



## Patient information Veteran Aware NHS trust

January 2021

We are proud to be a Veteran Aware healthcare provider.

**Please let a member of staff know if you, or your spouse/partner, have ever served in the UK armed forces so that we can best support your care needs.**

Being flagged as a veteran in your NHS medical notes will help ensure you are able to access specific veterans' health services, such as those for mental health, hearing loss, limb amputation and wheelchairs.

All veterans are entitled to priority access to NHS care (including hospital, primary or community care) for conditions associated with their time in the armed forces (service-related).

But this is always subject to clinical need and doesn't entitle you to jump the queue ahead of someone with a higher clinical need.

### Improving care for veterans across the NHS

Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust are a member of the Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance, sharing and driving best practice in NHS care for people who serve or have served in the UK armed forces and their families, in line with the Armed Forces Covenant.

### What you can expect from us

- We support the health commitments of the Armed Forces Covenant.
- We are committed to ensuring no disadvantage and giving special consideration where appropriate.
- We have educated and trained all relevant staff to identify and respond to veterans' needs.
- We also support the UK armed forces community as an employer.

We work with a range of extra services for the armed forces community and will let you know of and refer you to any that could benefit you, including:

- Defence Medical Welfare Service offices who will assist in identifying support provided by various charities and other organisations – 24 hour helpline Tel: 0800 999 3697  
<https://dmws.org.uk>
- The Royal British Legion - <https://www.britishlegion.org.uk> Tel: 0808 802 8080
- The Armed Forces Charity - [SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity](https://www.ssaifa.org.uk) Tel: 0800 260 6767
- Combat Stress/mental health services for veterans - <https://combatstress.org.uk> Tel: 0800 138 1619
- Armed Forces & Military Veterans Charity Help for Heroes -  
<https://www.helpforheroes.org.uk> Tel: 0300 303 9888 or South West England and Wales - 01752 562179
- The NHS Veterans' Mental Health Transition, Intervention and Liaison Service – For South West of England services: call 0300 365 0300 or email [sc.veterans@nhs.net](mailto:sc.veterans@nhs.net)

### **What other support is available?**

There are many service charities and organisations. The Veterans' Gateway is a first point of contact for veterans and their families. It provides information, advice and support by phone (0808 802 1212), text (81212) and online at [www.veteransgateway.org.uk](http://www.veteransgateway.org.uk)

Here at The Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust we will put you in touch with the organisations best placed to help with the information, advice and support – from healthcare and housing to employability, finances and personal relationships.

### **How could you get involved in the NHS?**

The NHS can benefit significantly from the skills and experience you bring from your military training and service. Veteran Aware trusts support the employment of veterans and reservists in the NHS workforce and will be involved either in the 'Employer Recognition Scheme' or the 'Step Into Health' scheme.

Find out more about careers for veterans and reservists in the NHS at [www.militarystepintohealth.nhs.uk](http://www.militarystepintohealth.nhs.uk)

### **Armed Forces Covenant**

The NHS is committed to the Armed Forces Covenant, which is a promise by the nation that those who serve or who have served in the UK armed forces, and their families, will be treated fairly. It has two key principles:

- The armed forces community should not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services.
- Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved.

You and your family should not be at a disadvantage in accessing appropriate health services; for example, if you are on a waiting list and are moving.

The NHS always prioritises people with the most urgent clinical need. At the same time, we must recognise your health and social needs and act on them. We are working to make sure this happens.

- To learn more about the Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance and what it means for NHS hospitals to be Veteran Aware, visit: <https://improvement.nhs.uk/resources/veteran-aware-hospitals>
- We are committed to consistently and continually learning from our patients and their families to improve care for all. If you have any feedback or suggestions please ...
- Speak with a nurse or manager in the ward or department
- Visit our trust website at: <https://www.gwh.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/feedback>
- For more information on NHS healthcare for veterans, visit the NHS Choices website at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) and search for 'veteran'
- This information sheet is available to order in other languages and formats. If you would like a copy, please contact us on 01793 604031 or email [gwh.pals@nhs.net](mailto:gwh.pals@nhs.net)