

## Mental Health

**Most** British military personnel do **not** experience mental health problems while they are in service, or afterwards in civilian life.

However they face unique risks in service and, if they do experience mental health problems, they may require particular treatments and particular mental health services.

Mental health problems are common and can affect anyone, including veterans and their families.

Although it's completely normal to experience anxiety or depression after traumatic events, this can be tough to deal with. Symptoms or problems coping can happen at any time, including a few years after leaving the armed forces.

Some people delay getting help for a number of reasons, such as trying to cope alone, fear of criticism, embarrassment or feeling that the NHS will not understand.

Read more about the symptoms of [anxiety](#), [stress](#), [depression](#) and [PTSD](#).

The NHS website has a section providing an [overview about mental health care for Veterans](#). The NHS has also produced [a leaflet with a diagram](#) to explain how the service works.

### [Op COURAGE: The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service](#)

If you or someone you know is struggling with their mental health or wellbeing, expert help is available from Op COURAGE: The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service.

It does not matter if you're due to leave the Armed Forces, just left the Armed Forces or left many years ago. Op COURAGE are here to help and understand the courage it takes to speak to someone.

When you contact Op COURAGE, you'll speak to people who:

- understand the Armed Forces and military life
- are either from the Armed Forces community or highly experienced in working with serving personnel, reservists, veterans, and their families
- will work with you to make sure you get the right type of specialist care, support, and treatment

### [Military Veterans' Mental Health Transition, Intervention and Liaison Service](#)

is a mental health and wellbeing service seeking to provide a prompt, effective assessment, liaison and signposting service for veterans and their families **in the north east**.

They offer a **single point of contact** to access a **range of mental health support services across the region**, making it much easier to get signposted to the right help and support.

This specially tailored service 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, reduction in alcohol consumption, housing and social support.

MVMH **works in partnership** with Combat Stress, the Royal British Legion, Help for Heroes and SSAFA. Veterans can contact the service personally – or you can get a relative, someone who supports you, or your GP to get in touch on your behalf.

Call **0191 441 5974** or email [vwals@nhs.net](mailto:vwals@nhs.net)

**Combat Stress** – have been helping former servicemen and women for nearly a century – deal with issues like trauma, anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. They provide support to veterans from every service and every conflict – on the phone and online - in the community and at their treatment centres.

Their mission is to raise awareness that invisible injuries can be just as hard to cope with as physical ones. So when a veteran is having a tough time, they are there to help tackle the past and to help them take on the future.

If you're currently serving, or have served in the UK Armed Forces, you can call their **24-hour Helpline** to talk about mental health. If you are a family member or carer worried about a loved one or need to talk to someone yourself, you can use it too.

Call: **0800 138 1619** Text: **07537 404 719** Email: [helpline@combatstress.org.uk](mailto:helpline@combatstress.org.uk)

**PTSD Resolution** – helps ex-service men and women who have mental health problems, including post-traumatic stress disorder, following service in the UK armed forces. The service is available to all veterans of the UK armed services, reservists and their dependents.

The programme is community-based, with treatment and support provided locally through a nationwide network of 200 therapists, accredited by the Professional Standards Authority. PTSD Resolution helps Veterans and Reservists to resolve the mental health problems associated with military trauma that obstruct a normal range of family and work relationships.

Call: **0300 302 0551** (between 0900 – 1700hrs)

For **general enquiries** and information **about treatment** – [contact@ptsdresolution.org](mailto:contact@ptsdresolution.org)

For requests for **literature** etc – [komeara@ptsdresolution.org](mailto:komeara@ptsdresolution.org)



**HeadFIT** is a mental health support website designed to help you maintain your mental fitness. It was specifically developed for people working in Defence, military and civilian roles.

HeadFIT is available to anyone who wishes to use it, so it is important to spread the word as widely as possible.

The site features a range of tools to help manage your mental fitness, with video case studies from members of the Royal Navy, British Army, RAF and civil service.

**The Finchale Group** is an independent charity providing specialist support programmes for veterans and their families across the north east. This includes debt, housing, vocational training, CV building, cover letters, relationships, employment, addiction counselling, mental and physical health assistance, benefits and education.

**Help for Heroes** provide a fantastic service offering support to those with injuries and illnesses attributable to their service in the British Armed Forces. No matter when someone served, they believe that those prepared to put their lives second, deserve a second chance at life.

[\*\*Officers Association\*\*](#) provides support and advice to **former officers** and their dependents on a variety of matters including employment, finances, housing, health, wellbeing, volunteering and maintaining a social life.

[\*\*Veterans UK\*\*](#) – provides a range of useful information and advice for veterans. One of the main areas of help is from the [\*\*Veterans Welfare Service \(VWS\)\*\*](#) which is committed to enhancing the quality of life for veterans and beneficiaries of Veterans UK pensions and compensation schemes, and all their dependants.

[\*\*British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association \(BLESMA\)\*\*](#) – is a charity dedicated to assisting serving and ex-Service men and women who have suffered life-changing limb loss or the use of a limb, an eye or loss of sight in the honourable service of our country – lead independent and fulfilling lives.

[\*\*Veterans' Gateway\*\*](#) is the first point of contact for veterans seeking support. It's made up of a number of military charities and can put you in touch with organisations who can help further. [\*\*Contact Veteran's Gateway on 0808 802 1212\*\*](#) (24 hours a day, 365 days a year).

There is now a [\*\*Veterans' Gateway App\*\*](#) which you can use to find support organisations in your area using a smartphone or tablet.