

## **TRANSITION SERVICES**

- Veterans Affairs Canada is committed to working with the Canadian Armed Forces and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to ensure that the transition to life after service is as smooth as possible.
- The objective is to deliver a standardized, personalized and professional transition process that supports and empowers Canadian Armed Forces and Royal Canadian Mounted Police members, Veterans and their families before, during and after their transition to life after service.
- We have focused our efforts on reducing the complexity of the transition process while enhancing the well-being of Canadian Armed Forces and Royal Canadian Mounted Police Members, Veterans and their families.
- We are improving service delivery by enhancing digital tools and increasing early registration on My VAC Account to improve contact with Veterans Affairs Canada, and by increasing awareness of the available resources and supports.

## **WHEN PRESSED:**

### **Q1 – How is Veterans Affairs Canada providing transition assistance in the Transition Centres?**

Veterans Affairs Canada began providing a form of transition assistance on Canadian Forces Bases and Wings in 2003. Since that time, we have continued to develop and improve our service delivery model in response to the needs of transitioning Canadian Armed Forces Members and their families. A Transition Interview with wellness screening is available to all transitioning members.

Since 2015, we have worked with the Canadian Armed Forces to provide Enhanced Transition Services to medically releasing Canadian Armed Forces members and their families. In 2019, in cooperation with the Canadian Armed Forces and Military Family Services we designed a new joint Military to Civilian Transition process for non-medically releasing Canadian Armed Forces members and their families. This process has been implemented nationally.

In addition, My Transition 101 training courses have been developed and are available for all serving members at any time and are recommended for releasing members. These e-learning modules cover a diverse range of topics such as: the transition process, Veterans Affairs Canada programs and services, Canadian Armed Forces Pension Plan, financial planning for retirement, and how to manage their well-being after transition. This program is complemented by an updated series of My Transition Seminars, which are in-person or virtual. The aim of these courses is to assist the member in preparing for release and in making a detailed transition plan.

### **Q2 – What transition assistance is being provided to ill and injured Canadian Armed Forces Members?**

As part of Enhanced Transition Services, we engage earlier with medically releasing Canadian Armed Forces members as part of coordinated and integrated support from both Veterans Affairs Canada and the Canadian Armed Forces. This includes joint case consultation and coordinated case planning. Case Managers or Veteran Service Agents are assigned pre-release in order to align the transitioning member with the appropriate supports and ensure continuity of care.

### **Q3 – How is the new transition process different from the services that Veterans Affairs Canada was previously providing to support transition?**

Although Veterans Affairs Canada has been providing transition assistance for a considerable length of time, the weight of effort from the Canadian Armed Forces was given to support the ill and injured, leaving a gap for non-medically releasing Canadian

Armed Forces Members who underwent a largely administrative process without support.

The new Military to Civilian Transition process will address this gap within the Canadian Armed Forces and provide a standardized, personalized and professional transition process for non-medically releasing members. As part of this process, transitioning members will be supported by Canadian Armed Forces' Transition Advisors, Military Family Services' Family Transition Advisors and Veterans Affairs Canada staff who jointly will provide assistance and transition planning throughout the process. This new approach has been trialled at Canadian Forces Base Borden since 2019 and Canadian Forces Base Petawawa since 2021. The process has been implemented nationally and is fully operational as of March 2024.

#### **Q4 – How is Veterans Affairs Canada meeting the needs of families during the transition process?**

Veterans Affairs Canada understands that transition to life after service is just as big a change for the families as it is for those who served. As part of the new Military to Civilian Transition process, Military Family Services have been integrated into the joint transition centres where they will provide screening, transition assistance and transition planning for the families of releasing Canadian Armed Forces members. In addition, medically releasing Canadian Armed Forces Members and their families are eligible for the Veteran Family Program, which provides continued access to the Military Family Resource Centres and to a suite of transition-support programs and services. Under this program, we have introduced a pilot program called the Veteran Family Telemedicine Service. This pilot program connects medically released Veterans and their families to a national network of Canadian-licensed doctors, nurse practitioners, and healthcare providers who are accessible online via secure text messaging, audio, or video. Veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces and their families have one year from their medical release date to sign up for this service and from there, they and their families have one year of unlimited access to the virtual care service. Budget 2024 announced an extension of this pilot and an expansion to include all releasing Veterans and their families for a period of two years after their release.

#### **Q5 – How has Veterans Affairs Canada reduced complexity for Canadian Armed Forces members undergoing transition?**

Through Budget 2019, Veterans Affairs Canada established a project, Closing the Seam, which had as expected outcomes the reduction of the complexity of applying for benefits, the adequate preparation of Canadian Armed Forces members and their families for transition and the removal of the need to provide the same information multiple times. In support of these outcomes, there were nine different initiatives all of which are now complete.

For example, My VAC Account has been improved to allow for early registration for transitioning Canadian Armed Forces members, increased capacity and the

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development of guided web forms which provide a more automated, guided application experience which uses the 'tell us once' approach. Several other initiatives were aimed at improved information and data sharing between the Canadian Armed Forces and Veterans Affairs Canada including improvements to data quality and accuracy and providing direct access to service health records by Veterans Affairs Canada staff. Each of these will enable timely decisions, reduce wait times and remove the burden of providing this information from the Veteran. Finally, a number of tools and services were developed and help support members and their families as they transition to life after service, including: screening tools for potential risk and unmet needs, a new case management assessment which is interoperable with other tools and systems, a Member Transition Task List which is a digital and interactive transition planning tool and the Alignment of Treatment Benefits service which enables transitioning members to make informed decisions on their future healthcare needs after release, without delay or administrative burden.

#### **Q6 – How is Veterans Affairs Canada providing transition support to Royal Canadian Mounted Police members?**

Working closely with the RCMP, VAC introduced Transition Services at a number of locations in 2007. Since April 1, 2014 all discharging RCMP Regular Members, Civilian Members and their families may participate in a VAC Transition Interview. This is the same Transition Interview provided to releasing members of the CAF. Approximately 500 RCMP Members discharge annually. The Transition Interview is a meeting between a discharging RCMP member, their family or other support person, and VAC staff. It consists of a screening process that will assist members and their families in identifying potential risks and/or barriers to successful transition into civilian life. During a Transition Interview, VAC will gain a greater understanding of potential transition needs, provide information on available programs, benefits and services, and determine the level of support/intervention an RCMP member and their family may require from VAC and other community supports to address their needs. The interview is normally conducted upon discharge in person or over the phone for those living in remote locations. The process is completely voluntary for the RCMP and will be provided upon their request.