

Research Briefing

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# Veterans: Access to health services



## Summary

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- 2 NHS policies for veterans in England
- 3 Mental health support for veterans
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- 5 Support for service-related physical injuries

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## Summary

### Healthcare for veterans

Primary healthcare for service personnel is provided by the Ministry of Defence (MOD). The provision of veterans' healthcare is primarily the responsibility of the NHS. Upon discharge, service leavers should register with a General Practitioner (GP) and provide the GP with their medical records.

The Armed Forces Covenant says veterans have distinct health needs and should receive priority treatment for service-related conditions. The [Support for veterans and their families](#) webpage on gov.uk provides online advice to support these needs, including for both physical and mental health care.

### NHS policies for veterans in England

In 2015, the NHS constitution was updated with a commitment to ensure that “those in the armed forces, reservists, their families and veterans are not disadvantaged in accessing health services in the area they reside”. Further to this, in the 2021 publication [Healthcare for the Armed Forces community: a forward view](#) (PDF), NHS England stated its commitment to:

- help the transition from the armed forces to civilian life
- identify and support veterans
- improve veterans' and their families' mental health

In January 2022, the [Veterans' Strategy Action Plan: 2022-2024](#) said that NHS England would provide £18 million over three years for specified support services, including veteran health services, and that the government would make £5 million available in 2022/23 for a 'Health Innovation Fund'. The action plan further stated that NHS England was working to increase the number of GP practices, NHS trusts, independent providers and hospices that hold 'Veteran Aware' accreditation.

### Mental health support for veterans

In March 2021 the government announced the Op Courage service, creating a [single point to access mental health services](#) and support for veterans. Op

Courage provides mental health care and support. This includes support to recognise and treat early to advanced mental health problems and treatment for substance misuse and addictions. Op Courage will also liaise with other organisations to address wider wellbeing needs and support armed forces families affected by mental health problems. As of 30 June 2024, Op Courage was [actively supporting 2,702 veterans](#).

In Wales, veterans can access specialised mental health support through [Veterans' NHS Wales](#).

Veterans in Scotland can receive mental health treatment through NHS Scotland and can further access support for free through the [Veterans First Point](#) drop-in service.

Veterans in Northern Ireland can contact the Veterans Welfare Service Northern Ireland (VWS NI) to seek support.

## Veterans and suicide prevention

The office for National Statistics (ONS) report on [Suicides in UK armed forces veterans, England and Wales: 2021](#) found that in 2021, in England and Wales, 4.9% people aged 16 years and over in the UK who died by suicide were armed forces veterans. Of these, 94% were male and 6% were female. The ONS did not find evidence of differing rates of suicide between male UK armed forces veterans and the male general population. It did however find that 25 to 44-year-old male UK armed forces veterans had a higher rate of suicide than the same age group in the general population.

A study looking at [suicides among veterans who left the UK Armed Forces between 1996 and 2018](#) was published by the University of Manchester in August 2023. It found that the overall risk of suicide in veterans is not higher than the general population but that the risk among men and women veterans under the age of 25 was two to three times higher than that of the same group in the general population.

In 2023, the then government published its [Suicide prevention strategy for England: 2023 to 2028](#) in 2023. In August 2024 the [government stated that the MOD is currently conducting a study into mortality rates and causes](#), including suicide, of military personnel who served since 2001.

## Support for service-related physical injuries

Information about services for veterans with service-related physical injuries can be found on the [NHS website](#). This includes information on [Op Restore: The Veterans Physical Health and Wellbeing Service](#), which provides services alongside military and civilian clinicians.

In September 2023, [the then government announced it was reinstating the Veterans' Mobility Fund](#) to deliver grants and equipment to veterans with mobility needs linked to their service.

Nine Disablement Service Centres have been set up across England to provide specialist prosthetic and rehabilitation services similar to those provided by the armed forces. As well as this, in 2012 the Veterans Prosthetic Panel was established to provide funding to veterans who have lost a limb during military service.

