

# SUPPORTING ARMED FORCES IN ACUTE HOSPITAL SETTINGS E – BULLETIN



**FEBRUARY 2023**

## UNIVERSITY OF CHESTER PROJECT EVALUATOR

### Update from Dr Becky Randles, Senior Researcher

Welcome to the third E-Bulletin for the Evaluation of the Supporting Armed Forces in Acute Hospital Settings Programme. We are now into our final year of data collection and will be beginning interviews in April 2023.

We are now at a pivotal stage of the evaluation, data is key to be able to demonstrate the impact that the AFA (or equivalent) is having on the armed forces community. Without data, we cannot prove the need for this post and it remains vital that data is provided.

We have seen an increase in the number of trusts entering data onto the portal and would like to take the opportunity to thank those who are regularly providing data and to encourage additional trusts to input details on their veteran patients.

Gaining feedback from the beneficiaries themselves is an important aspect to this evaluation which can come with many challenges, feedback from the veteran themselves and/or their

family members will help demonstrate the impact of the AFA (or equivalent).

Our webinars are continuing, and to ensure that every AFA (or equivalent) has the opportunity to present their progress to all grant holders, presentations will now take place every other month instead of every quarter. We hope that all grant holders will take this opportunity to see the work of other AFA's (or equivalent).

Northern Ireland continue to receive phone calls, and identify the gaps in their reach, ensuring that presentations are given throughout the region, in numerous different organisations, on what the advice line can offer.

Finally, on April 4th, the first roadshow hosted by AFCFT will take place at Chester. There will be numerous discussions and presentations, including one from ourselves. We hope to see you all there.

# EDUCATIONAL MODULE

The Westminster Centre for Research in Veterans educational module has been adapted into a Moodle Module which you can access [here](#). Originally created for student nurses, but has been found to be incredibly useful to numerous healthcare staff and professions.

Westminster Centre for Research in Veterans  
Mental health and Veterans

University of Chester

## Welcome to the online training module for *Supporting Armed Forces in Acute Hospital Settings*

This Moodle Module has been created for the Supporting Armed Forces in Acute Hospital Settings programme funded by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust and NHS England and is using the free online educational module "Introduction to the Armed Forces Community" which was created by the Westminster Centre for Research in Veterans at the University of Chester.

This programme is encapsulated into 6 chapters to educate healthcare practitioners to deliver optimum care to military veterans and their families through an understanding and insight into the Armed Forces Community.

The creation of the original online sessions were supported by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, Health Education England and the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust. Background to the project and the evaluation were published in Finnegan, AP., et al (2020). Educating Nurses to Deliver Optimum Care to Military Veterans and their Families. *Nurse Education in Practice*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nepr.2019.102654>

The original educational module can be accessed [here](#) and is also available on the NHS Learning Hub which can be accessed [here](#)

*The purpose of this training is to help you to feel empowered to connect with veterans, discuss experiences and offer appropriate support to them, and to each other, to provide the best possible care.*

Pre course knowledge assessment

Chapter 1 Introduction to the Armed Forces Community

Chapter 2 The British Armed Forces and Veterans

Chapter 3 Military Nursing

Chapter 4 Military Mental Health

Chapter 5 Caring for and supporting the Armed Forces Community

Chapter 6 Caring for and Supporting the Armed Forces Community: ...

Post course knowledge assessment

Completion Certificate

This module consists of videos which are designed to be able to be viewed at leisure. We have also included a pre and post quiz which tests knowledge before and after using the module. These quizzes are completely optional for staff. If the staff would like a completion certificate they must complete all chapters and quizzes.

## Chapter 1 Introduction to the Armed Forces Community

Welcome to Chapter 1.

This chapter gives an overview of all that is contained in this online module and introduces you to the what the Armed Forces Community means.

Approx 8 minutes.

Please check the tick box once you have watched the video



## THE EVALUATION

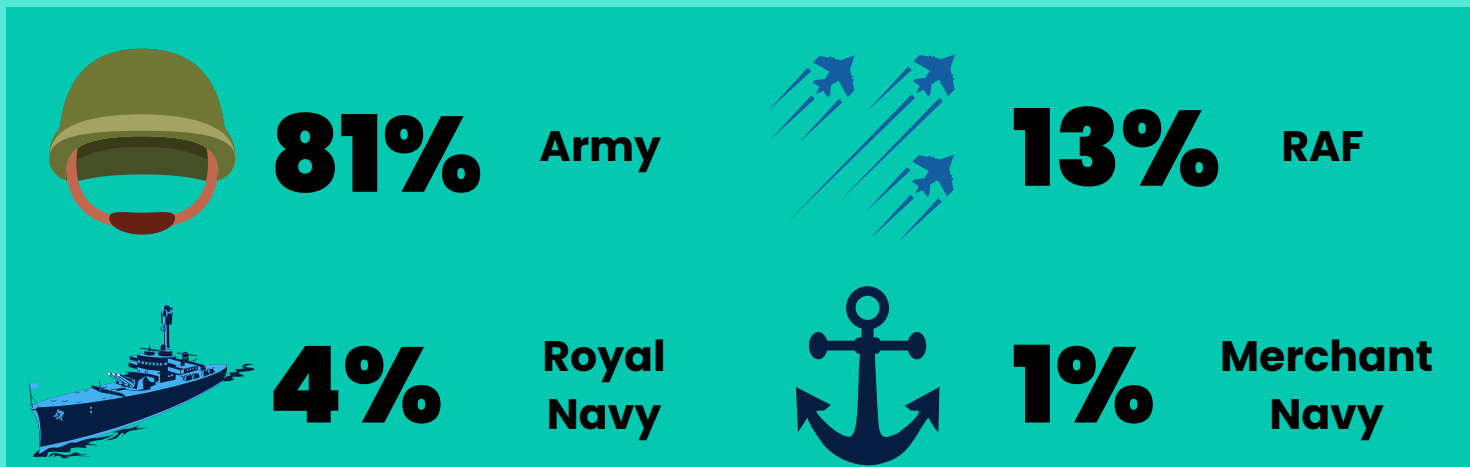
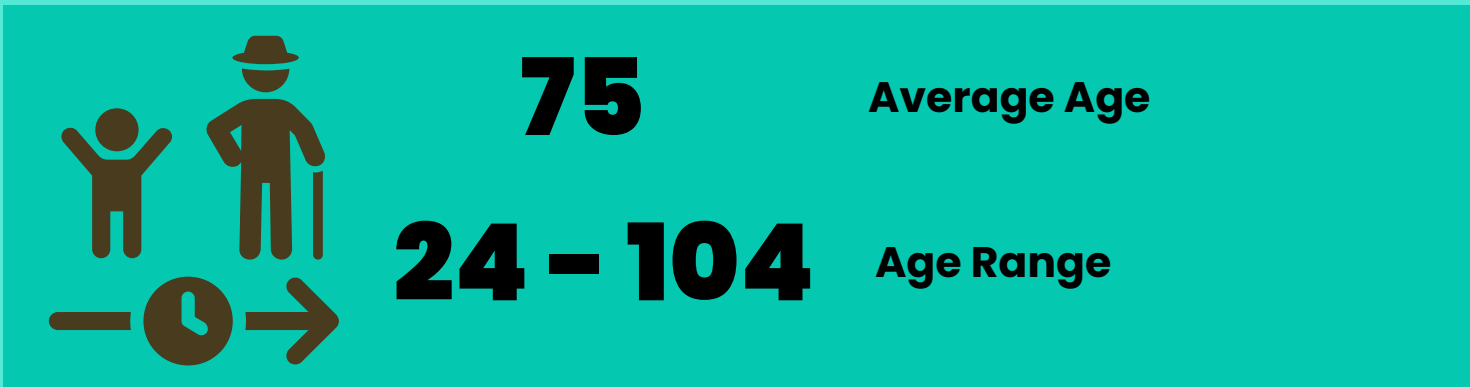
Data is received on a weekly basis in an anonymised format. Below is the data that has been received by the project team as of the 24th of January 2023. Data past this point has been recieved but is yet to be analysed.

