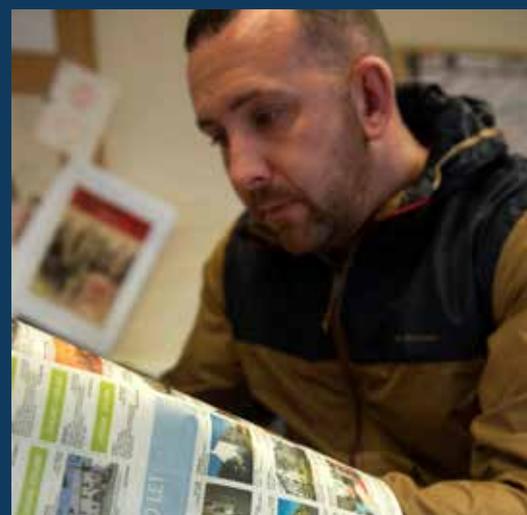


# THE STRATEGY FOR OUR VETERANS

TAKING THE STRATEGY FORWARD IN SCOTLAND



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# Foreword



The Strategy for our Veterans was published in November 2018. It sought to build on the work by organisations across the public, private and charitable sectors to support and empower veterans, by setting clear goals for the next 10 years to provide appropriate support for our current veterans and the veterans of the future. The aims were to ensure that every veteran would feel even more valued, supported and empowered.

This builds on the work that the Scottish Government was already undertaking to support the Armed Forces and veterans community, as set out previously in *Our Commitments* (2012) and *Renewing Our Commitments* (2016), and through our more recent annual updates to the Scottish Parliament. Veterans are assets to our society and my ambition remains to make Scotland the destination of choice for Service leavers and their families, offering high living standards, great job prospects and a society that respects and values their contribution. The launch of the Strategy provided a timely opportunity for us to take stock nationally about how we measure up to those aims currently and in the future.

Since its publication last year, we have been consulting extensively across Scotland about how to take the Strategy's aims forward.

I have been clear from the outset that our response needed to be driven by those who have the lived experience of the Armed Forces in Scotland, most importantly veterans themselves and the many valuable organisations who support them. I also wanted to ensure that we examined the needs of the wider Armed Forces and veterans community in Scotland, including the families whose lives are often disrupted as a result of the mobility and separation that is an inevitable part of Service life.

I was particularly pleased to be able to participate personally in many of the consultation events that we conducted across Scotland, ranging from small gatherings of veterans at their regular breakfast clubs, to larger scale meetings and conferences, where I was able to hear directly from organisations including veterans charities and Local Authorities. Since taking over as Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans in June 2018, I have consistently been impressed at the candid and constructive nature of the views that have been represented to me and this was a constant through all of our consultation events. Views were presented with passion and enthusiasm, and always with the needs of veterans and their families at the forefront of the feedback. I have also been greatly impressed by the tireless dedication of so many people in Scotland's veterans' charities and organisations, and the wider support that is provided by hundreds of partner organisations who are focused on making improvements to the lives of veterans.

Further information about how we gathered the views that would inform our response to the Veterans Strategy is at the annex to this document. I hope you will agree that the consultation has been thorough and extensive and I am confident that the feedback that we have amassed in Scotland, combined with that which was collected by the UK Government during its wider public consultation, have given us a clearer picture than we have ever had before about the needs of the veterans community.

Overall, the feedback about support for veterans in Scotland was positive. There was also clear reinforcement of my view that veterans are assets to our society. The vast majority thrive and make a significant contribution to the success of our country, from the knowledge and skills that they offer employers and businesses through to the positive impact that they and their families add to their local communities.

But while no significant gaps were identified, there were a number of areas where potential improvements were suggested. This document summarises these and sets out what the Scottish Government and its partners are doing to address them. This is a long-term piece of work, and while we have identified some areas where rapid progress can be made, there is clearly a need for continued engagement going forward over the 10 years that the Strategy for our Veterans spans. Progress against the Strategy will therefore be reported through the annual update to the Scottish Parliament.

The positive picture evidenced by our consultation has also demonstrated the benefits that have been achieved by the Scottish Government's decision to establish a Veterans Commissioner in Scotland in 2014. This is still the only such appointment in the United Kingdom. The recommendations of the Veterans Commissioner have focused our efforts over the last five years and made sure that our policies have been developed with views of the wider veterans sector firmly represented. I would therefore like to thank Eric Fraser, our inaugural Veterans Commissioner, who submitted detailed recommendations following his reviews of the Transition process, Housing, Employability, Education and Skills and Health and Wellbeing, recommendations which were accepted by the Scottish Government. I would also like to thank Charlie Wallace, the current Commissioner, who last year published his own independent assessment of our progress across all of these areas and a paper on transition.

The consultation also rightly highlighted the cross-UK approach taken to the Strategy. All partners welcomed the strong joint foundation provided by the initial publication and I remain committed to continuing the inter-governmental collaboration where appropriate to achieve the Strategy's outcomes. Each Government also undertook separate consultations to explore what implementation might look like in response to the needs of their own populations and the different mechanisms for delivery.

Going forward, the Scottish Government will not be complacent in continuing to seek ways we can better support our veterans community to 2028 and beyond. We owe our veterans community nothing less and, as Veterans Minister, I and this Government, will do all that we can to ensure that they receive the recognition and support that they deserve.



Graeme Dey MSP  
Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans

# Responses



The advent of a 10-year UK-wide Veterans' Strategy is extremely welcome. The long-term, outcomes focused approach it takes is a significant step forward. Implementation will provide an important opportunity to move beyond the comfort zone of long established structures and systems, and focus our efforts on how best to support our veterans and their families. However, I would offer a word of caution. Unless governments and administrations continue to work jointly in meaningful collaboration, they will not be able to deliver on the vision articulated in the Strategy. A UK-wide consistency of purpose is needed from policy makers if we are to ensure our veterans are always well served wherever they choose to settle.

The Scottish Government's wide-ranging consultation is to be applauded and the feedback is thought-provoking. By and large it shows a relatively buoyant veterans population who are prospering in the civilian world following their time in the Armed Forces. However, it also highlights areas where veterans continue to need assistance and support and will do so for many years to come. This is consistent with my own analysis of the Scottish Government's progress against my predecessor's recommendations for improvement, which spanned similar issues. I am pleased to see such a wide ranging list of proposed actions in response to the Strategy consultation and I will be keeping a close eye on how these are supported and delivered.

Finally, the subject of transition from Service life to civilian life. The feedback from the consultation is clear. Transition is of fundamental importance in a successful move from Service life to civilian life. This subject is the current focus of my work and I have recently published a strategic overview of transition – Positive Futures: Getting Transition Right in Scotland, which will be followed by a series of more in-depth thematic papers focussing on the specific elements which make for a successful transition.

Veterans have so much to offer society and it is incumbent on us all to ensure their skills and talents are recognised and utilised, and their needs and aspirations supported and encouraged.

Charlie Wallace  
Scottish Veterans Commissioner



Veterans Scotland welcomed the announcement of the Veterans Strategy in 2018. It was particularly refreshing to see the Governments across the United Kingdom come together to take collective ownership of the Strategy and put the needs of the veterans community before party politics, an achievement that has been widely applauded by stakeholders. We were also pleased that our members, and indeed all of the veterans community and the many organisations that support them, have had the opportunity to contribute to the consultation on the Strategy, whether through the many engagements that have been conducted by the Scottish Government or through the public consultation that ran across the United Kingdom until early 2019.

