Military Veterans Mental Health - Assessment Guidance

Are you a Military Veteran?
A Military Veteran in the UK is defined as anyone who has drawn a days pay from the armed forces. A veteran is not defined by length or nature of service, nor are they stripped of the veteran status if discharged from the forces. People currently serving in the Armed Forces must be directed by health professionals to seek support from their unit medical officer or contact SSAFA for advice and support. In Service Confidential Support Line: 0800 731 4880

What is your service number? (It is rare a service number is not automatically repeated).
If there are queries regarding priority access to NHS for Armed Forces verification of service history can be checked by contacting:
RAF: Tel 01400 268169 (Jayne Evans), Fax 01400 266 417 :
Royal Navy & Marines: Tel 02392 628781, Fax 02392 628660,
Army & TA: Tel 0141 224 2670, Fax 0141 224 3172
Verification of service history is usually done by fax and the above agencies will offer guidance to clinicians on current procedures.

Are you a family member of any ex-service personnel?
Family members of military veterans can access priority NHS Mental Health Services if their problems are viewed as directly related to a family member serving in the Armed Forces.

Do you feel that your current problems are related to your/another person’s military experience?
Veterans receive priority access to NHS Mental Health Services if their current problems are likely to be service-related; therefore services prioritise veterans over other patients with the same level of clinical need. However, veterans should not be given priority over other patients with more urgent clinical needs.
Example Question: “Veterans may experience common mental health problems (depression, anxiety, adjustment problems), do you feel your difficulties are linked to physical injuries or psychological distress sustained during active service?”

Consider Trauma Screening Questions:
During your service have you ever had experiences so frightening, horrible or upsetting that in the past month you:
  ❖ Have had nightmares about it or thought about it when you didn’t want to?
  ❖ Tried hard not to think about it or went out of your way to avoid situations that reminded you of it?
  ❖ Were constantly on guard, watchful or easily startled?
  ❖ Felt numb or detached from others, activities or your surroundings?

Veterans often have complex problems and targeting their social problems in the first instance, appear to produce better attendance and improved outcomes of psychological therapy interventions. It is therefore important to ask: Do you have any financial problems, housing problems, occupational or training needs, drug or alcohol problems?
Have you sought help, support or assistance from:
Combat Stress – Veteran Mental Health Charity (PTSD focus)
Service Personnel & Veterans Agency – Armed Forces Compensation Scheme
Citizen’s Advice Bureau – Confidential, free, independent and impartial information service
Civvy Street or The Royal British Legion – Financial support through grants, loans, scholarships
The Soldiers, Sailors, Airman and Families Association (SSAFA) – National charity supporting Armed Services, veterans and families.
Medical Assessment Programme – for comprehensive psychiatric examination and treatment recommendations.
Veteran Regimental Associations
Jobcentre Plus – Veteran Champion – Support for families and veterans
Any other group/organisation

Are you aware of the Big White Wall, a 24 hour online well-being network equipped to support the mental health needs of the Armed Forces Community offering anonymous and confidential support? www.bigwhitewall.com
Are you aware of the free Combat Stress 24 hour telephone help line (0800 138 1619)?
  If NO provide handouts with relevant information
BLESMA (British Limbless Ex Service Men’s Association) – National Charity for limbless serving and ex-serving men and women, their dependents and families.
185-187 High Road, Chadwell Heath, Romford, RM6 6NA
Telephone – 0208 590 1124
E-mail headquaters@blesma.org Website www.blesma.org
North West Area Welfare Officer: Mike Downes, Telephone 01942 726677 e-mail: awonw@blesma.org

Civvy Street (part of the Royal British Legion) – a website for serving and former members of the UK Armed Forces and their dependents. It offers free information and advice about resettlement into civilian life, learning and work.
Helpline 0800 169 4073 Website www.civvystreet.org