In Scotland there is a National Specialist Prosthetics (SOTA) Service. The service is focused on the SMART centre in Edinburgh and the WestMARC centre in Glasgow, which are linked to the other limb fitting centres in Aberdeen, Inverness and Dundee.

In Wales, three specialist centres in Cardiff, Swansea and Wrexham provide veterans with [NHS Wales Prosthetic and Amputee Rehabilitation services](#).

In Northern Ireland, veterans can utilise the [Regional Disablement Service](#) which specialises in the rehabilitation of patients who have had an amputation of a limb or limbs.

## 1 Commons Library briefings on veterans' issues

Our [veterans' collection](#) of briefings provide information on support and services available to veterans on a variety of topics including: access to housing, healthcare, employment and benefits, as well as information on compensation and pension schemes. Our briefings explain what the Armed Forces Covenant is and its status in law, the evolution of government policy towards veterans, and veteran-specific legislation.

Our briefings also provide information on how to access service records, maintaining and funding war memorials, how to apply for medals and prominent medal campaigns.

Our [data dashboard](#) shows the number of veterans by constituency and lists the top 20 constituencies with the highest proportion of former armed forces personnel.

# 1 Healthcare for veterans

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) provides primary healthcare for all service personnel. The provision of veterans' healthcare in the UK, including for those affected by post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental health conditions, is primarily the responsibility of the NHS.<sup>1</sup>

Service leavers should ideally register with a GP one to three months before they are discharged, as their GP may be able to access their military medical record before the end of the discharge period. When leaving the armed forces, veterans can get an NHS welcome letter, FMed133A form and a paper copy of their summary medical records. Leavers should give their FMed133A form to their GP when they first visit the surgery, as this includes details of how the GP can obtain their medical records.<sup>2</sup>

For leavers from 2015 onwards, the Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report for 2015 noted an improvement in the system so when a service leaver registers with a GP their medical summary is automatically sent to that surgery.<sup>3</sup>

The Armed Forces Covenant says veterans have distinct health needs and should receive priority treatment where it relates to a condition resulting from service in the armed forces. The Covenant sets the following goals with respect to healthcare:

Veterans should receive priority treatment (subject to the clinical needs of others) in respect of treatment relating to a condition resulting from their service in the Armed Forces; and

Veterans should be able to access mental health professionals who have an understanding of Armed Forces culture.<sup>4</sup>

The Veterans' Gateway was previously used to signpost veterans and their families to support services online. The website has now been retired and replaced by a gov.uk webpage titled [Support for veterans and their families](#), where advice can be found regarding:

- [leaving the armed forces](#), including a leavers checklist and medical considerations

<sup>1</sup> Further background on the armed forces healthcare commissioning landscape can be found on page 6 of NHS England's [Healthcare for the Armed Forces community: a forward view](#) (PDF, March 2021).

<sup>2</sup> NHS website, [Step-by-step guide for service leavers](#)

<sup>3</sup> MOD, [Armed Forces Covenant: Annual Report 2015 \(2015\)](#), (PDF) p18

<sup>4</sup> As above, p17

- [managing illness or injury](#)
- [managing mental health](#)
- [managing disability](#)



## 2

# NHS policies for veterans in England

The NHS Constitution (which applies in England) was updated in 2015 to confirm “the NHS will ensure that in line with the Armed Forces Covenant, those in the armed forces, reservists, their families and veterans are not disadvantaged in accessing health services in the area they reside”.<sup>5</sup>

In March 2019 NHS England published [Armed Forces Personnel in Transition: Integrated Personal Commissioning for Veterans \(IPC4V\) Framework](#), noting it had worked with the Ministry of Defence, armed forces charities, and those with lived experience, to develop it. The [NHS England website](#) says IPC4V provides a personalised care approach, through the support of dedicated veterans’ welfare managers, for those with complex and enduring physical, neurological and mental health conditions attributable to their service. This approach aims to put into place agreed health and wellbeing arrangements while the individual is still serving, ensuring care and support continues as they move into civilian life.<sup>6</sup>

