

Briefing

30 March 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), as set out in the [Armed Forces Covenant](#), principle four of the [NHS Constitution](#) and the [NHS Long Term Plan](#). 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.

COVID-19 information and guidance

A range of advice for health professionals and other organisations has been produced, which is available via the following links:

- [Government advice on COVID-19](#) and [complete list of all guidance](#)
- [NHS England and NHS Improvement \(NHSE/I\) COVID-19 web pages - information for clinicians](#)
- [COVID-19: guidance on shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable](#)

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

- **Non-urgent elective** services have been postponed for three months across providers of NHS funded care.
- **Primary care:** The NHS is working closely with Defence Medical Services to ensure COVID-19 information and guidance is shared with and followed by Defence Primary Care as appropriate.
- Access to **prosthetics services** is likely to be impacted, with providers reducing services to a minimal level to support social distancing. Some prosthetics support will continue, but will vary across services.

- **Veterans Trauma Network:** All elective activity is postponed, however requests for advice and guidance will continue to be supported.
- **Veterans' Mental Health Transition, Intervention and Liaison Service (TILS) and Veterans' Mental Health Complex Treatment Services (CTS) provision**
 - TILS and CTS providers are maintaining deliverable services, which are being provided remotely and in the main via telephone and online platforms.
 - IAPT continues to be available to veterans.
 - Reviews are ongoing in response to changing national guidance, issues and risks, as well as for those veterans pausing or considering pausing treatment.
- The NHS is working with **Armed Forces charities**, including Cobseo and its mental health cluster group, Contact, to co-ordinate care provision across organisations and minimise service disruption as far as possible.

Supporting the NHS

The virus has the potential to put huge additional demand on our NHS and our fellow citizens. Your support will make more of a difference than ever before, not just to patients, but to colleagues and the wider community.

We are working closely with regulators ([General Medical Council](#), [Nursing and Midwifery Council](#), [Health and Care Professions Council](#) and [General Pharmaceutical Council](#)) who are contacting as many of their existing and former registrants as possible. If you have previously left the NHS either temporarily or permanently, are currently registered in private practice or are in a non-patient facing role, you may be one of those contacted.

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](#).