

KEEPING OURSELVES AND OUR LOVED ONES SAFE

As we begin Lockdown 2.0 and prepare for Christmas it's even more important that we continue to follow the latest guidance to help keep ourselves and our loved ones safe.

The winter months also bring with them their usual bugs and viruses from the common cold to flu. The flu vaccine programme has been expanded this year to include more eligible groups including those who are a household contact of a person asked to shield and also expanding the school vaccine programme to also include year 7 for the first time. If you are eligible for a free flu vaccine, your GP will be in touch with you to make your appointment.

To help protect yourself from COVID and other winter viruses, remember: hands, face, space. Regularly wash your hands, cover your face if you can and keep 2 metres apart from people not from your household or 'bubble'.

Once we come out of Lockdown we will need to remember COVID-19 rules for meeting and visiting people, especially for Christmas and the New Year.

For the latest COVID-19 guidance, visit:
warwickshire.gov.uk/coronavirus

For more information about the flu vaccine, visit:
nhs.uk/flu

**let's do the
right thing**
for our Armed Forces Family

If you do have friends or family in your house, you should:

- Follow social distancing rules and continue to stay 2 metres apart
- Regularly wash your hands
- Do not share cups, cutlery or crockery
- Clean and disinfect any shared surfaces and wash any shared towels
- Keep windows open and allow for ventilation
- Meet people outdoors where practical

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LEST WE FORGET: LT.CDR CLLR BOB STEVENS RN (RET'D)

It is with great regret that we inform you that Cllr Bob Stevens, Chair of the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Armed Forces Covenant partnership passed away on the 31st July.

Cllr Stevens was the Chair of the partnership since its formation in 2012 and was a great advocate for supporting the Armed Forces community. He was closely involved with Gallanos House in Southam, a care home for those with connections to the Forces as well as Poppy Lodge, a similar facility in the area specialising in care for ex-Armed Forces personnel with dementia.

Cllr Izzi Seccombe, Leader of Warwickshire County Council said "Councillor Bob Stevens has been a passionate champion for the Armed Forces and their value in society. As Chairman, he was able to bring his experience into the world of local government and how we respond to the needs of ex-servicemen and their families. He will be very much missed by all who knew him."



Cllr Stevens with Chief Petty Officer Freeman



Cllr Stevens with HRH Prince Charles at a visit to the VCP

Cllr Stevens championed the cause of the Covenant and, in one of his last pieces of work at Warwickshire County Council, supported the passing of the 'Supporting Armed Forces in Employment' policy. This paved the way for the Council to receive the Defence Employer Recognition Gold Award announced earlier this year.

Cllr Stevens was also a champion for the Veterans Contact Point (VCP) and, in particular, supporting those veterans involved in the Criminal Justice System. Earlier in the year, Cllr Stevens met HRH Prince Charles during his visit to the VCP.

THANK YOU TO THE ARMED FORCES FOR THEIR SUPPORT WITH TACKLING THE COVID PANDEMIC

As we all adjust to Lockdown 2.0 it is worth reflecting on, and giving thanks to, our Armed Forces who have performed magnificently both nationally and locally. Those of us who are ex-Armed Forces, and been involved in one 'emergency' or another during our Service, will understand the dedication, willingness and professionalism of the young men and women who make up our Armed Forces today.

#WeSaluteYou

During the first lockdown in Warwickshire we had Lt. Chris Haydock from 9 Regt. Army Air Corps and Flying Officer Jasper Chamberlain RAF support the work of the Warwickshire Shielding Hub. They contributed to logistical and planning

operations, ensuring up to 1,200 boxes of essential items each week, reached people who couldn't leave their homes.

With the hub winding down Lt. Haydock was moved onto supporting the Test and Trace developments within Warwickshire. The Armed Forces were also involved in creating a number of NHS Nightingale hospitals around the UK, contributing to the Test and Trace system and working in communities to encourage individuals to take a Covid test.

