



# Military Veterans and Family Health

## Are you a Military Veteran?

Have you ever served in the armed forces?

In the UK a military veteran is defined as anyone who has drawn one day's pay from the Armed Forces. This means all personnel who have served for one day or more, in any occupation in the Royal Air Force, Royal Navy, or the Army, including Reservists and National Service personnel, and the Merchant Navy if involved in a conflict.

A veteran is therefore not defined by the length, nature of their service, or when they left. They also remain veterans even if discharged from the forces for a serious or criminal breach of the Armed Forces Act 2006, (or the preceding individual service's discipline acts).

In the NHS we use the term 'veteran' to describe ex-forces (including those patients who have completed National Service) who may be entitled to priority treatment under the UK Armed Forces Covenant, the UK Government's commitment to ensure members of the British armed forces are treated fairly and are not disadvantaged as a result of their service and that organisations meet their duty of "due regard" to this community under the law.

Both The Grove Medical and Apples Medical Centres are 'Veteran-Friendly Accredited' GP practices.

Both Medical Centres have a lead GP for military veterans and they have support available should you need it. If you haven't already informed your medical practice that you are a Military Veteran please do so the next time you make contact.

If you might be struggling with your health and need support, please book an appointment to see a GP, or have a look at this leaflet as a start point:

## Health Related Groups to help Military Veterans

### Op Courage: the Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service

**Op Courage** is the new Integrated Mental Health Service which was launched on 1 Apr 23. It enhances the previous offer for the three NHS veterans' mental health services Veteran's Mental Health Transition, Intervention and Liaison Service (TILS), Veteran's Mental Health Complex Treatment Service (CTS) and Veteran's Mental Health High Intensity Service (HIS). The new service is integrated so that those who need help enter Op Courage services through one referral and then are triaged and directed to the service that suits their needs best.

### Op RESTORE – The Veterans Physical Health and Wellbeing Service

The Veterans Trauma Network now **Op RESTORE** (email: [imperial.oprestore@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.oprestore@nhs.net)) provides care and treatment to those injured as a result of their service in the armed forces. The service is available in selected NHS health centres across England close to where people live. Veterans accessing this service will be cared for by military and civilian clinicians who understand the nature and context of the injuries. **Op RESTORE** personnel work closely with Defence Medical Services, national centres of clinical expertise, NHS veterans mental health services and key service charities to make sure patients have a personalised care plan in place. As families and carers can be seriously impacted when their loved ones are injured, they can also be supported to access services that may help them. The Veterans Trauma Network also works with research partners, to better understand the impact of these injuries and the service has been designed following feedback and information from injured veterans and their families.

## Op NOVA – Veterans in the Justice System

The Forces Employment Charity to deliver **Op NOVA**, an England wide service for veterans who come in to contact with the justice system, pre and post prison custody. This non-clinical service builds on existing provision to improve the identification and support of veterans pre and post prison custody. Working together with NHS services and health and justice services, as well as charities and other organisations, **Op NOVA** provides a single point of contact for veterans, who, following an assessment, will have a comprehensive support plan developed for them that is overseen by a care and support co-ordinator.

## Op FORTITUDE—Housing

Funded by The Armed Forces Covenant Fund to deliver a centralised referral pathway into veteran supported housing. The remit of the team will be to work with individual veterans at risk of or experiencing homelessness, supporting them either into suitable accommodation, or supporting them to maintain their current home.

Freephone **Op FORTITUDE**: 0800 9520774

Make a referral today via the on line referral form:

[https://lnkd.in/dwic8\\_6f](https://lnkd.in/dwic8_6f)

## Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance (VCHA)

<https://veteranaware.nhs.uk/> This is an accreditation system for increasing awareness of Veterans' and their specific needs in secondary care trusts/hospitals. Dorchester and Yeovil Hospitals are both in receipt of VCHA accreditation.

## **Forces Pension Society -**

<https://forcespensionsociety.org/>

If you have ever served in the armed forces you may be entitled to a pension. There are over 16M unclaimed pensions by individuals who served in the armed forces and who may have an entitlement so it is worth checking.

## **Veterans Foundation – Grants for veterans**

<https://www.veteransfoundation.org.uk/>

The Veterans' Foundation Hub exists to connect those that provide frontline charitable support for the veterans community. If you are a charity supporting veterans you may be able to secure funds for activities that you provide.

## **Veterans UK**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/veterans-uk/about>

Veterans UK is part of the Ministry of Defence (MOD). They help ex-service personnel get appropriate support from government, local authorities, independent bodies and the charity sector.