Citizen’s Advice Bureau (CAB)
The Citizens Advice Bureau offers free, independent, confidential and impartial advice regarding debt problems, benefits & tax credits, employment, housing, relationships and family problems. Advice can be offered over the telephone, at face-to-face appointments, via email or by using their self-help website: www.adviceguide.org.uk
Website www.citizensadvice.org.uk/index/getadvice
Blackburn with Darwen CAB Telephone 01254 671211 (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 10:00 to 14:30).
Burnley CAB Telephone 0844 4994133 (Monday to Thursday 09:30 to 12:00)
Colne CAB Telephone 01282 867188 (Monday, Wednesday, Friday 10:00 to 12:30)
Clitheroe CAB Telephone 01200 428 966 (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 10:00 to 16:00)
Hyndburn CAB Telephone 01254 394 210 (Monday to Friday 09:00 to 17:00)
Nelson CAB Telephone 01282 616750 (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 10:00-12:30, Thursday 16:30 to 17:00)
Rossendale CAB Telephone 0844 4994121 (Monday to Thursday 09:30 to 12:30)

Combat Stress – Veteran Mental Health Charity (PTSD focus)
Combat Stress offer community outreach support across the North West as well as remedial inpatient care at three specialist short stay treatment centres in Shropshire, Surrey and Ayrshire. They also offer a six-week inpatient veteran program for veterans who have PTSD along with other co-morbid problems (severe depression or alcohol abuse) using evidence-based interventions.
Tyrwhitt House, Oak Lawn Road, Leatherhead, Surrey. KT22 0BX
Telephone 01372 841600
E-mail contactus@combatstress.org.uk Website www.combatstress.org.uk

Confederation of Service Charities (COBSEO) – an organisation whose aim is to counter the fragmented delivery of different military veteran organisations.
Mountbarrow House, 6-20 Elizabeth Street, London. SW1W 9RB
Telephone 0845 504 6630 Website www.cobseo.org.uk

Jobcentre Plus – Champion for Armed Forces – Main point of contact for offering support to those serving in the Armed Forces, veterans or family members who require assistance relating to employment, emergency loans and work related benefits.
Telephone 0845 604 3719, ask for the Accrington Office, Kelly.....
Website: www.direct.gov.uk
Benefit Claim Telephone 0800 0556688, 08:00 to 18:00 Monday to Friday

IAPT North West Military and Veterans Service - This is an NHS Service in the North West dedicated to the provision of psychological therapies for veterans and their families. They provide a range of IAPT interventions but also have provision to offer specialist family therapy interventions and psychodynamic psychotherapy which may be of benefit to East Lancashire Veterans who access Healthy Minds Services and require these interventions not currently available within the East Lancashire Services.
Open Monday to Friday 9:00 to 17:00 Telephone 0161 253 6638
E-mail mviapt.nw.referrals@nhs.net Website: www.penninecare.nhs.uk/military-veterans/
Lancashire Care NHS Traumatic Stress Service - The Lancashire Traumatic stress service is a countywide specialist service provided by Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust to deliver NICE guidance compliant assessment and treatment for adult onset PTSD with severe and extreme symptoms. The service works in partnership with local mental health teams and all referrals to the service are through primary or secondary care mental health services across Lancashire. LTSS does not accept direct referrals.
Location: 18 Euxton Lane Chorley Lancs PR7 1PS
Telephone 01772 647071
Website: www.lancashiretraumaticstressservice.nhs.uk

Medical Assessment Programme (MAP) – MAP provide a comprehensive examination, diagnosis (if possible) and management recommendations for ex-Service personnel with operational service since 1982 and have concerns regarding their mental health. The MoD can assist with travel and accommodation costs.
Baird Medical Centre – Gassiot House, St. Thomas Hospital, Lambeth Palace Road, London. SE1 7EH.
Freephone Helpline: 0800 169 5401
E-mail map@gstt.nhs.uk
To find website link Google: Medical Assessment Programme, MoD.

Reserves Mental Health Programme (RMHP) – Open to anyone who has seen active service as a volunteer or reservist since January 1st, 2003, is now demobilised and has mental health problems that may be linked to operations. Self-referral or GP referral.
Telephone 0800 0326 258
To find website link Google: Reserves Mental Health Programme.

