



Veteran's Health Needs Assessment June 2021



Commissioning and Strategic Support Unit

Public Health

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Summary

The Community Covenant¹ aims to ensure that the military community, including current and ex-service personnel and their families face no disadvantage when engaging in civilian life. Organisations, including local authorities had the opportunity to formally show their support by signing the Covenant. The council has a strong tradition of supporting the local military community and signed the Community Covenant in November 2011.

This year will see the Armed Forces Bill 2021, a renewal of the Armed Forces Act 2006. It will enshrine the Armed Forces Covenant in law and help prevent service personnel and veterans being disadvantaged when accessing services like healthcare, education, and housing.

Focusing on healthcare, housing, and education, it will increase awareness among public bodies of the unique nature of military service, improving the level of service for members of the armed forces community, no matter where in the UK they live. Enshrining the Covenant in law also builds on several initiatives implemented over the last year to support service leavers and veterans. These include the Defence Transition Services organisation which was established to assist those facing the greatest difficulties successfully transition to civilian life after leaving service².

A lack of reliable data both nationally and most notably locally, the transient nature of the military community, and the reluctance of many current and ex-military members to engage and or be identified have all contributed to this lack of evidence of specific needs.

Similarly, quantifying the number of ex-service personnel who reside in North East Lincolnshire is very difficult, this means it is extremely challenging to establish a population for commissioners to plan services. For the first time, the 2021 Census³ in England and Wales will provide information on whether someone has served in HM Armed Forces. This means that from 2023 onwards, it will be easier to quantify the veteran community which will then facilitate research and understand local needs further. However, it is important to note that not every veteran wishes to be identified as a 'Veteran'.

For the time being, it is estimated that there could be circa 7765 veterans living in North East Lincolnshire. This population is largely male and is currently skewed towards the older age groups. Yet by 2030, the veteran's population is predicted to decrease by 20%.

Currently, in North East Lincolnshire, Cllr Ron Shepherd is the Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities and included within that is responsibility for the Council's delivery of duties around the Armed Forces Covenant. The Armed Forces Major Events Team (AFMET) deliver the Armed Forces Covenant on behalf of the local authority, via a Service Level Agreement. Furthermore, a local action plan is in development with objectives of how it will deliver the main streams of the Veterans Strategy. However, as previously mentioned, with the introduction of the Armed Forces Bill later this year, there will be statutory delivery from local authorities around health, skills, education, and housing.

¹ <https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/>

² [Armed Forces Bill 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/bills-2021/armed-forces-bill-2021)

³ [Armed forces community \(veterans\) question development for Census 2021 - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk/people-in-the-uk/population-and-demography/military-service/armed-forces-community-question-development-for-census-2021)

Introduction

Health Needs Assessment Objective

The objective of the North East Lincolnshire's Veteran's Health Needs Assessment is to understand the health and wellbeing needs of this population, including high risk groups. In accordance with the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE)⁴ definition of a Health Needs Assessment, this will involve undertaking a systematic review of the health and wellbeing issues faced by many veterans leading to agreed priorities and resource allocation that will improve health and reduce inequalities.

This document brings together national research and local evidence of the health and health-related needs of veterans within North East Lincolnshire.

Aims

The aim of this health needs assessment is to:

1. estimate the size of the veteran population within North East Lincolnshire;
2. undertake a literature search to assess the health needs of the veteran population;
3. identify locally available services to veterans; and
4. highlight next steps to improve the health and wellbeing of North East Lincolnshire's veteran population.

Methodology

This Assessment was undertaken amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, which limited, to a certain degree the range of stakeholder engagement and the stakeholder prioritisation of this needs assessment. However, the overall methodology included collection and analysis of:

- National and local data, where this was available from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) and Ministry of Defence (MoD)
- National and local research such as the Royal British Legion (RBL) UK Household Survey (2014)
- Armed Forces Covenant Community Survey

Research Limitations

There are very few reliable statistical sources on veterans in the UK. When reviewing the various statistics and research findings, it has become clear that whilst some sources have substantiated each other, others have conflicted.

Furthermore, we acknowledge that this assessment does not reference the voluntary sector and the volunteer work that exists across the local authority area.

⁴ [Glossary | NICE](#)

Why focus on the Veteran Community?

The Armed Forces covenant was published in 2011. It was established to outline the relationships between the armed forces, the nation, and the government. The covenant covers serving and ex-serving personnel and their families. Its aim is to ensure members of the armed forces community are not disadvantaged in comparison to others and that there is a moral obligation to treat members of the Armed Forces and their families with respect.

While there are no full-time operational bases in the borough, personnel and their families living in North East Lincolnshire may be based at RAF Waddington, RAF Digby, RAF Scampton, RAF Coningsby, RAF Cranwell, RAF Barkston Heath or Prince William of Gloucester Barracks all situated in Lincolnshire. North East Lincolnshire is home to both current and ex-serving men and women and their families from across the Armed Forces. These men, women and their families form an important part of North East Lincolnshire's community, bringing with them skills and a contribution that is unique and valuable.

Who is a Veteran?

There are differing views on the use of the term 'veteran'. Whilst it does not apply exclusively to those who served in the Second World War many young 'veterans' feel it refers to older personnel who served in conflicts pre-Iraq and Afghanistan and think of themselves more as 'ex-military' or 'ex-armed forces'. No distinction is made between those who may have served in more recent conflict operations (such as Iraq or Afghanistan) and those who have spent time in basic training with one of the Services, or between the length of time personnel may have served. As a result, the veteran population is large and naturally, encompasses a wide age range from youth to older generations.

According to the Office for Veterans' Affairs, a 'Veteran' in the UK is defined as "*anyone who has served for at least one day in Her Majesty's Armed Forces (Regular or Reserve) or Merchant Mariners who have seen duty on legally defined military operations*⁵." This inclusively represents all former Armed Forces personnel.

National Armed Forces Covenant

The armed forces covenant sets out the relationship between the nation, the government, and the armed forces. It recognises that the whole nation has a moral obligation to members of the armed forces and their families. The obligations are owed to the Armed Forces Community as individuals, as well as collectively.

According to the covenant, some 10 million people nationally are entitled to recognition and sometimes to support. However, it acknowledges that the level of support made available 'will vary'⁶.

The covenant's two main principles are that:

- the armed forces community should not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services

⁵ [Veterans Factsheet 2020 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/421212/veterans_factsheet_2020.pdf)

⁶ [the armed forces covenant.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/421212/the_armed_forces_covenant.pdf)

- special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved.

Since 2011, the covenant has helped regular serving personnel in several ways, including giving priority to veterans accessing NHS services for service-related conditions, help with accommodation including monetary schemes, help with children of service personnel, help with education and educating GPs on how to support veterans' health needs.

North East Lincolnshire's response to the Armed Forces Covenant

- AFMET (Armed Forces Major Events Team) set up to deliver covenant on behalf of North East Lincolnshire Council via a Service Level Agreement.
- Set up an Armed Forces Liaison Group.
- North East Lincolnshire Council (NELC) poor at identifying veterans. Introducing several new processes and policies to be able to identify veterans within NELC. Including extending annual leave policy to Reservists and Adult Cadet Force Volunteers.
- Introduced NELC Guaranteed interview scheme. The application form now has a space where a veteran can identify themselves and if they meet the minimum essential criteria, they will be selected for interview automatically.

AFMET

In North East Lincolnshire, the Armed Forces Major Events Team (AFMET) deliver the Armed Forces Covenant on behalf of the local authority, via a Service Level Agreement. AFMET supports the Armed Forces Community Covenant across the region in support of service personnel, their families, veterans, and outreach services. They provide assistance to the borough to maintain the dignity and integrity of civic/military functions and provide support and advise on all events and functions involving military and civilian integration across the borough and ensuring the correct protocols are followed.

