

## **Mental health support for veterans**

A specialist service for ex-armed forces; veterans; families/carers and service personnel who are approaching discharge, to support and recognise the early signs of mental health problems

Information for referrers

## For veterans

Improved NHS veterans' mental health services are available across England. These services provide a range of treatment and support which includes recognising the early signs of mental health problems and providing access to early treatment and support, as well as therapeutic treatment for complex mental health difficulties and psychological trauma. Patients are also provided with help, where appropriate, with employment, finances, reduction in substance misuse or other addictive behaviours housing, and social support.

### To access these services, the individual must meet the following criteria:

- be resident in England
- have served in the UK armed forces for a full day (or be a family member/carer who is experiencing difficulties relating to time and experiences of Military service)
- be registered with a GP practice in England or be willing to register with a GP
- be able to provide your military service number or another form of acceptable proof of eligibility.

We accept self-referrals or referrals via a health care professional or service charity.

Upon receipt of referral, a triage will be completed with a qualified OpCourage clinician within 1 working day. If indicated, an initial assessment with our service will be completed within 5-10 working days, depending on clinical need as determined within OpCourage. These appointments are available via telephone, video/online platform, or face to face, with flexibility to meet individuals needs where possible.

## Contact details

The North of England region has a single point of contact for ease.

### Regional Single point of contact:

Tel: **0300 373 33 32**

Email: [opcourageNORTH@cntw.nhs.uk](mailto:opcourageNORTH@cntw.nhs.uk)

**The phone line is operational 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.**

From 8am-8pm this will be directed to an Opcourage team member, out of hours this will be overseen by staff from Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust (CNTW)

Once a case is allocated to a regional team the direct service contact details will be provided for continued contact and liaison.

## Other services for veterans

### Combat Stress, the UK's leading charity for veterans' mental health

If you have served or are currently serving in the UK Armed Forces, you can call the free Combat Stress' 24-hour mental health helplines. A team of specially-trained professionals are available day and night to provide free confidential advice and support.

- Veterans and their families, friends and carers can call 0800 138 1619  
You can also text on 07537 173683 and email [helpline@combatstress.org.uk](mailto:helpline@combatstress.org.uk)  
Standard charges may apply for texts, please check with your provider.
- Serving personnel and their families can call 0800 323 4444

### MOD Military Mental Health Helpline

For serving personnel and their families.

A 24-hour helpline service for serving troops and their families. This helpline is operated by Combat Stress. **0800 323 4444**

### Royal British Legion (RBL)

The Royal British Legion helps members of the Royal Navy, British Army, Royal Air Force, veterans, and their families. Support starts after one day of service and continues through life, long after service is over for dependents and carers too.

Contact the helpline team on **0808 802 8080**.

### Samaritans

The Samaritans are available around the clock – 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

No matter what you're going through, you can call. You don't have to be suicidal.

Call **116 123** for free, any time, on any phone

### SSAFA – The Armed Forces Charity

SSAFA provides practical, emotional, and financial support for those who serve or have served.

**020 7403 8783**

### Togetherall

Togetherall is a safe, online community where people support each other anonymously to improve mental health and wellbeing.

All armed forces personnel, veterans, and their families (16+) also have free access.

<https://togetherall.com/en-gb/>

### Veterans Trauma Network (VTN)

Despite the name "trauma", VTN deals with all physical health problems in veterans as a result of their time in service - from recurrent heat illness to problems after limb loss, from traumatic brain injury to service-related fertility issues. VTN are closely linked to Op COURAGE: The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service and charities such as BLESMA and Blind Veterans UK so can offer comprehensive care focused around your needs.

Ask your GP to refer you to the VTN at England. [england.veteranstraumanetwork@nhs.net](mailto:england.veteranstraumanetwork@nhs.net)

More information can be found:

<https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/armed-forces-community/veterans-service-leavers-non-mobilised-reservists/>

### Veterans UK

The MOD's Veterans UK helpline can provide support with many issues including benefits, housing and welfare.

Normal opening hours are 8am-5pm, Monday to Friday. **0808 191 4218**

## Veterans' Gateway

The Veterans' Gateway is a useful point of contact for whatever support you need. It's available 24/7 and can signpost you to relevant services.

Many of the team are veterans themselves so understand the issues people face after leaving the armed forces. **0808 802 1212**

[www.veteransgateway.org.uk](http://www.veteransgateway.org.uk)

## Walking with the Wounded

Walking with the wounded (WWTW) delivers employment, mental health, care coordination and volunteering programmes in collaboration with the NHS. WWTW's purpose is to get those who served, and their families, whether mentally, socially, or physically wounded, back on their feet and making a positive contribution once more. We believe that those who served, deserve.

**01263 863 900**

<https://walkingwiththewounded.org.uk/>

## Contact us

For more information about our service, contact OpCourage- The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service on Tel: **0300 373 33 32** or email [opcourageNORTH@cntw.nhs.uk](mailto:opcourageNORTH@cntw.nhs.uk)

For further information on OpCourage: The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service, visit [www.nhs.uk/opcourage](http://www.nhs.uk/opcourage)

For more information on NHS services for veterans, visit the NHS website at [www.nhs.uk/armedforceshealth](http://www.nhs.uk/armedforceshealth)

## North of England Team

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Service provided by:

Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust

Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust

Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust

Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Humber Teaching NHS Foundation Trust

Walking With The Wounded

Combat Stress