

Briefing

14 May 2021

Armed Forces healthcare briefing and latest updates on COVID-19

This 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

The NHS continues to deliver the COVID-19 vaccination programme. In England, the vaccine is being offered in some hospitals and pharmacies, at local centres run by GPs and at larger vaccination centres.

[A Beacon of Hope: The UK Vaccine Story](#)

The Government has shared a new vaccination film called [The Beacon of Hope](#), which covers the story of the development and delivery of the COVID-19 vaccine. There is also a short advert running on primetime television.

This film covers some extraordinary moments in the journey to create a vaccine, shining the light on our NHS people and the pivotal part they've played in saving lives.

[New advice on COVID-19 vaccination for pregnant women](#)

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has [updated its guidance](#), in relation to COVID-19 vaccination during pregnancy and the actions to take. There's no evidence that the COVID-19 vaccine has any effect on a person's chances of becoming pregnant. There's no need to avoid pregnancy after vaccination.

[Reports of very rare blood clots](#)

The latest information on COVID-19 vaccination and blood clotting is available on [GOV.UK](#).

Health and wellbeing updates

[NHS Chief Sir Simon Stevens to stand down this summer](#)

Sir Simon Stevens has decided to step down as the chief executive of NHS England and NHS Improvement. It's a testament to what he's achieved that he's been called 'the most important figure in NHS history since Nye Bevan'. Simon has been an inspiring leader and completely devoted to the role. We will miss him greatly but wish him every success for the future.

[Mental Health Awareness Week 2021](#)

Mental Health Awareness Week takes place from 10 to 16 May 2021. This year, the theme is the ['5 Ways to Wellbeing'](#) and reconnecting with nature. The '5 Ways to Wellbeing' are a set

of pillars which are key to improving our mental health. Modelled by the New Economics Foundation, they're geared around themes of social connectedness, physical activity, awareness, learning, and giving. Read more here.

Op COURAGE: The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service, is being widely promoted during Mental Health Awareness Week, via social media, newsletter articles and through an Op COURAGE feature in [Civvy Street magazine](#), which they are promoting via their website and [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts.

Please support by sharing the Civvy Street social media posts and our posts on the [NHS England and NHS Improvement Twitter](#) account, or create your own using the suggested copy below and sharing a social media asset (attached to the briefing):

Example social media copy:

Op COURAGE: The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service
Specialist care and support for Service leavers, reservists, veterans and their families
www.nhs.uk/opcourage #OpCourage #NHS #Veterans #MentalHealthAwarenessWeek

Op COURAGE: The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service

In support of helping more veterans seek help from Op COURAGE: The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service, the London region has produced the following series of videos:

- Episode one: [Who are Veterans?](#)
- Episode two: [Military Culture](#)
- Episode three: [Veterans and the Criminal Justice System](#)
- Episode four: [The Officer and Op COURAGE](#)
- Episode five: [Veterans and Op COURAGE](#)

The Leeds & York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust have also recently launched a three minute [animation](#) which shows how Op COURAGE supports armed forces veterans in mental health crisis across the North of England.

Help improve the NHS website

NHS Digital are working to improve the information about Armed Forces healthcare on the NHS website. You can help them to make sure this information is clear and easy to navigate by completing a [short online survey](#) and research activity.

The activity takes 10-15 minutes and your responses will help shape how the information is organised and what is included on the website. The deadline for responding is 5.00pm on Tuesday 18 May 2021.

Mesothelioma UK Celebrates Armed Forces Day 2021

Mesothelioma UK - Supporting our Armed Forces is hosting a webinar on Thursday 24 June 2021 at 4pm to celebrate Armed Forces Day 2021.

Event attendees will find out more about the project, outcomes from the mesothelioma and the Armed Forces study, and can hear about the planned sculpture at the National Memorial Arboretum. [Event registration](#) is open now.

Participants wanted for Universal Credit system research

Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT) would like to speak to UK Armed Forces Service leavers, veterans and full-time reservists who are living in England and are currently in receipt of Universal Credit. The research seeks to understand how Service leavers/veterans are experiencing navigating the transformed Universal Credit system. The research is part of a bigger project called **Sanctions, Support and Service Leavers**.

For more information or to take part, contact Phil Martin on 07901 573 285 or by email at p.martin5@salford.ac.uk.