

A Select Committee has been appointed by the House of Commons to consider the Armed Forces Bill 2026, which would be the latest renewal for five years of the Armed Forces Act 2006. The Select Committee has invited submissions.

Please note that the MOD doesn't encourage serving personnel to submit evidence to Parliamentary inquiries **except** where special permission has been given for specific inquiries. **BAFF members should contact us urgently if they wish a particular point to be made without being personally identified.**

The Armed Forces Act primarily serves as the basis for military law and discipline in the UK Armed Forces, replacing the old single-service legislation like the Army Act 1955. Governments also use the Armed Forces Bill to legislate on other matters relating to the Armed Forces.

For example, measures in the 2026 Bill include establishing a new Defence Housing Service and a single Reserve Forces and Cadets Association as non-departmental public bodies, extending the Armed Forces Covenant and making changes to the Service Justice System aimed at better protecting victims.

The Select Committee has called for written evidence submissions on 'any or all the provisions within the Bill', and in particular views on any of the questions listed below.

Due to the short timetable for considering the Bill, the Committee encourages contributors to share their evidence via an online link as soon as they're able, **and no later than Monday 2 March.**

The Select Committee's listed questions are:

Armed Forces Covenant

- What is the expected impact of the changes to the Armed Forces Covenant on serving personnel, their families and veterans?
- Does the Bill extend the scope of the Armed Forces Covenant Legal duty in an appropriate way?
 - Are there policy areas which should/should not have been included?
- What impact will extending the scope of the Covenant Legal Duty have on service providers' ability to deliver on their obligations?
 - What are the resource implications of expanding the Covenant?
- What will be the impact of extending the Covenant Legal Duty to the Devolved Administrations?
- How far will the Bill improve implementation of the Armed Forces Covenant?

Defence Housing

- To what extent will the Bill's creation of the Defence Housing Service (DHS) help to improve housing for military families?
- Are the powers and functions provided to the DHS in the Bill appropriate?
- Does the Bill create suitable arrangements for how the DHS will be governed and held accountable for the service it provides?

Service Justice System

- To what extent will the Bill's provisions on the Service Justice System help achieve the Government's target of halving Violence Against Women and Girls within a decade?
- What is the expected impact of granting additional powers to Service Courts to make orders relating to sexual harm, domestic abuse, and stalking?
- Do the Bill's measures go far enough to support and ensure justice for victims of service offences?
- How will the Service Policing Protocol improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Service Justice System?
- Are the Bill's measures relating to concurrent jurisdiction sufficient?
- Are the Bill's measures granting additional powers to Commanding Officers appropriate?

Reserves

- To what extent will the Bill's provisions on recall liability help achieve the Strategic Defence Review's recommendation to increase the number of active reserves by 20% and increase UK Armed Forces Readiness?
- What will be the impact of the Bill's measures which provide the Secretary of State with the power to authorise the call-out of the Strategic Reserve for "warlike operations"?
- Will the measures on the transfer of Service personnel between the regular and reserve forces have the desired outcome of enabling more flexible career pathing for Service personnel?
- What will be the impact of the creation of the new Reserve Forces and Cadets Association non-departmental public body?

Other issues

- Do you have comments on any other aspects of the Bill you would like to share with the Committee?

There is no requirement to address all the questions or topics above in your evidence.

Links [obsolete]

- ~~Armed Forces Bill 2026—Call for Evidence~~
- ~~Select Committee on the Armed Forces Bill formed and launches call for evidence~~