As of 30th October there were 547 military personnel committed to 35 'Military Aid to the Civillian Authorities' requests plus an additional 7500 on standby as part of the Covid 19 winter preparedness package.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY AND REMEMBRANCE DAY

Remembrance events this year will look and feel very different. For the first time in history, the annual ceremony at the Cenotaph will be closed to members of the public, with people encouraged instead to join together for a national moment of silence at 11am as the service is broadcast nationwide.

There are very few events taking place this year.



SILVER LINING FOR SINGERS



A silver lining for the Kineton Military Wives Choir is that Covid has forced them to move to new premises, which gives them a fabulous place for singing and wider access to the community.

Having started in early 2020 Covid put a halt to their singing, but arrangements have been put in place for them to sing at the Chapel of Ease in Northend, Burton Dassett...when Lockdown ends!

The Choir will meet on a Wednesday evening (7-9pm) and belt out tunes in a Covid secure environment. Pamela Mossman, the driving force behind the Choir, is keen to recruit new members and points out that, strictly speaking, you don't need to be in the 'military' or a 'wife'. Anyone with a military connection (veteran, spouse, partner, sister, mother, former civilian employee of Kineton Station or their spouse/partner) can join the Choir.

If you're interested please email kineton@militarywiveschoirs.org or call Pamela on 07896 047747.

ARE YOU A SERVICE FAMILY? THE NHS WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU

The NHS in England understand that the unique circumstances of military life, such as frequent moves, can cause pressure for some Service families (Regulars, Reserves and Veterans), and can affect an individual's health and wellbeing.

The NHS want to help change this, so Armed Forces families are able to access local NHS services easily in all parts of England. They also want to ensure that you can get care and support from clinicians and people who understand your health and wellbeing needs.

The NHS are consulting on how they can improve the health and wellbeing support for Armed Forces families (Regulars, Reserves and Veterans) and are particularly keen to hear from armed forces families, people who are serving in or who have served in the British Armed Forces and organisations working with or supporting the armed forces community.

Further information is available at <https://www.engage.england.nhs.uk/survey/health-and-wellbeing-support-armed-forces-families/> along with access to Nepalese versions of the engagement document and questionnaire. The closing date is 30th November.

Please contribute and help shape how the NHS in England responds to your needs!

WEST MIDLANDS VETERANS HIGH INTENSITY SERVICE *HIS* GOES LIVE!

The latest mental health service to support veterans has gone live across the West Midlands.

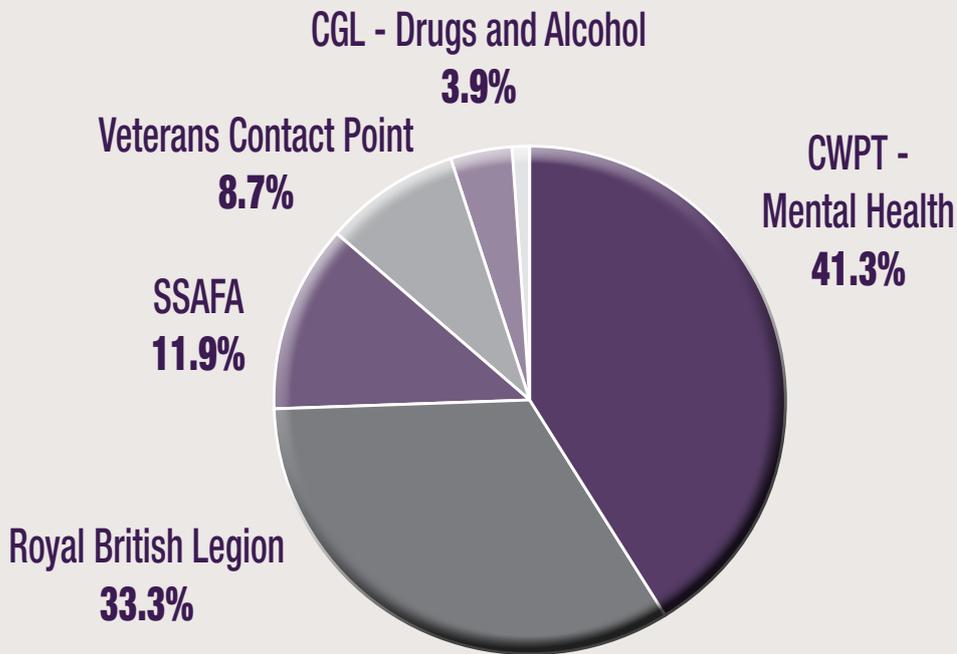
The High Intensity Service (HIS) will support the most vulnerable veterans suffering significant distress in times of crisis. HIS compliments existing mainstream NHS services, ensuring a military sensitivity and understanding is there for veterans and families at points of mental health crisis.

