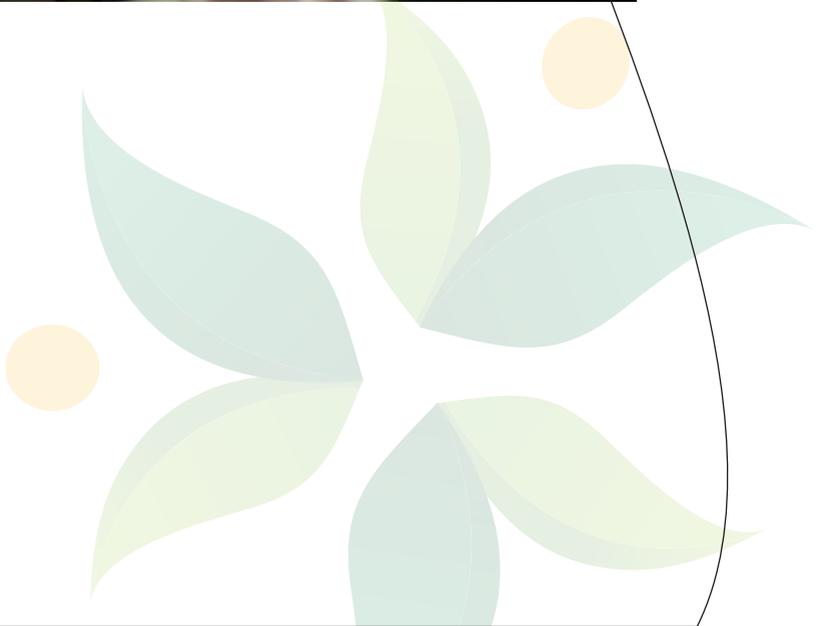




the**wellbeing**hub



CUT OUT



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Welfare for Veterans

The East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust (EEAST) takes seriously its responsibility in looking after the staff it employs. Our Wellbeing Hub is here for all staff at EEAST, but recognising that we employ a significant number of veterans, we want to meet the specific wellbeing needs of this group as well as all others in the service.

This document therefore outlines a variety of services which cater for those who have had, and been affected by, a life in the military before joining the ambulance service.

We know we have not covered everything, but would be keen to know of any new ideas or options from groups - in this case our veterans - as well as welcoming comments and thoughts that will help us provide the best support we can.

The Wellbeing Hub

The Wellbeing Hub is able to provide formal and direct support for all staff in the Trust through our TRiM service, occupational health, our employee assistance programme and external suppliers, including the Red Poppy trauma service. We also have contacts with a wide variety of other services, such as Combat Stress, which might be appropriate in some cases.

The Hub runs a phone-in **friends and family clinic every Wednesday** (9am-12pm on 03456 089 945), for closely linked people to ask questions, or discuss concerns regarding the wellbeing of their loved ones. It has also prepared a booklet – **Coping with the effects of Psychological Trauma** - for the family and friends of people who experience PTSD. This can be obtained with other support and guidance from the Hub by 'phone on **03456 089 945** or via email, **wellbeing.info@nhs.net**. The Wellbeing Hub service is a totally confidential, standalone service within the Trust (although safeguarding rules apply).

The Hub style is confidential, informative and supportive. We welcome everyone whatever their need. Our reach is being extended with a peer-support group and veterans are invited to become part of this group to ensure any specific needs are met.

The Wellbeing Team can also offer short workshops/training sessions on wellbeing, resilience, coping tools and support networks, so if there are any veteran groups that need assistance they simply need to contact the Hub team.

Combat Stress

This is available to all veterans from every service and every conflict, whether they have served for just one day or many, many more. Contact The Wellbeing Hub if you would like to be put in touch.

Support is provided for common mental health problems including:

- Depression (88% of veterans can experience)
- Anxiety (79%)
- Anger problems (46%)
- Alcohol problems (44%)
- Drug misuse (13%)

PTSD

Some symptoms:

- Unwanted memories, flashbacks, nightmares, palpitations, aversion to noise/bustle
- Over-vigilant, irritable, angry, feeling detached (or not feeling at all), experiencing sleep changes, inability to concentrate, giving up activities, amnesia
- Avoidance of event reminders, loss of interest, self-isolating, feeling useless

Treatments include:

Residential courses of 1 week, 2 weeks' and 6 weeks' duration cover:

- Normalising and understanding PTSD
- Developing coping strategies
- Rebuilding a 'normal' life
- Basic relaxation techniques
- Finding further support agencies for the future

PTSD left untreated for several years will require more intensive treatment. If PTSD is diagnosed early, the right treatment in the right environment can lead to increased rates of recovery.

Welfare for Veterans in EEAST



The Process

The person suspects they may have symptoms of PTSD

They contact The Wellbeing Hub on 03456 089945 or wellbeing.info@nhs.net (secure email and confidential service)

The Wellbeing Hub contacts Combat Stress

Following referral, the person is triaged. If appropriate, they are formally assessed by a psychologist / psychiatrist

A recovery plan might include:

- Preparation for Therapy (1 wk)
- Anger Management Programme (2 wks)
- Art therapy/occupational therapy
- Intensive Treatment for PTSD (6 wks)

Treatment centres in Leatherhead, Surrey, and Ayr, Scotland

Testimonial

"I was officially diagnosed with PTSD in April 2014. Prior to this I was struggling at work and was afraid to approach management as I didn't know how it would impact my professional and personal life.