Type	N	Change Since 08/11/22
Portal Entries	503	+ 389
Staff Pre Training Surveys	352	+ 179
Staff Post Training Surveys	326	+ 157
Service User Feedback Surveys	40	+ 19
Family Member Feedback Surveys	15	+ 9
Moodle Module Engagements	11	+ 10
Northern Ireland Advice Line Calls	221	+ 91
Northern Ireland Feedback Surveys	13	+ 3

Thank you to those who have been inputting data, ensuring that surveys are completed and in the case of Northern Ireland, sending regular data. Without data, we are unable to complete the evaluation. Therefore, it is vital that this data is completed.

# VETERAN DEMOGRAPHICS

Currently, we have 503 veterans inputted into the Armed Forces Advocate Portal. A summary of the demographics of these veterans can be seen below.



\*Of the remaining veterans 0.9% served in the Royal Marines and 0.2% were Gurkha's.





## REFERRALS

The portal also records where the AFA's are referring veterans to for support. Below is a snapshot of some of the services that veterans are being referred to.



## STAFF TRAINING



**58%** of those trained were Nurses

**63%** were band 5 or below



**Before Training**

**59%** selected "Strongly Disagree/Disagree" for having an awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant

**After Training**

**91%** selected "Strongly Agree/Agree" for having an awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant



**Before Training**

**54%** graded their knowledge as "Very Poor/Poor" on the Armed Forces Community

**After Training**

**73%** graded their knowledge as "Very Good/Good" on the Armed Forces Community

## Before Training



**53%**

selected "Strongly Disagree/Disagree" for knowing what services are available to veterans

## After Training

**88%**

selected "Strongly Agree/Agree" for knowing what services are available to veterans

Trainees have the option to leave comments regarding the experience of their training. The feedback received has been positive about the AFA.

***"I really enjoyed the presentation it was very interesting and informative."***

***"No improvements needed."***

***"Training was well delivered with balance of lived experience and NHS/system knowledge."***

***"I was a little bit shocked at my lack of understanding of the issues veterans have to deal with."***

***"The personal experiences shared allowed a greater depth of understanding of the content being discussed."***

## SERVICE USER FEEDBACK

Service Users are also given the opportunity for feedback as well as their family members. Currently, we have 40 SU feedback surveys and 15 Family members.

The feedback received is positive. All 55 feedback forms rated the overall support provided by the AFA as "Very Good/Good", the same being the case for their sympathy and compassion.

Improvements simply included wanting more time and visits from the AFA, as well as being made aware of the role earlier.

# NORTHERN IRELAND (NI)

Nothern Ireland's evaluation is bespoke to them due to differences in legislation. Instead, NI has created an advice line that both organisations and veterans are able to call.



**221** calls have been made to the advice line since launching\*  
**55%** of the calls came from organisations

## REASONS FOR USING ADVICE LINE



**30%**  
Mental Health



**29%**  
Services Available



**19%**  
Physical Health



**15%**  
Pensions



**15%**  
Housing

## SIGNPOSTING



Users of the advice line are asked to complete a feedback survey. Currently, there has been 13 surveys completed all of which are positive. 100% stated that they would be "Very Likely/Likely" to use the advice line again, would be "Very Likely/Likely" to recommend the adviceline and rated the advice line as "Very Useful/Useful".

**"Someone cares."**

**"Very polite and helpful."**

**"Willingness and friendly approach to help provide the best solutions for the individual needs."**

**"Control it has given me."**

**"The level of proactivity to helping my situation has been fantastic."**

Users also have the opportunity to express what was positive about the advice line and any improvements that could be made. One improvement suggested to include the council Veterans champion in signposting. Some of the positive comments can be seen here.



# ARMED FORCES COVENANT FUND TRUST

## Update from The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust (AFCFT)

The Trust would like to extend a very warm welcome to Rachael Storr. Rachael will be taking over the grant management role from Steven Inman in overseeing the Supporting Armed Forces in Acute Hospital Settings Programme and we are delighted to have Rachael join us.

We had an overwhelming attendee response for our external webinar, "The positive impact of Armed Forces advocates on veterans in acute hospital settings" webinar which was held on 31st January. We managed to forge many links between the Advocates and the attended organisations and guests. Advocates highlighted the success stories from their projects and talked about the positive impacts the programme has made to the Veteran community so far.

Our communications team have been working hard to promote the programme through our social media channels and our website. Our latest article is now available to read on our website at <https://covenantfund.org.uk/2023/01/23/advocating-for-vulnerable-veterans-the-acute-hospital-settings-programme/>. Please do continue to send us in your heartfelt Veteran stories coming from this programme as we do like to highlight and promote the success and impact this is making to our Veteran community.

We are extremely excited to be at the foundation stages of organising a series of Advocate Roadshows, the first of which will be held on 4th April at the University of Chester Riverside Campus. There will be three Roadshows held throughout the country, so each Advocate will have the opportunity to attend one, and extend the invitation to their important network of stakeholders. Our primary theme for all the roadshows will be sustainability. We would like to utilise this unique opportunity for the Advocates to be able to network and forge links with NHS Veterans Networks and other organisations, to ultimately help their projects drive improvements in the NHS for the Veteran and Armed Forces communities."





# NHS ENGLAND



## Update from Professor Andy Bacon, NHS England (NHSE)

### Op COURAGE update

With NHS veterans mental health services continuing to expand and improve over recent years, nearly 30,000 veterans have benefitted from this dedicated care and support since 2017. Part of this success has been the development of the name, Op COURAGE: The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service, which veterans and their families created to help improve awareness of and confidence in this service.

Op COURAGE is the overarching name for the following three veterans mental health services:

- Veterans' Mental Health Transition, Intervention and Liaison Service (TILS)
- Veterans' Mental Health Complex Treatment Service (CTS)
- Veterans' Mental Health High Intensity Service (HIS)

As part of NHS England's ongoing commitment to improving veterans mental health services, the TILS, CTS and HIS are being brought together under an Op COURAGE service specification. This means that from 1 April 2023, each regional Op COURAGE service has one lead provider (see table below). Each lead provider will work in partnership with a range of organisations, including charities, to offer a holistic range of mental health care and treatment that is tailored for those accessing the service.

Lead provider	Region
North Tyne & West NHS Foundation Trust	North of England
Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust	East of England
Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Trust	Midlands
Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust	South East England
Camden & Islington NHS Foundation Trust	London
Avon and Wiltshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust	South West England

NHS England are currently working on a campaign to raise awareness of Op COURAGE and encourage veterans struggling with their mental health to seek help from this service.

## Renaming of IAPT Services

More than 75% of the mental health needs of veterans, families and reservists are met by mainstream services and over 20,000 are referred each year to talking therapies and the outcomes for the armed forces community are as good as those for the general population (and often slightly better). NHS Talking Therapies for Anxiety and Depression – the new name for IAPT services. Improving Access to Psychological Therapy (IAPT) services have been renamed as ‘NHS Talking Therapies for Anxiety and Depression’. This work has taken place after understanding the previous name had become a barrier to access. A stakeholder survey was shared at the end of 2022 seeking new name options, looking particularly at the service name and tagline. The outcome of this survey has informed the new name, NHS Talking Therapies for Anxiety and Depression, which reflects the nature of the service better.

