may affect veterans which you feel are not properly supported through current services? (select all that apply)

- a. Anxiety
- b. Depression
- c. Bipolar Disorder
- d. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- e. Schizophrenia
- f. Psychosis
- g. Stress
- h. Alcohol, drug and gambling addiction
- i. Personality disorder
- j. Bereavement
- k. ADHD
- l. OCD
- m. Self-harm
- n. Dementia
- o. Eating disorder

- p. Other (please specify)
88. To what extent do you agree or disagree that there is stigma associated with seeking mental health support within the veteran community?
- a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
 - f. I don't know
89. Were you already aware of mental health provision for veterans in your area before this consultation (e.g. Op COURAGE in England, or other services elsewhere)?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
90. How could mental health support for veterans be improved?
- a. Free text
91. Are there any gaps in mental health support provision for female veterans?
- a. Yes (Please explain - max 350 words)
 - b. No

Section 3: NHS awareness

It is essential, if we are going to properly support veterans that require mental or physical health support, that our health services are aware of the veteran specific options available to them.

92. In your experience, to what extent do you agree or disagree that staff in hospitals of veterans are aware of veteran support services?
- 1. Strongly agree
 - 2. Agree
 - 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 - 4. Disagree
 - 5. Strongly disagree
93. In your experience, to what extent do you agree or disagree that staff in GP surgeries are aware of veterans and veteran support services?
- a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neither agree nor disagree
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree

(For competent authorities)

94. What are the barriers to increasing awareness across the NHS?

- a. Free text (max 350 words)
- 95. Can you estimate the time you have already allocated to raising awareness in your Trust or GP practice?
- 96. If you have allocated resources to raising awareness, do you feel that this has been a worthwhile investment?
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No
 - iii. Unsure
- 97. Have there been any particularly effective initiatives you have implemented?
 - a. Free text (max 350 words)
- 98. What more could be done to increase awareness across the NHS?
 - a. Free text (max 350 words)

Section 4: Transition

As service personnel leave the armed forces it is important they are aware of what healthcare services are available to them. Similarly civilian health services are provided with the information they need to support veterans and their families.

- 99. What, if any, are the main barriers for veterans accessing healthcare within the first two years of leaving the military?
 - a. Free text (max 350 words)
- 100. What more, if anything, could be done to make accessing healthcare after transition better?
 - a. Free text (max 350 words)

(For competent authorities)

- 101. Are there any issues that regularly arise regarding veterans registering with health services?
 - a. Free text (max 350 words)

Section 5: Veterans in Care

For veterans in receipt of care, including those in senior living establishments, 8% of those in care homes are veterans. Veterans residence is unlikely to be as a direct result of their service. Nevertheless, we want to ensure that the appropriate support is, where necessary, available to take into account their experiences of serving in the UK Armed Forces. For veterans in receipt of other care, their families, and those who provide care, we equally want to better understand your needs and experiences.

Question for all

- 102. Are you involved in, or have experience of caring for veterans? (e.g. as a service provider, a family member of a veteran in care, or carer). (FILTER QUESTION)
 - a. Yes

- b. No

(Questions for those involved in providing care to a veteran)

- 103. Do you feel there is sufficient support for veterans in care?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - i. If no, please explain your answer

(Questions for individuals)

- 104. Are you a veteran in care? (Filter question)
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
- 105. What sort of care do you receive? (Free text - max 350 words)
- 106. Who provides this care?
 - a. Family and/or friends
 - b. Care provider
 - c. Other (please specify)
- 107. Is your need for care a result of serving in the military?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
- 108. Do you feel you receive the right support?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - i. If no, please explain your answer.

(Questions for local authorities and competent authorities)

- 109. Are there particular types of support you would like to see offered more widely to veterans in care settings?
 - a. Free text (max 350 words)
- 110. Are there barriers to introducing veteran specific support?
 - a. Free text (max 500 words)
 - i.

Chapter 4: Finance and Welfare

Transitioning out of the Armed Forces begins a significant period of change for service leavers. Ensuring that all service leavers have the skills needed to be financially secure and resilient is essential. It is important veterans are aware of and can access the full range of offers from the UK government, Devolved Administrations and Local Authorities, including benefits, pensions and compensation.

Section 1: Pensions and Compensation

Since 1975, all Serving Personnel have been automatically enrolled into an Armed Forces Pension Scheme and unlike almost all other schemes, pay 0% in contributions each month. For some, depending on the dates and length of their service, their pension will also provide an early departure payment or immediate pension, whilst all Armed Forces Pension Schemes provide for ill-health and survivor benefits. Some benefits and payments under the Armed Forces Pension Schemes are automatic whilst others must be proactively claimed from the MOD.

Work is currently underway to improve communications on and about the Armed Forces Pension Schemes. In 2015, pension rules were prospectively amended to enable all Armed Forces widow(er)s who later cohabit or remarry to retain their survivor's benefits for life.

(Questions for all)

111. To what extent do you think veterans understand their Armed Forces pension entitlement?
- Excellent understanding
 - Good understanding
 - Limited understanding
 - Poor understanding
 - No understanding
 - I don't know
112. To what extent do you think Service personnel and veterans are supported to make informed decisions affecting the value of their Armed Forces pension?
- Very supported
 - Somewhat supported
 - Not supported
 - I don't know
113. To what extent do you think injured Service personnel and veterans are supported to make informed decisions about managing their compensation awards?
- Very supported
 - Somewhat supported
 - Not supported
 - I don't know

114. What is your perception of the claim process?
a. Free text (max 350 words)
115. How do you think official communications concerning Armed Forces pension and compensation schemes could be further improved?
a. Free text (max 350 words)

Section 2: Social security benefits

Every year around 15,000 people leave the Armed Forces, some with injuries and conditions that mean the veteran requires additional support.

A number of initiatives have been introduced to better support veterans' welfare through the social security benefits system. This includes the establishment of the Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP), which ensures that veterans seriously injured since 6 April 2005 automatically receive on-going payments to help with additional costs associated with their injuries. Veterans in receipt of Armed Forces Compensation Scheme Guaranteed Income Payments and War Pension Scheme payments are also exempt from both the benefit cap, the financial assessment for Universal Credit (UC) eligibility, and means tests for social care support within Great Britain.

In addition, Armed Forces Champions across the Jobcentre Plus network build staff capability within their districts, handling some claims, supporting veterans into work, and helping to resolve complex cases where necessary.

For non-UK veterans personnel and their families, leaving the UK Armed Forces results in the loss of their exemption from UK immigration control. This means they are unable to access statutory support whilst their immigration status is considered.

(Questions for all)

116. To what extent do you think veterans are aware of the social security and other state benefits they are entitled to?
a. Very aware
b. Somewhat aware
c. Unaware
d. I don't know
117. To what extent do you think people dealing with claims and/or medical assessors understand military life and military benefits?
a. Excellent Understanding
b. Good understanding
c. Limited understanding
d. Poor understanding
e. No understanding
f. I don't know

118. Do you think there are barriers to veterans claiming social security and other state benefits?
- a. Yes
 - b. No [Please explain your answer]
119. Do you think the support that veterans can access through the social security benefits are sufficient to support them in civilian life?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - i. Please explain your answer (max 350 words)
 - c. I don't know

Section 3: Economic Engagement

Stable long-term employment opportunities after Service are the foundation of positive life outcomes for veterans, with statutory benefits providing support for those who are either unable to work or have additional needs arising from specific vulnerabilities.

Veterans Railcard and other discounts

To help veterans engage fully in the economy and society, in 2020 the Veterans Railcard was introduced giving eligible veterans across England, Wales and Scotland a discount of $\frac{1}{3}$ off most rail fares. In Northern Ireland, veterans in receipt of ongoing military compensation payments who are permanently resident in Northern Ireland are eligible for free travel on public transport. Veterans resident in London who are in receipt of military compensation awards are eligible for free travel at any time on Transport for London services and National Rail services in London, with discounted fares on River Services. The MOD's official Defence Discount Service provides discounts both online and on the high street for members of the Armed Forces, veterans and their families, on a range of holidays, goods and services, such as broadband packages.