Furthermore, a local action plan is in development with objectives of how it will deliver the main streams of the Veterans Strategy. The Veterans strategy identified six key areas where support is most needed over the next ten years, including: community and relationships, employment and skills, health and wellbeing, finance and debt, housing, and contact with the law. However, with the introduction of the Armed Forces Bill later this year, there will be statutory delivery from local authorities around health, education, and housing.

Demography

Determine the size of the North East Lincolnshire Veteran population

A literature search and local knowledge has confirmed that there are no official records of veteran populations available, therefore the population has been estimated based on the best available data. The estimates we present are an approximation based on national data sources. These sources include the Office of National Statistics (ONS), surveys, and armed forces pension data. The data therefore should be viewed with caution and is intended to be indicative and open to revision should new data become available.

North East Lincolnshire Veteran Population Estimate

The veteran population for North East Lincolnshire was calculated using the results of a study published by the Royal British Legion⁷ (RBL) in 2014. The UK household survey of the ex-service community conducted by RBL, estimated the prevalence of Veterans by age and gender. These estimates have been applied to ONS mid-year 2019 population estimates for North East Lincolnshire, as this is the best estimate of the local population in North East Lincolnshire to date. Using these estimates and applying them to North East Lincolnshire's population, a break-down by ward has been calculated. The percentages when applied to ward population estimates, were rounded up or down to the nearest integer as seen as appropriate. Figures are provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1.

Estimated number of ex-service personnel in North East Lincolnshire by age and ward, ALL PERSONS (calculated using The Royal British Legion estimates and ONS Mid-Year 2019 population estimates)

Age Band (ex-service personnel estimate) %	Croft Baker	East Marsh	Freshney	Haverstoe	Heneage	Humberston & New Waltham	Immingham	Park	Scartho	Sidney Sussex	South	Waltham	West Marsh	Wolds	Yarborough	NEL Total
16-24 (0.4%)	4	5	4	3	5	3	4	4	4	5	5	2	3	3	4	58
25-34 (1.1%)	17	20	12	9	20	11	16	18	15	21	19	6	15	8	21	228
35-44 (2.8%)	36	40	28	24	38	29	37	38	34	42	41	18	27	25	39	496
45-54 (4.2%)	63	65	53	58	69	72	68	69	65	70	67	39	42	49	60	909
55-64 (5.1%)	81	69	73	74	72	88	83	80	77	76	74	54	46	60	76	1083
65-74 (6.8%)	90	58	87	118	65	108	97	84	90	66	81	74	37	62	78	1195
75-84 (25.3%)	229	101	160	307	143	298	218	202	258	129	137	176	77	142	170	2747
85+ (23.7%)	98	44	36	100	62	101	72	99	96	50	66	80	28	56	61	1049
Total	618	402	453	693	474	710	595	594	639	459	490	449	275	405	509	7765

As Table 1 shows, the estimated veteran population in North East Lincolnshire is around 7765. The wards with the largest estimated veteran populations are Humberston and New Waltham, Haverstoe and Scartho. Furthermore, the veteran population is perhaps unsurprisingly skewed towards the older age groups with the over 65's accounting for over 64% of the total estimated veteran population in North East Lincolnshire.

⁷ [A UK household survey of the ex-Service community \(rblcdn.co.uk\)](http://rblcdn.co.uk)

Table 2.

Table 2 Estimated number of MALE and FEMALE ex-service personnel in North East Lincolnshire by age (calculated using The Royal British Legion estimates and ONS Mid-Year 2019 population estimates)

Age Band (ex service personnel)	MALE (% estimate)	FEMALE (% estimate)
16-24	67 (0.9%)	7 (0.1%)
25-34	175 (1.7%)	41 (0.4%)
35-44	381 (4.4%)	99 (1.1%)
45-54	781 (7.4%)	122 (1.1%)
55-64	871 (8.3%)	171 (1.6%)
65-74	1039 (12.2%)	172 (1.9%)
75-84	2734 (56.3%)	120 (2.0%)
85+	977 (60.1%)	115 (4.1%)
TOTAL	7025	847

As table 2 shows, the estimated veteran population figures for male and females in North East Lincolnshire. As the estimates show, there are more male than female veterans in North East Lincolnshire. Estimated prevalence of veterans by gender have been applied to ONS mid-year 2019 population estimates for North East Lincolnshire, using the RBL UK household survey⁸. The percentages were applied to age specific population estimates in North East Lincolnshire, figures were rounded up or down to the nearest integer as seen as appropriate.

There are limitations to these estimates, such that the resultant population projection and varying population structures may somewhat underestimate the true size of the veteran population. Furthermore, the survey was conducted using a sample of adults living in residential dwellings, excluding those veterans who may be in institutions for example, in care homes or prisons. This may lead to underestimates particularly in the older and younger age groups.

Armed Forces Pension Data

Another source of data that can provide some insights into the veteran population in North East Lincolnshire can be drawn from the annual release of armed forces pension and compensation data from the Ministry of Defence (MoD)⁹. There are two main schemes to consider:

- War Pension Scheme (WPS) – this provides no-fault compensation for all ex-service personnel where illness, injury or death is caused by Service from the start of the First World War in 1914 up until 5 April 2005.
- Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) – came into force on 6 April 2005 to pay compensation for injury, illness, or death attributable to Service that occurred on or after that date. It replaced the previous compensation arrangements provided by the War Pensions Scheme (WPS) and the attributable elements of the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces Pensions Scheme.

⁸ [A UK household survey of the ex-Service community \(rblcdn.co.uk\)](http://rblcdn.co.uk)

⁹ [Location of armed forces pension and compensation recipients: 2020 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Table 3.

	All ¹	Of which veterans ¹	AFPS Recipients ²	WPS Recipients	WPS Recipients	AFCS Recipients	AFCS Recipients	AFCS Recipients
				Veterans (Disablement Pensions)	War Widow(er)s	Serving Personnel ³	Veterans ^{3,4}	GIPS in payment ⁵
NEL 2020	1,204	1,137	979	236	37	29	55	11

1. Subtotals cannot be summed as an individual may be in receipt under more than one scheme.
2. All veterans in their pension under AFPS 75 and AFPS 05. Excludes pensioners in receipt of their pension under AFPS 15.
3. Figures do not match other published AFCS statistics on lump sum recipients as this bulletin excludes those who have a date of death recorded on the CAPS.
4. Includes individuals awarded compensation under the AFCS after leaving Service, and in-Service recipients of compensation who had later left Service as at 31st March 2020.
5. Guaranteed Income Payment.

As is shown in Table 3, as of 31st March 2020, a total of 1,204 individuals within North East Lincolnshire were in receipt of an Armed Forces pension and/or compensation payments. The limitations of this information make it unhelpful for understanding the veteran population size, however it could be useful when considering the needs of our local veteran community.

Furthermore, 368 payments are coded as War Pension Scheme (WPS) and/or Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) payments. Being in receipt of one or both does not necessarily mean that an individual requires on-going support or care, but it may indicate a group of individuals that may be more likely to require additional medical care and support as they age.

However, a high proportion of veterans do not receive an ex-service pension, as not all deferred pensions have been claimed, veterans who completed National Service only receive a pension if they had been injured during their Service and the injury was attributable to that Service and veterans who served less than 12 years prior to 2012, do not qualify for a military pension. The Armed Forces Pension Schemes are designed to reflect the unique nature of Service life, to provide a retirement income for Serving personnel and their dependants and to incentivise retention in Service as a key part of the overall remuneration package¹⁰.

