

Briefing

24 April 2020

Armed Forces health – COVID-19

The NHS has a duty to deliver on a number of health commitments for the Armed Forces community (service personnel (regular and reserves), veterans and their families), to meet the obligations of the [Armed Forces Covenant](#) and principle four of the [NHS Constitution](#). Our priority during the outbreak of COVID-19 is to ensure that those who require NHS services can access them as easily and safely as possible.

We will be sending out this briefing every week to keep you up-to-date with the provision of NHS services for the Armed Forces community, as well as latest guidance.

Thank you for your continued support.

Latest COVID-19 information and guidance

- [Leading through COVID-19: supporting health and care leaders in unprecedented times](#)
- [Flowchart describing return to work following a SARS-CoV-2 test](#)
- [Easy Read COVID-19 Glossary](#)
- While families across the country try to adapt to coronavirus isolation keeping them apart, the children of military personnel give some tips on how to get through it. You can watch the video [here](#).
- As Muslims begin to prepare for the month of Ramadan, the NHS is reminding those who observe the Islamic holy month to avoid social gatherings because of the risk of COVID-19. [Read about how to support staff during Ramadan and Eid-ul-Fitr.](#)
- The Home Office has launched a campaign raising awareness of the support available to those suffering from domestic abuse and that isolation rules do not apply in these cases. [You can find campaign assets here.](#)
- Patients who might need support while self-isolating can be referred to NHS Volunteer Responders for help with tasks such as collecting shopping and prescribed medicines or driving patients to medical appointments. Referrals can be made through the [NHS Volunteer Responders referrers' portal](#) or by calling 0808 196 3382. The scheme will soon be open for self-referrals. People who have been advised to shield and received a

letter asking them to self-isolate can ask volunteers for short-term help by calling 0808 196 3646 between 8am - 8pm. Please pass this number on to those who could benefit from this support.

- Listen to the [Declassified podcast interview](#) with Dr Jonathan Leach, Medical Director for Armed Forces Health, NHS England and NHS Improvement, who talks about COVID-19 – what it is, how it affects your immune system, how to stay safe and how military lessons are informing the response to the pandemic. He also provides information on the NHS veterans' mental health services.

NHS healthcare for veterans and the Armed Forces community during COVID- 19

- Information about the **Veterans' Mental Health Transition, Intervention and Liaison Service (TILS) and the Veterans' Mental Health Complex Treatment Services (CTS)** is being included in a newsletter to 111 call handlers next week. The article encourages call handlers to identify whether a caller or their partner is a veteran and if they are struggling with their mental health, to let them know about the TILS and CTS, which continue to provide care and support during COVID-19.
- **Reading Force** is a charity which supports Armed Forces families through separation, isolation and change. It uses shared-reading as a means of promoting better communication within families and is proving a great resource during the COVID-19 lockdown. The Armed Forces community can register with the charity at <https://www.readingforce.org.uk/> and will then be sent a free reading scrapbook to work on with their family and an age-appropriate book. The project is open to the entire Armed Forces community and participation is completely free.

Supporting the NHS

If you have facilities and / or resources that could potentially be used to support the NHS, please complete an online form here: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/L5B32S/>

The NHS is also seeking members of the public who would like to help on a voluntary basis. Find out more about our [NHS voluntary responders programme](#).