In March 2021 NHS England published [Healthcare for the Armed Forces community: a forward view](#) (PDF), which included a series of commitments, including:

- helping the transition from the armed forces to civilian life
- identifying and supporting veterans
- improving veterans’ and their families’ mental health

## 2.1

# The Veterans’ Strategy Action Plan 2022-2024

The [Veterans’ Strategy Action Plan: 2022-2024](#) (January 2022) said NHS England would provide £18 million over three years for:

- veteran health services, including for armed forces and family single points of contact
- developing clear pathways to support improved access to sexual assault referral centres (SARCs) for serving personnel and veterans
- improving support to veterans in the criminal justice system

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<sup>5</sup> Department of Health and Social Care, [The NHS Constitution for England](#)

<sup>6</sup> NHS England, [Healthcare for the Armed Forces community: a forward view](#), March 2021

It also said the government would make £5 million available in 2022/23 for a ‘Health Innovation Fund’. The strategy action plan said this “will be used to fund a range of projects to improve understanding on how innovative medical treatments or new clinical pathways can be used to better meet veteran healthcare needs”.<sup>7</sup>

The action plan also set out some additional grant funding for service charities to provide mental health support to veterans and their families following the UK withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021.<sup>8</sup>

Responding to the publication of the Veterans’ Strategy Action Plan in 2022, the veteran’s charity Help for Heroes said they were disappointed by its “limited focus on the wounded, injured and sick, and upon improving existing care pathways to deliver a step change in support”, and also noted it made “little mention of social care provision.”<sup>9</sup>

## 2.2

## GP services

The Veterans’ Strategy Action Plan said NHS England is working to ensure all Primary Care Networks<sup>10</sup> have a ‘Veteran Aware’ accredited GP practice, that all NHS trusts in England are accredited as ‘Veteran Aware’ by March 2023, and that independent providers and hospices across England are accredited by 2024.<sup>11</sup> [This series of maps on the NHS Veteran Aware website](#) shows the NHS trusts, independent hospitals, hospices and care homes that have been accredited as ‘Veteran Aware’ by the Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance.

The former Conservative government said in March 2024 that the 2024/25 general practice (GP) contract will require that GPs must have due regard for the requirements, needs, and circumstances of Armed Forces Veterans when offering services and making onward referrals.<sup>12</sup> The Armed Forces Act 2021 also introduced a legal requirement for the NHS to give due regard to the armed forces community. Integrated care boards (ICBs), which are responsible for commissioning and planning healthcare services in their local population, are required to demonstrate how they give due regard to the armed forces community when commissioning healthcare services in England.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Office for Veterans’ Affairs, [Veterans’ Strategy Action Plan 2022-24](#), CP 598, January 2022

<sup>8</sup> As above.

<sup>9</sup> Help for Heroes, [Our Response to the Veterans’ Strategy Action Plan 2022-24](#), 22 January 2022

<sup>10</sup> [Primary Care Networks \(PCNs\)](#) are groups of GP practices, working together with community, mental health, social care, pharmacy, hospital and voluntary services in their local areas. There are around 1,250 PCNs in England, covering populations of around 30,000 to 50,000.

<sup>11</sup> Office for Veterans’ Affairs, [Veterans’ Strategy Action Plan 2022-24](#), CP 598, January 2022

<sup>12</sup> PQ 17714 [on [Health Services: Veterans](#)], 8 March 2024

<sup>13</sup> NHS England, [What ICBs can do to support the Armed Forces community](#) (accessed 28 October 2024)

In March 2024 the then government launched a new campaign to help GPs identify which patients are veterans, to ensure they receive the right diagnosis and referral to veteran mental and physical healthcare services. Its press release noted that the Office for Veterans' Affairs (OVA) is working with NHS England and the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) to encourage more GP practices to become 'Veteran Friendly' accredited. It stated that, as of March 2024, 83.9% of Primary Care Networks in England include an accredited practice.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Gov.uk, [Government delivers further expansion of health services to former armed forces personnel](#), 13 March 2024

## 3

## Mental health support for veterans

### 2 Defence Select Committee inquiries on veterans' mental health

On 25 July 2018, the Defence Committee published the findings from its inquiry into [Mental Health and the Armed Forces \(Part one\)](#).<sup>15</sup> It found evidence that although most veterans do not suffer mental health issues, a myth that ex-military personnel are “mad, bad or sad” continues.

