



Ministry
of Defence

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
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[REDACTED]
MINISTER FOR VETERANS AND PEOPLE

[REDACTED]
14 January 2025

Dear Ms Bhardwaj,

Ref: your PDFR dated 15 October 2024

Thank you for your letter of 15 October 2024 to the Ministry of Defence enclosing your Regulation 28 report following the sad death of Mr Paul Anthony Chase (Malone) on 13 March 2024. My deepest sympathies go out to Mr Chase's wife, daughter and his friends and family at this difficult time.

Addressing the complex mental health needs of both serving personnel and veterans is a priority for the Ministry of Defence. While I am very receptive to the concerns that you have raised, and welcome the challenge to do more, it is unfortunate that the MOD was not considered an Interested Person at the inquest. This meant that we were unable to provide you with important information around Mr Chase's service and medical history, and the support he had already received from the Ministry of Defence. Going forward, I respectfully request that you engage the Ministry of Defence much earlier in the inquest process where an individual's service history may be of relevance to your investigation.

Nevertheless, I would highlight that Defence has been working hard to provide prompt, effective support for mental health issues, including addiction issues, amongst our service population and veterans for several years now. I also understand from the Defence Medical Services that Mr Chase received treatment from the MOD Department of Community Mental Health for his addiction issues before being discharged, and there is no suggestion within the records available, that Mr Chase was experiencing symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during his service.

HM Coroner Ms Bhardwaj
Area Coroner for Liverpool and Wirral
Gerard Majella Courthouse
Boundary Street
Liverpool
L5 2QD

That is not to say that we shouldn't do more, particularly where issues arise after service. Separately, it is paramount that serving personnel, veterans, and their families engage with the services we offer, to ensure that they can get the support they so rightfully deserve. I am conscious that you won't be sighted on everything we do, and therefore I have enclosed a summary to try and give you a better understanding.

I hope that this highlights the steps that the Ministry of Defence has already taken, and under this Government's leadership will continue to take, to support the mental health and wellbeing of our people. I can assure you that this will be a priority for my tenure as Minister for Veterans and People, particularly where there are opportunities to improve. Thank you for bringing this to my attention.

Yours sincerely,

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Annex A: Summary of mental health, alcoholism, addiction support, treatment and therapy provided to serving personnel, including those undergoing "intensive combat training" and veterans.