It is significant that the consultation highlighted that the vast majority of veterans thrive in civilian society, bringing to bear their often unique skills, experience and personal attributes that service in the Armed Forces provides. The negative stereotypes about veterans that are often portrayed by the media continue to be a source of frustration for many in the sector and it is important that these are tackled wherever possible. But the consultation has also rightly reinforced that, for a variety of sometimes multiple and complex reasons, some veterans do need help and support and their needs will change in the years to come.

Though there are no major surprises in the feedback reported in this document, it is helpful that we now have a stronger evidence base from across the United Kingdom that informs where support services are working effectively or not or will need to alter to reflect the changing needs of veterans and their families. It is encouraging to see such a comprehensive list of measures planned in response to the Strategy but evaluating the effectiveness of these actions, and those announced by the other Governments, will be the real test of the Veterans Strategy's success.

Veterans Scotland will look to the Scottish Veterans Commissioner to continue his important role in holding the Scottish Government to account on support for veterans in Scotland and to highlight issues that need to be addressed, whether by the Governments or the many public, private and third sector organisations that provide supporting services in the sector. For our part, Veterans Scotland will continue to engage closely with the Scottish Government and other stakeholders, on behalf of our member charities, which play such a vital role in supporting our veterans, to identify where things are working well or need attention and to help ensure that those in a position to make the necessary changes are clear on where we believe their priorities should be focused.

Chris Hughes  
Veterans Scotland

# Part 1

## The Strategy and Consultation



# Aim and Objectives

The launch of the Veterans Strategy in November 2018 acknowledged the importance of supporting and empowering those who have served us in our Armed Forces. Veterans, young and old, offer a wealth of experience, skills and knowledge that are vital for civil society and it is important that the contribution of their families is recognised too.

By committing to this Strategy along with the other governments of the United Kingdom, the Scottish Government has pledged to achieve a shared Vision and Principles and the best possible outcomes for our veterans and their families in the future. Implementing the Strategy, however, will be tailored to the needs of our veterans population and the distinctive mechanisms for delivery in Scotland.

Taking forward our consultation in Scotland, we have been clear to emphasise the message that, first and foremost, veterans are assets to our society. And for the small proportion who find the transition to civilian life more of a challenge, we owe them all the support that we can to ensure that, regardless of their difficulties, they too are able to realise their potential and live full and successful lives after their military service.

We have focused on strengthening the excellent work being done every day by organisations across the public, private and charitable sectors to support and empower veterans. Our response to the Strategy builds on this work and recognises that the needs of our veterans are changing, both in terms of the reducing numbers and also with regard to the types of support that help them to integrate successfully into civilian society. Where veterans require help, their issues can be multiple and complex, emphasising the importance of effective collaboration and co-ordination by the many agencies that are available to support them.

Looking ahead, this document sets out how we intend to respond to these changes, across all of the services that impact on the lives of veterans and families of the Armed Forces community in Scotland.

# Cross-Cutting Factors and Themes

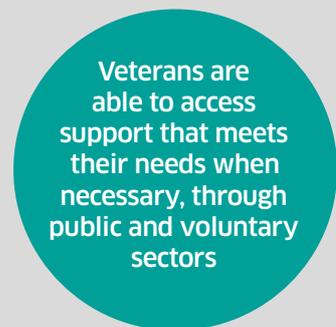
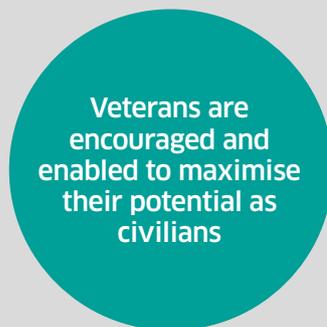
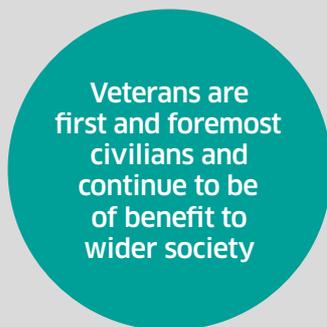
## VISION

This Strategy has a 10 year scope. Through the 10 year timescale, the Strategy addresses the immediate needs of older veterans as well as setting the right conditions for society to empower – and support – the newer generation. Initiatives and proposals will work towards an enduring Vision articulated by three key principles.

Those who have served in the UK Armed Forces, and their families, transition smoothly back into civilian life and contribute fully to a society that understands and values what they have done and what they have to offer.

## PRINCIPLES

The Principles articulate in greater detail the strategic objectives of the Vision.



These Principles encompass Regular and Reservist Veterans and where appropriate, their families and the bereaved. The focus is on those Veterans of the UK Armed Forces resident in the UK. In due course, we will consider encompassing Veterans who return to or choose to live overseas. These Principles are consistent with, and underpinned by, the Armed Forces Covenant.

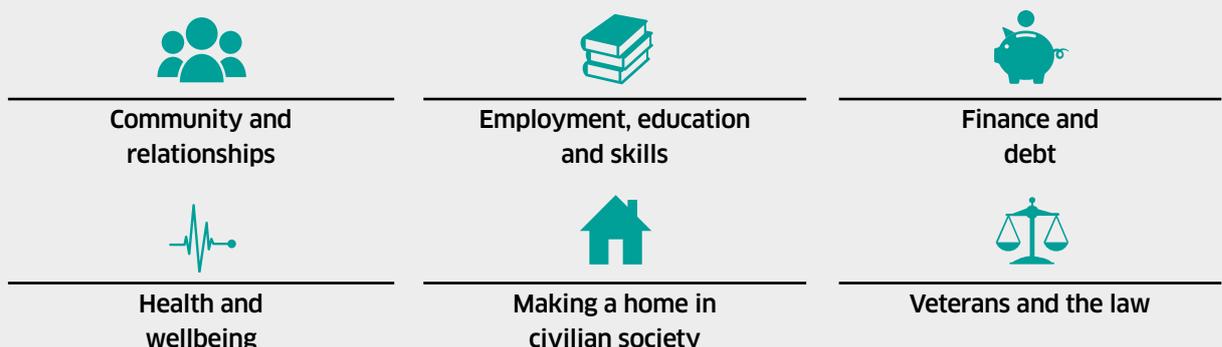
## CROSS-CUTTING FACTORS

That affect service provision for Veterans across all Key Themes



## KEY THEMES

That emerged as affecting Veterans' lives



# Summary of 10 Year Outcomes

## CROSS-CUTTING FACTORS

1	Collaboration between organisations	Improved collaboration between organisations offers Veterans coherent support.
2	Coordination of Veterans' services	The coordination of Veterans' provision delivers consistent aims and principles over time and throughout the UK, ensuring Veterans, their families and the bereaved are treated fairly compared to the local population.
3	Data on the Veteran community	Enhanced 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.
4	Public perception and understanding	The UK population value Veterans and understand their diverse experiences and culture.
5	Recognition of Veterans	Veterans feel that their service and experience is recognised and valued by society.