SPACES – Single Persons Accommodation Centre for Ex-Services – Accommodation support for single ex-Service personnel
Resettlement/Welfare Centre, St. Aidan’s Road, Catterick Garrison, North Yorkshire. DL9 3AY
Telephone 01748 833 797
www.spaces.org.uk

Service Personnel & Veterans Agency (SPVA) – Armed Forces Compensation Scheme offers pensions, welfare and support services for Armed Forces and veterans.
Tomlinson House, Norcross, Thornton Cleveleys, Lancashire. FY5 3WP
Telephone – 01253 866043
E-mail veterans.help@spva.gsi.gov.uk
www.mod.uk/defenceinternet/aboutdefence/whatwedo/personnel/pensions/armedforcespensions/afcs

St. Dunstan’s – A charity which helps visually impaired ex-servicemen and women to continue to have independent lives by offering practical support and assistance accessing a wide range of services.
12-14 Harcourt Street, London. W1H 4HD
Telephone 0800 389 7979 (applicants) Other enquiries 020 7723 5021
E-mail enquiries@st-dunstans.org.uk Website www.st-dunstans.org.uk

The Royal British Legion – Financial, social and emotional support to serving and ex-servicemen, women and their dependents.
Legionline: 08457 725 725 (10am – 4pm, Monday to Friday)
Lancashire Branch: Suite 1, Conway House, Ackhurst Business Park, Foxhole Road, Chorley, PR7 1NY
Telephone 01257 244699
Website www.britishlegion.org.uk

The Soldiers, Sailors, Airman and Families Association – Forces Help (SSAFA) – Provide support, advice and financial assistance for a wide range of needs.
Lancashire SSAFA Forces Help Office, Fulwood Barracks, Preston
Telephone 01772 260462 (Monday & Wednesday 09:00 to 12:30)
E-mail Lancashire@ssafa.org.uk E-mail info@ssafa.org.uk Website www.ssafa.org.uk

Veterans UK – single point for accessing information and publishes a monthly newsletter called Veterans World.
www.veterans-uk.info
Other Questions that might be helpful when assessing Military Veterans

Information about Military History

Please tell me about how you came to join the services?
How old were you on joining? What year did you join up?
Which Branch of the Armed Forces? (Army, RAF, Navy, Territorial Army Volunteer Reserve, Royal Navy Reserve, Royal Marines Reserve, Royal Auxiliary Air Force Reserve, Merchant Navy serving during conflict)
Which regiment did you join? What did you do/role/job?
How long did you serve in the military for?
Were you deployed operationally? Did you serve active service in a combat zone? (Ireland, Falklands, Balkans, Gulf, Iraq, Afghanistan)
When and why did you leave the military?
How did you find the occupational culture in the military?
Would you say that your experience of the military was positive or negative?
Were you in trouble in the military?
On reflection, what would you say about your time in the Armed Forces?
What did you/ do you miss about being in the Forces.

After military service

How did you feel when you left the military?
What did you do on leaving?
Did the military help to prepare for the transition? If they did what was useful?
How would you say you adjusted to civilian life?
Did you find housing?
Did you find work?
What did you do for money?
What jobs have you had outside the military?
Have you ever had treatment for mental health problems, what happened when you were trim-ed?
Have you had any drug or alcohol problems?

Relationships

Can you tell me a little about the support networks currently available to you?
Do you have contact with family/friends who support you?
Do you have a partner?
Do you feel that being ex-military affects the way other people relate to you?

Offending History

How many times have you been in trouble with the law?
What offences have you been convicted for?
Were you involved in the judicial system prior to joining the military?
How would you describe your emotional well being and mental Health?

Early Life

Can you tell me a little about your early life?
What are your childhood memories?
How did you find school?
When did you leave school? (Excluded, expelled, truant)
Were you in care?
Did you gain any qualifications?
What did you do when you left school?
Were you in trouble with the police in your childhood/teenage years.