Questions for individual veterans

120. Are you aware of the discounts available?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
121. Are there any barriers related solely to travel, that have prevented you as a veteran from applying for or accepting a job of your choice?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
122. Are there any examples of best practice regarding the provision of public transport for veterans elsewhere you can highlight?
- a. Free text

National Insurance Relief

In 2021, the Government introduced a year's zero rate relief on Class 1 National Insurance Contributions for companies that hire veterans in their first year of employment after leaving the Armed Forces.

Question for all

123. Were you aware of the National Insurance Rate Relief Scheme?
- a. Yes
 - b. No

Question for individual veterans

124. Have you ever referenced the Relief Scheme whilst applying for a job as a potential benefit of your employment?
- a. Yes
 - b. No

(Questions for business / employers, business and social enterprise providing services)

125. Are there barriers preventing you from applying for National Insurance Relief?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
126. If you employ any veterans, has this National Insurance Relief made a difference to your decision to recruit them?
- a. Yes
 - b. No

Chapter 5: Justice

Background

In the Veterans' Strategy Action Plan 2022-24, the Government pledged to "make sure the right support is in place for those who are in the criminal justice system: reducing the risk of re-offending, understanding why some veterans enter the system and doing more to prevent it". The criminal justice systems of Scotland and Northern Ireland are devolved to the Scottish parliament and Northern Ireland assembly respectively.

While the number of veterans in the criminal justice system is relatively small, many require bespoke support to deal with the legacy of their service in the military. In order to best support veterans and reduce reoffending, we need to understand how the criminal justice system responds to and works with veterans who come into contact with it.

Section 1: Prisons and Probation

Questions for individuals, competent authorities, local authorities, charities and academics

127. Are you aware of the services available for veterans in the justice system?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c.

128. Are there any barriers to veterans accessing support in the justice system?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know
 - i. Please explain your answer

129. Are you aware of any needs of veterans in the justice system that are not being addressed?
 - a. Yes (Free text)
 - b. No
 - c. I don't know

130. What else could be done to identify and support veterans at risk of offending behaviours when they transition from military service to the community, or military custody to the community?

131. What more, if anything, could be done to support veterans who are being discharged from military service for disciplinary and or criminal-related issues?

132. Are there any barriers to rehabilitating or resettling veterans who are engaged in the justice system?

Questions for charities, competent authorities, local authorities

133. Does your organisation have knowledge or experience of prisons and probation, or the experiences of veterans in the criminal justice system? (FILTER QUESTION)
- a. Yes
 - b. No
134. Are there barriers to recording veteran identity in the prisons and probation (or equivalent systems such as Justice Social work in Scotland) systems or social justice work?
- a. Yes (please explain)
 - b. No
 - c. I don't know
135. Are there any opportunities during the process of recruiting to the military that could help identify vulnerable veterans to provide appropriate support during service? (Free text)
136. Are there any barriers to your organisation that deter or prevent you providing services to those who are assessed as Medium or High Risk of Serious Harm? (Free text)

Chapter 6: Veterans and the Armed Forces Covenant

The Armed Forces Covenant is a statement of the moral obligation which exists between the nation, the Government and the Armed Forces. It was published in May 2011, and the Armed Forces Act of that year required the Secretary of State to report annually to Parliament on the effects of membership or former membership of the Armed Forces in specified areas. This law was further strengthened by the Armed Forces Act 2021, which required certain public bodies to have due regard to the principle of the Covenant in aspects of health, housing and education. The principles outlined in the legislation are

- (a) the unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the armed forces;
- (b) the principle that it is desirable to remove disadvantages arising for service people from membership, or former membership, of the armed forces; and
- (c) the principle that special provision for service people may be justified by the effects on such people of membership, or former membership, of the armed forces

The government is committed to the principles of the Covenant which covers veterans. This means that veterans should suffer no disadvantage compared to civilians and receive special consideration where appropriate; the government is also committed to making the UK the best place in the world to be a veteran.

(Questions for all)

137. Were you aware of the Covenant and that it covered veterans prior to this consultation?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
138. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Covenant provides for the needs of veterans?
- a. Strongly Agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
139. Do you have evidence there are any limitations to the Covenant in providing support to veterans or areas where government could go further?
- a. [Free text - Please provide evidence to support your answer]
140. Do you have any other views on the Covenant as it pertains to veterans?

(Questions for all organisations)

141. Are you a signatory of the Armed Forces Covenant? (FILTER QUESTION)
- a. Yes
 - b. No

Questions for all organisations who answered yes to question above and all local and competent authorities

142. How easily have you found it to deliver your commitments under the Covenant?
- Extremely easy
 - Easy
 - Neither Easy nor Hard
 - Hard
 - Extremely Hard
143. Have there been any specific difficulties in delivering your commitments to veterans under the Covenant?
144. Are there any examples of best practice in delivering your commitments to veterans under the Covenant you can share?
145. Have there been any limitations to the Covenant in providing support to veterans?

Equalities (all)

146. Are there any other issues or experiences you believe should be further considered relating to any of the previous chapters (housing, employment, health, finance and welfare or justice), and the experiences of veterans who also hold protected characteristics under The Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation), and/or who are underrepresented within the military community (for example, women and ethnic minorities)? [please avoid providing personal information or name people]

Part Two: Understanding our veteran community

Background

Veterans and their families have a broad range of backgrounds and we want to better understand the important elements of veteran identity, the communities they represent and how to support them effectively.

Veterans of different services, ships, squadrons and regiments may all form their own communities within the wider veteran population. Communities can also form around shared experiences such as veterans of particular conflicts or operations, specialisms and professions such as submariners or pilots, or personal interests and pursuits. Communities may also form around specific common identities that some veterans will share, such as ethnic origin, sexual orientation, or disability. Communities such as these can provide important support mechanisms, comradeship and help enable veterans to transition into civilian life.

The Government has already taken significant steps to deliver on its promise to better understand members of the veteran community. These include analysis of the England and Wales Census 2021, the Veterans' Survey on veterans' life experience and use of statutory services, and research commissioned into veteran death rate due to suicide, alcohol abuse and drug misuse, and the experiences of non-UK, ethnic minority and female veterans. With new insights becoming available from this work and other projects over the next two years, the Government will be in a position where it can respond even more effectively to the issues and barriers faced by certain cohorts of the veteran population. A significant product of this work will be the delivery of the first ever Women Veterans' Strategy In 2024, and the OVA has also laid out its longer term data and research intentions via the [Data and Research Framework 2022-28](#).

Chapter 7: Post-Service Life Skills

The UK Armed Forces provides excellent and extensive career opportunities in a range of fields. This often provides veterans with highly marketable skills in the economy as well as helping them become well-rounded individuals who can easily build a civilian life. However, the UK government recognises that military life is unique. The transition from that highly structured military life towards civilian life, particularly after a long period in service, may leave veterans unfamiliar with the systems or routes of entry to access job opportunities, housing or other services.

Veterans will be susceptible to, and may encounter, many of the same issues as the general population, which are the result of wider economic and social factors as opposed to military service. This includes current cost of living challenges. However, during service, many costs are either subsidised or free, and may be deducted directly from their salary. This means that some veterans can be unfamiliar with the full costs of civilian life and the need to manage their personal financial outgoings, especially compared to their civilian peers who have experience in doing so.

