

Research Briefing

9 January 2025

By Louisa Brooke-Holland

Recognition of LGBT+ veterans: FAQs

Summary

- 1 What is the LGBT veterans' review?
- 2 Why does the review only look at the period 1967 to 2000?
- 3 What did the review look at?
- 4 What impact did the ban have?
- 5 What did the review recommend?
- 6 How did the government respond?
- 7 I am an LGBT veteran. Where can I find information on restorative measures?
- 8 How will veterans be told about the scheme?
- 9 Did Lord Ffetheron recommend financial compensation?

Disclaimer

The Commons Library does not intend the information in our research publications and briefings to address the specific circumstances of any particular individual. We have published it to support the work of MPs. You should not rely upon it as legal or professional advice, or as a substitute for it. We do not accept any liability whatsoever for any errors, omissions or misstatements contained herein. You should consult a suitably qualified professional if you require specific advice or information. Read our briefing [‘Legal help: where to go and how to pay’](#) for further information about sources of legal advice and help. This information is provided subject to the conditions of the Open Parliament Licence.

Sources and subscriptions for MPs and staff

We try to use sources in our research that everyone can access, but sometimes only information that exists behind a paywall or via a subscription is available. We provide access to many online subscriptions to MPs and parliamentary staff, please contact hoclibraryonline@parliament.uk or visit commonslibrary.parliament.uk/resources for more information.

Feedback

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in these publicly available briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that briefings are not necessarily updated to reflect subsequent changes.

If you have any comments on our briefings please email papers@parliament.uk. Please note that authors are not always able to engage in discussions with members of the public who express opinions about the content of our research, although we will carefully consider and correct any factual errors.

You can read our feedback and complaints policy and our editorial policy at commonslibrary.parliament.uk. If you have general questions about the work of the House of Commons email hcenquiries@parliament.uk.

Contents

Summary	4
1 What is the LGBT veterans' review?	6
2 Why does the review only look at the period 1967 to 2000?	7
3 What did the review look at?	8
4 What impact did the ban have?	9
5 What did the review recommend?	10
6 How did the government respond?	11
7 I am an LGBT veteran. Where can I find information on restorative measures?	14
8 How will veterans be told about the scheme?	15
9 Did Lord Etherton recommend financial compensation?	16
10 What is the financial recognition scheme?	17
11 What are the non-financial restorative measures?	20
12 Can I apply on behalf of a deceased veteran?	22
13 What restorative measures can I apply for as pre-1967 veteran?	23
14 What other restorative measures are available?	24
15 What measures remain outstanding?	25

Summary

Prior to 2000, being LGBT+ was considered to be incompatible with service in the armed forces. The [government has explained](#) this meant that those serving who were or were perceived to be gay, lesbian or trans could be dismissed or otherwise forced to leave the armed forces.

LGBT Veterans Independent Review

In 2022 the government [commissioned an independent review](#) of the impact that the pre-2000 ban on homosexuality in the armed forces has had on LGBT veterans. Lord Etherton, who led the review, made [49 recommendations in his report](#) covering the areas of “restitution, recognition and just satisfaction”.

On publication of the review in July 2023, then Prime Minister Rishi Sunak [apologised on behalf of the country](#) to LGBT veterans who were affected by the policy. His government began implementing the recommendations made by Lord Etherton.

Implementing the review

Implementation has continued under the current Labour government. On 12 December 2024, the Defence Secretary, John Healey, [announced the implementation of many of the remaining recommendations](#), including the establishment of a financial recognition scheme. John Healey said the scheme is not a compensation scheme, but is intended to “recognise the discrimination and detriment suffered by LGBT personnel under the ban”.

Restoration of rank

The Defence Secretary also [announced measures to allow LGBT personnel](#) who served before the ban was lifted in 2000 to apply for the restoration of rank and the qualification of administrative discharge, if applicable.

Financial recognition

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) has allocated [£75 million for the financial recognition scheme](#), with a flat payment of £50,000 for “veterans who were dismissed or administratively discharged, including officers instructed to resign because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation or their gender

identity under the ban”. A further “impact payment”, up to £20,000 per individual, will be also be available to eligible personnel.

