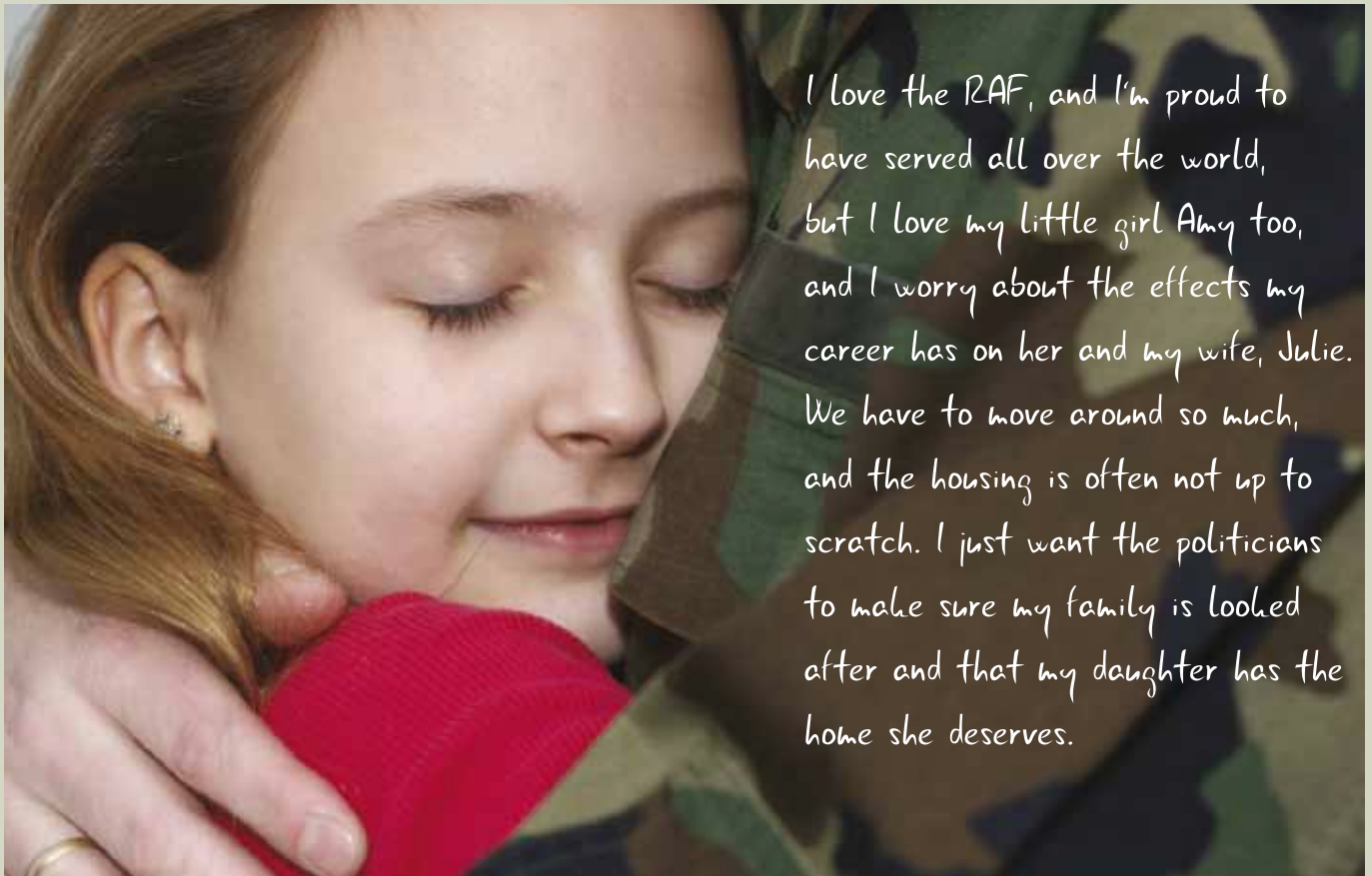




The Royal British Legion

# General Election Manifesto

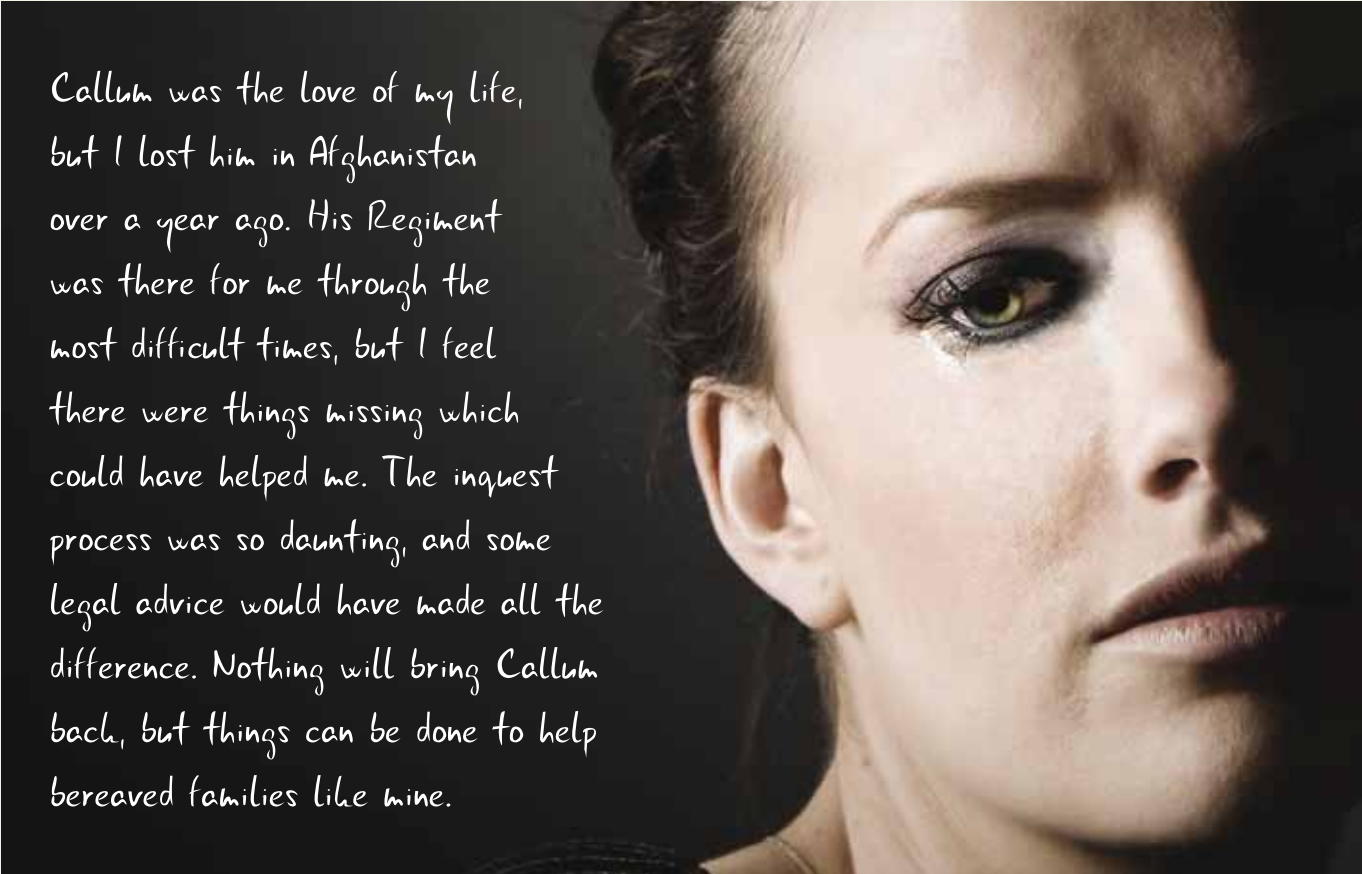




I love the RAF, and I'm proud to have served all over the world, but I love my little girl Amy too, and I worry about the effects my career has on her and my wife, Julie. We have to move around so much, and the housing is often not up to scratch. I just want the politicians to make sure my family is looked after and that my daughter has the home she deserves.

## Service Personnel and their families need the next government to:

- Keep the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme under continual, independent review and:
  - change the standard of proof so that where evidence is inconclusive, the benefit of the doubt is given to the injured Service person;
  - remove the link between lump-sum awards and ongoing payments to reflect the fact that they are paid for different reasons;
  - allow claims relating to injuries or illnesses caused by medical treatment;
  - remove the time limits to lodge a claim; and
  - exempt payments when carrying out means-testing for State benefits.
- Stop breaches of harmony guidelines (deployment rates) in order to reduce family separation and breakdown.
- Bring all single and family accommodation up to the highest standard within the lifetime of the next parliament and ensure that the Ministry of Defence publishes full details of the funding and timescales needed to upgrade Armed Forces housing.
- Introduce health screening and monitoring for Service Personnel and vulnerable dependants and ensure priority is given to those deployed for extended periods, their partners and those medically downgraded.
- Introduce more effective prevention and treatment strategies to tackle mental health problems, binge drinking and drug abuse.
- Assess the impact of mobility on Armed Forces families, especially in relation to health, employment and education.