(Question for individual veterans)

Section 1 - Resettlement and military-to-civilian transition

147. Did you feel you had sufficient information to prepare you for your transition to civilian life before leaving service?
- Yes
 - No
 - Unsure
148. To what extent did you find advice, training or information sessions on post-service life helpful in your transition out of the military?
- Very Helpful
 - Helpful
 - Unhelpful
 - Very unhelpful
 - Didn't know about it/use it
 - Please explain your answer

Section 2 - Post-service life

(Question for individual veterans)

149. To what extent do you feel the Armed Forces has prepared you for life outside the military?
- Very prepared
 - Prepared
 - Neither prepared or unprepared
 - Unprepared
 - Very unprepared

i. Please explain your answer

150. Did you seek advice and guidance related to your transition to civilian life?
- Yes
 - No
151. Where did you seek advice and guidance related to your transition to civilian life (including housing, employment and other statutory services) issues?
- Charities
 - Single Services Army/RAF/Navy/Marines
 - Friends and family
 - Other (please specify)
152. When seeking support or advice, did you disclose your veteran status?
- Yes
 - No
 - If not, why?
153. Did you need to provide proof or evidence of your veteran status?
- Yes
 - No
 - If not, do you know why?
154. Do you think sharing your veteran status meant you received better or improved support?
- Yes
 - No
 - I don't know

Section 3: Financial skills

Service personnel receive some financial skills training as part of MOD's Resettlement provision as they transition out of the Armed Forces, including via the Financial Aspects of Resettlement Brief, which is available to all Service leavers through the Career Transition Partnership. Life Skills, directed in JSP 100 and delivered by the Single Services provide a framework and learning opportunities for Service Personnel in Finance and Benefits, among other areas and Defence direction includes the duty to refer where any needs are identified. In addition to the resources available to any UK citizen, serving personnel and veterans can access credit and deposit savings through Joining Forces Credit Union services.

(Questions for veterans)

155. How would you describe your ability to manage a household budget?
- Very good
 - Good
 - Acceptable
 - Poor
 - Very poor

156. To what extent do you agree or disagree that your answer to the previous question (on your ability to manage a household budget) is due to your service in the Armed Forces?
- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
157. Were you aware that many of your living expenses during Service were either free or subsidised?
- Yes
 - No
158. Would you have liked to have more personal responsibility for managing your expenses during Service?
- Yes
 - No
159. How would you rate the financial planning briefings/resources provided to you in Service?
- Very good
 - Good
 - Average
 - Poor
 - Very poor
 - I did not make use of either.
 - Please explain your answer and state any specific briefings or resources you are referring to

(Questions for all)

160. How do you think service personnel could be made more aware of the typical costs of civilian life? [free text]
161. What could the Government do to improve financial literacy and resilience among veterans?

Chapter 8: Veteran Identity

Background

The UK has long established military institutions with proud histories stretching back, in some cases, centuries. This has seen millions of people serve our country, some through choice and historically some through various forms of conscription. For some the military has been a lifelong career or key period of their lives shaping them as individuals and building some of the most important friendships in their lives. For others it was merely one job amongst many and may hold no special place, or was something they were compelled to do. How veterans view their experience or self identify is for them, and the UK government with the support of the devolved administrations want to ensure all veterans are supported in doing so, that they are aware of the benefits available to them and face no barriers in civilian life due to their military service. At the same time, as the veteran population declines in size, issues concerning public perception of veterans grow.

162. How important do you think it is for the government to address negative stereotypes held by some regarding veterans?
- Very important
 - Important
 - Neutral
 - Unimportant
 - Very unimportant
163. Has the government's commitment in this area been effective so far?
- Very Effective
 - Effective
 - Neither effective nor ineffective
 - Ineffective
 - Very ineffective

Section 1: Who is a Veteran?

The government and much of the Armed Forces charity sector generally defines veterans as those who have served at least one day in the UK Armed Forces. This is an inclusive and simple definition, and it formed the basis of the question that was asked for the first time in the England and Wales census in 2021 and then in Scotland in 2022. On this definition, the current veteran population in the UK is estimated to be approximately 2 million. However, wider understanding in society of what is meant by a 'veteran' can vary and be uncertain. We are interested in understanding all the definitions currently used and understood.

(Questions for all)

164. Do you agree with the above definition of a veteran?
- Yes
 - No
- [Please explain your answer]

A more expansive definition of veteran could be based on all those who have been under the jurisdiction of “Service discipline” as defined by the 2006 Armed Forces Act (this means all UK armed forces, and non UK Armed Forces Personnel who are bound by the rules of service discipline within a designated area). E.g non military personnel embedded within military operations on a military base in a combat area.

165. Do you agree with the above definition of a veteran?

- a. Yes
- b. No

[Please explain your answer]

166. What length of time should a person have worked under the jurisdiction of “Service discipline” to qualify as a veteran?

167. Is there any action that should remove someone’s status as a veteran?

- a. Yes (please explain)
- b. No
- c. I don’t know

Section 2: Discrimination against veterans

The Government is interested in understanding the extent, if any, of discrimination experienced by veterans specifically as a result of being a veteran, rather than due to any other part of their circumstances. The Equality Act defines direct discrimination as when A treats B less favourably than A treats or would treat others because B possesses some protected characteristic. It defines indirect discrimination as when a person A discriminates against another B if A applies to B a provision, criterion or practice which is discriminatory in relation to a relevant protected characteristic of B.

(Questions for all)

168. Are you aware of any instances of discrimination against veterans due to their veteran status?

- a. Yes (please describe)
- b. No
- c. I don’t know

169. To what extent do you agree that discrimination against veterans is a significant problem?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

a. [Please explain your answer]

Section 3: Disadvantages faced by veterans

Background

In line with the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant, the UK and devolved governments seek to understand where disadvantage compared to civilian peers may occur for veterans and identify remedies. Disadvantage is different from discrimination in that there is no overt intent or systemic bias to disadvantage veterans, only the mismatch in ability or information places them at disadvantage. The UK government and its partners in the devolved administrations do not seek to provide privilege over civilian peers, only parity with them via targeted intervention if and when necessary.

As part of leaving the Armed Forces the UK government seeks to prepare service personnel for the return to civilian life by offering training, information and learning resources. This is designed to help individual service leavers and their families manage their transition back to civilian life. The support provided is designed to address the information and skills asymmetry that may have built up between service people and their civilian peers over their years of service and any disadvantage that may stem from that.

Questions for all

170. Are you aware of any incidents where veterans have faced a disadvantage when accessing public and commercial services?
- Yes [Free Text - please do not include any personal information or identify individuals within your response]
 - No
 - I don't know
171. To what extent do you agree that veterans face significant disadvantage compared to civilian peers?
- Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
- [Please explain your answer]
 - I don't know

Section 4: Protecting and enhancing veteran identity

The Government has made considerable efforts to improve our understanding of the numbers and extent of the veteran population in recent years, notably through the inclusion of a question in the census. We have also sought to encourage public bodies to 'ask the question' to establish veteran status, and thus ensure that those who have served are able to access any support to which they are entitled. The roll-out of 'veteran-friendly' status to

GP surgeries and other health bodies is a primary example and we have also seen welcome moves in the private sector by companies to understand their veteran workforce.

Veteran ID cards

To support veteran identification, the government has ensured that since 2018 all Service leavers automatically receive a Veteran Card from the MOD as part of their discharge process. From 2023 this is being augmented by the wider roll out of HM Armed Forces Veteran Card, which will be available to all veterans. This service is accompanied by a digital verification service to confirm the identity of veterans and that they have served. With the delivery of this new service, the government is interested in understanding how it can be best protected, fraudulent use prevented, and the ways in which it could further benefit veterans.

Questions for all

172. Do you think existing UK law is sufficient to prevent veterans cards being improperly obtained or possessed, with the intent to misuse it?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
- i. Please explain your answer

Voter ID

The Elections Act 2022 introduced a requirement to show photo ID before being issued a ballot paper in polling stations at local, parish, mayoral elections, and local referendums in England, and in Police and crime commissioner elections in England and Wales. The same requirements are also in place for voters across Great Britain at UK Parliament general elections and voters in Northern Ireland have been required to show ID when voting in all elections there since 2003.

The Government is considering adding Veterans Cards to the list of acceptable forms of ID.