Veteran population forecast and projections

Nationally, the figures show that over the next ten years, the number of former service personnel in Great Britain is expected to decrease by around 1 million, to approximately 1.6 million by 2028. Estimates put the number of former service personnel currently residing in Britain at around 2.5 million. As well as the reduction in size, the age and gender profile of the ex-forces community is also expected to change. The percentage of veterans of working age, between 16-64, is projected to rise from 38% to 44%, while the percentage of women is set to increase from 10% to 13%¹¹.

The new projections have informed the 2018 'Strategy for our Veterans', which has been jointly published by the UK, Scottish and Welsh Governments, setting out the key areas of support for those who have left the armed forces¹². The strategy identified six key areas where support is most needed over the next ten years, including: community and relationships, employment and skills, health and wellbeing, finance and debt, housing, and contact with the law. All

¹⁰ [AFPS 75: your pension scheme explained \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

¹¹ [Population projections: UK armed forces Veterans residing in Great Britain, 2016 to 2028 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

¹² [The Strategy for our Veterans \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

relevant Government departments have a responsibility to ensure that the military community is treated fairly, and not disadvantaged by their service as part of the Armed Forces Covenant. This includes access to housing and healthcare, as well as employment and education support.

North East Lincolnshire’s population is stable and is currently estimated to be around 159,995. The ONS have predicted that the North East Lincolnshire population in 2030 will be around 159,224¹³. Therefore, it is suitable to use the 2019 ONS mid-year population estimates and calculate the predicted figures, as the population in 2030 will be like that of the present day. Population percentages are forecast in the RBL 2014 survey and have been applied to the mid- year 2019 ONS estimates. As the national trend predicts, the local North East Lincolnshire trend also follows, with a predicted decrease in veterans by 2030. See table 4 below.

Table 4.

Table 4. Estimated number ex-service personnel in North East Lincolnshire forecast 2030 (calculated using The Royal British Legion estimates and ONS Mid-Year 2019 population estimates)

Age Band	NEL Forecast 2030 estimate and % of UK population in each band
16-24	145 (1%)
25-34	412 (2%)
35-44	354 (2%)
45-54	650 (3%)
55-64	1059 (5%)
65-74	1231 (7%)
75-84	1086 (10%)
85+	1285 (29%)
TOTAL	6222

Service Leavers

Between 1st January 2020 and 31st December 2020, **12,700** individuals left the Regular Armed Forces¹⁴. Service leavers by location data are currently not published, however a formal online consultation was opened and ran between 15th March 2021 to 10th April 2021, regarding assessing the requirement for summary figures showing the number of UK armed forces leavers by geographical location such as local authority. Should this data be published, it would provide local authorities with clearer figures on service leavers within the desired geography¹⁵.

Number of Ex-service Personnel in North East Lincolnshire

The MOD does not maintain personal address information once individuals have left the Armed Forces which makes it extremely difficult to know how many veterans, and their family

¹³ [Population projections for local authorities: Table 2 - Office for National Statistics](#)

¹⁴ [Quarterly service personnel statistics 1 January 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

¹⁵ [Publication of figures on service leavers by geographical location. - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

members, live within North East Lincolnshire. This challenge is not unique to North East Lincolnshire. However, on the 23rd of June 2020, legislation was finalised by the UK Government and Parliament to amend the Census in England and Wales, so that, for the first time, it will provide information on whether someone has served in HM Armed Forces. In the 2021 Census, all respondents aged 16 years and over were asked the following question¹⁶

Have you previously served in the UK Armed Forces (current Serving members should only tick 'No')?

Yes, previously served in Regular Armed Forces.

Yes, previously served in Reserve Armed Forces.

Or No.

This means that from 2023 onwards, it will be significantly easier to accurately quantify the local Armed Forces community which will facilitate research to understand their local needs. However, it is important to note that not everyone who has previously served within the UK Armed Forces will want to be identified as ex-military or a veteran.

Transition into local NHS services: Health Data

At the end of Service, it is the responsibility of individual personnel, and their families, to register with a civilian GP and dentist and to inform them of their previous Service, enabling a marker code to be assigned to their patient record. This prompts the request for a transfer of previous medical records from the Armed Forces. By sharing this information, veterans with Service-related injuries and health conditions can be referred to a range of dedicated services provided by specialist military and civilian providers.

As of 2020, all the read codes were converted to SNOMED, making it easier for both recording and reporting. In North East Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) many North East Lincolnshire GP practices clinical systems are on SystmOne and a few practices use EMIS, however the same read codes are used on both systems. Practices assign the term "Military Veteran", and the clinical system naturally assigns the equivalent code of 753651000000107¹⁷. By assigning this blanket term of "Military Veteran" to patient's records, it somewhat simplifies the search of attempting to quantify veterans in North East Lincolnshire GP practices.

There are 26 GP practices within NEL, 20 practices have used the term and code as previously outlined, however 6 practices did not record or have any 'Military Veteran' code assigned within their respective systems. This highlights that despite somewhat streamlining the term, there seems to be inconsistencies with some practices not coding veteran patients and some GP practices are coding more than others. Within the 20 GP practices that returned the 'Military Veteran' code, when searched, a total of 237 patient records across the GP practices were assigned this code.

However, whilst offering an opportunity, the use of primary care data is therefore limited by; the willingness of veterans to identify themselves as such when first registering with a GP awareness of the existence of relevant codes by GPs and other primary care staff. Given these caveats, data from primary care is likely to underestimate the size of the local veteran population.

¹⁶ [Armed forces community \(veterans\) question development for Census 2021 - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

¹⁷ [SNOMED CT - Military veteran \(finding\) \(termbrowser.nhs.uk\)](https://termbrowser.nhs.uk)

Health and Healthcare

The Annual Population Survey: UK Armed Forces Veterans Residing in Great Britain, 2017 identified that overall, there were 'no differences' between veterans and non-veterans self-reported general health and whether any health problems suffered were expected to last more than twelve months¹⁸. In terms of the older veteran population, the physical health needs of veterans are actually very similar to those of the general ageing population: typically including difficulties with mobility, visual and hearing impairment, and difficulties with self-care¹⁹. Physical health problems, are more common among the elderly than those of working age, leading to problems with mobility and care. However, those aged 65 or over are less likely to report ill health than the UK population of the same age, suggesting they enjoy slightly better health than the average UK pensioner.

Role of NHS for Armed Forces Community

All veterans are entitled to priority access to NHS care (including hospital, primary or community care) for conditions associated with their time within the armed forces (service-related). This is always subject to clinical need and does not entitle veterans to jump the queue ahead of someone if they have a higher clinical need²⁰.

NHS England is responsible for ensuring that services are commissioned to support consistently high standards of quality across the country, promote the NHS Constitution, deliver the requirements of the Secretary of State's Mandate with NHS England and are in line with the commitments made by the Government under the AFC.

NHS England's responsibilities are to commission directly:

- All secondary and community health services for members of the Armed Forces, mobilised Reservists and their families if registered with Defence Medical Centres in England.
- Specialised services, including specialist limb prosthesis and rehabilitation services for veterans.

The responsibilities of the Clinical Commissioning Groups are to commission:

- All secondary and community services required by Armed Forces' families where registered with NHS GP Practices, and services for veterans and Reservists when not mobilised. The bespoke services for veterans, such as veterans' mental health services, will be commissioned by CCGs either individually or collectively.
- Emergency care services on a geographical basis which can be accessed by anyone present in their defined geographical boundary for example accident and emergency services, emergency ambulance services and other emergency health services. Serving members of the Armed Forces and their families (where registered with DMS Medical Centres) will have full access to these services.
- Health services for these groups stationed overseas who return to England to receive NHS care²¹

¹⁸ [Annual Population Survey: UK Armed Forces Veterans residing in Great Britain 2017 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

¹⁹ [Household Survey | Veteran Needs | Royal British Legion](#)

²⁰ [Veterans: priority NHS treatment - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

²¹ [NHS commissioning » Services for members of the armed forces \(england.nhs.uk\)](#)

We recognise the forthcoming changes to Health and Social Care, with the Integrated Care System (ICS) that comes into effect in April 2022. There is consideration needed to appropriate the actions to support the Veteran Community.

