

Government response: Business Secretary's message of support for Honda Workers

I am sorry not to be able to be with you today. I am attending on behalf of the government, the memorial service at Coventry Cathedral of Lord Bhattacharyya – one of the great champions of the British motor industry.

Honda's decision was, and is, a massive blow to a town and an industry which the country is proud of. I strongly believe it was the wrong decision.

If you are looking to build the next generation of motor vehicles, you need a modern plant; a highly efficient and dedicated workforce; a supplier network finely tuned to meeting its needs; access to some of the most innovative new technology anywhere in the world; and a well-connected location.

Swindon is the ideal place.

I will continue to work jointly with Associates, the Trade Unions, suppliers, Swindon Council, local MPs and the whole local community to make a joint case that is compelling and shows with evidence that this decision should be reversed.

Swindon is renowned for its engineering excellence and I will do whatever it takes to persuade Honda to be part of its future as well as its present.

The health and industry of this town must flourish for years to come.

News story: New programme launched for armed forces personnel seriously wounded in conflict

A new package of support for seriously wounded armed forces personnel has been launched.

The joint agreement between the MOD and NHS England, developed with the Department of Health and Social Care, will ensure that individuals with very complex and enduring healthcare requirements transitioning out of the military into civilian life will continue to receive comprehensive support.

The new approach will benefit individuals such as Lance Bombardier Ben

Parkinson, who was severely injured in Afghanistan. Ben has been medically discharged from the Army, following agreement with his family that his care needs would continue to be met in civilian life.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Ben has given a lot for this country and I'd like to thank him and his family for all they have done throughout this process.

We have now agreed a package of support for Ben, to ensure that he gets the right care as he leaves the Army and moves into civilian life.

This new support package will also benefit other serving personnel who have been seriously injured.

Simon Stevens, Chief Executive of NHS England, said:

Those who bravely serve our country deserve its full support, and in the NHS we are committed to playing our part. That's why we're now expanding the dedicated care for those who need it from highly skilled teams of NHS nurses, therapists and doctors.

As well as the establishment of the new framework, known as Armed Forces personnel in transition, Integrated Personal Commissioning for Veterans (IPC4V), the MOD will now provide extra funding to a very small number of individuals injured in service, and Armed Forces Compensation Scheme recipients who require 24 hour, one to one care from a trained individual.

The funding, which has currently been set as £24,000 per year, for life, can be spent on health and wellbeing activities which are above those already provided by statutory services to enable a better quality of life for this small number of individuals.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Tobias Ellwood said:

It's right that we do everything we can to support those service personnel who have been severely wounded while serving our country.

This new framework will ease the transition into civilian life for the small number of military personnel who have been badly injured.

The joint approach between the MOD, the NHS, and local authorities to provide this comprehensive care demonstrates the Armed Forces Covenant in action.

Available in England, the new ICP4V framework will provide personalised care for armed forces personnel who have complex and enduring healthcare

requirements that have resulted from injury whilst in service. This is part of the expansion of support for all veterans and their families as they transition out of the armed forces under the NHS Long Term Plan.

Health Secretary, Matt Hancock said:

We owe enormous gratitude to the brave men and women of our armed forces, like Ben, who have risked their lives for our safety and security.

Their health and wellbeing must be our priority and we have a duty to provide excellent specialist care no matter what their physical or mental health needs.

The NHS is there for all of us when we need it most and this new package of support, delivered as part of our Long Term Plan for the NHS, will provide the ongoing care which our veterans deserve.

Jointly developed between the MOD, NHS England, service charities including Blesma, the Royal British Legion and Help for Heroes, and local authorities, as well as with patients and their families, IPC4V provides a framework for effectively planning and delivering personalised care in line with the health commitments of the Armed Forces Covenant. This will now start around nine months before personnel are due to leave the military.

In particular, individuals will benefit from the following:

- Personalised care and support planning starting before they have been discharged from the Armed Forces, drawing together the appropriate health and social care specialists, the MOD, local commissioners and military charities.
- A single integrated personalised care and support plan for all their health and wellbeing needs, including the option of a personal budget, personal health budget or integrated personal budget for all or part of their care.
- Ongoing support to help ensure that they are an active participant in the planning and management of their own health and wellbeing, with outcomes and solutions having meaning and context within their life.
- A dedicated Veterans Welfare Manager, employed by the MOD who will be a central point of contact for the individual and all involved organisations. The Veterans Welfare Manager will provide a range of support, including 'guided conversations' to help the individual identify goals and actions and explore the management of their health and wellbeing within the context of their whole life and family

situation. They will also make connections to community based resources, including veteran specific organisations, facilitate appropriate referrals back into health or social care and arrange at a minimum an annual review of the individual's care with them and each involved organisation and will have the ability to escalate any concerns in to the Ministry of Defence.