173. Do you think the Veteran Card should be added to the list of accepted forms of ID for elections covered by requirements for photo ID?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
- i. Please explain your answer

174. Are there any other potential uses for a Veterans Card, for example as a means of identification?
- a. Yes Please explain your answer
 - b. No

Medals

The United Kingdom takes a distinctive approach to the award of military campaign medals, reflecting a strong view that medals must be awarded sparingly to maintain a highly prized currency. Medals attract strong emotions in any event. It is not therefore surprising that they can become the subject of controversy.

Many countries have laws penalising those who fraudulently wear military medals or uniforms, including all the other Five Eyes countries, and almost every EU country.

In the UK it was an offence under the Army Act 1955 to wear real or replica military decorations with intent to deceive, but that was repealed by the Armed Forces Act 2006. A Private Member's Bill, the Awards for Valour (Protection) Bill, which would have in effect reintroduced the previously repealed provisions, did not complete its passage before the intervention of the 2017 general election.

It is already an offence in the UK under the Uniforms Act 1894 to wear an Armed Forces uniform without permission, or something that has the appearance of a uniform. This Act is however now somewhat dated, with references to music halls and circus performances. Similarly any deception for profit is likely covered by the Fraud Act 2006.

The UK government is not aware of evidence to suggest any of these issues are significantly widespread problems, but equally recognises the strength of feelings that suggestions of this activity can engender in both veterans and the wider public. In addition to provisions around medals and uniforms, which are visually identifiable, concerns are sometimes raised about false or exaggerated representation of veteran status and service experience. Such provisions may bring significant evidential challenges and so the government is interested in understanding the evidence base and feasibility issues.

The UK government recognises that there are occasions when non-veterans may wear medals, uniforms and appear as a veteran and is clear that exemptions must exist for artistic endeavour and when worn in remembrance by a friend or family member.

175. To what extent do you agree that inappropriate use of medals and uniforms is a significant problem?
- a. Strongly Agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly Disagree
- i. [Please explain your answer, providing evidence where possible (without providing personal information or naming anyone)]
176. Do you think that it should be an offence to wear military medals to which one is not entitled?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
- i. Please explain your answer
177. Do you think that the provisions of the Uniforms Act 1894 need updating?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
- i. Please explain your answer
178. Do you think it should be an offence to falsely claim to have served in the UK Armed Forces?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
- i. Please explain your answer

179. Do you think it is feasible to prevent impersonation of veterans online?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - i. Please explain your answer
180. Do you think it is feasible to prevent exaggeration of military service by those who have served in the UK Armed Forces?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - i. Please explain your answer
181. What is your assessment of the harm caused by those who impersonate veterans, exaggerate their service or wear medals they have not earned?
- a. Very harmful
 - b. Moderately harmful
 - c. Minorly harmful
 - d. Nominally harmful
 - e. Not harmful at all
182. Are there any other circumstances, in addition to artistic endeavours and appropriate use by friends and family, that you think should be exempted from any provision on the wearing of medals?
- a. [Free text]

Chapter 9: Non UK veterans

Background

Currently to be eligible to apply to join the UK Armed Forces an individual must be British (British Citizen, British Overseas Citizen, British Overseas Territory Citizen, British National (Overseas) Citizen, British Protected Person or British Subject) Irish or a Commonwealth Citizen. This can be as a sole or dual national. The British Army also has the Brigade of Gurkhas who are from Nepal.

Non-UK nationals are defined as those who do not have an automatic right to live and work in the UK so are granted 'Exempt from Immigration Control' status by the Home Office for the duration of their Regular or Brigade of Gurkhas service:

- British Overseas Citizen
- British Overseas Territory Citizen
- British National (Overseas) Citizen
- Commonwealth Citizens
- Gurkhas, including those who later transfer out of the Brigade to serve in the wider Army, Royal Navy/Royal Marines or the Royal Air Force.

Non-UK nationals are, and always will be, an important and valued part of the fabric of the UK Armed Forces. The UK's military has long-held links with Nepal and with Commonwealth countries, in which recruits from across the globe have served in a variety of roles and conflicts. The UK has a long history of counting on the skills and dedicated service of brave men and women from across the world, serving to protect our nations and their significant contribution continues to this day.

Currently people applying to join the UK's armed forces must be either a British or Commonwealth citizen or from the Republic of Ireland (either as a sole or dual national). Gurkhas serve under special and unique arrangements. They remain citizens of Nepal during their service in the Brigade of Gurkhas. Historically recruitment criteria has differed so some older cohorts of veterans reflect a broader range of home countries, some having served in the UK Armed Forces as volunteers in major conflicts such as World War Two.

Section 1: General Support for non-UK veterans

(Questions for all)

183. Are there any gaps in UK support provision for non-UK national veterans?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - i. Can you explain your answer?
184. Do you think non-UK veterans face any barriers accessing housing, employment, healthcare and other statutory services in the UK as a result of their status?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. I don't know

185. What do you think the Government could do to support non-UK nationals accessing housing, employment, healthcare and other statutory services?
- Free text

[For veterans]

186. Following service, did you seek advice and guidance related to resettlement or immigration (including housing, employment and other statutory services) issues?
- I didn't seek any further advice support
 - Charities
 - Single services
 - Friends and family
 - Not applicable
187. When seeking support or advice, did you disclose your veteran status?
- Yes
 - No
 - Not applicable
188. Did you need to provide proof or evidence of your veteran status?
- Yes
 - No
 - Not applicable
 - If no, why not?
189. Do you think sharing your veteran status meant you received better or improved support?
- Yes
 - No
 - Not applicable
 - I don't know

Question for service providers, competent authorities, charities

190. Do you have any data or evidence regarding the experiences of non-UK veterans (without providing personal information or naming anyone)?

Section 2: Immigration

While serving in the Regular Armed Forces or Brigade of Gurkhas, non-UK personnel are exempt from UK immigration control. This allows them to come and go from the UK without restriction or the need to pay visa fees. Upon discharge this exemption ceases and they must either regularise their UK immigration status or leave the UK. Non-UK Service Personnel can apply to Settle in the UK if they have served at least four years or been medically discharged due to a service attributable illness or injury. Applications can be submitted up to 18 weeks before discharge. Those who may choose to return to their country of origin on discharge also have the option to apply to Settle in the UK within two years of discharge.

Applications to Settle in the UK have been **free** for non-UK Service Personnel since 6 April 2022 if they meet all other Home Office criteria and one of the following:

- have served at least six years at their point of discharge from service;
- are discharged on medical grounds with a condition attributable to service irrespective of their length of service;
- are a veteran who has served for at least six years or was discharged on medical grounds with a condition attributable to service and is currently living in the UK and has not yet regularised their immigration status.

Commonwealth citizens can choose to apply for naturalisation as British citizens while they are serving. Gurkhas must remain Nepali citizens while serving in the Brigade of Gurkhas in line with Government of Nepal requirements. However, if they choose to transfer out of the Brigade and serve in the wider Armed Forces, they also have the option to apply to naturalise as British citizens. Becoming a British citizen while serving removes the need to apply for Settlement on discharge.

Eligible non-UK family members of Armed Forces personnel enter the UK on a visa which puts them on their own route to being able to Settle in the UK after five years. Once family members have had Settled status for 12 months they can apply for naturalisation as a British citizen. Children born in the UK or a qualifying territory to members of the Armed Forces automatically acquire British citizenship, and children born outside the UK whose mother or father is a member of the Armed Forces at the time of their birth can register as a British citizen at public expense.

(Questions for all)

191. To what extent do you agree that the current immigration process provided for the non-UK national community of veterans supports them in securing their long term status in the UK?
- a. Strongly Agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly Disagree
- i. [Please explain why]
192. What changes could be made to the routes to citizenship for foreign nationals that have served in the UK Armed Forces?
193. The Home Office held a public consultation on the [proposal to waive settlement fees](#) in 2021. Is there anything you would like to comment on which was not already covered in this consultation?

