Defence Committee  
House of Commons London SW1A 0AA  
Tel 020 7219 3280 Fax 020 7219 6952  
Email defcom@parliament.uk Website www.parliament.uk/delcom

From the Chair, Rt Hon James Arbuthnot MP

Alex Neil MSP,
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing,
St Andrew's House,
Regent Road,
Edinburgh,
EH1 3DG

6 February 2013

Dear Alex Neil,

The Armed Forces Covenant in Action? Part 1: Military Casualties

As you may be aware, the Defence Committee carried out an inquiry into military casualties to which your predecessor kindly submitted a statement to the Committee on the Scottish Government perspective on the treatment of individuals who are being discharged from Service. The Defence Committee published its Report into military casualties in December 2011 and the Government Response to that Report in February 2013. We followed up the Government Response with the Ministry of Defence in July 2012.

We are now undertaking further work in this area and, recognising the importance of the Devolved Administrations in meeting the health needs of former Service personnel, we would like to understand further the work you are doing on veterans’ mental and physical health needs and your interaction with the MoD, the Department of Health and the Northern Ireland and Welsh Governments.

In particular, we would like your assistance in addressing the following topics:

- How you commission your health authorities to meet the physical and mental health needs of veterans?

- **The implementation of the Armed Forces Covenant in Scotland** What aspects have you introduced? What progress has your programme of Continuing Professional Development for health professionals made?

- **The Scottish Government’s involvement in the MoD Transition Protocol** How many ex-Service personnel passed through the Transition Protocol into civilian life in Scotland? How has the Veterans First Point Service developed?
• The approach taken by the Scottish Government to the mental health needs of the former Armed Forces personnel. How are the commissioning arrangements put in place from April 2009 with NHS Scotland and Combat Stress for the provision of specialist mental health services working? Is the MoD working with you to implement the recommendations of the Murrison Report “Fighting Fit”?

• Scottish Government involvement have you had in implementing the Murrison recommendations on Veterans’ prosthetic services. Have you accepted these recommendations? If so, how will you implement them in Scotland?

• Specific policies in place to provide the long term cares needs of those veterans with serious brain injuries

• Does the Scottish Government exclude Guaranteed Income Payments made under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme when determining the funding of publicly arranged social care?

I look forward to hearing from you on the good work being undertaken in Scotland.

Yours sincerely,

James Atherton

CHAIR