

How effective is NHS mental health care for veterans and what next

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NHS England and NHS Improvement



The Health and Care Bill



- Commissioning healthcare for **serving members of the Armed Forces** and their families registered with Defence Medical Services, veterans' mental health services and prosthetic services will remain with NHS England
- Commissioning healthcare for **veterans of the Armed Forces** and their families registered with NHS GP practices will remain with integrated care systems (ICS)

* Discussions with the 42 ICSs are underway to explore how we as co-commissioners of healthcare for the Armed Forces community will work more effectively for this population

1. Improve population health and healthcare
2. Tackle unequal access, experience and outcomes
3. Enhance productivity and value for money
4. Ensure the NHS supports broader social and economic development



Supporting veterans' health and wellbeing needs



The NHS Long Term Plan



Commitments

We will expand our support for all veterans and their families as they transition out of the Armed Forces, regardless of when people leave the services.

To ensure all GPs in England are equipped to best serve veterans and their families, over the next five years we will roll out a veterans accreditation scheme in conjunction with the Royal College of GPs.

Healthcare for the Armed Forces community: a forward view

From serving to civilian life: health and wellbeing for all

Commitment 5

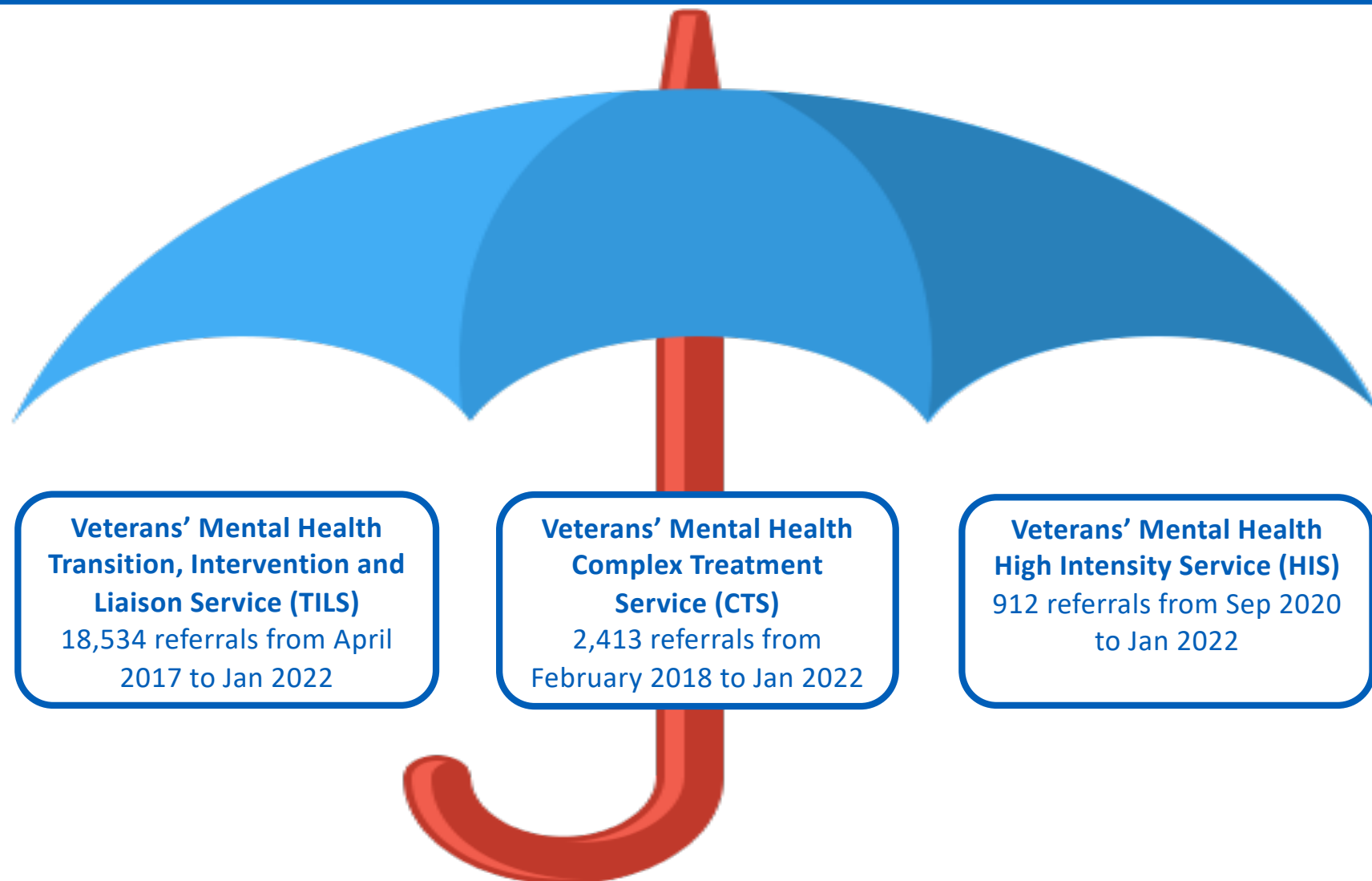
Improving veterans' and their families' mental health

