



Self-Harm and Suicide Behaviours in the UK Armed Forces: Ex-Serving Military Personnel's Experiences of Seeking Help for Self-Harm, Suicidal Thoughts and/or Suicide Attempts

Signposting Booklet

General Information on Support Services
for Veterans



Disclaimer: We do not personally recommend these charities or services. Whilst we try to ensure information is correct, details may change.

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1.0. Self-Harm and Suicide Support and Advice

If you are at imminent risk/in crisis, please contact the emergency services on 999

1.1. National Suicide Prevention Helpline UK

Helpline offering a supportive listening service to anyone (18 years or older) with thoughts of suicide.

Open: 24hrs/7 days a week

Tel: 0800 689 5652

Web: www.spuk.org.uk/national-suicide-prevention-helpline-uk

1.2. Samaritans

Someone to talk to 24 hours a day.

Open: 24hrs/365 days a year

Tel: 116 123

Email: jo@samaritans.org

Web: www.samaritans.org

1.3. The Listening Place

Offer face-to-face support for those who feel life is no longer worth living. In the listening appointments, individuals can talk openly about their feelings without being judged or being given advice.

Open: Everyday, 09:00-21:00

Tel: 0203 906 7676

Web: www.listeningplace.org.uk

1.4. SHOUT

SHOUT is a free, confidential, anonymous text support service which provides support to those who are struggling to cope and need someone to talk to.

Open: 24hrs/365 days a year

Web: www.giveusashout.org

Text: "SHOUT" to 85258 to contact the Shout Crisis Text Line

1.5. PAPYRUS

Offers confidential suicide prevention advice to young people (under 35 years old) struggling to cope and experiencing thoughts of suicide.

Open: Everyday, 09:00-00:00

HOPELINEUK: 0800 068 4141

Email: pat@papyrus-uk.org

Text: 0786 003 9967

1.6. Maytree

Offers free respite stays for people in suicidal crisis.

Open: Everyday 10:00-18:00

Tel: 0207 263 7070

Web: www.maytree.org.uk

1.7. Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide (SOBS)

Emotional and practical support and local groups for anyone bereaved or affected by suicide.

Open: Mon-Tues, 09:00-17:00

Supportline: 0300 111 5065

Web: www.uk-sobs.org.uk

Email: email.support@uksobs.org

1.8. Harmless

Provide support, information, training and consultancy about self-harm to individuals who self-harm, their friends, families and professionals.

Web: www.harmless.org.uk

Email: info@harmless.org.uk

2.0. National Mental Health Services and Advice

For veterans the first port of call is your GP; however you can use the Combat Stress Helpline (0800 138 1619) or contact the Veterans Gateway (0808 802 1212 or https://support.veteransgateway.org.uk/app/get_help)

2.1. Togetherall (Previously Big White Wall)

An anonymous peer support network that encourages you to be open about what is on your mind, to learn more about yourself and what is troubling you. It is available 24hrs/7 days a week and is free for serving personnel, veterans and their families. You can talk anonymously through your troubles with the whole community, or a selected group or individual. Trained mental health professionals can help small groups of members to resolve problems like stress, anxiety and depression.

Open: 24hrs/365 days a year

Web: <https://togetherall.com/>

2.2. Combat Stress 24 Hour Helpline

Provides confidential help and advice on any mental health issues to the military community and their families.

Open: 24hrs/365 days a year

Helpline: 0800 138 1619

Email: helpline@combatstress.org.uk

Text: 0753 717 3683

(standard charges may apply)

2.3. Combat Stress

Combat Stress specialises in the treatment and support of British Armed Forces Veterans who have mental health problems. Contact head office for details of your local office.

Open: Mon-Fri, 09:00-17:00

Tel: 0137 258 7000 (Head Office)

Email: contactus@combatstress.org.uk

Web: www.combatstress.org.uk

2.4. Samaritans

Someone to talk to 24 hours a day.

Open: 24hrs/365 days a year

Tel: 116 123

Email: jo@samaritans.org

Web: www.samaritans.org

2.5. Royal British Legion

Provides financial, social and emotional support to all those who have served and are currently serving in the Armed Forces, as well as their families. There are 2,500 local branches around the UK and overseas providing support for people in their local communities and also a meeting place to get together.

