



Ministry
of Defence

VETERANS

Key Facts



This document offers some key facts and data about veterans in the UK.

It focuses on veterans' employment, health, housing, the justice system and the Armed Forces Covenant, and provides some sources of further information.



DEFINITION

Who is a “veteran” in the UK?

Veterans are defined as anyone who has served for at least one day in Her Majesty’s Armed Forces (Regular or Reserve) or Merchant Mariners who have seen duty on legally defined military operations.

A “Service Leaver” is a term for someone who is in transition from or has ceased to be a member of HM Armed Forces. The term “Service Leaver” is typically used in legal documents, as understanding and use of the term “veteran” does vary, not least amongst those who have served. Many former Armed Forces personnel in the UK do not define themselves as “veterans”.

<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/kcmhr/publications/assetfiles/veterans/burdett-2012-veterans.pdf>

For the purposes of this document, the term “veteran” will be used to represent all former Armed Forces personnel.

Based on the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Annual Population Survey results, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) estimated that there were 2.56 million veterans residing in households across Great Britain in 2015.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/annual-population-survey-uk-armed-forces-veterans-residing-in-great-britain-2015>

What is the Armed Forces Covenant?



The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise by the nation that those who serve and have served, and their families, should be treated fairly.

The Covenant was enshrined in law in the 2011 Armed Forces Act and ensures that members of the Armed Forces community are not disadvantaged as a result of their service in accessing Government and commercial services. Special consideration is also appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and bereaved.

The Government, local authorities, the wider public sector, charities, commercial organisations and civil society all have a role in supporting the Armed Forces community. This includes support to veterans regarding employment, healthcare, housing, education, and financial advice.

www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk



EMPLOYMENT

What support is offered to those transitioning out of the Armed Forces?

In preparation for a career after service in the Armed Forces, the MOD directly funds employment support through the Career Transition Partnership (CTP). The CTP offers a high quality, no cost recruitment service and supports those leaving the Armed Forces for two years after their discharge date by connecting them with employers who recognise the benefits of bringing the talent, skills and experience of veterans into their organisations.

It is estimated that 80% of service leavers who used the CTP in 2015/16 were employed within six months of leaving the Armed Forces, with a further 10% either in full-time education, training or not actively looking for work.

<http://www.ctp.org.uk>

“Armed Forces leavers offer an exceptional work ethic, commitment, and ability to work in some of the most challenging conditions possible. With an unrivalled approach to team working and leadership as well as a multitude of skills, experiences and knowledge; they are an asset to any company.”

JAGUAR LAND ROVER

“Working with the Career Transition Partnership gives us the ability to operate a highly focused end-to-end recruitment solution. We’re able to minimise timescales and generate applications from highly skilled, motivated and disciplined Service leavers who have experience of complex engineering tasks in challenging environments. For us it’s fantastic that we’ve been able to recruit so many ex-forces personnel, and we’ll continue to do so.”

BT

As of March 2017, 1500 businesses, charitable and public sector organisations have signed the Armed Forces Covenant, pledging specific support to the Armed Forces community. Commitments include better access to employment opportunities, support, mentoring, and work placements for veterans. Details of the organisations which have signed can be found here:

<https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/get-involved/who-has-signed-the-covenant/>

HEALTH

The provision of veterans' health care, including mental health care, is primarily the responsibility of the local NHS across the UK, providing a wide range of specialist and nationally-funded services to meet the needs of veterans. Veterans in England, Scotland and Wales receive priority access to NHS secondary care for Service-related conditions, subject to clinical need of all patients. Veterans are actively encouraged to inform their General Practitioners (GPs) and other NHS providers that they have served in the Armed Forces. By sharing this information, veterans with service related injuries and health conditions can be referred to a range of dedicated health services provided by specialist military and civilian doctors, such as veterans' mental health services and the veterans trauma network. Further information is available from:

<http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Militaryhealthcare/Pages/Militaryhealthcare.aspx>

The NHS supports the delivery of training and awareness programmes for GPs, consultants, health professionals and others to aid their professional understanding of Service life and support and facilitate improved care and treatment. NHS England has embedded the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant into its constitution, meaning veterans should enjoy the same standard of and access to healthcare as that received by any other UK citizen in the area they live and continue to have access to high quality veterans' mental health and prosthetics services if required.

What do we understand about the mental health issues affecting the Armed Forces and veterans?

Whilst there has been an emphasis on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), studies conducted by the King's Centre for Military Health Research (KCMHR) noted that PTSD rates were low amongst British forces, with prevalence rates of around 4% in personnel who have deployed, rising to 6% in combat troops.

<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/kcmhr/publications/assetfiles/2014/Hunt2014.pdf>

This is broadly equivalent to the incidence amongst civilians. Research continues on common mental health issues amongst veterans, including anxiety, depression and alcohol-related problems. The causality of mental health issues is complex and related to a number of contributing factors. However it is important to note that the vast majority of the UK Armed Forces and veterans do not experience mental health difficulties.

Lord Ashcroft's Veterans' Transition Review in 2014 also noted that veterans as a whole are no more likely to commit suicide than the general population.

<http://www.veteranstransition.co.uk/vtrreport.pdf>

The MOD, Department of Health, NHS, local authorities, and mental health and service charities are working together to improve mental health outcomes for the Armed Forces community. This includes support and raising awareness for Armed Forces personnel and veterans to break the stigma often associated with mental health problems, so that veterans access the help they need when they need it.