A complete veterans mental health care pathway



OpCOURAGE

The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service



Op COURAGE – reflections over the last year



- Launch of Op COURAGE at last year's conference
→ **25%** increase in referrals the same week
- Additional **£4.1m** invested for Op COURAGE to support veterans impacted by events in Afghanistan, as well as military police and interpreters working with the UK Armed Forces in Afghanistan. This includes:
 - clinical assessment and treatment plan development
 - care co-ordination of complex cases
 - access to drug and alcohol misuse services
 - translator services
- Op COURAGE fully operational across England (East of England HIS launched this Monday)
- Ongoing funding awarded to Armed Forces charities to enhance veterans care, ie social prescribing

“The treatment I received was a very positive experience for me – the team understood my situation and I genuinely and readily engaged with it.

I wish that I had been referred earlier to a veteran specific service as only those who have been in the military really understand.”

Op COURAGE service user

Improving support for veterans' families

- Support for veterans' families to be considered as part of Op COURAGE reprocurement
- Commissioning of an Integrated Care Board based Armed Forces families / Armed Forces community single point of contact:
 - Will act as a point of contact for Armed Forces families / the Armed Forces community, providing support and guidance to navigate the NHS to help prevent disadvantage
 - Will include supporting the families of veterans accessing OP COURAGE
 - To be informed by three pathfinder services that will run for 18 months from **April 2022**

“It wasn’t just me though, they involved my wife, made her feel like part of the team and that she was important too. She’s now linked in with other people who understand her and what she’s going through too.”

Op COURAGE service user

“HIS were a lifeline. They helped me and my son find somewhere to stay so I could get things sorted.”

