

Speech: Employer Recognition Scheme Awards

I'm delighted to be here and it's a great honour to have Prince Harry joining us fresh from a triumphant Invictus Games and from raising awareness of mental health issues in the Armed Forces earlier today.

We are, Your Royal Highness, incredibly fortunate to have someone with such immense energy and enthusiasm working on our Armed Forces' behalf.

It's also a privilege to meet in this iconic museum, currently celebrating its centenary. If you get the chance, wander the halls.

There you'll find our national story documented in deeds of outstanding courage from Gallipoli and the Battle of Britain, to our exploits in the Atlantic during the Cold War.

Among the modern day exhibits you'll find extraordinarily mementos of sheer courage such as Johnson Beharry's Victoria Cross, the first Victoria Cross awarded in the 21st century, to a soldier who twice survived hits by rocket propelled grenades who despite his own injuries and showing complete disregard for his own safety then saved his comrades from the fire.

Today, as Your Royal Highness knows, our forces are serving on operations in more than 25 countries.

They're helping fragile democracies from Afghanistan to Iraq, supporting peacekeeping in Somalia and South Sudan, and leading in NATO with troops in Estonia and Poland. Our planes protecting the Black Sea Skies, and our ships of the Royal Navy leading NATO's maritime task groups.

No praise can be high enough for them. Nor for those who go out of their way to support them.

So today whether you hail from the public or private sector whether you're in a business employing fewer than 10 people or more than 500 people, I'd like to thank you all.

First, for supporting our Reserves. For giving those civic minded citizens more than flexibility to train or to go on deployment but for giving them also encouragement and recognition. It is your support has enabled us to increase our Reserve numbers by 1,280 up almost 4 per cent since last year with our total trained and untrained strength now standing at 36,580.

Second, I want to thank you for what you're doing for our veterans. Laing O'Rourke and Build Force are attracting service leavers into the building trade. North West Ambulance Service, one of four blue light organisations to scoop gold, is helping veterans retrain as ambulance drivers.

Transport for London and Airbus are offering placements to wounded, injured

and sick soldiers. And Combat pest control a small business that doesn't just free homes from household menaces but provides assistance to children from Afghanistan to Africa is a workforce entirely composed of veterans.

Thirdly, thank you for the help you're giving to our wider Armed Forces families.

Sodexo is actively welcoming military spouses into its workforce, allowing spouses to transfer to different sites when their partners are deployed or posted elsewhere. X-forces are helping veterans and their partners into work. And Manpower are giving free employability sessions to spouses living on Salisbury Plain.

Yet those efforts, for our reserves, our veterans, our families don't account for why the people in this hall now hold gold.

The reason you're listed among our elite 80 employers is because you're also superb advocates leading by example showing that employing Reservists and veterans simply makes business sense.

We have here amongst us Corporal Ian Taylor. A systems integration and test engineer for General Dynamics. His Royal Highness will know him well.

He's just back from the Invictus Games in Toronto, where he not only competed in swimming, powerlifting and rowing, he not only set a personal best, but won silver in the breast stroke.

Who wouldn't want to employ someone with such grit and guts, determination and drive in their company too?

Your collective efforts have encouraged more and more companies to commit to the Armed Forces Covenant.

Today we have more than 1900 companies that have signed up – and we are on track to hit 2000 soon.

Back in 1920 at the official opening of Imperial War Museum its founder Sir Alfred Mond declared the museum would not be a "monument of military glory, but a record of toil and sacrifice" wherein all would find "an example or illustration of the sacrifice he or she made".

So today, alongside sacrifice we record the service of great employers. As years to come, as the threats against us intensify, we will increasingly look to our wider Armed Forces family to help us manage all those demands and pressures.

But with your example, inspiring the businesses of the future to follow in your footsteps, I am very confident that our Armed Forces family will continue to thrive.

News story: Defence Secretary and Prince Harry Award Gold to Supportive Employers

The award is the Ministry of Defence's prestigious badge of honour for organisations who have demonstrated outstanding support for the Armed Forces community. Hosted by Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon, the award presentation took place on Monday 9 October at the Imperial War Museum.

HRH Prince Harry thanked this year's winners and heard about successful initiatives providing veterans with a fair chance of starting a second career in diverse industries following military service. Other support measures in the workplace include flexibility for Reservists and mentoring and job opportunities for military spouses.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

This year's Gold award winners should be extremely proud of the work they are doing to live up to the Armed Forces Covenant pledge and to promote the pledge to others.

I'm delighted to recognise employers who make it crystal clear that regardless of size, location, or sector, employing people with military skills is good for business. I hope others follow their example, thereby delivering a better deal for veterans and armed forces families.