NHS Care for the Armed Forces Community includes the following dedicated services and initiatives to support the Armed Forces Community:

The Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance (VCHA). It aims to improve NHS care for the Armed Forces community by supporting Trusts, Health Boards and other providers to identify, develop and showcase the best standards of care. To date, a group of seventy-five NHS providers have been accredited as exemplars of the best care for veterans, helping to drive improvements in NHS care for people who serve, or have served, in the UK Armed Forces and their families. As of June 2021, Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust who serve North East Lincolnshire, has been accredited as Veteran Aware.

Armed Forces Personnel in Transition: Integrated Personal Commissioning for Veterans Framework (IPC4V) is a personalised care approach for Serving personnel who have complex and enduring physical, neurological and mental health conditions that are attributable to injury whilst in Service. It provides a framework for effectively planning and delivering personalised care in line with the AFC. Central to this is an improved discharge planning process, starting approximately nine months before individuals leave the military. This means that the MOD, health and social care, Armed Forces charities and other organisations involved in the care of these individuals are brought together at an earlier point in the care pathway, ensuring care and support arrangements are in place as they transition to civilian life and beyond²².

Personalised Care for Veterans with a Long-Term Physical, Mental or Neurological Health Condition or Disability. Veterans with a complex and life-long health condition may be eligible for the Veterans Personalised Care Programme. Eligible individuals will have a single personalised care plan for all their health and wellbeing needs that is developed with them and a range of organisations, including health and social care and Armed Forces charities. NHS England and NHS Improvement, together with the MOD, have published a guide for CCGs and Local Authorities which sets out the new personalised care approach for veterans²³. For further information, individuals should contact the North East Lincolnshire CCG²⁴.

Veteran Friendly GP Practice Accreditation. Over the next five years, NHS England, and NHS Improvement, together with the Royal College of General Practitioners, are rolling out a Veteran Friendly GP Practice Accreditation Scheme across England. This Scheme is intended to help ensure Practices are equipped to best care for veterans and their families and as of May 2021, 948 surgeries have received accreditation. However, within North East Lincolnshire, only four practices have signed up and achieved this accreditation.

Table 5: Veteran Friendly Accredited Practices within NEL as of 21st May 2021²⁵

CCG or Health Board	Practice Name	Postcode	Date Accredited
North East Lincolnshire CCG	Dr A Kumar Surgery	DN31 3AE	23/07/2019
North East Lincolnshire CCG	Scarcho Medical Centre	DN33 3JF	23/09/2019

²² [NHS England » Personalised care for Armed Forces personnel in transition](#)

²³ [NHS England » Personalised care for veterans](#)

²⁴ [Welcome • NHS North East Lincolnshire CCG](#)

²⁵ [Veteran friendly GP practices \(rcgp.org.uk\)](#)

North East Lincolnshire CCG	Dr R K Mathews Surgery	DN31 3AE	09/10/2019
North East Lincolnshire CCG	The Chantry Health Group	DN31 1QZ	17/02/2020

The Veterans Trauma Network provides specialist care to veterans with service-specific traumatic injuries. Veterans benefit from a personalised care plan implemented by top military and civilian trauma experts. The needs of veterans' families and carers are also taken into consideration.

The network operates 10 centres in eight major cities: Plymouth, Oxford, London (three centres), Birmingham, Nottingham, Liverpool, Leeds and Middlesbrough. Referrals can be made via a GP at england.veteranstraumanetwork@nhs.net²⁷.

Veterans Prosthetics Panel (VPP) provides funding on a named veteran basis to NHS Disablement Service Centres (DSC) to ensure that veterans who have Service-related limb loss can access high quality prosthetics regardless of which DSC they attend. More detail follows below in the disability section.

'Healthcare for the Armed Forces community, a forward view to 2022²⁸' was launched in March 2021, which sets out the commitments NHS England and NHS Improvement is making to improve the health and wellbeing of the Armed Forces community (serving personnel (regulars and reservists), veterans and their families. This plan sets out nine commitments for NHS England and NHS Improvement which have been informed by the views and experiences of the Armed Forces community. Each commitment provides information on what the NHS will do, in partnership with the MOD, the Office for Veterans' Affairs, Armed Forces charities and other organisations, to improve the care and support delivered to this population. This is intended to supplement the work already underway in regions and through integrated care systems to meet the goals and ambitions of the NHS Long Term Plan (LTP).

As part of the NELC Armed Forces Community Survey, when asked, "as a member of the Armed Forces Community, do you have good physical and mental health and wellbeing", an overwhelming majority 75% said 'yes', 19% said 'no' and 6% of individuals said, 'don't know'. Some of the responses to this question were as follows: 'Maintained a steady exercise regime and engaged socially through veterans' associations and events organised by the central Armed Forces team', 'I exercise and go outdoors as much as possible' and 'Mentally is a different ball game all together. Nothing prepared you for the rollercoaster in your head!'. A follow up question was asked 'what would you need to change to achieve good physical and mental health' and some the free text responses were as follows: 'Gaining support from GP' and 'support to deal with my PTSD'.

Mental Health

The overall rate of mental health in the UK Armed Forces is broadly comparable to that seen in the UK general population. Generally, rates of mental disorder are lower in the military (3.1%) than the general population (4.5%). The rate of mental health for those needing specialist mental health treatment was lower than that seen in the UK general population. There are some conditions that are more likely to be managed by GPs such as sleep disorders,

²⁶ [Veterans: NHS services for those with physical injuries - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

²⁷ [Veterans: NHS services for those with physical injuries - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

²⁸ [NHS England » Healthcare for the Armed Forces community: a forward view](#)

low mood, and stress. Other conditions such as adjustment disorder, PTSD and depression are more likely to be treated by specialist mental health clinicians²⁹.

The prevalence of mental health problems in the veteran community in North East Lincolnshire is very difficult to ascertain. There are no reliable statistics on the numbers of veterans' resident in the borough and all of the data relating to mental health is based on national reports and estimates. An estimate published by the NHS Confederation in 2010, concluded that 27.2% of veterans have a common mental disorder³⁰. This figure could mean that in North East Lincolnshire, there could be 2112 veterans with common mental health problems.

Furthermore, PTSD rates in ex-Service personnel have often been cited in the media as being higher than those in the general population. However, a study of 10,000 ex-Service personnel conducted by the King's Centre for Military Mental Health (KCMHR) found that PTSD rates were low among British forces, with a prevalence rate of 4% in deployed personnel and 6% in combat troops³¹.

NHS Services

There is no locally commissioned specialist mental health service specifically for veterans via the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and therefore depth of information is not held locally. NHS care for the veterans' mental health includes the following nationally commissioned and dedicated service to support the Armed Forces community:

Op COURAGE

Officially launched in March 2021, "Op COURAGE-³² The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service" is the new name for the Veterans' Mental Health Transition, it combines the existing Intervention and Liaison Service (TILS), Veterans' Mental Health Complex Treatment Service (CTS) and Veterans' Mental Health High Intensity Service (HIS). The name has been developed following feedback from the Armed Forces community and with support from the NHS England and NHS Improvement Armed Forces Patient and Public Voice and Lived Experience Groups to make it easier for those leaving the military and veterans to find help. The North of England service can be contacted on 0303 123 1145 or by emailing ntawnt.veteransservice@nhs.net.