Open: Everyday, 08:00–20:00

Helpline: 0808 802 8080

Web: www.britishlegion.org.uk

2.6. Forcesline (SSAFA)

As part of Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA) this support line offers totally confidential, non-judgemental, guidance on all personal/welfare issues including sexual harassment, discrimination, bullying, racism, drugs, depression, alcohol, debt, relationship counselling and suicide to the Army community from anywhere in the world. It is completely independent of the military chain of command.

Open: Mon-Fri, 09:00–17.00

From UK: 0800 260 6767 (freephone)

From Cyprus: 0800 91065 (freephone)

Rest of the World: +44(0) 207 463 9292

Falkland Islands: #6111 (freephone)

Website: www.ssafa.org.uk/how-we-help/forcesline

2.7. The Veterans and Reserves Mental Health Programme (VRMHP)

The Veterans and Reserves Mental Health Programme (VRMHP) (*formerly the Medical Assessment Programme*) provides mental health assessments for veterans and reservists who have concerns about their mental health as a result of service.

The VRMHP investigates patients' mental health concerns and, so far as possible, it provides a diagnosis if the veteran has a mental health disorder, and recommends appropriate management through the NHS, if required. Advice will also be provided on the extensive support network that is available to veterans and their families in the UK.

The **Veterans Mental Health Programme** is available to veterans who have deployed since 1982 and are experiencing mental health challenges as a result of military service. The service will remain the same; a full mental health assessment by a consultant psychiatrist with accompanying guidance on care and treatment for the veteran's local clinical team. Referrals to the VRMHP will preferably be made by the individual's GP however self-referrals will now be accepted for this service.

The **Reserves Mental Health Programme**, run in partnership with the NHS, is open to all current or former members of the UK Volunteer and Regular Reserves who have been demobilised since 1 January 2003, following operational deployment overseas as a Reservist and who believe that their deployment may have affected their mental health.

Helpline: 0800 032 6258

Email: dphce-dcmhcol-vmh@mod.uk

Web: www.gov.uk/support-for-war-veterans#the-veterans-and-reserves-mental-health-programme

2.8. Mind

Mind's telephone helplines offer a range of advice on mental health issues and legal information. The website also has links to a wide range of booklets and leaflets and provides details of local Minds across England and Wales.

Open: Mon–Fri, 09:00–18:00

Web: www.mind.org.uk

Infoline: 0300 123 3393

Email: info@mind.org.uk

Legal Line: 0300 466 6463

Email: legal@mind.org.uk

General Enquiries:

Tel (England): 0208 215 2243

Tel (Cymru): 0292 039 5123

Email: supporterrelations@mind.org.uk

Mind do not currently work in Scotland or Northern Ireland. If you are from either of these areas and are looking for mental health information, advice or support, you may find the following organisations helpful:

[The Scottish Association for Mental Health](#)

[The Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health](#)

2.9. NHS 111 Online

Get advice from health professionals about mental and physical health.

Open: 24hrs/365 days a year

Web: <https://111.nhs.uk/>

2.10. Veterans UK: The Service Personnel and Veterans Agency

Aims to be a first-stop for veterans providing information on the various services offered by other organisations in one place. The Veterans UK Helpline provides advice on many topics.

Open: Mon-Fri, 08:00-16:00

Helpline: 0800 191 4218

Overseas: +44 1253 866 043

Textphone: 0800 169 3458

Email: veterans-uk@mod.gov.uk

Web: www.veterans-uk.info

2.11. Veterans Gateway

Veterans Gateway is the first point of contact for veterans seeking specific or general support. It is an online portal, chat and telephone service where ex-servicing personnel can seek help and be triaged to different organisations. With many organisations supporting the Armed Forces community, Veterans' Gateway facilitates access to the right support quicker and easier, no matter where individuals are or what they need. More specifically, it puts ex-serving personnel and their families in touch with organisations (e.g., Armed Forces charities, general charities or NHS support) best placed to help with the information, advice and support they may need (e.g., healthcare, housing, employability, finances, personal relationships).

Phone: 0808 802 1212

Text: 81212

Web: www.veteransgateway.org.uk

WebChat: www.veteransgateway.org.uk/app/chat/chat_launch

2.12. Op COURAGE: The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service (NHS Service)

Op COURAGE is an NHS mental health specialist service designed to help serving personnel who are due to leave the military, reservists, veterans, and their families.

Web: www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/armed-forces-community/mental-health/veterans-reservists

N England: Tel: 0300 373 3332

Email: OpCourageNORTH@cntw.nhs.uk

Midlands: Tel: 0300 323 0137

Email: mevs.mhm@nhs.net

E England: Tel: 0300 034 9991

Email: mevs.mhm@nhs.net

London: Tel: 020 3317 6818

Email: veteransservice@candi.nhs.uk

SE England: Tel: 0300 365 2000 (option 4)

Email: gateway@berkshire.nhs.uk

SW England: Tel: 0300 034 9986

Email: mevs.mhm@nhs.net

3.0. General Advice and Support

3.1. Citizens Advice Bureau

Provide knowledge and advice to help people find their way through problems. Includes advice on benefits, work, debt and money, housing, family, law and courts, immigration, and health. The national centre can give you the number of your local office.

Adviceline: 0800 144 8848 (England), 0800 702 2020 (Wales)

Web: www.adviceguide.org.uk

3.2. Royal British Legion

Provides financial, social and emotional support to all those who have served and are currently serving in the Armed Forces, as well as their families. There are 2,500 local branches around the UK and overseas providing support for people in their local communities and also a meeting place to get together.

Open: Everyday, 08:00–20:00

Helpline: 0808 802 8080

Web: www.britishlegion.org.uk

3.3. Cobseo (The Confederation of Service Charities)

Cobseo provides details of charities providing services for members of the Armed Forces community, including ex-serving personnel and their families:

Web: www.cobseo.org.uk/members/directory

4.0. Alcohol, Drugs and Gambling

4.1. With You (formerly Addaction)

Free, confidential support with alcohol, drugs or mental health.

Web: www.wearewithyou.org.uk

4.2. Alcoholics Anonymous

A fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other to help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking.

Tel: 0800 917 7650

Web: www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Email: help@aamail.org

4.3. Gamblers Anonymous

National Tel: 0330 094 0322

Web: www.gamblersanonymous.org.uk

Email: info@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

5.0. Jobs, Employment and Education

5.1. Employment Service (Job Centre Plus)

Open: Mon-Fri, 08:00-18:00 & Sat, 09:00-13:00

Tel: 0845 606 0234

Textphone: 0845 605 5255

Web: www.gov.uk/browse/working/finding-job

5.2. NACRO

Works with and supports a range of people across education, resettlement, health and wellbeing and housing – including support for ex-offenders.

Open: Mon-Fri, 09:00-17:00

Email: helpline@nacro.org.uk

Web: www.nacro.org.uk

Information/advice for ex-offenders and families: 0300 123 1999

5.3. Adult Learning Grant

Financial assistance to help adults back into education.

Information on advanced learning loans:

www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/AdultLearning/FinancialHelpForAdultLearners/index.htm

For further source of financial help with childcare contact the learner support helpline: 0800 121 8989

6.0. Help Claiming Benefits

6.1. GOV.UK - Benefits Information

Web: www.gov.uk/browse/benefits

6.2. SSAFA (Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association)

Supports serving personnel, veterans and their families in their time of need.

Web: www.ssafa.org.uk

General Enquiries: 0207 463 9200

Forcesline: 0800 260 6767 (Mon-Fri, 09:00-17:00)

6.3. Royal British Legion

Provides financial, social and emotional support to all those who have served and are currently serving in the Armed Forces, as well as their families. There are 2,500 local branches around the UK and overseas providing support for people in their local communities and also a meeting place to get together.

Open: Everyday, 08:00-20:00

Tel: 0808 802 8080

Web: www.britishlegion.org.uk

7.0. Housing

7.1. Government Housing Information

Web: www.communities.gov.uk/housing

7.2. Haig Homes

Lets rental property to ex-service personnel.

Open: Mon-Fri, 09:00–17:00

Tel: 0208 685 5777

Email: enquiries@haighomes.org.uk

Web: <https://www.haighousing.org.uk/>

Email: housingoptions@haighousing.org.uk

8.0. Relationship Guidance and Family Support

8.1. Relate

Offers phone counselling, internet counselling and/or appointments for face-to-face counselling.

Web: www.relate.org.uk

8.2. Working Families

Helping children, working parents and carers and their employers find a better balance between responsibilities at home and work.

Helpline: 0300 012 0312

Web: www.workingfamilies.org.uk

9.0. Counselling and Support

9.1. Cruse

Cruse supports people through bereavement.

Helpline: 0808 808 1677

Web: www.cruse.org.uk

Open: Mon, 09:30-17:00; Tues-Thurs, 09:30-20:00; Fri, 09:30-17:00;
Sat-Sun, 10:00-14:00