Health and Wellbeing of UK Armed Forces Personnel: An Interview Study

Signposting Booklet

General Information on services for Serving and ex-Service personnel
## Contents

1. National Mental Health Services and Advice ........................................... 2
2. Regional/local Mental Health Service and Advice .................................... 6
3. General Advice and Support ..................................................................... 8
4. Alcohol and Drugs .................................................................................. 10
5. Jobs and Employment ............................................................................ 11
6. Grants for Courses/Education .................................................................. 12
7. Help Claiming Benefits ........................................................................... 14
8. Housing .................................................................................................... 15
9. Relationship Guidance and Family Support ............................................ 16
10. Counselling and Support ......................................................................... 17
11. Information on Equality and Rights ......................................................... 18

Index ............................................................................................................ 19
1. National Mental Health Services and Advice

For those of you still serving the first port of call should be your Medical Officer; the Chain of Command; the Padre.

For veterans the first port of call is your GP.

For reservists the first port of call is the TA Chain of Command or your GP.

1.1. Big White Wall

An anonymous peer support network that encourages you to be open about what is on your mind, to learn more about yourself and what is troubling you. It is available 24/7 and is free for serving personnel, veterans and their families. You can talk anonymously through your troubles with the whole community, or a selected group or individual. Trained mental health professionals can help small groups of members to resolve problems like stress, anxiety and depression.

Open: 24hrs/365 days a year  
Tel: 0203 574 4561

Email: theteam@bigwhitewall.com  
Web: www.bigwhitewall.com

1.2. Combat Stress 24 Hour Helpline

Provides confidential help and advice on any mental health issues to the military community and their families.

Open: 24hrs/365 days a year  
Helpline: 0800 138 1619

Email: combat.stress@rethink.org  
Text: 07537 404 719  
(standard charges may apply for texts)

1.3. Combat Stress

Originally called the Ex-Services Mental Welfare Society, Combat Stress specialises in the treatment and support of British Armed Forces Veterans who have mental health problems.

Contact head office for details of your local office.

Open: Monday - Friday, 9am - 5pm.  
Tel: 01372 841600

Email: contactus@combatstress.org.uk  
Web: www.combatstress.org.uk

1.4. Forcesline

As part of Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA) this support line offers totally confidential, non-judgemental, guidance on all personal/welfare issues including sexual harassment, discrimination, bullying, racism, drugs, depression, alcohol, debt, relationship counselling and suicide to the Army community from anywhere in the world. It is completely independent of the military chain of command.

Open: 7 days a week from 10.30am -10.30pm (UK time)

From UK: 0800 731 4880 (freephone) 0845 241 7141 (helpline)

From Cyprus: 800 91065 (freephone)
1.5. The Veterans and Reserves Mental Health Programme (VRMHP)

The Veterans and Reserves Mental Health Programme (VRMHP) (formerly the Medical Assessment Programme) provides mental health assessments for veterans and reservists who have concerns about their mental health as a result of service.

The Medical Assessment Programme has moved from St Thomas' Hospital, London to Chilwell, Nottingham and the service is now co-located with Reservist Mental Health Programme and renamed the VRMHP.

The VRMHP investigates patients’ mental health concerns and, so far as possible, it provides a diagnosis if the veteran has a mental health disorder, and recommends appropriate management through the NHS, if required. Advice will also be provided on the extensive support network that is available to veterans and their families in the UK.

The Veterans Mental Health Programme is available to veterans who have deployed since 1982 and are experiencing mental health challenges as a result of military service. The service will remain the same; a full mental health assessment by a consultant psychiatrist with accompanying guidance on care and treatment for the veteran’s local clinical team. Referrals to the VRMHP will preferably be made by the individual’s GP however self-referrals will now be accepted for this service.

The Reserves Mental Health Programme, run in partnership with the NHS, is open to all current or former members of the UK Volunteer and Regular Reserves who have been demobilised since 1 January 2003, following operational deployment overseas as a Reservist and who believe that their deployment may have affected their mental health.

