



Office for
Veterans' Affairs

Veterans Factsheet 2020



This document offers some key facts and data about veterans in the UK. It focuses on veterans' employment, health, housing, and the justice system, and provides some sources of further information.

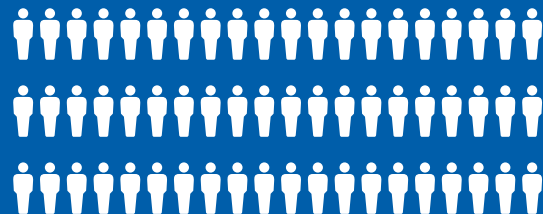
Veterans: the facts

Veterans in Great Britain

40% 16–64 YEARS



60% 65 YEARS AND OVER



Definition

Who is a “veteran” in the UK?

Veterans are defined as anyone who has served for at least one day in Her Majesty’s Armed Forces (Regular or Reserve) or Merchant Mariners who have seen duty on legally defined military operations.

A “Service Leaver” is a term for someone who is in transition from or has ceased to be a member of HM Armed Forces. The term “Service Leaver” is typically used in legal documents, as understanding and use of the term “veteran” does vary, not least amongst those who have served. Many former Armed Forces personnel in the UK do not define themselves as “veterans”. <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/kcmhr/publications/assetfiles/veterans/burdett-2012-veterans.pdf>

For the purposes of this document, the term “veteran” will be used to represent all former Armed Forces personnel.

Based on the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Annual Population Survey results, the Ministry of Defence estimated that there were 2.4 million veterans residing in households across Great Britain in 2017. It is estimated that around 60% of veterans were aged 65 and over, making up 5% of household residents aged 16 and over. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/annual-population-survey-uk-armed-forces-veterans-residing-in-great-britain-2017>

Based on Ministry of Defence statistics, around 15,000 people leave the UK Armed Forces every year. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/quarterly-service-personnel-statistics-index>

Veterans: the facts

2.4 MILLION VETERANS IN GREAT BRITAIN



According to Annual Population Survey UK: UK Armed Forces Veterans residing in Great Britain 2017. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/annual-population-survey-uk-armed-forces-veterans-residing-in-great-britain-2017>

The Office for Veterans' Affairs

The Office for Veterans' Affairs (OVA) is a new Ministerial unit in the Cabinet Office with responsibility for championing veterans' interests at the heart of government – highlighting the outstanding contribution veterans from all walks of life are already making to our economy and society and ensuring no individual who needs help is left behind after they leave service.

We have set up the Office for Veterans' Affairs in the Cabinet Office to ensure the full power of Government can support veterans.

The Strategy for our Veterans, with its ambitious vision to make the UK the best place to be a veteran anywhere in the world by 2028, is the foundation of the Government's approach to veterans. The Office of Veterans' Affairs will drive forward the realisation of this vision, working in concert with Government Departments, Devolved Administrations and the wider veterans' sector.



The Strategy for our Veterans

The Strategy for our Veterans was jointly published by the UK, Scottish and Welsh Governments in November 2018. The strategy set the principles and aims needed to continue to meet the needs of older veterans as well as the wider veteran community over the next ten years, and set the right conditions for society to empower and support them for the next 100 years. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategy-for-our-veterans>



The Strategy for our Veterans – Consultation Response

In support of the Strategy, the UK, Scottish and Welsh Governments each undertook its own consultation, to inform how it could achieve the Strategy's aims within their respective areas of responsibility. The UK, Scottish and Welsh Governments responded to their consultations in January 2020, and continue to collaborate to enable delivery across the whole of the UK.

The UK Government response can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/strategy-for-our-veterans-uk-government-consultation-paper>

The Scottish Government's response is available here:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/strategy-veterans-taking-strategy-forward-scotland/>

The Welsh Government's response is available here:

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-01/taking-forward-the-findings-of-the-veterans-scoping-exercise-in-wales-and-the-strategy-for-our-veterans.pdf>

The Armed Forces Covenant

The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise by the nation that those who serve and have served, and their families, should be treated fairly.

The Covenant was enshrined in law in the 2011 Armed Forces Act and ensures that members of the Armed Forces community are not disadvantaged as a result of their service when accessing Government and commercial services. Special consideration is also appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most, such as the injured and bereaved.

The Government, local authorities, the wider public sector, charities, commercial organisations and civil society all have a role in supporting the Armed Forces community. This includes in areas such as employment, healthcare, housing, education, and financial advice.

Details of organisations which have signed the Covenant can be found here: <https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/get-involved/who-has-signed-the-covenant>



Employment

What support is offered to those leaving the Armed Forces?