## **Veterans Gateway <https://www.veteransgateway.org.uk/>**

Veterans' Gateway is for any ex-service personnel and their families looking for advice or support, 24 hours a day. It is the first point of contact to a network of military and non-military partner organisations to help veterans and their families find exactly what information, advice and support they need, when they need it across key areas from physical and mental health to employability, housing, finances, personal relationships and more. For more information, visit the Veterans Gateway website or call 0808 802 1212.

## **Combat Stress <https://combatstress.org.uk/>**

Combat Stress is the UK's leading mental health charity for veterans. They provide free specialised clinical treatment and support to ex-servicemen and women across the UK with mental health conditions. Combat Stress has a strategic partnership with the MOD and the Department of Health and Social Care. This enables them to work directly with NHS mental health trusts and Armed Forces health networks to develop services suitable for military veterans. For further information, visit the Combat Stress website.

## **Cobseo <https://www.cobseo.org.uk/>**

Cobseo, as the Confederation of Service Charities, offers membership to charities who promote and further the welfare and general interests of the Armed Forces community, subject to fulfilling the membership criteria. Comprising 255 members, Cobseo provides a single point of contact for interaction with the Armed Forces community. For more information, visit the Cobseo website.

## **SSAFA <https://www.ssafa.org.uk/dorset>**

Trained welfare advisors and volunteers who work with each person to find out exactly what they need. Once they've assessed what is required, they'll help the individual or family access the support they need. This may just be someone to listen to them, but, more often than not, they access financial assistance from statutory and military benevolent funds or foundations that they work with. In addition, they signpost to their other charity partners who can give much needed assistance to help people get their lives back on track.

## **Royal British Legion <https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/>**

The Royal British Legion is at the heart of a national network that supports our Armed Forces community. They provide lifelong support to serving and ex-serving personnel and their families.

## **Contact <https://www.contactarmedforces.co.uk/>**

Contact is a group of charitable, support and state organisations that have joined forces to enhance mental health support available to the Armed Forces community. The partnership consists of Big White Wall, Cobseo, Combat Stress, Help for Heroes, The Royal British Legion, Walking With The Wounded, the NHS, MOD, UK Psychological Trauma Society and King's College London. Contact aims to improve collaborative care management, increase instances of help-seeking behaviour, improve service provision, encourage best practice across the sector and improve public knowledge of what support is available and how best to access it. For more information, visit the Contact website.

## **Togetherall(formally Big White Wall)**

**<https://togetherall.com/>**

An online service providing access to millions with anxiety, depression and other common mental health issues.

## **Blesma <https://blesma.org/>**

Blesma supports limbless veterans to lead independent and fulfilling lives. Blesma is dedicated to assisting serving and ex-service men and women who have suffered life-changing limb loss or the use of a limb, an eye or loss of sight. They support these men and women throughout the UK and provide centralised assistance to those living overseas.

## **Help for Heroes <https://www.helpforheroes.org.uk/>**

Help for Heroes provides direct, practical support for wounded, injured and sick service personnel, Veterans and their families. No matter when or where someone served, the charity offers the help they need, if necessary for life. They have four recovery centres in the UK that offer a wide range of services, including, but not exclusive to, psychological wellbeing, clinical support and sports recovery.

## **Hearing Loss and Tinnitus Service**

<https://www.veteranshearingsupport.co.uk/>

If a patient has acquired hearing loss and / or tinnitus relating to their time in service, additional support can be funded through the Royal British Legion Veterans' Hearing Fund. To access the service, patients can be referred by their GP to their local NHS audiology department.

**Blind Veterans UK** <https://www.blindveterans.org.uk/>

Helping ex-Service men and women of every generation rebuild their lives after sight loss. Since 1915 they've provided rehabilitation, training, practical advice and emotional support to tens of thousands of blind veterans.

## **Defence Medical Welfare Service – DMWS**

<https://dmws.org.uk/>

An independent defence charity providing practical and emotional support to the armed forces, veterans, NHS staff, emergency services, The Merchant Navy and their immediate family when they are receiving treatment in the medical pathway.

## **King Edward VII Veterans Pain Clinic**

<https://www.kingedwardvii.co.uk/the-charity/about-the-centre-for-veterans-health>

Committed to ensuring that as many serving members and veterans of the Armed Forces as possible are able to access the healthcare they provide at little or no cost to themselves. In addition to their automatic 20% subsidy for all uninsured Service or ex-Service personnel (which extends to spouses, ex-spouses, widows and widowers), they also offer means-tested grants which can cover up to 100% of a patient's hospital fees. A number of key consultants support their charitable commitment by reducing or waiving their fees for grant beneficiaries.