IAPT services were launched in 2008 with a promise to provide effective psychological therapies to far more people experiencing the most common mental health problems: anxiety and depression.

The services have been successful, with 6.5 million people receiving a course of treatment and around 50% fully recovering. The services aim to be flexible, with patients often offered a choice between different effective treatments and how the treatments are delivered. It has been advised that the name IAPT was not very appealing or clear, and that many services developed unique local names.

## Veterans Trauma Network conference

The Veterans Trauma Network (VTN) held its annual conference on Wednesday 11 January, in London. Following on from the VTN's success at the HSJ Awards, Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Johnny Mercer addressed the conference, highlighting the need for a single veteran physical care pathway across the NHS. The minister also paid tribute to Kate Davies, our National Director for Health and Justice, Sexual Assault Services and Armed Forces for her relentless commitment to veteran healthcare. The minister's full speech can be found on the gov.uk website.

## Military maternity project in Lincolnshire

A special presentation by Lincolnshire ICB was recently held on the work they have been doing to support the military community access maternity services. This included a presentation given by the Better Births programme in Lincolnshire, where they have been piloting a dedicated maternity service for the Armed Forces community. Maternity Voices Partnerships, commonly known as MVPs, first began to appear in 2018 as part of the maternity transformation programme. MVPs bring together stakeholders across maternity services at a local level, which includes midwives, parents, service user representatives, commissioners, health visitors and third sector organisations. MVPs facilitate the coproduction of maternity services so that they represent the needs of the local community. It is a core aim of MVPs that they amplify the voices of those who are seldom heard.

In Lincolnshire, MVP Chair Amanda Pike noticed recurrent themes in the feedback she was receiving from military families. For example, many families were experiencing difficulties in accessing maternity care as they moved in and out of Lincolnshire on military postings. Working with the Local Maternity and Neonatal System (LMNS) and ICB colleagues, Amanda was introduced to the Armed Forces commissioning team at NHS England. NHS England colleagues have subsequently worked with Lincolnshire LMNS and MVP to pilot a dedicated military maternity project. This has involved recruiting a dedicated Military MVP Lead, Susie Dachtler, and Military Care Navigator, Dave James.

Together Susie and Dave ensure the voices of military families are heard and that they receive the right care and support they need. Dave, himself an ex-RAF Warrant Officer, has been able to support military families navigating fertility, maternity and early years services.

One service user said: “I have been so impressed with all the contact I have had with the military care navigator and I believe that this role will help many people particularly those who have to move whilst pregnant for military postings” . You can find out more in this [video](#).

## **Reminder of NHS care and support for survivors of sexual assault and abuse**

In support of Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Awareness Week (6-12 February), NHS England is raising awareness of sexual assault referral centres (SARCs) – specialist NHS services that offer specialist practical, medical and emotional support 24/7 to anyone who has been raped, sexually assaulted or abused. SARCs are located across the country and are here for everyone, regardless of when an incident happened. They are staffed by health and wellbeing professionals, who can provide support to individuals and arrange counselling and therapy sessions following rape, sexual assault or abuse. You can self-refer and, unless there is a safety issue, it's up to you whether to involve the police or not. If you have been raped, sexually assaulted or abused and don't know where to turn, go to <https://www.nhs.uk/SARCs> to find your nearest service.

To support with raising awareness of SARCs, please see the campaign toolkit [here](#). We would really appreciate your help with raising awareness of these important services.

## **The new NHS England**

NHS Digital and NHSX have now joined NHS England as a single organisation and consultations are underway about changes to the structure and commissioning arrangements. This has included the setting up of joint committees between NHS England and multi-ICB collaborations from 1 April 2023 – covering nine geographical footprints – that will oversee and take commissioning decisions on 59 specialised services that have been identified as suitable and ready for integrated commissioning.

Jointly commissioning specialised services where appropriate will enable the delivery of more joined-up care for patients, improving their experiences and outcomes from treatment. It will support a focus on population health management across whole pathways of care, improving the quality of services, tackling health inequalities and ensuring best value. The arrangements in 23/24 represent a stepping-stone to delegating full commissioning responsibility for suitable services from April 2024. This will be subject to further Board consideration and decision.

Commissioning responsibility for health and justice, sexual assault and abuse service functions will remain with NHS England. Commissioning healthcare for serving members of the Armed Forces and their families registered with defence medical services, veterans mental health and prosthetic services will remain with NHS England and we currently have no aim to delegate these. More recently, the Health and Care Act 2022, The Armed Forces Covenant 2022 and the Armed Forces Act 2021 require public bodies, including the NHS, to pay due regard to the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant. For more information please see the [Roadmap for integrating specialised services within Integrated Care Systems](#).



# GRANTHOLDER UPDATES



## NORTHERN IRELAND/SOMME NURSING HOME (VASP)



The Legislative Assembly in Northern Ireland remains collapsed. This notwithstanding, the implementation of the Armed Forces Covenant is not possible; owing primarily to the fact that Veteran matters are bound by the Belfast Agreement 1998 (commonly known as the Good Friday Agreement), whereby all devolved matters require joint agreement from the current political parties represented, reflecting the political aspirations for Northern Ireland.

The Adviceline went 'live' on 10th June 2022, with 283 enquiries as of the 14th February 2023. There continues to be an ongoing soft launch of the Project, and the formal launch of the Service took place on 21st October 2022.

The Project has been promoted in 7 main areas:

1. Medical Services
2. Housing & Homelessness Services including State Benefits
3. Community and Voluntary Sectors
4. Legal
5. Policing and Probationary Services
6. Political involvement.
7. Veteran Organisations and Associations.

VASP Project Manager plans to promote the service in the following areas:

1. Prisons in Northern Ireland
2. Women's Royal Army Corp (WRAC), RAF Association
3. Southern Health and Social Care Trust
4. Victims and Survivors Support Groups

Of the 283 individual calls to the VASP Service, 404 queries were raised by callers and 502 signposting pathways were provided by the VASP Service to support their needs.

The VASP Service reports that in the previous E-Bulletin the percentage of callers seeking signposting to ameliorate their welfare/financial difficulties has risen from 32% (11th Nov 22) to 34% (14th Feb 23). This increase is small but given the cost-of-living increases, is not unexpected. This is now the largest constituency seeking signposting support.

Homelessness and housing remain an area of concern with 10% of enquirers seeking help in this area.

On analysing the age profile of the callers and leaving aside the unknown age grouping; Veterans from the 50-80yrs age range represent the largest group seeking help. This may reflect poorer health and financial circumstances.

Of note, the Project Manager on occasion is required to advocate and complete forms for individual Veterans owing to the complexity of the forms and their poor mental health. In addition, some Statutory Professionals are understandably not conversant with the forms/do not have time and ask the Project Manager to complete them for their patients/clients.



SCOTLAND –  
DEFENCE MEDICAL  
WELFARE SERVICES



NHS Lothian

Since our last update we continue to support our Armed Forces Community within the medical pathway in NHS Lothian and service user referrals continue to come in from various sources within the Acute Hospital setting. We have received referrals from Discharge Facilitator's, Social Workers, Community Mental Health Teams, Ward Staff, Medicine of the Elderly, Occupational Therapists and now directly from Medical Consultants. By raising awareness through staff presentations and networking but most importantly building relationships within the site, this had led to this variety of referral sources. A future CPD session with Emergency Department staff is planned at St John's Hospital in Livingston, this will not only assist with raising awareness of the project but also the opportunity to educate staff on the Armed Forces Community and the Armed Forces Covenant. The table below gives an insight into the number or referrals we have received and our service delivery.