79% of working age veterans are employed and are as likely to be employed as non-veterans, and 92% have a qualification and are as likely to have a qualification as non-veterans, according to the Annual Population Survey 2017. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/774937/20190128_-_APS_2017_Statistical_Bulletin_-_OS.pdf

In preparation for a career after service in the Armed Forces, the MOD directly funds employment support through the Career Transition Partnership (CTP). The CTP offers a high quality, no cost recruitment service and supports those leaving the Armed Forces for two years after their discharge date. It connects veterans with employers who recognise the benefits of bringing their talent, skills and experience into their organisations. <http://www.ctp.org.uk>

It is estimated that 86% of service leavers who used the CTP in 2018/19 were employed within six months of leaving the Armed Forces, with a further 8% either in full-time education, training or not actively looking for work. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/868768/20200226_-_Statistical_Bulletin_v3_-_O.pdf

The Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) rewards those employers who support the Armed Forces and inspires others to do the same. The scheme encompasses Bronze, Silver and Gold awards for employer organisations that pledge, demonstrate or advocate support to Defence and the Armed Forces community, and align their values with the Armed Forces Covenant. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defence-employer-recognition-scheme/defence-employer-recognition-scheme>

Veterans: the facts

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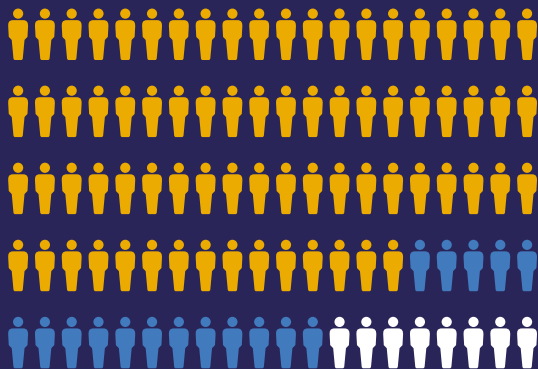
Veterans: the facts



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According to Annual Population Survey UK: UK Armed Forces Veterans residing in Great Britain 2017. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/annual-population-survey-uk-armed-forces-veterans-residing-in-great-britain-2017>



75%

healthy



According to Annual Population Survey UK: UK Armed Forces Veterans residing in Great Britain 2017. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/annual-population-survey-uk-armed-forces-veterans-residing-in-great-britain-2017>

Health

What do we know about the mental health issues affecting the Armed Forces and veterans?

Overall there are no differences between veterans' and non-veterans' self-reported general health, according to the Annual Population Survey 2017.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/annual-population-survey-uk-armed-forces-veterans-residing-in-great-britain-2017>

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), NHS, MOD, OVA, local authorities, and service charities are working together to improve mental health outcomes for the Armed Forces community. This includes Veterans UK, the Samaritans, Combat Stress, Help for Heroes and Walking with the Wounded. <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/military-healthcare/nhs-mental-health-services-for-veterans/>

There are a variety of estimates regarding the prevalence of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in UK Service Personnel and veterans. The longitudinal studies conducted by the King's Centre for Military Health Research (KCMHR) estimated the overall rate of probable PTSD among a sample of current and ex-serving regular military personnel was 6% in the 2014/16 cohort; compared to 4% in the 2004/06 and 2007/09 cohorts. This compares to a rate of 4.4% within the civilian population. <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/kcmhr/publications/assetfiles/2018/kcmhr-admmh-factsheet-sept2018.pdf>

The Government has committed to undertake and extend a Veteran Cohort study to investigate causes of death, including suicide, amongst all those who served between 2001 and 2014, including those who were deployed to operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The study will be extended to include the most recent service leavers and will be updated on an ongoing basis to provide real-time monitoring of suicides. The study will be complemented by an additional study by the University of Manchester, funded jointly by the MOD and NHS (England), into veterans who take their own lives. The study will look at risk factors in the year leading up to a suicide and will use the National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Mental Health database and records from Coroners' inquests. Combined, these studies will provide increasingly robust data, in order to understand whether suicide in the veteran community is disproportionate compared to the rest of the UK general population, and to identify potential interventions.

