

Veterans ministers meet ex-forces personnel on first joint visit

The Office for Veterans' Affairs ministers have met with ex-service personnel working at world-leading cloud software firm Salesforce, as they undertook their first engagement in post.

Cabinet Minister Oliver Dowden and Defence Minister Johnny Mercer discussed their plans for the new offering to veterans, taking views from those who have transitioned out of the military into new careers within the private sector.

They were also briefed on the business' veterans programme, VetsForce, which provides online training workshops and mentoring to service leavers and their partners.

The programme aims to educate Salesforce's staff on the significant value military experience brings to the private sector, and works closely with the MOD's Career Transition Partnership to support the employment of veterans.

Minister for the Cabinet Office Oliver Dowden said:

It was wonderful to meet the former service personnel at Salesforce and to see how they are now applying their skills in the private sector. Through the new Office for Veterans' Affairs, the Government is committed to ensuring that veterans have all the support they need, so that they know just how much the country values them.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Johnny Mercer said:

The skills and values developed throughout military service set you up for success in the civilian world, but society has a long way to go to change the perception of veterans in this country. Companies like Salesforce are leading the way in recognising the unique contribution our service leavers can bring to a business, and I urge all employers to follow suit.

Salesforce cemented their commitment to the armed forces by signing the Covenant, pledging to support the careers of veterans and their families, as well as accommodating the training and deployment of employees who join the Reserves.

The ministers have been appointed by the Prime Minister to champion veterans and oversee the provision of support across government, ensuring relevant departments work together to address the challenges service leavers can face.

From mental and physical health to housing and employment, the new Office for Veterans' Affairs represents a holistic approach to caring for those who have served, and the Prime Minister will be updated on its progress at the end of September.

Last year, the UK Government launched the 'Strategy for Our Veterans' which, in partnership with the Scottish and Welsh Governments, aims to improve the delivery of support to ex-service personnel. The consultation sought views from across all sectors as well as the armed forces community, and the response will be published in due course.