

NHS care for the Armed Forces community, January 2024

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.

[Healthcare for the Armed Forces community: a forward view](#) outlines the commitments NHS England is making to improve the health and wellbeing of the whole Armed Forces community.

Op COURAGE: The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service

[Op COURAGE](#) provides a broad range of specialist mental health and wellbeing care and support for Service leavers, reservists, veterans and their families. Individuals can self-refer to their local service or ask a healthcare professional, charity, family member or friend to do this.

Op RESTORE: The Veterans Physical Health and Wellbeing Service

[Op RESTORE](#) provides care and treatment to those with a Service-attributable physical health condition. Located in 13 major trauma centres (Plymouth, Oxford, London (three centres), Birmingham, Nottingham, Liverpool, Leeds, Cambridge, Brighton and Middlesbrough) and with links to four NHS trusts, the network works closely with Defence Medical Services, national centres of clinical expertise, Op COURAGE and military charities, to provide holistic care. Access to Op RESTORE requires a primary care referral by emailing imperial.oprestore@nhs.net.

Op NOVA: Supporting Veterans in the Justice System

[Op NOVA](#) provides one to one non clinical support to veterans who are at risk of being arrested or already have been, are due to leave prison or have been released from prison. Veterans accessing the service have access to a range of practical and emotional help, along with being supported by an expert case worker.

Op COMMUNITY: Armed Forces Community Support

Op COMMUNITY is an NHS England funded pilot being delivered by seven integrated care boards (ICBs). Op COMMUNITY is providing care navigation and signposting to the wider Armed Forces community with a specific focus on Serving families. We are supporting ICBs to communicate their referral pathways locally at this time.

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 attributable limb loss can access high quality prosthetics regardless of which DSC they attend. More information is available [here](#).

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

[IPC4V](#) provides a personalised care approach for serving personnel who have complex and enduring, service attributable physical, neurological and mental health conditions. It provides a framework for effectively planning and delivering personalised care to support an improved discharge planning process from the military. This means that all organisations involved in supporting the individual are brought together at an earlier point in the care pathway, ensuring the appropriate arrangements are in place as they transition to civilian life.

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

Veterans 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 [integrated care board](#).

Veteran friendly GP practice accreditation

The Royal College of General Practitioners, supported by NHS England, are rolling out the [veteran friendly GP practice accreditation scheme](#) across England. This scheme, which helps to ensure practices are equipped to best care for veterans and their families, has already accredited over 2,700 surgeries with 84% of primary care networks having at least one accredited practice.

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, over 170 trusts have been accredited as 'Veteran Aware', having demonstrated their commitment to eight core standards, including signing the Armed Forces Covenant and raising awareness of veterans' healthcare needs.

Step into Health

[The Step into Health programme](#) encourages NHS organisations to recruit members of the Armed Forces community. Supported by NHS England, Walking with the Wounded and The Royal Foundation, it helps NHS organisations benefit from the transferable skills and values that the Armed Forces community bring into the workplace, along with raising awareness of the barriers into employment which they may face.

For further information and to register for the Armed Forces health stakeholder brief, email england.armedforceshealth@nhs.net. Information is also available at www.nhs.uk/armedforceshealth (patient facing) and www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/armed-forces/ (NHS facing).



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