Op COURAGE service user

Serving and ex-service women priorities

Prevention and lifestyle

Mental health pathway

Maternity pathway

Domestic and sexual violence

SESW in the criminal justice service

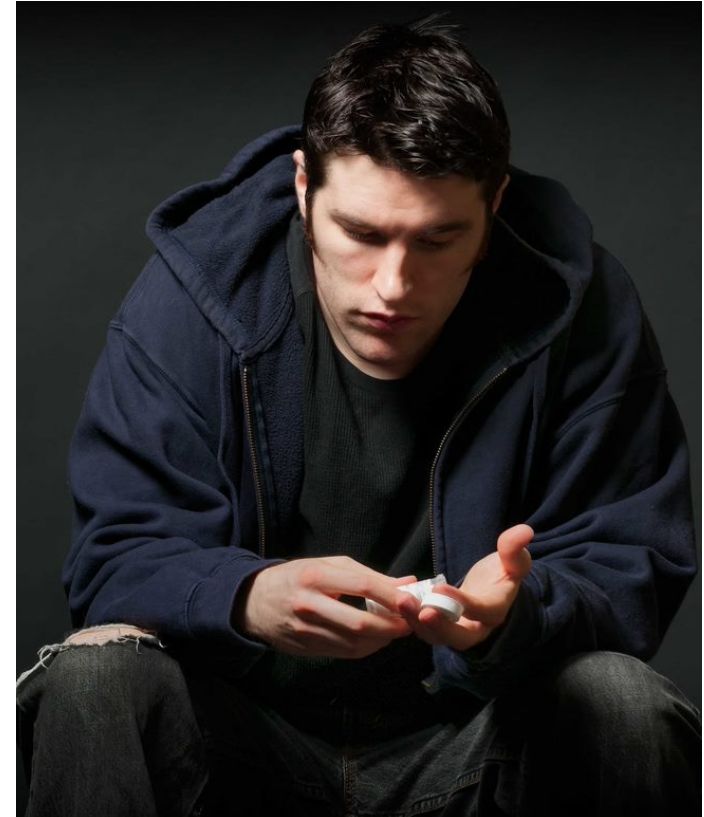
Employment after service

Research

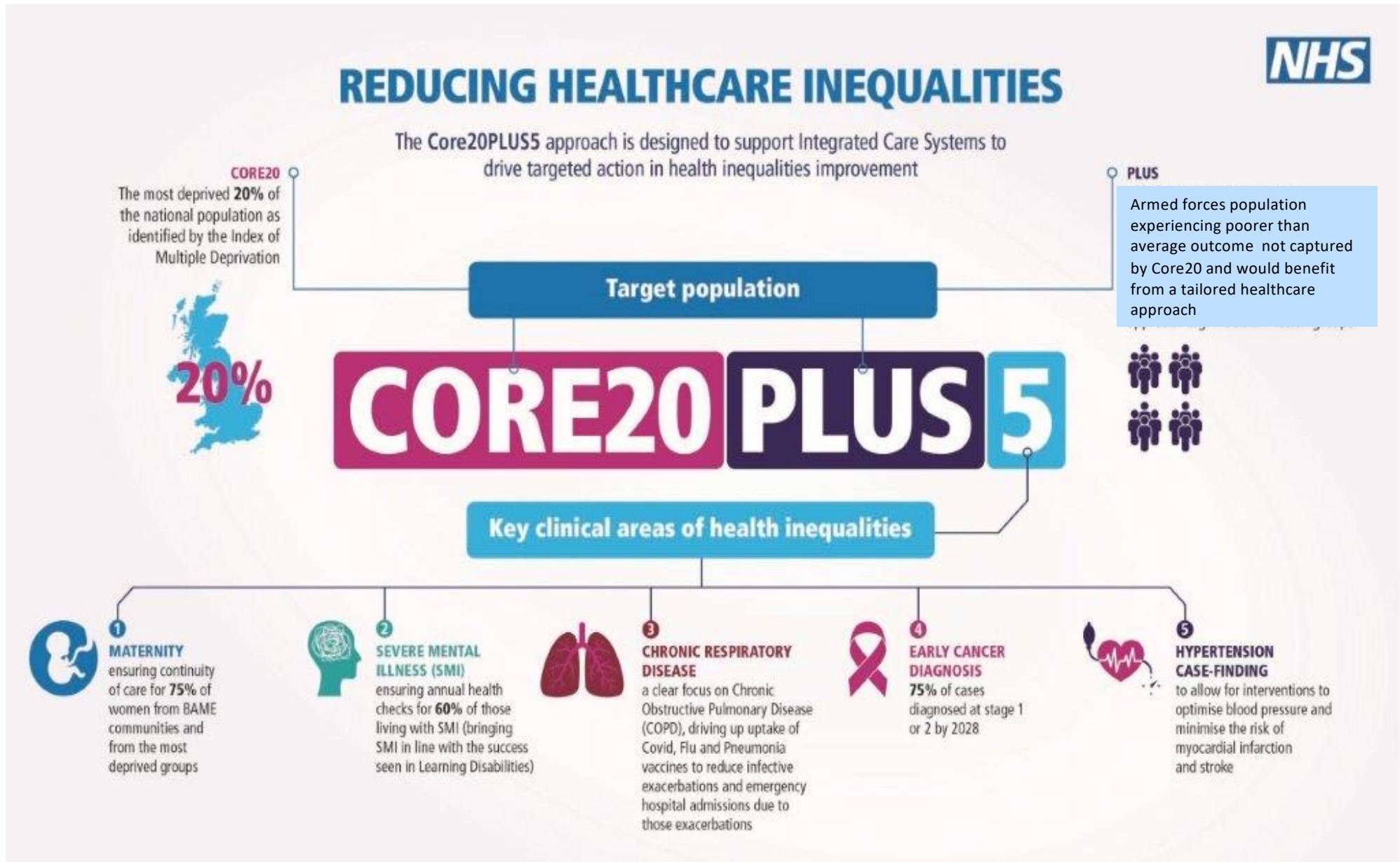


Improving support for veterans in the criminal justice system

- Refreshing the health needs of the Armed Forces veteran population that comes into contact with the criminal justice system (CJS)
- Reviewed all existing veteran CJS services, including referral pathways and interfaces
- Partnership arrangements in place with stakeholders and third-party providers of veteran specific services
- Designing a single CJS pathway for veterans, informed by lived experience, to commission a future service
- Planning engagement with wider stakeholders to inform the future service model



Our approach to reducing inequalities – the ‘Core’ and the ‘Plus’ apply to the Armed Forces community