JUSTICE SYSTEM

What do we know about veterans in the criminal justice system and what support is available to them?

The Phillips Review, commissioned by the Government in 2014, concluded that the vast majority of those who serve in the Armed Forces return to civilian life without problem and are less likely than their civilian counterparts to commit criminal offences. A small minority have difficulties and find themselves in trouble with the law. Their offending behaviour is unlikely to have been directly caused by their service in the Armed Forces, but is sometimes contributed to by their experiences. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/former-members-of-the-armed-forces-and-the-criminal-justice-system>

The Government is committed to providing support to help veterans in prison and improve their lives on return to their communities. For the small minority who find themselves in custody, the MOD maintains contact with prison governors to ensure they are aware of the support available and can identify those who may require support from the Veterans' Welfare Service. Since January 2015, every prisoner coming into custody has been asked if they have served in the Armed Forces (Regular or Reserves). This information helps those who work with them focus more closely on their rehabilitation needs and signpost them to the wealth of support and assistance available to them from voluntary and community sector organisations. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/more-support-for-veterans-in-the-criminal-justice-system>

According to these Offender Management Statistics, compiled quarterly by the Ministry of Justice, offenders who have formerly been members of the Armed Forces have accounted for 4% of those entering prisons in England and Wales in 2015 to 2016. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly#history>

Many service charities also offer help to these individuals in their rehabilitation and aim towards subsequent employment.

Veterans that are subject to investigations by the Service Police can receive welfare support through the Veterans Welfare Service (VWS) via a national network of welfare managers across the UK and the Republic of Ireland.



HOUSING

All 407 local authorities in Great Britain have pledged to uphold the Armed Forces Covenant.

The Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has introduced various measures to improve access to social housing for the Service community and veterans. This includes changing the law to ensure seriously injured Service personnel and veterans with urgent housing needs are always given high priority for social housing by local authorities. Regulations have also been introduced which ensure that those within five years of having left the Armed Forces cannot be disqualified from social housing because of a local connection or residency requirement.

DCLG has also introduced measures to make it easier for members of the Armed Forces community to buy their own home. Regular Armed Forces personnel are benefitting from over £200million from the Forces Help to Buy Scheme to help them get on the property ladder, and provide stability throughout their career and later in life.

What do we know about veterans and homelessness?

Only a small minority of veterans become homeless. In 2014 it was estimated that the proportion of those sleeping rough who had served in the Armed Forces ranged from 3% to 6%.

<http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/media/2275/2014householdsurveyreport.pdf>

The Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN) Greater London annual reports between 2013 and 2016 show that, of those seen sleeping rough in London, the percentage who were UK nationals with experience of serving in the UK Armed Forces had stayed at 3%.

<http://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/chain-reports>

The Government used £40million from LIBOR banking fines in 2014-15 to specifically target support to projects which provide veterans' accommodation under the Veterans Accommodation Fund. This included charity projects providing long-term and temporary accommodation to veterans and their families, including support accommodation for vulnerable and disabled veterans.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/mod-announces-final-recipient-of-40m-veterans-accommodation-fund>



FURTHER SUPPORT

What other support is available to veterans?

Veterans UK is the MOD's support organisation for service personnel, veterans and their families. Veterans UK delivers the Armed Forces Pension Schemes (AFPS), War Pension Scheme (WPS) and Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS), making payments to those injured or disabled due to service in the Armed Forces, and to the widows, widowers and civil partners of those who die as a result of service in the Armed Forces.

Veterans UK also provide a welfare support package through the Veterans Welfare Service (VWS) and a Freephone Helpline facility. The VWS provides a help and advice service to veterans, their families and dependents through a national network of Welfare Managers. The VWS works alongside in-service welfare providers and also works closely with local authorities, voluntary organisations, service charities and the Department for Work and Pensions. This ensures that those leaving the Armed Forces and existing veterans and their families receive the information and assistance they need to access the appropriate services and benefits.

The Veterans UK Helpline (0808 1914 218) provides specific advice on compensation scheme claims and on where to get help on benefits, pensions, loans and grants, emergency accommodation, finding a job, re-training, health issues, welfare concerns, service records and medals.

<https://www.gov.uk/veterans-uk>

Email: veterans-uk@mod.uk

The Aged Veterans Fund, launched in August 2015, is a one-off fund from the Treasury of £30million over five years to support veterans born before 1950. It will fund projects that support non-core health, wellbeing and social care needs for older veterans who may need some focused support in relation to their health and social care needs.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/aged-veterans-fund>

The Armed Forces Covenant Grant Fund has awarded £2million for the creation of a **Veterans' Gateway**, to be launched in 2017, to provide a single point of contact (online and over the telephone) to help veterans find sources of support or information for challenges that they are facing. <http://www.veteransgateway.org.uk>

A large number of charities provide extensive support to veterans; further details can be found on the **Confederation of Service Charities (Cobseo)** website.

<http://www.cobseo.org.uk>

All veterans are eligible to apply for an Armed Forces Veterans Badge.

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-medal-or-veterans-badge/apply-for-a-veterans-badge>

More information can be found here:

<http://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk>

<https://www.facebook.com/theministryofdefence>

<https://www.facebook.com/ukarmedforces>

<http://www.twitter.com/defenceh3>

<http://www.armedforcesday.org.uk>