Helpline: 0800 032 6258        Email: DPHCE-DCMHCHL-VRMHP@mod.uk
Web:    www.gov.uk/support-for-war-veterans (Veterans and Reserves)

1.6. MIND

Mind’s telephone helpline offers a range of advice on mental health issues on their infoline and also offers legal advice on their legal line. The website also has links to a wide range of booklets and leaflets.

Open:  Mon–Fri, 9.00am – 6.00pm        Helpline: 0845 766 0163
Infoline: 0300 123 3393        Web:    www.mind.org.uk
Legal Line: 0300 4666 463        Email: contact@mind.org.uk
MIND (Cymru)
Tel: 029 2039 5123  Email: contactwales@mind.org.uk

MIND do not currently work in Scotland or Northern Ireland. If you are from either of these areas and are looking for mental health information, advice or support, you may find the following organisations helpful:

The Scottish Association for Mental Health:
Tel: 0141 530 1000  Web: www.samh.org.uk

The Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health:
Tel: 02890 328 474  Web: www.niamhwellbeing.org

1.7. NHS 111
Call or email health professionals for advice about mental and physical health.
Open: 24hrs/365 days a year  Tel: 111 (freephone) or 0845 4647 in some areas

1.8. Samaritans
Someone to talk to 24 hours a day. They also offer face to face appointments in local branches.
Open: 24hrs/365 days a year  Tel: 08457 90 90 90
Email: jo@samaritans.org  Web: www.samaritans.org

1.9. Veterans UK: The Service Personnel and Veterans Agency
Aims to be a first-stop for veterans providing information on the various services offered by other organisations in one place.
The Veterans UK Helpline provides advice on many topics.
Open: Monday – Thursday: 7.30am - 6.30pm  Friday: 7.30am - 5.00pm
Freephone: 08081 914218
Overseas: +44 (0)1253 866043
Email: veterans-uk@mod.uk  Web: www.veterans-uk.info
1.10. Royal British Legion

Provides financial, social and emotional support to all those who have served and are currently serving in the Armed Forces, as well as their families.

**Open:** Monday – Friday, 8am – 8pm. **Helpline:** 0808 802 8080

**Web:** [www.britishlegion.org.uk](http://www.britishlegion.org.uk) **Helpline (ROI):** 02033 768 080

There are 2,500 local branches around the UK and overseas providing support for people in their local communities and also a meeting place to get together.

**Web:** [www.britishlegion.org.uk/membership/branches](http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/membership/branches)
2. Regional/local Mental Health Service and Advice

Please note that the list of regional/local services is not exhaustive. For more information on local services, if you cannot find an appropriate service listed below, please contact:

**Combat Stress 24 hour helpline** (0800 138 1619, see section 1.2)
**Veterans UK Helpline** (08081 914218, see section 1.9)

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**Services in Scotland**

2.1. **Veterans F1rst Point**

Aims to provide a one-stop shop for veterans and their families living in Lothian, working with organisations that might be able to help a veteran or their family to resolve whatever issue they may have.

Tel: 0131 220 9920  
Web: [www.veteransfirstpoint.org.uk](http://www.veteransfirstpoint.org.uk)

2.2. **Veterans’ Health Zone**

Information on specific NHS support for veterans in Scotland, as well as programmes and initiatives that you may access.

Web: [www.nhsinform.co.uk/veteranshealth](http://www.nhsinform.co.uk/veteranshealth)

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**Services in Wales**

2.3. **All Wales Veterans Health and Wellbeing Service**

This is a service for veterans who need psychological support, treatment and advice. The service also provides help to access employment, benefits and housing advice.

Open to any veteran living in Wales who has served at least one day with the British Military as either a regular service member or as a reservist who has a service related psychological injury. Self-referral or referral by GP.

Open: Monday – Friday, 8.00am - 3.30pm  
Tel: 029 2074 2062  
Email: Claire.morgan4@wales.nhs.uk  
Web: [www.veteranswales.co.uk](http://www.veteranswales.co.uk)  
24/7 helpline: 0800 132 737

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**Services in Northern England**

2.4. **NHS Humber and Yorkshire Veterans Outreach Service**

Mental health triage and assessment for military veterans registered with GPs across North, West and South Yorkshire and the Humber.

