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THE RT HON ANDREW ROBATHAN MP
MINISTER FOR DEFENCE PERSONNEL WELFARE AND VETERANS

RECEIVED 17 MAY 2011

Our ref: D/Min(DPWW)/AR MC02207/2011
Your ref: GAMM3363

11 May 2011

Thank you for your letter of 18 April on behalf of your constituent, Mr Hindson of 10 Alderley Road, Low Fell, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, concerning setting up a new scheme 'Hands for Heroes' that offers free chiropractic care for war veterans.

I would like to assure you that the Government fully recognises the invaluable work undertaken by members of the Armed Forces, often in dangerous and difficult circumstances, and has the utmost gratitude for those such as Mr Hindson that have served their country especially those who have been physically or mentally wounded in conflict.

The Government takes both physical and mental health problems, in both serving personnel and veterans, very seriously. Those who join the Armed Forces are fitter than the equivalent civilian general population. While in service there is emphasis on health and fitness promotion, prevention of injury and illness, high standards of training human resource management and occupational health. Rates of physical and mental injury and illness are not high but if serving personnel become ill or injured, healthcare is provided by the Defence Medical Services; and increasingly Defence Medical Services work closely with National Health Service (NHS). This is especially the case in respect of acute treatment of injuries sustained in deployed operations. The aim is that personnel regular and reservist alike should have access to the highest standards of care and expertise. Upon leaving the service, since 1948 successive Governments have taken the view that that responsibility for veterans' medical care passes to the NHS.

The Department recognises the good intentions of "Hands for Heroes". Both in Service and in the NHS the Government is firmly committed to ethically sound evidence based therapies and interventions i.e. it sponsors therapies where there is evidence that they work. That evidence is usually obtained from reports of suitably designed studies in the

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published peer reviewed medical literature. As chiropractic care has not been endorsed by the NHS it is considered that it is not appropriate for the Department to raise awareness of "Hands for Heroes" amongst Serving and ex-Service personnel.

I am sorry to send a disappointing reply.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a stylized 'Y' or 'J' followed by a horizontal line and a comma.A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a stylized 'A' followed by a horizontal line and a period.

THE RT HON ANDREW ROBATHAN MP