The financial restorative measures only apply to personnel who served between 1967 and 2000. The government has extended some of the non-financial restorative measures to those serving prior to 1967.

Recommendations yet to be implemented

Of the 49 recommendations made by Lord Etherton, seven are yet to be fully implemented. This includes a memorial, planning for which is underway. Most are for the NHS to fulfil. The Minister for Veterans and People, Al Carns, has said [he expects to complete the remaining recommendations](#) "by 2027".

This briefing answers some frequently asked questions about the review and points to further resources provided by the government on eligibility and how to apply for restorative measures.

A note on terminology

Lord Etherton explained in his report he used the term LGBT rather than, for example, LGBTQIA+, because LGBT is the acronym used in the review’s terms of reference. The Ministry of Defence also uses this term in reference to the review and restorative measures. This briefing reflects this usage.

Resources

- [The LGBT veterans independent review](#), published 19 July 2023
- [LGBT veterans independent review](#) website, with a timeline, a summary of recommendations, veteran testimonies and support services.
- [LGBT veterans: support and next steps](#), collection of information on the restorative measures available to LGBT veterans and details on how to apply.

1

What is the LGBT veterans' review?

Prior to 2000, being LGBT was considered to be incompatible with service in the armed forces. The government has explained this meant that those serving who were or were perceived to be gay, lesbian or trans could be dismissed or otherwise forced to leave Her Majesty's Armed Forces.¹

In early 2022 the Conservative government pledged to commission an independent review into the "impact that the pre-2000 Ban on Homosexuality in the armed forces has had on LGBT veterans today".²

The government appointed Lord Etherton to chair the review in June 2022.³ The terms of reference for the review said:

The Government accepts that this historic policy was wrong and has committed to work to understand, acknowledge and where appropriate address the impact it has had on veterans today, in particular in relation to members of the LGBT community.⁴

Lord Etherton submitted his report to the government in May 2023 and it was published by the government on 19 July 2023.⁵

¹ MOD, [LGBT Veterans Independent Review: About us](#), accessed 6 December 2024

² MOD, [Veterans' strategy action plan: 2022 to 2024](#), 19 January 2022

³ HCWS126 [[LGBT veterans review](#)], 22 June 2022

⁴ Ministry of Defence, [Terms of reference: Independent review into service and experience of LGBT veterans who served prior to 2000](#), 22 June 2022

⁵ MOD, [LGBT veterans independent review](#), 19 July 2023

2

Why does the review only look at the period 1967 to 2000?

The review looked specifically at veterans who served between 1967 and 2000, as set out in its terms of reference.⁶

These dates reflect the time between the [decriminalisation of “homosexual acts” in private](#) between men aged over 21 in England and Wales in 1967 and the lifting of the ban on gay people in the armed forces in January 2000.⁷

The MOD has explained that, until 12 January 2000, there was a “blanket ban on the presence of homosexuals” in the armed forces.⁸ Lord Etherton’s review described how, between 1967 and 1994, a person “who engaged in same sex sexual activity committed a service discipline offence”. In addition, the review said, there was a blanket “ban on the presence of gay men and lesbians in the armed forces” between 1967 and January 2000, when the ban was lifted.⁹

Lord Etherton summarised the application of the ban:

The policy was that no person subject to service law who was gay, lesbian, transgender or transitioning due to gender dysphoria, or who was perceived to be such, even if they were not in fact, could be or remain a member of the armed forces. It made no difference that such military personnel had never engaged in same sex sexual relations or that they were not aware of being gay, lesbian or suffering from gender dysphoria when they joined the armed forces, sometimes when only 15 years of age.¹⁰

A [timeline of notable events about LGBT life and the military](#) can be found on the independent review’s website.

The government has extended some of the non-financial restorative measures to those serving prior to 1967. Information on these can be found in section 13.

