

## [News story: London VAPC respond to consultation on homelessness code of guidance](#)

The outcome of a closed government [consultation](#) on a proposed homelessness code of guidance for local authorities, is keenly awaited by London Veterans Advisory and Pensions Committee (VAPC).

The VAPC, had previously commissioned an independent review from the [University of Kent](#), on how London's councils implement housing policy affecting veterans, contributed to the consultation.

It welcomed that guidance on dealing with veterans now forms a separate section within the proposed code.

But London VAPC chairman Lynn Verity suggested there were several areas where further clarification was vital:

Chief among these are that the code as currently written does not define either 'veteran' or 'vulnerable'. We have pointed this out and, therefore, hope our concerns are acted upon.

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## [News story: KITE and VAPC NE run an Armed Forces Community Hub workshop](#)

Prof Rob Wilson (r.) explaining the veteran landscape, VAPC/KITE Armed Forces Community Hub Workshop, KITE, Newcastle University, 09/01/2018. Photograph by Michael Potts. All rights reserved.

The Veterans Advisory and Pension Committee Northern England (VAPC NE) and Newcastle University's Centre for [Knowledge, Innovation, Technology and Enterprise](#) (KITE) conducted a workshop with 2 objectives. These were to:

- focus on deepening the appreciation of sharing information within the armed forces community
- explore the need for developing information sharing infrastructure

to empower individual members of the regular and reserve armed forces, their families, and the veteran community

To help better understand the issues from the navy perspective, the VAPC NE lead, Mr. Michael Potts, and Profs [Rob Wilson](#) and [Mike Martin](#), , engaged with a Royal Navy Officer who had experience of both regular and reservists in the north-east England and experience working with veterans groups from a naval perspective.

This workshop was part of the on going process conducted by KITE and the VAPC NE to develop new tools and infrastructure to empower the armed forces community and provide the tools to local and national government, service providers and third sector partners. These tools will place the control back to the individual community member, veterans, their families, and serving members of the community, to provide the tools to improve support delivery, reduce costs, and to help those in most need.

The Hub project has been on going for 5 years. These rounds of workshops are an important way to develop the project to help maximise the toolset, infrastructure, and talent needed in a complex mixed economy, which veterans and the wider community are facing.

It is an important part to ensuring that veterans are very much in control and are not seen as a passive problem but as part of a solution.

The coming rounds of workshops are continuing and form an integral part of the KITE/VAPC NE Armed Forces Community Hub development process.

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## **[Press release: High quality evidence helps government deliver better public services](#)**

The government-funded network, which is made up of 10 independent What Works Centres, was created to improve the use and generation of robust evidence in policy areas such as health, education and policing.

The progress report, released today to mark the network's fifth anniversary, highlights how public funds and resources have been allocated more effectively, thanks to evidence provided by independent researchers in the government-backed What Works Centres.

For example, research from the Early Intervention Foundation showed the impact of parent conflict on children's long-term outcomes. This research informed the decision of the Department for Work and Pensions to invest £30 million in interventions designed to resolve parent conflict in families with the most disadvantaged children.

By translating complex evidence into practical and useable tools, the What

Works Centres help public sector decision-makers deliver the best possible outcomes for the public.

David Lidington, Minister for the Cabinet Office and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Elizabeth Truss, Chief Secretary to the Treasury said:

This government is committed to delivering public services that work for the ordinary citizen. Services delivered by schools, hospitals, GP practices, residential care homes, and police forces have all been enhanced by the findings of the What Works network.

The UK is now seen as a world-leader in the application of evidence in policy and practice and that is largely due to the increasing profile of the What Works Centres.

Dr David Halpern, What Works National Adviser said:

At the request of the Cabinet Secretary and Prime Minister, it has been a great honour to champion this agenda these last five years. Answering the question 'What works?' is hard work, but often a game changer. We've been asking this question in medicine for 50 years, and it's saved countless lives. Now we're asking it in schools, policing and economic growth policies, and its impact is proving equally large.

Megan Dixon, Director of Literacy, Aspire Educational Trust said:

The research that the EEF [Education Endowment Foundation] does helps us make really effective decisions about what to focus on in schools. It is great to have independent, robust research to consider when you are thinking about adopting a new approach.

