



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

*From the Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP  
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care*

*39 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0EU*

*020 7210 4850*

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Dear Defence Committee members,

It was good to meet with you last week to discuss your report 'Mental Health and the Armed Forces, Part Two: The Provision of Care' published on the 25<sup>th</sup> February. As mentioned I warmly welcome this report and its recommendations. Safeguarding the mental health and wellbeing of our nation's armed forces community is of the utmost importance, and I am always open to suggestions on how current provision can be improved.

I am pleased to say we are already making steady progress on some of the report's recommendations. For example, recommendation 10 on paragraph 67, regarding the positive steps to create veterans friendly GP surgeries. There are already over 100 GP practices in the West Midlands with more coming forward every week and the additional funding announced in NHS England's Long-Term Plan will go some way to help roll this out throughout England. There is also the already established Veterans Trauma Network and the Veterans Covenant Hospital Alliance which seek to raise awareness of the complex issues veterans can face amongst a wide range of healthcare professionals.

I also met the Duke of Westminster and his team about progress on the DNRC.

I have a meeting planned with Gavin Williamson to discuss all the recommendations in more detail and our Departments along with those in the Devolved Administrations are working closely together to draft the Government's Official Response.

I would be happy to meet with you again after you have received our response, and look forward to working with you on this to ensure our veterans have the support they need.

Yours ever,

**MATT HANCOCK**