

When you register with a GP you need to inform them of your veteran status in order to benefit from priority treatment.

If you have concerns regarding mental health, even if any symptoms have not been present for some time after leaving the service, you should be able to access support with health professionals who understand the Armed Forces culture – go to your GP in the first instance.

You can get free NHS prescriptions if, at the time the prescription is dispensed, you hold a valid war pension exemption certificate and the prescription is for your accepted disability (or if you meet any of the other exemption criteria as shown: <http://www.nhs.uk/nhsengland/Healthcosts/pages/Prescriptioncosts.aspx>)

For further information about veterans healthcare:

<http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Militaryhealthcare/Veteranshealthcare/Pages/veterans.aspx>

#### **For Reservists**

Reservists should not de-register with their NHS GP on mobilisation.

#### **For Forces' Families**

For family members, primary healthcare is mostly provided through local primary care services in the community - GPs, NHS-walk-in centres, dentists, pharmacists etc, but in some places may be provided by the Ministry of Defence (e.g. when accompanying Service personnel posted overseas).

## **Healthcare advice for the Armed Forces Community**



## **Access to healthcare – What am I entitled to?**

It is fully recognised that Military personnel put themselves in harms way in the service of their country and it is a key principle of all healthcare providers that they should be able to access timely, comprehensive and effective healthcare.

The Armed Forces Community Covenant includes various commitments to military personnel past and present. In terms of healthcare it promises that: The Armed Forces Community should enjoy the same standard of, and access to, healthcare as that received by the general population in the area they live

## **Who is responsible for meeting this commitment?**

Depending on the level of care required and your current status your care could be provided by either NHS England or the Ministry of Defence.

Within the NHS different organisations have overall responsibility for the provision of healthcare depending on the level required. Clinical Commissioning Groups are responsible for primary healthcare services, such as GPs, walk-in centres and dental. Secondary care is provided by Hospital Trusts.

### **For Serving Personnel**

For serving personnel, including mobilised reservists, primary healthcare is provided by the MOD, whilst secondary care (i.e. hospital treatment) is commissioned by NHS England. Personnel injured on operations should be treated in conditions which recognise

the specific needs of Service personnel, normally involving a dedicated military ward, where this is appropriate, and medical rehabilitation in MOD facilities.

If you have been referred for hospital treatment and are posted to a different part of the UK this should not affect how long you wait for your treatment as you should keep your relative position on any NHS waiting list.

### **For Veterans**

When servicemen and women leave the armed forces, their healthcare is the responsibility of the NHS. All veterans should receive priority access to NHS secondary care for any conditions which are likely to be related to their service, subject to the clinical needs of all patients. (Reference NHS Guidelines HSG (97) 31 Updated Feb 2010 (Gateway ref 13406)