The provision of veterans' health care, including mental health care, is primarily the responsibility of the local NHS across the UK. Veterans can access all the mental health services available to the general population. On top of that, the NHS provides a wide range of specialist services for veterans. Veterans in England, Scotland and Wales receive priority access to NHS secondary care for Service-related conditions, subject to clinical need of all patients. In Northern Ireland, the Veterans Support Office can also help to provide

support to access health services. Veterans are actively encouraged to inform their General Practitioners (GPs) and other NHS providers that they have served in the Armed Forces. <http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Militaryhealthcare/Pages/Militaryhealthcare.aspx>

NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSEI) has embedded the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant into its constitution, meaning veterans should enjoy the same standard of and access to healthcare as that received by any other UK citizen in the area they live, and continue to have access to high quality veterans' mental health and prosthetics services if required.

In England the NHS provides two dedicated veteran specific mental health services. The Transition, Intervention and Liaison Service (TILS), that provides a range of treatment from recognising early signs of mental health problems and access to support to providing therapeutic treatment for complex mental health difficulties.

This service is complemented by the Veterans Mental Health Complex Treatment Service (VMH TILS), which provides intensive care and treatment for veterans with the most complex needs, offering holistic support for the whole person and their family.

The Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance is made up of 49 hospitals and ambulance trusts across England, Scotland and Wales, with nearly 100 working towards accreditation. They share best practice and showcase high quality veterans' healthcare, including raising awareness amongst staff of veterans' healthcare needs and establishing clear links with Service charities and local support providers.

The Royal College of General Practitioners, together with NHS England and NHS Improvement, have developed an accreditation scheme designed to equip GP practices to better understand the specific needs of veterans and their families (including bereaved families). As at the end of February 2020, over 700 practices have been accredited. <https://www.rcgp.org.uk/clinical-and-research/resources/a-to-z-clinical-resources/Veteran-friendly-gp-practices.aspx>

Accessing NHS mental health care for veterans in England

To access these services, you need to go through the TILS. This can be done by contacting the service directly, or by asking your GP or a military charity to refer you. Find out more:

https://assets.nhs.uk/prod/documents/673_NHS_Veterans_Mental_Health_leaflet_S23_Online_for_web.pdf

As part of the commitments of the NHS Long Term Plan, NHSEI are progressing arrangements to commission a High Intensity Mental Health Service (HIS) for veterans who are in a mental health crisis and need urgent and emergency care and treatment. NHS England is currently in the process of commissioning regional pathfinder services across England to test the proposed model of care for the HIS.

These will be mobilised from late April 2020 and run until the end of March 2022. Learning and insight from the pathfinders will inform the development of a final integrated mental health service model for HIS that will be in place by April 2022.

Justice System

What do we know about veterans in the criminal justice system and what support is available to them?

The vast majority of those who serve in the Armed Forces transition well to civilian life and are less likely than the general population to commit criminal offences. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/former-members-of-the-armed-forces-and-the-criminal-justice-system>

According to the Offender Management Statistics, compiled quarterly by the Ministry of Justice, offenders who have formerly been members of the Armed Forces have accounted for only 3% of those entering prisons in England and Wales in 2019. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly>

The Government is committed to providing support to help veterans in prison and improve their lives when they return to the community. The MOD maintains contact with prison governors, to ensure they are aware of the support available for veterans in custody and can identify those who may require support from the Veterans' Welfare Service. Since January 2015, every prisoner coming into custody has been asked if they have served in the Armed Forces (Regular or Reserves). This information helps those who work with them focus more closely on their rehabilitation needs and signpost them to the wealth of support and assistance available to them from voluntary and community sector organisations. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/more-support-for-veterans-in-the-criminal-justice-system>

Many Service charities are ready to help those who need support after a custodial sentence. <https://www.cobseo.org.uk/clusters/>

Housing

Veterans: the facts

Housing for Veterans

76% of Veterans own a house or have a mortgage



Veterans are as likely as non-veterans to have bought their own home

According to Annual Population Survey: UK Armed Forces veterans residing in Great Britain 2017

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/annual-population-survey-uk-armed-forces-veterans-residing-in-great-britain-2017>

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has introduced various measures to improve access to social housing for the Service community and veterans. This includes changing the law to ensure seriously injured Service personnel and veterans with urgent housing needs are always given high priority for social housing by local authorities. Regulations have also been introduced which ensure that within the first five years, those who have left the Armed Forces cannot be disqualified from social housing because of a local connection or residency requirement.

As trailed in the Government's response to the Veterans Strategy, we will shortly be issuing new statutory guidance for local councils to improve access to social housing for members of the Armed Forces, veterans and their families.

What do we know about veterans and homelessness?