To get help from this service you must:

- be a resident in England and have served in the UK armed forces for a full day;
- be registered with a GP practice in England or be willing and eligible to register with a GP;
- provide your military service number or another form of eligibility.

It recognises that everyone is different and so it offers a range of treatments including:

- working with Defence Medical Services to make sure veterans get mental health care and support as they transition from the military to civilian life
- recognising the early signs of mental health problems and providing care and treatment for this

²⁹ [UK Armed Forces Mental Health annual report 2019 to 2020 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

³⁰ [MHN Briefing 210 \(final\):Briefing \(new\) No. 125 copy \(nhsconfed.org\)](#)

³¹ Hunt. E.J.F, Wessley, S., et al. (2014) "The Mental Health of the UK Armed Forces: where facts meet fiction" European Journal of Psychotraumatology. 5: 23617. [Hunt2014 \(kcl.ac.uk\)](#)

³² [Veterans: NHS mental health services - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

- therapeutic treatment for more advanced mental health conditions and psychological trauma
- intensive emergency care and treatment if individuals are in a crisis
- helping veterans to access other NHS services if needed, such as "Improving access to psychological therapies" (IAPT) and eating disorder services
- working with charities and local organisations to support veterans with wider health and wellbeing needs, such as housing, relationships, finances, employment, drug and alcohol misuse and social support.

The service is available across England and individuals can self-refer or ask a GP or a charity to refer them.

Locally

Within North East Lincolnshire, the Transition, Intervention and Liaison Service (TILS) still operates whilst Op-COURAGE is in progress of being fully implemented by 2023. The service is a Mental health triage and assessment for military veterans registered with GPs across Yorkshire and the Humber that are struggling to access and or engage with mainstream mental health services. The service commissioned by NHS England, developed from recognition that military veterans may find it difficult to access traditional NHS services following time spent in a military environment and acknowledges that a stigma still surrounds mental health issues and aims to reduce this by providing more accessible pathways into services. The team offers mental health assessment by a specialist veterans mental health practitioner who is sensitive to military culture and has good local knowledge. The service aims to provide a thorough assessment to refer veterans onto the most appropriate service to meet their needs. Clinics have also been held at 'The Knoll' in Cleethorpes.

NAVIGO, the local mental health service provider in North East Lincolnshire, are currently working on a 'Veterans Project'. They are completing a gold-standard mental health needs assessment to highlight the unmet needs and gaps in services that meet veterans' mental health, physical health, and social care needs. They are undertaking an audit of all veterans open to their services and are also completing semi-structured interviews with veterans, covid permitting, using a needs assessment tool to understand the specific and multiple needs of veterans who have been discharged from service with outstanding health and social care difficulties.

There is a specific Armed Forces MHFA (Mental Health First Aid) programme available to train local authority employees. As part of the initial funding from the Armed Forces Community Trust Fund "Strengthening Delivery of the Armed Forces Covenant"; NELC did deliver to one cohort the Mental Health (Armed Forces) First Aid course in April 2019. Applications were opened to NELC staff and relevant stakeholders. The sixteen individuals who attended the two-day course were from Veterans Steadfast Support, Humberside Fire and Rescue, University of Leeds, Empower, Carers Support Service, Blue Light Brigade and Samaritans. The Wellbeing service at NELC has no formal veterans training but do provide wellbeing support for veterans, they would be considered a vulnerable group and the service has been involved in the support for the 'Veterans Pathway' There is an online learning course to assist frontline staff who may deal with the Armed Forces Community within NELC 'Learning Lincs'; it is rarely used and would benefit from some additional prominence.

Suicide data specifically for veterans of the UK armed Forces is not currently captured by the Government. However, 'Defence Statistics Health' are working alongside the Office for Veterans Affairs within the Cabinet Office, to improve data collection of the veteran community

as envisioned by the 'Strategy for our Veterans'. However, data on suicides that have occurred among serving UK regular armed forces are captured. Despite this, Lord Ashcroft's Review in 2014 of Veterans Transition found that ex-Service personnel as a group are no more likely to take their own lives than the general population³³.

The MoD published a report on Suicides in the UK regular Armed Forces and analysed trends between 1984 and 2019. Suicide remains a rare event in the UK armed forces, with on average less than two per month (in 2019 there were ten coroner confirmed suicides, with an additional eight that may result in a suicide verdict once Coroner Inquests are held). This represents less than one death per 1,000 armed forces personnel (8 per 100,000)³⁴. For the 20-year period between 2000-2019, there were 306 suicides in the UK regular armed forces. The suicide rate per 100,000 for all persons in North East Lincolnshire is 11.2 and for England it is similar at 10.1 per 100,000³⁵, higher than that of the armed forces personnel rate. Within North East Lincolnshire, between 2010 and 2018, there were 12 people out of 112 who had died by suicide and had been in the military at some point in their life, all were male.

Alcohol Misuse

Rates of alcohol misuse in the UK Armed Forces are higher than that of the public. In a study of nearly 10,000 military personnel, 13% reported alcohol misuse³⁶. Further evidence suggests that alcohol misuse persists beyond military service, with prevalence rates for alcohol misuse higher in military veterans than the general public³⁷.

A similar picture is emerging in veterans who are seeking support for mental health problems, with one recent study of treatment-seeking UK veterans observing that 43% reported problems with alcohol misuse, and that alcohol misuse was commonly reported to be comorbid alongside PTSD, common mental health difficulties like anxiety and depression, and problems with anger³⁸.

Locally, established in 2019 'The Comeback' is an initiative locally commissioned through the 'Creative Start CIC' service. Creative Start has been supporting Grimsby and North East Lincolnshire for over 8 years and is not-for-profit organisation that builds safe and honest creative workspace environments, runs community art projects to promote *abstinence-based recovery*, provides peer-support to inspire creativity and aims to reduce the *stigma of addiction* that many members experience in their daily lives. Although there is support for people in active addiction, there is very little support and limited activities for people who are in a programme of abstinence. Though not specifically for veterans, 'The Comeback' operates on a 'drop-in' service and is an opportunity to make new connections and meet peers in recovery from addiction. The service has facilitated ex-service personnel and has supported them with substance misuse and co-morbidities. Other locally commissioned services

³³ [vtrreport.pdf \(veteranstransition.co.uk\)](#)

³⁴ [UK Armed Forces suicides national statistics 2019 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

³⁵ [Suicide Prevention Profile - PHE](#)

³⁶ Head, M., Goodwin, L., Debell, F., Greenberg, N., Wessely, S. and Fear, N.T., (2016) Post-traumatic stress disorder and alcohol misuse: comorbidity in UK military personnel. *Social psychiatry and psychiatric epidemiology*, 51(8), pp.1171-1180. [Post-traumatic stress disorder and alcohol misuse: comorbidity in UK military personnel | SpringerLink](#)

³⁷ Fear, N. T., Iversen, A. C., Meltzer, H., Workman, L., Hull, L., Greenberg, N., & Jones, M. (2007). Patterns of drinking in the UK Armed Forces. *Addiction*, 102(11), 1749-1759

³⁸ Murphy, D., Ashwick, R., Palmer, E. and Busuttil, W., 2019. Describing the profile of a population of UK veterans seeking support for mental health difficulties. *Journal of Mental Health*, 28(6), pp.654-661.

available, though not specifically for veterans, in North East Lincolnshire is the 'Grimsby Practices in Partnership (GPiP)³⁹, an NHS service that supports individuals with alcohol misuse and comorbidities and combines Birkwood, Cromwell Road, Pelham and Woodford Surgeries. The service offers structured support for individuals and their families as well as access to support groups.

