VETERAN AWARE

NHS

Supporting veteran rehabilitation

a guide for staff

This pack has been designed by the Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance (VCHA), as part of their veteran rehabilitation project, to help you support veterans to get the most out of their rehabilitation and better manage their health.

We have included key information in this pack. If you are keen to find more, there is an abundance of resources on our website, which can be found here.
Our patient resource pack can be found here.
Any specific questions or feedback relating to this project please email rnoh.rehab.vcha@nhs.net

About the VCHA and Veteran Aware accreditation

The VCHA is a strategic and continuous quality improvement programme. Its purpose is to:

- improve understanding of the needs of and the services and initiatives available to the Armed Forces community to improve care underpinned by evidence and data; improving healthcare for the Armed Forces community while raising the standards for everyone accessing care within the NHS
- build trust and understanding amongst healthcare professionals
- engender support and action from key stakeholders and partners to support delivery of the commitments of the programme to improve the health and wellbeing of the Armed Forces community
- support the NHS to meet its statutory duties relating to the involvement of patients and the public and to ensure no disadvantage, or unwarranted variation, in accessing healthcare for the Armed Forces community, as per The Armed Forces Act, 2021.

Veteran Aware accreditation is available to all NHS trusts in England, hospices and the independent healthcare sector. There is also a similar scheme available for the accrediting of care homes.

Accrediting is a robust yet straightforward process and your organisation will be supported, every step of the way by an appointed regional lead. Your organisation may already be meeting some or all of the eight accreditation standards.

Advice on recording Armed Forces status

For many different reasons, people do not always consider themselves a veteran. It is important you consider how you ask about Armed Forces status and when it is appropriate to do so.

For example, asking about Armed Forces status in a busy reception area may result in some people feeling suspicious of why they are being asked. They may not feel safe in the environment to divulge that information.

Below are some suggestions as to how you may wish to phrase the question you ask about armed forces status. These examples could also be used when asking the question of staff.

- Have you or your immediate family members ever served, in the UK Armed Forces? (Includes spouses/ partners and children)
- Are you currently or have you ever served in the UK Armed Forces?
- Have you ever served in the UK Armed Forces?

Recording veteran status

Veteran status can be recorded on many electronic patient record systems. Please check our NHS Futures page for information relating to the software you use.

NHS App guide

We recommend patients download the NHS App as it has been shown to be useful in helping them co-ordinate their care by storing all GP letters and scan results in one place. The NHS App user guide created by Kingston Hospital can be found here. They may need to notify their GP to make sure all information is correctly uploaded.

OpRESTORE

Op RESTORE: The Veterans Physical Health and Wellbeing Service

Op RESTORE is an NHS service that ensures those who have served in the UK Armed Forces access the right NHS treatment for significant, continuing physical injuries and illnesses caused by their time in the Armed Forces. Op RESTORE works with military and civilian medical professionals, along with charities, and understands military life and the physical issues that can result from this.

Op RESTORE can help by:

- ensuring access to the appropriate care within the NHS,
- making sure the patient is treated by people who understand the military world and specialise in the type of physical health problems they have,
- putting together a care plan shaped around the patients needs.

Who is it for?

It doesn't matter when the physical health problem happened or when the person left the Armed Forces, Op RESTORE can help if an individual:

- has served at least one day in the British Armed Forces (including reserves),
- has a physical health problem is attributable to their time in Service,
- asks a clinician at their GP practice to refer them.

Referral forms can be obtained by emailing: imperial.oprestore@nhs.net

Once a referral is received a support worker from a military charity will get in touch with the patient – this usually takes about five working days. The support worker can help the individual access non-clinical support and keep them updated as their referral progresses. Referrals are normally reviewed by the multi-disciplinary team (MDT) within 8 weeks after which the GP will be updated.

Op RESTORE is unable to reduce NHS waiting times and works to ensure patients are seen by the most appropriate clinician, this may not be local to them. Further information can be found at nhs.uk/oprestore.

Op COURAGE: The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service

Op COURAGE provides specialist care and support for people who have served in the Armed Forces and are experiencing mental ill health. This service provides a range of support and treatment that has been informed by people who have served in the Armed Forces.

Who is it for?

Op COURAGE can help if an individual:

- has served at least one day in the British Armed Forces (including reserves),
- lives in England,
- is registered with a GP (or will be) in England.

Referral to Op COURAGE

Referral to Op COURAGE can be done by the individual or by a GP, healthcare professional or supporting charity, Information about how to make a referral can be found at www.nhs.uk/opcourage.

Op NOVA: Supporting Veterans in the Justice System

Op NOVA provides specialist non clinical support for people who have served in the Armed Forces and find themselves in the criminal justice system or, at risk of arrest. This service provides a range of support that has been informed by people who have served in the Armed Forces. Op NOVA is an NHS service which is delivered by the Forces Employment Charity.

Who is it for?

Op NOVA can help if an individual:

- has served at least one day in the British Armed Forces (including reserves) and,
- lives in England.

Referral to Op NOVA

Referral to Op NOVA can be done by the individual or they can ask someone else to do it for them. Information can be found at www.forcesemployment charity/opnova

DMWS

Defence Medical Welfare Service (DMWS) is an independent charity providing medical welfare to those who have, and continue to, operate on the frontline. They place trained professional welfare officers in locations throughout the UK to deliver much-needed additional support for those who are on the clinical pathway.

Telephone: 0800 999 3697
Email: referrals@dmws.org.uk

Help for Heroes

Help for Heroes provides physical, financial and social support to promote the health and wellbeing of veterans. Their Sport, Activity and Fellowship programme offers something for everyone, whatever your interests and abilities. Patients can contact the charity directly on their website, here.

Help for Heroes run free 'My recovery college' courses on various topics designed to help people better manage their physical and mental health.

Battle back Centre - Royal British Legion

The Battle Back Centre was established by the Royal British Legion in 2011 to support wounded and injured service personnel returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.
The aim is to help ensure the best possible recovery for the Armed Forces community, whether it's returning to duty or successfully transitioning to civilian life.

As well as continuing to support wounded, injured and sick service personnel, more recently they have expanded their service with the introduction of wellbeing courses for veteran se

Complete the online application using the link: https://forms.office.com/e/PK5Gfi156a
The course includes activities such as cycling, climbing, archery, walking, bowling and much more. Participants must:

- be independently mobile,
- be able to independently transfer from one vehicle to another ,
- be able to participate in activities,
- have a moderate level of mobility and fitness and,
- not have been detained under Sec. 2 or Sec.3 of the Mental Health Act within the last three months or currently under a Community Treatment Order.

The Battle Back Centre:

- is unable to provide clinical, medical or nursing support,
- will give precedence to those who have not benefitted from other Recovery programme courses,
- allocation process will be based on perceived need based on the facts presented,
- confirms there is no age restriction and,
- will require basic medical information, to ensure your safety, but details will be destroyed once the course has finished, in accordance with RBL GDPR policies and procedures.

The course is fully funded by the British Legion and is free to attend. All meals and use of equipment is included.

The Warrior Programme

For veteran patients struggling to manage chronic conditions, the Warrior Programme provides a behavioural change programme. This consists of either a three day residential course or five days online. Then follow up monthly phone calls for 12 months after. They have a wide catalogue of online resources and work closely with Op COURAGE. Patients Can contact directly on +44 (0)808 801 0898 or Enquiries@warriorprogramme.org.uk

Breakfast clubs

Social clubs for veterans to come together over breakfast. Veterans must make an account online at https://www.afvbc.world/