Question for service providers, charities, competent authorities

194. Do you have data on the number of non-UK veterans going through the immigration process?

(Questions for non-UK veterans)

195. Are you a non-UK veteran? [Filter question]

- a. Yes
 - b. No
196. What was your reason for joining the UK armed forces?
- a. Feeling of strong ties to the UK,
 - b. Family tradition
 - c. Opportunities not available in home country's armed forces
 - d. Other - Please state
197. Were you informed about resettlement and immigration-related processes before leaving service?
- a. Yes (what advice did you receive?)
 - b. No
198. Did you want to become a UK Citizen following your time in the UK Armed Forces?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - i. If no, why not?
199. Did you want to settle in the UK?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. If no, why not?
200. If you wanted to settle in the UK, were you able to?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - i. If no, why not?
201. If you settled in the UK, what barriers, if any, did you face?
202. What was your experience of securing UK citizenship?
203. Did you face any challenges pursuing leave to remain or citizenship?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - i. If so, what were these?

[For all]

204. Do you think any specific nationalities of veterans from the non-UK community face unique challenges?

Chapter 10: Groups within the Veteran population

There are subsets and groups within the veteran population who may have different experiences of service or to whom specific issues may apply. We have segmented these into the following cohorts;

- Women
- Disability
- Neurodiversity
- Socio-Economic background
- Sexual and Gender Identity
- Religious identity
- Ethnic identity

While today's Armed Forces promote diversity, we know that the experiences of veterans from these cohorts can vary. The UK and devolved government's intention is for all veterans to feel valued and have access to the right support. We are therefore keen to better understand these cohorts, to understand what if any unique needs or issues they may face and what if any tailored support can be developed.

Section 1: Government Commitment and Stereotype Reduction

205. What is your assessment of the government's commitment to addressing the historic hurt experienced by specific cohorts and groups within the veteran community? (Free text)
206. Do you believe it is making meaningful progress in addressing historic hurt experienced by these specific cohorts?
- a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neither agree nor disagree
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree

Section 2: Women Veterans

Background

There are over 250,000 women veterans in England and Wales, which is almost 14% of the total veteran population. The Government is committed to ensuring the services we provide to women veterans best suit their needs. In order to do so, we must acknowledge and understand the differences between the experiences of women and men as veterans. Recent research commissioned by the OVA tells us that experiences during service, medical requirements, maternity and social issues all impact the extent to which women veterans enjoy civilian life and take pride in their service. We will publish the first Women Veterans'

Strategy in 2024, which will recognise the experiences of women veterans and identify what else is needed to better champion them.

Questions for female veterans only

207. To what extent do you agree that being a woman impacts how likely you are to identify as a veteran?
- a. Strongly Agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly Disagree
 - i. [Please explain why]

Questions for all

208. To what extent do you agree that current statutory support services meet the needs of women veterans?
- a. Strongly Agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly Disagree
 - i. [Please explain why]
209. To what extent do you agree that women veterans feel comfortable accessing support services (statutory and third sector)?
- a. Strongly Agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly Disagree
 - i. [Please explain why]
210. Do you agree women veterans are sufficiently visible and that their service is recognised by society as a whole?
- a. Strongly Agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly Disagree
 - i. [Please explain why]

(Question for service charities)

211. How well informed are you about the issues facing women veterans?
- a. Very well informed
 - b. Somewhat informed
 - c. Not informed
212. To what extent do you agree that women veterans have different needs to men as veterans?
- a. Strongly agree

- b. Agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree
 - i. [Please explain why]

f.

213. How many women access your services/what proportion of the total veterans who access your services are women?
- a. Number/proportion is _____
 - b. Not known

Section 3: Disabled Veterans

Many veterans may experience disabilities for a number of reasons, and all veterans are eligible to receive NHS services. For those who are disabled as a result of their service, it is right that we should ensure that they have any specialist support they may require.

A veteran is considered to have a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.

The Office for Veterans Affairs has funded the £3 million Veterans Mobility Fund to provide advanced mobility equipment to veterans to help increase their wellbeing.

We seek to support all disabled veterans whether they suffered their condition as a result of service, after service or have always had such a condition, to access employment, housing, and all aspects of civilian life on equal terms to their able bodied peers providing reasonable adjustments as required.

(Questions for all)

214. What is your experience of statutory support / public services for disabled veterans?
- a. Very good
 - b. Good
 - c. Acceptable
 - d. Poor
 - e. Very Poor
215. Are there particular issues that you do not feel are addressed by statutory services?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - i. Please explain your answer
 - c. I don't know
216. Do you feel that there are circumstances in which disabled veterans in particular are disadvantaged?
- a. Yes
 - b. No

- i. Please explain your answer
 - c. I don't know

- 217. Is there more that could be done to support disabled veterans?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - i. Please explain your answer
 - c. I don't know

- 218. If you have a disability, do you feel that your disability has resulted in social isolation?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - i. Please explain your answer
 - c. I don't know
 - d. Not applicable

- 219. Do you feel that the service of disabled veterans is sufficiently recognised?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - i. Please explain your answer
 - c. I don't know

Section 4: Neurodiverse Veterans

The government recognises the value that neurodiversity brings to society, the economy and the military. Neurodiverse people often see and approach problems from different perspectives coming up with unique solutions that might otherwise be missed. However we also recognise that neurodiverse people may face challenges in engaging with organisations, bureaucracy and mediums that have not been designed to consider their needs.

Neurodiversity is a range of differences in individual brain function and behavioural traits, beyond what is regarded as part of normal variation in the human population. It can include people on the autism spectrum, those with behavioural differences such as ADHD and those with dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia among other conditions.

In this section we are keen to gather evidence to better understand the unique challenges faced by and opportunities for neurodiverse veterans.

(Questions for all)

- 220. Do neurodiverse veterans face any unique challenges?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - i. Please explain
 - c. I don't know

- 221. Are there any specific things you believe would better support neurodiverse veterans?

- a. Yes
- b. No
 - i. Please explain
- c. I don't know

Section 5: Social mobility and socio-economic background

Veterans come from a diverse range of backgrounds, although there are long-standing trends on the socio-economic background of recruits to officers and enlisted respectively. Those from ABC1 socio-economic background and generally considered to be upper or middle class more likely to be officers and those from C2DE backgrounds generally considered working class to be enlisted. The Government is committed to ensuring that all veterans irregardless of rank are supported in civilian life and recognised for their service.

Social mobility refers to change in a person's socio-economic situation, either in relation to their parents (intergenerational mobility) or throughout their lifetime (intra-generational mobility). The UK Government's intention is that military service improves the socio-economic trajectory of veterans through the skills and experience they gain and can utilise as veterans when they return to civilian life.

For those veterans from working class backgrounds, military service has been shown to be an effective means of social mobility for the majority of service leavers. Recent studies have shown that 55.6% of service leavers had what was deemed as 'positive' trajectories in socioeconomic status from military to civilian career while 20.4% had 'negative' socioeconomic change.

Questions for all

222. Do working class veterans face any additional disadvantages in comparison to peers from other backgrounds?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - i. Please explain your answer
 - c. I don't know
223. To what extent do you agree or disagree that working class veterans are sufficiently visible and that their service is recognised by society as a whole?
- a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neither agree nor disagree
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
 - i. [Please explain why]
 - f. I don't know
224. To what extent do you agree or disagree that military service is effective at both intergenerational and intragenerational mobility?

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree
 - i. [Please explain why]
- f. I don't know

225. What further actions could be taken to improve the social mobility of veterans?

Section 6: LGBT Veterans

Background

Today's Armed Forces are proudly inclusive and welcoming of LGBT personnel, but that has not always been the case. The pre-2000 ban on LGBT personnel serving was wrong, and on 19 July 2023, the Prime Minister apologised on behalf of the British state to those affected by the ban. This apology delivered the first recommendation in the LGBT Veterans Independent Review, which the Government commissioned in 2022 to understand more about the experiences of LGBT veterans who served before 2000, as well as understand how the Government could better address the legacy of the ban. We want to learn more about the experiences of LGBT veterans.