Only a small minority of veterans become homeless. In 2014 it was estimated that the proportion of those sleeping rough who had

served in the Armed Forces ranged from 3% to 6%. <https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/things-to-do/campaigns-policy-and-research/policy-and-research/the-uk-ex-service-community-a-household-survey>

The Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN) Greater London annual reports show that, of those seen sleeping rough in London, the percentage who were UK nationals with experience of serving in the Armed Forces had dropped from 3% in 2017/2018 to 2% in 2018/2019. <http://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/chain-reports>

The Government is working to ensure everyone has a roof over their head and has committed to end rough sleeping. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 ensures that housing authorities intervene at an earlier stage to prevent homelessness and provide support.

Under this Act, the MOD, along with other public authorities, is required to refer Service Leavers at risk of homelessness, if they give consent, to the local housing authority of their choice.

Further Support

What other support is available to veterans?

Veterans UK is the MOD's support organisation for Service Personnel, the majority of veterans and their families. Veterans UK delivers the Armed Forces Pension Schemes (AFPS), War Pension Scheme (WPS) and Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS), making payments to those injured or disabled due to service in the Armed Forces, and to the widows, widowers and civil partners of those who die as a result of service in the Armed Forces.

Veterans UK also provides a welfare support package through the Veterans Welfare Service (VWS) and a Freephone Helpline facility. The VWS provides a help and advice service to veterans, their families and dependents through a national network of Welfare Managers. The VWS works alongside in-service welfare providers, local authorities, voluntary organisations, service charities and the Department for Work and Pensions. This ensures that those leaving the Armed Forces, existing veterans and their families receive the information and assistance they need to access the appropriate services and benefits.

The Veterans UK Helpline (0808 1914 218) provides specific advice on compensation scheme claims and getting help with benefits, pensions, loans and grants, emergency accommodation, finding a job, re-training, health issues, welfare concerns, service records and medals. <https://www.gov.uk/veterans-uk> Email: veterans-uk@mod.uk

Defence Transition Services (DTS) has been launched by the MOD to assist those facing the greatest challenges to making a successful transition to civilian life on their discharge from the Armed Forces. DTS support is available to all Service leavers exiting the Armed Forces and is based on the need of the individual.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/help-and-support-for-service-leavers-and-their-families>

The **Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust** receives £10 million a year to run grant programmes across the UK which support the Armed Forces community. This year, they will receive an extra £10 million to support veterans' mental health.

<https://www.covenantfund.org.uk/>

The **Veterans' Gateway**, launched in 2017 and awarded £2 million from the Covenant Fund Trust provides information and support both online and over the phone (0808 802 1212). They help veterans and their families find sources of support or information for any challenges that they might be facing, from healthcare and housing to employability and finances.

<https://www.veteransgateway.org.uk>

In Northern Ireland (NI) the **Veterans Support Office**, facilitated by the Reserves and Cadets Association NI, provides further specific support for veterans resident in NI. It is designed both to help deliver services where the statutory bodies and service charities are unable, and to improve the capacity and capability of local authorities and others to apply for grants from the Armed Forces Covenant Trust. <http://www.reservesandcadetsni.org.uk/veteran/>

Cobseo, as the Confederation of Service Charities, provides a point of contact for integration between Government, local government, Devolved Administrations, its members and the wider Armed Forces Community. Its cluster system, formed in 2009, promotes and enhances collaborative working between Government, Service charities and the broader third sector in areas such as housing, health and wellbeing, veterans in the criminal justice system and employment. <http://www.cobseo.org.uk>



The **Veterans Railcard** was announced by the Department for Transport (DfT) in January 2020 and will be launched in November 2020, providing discounted train travel to veterans to help boost job prospects and bring them closer to family and friends. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-fulfils-promise-to-veterans-with-new-railcard>

The Government will offer an interview to any veteran who meets the minimum criteria for a Civil Service role, from spring this year, as part of plans to make the Civil Service a great place to work for veterans.

The Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Defence, the Cabinet Office and the Home Office, including UK Border Force, will be the early adopters of this scheme.

All veterans are eligible to apply for an Armed Forces Veterans Badge. <https://www.gov.uk/apply-medal-or-veterans-badge/apply-for-a-veterans-badge>

More information for employers on how to advertise jobs to Service leavers can be found here: <https://www.ctp.org.uk/employers>

Veterans: the facts

Service leavers who used the Career Transition Partnership in 2018/19



86%
employed within six months
of leaving the armed forces

9%
either in full-time education, training
or not actively looking for work

“Armed Forces leavers offer an exceptional work ethic, commitment, and ability to work in some of the most challenging conditions possible. With an unrivalled approach to team working and leadership as well as a multitude of skills, experiences and knowledge; they are an asset to any company.”

Jaguar Land Rover

