

Veterans: priority NHS treatment

A veteran is someone who has served in the armed forces for at least 1 day. There are around 2.4 million veterans in Great Britain.

When servicemen and women leave the armed forces, their healthcare is the responsibility of the NHS.

It's very important for continuing healthcare that you register with an NHS GP and remember to tell them that you have served. This will help your GP to better understand any service-related health conditions that you may have and ensure that you are referred, where appropriate, to dedicated services for ex-forces.

If you've recently left the armed forces, it's important to give your GP the paperwork that your military medical centre gave you, including any medical records. This will help to ensure your military health record transfers to your NHS health record. It will also give your GP information on your health and ensure that any ongoing care and treatment is continued.

Being flagged as a veteran in your NHS medical notes will help to ensure that you are able to access dedicated services for those who have served in the UK armed forces. These include services for [mental health](#) and [physical health](#) conditions.

Find out more about the range of [dedicated health services for ex-forces \(PDF, 278kb\)](#).

'No disadvantage'

You should not be disadvantaged from accessing appropriate health services, so it's important that you notify your current GP if you're moving, particularly if you're on a waiting list for medical treatment, so this information can be transferred across.

Details of GP surgeries and other health services within your area can be found by using [find GP services](#).

All veterans are entitled to priority access to NHS care (including hospital, primary or community care) for conditions associated with their time within 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.

If the NHS service you're dealing with is unaware of priority treatment, you're actively encouraged to tell them about it and ensure you have told them you have served.

Failing that, you can enlist local health care commissioners, your local authority [community covenant lead](#) or one of the national service organisations, such as the Royal British Legion, to support you.

For more information on the duty of care owed to service personnel, read the [Armed Forces Covenant \(PDF, 919kb\)](#).

Personalised care programme

If you have served in the UK armed forces and have a complex and lifelong health condition, you may be eligible for the veterans personalised care programme. This is to ensure you have more choice and control over how your care is planned and delivered. It is based on what matters to you, meaning that you can choose how best to live your life and get the right support to do so.

If eligible, you will have a single personalised care plan for all your health and wellbeing needs that is developed with you and a range of organisations, including health and social care and military charities.

As part of this, you may get a personal budget to pay for some of the care and support you need. You should also get more support in the community and be able to access a range of help, such as emotional and practical support from people who have similar health conditions or disabilities.

For more information, read [Personalised care for veterans in England \(PDF, 685kb\)](#)

To apply, you should contact your [local clinical commissioning group \(CCG\)](#).