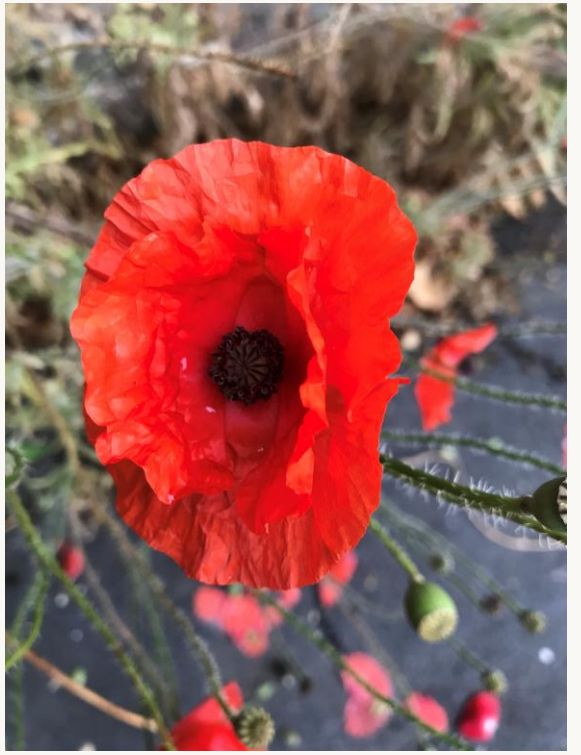
Armed Forces Network

Special pathways and how they can help improve support and reduce service pressure

Thrive Together Kent and Medway Event



Kate Parkin – Director , November 2026
kate.parkin@armedforces.network

Connecting communities. Empowering access.

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Context and Changes

01 MOD

Defence policy
Employers Recognition Scheme
Veterans Strategy

02 Context of World

Geopolitical insight, Strategic Defence Review
Organisational and individual Resilience
Impact on the Community

03 Legal/Equality

Legal guidance
Armed Forces Act 21 and 26
Reparations, Research

04 Op Services

NHS Services, OpCourage, OpRestore, OpNova
OpCommunity, OpSterling
OpFortitude, OpAscend

05 Valour

New Systems – Valour Centres
Veteran Services
Breakfast Clubs/Drop-Ins

06 Other Services

Welfare & support
Choice, Chavasse Clinic, Mental Health,
Employment, Children, Carers, Loneliness,
Addictions, physical health, Occupational Health

Triggers/Anniversaries

2025 marks 80 years since the end of the Second World War,
Victory in Europe (VE) Day on 8 May 1945 and
Victory over Japan (VJ) Day on 15 August 1945
Falklands War ends 14th June 1982 - 45 years in **2027**

Different Deployments will have anniversaries or News and its impact ie Northern Island





We Remember and give our thanks

Actions for all

- Ask the Question
- Record the data
- Book & use info appropriately
- Treat/care with knowledge
- Use resources
- Refer appropriately
- Organisational development

Why – Better Outcomes

- Safer care/support
  - Access to previous history
  - Notes – Do you have them all?
  - Understanding of culture, possible conditions
- Access to Services
  - Armed Forces specific NHS
  - Appropriate referral (wording)
- Wider support for individual & family

'Are you serving or have you or any member of your immediate family ever served in the Armed Forces?'

NHS England – AF Services



Pathfinders

- Maternity Matters
- Integrated Shared Care Records
- Social Prescribers
- Programmes, women, sexual assault



Mental Fitness and Mental Fitness

- Service Champions in the Talking Therapies and/or NHS secondary mental health services

- Specialist Clinicians
  Domestic violence/abuse
  sexual assault/abuse



- PTSD Resolution – Family and Veteran
  Call 0300 302 0551
  contact@ptsdresolution.org

PTSD Resolution
Counselling Forces' Veterans & Reservists
registered charity no. 1133188

- Combat Stress – Military Charity

24/7 Helpline:

- Tel: 0800 138 1619 (Veterans & Families)
- Tel: 0800 323 4444 (Serving personnel & Families)

Email helpline@combatstress.org.uk
https://combatstress.org.uk/victor-programme

COMBAT STRESS
FOR VETERANS' MENTAL HEALTH

VICTOR
Veterans' Intensive Complex Trauma Organised Recovery

Mental Fitness

- Social Prescribing
- Activities
- Befriending, Peer Support
- Veteran projects in Football clubs
- Drop-Ins, Breakfast Clubs
- Associations

OLD COMRADES



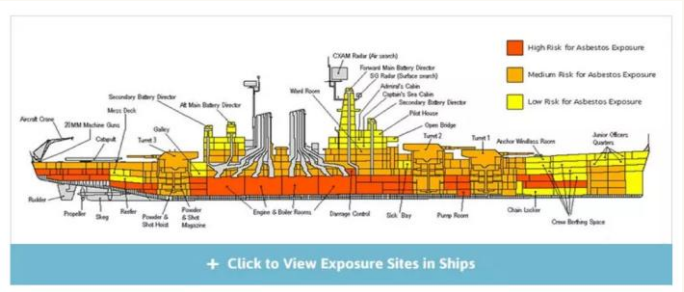
Connecting and Reconnecting Older Veterans