⁶ MOD, [Terms of reference: Independent review into service and experience of LGBT veterans who served prior to 2000](#), 22 June 2022

⁷ MOD, [LGBT Veterans Independent Review](#), 19 July 2023

⁸ Ministry of Defence, [Terms of reference: Independent review into service and experience of LGBT veterans who served prior to 2000](#), 22 June 2022

⁹ MOD, [LGBT veterans independent review](#), 19 July 2023

¹⁰ MOD, [LGBT Veterans Independent Review](#), 19 July 2023

3

What did the review look at?

The review looked specifically at the experiences of LGBT personnel who served between 1967 and 2000. It did not consider the experience of service personnel in other minority groups.¹¹

The terms of reference said the review should comment on:

1. The range of potential impact that the ban may have had on those affected, including but not limited to consequences for future relationships, employability or financial position;
2. How services for veterans today could be made more accessible and inclusive so that LGBT veterans, dismissed or otherwise required to leave Her Majesty's Armed Forces because of their sexual orientation or otherwise adversely impacted by the historic ban feel welcome and that the services are 'for them';
3. How Government can ensure that veterans dismissed or otherwise required to leave Her Majesty's Armed Forces because of their perceived sexual orientation are recognised and accepted as full members of the Armed Forces community and that HMG acknowledges and appreciates their service; and
4. Any further research, or policy review the Government could undertake to understand and seek to mitigate any impacts, including any financial impact.¹²

The terms of reference said that recommendations "should focus on the desired outcome, leaving flexibility for the government on how to achieve that via policy or process change".¹³

¹¹ MOD, [Terms of reference: Independent review into service and experience of LGBT veterans who served prior to 2000](#), 22 June 2022

¹² MOD, [Terms of reference: Independent review into service and experience of LGBT veterans who served prior to 2000](#), 22 June 2022

¹³ MOD, [Terms of reference: Independent review into service and experience of LGBT veterans who served prior to 2000](#), 22 June 2022

4

What impact did the ban have?

Lord Etherton's report contains extensive testimony from LGBT veterans about the effect the ban had on them. In the foreword, Lord Etherton said that the testimonies of those who were affected by the policy are at the heart of the review:

Those statements give shocking evidence of a culture of homophobia, and of bullying, blackmail and sexual assaults, abusive investigations into sexual orientation and sexual preference, disgraceful medical examinations, including conversion therapy, peremptory discharges, and appalling consequences in terms of mental health and wellbeing, homelessness, employment, personal relationships and financial hardship.¹⁴

[Summaries of these testimonies](#) are collated on the independent review's website. The Defence Secretary said that over 1,100 individual LGBT veterans shared stories with the review.¹⁵

A number of MPs reflected the personal accounts of affected constituents [during the debate on 12 December 2024](#).

¹⁴ MOD, [LGBT Veterans Independent Review](#), 19 July 2023

¹⁵ [HC Deb 12 December 2024 c1102](#)

5

What did the review recommend?

The review made 49 recommendations covering “restitution, recognition and just satisfaction” for all LGBT veterans who served between 1967 and 2000. Recommendations included¹⁶:

- An apology from the Prime Minister and the head of each of the services to LGBT personnel.
- Restoration of rank and commission, and return of any medals that were required to be handed back on dismissal or discharge.
- A special veterans’ badge for those who served at the time of the ban.
- Clarity on pension entitlements.
- A memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum to all LGBT people who have served and continue to serve in the military.
- An appropriate financial award.

The review also made a series of recommendations relating to the NHS and health services. A brief summary of the recommendations and suggestions can be found in [annex 11 of the review](#) (pages 251 to 268). A full list of the recommendations can also [be found on the independent review’s website](#).

¹⁶ MOD, [LGBT Veterans Independent Review](#), 19 July 2023

6 How did the government respond?

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announced the publication of the report during Prime Minister's Questions on 19 July 2023. In doing so, the Prime Minister fulfilled Lord Etherton's first recommendation, which was to apologise on behalf of the country to "all those LGBT service personnel who served under and suffered from the Ban (whether or not they were dismissed or discharged)" in the House of Commons.¹⁷ The Prime Minister said:

The ban on LGBT people serving in our military until the year 2000 was an appalling failure of the British state—it was decades behind the law of this land. As today's report makes clear, in that period many endured the most horrific sexual abuse and violence, homophobic bullying and harassment, all while bravely serving this country. Today, on behalf of the British state, I apologise, and I hope that all those affected will be able to feel proud parts of the veteran community, which has done so much to keep our country safe.¹⁸

The then Defence Secretary, Ben Wallace, subsequently gave an oral statement in which he also apologised for the "unacceptable hurt" caused to LGBT members of the armed forces: "on behalf of the Government and the armed forces, I am deeply sorry".¹⁹ Ben Wallace described the testimonies given as "truly harrowing reading" which paint a "shocking and shameful picture of a Defence that is hard to comprehend".²⁰

The Prime Minister's apology was welcomed by the then Leader of the Opposition, Keir Starmer, who called on the government to act on the recommendations of the review.²¹

However, the Defence Secretary also said that "while we agree with the intent behind them [the recommendations], we may deliver a number in different ways from that described in the report".²² He indicated a full response would be published in the second half of 2023.

¹⁷ Ministry of Defence, [LGBT Veterans Independent Review](#), 19 July 2023

¹⁸ [HC Deb 19 July 2023 c898](#)

¹⁹ [HC Deb 19 July 2023 c920](#)

²⁰ [HC Deb 19 July 2023 c920](#)

²¹ [HC Deb 19 July 2023 c898](#)

²² [HC Deb 19 July 2023 c922](#)

6.1 Full response given in December 2023

The government's full response was given on 13 December 2023 by Dr Andrew Murrison, the then Minister for Defence People and Families.²³

Dr Murrison first set out the actions taken by the government prior to the report's publication "to right historic wrongs".²⁴ Those measures included returning medals to those who had had them withheld or removed because of their sexual orientation, removing barriers that prevent those living with HIV from joining the military, and wiping historic convictions for same-sex sexual activity.²⁵

Dr Murrison also said the government was "accepting the intent behind all 49 of Lord Etherton's recommendations" and had implemented almost half of them. On the issue of financial redress, Dr Murrison said the government agreed with Lord Etherton's recommendation but that it needed time to "gain a much better understanding of what the affected cohort looks like".²⁶

Then Shadow Defence Secretary, John Healey, restated Labour's welcome of the review and its recommendations.²⁷

6.2 Was this the first apology from the government?

No. In 2020, the government apologised to LGBT veterans for the first time.²⁸ Johnny Mercer, then Minister for Defence, People and Veterans, told veterans at an event in the House of Commons that the ban was wrong:

It was unacceptable then and it is unacceptable now, and as the minister for defence, people and veterans, I wanted to personally apologise to you today for those experiences.²⁹

During the debate on 12 December 2024, the new Labour government's Defence Secretary, John Healey, also apologised:

²³ [HC Deb 13 December 2023 c897](#)

²⁴ [HC Deb 13 December 2023 c897](#)

²⁵ [HC Deb 13 December 2023 c897](#)

²⁶ [HC Deb 13 December 2023 c898](#)

²⁷ [HC Deb 13 December 2023 c899](#)

²⁸ [Government apologises for ban on gay people serving in the armed forces](#) Sky News, 9 January 2020

²⁹ [Government apologises for ban on gay people serving in the armed forces](#), Sky News, 9 January 2020

On behalf of the Government, I want to apologise without reservation for the pain and injustice caused during this dark chapter of our armed forces' history.³⁰

³⁰ [HC Deb 12 December 2024 c1103](#)

7

I am an LGBT veteran. Where can I find information on restorative measures?

Information on restorative measures, support and services for those impacted by the pre-2000 law or ban on LGBT personnel in the armed forces can be found on gov.uk: [LGBT veterans: support and next steps](#).

Further information about these measures is set out below.

8

How will veterans be told about the scheme?

