

Anti-bullying helpline now live

Set up by the Ministry of Defence and employee support organisation Health Assured, the helpline is staffed 24/7 by trained bullying, harassment and discrimination advisers and qualified counsellors. The advisers, who are independent from the chain of command, can provide emotional support, information and guidance to callers.

Individuals will be able to anonymously report incidents to independent advisers and seek help on how to take issues forward, including through local support networks or the service complaints system, where necessary.

The service will provide personnel with a safe space to discuss their experiences and work towards a resolution, with anonymity if required. Where there are reported incidents of unacceptable behaviours, serious action will be taken.

Secretary of State for Defence Ben Wallace said:

Defence works best as one team, working together to achieve the same aims, and treating those around us with dignity and respect.

There is no place for bullying, harassment or discrimination in any corner of defence, and this helpline is a critical step towards stamping out unacceptable behaviour.

Establishing the helpline was one of the key recommendations within Air Chief Marshal Wigston's review into unacceptable behaviour across defence that was published last year.

Since the publication of the Wigston Review, a dedicated team has been established to oversee progress against the recommendations with an initial focus on updating policies and infrastructure for serving personnel to identify and report unacceptable behaviour at an earlier stage.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Johnny Mercer said:

Unacceptable behaviour has no place in defence and will not be tolerated. The new helpline offers even more support for personnel across defence. The helpline is a safe space to discuss incidents and receive advice in order to take steps in challenging unacceptable behaviour. Trained advisers and counsellors from outside defence will ensure concerns are dealt with quickly and appropriately.

The number is 0800 783 0334 and is free to call.