

# Are you Ex Armed Forces?

**Talking to someone who understands may make all the difference**



**Veterans' Mental Health Network**  
West Midlands

South Staffordshire and  
Shropshire Healthcare   
NHS Foundation Trust

# Why look at this booklet?

This booklet is designed to support you if you have served in any of the Armed Forces for one day or more, either as a Regular or a Reservist, to access the help and services you are entitled to.

Admitting you have symptoms of mental distress is not easy; it's likely you have always considered yourself a strong person, able to cope with anything; particularly if you have served in the Armed Forces.

You may be the one in the family or amongst friends, who people look up to, respect, consider you as someone dependable, strong.

But military life, which may include memories of war and traumatic experiences, bombards the mind with a huge quantity of intensely distressing information... so much so your mind cannot make sense of it all at once.

Experiences of war can cause even the strongest (yes professionals too) to falter and struggle as we try to readjust and rejoin the ordinary flow of civilian life.

## **Situations you might need some support with:**

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Feeling isolated
- Difficulty in coping
- Difficulties in relationships
- Alcohol and drug concerns

Take this booklet, keep it with you and talk to your loved ones about it. Think about talking to your GP too, chances are he/she has heard similar troubles from other patients. Early support is important and will help family, friends and your GP to understand why you seem 'different', 'troubled'.

Your mental health may be perfectly fine but, you are frustrated, feeling isolated, or you may notice that you are drinking more than usual. Maybe you can't handle emotional issues, commitments, relationships, even loving may seem more difficult now, or you are just feeling lost.

'The first step to help may be in talking in confidence to the skilled, experienced and professional team at St. George's Hospital Veterans' Mental Health Service. Just let them know how you are feeling and they will do the rest.

Talking to someone who understands may make all the difference'

**Written by a Military Veteran who has been helped**

**June 2012.**



# Are you aware of the Armed Forces Covenant?

The Armed Forces Covenant is an enduring agreement between the people of the UK, Her Majesty's Government and ALL those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces and their families.

It acknowledges the sacrifices made by those who have served, giving up some of their civilian freedoms, facing danger and sometimes serious injury or ill health as a result of their duty. It also recognises the vital role that families play in supporting the operational effectiveness of all of our Armed Forces.

The covenant states that those who have served should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens. Support to the Armed Forces Community will reflect the needs and commitment of individuals within that community and the moral obligation of society towards them.

The support available would normally be in three areas:

- Recognition and gratitude
- Positive measures to prevent disadvantage
- Financial package

## Levels of Support Available

Special Treatment				+
Financial Package			+	+
Positive Measures Prevent Disadvantages		+	+	+
Recognition and Gratitude				
	Any form of service	Families Reservists (not mobilised)	Serving Personnel Veterans and Families (Pensions)	Injured Personnel Injured Veterans Bereaved due to Service



# The Armed Forces Covenant

## How does it help me? (Service Personnel & Veterans)

The Armed Forces Covenant has been set out by the Government as an agreement between you as a Veteran, the government and your local community. This agreement sets out the responsibility and commitment that you are afforded because you served in the Armed Forces. The core principles are that members of the Armed Forces Community do not suffer disadvantages as a result of their service.

### Key actions include:

- Twice doubling Council Tax Relief which now stands at nearly £600 per Service person for a six-month deployment
- Doubling the Families Welfare Grant
- Launching the Community Covenant scheme
- A £30m Community Covenant Grant for local projects that support the scheme
- A Pupil Premium for Service children
- An additional fund of £3m per year to support state schools catering for significant numbers of Service children including children of Reservists
- Launching a veterans' information service to provide support on health issues including mental health.
- Launching a Veterans Card to access commercial discounts or privileges and to consider how this could be expanded to include Service families
- Working to ensure AFCS payments are not required to be used to pay for social care
- A guarantee that veterans suffering serious genital injuries receive three cycles of IVF
- Working with banks and building societies on how they lend to members of the Armed Forces
- A Ministerially-chaired meeting with key stakeholders to explore ways to improve access to housing
- Launching a Military to Mentors scheme

**For more information visit the MoD website  
[www.mod.uk](http://www.mod.uk)**



# Scope of the Armed Forces Covenant

## Healthcare

'The Armed Forces Community should enjoy the same standard of, and access to healthcare, as that received by any other UK citizen in the area they live.

Veterans receive their healthcare from the NHS, and should receive priority treatment where it relates to a condition which results from their service in the Armed Forces, subject to clinical need. Those injured in service, whether physically or mentally, should be cared for in a way that reflects the Nation's moral obligation to them, whilst respecting the individual's wishes.

For those with concerns about their mental health, where symptoms may not be present for some time after leaving Service, they should be able to access services with health professionals who have an understanding of Armed Forces culture.'

## Support after Service

The Covenant involves an obligation for life, and the commitment and sacrifices made by Veterans in the past, as well as their continuing value to society should be properly recognised in the support they receive. In accessing services, former members of the Armed Forces should expect the same support as any other citizen in society.

## Obligations



The Armed Forces Covenant is available at:  
[www.mod.uk](http://www.mod.uk)



If you need help with a health problem, including mental health, then your GP is often the best person to see. Your GP can access services you need or refer you to other services that may help.

South Staffordshire and Shropshire NHS Healthcare Foundation Trust has a dedicated Veterans' Team to support you with issues including those within this handbook.

For more information, contact the team on:

**South Staffordshire and Shropshire NHS Healthcare Foundation  
Trust Veterans' Service**

**Tel** 0800 500 3113

**Web** [sssft.nhs.uk](http://sssft.nhs.uk)

**ADSIS (Alcohol and Dependency Specialists)**

**Tel** 0844 561 7079 **Web** [adsis.org.uk](http://adsis.org.uk)

**Big White Wall**

**Web** [bigwhitewall.com](http://bigwhitewall.com)

**Combat Stress**

**Tel** 0800 138 1619 **Text** 07537 404 719 **Web** [combatstress.org.uk](http://combatstress.org.uk)

**MIND**

**Tel** 0300 123 3393 **Web** [mind.org.uk](http://mind.org.uk)

**NHS Direct**

**Tel** 0845 46 47 **Web** [nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

**Royal British Legion**

**Tel** 08457 725 725 **Web** [britishlegion.org.uk](http://britishlegion.org.uk)

**Citizen's Advice Bureau**

**Tel** 08444 111 444 **Web** [staffordandstonecab.org.uk](http://staffordandstonecab.org.uk)

**Staffordshire Citizen's Advice Bureau**

**Tel** 01283 566722.

**Stafford Housing**

**Tel** 01785 619000. *(This number is also used for Benefits advice)*

**Staffs Housing Association**

**Tel** 01782 744533 **Web** [staffshousing.org.uk](http://staffshousing.org.uk)

**Staffs Welfare Rights Service**

**Tel** 0300 111 8000 **Web** [staffordshire.gov.uk](http://staffordshire.gov.uk)

**Veterans' Agency**

**Tel** 0800 169 2277 **Web** [veterans-uk.info](http://veterans-uk.info)



## Ex Armed Forces

If you have served in the armed forces  
you have access to a wide range of free  
services including help with

Anxiety

Depression

Feeling isolated

Difficulty in coping

Difficulties in relationships

Alcohol and Drug concerns

0800 500 3113

***Talking to someone who understands  
may make all the difference***

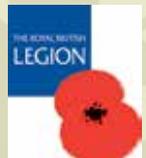
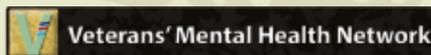
**Has this booklet been helpful to you?**

We would welcome your feedback

[veterans.support@sssft.nhs.uk](mailto:veterans.support@sssft.nhs.uk)



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