Delivery since April'22	No. of Service Users (community based)	What delivery looks like
NHS Lothian	44 (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>64% of referrals from hospital staff</li><li>1.75 working day response rate</li><li>16% high/severe complexity score</li><li>top reasons for complexity: dementia, MH, gen health, isolation, falls, finances</li><li>168 visits in person</li><li>145 telephone calls and emails</li></ul>

Like our colleagues in Greater Glasgow and Clyde improving the identification and recording of patients who are members of the armed forces community and ensuring that staff have the necessary awareness and training in Armed Forces and Veterans issues is a focus for the coming months and we continue to work collaboratively on this. Within Lothian we have been working in conjunction with our NHS Lothian Project Team and have upcoming meetings with the TRAK Care team who administer the patient tracking system to have a Veterans Icon placed on the system to highlight those patients who are part of the Armed Forces

Community and would benefit from the service we provide and also allow us to run daily reports to assist with identification.

We continue to work with our 3rd sector colleagues within the Age Scotland Led Unforgotten Forces Consortium to provide expert targeted support for our service users to tackle issues such as social isolation, finance, mental health, sight loss, transport to name but a few. Support with these issues compliments the valuable medical work of the NHS as we provide wellbeing and holistic support. We have now established some great local relationships and have several service users who are now benefitting from this collective support. In conjunction with the Department of Work and Pensions we are planning to jointly visit several Military Units and Welfare Teams within Lothian to raise awareness of the services we provide.

Engaging with the veteran community is also an area where we continue to foster relationships and attendance at events such as the Veterans Winter Friday at the Military Museum Scotland has led to members of the Armed Forces Community now self-referring for either community support and signposting but more importantly support when they enter the Hospital setting. As said by one veteran "Knowing that there is someone who will be there when I come into hospital that understands me and will be there to help provides a sense of comfort not only for me but my family"

We continue to deliver our service and look for opportunities to raise awareness of our service and work towards a solution to enhance the education element of the project in a way that will allow for a high participation from our NHS colleagues.



# SCOTLAND – DEFENCE MEDICAL WELFARE SERVICES



## NHS GREATER GLASGOW AND CLYDE

NHSGGC is the largest health board and provider of healthcare in Scotland and one of the largest in the UK. With our second DMWS Welfare Officer now in place, our physical presence has started to expand beyond the Vale of Leven Hospital and Queen Elizabeth University Hospital. Our project staff have been actively promoting the service, with a pop-up information desk at Glasgow's Royal Infirmary. Margaret Partridge (Veteran Support Coordinator) and Samantha Wilkie (Advocate/Welfare Officer) have recorded an interview for the Hospital Broadcasting Service (HBS). HBS has also created a continuity 'jingle', encouraging veteran listeners to self-refer if they would like support from a welfare officer.



Earlier this month Julie Murray, NHSGGC's Armed Forces and Veterans Champion presented a paper to the health board's Corporate Management Team (CMT) updating them on the work underway to support our Armed Forces and Veterans within Greater Glasgow & Clyde. This report presented several recommendations for consideration, which will help NHSGGC fulfil its covenant duty. Two of these recommendations are fundamental to the Acute Hospitals Project:

- Improving the identification and recording of patients who are members of the armed forces community: the CMT agreed to support this proposal and we will now take forward actions to ensure that all patients are asked about their status on admission and that this is recorded in patient records.
- Ensure that staff have the necessary awareness and training in Armed Forces and Veterans issues: it was agreed that staff should be informed about the Armed Forces Covenant and why it is important to recognise our veteran patients and their families. The CMT also asked for further thought to be given to the best approach to more structured learning. Action is now underway on both of these points.

Out with this project, there is wider activity afoot to support NHSGGC's covenant pledges, including a range of activities underway to demonstrate our progress and commitment towards achieving the Gold Employer Recognition Award.

### Delivery

Our welfare officers have provided meaningful support to over 60 veterans and their families since the project started. This includes involvement in their discharge from hospital and transition back into living well at home or other community care. Follow up support after discharge is an integral part of the service we provide, continuing to support our service users until they have settled in and have support networks in place where these are needed.

We have a small cohort of service users receiving palliative care. The care they receive can involve a combination of acute, hospice and community care. At such a very difficult time for the veteran and their families, we have found that some of them really value activities that connect them to their earlier military career. We have also found that as their health needs change, this can impact on the kind of wider welfare support they need. This means that we are reaching further into local support services beyond the established veteran charity organisations. Our project staff have delivered training to staff in NHSGGC's Palliative Care Team to help them learn more about the covenant duty and the impact that a service career can have in later life.

The project is well underway, and we look forward to expanding its reach as patient identification improves.

# BETSI CADWALADR UNIVERSITY HEALTH BOARD



National Veteran leads have congratulated Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) for its commitment to improving NHS care for Armed Forces Community (AFC) across North Wales.

The Health Board's three acute hospitals Wrexham Maelor, Ysbyty Glan Clwyd and Ysbyty Gwynedd recently received accreditation as Veteran Aware hospitals, which means we are raising veteran awareness, identifying veterans being referred for treatment, and striving to improve the recruitment and retention of veterans across the Health Board's workforce.

The Veterans' Commissioner for Wales Colonel James Phillips visited Wrexham Maelor Hospital to showcase the support available to the AFC, and he raised the hospital's new Veteran Aware flag, commending it for being the first in Wales to achieve accreditation with the Veteran Covenant Healthcare Alliance (VCHA).

The National Lead for the VCHA, Professor Tim Briggs CBE, who formally approved BCUHB's initial Veteran Aware accreditation, has also congratulated the Health Board for its "remarkable efforts". The Health Board's Armed Forces Lead, Army Veteran Zoe Roberts was acknowledged by the VCHA for her dedication to the hard work, having submitted evidence of a "very high standard" to achieve the Veteran Aware accreditation for Health Board's acute hospitals. Zoe said: "I am delighted to be the VCHA pathfinder for Wales. Leading the Health Board through the VCHA accreditation process and achieving "Veteran Aware" status for our hospitals, makes me so proud."

Zoe added: "To be recognised by the VCHA for my high standards of work will only spur me on to strive for even better outcomes for the North Wales Veteran Healthcare Collaborative and our Support Services programme. Knowing that the work we are doing within BCUHB and across North Wales is positively impacting the lives of the AFC members makes me truly happy. Becoming Veteran Aware accredited will ensure that those who serve, or who have served within our Armed Forces, including their families, will feel appropriately supported and allow us as a Health Board, to offer some much-deserved recognition for their Service to our country."

Colonel Phillips also saw the hospital's new Poppy Programme in action, which aims to identify in-patients who are from part of the AFC to ensure they receive appropriate onward referral to external veteran support services and charitable veteran organisations, before they are discharged.





# WARRINGTON AND HALTON TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

The Trust continues to strive to collect veteran status from patients. We will shortly be launching a campaign to educate staff and patients alike of the reasons why we ask for this information along with other Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Information. The campaign will focus on how we ask, why we ask and what we do with this information.

A Veteran Patient Dashboard has now been created which is updated every 24 hours and identifies how many veterans are recorded on the patient information system and whether these patients are in ED, on a ward, due for OPD appointments or due for surgery. The Armed Forces Advocate can monitor this daily and support veterans across the Trust as appropriate.



We have a schedule of quarterly awareness events across Trust sites, the most recent held in December where we have information stalls and a communications campaign which includes the Chief Executives message of the day, staff bulletins, Trustwide safety huddle and more.

In addition the Armed Forces Advocate also continues to roll out awareness presentations across individual teams and departments across the Trust sites most recently amongst Junior Doctors and Diagnostic Staff.

We continue to foster strong links with our local partners who provide valuable support and information to the Trust to support us in better assisting our veterans. The Armed Forces Advocate is receiving referrals of veterans from a variety of specialties across the hospital and these veterans have been provided with advice and support and referrals to other services where appropriate.

