

Armed Forces briefing

28 October 2022

With Remembrance Day only a few weeks away, many people will be reflecting on those who have given their lives in conflicts across the years and the families left behind. We also reflect on the commitments made by past and present service people, reservists and their families that offer critical support. NHS England will be represented at the opening service of the Field of Remembrance and we are delighted that LGBT+ veterans will again be participating in the Cenotaph Remembrance Sunday Service parade.

In this month's brief, we look at what we are doing to support the wider Armed Forces family through our Single Point of Contact services, which are currently being piloted in three areas of England with expansion to other areas due in the coming month.

Families

[The Armed Forces Forward View](#) (2021) sets out nine commitments from the NHS to ensure equitable care is provided to the Armed Forces community. Specifically, commitments 1, 2 and 5 directly reference family health, with a key focus on a new Single Point of Contact service for the Armed Forces community.

[Single Point of Contact service for the Armed Forces community](#)

The Single Point of Contact (SPoC) service for the Armed Forces community saw three pilot sites go live in April 2022 in:

- North Yorkshire and Humber Integrated Care Board (ICB);
- Hertfordshire and West Essex ICB;
- Sussex ICB and Kent and Medway ICB.

The SPoC model is a dedicated service for the Armed Forces community, including those who are serving, reservists, veterans and their families. SPoCs can support individuals by:

- liaising with other organisations on their behalf to ensure a smooth transition of care when moving between areas
- helping to ensure your treatment continues and any places you have on NHS waiting lists are maintained
- providing support and guidance on how to use the NHS
- advising on your nearest Veteran Friendly GP practice and Veteran Aware NHS Trust
- letting you know about support via social prescribing
- putting you in touch with a service champion within an organisation
- providing information on both physical and psychological trauma support services

SPoCs are being piloted in response to the findings from the [Improving Health and Wellbeing for Armed Forces Families](#) engagement held in 2021, with findings from the pilot helping to inform a wider roll out across England.

Phase 2 is due to commence in November 2022 with Dorset ICB; and Bath, North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire ICB set to offer this service. London region and Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland ICB due to follow soon after, meaning coverage across all regions in England.

“I am so grateful to the NHS team in Sussex who have been supportive in getting the right care for our child. Above all, they understood the complexity of our situation and took the time to listen to us. That means so much.”

[Military Maternity Voices Partnership \(MMVP\) and Military Care Navigator \(MCN\) in Lincolnshire](#)

As reported in the last brief, the MMVP pilot is underway across Lincolnshire, which is a large county with rural and coastal areas of deprivation and poor road networks. Work has been undertaken to understand the areas that serving and veteran families live in order to make links with local groups to promote the MMVP and MCN.

The MMVP has visited bases across Lincolnshire, including RAF Waddington, Cranwell, Coningsby and Prince William of Gloucester Barracks, with further visits to RAF Digby and Sobraon Barracks being organised. MMVP are progressing work to also reach families that live off base, veterans and reservists.

The Military Care Navigator (MCN) is a direct point of contact whom individuals can self refer or be referred to and who can offer tailored support to ensure access to the correct health and social care services, as well as those provided by third sector organisations. The MCN supports families from conception to reception (school starting age). Initial data shows a steady increase in contacts and referrals to the MMVP and positive feedback on the care navigator role.

You can hear more about this project [here](#).

Catterick Integrated Care Campus

Formal planning approval has been granted for the new Catterick Integrated Care Campus, bringing construction of a brand-new health and care facility. More than seven years in development, this joint venture between the NHS and Ministry of Defence (MOD) will provide a range of healthcare services for Armed Forces personnel and their families based at Catterick Garrison and residents of the local Richmondshire area.

Subject to final clinical modelling, the purpose-build centre on the Garrison will feature primary care: advanced primary care; mental health services; physiotherapy; NHS dentistry for children and for adults with a disability and voluntary and community healthcare providers under one roof.

Winter vaccines – COVID-19 and flu

People aged over 50 and those in some high risk groups are now able to book online for their seasonal COVID-19 and flu vaccines. Whilst it is safe to have the vaccines together, they must be booked separately. Click [here to book COVID-19 vaccine](#) and [here to book the flu vaccine](#).

Veteran services accreditations

Below are the most recent accreditation figures from the Veteran Friendly and Veteran Aware schemes.

	Accreditations
RCGP Veteran Friendly GP Practices	1,593
VCHA Veteran Aware Acute Hospital Trusts	123

Royal College of General Practitioners Remembrance Campaign

The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) are launching an awareness campaign ahead of Remembrance Day with an aim to accredit more GP practices across England.

GP practice staff who wish to honour veterans for their service this Remembrance Day are encouraged to apply for Veteran Friendly accreditation.

More than half of veterans (52%) have a long-term illness or disability, yet research suggests many may be reluctant to seek out support for their issues, particularly if they feel they may not be understood.

With an estimated two million veterans in the UK, it's likely that the average GP sees a veteran patient every day. Being able to identify and support veteran

patients is crucial to ensure best outcomes, as they may face different health challenges to the general population.

New resource for general practice

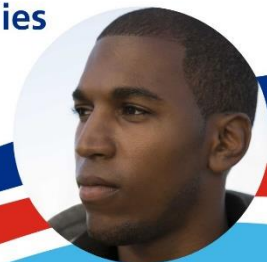
University of Chester, funded by Forces in Mind Trust, have recently published a video, [Top 10 tips for improving Veteran Registration](#), to help GP practices identify veteran patients. This short video is a worthwhile watch for all practice staff.

Op COURAGE

We are currently arranging focus groups and one to one sessions to find out how veterans and their families want us to talk to them about mental health services. The findings of the engagement will be used to inform a new marketing campaign in support of the new integrated Op COURAGE service model launching in April 2023.

We want to speak to veterans and their families

about how we talk about mental health



If you or someone you know is interested in talking to us, you can get in touch by emailing:

england.armedforceshealth@nhs.net

We will be sharing tweets advertising opportunities for engagement. Please do consider sharing these if you see them.

Engagement opportunities

The below engagement opportunities may be of interest. Please note that whilst these may be of interest, they may not necessarily be associated with NHS England.

LGBT Veterans independent review [Call for evidence.](#) Closes 15 November 2022

University of Chester [Perceptions of healthcare professionals working with veterans](#) Closes June 2023

Suicide Bereavement UK NHS funded study As part of this study, authors would like to speak to serving Armed Forces personnel or veterans who have lost a serving or veteran friend, colleague or family member to suicide in the last 10 years, so that they can speak to and learn from them about their experiences. TBC

To share your views or for more information, contact:

Dr. Sharon McDonnell
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Honorary Research Fellow, University of Manchester
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Email: sharon.mcdonnell@suicidebereavementuk.com

Op COURAGE communications The Armed Forces team are looking to speak to veterans and their families about how we talk about our veterans mental health services. You do not need to have used the Op COURAGE service to join in. To find out details of upcoming focus groups or to arrange a one-to-one discussion, email: england.armedforceshealth@nhs.net Email for details of focus group dates