The team have put together an animation co-produced with service users in order to explain the pathway that is being offered across the Midlands: <https://vimeo.com/399712984/01cd747a34>

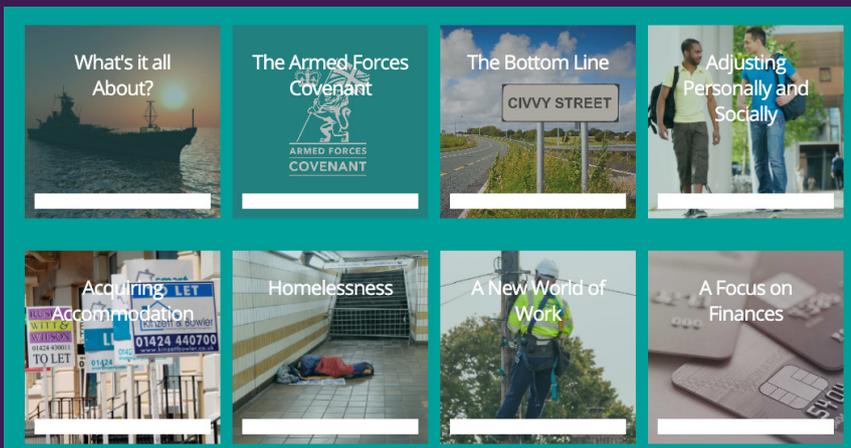
Access to the service is via the existing Transition Intervention Liaison Service (TILS) on 0300 323 037. For further advice or questions please ask to speak to Team Manager Jenny Bell or email HIS directly on: crccg.highintensityservice@nhs.net.

COVENTRY, SOLIHULL AND WARWICKSHIRE ARMED FORCES COVENANT PARTNERSHIP SUMMARY 2019-20

OVER **1500** MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY; VETERANS, REGULARS, RESERVES AND FAMILIES WERE SUPPORTED BY PARTNER AGENCIES



'ADJUSTING TO LIFE OUTSIDE OF THE ARMED FORCES' E-LEARNING LIVE ON .GOV COVENANT WEBSITE



OVER **60** LOCAL AUTHORITIES ARE NOW USING THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT FOR FRONTLINE STAFF E-LEARNING DEVELOPED BY CSW AFC



OVER 260 STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS TRAINED ON THE COVENANT AND HOW TO SUPPORT THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY



OVER 2000 YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGED IN STEM PROJECTS THROUGH KINETON STATION STEM TEAM



29 GP SURGERIES HAVE RECEIVED 'VETERAN FRIENDLY' ACCREDITATION



NBBC AND NWBC ACHIEVE DEFENCE EMPLOYER RECOGNITION GOLD AWARD



THE VETERANS CONTACT POINT REOPENED AND HAD A VISIT FROM HRH PRINCE CHARLES



£38,000 OF GRANT FUNDING SECURED FOR VETERAN AND AF SPOUSE PROJECTS



13 VETERANS HOUSED, 5 OF WHOM WERE HOMELESS



ARMED FORCES AND VETERANS BREAKFAST CLUBS ESTABLISHED IN COVENTRY AND STRATFORD-UPON-AVON



THE VCP HAS GONE DIGITAL!

Like many services the Veterans Contact Point (VCP) in Nuneaton was forced to (temporarily) close its doors in response to the Covid outbreak. This didn't mean, however, that they were sat around doing nothing. The solution was to provide as much support through digital services as possible.

The VCP applied to the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust under the 'Veterans should not be forgotten' programme and were successful at securing £19500. This has enabled them to develop an online veterans' community portal to cover the whole of the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire (CSW) Covenant partnership area.