Tel: 01482 617594  
Email: HNF-TR.veteransoutreachservice@nhs.net  
Web: [www.humber.nhs.uk/services/veterans-outreach-service](http://www.humber.nhs.uk/services/veterans-outreach-service)
2.5. **NHS Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust Veteran Services**

Services include Community Veterans Mental Health Service, Veterans Wellbeing Group, Veterans' Wellbeing Assessment and Liaison Service and Veterans Mental Health Awareness Training

**Tel:** 01388 646802  
**Web:** [www.tewv.nhs.uk](http://www.tewv.nhs.uk/)

2.6. **NHS Pennine Military Veterans’ Service**

Service to improve the mental health and emotional wellbeing of ex-service personnel and their families. Service covers the whole North West, working closely with local services. Self-referral or referral through GP.

**Tel:** 0300 323 0707  
**Email:** mviapt.enquiries.nw@nhs.net  
**Web:** [www.penninecare.nhs.uk/your-services/military-veterans-service](http://www.penninecare.nhs.uk/your-services/military-veterans-service)

### Services in The Midlands

2.7. **West Midlands Regional Veterans Mental Health Network**

Network of eight Mental Health Trusts has been established across the West Midlands region to support the identification and engagement of veterans into services

**Email:** veterans.support@sssft.nhs.uk  
**Web:** [www.sssft.nhs.uk/services/veterans](http://www.sssft.nhs.uk/services/veterans)

2.8. **South Staffordshire & Shropshire Veterans’ Mental Health Services**

This service offers specialist advice, support and understanding in regards to mental health problems that affect our veteran population.

**Tel:** 0800 500 3113 (If ringing from a mobile phone 01785 258041)  
**Email:** veterans.support@sssft.nhs.uk  
**Web:** [www.sssft.nhs.uk/services/veterans](http://www.sssft.nhs.uk/services/veterans)

### Services in London and Southern England

2.9. **South West Veterans Mental Health Partnership Service**

Provides help to military veterans across the whole of the South West of England. Referrals from veterans themselves, their families or carers, from any health or social care professional or recognised charity.

**Tel:** 0300 555 0112  
**Email:** awp.swveterans@nhs.net  
**Web:** [www.swveterans.org.uk](http://www.swveterans.org.uk)

2.10. **NHS London Veterans’ Community Mental Health Service**

Mental Health Service for veterans in London, self-referral or referral by charity or GP

**Tel:** 020 3317 6590  
**Email:** veterans@candi.nhs.uk  
**Web:** [www.candi.nhs.uk/services/london-veterans-assessment-and-treatment-service-lvs](http://www.candi.nhs.uk/services/london-veterans-assessment-and-treatment-service-lvs)
3. General Advice and Support

3.1. Citizens Advice Bureau
The national centre can give you the number of your local office.
Tel: (England) 03454 04 05 06 (Wales) 03454 04 05 05
Web: www.citizensadvice.org.uk

3.2. Debt Advice Line
Leave a message to request an information pack or factsheet.
Open: Mon-Fri, 9am-9pm Freephone: 0808 808 4000
Saturday 9:30am-1pm Web: www.nationaldebtline.co.uk

3.3. HIVE
Tri-Service information network offering range of advice to all members of the service community.
Web: http://www.army.mod.uk/welfare-support/23438.aspx

3.4. RAF Community Website
For RAF personnel and their families. Information on a wide range of topics, including family wellbeing, community support and support services as well as a help desk for advice.
Web: www.raf.mod.uk/community

3.5. Rear Party
Online community for families and friends of UK Armed Forces personnel.
Web: www.rearparty.co.uk Forum: www.rearparty.co.uk/Forums.html

3.6. Royal British Legion
Provides financial, social and emotional support to all those who have served and are currently serving in the Armed Forces, as well as their families.
(See section 1.10)

3.7. Royal Navy Community Website
For RN personnel and their families. Information on a wide range of topics, including family wellbeing, community support and support services as well as a help desk for advice.
Web: www.royalnavy.mod.uk/Community/Members-area
3.8. The Site
Online guide for 16-25 year-olds in the UK providing information on many topics including relationships, health and wellbeing, housing, money, work and study, crime and addiction.
Web: www.thesite.org

3.9. Veterans UK: The Service Personnel and Veterans Agency
Aims to be a first-stop for veterans providing information on the various services offered by other organisations in one place.
(See section 1.9)

3.10. Personnel Officers
Provides HR and welfare support to servicemen/women and their dependents.
4. Alcohol and Drugs

4.1. Addiction
Addaction is one of the UK’s largest specialist drug and alcohol treatment charities. This website gives information about coping with alcohol and drug dependency and can help you find a service in your local area.