## KEY THEMES

1	Community and relationships	Veterans are able to build healthy relationships and integrate into their communities.
2	Employment, education and skills	Veterans enter appropriate employment and can continue to enhance their careers throughout their working lives.
3	Finance and debt	Veterans leave the Armed Forces with sufficient financial education, awareness and skills to be financially self-supporting and resilient.
4	Health and wellbeing	All Veterans enjoy a state of positive physical and mental health and wellbeing, enabling them to contribute to wider aspects of society.
5	Making a home in civilian society	Veterans have a secure place to live either through buying, renting or social housing.
6	Veterans and the law	Veterans leave the Armed Forces with the resilience and awareness to remain law-abiding civilians.

# Part 2

## What we know about Veterans in Scotland



# Findings in Scotland

The overall picture evidenced by our consultation in Scotland – and reinforced by the feedback we gathered from the Scottish responses to the wider UK public consultation – is a positive one.

Respondents and stakeholders acknowledged the improvements in support for veterans in Scotland in recent years, many of these improvement driven by the Scottish Government's response to recommendations made by the Scottish Veterans Commissioner in previous reports on [Transition](#), [Housing Information](#), [Employability Skills and Learning](#) and in the two Health and Wellbeing reports – [Are We Getting It Right?](#) and [A Distinctive Scottish Approach](#).

But there were areas where the feedback indicated that further work was needed. These are addressed in more detail in the pages that follow, set out against the cross-cutting factors and key themes of the Strategy. There were strong and consistent messages around the subjects of Transition, Data and the Armed Forces Covenant, and families of Service personnel were also highlighted as an important element.

## The Transition process

Respondents rightly emphasised the fundamental importance that the transition process plays in ensuring that those leaving the Services, along with their families, are able to adjust and settle into their new lives as civilians. While the transition process is reserved to the UK Government and managed by the Ministry of Defence (MOD), the majority of services that ex-Forces personnel encounter in Scotland are devolved, in particular around housing, health and employment.

We have therefore sought to work closely with the MOD to ensure that the feedback we gathered during our consultation, particularly that provided by the many veterans with whom we engaged during their Resettlement courses as they were preparing to leave the Forces, was communicated clearly to those responsible for the transition process.

The vast majority of veterans in Scotland left the Services many years ago and, listening to some of their feedback, it was clear that the transition process has come a long way from that which existed in the past. Many older veterans were critical of the minimalist approach that they described from their experience and their recollections highlighted the importance of recognising their needs as well as of those who have left the Services in more recent times. Although there have been improvements in the transition process, there were common views that it needed further attention to provide effective preparation for civilian life.

The Resettlement workshops that are currently delivered to Service leavers by the Careers Transition Partnership, MOD's provider of resettlement services, were praised during our engagements. However, there were common views that the transition process needed to begin earlier, to be expanded so that the focus was wider than employment options (for example with more emphasis on further education, securing suitable housing and managing money) and to have more consistent support by the Chain of Command of those preparing to leave the Armed Forces.

We are pleased that the MOD has now introduced its Holistic Transition Policy and we hope that this will be a significant step in improving the process for Service leavers.

## Data

A concern that was raised frequently by organisations who support veterans was about data. There was a common view that greater clarity on numbers, needs and locations of veterans would enable service providers, such as Health Boards and Local Authorities, to have better evidence with which to plan and monitor the services that they deliver for veterans. Similar concerns have been raised across the UK and improving the data that is available will be a priority for our work going forward, working together with MOD and the UK Government.

## Armed Forces Covenant

The Armed Forces Covenant is well known to much of the Armed Forces and veterans community in Scotland, with many of the respondents citing it in discussions. All of the Local Authorities in Scotland are signatories, as are a large number of public, private and 3rd sector organisations. The Scottish Government has consistently supported the aims of the Covenant. However, the consultation also highlighted that there is some misunderstanding when it comes to the interpretation of the principles of the Covenant, particularly around priority treatment at the point of receipt of local services. This was also a theme of the Veterans Commissioner's 2017 report Veterans' Health and Wellbeing in Scotland - Are We Getting it Right?.

## Support for families

Respondents were keen to emphasise that getting it right for our veterans couldn't just focus on the veteran as an individual. The role that families play in supporting our veterans is extremely significant, before, during and after the transition process, a message that was reinforced in the feedback across the UK. In short, the impact of Service life on families needed to be recognised, both during and after the time spent in the Armed Forces.



# Building the evidence base

It was widely acknowledged that significant improvements could be made to the availability and use of data regarding veterans in Scotland. Stakeholders highlighted during the consultation the challenges that the limited reliable data on the veterans community created for them.

Recent years have seen some important additions to the evidence base, namely the [Annual Population Survey](#), [The Scottish Veterans Health Study](#) and the incorporation of veterans 'flags' into wider data collection exercises. The work and reports by the Scottish Veterans Commissioner have also helped form an overall picture in priority areas.

## The veterans population

It was estimated that in 2016 there were approximately 2.5 million UK Armed Forces veterans residing in Great Britain. This is forecast to decrease year-on-year to 1.6 million by 2028<sup>1</sup>.

In 2017 there were an estimated 220,000 UK Armed Forces veterans in Scotland, amounting to 9% of veterans in Great Britain and 5% of all household residents in Scotland<sup>2</sup>.

It was also estimated that more than half (129,000; 58%) of the veterans residing in Scotland were aged 65 and over. This balance is likely to change significantly in the coming decade, resulting in a younger age profile in the veterans community and potentially different needs.

While there are positive indications in areas such as housing for veterans in Scotland – a 49% decrease in homelessness applications by veterans from 2008-09 to 2018-19<sup>3</sup>, compared to a 37% reduction in all applications over the same period – we know there remain persistent challenges that need to be addressed.

By ensuring that we seek to improve the evidence base about the veterans community in Scotland as part of our response to the Veterans Strategy, we have the opportunity to build on the positives and also address any issues where they present.

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1 Population Projections: UK Armed Forces Veterans residing in Great Britain, 2016 to 2028  
2 Annual Population Survey: UK Armed Forces Veterans residing in Great Britain, 2017  
3 Homelessness in Scotland: 2018 to 2019

# Part 3

## Taking the Strategy forward in Scotland



# Cross-Cutting Factors



Collaboration



Co-ordination



Data



Perception



Recognition

During our consultations on the Veterans Strategy, we have sought to identify where we can make improvements in each of the cross-cutting factors listed in the Strategy. The actions that are described in the pages that follow are intended to show where the consultation has provided good evidence against the cross-cutting factors and also where work can be taken forward to provide greater impact. Although not a specific cross-cutting factor or theme of the Strategy, the transition process was also highlighted as fundamental to a smooth and successful move into civilian life.