(Questions for all)

226. Do you think the current support is sufficient for LGBT veterans?
- a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neither agree nor disagree
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
 - i. [Please explain why]
227. Do you think LGBT veterans understand what statutory support is available to them?
- a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neither agree nor disagree
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
 - i. [Please explain why]
228. Do you think LGBT veterans' service is recognised by society as a whole?
- a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neither agree nor disagree
 - d. Disagree

- e. Strongly disagree
 - i. [Please explain why]

Section 7: Faith and belief groups amongst veterans

The UK armed forces has a long tradition of drawing recruits from many religious backgrounds. Armed Forces Chaplains are provided for the Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish and Sikh faiths as well as support for Humanist and other belief groups. The UK Government has put in place a range of measures to support veterans from different religious backgrounds in the military, but after leaving there is no targeted support for those veterans from a faith or belief backgrounds. UK and devolved governments want to better understand the role that this identity plays in veterans' post service life.

Questions for all

- 229. Do you think statutory services sufficiently address the needs of veterans from a religious or belief community?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - i. If you answered no, please explain your reasoning
- 230. Are there particular issues that you do not feel are addressed by statutory services?
- 231. Do you feel that there are circumstances in which veterans from religious or belief groups in particular are disadvantaged?
- 232. Do you feel that your identity as a veteran has ever caused issues with regard to your religious identity or within your religious community?
- 233. Do you feel that the service of veterans from religious minorities is sufficiently recognised?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. I don't know
 - d. Please explain your answer
- 234. Do you believe there is any stigma related to being a veteran within or from certain religious communities or experienced this yourself?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - i. If yes please explain to the extent you are comfortable

Section 8: Veterans from ethnic minority backgrounds

As the UK Armed Forces become more diverse, so does the veteran population, and it is important to develop our understanding of the needs and experiences of veterans from

minority ethnic backgrounds to make sure that they receive the support that they need to live in, and contribute to, society.

To date, there has been little research or focus on the experiences of ethnic minority veterans. An on-going OVA funded research project is gathering data to better understand their experiences, needs and aspirations

The findings of the research will be used to put the voices of ethnic minority veterans at the heart of decision-making about the information and services they need, ensuring that support is appropriate and accessible to veterans of all backgrounds.

Questions for all

235. Do you think statutory services sufficiently address the needs of ethnic minority veterans?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - i. If not, why?
236. Do you feel that the service of ethnic minority veterans is sufficiently recognised?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - i. If no, why?

Chapter 11: Veterans' families

Veterans' most important support mechanism is often their friends and family. Families can also be affected by a veteran's service, with the impact extending beyond discharge, beyond relationship breakdown, and beyond the death of a veteran. This is why support for veterans should consider their families and former spouses and partners. It is important to acknowledge the unique challenges that they may have and continue to face and how they may be addressed.

This consultation is focused on veterans living now. We are interested in the support veterans receive from others: chiefly families of veterans, but also friends, colleagues, neighbours and members of the public. This is in your capacity as someone who is supporting a living veteran now, and as such is not focused on those who have supported veterans in the past, and we are focused for the purposes of this consultation only on your role supporting that veteran.

Section 1: Immediate family and beyond

Spouses, former spouses and partners and children of veterans can bear impacts of their current or former family member's service, for example in accessing employment and educational opportunities due to the sometimes multiple moves brought about by military life. However there can be implications for the wider family including siblings, parents and other relations, recognising the diversity of veterans' family units and that a veteran's age can range from 16 onwards.

237. Do you think more should be done in supporting family members during the transition to civilian life?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - i. If yes, what do you suggest?
 - c. I don't know
238. Do you have a family member, or a former spouse or partner who is a current serving member of the regular or reserve UK Armed Forces or a veteran? (select all that apply)
- a. I am a current spouse or partner of a serving member of the regular or reserve UK Armed Forces
 - b. I am a current spouse or partner of a veteran
 - c. I am a former spouse or partner of serving member of the regular or reserve UK Armed Forces
 - d. I am a former spouse or partner of a veteran

- e. I am the child of a veteran
- f. I am the parent, former carer or legal guardian of a veteran
- g. I am the sibling of a veteran
- h. Other (please specify)
- i. None of the above

(Questions for families of veterans)

239. Did you receive any support information when your spouse, former spouse or partner, left their service?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - i. If yes, please outline what you received
 - c. I don't know
240. As a family member or former spouse or partner of a veteran, have you experienced any disadvantages in adjusting to civilian life?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - i. If yes, please can you tell us about your experience. Any Information on when this occurred would be very helpful.
 - c. I don't know
241. Do you feel the support to your family member, spouse or former spouse or partner whilst serving has had a detrimental effect on your ability to thrive in a civilian way of life?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - i. Please explain your answer
 - c. I don't know
242. Do you feel that as a family of a veteran you have had the same opportunities as your civilian counterparts?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - i. If you answered no, please tell us about your experience.
 - c. I don't know

(Questions for competent authorities):

243. Do you hold any data regarding issues raised by family members or former spouses or partners of veterans? If so, please provide information on this.
244. What do you see as being the main barrier, if any, to veterans families accessing statutory services?

Chapter 12: Merchant Seafaring and Reservist Veterans

Background

The regular forces are supported by the UK's reserve forces, the Royal Navy Reserve, Army Reserve, Royal Air Force Reserve and Royal Fleet Auxiliary. During military operations reservists can be activated and deployed alongside our regular forces in vital roles. Some veterans of the regular forces choose to go on and become reservists after leaving the service. During this time they are both a veteran and an active reservist. When they in turn retire from the reserves they become veterans of both regular and reserve forces.

Section 1: Reservist veterans

Reservists play a vital role in our national defence. They are citizens who are prepared to put their lives on hold when the need arises and join military operations. Reservists ensure our armed forces have the skills they need to mount successful operations. When they finish their service in the Reserves it is important that they are supported as veterans.

The UK reservist formations have evolved over time to the current three which mirror regular forces. This means a considerable number of reservist veterans may have belonged to historical formations that no longer exist, complicating their identification.

Reservist veterans may have different needs to those veterans that served in the regular forces. As such support may be tailored to meet these differences and we are seeking to better understand the needs of this cohort.

(Questions for all)

245. Are there any unique issues faced by veterans of the reserves? Please set these out below with explanations.

Section 2: Merchant Seafaring Veterans who have seen duty on legally defined military operations

The UK's nature as an island nation requires extensive logistics over the sea to supply the UK Armed Forces around the world. The Royal Fleet Auxiliary is a merchant marine fleet operated by the Ministry of Defence to support and supply the Royal Navy. This can be further supplemented by the requisition of civilian vessels during a conflict. These merchant sailors and fishermen who served during such defined military operations are classed as veterans.

246. To what extent do you agree or disagree that Merchant sailors who have participated in military operations are recognised as veterans?
- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree

- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

247. To what extent do you agree or disagree that veterans from the merchant marine are aware of the support and services available to them as veterans?

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Chapter 13: Data collection and Statistics

One cross-cutting theme of the Strategy for Our Veterans is to enhance collection, use and analysis of data across the public, private and charitable sectors to build an evidence base to effectively identify and address the needs of veterans. The Government is achieving this via the following aspects:

- Understand better the veteran data landscape
- Improve veteran data recording and collection
- Improve data linkage and data sharing
- Improve and develop data infrastructure
- Generate and share new insights by harnessing cross-sector data

(Questions for all)

A question asking whether individuals have previously served in the Armed Forces was included in the England & Wales Census 2021 and Scotland Census 2022 for the first time. However, the content of the questionnaire for each census is subject to review, and the veteran question is not mandated by the Census Act.