Choice, get the right fit

Physical Health

- **Op Restore**
  - Service-related physical health injury
- **Sight Loss**
  - Access in seeking help: Blind Veterans UK research
- **Hearing loss** – ‘Lost Voices’ Report
  - Increase in hearing loss in the working age group
- **IVF – 3 Cycles**
  - Equality of access across England
- **Respiratory, Mesothelioma**
  - Asbestos and chemicals
- **Amputees Prosthetic** Services Centres across UK
- **Understanding specific needs of minority groups**
  - (Gurkha, Foreign & Commonwealth)
  - Non Freezing Cold Injuries – (St Mary’s Hospital)
- **Addictions**
  - Gambling, Alcohol, Performance Enhancing Drugs, etc

Blind Veterans UK



Blesma
THE LIMBLESS VETERANS

The Chavasse Clinic

THE CHAVASSE CLINIC

How to refer:

Referrals are welcome from an appropriate medical practitioner (e.g. GP/ Physio) for patients with musculoskeletal problems who have served in HM Armed Services, Regular, Reserve or Veteran in any service.



Please complete

Chavasse Clinic Referral form and contact our appointments team at the booking Hub, RSCH with the referral to the Chavasse Clinic.

0300 131 6770

uhsussex.outpatients.bookingcentre@nhs.net

The Chavasse Clinic

Royal Sussex County Hospital
Eastern Road, Brighton BN2 5BE

DMWS

OpCOMMUNITY

Decision Tool

Decision Tool 2026 — diagram option

Full contact details and referral instructions: pages 1–2

Financial need?	YES	DWP — benefits check SSAFA / Royal British Legion — financial support
Mental health support needed? Related to service?	YES	OpCOURAGE 0300 365 2000 (option 4)
Complex physical health needs? Service-related injury?	YES	Ask GP to refer to OpRESTORE
Homeless or due to be homeless?	YES	OpFORTITUDE 0800 852 0774
NHS services support needed for themselves or family?	YES	OpCOMMUNITY 01273 403693
Leaving the Armed Forces and need relocation support, or Armed Forces support needed?	YES	OpCOMMUNITY 01273 403693
Involved in the justice system?	YES	OpNOVA 0800 917 7299
Physical health needs: MSK, pain or spinal trauma? Regular, Reservist or Veteran	YES	Chavasse Clinic (Brighton) Referral: appropriate medical practitioner (GP / Physio)
Dealing with an addiction?	YES	Gambling: Southern Gambling Service Alcohol / drugs: We Are With You Family support: Adfam

High-level examples only. Review each case individually.

Armed Forces Network | 01273 403693 | afn.admin@nhs.net

Decision Tool 2026

Are they in financial need?	YES	Refer to DWP: segroup.armedforceschampions@dwp.gov.uk To check all benefits are being claimed. Refer to SSAFA or Royal British Legion SSAFA South East Regional Office: 0204 566 9216 Royal British Legion: 0808 802 8080 They can check to see what other financial support may be available.
Do they need assistance with their mental health? Does it relate to their service?	YES	Refer to OpCOURAGE: 0300 365 2000 (option 4) www.opcouragesoutheast.nhs.uk Visit website to get referral form.
Do they have complex physical health needs? Is it a service related injury?	YES	Need to ask GP to refer them to OpRESTORE Email imperial.oprestore@nhs.net to get a copy of the referral form.
Are they already or are they due to be homeless?	YES	Refer them to OpFORTITUDE 0800 852 0774 Online form available: https://riv.org.uk/opfortitude
Do they need support for their family or themselves with NHS services?	YES	Refer them to OpCOMMUNITY 01273 403693 afn.admin@nhs.net
Are they transitioning out of the Armed Forces and need support with relocation or anyone from the Armed Forces needing support?	YES	Refer them to OpCOMMUNITY 01273 403693 afn.admin@nhs.net
Are they involved within the Justice System?	YES	Refer them to OpNOVA 0800 917 7299 opnova@forcesemployment.org.uk
Do they have physical health needs? MSK, Pain, Spinal Trauma Regular, Reservist, Veteran	YES	Refer to Chavasse Clinic (Brighton) Any appropriate Medical Practitioner (GP/Physio) Email: uhsussex.outpatients.bookingcentre@nhs.net to get a copy of referral form Tel: 0300 131 6770
Are they dealing with an addiction?	YES	Southern Gambling Service Email: hiowh.southerngamblingservice@nhs.net Professional or self referral forms online: https://hiowhealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/a-z-list-ofservices/gambling-service For Alcohol or Drugs refer to We Are With You https://www.wearewithyou.org.uk/ To support family members refer to Adfam https://adfam.org.uk/
These are very high level examples and each case should be reviewed individually. Further advice can be sourced from the Armed Forces Network.		
Download the Forces Connect app to view all services available. For any issues contact Armed Forces Network: www.armedforcesnetwork.org | 01273 403693 | afn.admin@nhs.net		