Web:  www.addaction.org.uk

4.2. Alcoholics Anonymous
A fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other to help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking.

Tel:  0800 9177 650 (Freephone)  Web:  www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk
Email:  help@alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

4.3. Al-Anon
Provides support to anyone whose life is, or has been, affected by someone else’s drinking as they believe alcoholism affects the whole family, not just the drinker.

Open:  10am - 10pm, 365 days a year
Confidential Helpline:  020 7403 0888

From Northern Ireland:  028 9068 2368  (10am - 10pm, 365 days a year)
From Republic of Ireland:  01 873 2699  (10am - 1pm Monday – Friday
6pm – 11pm Monday – Sunday)

Email:  enquiries@al-anonuk.org.uk
Web:  www.al-anonuk.org.uk/

4.4. Drinkaware
Offers free, confidential information and advice to callers who are concerned about their own or someone else’s drinking.

Tel:  0300 123 1110 (Helpline)  Web:  www.drinkaware.co.uk

4.5. National Drugs Helpline - FRANK
FRANK is a confidential service to speak to a professionally trained advisor about drugs.

Open:  24hrs/365 days a year
Tel:  0300 123 6600
SMS:  82111 (text a question for an answer from FRANK)
Web:  www.talktofrank.com

4.6. Turning Point
National health and social care provider to help people find a new direction in life and help tackle substance misuse, mental health issues or employment difficulties

Tel:  020 7481 7600
Email:  info@turning-point.co.uk  Web:  www.turning-point.co.uk
5. Jobs and Employment

5.1. Employment Service Direct (Job Centre)
   
   **Open:** Monday - Friday, 8am - 6pm and Saturdays, 9am - 1pm.
   **Tel:** 0845 6060 234    **Textphone:** 0845 6055 255
   **Web:** [www.gov.uk/browse/working/finding-job](http://www.gov.uk/browse/working/finding-job)

5.2. NACRO
   
   Aims to help those with a criminal record get back into work.
   
   **Open:** Monday - Friday, 9am - 5pm.  
   **Tel:** 0800 0181 259
   **Email:** Helpline@nacro.org.uk
   **Web:** [www.nacro.org.uk](http://www.nacro.org.uk)

5.3. SaBRE
   
   Offers advice to reservists about their employment rights and responsibilities.
   
   **Open:** Monday - Friday, 9am-5pm.  
   **Tel:** 0800 389 5459
   **Website:** [www.sabre.mod.uk](http://www.sabre.mod.uk)
6. Grants for Courses/Education

6.1. Adult Learning Grant
Financial assistance to help adults back into education. Learner support helpline is open 7am to 8pm.

Information on advanced learning loans:
www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/AdultLearning/FinancialHelpForAdultLearners/index.htm

For further source of financial help with childcare contact the learner support helpline: 0800 121 8989

6.2. Army Education Centre
There are over 25 permanent Army Education Centres (AECs) located in the major Army bases in the UK, Cyprus and Germany, available to those still serving. In some respects, the AECs are similar to local further education colleges. They are staffed by both military and civilian instructors who deliver a whole range of courses and educational services for officers, soldiers and their dependants.

6.3. Royal British Legion
The British Legion has grants and scholarships available for ex-service personnel and their dependants, spouses of ex-service personnel and their dependants.
Open: 10am-4pm Monday-Friday. Tel: 0808 802 8080
Web: www.britishlegion.org.uk

6.4. Army Benevolent Fund
Offers a range of financial grants for care in the home, holidays, bursaries, annuities and practical support to serving and ex-service personnel and their families.
Tel: 020 7901 8900 Web: www.soldierscharity.org

6.5. Princes Trust
For help with setting up your own business or with money for courses, for those aged 18-25.
Tel: 0800 842 842 Web: www.princes-trust.org.uk

6.6. RAF Benevolent Fund
For former RAF personnel or their families. Offers a wide range of practical, financial and emotional support.
Tel: 0800 169 2942 Web: www.rafbf.org.uk
For those still serving, contact should be made through Chief Clerk or Flight Commander.
6.7. Royal Navy Benevolent Trust

Offers a range of help, including grants and advice, for serving and ex-serving members of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines and their families, including those who are separated or divorced and now living with a new partner.

