



The **LGBT+** Military Charity

LGBT Veterans Coalition

Open Letter to Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer KCB KC MP, Prime Minister

Dear Prime Minister,

Almost 25 years ago, the United Kingdom repealed the ban on LGBT personnel serving in our Armed Forces, a policy enforced for decades with cruelty and zeal.

In recent years, our diverse organisations have worked together to welcome our LGBT Veterans into the military family. We are proud of their service, in every branch of the Armed Forces, in every conflict and in every theatre.

In 2023, the Government made a powerful apology. Your predecessor Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said the ban was:

“An appalling failure of the British State during which members of our Armed Forces endured the most horrific sexual abuse and violence, homophobic bullying and harassment, all while bravely serving this country.”

As Leader of the Opposition, you said in response:

“Although we cannot right the wrongs of the past, the Government should now act on the recommendations of the Etherton review to fix the lives broken by the ban, it is what LGBT+ veterans deserve.”

The Ministry of Defence has indicated that it plans to launch the financial reparation scheme at the end of the year. Our concern is that the Government has not yet made a commitment to properly fund the financial reparations for this shocking breach of the Armed Forces Covenant, our nation’s promise of fair and respectful treatment to those who have served. We believe that the the current £50M cap will lead to inadequate and unacceptably low average payments, as do many of your colleagues in parliament.

It is the shared view of the LGBT Veterans Coalition and our supporters that payments of this scale will not bring about the sense of justice these veterans deserve, and will not honour the service and sacrifice of a community who faced treatment Lord Etherton described as ‘a stain upon the illustrious history of the Armed Forces’

We must not deny LGBT veterans the justice they are due, nor deny the defence establishment this watershed moment in which the values we share today, replace those of the past.

Craig Jones MBE
Chair
LGBT Veterans Coalition

Organisation	Signer	Role
Fighting With Pride	Ed Hall	Chair
Fighting With Pride	Lt Gen Sir Andrew Gregory KBC CB DL	Patron
Royal British Legion	Mark Atkinson	Director General
Help for Heroes	James Needham	Chief Executive
Walking With the Wounded	Tony Hulton	Chief Executive
Combat Stress	Chloe Mackay	Chief Executive
Adferiad	Alun Thomas	Chief Executive
Stonewall	Simon Blake OBE	Chief Executive
LGBT Foundation	Paul Martin OBE	Chief Executive
Age UK	Paul Farmer	Chief Executive
Age Scotland	Katherine Crawford	Chief Executive
Centre for Military Justice	Emma Norton	Chief Executive
Veterans in Crisis	Ger Fowler	Chief Executive
The VC Gallery	Barry John MBE	Chief Executive
Forward Assist	Tony Wright	Chief Executive
Veterans Tribe Scotland	Gerry McGregor	Founder
Woodys Lodge	Graham Jones	Chief Executive
Women's Royal Army Corps Association	Paula Rogers	Chief Executive
Scotlands Bravest	Robert Lappin	Associate Director
Royal British Legion Lifeworks	Steve Parrott	Head of Lifeworks
Unforgotten Forces	Frank Gribben	Coordinator
Havant Borough Council	Phil Mundy	Leader
Phoenix Arts Club	Kenneth Wright	Managing Director
Bridgewater Homecare	Christopher Taylor	Managing Director
Individual Signers		
	Carl Austin-Behan OBE DL	Veteran
	Antony Cotton MBE	Actor