Dear David,

Following the inquiry into 'Support for Armed Forces Veterans in Wales', the Welsh Affairs Committee published its report on this subject on 12 February 2013. The Government response to the recommendations and conclusion within this report was published on 4 June 2013 and included a commitment to write back to the Committee at the end of the year on the recommendation regarding medical records. As such, I would like to take this opportunity to provide you with an update.

You will recall that recommendation 11 of your report stated "...care given to veterans can sometimes be compromised by the failure to transfer medical records between MOD and NHS. We welcome the introduction of an improved system by the MOD later in 2013 and recommend that the Ministry updates Parliament about the establishment and effectiveness of the system by the end of the year". I am pleased to report that the roll out of the first increment to the new system was completed on 3 December 2013. From this date once an individual leaves the Armed Forces and first registers with a NHS GP, their NHS record is being sent to the GP with a letter explaining that the Service leaver has been under the care of the Defence Medical Services and detailing how the GP may obtain a copy of the individual's full military medical record.

Under the previous system, the GP may not have known that their patient was a veteran unless the individual proactively identified themselves as such and may not have known how to obtain the individual's medical record unless the patient had relayed this information to them. The inclusion of a letter in the NHS medical record now means that the receiving GP has this information allowing them to act upon this.

It should be noted that under both the current and previous systems, Service leavers are provided with a summary of their military medical record and/or an FMED 133 which includes information on how to obtain a copy of the full military medical record. The

David T C Davies MP
Chairman
Welsh Affairs Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA
individual is then responsible for passing this to their NHS GP on registration. The letter highlights this and this will act as an additional prompt for the GP to proactively discuss the Service medical history with the patient.

Over the next 12 months we will be developing our systems further to deliver another incremental improvement. In addition to the letter, we are considering the feasibility of including a summary of in-service care received under the DMS with the NHS record. This should allow the receiving medical practitioner in the NHS to have a better understanding of the individual's health needs and build awareness of the veteran community.

The first incremental improvement to our systems has only been in place for a matter of weeks, so although the effectiveness of this change in process will only become apparent over time, I hope you will agree that this is a positive step forward.

ANNA SOUBRY MP