The committee expressed concerns over the quality of government data, waiting times, and inconsistent adherence across the UK to the Armed Forces Covenant principle of priority treatment for service-related health concerns.<sup>16</sup>

The Defence Committee published [a follow-up report](#) in February 2019. It said veterans face wide variations in the quality of treatment available and demand was “swamping available capacity”.<sup>17</sup> The committee also called for the establishment of a specialist centre for the treatment of mental injuries relating to service.<sup>18</sup>

In January 2021, the Defence Committee held two follow up oral evidence sessions, which focused on updates since the reports, additional challenges of the pandemic and the provision of diagnosis and treatment for traumatic brain injury.<sup>19</sup>

## 3.1

## England

### Op Courage

In April 2017, the NHS in England launched the Veterans' Mental Health Transition, Intervention and Liaison Service (TILS). In April 2018, it launched the Veterans' Mental Health Complex Treatment Service (CTS). A High

<sup>15</sup> House of Commons Defence Committee, [Mental Health and the Armed Forces, Part One: The Scale of mental health issues](#), 25 July 2018, HC 813, 2017-19

<sup>16</sup> As above, Summary

<sup>17</sup> House of Commons Defence Committee, [Mental Health and the Armed Forces, Part Two: The Provision of Care](#), 25 February 2019, HC 1481, 2017-19 p57

<sup>18</sup> As above, p57

<sup>19</sup> House of Commons Defence Committee, [Armed Forces and veterans mental health: follow-up](#), 12 and 26 January 2021

Intensity Service (HIS) for veterans launched in some areas from November 2020.

In March 2021, the NHS announced it would roll out the HIS across England and the three services would be renamed as [Op Courage: The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service](#).<sup>20</sup>

In April 2023, these services were combined into one integrated service, to make it easier for veterans and their families to navigate.<sup>21</sup>

Op Courage provides the following services:

- mental health care with [Defence Medical Services](#)
- support to recognise and treat early to advanced mental health problems, including psychological trauma
- support and treatment for substance misuse and addictions
- support to access NHS mental health services such as an NHS talking therapies service
- liaison with other organisations to address wider wellbeing needs such as housing, employment, relationships and finances
- support for armed forces families affected by mental health problems, including help to access local services<sup>22</sup>

Charities supporting veterans can bid for contracts to run services under Op Courage. Johnny Mercer, former Minister for Veterans' Affairs, said in July 2022 that this provides more certainty for charity workers and veterans compared to seeking year-to-year funding.<sup>23</sup>

The government reported in October 2024 that there have been more than 38,500 referrals to Op Courage since its inception (as TILS) in 2017 and that, as of 30 June 2024, Op Courage was actively supporting 2,702 veterans.<sup>24</sup>

In January 2024, NHS England launched a national campaign to raise awareness of Op Courage.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> NHS, [NHS launches 'Op Courage' veterans' mental health service](#), 4 March 2021

<sup>21</sup> Office for Veterans' Affairs, [Veterans' Strategy Action Plan 2022-24](#), CP 598, January 2022

<sup>22</sup> NHS England, [Mental health support for veterans, service leavers and reservists](#) (accessed 23 October 2024)

<sup>23</sup> [HC Deb 14 July 2022](#) (c471)

<sup>24</sup> PQ 8023 [on [Mental Health Services: Veterans](#)], 8 October 2024

<sup>25</sup> NHS England, [NHS expands mental health support for veterans with more than half saying it's hard to speak up](#), 9 January 2024

To be eligible for support from any of the services under Op Courage, veterans must:

- be a resident in England and have served in the UK armed forces for a full day,
- be registered with a GP practice in England (or willing and eligible to [register with a GP](#)), and
- provide their military service number.

