

Veterans: Priority NHS treatment

What is a veteran?

A veteran is anyone who has served for at least 1 day in the armed forces, whether regular or reserve.

This also applies to Merchant Navy seafarers and fishermen who have served in a vessel when it was being used for military operations by the armed forces.

There are around 2.6 million veterans in the UK.

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

It's highly important for continuing healthcare that you register with an NHS GP and remember to tell them you have served.

Telling the GP practice about your veteran status will trigger the transfer of your full medical documentation from the Ministry of Defence (MoD) to your GP, and enable you to benefit from veteran-specific services like prosthetics and [mental health](#).

'No disadvantage'

You shouldn't be disadvantaged from accessing appropriate health services, so it's important that you notify your current GP that 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.

Medical Military Codes (READ Codes)

NHS issued Codes for Military / Veterans

- X a 8 D a** - History relating to Military Service
- 1 3 q 3** - Served in Armed Forces
- 1 3 q 0** - History relating to Army Service
- 1 3 q 1** - History relating to Royal Navy Service
- 1 3 q 2** - History relating to Royal Air Force Service
- 1 3 J Y** - History relating to Military Service
- 1 3 J i** - Military Veteran
- 1 3 J i 0** - Army Veteran
- 1 3 J i 1** - Royal Air Force Veteran
- 1 3 J i 2** - Royal Navy Veteran
- 1 3 J i 3** - Royal Marines Veteran

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These are case sensitive in NHS computer systems so quote them as they are written here.

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 \(PDF, 919kb\)](#).

Improving care for severely injured veterans

NHS England hosts the Veterans Trauma Network, which aims to provide specialist care for patients with service-related traumatic injuries.

The network comprises of 10 major trauma centres across England:

- Plymouth
- Oxford
- London (3 centres)
- Birmingham
- Nottingham
- Liverpool
- Leeds
- Middlesbrough

The network acts as a regional hub for veteran care, linking with NHS veterans mental health services, national centres of expertise and key service charities to provide a complete package of care.

Patients referred to the service have a personalised treatment plan developed and provided by a specialist team of military and civilian experts in trauma. As part of this, the needs of families and carers are also considered.

If you're supporting a veteran or veterans who you feel may benefit from referral to this service, BLESMA is the umbrella charity for the veterans trauma network and can be contacted by:

- email: bsoprosthetics@blesma.org
- phone: 020 8548 7080

Referrals to the network can also be made via a GP, [Blind Veterans UK](#) and Style for Soldiers.

For further information on the service or referrals, email:

- bsoprosthetics@blesma.org
- england.veteranstraumanetwork@nhs.net

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Veterans: health FAQs

Find answers to the questions most commonly asked about veterans' health.

I'm a GP. How can I request my patient's service medical records?

Veterans are given a personal copy of their summary medical record when they leave the Services, together with information on how to obtain their full Service medical record if they need it.

If this information has been lost, you'll need to contact the below.

Royal Navy:

The Medical Director General
Medical Records Release Section
Institute of Naval Medicine
Alverstoke
Hampshire
PO12 2DL
Tel: 023 9276 8063

Army:

Army Personnel Centre
Disclosure 3
Mailpoint 525, Kentigern House
65 Brown Street
Glasgow
G2 8EX
Tel: 0845 600 9663

Royal Air Force:

Medical Casework 6
Air Manning Medical Casework
Headquarters Air Command
Room 1, Building 22
Royal Air Force High Wycombe
Walters Ash
Buckinghamshire
HP14 4UE

Do I need to register with a GP when I leave the armed forces?

Yes. You should have a summary record of your health history given to you when you're discharged, with details of how your GP can obtain your medical records.

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What if I no longer have a copy of my health record from my time in the armed forces?

If you no longer have a copy of your health record summary from when you were in the armed forces, find out how individuals can obtain their own records (service or medical) from the [requests for personal data and service records](#) on GOV.UK.

How long will I have to wait for treatment?

It depends on what you need.

All veterans are entitled to priority NHS treatment for any condition related to their service. This includes veterans who don't receive a war pension.

Priority treatment includes assessment, treatment, aids and appliances for conditions accepted as being due to their service.

Can I get financial support for my medical needs?

If you're a war pensioner who needs medical treatment or care because you were disabled while serving in the armed forces during war, you should seek advice and help from [Veterans UK](#) and the [Veterans Welfare Service](#).

You may also be able to get help from the [Royal British Legion](#).

I'm disabled. Can I get financial support?

If you need items like a stairlift, bathroom adaptations or personal alarm system, [Veterans UK](#) and the [Veterans Welfare Service](#) can help you apply for these from your local social services.

Can I get help for mental health issues, including post-traumatic stress disorder?

Yes. There are treatments available to help people cope with the psychological consequences of exposure to traumatic events, including trauma-focused [cognitive behavioural therapy \(CBT\)](#).

The NHS and other partners can deliver these services for anyone who needs them, and they also have services specifically aimed at helping veterans.

[Find out more about veterans' mental health services](#)

I have been referred for a health problem related to my service in the armed forces. Can I get special assistance?

Maybe. Your GP may be able to get you referred more quickly for any hospital care or treatment that's needed. But this is subject to the clinical needs of others.

Sourced from:

<https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/military-healthcare/priority-nhs-treatment-for-veterans/>

Except READ Codes

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