The MOD is relying on publicity to reach veterans affected by the policy.³¹

The MOD has said that it is “unable to proactively reach out to individuals who may have been administratively discharged or had their rank reduced”. This is because, it says, the government has no comprehensive way of identifying those impacted” because of the length of time since the ban was lifted, and differences in record keeping over the years.³²

The MOD has not provided an estimate of how many veterans may be affected. The Defence Secretary, John Healey, said the MOD had worked with veterans’ groups and the organisation Fighting with Pride, among others, to “make our best assessment of the number of veterans who may be affected and may be eligible, and may therefore want to take advantage of these financial recognition schemes”.³³

Al Carns, the Minister for Veterans and People, said that the government is “working exceptionally hard with Fighting With Pride and 10 other charities to ensure that we advertise this scheme as broadly as possible across the community”.³⁴

³¹ [HC Deb 12 December 2024 c1135](#)

³² MOD, [Veterans of the Ban: Qualification of administrative discharge and restoration of rank – FAQs](#), 12 December 2024

³³ [HC Deb 12 December 2024 c1102](#)

³⁴ [HC Deb 12 December 2024 c1135](#)

9

Did Lord Etherton recommend financial compensation?

Lord Etherton recommended (recommendation 28) that an “appropriate financial award should be made to affected veterans notwithstanding the expiry of litigation time limits”.³⁵ He said further:

Many of the veterans who suffered from the Ban are elderly, in poor mental and physical health, and in financial need. They have already waited for a minimum of 23 years for justice and restitution. Any further delay can only be to their detriment.³⁶

Lord Etherton did not make formal recommendations on the terms of the financial payment scheme because, he said, he did not want to hold up acceptance of this report by the MOD “by a disagreement as to whether I can make formal recommendations on the terms of the financial payment scheme I have recommended”.³⁷ The MOD did request Lord Etherton specify a recommended overall limit to the scheme, and he suggested the government’s overall exposure should be capped at £50 million.

Lord Etherton also recommended (recommendation 29) that a time limit of two years be applied for making a claim. He said this would allow payments to be made under the authority of the Supply and Appropriations Act, and so avoid the need for primary legislation to establish the financial payment scheme and any consequent delay.³⁸

³⁵ MOD, [LGBT Veterans Independent Review](#), 19 July 2023

³⁶ MOD, [LGBT Veterans Independent Review](#), 19 July 2023

³⁷ MOD, [LGBT Veterans Independent Review](#), 19 July 2023

³⁸ MOD, [LGBT Veterans Independent Review](#), 19 July 2023. The review includes the following footnote for this recommendation: Managing Public Money published by HM Treasury in March 2022 Annex S.4 paragraph 2.4.2

10

What is the financial recognition scheme?

On 12 December 2024 the Defence Secretary, John Healey, announced the establishment of a financial recognition scheme to recognise the “discrimination and detriment” suffered by LGBT personnel under the ban.³⁹

The Defence Secretary explained that the scheme provides two types of payment:

The first is for those who were dismissed or discharged. It will be available to veterans who were dismissed or administratively discharged, including officers instructed to resign because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation or their gender identity under the ban. The payment will be at a flat rate of £50,000.

The second is for those who were impacted in other ways. This LGBT impact payment is open to all those who experienced pain and suffering under the ban, including harassment, intrusive investigations and in some cases imprisonment. The impact payment will be assessed by an independent panel, with tariffs ranging between £1,000 and £20,000 to make the awards fair and proportionate to each individual. The two payments will run concurrently as part of a single financial recognition scheme. We have also set aside funding from the MOD to support those charities that can advise applicants on the schemes.⁴⁰

Individuals can qualify for both awards; John Healey said payments can reach up to a “maximum of £70,000 for those who were most impacted and most hurt and who qualify for both awards”.⁴¹

The Defence Secretary also said that the awards will be “exempt from income tax and will not affect benefits that applicants may receive”.⁴²

The Defence Secretary said the total budget for the scheme is £75 million, which he described as “50% higher than the level recommended in the Etherton review”.⁴³ The government has also allocated £90,000 to help charities to assist the veterans with their applications.⁴⁴

The Shadow Defence Secretary, James Cartlidge, welcomed and supported the announcement of the financial scheme. He added “the financial package announced today will not undo the past, but it means that both parties in

³⁹ [HC Deb 12 December 2024 c1099](#)

⁴⁰ [HC Deb 12 December 2024 c1100](#)

⁴¹ [HC Deb 12 December 2024 c1100](#)

⁴² [HC Deb 12 December 2024 c1100](#)

⁴³ [HC Deb 12 December 2024 c1100](#)

⁴⁴ [HC Deb 12 December 2024 c1135](#)

government have taken significant steps to deliver redress”.⁴⁵ He also expressed support for plans to restore rank and amend official reasons for discharge.

