



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

Signposting Booklet

General Information on services for
Serving and ex-Service personnel

KING'S
College
LONDON

University of London

Version 3.0

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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 online 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

Web: www.bigwhitewall.com

Email: theteam@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. Community and outreach support is also offered in local communities and in veterans own homes, with a community team providing both practical and clinical support.

They recommend calling their local outreach office to get in touch with them:

Open: Monday - Friday, 9am - 5pm.

Tel: 01372 841600

OutreachNorth@CombatStress.org.uk

OutreachSouth@CombatStress.org.uk

Tel: 0129 256 1350

Tel: 01372 587 080

OutreachCentral@Combatstress.org.uk

OutreachIreland@CombatStress.org.uk

Tel: 01952 822 750

Tel: 02890 269 999

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.

They also provide an email service where they will respond within 24hours via a contact form on their website.

Open: Monday – Friday, 9am - 5pm (UK time) **Web:** www.ssafa.org.uk/how-we-help/forcesline

UK Freephone: 0800 731 4880

Germany Freephone: 0800 182 7395

Cyprus Freephone: 800 91065

Falkland Islands Freephone: #6111

Rest of the World: +44(0) 207 463 9292 (*staff will phone you back)

Absent without Leave (AWOL) Line: 01380 738137

From Operational Theatres: use Paradigm's phone system and dial the appropriate access number then enter *201 at the PIN prompt)

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

Infoline: 0300 123 3393

Text: 86463

Web: www.mind.org.uk

Legal Line: legal@mind.org.uk

Email: contact@mind.org.uk

MIND (Cymru)

Tel: 029 2039 5123

Web: <http://www.mind.org.uk/news-campaigns/mind-cymru-campaigns/>

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:

The Scottish Association for Mental Health provides community based mental health support across Scotland. Their website contains contact information for a variety of services on offer across Scotland.

Tel: 0141 530 1000

Web: www.samh.org.uk

Email: enquire@samh.org.uk

The Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health:

The Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health is an independent charity focusing on mental health and well-being services in Northern Ireland.

Tel: 02890 328 474

Web: www.niamhwellbeing.org

1.7. NHS 111

Call or email health professionals for advice about mental and physical health. You can find your local branch via their branch finder on their website.

Open: 24hrs/365 days a year

Tel: 111 or 0845 4647 in Wales

1.8. Samaritans

Someone to talk to 24 hours a day. They also offer face to face appointments in local branches. You can find your local branch via their branch finder on their website.

Open: 24hrs/365 days a year

Tel: 116 123 (UK and ROI)

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: 7 days a week, 8am – 8pm.

Helpline: 0808 802 8080

Web: www.britishlegion.org.uk

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: <http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-support/the-legion-near-you/find-the-legion-near-you/>

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)

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. They also offer a drop in centre in Edinburgh open Monday to Friday from 1pm until 4.30pm.

Tel: 0131 220 9920

Web: 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.

Open: 8am – 10pm

Helpline: 080 022 4488

Email: nhs.inform@nhs24.scot.nhs.uk

Web:
www.nhsinform.co.uk/veteranshealth

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, 8am - 4.30pm **General Enquiries:** 0292 074 2062

Email: Claire.morgan4@wales.nhs.uk

Web: www.veteranswales.co.uk

They are unable to respond to crisis calls but recommend those in need call a 24/7 **helpline:** 0800 132 737

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

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, Website contains information on a number of different services offered in the region.

Tel: 0132 555 2000

Email: tewv.enquiries@nhs.net

Web: www.tewv.nhs.uk/ (then search for veterans)

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.

Open: Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm

Tel: 0300 323 0707

Email: mviapt.enquiries.nw@nhs.net

Web: www.penninecare.nhs.uk/your-services/military-veterans-service

2.7. NHS Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS foundation trust

Service that aims to help the well-being of veterans and their families. They also provide a community mental health service for veterans, which can be accessed by self-referral or by your GP. This service also works in partnership with Combat Stress and the Royal British Legion.

Open: 9am – 5pm

Urgent Mental Health Advice: 0303 123 1145

Email: veterans@ntw.nhs.uk

General Enquiries: 0191 245 6725

Website: www.ntw.nhs.uk/ (then search for veterans services)

Services in the Midlands

2.8. 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

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

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.