Partnership working to enhance veteran care



- Ongoing collaboration and partnership working with Armed Forces charities to provide:
 - holistic care and support for veterans
 - enhanced care co-ordination for veterans
 - face to face care during the pandemic
- Military charities represented on programme Boards and involved in commissioning processes
- Ongoing collaboration with cross Government departments to inform policy and drive improvements in veterans care



Supporting veterans into NHS employment



- **Step into Health**, developed in conjunction with The Royal Foundation and Walking with the Wounded, provides a dedicated NHS career pathway for the Armed Forces community
- Through Step into Health, individuals can connect to NHS organisations to access work placements, attend insight days, receive job application support and apply for jobs
- Programme encourages NHS organisations to make full use of the skills, knowledge and experiences of the Armed Forces community
- To pledge to the programme, NHS organisations sign a pledge certificate which commits them to five mandatory pledges
- **112** NHS organisations have pledged their support to the programme, with over **1,570** individuals employed to date



Lived experience – a golden thread



- **NHS England Armed Forces Patient and Public Voice Group** champions the views of the Armed Forces community
- Patient, service user and family / carer involvement in all work programmes and commissioning activity to ensure the voice of the Armed Forces community is heard
- Proactively captures patient and service user feedback to inform service improvements
- Works with clinicians to share patient insights and inform care provision
- Informs and supports communications and engagement activity

OpCOURAGE



'The Armed Forces Patient and Public Voice group works closely with the NHS, to ensure the voice of the Armed Forces community is heard, based on their lived experience.'

Nicky Murdoch, Armed Forces Patient and Public Voice Group
Independent Chair, NHS England and NHS Improvement

How the NHS is supporting veterans



21,800+ referrals to Op COURAGE

70%+ ex-Army and 90%+ white males, of whom nearly a third are 31-40



320+ referrals to the Veterans Trauma Network

Over the last year, 96% of referrals have been men, the majority of whom (46%) are 43-62



1,250+ veteran friendly GP accredited practices

North East and Yorkshire (33%) and the Midlands (25%) have highest percentage of accredited practices



Armed Forces Veteran
friendly accredited
GP practice

100+ Veteran Aware accredited trusts

Aim is to accredit all trusts by March 2023



**VETERAN
AWARE**

1,570+ veterans employed through Step Into Health

112 NHS organisations have pledged their support to this programme



What next for veterans' mental health



- Enhanced annual investment of **£21m+**
- Commissioning of **first ever** integrated veterans mental health service in England
 - OP COURAGE: The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service
- Service will deliver a single point of entry and a clinical pathway that provides a comprehensive mental health service, based on individual clinical need and evidence based care. This approach ensures individuals have care and treatment that is flexible to respond to their changing mental health needs at various stages of their care – will go live from **April 2023**
- The service will meet the following as agreed by the National Quality Board:
 - Respect for patient-centred values, preferences and expressed needs
 - Proactive involvement of family and friends
 - Information, communication and education
 - Coordination and integration of care
 - Physical comfort and emotional support
 - Transition and continuity
 - Access to timely care



What next for veterans' mental health



- Associated engagement launching this spring to inform new clinical model of care
- For the **first time**, the engagement will also explore the physical health needs of veterans to shape improvements in holistic care provision
- Other areas that will be explored, include the health needs of:
 - families and carers of unwell veterans
 - veterans struggling with drug, alcohol and gambling addictions



NHS
The Veterans Mental Health
and Wellbeing Service

**The first call for
help takes courage**
**Op COURAGE: The Veterans
Mental Health and Wellbeing
Service**
Specialist care and support for Service leavers,
reservists, veterans and their families

Visit the NHS website at www.nhs.uk/opcourage

OpCOURAGE

How effective is NHS mental health care for veterans

Since 2017:

- annual referrals to NHS veterans mental health services have doubled
- investment in these services has increased over **6.5 times**, which includes:
 - doubling investment in both the TILS and CTS
 - launching the HIS, which accounts for an additional **£5m**

“Any veterans, or families of veterans, that need help should make Op COURAGE their first port of call. The people that work there really do understand our needs and the help we need.

If you know a veteran in need then please help them make contact with their local Op COURAGE NHS Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service. It will make a massive difference to the care that you need with the support of veterans that have been through the service as well.”

Op COURAGE service user

Support for Ukraine



- A national effort is underway to provide support to Ukraine and to ensure the NHS stands ready to provide further support as needed
- As part of this, outreach and support is being mobilised for veterans impacted by events in Ukraine, as well as for those from the Ukraine and Armed Forces personnel
- Wider NHS help and support is being co-ordinated via national emergency planning, preparedness, resilience and response routes



Thank you and questions

NHS England and NHS Improvement

