



# Ministry of Defence

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
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THE RT HON BARONESS GOLDIE DL  
MINISTER OF STATE IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS

MSU/4/8/2/3/ap

19th July 2022

Dear David,

During the Armed Forces Act Continuation Order debate on 05 July, you asked whether the Government intends to report on the impact of the Covenant duty including consideration of extending the Duty to Central Government.

As I said in the House<sup>1</sup> on 14 December 2021, confirming the remarks of the Minister for Defence People and Veterans the previous day<sup>2</sup>, we will review the operation of the new Duty across the UK and whether it would be beneficial to add to its scope. This would include consideration of whether central Government and any of its functions could usefully be added.

I can confirm that it remains the Government's intent to conduct such a review and report its findings and decisions in the Covenant Annual Report 2023, some 12 months after the Covenant duty has come into operation. As was said at the time, for any meaningful review to take place the Duty would need some time to become embedded and we feel this period is the absolute minimum length of time necessary. An update will be included in this year's Annual Report outlining the scope and methodology of the planned review.

The Armed Forces Act introduced the Covenant duty, and it will take effect in law later this year. The Act requires both the guidance and a legal definition of 'relevant family members' to be consulted on before a Regulation can be laid before both Houses and debated under affirmative procedure. I am pleased to say that the consultation is completed, and the responses were broadly supportive of both the draft guidance and definition of relevant family members. Work is underway on the necessary documents, and we are expecting the process as set out in the Act, to be completed, enabling the Covenant duty to come into force, by the end of 2022.

I am placing a copy of this letter in the Library of the House.

With kind regards  
Yours sincerely,  
Annabel.

**BARONESS GOLDIE DL**

<sup>1</sup> 14 December 2021, Col 145 [Armed Forces Bill - Hansard - UK Parliament](#)

<sup>2</sup> 13 December 2021, Col 817 [Armed Forces Bill - Hansard - UK Parliament](#)