

Government and charities highlight veterans support, in light of situation in Afghanistan

Government, charities and the academic sector met today to highlight the range of support on offer to veterans of the Afghanistan conflict, in light of the difficult situation in the country.

The meeting, co-chaired by Defence Secretary Ben Wallace and Minister for Defence People and Veterans Leo Docherty and attended by the Health Secretary Sajid Javid, brought together government departments, veterans charities and experts in military mental health.

They discussed the potential for the current situation in Afghanistan to impact the mental health of veterans, outlined the support available to former service personnel across the UK and agreed to share information and best practice on supporting veterans through this difficult time.

The meeting agreed that the Office for Veterans' Affairs (OVA) will monitor the effects that recent events have had on veterans, and bring together experts from health academia to further inform government understanding of the issue. The OVA will be funding phase four of the KCL cohort study looking at veterans health and wellbeing and agreed today to work with KCL to understand how we can measure the impact of current events on the veteran community as part of this study.

Additionally, the OVA and Forces in Mind Trust will work together to explore how to bring veterans who served in Afghanistan together, in order to support each other. Research suggests that these veterans could benefit from 'supportive comradeship', particularly among those who served together.

The government and the nation is extremely grateful for the role the armed forces community played in keeping the country safe from the threat of terrorism, through combat operations (known as Op Herrick) and the subsequent train, advise and assist mission, in Afghanistan. While this may be a challenging time for those who served in Afghanistan, veterans should be in no doubt of the significant role they played in serving their country and keeping it safe.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Leo Docherty said:

The situation in Afghanistan is very difficult and I understand why those from the veteran community who served there with such great distinction will be concerned.

We will always be indebted for your sacrifice and you played a key role in keeping this country safe from the threat of terrorism.

For those who may be struggling, I urge you to access the range of veterans specific support available.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

I recognise that the experience of conflict can affect the physical and mental wellbeing of our veterans, and that the events currently taking place in Afghanistan may have a detrimental impact on the mental health of those who served there.

I am committed to ensuring our veterans can access the support they need. The NHS already provides incredible mental health support for our veteran community, but I know there is more to do.

I encourage any veteran who is struggling to cope to reach out for help. Services like Op COURAGE and the Veterans' Gateway helpline are there for you, so please come forward.

If you are struggling as a result of the recent events in Afghanistan, there is [support available](#) across the United Kingdom for veterans and those affected:

- In England, veterans and their families in England can get specialist help from the [NHS Op COURAGE](#) service.
- In Wales, you can reach out to Veteran Therapists in each Local Health Board through [Veteran Wales](#).
- In Scotland, veterans can access veteran-led mental health and welfare support through [Veterans First Point](#), part of NHS Scotland.
- In Northern Ireland, the [Northern Ireland Veterans' Support Office](#) links individual veterans, veterans' groups, statutory and non-statutory bodies, and charities supporting veterans.
- Anyone in the UK or overseas can also contact the [Veterans' Gateway](#) helpline on 0808 802 1212, or visit the website for advice and signposting to further support, including for families and the bereaved.

[**Fisheries and Seafood Scheme funding rounds open for applications**](#)

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) has today (25 August) opened four funding rounds for applications to help support the fishing and seafood sector in England.

The time-limited competitive rounds, which are being delivered by MMO on behalf of Defra under the £6.1 million Fisheries and Seafood Scheme (FaSS),

will match fund projects that deliver sustainable growth in the catching, processing and aquaculture sectors, and that conserve, enhance and support the recovery of the marine environment. They consist of:

- Grants for projects that support businesses trading in Live Bivalve Molluscs (LBMs).
- Grants for projects that contribute towards protecting the marine environment.
- Grants for projects that deliver world class science and technological advancements.
- Grants for projects that support or enhance the recreational sea fishing sector.

Launching the funding rounds, Fisheries Minister Victoria Prentis said:

The Fisheries and Seafood Scheme is an important part of our ongoing commitment to support the seafood industry as it accesses new opportunities outside of the EU. The funding will help create a sustainable and successful future for the catching, processing and aquaculture sectors.

