

# News story: Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report outlines stepped up support for military community

The annual [Armed Forces Covenant Report](#), published today, sets out the Government's achievements in fulfilling its duty to ensure the military community is treated fairly, and not disadvantaged by their service.

It also highlights the new commitments made by the UK Government and its partners in the devolved administrations, local government and the charitable sector and how, through collaboration, they are able to deliver effective support.

Key accomplishments include:

- £23 million of Service Pupil Premium payments made to support 76,000 service children in 10,000 primary and secondary schools across England
- The launch of the Armed Forces Flexible Working Act, enhancing service personnel's ability to serve part-time, should personal circumstances change
- Plans to launch the Defence Transition Policy shortly, improving the holistic support available to service personnel and their families when leaving the services and returning to civilian life
- Over 3,000 businesses and organisations have now signed the Armed Forces Covenant, pledging to support and empower former and current service personnel and their families
- The launch of the first UK-wide 'Strategy for our Veterans', to improve the delivery of support to those who have served

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Minister Tobias Ellwood said:

This year, we have stepped up support across Government for those who have served our country, those who continue to serve, and their loved ones.

Today's report shows the fantastic progress that has been made, promoting mental fitness across the military community, supporting service families, and reaching the 3,000th signing of the Covenant.

But it also sets out the work still to be done to ensure our armed forces are given every opportunity to thrive, throughout their careers, and as they transition into civilian life. As we look forward to 2019, we will continue to provide the best care possible for our people.

Further support delivered this year includes:

## **Service families**

- The MOD has allocated £5 million to the Education Support Fund, extending it for two years
- £2.5 million was awarded by the Covenant Fund Trust to projects that support military families, under the 'Families in Stress' programme
- £68 million was invested in the improvement of service family accommodation

## **Health and wellbeing**

- The MOD increased its spending on mental health for service personnel to £22 million a year
- A new 24-hour mental health helpline for serving personnel, operated by Combat Stress was launched
- £10 million was awarded to the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, to support mental fitness among veterans
- The launch of NHS England's Veterans' Mental Health Complex Treatment Service