

Briefing

June 2021

Armed Forces healthcare briefing and latest updates on COVID-19

This monthly brief is intended to keep you up-to-date on the provision of NHS services for the Armed Forces community, as well as latest information and guidance relating to COVID-19.

COVID-19 updates

The NHS continues to deliver the COVID-19 vaccination programme. In England, the vaccine is being offered in some hospitals and pharmacies, at local centres run by GPs and at larger vaccination centres.

On the 2 June 2021, the NHS met yet another major milestone for the COVID-19 vaccination programme. Over 55 million people have now been vaccinated.

COVID-19 vaccines are being offered to:

- people aged 25 or over
- people who will turn 25 before 1 July 2021
- [people at high risk from COVID-19 \(clinically extremely vulnerable\)](#)
- people with a condition that puts them at higher risk (clinically vulnerable)
- people with a learning disability
- people who live or work in care homes
- health and social care workers
- people who are a main carer for someone at high risk from COVID-19

You'll be contacted by the NHS when you're eligible.

You do not need to wait to be contacted if you're in a group listed above. You may be able to [book your COVID-19 vaccination appointments online](#) now.

If you did not book when you were contacted, you're still eligible and can book your appointments anytime.

Health and wellbeing updates

Armed Forces Day 26 June 2021

Armed Forces Day is a chance to show support for the Armed Forces community: from serving personnel to Service families, veterans and cadets. There are many ways for people, communities and organisations across the country to show their support and [get involved](#) with [event toolkits and resources](#) available to help you plan your support.

NHS England and NHS Improvement will be raising awareness of its services for the Armed Forces community during Armed Forces week from Monday 21 June 2022 including, **Op COURAGE: The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service**.

If you would like to receive communications resources for sharing during Armed Forces week please contact carrie.fleming@nhs.net

Op COURAGE: The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service

In the June edition of Civvy Street magazine, Eleanor Duke, Royal Air Force Veteran and Op COURAGE mental health nurse and team manager in the East Midlands service, shares her specialist experience and describes what happens when a veteran gets in contact with or is referred to Op COURAGE: The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service. Visit their [website](#) and [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts to find out more.

Further information on Op COURAGE, which is the new overarching name for the Veterans' Mental Health Transition, Intervention and Liaison Service (TILS), the Veterans' Mental Health Complex Treatment Service (CTS) and the Veterans' Mental Health High Intensity Service (HIS), is also available at www.nhs.uk/opcourage.

Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance

The Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance (VCHA) has an ambition to accredit all NHS providers in England as Veteran Aware by November 2022.

Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust, which also provides the **Op COURAGE service**, has this week gained accreditation as a **Veteran Aware Hospital**, recognising its work to identify and share best practice across the NHS as an exemplar of the best standards of care for the Armed Forces community

If you would like to know more about becoming a Veteran Aware accredited provider, you will find all the information you need on this [website](#) or you can contact your [Regional Lead](#) with any questions or email: rnoh.vcha@nhs.net.

Veteran Aware: NHS and the Armed Forces webinar

The VCHA, in partnership with Defence Relationship Management (DRM), is holding a joint national webinar on 21 June 2021. The webinar will mark the official launch of the VCHA and bring together NHS trusts, Armed Forces Champions and other key stakeholders to provide key updates on the Alliance and important information for NHS healthcare providers interested in becoming 'Veteran Aware' accredited.

Register [here](#) or for more details, please contact Lieutenant Colonel Retired, Guy Benson rnoh.vcha@nhs.net.

Overseas birth notification pilot launches

A birth notification pilot in Cyprus is enabling babies born to British Forces families, who are registered with Defence Medical Services, to be registered on the Birth Notification Application (BNA) by Primary Care Support England (PCSE). Babies will receive their NHS number at (or soon after) birth to enable immediate and ongoing care provision and aide secure information sharing between approved health and care organisations.

Since March 2021, 10 babies have already been registered on the BNA. With the aim of keeping babies and children safer and improving efficiencies, the pilot has been made possible through partnership working with military, charitable, NHS and public health bodies, including NHS Digital, Public Health England, NHS England and NHS Improvement, Defence Public Health Unit, Defence Primary Healthcare, SSAFA and PCSE.

It is anticipated that the pilot will be rolled out to other overseas bases in the future.

General practice and the care of Armed Forces veterans and their families

The Royal College of General Practitioners have published a [webinar](#) on caring for veterans, which is the first in a new series of resources to help GPs meet the healthcare needs of veterans and their families. It features lived experience accounts from veterans and information on available services and referral pathways.

Specialised services patient and public voice recruitment

NHS England and NHS Improvement Specialised Commissioning is recruiting Patient and Public Voice (PPV) partners for its trauma, internal medicine and mental health programmes of care, as well as for a number of clinical reference groups. PPV representation brings important views, perspectives and challenge and is essential in championing the patient, public or carer viewpoint, ensuring the needs of the population are met. . All are strategic roles which attract an involvement payment in line with our [PPV Partners policy](#).

This is a great opportunity to influence how specialised services are commissioned. Please share with anyone you think may be interested, as well as through relevant networks.

Full details of the roles and how to apply are [on our website](#). The deadline for responding is 20 June 2021.

NHS 73rd birthday celebrations

As part of plans to celebrate the NHS's 73rd birthday, the #NHSBigTea is a chance to come together to thank NHS staff and our communities for their hard work over the last year. The NHS Big Tea in 2019 saw hundreds of events in hospitals, ambulance services, community and mental health trusts across the UK. This year, help break the record and organise a tea party in every NHS setting, raising a mug in collective thanks at **3.00pm on 5 July**. [Register online](#) and get access to resources to help you plan your tea party, virtually or in person.