



**MENTAL HEALTH, HELP SEEKING AND HEALTH CARE EXPERIENCES AFTER LEAVING THE
UK ARMED FORCES:
A TELEPHONE INTERVIEW STUDY**

Signposting Booklet

General information on services for
ex-Service personnel

KING'S
College
LONDON

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1. Directory of Social Change: Online Tool for Searching for Armed Forces Charities

1.1. ArmedForcesCharities

Armedforcescharities.org.uk contains details of over 2,200 armed forces charities registered in the UK, including charities that cater for the needs of serving and ex-serving personnel and their families, armed forces museums and heritage organisations and cadet units and organisations.

To search for help, select "Search for Armed Forces Charities" from the main menu at the top of the page and follow the instructions to select your criteria. You can refine your search by selecting more and more specific criteria.

Web: www.armedforcescharities.org.uk

Email: info@armedforcescharities.org.uk

2. National Mental Health Services and Advice

For veterans the first port of call is your GP.

2.1. 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 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 via live chats online.

Open: 24hrs/ 365 days

Web: www.bigwhitewall.com

Email: theteam@bigwhitewall.com

2.2. Combat Stress 24 Hour Helpline

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

Open: 24hrs/ 365 days

Helpline: 0800 138 1619

Email: combat.stress@rethink.org

Text: 0753 740 4719 (*standard charges may apply for texts*)

2.3. 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: Mon - Fri, 9am - 5pm

Web: www.combatstress.org.uk

OutreachNorth@CombatStress.org.uk

OutreachSouth@CombatStress.org.uk

Tel: 0129 256 1350

Tel: 0137 258 7080

OutreachCentral@Combatstress.org.uk

OutreachIreland@CombatStress.org.uk

Tel: 0195 282 2750

Tel: 0289 026 9999

2.4. 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 serving and ex-serving military 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: Mon – Fri, 9am - 5pm (UK) **Web:** www.ssafa.org.uk/how-we-help/forcesline

UK Freephone: 0800 731 4880 **Germany Freephone:** 0800 182 7395

Cyprus Freephone: 8009 1065 **Falkland Islands Freephone:** #6111

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

2.5. 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.

Helpline: 0800 032 6258

Web: www.gov.uk/support-for-war-veterans

Email: DPHCE-DCMHCHL-VRMHP@mod.uk

2.6. MIND

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

Open: Mon–Fri, 9am – 6pm

Web: www.mind.org.uk

Infoline: 0300 123 3393

Text: 86463 (*standard charges may apply*)

Email: info@mind.org.uk

Legal Line: legal@mind.org.uk

MIND's network is focused on England and Wales and they 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.

General Enquiries: 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.

General Enquiries: 0289 032 8474

Web: www.niamhwellbeing.org

2.7. NHS Direct (111)

Call or email health professionals for advice about mental and physical health.

Open: 24hrs/365 days a year

Non-Emergency: 111 or 0845 4647 in Wales

2.8. 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

2.9. 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: Mon – Thurs: 7.30am - 6.30pm; Fri: 7.30am - 5pm

Helpline: 0808 191 4218

Overseas: +44 (0)125 386 6043

Email: veterans-uk@mod.uk

Web: www.veterans-uk.info

2.10. 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. There is an online chat service available via their website 7 days a week from 8am until 8pm.

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/>

2.11. Help for Heroes Hidden Wounds

Help for Heroes provides direct, practical support for wounded, injured and sick servicemen, women and veterans and their families.

Help for Heroes Hidden Wounds is the psychological wellbeing service of Help for Heroes providing support to veterans and their families living with anxiety, depression, stress, anger or alcohol issues. Offers support from Psychological Wellbeing Practitioners (PWPs) with knowledge of the Armed Forces. Over the phone, via Skype or face to face, practitioners work with individuals across four to eight sessions as they use work books and learn practical strategies to understand and manage emotions.

Open: Mon – Fri, 9am -5pm

Tel: 0808 202 0144 (*free from UK Landlines*)

Alt Tel: 0198 084 4300

Web: www.helpforheroes.org.uk/hidden-wounds

Email: hidden.wounds@helpforheroes.org.uk

Or you can contact one of their regional Support Hubs

Open: Mon – Fri, 9am -5pm

Tedworth House, Tidworth: 0198 084 4224

Phoenix House, Catterick: 0174 883 4148

Chavasse VC House, Colchester: 0120 658 5659

Naval Service Recovery Centre, Plymouth: 0175 256 2179

Help for Heroes also offer funds for financial support (Quick Reaction Fund) and support networks (Band of Brothers and Band of Sisters).