Tel: 02392 690112
Email: rnbt@rnbt.org.uk    Web:  www.rnbt.org.uk/

Service family members can also get basic skills training at their local Armed Forces education facility. Ask at your local facility for details.
7. Help Claiming Benefits

7.1. JobCentre Plus

Open:  Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm.  Tel:  0800 055 6688

7.2. SSAFA

SSAFA (Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association)

Open:  Monday-Friday, 9am-5.30pm.  Tel:  0845 241 7141
Web:  www.ssafa.org.uk

7.3. Royal British Legion

The British Legion also has funding available for families of ex-service personnel in need.

Open:  8am - 8pm, 7 days a week.  Tel:  0808 802 8080
Web:  www.britishlegion.org.uk
8. Housing

8.1. Government Housing information
    Web:  www.communities.gov.uk/housing

8.2. Haig Homes
    Lets rental property to ex-Service personnel.
    Open: Monday - Friday, 9am - 5pm.  Tel:  020 7685 5777
    Email: enquiries@haighousing.org.uk  Web:  www.haighomes.org.uk/

8.3. JSHAO
    Provides civilian housing information, advice and, where possible, placement to
    service persons and their dependants and to ex-service personnel still occupying
    service accommodation.
    Tel:  01252 787 574  Email:  aws-jshao-mailbox@mod.uk
    Web:  www.gov.uk/housing-for-service-personnel-and-families

8.4. SPACES
    Assistance for single ex-Service personnel in finding housing.
    Tel:  01748 833797 or 01748 872940 or 01748 830191
    Email:  spaces@riverside.org.uk  Web:  http://www.spaces.org.uk

8.5. SSAFA: Housing Advice
    Tel:  0207 463 9354  Web:  www.ssafa.org.uk

8.6. Stoll Foundation
    Provides temporary and permanent housing for ex-Service personnel.
    Open: Monday - Friday, 9am - 5pm.  Tel:  020 7385 2110
    Web:  http://www.stoll.org.uk

8.7. Veteran’s Aid
    Provides help for veterans who are homeless or are likely to become homeless. This
    includes help with hostel accommodation, financial assistance, meal vouchers and
    clothing, advice and advocacy.
    Freephone: 0800 0126867
    Email:  info@veterans-aid.net  Web:  www.veterans-aid.net
9. Relationship Guidance and Family Support

9.1. Army Families Federation
Helps still serving military families sort out a range of problems.
Open: Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm. Tel: 0755 286 1983
Web: www.aff.org.uk Email: additionalneeds@aff.org.uk

9.2. Naval Families Federation
A range of information for Royal Naval and Royal Marines families.
Tel: 02392 654374 Web: www.nff.org.uk

9.3. RAF Families Federation
Information and support for RAF families.
Tel: 01780 781650 Web: www.raf-ff.org.uk

9.4. Relate
Offers phone counselling, internet counselling and/or appointments for face to face counselling.
Tel: 0300 100 1234 Web: www.relate.org.uk

9.5. Relate for Parents
Free support, ideas, guidance and information.
Tel: 0300 100 1234 Email: enquiries@relate.org.uk

9.6. Working Families
Helping children, working parents and carers and their employers find a better balance between responsibilities at home and work.
Tel: 0800 012 0312 Email: advice@workingfamilies.org.uk
Web: www.workingfamilies.org.uk

9.7. Children's Education Advisory Service
Provides expert and impartial advice about the education of Service children, both in the UK and overseas.
Tel: 01980 618 244 (Answerphone service)
Email: enquiries@ceas.detsa.co.uk
Web: https://www.gov.uk/childrens-education-advisory-service
10. Counselling and Support

