

News story: New figures reveal changes to the UK's veteran population

New figures released by the MOD provide an insight into how the UK's veteran population will change over the next decade.

The figures show that over the next ten years, the number of former service personnel in Great Britain is expected to decrease by around 1 million, to approximately 1.6 million by 2028. Estimates put the number of former service personnel currently residing in Britain at around 2.5 million.

As well as the reduction in size, the age and gender profile of the ex-forces community is also expected to change. The percentage of veterans of working age, between 16-64, is projected to rise from 38% to 44%, while the percentage of women is set to increase from 10% to 13%.

The new data projections will inform the first 'Strategy for our Veterans', jointly published by the UK, Scottish and Welsh Governments, which sets out the key areas of support for those who have left the armed forces.

Published in November 2018, the strategy identified six key areas where support is most needed over the next ten years, including: community and relationships, employment and skills, health and wellbeing, finance and debt, housing, and contact with the law. The UK Government consultation complementing the strategy is open until 21st February.

All relevant Government departments have a responsibility to ensure that the military community is treated fairly, and not disadvantaged by their service as part of the Armed Forces Covenant. This includes access to housing and healthcare, as well as employment and education support.

The 2021 census, which will for the first time allow citizens to identify whether they have served, will work alongside these new projected figures to help local authorities to better understand the needs of the veterans community, and to support them in the most efficient way.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Tobias Ellwood said:

The figures reveal important insight into the potential needs of our future veteran community, and will help us to continue to step up our support for those who have served this country.

While the vast majority of ex-service personnel go to live happy, healthy and successful lives, it's right that we work across Governments to make sure veterans can access the services they need.

This week, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

announced that all social housing applicants will be given the chance to identify themselves as veterans, and those struggling with mental health will be given the same priority as their peers with physical injuries.

Last year, NHS England confirmed that every part of the country now has dedicated mental health services up and running for veterans, and announced the first 25 hospitals to become 'Veteran Aware', delivering specialist healthcare support to those who have served. This will be supported by £10 million of investment as part of the NHS's long term plan.

Any veteran in need of advice can call the [Veterans' Gateway](#) – a 24 hour helpline which acts as the first port of call for ex-service personnel and their families. The MOD has announced that the Gateway's 24/7 helpline will trial a new outreach service where it will proactively call those who have served, to check in on their wellbeing and remind them of where support can be found.