The Trust continues to make progress in the development of veteran's patient pathways across various services. A new Trustwide Task and Finish Group is commencing this month to continue to drive and expand veteran centered approaches to care.

A recent patient story has also highlighted how our Armed Forces Staff Networks are integral to supporting the patient experience. We have recently had an inpatient with dementia who was very confused and regressing back to his army days. The Ward asked if one of our veterans could visit the patient as they may be able to support with their shared experience. One of our network members visited the patient and had a brew and a good chat. This elicited better understanding of the patient's military experiences and his interests and hobbies. The network member was able to support the ward staff by highlighting the types of things that may be triggering for the patient on the ward which supported them to keep him calm and comfortable. We also worked with the ward to create a memory folder related to his hobbies and his times serving in Northern Ireland in the 1970s.



Items from our recent Poppy Display held for Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday has also now been placed in our Forget Me Not Dementia Friendly Ward's Garden as a permanent display for staff and patients to view.

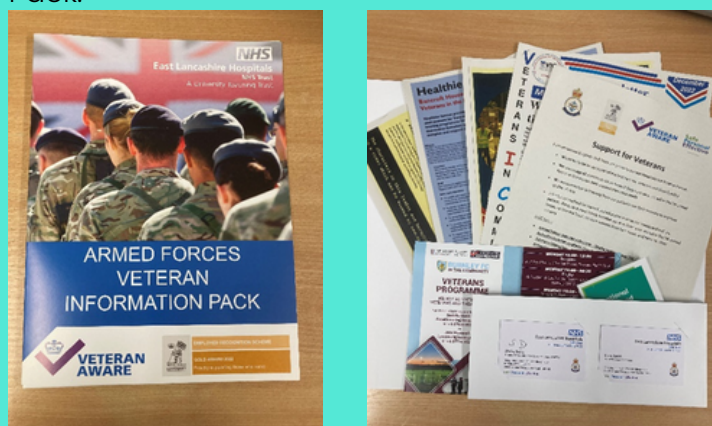
We have developed our annual calendar for 2023 of events to commemorate and celebrate our Armed Forces Community and look forward, in particular to Armed Force Day Celebration in June.



# EAST LANCASHIRE HOSPITALS NHS TRUST

Since our last report ELHT have had a busy few months. We have now visited and supported 1036 Veterans in-patients across our five hospitals since January 2022. This support has ranged from a simple chat and reassurance to referrals to Op Courage and The Veterans Trauma Network for those veterans that have found themselves in very difficult positions.

We have introduced a new veteran Information Pack:



Each patient we visit receives one the packs and both Fiona and I chat through the various support options that are available, both locally and nationally.

## NURSING ASSESSMENT AND PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK (NAPF)

The trust has an internal auditing process that ensures all departments meet the standards required by the CQC. This process is the Nursing Assessment & Performance Framework (NAPF). The veteran awareness and referral process has now been incorporated in to the NAPF audit, which will ensure that every department is asking 'The Question' and then referring for support.

## ELECTRONIC PATIENT RECORD

The trust goes live with the new Electronic Patient Record as of 16 June 2023. We have worked hard with Cerner to ensure a definitive Armed Forces Community referral pathway is embedded into the system.

## VETERANS COVENANT HEALTHCARE ALLIANCE (VCHA) NHS

The Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance (VCHA) asked us to be part of data capture pilot which runs from 01 April 2023 – 30 September 2023. The aims of the pilot are as follows:

- To identify and establish a national, universal, core reporting dataset, demonstrating impact and effect for individuals, providers, and commissioning organisations to support sustainability
- To identify and establish the most effective model to deliver the requirements of the Armed Forces Covenant (AFC), reducing variation and improving access and outcomes
- To evaluate the value of the combined impact that our organisations have on the final experience of a service user.

## NHS LONG TERM PLAN

In January 2023 I attended the Veterans Trauma Network Conference in London. The Director of Health & Justice, Armed Forces and Sexual Services Commissioning – Kate Davies gave a presentation on the NHS' Long-Term Plan to Armed Forces Health Commitments. These are detailed as follows:

**The NHS Long Term Plan**

**Armed Forces health commitments**  
We will expand our support for all veterans and their families as they transition out of the Armed Forces, regardless of when people leave the services.

- We have translated the aspirations of the Long Term Plan into an ambitious transformation programme – *Healthcare for the Armed Forces Community: a Armed Forces Forward View*
- A refreshed national partnership agreement with the Ministry of Defence that reflects NHS system changes has been signed
- To ensure the NHS is equipped to best serve veterans and their families we are rolling out:
  - In conjunction with the Royal College of GPs – the **Veteran** accreditation schemes across all GP practices in England
  - The **Veteran Covenant Hospital Alliance** accreditation across all NHS secondary care acute hospitals
  - Establishing a **Single Point of Access for Veterans** and their families which are based in the Integrated Care Board (ICBs) local areas.

## ADMISSION AVOIDANCE & COST SAVING

The veteran Lead & Advocate are currently collaborating with our Patient Level Information Costing System (PLICS) team with regards to building a detailed picture of costings saved with admission avoidance and referrals on to other services outside ELHT.

Based on this fact and cost per night as in patient in ELHT.... £642

$£642 \times 3 \text{ days} = £1926$  per average length of stay

Jan 2022 to Jan 2023 the ELHT Veteran Services stopped/reduced stay of 33 Veterans

$£1926 \times 33 = £63,558$

The infographic features a blue piggy bank icon on the left. To its right, the text reads: AMOUNT SAVED TO  
DATE £63,558 -  
£5,296.50 per month

Below this, it states: "Other savings were made by referring patients to the following services for financial assistance:"

A list of services follows: "MacMillan, RBL, SSAFA, Blesma, Healthier Heroes, LSCFT Mental Health Services, Op Courage"

At the bottom, a banner contains the text: "Safe | Personal | Effective"

The trust has created a Memorandum of Understanding with £ Medical Regiment which will allow CMT's to gain clinical experience in our hospitals.

- Week 1 - Induction, Orientation & Training
- Week 2 - ED Majors
- Week 3 - Urgent Care – Minor Treatments
- Week 4 - Ward experience on Medical Assessment Wards

The ELHT Veteran Team have a busy schedule are the following are some of the projects that are currently being initiated and worked on:

- Building an internal network of Veteran Champions
- Furthering links with NHS and working on a Shared Care Records Project
- Building links and relationships with local veteran organisations.
- Working with Office for Veteran Affairs & NHS England with regards to supporting Homeless Veterans.

# MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY NHS FOUNDATION TRUST



The Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust (MFT) have been continuing to support the armed forces community during the challenging festive period, and NHS strikes.

Grace has been working within the Manchester Royal Infirmary's (MRI), inpatient wards and emergency department for two-months. She has engaged with all ward clerks and personal assistants on the wards within the MRI so that all Armed Forces personnel who come into the Manchester Royal Infirmary are identified. Ward clerks are now asking every patient who is admitted if they have ever served in the UK Armed Forces, or if they have a relative who has served within the UK Armed Forces.

Once highlighted, the ward clerks are updating their status on the hospital patient administrative system, and then referring the individuals to Grace. She has been involved with some very complex cases within the hospital and has provided specialist support to patients and their families from the armed forces community, examples including, but limited to:

- Homelessness
- Vulnerability
- Substance abuse and addiction
- Poor Mental Health
- Service-related health conditions

Since the pilot Grace has made 6 referrals to the Military Veterans Service, 1 High Intensity Service. She has supported over 30 patients to support discharge planning. Grace has now received clearance from Information Governance, to record Veterans healthcare pathway during their stay as an inpatient, this study will support the research being collated by Chester University.