These four funding rounds will support shellfish businesses adapt to new trading conditions, help fishermen safeguard our marine ecosystems, support world-class science and boost our recreational angling sector. I encourage all eligible businesses to apply.

Tom McCormack, Chief Executive Officer of the MMO, added:

The new funding rounds provide another opportunity to support our seafood industries and coastal communities to adapt and thrive as we work together to protect the environment.

We look forward to receiving applications that will result in improved equipment and processes, and innovations in science, technology and knowledge that will further our shared ambition to see our seas, coasts and communities prosper.

Live Bivalve Molluscs (LBM)

This time-limited and competitive funding round is open to individuals or business engaged within commercial activities in the LBM sector.

Projects applying for financial support through this funding round must contribute towards one or more of the following:

- strengthening the financial resilience of LBM businesses and long-term viability
- supporting LBM businesses seeking to adapt to new trading conditions
- enabling LBM businesses to have access to infrastructure (including depuration and other processing facilities) to enable domestic sales and exports.

This may include depuration or other processing facilities to support adaptation.

This funding round will have an individual grant cap of £150,000 per project. The closing date for submissions is 6 October 2021. A review panel will be convened in late October to assess and score projects against the funding round criteria.

Science and Technology Advancements

Delivering world class science and innovation is one of the seven strategic priorities of the FaSS. The target outcomes of this funding round include:

- Increasing innovative or technological advancements in the seafood sector
- Developing new or substantially improved products and equipment
- Developing new or substantially improved processes, techniques and behaviours
- Increasing partnerships between the science communities and the catching, processing and aquaculture sectors.

This time-limited competitive funding round is available to individuals or business engaged in commercial fishing, aquaculture or seafood processing; public bodies and local authorities that focus on fishing and aquaculture activities, universities, research institutes and NGOs.

Projects receiving financial support through this funding round must contribute towards one or more of the outcomes set out above. Eligible activities include conservation management, protecting/enhancing marine habitats, and supporting carbon net zero.

The closing date for submissions is 6 October 2021. A review panel will be convened in late October to assess and score projects against the funding round criteria.

Protecting the Marine Environment

Protecting the marine environment is one of the strategic priorities of the FaSS. Applications for this time-limited competitive funding round must contribute towards the following target outcomes:

- improving the management of the marine environment, including through the design and implementation of conservation measures, improved environmental monitoring, innovation linked to conservation and techniques and/or equipment to protect the marine environment.

- protecting and enhancing marine habitats and species, and the restoration of marine habitats, thereby contributing to Good Environmental Status as required by the UK Marine Strategy and the Fisheries Act 2020
- supporting climate change adaptation, resilience and mitigation, contributing to net zero by 2050.

This may include supporting innovative and technological advances and the development of new products and processes.

The closing date for submissions is 6 October 2021. A review panel will be convened in late October to assess and score projects against the funding round criteria.

Recreational Sea Fishing

This round will fund projects that support or enhance the sector. This includes improvements to infrastructure, programmes that contribute to environmental and fish stock sustainability (such as innovations in new gear or technology, provision of professional advice, fisheries management plans or pilot studies) and educational or promotional campaigns.

This time-limited competitive funding round is available to businesses and organisations based in England engaged with recreational sea fishing, public bodies and local authorities that focus on fishing and aquaculture activities, universities, research institutes and NGOs. Individual anglers are not eligible.

The closing date for submissions is 6 October 2021. A review panel will be convened in late October to assess and score projects against the funding round criteria.

For more information on these funding rounds, eligibility criteria and details on how to apply, go to:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/fisheries-and-seafood-scheme#FaSS>

The Fisheries and Seafood Scheme remains open for eligible projects outside of these funding rounds. The fund focuses on projects that help businesses adapt to life outside the EU's Common Fisheries Policy and recover from the impacts of Covid-19.

It is also funding a wide range of projects from providing professional advice to local businesses and encouraging local sales, to making fishing gear more selective of size and species and working conditions safer. In line with the Government's commitment to tackle climate change across all sectors of the UK economy, the scheme will work with the seafood sector to reduce emissions and provide environmental improvements.

