

Please see below the **NHS Armed Forces Community Information** update for the week ending the 9th April 2021.

Op COURAGE: The New 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 a series of videos with 'On Parade'.

- Episode one: Who are Veterans?
- Episode two: Military Culture
- Episode three: Veterans and the Criminal Justice System

Two more episodes in the series will follow on 14 and 21 of April 2021. 'On Parade' also produce a regular chat show discussing issues facing veterans, the latest Episode 11.

<https://www.candi.nhs.uk/news/watch-our-new-video-series-illustrating-veterans-experiences>

Op COURAGE Flexible Appointments

The veterans mental health and wellbeing service continues to support veterans during the COVID-19 pandemic and offers flexible appointments to suit individual circumstances. Contact Op COURAGE in your region for more information.

To make a self or professional referral to the veterans service please call Mental Health Matters, who operate a referral line on 0300 323 0137. This line is open 9am-9pm 7 days a week.

If you are a Veteran needing support out of working hours you can call the Mental Health Matters Emotional helpline 24/7 on 0300 323 0139.

Veterans Trauma Network (VTN) engagement

Following the well-received launch of Op COURAGE: The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service, feedback from several veterans and those supporting them suggested that a similar naming approach should be used for the Veterans Trauma Network (VTN). NHS England and NHS Improvement would like to hear from veterans and their families, as well as colleagues working with and supporting them to take part in a small virtual focus group, completing an online questionnaire or having a one to one phone / virtual chat.

Focus groups will be held for:

- Veterans who have used / are using the VTN (family members are welcome too).
- Veterans who have not used the VTN (family members are welcome too).

- Clinicians and staff working within a VTN
- Representatives from organisations working with and supporting veterans.

The engagement will launch on Monday 12 April 2021 and end on Friday 14 May 2021. Submit your expression of interest to carrie.fleming@nhs.net if you:

- Would like to take part in the engagement and state how you would like to participate, i.e. by focus group, questionnaire or one to one chat.
- Can help identify patients, veterans and their families who would like to take part in this engagement.

Shell Shock Livestream - Film and Themed Live Expert Panel Events

Shell Shock Media CIC, in partnership with NHS Armed Forces Networks: Sussex, Kent & Medway, SSAFA and Changing Minds Changing Lives and supported by The National Lottery Community Together Fund, will be hosting an on-line adaptation of the award-winning Shell Shock play starring Tim Marriott, with a live panel session afterwards. Upcoming event dates and live panel sessions:

- 15 April 2021 – Panel theme: Moral injury and blue-light services with expert panellists: Kelly Drewry from MIND Bluelight Programme and representatives from Kent Fire Brigade and Sussex Police.
- 20 May 2021 - Panel theme: LGBTQ+ with expert panellists: Craig and Caroline from the dedicated charity, Fighting with Pride.
- 11 June 2021 - Panel theme: Moral Injury in the armed services with expert panellists: Prof Neil Greenberg and Dr Victoria Williamson from King's Centre for Military Health Research (KCMHR).

Armed Forces Suicide Bereavement Support

Suicide Bereavement UK have been commissioned by NHS England and NHS Improvement, to develop an evidence-based Armed Forces suicide bereavement pack. A study will be conducted on the experiences and needs of relatives, friends and colleagues of military personnel who have died by suicide whilst serving, or after service in the Armed Forces. For more information on the study contact: paul.gham@suicidebereavementuk.com