10.1 Who is eligible for a financial payment?

The scheme is not open to those who served prior to 1967.

The scheme is open only to those who served under, and were impacted, by the ban on LGBT personnel in the armed forces from 27 July 1967 to 11 January 2000.

The scheme is not open to those who served prior to 1967. The MOD explains this is because armed forces policy was in line with criminal law at the time:

The Government acknowledges that LGBT veterans who served prior to 1967 may have had similar experiences to those who served under the Ban, however, Armed Forces policy was in line with criminal law at that time. The LGBT Financial Recognition Scheme intends to provide recognition for the harm caused by the policy Defence upheld from 1967 to 2000, when same sex sexual acts were essentially decriminalised in civilian law.⁴⁶

10.2 Is it a compensation scheme?

No. The Minister for Veterans and People, Al Carns, said during the debate that it is “not a compensation scheme and has not been designed as such”.⁴⁷

The MOD’s guidance on the scheme also states that it is not a compensation scheme:

It is important to recognise that the scheme is not seeking to compensate and therefore comparisons should not be made to compensation schemes such as the Infected Bloody Inquiry.

The aim of the Financial Recognition Scheme is to recognise the hurt caused to those who served under and suffered from the Ban on LGBT personnel serving in HM Armed Forces between 1967-2000.

[...]

The payments are not compensation payments and do not seek to compensate for any pecuniary losses or attempt to place personnel in a financial position they could have been in, but for the Ban.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ [HC Deb 12 December 2024 c1105](#)

⁴⁶ MOD, [Pre-1967 LGBT veterans: apply for restorative measures – FAQs](#), 12 December 2024

⁴⁷ [HC Deb 12 December 2024 c1137](#)

⁴⁸ MOD, [LGBT financial recognition scheme – FAQs](#), 13 December 2024

Al Carns, the Minister for Veterans and People, responding to MPs concerns about the amount available to individuals, said the scheme was not intended to compensate for loss of earnings:

It is important to acknowledge at the outset that no amount of money can undo the hurt and pain caused, and no process can genuinely quantify the impact on earnings. This is a financial acknowledgment of wrongdoing and regret by the state, and while I know that it will not fully satisfy all, I hope that it will help to bring affirmation, and some closure, to those affected.⁴⁹

Information on how to apply for a payment, and frequently asked questions, are available on gov.uk: [Veterans of the LGBT Ban: Financial Recognition Scheme](#).

⁴⁹ [HC Deb 12 December 2024 c1137](#)

11

What are the non-financial restorative measures?

The review recommended the restoration of status, medals and other entitlement to those affected by the ban. These include:

- The restoration of rank and/or commission
- The qualification of administration discharge

John Healey explained how the MOD intended to implement these measures in his statement on 12 December 2024:

First, those who were administratively discharged based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation will be able to apply to get their records set straight. As a result, the ban will be shown as the reason for their discharge, finally removing any blame or dishonour on their record for those who have served. Secondly, we will restore the ranks of veterans who had them reduced as a result of the ban, ensuring that they regain the rank they rightfully earned in service.⁵⁰

John Healey also announced that these restorative measures would also be extended to those who served prior to 1967. Section 13 discusses this further and the application process for those affected.

The policy for both schemes and a frequently asked questions leaflet is available on gov.uk: [Veterans of the LGBT ban: qualification and restoration of rank.](#)

11.1

Restoration of rank and/or commission

Recommendation three of the LGBT review stated:

Commission and rank should be retrospectively restored to what it was immediately before dismissal or discharge where there was a demotion in consequence of dismissal or discharge pursuant to the Ban.⁵¹

⁵⁰ [HC Deb 12 December 2024 c1100](#)

⁵¹ Ministry of Defence, [LGBT Veterans Independent Review](#), 19 July 2023

The government set out the eligibility criteria and process to be followed in a policy document published on 12 December 2024:

This policy sets out the eligibility criteria and process to be followed in seeking to right the historic wrong of Service Personnel being demoted in rank in consequence of dismissal or discharge for same-sex sexual activity; actual or perceived sexual orientation; or gender identity.

