I am writing in response to your letter dated 9 September (received by us on 10 October) in which you express concern that Commanding Officers are taking action against Service Personnel who contact their Member of Parliament regarding personal matters.

Members of the Armed Forces are permitted to contact their constituency Member of Parliament on a purely personal matter. This policy is published in a Service-wide notice to all Commanding Officers (Defence Instruction and Notices –2014DIN03-024 “Contact with the Media and Communicating in Public”) that can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defence-instruction-contact-with-media-and-public. Unless authorised by MOD Ministers in advance, meetings, either formal or informal, between Parliamentarians and Service personnel to discuss Defence matters are not permitted.

Where a Service person raises an issue relating to Defence matters through their MP, the Department’s response encourages them to raise it through their Chain of Command. My officials are not aware of any instances of disciplinary action being taken against personnel in relation to contact with Parliamentarians. However, if you are able to provide specific examples of this, I will investigate further.

I hope this clarifies our position.

THE RT HON MICHAEL FALLON MP

Rory Stewart MP
Chairman, House of Commons Defence Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA