

Information for Veterans and Armed Forces Families attending Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust



Introduction

Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is a member of the Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance. This means we are committed to providing quality NHS care for people who serve, or have served, in the UK Armed Forces and their families. This leaflet explains why this is important to us and how serving in the UK Armed Forces can enable you and your family to have easier access to specific health services for veterans.

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Department

Corporate

Review due

April 2027

**Patient
Information**

Improving care for veterans across the NHS

If you or your spouse/partner have ever served in the UK Armed Forces, please let a member of staff know.

In line with the Armed Forces Covenant, being identified as a member of the Armed Forces family you are able to access specific health services for veterans. Such as those for mental health, physical health and prosthetics etc.

Members of the Armed Forces family may be entitled to priority access to NHS care (including hospital, primary or community care) especially for service-related conditions. This is always subject to clinical need but does not entitle you to go ahead of someone with a higher clinical need.

What you can expect from us

- We support the health commitments of the Armed Forces Covenant Duty by identifying and supporting veterans and Armed Forces families.
- We recognise the unique obligations and sacrifices made by HM Armed Forces and aim to provide the appropriate healthcare to meet the needs of those who have become ill or injured, as a result of their time in service.
- We have educated and trained all relevant staff to identify and respond to veterans' needs.
- We offer support from the Patient Advice and Liaison Service who can be contacted by email or telephone:
Email: ghn-tr.pals.gloshospitals@nhs.net
Tel: 0800 019 3282 – Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 4:00pm
- As an employer, the Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust support the UK Armed Forces Community.
- We listen to the feedback from our veterans and Armed Forces families to improve our services.

**Patient
Information****Referral pathways for veterans**

- **Op RESTORE:** Formerly the Veterans Trauma Network, is the veteran's physical health and wellbeing service.
Email: imperial.oprestore@nhs.net (GP referral only)
- **Op COURAGE:** Veterans mental health and wellbeing service.
Tel: 0300 034 9986
Email mevs.mhm@nhs.net or visit www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/armed-forces-community/mental-health/veterans-reservists/
- **Op NOVA:** Provides support for veterans who are in contact with the justice system, enabling them to access the services they need.
Tel: 0800 917 7299
Email opnova@forcesemployment.org.uk or visit www.forcesemployment.org.uk/programmes/op-nova/
- **Op FORTITUDE:** The pathway for homeless veterans, or for veterans about to be made homeless.
Tel: 0800 952 0774 or visit the secure web portal at www.riv.org.uk/opfortitude
- **Veterans UK:** Provides compensation, pension and welfare support to serving personnel and veterans and facilitates access to appropriate support from other government departments, local authorities, independent bodies and the charity sector.
Tel: 0808 1914 2 18
Email veterans-uk@mod.gov.uk or visit www.gov.uk/government/organisations/veterans-uk
- **Veterans' Gateway:** Information and support hub for veterans and their families.
Tel: 0808 802 1212 or text 81212
www.veteransgateway.org.uk

**Patient
Information**

Charities who support veterans and their families

Defence Medical Welfare Service

Support veterans to have a better healthcare experience and assist with housing needs.

Tel: 01264 774000

Email: referrals@dmws.org.uk

SSAFA

Providing help to the Armed Forces Community. Focussing on individuals in need of practical or emotional support.

Tel: 0800 260 6767 or visit their local website

www.ssafa.org.uk/gloucestershire

The Royal British Legion

Provides financial, emotional and social support to members of the Armed Forces Community.

Tel: 0808 802 8080 or

Email: info@britishlegion.org.uk

Help for Heroes

Providing support for veterans and their families across the UK, by helping veterans improve their physical and mental health.

Tel: 0300 303 9888

Email: getsupport@helpforheroes.org.uk

Combat Stress

UK's leading charity on veterans' mental health.

Tel: 0800 138 1619

Email: helpline@combatstress.org.uk

BLESMA British Limbless Ex-Service Man's Association

Tel: 020 8590 1124

Email: info@blesma.org

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Making a choice

Shared Decision Making

If you are asked to make a choice, you may have lots of questions that you want to ask. You may also want to talk over your options with your family or friends. It can help to write a list of the questions you want answered and take it to your appointment.



Ask 3 Questions

To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions if you are asked to make a choice about your healthcare.

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?

These resources have been adapted with kind permission from the MAGIC Programme, supported by the Health Foundation

* Ask 3 Questions is based on Shepherd HL, et al. Three questions that patients can ask to improve the quality of information physicians give about treatment options: A cross-over trial. Patient Education and Counselling, 2011;84: 379-85



<https://aqua.nhs.uk/resources/shared-decision-making-case-studies/>