Locally, more specifically supporting veterans, 'We Are With You' (WAWY) service delivers the 'Right Turn' programme. The Right Turn model looks at veterans' issues in the context of their whole life, rather than focusing only on their drug or alcohol use. Right Turn is embedded in national WAWY services, through a network of trained Right Turn leads and staff. Support includes specialist one-to-one treatment, peer recovery groups and social activities to build trust and develop positive support networks⁴⁰.

Disability (relating to service)

According to the Royal British Legion survey, significantly higher prevalence of musculoskeletal, cardiovascular, respiratory, mental health, sight and hearing conditions were reported in the adult ex-service community (veterans and their dependants) compared to the general adult population⁴¹. The largest differences in health are in the younger age groups where the ex-service community report over double the poor health in some age cohorts compared to their peers. Those aged 35-64 are more likely to report a range of long-term health problems compared with UK adults of the same age, particularly musculoskeletal and sensory problems, and depression.

Veterans are entitled to some priority care, based on clinical need, for service-related conditions so encouraging veterans to make their status known would allow their military history to be considered when assessing health needs. Veteran status should be recorded on primary and secondary care records and within referrals for this to be taken into account and not to disadvantage veterans if moving around the country.

Veterans who have lost limbs in combat often have more complex needs than civilian amputees. Those who have been injured in combat may have multiple amputations and specialist prosthetics which require different treatment to civilians whose amputations may be health or age related. They also have experienced different levels of treatment while in the armed forces than the NHS can provide. The Murrison report⁴² recommended several national specialist prosthetic and rehabilitation centres across the country are introduced to support veterans who have lost limbs due to their military service to ensure the services provided meet the requirements of veterans and use the experience to develop NHS services in the future. Since 2011, 9 Disablement Service Centres (DSCs) have been implemented, the closest to North East Lincolnshire is Sheffield at Northern General Hospital⁴³.

³⁹ [Overview - Grimsby Practices In Partnership - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

⁴⁰ [Our programmes - We Are With You](#)

⁴¹ [A UK household survey of the ex-Service community \(rblcdn.co.uk\)](http://rblcdn.co.uk)

⁴² [A better deal for military amputees - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

⁴³ [Veterans: NHS services for those with physical injuries - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

Housing

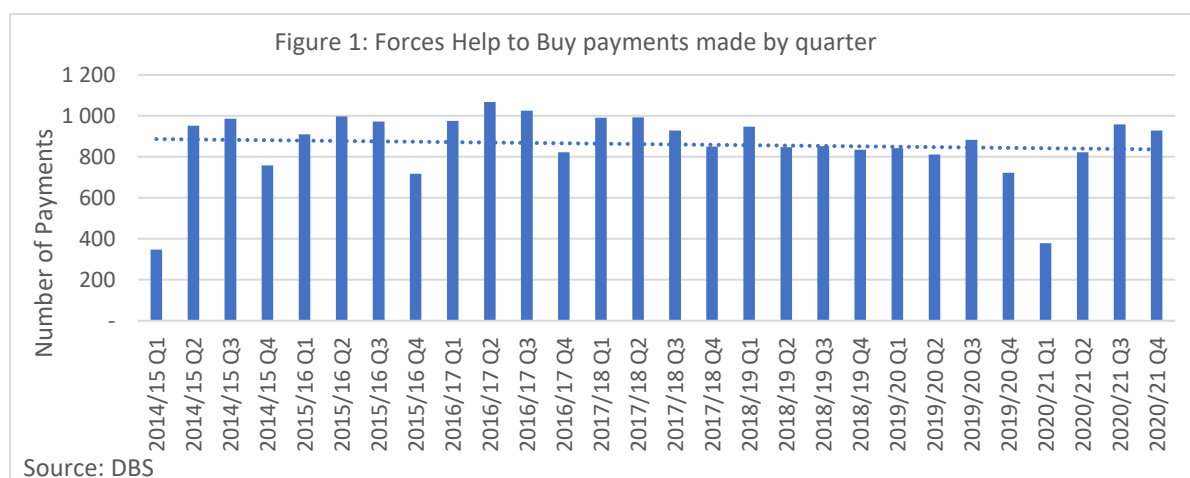
Housing and homelessness may be a risk for ex-service personnel as they settle back into civilian life following their time in service⁴⁴. For some Veterans, leaving the Armed Forces will be the first time they find a home for themselves. The importance of ensuring veterans have access to quality housing and housing support is recognised within the Armed Forces Covenant.

The needs of veterans in relation to housing may be similar to other members of the public but consideration must also be given to any increased needs in relation to housing, particularly for those with major disabilities. Furthermore, people leaving Military housing can now apply to stay in their Married Quarter for up to a year after their discharge date whilst they find suitable accommodation⁴⁵. However, this does not apply to a single service person so they could potentially be another area for concern.

Forces Help to Buy Scheme

Introduced in 2014, the Forces Help to Buy scheme continues to help Service personnel to get on or stay on the property ladder, by borrowing up to 50% of their annual salary (up to a maximum of £25,000) to purchase their first property. As of 30 September 2020, the scheme has collectively helped around 22,200 Service personnel at a total cost of around £336 million (an average of £15,100 per claim). In October 2019, the Secretary of State for Defence announced that the scheme would be extended until the end of December 2022⁴⁶.

Nationally, data is available for the schemes three key outcomes; the number of first stage applications, which includes initial eligibility checks, the number of second stage applications, which included more detailed checks, and the number of payments made under the scheme to Service personnel. Since the scheme began, as of April 2021, there have been 56,540 first stage applications, of which 28,926 applications have proceeded to the second stage. Of this, 24,100 applicants have received payments, totalling around £366 million, which provides an average of approximately £15,200 per claim. At least 95% of payments, as of March 2021, have resulted in a purchased property or extension.



⁴⁴ Lowe, S. and Dybiczyk, P., (2019) Veteran Homelessness: Examining the Values of Social Justice Guiding Policy. *Journal of Veterans Studies*, 4(1).

⁴⁵ [Occupation of Service Family Accommodation \(updated 16 September 2020\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/occupation-of-service-family-accommodation-updated-16-september-2020)

⁴⁶ [6.6856 MOD Covenant-Annual-Report-2020 Full-Pages_A4_v16.1_web_3_.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/86856/6.6856_MOD_Covenant-Annual-Report-2020_Full-Pages_A4_v16.1_web_3_.pdf)

NELC Housing and Policy

On the 27th of June 2020, the UK Government announced new measures to ensure access to social housing was improved for members of the Armed Forces, veterans, and families.

The Government set out how councils should ensure members of the Armed Forces and veterans who need support with their mental health, because of conditions such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), are given priority. The new measures also mean that former spouses (bereaved individuals) or civil partners of Serving personnel will be given extra support when applying for social housing. They will be exempt from rules requiring them to be a local resident before being given social housing in the area to ensure that they are not disadvantaged when applying. Guidance was also issued to councils to encourage staff-training so that they understood the circumstances of the Armed Forces community and consider their housing needs appropriately⁴⁷.

North East Lincolnshire have a 'Local Lettings Policy' in place in conjunction with Lincolnshire Housing Partnership (LHP). Each year LHP allocates 5 new build properties to eligible service personnel. To be eligible,

- Households must contain either a serving or former member of the UK armed forces (regular or reserve);
- Households must both successfully register with Home Choice Lincs (HCL) and be assessed as eligible for assistance under both HCL and LHP's relevant policies. When being considered for a social tenancy, eligible households will be prioritised by their assessed housing need and date of registration.
- Any households presenting to the Local Authority as homeless will be assisted in accordance with the Local Authority's statutory duties, but this will not preclude them from applying and bidding for housing under this policy.

Since 1st April 2018, North East Lincolnshire have housed 10 ex-forces applicants, 3 however have been through the scheme as described above, as the rest were successful in applying for other properties on the register.

