

First government-funded veteran centres launch

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14 veteran support centres across the UK to receive up to £1m each to act as a single point of contact for local veterans.

Thousands of ex-forces personnel will soon be able to visit the UK's first ever network of government-backed veteran support centres and gain easier access to local services across health, housing, employment and more.

14 existing veteran centres will receive over £13m of funding to become part of VALOUR – a groundbreaking programme that tackles the current fragmented nature of accessing support.

The wider £50m programme will include a headquarters in the Office for Veterans' Affairs in the Ministry of Defence, field officers and an online support platform. The system will work together to share data and form better connections between local charities, councils and service providers.

This government is investing record levels in support for our veterans, and is renewing the nation's commitment to those who serve with a 10-year Veterans Strategy, which aims to celebrate and support veterans, and help them to contribute to their local communities and the economy.

Minister for Veterans and People Louise Sandher-Jones MP said:

This government is stepping up the nation's commitment to its veterans. We are building the first ever system that brings together a headquarters in the heart of government, coheres charities and support services, and connects a network of veteran support centres.

With new connections across the system and field officers on the ground, VALOUR will build the most detailed picture yet of what's working and what's needed at a local and national level. Our message to veterans is simple: this Government is on your side.

The minister was speaking on a visit to one of the centres that will soon become part of the VALOUR network to learn more about how the additional funding will help support 265,000-strong veteran community in the South West of England.

Alongside a group of six local military charities, Alabaré's VALOUR-recognised centre in Salisbury will coordinate local access to housing, health, employment and wellbeing support for veterans and the wider armed forces community.

Andrew Lord, CEO of Alabaré, said:

We were delighted to welcome the Veterans Minister to the South West's VALOUR-recognised centre in Salisbury. The VALOUR programme is one of the most significant opportunities in recent years to transform how the UK's Armed Forces community accesses support, recovery pathways, and long-term independence.

ALABARÉ's partnership with Defence Medical Welfare Service, Defence Gardens, Icarus, The Poppy Factory, The Warrior Programme and Armed Forces Equine Charity reflects both our long-standing commitment to supporting veterans and the strength that comes when organisations work together.

Veteran centres have also been selected in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and across England. These include a wellbeing centre in County Fermanagh that supports veterans' mental health, SSAFA's drop-in centre in Glasgow that signposts veterans to local services, and a community sports centre in Port Talbot, South Wales. A group of centres in Greater Manchester organise local community activities such as walking trips and choir singing to reduce isolation, while a Kent-based charity trains and employs veterans to manufacture road signage.

Later in the spring, there will be a further opportunity for organisations to be able to apply to become part of the VALOUR network, via a second round of funding.

List of upcoming VALOUR-recognised centres

- Northern Ireland: Brooke House
- Scotland: SSAFA
- Wales: Bulldogs Boxing and Community Activities
- North East England: Northumberland County Council and East Durham Veterans Trust
- North West England: Armed Forces Community HQ – Greater Manchester and Veterans in Communities
- Yorkshire & the Humber: Hull 4 Heroes
- West Midlands: Telford & Wrekin Council
- East Midlands: Derbyshire Addictions Advice Service
- South East England: Veterans Outreach Support and Royal British Veterans Enterprise
- South West England: Alabaré and Improving Lives Plymouth

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/first-government-funded-veteran-centres-launch>