Sir Jeremy Heywood, Head of the Civil Service said:

What Works' is a quietly radical agenda that is materially increasing the supply of evidence available to decision-makers. I am delighted to see that the public sector is embracing it.

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# News story: Home Office proposes changes to passport application fees

The Home Office has outlined plans to introduce different passport fees for online and postal applications as part of its push to increase the use of online services and its ambition to create a self-sustainable immigration and borders system.

The proposals, which remain subject to Parliamentary approval, would mean the money collected through fees will contribute to the cost of processing British passport holders as they travel in and out of the country, shifting the burden for paying for these services away from the taxpayer – millions of whom do not currently hold passports. These reforms are part of plans by the Home Office to invest £100 million on border security and infrastructure next year.

This forms part of the ongoing work to modernise and further strengthen the security of the border. British passport holders already receive a world-class customer experience at the UK Border with 76% of eligible passengers now using ePassport gates which had a record 46.2 million passenger crossings in 2017. And in total 250 million people travel across the UK Border each year and this number is increasing, helping to grow our economy.

In addition, as is currently the case, the fee will pay for the costs associated with issuing UK passports and for consular support provided to British nationals abroad.

As well as ensuring that the process of getting a passport is funded by those who use them, the proposals reflect the differing amounts it costs to process online and postal applications. Her Majesty's Passport Office is continually developing its online application services, with everyone over the age of 16 now able to renew their passport using the latest online system where applicants can upload their passport photograph digitally.

Under the plans, online applications, which are available to all UK-based applicants, will increase in line with inflation, taking the total from £72.50 to £75.50 for adults and £49 for children. Postal applications will increase by £12.50 to £85 for adults and £58.50 for children, reflecting the increased costs of processing postal applications compared to online applications. Adults choosing to apply online would still be paying less than they would have in 2009, with passport fees having decreased in 2012.

Immigration Minister Caroline Nokes said:

The passport is an invaluable document that allows millions of British people to travel around the world for business and pleasure.

Our priority is to ensure that UK travellers have a secure,

effective, and efficient service from the point of application to the time they pass through the UK border and it is only right that we should look at this whole process when setting our fees.

These proposals will ensure that those people who don't travel abroad are not footing the bill for those who do.

The changes are fully supported by the fee-setting powers that were brought in by the Immigration Act 2016 and if they are approved by Parliament, they will come into force on 27 March 2018.

The proposals are unrelated to the announcement that the colour of the UK passport will be changing in 2019, which will be delivered at no additional cost.

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## [News story: Assessing the impact of medical technologies: apply for funding](#)

Ultrasound machine in a laboratory.

The [Office for Life Sciences](#), in partnership with Innovate UK, has up to £1 million to invest in projects that help developers of innovative medicines, medical devices, diagnostics and digital technologies to evaluate their products in a clinical setting.

This competition will allow small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to generate evidence that the products they are developing can meet the priorities of the NHS.

### **The life sciences sector**

Life sciences is one of the most important sectors of the UK economy. More than 5,000 businesses employ around 235,000 people and generate £63.5 billion in turnover.

Over 95% of businesses working in the sector are small. They often find it difficult to generate sufficient evidence to get their products adopted.

### **In line with NHS priorities**

Projects can range from smaller ones looking at the feasibility of collecting data to larger ones that support the actual collection of data.

They must be carried out in the NHS and show how they will impact NHS priorities. This includes to:

- reduce cancellations or unnecessary appointments in primary and secondary care
- reduce the burden on accident and emergency services, for example, by diverting footfall
- improve patient safety and avoid patient harm
- speed up diagnosis, such as improving the scope of lower cost diagnostic imaging
- enable earlier diagnosis of cancer
- support the management of long-term conditions, such as diabetes, chronic pain management, cardiovascular disease, asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease

## **Competition information**

- the competition is open, and the deadline for applications is at midday 21 March 2018
- projects must be led by an SME working alone or with partners, but only the lead business can apply for funding
- we expect projects to range in size between £50,000 and £250,000 and to last up to 10 months
- businesses could attract up to 50% of their costs