The scheme match funds projects that aim to:

- Create new opportunities for businesses – such as exploring new local markets and support to sell a wider range of products

- Support business to adapt to new markets and respond to new trading conditions
- Support sustainability – with the potential to boost the traceability of the fish landed and promote environmentally-friendly processing methods
- Protect the environment – with equipment that reduces the impact of fishing on the marine environment *Improve safety on fishing vessels and on shore – by supporting high standards of health, safety, hygiene, and working conditions across the seafood sector

FaSS is in addition to the £23 million committed earlier this year to support seafood exporters, fishing and aquaculture businesses affected by Covid-19 and new trading conditions.

You can find out more, and submit your online application, on our website: <http://www.gov.uk/guidance/fisheries-and-seafood-scheme>.

UK General Statement, COPUOS 64th Session

Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

The United Kingdom is pleased to have the opportunity to share with you the progress and developments we have made since the last meeting of this committee in 2019.

The UK will shortly be releasing a National Space Strategy. Through this strategy, the UK recognises the importance of space in the fight against climate change, and in supporting the UK's ambitions to become a science superpower, and to build a better and greener world in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The UK's National Space Strategy, along with the establishment of the UK National Space Council in June 2020 – which is chaired by our Prime Minister – will provide strategic direction across the whole of the UK Government on future space activities and investment.

Chair,

Regarding our spaceflight ambitions, the UK Space Industry Regulations were signed into law in our Parliament this year on 29 July. These new Regulations will enable a range of commercial spaceflight activities, including horizontal and vertical launch from the UK.

An example of the new type of missions that are being licensed from the UK is the OneWeb constellation. As other, similar systems start to be deployed, we must collectively work together to ensure near-term safety and the long-term sustainability of outer space activities.

Chair,

The UK believes that space has an important contribution to make to the Sustainable Development Goals – the SDGs. To support developing countries, and the implementation of the SDGs, the UK Space Agency's award-winning initiative, the International Partnership Programme (IPP), uses the UK space sector's capabilities in satellite technology and data services to develop space-enabled projects in partnership with developing countries. The International Partnership Programme has an impressive portfolio of 43 grant-funded projects benefitting 47 countries, in Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America, which tackle global development challenges such as climate and disaster resilience, food security, maritime safety, health, and education.

Chair,

I already mentioned the importance of space in the fight against climate change. The UK is delighted to be assuming the Presidency of the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties – COP26 – in partnership with Italy, later this year. We were proud to be the first major economy in the world to pass laws to end our country's contribution to global warming by 2050. The UK's expertise in the analysis and exploitation of climate data from satellites is helping the development of global climate change policy and we are excited by the potential that space has to help combat climate change, including through supporting and improving climate adaptation.

Chair,

We also attach great importance to the Long-Term Sustainability of the Outer Space Environment. Sustainability is just as important in space as it is on earth. To achieve that, the UK is playing a leading role in supporting an inclusive approach to capacity building and implementation of the Long-Term Sustainability guidelines – the LTS guidelines.

The UK is proud to have established our first project with UNOOSA in January 2021. There are four parts to this project:

1. The publication of the LTS guidelines in an accessible format in all six official UN languages;
2. Hosting a series of three international expert events to promote space sustainability by identifying examples of the sustainable use of outer space;
3. Supporting Member States to engage constructively in the upcoming LTS working group; and
4. Identifying gaps and challenges associated with LTS guideline implementation, so as to support the capacity-building needs of all countries.

The UK will showcase this work at a side event that we are co-hosting with UNOOSA on Tuesday 31 August between 5.15pm and 6.15pm Vienna time. We hope many of you will join us, and Director Simonetta Di Pippo, for that event.

Chair,

As part of the UK's Presidency of the G7 this year, delegates pledged to take action to tackle the growing hazard of space debris. The G7 published a Common Statement recognising the importance of the LTS guidelines and the need for a collaborative approach for space traffic management. This important issue was also reflected in the G7 Leaders' Communique.

Additionally, Astroscale – the innovative private company that works on the safe and sustainable development of space – launched a demo programme from their UK operations centre in March this year, which aims to tackle space debris with a spacecraft that uses a magnetic plate, which can pull the debris into freefall to burn up in Earth's atmosphere.