Open: Monday – Friday, office hours

Tel: 0300 555 0112

Email: awp.swveterans@nhs.net

Web: www.swveterans.org.uk

2.10. NHS London Veterans' Community Mental Health Service

An open access Mental Health Service for veterans in London, accessed via self-referral or referral by charity or GP

Open: Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm

Tel: 020 3317 6818

Email: veterans@candi.nhs.uk

Web: 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 provides free, confidential advice on a range of issues including finances, housing and employment. You can talk to them via an online chat service available Monday to Friday from 10am to 4pm through their website.

They also have a range of local offices that you can visit or call, the details of which can be found on their website.

Open: Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm

Consumer Helpline: 0344 411 1444

Welsh Advisor: 0344 477 2020

Web: www.citizensadvice.org.uk

3.2. Debt Advice Line

Is an independent charity offering free, confidential, debt advice. Their website provides fact sheets, interactive tools and guides as well as an online chat service.

Open: Mon-Fri, 9am-8pm; 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 separation, housing and support groups.

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.

Tel: 02392 728 777

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. They offer discussion boards, live expert chat and a number of apps to deal with finance, stress, motivation and finding local support services. They provide a counselling service Monday to Friday from 9am until 5pm which can be accessed via a form on their website.

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. The Veterans UK Helpline provides advice on many topics.

(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. You can find your local meeting via their website.

Tel: 0800 917 7650 (Freephone)

Web: www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Email: help@alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

4.3. Al-Anon

Provides local 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

Email: enquiries@al-anonuk.org.uk

Confidential Helpline: 020 7403 0888

Web: www.al-anonuk.org.uk/

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)

4.4. Drinkaware

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

Helpline: 0300 123 1110

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. They offer a live chat service on their website from 2pm until 6pm.

Open: 24hrs/365 days a year

Tel: 0300 123 6600

Text a question to Frank: 82111

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: 0207 481 7600 (*not a helpline*)

Web: www.turning-point.co.uk

5. Jobs and Employment

5.1. Employment Service Direct (Job Centre)

Information on working, jobs and pensions available and contacting Jobcentre plus for support finding a job,

Web: <https://www.gov.uk/browse/working>

5.2. NACRO

Aims to help those with a criminal record get back into work, providing information for ex-offenders, their families or those working with them.

Open: Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm.

Tel: 0300 123 1999

Email: Helpline@nacro.org.uk

Web: www.nacro.org.uk

5.3. Defence Relationship Management (DRM)

Offers advice to reservists and their employers about their employment rights and responsibilities.

Helpline: 0800 389 5459

Website: www.gov.uk/government/groups/defence-relationship-management#support-for-reservists

6. Grants for Courses/Education

6.1. Adult Learning Grant

Financial assistance to help adults back into education. Offers a website providing information on advanced learning grants and loans and a learner support helpline providing advice on support for childcare costs, housing and grants that may be available whilst learning.

Open: Monday-Friday 9am-5pm

Helpline: 0800 121 8989

Information on grants and bursaries for adult learners:

www.gov.uk/grant-bursary-adult-learners

Information on advanced learning loans:

www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/AdultLearning/FinancialHelpForAdultLearners/index.htm

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: 8am - 8pm, 7 days a week.

Tel: 0808 802 8080

Web (Live Chat Available): 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. They have regional offices throughout the UK the details of which are provided on their website.

Tel: 0207 901 8900

Web: www.soldierscharity.org

6.5. Princes Trust

Offer help for those aged 13-30 who are unemployed or struggling with education.

Tel: 0800 842842

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

Email: mail@rafbf.org.uk

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

Tel: 02392 690112

Email: rnbt@rnbt.org.uk

Web: www.rnbt.org.uk/

7. Help Claiming Benefits

7.1. JobCentre Plus

For advice on claiming benefits you can contact job centre plus.

Open: Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm.

Tel: 0800 055 6688

Tel: (Welsh language): 0800 012 1888

Text phone: 0800 023 4888

Web: www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus

7.2. Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA)

SSAFA provide welfare advice and support, health and social care services, specialist services, child services and housing support for veterans, regulars and reservists in the British Army, Royal Navy and Royal Airforce.

Open: Monday-Friday, 9am-5.30pm.

Helpline: 0800 731 4880

Web: www.ssafa.org.uk

7.3. Royal British Legion

The Royal British Legion helps members of the Royal Navy, British Army, Royal Airforce, veterans and their families all year round. Has a helpline and local pop-in centres available across the UK.

Open: 8am - 8pm, 7 days a week.

