

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

The Defence and National Rehabilitation Centre

The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr Philip Hammond): In October 2011, my predecessor updated the House on progress towards the creation of a Defence and National Rehabilitation Centre (DNRC). I am today announcing that the Ministry of Defence intends to transfer its Rehabilitation Centre at Headley Court to the Stanford Hall Estate facility when it opens in 2017.

Rehabilitation medicine is advancing rapidly. For this reason, the feasibility of establishing a DNRC to put the UK at the forefront of this field, benefiting the Armed Forces and wider society, has been under consideration for a number of years.

The Duke of Westminster funded a Feasibility Study in 2010 and 2011, which concluded that there was convincing evidence that a DNRC would be able to build on the remarkable achievements of Headley Court by offering substantial 'betterment' in virtually all areas, providing an assured level of future care that will surpass that which is offered by Headley Court's current capabilities. Subsequently, the Duke acquired a site in the East Midlands and has gained detailed planning permission for the development of the new Defence facility and outline permission for a civilian National rehabilitation centre on the same site. The designs for the Defence establishment are very well advanced and have been drawn up with the significant engagement of the practitioners at Headley Court and the direct involvement of the MOD's Surgeon General.

The Duke has led a major donor fundraising campaign to build the Defence facility. Very significant progress has been made and he is confident that the overall sum required will be achieved in time for the establishment to open at the end of 2017, as originally forecast. The DNRC Programme will now move to the tendering stage with a view to construction work starting in 2015.

Design of the civilian National facility to support NHS rehabilitative work has involved the Department of Health, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, as well as Health authorities in the East and West Midlands and academic institutions. The outline permission for that facility at Stanford Hall envisages provision of a rehabilitation complex with the flexibility to encompass vocational rehabilitation, rehabilitation research and education, and to accommodate and support sports athletes with disabilities. The application was entered into on the basis that a full business case for the civilian National facility, which will determine the best mix of facilities, will be considered in 2016.

The Headley Court estate and premises is owned in its entirety by the trustees of the Headley Court Charity who have been involved in the DNRC project from the outset as a means of ensuring that the spirit and achievements of Headley Court are carried forward into the 21st Century on a new, larger site, purpose-built to continue to do what Headley Court has always done so well. A dialogue with the Charity's trustees as to their intentions with regard to the future of the site is underway with the MOD.

Building on the success of Headley Court and the tremendous support it has received from Help for Heroes, The Royal British Legion, SSAFA and the many other Service charities, the DNRC will ensure the continued provision of world-leading clinical rehabilitation to enable Defence to care for the injured and the sick in the best possible way. The Help for Heroes facilities at Headley Court, an £8.5m investment, will be replicated and upgraded at the Stanford Hall Estate to achieve optimal clinical outcomes and the name 'Help for Heroes Rehabilitation Complex' will be prominent in the new facilities. Key symbols of Help for Heroes at Headley Court, such as the Stretcher Bearer statue and the Pathway of Support, will also transfer to Stanford Hall.

I will update the House on plans for the future of Headley Court when they have been determined. I am grateful to the Duke of Westminster for his generosity and determination. I am confident that the new DNRC has the potential to drive significant further advances in rehabilitative medicine, building on the world-class experience of Headley Court.

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