This has meant that the VCP has changed an interview room into a mini-production studio to broadcast MS Teams Live events and learnt to master new technology! Between July and October a range of broadcasts were delivered to veterans covering topics such as:

- Housing support for veterans
- The Armed Forces Covenant and how it can help
- Armchair fitness
- Employability workshops backed up by 1:1 support
- Veteran case studies



These broadcasts were also shared with veteran groups in Nottinghamshire and Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

As a way of ensuring veterans should not be forgotten over 40 'NAAFI Brew Boxes' were delivered across Nuneaton, Bedworth, Stratford-upon-Avon and Warwick/Leamington. The Brew Boxes contain the makings of a brew/wet (delete as appropriate depending upon your Service area) as well as a range of other goodies.

A second round of broadcasts is beginning soon so if you are interested in contributing or have any suggestions please contact the VCP on 02476343793 or email: contactus@veteranscontactpoint.co.uk.

VETERANS 'WILDER WELLBEING IN THE WOODS'

Thanks to funding from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust will be working in partnership with Achieving Results in Communities (ARC) in Leamington to deliver 'Wilder Wellbeing in the Woods'

This is a FREE 8 week programme for veterans where veterans can join other veterans spending one day a week in the woods making fires, learning and sharing bush craft skills, swapping stories, exploring and managing the woodland and using nature to feel well.

The first course began in Brandon Marsh, Coventry following Covid guidelines, but have had to stop due to Lockdown 2.0. This course will be re-run early next year. There will also be 2 courses run in Tallis Wood, Leamington and Swift Valley, Rugby, subject to any changes to Covid-19 guidance and restrictions.

One of the veterans said it's been 'Very enjoyable, learned things, getting out with like-minded people and learning together'.

The wife of one veteran said her husband is 'like a new person and feeling so much better'.

If you would like to receive more details about the course and let us know that you're interested, please contact Man-Lan Adams on: man-lan.adams@wkwat.org.uk or via 02476 302912.



Steve on the veterans woodland course

ATHERSTONE VETERANS HUB WAS BACK OPEN!

Tam from the Veterans Contact Point re-opened the Atherstone Veterans Hub in a Covid secure setting at the Alexandra Community Centre, but has temporarily had to 'cease trading'. Tam will be there every Thursday between 10-1pm and every first Saturday of the month (10-1pm) and is looking forward to some brew and banter when Lockdown 2.0 ends.

Tam is also there to support Veterans with any help they may need. This can be a chat about how they're coping with Covid, social isolation, support to enable them to contact the Royal British Legion, Veterans UK, SSAFA as well as access to employment, housing and mental health support.

Look out for Tam or contact him at: tam@veteranscontactpoint.co.uk.

<https://www.veteranscontactpoint.co.uk/>



Tam and other Atherstone veterans

MORRISONS SUPPORTS LOCAL VETERANS SHOULD NOT BE FORGOTTEN PROGRAMME

Morrisons in Leamington Spa teamed up with the Veterans Contact Point (VCP) in Nuneaton to deliver 40 'Main Meal' boxes to vulnerable veterans.

This is part of the 'Veterans Should Not be Forgotten' programme to raise awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant and the needs of Veterans who are impacted upon by the COVID19 pandemic. It builds upon the VCP 'NAAFI Break' brew box containing the kit to make a brew, a Covenant coffee mug, biscuits and other items. This was part of a campaign by the VCP to let veterans know that the VCP was still open and able to support them during the pandemic.

Morrisons donated 20 bags of food to be given out to Veterans living across the South Warwickshire Area. These were converted into 40 "Main Meal Boxes" which were distributed in Atherstone, Nuneaton, Stratford and the remaining were given out on Friday, 18th September at Morrisons Supermarket in Old Warwick Road Leamington.

SIR TOM GETS THE FIRST VETERANS RAILCARD



Captain Sir Tom Moore receives his Veterans Railcard

On the 14th October Captain Sir Tom Moore was presented with the very first veterans railcard by Grant Shapps MP, Transport Secretary.

