

Dear

I am writing to ask for your support in ensuring that bereaved Armed Forces families receive the recognition and support they deserve. As you know, military families play an essential role in our national defence, yet when they experience loss, they often face significant challenges in accessing housing, healthcare, and financial stability.

I am reaching out to introduce **Beyond The Wire**, a non-profit organisation dedicated to advocating for improvements for the Armed Forces bereaved community.

Armed Forces families provide vital emotional support and stability to service personnel, yet when they lose a loved one in service, they often face **significant challenges**—from securing accommodation and maintaining continuity in education to accessing health services, employment, and financial stability.

The transition out of military life following a bereavement can also bring **isolation and loss of identity**, making these families particularly vulnerable.

While many organisations provide essential support, **there is currently no centralised resource** to help bereaved military families navigate the complexities of their new reality. **Beyond The Wire's Bereavement Hub** will serve as a single, comprehensive portal, offering tailored guidance and support to ensure no family, friend or colleague is left without the help they need.

Grief is deeply personal, often affecting individuals and families for many years. The **Armed Forces Covenant** recognises our duty to bereaved families, yet more must be done to ensure that their unique needs are met with **dignity, respect, and meaningful support**.

Beyond The Wire is particularly concerned by the variation in financial support provided to the spouses/partners and children of deceased serving personnel, depending on the circumstances of the death. For example, if a death occurs whilst serving, say in a training accident then the death is attributable to service. However if the loss of life whilst serving is from suicide or a terminal illness, then the family may well receive a reduced bereavement package unless they challenge the decision and can prove the loss of life was due to service. As I am sure you can appreciate, challenging this decision at a time of immense personal grief is particularly harrowing for all concerned, as well as creating a significant financial cost to the family. Beyond the Wire believes this is ultimately death discrimination with potentially long term implications for the bereaved family. Educational opportunities may now be reduced as the surviving children will not be able to access the Armed Forces Bereavement Scholarship. Beyond the Wire believes the Armed Forces Bereavement Scholarship (AFBS) should be available for all bereaved children across all services, regardless of the categorisation of their parent's death. Beyond the Wire wants to end the current discrimination that significantly exacerbates the impact of bereavement on children. AFBS should be available up to the age of 25, as is the case for looked after children/young people.

I would therefore be extremely grateful if you could raise the following questions directly with ministers and provide me with a response:

1. **In cases where a member of the Armed Forces dies while serving, but the death is not classified as due to service, how does this impact the financial support available to their family and children?** Specifically, please outline the differences in:

- The pension entitlements for the surviving family.
- The financial support provided to dependent children, including pension benefits.
- Eligibility for the Armed Forces Bereavement Scholarship Scheme.
- Any other benefits that are reduced in value or become inaccessible if the death is not deemed service-related.

2. **If a death is classified as not due to service, what options are available for the surviving partner or family member to challenge this decision?** Please provide details of:

- The tribunal process for appealing the decision.
- The costs involved for the family, including any liability for legal fees (both their own and any potential costs awarded against them).
- The number of stages in the appeals process and typical timeframes.
- The qualifications and expertise of the Ministry of Defence-appointed experts who provide evidence in these cases.

We would be delighted if you would follow us on LinkedIn and visit our website to learn more about our mission and our 5 requests for change.

Beyond The Wire – LinkedIn

Beyond The Wire – Website

Can we count on your support?

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this further and explore ways in which you can help champion this cause in Parliament. Please let me know if you would be open to a meeting, or if there are any steps we can take to support you in raising this issue.

Best regards,