Chair,

The UK looks forward to the establishment of a working group in COPUOS to address the use of in-situ space resources and we welcome the political interest in this. We note, however, that other issues, such as spectrum and Geostationary Satellite Orbit slot allocation by the ITU, are best discussed at the ITU in Geneva.

Chair,

In 2020, the UK was a signatory to the Artemis Accords with NASA. By signing the Artemis Accords, the UK joined international partners to agree a common set of principles to guide cooperation in space exploration for years to come. The Artemis Accords will ensure a shared understanding of safe operations, use of space resources, minimising space debris and sharing scientific data.

Finally, Chairman, distinguished delegates, we look forward to a productive session. You have the UK's full support in furthering joint cooperation and dialogue in the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space.

[Civil news: change to family legal advice via the CLA helpline](#)

Callers to the Civil Legal Advice (CLA) helpline with family issues will no longer be referred to specialist telephone advice from 1 September 2021. Instead, they will be offered alternative support arrangements by being signposted to their nearest face-to-face family providers.

Other areas of telephone advice provided by the CLA in England and Wales will be unaffected by this change. These include education, discrimination, debt, and housing work.

How will the new family process work?

Operators will carry out an initial 'means and merits' assessment for the client. This will provide an early, initial case determination.

If the issue is in scope, and clients are financially eligible, they can then be signposted to their 3 closest providers. If not, they will continue to be signposted elsewhere for possible help.

This is a change from the current referral process for specialist telephone legal advice on family issues. However, these changes do not affect access to family advice. Clients who qualify for legal aid can continue to get face to face help from family practitioners with legal aid contracts, including over the telephone.

Why is this happening now?

The CLA is introducing these changes to replace the current referral arrangements for specialist telephone advice in the family category of law.

It adapts the process to the reality that more than 90% of family cases billed under CLA are only reaching the determination stage.

At the moment, the service is not delivering substantive legal advice in most cases. Instead the service is mostly being used to determine scope and financial eligibility for legal aid.

Amendments to Standard Civil Contract 2018

Changes have been made to the Standard Civil Contract 2018, which we consulted on with representative bodies. Contract amendments will apply from 1 September 2021 to:

- support the referral of clients from the CLA operator service to a face to face family provider
- require face to face providers to carry out full scope and eligibility assessments of the client's issue
- give face to face providers the option of using remote methods of communication where the client has been referred to them by the CLA operator service

Details of the contract amendments can be found on the Standard Civil Contract 2018 page on GOV.UK.

Further information

[Standard Civil Contract 2018](#) – to download table of amendments, general specification and family category specific

COP26 Regional Ambassador Fiona Clouder travels to Honduras

World news story

UK Government's Regional Ambassador for Latin America and the Caribbean, Fiona Clouder, will visit Honduras on 27 August.



Ambassador Clouder will be in Honduras to help ensure the delivery of COP26 objectives by engaging with representatives of government, businesses and wider society. In the meetings Ambassador Clouder will thrive for a COP26 that could achieve ambitious emission reduction targets, promote adaptation measures to protect communities and natural habitats, mobilize finance in favour of the environment, and accelerate collaboration between governments, businesses and civil society to deliver on our climate goals faster.

Ambassador Clouder will discuss this with the Presidential Commissioner for Climate Change, Orlando Garner; the Deputy Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Karen Najarro; the Secretary of Environment, Liliam Rivera; the Secretary of Agriculture, Mauricio Guevara; the Secretary of Energy, Roberto Ordóñez, and the Secretary of Finance, Carlos Mata. She will also have discussions with the organization SUSTENTA Honduras, a group of youngsters implementing a UK funded project that will develop virtual events and social media campaigns to foster public awareness of climate change. Finally, Ambassador Clouder will discuss with Honduran civil society about their contributions to the COP26.

In the run up to COP26, the UK is working with every nation to reach agreement on how to tackle climate change. More than 190 world leaders are expected to arrive in Scotland where the COP26 will take place in November this year. Together, with negotiators, government representatives, businesses and citizens for twelve days of talks, we aim to spur commitments that could lead to cleaner air, creating good jobs, restoring nature and at the same time unleashing economic growth.

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