

News story: Veterans' Gateway begins new trial proactive call service to support ex-forces community

The Veterans' Gateway, the first port of call for veterans' support, has begun a new trial outreach service for those who have served in the armed forces.

Supported by £108,000 of funding from the Ministry of Defence, the Veterans' Gateway will now proactively call ex-service personnel who have been in contact to ask for support.

Under the new initiative, the Gateway will identify the most vulnerable ex-service personnel who have previously contacted its helpline, and trained call handlers will get in touch to make sure they are receiving the support they need.

Each individual who contacts the helpline will be asked for their consent to receive calls from the Veterans' Gateway team, who will be able to provide support and advice, and make referrals where necessary.

Veterans will receive calls from the same advisor, and can decide how often they hear from the Gateway, so they are supported in a way that suits their specific needs.

This new proactive posture follows the US Marine Corps veterans service, who make six proactive calls for every one that they receive.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

The Veterans' Gateway already makes a huge difference to the ex-forces community, helping thousands of people across the country access the support they need.

I'm delighted we are now able to enhance this service, boosting the support we offer veterans and making sure that no one who has served this country suffers in silence.

Assistant Director of Veterans' Gateway Mark Collins said:

This funding will allow us to build on our service, offering a more holistic service to the veteran community which will be a positive step.

We will be monitoring the outcome to see how this trial impacts our

users but hopefully it'll mean those most vulnerable will be able to access help from Veterans' Gateway supporting organisations, on their journey to getting the right help.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Tobias Ellwood said:

We are committed to making sure everyone who has served knows where to turn in times of hardship, and this new trial will allow us to go one step further.

By maintaining regular contact with any veteran who needs help, we can offer them the support they deserve, as and when they need it.

Available 24 hours a day, the Veterans' Gateway signposts ex-forces personnel to the wide range of support available to them, including housing and financial advice, career guidance, and medical care from the NHS. Since being set up in 2017, the Veterans' Gateway has already received over 20,000 calls, advising ex-forces personnel and their families.

The funding for this new trial was announced by the Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson last year, as part of a wider package of support for veterans. This included the creation of the new Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund – a grant programme where charities will be able to apply for funding from the £10 million awarded to the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust to support the mental fitness of ex-service personnel.