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**Veterans: Credit their Service:**

I pay tribute to the organisations, charities and activists campaigning to improve the lives of veterans. I support the Royal British Legion's campaign to change the law to ensure that when calculating means-tested benefits, military compensation is not considered as income.

I am incredibly proud of our ex-servicemen and women. They have performed the ultimate public service, and if this has caused serious injury, illness or death, veterans and their families deserve to be fairly compensated. At the moment, far too many former military service people are being denied the payments they are entitled to, leaving them at risk of poor mental health, poverty and the feeling of being let down by the country they have served with distinction.

I welcome the announcement that the Government will shortly publish its long overdue review of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme and the independent review of the Government's provision of welfare services for veterans. However, in my view, Ministers are responsible for the deterioration of veterans' services over the past 13 years. This includes examples such as the slow roll-out of ID cards needed to access services, while at the same time important mental health waiting time targets have also been missed. It is important that the review is shaped by veterans' experiences.

Those who serve in our British Armed Forces should not be forced to rely on benefits. The Government must ensure that personnel and veterans are receiving the right support. It is what our country expects and what service communities deserve.

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