Welcoming their Gold Award, Mike Brown MVO, Commissioner Transport for London said:

The technical expertise and skills that ex-service personnel have developed during their military service, such as problem-solving and working under pressure, are ideal for a number of roles within the transport industry and we are proud to count them amongst our employees.

The employers recognised with the ERS Gold distinction in 2017 for going above and beyond their pledges under the Armed Forces Covenant:

Airbus	Inverclyde Council	Shropshire Council
Balfour Beatty	Kuehne + Nagel	Skanska UK Plc
City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust	Laing O'Rourke	Sodexo UK & Ireland

Combat Pest Control	Liverpool City Council	South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust
DHL	Mabway Ltd	Transport for London
DXC Technology	ManpowerGroup UK	West Midlands Fire Service
ER Systems Global	Metropolitan Police Service	Wiltshire Council
FDM	Morson Group	Wolferstans Solicitors
Forth Valley Chamber of Commerce	Network Rail	X-Forces
General Dynamics UK	NHS Golden Jubilee Foundation	
Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	North West Ambulance Service	
Hull City Council	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	

The Employer Recognition Scheme encompasses three award tiers: Bronze, Silver and Gold. Gold Award winning employers have to first make pledges under the Armed Forces Covenant, then demonstrate and advocate their support for the Armed Forces. So far, 79 employers have been recognised with a Gold award.

[Speech: Defence Secretary launches partnership on mental health and wellbeing with the Royal Foundation](#)

I'm delighted to be here. Warfare's often seen in terms of battles of the body.

Today we recognise it's also about battles of the mind.

For those suffering from mental illness the damage trauma inflicts is no less real for being invisible, while the need to address mental, as well as physical shocks, is no less pressing.

It's not simply that the operational effectiveness of our forces depends on them being healthy, outside and in.

We have a duty of care to all who lay their lives on the line and a moral obligation to all who support them.

Now I think it's true to say that whether families or civilian staff, we're better at treating mental trauma than we used to be.

A century ago, in the First World War, an anonymous medical superintendent at one military hospital in York advised a shell shocked patient "to face his illness in a manly way".

Today after 21st century conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq where a lack of safe zones was compounded by the constant threat of roadside IEDs, we no longer expect people to simply "man up", instead we offer expert help through Defence Medical Services for current personnel and through the NHS for veterans, families and civilians.

But with some 2.6 million veterans in the UK many at increased risk of developing mental illness, complacency is not an option.

Nor can our sole focus be on the frontline

PROMOTING MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

So part of the reason we're here today is to promote mental health awareness.

No current or ex-member of our Armed Forces family should have to keep quiet about their illness for fear of being thought a failure.

And here I'd like to pay particular tribute to the work of HRH Prince Harry.

As a former serviceman, few understand these matters better.

He has set an inspirational example in speaking about the challenges he has faced.

And having used the Invictus Games to draw attention to the physical effects of war he's now tackling the taboo of mental illness head on.

And we look forward to hearing from him in a moment.

Our strategy to address mental health issues, is about more than just raising awareness, important though that is.

PREVENTION

It's also about prevention.

Mental health conditions are treatable but we have to be better at spotting the signs

Better directing people to the right treatment and doing more to help those suffering from everyday stresses and strains to deal with the challenges they face.

DETECTION

Second our plans are about better detection.

And today's Royal Foundation Partnership will give individuals the means to identify what's wrong earlier on and our leaders the practical tools they need to support their colleagues.

TREATMENT

Finally, it's about better treatment. We're focused on putting proper treatment in place.

Earlier this year the Prime Minister introduced a package of reforms to improve mental health support throughout a person's life.

Our Defence People Mental Health and Well-being Strategy builds on those plans for our Whole Force utilising the best evidence based practice and joining the dots between the National Health Service, devolved administrations, key service charities, our own Defence Medical Services and academia to provide a more seamless service.

Our new Veterans board announced last week will now co-ordinate all veterans-related work right across government and give this work today much needed focus.

CONCLUSION

So let me conclude, before welcoming His Royal Highness by saying that in a 24-hour society, of constant communication, intensifying threats and multiplying daily pressures it's never been more vital for members of the military to keep mind, body and soul together.

But by joining forces with them, we can shine the spotlight on these hidden scars of mental illness.

We can help change the environment long-term.

We can help combat outdated attitudes and create a culture of well-being, so no member of our Armed Forces Family ever has to suffer in silence again.

Would you please welcome His Royal Highness.

