

# Communications toolkit

## Op COURAGE: The Veteran Mental Health and Wellbeing Service

### Follow us on Twitter – dedicated NHS Twitter account for Armed Forces health

NHS England and NHS Improvement have launched a dedicated Twitter account for Armed Forces health in England. You can follow us for service signposting and information on [@NHSArmedForces](https://twitter.com/NHSArmedForces)

### Op COURAGE: The Veteran Mental Health and Wellbeing Service

We are encouraging service providers, partners and advocates to widely promote the [Op COURAGE](#) service. It is important at this time to support those impacted and affected by recent events in Afghanistan, including veterans and their families.

### Below is newsletter article/bulletin copy for you to use as appropriate:

The first call for help takes courage. If you or someone you know is struggling with mental health or wellbeing problems, expert help is available from Op COURAGE: The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service.

If you're due to leave the Armed Forces, just left the Armed Forces or left many years ago, Op COURAGE is here to help. You will be able to 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.

The service can be contacted directly by yourself or you can ask your GP, a charity or someone else, such as a family member or friend, to do this on your behalf.

### What will happen when you contact Op COURAGE

To make sure you get the right care and support, you will first have an assessment by someone who understands the specific needs of the Armed Forces community.

The service offers a range of treatment, which includes:

- working with Defence Medical Services to make sure you get mental health care and support as you transition from the military to civilian life
- recognising the early signs of mental health problems and providing care and treatment for this
- therapeutic treatment for more advanced mental health conditions and psychological trauma
- intensive emergency care and treatment if you're in a crisis

- helping you to access other NHS services if needed, such as ‘Improving access to psychological therapies’ (IAPT) and eating disorder services
- working with charities and local organisations to support you with your wider health and wellbeing needs, such as housing, relationships, finances, employment, drug and alcohol misuse and social support.

**For more information, visit the NHS website at [www.nhs.uk/opcourage](http://www.nhs.uk/opcourage)**

Op COURAGE: The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service is the new name for the Veterans’ Mental Health Transition, Intervention and Liaison Service (TILS), Veterans’ Mental Health Complex Treatment Service (CTS) and Veterans’ Mental Health High Intensity Service (HIS). The new name has been developed following feedback from veterans and their families to make it easier for those leaving the military and veterans to find help.

### **Other supporting materials:**

- The **\*\*updated\*\*** Op COURAGE services **map leaflet** is attached to this toolkit.
- You can [download the social media assets](#) in two sizing formats for sharing on your social media channels and to share with your networks for distribution.

### **Social media copy is below:**

Op COURAGE: The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service. Specialist care and support for Service leavers, reservists, veterans and their families.

<https://www.nhs.uk/opcourage> #OpCourage #NHSArmedForcesHealth #Veterans

### **Supporting veterans through the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) veteran friendly accreditation**

Recent events in Afghanistan may have an impact upon patients who have links with the country, including members of the Armed Forces community, veterans, their families or those with close family ties to the country. It is possible that mental health issues including PTSD, depression and the use of recreational drugs may increase with consequences both upon themselves and those around them.

The RCGP has developed a wide range of material to assist practice teams in supporting military veterans and their families. Details on how to become accredited are [here](#). There are also some specific e-learning and webinars that can be accessed to provide up to date information on how care of the military community is the same or different from other patients. See [here](#).

Please use the below copy in your newsletters and bulletins to encourage more GP practices to become accredited.

#### **Become an RCGP veteran-friendly accredited practice**

If your practice is not yet accredited, show your support by signing up to the RCGP veteran-friendly accreditation programme.

There are an estimated 2.4 million veterans in the UK, some of whom have complex needs. There are veteran-specific services tailored towards this potentially vulnerable patient group. Veterans may also be entitled to priority treatment for conditions related to military service.

Becoming a veteran friendly accredited practice is a simple on-line process and helps to raise awareness, improve understanding and better equip and facilitate GPs in their duty of care to veterans.

Further information can be found at <https://www.rcgp.org.uk/clinical-and-research/resources/a-to-z-clinical-resources/veteran-friendly-gp-practices.aspx>

For expressions of interest please contact [veterans@rcgp.org.uk](mailto:veterans@rcgp.org.uk)

**Digital assets:**

- **Social media quote cards** - [download the social media assets](#)
- **Share content** by The Royal College of General Practitioners [@rcgp](#)

**Example social media copy**

Becoming a veteran friendly accredited practice is simple. Show your support by signing up today [www.rcgp.org.uk/veterans](http://www.rcgp.org.uk/veterans)

#RCGP #VeteranFriendly

Please contact [Carrie Fleming](#) if you require any of the supporting communications materials to be sent directly.