Since its launch April 2017, over 6,000 ex-service personnel have been helped to settle back into civilian life through NHS' 'Transition, Intervention and Liaison' service, (TILS). Several trusts have been accredited as 'Veteran Aware', which means veterans will be cared for by staff who have been trained on how to treat their specific needs, and can refer them to their local support services.

News story: RAF Typhoons intercept Russian Aircraft over the North Sea

Today (29 March), RAF Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) Typhoon fighter aircraft scrambled from RAF Lossiemouth, with an RAF Voyager from Brize Norton, to monitor two Russian Blackjacks approaching UK airspace.

The RAF worked closely with NATO partners to monitor the Russian aircraft as they passed through a variety of international airspace before they were intercepted over the North Sea. Our fighters escorted them from the UK's area of interest and ensured that they did not enter UK sovereign airspace.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Our brave RAF pilots have shown again that we are ready to respond to any threat to the UK. Alongside our NATO allies, we must remain vigilant and aware of Russian military activity.

The RAF routinely identify, intercept and escort Russian aircraft that transit international airspace within proximity to the UK's area of interest and continue to be on call every day. This is the second time this week RAF aircraft have taken to the air to investigate Russian activity, following a similar incident on Wednesday evening, but on that occasion, an intercept by the Typhoons was not necessary.

[Press release: Burglar jailed after Solicitor General's intervention](#)

A man who burgled 2 homes has had his sentence increased after the Solicitor General, Robert Buckland QC MP, referred it for being too low.

Emmanuel Buckland, 44, took a number of items from 2 homes including personal items, a bicycle and money. Both properties were occupied on the night of the burglaries, including a child in one of the homes.

When arrested by police Buckland stated that although his memory was affected by drugs and alcohol he recalled entering both properties, and he later pleaded guilty to both burglaries.

Buckland was originally sentenced in January to 2 years imprisonment suspended for 2 years at Luton Crown Court. The Court of Appeal has now increased this to 2 years and 8 months immediate imprisonment.

Commenting on the increase, the Solicitor General said,

“Breaking into these homes while the victims were in caused them substantial anxiety and fear, and given that this is not the first time that Emmanuel Buckland has been convicted of burglary it seems appropriate that his sentence was increased to reflect that.”

[News story: April tax changes 2019: changes for you](#)

Tax changes which come into effect in April will mean 32 million people in the UK see their income tax bill cut compared to 2015-16. This summary lets you know where you can find more information about each of the tax changes.

The National Living Wage is going up to £8.21 an hour

If you are aged 25 and over, and not in your first year of an apprenticeship, you are legally entitled to at least the National Living Wage. Those under 25 and apprentices also benefit from rises in the Minimum Wage. The National Living Wage and National Minimum Wage rates apply across the UK.

The Personal Allowance is going up to £12,500

You don't have to pay income tax on the income you earn below this amount. As a result of the change, a typical basic-rate taxpayer will take home £130 more than in 2018-19.

Fuel duty will remain frozen for the ninth year in a row

It will remain at 57.95 pence per litre across the UK. Fuel duty has been frozen for the ninth successive year, saving the average car driver £1,000.

Small retailers will get business rates relief

Small retailers will get one third off their business rates bills, this is part of more than £13 billion of rates relief since 2016.

From April, working parents and disabled people will be able to earn an extra £1,000 a year before their Universal Credit starts to reduce. This change will see 2.4 million families keep up to an extra £630 per year of what they earn.

New Enterprise Allowance has been extended

The New Enterprise Allowance provides mentoring, support and funding for benefit claimants to get their business ideas off the ground. Over 120,000 businesses have been launched through the NEA since 2011 and from April funding will continue for another 2 years with 30,000 new mentoring places available.

From 1 April 2019 people will be able to claim up to £59,200 annually through the Access to Work scheme to help pay for additional support that they may need in the workplace. This can include workplace adaptations, assistive technology, transport and interpreters.