

Defence Whistleblowing System to Undergo Ministerial Review

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The Ministry of Defence is set to launch a full ministerial review into whistleblowing procedures across the Armed Forces, following pressure from the House of Lords during the passage of the Armed Forces Commissioner Bill. The review aims to assess the effectiveness of current internal reporting structures, including whether the “Raising a

Concern” process provides sufficient protection and clarity for service personnel.

Veterans Minister Al Carns MP will lead the review, with initial findings expected before the end of 2025 and a final report scheduled for spring 2026. A ministerial statement outlining the review’s scope will be published after the summer recess.

The government’s commitment to a comprehensive reassessment led peers to withdraw proposed amendments to the Bill, which would have given the Armed Forces Commissioner direct oversight of whistleblowing complaints. Baroness Goldie, who championed those changes, welcomed the government’s concession to strengthen accountability mechanisms.

A key focus of the review will be whether current whistleblowing routes, which include multiple internal channels, empower or deter personnel from reporting wrongdoing. It will also evaluate whether military procedures align with civilian whistleblowing standards.

The review comes amid growing scrutiny of the Armed Forces’ internal culture, following high-profile cases such as the death of Gunner Jayasuriya Beck. The inquest into her death prompted wider calls for reform, as numerous service members came forward with allegations of abuse and harassment that they felt were ignored or mishandled.

The Commons recently approved a key amendment to the Armed Forces Commissioner Bill, allowing anonymous whistleblower reports, a measure intended to protect complainants from retaliation.

Calls for improved protections have been echoed by advocacy groups and former service members who argue the current system lacks transparency and fosters a climate of fear. The ministerial review is expected to provide a roadmap for overhauling how the Armed Forces handles internal complaints, with the potential for legislative changes depending on the review's findings.