248. Do you think a veteran question should continue to be asked in any future censuses?
- a. Yes
 - b. No

(Questions for competent / local authorities):

It is not mandatory for statutory bodies to include a veteran question or marker in their data collection or recording initiatives.

249. How could we improve the collection or recording of data to better understand veteran status and requirements?

There are a range of organisations in government, the charity sector and beyond that collect data in order to provide support to veterans. The risk that veterans have to repeat their stories to multiple providers due to limitations on data sharing has been suggested as a barrier to help-seeking.

250. What steps could be taken to improve data sharing between organisations working to support veterans?
251. Do you have views or experience on how to improve data integration across different data systems to help reduce the burden for veterans to tell their stories several times before getting the services or support they need?

Chapter 14: Veterans governance and advocacy

In recent years, there has been significant change to the structures in government supporting veterans' policy. The most notable change has been the creation of the Office for Veterans' Affairs in the Cabinet Office in 2019, with a remit to coordinate across the UK Government and ensure that the interests of veterans are championed at the heart of government. Since 2022, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs has also attended Cabinet. The variety of the wider ecosystem supporting veterans is reflected in a number of groups and bodies that seek to bring together government and external stakeholders who work with the veteran community, including the Veterans' Advisory Board and the Covenant and Veterans Engagement Forum.

In each part of the UK, there is now also a Veterans' Commissioner or equivalent. Starting with the creation of the Scottish Veterans Commissioner in 2014, who is funded and appointed by the Scottish Government, this was followed by the appointment of a Northern Ireland Veterans Commissioner in 2020 (sponsored by Northern Ireland Office), the Independent Veterans Adviser to HM Government in 2021, and the Veterans Commissioner for Wales in 2022 (reporting to the Minister for Veterans' Affairs and the Secretary of State for Wales).

Whilst broadly fulfilling similar functions, each of the Commissioners are established and interpret their remits slightly differently, but they are all direct appointments by Ministers, with funding subject to short term fixed appointments.

Section 1: Government and Veterans

252. Were you aware that the UK Government now reports annually on the Armed Forces Covenant, including on Veterans?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

253. Were you aware that there is a Minister for Veterans Affairs attending Cabinet?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

254. Were you aware of the Office for Veterans' Affairs?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

255. To what extent do you agree that the Government and Ministers should have specific structures and responsibilities to ensure the interests of veterans are represented?
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neither agree or disagree
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree

256. To what extent do you agree or disagree that veterans are valued by society?
 - a. Strongly agree

- b. Agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

257. Do you think the Government should be required to report annually to Parliament specifically on support for veterans?

- a. Yes
- b. No
 - i. Please explain your answer

258. Do you think the Government could do more to support veterans? If so, how?
(Free text 300 words)

Section 2: Veterans Commissioners

Veterans Commissioners are independent from Government and seek to reflect the views of veterans and their families to government and scrutinising policy both in its conception and delivery to ensure it is providing the best support for veterans. There are three commissioners who cover Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland as well as the Independent Veterans Advisor to HM Government.

The Scottish Veterans' Commissioner (SVC) was created in 2014 and is appointed by Scottish Ministers but is operationally independent from the Scottish Government. The SVC is supported by a small team of civil servants seconded from the Scottish Government.

The Veterans Commissioner for Wales was created in 2022 and jointly reports to the Minister for Veterans' Affairs and the Secretary of State for Wales.

The Northern Ireland Veterans Commissioner was created in 2020 and is sponsored by the Northern Ireland Office.

The Independent Veterans Advisor was appointed by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and reports to the Minister for Veterans' Affairs.

(Questions for all)

259. Were you aware of the Veterans' Commissioners prior to this consultation?

- a. Yes
- b. No

260. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Commissioners have been effective to date?

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Disagree

- e. Strongly disagree
 - i. [Please explain why]

261. Do you think that the Commissioners should be established on a permanent, paid statutory basis, rather than as direct appointments?

- a. Yes
- b. No
 - i. Please explain your answer
- c. I don't know

Section 3: Ombudsman

Government guidance makes a distinction between Commissioners (such as, for example, the Children's Commissioner) being the appropriate mechanism for advocacy for certain groups in society, and Ombudsmen being appropriate for investigations of complaints and maladministration. Other similar countries that have a specific Veterans Ombudsman include Canada and the Netherlands, whilst others make use of general public services Ombudsmen. In the UK, individuals with a complaint about a government body can make representations to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (through their MP), the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, and the Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsman. In England there are also some service-specific Ombudsmen, such as that for Local Government and Social Care.

The Service Complaints Ombudsman for the Armed Forces, established in 2016 in place of the Service Complaints Commissioner (created in 2008) provides independent oversight and investigations in support of the complaints process for serving members of the UK Armed Forces. The government is interested in understanding the adequacy of existing processes to support complaints by veterans about services they receive as veterans, rather than as members of the general public.

(Questions for all)

262. To what extent do you agree or disagree that veterans face barriers in seeking redress about government services?

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree
 - i. [Please explain why]

263. Do you think existing Ombudsman arrangements provide sufficient means of redress for veterans?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I don't know
 - i. Please explain your answer

Chapter 15: Remembrance, recognition and memorialisation

It is important that Veterans have places and events where they can remember their service, and celebrate alongside old comrades. Society also needs to recognise the ongoing contribution veterans make after their service. As the large conflicts of the 20th century move further into the past, and the number of veterans dwindle, it is important as a society that we incorporate veterans into our national history to ensure their stories, their struggles and their sacrifices are remembered.

Section 1: Education

Education can be the single most effective means of remembrance. Individual stories of the majority of veterans can be lost when trying to explain the overarching narrative of historical events such as wars. Such courses or exhibits may focus on the 'great men' of a conflict or the social, political and economic trends that caused or emerged due to a conflict, perhaps overlooking the individuals that actually fought it and how it affected them. It is valuable to both the study of history and to remembrance that veterans' experiences are effectively integrated into the curricula of schools and universities and as part of the framing of museums and other institutions that hold exhibitions.

(Questions for all)

264. How effectively do you think the lived experience of veterans is recognised in the teaching and explanation of our history?
- Very effective
 - Effective
 - Neither effective nor ineffective
 - Ineffective
 - Very ineffective
 - [Please explain why]

(Questions for competent authorities):

265. To what extent do you agree or disagree veterans' individual experience is sufficiently included in teaching of history?
- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - Explain your answer

Section 2: Arts

Telling veterans' stories through literature, painting, photography, plays, film, video games and music among other media can not only serve therapeutic ends but also be a vital way in which we remember and recognise the experience of veterans.

Narrative arts have always been an effective way to remember history even if not direct accounts; the successful programme of arts activity for the First World War Centenary showed the power of this medium.. We are defined by and understand the world through storytelling. It is through constructing a narrative that we structure ours and others' experiences so that we can share, empathise, and understand them.

(Questions for all)

266. Do you agree or disagree that it is important for veterans to tell their own stories through the arts?
- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
- i. [Please explain why]
267. Do you agree or disagree that the experience of veterans is appropriately represented in the arts and media?
- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
- i. [Please explain why]
268. How can veterans be better empowered to share their experiences through the arts?

(Questions for competent authorities):

269. How do you support your local veterans to express their experiences through the arts?

Section 3: Heritage

Remembrance can be sharpened through the buildings veterans lived, worked and fought in, which in turn can become memorials themselves. These buildings and other structures can be extremely varied but can all help tell veterans' stories, by preserving this heritage to support our understanding of history. Allowing people today to see and interact with such places can be more impactful than simply seeing or hearing about a place through other media or learning materials.

270. To what extent do you agree or disagree that veterans are sufficiently celebrated in our heritage?

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree
 - i. [Please explain why]

Section 4: Public monuments and events

Remembrance and recognition can take on many forms, including sombre reflection on Remembrance Sunday. It can also be a celebration as with public recognition of service at the Invictus Games. It is important that those who have served are recognised in our public spaces.

