The Fund was established on the 14th June 1916 in response to an Appeal by the Lord Mayor of London to establish a national memorial to the late Field Marshal Lord Kitchener of Khartoum. The Charter of Incorporation of the Fund received the Royal Assent in 1919 with HM Queen Alexandra as its first President. Initially set up for 'the relief of disabled officers and men' of the First World War other donations were to the establishment of a permanent memorial in All Souls Chapel, St Paul's Cathedral, and the foundation of a medical school at the university he had earlier established in Khartoum as a memorial to General Gordon.

Also established was a scheme to offer Kitchener University Scholarships to former members of the three Services of a suitable age who were undertaking a course of study leading to a first degree at a university in the United Kingdom. The first of these scholarships was awarded in 1917 and were extended shortly afterwards to the sons, and later daughters, of parents who were serving or who had served in the Armed Services. Since the grant of the first scholarship over 5500 such scholarships have been awarded. At present up to 25 awards are made each year to the value of £750.

In 1980 Kitchener European Scholarships were inaugurated. The rules of eligibility were the same as those applying for university scholarships and were aimed at those studying for a Masters degree in Business Administration at the European Institute of Business Administration (INSEAD), Fontainebleau. To date 80 such scholarships have been awarded to two scholars each year and to the value of £2000. It is the aim of the Lord Kitchener National Memorial Fund to continue and increase both the number and value of Kitchener Scholarships in future years.