People can receive support regardless of how long it has been since they left the forces. Serving personnel can also contact Op Courage if they have a discharge date.<sup>26</sup>

The contact details for regional Op Courage services are available on the [NHS webpage on mental health support for veterans, service leavers and reservists](#).

Veterans can also access regular [NHS mental health services](#), such as NHS talking therapies.

Further detail on mental health support for veterans and their families is available online from:

- Gov.uk, [Mental health support for the UK armed forces](#)
- Gov.uk, [Managing your mental health as a veteran](#)

## Spending on veterans' mental health services

In February 2024, the then government said the planned spend on veterans' mental health services for 2023/24 is £23.5 million.<sup>27</sup>

As set out in the table below, a response to a parliamentary question in September 2022 set out [NHS England's expenditure on bespoke veterans' mental health services](#), including Op Courage, since 2013/14. Information on expenditure prior to 2013/14 is not held centrally.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> NHS England, [Mental health support for veterans, service leavers and reservists](#) (Accessed 23 October 2024)

<sup>27</sup> PQ 15062 [on [Post-traumatic Stress Disorder: Veterans](#)], 21 February 2024

<sup>28</sup> PQ 40886 [on [Veterans: Mental health services](#)], 20 July 2022

### NHS England expenditure on veterans' mental health services

Year	£ millions
2013/14	4.7
2014/15	4.7
2015/16	5.8
2016/17	5.8
2017/18	6.1
2018/19	6.9
2019/20	11.1
2020/21	18.2
2021/22	18.7
2022/23	22.3

Source: PQ 40886 [on [Veterans: Mental Health Services](#)], 5 September 2022

In the 2023 Autumn Statement, the government announced an additional £10 million to support the Veterans' Places, Pathways and People Programme, funded through the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust Veterans' Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund, to enable it to become self-sustaining.<sup>29</sup> The programme awards grants to projects working regionally to develop joined up support for veterans with mental health needs.<sup>30</sup>

## 3.2

### Wales

[Veterans' NHS Wales](#) is a specialised, priority service supporting veterans with mental health difficulties relating to their time in the armed forces. Each Local Health Board in Wales has a veteran therapist available. This is an experienced clinician with an interest in, or experience of, military mental health problems. Referrals can be made through health care staff, the GP, veteran charities or self-referral. It is not an emergency service and does not respond to urgent referrals.

## 3.3

### Scotland

Veterans in Scotland can receive mental health treatment through NHS Scotland. Veterans should contact their GP, who can refer them on for the most appropriate treatment depending on their needs.

<sup>29</sup> HM Treasury, [Autumn Statement 2023](#), 30 November 2023

<sup>30</sup> The Armed Forces Covenant Fund and Trust, [Veterans' Places, Pathways and People programme](#) (accessed 9 May 2024)

Veterans can also access support through [Veterans First Point](#), a drop-in service for all veterans' needs, which is provided for free as part of the NHS.

## 3.4 Northern Ireland

Veterans in Northern Ireland can contact the Veterans Welfare Service Northern Ireland (VWS NI) to seek support. Specialist physical and mental healthcare is available to veterans for conditions caused or worsened by military service.<sup>31</sup>

The Northern Ireland Veterans Commissioner's Office has a [page guiding veterans on where to get help](#), which lists sources of support in the voluntary and community sector.