10.1. Cruse
   Cruse supports people through bereavement.
   **Daytime helpline:** 0844 477 9400
   **Email:**  helpline@cruse.org.uk  **Web:**  www.cruse.org.uk

10.2. Relate
   Offers phone counselling, internet counselling and/or appointments for face to face counselling.
   **Tel:**  0300 100 1234  **Web:**  www.relate.org.uk

10.3. Samaritans
   Someone to talk to 24 hours a day. They also offer face to face appointments in local branches.
   **Open:**  24hrs/365 days a year  **Tel:**  08457 90 90 90
   **Email:**  jo@samaritans.org  **Web:**  www.samaritans.org
11. Information on Equality and Rights

12.1. Equality Advisory Support Service
Specially trained staff will provide information and guidance on discrimination and human rights issues.

Open: Monday - Friday: 9am - 8pm, Saturday: 10am - 2pm
Tel: 0808 800 0082  Textphone: 0808 800 0084
Website: www.equalityhumanrights.com

12.2. Mankind Initiative
The Mankind Initiative is a national charity that provides support for male victims of domestic abuse. It runs a helpline and can provide referrals to refuges and local authorities where appropriate.

Open: Monday - Friday, 10am - 4pm and 7pm - 9pm
Tel: 01823 334244  Web: http://www.mankind.org.uk/

12.3. Men’s Advice Line
A confidential helpline for all men experiencing domestic violence by a current or ex-partner.

Open: Monday - Friday, 10am - 1pm and 2pm - 5pm
Freephone*: 0808 801 0327 (*including most mobiles)
Email: info@mensadviceline.org.uk  Web: www.mensadviceline.org.uk
Index

Addiction .............................................. 10
Adult Learning Grant .......................... 12
Al-Anon.............................................. 10
Alcoholics Anonymous .......................... 10
All Wales Veterans Health and Wellbeing Service ............................................. 6
Army Benevolent Fund .......................... 12
Army Education Centre .......................... 12
Army Families Federation ......................... 16
Benefits Agency .......................................... 14
Big White Wall ........................................... 2
Citizens Advice Bureau .......................... 8
Combat Stress .......................................... 2
Combat Stress 24 Hour Helpline ......................... 2
Cruse...................................................... 17
Debt Advice Line ........................................... 8
Drinkline .................................................. 10
Employment Service Direct ......................... 11
Equality and Human Rights Commission ............ 17, 18
Forcesline .................................................. 2
FRANK ..................................................... 10
Government Housing information ................. 15
Haig Homes ............................................. 15
HIVE ......................................................... 8
Job Centre .................................................. 11
JSHAO .................................................... 15
London Veterans’ Community Mental Health Service ............................................. 7
Mankind Initiative ......................................... 18
Men’s Advice Line ......................................... 18
MIND ......................................................... 3/4
NACRO .................................................... 11

National Drugs Helpline .................................. 10
Naval Families Federation .......................... 16
NHS Direct ............................................... 4
NHS Humber Veterans Outreach Service ............. 6
NHS Pennine Military Veterans’ Service ................. 7
NHS Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust Veteran Services .............. 7
Princes Trust .............................................. 12
RAF Benevolent Fund ................................... 12
RAF Community Website .......................... 8
RAF Families Federation ............................ 16
Rear Party ................................................ 8
Relate ....................................................... 16, 17
Relate for Parents ....................................... 16
Royal British Legion ................................. 5, 8, 12, 14
Royal Navy Benevolent Trust ......................... 13
Royal Navy Community Website ......................... 8
SaBRE ..................................................... 11
Samaritans ................................................ 4
South Staffordshire & Shropshire Veterans’ Mental Health Services .................... 7
South West Veterans Mental Health Partnership Service ........................................... 7
SPACES ..................................................... 15
SSAFA ..................................................... 2, 14, 15
Stoll Foundation .......................................... 15
The Site ..................................................... 9
Turning Point ............................................... 10
Veteran’s Aid ............................................. 15
Veterans Agency ................. See Veterans UK Veterans and Reserves Mental Health Programme ............................................. 3
Veterans First Point ...................................... 6
Veterans UK .............................................. 4, 9
West Midlands Regional Veterans Mental Health Network ........................................... 7
Working Families ......................................... 16