



## Patient information Veteran Aware hospital

April 2019

Here at University Hospitals of North Midlands 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 veteran in your NHS medical notes will help ensure you are able to access specific veterans' health services, such as those for mental health, hearing loss, limb amputation and wheelchairs.

All veterans are 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).

But this is always subject to clinical need and doesn't entitle you to jump the queue ahead of someone with a higher clinical need.

### **Improving care for veterans across the NHS**

We at University Hospitals of North Midlands are a member of the Veterans Covenant Hospital Alliance, 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 in this hospital**

- We support the health commitments of the Armed Forces Covenant
- 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 also support the UK armed forces community as an employer.

### **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](http://www.veteransgateway.org.uk)

We work with a range of extra services for the armed forces community and will let you know of and refer you to any that could benefit you, including:

- **Big White Wall** who provide safe anonymous support to anyone struggling with common mental health issues and can be contacted at [www.bigwhitewall.com](http://www.bigwhitewall.com) Via a smartphone app, members can talk to each other anonymously and share experiences and follow guided self help courses and topics such as managing anxiety, dealing with alcohol, getting better sleep. Test and guides to improve wellbeing and trained counsellors (called Wall Guides) are on hand at all times to moderate the service and provide support.
- **Combat Stress/Rethink** who provide emotional support and a listening ear can be contacted on a 24 hour free phone **Helpline 0800 138 1619** or [helpline@combatstress.org.uk](mailto:helpline@combatstress.org.uk)
- **Help for Heroes** contact **Helpline 01980 844280** or [www.helpforheroes.org.uk/get-support](http://www.helpforheroes.org.uk/get-support)
- **NHS Veterans' Mental Health Transition, Intervention and Liaison Service** 0300 323 0137 Midlands or East of England
- **Royal British Legion**, The Bird in Hand, 1 Victoria Road, Stafford, ST16 2AQ. **Helpline 0808 802 8080**
- **SSAFA**. [Staffordshire@ssaf.org.uk](mailto:Staffordshire@ssaf.org.uk) contact **01785 212680** or **Helpline 0800 7314880**
- **The Poppy Factory**, provide employment support for veterans with mental and physical health conditions. Contact **0208 940 3305** or [admin@poppyfactory.org](mailto:admin@poppyfactory.org)
- **Veterans Helpline** Contact **0808 1914 218** or [veterans-uk@mod.gov.uk](mailto:veterans-uk@mod.gov.uk)
- **Walking with the wounded** (WWTW) contact **01263 863900** or [info@wwtw.org.uk](mailto:info@wwtw.org.uk)
- Defence Medical Welfare Service officers who will assist the patient in identifying services provided by service charities and other organisations.
- **Landau Ltd** contact **01782 324398** support with advice on employment and education advice.

Here at University Hospitals of North Midlands we will put you in touch with the organisations best placed to help with the information, advice and support – from healthcare and housing to employability, 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 hospitals support the employment of veterans and reservists in the NHS workforce and will be involved either in the 'Employer Recognition Scheme' or the 'Step Into Health' scheme.

Find out more about careers for veterans and reservists in the NHS at [www.militarystepintohealth.nhs.uk](http://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 fairly. 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 and should retain your place on any NHS waiting list if moved around due to the service person being posted.

The NHS always prioritises people with the most urgent clinical need. At the same time, we must recognise your health and social needs and act on them. We are working to make sure this happens.

To learn more about the Veterans Covenant Hospital Alliance and what it means for NHS hospitals to be Veteran Aware, please visit: <https://improvement.nhs.uk/resources/veteran-aware-hospitals/>

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 the Patient Experience Team via email on [patient.experience@uhnm.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.experience@uhnm.nhs.uk).

For more information on NHS healthcare for veterans, visit the NHS Choices website at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) and search for 'veteran'.