## Collaboration and Co-ordination

### During our consultation, stakeholders told us that

- There is already significant collaboration across the Armed Forces and veterans sector in Scotland.
- The value of Veterans Scotland, whose aim is to establish cooperation and coordination between veterans organisations in Scotland, to act as a focal point for all matters concerning the ex-Service community within Scotland and to represent these matters to Government at all levels, is widely recognised.
- Effective delivery of services to veterans requires the public, private and charitable sectors to work closely together. In most cases, the services they provide complement each other. While the public sector delivers statutory support, it draws on the expertise and delivery in the charitable and private sectors.
- The Unforgotten Forces consortium was widely regarded as an exemplar of collaboration in the veterans sector.
- Ensuring the right support for the veterans community requires effective co-ordination of activities within and across governments.
- Resources which aim to provide one-stop-shop online information for veterans are valuable. In Scotland stakeholders spoke of the contribution of both the UK wide Veterans Gateway and the Veterans Assist website, which is managed in Scotland by Veterans Scotland. However, awareness of both sites among veterans was low.
- There is a need to recognise the bereaved and the organisations that support them such as the War Widows' Association.
- There are common misunderstandings about the Armed Forces Covenant, particularly around "priority treatment".

**Going forward, the Scottish Government and its partners will therefore:**

- Work closely with other governments as the Veterans Strategy is developed and implemented elsewhere in the UK.
- Continue to support the wider sector to coordinate efforts and improve efficiency of delivery.
- Look for ways to support organisations to share information as appropriate.

**We will do this by:**

- Working with OSCR (the Scottish Charity Regulator) and Veterans Scotland to expand the guidance for new charities produced by OSCR, to also specifically signpost to Veterans Scotland. While decisions on such charities will remain with OSCR, Veterans Scotland will be able to advise on gaps or potential overlaps with other Scottish charities, ensuring that applicants have a clear understanding of existing charity coverage in the sector.
- Supporting the network of Armed Forces and Veterans Champions in Scotland, as a means of collaboration and sharing of best practice. This will include developing clear terms of reference for Local Authority Champions and engaging with NHS Champions.
- Arranging a further meeting with the Veterans Minister and Local Authority Champions in early 2020 to develop the partnership approach in taking forward our response to the Veterans Strategy.
- Improving sector wide information and guidance, including increased promotion of, and greater collaboration and information sharing between, Veterans Gateway and Veterans Assist.
- Supporting and participating in cross-government work to improve understanding and raise awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant, through engagement in the cross government Covenant Reference Group.
- Engaging with the dedicated new team of Armed Forces Champions to be established in 2020 across the Department of Work and Pensions. We will work with the staff based in Scotland, whose focus will be to help veterans and their families to find a job and receive the financial support they are entitled to, to ensure joined-up support across governments where appropriate.
- Continuing to recognise the work of the Unforgotten Forces consortium, to improve the lives of older veterans.
- Continuing to support the Scottish Veterans Fund. We have allocated over £1.4 million through the Scottish Veterans Fund since 2008, supporting over 150 projects across Scotland and benefiting the lives of hundreds of veterans and their families. We are again partnering with Standard Life Aberdeen in 2020/21. The Scottish Government has committed to maintain our contribution to the fund until 2022/23.
- Build on the excellent relationships developed with the three Services in Scotland and the Families Federations.

## Data

### You told us that:

- Data is important in identifying and understanding the needs and geographical distribution of the veterans community.
- Building a robust evidence base would contribute to more informed and effective policy making and planning to support service delivery, in addition to enabling high quality evaluation.
- Some reliable data already exists across government, but it can be fragmented, making analysis and assessment of needs difficult.
- Often veterans may not self-declare at the point of accessing services, which makes recording difficult.
- Data protection legislation has seen veterans being required to repeat the same information to different support agencies and organisations, instead of that information being shared across the relevant bodies.

### Going forward, the Scottish Government and its partners will therefore:

- Look to improve nationally available data on the veterans community in the short and long term and share this with the sector more broadly.
- Support the development of better local data, where this may be appropriate.
- Encourage veterans to declare themselves as having a Service background at the point of accessing services, and encourage service providers to ask appropriate questions that might highlight previous military service.

### We will do this by:

- Taking forward work for collection of data on the ex-Service community through the 2021 census. The Scottish Government has proposed that the census should include a question that will be designed specifically to identify those who have previously served, providing accurate numbers of veterans and their locations in Scotland. The final census questions are planned to be agreed through the Scottish Parliament by summer 2020 and the proposal to include a veterans question has been welcomed widely by our stakeholders.
- Recognising that the analysis of the census will take some time to filter through, beginning a programme of work that will seek to collate and assess research that has been published on the veterans community in Scotland, to identify gaps in our knowledge. The Scottish Government is also actively considering where existing data collections can be better used to understand the profile and needs of the veterans community.
- Considering viable and robust options for carrying out further research to begin to address evidence gaps in line with our priority research questions. Throughout this process we will engage with the academic and wider expert research community.
- Working across the Scottish and UK Governments to encourage veterans to self-declare when presenting to a service provider or agency.
- With the UK Government, exploring data-sharing opportunities to exploit current data and identify gaps.

## Perception and Recognition

### **During our consultation, stakeholders told us that:**

- Public understanding of the Armed Forces determines the climate into which individuals return when they leave the Services and establish a civilian life.
- Public perceptions of veterans do not always reflect the reality.
- Many people believe that while military service develops positive attributes, such as self-discipline, loyalty, and self-reliance, there are also incorrect perceptions that veterans are inherently likely to be institutionalised, psychologically impaired and less able to build relationships outside the Armed Forces.
- These perceptions can make it difficult for veterans when seeking employment or adjusting back to civilian life.
- Improved public understanding of veterans' experience, especially dispelling popular myths, would support improvements across all six key themes of the Veterans Strategy.

### **Going forward, the Scottish Government and its partners will therefore:**

- Look to further promote the positive narrative that veterans and the Armed Forces community are assets to communities and employers.
- Work with MOD, and exemplar veterans employers, for example Barclays, Standard Life Aberdeen and Scotland's Bravest Manufacturing Company, to support the positive narrative with stronger evidence and examples of those that have made a successful transition.

### **We will do this by:**

- Engaging regularly with the Heads of the Armed Forces in Scotland to support the positive narrative that reinforces the vital work that the Armed Forces do in keeping our country safe and secure and the importance of their presence in Scotland.
- Working with employers in Scotland to highlight positive case studies to help promote veterans as assets to employers, communities and our wider society.
- Improving training and resources for service providers engaging with the Armed Forces and veterans community, so that the modern veteran is better understood by those delivering services, for example by promoting the Forces Connect products that have been developed for Local Authorities.
- Supporting the introduction of MOD's Veterans ID (Recognition) Card scheme.

## Transition

### **During our consultation, stakeholders told us that:**

- In previous years, there was little priority given to preparing Service leavers for civilian life, adding to the challenges faced by many older veterans.
- The transition process has come a long way from that which existed in the past.
- Transition needs to start earlier, and go beyond employment into wider support, including education options, finding suitable housing and managing money.

- The transition process needs more consistent support for Service leavers by their Chain of Command.
- The Scottish Government and its partners should work closely with MOD to help improve the transition process.
- Partners in Scotland, including the Careers Transition Partnership and Skills Development Scotland, are working well together to support transition.
- Families also play a key role in a successful transition to civilian life.

**Going forward, the Scottish Government and its partners will therefore:**

- Continue to engage with MOD to develop and support the transition process for those moving to Scotland.
- Improve awareness about the services and support that are on offer in Scotland.
- Ensure that families are recognised and supported as part of this process.

