

# Briefing

November 2021

## Armed Forces healthcare briefing and latest updates on COVID-19

This monthly brief is intended to keep you up to date on the provision of NHS services for the Armed Forces community, as well as latest information and guidance relating to COVID-19.

### Focus on COVID-19

#### Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine third dose

The NHS has published information to explain the difference between third primary doses – for which some severely immunosuppressed people are eligible – and boosters, which take place from six months after the primary course of two or three doses. The third vaccine dose for people with a weakened immune system is different to a [booster vaccine dose](#).

For more information about why people with a weakened immune system are being offered a third dose of a coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine, also known as a third primary dose, visit the [NHS website](#).

### Health and wellbeing updates

#### Remembrance

This month the Armed Forces community came together on Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday to mark this period of Remembrance.

NHS England and NHS Improvement has shared messages from staff, veterans and reservists, giving thanks to the Armed Forces community and describing who they are remembering and what this time means to them.

- Kate Davies CBE, Director of Health and Justice, Armed Forces and Sexual Assault Services Commissioning said; "We are all very proud to be working alongside the Armed Forces community." in her [video](#) message on Remembrance Sunday.
- Veterans Trauma Network Lead and reservist, Shehan Hettiaratchy, shared a [video](#) and [social media](#) message, describing what Remembrance Day means to him and how his work has been affected by his experiences, 'We use what we learnt every day in the NHS to save the lives of civilian trauma patients.'
- Social media messages from a mix of our staff and Armed Forces Patient and Public Voice Group members, [Nicky Murdoch](#), [Deborah Poneskis](#), [Gemma Pashley](#) and



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[Craig Jones](#), were shared across our networks and on the NHS Armed Forces Twitter account [@NHSArmedForces](#).

Colleagues from the Armed Forces team attended several events during the week of Remembrance, starting with the VCHA 101<sup>st</sup> 'Veteran Aware' celebration event which included laying a wreath at the Cenotaph.

Kate Davies attended the opening of the Field of Remembrance and Dr Jonathan Leach attended a Remembrance event hosted by BT, which is one of the largest employers of veterans in England. On Remembrance Sunday Armed Forces Patient and Public Voice Group members and Joint Chief Executives of Military Charity Fighting with Pride, Craig Jones MBE and Caroline Paige, joined LGBT+ veterans who were marching at the Cenotaph for the first time.

### **Veteran Trauma Network – Annual Conference 2021**

On Tuesday 9 November the Annual Conference convened via an online and in person hybrid conference.

The Veterans Trauma Network (VTN) supports veterans with service-related physical healthcare issues – no matter how long ago the problem occurred or how severe it was at the time or is now.

The VTN conference heard from clinicians and veterans who shared lived their experience, examples of collaborative working and a year in review of the VTN. The event concluded with a look to the year ahead and heard from Veteran, Paralympian, Jaco Van Gass.

Shehan Hettiaratchy, Veterans Trauma Network Clinical Lead, said; "I'm excited by the progress we are making to deliver physical healthcare that is centred around the veteran and their family. Today is a really important step on that journey."

For more information visit the [website page](#). Access to the VTN is by a GP referral or by emailing: [england.veteranstraumanetwork@nhs.net](mailto:england.veteranstraumanetwork@nhs.net)

### **RCGP Veteran Friendly Accreditation – New toolkit**

Nearly 1,100 GP practices are now "Veteran Friendly" accredited, and the simple process starts with the completion of a short form.

We would really appreciate your support to share information about the programme to your professional network and on your communications channels. By encouraging more GP practices to get accredited, you could help improve the quality of care for our Armed Forces veterans.

Attached to this briefing is a **\*\*NEW\*\*** communications toolkit to help spread the word and encourage more GP practices to sign up.

### **Integrated care systems: how will they work under the Health and Care Bill?**

The King's Fund has produced [a diagram and accompanying narrative](#) on integrated care systems. The diagram uses the framework of system, place and neighbourhood to explain how organisations will contribute to system working at these different levels.

### **Self-Care Week Reminds us to Practise Self Care for Life**

15 -21 November is Self-Care Week, the annual national event that raises awareness of what we can all do to improve our physical health and mental wellbeing. This year, the

theme is Practise Self Care for Life. The important thing to remember is, practising self-care is something we all need to do every day. For ourselves. For our families. And for the NHS.

The Self Care Forum has some useful fact sheets you might like to download and share via your channels. <https://www.selfcareforum.org/fact-sheets/>

### **White Ribbon Day and 16 Days of Action to end violence against women**

On White Ribbon Day, Thursday 25 November, and the 16 days to end violence against women that follow, people in their communities, organisations and workplaces, are asked to come together, and say 'no' to violence against women.

#AllMenCan is the leading message this year. For more information and resources and assets, visit the [White Ribbon website](#).

A new video by Women's Aid has also been launched on [YouTube](#) which supports the campaign to end violence against women.

### **LGBT+ veterans - call for research project participants**

Understanding barriers and facilitators of mental health and wellbeing help-seeking in LGBT+ UK Armed Forces Veterans, is a study that seeks to understand what makes it difficult for and what helps LGBT+ UK Armed Forces Veterans to ask for support with mental health or general wellbeing.

For more details and to get involved visit the [participant information online](#) or contact Charlotte Lerner, Trainee Clinical Psychologist via email at [Charlotte.Lerner.2019@live.rhul.ac.uk](mailto:Charlotte.Lerner.2019@live.rhul.ac.uk)