

Armed Forces charities to receive £5 million boost

The Prime Minister has announced today that Armed Forces charities will receive £5 million in additional funding to support those who have served, including those who may be struggling following recent events in Afghanistan.

The Prime Minister made the announcement at a statement today in the House of Commons on the situation in Afghanistan.

The additional funding will be allocated to a range of projects that will increase capacity in mental health charities, improve veterans' understanding of the support available and deliver enhanced social support. The Office for Veterans' Affairs will allocate the funding over the coming months.

Funding will also enable veterans to continue helping the people of Afghanistan who have settled in the UK under the ARAP scheme, by providing social support, integration into local communities and help navigating life in the UK.

The Office for Veterans' Affairs will commission charity provision of targeted and relevant support for Afghan refugees with military links and provide surge capacity to support transition to life in the UK.

The £5 million boost will also help increase the user friendliness and accessibility of services, better signposting veterans to the range of state and charitable services available to them. This will help to make mental health services even more accessible to the Afghanistan veteran cohort.

Speaking in the House of Commons, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

In addition to the extra £3 million we have invested in mental health support through NHS England's Op Courage, we are providing another £5 million to assist the military charities who do such magnificent work, with the aim of ensuring that no veteran's request for help will go unanswered.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Leo Docherty said:

This targeted increase in funding to charities, both large and small, will allow those who served to receive a gold standard of care across the board.

We are forever grateful to the serving personnel and veterans who aided the people of Afghanistan, and will ensure they get the support they need and deserve in the most accessible methods possible.

This follows a Mental Health Summit two weeks ago, where the Secretary of State for Defence, Minister for Defence People and Veterans and Secretary of State for Health discussed the current mental health and wellbeing provision for service leavers across the UK with NHS, charity and academic experts.

If you are struggling as a result of the recent events in Afghanistan, there is support available across the United Kingdom for veterans and those affected:

- in England, veterans and their families in England 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 Veteran 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
- anyone in the UK or overseas can also contact the Veterans' Gateway helpline on 0808 802 1212, or visit the website for advice and signposting to further support, including for families and the bereaved