

War Pension Scheme and Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (Public Inquiry) Bill

[AS INTRODUCED]

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[AS INTRODUCED]

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TO

Establish an independent public inquiry into the administration of the War Pension Scheme and of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme by Veterans UK; and for connected purposes.

BE IT ENACTED by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

1 Public inquiry into the War Pension Scheme and the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme

- (1) *The Secretary of State must as soon as reasonably practicable establish a public inquiry into the administration of the War Pension Scheme and of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme by Veterans UK.* 5
- (2) The terms of reference of that inquiry must include—
- (a) the effectiveness of Veterans UK in making payments under the War Pension Scheme and the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme accurately and promptly,
 - (b) the appropriateness of the processes operated by Veterans UK for assessing claims, including— 10
 - (i) whether those processes are sufficiently transparent,
 - (ii) whether those processes could be made easier for veterans to use, and
 - (iii) whether those processes are adequate to ensure fair and impartial decision-making on claims, 15
 - (c) the appropriateness of processes to assess medical evidence and other documents, including— —
 - (i) whether there is evidence of a presumption for or against claims being successful, and, if so, to what extent the claims process contributes to that presumption, and 20
 - (ii) whether those processes consider medical evidence and other documents to a fair and appropriate extent,
 - (d) the impact of the claims process on the mental and physical health of veterans, and 25

- (e) the accuracy of reports that medical evidence and other documents have been removed by Veterans UK staff from evidence bundles prepared by veterans for tribunals.

2 Provisions of the Inquiries Act 2005 to apply to the inquiry

The following provisions of the Inquiries Act 2005 apply to the inquiry established under section 1 as if it was an inquiry under that Act— 5

- (a) sections 2 to 14 (constitution of inquiry);
- (b) sections 17 to 23 (inquiry proceedings);
- (c) sections 24 to 26 (reports);
- (d) section 27 (United Kingdom inquiries); 10
- (e) section 31 (the relevant part of the United Kingdom and the applicable 10 rules);
- (f) sections 35 to 43 (supplementary and general);
- (g) section 50 (Crown Application).

3 Extent, commencement and short title 15

- (1) This Act extends to England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- (2) This Act comes into force on the day on which it is passed.
- (3) This Act may be cited as the War Pension Scheme and Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (Public Inquiry) Act 2023.

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Presented by Owen Thompson

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be
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