UK wide Support

Speak to us



Valour

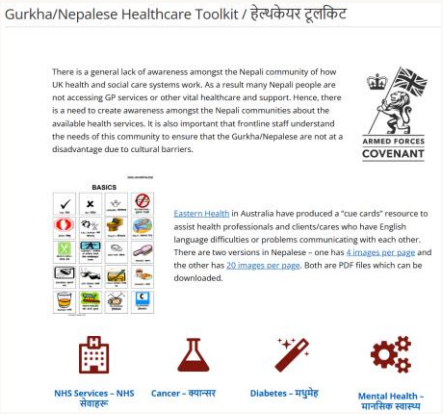
Call our support team:
0808 1914 218
(Option 6 for Veterans Services)

If you're in Northern Ireland:
07387 050 564

We're open 8pm to 4pm, Monday to Friday

Local Hubs around the UK

ARMED FORCES NETWORK



Tools, training, networking



App to find services

The System


ROYAL AIR FORCE Families Federation
aff army families federation
Cobseo The Confederation of Service Charities
ssafa the Armed Forces charity
ROYAL BRITISH LEGION
AFVBC LITTLEHAMPTON
CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES
ASDIC
Naval Families FEDERATION
Forces Families Jobs
Veterans UK
COMBAT STRESS FOR VETERANS' MENTAL HEALTH
STEP INTO HEALTH
military wives Choirs
afvbc
ARMED FORCES & VETERANS BREAKFAST CLUBS
THE BLUE VAN Ex Forces Drop-In
Are you a UK Armed forces Veteran? Miss the Banter and Camaraderie? Want to link up with likeminded people?
ROYAL AIR FORCES Association The charity that supports the RAF family
OpCOMMUNITY
Army Benevolent Fund
HELP for HEROES
togetherall
WALKING WITH THE WOUNDED Supporting Those Who Served
DMWS
Blind Veterans
MILITARY COWORKING network
THE POPPY FACTORY getting you back to work
CHELSEA PENSIONERS VETERANS' OUTREACH
VETERANS' GROWTH
ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION
THE ROYAL NAVAL BENEVOLENT TRUST SERVE A DAY, SUPPORTED FOR LIFE
PTSD Resolution Counselling Forces' Veterans & Reservists registered charity no. 1133188
FIRST DEFENCE FINANCE Serving our military family
scotty's THE MILITARY BEREAVEMENT CHARITY
LIFEWORKS
READING FORCE
SALUTE HER UK
OpCOURAGE
Op ASCEND
SERVICE DOGS UK for those with PTSD who have served
Assistance Dogs International & Assistance Dogs Europe Candidates
Animal Partnership Award Winners
Soldiering on Awards 2018
OpRESTORE
RBVE
THE GURKHA WELFARE TRUST
little TROOPERS For all Forces Families
VVS VETERANS VOLUNTEER SERVICE
OpNOVA
THE RIPPLE POND
Blesma THE LIMBLESS VETERANS
Forces Employment Charity
FORCES LAW
CARE AFTER COMBAT
SUSSEX PRISONERS' FAMILIES
OpFORTITUDE
THE STOLL FOUNDATION
ageUK
Riverside
BUILDING HEROES
FIGHTING WITH PRIDE
Care for Veterans a Royal Star & Garter Home
HAIG HOUSING
HOMES FOR THE VETERAN COMMUNITY
FC
Department for Work & Pensions

Together We Can FOUNDATION

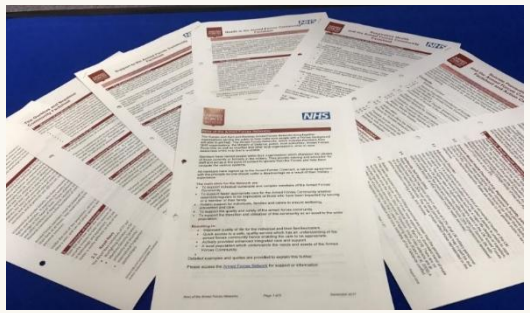
kate.parkin@armedforces.network
www.armedforcesnetwork.org

ARMED FORCES NETWORK

Fact Sheets

- Health and Case Studies
- Community Support
- Service Life
- Gurkha/Nepalese
- Mental Health
- Respiratory
- Suicide Prevention
- 'How to Guide' for NHS
- Dentistry
- Maternity
- LGBT+
- Women

Any Questions ?





Training

- Service Champions
  - Reference Sheet
  - Decision Tool
- Refresher 1st Dec
- Sessions
  - Dementia, 17th November
  - Gambling 10th December
- RCGP
  - In process of updating training

Download Forces CONNECT in the Apple app store or Google Play store.
Support and advice for members of our armed forces community.
Forces CONNECT
TOGETHER WE STAY CONNECTED
ARMED FORCES COVENANT