

# Briefing

5 February 2021

## Armed Forces healthcare briefing and latest updates on COVID-19

This fortnightly brief is intended to keep you up-to-date on the provision of NHS services for the Armed Forces community, as well as latest information and guidance relating to COVID-19.

### COVID-19 updates

#### COVID-19 vaccination priority groups

This week it was confirmed that the NHS has now offered the COVID-19 vaccine to every eligible care home resident across England.

People vaccinated in the UK up to and including 3 February 2021:

- **First dose: 10,490,487**
- **Second dose: 501,957**

Daily updates are available on the official UK Government website for [data and insights](#) on Coronavirus (COVID-19). You can also keep up to date with daily [vaccination data](#).

#### COVID-19 vaccination letters to Clinically Extremely Vulnerable people

From Wednesday 3 February, people aged 18 and over in the clinically extremely vulnerable cohort (as identified through the Shielded Patient List) will start to receive letters from the national call/recall service inviting them to book their COVID-19 vaccine at a vaccination centre or community pharmacy. The letters explain that people have a choice of where to get vaccinated and can choose to wait for their GP services to contact them directly, if they haven't already, or book into a vaccination centre or community pharmacy.

The order in which people will be offered the vaccine is based on advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). [Read the latest JCVI advice on priority groups for the COVID-19 vaccination on GOV.UK](#)

#### Vaccination advice if you're of childbearing age, pregnant or breastfeeding

Public Health England have issued '[A guide to COVID-19 vaccination](#)' for women who are of childbearing age and those currently pregnant or breastfeeding.

The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and the Royal College of Midwives have issued a statement on the [COVID-19 vaccine and fertility](#).

## Wait to be contacted

As a reminder, the NHS will contact you when it's your turn to have the coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination. When it's your turn, you'll be [contacted](#) by letter, text or email with information on how to book your appointment. It's important not to contact the NHS before then. More people are being offered the vaccine every week.

To stay up to date with the latest news and information on the vaccine, please visit the [NHS website](#). Please see [here](#) for documents relating to the vaccination programme, as well as Public Health England [COVID-19 vaccine campaign resources](#).

## Webinar: How can the voluntary care sector support hospitals to discharge patients? 9 February 2021, 12pm – 1pm

[This webinar](#), hosted by the Care and Health Improvement Programme at the Local Government Association and the British Red Cross, in partnership with the Better Care Fund Team, brings together health and social care commissioners and voluntary care sector organisations to consider how they can collaborate to support effective hospital discharge and enable more people to recover safely at home.

## Armed Forces and NHS partnership during the pandemic

Forces.net has published an article highlighting the pivotal role the partnership between the [Armed Forces and the NHS](#) has played in the response to the pandemic.

Working with NHS Employers, '[Step into Health](#)', NHS organisations have shared how positive and valuable their experiences have been working with military colleagues.

## Armed Forces community information

### Captain Sir Tom Moore

Our thoughts this week are with the family and friends of [Captain Sir Tom Moore](#), Army veteran and inspirational role model who sadly died this week. He touched the hearts of the UK when he set out to raise money for NHS charities by walking 100 laps of his Bedfordshire garden before his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, during the first lockdown in spring 2020. He had initially set out to raise £1,000, but instead raised £32,794,701 from more than 1.5 million supporters.

### The Armed Forces Bill

New legislation to help ensure Armed Forces personnel, veterans and their families are not disadvantaged by their service when accessing key public services was introduced in the House of Commons on 26 January 2021.

- The [Armed Forces Bill](#) will enshrine the [Armed Forces Covenant](#) in law and help prevent service personnel and veterans being disadvantaged when accessing services like healthcare, education and housing
- The Bill will improve the Service Justice System for our personnel wherever they are operating.

Focusing on healthcare, housing and education, the Bill will increase awareness among public bodies of the unique nature of military service, improving the level of service for members of the Armed Forces community, no matter where in the UK they live.

### **Defence select committee**

On 26 January 2021, the second formal meeting of the [Defence Select Committee](#) revisited its inquiry in the last Parliament into the provision of mental health care for the Armed Forces and veterans to see what progress has been made on its recommendations and how the system has responded to the pandemic. This followed the first formal meeting on 12 January 2021. For a transcript of the second session, visit [here](#).

### **Facing Loneliness Together Event**

[The Royal British Legion](#) and [The Jo Cox Foundation](#) are holding an event on Tuesday 23 February from 11:00am - 12:00pm to raise awareness and reduce the stigma of loneliness and social isolation amongst members of the Armed Forces, veterans, their families, and carers. More details and registration is via the [Eventbrite](#) page. If you have any questions in the meantime, please email [socialisolation@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:socialisolation@britishlegion.org.uk)

### **Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Awareness week**

This week (1-7 February) is Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Awareness Week – an opportunity to raise awareness of abuse which can leave victims and survivors isolated and traumatised.

It's estimated that 20% of women and 4% of men have experienced some type of sexual assault since the age of 16, equivalent to 3.4 million female and 631,000 male victims. The aim of this week is to promote services that support survivors of sexual abuse, share ways to prevent sexual assault and support those who are survivors of sexual abuse.

Sexual assault referral centres (SARCs) offer confidential and non-judgmental support. They provide medical, practical and emotional care and advice following sexual assault and abuse, regardless of when the incident occurred. Victims and survivors don't need to report what's happened to the police to visit a SARC; staff will support them to make the decision that works best for them.

SARCs are available across the country, 24-7, and continue to be open through the COVID-19 pandemic.

You can find your local sexual assault referral centre here: [Find Rape and sexual assault referral centres services - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)