**We will do this by:**

- Contributing to MOD's plans to take forward its new Holistic Transition Policy. The new policy is intended to support Service personnel and their families to better prepare for life after the military on a through-career basis by recognising that transition is far wider than employment and that a wide range of life changing issues can affect both the Service person and their immediate family as they leave the Armed Forces. Through the policy, the single Services will identify potential vulnerable Service leavers and facilitate a referral to the new Defence Transition Services.
- Engaging closely with the Defence Transition Services (DTS), which has been created as part of the Holistic Transition Policy, to ensure that Service leavers and their immediate families needing additional support are provided with the relevant help and guidance both during their transition and beyond.
- Working with the DTS team based in Scotland to ensure that they are clear on the differences that apply to devolved services. We will support the local DTS team to understand and access the sources of support in the third and statutory sectors that may be of value to DTS clients, and the networks they need to be part of to become an established part of transition support in Scotland.
- Responding to the Veterans Commissioner's papers which focus on Transition in Scotland. The first of these, a scene setting paper, was published in December 2019.

# Key Themes





# Community and relationships

**Strategy outcome:** Veterans are able to build healthy relationships and integrate into their communities.

Leaving the Armed Forces, and their associated camaraderie and sense of purpose, can create challenges establishing new relationships within civilian communities both for Service leavers and their families. This experience will be different for each veteran and family. Some will already have links within communities and others may be starting from scratch. That it is a personal issue and varies greatly between individuals presents a challenge in how to sufficiently support ex-Service personnel while respecting their private lives.

**During our consultation, stakeholders told us that:**

- Informal veterans gatherings, such as breakfast clubs, many of which were broadened to include families and the general public, were increasingly popular and were favoured by many over the more traditional and formal veterans' events.
- Activities to help veterans who may experience loneliness or social isolation should be a priority and supported wherever possible.
- The older generation of veterans can be at increased risk of greater social isolation and loneliness.
- Opportunities to promote wider relationships beyond the immediate Armed Forces and veterans community should be encouraged.
- More could be done to promote recognition of veterans as assets to communities, instead of a disproportionate focus on those needing additional support.
- Families have a crucial role to play in establishing relationships within communities and beyond.

**Going forward, the Scottish Government and its partners will therefore:**

- Continue to emphasise the narrative that veterans are assets to communities.
- Work with MOD and other partners in Scotland to make the transition process as smooth as possible.
- Look for opportunities within our wider policies to help veterans and their families build local networks.
- Continue to support families settling in Scotland to understand the services and support available to them.

### We will do this by:

- Integrating veterans within our wider work on social isolation.
- Expanding the criteria for the Scottish Veterans Fund, to emphasise inclusion and social integration, so that future local projects can be supported.
- Working with Legion Scotland and other stakeholders to further promote breakfast clubs as positive ways for veterans and their families to integrate.
- Providing a programme of development for breakfast club volunteers across Scotland to receive formal training on Befriending and Mental Health First Aid.
- Responding to the Veterans Commissioner's focus on transition as a key future theme of his work, with an emphasis on how communities in Scotland can best work together to support veterans.
- Promoting our Welcome to Scotland booklet, as a guide to families settling in Scotland. We will ensure that this resource is updated and promoted widely to Service families, working with the Families Federations and other stakeholders.





# Employment, education and skills

**Strategy outcome:** Veterans enter appropriate employment and can continue to enhance their careers throughout their working lives.

Military service fosters leadership, organisational skills, resilience and specialist skills such as medical or technical expertise. Veterans - and their families - are great assets for all employment sectors and a growing number of employers are actively targeting veterans to fill their skills gaps. Continued development beyond military service can also include a number of education options, both for the Service leavers and their families. It is also important to recognise that, during their school education, children of Service personnel and veterans sometimes need additional support to overcome the challenges arising from military life.

**During our consultation, stakeholders told us that:**

- Employers do not always understand the significant skillsets and personal attributes that veterans can bring to the workplace. Where they do however, employers are benefiting.
- More could be done to help prepare Service leavers for life after their military service, including options around employment, further education, etc.
- The specific skills and qualifications gained during Service are not easily translated into civilian equivalents, making it difficult for Service leavers and for employers to fully recognise what the individual has to offer.
- Spouses and partners can need additional support too, as the mobility which goes with Service life can create difficulties in sustaining stable employment.
- More data and other evidence would help those supporting Service children's education better target their support.

**Going forward, the Scottish Government and its partners will therefore:**

- Introduce guidance to increase wider understanding of qualifications gained in military service and continue to support the process of translating military qualifications into those civilian employers recognise.
- Seek to provide clearer pathways for those transitioning out of the Services into employment in Scotland.
- Encourage further education and training as realistic and accessible options for those leaving the Services.
- Promote further recognition of skills and experience gained in the Services to employers and the wider community.
- Develop support for Armed Forces spouses and partners who seek employment or training in Scotland.
- Continue to work with stakeholders, to promote and support the education needs of Service children in schools.

## We will do this by:

### Employability Support

- Ensuring that veterans and their families are able to access and benefit from a range of Scottish Government supported employability initiatives, including the [No-one Left Behind Employability Funding Stream](#); [Community Jobs Scotland](#); [Employability Fund](#); and [Fair Start Scotland](#).
- Using the Scottish Government's Veterans Employability Strategic Group to examine how to improve employment opportunities and remove potential barriers for the Armed Forces and veterans community, including their families.
- Launching the [Support for Veterans page on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework \(SCQF\) website](#) and Infantry Qualifications leaflet created through the Military Qualifications Mapping project led by the SCQF Partnership, working with a range of partners. Through the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), we have provided a further £20,000 funding for 2019-2020, supplementing the £20,000 provided in 2018-2019 to extend the work looking at how to map military qualifications against those which are recognised by employers in Scotland. We will continue to fund this valuable work through to 2023. Further outputs will include more guidance on qualifications for different roles, skills profiling and work to ensure more of these qualifications are recognised on the SCQF.
- Continuing to support the pilot project, where, through partnership between Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and the Careers Transition Partnership, some Service leavers will be offered careers guidance during their Resettlement training.
- Continuing to promote the SDS website [My World of Work](#), which has a dedicated landing page for Service leavers and veterans, and SDS's engagement with the veterans community, for example during the annual Scottish Apprenticeship Week events.

### Higher and Further Education

- Working with the SFC and key stakeholders, through the SFC-led Veterans Group, to develop a Network of Champions for Further and Higher Education. The Network will provide a single point of contact in each of Scotland's colleges and universities for veterans, ex-Armed Forces and their families.
- Promoting SFC's dedicated [web page](#) outlining sources of information, advice and guidance for veterans, Service leavers and their families.
- Working with stakeholders to explore the barriers to Further and Higher Education for children of Service families. This includes supporting the establishment of a Service Children's Progression Alliance Scottish Hub, led by the Royal Caledonian Education Trust (RCET) and hosted by Heriot-Watt University. The Hub will champion the progression of children and young people from military families into further and higher education.
- Supporting SFC's work to improve access through the use of data analysis, including data in the college sector SFC began collecting in academic year 2017-18 about veterans. SFC have also arranged with Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) for the inclusion of a field in the 2021-2022 Student Return to identify Service leavers in the university sector. Once the data is

gathered and returned in the wider HESA record, SFC will be able to consider veterans' representation, success rates, and how many are supported by articulation and other routes such as the Scottish Widening Access Programme (SWAP).