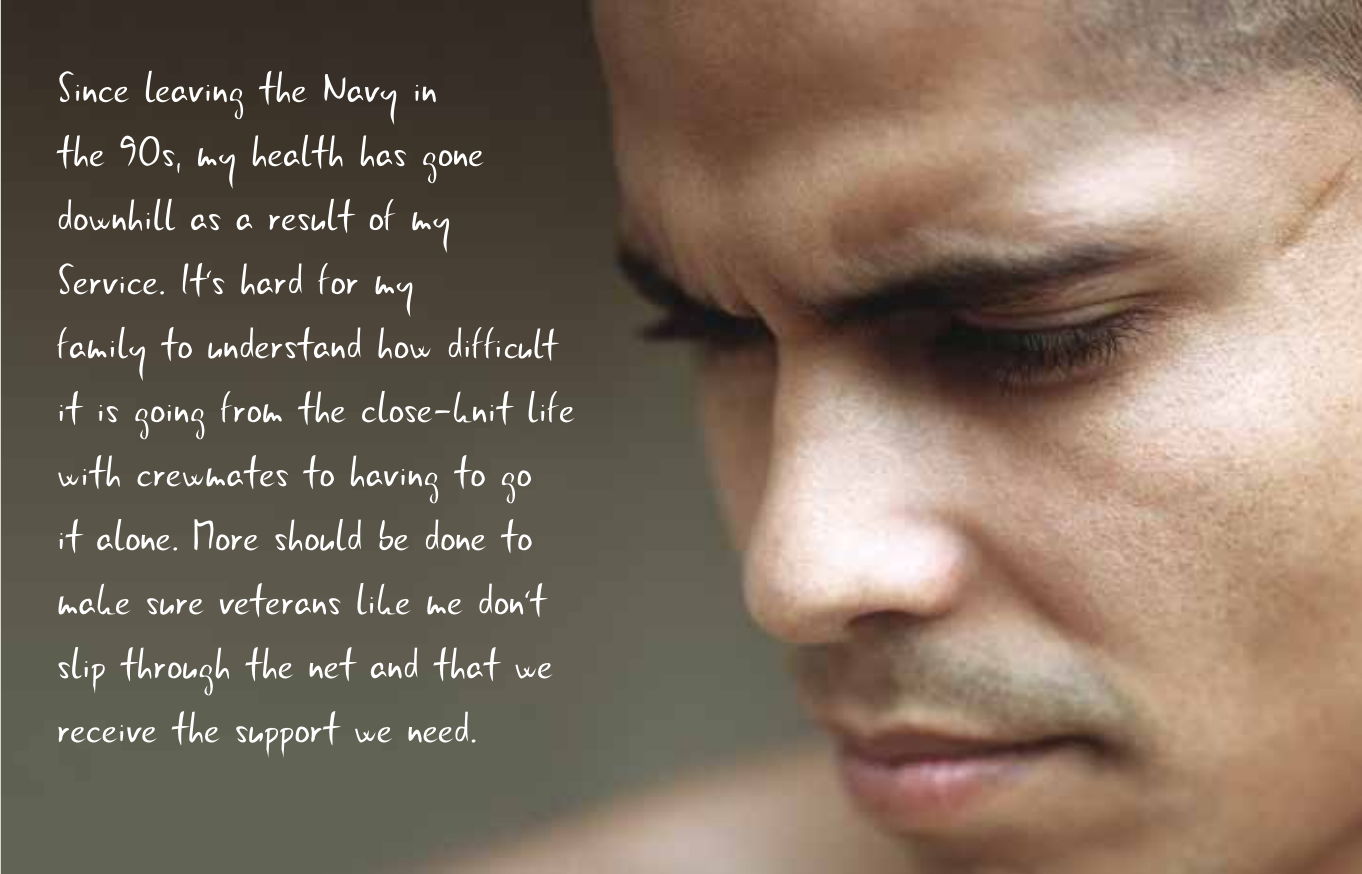


Callum was the love of my life, but I lost him in Afghanistan over a year ago. His Regiment was there for me through the most difficult times, but I feel there were things missing which could have helped me. The inquest process was so daunting, and some legal advice would have made all the difference. Nothing will bring Callum back, but things can be done to help bereaved families like mine.