Public monuments are permanent memorialisation that can be focal points for remembrance. There are thousands of memorials in the UK, with a huge wave of construction following the First World War and new memorials continuing to be built today. These provide places where individuals can reflect on the memorial's meaning in their own way and in their time such as veterans gardens. For veterans they can provide important places of reflection, and for communities a sense of shared purpose and connection.

Events

(Questions for all)

271. Do you feel there are sufficient opportunities to celebrate or commemorate the service of veterans? Please explain why
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - i. Please explain your answer
 - c. I don't know

(Questions for competent authorities):

272. Do you hold events in your area to mark the service of veterans or where veterans form an aspect of the event?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
273. Do you face any issues in holding such events?
274. Do you have any best practice or successes in running events you could share?

Section 5: Monuments

(Questions for all)

275. Do you feel there are sufficient monuments nationally and locally recognising and memorialising veterans?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - i. If no, please explain your answer
 - c. I don't know

(Questions for competent authorities):

276. Do you have any monuments in your area which in part memorialise veterans?
277. Do you face any issues maintaining existing monuments or establishing new ones?

Part Three: Recognising our veterans' contribution to society

Background

There is more that can be done to raise the awareness of the positive contribution that veterans, their families and members of the Armed Forces community make to society. This includes the unique skills, strengths, experience and qualifications that veterans bring to the workplace and overall economy, the good work done in charitable and socially responsible initiatives and the ways in which they have a positive impact on their communities. By celebrating veterans' achievements such as those in receipt of Points of Light Awards, King's Birthday Honours, promoting the unique value veterans bring to the workforce through the OVA hosted Veteran Employers Group, supporting commemorative events, sharing stories on our social media channels and working with our partners to promote these good news stories, we can do more to promote a positive perception of veterans and members of the Armed Forces community in society.

Chapter 16: Recognition of veterans

Background

The UK Government, the devolved governments and local authorities all understand the important positive role veterans play in society, and want to ensure that these efforts are properly recognised.

Section 1 Promoting Positive Perception

278. In your opinion, how can individuals and organisations best collaborate with the government to promote a more positive perception of veterans in society?
279. In your view, what more can the Government do to raise awareness of the positive contributions made by veterans to society, including their unique skills and charitable work?

Section 2: Impact of Recognition Initiatives

280. Have you observed any tangible outcomes or benefits resulting from initiatives such as celebrating veterans' achievements?
- Yes
 - No
281. To what extent do you agree or disagree that government-supported programs effectively promote the unique value veterans bring to society?
- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree

i. [Please explain why]

282. How important is the Government's role in supporting commemorative events and sharing positive stories about veterans on social media channels and through partnerships with other organisations?
- Extremely important
 - Very important
 - Somewhat important
 - Not so important
 - Not at all important

Chapter 17: The value Veterans bring to the workplace

Background

Veterans are a significant part of the UK's workforce, whose service in our Armed Forces equips them with unique skills, strengths, experiences and qualifications that are hard or impossible to replicate elsewhere. These skills and experiences can range from advanced technical skill-sets to 'soft skills' such as leadership, resilience, problem solving, communication skills, dedication and analytical skills that are applicable and transferable to a range of sectors and roles in the economy.

Section 1: Veterans in your business or organisation

(Questions for employers)

283. Which sector(s) is your business or organisation active in?
- Agriculture
 - Mining and quarrying
 - Manufacturing (including Maritime & Aerospace)
 - Building & Construction
 - Energy (Oil & Gas)
 - Energy (Renewables)
 - Utilities & Services
 - Retail & wholesale
 - Transport & Logistics(including Logistics)
 - Accommodation & food
 - IT & communications
 - Financial & professional services
 - Real estate activities
 - Professional & technical & professional
 - Admin and support
 - Public sector
 - Defence & Security & defence
 - Education
 - Health & social care

- t. Arts, entertainment, culture & recreation
 - u. Engineering
 - v. Other (If 'Other', how would you describe the industry you are employed in)
284. To the best of your knowledge, does your business or organisations currently employ veterans?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Unsure
285. If you employ veterans, can you provide an estimate of how many?
- a. Free text
286. If you employ veterans, can you provide an estimate of what percentage of the workforce they make up?
- a. % of workforce
287. Do you proactively seek to recruit veterans into your organisation
- a. Yes
 - b. No
288. If you employ veterans - what were the main reasons for your decision to hire them? (You can select more than one)
- a. Unique skills & strengths (including 'soft skills')
If so, which ones?
 - b. Qualifications
i. If so, which ones?
 - c. Experience
If so, what kind?
 - d. Social return e.g 'giving back to society'
 - e. Corporate social responsibility
 - f. Other (Please explain)
289. If you employ veterans, to what extent do you agree or disagree that you make full use of the skills, strengths, experience and qualifications gained as part of their military service?
- a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neither agree nor disagree
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
i. Please explain your answer (Free text)
290. If you employ veterans - do they require any specific kinds of support? (select all that apply)
- a. None
 - b. CV & interview preparation

- c. Coaching and mentoring
 - d. Career development conversations
 - e. Sick leave or special leave
 - f. Reasonable adjustments (such as physical or mental health requirements, or disabilities)
 - g. Other (please specify)
291. What barriers, if any, does your business or organisation face when recruiting veterans? (select all that apply)
- a. There are no barriers
 - b. Unsure of how to engage with veterans
 - c. Unsure of where to go for veterans specific recruitment
 - d. Unsure of support available from government, 3rd sector and recruitment specialists in recruiting veterans
 - e. Unsure of what unique benefits and value veterans have to offer
 - f. Unsure of what support veterans themselves might need as an employee
 - g. A negative experience with a previous or existing veteran employee
 - h. A decision not to target specific recruitment efforts toward veterans
 - i. Other (please specify)
292. Veterans are often highlighted as having developed effective leadership skills through their military experience. What value do you place on leadership? (Free text)
293. How does your organisation measure leadership potential in your employees?
294. What sort of roles within your organisation are people with good leadership skills most likely to be the most productive in?
295. How does your organisation identify, recruit and retain people with good leadership skills?
296. If you have any other evidence regarding job matching for veterans please provide it here.
297. Does your business or organisation have any veterans-specific support in place? (select all that apply)
- a. No
 - b. Tailored training & recruitment programmes
 - c. Engagement & outreach
 - d. Veteran-specific talent development schemes
 - e. Coaching and / or mentorship programmes
 - f. Staff Networks (also known as Employee Resource Groups)
 - g. Self-ID of veterans in your employee workforce
 - h. Signatory to Armed Forces Covenant
 - i. Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Award holder
 - j. Career Transition Partnership employer account
 - k. Other (please specify)
298. Do you as an employer engage with any forms of veteran-specific support? (select all that apply)
- a. No

- b. CTP (Career Transition Partnership)
- c. Forces Employment Charity
- d. Armed Forces Covenant
- e. DRM (Defence Relationship Management)
- f. ERS (Employer Recognition Scheme)
- g. Office for Veterans' Affairs
- h. DWP (Department for Work & Pensions) Armed Forces Champion, or Employer & Partnership Team
- i. Department for Business & Trade (*formerly BEIS*)
- j. A Charity or 3rd Sector Group
- k. A veterans or service leaver recruitment specialist
- l. A tailored veterans work placement or employment programme
- m. Another form of support
(*If so, please describe*)

299. Are there any other forms of support you think would be useful to your business or UK employers more generally, in recruiting and making full use of veterans in the workforce?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Unsure
 - i. (If yes, please describe)

Next steps

After the consultation, a summary of the responses to this consultation will be published and placed on the government website.

This consultation is being conducted in line with the “Consultation Principles” as set out in the Better Regulation Executive guidance which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-principles-guidance>.

If you have any comments or complaints about the consultation process, please address them by email to: veteransconsultation@cabinetoffice.gov.uk or in writing to: Office for Veterans' Affairs, 1 Horse Guards Road, Westminster, SW1A 2HQ.