Applicants who meet the eligibility criteria under this policy may have their commission or rank restored to what it was immediately before dismissal or discharge where they were demoted as a consequence of discharge or dismissal pursuant to the Ban.

This policy will only apply to those that were dismissed or discharged as a direct result of the historic policy that homosexuality was incompatible with life in HM Armed Forces between 27 July 1967 and 12 January 2000.⁵²

Further criteria apply and are set out in the policy document: [Policy: restoration of rank and/or commission for veterans of the ban](#).

11.2 Qualification of administration discharge

Recommendations 25 to 27 of the review relate to disregards, pardons and alteration of records.

The government set out the eligibility criteria and process to be followed in a policy document published on 12 December 2024:

This policy sets out the eligibility criteria and process to be followed in seeking to right the historic wrong of Service personnel being administratively discharged solely for same-sex sexual activity; actual or perceived sexual orientation; or gender identity.

Under this policy, applicants who were administratively discharged because of their sexual orientation or gender identity may apply to have their discharge reason amended or annotated in their records with the statement: “Discharge was pursuant to a policy subsequently held by the European Court of Human Rights to be unlawful”. This was one of the recommendations of the Independent Review.

This policy applies only to those dismissed or discharged as a direct result of the historic policy that homosexuality was incompatible with life in HM Armed Forces between 27 July 1967 and 12 January 2000.⁵³

Further criteria apply and are set out in the policy document: [Policy: Qualification of Administrative Discharge for Veterans of the Ban](#).

⁵² MOD, [Policy: restoration of rank and/or commission for veterans of the ban](#), 12 December 2024

⁵³ MOD, [Policy: Qualification of Administrative Discharge for Veterans of the Ban](#), 12 December 2024

12

Can I apply on behalf of a deceased veteran?

Yes. Persons of “sufficient interested to a deceased veteran” who served between 1967 and 2000 can apply for the above measures.

The MOD provides the following explanation of this term:

A Person of Sufficient Interest, including next of kin, is someone who had a long-standing, close personal relationship with the deceased person, who could be expected to represent the wishes of the deceased. This may be a relative, spouse, civil partner, long-term partner, child(ren), adopted family member or similar.

Defence has adopted this broader definition to help include those whom the veteran may have nominated as their next of kin.⁵⁴

Information on how to do this, and the information needed, can be found on gov.uk: [The Veterans of the LGBT ban: apply for non-financial restorative measures](#).

⁵⁴ MOD, [Veterans of the LGBT Ban: apply for non-financial restorative measures](#), 12 December 2024

13

What restorative measures can I apply for as pre-1967 veteran?

On 12 December 2024, the Defence Secretary announced that non-financial restorative measures will be extended to LGBT veterans who served before 1967 and “may have suffered under the ban”, in recognition of their service and contribution.⁵⁵ LGBT veterans who served prior to 1967 can apply to:

- have their administrative discharges qualified
- rank restored if it had been reduced
- have their certificates of service reissued
- have their service details published in the Gazette as part of the official record if they were officers

Guidance on how to apply for all of these measures can be found on gov.uk: [Pre-1967 LGBT veterans: apply for restorative measures](#).

Veterans who served prior to 1967 and who forfeited their medals have been able to apply to have these returned since February 2021. Affected veterans with a conviction must first have obtained a disregard from the Home Office.⁵⁶ Information on this process can be found on gov.uk: [Apply to remove a conviction for gay sex offences](#).

⁵⁵ [HC Deb 12 December 2024 c1100](#)

⁵⁶ MOD, [Pre-1967 LGBT veterans: apply for restorative measures – FAQs](#), 12 December 2024

14

What other restorative measures are available?

Several restorative measures had been announced by the Conservative government prior to the commissioning and publication of the review.