Grace is currently finalising plans for Military March within the Trust, which will consist of MFT's first Newsletter and the re-launch of the Armed Forces Network which was put on hold due to operational commitments across the Trust to support the new patient's administrative system, in addition to providing information and education to employees.

# AIREDALE NHS FOUNDATION TRUST



I have now been in the role of Armed Forces Advocate at Airedale NHS Foundation Trust for the last five months. During this time, I have met many Veterans, ranging from between 32 to 99 years old; regaling stories from their time in the Armed Forces and conflicts in which they have served including World War II, Aden, Cyprus, Falklands, Northern Ireland, Iraq and Afghanistan. I have had the privilege of being told stories of veterans serving on Christmas Island and witnessing hydrogen bomb testing; to a submariner, who spent 25 years on submarines and the physical impact it has had on their bodies.

With the usual 'speed' of the NHS, after 4 months I finally have a work uniform and our Veteran Aware award is now proudly displayed in the entrance to the Trust, with the service slowly starting to gain a presence in the hospital. We are now in the process of reapplying for our ERS silver, having first gained recognition in 2018.

I have received many positive comments from Veterans and their families about how much my support has improved their quality of stay while at Airedale NHS Foundation Trust. My support has varied from printing out enlarged crosswords, providing newspapers, magazines and radios to alleviate boredom; to signposting to services that help decrease social isolation and loneliness; making referrals to OP Courage, to Social Care - as well as applying for funding for an assessment bed.

One Veteran, although at the end of his life stated I had made his stay "100 times better", we were able to laugh at interservice rivalry, hours before he passed away. Another elderly Veteran was moved from Airedale NHS Foundation Trust to East Lancashire, where I was able to pass details to the Armed Forces Advocate in the local area providing a seamless link for support.

I have found it reassuring that staff awareness of my role is continually increasing, knowing who to contact when a patient shares that they are a veteran. Colleagues across the Trust are showing a greater awareness of what it means to be a veteran, the sacrifices they and their families have made and why the Armed Forces Act is now in place.

Other local Trusts, primary care providers and Local Authorities have phoned or emailed (I can't use the word "Contact" for obvious reasons), requesting advice. In addition, I have been asked to help develop the new EPR system to be introduced to the Trust ensuring it is Armed Forces Friendly and demonstrating the Trusts investment in the Armed Forces Covenant and the role of Armed Forces Advocate.

Although still in its infancy, it is evident the role as Armed Forces Advocate has improved the Veterans experience visiting Airedale and will continue to do so. My future plans include a Naffi style coffee morning in the Trust for Patients, staff and visiting Veterans.





# EAST SUFFOLK AND NORTH ESSEX FOUNDATION TRUST



The Armed Forces Advocate (AFA) has now been in post for 10 months. During this time we have continued to build and strengthen our relationships, working collaboratively with local and national services and partnering with other NHS organisations – seeking guidance and sharing best practice. This proactive approach has resulted in significant progress and improvements in demonstrating our Trust's commitment to supporting the armed forces community.

During the festive season we hosted our third veteran roadshow. ESNEFT commissioned Combat 2 Coffee (C2C) to deliver festive drinks to all staff members. The event took place over a two week period covering thirteen ESNEFT sites. Throughout this period we were joined by representatives from Blind Vets UK and Op Courage –Transition intervention and liaison service. Once again this was a valued opportunity for ESNEFT to work in partnership with local providers – increasing awareness of the services and support available to staff and more widely members of the public. In total 3500 members of staff visited the stands and a further 2000 members of staff working in key clinical were provided with brew bags which included mental health signposting information.



To start off the new year in January 23, the AFA was invited to attend and present to the Essex Royal British Legion – 101st County conference. This was another great opportunity to promote the AFA role within ESNEFT and the Supporting Armed Forces in Acute Hospital Settings programme.

## Armed Forces Awareness Training

The AFA has continued the delivery of armed forces awareness training at present 107 participants have attended the training package. Due to the current limitation of training room availability within the Trust – these sessions have continued to be delivered on an ad-hoc basis.

To further promote armed forces awareness amongst colleagues, we now have a Trust wide armed forces E-Learning package available on the training hub. In addition to this the AFA is now hosting awareness stands twice a month as part of the welcome fair for all new starters during Trust inductions.

We have also continued to promote and support the Sussex Armed Forces Champion training – authorising staff who wish to attend a day's study leave. To ensure we capture the number of attendees a field identifying the training has been added to the Electronic Record System – study leave tab. Since Oct 22 – seven members of staff have completed the training and these numbers will continue to grow in 2023.

## Veteran Identification

At present the majority of armed forces community in-patients are being identified during the AFA ward visits – however in recent weeks there has been an increase in referrals from colleagues demonstrating an increase in awareness and the positive impact of the training delivered.

As previously identified in common with many other organisations we do not have an electronic system to enable identification of members of the armed forces community as part of the admittance process – we are still in the process of implementing an 'Alert' to the current electronic systems.



## Employment

The AFA has continued to work alongside ESNEFT's, Armed Forces and Veterans working group – one of the key areas of focus is employment support for members of the armed forces community.

- Dec 22 - AFA attended a Career Transition Partnership - Employer Forum event, hosted by JP Morgan in London. This event provided a fantastic insight into the experiences of those who have recently transitioned from military service and how larger organisations support members of the armed forces community.

Following this event we officially launched a Buddy system - offering support to members of the Armed Forces Community seeking employment within the Trust and following employment. Since the AFA has been in post direct support has been sought and provided to four members of the armed forces community seeking employment within the Trust – three are now in full time employment and one is currently preparing to transition from military service.

- Jan 23 - we published an Armed Forces Reserve Policy.
- We are currently pre-paring to host our third NHS insight day in Mar 23 – assisting the Personnel Recovery Centre, Colchester with their Transition Course aimed at service personnel who will be medically discharged from Service due to being Wounded, Injured or Sick.



Remember you can stay up-to-date with ESNEFT news every day on social media.

Facebook: @EastSuffolkNorthEssexNHS

Twitter: @Team\_ESNEFT

Instagram: @esneft



# JAMES PAGET UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST



The Trust has now had an AFA in post for 9 months and the role has now become a strong, well known and appreciated focal point for all Armed Forces Community matters. Our successful identification process has seen over 150 individuals referred to the Armed Forces advocate. This has enabled individuals that need support to be identified and over 50 referrals to support organisations have been made. In a number of cases emotional support, information and advice from the AFA continues to make a big difference and the Armed Forces Advocate has recorded over 500 visits to patients over the last 6 months.



The Trust is now becoming a focal point for Armed Forces Community support in the local area with 15% of referrals coming from community support teams and individuals contacting our Armed Forces Advocate. This has mainly been down to the success of our webpage which is now a hub for all Armed Forces Community information. It has now been updated to include information for staff who are interested in joining the reserves and links for service leavers and veterans looking for job opportunities in the trust. We have also now introduced a guaranteed interview scheme for service leavers and appointed two Armed Forces Reservist champions in the trust

[Armed Forces Advocate \(jpaget.nhs.uk\)](http://jpaget.nhs.uk)

## Patient Identification

Our mandatory Armed Forces Community training has been very successful and very well received by all staff. The Armed Forces Advocate has now trained over 700 members of staff and received a lot of positive feedback regarding the information and value of this role. This has also helped patient identification with over 30% of referrals coming from ward staff, Occupational Therapists and specialist teams. Our patient identification posters and community awareness work has also helped with a number of patients identifying to ward staff if they are not asked the question on admission. All of this along with the Armed Forces Advocate being on the wards daily helps ensure we find those individuals that need support.

