

Patient information Veteran Aware

February 2024

Here at RJAH we are proud to say we are a Veteran Aware hospital.

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 member of the Armed Forces community in your NHS medical notes will help ensure you are able to access specific veterans' health services, such as those for mental health, physical health and prosthetics.

Members of the Armed Forces community may be 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).

This however, is always subject to clinical need and doesn't entitle you to go ahead ahead of someone with a higher clinical need.

Improving care for veterans across the NHS

We at the RJAH Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust are a member of the Veterans Covenant Hospital Alliance. This means we are committed to 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 Duty
- 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 support the UK Armed Forces community as an employer.

We work with a range of extra services for the Armed Forces community, and will make you aware of, and refer you to, any that could benefit you, including:

- Our **Veterans' Hub** based in the Headley Court Veterans Orthopaedic Centre here at RJAH (Location 3), supported by **Shropshire Armed Forces Outreach, SSAFA, RBL, Combat Stress, Walking with The Wounded**. You can also call us on:
 - 01691 404000 ext 6910
- **Op COURAGE** - the NHS mental health service for veterans.
- **Op RESTORE** - the NHS physical health service for veterans who have received a service-related injury.
- **Op FORTITUDE** - the pathway for homeless veterans
- Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force families federations to support family members of the Armed Forces community.
- Scotty's Little Soldiers, Reading Forces, and Little Troopers for children of the Armed Forces.

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

Here at the RJAH Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, we will support you in accessing organisations best placed to help with the information, advice and support – from healthcare, housing, employment, 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 organisations support the employment of veterans, reservists and their families in the NHS workforce. They will be involved either in the MoD's Employer Recognition Scheme, or the NHS Employers Step Into Health scheme.

Find out more about careers for veterans and reservists in the NHS at 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 equitably. 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 families should not be at a disadvantage in accessing appropriate health services; for example, if you are on a waiting list and are moving.

Who are members of the Armed Forces community?

Regular forces, reserve forces; members of British overseas territory forces who are subject to Service law; veterans who have served at least one-day; partners; children; relatives (living in the same household, financially dependent, assumed regular and substantial caring responsibility), bereaved family members

For more information on NHS healthcare for the Armed Forces community, visit the NHS Choices website at www.nhs.uk and search for 'veteran'.

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 contact our **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)** by phone: 01691 404604 or by email: rjah.pals.office@nhs.net