Within North East Lincolnshire, Bands are assigned to housing applicants, 'Band 1' is urgent, 'Band 2' is high, 'Band 3' is medium, and 'Band 4' is low priority. A new system has been implemented whereby choosing to flag armed forces applicants on a housing advertisement, allows to obtain more accurate data when armed forces veterans are requesting housing. The number of veterans on the current register in North East Lincolnshire is low, cumulatively there are 3 applicants either band 1 or 2 and 19 applicants in bands 3 or 4. Armed forces applicants are assessed the same as any other applicant, based on their housing circumstances; often many resolve their own housing issues before a suitable property becomes available. However, priority is given to those individuals being discharged from the forces, either on medical grounds or through being at risk of homelessness. All armed forces applicants are awarded a local connection and given priority to relocate upon discharge.

⁴⁷ [Improving access to social housing for members of the Armed Forces - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/improving-access-to-social-housing-for-members-of-the-armed-forces)

Homelessness and homelessness in North East Lincolnshire

Delivering on the Armed Forces Covenant, in 2012 the government introduced protections to ensure that members of the Armed Forces community are not disadvantaged in accessing social housing because of the requirements of military life.

In 2018 the government introduced the Homelessness Reduction Act duty to refer⁴⁸ which requires the Secretary of State for Defence to refer members of the Regular Forces, who may be considered to be homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days, to a local housing authority of their choice, with the individual's consent. A person who is vulnerable as a result of having been a member of the Armed Forces (a veteran) has a priority need for accommodation.

The characteristics, profile and experiences of homeless veterans are largely the same as those of the wider homelessness population, although there are some notable differences. Homeless veterans have been found on average to be older, have slept rough for longer, be less likely to use drugs and more likely to have alcohol-related problems. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) has been found among a small number of homeless veterans although other non-military related mental health problems were more common. Though, there is little evidence to support the notion that military life, or institutionalisation, is a cause of veterans' homelessness⁴⁹.

In Yorkshire and the Humber, the estimated number of people sleeping rough on a single night in autumn in 2019 was 242 and in 2020 was 181, a decrease of 25%⁵⁰, however factors such as the pandemic cannot be ignored that may have impacted on this decrease.

In North East Lincolnshire, the number of homeless referrals increased by 6% between 2019/20 and 2020/21. In 2020/21, upon referral 1904 individuals were classed as 'at risk of homelessness'. Since 2018, two individuals have highlighted that the main reason for loss of settled address, was that they had left the armed forces and were homeless as a result. Within North East Lincolnshire, priority is given to those individuals who have been discharged and are at high risk of homelessness.

⁴⁸ [Homelessness: duty to refer - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

⁴⁹ [Literature review: UK veterans and homelessness \(britishlegion.org.uk\)](https://britishlegion.org.uk)

⁵⁰ [Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2020 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Children and Young People

The Local Government Association, in 2017, estimated that there were approximately 150,000 serving personnel living in England and that across the UK there were 57,590 dependent children, with around 8% of children aged 0-15 in the UK being from current and ex-serving armed forces families⁵¹. The ONS 2019 Mid-Year population estimate for young people aged 0-15 in North East Lincolnshire is 31,035. Applying the methodology of the previously mentioned 8% to the ONS estimate, this equates to an approximate total of 2,483 children in North East Lincolnshire.

Service families often face additional pressures, the military lifestyle means service children can experience 'growing-up' quite differently from their peers. The mobile lifestyle often means that children can move school multiple times, often leaving the children feeling unsettled and anxious. For children with additional needs, moving around can add another layer of complexity, with the need to find suitable schooling and the transfer of support plans often a complicated and frustrating task⁵².

Service Pupil Premium

Identifying the children of veterans is challenging. The Service Pupil Premium provides a more accurate record of the children of serving personnel in schools.

The Department for Education introduced the Service pupil premium (SPP) in April 2011 in recognition of the specific challenges children from service families face and as part of the commitment to delivering the armed forces covenant. Eligible schools receive the SPP so that they can offer mainly pastoral support during challenging times and to help mitigate the negative impact on service children of family mobility or parental deployment.

State schools, academies, and free schools in England, which have children of service families in school years reception to year 11, can receive the SPP funding. It is designed to assist the school in providing the additional support that these children may need and is currently worth £310 per service child who meets the eligibility criteria.

Children must be flagged as service children ahead of the autumn school census deadline. The School Census includes a field for all on roll pupils which records whether a pupil is from a service family. Valid codes for the Census are 'Yes', 'No', 'Refused' and 'Unknown'. The 'Refused' code applies to those parents/pupils who have actively refused to provide a response when the information has been sought; the 'Unknown' code indicates that no response has been given or data is not known for any other reason.

Within North East Lincolnshire, taking the January 2021 school census, very few are recorded as a 'service child', though those that are, are all primary school age. Most records are not complete or are 'unknown'.

The next school census will be completed in October 2021 and there are plans to highlight these issues to the school as there are obvious data quality issues. Service parents need to make the school aware of their status by talking to the head teacher or school admin staff.

⁵¹ Local Government Association (2017) [Meeting the public health needs of the armed forces: a resource for local authorities and health professionals](#)

⁵² [KIN-AND-COUNTRY-Growing-up-as-an-Armed-Forces-child.pdf \(childrenscommissioner.gov.uk\)](#)

Schools should identify service children in the school census via the service children indicator, encourage and highlight to parents the benefits of SPP to their child and identify the most effective use of the premium. However, it is important to note that perhaps parents of service children do not wish to identify their child as having an Armed Forces connection, this non-notification may be for various reasons including lack of knowledge about SPP and concerns around their child being identifiable to the Ministry of Defence.

In North East Lincolnshire, for the financial year beginning 1st April 2020 to March 31st, 2021 a total of 22,687 children were on the pupil roll. The total number of children registered for SPP during the financial year stipulated was 213, (less than 1% of the total pupil roll population), this equates to £66,030 in monetary SPP support for these eligible children⁵³.

Attainment

In 2018, the Service Children's Progression (SCiP) Alliance was commissioned to conduct the first UK-wide stakeholder consultation on Service children in education. The SCiP Alliance is a partnership of organisations funded by the MoD seeking to improve outcomes for children from military families. The main conclusions drawn from the data was:

- A significant difference was found in Year 10 and 11 English attainment scores, with Army pupils performing significantly lower in English compared to Non-Army pupils. A lower proportion of Year 6 Army pupils, compared to Non-Army pupils reported that they agreed with the statement "I get enough help with learning".
- A higher proportion Year 10 and 11 Army pupils, compared to Non-Army pupils reported strongly agreed with the statement "I feel I am reaching my potential with my schoolwork"
- 52.4% of Year 6 pupils and 33.3% of Year 10 and 11 Army Pupils reported having studied aspects of the curriculum more than once. The only subjects reported to having been taught more than once were maths, science, and history⁵⁴.

However, in 2016, the MoD issued an Ad Hoc Statistical Bulletin which provided information on educational statistics for England specifically on UK Armed Forces Personnel's children (Service children), in 2014/15⁵⁵.

- In 2014/15, 82.3% of Service children achieved level 4 or above in reading, maths and writing at Key Stage 2, compared to 82.9% of non-Service children. Achieving level 4 or above in these subjects was the expected standard for KS2 pupils in 2014/15.
- At Key Stage 4, 64.9% of Service children achieved five or more A*-C (or equivalent), including English and Maths, GCSEs in 2014/15 compared to 63% of non-Service children.

The bulletin also concluded, the same percentage of Service children and non-Service children attended Outstanding and Good OFSTED rated schools in 2014/15. However, fewer Service children attended Outstanding schools.