3. 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 2.2)

Veterans UK Helpline (0808 191 4218, see section 2.9)

Services in Scotland

3.1. 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

3.2. Veterans' Health Zone

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

Open: 8am – 10pm

Helpline: 0800 22 44 88

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

Web: www.nhsinform.co.uk/veteranshealth

Services in Wales

3.3. 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: Mon – Fri, 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 CALL a 24/7 **helpline:** 0800 132 737

Services in Northern England

3.4. 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: 0148 261 7594

Email: HNF-TR.veteransoutreachservice@nhs.net

Web: www.humber.nhs.uk/services/veterans-outreach-service

3.5. NHS Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust Veteran Services

The 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)

3.6. 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: Mon – Fri, 9am – 5pm

Tel: 0300 323 0707

Email: mviapt.enquiries.nw@nhs.net

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

3.7. 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

3.8. West Midlands Regional Veterans Mental Health Network

A network of eight Mental Health Trusts has been established across the West Midlands region to support the identification and engagement of veterans into mental health services.

Tel: 0800 500 3113 (If ringing from a mobile phone 0178 525 8041)

Email: veterans.support@sssft.nhs.uk

Web: www.veterans.sssft.nhs.uk/veteranservices/west-midlands-regional-veterans-service

3.9. 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 0178 525 8041)

Email: veterans.support@sssft.nhs.uk

Web: <http://veterans.sssft.nhs.uk/>

Services in London and Southern England

3.10. 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: Mon – Fri, office hours

Tel: 0300 555 0112

Email: awp.swveterans@nhs.net

Web: www.swveterans.org.uk

3.11. NHS London Veterans' Community Mental Health Service

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

Open: Mon – Fri, 9am – 5pm

Tel: 020 3317 6818

Email: veterans@candi.nhs.uk

Web: www.londonveterans.nhs.uk

4. General Advice and Support

4.1. 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: Mon – Fri, 9am – 5pm

Consumer Helpline: 0344 411 1444

Welsh Advisor: 0344 477 2020

Web: www.citizensadvice.org.uk

4.2. Debt Advice Line

Are 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; Sat 9:30am-1pm

Tel: 0808 808 4000

Web: www.nationaldebtline.co.uk

4.3. 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. There is an online chat service available via their website 7 days a week from 8am until 8pm.

Open: 7 days a week, 8am – 8pm

Helpline: 0808 802 8080

Web: www.britishlegion.org.uk

4.4. 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

4.5. 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: Mon – Thurs: 7.30am - 6.30pm; Fri: 7.30am - 5.00pm

Helpline: 0808 191 4218

Overseas: +44 (0)125 386 6043

Email: veterans-uk@mod.uk

Web: www.veterans-uk.info

5. Alcohol and Drugs

5.1. Addaction

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

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

Free national helpline: 0800 917 7650

Email: help@alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk **Web:** www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

5.3. 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

Helpline: 020 7403 0888

Email: enquiries@al-anonuk.org.uk

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

Republic of Ireland: 01 873 2699

Open: 10am - 10pm, 365 days a year

Northern Ireland: 0289 068 2368

Open: Mon – Fri: 10am - 1pm;

Mon – Sun: 6pm – 11pm

5.4. Drinkaware

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

Drinkline Helpline: 0300 123 1110

Web: www.drinkaware.co.uk

5.5. 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

5.6. 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

6. Jobs and Employment

6.1. National Job Centre

To contact Jobcentre plus for support finding a job:

Open: Mon - Fri, 8am - 6pm

Tel: 0345 604 3719

Textphone: 0345 608 8551

Welsh Language: 0345 604 4248

Web: www.gov.uk/browse/working/finding-job

6.2. NACRO

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

Open: Mon - Fri, 9am - 5pm

Advice line: 0300 123 1999

Email: helpline@nacro.org.uk

Web: www.nacro.org.uk

6.3. RFEA: The Forces Employment Charity

Provides tailored job finding support, helping to source job opportunities for all service leavers and ex-forces personnel across the UK.

You can register online for their employment services, call the helpline below or visit their website to find details of their regional offices.

Helpline: 0121 236 0058

Web: www.rfea.org.uk

6.4. The Officers' Association

Provides practical support and advice on transition and employment for officers and their families whether still serving, in transition, or having left the Armed Forces. There are three core streams of support aimed at: building knowledge; growing connections; and sourcing employment positions.

The Officers' Association also provide support regarding financial assistance and housing via the website and a separate telephone number.

Tel: 0117 906 3580

Web: www.officersassociation.org.uk

Email: employment@officersassociation.org.uk

The Officers' Association also provide support regarding financial assistance and housing via the website and a separate telephone number.

