



Ministry
of Defence

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The HCDC report Mental Health and the Armed Forces Part Two The Provision of Care published on 25 February 2019 highlights the importance of the need for timely and appropriate health care being provided to serving personnel and veterans suffering from mental health conditions.

As Defence Secretary, I take the recommendations of the HCDC very seriously and am fully committed to continuing and improving support for serving personnel and expanding access to key mental health initiatives that the NHS across the UK are responsible for delivering to the veteran population. We are in the middle of a sustained focus on mental health and wellbeing not only within Defence but alongside our colleagues in the Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England and the Devolved Administrations. Defence cannot do this alone and we will ensure that the commitments announced by the NHS are met consistently across the UK, in line with the Armed Forces Covenant. Service people, their families, including Reserves, Veterans and MOD Civil Servants rely both on our Defence Medical Services and on external services to access health and wellbeing support, particularly regarding the provision of healthcare services. We want to make sure the NHS delivers the full and best possible care; Defence remains closely mapped with the Government's national focus and, from a healthcare perspective, the NHS in delivering it.

I have asked to meet with the Health Secretary Matt Hancock personally to discuss the recommendations on current and future Armed Forces mental health provisions and to reiterate the importance that the Government places in making sure our armed forces community are looked after in a number of key health areas including mental health. I want to assure you that our officials are fully engaged to provide a detailed reply to the HCDC by 25 April 2019.

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