



# VETERANS

## Key Facts





**This document offers some key facts  
and data about veterans in the UK**

**It focuses on veterans' employment,  
health, housing, the justice system and  
the Armed Forces Covenant, and provides  
some sources of further information**

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# 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 (MOD) estimated that there were 2.5 million veterans residing in households across Great Britain in 2016. It is estimated that around 62% of veterans are aged 65 and over. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/annual-population-survey-uk-armed-forces-veterans-residing-in-great-britain-2016>

## Veterans: The Facts

**2.5**  
**MILLION**  
**VETERANS**  
**IN GREAT BRITAIN**



(According to Annual Population Survey: UK Armed Forces veterans residing in Great Britain 2016)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/annual-population-survey-uk-armed-forces-veterans-residing-in-great-britain-2016>

# What is 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 in 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 support to veterans regarding employment, healthcare, housing, education, and financial advice.

[www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk](http://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk)

## Veterans: The Facts



**78%**  
of working age veterans are employed – and are as likely to be employed as non-veterans (79%)

(According to Annual Population Survey: UK Armed Forces veterans residing in Great Britain 2016)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/annual-population-survey-uk-armed-forces-veterans-residing-in-great-britain-2016>

# Employment

## What support is offered to those leaving the Armed Forces?

78% 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 2016.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/annual-population-survey-uk-armed-forces-veterans-residing-in-great-britain-2016>

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 by connecting them with employers who recognise the benefits of bringing the talent, skills and experience of veterans into their organisations.

<http://www.ctp.org.uk>

It is estimated that 82% of service leavers who used the CTP in 2016/17 were employed within six months of leaving the Armed Forces, with a further 10% either in full-time education, training or not actively looking for work.

The MOD partners with organisations throughout the UK to build mutually beneficial partnerships with Defence and to help them understand the value in signing the Armed Forces Covenant.

As of May 2018, around 2500 businesses, charitable and public sector organisations have signed the Armed Forces Covenant, pledging specific support to the Armed Forces community. Commitments include better access to employment opportunities, support, mentoring, and work placements for veterans. Details of organisations which have signed the Covenant can be found here:

<https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/get-involved/who-has-signed-the-covenant/>

The Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) encompasses gold, silver, and bronze awards as a public recognition by the Ministry of Defence of an employer's efforts to pledge, demonstrate and advocate support towards the Armed Forces community. Examples include Deloitte, a gold ERS winner, who is part of the Veterans Work project encouraging businesses to hire veterans.

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

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# Veterans: The Facts



**92%**

of working age veterans have a qualification – and are as likely to have a qualification as non-veterans (89%)

(According to Annual Population Survey: UK Armed Forces veterans residing in Great Britain 2016)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/annual-population-survey-uk-armed-forces-veterans-residing-in-great-britain-2016>

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# Veterans: The Facts

## Veterans' Health aged 16-64



**74%**  
Healthy

**17%**  
Fair

**9%**  
Bad Health

(According to Annual Population Survey: UK Armed Forces veterans residing in Great Britain 2016)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/annual-population-survey-uk-armed-forces-veterans-residing-in-great-britain-2016>

# 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 2016.

**<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/annual-population-survey-uk-armed-forces-veterans-residing-in-great-britain-2016>**

The MOD, Department of Health, NHS, local authorities, and service charities are working together to improve mental health outcomes for the Armed Forces community. This includes a new 24 hour mental health helpline (0800 323 4444) for Service personnel with Combat Stress, and the Veterans' Gateway as a single point of contact for Service personnel, veterans and their families. The MOD also launched the Defence Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy in 2017 focusing on well being and prevention, detection and treatment of mental health issues in the Armed Forces.

Whilst there has been an emphasis on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), studies conducted by the King's Centre for Military Health Research (KCMHR) noted that PTSD rates were around 6% in a sample of serving Armed forces personnel and veterans. This is slightly higher than the prevalence among the general population (4%), and increases were found amongst those serving in combat roles.

**[http://www.veteranstransition.co.uk/vtr3\\_followup\\_2017.pdf](http://www.veteranstransition.co.uk/vtr3_followup_2017.pdf)**

Overall, rates of suicide are lower in the Armed Forces than they are in the general population, and any increases are often influenced by pre-Service vulnerabilities.