These measures include returning medals to those who had them withheld or removed because of their sexual orientation⁵⁷, removing barriers to serving in the armed forces for those living with HIV⁵⁸, and removing historic convictions for gay sex offences.⁵⁹

A list of these measures, with information on eligibility, can be found on gov.uk: [Veterans of the LGBT Ban: apply for non-financial restorative measures](#).

Information on each, and how to apply, are on gov.uk:

- [Armed Forces veterans badge application form](#)
- [Disregards and pardons for those convicted of same-sex sexual offences](#)
- [Military Awards Commemorations](#)
- [Armed Forces pensions](#)
- [Apply for an HM Armed Forces Veteran Card](#)

⁵⁷ MOD, [Former personnel discharged over sexuality to have medals restored](#), 16 February 2021

⁵⁸ MOD, [Final barriers removed for armed forces personnel with HIV](#), 21 June 2022

⁵⁹ HCWS848 [[Disregards and pardons scheme](#)], 13 June 2023

What measures remain outstanding?

The Minister for Veterans and People said 42 of the 49 recommendations had now been recommended, following the announcements made on 12 December 2024.⁶⁰ Of the seven that remain, he said “I think we will close them out by 2027”.⁶¹

The Minister did not identify which recommendations remain outstanding. However, he did identify what was then 11 outstanding recommendations in response to a written parliamentary question on 10 December. Of these 11, he said six were for the MOD to implement and five were for the NHS to fulfil:

To date, the Government has implemented 38 of Lord Etherton’s 49 recommendations.

Of those that remain, six are for Defence: recommendation 3 – the restoration of rank lost due to the Ban; recommendation 17 – a memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum; recommendation 26 – the qualification of administrative discharge; recommendations 28 and 29 – financial recognition, and recommendation 44 – improving women veterans’ access to support, welfare and other Services.

The remaining five recommendations are for the National Health Service England: recommendations 31, 35, 36, 38 and 42.⁶²

The Defence Secretary’s announcement on 12 December set out the implementation of four recommendations (3, 26, 28 and 29). This suggests the remaining recommendations for the MOD to implement are recommendations 17 (memorial) and 44 (female veterans). The previous government said in December 2023 that planning for a veterans memorial was underway.⁶³

The remaining five recommendations for NHS England, as stated on 10 December, are⁶⁴:

- 31: NHS England, Integrated Care Boards and the RCGP [Royal College of General Practitioners] should explore ways to encourage more practices to become ‘veteran friendly’ accredited.

⁶⁰ [HC Deb 12 December 2024 c1136](#)

⁶¹ [HC Deb 12 December 2024 c1136](#)

⁶² [PQ17202 \[Veterans: LGBT+ people\]](#), 10 December 2024

⁶³ [HC Deb 13 December 2023 c897](#)

⁶⁴ [PQ17202 \[Veterans: LGBT+ people\]](#), 10 December 2024; LGBT veterans independent review, [Recommendations](#), accessed 20 December 2024

- 35: All reasonably practicable steps should be taken to achieve 100% of NHS Trusts being VHCA [Veterans' Covenant Healthcare Alliance] 'veteran aware' accredited.
- 36: Expansion of the VHCA [Veterans' Covenant Healthcare Alliance] accreditation scheme to include care homes and hospices should be encouraged.
- 38: Addiction treatment centres providing services in the community need to be aware that, in the case of LGBT+ veterans, addiction may be a manifestation of a particular service history as that may have consequences for the most appropriate treatment.
- 42: Consideration should be given by NHS England to commissioning an appropriate e-training module to be available, not just for Op Courage services, but for all NHS services that provide care to military veterans.

The House of Commons Library is a research and information service based in the UK Parliament. Our impartial analysis, statistical research and resources help MPs and their staff scrutinise legislation, develop policy, and support constituents.

Our published material is available to everyone on commonslibrary.parliament.uk.

Get our latest research delivered straight to your inbox. Subscribe at commonslibrary.parliament.uk/subscribe or scan the code below:



 commonslibrary.parliament.uk

 [@commonslibrary](https://twitter.com/commonslibrary)