### Support for families

- Supporting the development of a Co-working Hub in Helensburgh to support families based in Faslane. This follows the model of the Leuchars Co-working Hub, which was the first hub in the Military Co-working Network, and we will consider if the model could be further extended to other areas.
- Contributing to the [Forces Families Jobs](#) website, providing links to adverts on the [Work For Scotland](#) website.
- Expanding the criteria for the Workplace Equality Fund, to incorporate the Armed Forces community, including veterans and spouses.
- Supporting the General Teaching Council for Scotland's (GTCS) work with the Families Federations to develop a joint publication detailing the requirements for teaching in Scotland.

### Specific pathways

- Working with the Careers Transition Partnership to provide work placements in Scottish Government for individuals transitioning from the Armed Forces.
- Continuing to develop the [NHS Careers](#) website, which provides information for people looking into a career in NHS. We are exploring ways that we can provide dedicated information and resources for veterans. For example, the website features "Career Stories" and we will look to highlight case studies from NHS employees who served in the Armed Forces.
- Supporting Police Scotland's aim to strengthen its partnership working in order to focus recruitment of veterans into Police Scotland as police officers, staff members and Special Constables.
- Engaging with the veterans community, including at jobs fairs aimed at the Service leaver community, to understand the best way to encourage and support them to apply for Scottish Government jobs.
- Ensure that Scotland's Apprenticeship suite of offerings will continue to be promoted to Early Service Leavers, veterans and their families.
- Continuing to support the relationships between GTCS and the Armed Forces to overcome barriers that may be experienced by Service personnel interested in pursuing a teaching career in Scotland. The GTCS have introduced Provisional Conditional Registration for teachers who have appropriate previous experience.
- Supporting the University of Strathclyde to develop an articulation route that allows Service leavers with HND qualifications to enter initial teacher education programmes.
- Working with SDS to provide £60,000 to a consortium led by SaluteMyJob to deliver a pilot project to upskill/reskill veterans and spouses into Cyber Security jobs, between January and April 2020.

### Service Children's Education

- Working with Local Authorities, schools and other stakeholders to deliver another event for practitioners and MOD personnel to share good practice around supporting Armed Forces children, and their families, in schools.
- Sharing practitioner resources and case studies of supporting Armed Forces children, on Education Scotland's National Improvement Hub.
- In line with Education Scotland's self-evaluation framework, 'How Good is Our School', encouraging schools and Local Authorities to use data to help deliver improvements for Armed Forces children and young people.
- Seeking, with support from the MOD's Directorate Children and Young People, opportunities to build on the research base in Scotland on Armed Forces children and families' school education experiences.



# Finance and debt

**Strategy outcome:** Veterans leave the Armed Forces with sufficient financial education, awareness and skills to be financially self-supporting and resilient.

Finance is regarded by many as being in the top three areas of need for veterans, though frequently in combination with another issue. While the Armed Forces community can encounter many of the same financial issues as the general population, Service life, often starting in very early adulthood, can mean that some Service leavers are less familiar with managing their personal financial outgoings than their civilian peers who have had years of experience of doing so. It is therefore vital that personnel are given financial awareness while they are in Service and suitable advice, guidance and support as they transition back into civilian life.

**During our consultation, stakeholders told us that:**

- There is insufficient focus on managing money during the transition process for Service leavers.
- Awareness about the support and benefits available in Scotland could be improved, especially with the changing landscape of devolved benefits.
- There are resources available to support those in financial difficulty, but they are not always readily accessible or easily understood.

**Going forward, the Scottish Government and its partners will therefore:**

- Work with MOD to ensure that the financial landscape in Scotland is clearly understood and that sufficient information is made available to Service leavers during their transition.
- Ensure that the welfare and benefits available to veterans in Scotland are well understood by the veterans community.
- Ensure that there is no disadvantage in accessing this support as a result of military service.
- Ensure that there are support tools available for those who are experiencing financial difficulty and that these are made easily accessible and tailored where appropriate.

### **We will do this by:**

- Providing clear and transparent advice on entitlement to devolved benefits. Where benefits remain reserved, we will signpost or refer individuals to organisations that can provide specialist advice. These referral pathways and guidance will be in place prior to Disability Assistance for Working People going live in early 2021.
- Recognising that some veterans will access benefits delivered by our agency, Social Security Scotland, and that there will continue to be significant overlaps between these benefits and veteran specific benefits, such as between Armed Forces Independence Payment and Disability Assistance for Working Age People. We will provide guidance to make clear where there are overlaps between devolved benefits and those that remain reserved to the UK Government, including veteran benefits.
- Embedding specialist support available where necessary for the smaller number of people who need it. The Scottish Government is working closely with a range of expert stakeholders, including the British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association (BLESMA), to help us with this specialised work.
- Working with veterans organisations to help promote and maximise take-up of benefits.
- Promoting, with our partners, the Moneyforce website, a programme led by the Royal British Legion that aims to improve the financial capability of the UK Armed Forces by providing money guidance to all those serving in the military and their families.
- Working with the Money Advice Trust, who, in designing their new guide "How to Deal with Debt" which is due for launch in 2020, will engage with the Armed Services Advice Project (ASAP), part of Citizens Advice Scotland, to ensure that the specific needs of the veterans' community are addressed as appropriate in the guide.
- Ensuring that veterans stakeholders, including ASAP, are formally consulted as part of the Money and Pensions Service (MaPS) Scottish Action Plan for Financial Wellbeing to be launched in 2020.

**Strategy outcome:** All veterans enjoy a state of positive physical and mental health and wellbeing, enabling them to contribute to wider aspects of society.

We are committed to ensuring all Armed Forces personnel and veterans who serve and live in Scotland are able to access the best possible care and support, including safe, effective and person-centred healthcare.

The Scottish Veterans Commissioner examined healthcare provision for veterans in depth in his 2018 report *Veterans' health and wellbeing: a distinctive Scottish Approach*. The report contained 18 recommendations covering a wide range of issues including physical health, mental health, governance and leadership.

The Scottish Government accepted all the recommendations contained in the report and is committed to taking forward the approaches outlined, which were developed after an extensive period of consultation across the veterans community. Throughout this work, our continuing aim is to ensure the long-term clinical needs of Service personnel and veterans are better understood and supported within the NHS.

**During our consultation, stakeholders told us that:**

- In general, most veterans in Scotland are in good health and there are many excellent organisations in Scotland offering additional support for those who need it.
- There is a need, particularly among health providers, to understand better the number, location and needs of our veterans with improved evidence and data.
- Some veterans still do not want to declare their service, for example, to their GP.
- Mental health support is still a priority, with a need for bespoke support in some cases.
- Signposting between organisations could be improved, but data protection can be a barrier.

**Going forward, the Scottish Government and its partners will therefore:**

- Continue to work to ensure that all veterans and Armed Forces families do not experience disadvantage when accessing health services in Scotland.
- Continue to focus on mental health as a priority area.
- Encourage veterans to declare as ex-Service when accessing support.
- Implement the recommendations of the Veterans Commissioner's report in full to create the conditions for the Distinctive Scottish Approach to healthcare which the report calls for.

