**Samaritans Scotland Briefing**

This briefing is for MSPs ahead of the debate scheduled for Thursday 11th of November on Remembrance Commemorations and the Scottish Government’s Support for the Veterans and Armed Forces Community in Scotland in 2021.

**What we know about veterans and Armed Forces personnel**

Samaritans work with the Ministry of Defence and relevant charities, across Scotland and the rest of the UK, via our Military Programme to support serving personnel in the Armed Forces, veterans and their families.

Of all those leaving the UK armed forces, we know that young men who leave the UK Armed Forces are at an increased risk of suicide. Military veterans aged 24 years and younger are 2-3 times more likely to die by suicide than other people the same age .

Our most recent caller data from our [Armed Forces Community eLog](https://home.samaritans.org/outreach-and-partnerships/armed-forces-veterans-and-families/armed-forces-veterans-eLog/) (collected anonymously from contacts across the UK) shows:

* Consistently over 70% of Samaritans contacts from the military community are veterans
* Suicidal feelings are expressed in around 34% of armed forces emotional support contacts
* 98% of callers from the Armed Forces community were emotional support contacts, of which 77% were veterans
* Most of the contacts we receive from the Armed Forces community are from males (serving personnel 82%, veterans 96%), while 85% of contacts from family and friends were female

**Samaritans Veterans App**

[Samaritans Veterans](https://www.samaritans.org/scotland/how-we-can-help/military/samaritans-veterans-app/) is a free app that can provide veterans and military personnel emotional support after their service. The app has been developed using research conducted by Samaritans and facilitated by the Royal British Legion in early 2019, which found that veterans wanted to understand more about their emotional wellbeing and to hear from people with similar experiences.

Those leaving the military and former Armed Forces personnel can access emotional health and wellbeing information, videos, exercises, podcasts, and create wellbeing to-do-lists in the app to help look after themselves and connect with the veteran community.

Our [Suicide Prevention and Peer Support in the Armed Forces handbook](https://www.samaritans.org/scotland/how-we-can-help/military/Support-in-the-Armed-Forces-Guide/) also gives Armed Forces personnel practical information on how to look out for their team’s wellbeing, how to open conversations and where to go for more support.

For more details on any of the information included in the briefing please contact d.yule@samaritans.org