Finance and Housing Tel: 0207 808 4175

7. Grants for Courses/Education

7.1. Adult Learning Grants

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: Mon – Fri, 9am – 5pm

Helpline: 0800 121 8989

Web: <https://www.gov.uk/grant-bursary-adult-learners>

7.2. 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: 7 days a week, 8am – 8pm

Web: www.britishlegion.org.uk

Helpline: 0808 802 8080

7.3. 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.

National Office Tel: 0207 901 8900

Web: www.soldierscharity.org

7.4. Princes Trust

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

Freephone: 0800 842 842

Text: CALL ME to 0798 338 5418

Web: www.princes-trust.org.uk

7.5. RAF Benevolent Fund

For former RAF personnel or their families. Offers a wide range of practical, financial and emotional support.

Tel: 0800 169 2942

Email: mail@rafbf.org.uk

Web: www.rafbf.org.uk

7.6. 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: 0239 269 0112

Email: rnbt@rnbt.org.uk

Web: www.rnbt.org.uk

8. Help Claiming Benefits

8.1. Job Centre Plus

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

Open: Mon to Fri, 8am to 6pm

Tel: 0800 055 6688

Textphone: 0800 023 4888

Welsh language: 0800 012 1888

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

8.2. SSAFA

SSAFA (Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association) has a network of volunteers who can help with advice on a range of financial issues.

Open: Mon-Fri, 9am-5.30pm

Helpline: 0800 731 4880

Web: www.ssafa.org.uk

8.3. Royal British Legion

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

There is an online chat service available via their website 7 days a week from 8am until 8pm.

Open: 7 days a week, 8am – 8pm

Web: www.britishlegion.org.uk

Helpline: 0808 802 8080

9. Housing

9.1. Haig Homes

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

Open: Mon - Fri, 9am - 5pm

Main Line: 0208 685 5777

Email: enquiries@haighousing.org.uk

Web: www.haighomes.org.uk/

9.2. 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.

Advice line: 0125 278 7574

Email: aws-ishao-mailbox@mod.uk

Web: www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-for-service-personnel-and-families

9.3. SPACES

Assistance for single ex-Service personnel in finding housing.

Tel: 0174 883 3797

Alternate: 0174 887 2940

Alternate: 0174 883 0191

Email: spaces@riverside.org.uk

Web: www.spaces.org.uk

9.4. SSAFA: Housing Advice

SSAFA has a dedicated area of the website for housing advice.

Tel: 0207 463 9354

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

9.5. Stoll Foundation

Provides temporary and permanent housing for ex-Service personnel. They hold a bi-monthly drop in in London for veterans and their families the details of which are provided on their website.

Head Office: 0207 385 2110

Email: info@stoll.org.uk

Web: www.stoll.org.uk

9.6. 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. They have a drop in centre and a hostel in London available to veterans.

Freephone: 0800 012 6867

Tel: 0207 828 2468

Email: info@veterans-aid.net

Web: www.veterans-aid.net

10. Relationship Guidance and Family Support

10.1. 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: Mon - Thurs 8am-10pm, Fri 8am – 6pm, Sat 9am – 5pm

Booking line: 0300 100 1234

Web: www.relate.org.uk

10.2. Relate for Parents

A section of the Relate website is dedicated to parenting which contains useful information for parents worried about their child's behaviour or looking for parenting advice.

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

10.3. Working Families

Helping children, working parents and carers and their employers find a better balance between responsibilities at home and work. Provides support on employment rights, tax credits, in work benefits, maternity and paternity leave as well as flexible working options.

Helpline: 0300 012 0312

Email: advice@workingfamilies.org.uk

Web: www.workingfamilies.org.uk

11. Counselling and Support

11.1. 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: Mon & Fri, 9.30am-5pm; Tues - Thurs 9.30am-8pm

Helpline: 0844 477 9400

Email: helpline@cruse.org.uk

Web: www.cruse.org.uk

11.2. 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: Mon - Thurs 8am-10pm, Fri 8am – 6pm, Sat 9am – 5pm

Booking line: 0300 100 1234

Web: www.relate.org.uk

11.3. 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

12. 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: Mon - Fri: 9am - 8pm; Sat: 10am - 2pm **Phone:** 0808 800 0082

Website: www.equalityhumanrights.com **Textphone:** 0808 800 0084

12.2. Men's Advice Line

A confidential helpline for all men experiencing domestic violence by a current or ex-partner.

Open: Mon - Fri, 9am - 5pm

Phone: 0808 801 0327

Email: info@mensadviceline.org.uk

Web: www.mensadviceline.org.uk

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