

Sussex service dogs charity hailed as key to veterans recovery

A service dogs charity in Sussex has been hailed as a leading light of support for veterans suffering from mental health issues.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Steve Barclay, today met with veterans and their assistance dogs at Service Dogs UK in Petworth.

The charity recently received £35,000 from the government's Afghanistan Veterans' Fund, which provides funding for projects which support veterans of Afghanistan and their families.

As well as meeting with veterans and dog trainers, the minister saw demonstrations of how the dogs help veterans deal with mental health issues, such as PTSD.

The dogs are trained to do a variety of practical tasks, such as wake the veterans from nightmares, interrupt anxiety attacks, help with providing space by positioning, fetch medication and take the veteran to the nearest exit when overwhelmed.

The dogs also give veterans the confidence to go out and integrate with the community, the shared oxytocin relieves stress and lowers anxiety naturally.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Steve Barclay said:

It was fantastic to meet with veterans and their assistance dogs at Service Dogs UK in Sussex.

This unique model of training the dogs with their owners has supported the mental health and wellbeing of many veterans who have been suffering from PTSD.

I'm determined to make the UK the best place in the world to be a veteran and that is why we are putting in place measures across health and employment services to ensure they get the support they deserve.

The Afghanistan Veterans' Fund was announced by the Prime Minister last year, following the withdrawal from Afghanistan. The fund supports the Afghanistan veteran cohort with help adjusting to civilian life.

The funding to Service Dogs UK will allow them to increase capacity to their 'Canines and Comradeship after Conflict' projects, which has seen an increased demand following the Afghanistan withdrawal.

The programme has already helped over 30 Veterans become Assistance Dog

teams.

During the visit the minister joined a training session to understand how veterans at all stages of training their service dogs have benefited from their experiences getting an assistance dog.

Garry Botterill, Operations Director at Service Dogs UK said:

We are delighted to host this visit by the Minister in recognition of the work we are doing to help our Veterans. The Armed Forces Covenant grants have been key to enabling us to support our wonderful Veterans and helping them to a brighter future.

In particular, the 'Canines and Comradeship after Conflict' award allows us to further our service to them which greatly enhances the social and Peer Support element of our charity. We are very grateful to receive such valuable support!

The minister also spoke to veterans whose dogs had recently qualified as assistance dogs. Service Dogs UK offers a model where veterans train their own service dogs, which can provide higher levels of personal satisfaction, pride and a real sense of achievement when they become accredited Assistance Dog Partnerships.

Lee Carter, a veteran who has successfully qualified through Service Dogs UK, said:

Service Dogs UK have been a life changer for me. From the very start they lived their values, providing a safe place to learn, an excellent team of people all focused on helping you succeed from taking those first few tentative steps, to training with professional dog trainers twice a week, having behaviourists and nutritionists input on looking after your dog, right through to becoming an accredited assistance dog partnership and beyond.

By sourcing their dogs primarily from rescue they really are changing two lives at a time.

[Aviation resilience planning](#)

Over the half-term Jubilee weekend, we saw disruption at UK airports with some passengers facing long queues and cancellations largely due to staff shortages at airports, airlines and ground handlers. These experiences, for too many consumers recently, have been unacceptable.

The Secretary of State for Transport and I have made it clear to the sector that they need to operate services that are offered for sale properly and according to schedule, or provide swift, appropriate compensation.

The aviation industry is privately owned, operated and run. It is, therefore, responsible for making sure that it has enough staff to meet demand and to operate the flights offered for sale. It is important that the sector is a competitive, attractive market for workers. The government has called upon the sector's leadership to offer better packages and build a resilient workforce to meet demand.

Since earlier this year, government has worked across a number of different areas to help the industry alleviate the issues they have been facing. We are clear that consumers should not lose out.

The government is taking steps to boost consumer rights, including recently [consulting on using our Brexit freedoms to enhance consumer protections](#). We have committed to publishing an aviation passenger charter to ensure consumers can access information about their rights all in one place.

We have sought ways to ease the burden of background checks carried out by industry. A statutory instrument was laid on 29 April 2022 to provide greater flexibility, enabling ministers to take the decision to allow certain training to be undertaken while background checks were completed.

Ministers have also agreed that HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) employment history letters can be used as a suitable form of reference check with safeguards in place. These temporary alleviations have helped to speed up recruitment times.

In partnership with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), the government has written to the industry setting out 5 specific expectations we have for the aviation sector this summer:

1. Summer schedules must be reviewed to make sure they are deliverable.
2. Everyone from ground handlers to air traffic control must collaborate on resilience planning.
3. Passengers must be promptly informed of their consumer rights when things go wrong and – if necessary – compensated in good time.
4. Disabled and less mobile passengers must be given assistance they require.
5. Safety and security must never be compromised.

I am chairing a Strategic Risk Group with chief executive officers of the aviation sector, which will meet on a weekly basis going into the summer.

This group will identify possible interventions to further improve the resilience of the sector and will be used to hold the sector to account for delivering its schedules.

Department for Transport ministers and senior officials will continue to monitor the situation closely to make sure consumers do not lose out from any further disruption.

Burton-upon-Trent flood defence work completes £30 million investment

The work, which started last summer in 2021, reduces flood risk to some 397 properties, including 18 affected by the flood of February 2020. The whole investment in Burton, including £2 million from the National Highways Designated Funds programme, has cost over £30 million, and reduces the risk of flooding to over 4,600 homes and 1,000 businesses.

The A38 at Branston and adjacent properties have experienced flooding on several occasions since 2000. An investigation revealed that when the level of the River Trent was high, water got into Severn Trent Water's foul sewerage system, highway drains and through low ground and eventually flooded properties and the highway.

Through the construction of sheet piled walls, embankments and non-return valves, water will now be contained in Tatenhill Brook when the River Trent is high.

Will Groves, Senior Flood Risk Adviser for the Environment Agency, said:

This latest completed work has been funded from the £30 million set aside to improve the flood defences in the Burton-upon-Trent area.

We want to thank all members of the local community for their understanding and patience while these works have taken place.

Our team first started construction work in Burton in 2019 and the improved flood defences have already successfully protected properties, which otherwise would have been affected by floods, in the last two years.

While these defences should provide reassurance to communities and businesses, no one should have a false sense of security. We strongly urge people to sign up for flood warnings and regularly check flood risk via our [website](#)

Ian Doust, National Highways Programme Development Manager, said:

We are committed to reducing flooding on our roads and also minimising flood risks to the communities who live alongside them.

In response to the changing climate, we are investing in schemes such as this which will improve the flood resilience of our network and reduce the flooding risk to our neighbours.

It is extremely rewarding to see the completion of this scheme which will not only protect our roads and people living alongside them for generations to come but in the future will also enhance the waterside habitats enabling wildlife to thrive.

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[Animal medicine seizure notice: Product stopped at Heathrow Airport June 2022](#)

News story

Details of seizure notice served for a medicine product imported along with an animal.



The following veterinary medicine was imported with an animal into Heathrow Airport.

This was identified and detained by an Animal Health Officer and the product was subsequently seized by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate.

The animal was destined for residential premises in Bristol and had been shipped from South Africa. The parcel contained:

- 216 x phenobarbitone tablets 30mg

This product was intended for use in a dog and is not an authorised

veterinary medicine in the UK and had not been prescribed by a UK vet for use in the animal.

The medicine was seized under Regulation 25 (Importation of unauthorised veterinary medicinal products) of the Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2013.

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