## **Tom Harrison House <https://tomharrisonhouse.org.uk/>**

Tom Harrison House provides a specialist addiction recovery programme for UK Armed Forces veterans and emergency services personnel. Their bespoke 12-week residential programme is designed specifically for those who have served and who may struggle to engage with mainstream, civilian rehabilitation services.

## **Salute Her <https://saluteher.co.uk>**

A small specialist charity providing support to any woman who has served or is serving an and care for women, families, care givers and care providers from the armed forces community in need of a compassionate continuum of services, treatment and care.

## **Forward Assist <https://www.forward-assist.com/>**

They provide support, advice, guidance and advocacy by delivering a variety of projects to help veterans 'come out of the darkness', and seek support to reduce the negative impact of social isolation and loneliness. All their interventions aim to improve the physical and mental health of veterans.

## **Walking with the Wounded - WWTW**

### **<https://walkingwiththewounded.org.uk/>**

Supports disadvantaged veterans who have served in the Armed Forces and their families, empowering them to regain their independence, thrive and contribute in our communities.

## **Forces Online Veterans Directory**

### **<https://www.forcesonline.org.uk/veterans-directory/>**

A very useful online directory providing information and links to many groups and organisations.

## **Armed Forces Health Podcast**

The Armed Forces Health podcast which features 6 episodes and provides helpful information about all elements of armed forces health for the serving, reserves, veterans and their families can be found at [bit.ly/PPVpodcast](http://bit.ly/PPVpodcast).



## **Veterans Bereavement Support**

<https://www.veteransbereavementsupport.com/>

Veterans Bereavement Support is a community-based organisation providing free advice and information for all those who have served or have served in the Armed Forces and Merchant Navy over the years.

They also provide ongoing bereavement care for families and friends of those who have served and who struggle with the passing of someone special. They are run by a small team of dedicated volunteers who give their time, skills, and talents for the benefit of others. Their services are provided free of charge.

## **Soldier's Arts Academy**

<https://www.soldiersartsacademy.org/>

The Soldiers' Arts Academy is a not for profit organisation which gives serving and former military personnel a route into the arts. It may be part of a recovery process; it may provide training for a step into a new industry; or it may simply be there to help support the transition into civilian life. Working closely with actors, directors, producers, dancers, writers, poets and artists the SAA creates opportunities for participants to fulfil their artistic potential.

## **Alcoholics Anonymous**

<https://www.westdorsetaa.org.uk/>

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of those who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for AA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions.

## **The Salvation Army <https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/>**

Activity and Creative Support, Homeless and Housing Support, Missing & Looking For Veteran's, Mother & Family, Non-Military Charity, Physical Well-Being and Injury Support.

## **Berts Alert <https://www.bertsalertmedical.co.uk/>**

BERTS Alert™ is a Medical & ID Alert System that uses Medical Alert bracelets that alert life threatening medical conditions early to first aiders and qualified medical personnel.

BERTS Alert™ uses technology to advance this information sharing capability in order to save lives.

This can be achieved by using one of BERTS Alert™ Smart-cards or Smart-chips or Smart-fob to access your vital information securely in an emergency.

## **Rewards For Forces <https://www.rewardsforforces.co.uk/>**

Discount offers for serving personnel and their partners of the Navy, Army, Air Force and Veterans, Service Widows/Widowers, Reservists, Cadets, MOD Civil Servants and the Royal British Legion.

## **Armed Forces & Veterans Breakfast Club**

<https://www.afvbc.net/>

Their purpose is to facilitate veterans and serving Armed forces personnel to meet face to face in a relaxed, safe, social environment to enjoy breakfast and banter, to combat loneliness and allow veterans to 'return to the tribe'.

## **South West Regional Organised Crime Unit (SWROCU)**

<https://www.wmrocu.org.uk/the-little-book-of-big-scams/>

The South West Regional Organised Crime Unit (SW ROCU) is one of nine regional units across England and Wales that delivers specialist capabilities to target and disrupt serious and organised crime.

# Support for Families of Service Personnel

## NHSE Op COMMUNITY

This is a new service for families of the armed forces community to provide a single point of contact and expertise for armed forces families being delivered locally by ICBs. NHS Dorset ICB is part of the phase 2 roll out of the service and can support individuals by:

- liaising with other organisations to ensure a smooth transition of care when moving between areas
- helping to ensure treatment continues and relative waiting list position is maintained (if required)
- providing support and guidance on how to use the NHS
- advising on local Veteran Friendly GP practice and Veteran Aware NHS trusts
- providing information about support via social prescribing
- providing information on both physical and psychological trauma support services

## Army Families Federation <https://aff.org.uk/>

The Army Families Federation (AFF) is the independent voice of Army families and works hard to improve the quality of life for Army families around the world – on any aspect that is affected by the Army lifestyle. AFF is independent of the Army and offers confidential advice. They will deal with your enquiry without revealing your identity.