Aimed at supporting veterans post-service, the newly unveiled railcard will provide up to a third off all peak and off-peak fares, as well as discounted travel for adult companions and children. It forms part of the government's commitment to make this country the best place to be a veteran, helping repay the debt we all owe to those who have served.

Captain Sir Tom Moore said "It is a rare opportunity to show thanks and gratitude to veterans and this railcard is a necessary recognition and investment in veterans, giving them the ability to re-connect and combat loneliness".

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Johnny Mercer said "Providing discounted rail travel is a fantastic way to underline the debt of gratitude we owe to those who have served. For younger veterans, it will also help boost employment prospects, allowing more flexibility in their travel to work or job interviews".

The new Veterans Railcard will be available for a special introductory price of just £21 for a 1-year Railcard or £61 for a 3-year Railcard, until 31st March 2021. It will offer the Railcard holder and their companion 1/3 off most rail fares and 60% off for up to four children aged 5-15 years.

To get your railcard visit:

<https://www.veterans-railcard.co.uk/>

WARWICKSHIRE ACHIEVES GOLD, SOLIHULL SCOOPS SILVER!

Warwickshire County Council was one of 127 organisations awarded the prestigious Gold award under the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme on 30 July. Solihull MBC were awarded Silver on 4th August.

The Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) was launched in 2014 to recognise employer support for the wider principles of the Armed Forces Covenant and the full spectrum of Defence personnel. This includes the Reserves, Service Leavers, Wounded Injured and Sick, Cadets, and spouses. The award is given in recognition of the Councils' positive measures and policies which actively support members of the Armed Forces community. Both Councils' ensures that members of the Armed Forces community are not disadvantaged in recruitment and selection processes, that members of the Reserve Forces are supported to complete their annual training and that values are aligned with the Armed Forces Covenant.

Warwickshire has been a leading organisation in delivering on the Covenant agenda and this award is recognition of their contribution.

Cllr Izzi Seccombe said "We are very proud to be awarded the Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award this year in recognition of our support for our serving men and women, past and present. We are honoured to be leading the way in the public sector in Warwickshire by being an Armed Forces-friendly employer. We want members of our Armed Forces to be a part of the team at the council as we recognise the huge breadth of transferable skills they acquire."

Solihull Council's Cabinet Member for Stronger and Safer Communities - and Armed Forces Champion for Solihull - Cllr Alison Rolf, said: "Staff at Solihull Council have worked hard to ensure that members of the Armed Forces are not disadvantaged. We will continue to develop our interventions and positive support for the Armed Forces Community."



IMPROVING ACCESS TO SOCIAL HOUSING FOR MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY

Government has provided new statutory guidance to Local Authorities to improve access to social housing for members of the Armed Forces. The purpose of the guidance is to assist local authorities when considering applications for social housing by members of the Armed Forces, veterans, and their families. More specifically, the guidance sets out how Local Authorities can ensure that estranged spouses and civil partners of serving personnel are not disadvantaged when applying for social housing, and that members of the Armed Forces and veterans suffering from mental ill health are given the priority for social housing that they deserve.

These provisions recognise the special position of members of the Armed Forces whose employment requires them to be mobile and who are likely therefore to be particularly disadvantaged by local connection requirements. The provisions extend to bereaved spouses and civil partners of Service personnel recognising that they are likely to experience similar issues. Reservists are included, recognising, for example, that those who have been seriously injured as a result of their service may need to move to another Local Authority area in order to access treatment, care or support.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-access-to-social-housing-for-members-of-the-armed-forces/improving-access-to-social-housing-for-members-of-the-armed-forces>

EVER WONDERED ABOUT A CAREER IN THE NHS? STEP INTO HEALTH IS OPEN TO THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY

Step into Health provides a dedicated pathway for the Armed Forces community to access the numerous career opportunities available in the NHS.

Step into Health is made up of NHS organisations which have pledged their support to the programme. Members of the Armed Forces community can connect to NHS organisations to set up training opportunities, clinical and general work placements, insight days and application support. Step into Health is open to all service leavers, reservists, veterans, Cadet Force Adult Volunteers and the families of all of these.

<https://www.militarystepintohealth.nhs.uk/>