**Armed Forces Veteran support and information**

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**We are an Armed Forces veteran friendly accredited GP practice.**

More than half of veterans (52%) have a long-term illness, disability or mental health problems including PTSD, yet research suggests many may be reluctant to seek support for their issues, particularly if they feel they may not be understood.

With an estimated 2.4 million veterans in the UK, a GP surgery, like ours, may see a veteran patient every day on average. Being able to identify and support veteran patients is crucial to ensuring best outcomes, as research shows that some veteran patients may face different health challenges to the general population.

[How to get the most out of your GP Appointment](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ainsdalemedicalcentre.nhs.uk%2Fmedia%2Fcpihla0a%2Fhandout-top-tips-for-the-military-veteran-how-to-get-the-most-from-your-gp.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)

[Healthcare for the armed forces community - NHS (www.nhs.uk)](https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/armed-forces-community/)

[RESERVISTS MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMME (RMHP)INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS AND HEALTH PROFESSIONALS](https://www.ainsdalemedicalcentre.nhs.uk/media/jgzaetrb/dms_leaflet_for_health_profs_and_individuals.pdf)

How we identify military veterans

When registering at our surgery, it is important that you let us know if you are a military veteran. Details on how to register with the surgery can be found [here](https://www.ainsdalemedicalcentre.nhs.uk/practice-information/practice-information/new-patient-registration/) and it is something we ask as part of our new patient questionnaire when registering.

It is important to tell us that you are a military veteran so we can make sure this is included in your medical records. We are then able to ask for your military health records if you wish.

Being flagged as a veteran in your NHS medical notes will help to ensure that you are able to access specific veteran's health services, such as those for mental health, hearing loss, limb amputation and wheelchairs.

It also means that where you have an illness or medical condition that has been caused by your time in service or occurred whilst you were in the military, you may be entitled to a shorter hospital waiting list. This is part of the health commitments of the [Armed Forces Covenant](https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/).

With your consent, it can sometimes be helpful for your doctor to refer you to specific service charities, such as SSAFA, Royal British Legion, BLESMA or Help for Heroes. They can often offer significant help and support, even if they do not all deliver health care.

If you are already registered at our surgery and you are not sure if it is flagged on your medical record, please let us know by contacting reception and this can be added to your medical records.

**Support for military veterans**

Please see below services dedicated to supporting military veterans:

[OpCOURAGE](https://veteranaware.nhs.uk/op-courage/): mental health support for veterans - Mental Health & Wellbeing Service

[Benefits and concessions for the armed forces, veterans and their families](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/armed-forces-and-veterans/benefits-and-concessions-for-the-armed-forces-veterans-and-their-families/): Citizens Advice

[Southport Armed Forces & Veterans Breakfast Club](https://www.afvbc.net/find-a-club/southport/): Local Social Support Event

**Online services for military veterans**

If you are a veteran, you may find it useful to sign up to online services to manage your appointments, order medication, view test results online etc.

[Find out more about signing up to use online services.](https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/online-services/)