## We will do this by:

### Collaborative working

- Continuing to use the Armed Forces Personnel & Veterans Health Joint Group (the Joint Group) to bring together NHS Champions, Local Authority Champions, representatives of the serving community, veterans organisations, Scottish Government officials and other stakeholders such as the Service Families Federations. The Joint Group has set a number of priorities for the Implementation Group to take forward this year, based on recommendations of the Veterans Commissioner's report. These include: wheelchairs, defining priority treatment, hearing aids and the Scottish Veterans Healthcare Network. The group will also ensure that we create the conditions for achieving the 'Distinctive Scottish Approach to Veterans Health' as described by the Veterans Commissioner.
- Improving collaboration and awareness through continuing to strengthen support for the NHS Champions network. We will continue to host networking events to provide Champions with information and development on areas of mutual interest, encouraging the sharing of good practice and providing the opportunity to make and build connections.
- Continuing to work with UK Government counterparts by actively participating in cross-border networks through the MOD/Department of Health Partnership Board and a number of sub-groups.

### Better data

- Improving how we collect, hold and use data on veterans' health. We are engaging with the University of Edinburgh's Data Driven Innovation Project, and NHS Information Services Division are working with MOD to gather information on veterans' health. This will enable us to draw up key messages, identify areas of inequality and set metrics to address these.
- The new Drug and Alcohol Information System (DAISy) will gather key demographic and outcome data on people who engage in drug and alcohol treatment services and a field identifier for veterans has been included. This will provide useful data on the nature and scale of drug misuse among veterans across Scotland.

### Access to health services

- Developing the National Veterans Care Network, which was announced in December 2019. The Network will facilitate the sharing of good practice and expertise across Scotland, as well as adding to the resilience of existing services. A key objective and early priority for the Network will be the development of a Veterans' Mental Health Action Plan, ensuring it complements Scotland's 10 year Mental Health Strategy and veterans have parity of care, no matter where they are located in Scotland.
- Working with hospital and GP surgeries in Scotland to promote the accredited Veteran Aware status for hospitals and GP surgeries in Scotland, awarded to NHS providers who deliver healthcare which is particularly responsive to the needs of veterans. The Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh already has this accreditation so we intend to build on this, delivering hospital accreditation across Scotland before moving to surgery level accreditation.
- Improving accessibility to online information for veterans on NHS Inform through working with NHS24. NHS24 are leading a project to allow the

development of a standardised website for each GP practice across Scotland, which will encourage dissemination of health information, as well as promote self-management and signpost to available local services. “Early Adopter” pilot areas are NHS Highland, Western Isles, Lanarkshire, Forth Valley and Lothian.

- Working with Scottish War Blinded, Veterans Scotland and other relevant sight loss and veterans charities, to update the guidance for practitioners responsible for certifying people as sight impaired or severely sight impaired, to ask if the patient has ever served in the Armed Forces; if so, to signpost the veteran to the free services and support provided by Scottish War Blinded. The patient information leaflet that accompanies the Certificate of Vision Impairment (CVI) Scotland form, also includes contact details for Scottish War Blinded.

### Specialist support

- In partnership with NHS Scotland and Combat Stress, continuing to provide funding of £1.4m per year until 2021 for the provision of a range of specialist and community based services for Veterans resident in Scotland.
- With six local health boards the Scottish Government has provided joint funding for the Veterans First Point Network which offers a one-stop-shop for Veterans no matter their need. Between 2017-2020 the Scottish Government has provided a total of £2.4 million to support the Veterans First Point services network. Discussions around funding after 2019-2020 are ongoing.
- Supporting the Step Into Health programme which promotes and encourage members of the Armed Forces on leaving service to join the NHS. Though primarily an employability initiative, Step into Health will tackle health inequalities by increasing the number of NHS staff who are veterans themselves, acknowledging their forces skill-set as an asset and enabling them to have a shared vocabulary and experience with veteran patients, resulting in improved health outcomes for veterans.





# Making a home in civilian society

**Strategy outcome:** Veterans have a secure place to live either through buying, renting or social housing.

For many veterans, leaving the Armed Forces will be the first time they find a home for themselves. Despite this, veterans as whole are as likely as the general population to own their own home after accounting for age and sex<sup>4</sup>, and there is no evidence to suggest veterans are overrepresented amongst homeless applicants<sup>5</sup>. Wherever they wish to settle in civilian life, it is important that Service leavers are clear on the local options and how to find further guidance or support that they might need.

**During our consultation, stakeholders told us that:**

- The different policies and practices across public, private and 3rd sector housing providers were not always easily understood.
- More could be done to promote best practice across different housing providers.
- Homelessness among veterans remains a concern although many stakeholders believe that the public perception of the scale of the problem is disproportionate.
- There are elements of legislation, particularly around private rented tenancies, that made it more difficult for some charities to provide support for veterans.

**Going forward, the Scottish Government and its partners will therefore:**

- Improve the understanding of housing support and provision available.
- Aim to identify, share and promote best practice wherever possible.
- Ensure that veterans have good awareness and access to our core housing support programmes.
- Continue to address the issue of homelessness experienced by veterans.
- Work with stakeholders to ensure that housing legislation supports the wider veterans population.

**We will do this by:**

- Continuing to engage with veterans organisations on our Housing to 2040 vision and route map. This follows our commitment to plan together with stakeholders for how our homes and communities should look and feel in 2040 and the options and choices to get there.
- Amending legislation so that, from 1 July 2019, where the landlord is a charity providing accommodation to veterans, a private residential tenancy agreement will not apply. This will ensure that veterans specific accommodation in the private rented sector can continue to be used, ensuring that a veteran may be offered temporary accommodation for a period of rehabilitation and training, or permanent accommodation in line with the organisation's charitable purpose and the needs of the veterans.

<sup>4</sup> Annual Population Survey: UK Armed Forces Veterans residing in Great Britain, 2017

<sup>5</sup> Homelessness in Scotland: 2018 to 2019

- Considering how we can improve our data, for example through encouraging social landlords to add a veterans question to housing applications forms, and considering the feasibility of adding a question to the Scottish Household Survey and any new rough sleeping data collections that identify veterans.
- Working with the Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers, the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, Housing Options Scotland and other key housing stakeholders to include a specific question on veterans on housing application forms to help improve the data collected and ensure that veterans applying for social housing are identified and provided with appropriate housing options advice. We will also work with these partners and veterans' organisations such as Veterans Housing Scotland, where appropriate, to identify and promote good practice in veterans housing with social landlords.

### Guidance

- Improving guidance available. For example, in September 2019 we published refreshed [Local Housing Strategy guidance](#) which encourages Local Authorities to fully consider the housing requirements of the Armed Forces community. The guidance has also been strengthened to encourage appropriate engagement with relevant organisations, such as Veterans Scotland, to better understand the needs of the Armed Forces community when developing Local Housing Strategies. The Scottish Government expects all Local Authorities to review and report annually on progress with delivery of Local Housing Strategy outcomes.
- Promoting the publication recently produced by Poppyscotland and its partners, [Housing in Scotland – A Best Practice Guide](#), which provides guidance for social housing providers on how they can best support the Armed Forces and veterans community.
- Improving the advice for social landlords on allocations for those leaving the Armed Forces through the Social Housing Allocations Guidance. We published [Social Housing Allocations in Scotland – A Practice Guide](#) in February 2019, which provides clarity for social landlords about giving priority to Service leavers and on ensuring that ex-Service personnel are not at a disadvantage when applying for social housing due to time spent outwith an area. The guidance also reinforces the need for social landlords to have clear information and housing options in place for all applicants, including veterans.