## Navy Families Federation <https://nff.org.uk/>

Sometimes it can be difficult to find the help, support or advice you need. That's why they're there.

Their website has the answers to questions they're often asked, but if you need something else, their friendly team is ready to help, or to introduce you to someone else who can. They're a totally confidential service, they understand the challenges of Navy life but aren't a formal part of the Naval Service.

Whether you need help with schools, where you live or work, your finances, your future, a posting overseas, relationships or your health, their concern is always for you, their Naval Service family.

## **RAF Families Federation <https://www.raf-ff.org.uk/>**

They work to improve quality of life for the RAF family around the world – at work or at home. This could include resolving problems with access to education or healthcare, for children and young people; sorting out problems with accommodation, benefits, and visas; helping military spouses find meaningful employment. Additionally they support you in addressing issues that can arise when you live in one place, such as access to bases, repeated separations as a family, and finding the right help and advice.

# Support for Children of Serving & Ex-Serving Personnel



## **Little Troopers** <https://www.littletroopers.net/>

Little Troopers is a registered charity supporting all children with one or both parents serving in the British Armed Forces, regular or reserve. They provide fundamental resources, initiatives and support to ease and aid repeated separation periods aiming to keep parent and child connected and bonded even when miles apart.

## **Sailor's Children's Society** <https://sailorschildren.org.uk/>

Families come to them usually after a traumatic event such as bereavement, diagnosis of a terminal illness or the breakdown of a marital relationship. They provide ongoing support for the children until the family is again self-sufficient or until the children have left full time education. All the families they help are on a means tested benefit which ensures they only help those in most need.



## **Military Veterans**

We would like to remind our patients that The Grove Medical Centre is 'Veteran-Friendly Accredited'. Dr Dangerfield is the lead of this initiative and we have support available should you need it. If you haven't already informed us that you are a Military Veteran please do so the next time you make contact.

Below, our colleagues at Dorset Healthcare have provided information of more support in the area:

<https://www.dorsethealthcare.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/our-services-hospitals/mental-health/armed-forces-health-and-well-being>

More information can also be found on the Armed Forces page of our website:

<https://www.thegrovemedcentre.co.uk/armed-forces-care>



**WE'RE HERE  
FOR YOUR  
HEALTH AND  
WELLBEING**

**We're a free health service provided by your council. We'll guide you to a healthier lifestyle through advice and coaching.**

*"LiveWell Dorset gave me the helping hand I needed. My clothes are too big and I have had to buy new ones! My life has been transformed!"*

- OWEN



### **Get Active**

*Do you want to become more active?*

No matter your experience or daily schedule, we'll guide you towards embracing an active lifestyle.



### **Lose Weight**

*Finding it hard to lose weight?*

We'll empower you to manage your weight through healthy eating habits and physical activity.



### **Stop Smoking**

*Thinking about quitting smoking?*

If you want to escape smoking, but are not sure what steps to take, talk to us.



### **Drink Less**

*Need help to curb your drinking?*

Reducing your alcohol intake can do wonders for your health. We'll support you to cut down and drink less.

**Get in touch today to access your free advice and coaching.**

 **01305 233 105**

**[www.livewelldorset.co.uk](http://www.livewelldorset.co.uk)**



## SHERBORNE VETERANS SUPPORT GROUP

**THIRD SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH  
10.00 AM TO 12.00 NOON**

**SHERBORNE VETERANS SUPPORT GROUP  
MEETS AT  
THE COMMUNITY ROOM  
MANOR COURT, NEWLAND  
(BEHIND THE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICE)  
SHERBORNE  
DT9 3JX**

If you are an Armed Forces Veteran, widow, widower or serving member and family, please come along and join us at our informal drop-in session for a friendly chat with other like-minded people to re-connect with the camaraderie enjoyed in those serving times.

**Guest Speaker**

**Refreshments available**

- If you require disabled parking please contact (details below).
- The community room has step free access
- Please use nearby car parks

To find out  
more please  
contact:

Vicky Morland  
Email: [vicky.morland@dorsetgp.nhs.uk](mailto:vicky.morland@dorsetgp.nhs.uk)  
Tel: 07859 201617



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