To help the Armed Forces Advocate the trust has now recruited two volunteers to help visit Armed Forces Community patients. They will work with the AFA to ensure patients are visited and supported while in the hospital.



Community engagement has been key and the focal point over the last few months has been linking up with local organisations and finding out how they can support our veterans. This has opened up a number of different support pathways which will benefit the local Armed Forces Community.

Due to the success of our coffee morning in November the trust has now planned 4 more for 2023. These are being funded by organisations in the local community that want to support the work of our Armed Forces Advocate.

### **E-Learning Package on BEAT:**

Excitingly, UHD have now introduced the Moodle e-Learning training package which is now live. Links can be found on the Armed Forces Support Group page under 'We need to talk about Veterans' and on the Useful Links page on the VLE. It is a programme that comes in 6 chapters and aims to educate and broaden the knowledge of healthcare practitioners; allowing them to deliver optimum care to military veterans and their families through an understanding and insight into the Armed Forces Community.

### **Reservist Policy:**

With the CEO of the Trust the AFCA have produced a UHD Reservist Policy and is eagerly awaiting approval from all relevant parties. This will be extremely beneficial for all currently employed, and future employed reservists.

### **Ghurkha Community:**

Since the last e-Bulletin the AFCA was approached by another subject matter advocate asking for support/help with an issues they were having with a serving soldier from the Ghurkha community. I was able to advise them on certain aspects of their culture and traditions. This helped them have a better understanding of what was happening, and how to best deal with this very difficult situation.

### **Critical Patient Information Flag (CPI):**

After some training, the AFCA is now able to register all known veterans on to the CPI. This highlights to staff that the patient is a veteran and that staff should notify the AFCA that they are dealing with a veteran.

### **Presentations:**

The AFCA has been able to give a number of beneficial presentations to both internal departments and external organisations such as The Cancer Care Forum, The Veterans Peer Support Group run by We are With You, Wessex Cancer Alliance and Dorset Advocacy. All of these organisations now have a better understanding about the role of the AFCA and the needs of veterans.

### **ERS Gold:**

The Trust has submitted their expression of intent to apply for the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award this year. Work is now well underway to gather all the necessary evidence to ensure we meet all the criteria needed.

### **Veterans Project:**

The AFCA is working with one of the AFSG member who is doing a project at the moment to try and improve veteran care with MSK Rehabilitation. It is hoped that Veterans will be given an information booklet to include support services and direct to online exercise programmes to promote self-management for MSK conditions. There is lots of scope to build upon this project in the future, for example:

- Weekly gym-based exercise/education group
- Virtual 'Ride 2 Recovery'
- Escape Pain classes
- Rationale for having support services on site

### **NHS Challenge 2023:**

Work is already under way to hopefully enter at least 2 teams for the 243 (Wessex) Field Hospital South West Military Challenge 2023. It is taking place the weekend 16th- 18th Jun 23 at Okehampton Camp in Devon and it has been renamed Exercise Medical Endeavour. A comprehensive advertising campaign has been started to get as many people interested as possible.

### **Third sector collaboration:**

UHD and the AFCA continue to work closely with not only local, but National charitable organisations, with some very pleasing results. These include finding a foster home for a veteran's dog whilst the veteran was admitted to hospital, to removing rifles from a house to enable specialist medical equipment to be installed. The AFCA has also assisted a veteran with cancer who was living in a Travelodge Hotel as it was cheaper than the care home he was in, to be rehomed into more suitable accommodation.

### **Assisting other Trusts:**

The Armed Forces Community Advocate has been approached by a three different Trusts asking for help in a variety of ways including assistance in setting up an Armed Forces Support Group, how best to enrol on to the Armed Forces Covenant and what is needed to get ERS accreditation, as well as sharing lots of best practice to offer more support to the Armed Forces Community.

It has been a busy winter period at Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. The Armed Forces Advocates (AFA) here have continued to work at pace to establish a strong network within the Trust and now have a cohort of 23 Armed Forces Champions across all specialities and divisions which continues to grow.

We are also in the process of rolling out an internal recognition scheme for those individuals and areas that go above and beyond in their support of the Armed Forces Community across both hospital sites.

We continue to forge strong working relationships with a range of partners such as the County and local councils, headed by the Trusts' new Armed Forces Lead Debra Ritsperis. Work is also ongoing to maintain links with local military establishments, other health and social care providers in the county as well as military charities.

The AFA are also pushing ahead in the training and education of all staff and remain a regular face on Trust induction as well as delivering bespoke training across both sites and all divisions.

A few of the achievements are:

- Sunrise EPR continues to be the main source of referrals to the AFA and is working extremely well.
- Data collection and upload to the AFA portal began in January 2023.
- The AFA have received referrals for over 1200 identified veterans across the Trust within the last 10 months.
- Staff education continues. Nearly 1500 staff members have received specific training on the Armed Forces Covenant, the project and the role of the AFA. This is through both the Trust induction and area-based education.

- Debra Ritsperis continues to represent the Trust at Armed Forces Covenant meetings with Gloucestershire County Council, Gloucester City Council and Cheltenham Borough Council.
- Established a cohort of 23 Champions to work alongside the AFA across all sites and divisions.
- Continued engagement with other healthcare providers in the county across both primary and secondary roles.

Through an undoubtedly busy and at times hectic winter period the support offered and available to those members of the armed forces community has continued to develop and grow. Support and involvement for the AFA and the wider project, at all levels, has been second to none.

Even though many of the veterans visited by the AFA decline, or say that they do not need, support other than signposting the effect on their stay in the hospital has been enhanced by visits from the AFA.

Overall, it has been a busy though extremely rewarding period for the AFA. Data collection is now ongoing and veterans are benefitting from the assistance offered leading to a better patient experience.

The AFA look forward to what the future holds.



# FRIMLEY HEALTH NHS FOUNDATION TRUST



A quieter period here at Frimley.

I delivered a briefing on the work we are doing to Aldershot Parachute Regiment Association, this was attended by 48 veterans and also had a interview with Frimley Radio to promote the Role.

In addition to that we have been business as normal and starting to record Veterans on the hub whilst maintaining the levels of support to staff and patients alike. Last month I attended the Gold Workshop for Employee Recognition Scheme and we have embarked on attempting to increase our current Silver Award to Gold, part of this includes a 'soft survey' to identify those who are veterans, reservists and partners of serving military personnel so we await the results.

# CARDIFF AND VALE UNIVERSITY HEALTH BOARD



We are delighted to announce that we have successfully appointed Maisy Proven in to the post of Armed Forces Covenant and Veterans Healthcare Collaborative Lead, fixed term for 2 years. We have agreed a start date of 1st April 2023, Maisy's first day in the office will be 3rd April.

We have been in conversations with Zoe in BCUHB to see what if any information she could share in relation to the DPIA which they will share once completed. I have started conversations with our Information Governance team last month on this matter also.

Hopefully going forward from April we will be in a position to provide a more comprehensive update.

# UNIVERSITY STAFF PROJECT TEAM



## **Professor Alan Finnegan PhD RN FRN FRSA CF FAAN**

Alan joined the NHS in 1978, and then joined the British Army as a Nursing Officer in 1987. During his military career he reached the rank of Colonel and had numerous appointments. Since commencing at the University of Chester in 2016, Alan has been appointed as the principal investigator for over 30 research projects. Alan holds numerous Fellowships such as the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust and Chairs numerous committees such as the Northwest Armed Forces Network.