[News story: Ministry of Defence and Royal Foundation launch new partnership to improve mental health](#)

The joint initiative between the MOD and the Royal Foundation of The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry builds on the MOD's recently launched

mental health and wellbeing strategy, which outlines how the department will improve the mental health of its serving military and civilian personnel, their families, and veterans.

It will see the Royal Foundation provide advice and resources to the MOD to improve training, education and information sharing for the entire Armed Forces. The work will include annual briefings, websites and specialist support to raise awareness of the importance of good mental health.



HRH Prince Harry speaks at the launch of today's partnership between the MOD and the Royal Foundation.

Defence Personnel will be encouraged to use psychology and well-being in the same way as athletes do to maximise performance, emphasising the idea that mental fitness is as important as physical fitness when working as part of the Armed Forces.

The resources will be integrated into staff training courses and briefing processes across the Armed Forces from the middle of 2018, and will be widely available online, to strengthen the mental health support and services already available to Defence personnel.

Announcing the partnership, Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

By looking after our mental health we are building a more effective armed forces that helps keep this country safe. Our soldiers, sailors and airmen are the best in the world but we will only maintain that if we are as serious about improving mental health as

we are our combat skills and cutting-edge technology. So partnering with key groups like the Royal Foundation is an important part of our strategy to improve the wellbeing of our serving Armed Forces and veterans.

Sir Keith Mills, Chairman of the Royal Foundation said:

Through our work with the Invictus Games, the Endeavour Fund, and most recently the Contact coalition through Heads Together, the Royal Foundation has had the privilege of convening some of the best expertise in the field of military mental health. We are delighted that this new partnership with the Ministry of Defence will see the UK leading the way internationally in prioritising the mental fitness of its entire defence community.

While rates of mental disorder are slightly lower in the Armed Forces (3.2%) than in the general population (3.5%), improving the mental health of the MOD's entire workforce is a key priority.



Sir Michael Fallon and Sir Keith Mills, Chairman of the Royal Foundation, sign the partnership agreement.

The Defence People Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017-2022, launched in July, builds on five years of research and aims to develop a coordinated approach to prevent, detect, and treat mental health and wellbeing issues, as well as introduce measures to promote the importance of mental health.

As part of that strategy, the MOD committed to collaborate with the Royal Foundation to produce Mental Health training to embed within compulsory courses and work with them on communications material. Today's announcement delivers on that promise.

The wider Strategy includes plans to:

- Encompass all Defence People – serving Armed Forces members (Regulars and Reserves), military families, veterans, and MOD civil servants;
- Introduce standardised mental health and wellbeing education and training for all those working in Defence;
- Invest in research on resilience training to ensure that individuals are as mentally fit as they can be to prevent depression and anxiety and monitoring of groups who are more likely to suffer from mental health issues, such as combat troops and medical personnel in support of them;
- Improve access to clinical assessment (such as through digital delivery) and prioritisation for treatment;
- Develop partnerships with key service charities in order to continue anti-stigma campaigning initiatives and share best practice;
- Improve communication to the workforce about what help is on offer.

The Royal Foundation of The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry has made mental health one of its key priorities. The Foundation operates by bringing together people and organisations with passion and expertise to tackle issues that are close to the heart of Their Royal Highnesses.

As part of its work with the Invictus Games, Endeavour Fund, and most recently Heads Together the Foundation has partnered with veterans charities and experts to lead awareness raising activity and to provide support for veterans and serving military personnel as they recover from both physical and emotional challenges.

The Foundation is delighted to have the opportunity to make the most of its expertise and partnerships in this area for the benefit of the Armed Forces.

News story: New Chair of the Defence Science Expert Committee appointed

Professor Hugh Griffiths, FREng has been appointed as the new chair of the Defence Science Expert Committee (DSEC). DSEC provides authoritative, independent, informed, impartial and timely advice on the use of science, technology, analysis and maths regarding non-nuclear matters to MOD Chief Scientific Advisor (CSA) and senior MOD officials.

Prof Griffiths brings with him a wealth of experience from the academic and defence communities. He is world-leading academic research in the field of radar and radar signal processing. Prof Griffiths has won many accolades during his distinguished career. These include, the Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education and the 2017 Institute of Electronics and Electrical Engineers (IEEE) Picard Medal for exceptional contributions to radar research. He has Chaired and sat on a wide variety of organisations and panels over his career so will bring to bear extensive insight and knowledge to the role.

Prof Griffiths succeeds the outgoing Chair, Professor David Delpy, FRS. Prof Griffiths' appointment to Chair of DSEC is from 01 October 2017 for an initial term of three years. Prof Griffiths' first priority is to recruit new Independent DSEC Members.