## Bereaved Armed Forces families need the next government to:

- Fund an independent legal advice service to provide bereaved Armed Forces families with support and guidance through the inquest process.
- Introduce an Independent Advisory Committee on Military Deaths to provide advice, review recommendations from coroners and to give families a voice.
- Introduce mandatory training in Armed Forces policies and procedures to better equip coroners to investigate operational or training related Armed Forces deaths.
- Give the Service Complaints Commissioner additional powers to investigate complaints made by bereaved Armed Forces families.
- Create specialist bereavement counselling services for Armed Forces families, including parents and children.

The stories contained in this manifesto are for illustrative purposes only and are based on issues and experiences that the Legion is aware of through its work.



Since leaving the Navy in the 90s, my health has gone downhill as a result of my Service. It's hard for my family to understand how difficult it is going from the close-knit life with crewmates to having to go it alone. More should be done to make sure veterans like me don't slip through the net and that we receive the support we need.

## Veterans and their families need the next government to:

- Make the NHS priority treatment system work for veterans with injuries caused by Service in the Armed Forces or consider privately funded alternatives.
- Tackle poverty among veterans and their families by increasing incomes through:
  - doubling the Personal Expenses Allowance for those receiving residential care;
  - making the disregarding of all War Pension payments for means-testing for Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit a statutory requirement; and
  - developing an automated payment system for Council Tax Benefit.
- Ensure that local authorities meet their obligations to provide Disabled Facilities Grants to veterans who need adaptations to their homes.
- Exempt all veterans who require a Disabled Facilities Grant from the current means test if the adaptation is needed because of a Service related injury.
- Fund comprehensive research and provide additional compensation for duty of care breaches to veterans suffering from legacy health issues, including Gulf War and nuclear test veterans.
- Provide all Service leavers with an effective mental health education programme at the point of resettlement, so those at high risk know where to go for help.



**From our National Chairman to candidates standing in the General Election**

Dear Candidate,

As guardian of the Military Covenant, The Royal British Legion has been fighting for the concerns of the serving and ex-Service community since 1921. Today the need is just as great. The legacy of the fiercest fighting since the Second World War will be the nation's to meet for decades to come. Of course, the Legion is determined to do its bit to support serving personnel – those in the field and those returning home, perhaps with life-changing injuries – as well as their families and those who have served in the past.

However, we cannot do this on our own. Ultimately, it is the politicians who are in the unique position of sending our forces into war. They therefore have a moral lifelong duty of care to protect and support them and their families.

The Military Covenant must be honoured, both for those currently serving and those who have served.

This General Election manifesto is an open invitation to politicians of all parties to do their bit and join us in keeping faith with the brave heroes of the serving and ex-Service community. It outlines the key actions we would like the next Government to take to improve the welfare of serving personnel, past and present, and their families.

The stories inside reflect the experiences of people in constituencies up and down the UK, perhaps your own constituency. The message to every candidate standing in the general election is simple: "It's time to do your bit." Please take a few minutes to find out how you, too, can do your bit for those who sacrifice so much for all of us.

Thank you.

Yours Sincerely,

Peter Cleminson  
Peter Cleminson  
National Chairman

The Legion's mission is to safeguard the welfare, interests and memory of those who are serving or have served in the Armed Forces.  
Registered Charity Address: The Royal British Legion, 199 Borough High Street, London SE1 1AA  
Registered Charity No: 219279

 **POPPY SUPPORT**  
For Service people past and present and their families

# It's time to do your bit

Our top manifesto calls are:

## For Service Personnel and their families

- Improve and keep the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme under continual review
- Stop breaches of harmony guidelines (deployment rates) in order to reduce family separation and breakdown

## For bereaved Armed Forces families

- Provide bereaved Armed Forces families with independent legal advice during inquests
- Introduce an Independent Advisory Committee on Military Deaths

## For veterans and their families

- Make NHS priority treatment work for veterans with injuries caused by Service in the Armed Forces
- Tackle poverty among older veterans and widows

*Please see inside for all our manifesto calls.*

## Please do your bit by:

- Visiting [www.timetodoyourbit.org.uk](http://www.timetodoyourbit.org.uk) to:
  - **Register** your support online, and ask your friends and family to register theirs; and
  - **Publicise** your support by using the online resources for candidates and members of the public.
- Emailing [info@buckland.co.uk](mailto:info@buckland.co.uk) or calling **01304 205 900** to request a hard copy of the General Election manifesto campaign pack.
- Supporting our manifesto calls at election hustings, and in public and face-to-face meetings.



Thank you for your support!