In October 2023, the Office for Veterans' Affairs announced an 18-month pilot of a new medical and welfare service for veterans in Northern Ireland. The service will link veterans with local services and provide advice on physical health issues and mental health support.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> MOD, [Support for veterans and their families in Northern Ireland](#), 12 September 2024

<sup>32</sup> Office for Veterans Affairs press release, [New medical and welfare services for veterans living in Northern Ireland](#), 20 October 2023



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## 4 Veterans and suicide prevention

### 4.1 ONS analysis of official statistics from 2021

In April 2024, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) published statistics on suicide rates among UK armed forces veterans in England and Wales, based on death registration records linked to the 2021 census and the Ministry of Defence Service Leavers Database.<sup>33</sup>

The statistics are based on information on deaths that occurred in 2021 and were registered up to the end of 2022. Due to registration delays, some suicides that occurred in 2021 and were not registered by the end of 2022 will not be included in the analysis. The statistics are official statistics in development, which means the methodology is new and subject to future review.

The ONS found that in 2021, in England and Wales, 253 out of 5,175 people aged 16 years and over in the UK who died by suicide were armed forces veterans (4.9%). Of these, 94% (237) were male and 6% (16) were female.

After accounting for age, the ONS found no evidence of a difference in the rate of suicide between male UK armed forces veterans and the male general population. However, male UK armed forces veterans between 25 and 44 years old had a higher rate of suicide compared with the same age group in the general population.

### 4.2 Academic study of suicides between 1996 and 2018

In August 2023, the University of Manchester published a study looking at [suicides among veterans who left the UK Armed Forces between 1996 and 2018](#). The study, funded by the Ministry of Defence and NHS England, found the overall risk of suicide in veterans is not higher than the general population. However, the risk among men and women veterans under the age of 25 was two to three times higher than the same group in the general population.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> ONS, [Suicides in UK armed forces veterans, England and Wales](#), 5 April 2024

<sup>34</sup> Cathryn Rodway and others, [Suicide after leaving the UK Armed Forces 1996–2018: A cohort study](#), PLOS Medicine, 8 August 2023

The study identified being male, serving in the army, being untrained on discharge and serving for less than 10 years as risk factors for suicide among veterans of the UK Armed Forces. A quarter of veterans who died by suicide had been in contact with mental health services in the year before their death.<sup>35</sup>

The study is part of a wider body of research on this topic, including work to identify risk factors outside of service-related issues and the development of an Armed Forces Suicide Bereavement pack for families.<sup>36</sup>

## 4.3 Government data collection to study suicide rates among veterans

In November 2022, the Office for Veterans' Affairs published a [Data and research framework 2022 to 2028](#). It said the Office for National Statistics has been commissioned to undertake a study looking into veteran suicides between 2011 and 2021 to identify new insights, trends and comparisons with the general population.<sup>37</sup>

The then government's 2023 [Suicide prevention strategy for England: 2023 to 2028](#) said that government departments will commission research and data linkage projects, including on suicide rates in veterans.<sup>38</sup>

In August 2024 the government stated that the MOD is currently conducting a study into mortality rates and causes, including suicide, of military personnel who served since 2001, and that a Defence Suicide Register has been launched to better understand individual circumstances surrounding deaths.<sup>39</sup>

The charity Samaritans in April 2024 called for the government to improve data on veteran suicides and commission more research into risk factors for this group. It has also called for a targeted campaign and support for those most at risk, in particular young veterans, and improved data sharing between Armed Forces and civilian health services.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> [As above](#)

<sup>36</sup> Office for Veterans Affairs press release, [New figures provide latest data on veterans suicide](#), 16 December 2022

<sup>37</sup> Office for Veterans' Affairs, [Data and Research Framework 2022 to 2028](#), 24 November 2022, p6

<sup>38</sup> DHSC, [Suicide prevention in England: 5-year cross-sector strategy](#), 11 September 2023

<sup>39</sup> PQ 1772 [on [Armed Forces: Suicide](#)], 25 July 2024

<sup>40</sup> Samaritans, [Samaritan's policy position on veterans and armed forces suicide](#), April 2024

## 5

## Support for service-related physical injuries

The [NHS website](#) provides information on services for veterans with service related physical injuries, including information on Op Restore: The Veterans Physical Health and Wellbeing Service.<sup>41</sup> Op Restore provides services in selected NHS health centres across England, from military and civilian clinicians who understand the nature and context of service-related injuries. The NHS website says Op Restore works closely with organisations including:

