

Funding to support armed forces charities doing vital work during pandemic

- £6-million for those supporting the defence community affected by the coronavirus
- elderly veterans, those struggling with mental and physical health, and service children among organisations eligible for funding can apply from Tuesday 12 May.

Serving personnel, veterans and their families will benefit from an additional £6-million of new funding to ensure they get the support they need during the coronavirus outbreak, announced today by Minister for Defence People and Veterans Johnny Mercer (Tuesday 12 May).

Today's sum is part of a package of support announced by the Chancellor in April to ensure charities can continue their vital work during the pandemic. It will be offered in addition to existing funding for veteran's mental health and the Armed Forces Covenant Trust.

The funding is available to apply for from Tuesday 12 May (today). It will be distributed in the form of grants administered by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, backed by the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and the Cabinet Office, and will be given to charities across the UK that work in 9 key areas affected by the impact of the coronavirus.

These include:

- support to the elderly (including Care Homes)
- mental and physical health
- welfare
- domestic violence
- housing
- criminal justice system
- service families (including childcare)
- bereavement
- employment

The latest funding is in addition to the £10-million the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust received in the budget for support to veterans' health and wellbeing and the annual government contribution of £10-million for the Covenant Fund, £3-million of which has already been protected for veterans particularly affected by the coronavirus.

The announcement follows the recent launch of 2 platforms specifically designed to support the defence community. [Veterans' Gateway](#), an app with 24-hour point of contact for support with finances, employment, relationships and physical and mental health, and [HeadFIT](#), a new platform, spearheaded by

The Duke of Sussex launched with online tools to help defence personnel take a more proactive approach to their mental health and fitness.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Johnny Mercer said:

At such a difficult time I want to make sure our people, including those still serving, veterans, and their families, know they're not alone.

Military charities do a fantastic job in supporting this community and today's important new investment will ensure that they have the funding they need to continue their brilliant efforts.

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said:

Having just celebrated the 75th anniversary of VE Day, our veterans, armed forces and their families are rightly at the front of our minds, so I'm pleased we can give military charities supporting them through coronavirus extra help.

Our brilliant charities are vital to the national effort to beat the virus and this funding is part of the unprecedented charity support package pledged by the government to get help to the most vulnerable people in Britain.

David Richmond CBE, Director of the Office for Veterans' Affairs, said:

Charities play a vital role in supporting our veteran community by providing a wide range of support and services.

It's critically important that the government is providing support to them to allow essential services to continue during these difficult times and The Office for Veterans' Affairs will continue to work closely with the charities to ensure the funding reaches those who need it most.

General Sir John McColl KCB CBE DSO, Chairman of Cobseo, said:

Cobseo members have demonstrated true grit and determination in adapting, and in some cases revolutionising, how they support the armed forces community during this crisis, and this funding will help to provide a more secure immediate future and sustain vital services.

Many members have shifted their services to online support; and they are continuing to reach out to combat loneliness, isolation and promote mental wellbeing; as well as working hard to deliver

food and essentials for Veterans in need”.

Today’s funding is part of comprehensive measures to support vulnerable people through the pandemic and the government is working closely with councils, charities and other partners to ensure they get the support they need. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has led the allocation of funding to support charities providing key services to help vulnerable people during the crisis.

Small and medium sized charities can also bid for funding through the National Lottery Community fund, which has an allocation of £370-million to support the sector.

The application process will be published on [Covenant Fund Trust](#), and a separate decision-making board will be established to decide where the funding is best allocated. The board will include representatives from MOD, the Cabinet Office and COBSEO, the sector body for Armed Forces charities.