Welfare Minister “Honoured” to Visit Charity for Disabled Veterans on Poppy Appeal Launch Day

Thursday 27 October, 2016

Welfare Minister, Caroline Nokes, saw first-hand the employment support provided by The Poppy Factory in Richmond on yesterday on the first day of The Royal British Legion’s Poppy Appeal, and even got to make her own poppy.

To mark the first day of The Royal British Legion’s Poppy Appeal, Welfare Minister, Caroline Nokes, saw first-hand the employment support provided by The Poppy Factory in Richmond on Thursday.

The Poppy Factory is a charity which produces around 11million poppies every year, along with over a million wreaths and remembrance symbols laid by the Royal Family and The Royal British Legion at events across the country. They are made by veterans, all of whom are disabled or have health conditions.

Through a network of regional ‘employability consultants’, The Poppy Factory also supports disabled ex-service personnel into meaningful careers in a wide-range of sectors throughout the country.

The Minister for Welfare Delivery, Caroline Nokes, met staff employed at the charity on Petersham Road to hear about its good work and to highlight Government support for veterans and disabled people.

Caroline Nokes said:

“It was an honour to meet staff at The Poppy Factory and hear how they have gone on to lead independent lives after serving their country.

“Every year I wear my poppy with pride to honour those who have sacrificed so much for their country. We are committed to ensuring ex-Service personnel and their families get the help they need, and it’s great to see the vital support provided by organisations like The Poppy Factory, especially on the first day of the British Legion’s appeal.”

Melanie Waters, Chief Executive of The Poppy Factory, invited the Minister to the charity so they could share their best practice in supporting disabled people into work.

Melanie Waters said:

“We are grateful to the Minister for Welfare Delivery, Caroline Nokes, for visiting and for answering our questions about Armed Force Champions, the future of the Work Choice programme, and benefits for disabled veterans seeking work.”

“The Poppy Factory is committed to transforming the way businesses think about employing disabled people. Our research indicates that disabled veterans can sometimes fall through the gaps and it was welcoming to hear that the Minister shares our commitment to stop this happening.”

“We want to work with the Department of Work and Pensions to ensure that ex-Service men and women with disabilities are able to secure fulfilling employment.”

The Department for Work and Pensions is proud to honour the *Armed Forces Covenant*, a promise from the nation that those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces and their families are treated fairly.

Every Jobcentre Plus District has an Armed Forces Champion to ensure that serving personnel, veterans and their families get the right benefits advice and all the help they need in finding a job.

Veterans also have early access to the Work Programme and exemptions from requirements for claims to certain benefits. The Government recognises that special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for the wounded, injured and sick.

The Poppy Factory is an employment charity that helps disabled veterans overcome the many barriers to a meaningful civilian career. Through an evidence-based approach to employability support, including CV advice, interview coaching, job searching and an ongoing relationship with local employers, the charity has help over 700 individuals into employment since 2010.

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Founded in 1922, The Poppy Factory also provides employment opportunities at its headquarters in Richmond, Surrey, for disabled veterans and disabled dependents of Service personnel, creating remembrance products for The Royal British Legion and the Royal Family.

Company Contact:

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The Poppy Factory

T. 020 8940 3305
E. nickeaglesfield@poppyfactory.org
W. https://www.poppyfactory.org

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