### Provision

- Continuing to provide funding through our affordable housing supply programme to deliver homes specifically for veterans, where Local Authorities identify this as a strategic investment priority. Since 2012, more than £4.5 million has been made available through this programme to deliver over 100 homes specifically for veterans.
- Continuing to make the Open Market Shared Equity scheme available to veterans who have left the Armed Forces within the past two years so that they can buy a home that is for sale on the open market with assistance from the Scottish Government where they cannot afford the total cost. These households have priority access to the scheme, which means that they do not need to be first-time buyers to benefit from it.

- Continuing to support Housing Options Scotland to provide its Military Matters project. Since it began in 2012 the project has helped over 600 people, with 75 new referrals in 2018-19.
- Continuing to improve action on preventing homelessness through the Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan and Veterans Pathway. As part of the work as a follow up to the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group's final recommendations we are committed to developing a pathway in 2020 to prevent homelessness for veterans. We recognise that veterans are at high risk of homelessness and will work with relevant stakeholders, including MOD, Local Authorities and third sector partners to develop the pathway.





# Veterans and the law

**Strategy outcome:** Veterans leave the Armed Forces with the resilience and awareness to remain law-abiding civilians.

Although most veterans remain law-abiding citizens, a small minority enter into the criminal justice system. Members of this group are often among the most vulnerable veterans, with complex needs, meaning that there are often particular considerations to address when deciding on the most suitable support.

The Scottish Government is committed to ensuring that ex-Service personnel are properly supported when in custody or involved with the criminal justice system. Strong working relationships are in place with the third sector to make referrals, enabling holistic support for their needs.

**During our consultation, stakeholders told us that:**

- Whatever their reasons for falling into the criminal justice system, veterans needed support to help their rehabilitation.
- Early Service leavers, including those administratively discharged, often needed additional support.
- More could be done to identify vulnerable personnel, to ensure that appropriate agencies were aware of their needs as the individuals left Service.

**Going forward, the Scottish Government and its partners will therefore:**

- Continue to work with our partners in the justice system to support veterans who need it.
- Look to improve the data and evidence we hold about the experiences of veterans within the justice system.
- Consider the specific needs of veterans within our wider policies on rehabilitation.

**We will do this by:**

- Working with MOD and the Defence Transition Services to ensure that those who are most vulnerable receive support and advice early on, to prevent negative outcomes.
- Engaging with the network of Veterans In Custody Support Officers (VICSOs) to review the support for ex-Service personnel within Scotland's prison estate.
- With the VICSOs, considering what specific research might provide a better understanding of the ex-Service prison population in Scotland.
- Supporting the project being piloted by the Governor at HMP Glenochil, to mirror a "breakfast club" approach" to encourage ex-Service prisoners to socialise in the prison community.
- Supporting SACRO's work to create safer and more cohesive communities across Scotland, by helping ensure that their support for veterans is understood by the relevant agencies.
- Supporting Police Scotland's activities to support the Armed Forces and veterans community, including its review and refresh of the Veterans Champion role across local policing divisions and the introduction of Veterans Champions within its custody and criminal justice environment.

# Annex A

## How We Consulted

In parallel with the introduction of the Veterans Strategy in November 2018, the United Kingdom Government launched a formal public consultation across the UK, which ran until 21 February 2019.

The consultation paper sought broad public views on focused questions, to build on the research and engagement conducted to produce the Strategy, against a backdrop of what is already delivered.

In Scotland, where the Scottish Government has a close working relationship with stakeholders across the Armed Forces and veterans community, we supplemented the UK public consultation with a series of face to face engagements with veterans stakeholders in Scotland across the public, private and 3rd sectors, including groups of veterans themselves.

This recognised that some of the detailed questions in the public consultation had already been addressed by the Scottish Veterans Commissioner, and also enabled us to discuss the issues in detail with our key veterans stakeholders in Scotland, including Veterans Scotland, Poppyscotland and Legion Scotland, all of whom have been very helpful in providing their views on the Strategy and in pointing us to other stakeholders they considered of value to the consultation.

At the closing date of 21 Feb, UK public consultation had resulted in over 2000 responses, around 10% of these from respondents in Scotland.

Our face to face consultation engagements in Scotland continued until April 2019, by when we had discussed the Strategy with over 60 organisations and groups across the length and breadth of Scotland, covering more than 450 individuals. These included charities large and small, employers, Local Authorities, Health Boards, Armed Forces and Veterans Champions and organisations involved with housing, skills and employment. Engagement with groups of veterans were both formal and informal, ranging from sessions at Royal British Legion meetings and Regimental Association gatherings to discussions at veterans breakfast clubs and drop-ins.

Reinforcing the cross-government ownership of the Veterans Strategy, the MOD helpfully agreed to the Scottish Government's participation in several of its Resettlement Workshops across Scotland, run on MOD's behalf by the Career Transition Partnership. This enabled us to canvass views of Service Leavers going through the transition process and provided a valuable insight on their experiences.

A list of some of the main stakeholders with whom we engaged during the consultation process is below. It is not exhaustive and we are grateful to those listed as well as all others who have contributed their views to the process.

ADES – Association of Directors of Education in Scotland	Lothians Armed Forces and Veterans Project Team	Scottish War Blinded
Armed Services Advice Project	Lowland RFCA	SCQA – Scottish Credit and Qualifications Agency
Army Families Federation (representing 3 Service Federations)	Ministry of Defence	Skills Development Scotland
BLESMA	Money Advice Trust	SMJC – Salute My Job Consulting
Borders Firm Base	Money and Pensions Service	Social Security Agency Scotland
British Telecom	Nairn Council Veterans Group	SSAFA
Careers Transition Partnership	Napier University	Standard Life
Dumfries and Galloway Form Base	Poppyscotland	SVHRG – Scottish Veterans Health Research Group
Edinburgh University	RAF Lossiemouth Community Development Officer	Transport Scotland
Employ-Able Service	RASC and RCT Association	Unforgotten Forces Consortium
FiMT – Forces in Mind Trust	7 Rifles Veterans and Reserves Group	V1P – Veterans First Point Network
Firm Base Steering Group	Royal Caledonian Education Trust	Veterans Breakfast Clubs (various, throughout Scotland)
Glasgow Caledonian University	SACRO	Veterans Champion NHS Lothian
Glasgow’s Helping Heroes	Scottish Borders Housing Association	Veterans Champion, N Lanarkshire Council
Governor, staff and prisoners, HMP Glenochil	Scottish Charities Regulator	Veterans Housing Scotland
Head of Communities and Housing, Aberdeen Council	Scottish Government Cross Party Group on Armed Forces and Veterans	Veterans In Custody Support Officer Group
Housing Options Scotland	Scottish Government Tenants Regional Network	Veterans Scotland (incl Housing Group and Health Group)
Legion Scotland	Scottish Veterans Commissioner	Wounded, Injured and Sick Veterans Employment Group
Local Authorities and Housing Associations Regional Network	Scottish Veterans Residences	



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