

Government kickstarts Office for Veterans' Affairs with £5m funding

Ministers have wasted no time in backing up their promise to tackle the challenges faced by our nation's proud veterans – securing a £5 million funding boost in this week's spending round, to be announced by Chancellor Sajid Javid on Wednesday.

The cash, won by the Cabinet Office, will fund additional staff and resources, so that the newly-established Office for Veterans' Affairs (OVA) can drive cross-Whitehall action to support veterans' welfare.

The OVA will join up support and coordinate existing funding – holding other parts of government to account for delivering the Armed Forces Covenant and action on mental and physical health, education, employment and veteran homelessness.

Charities, MPs and the Sun newspaper made their concerns about the need for a coordinated approach to the post-service needs of Armed Forces personnel clear with their calls for top politicians to sign a Veterans' Pledge.

Since becoming Prime Minister, Boris Johnson has acted quickly to establish the OVA – and send a clear message that it will have real clout across Whitehall and beyond.

Minister for the Cabinet Office, Oliver Dowden, will represent veterans issues at Cabinet, and lead the OVA alongside Veterans Minister and former soldier, Johnny Mercer. They will drive policy from the heart of government and coordinate Whitehall machinery to make sure ex-service personnel get life-long support.

Chancellor Sajid Javid said:

This Spending Round is focused on public services. And no-one has given more than the service men and women who lay their lives on the line for all of us. Supporting them when they leave service is not just our responsibility but also our duty, which is why we've made funding the launch of the Office of Veterans Affairs a top priority.

Minister for the Cabinet Office, Oliver Dowden, said:

Now that we've secured this additional funding, we can use it to fight for them from the heart of government, and make sure this country never lets down those heroes who risked their lives to keep us all safe.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans, Johnny Mercer said:

The Prime Minister has given us a great responsibility to make sure our veterans are supported in every aspect of their lives, including their healthcare, housing, and employment opportunities. We're already hard at work bringing together the right people across government, and this new funding will be instrumental in making this vision a reality.