

## **News Release**

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SSAFA SPOKESPEOPLE, CASE STUDIES AND CELEBRITY AMBASSADORS AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW

### **41% OF VETERANS HAVE FELT ISOLATED, RESEARCH REVEALS**

#### **27% HAVE HAD SUICIDAL THOUGHTS AFTER LEAVING THE FORCES**

New YouGov research commissioned by SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity has found that **more than two in five** (41 per cent) of British Armed Forces veterans surveyed have felt lonely or isolated at some point since leaving the military.

When asked if they have ever felt overwhelmed by negative feelings, **a third** (34 per cent) of the veterans surveyed said they had. Over **a quarter** (27 per cent) admitted to having suicidal thoughts after finishing their military service.

**More than three in ten** of the veterans polled admitted (31 per cent) they have just one or no close friends and would be unlikely to discuss any feelings of loneliness with a family member or close friend (**53 per cent**), suggesting a limited support network for these veterans.

The most common reasons veterans gave for feeling lonely and isolated included: losing touch with friends in the Armed Forces (**41 per cent**), physical or mental health issues (**33 per cent**), and struggling to relate to anyone in civilian life (**23 per cent**).

This latest research from SSAFA calls on the public to join the fight against isolation in veterans through its personal face-to-face support. To find out how you can help, head to [ssafa.org.uk/fight](https://ssafa.org.uk/fight)

**Over a quarter** (27 percent) of the veterans surveyed stated that they felt they would benefit from meeting someone regularly from a military background to talk to someone who can empathise with their experience of the Armed Forces.

**Sir Andrew Gregory, Chief Executive, SSAFA says:** *“Isolation and loneliness is a growing issue across society that affects young and old alike. A great strength of military service is the team ethos, sense of comradeship and belonging that flows from being part of a group with a common purpose and shared values.*

*“Our research shows just how many veterans can become isolated as they struggle to adjust to life after the Forces. SSAFA is already seeing a growing number of younger veterans in need who are benefitting from our personal face-to-face advice through our trained volunteer network.*

*“You can help SSAFA reach more veterans who have served our Nation by giving either a donation or your time as a volunteer; they have sacrificed a great deal and deserve our support.”*

**Join the fight and donate to end isolation amongst veterans by visiting**

**[www.ssafa.org.uk/fight](http://www.ssafa.org.uk/fight)**

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### **Notes to editors**

- YouGov poll of 2,007 veterans aged 18-64 years. Fieldwork was undertaken between 7th - 20th September 2017. The survey was carried out online.
- SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity, has been providing lifelong support to our Forces and their families since 1885. Every year our staff and team of volunteers help more than 65,000 people, from Second World War veterans to young men and women who have served in more recent conflicts.

For more information visit [www.ssafa.org.uk](http://www.ssafa.org.uk) and follow us on Twitter: @SSAFA