



## Wellbeing support for Defence personnel and veterans

### The wellbeing of serving personnel and veterans is of the utmost importance to Defence.

We recognise that the prospect of supporting the Independent Inquiry relating to Afghanistan may be stressful, bringing up complex and mixed feelings. We encourage anyone who may require support to self-identify so wellbeing assistance can be provided.

MOD will do all it can to support those impacted including through the provision of legal and pastoral support with full confidentiality.

You can opt in to wellbeing support at any stage and there is no limit to the number of wellbeing mechanisms that can be accessed. Acknowledging your feelings and seeking support where necessary may help you to navigate your experience and minimise the toll on you.

A comprehensive list of the support available is provided below. This is available to current and former Defence personnel, as well as Defence families.

## Where to Get Help?

### UK Defence support

#### Witness support

The MOD has set up a dedicated Witness Support Team to provide administrative, logistical, and pastoral assistance for all former and current MOD employees impacted by the Afghan Inquiry. This includes the provision of Witness Support Officers to individuals, and access to specialist support when required.

#### Afghan Inquiry Witness Support Team

Tel: 07974 867 107

Email: [MODSI-WitSpTeam@mod.gov.uk](mailto:MODSI-WitSpTeam@mod.gov.uk)

#### Legal support

The MOD has set up a dedicated team of barristers and solicitors – the Military Witness Legal Team – to offer free, independent, and confidential legal advice to individuals whose evidence is requested by the Inquiry. Although this team is funded by the MOD it is separate, and any discussions and advice are protected from disclosure to the MOD, the Inquiry, or any other person.

#### Afghan Inquiry Military Witness Legal Team

Email: [Guy.Richardson@governmentlegal.gov.uk](mailto:Guy.Richardson@governmentlegal.gov.uk) or [Raveen.Patel@governmentlegal.gov.uk](mailto:Raveen.Patel@governmentlegal.gov.uk)

#### Single Service support lines

##### Royal Navy Family and People Support

Tel: 0800 145 6088

Email: [navynps-peoplesptmfpsptl@mod.gov.uk](mailto:navynps-peoplesptmfpsptl@mod.gov.uk)

##### Army Welfare Service

Tel: 01904 882 053

Email: [RC-AWS-IAT-0Mailbox@mod.gov.uk](mailto:RC-AWS-IAT-0Mailbox@mod.gov.uk)

##### RAF SSAFA

Tel: 0300 111 723

Email: [sswsRAF@ssafa.org.uk](mailto:sswsRAF@ssafa.org.uk)

#### Alternative Defence support

##### Employee Assistance Programme

The Employee Assistance Programme offers a confidential helpline designed to assist civilian personnel, or military line managers of civilians with personal or professional problems that could be affecting their home or work life, health and general wellbeing.

Tel (UK): 0800 345 7047

Tel (Overseas): 0330 008 5959

### Army Operational Legacy Branch

The Army Operational Legacy Branch (AOLB) offers an alternative channel for advice in respect of pastoral support – if required or in the event that individuals choose not to contact the MOD Witness Support Team. The AOLB's role is to provide military support to those involved in a legal process relative to a legacy operation. The AOLB has established a network of Military Support Officers to provide direct end-to-end support to the veterans and serving personnel involved.

Tel: 0300 153 4300

Email: [APSG-AOLB-Op-Legacy0Mailbox@mod.gov.uk](mailto:APSG-AOLB-Op-Legacy0Mailbox@mod.gov.uk)

## Single Service mental resilience programmes

**Royal Navy.** The Royal Navy (RN) has implemented Project Regain, an initiative of marines, by marines, for marines to assist all ranks in seeking help if they have concerns about their mental health without the need to first go through their unit's medical officer. Tel: 01206 817057.

**Army.** The Army has developed an evidence-based Army programme to improve mental fitness and resilience called Op SMART (Optimising Performance Through Stress Management and Resilience Training). Op SMART delivers a through-life stepped education and learning programme for all Army personnel, grounded in psychological skills and mental fitness.

**Royal Air Force.** The Royal Air Force (RAF) has developed a comprehensive Whole Force specialist mental fitness and wellbeing programme called Thriving at Work (T@W). Detail on T@W and other RAF resources can be found on RAF Health-Wellbeing.

On Unit / Ship / Station Support:

- Defence Medical Services
- Unit Welfare Officers
- Padre
- Chain of Command
- Peers

## Bespoke support to veterans

### Veterans Welfare Service

The Veterans Welfare Service (VWS) provides one-to-one support to veterans via a national network of welfare managers across the UK and Republic of Ireland. It is available for veterans and their families.

Tel (UK): 0808 1914 218

Tel (Overseas): +44 1253 866 043

Email: [veterans-uk@mod.gov.uk](mailto:veterans-uk@mod.gov.uk)

### Veterans' Gateway

The Veterans' Gateway is for any ex-Service personnel and their families looking for advice or support – whatever they may be dealing with. They provide the first point of contact to a network of military and non-military partner organisations to help personnel find exactly what they need, when they need it whether they're in the UK or overseas.

Tel: 0808 802 1212

Email: [Inquiries@veteransgateway.org.uk](mailto:Inquiries@veteransgateway.org.uk)

### Office for Veterans Affairs

This is a first point of contact for all Tri-Service veterans and their families on matters of wellbeing, families and communities, and physical health. It is funded by the Armed Forces Covenant and is supported by charities and organisations and individuals, including the NHS, United Kingdom Government and the Ministry of Defence.

Email: [veterans@cabinetoffice.gov.uk](mailto:veterans@cabinetoffice.gov.uk)

## NHS support

In England, veterans and their families can get specialist help from the NHS Op COURAGE service.

In Wales, you can reach out to Veteran Therapists in each Local Health Board through Veterans NHS Wales.

In Scotland, veterans can access veteran-led mental health and welfare support through Veterans First Point, part of NHS Scotland.

In Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Veterans' Support Office links individual veterans, veterans' groups, statutory and non-statutory bodies, and charities supporting veterans.

## Charities and other support agencies

Combat Stress is the UK's leading mental health charity for veterans, offering free treatment and support to ex-Service personnel of the UK Armed Forces.

Tel: 0800 138 1619

Email: [helpline@combatstress.org.uk](mailto:helpline@combatstress.org.uk)

The Samaritans organisation works with the Ministry of Defence and other charities to support serving personnel in the Armed Forces, veterans, and their families.

The Confederation of Service Charities (Cobseo) represents the whole serving and veterans' community and promotes the welfare and general interests of the armed forces community.

The Charity for Civil Servants offers support to current, former and retired civil servants when they face tough times, including on health and wellbeing matters.

HeadFit for Life offers advice to defence people on how to stay mentally fit and on top of their game at work and at home.

Togetherall offers online mental wellbeing support 24/7 where personnel can share their concerns with others who feel like them. It's safe, anonymous and has counsellors available 24/7. This service is free to veterans.

Drink Aware. Drinkaware provides independent alcohol advice, information, and tools to help people make better choices about their drinking.

Tel: 0300 123 1110

Gambling Support. The National Gambling Helpline gives confidential information, advice, and support for anyone with gambling challenges in England, Scotland and Wales. Personnel can speak with their advisors one-to-one over the phone or on live chat, every day of the year.

Tel: 0808 8020 133