



HRH The Princess Royal speaking with Mrs Gill McGill and Professor Matthew Kiernan, Co-Directors of Northumbria's Northern Hub for Veterans and Military Families Research.

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## Northumbria welcomes Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal

**Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal visited Northumbria University, Newcastle, to hear about the quality and impact of its research helping to transform services and support for the UK military veteran community.**

The Princess Royal toured the University on Tuesday 8 February while visiting the region. During the visit, Her Royal Highness saw the work of Northumbria's [Northern Hub for Veterans and Military Families Research](#).

Established in 2014, the Hub brings together academics, ex-servicemen and women and experts from a range of disciplines who are dedicated to improving the health and social wellbeing of veterans and their families across the lifespan.

The Princess Royal met with academics who are conducting innovative, collaborative research to better understand the needs of the veteran community and to help inform and shape policy change to improve services and support. Northumbria has received significant funding from government, local authorities, NHS and the third sector over the past few years, in recognition of the specialist expertise it has in these fields.

Her Royal Highness spent time speaking with the team about their current activities and key areas of research, including projects to support bereaved military families, older limbless veterans and the LGBT+ veteran community.

The Princess Royal also heard about their work investigating veteran poverty and food insecurity and a project commissioned by the Ministry of Defence to map the needs of veterans across the UK. As part of the 'Map of Need' project, the team developed the UK's first digital, UK-wide directory of services known as the Veterans' Gateway. The website and app enable veterans and their families to find support in their local area from a database of 16,800 quality-assured services.

As well as meeting with members of the Northern Hub for Veterans and Military Families Research, the University's executive team, and the Student Life and Wellbeing team, Her Royal Highness saw Northumbria's multi-million pound Student Central building, a light and airy space designed to host all of the award-winning support services that students need, in one place at the heart of campus.

Before departing The Princess Royal unveiled a plaque to commemorate the visit.

Commenting on the visit from Her Royal Highness, Professor Andrew Wathey CBE, Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive of Northumbria University, said: "Northumbria is extremely proud of the work of the Northern Hub for Veterans and Military Families Research, which is supporting vital activity to reduce health and wellbeing inequalities among those who have served their country. We were honoured to welcome Her Royal Highness The Princess

Royal to our city campus during this special year commemorating Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee, and to demonstrate the significant contribution Northumbria is making through its research and partnerships to support the nation's veteran community."

Director of the Northern Hub for Veteran and Military Families Research, Professor Matthew Kiernan is a former Lieutenant Commander in the Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service. He said: "It is a real privilege for us to share the hub's translational research to improve the health and social wellbeing of the veteran community with The Princess Royal.

"Our work is driven by the needs of veterans and their families - integration into the community that we work with and for is at the heart of the hub's mission. As a multidisciplinary team of academics and experts by experience, we strive to attract and facilitate collaboration across the Armed Forces sector and work as a collective force for impact and change across emotionally challenging matters. It is an honour for the hub's hard work to be recognised by Her Royal Highness."

Northumbria was the first university in the North East to sign up to the Armed Forces Covenant in 2016, setting out its pledge to support service personnel, veterans and their families. The University has also [received the Silver Award](#) in the Ministry of Defence's Employer Recognition Scheme.

For more information about Northumbria please visit [www.northumbria.ac.uk](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk)

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