

NHS care for the Armed Forces community, October 2019

The NHS is responsible for providing all hospital and most community services for serving personnel (except for mental health, general practice and rehabilitation services). The NHS also provides nearly all community, general practice and hospital services for the families of serving personnel, reservists and veterans. Included as part of this are the following dedicated services and initiatives to support the Armed Forces community.

NHS mental health services for veterans

The Veterans' Mental Health Transition, Intervention and Liaison Service (TILS) is for serving personnel approaching discharge from the military and veterans with mental health difficulties. The service provides a range of treatment, from recognising the early signs of mental health problems and providing access to early support, to therapeutic treatment for complex mental health difficulties and psychological trauma. Help may also be provided with housing, employment, alcohol misuse and social support.

The Veterans' Mental Health Complex Treatment Service (CTS) is for ex-forces who have military related complex mental health difficulties that have not improved with previous treatment. The service provides intensive care and treatment that may include (but is not limited to) support for drug and alcohol misuse, physical health, employment, housing, relationships and finances, as well as occupational and trauma focused therapies.

Both services are available across England and accessible via the TILS. Individuals can self-refer or ask a GP or Armed Forces charity to refer them. As part of their service offer, families are supported to access care and treatment for themselves where appropriate.

Veterans Trauma Network (VTN)

The VTN provides care and treatment to those with a service-attributable physical health condition. Located in ten major trauma centres across England, with links to five specialist NHS trusts, the network works closely with Defence Medical Services (DMS), national centres of clinical expertise, the TILS and CTS, as well as military charities to provide a complete package of care. It is run largely by healthcare professionals who are either veterans or serving personnel. GPs can email england.veteranstraumanetwork@nhs.net to refer veterans to the service, where they will benefit from specialist care by military and civilian experts. The service is also now available in Wales.

Veterans Prosthetics Panel (VPP)

The VPP provides funding on a named veteran basis to NHS Disablement Service Centres (DSC) to ensure that veterans who have service related limb loss can access high quality prosthetics regardless of which DSC they attend.

Armed Forces personnel in transition: Integrated Personal Commissioning for Veterans Framework (IPC4V)

IPC4V is a personalised care approach for serving personnel who have complex and enduring physical, neurological and mental health conditions that are attributable to injury whilst in service. It provides a framework for effectively planning and delivering personalised care in line with the Armed Forces Covenant. Central to this is an improved discharge planning process, starting approximately nine months before these individuals leave the military. This means that the MOD, health and social care, Armed Forces charities and other organisations involved in the care of these individuals are brought together at an earlier point in the care pathway, ensuring care and support arrangements are in place as they transition to civilian life and beyond.

Personalised care for veterans with a long term physical, mental or neurological health condition or disability

Ex-forces with a complex and life-long health condition may be eligible for the veterans personalised care programme. Eligible individuals will have a single personalised care plan for all their health and wellbeing needs that is developed with them and a range of organisations, including health and social care and military charities. To apply, individuals should contact their local clinical commissioning group.

Veteran friendly GP practice accreditation

Over the next five years, NHS England and NHS Improvement, together with the Royal College of General Practitioners, are rolling out the veteran friendly GP practice accreditation scheme across England. This scheme, which is intended to help ensure practices are equipped to best care for veterans and their families, has already accredited over 400 surgeries.

The Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance (VCHA)

The VCHA aims to improve NHS care for the Armed Forces community by supporting trusts, health boards and other providers to identify, develop and showcase the best standards of care. To date, 37 hospital trusts have been accredited as 'Veteran Aware', having demonstrated their commitment to eight core manifesto standards, including signing the Armed Forces Covenant, raising awareness of veterans' healthcare needs among staff, and establishing links with local support providers.

For further information, email england.armedforceshealth@nhs.net or visit www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/military-healthcare/