I eventually contacted Combat Stress and the ball started rolling. They gave me the confidence to tackle this problem head-on and I contacted my local Senior Manager.

I would like to put on record - and can only speak from personal experience, my manager's understanding of the situation was fantastic and I felt totally supported throughout the process. I think it helped massively with him being ex-military as I could speak to him and not only get his opinion from the management side, but also from his experiences during his time of service.

Looking at my journey from the start up until today I was supported fully with shift abstractions, so I could attend appointments but also the time to go away and attend a six-week intensive treatment program in Surrey at the Combat Stress HQ. I also was under the community wellbeing team, which also required time away from work for appointments. I attended a programme in Norwich last year (which was every Monday for 12 weeks). Again I was given the time to complete this.

I think the main thing looking back and moving forward, I feel that without the help from my Senior Manager and his management team I couldn't have got this far, they were always there for me and my family if required and I know I can still approach them as there are times when things flare up, but with this in mind, and because of the time invested in me by the Trust, via the local manager and the team I have the tools to tackle this head-on, so 'Thank you!'"





Other recommended services include:

There is a huge network of organisations supporting the Armed Forces community, so finding the right one can be tricky. Here are some who may suit your needs:

Veterans Gateway: The Veterans Gateway makes it quick and easy by being the first point of contact for each individual need and covers:

- Housing
- Employment
- Finances
- Living independently
- Health

Many of the team are veterans themselves so they understand the issues that people face after leaving the Armed Forces. They work with people on a one-to-one basis, connecting them with the right support as soon as possible

Walking with the Wounded: Established in 2010, Walking with the Wounded supports a pathway for vulnerable veterans to re-integrate into society and sustain their independence. At the heart of this journey is sustainable employment giving independence for all veterans regardless of their circumstances.

They also run a wide variety of challenges and events for veterans - all of which are listed on their website: www.walkingwiththewounded.org.uk

The Walnut Tree Project: TWTP run a 16-week out-patient CBT based programme - The Veterans' Stabilisation Programme, provided through a partnership with the Walnut Tree Project and the Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust.

Veterans, in groups of 6-8, are helped to explore options (in their one-hour weekly sessions) to move forward by understanding their symptoms, finding ways to change their mindset and learn new skills to manage their conditions.

Veterans can be referred by their GP or health and social care professional.

www.walnuttreehealthandwellbeing.co.uk/veterans-stabilisation-programme

The Veterans' Mental Health Transition, Intervention and Liaison (TIL) Service: (formerly known as London Veterans' Service) is a free NHS mental health service for all ex-serving members of the UK Armed Forces and service personnel who are making the transition to civilian life including reservists. They accept referrals from both professionals and veterans themselves.

The TIL Service is available across the whole EEA region for those who have served in Her Majesty's Armed Forces or the Merchant Navy regardless of their length of service. They appreciate that some service personnel find the transition to civilian life difficult; their dedicated team of mental health clinicians, many of whom are ex-MOD or veterans themselves, are there to help.

The service can provide you with a comprehensive assessment of your mental health, including social needs and a physical health check-up. They will work with you to produce a 'care plan' and liaise with your local mental health service to ensure you are able to access the support and treatment you need in a location as close as possible to your home.

If you have a family member, friend or significant other who has been supporting you on a regular basis, they will also speak to them (with your consent) to offer them an assessment of their needs.

To make contact: The TIL Service in EEA's region has a single point of enquiry operated by Mental Health Matters. You can self-refer or ask your GP or the Wellbeing Hub team to make the referral on your behalf.

Mental Health Matters is a national organisation supporting people with mental health needs, through a range of evidence based and innovative services. They provide support to more than 60,000 people every year, covering many aspects of their lives: from psychological and wellbeing therapeutic recovery interventions through to everyday employment, housing, independent and community support needs. Mental Health Matters will talk to you over the phone and confirm your referral details. They will also ask for your consent to share information with your closest veterans' hub. Once your referral is received by the veterans' hub, you will be contacted and offered an appointment at a mutually agreed location.

They can support veterans suffering with multiple symptoms including anxiety, stress, alcohol misuse, self-harm, anger, insomnia, sadness and paranoia. Help can cover housing, compensation, physical health, social activities, benefits, immigration, employment, debts.

Veterans can be referred by a member of the Wellbeing Hub, a health care professional (GP, paramedic, nurse), or can choose to self-refer.

Single point of contact number: **0300 323 0137**

24/7 helpline: **0300 323 0139**

Professional referral Email **mevs.mhm@nhs.net**
to request a referral form from Mental Health Matters



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Final Words

From Terry Hicks, Eeast Veterans Champion
and Sector Head

"The trust recognises that for many veterans and their dependants, their lives before joining the Ambulance trust mean that they will have experienced different, but no less traumatic incidents than our non-veteran staff; this is why we have looked to proactively identify sources of help and support to hopefully prevent a crisis. We have also worked with a number of charity and not-for-profit organisations that are able to intervene and support veterans at crisis points. As a trust we are committed to supporting our staff and their families when they need it most."

Welfare for Veterans in EEAST



Sources of Support:

The Wellbeing Hub **03456 089 945**

wellbeing.info@nhs.net.



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