**<https://www.cobseo.org.uk/assets/files/2017/09/KCMHR-ADMMH-Factsheet-2017-002.pdf>**

The provision of veterans' health care, including mental health care, is primarily the responsibility of the local NHS across the UK, providing a wide range of specialist and nationally-funded services to meet the needs of 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. 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 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. NHS England provides a Veterans Mental Health Transition, Intervention and Liaison Service (VMH TILS) providing 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.

The Veterans Covenant Hospital Alliance is made up of over 20 hospitals across England, Scotland and Wales sharing best practice and showcasing high quality veterans' healthcare. This includes raising awareness amongst staff of veterans' healthcare needs and establishing clear links with Service charities and local support providers.

# Veterans: The Facts

## Veterans in Great Britain:

**38%** 16-64 YEARS



**62%**  
65 YEARS AND OVER

(According to Annual Population Survey: UK Armed Forces veterans residing in Great Britain 2016)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/annual-population-survey-uk-armed-forces-veterans-residing-in-great-britain-2016>



# 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 return to civilian life without problem and are less likely than their civilian counterparts to commit criminal offences.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/former-members-of-the-armed-forces-and-the-criminal-justice-system>

According to these 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 2017.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly#history>

The Government is committed to providing support to help veterans in prison and improve their lives on return to their communities. For the small minority who find themselves in custody, the MOD maintains contact with prison governors to ensure they are aware of the support available 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 also offer help to these individuals in their rehabilitation and aim towards subsequent employment.

# Veterans: The Facts

Service leavers who used the Career Transition Partnership in 2016/17



**82%** employed within six months of leaving the Armed Forces

**10%** either in full-time education, training or not actively looking for work

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/career-transition-partnership-ex-service-personnel-employment-outcomes-financial-year-2016/17>

# Veterans: The Facts

Housing for Veterans

**75%** 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 2016)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/annual-population-survey-uk-armed-forces-veterans-residing-in-great-britain-2016>

# Housing

All 407 local authorities in Great Britain have pledged to uphold the Armed Forces Covenant.

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 those within five years of having left the Armed Forces cannot be disqualified from social housing because of a local connection or residency requirement.

MHCLG has also introduced measures to make it easier for members of the Armed Forces community to buy their own home. Regular Armed Forces personnel are benefitting from over £200million from the Forces Help to Buy Scheme to help them get on the property ladder, and provide stability throughout their career and later in life. As of April 2018, payments have been made to over 14,000 applicants and at least 95% have already resulted in a purchase property or extension.

## 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%.

<http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/media/2275/2014householdsurveyreport.pdf>

The Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN) Greater London annual reports between 2013 and 2017 show that, of those seen sleeping rough in London, the percentage who were UK nationals with experience of serving in the UK Armed Forces has stayed at around 3%.

<http://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/chain-reports>

The Government has committed to halve rough sleeping by the end of 2022 and eliminate it by 2027. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 ensures that housing authorities intervene at an earlier stage to prevent homelessness and provide support.



# Further Support

## What other support is available to veterans?

**Veterans UK** is the MOD's support organisation for service personnel, 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 provide 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 and also works closely with local authorities, voluntary organisations, service charities and the Department for Work and Pensions. This ensures that those leaving the Armed Forces and 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 on where to get help on 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](mailto:veterans-uk@mod.uk)**

The Armed Forces Covenant Fund provides £10 million per annum to projects and programmes across the UK which support the Armed Forces Community. The Covenant Fund awarded £2million for the creation of the Veterans' Gateway, launched in 2017, to provide a single point of contact both online and over the telephone (0808 802 1212) to 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>**

A large number of charities provide extensive support to veterans; further details can be found on the **Confederation of Service Charities (Cobseo)** website.

**<http://www.cobseo.org.uk>**



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 can be found here:

<http://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk>

“Between 3 and 4% of rough sleepers are veterans which means that you are statistically less likely to be homeless if you have served.


<https://www.stoll.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/FINAL-REPORT-ON-HOUSING-FOR-SINGLE-VETERANS-9-Feb-2018-EMBARGOED.pdf>

The provision of ringfenced housing and specialist support services for veterans far outweighs the provision for the general population. This is especially the case for housing where there are over 4,000 units of accommodation ringfenced specifically for the veteran population.”

Stoll Chief Executive and Chair of Cobseo Housing Cluster – Ed Tytherleigh



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**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**

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