Further Information:

<https://www1.chester.ac.uk/departments/westminster-centre-research-and-innovation-veterans-wellbeing/staff/alan-finnegan>



## **Dr Becky Randles BSc PhD FHEA PGCert GMBPsS**

Becky has a background rooted in Psychology and progressed directly onto her PhD in 2019 after completing her undergraduate degree at Liverpool John Moores University. She has completed several research roles in areas such as Domestic Homicide, Touch Perception and Research Ethics and Governance. Becky has extensive experience in both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies.

Further Information:

<https://www1.chester.ac.uk/departments/westminster-centre-research-veterans/staff/becky-randles>



## **Lottie Ainsworth-Moore**

Lottie joined the Centre in January 2019. She is a military spouse of a currently serving Officer and has previously worked for military charities. Her principle role within the Centre is Project Administrator where she is working on various evaluations with the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust and the NHS. Lottie is also a Families Representative on the Cheshire Armed Forces Covenant Partnership Committee.

Further Information:

<https://www1.chester.ac.uk/departments/westminster-centre-research-and-innovation-veterans-wellbeing/staff/lottie-ainsworth-moore>

## **The Westminster Centre for Research in Veterans**

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Tel: 01244 511621

Email: [WCVeterans@chester.ac.uk](mailto:WCVeterans@chester.ac.uk)

<https://www1.chester.ac.uk/westminster-centre-research-veterans/>



@UoCVeterans

Westminster Centre for  
Research in Veterans



University of  
Chester

# EVENTS, NEWS AND INFORMATION

## EVENTS

### Improving the welfare of Armed Forces veterans in Cheshire

Members of the Cheshire Armed Forces Covenant Partnership came together to improve the welfare of the veteran community in the county.

Hosted by the University of Chester's Westminster Centre for Research in Veterans, the Symposium saw the four local borough councils of Cheshire West and Chester, Cheshire East, Halton and Warrington together with the NHS, charities, the Department of Work and Pensions, the emergency services, veterans, military families, the Ministry of Defence and the University to look at further collaborative ways of working.

The symposium facilitated the partnership sharing information of Cheshire and Warrington's current projects and personal reflections, as well as welcoming local dignitaries for a re-signing in support of the Armed Forces Covenant.

### Armed Forces Community Research International Webinar Series

The Westminster Centre for Research in Veterans host free webinar sessions that take place every 2 months via Zoom. The previous webinar took place on the 8th February 2023 with a presentation from Kate Salen and Dr Natasha Green providing an overview of an Appraisal of the South of England High Intensity Service.

Details of the next session as well as recordings of previous sessions can be found here: <https://www1.chester.ac.uk/events/armed-forces-community-research-international-webinar-series>



The symposium was offered as a free event as a result of funding from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust as part of their Veterans' Places, Pathways and People Programme North-West (VPPP (NW)). This aims to develop better, more joined up, and lasting support for local veterans with mental health needs in the region. It aims to create safer places to receive support; better access and more effective pathways of care and support and exemplary people to assist with support.

Westminster Centre for  
Research in Veterans



Royal College  
of Nursing

# CURRENT RESEARCH

The Westminster Centre for Research in Veterans has several research projects currently ongoing. Further Information: <https://www1.chester.ac.uk/westminster-centre-research-veterans>

## **An evaluation of the AFCFT Tackling Serious Stress in Veterans, their Families and Carers Programme**

In 2022, the AFCFT's Tackling Serious Stress in Veterans, Carers and Families evaluation was completed. This programme was established to fund UK innovative interventions and establish new ways of working by providing space for cross sector partnerships and consortia in addition to statutory services.

The report is available [here](#).

## **Understanding the Experiences of Minority Ethnicities in the Armed Forces**

This is a feasibility study to understand the motivators behind why Black and Asian and ethnic minority communities choose to join the British Armed Forces, why they remain and ultimately their reasons for leaving. This study also seeks to understand the experiences of both veterans and their families whilst serving whilst in the military and during their transition to civilian life.

## **An appraisal of the impact of the Solent NHS Trust High Intensity Service (HIS) for military veterans**

The HIS provides care and treatment for former armed forces personnel (veterans) who are in a mental health crisis and need urgent help. The HIS forms one element of Op Courage. This mixed-methods study aims to advance knowledge and understanding of the predisposing factors and the associated symptoms in those veterans accessing the HIS across the Southeast Region. This report is available [here](#).

## **An evaluation of the AFCFT One is Too Many (OITM) Programme**

The One is Too Many evaluation aims to explore social isolation, help-seeking behaviour and provide indicators of the situational factors causing distress and potentially self-harming / suicide in military veterans. The evaluation intends to provide recommendations to help improve health outcomes and reduce determinates of poor health for military veterans.

## **An evaluation of the NHS Single Point of Contact for Armed Forces Families Pilot (SPOC)**

An NHS England and NHS Improvement pilot programme sees the establishment of an Armed Forces families and Armed Forces community care coordination support framework system and single point of contact (SPOC) across England to help them navigate the NHS.

The Centres evaluation will explore the perspectives of families who have accessed the initiative, SPOC staff members and those involved in implementing the initiative. The study aims to identify the benefits, challenges and effectiveness of the SPOC on Armed Forces Families' social needs and healthcare mobility.



# PUBLICATIONS

Salem, K., Randles, R., Sapre, B. and Finnegan, A. (2022) The experiences of minority ethnicity personnel in the Armed Forces: A systematic review. *Journal of Military, Veteran and Family Health*. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3138/jmvfh-2022-0019>

Finnegan, A., Salem, K., Ainsworth-Moore, L., Randles, R., West, L., Simpson, R. and Benedicta Grant, V. (2022) The veteran friendly practice accreditation programme: a mixed methods evaluation. *BJGP Open*, 12 July DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3399/BJGPO.2022.0012>

Finnegan, A. and Randles, R. (2022) Nursing care for the military veteran and their family. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/jocn.16345>

Currie, J., Thompson, C., Grootemaat, P., Andersen, P., Finnegan, A., Carter, M., & Halcomb, E. (2022). A scoping review of clinical skill development of preregistration registered nurses in Australia and five other English-speaking countries. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 00, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jocn.16239>

Finnegan, A. and Randles, R. (2022) Prevalence of common mental health disorders in military veterans: using primary healthcare data. *BMJ Mil Health*, doi: 10.1136/bmjmilitary-2021-002045

Di Lemma, Howe, S., & Finnegan A.P. (2022) An evaluation of the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust's Aged Veterans Fund. *BMJ Mil Health*. 186(1) pp 49–56. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmjmilitary-2020-001716>At: <https://militaryhealth.bmj.com/content/early/2021/03/30/bmjmilitary-2020-001716>

Randles, R. and Finnegan, A. (2022) Veteran help-seeking behaviour for mental health issues: a systematic review. *BMJ Mil Health*, doi: 10.1136/bmjmilitary-2021-001903

Finnegan, AP & Breeze, J (2022). Improving research and initiatives to support veterans and their families. *BMJ Mil Health*. 168 (1) pp i – ii <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmjmilitary-2021-001939>

# RESOURCES

## **Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust:**

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

## **Veterans Gateway:**

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

## **Westminster Centre for Research in Veterans:**

<https://www1.chester.ac.uk/westminster-centre-research-veterans>

# USEFUL LINKS

## **10-step video to improve the registration of military veterans**

<https://www1.chester.ac.uk/westminster-centre-research-veterans/research/where-are-all-veterans-finding-forgotten-phase-2>

## **Free Educational module – Westminster Centre for Research in Veterans Online Training:**

<https://www1.chester.ac.uk/introduction-armed-forces-community>

## **Westminster Centre for Research in Veterans Online Training:**

<https://www1.chester.ac.uk/introduction-armed-forces-community>



## **The Westminster Centre for Research in Veterans**

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<https://www1.chester.ac.uk/westminster-centre-research-veterans/>



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