Tel: 0808 802 8080

Web (Live Chat Available): www.britishlegion.org.uk

8. Housing

8.1. Haig Homes

Provides housing assistance to ex-service personnel and/or their dependents.

Open: Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm. **Tel:** 0208 685 5777 (General enquiries)

Tel: 0208 685 5781 (Housing Services enquiries)

Email: enquiries@haighousing.org.uk **Web:** www.haighomes.org.uk/

8.2. 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: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-for-service-personnel-and-families>

8.3. SPACES

Assistance for single ex-Service personnel in finding housing.

Tel: 01748 833 797 **Tel (Alt):** 01748 872 940 / 01748 83 0191

Email: spaces@riverside.org.uk **Web:** <http://www.spaces.org.uk>

8.4. SSAFA: Housing Advice

SSAFA has a dedicated area of the website for housing advice where you can find housing information and send them an online query.

Tel: 0207 463 9354

Web: www.ssafa.org.uk/help-you/veterans/housing-advice

8.5. Stoll Foundation

Provides temporary and permanent housing for ex-Service personnel. Hold a bi-monthly drop-in session for veterans and their families in London (see website for details).

Open: Monday - Friday, 9am - 5pm **Tel:** 020 7385 2110

Web: www.stoll.org.uk **Email:** info@stoll.org.uk

8.6. 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. Provide a drop-in centre and hostel in London for veterans.

Freephone: 0800 012 6867 **Tel:** 0207 828 2468

Email: info@veterans-aid.net **Web:** www.veterans-aid.net

9. Relationship Guidance and Family Support

9.1. Army Families Federation

An independent organisation offering a confidential advice for Army families about any aspect of life affected by the Army lifestyle.

Tel: Follow this link to find the contact details of your local AFF co-ordinator:

www.aff.org.uk/contact_us/aff_gb/contact_gb_coords/index.htm

Web: www.aff.org.uk

Email: us@aff.org.uk

9.2. Naval Families Federation

An independent organisation able to provide information, support and guidance for Royal Naval and Royal Marines families on a range of issues arising due to Service life.

Tel: 02392 654374

Web: www.nff.org.uk

Email: admin@nff.org.uk

9.3. RAF Families Federation

An independent organisation providing information and support for RAF personnel and their families.

Tel (Monday-Friday 10am-3pm): 01780 781650

Web: www.raf-ff.org.uk

9.4. Relate

Offers phone counselling, internet counselling, email counselling and live chat with a counsellor via their website. Appointments can also be made for face to face counselling at your local centre, details of which can be found on their website.

Open: Monday - Thursday 8am-10pm, Friday 8am – 6pm, Saturday 9am – 5pm

Tel: 0300 100 1234

Web (Live Chat Available): www.relate.org.uk

9.5. Relate for Parents

For parents worried about their child's behaviour or looking for advice about parenting, this section of RELATE contains useful information and a link for talking to a counsellor about parenting teenagers free.

Tel: 0300 100 1234

Email: enquiries@relate.org.uk

Web: www.relate.org.uk/relationship-help/help-family-life-and-parenting

9.6. Working Families

Helping children, working parents and carers and their employers find a better balance between responsibilities at home and work.

Helpline: 0300 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.uk.com

Web: www.gov.uk/childrens-education-advisory-service

10. Counselling and Support

10.1. Cruse

Cruse supports people through bereavement. They offer telephone support and email support as well as face-to-face and group support at their local branches. You can find your closest branch via their website.

Open: Monday & Friday 9.30am-5pm Tuesday-Thursday 9.30am-8pm

Helpline: 0844 477 9400

Email: helpline@cruse.org.uk

Web: www.cruse.org.uk

10.2. Relate

Offers phone counselling, internet counselling, email counselling and live chat with a counsellor via their website. Appointments can also be made for face to face counselling at your local centre, details of which can be found on their website.

Open: Monday - Thursday 8am-10pm, Friday 8am – 6pm, Saturday 9am – 5pm

Tel: 0300 100 1234

Web (Live Chat Available): www.relate.org.uk

10.3. Samaritans

Someone to talk to 24 hours a day via their Freephone helpline. They also offer face to face appointments in local branches.

Open: 24hrs/365 days a year

Freephone Helpline: 116 123 (UK &ROI)

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 **Text phone:** 0808 800 0084

Website: www.equalityhumanrights.com

Website (Live Chat Available): www.equalityadvisoryservice.com/app/help

12.2. 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

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