- GP surgeries
- specialist NHS services
- military and non-military charities

It provides personalised treatment and supports families and carers of veterans with physical health problems to access services. Referrals to Op Restore can be made by individual veterans' GPs.<sup>42</sup>

In September 2023 the then government announced it was reinstating the Veterans' Mobility Fund, providing £2.52 million to provide veterans across the UK with mobility equipment (the previous London Interbank Offered Rate-funded veterans' mobility fund had ended in 2021).<sup>43</sup> The Veterans' Mobility Fund will deliver grants and equipment to veterans with mobility needs linked to their service. This includes mobility aids that are not usually available through the NHS, such as specialist wheelchairs and mobility scooters, and different orthotics such as splints and braces.<sup>44</sup>

Applications to the fund, which is administered by the charities Help for Heroes and Blesma, were opened in March 2024.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Op Restore was previously known as the Veterans Trauma Network (VTN). The name was changed in June 2023 to bring the service in line with other Armed Forces healthcare services provided by the NHS in England, Op Courage: The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service; Op Nova; Supporting Veterans in the Justice System and Op Community; Armed Forces Community Support.

<sup>42</sup> NHS webpage, [Veterans, service leavers, and non-mobilised reservists](#)

<sup>43</sup> In 2012, an investigation was launched into the manipulation of the London Interbank Offered Rate (LIBOR). This ultimately resulted in a number of international banks receiving fines. This money was then used for the benefit of the public.

<sup>44</sup> Gov.uk, [Fund reinstated to deliver specialist mobility equipment for seriously injured veterans](#), 29 September 2023

<sup>45</sup> See for example, Help For Heroes, [Veterans Mobility Fund](#)

## 5.1

# Prosthetics

## England

Following a 2011 report by Dr Andrew Murrison MP, [A better deal for military amputees \(PDF\)](#), nine Disablement Service Centres (DSCs) were set up across England to provide specialist prosthetic and rehabilitation services similar to those provided by the armed forces.

In addition, the Veterans Prosthetic Panel was established in 2012 to provide funding to veterans who have lost a limb during military service (or whose limb loss is attributable to an injury sustained while in service). This provides additional funding for treatment not normally provided by the NHS. Applications are made through a Disablement Service Centre.

Further information can be found on the [NHS website](#).

## Scotland

Scotland operates a National Specialist Prosthetics (SOTA) Service, focused on two specialist centres in Edinburgh (the SMART centre) and Glasgow (the WestMARC centre).<sup>46</sup> These have links to the other limb fitting centres in Aberdeen, Inverness and Dundee.

The Scottish Government says that those who feel state-of-the-art prosthetics would be beneficial to them and would be clinically appropriate should register their interest with their local prosthetics centre.<sup>47</sup>

## Wales

The Welsh Government has committed to ensuring veterans receive the same quality prosthetic limbs as service personnel.<sup>48</sup> [NHS Wales Prosthetic and Amputee Rehabilitation services](#) are delivered by three specialist centres, located in Cardiff, Swansea and Wrexham. This is coordinated by the Welsh Government Armed Forces Prosthetics forum, which consists of NHS Wales, Blesma, Welsh Health and Limb Centre leads.<sup>49</sup> More information about this collaborative approach can be found on the [Blesma website](#).

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<sup>46</sup> National Services Scotland, [Specialist prosthetics](#), 7 February 2024

<sup>47</sup> Scottish Government, [State-of-the-Art Prosthetics for Veterans](#), 2013

<sup>48</sup> MOD, [Armed Forces Covenant: Annual Report 2015](#) (PDF) p25

<sup>49</sup> Armed Forces Covenant, [The Armed Forces Covenant and Veterans Annual Report 2023](#) (PDF), p44, December 2023

## Northern Ireland


The [Regional Disablement Service](#) in Northern Ireland specialises in the rehabilitation of patients, including veterans, who have had an amputation of a limb or limbs.

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