⁵³ [Pupil premium: allocations and conditions of grant 2020 to 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444444/pupil-premium-allocations-and-conditions-of-grant-2020-to-2021.pdf)

⁵⁴ [The Educational Attainment of Army Children \(scipalliance.org\)](https://www.scipalliance.org/)

⁵⁵ [Children of UK armed forces personnel: education statistics for England: 2014/15 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444444/children-of-uk-armed-forces-personnel-education-statistics-for-england-2014-15.pdf)

Financial Capability

Personal finance is an individual responsibility, and the Service chain of command has no right to interfere. Service life can create additional difficulties and financial mismanagement can create additional stress on Service Personnel and their families⁵⁶.

Over recent years, a significant amount of work has been carried out within the military to try and encourage members of the armed forces and service leavers to learn more about financial responsibility. Throughout the military career, financial briefings are held to educate members about finances after they leave the forces. These are designed to encourage serving members to take responsibility for their own financial security whilst in service and not wait until they have left or are planning to leave the military. Upon leaving a military career, the MoD has published a 'Service Leavers' Guide' which highlights where veterans can access financial help such as by contacting the Royal British Legion and Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA).

The Northern Hub for Veterans and Families Research at Northumbria University used funding from Covenant Fund to develop a map of veterans' and their families' welfare needs across the whole of the UK, based on data from public sources, statistics, health data and data directly from Armed Forces charities. Part of this map of need, identified 'hot spot' areas where it was statistically significant an area was high in receipt of financial assistance⁵⁷. Grimsby was identified as a 'hot spot' of individuals in receipt of funding with 99% confidence that the hot spot is the result of a spatial pattern that could not have happened by random chance.

Money Force

There are multiple charities who offer financial assistance for Veterans however, MoneyForce is the official Ministry of Defence channel for money advice for UK service personnel. They provide education rather than financial products and can help families with savings and budget planning to ensure they stay within their means.

As part of the 'Strategy for our Veterans' UK Government Consultation Response, within the key theme of 'Finance and Debt' the key focus areas identified were preparing Serving Personnel for the financial realities of civilian life and reducing potential financial disadvantage encountered due to Service by Veterans⁵⁸. The focus of the military is to continue to educate and prepare individuals with skills and awareness to be financially self-supporting and resilient. Outcomes from the consultation encouraged further financial training, to continue to offer free financial advice and help veterans better understand benefits pensions and housing options as these were highlighted as some of the key themes' respondents felt they needed support with.

⁵⁶ [Money and Finance | The British Army \(mod.uk\)](#)

⁵⁷ [Regional Report 2019 Yorkshire-and-the-Humber.pdf \(covenantfund.org.uk\)](#)

⁵⁸ [Strategy for our Veterans – UK Government Consultation Response \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Local Debt Advice

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) provide help and support for ex-military service leavers⁵⁹. Although CAB advise ex-armed forces personnel, locally, we do not have any advisers who specifically work with Armed Forces veterans and there are no specific protocols as such for veterans who are seeking advice. However, we are further awaiting local information from citizens advice within North East Lincolnshire pertaining to client data.

In the recent Armed Forces Community Survey conducted by NELC, when asked 'is there sufficient financial education, awareness and skills to assist with being financially self-supporting', a significant proportion 38% said 'no', 32% said 'don't know' and 30% said 'yes'. Some examples of responses to this question are as follows: 'It's hard to know what's available as unless you ask specifics, no one tells you', 'Never asked for any help' and 'There is not enough information on how to obtain financial support'. This seems to endorse the existing rhetoric, that not all veterans will require extra financial advice or support, however those that do find the process difficult and somewhat vague.

Adult Education, Training and Employment

The 2017, Annual Population Survey (APS)⁶⁰, reported that overall, there were 'no differences' in employment status between working-age veterans and non-veterans. Over three-quarters of veterans (79%) and non-veterans (79%) were employed. According to the APS, just 3% of working age veterans were unemployed and seeking work, whilst 18% were inactive by choice; academic study, travel and/or retirement cited as the most common reasons. However, veterans with a mobility or a mental health disability are more likely to be unemployed and conclusions have been drawn that more work is needed to support these individuals according to research funded by FiMT⁶¹.

Whilst there were 'no differences' between working-age veterans and non-veterans, there were gender differences within the populations. Female veterans and non-veterans were significantly more likely to be economically inactive, and less likely to be employed, than males. This finding was expected since females within the general UK population are more likely to be economically inactive due to family commitments than males⁶².

Moving into Civilian Employment

Many service leavers will spend more time in civilian employment than in their military career. Throughout the military career, individuals are encouraged to participate in Transition Individual Planning and Personal Development (IPPD) to enhance career prospects⁶³.

The MOD has adopted a proactive approach to supporting employees moving into employment at the end of their Service. The MOD has commissioned Career Transition Partnership (CTP) services for over 20 years. The CTP exists to provide employment

⁵⁹ [Benefits and concessions for the Armed Forces, veterans and their families - Citizens Advice](#)

⁶⁰ [Annual Population Survey: UK Armed Forces Veterans residing in Great Britain 2017 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

⁶¹ [veterans-work-moving-on.pdf \(fim-trust.org\)](#)

⁶² [Employment and employee types - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

⁶³ [Transition to civilian life | The British Army \(mod.uk\)](#)

resettlement services to those leaving the Royal Navy, Army, Royal Air Force and Marines regardless of the time served. The CTP service can be accessed two years before leaving the Armed Forces and for up to two years afterwards. To date, CTP have assisted over 235,000 Service leavers with the transition to civilian life and supported thousands of organisations looking to employ ex-Service personnel⁶⁴.

CTP outcomes are published annually by the ONS. Of the 2019/20 UK regular service leavers who used a billable CTP service, and reported their employment outcomes six months after leaving service; 84% were employed (most common occupations were associate professional, skilled trade and professional occupations), 7% were unemployed and 10% were economically inactive (for example being in education or those on a career break and therefore not actively seeking employment). The employment rate was higher than that of the UK population at 75.6%. However, the employment rate for 2019/20 service leavers (84%) was significantly lower than for 2018/19 service leavers (86%). However, when looking at quarterly trends, it was likely due to the economic effects of COVID-19 and the reduction in employment availability, particularly for those aged under 25⁶⁵. Furthermore, caution must be taken when making comparisons. The employment status of Service leavers was recorded six months after they left Service whilst the UK population includes those that sought employment for longer than six months.

The UK Government confirmed that the government would honour the commitment to reduce Employer National Insurance contributions (NICs) for a full year for every new employee who has left the Armed Forces. This will provide an added incentive for employers to hire more veterans and to benefit from the exceptional, and often unique, experiences and skills that a veteran can bring to the workforce. Relief is now available and was implemented on 6th April 2021⁶⁶.

There are numerous Charities, across the UK, who assist veterans in finding employment such as 'The Poppy Factory'. It is an employment charity for veterans from all Services with health conditions or impairments. They use an evidence-based model to improve outcomes and build successful, long-lasting relationships between disabled veterans and their employers.

Local Support and benefits

The benefits system, overseen by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), is in place to help those who would otherwise struggle financially. Locally, NELC and AFMET have an excellent working relationship with the DWP and the local job centres in Grimsby and Immingham for example. A key element of is making sure that veterans apply for all the benefits they are eligible for. Ensuring this happens can be difficult; some people may feel as though they do not want to claim benefits, some might feel as though they should not have to, and others may not be aware of benefits available to them. Claiming benefits may stop veterans from falling into debt, as well as allowing them access to the support and advice.

Locally, there is a specific veterans lead within DWP who supports veterans find work or apply for benefits. There is help and support available for veterans and their families who need referring to veterans' organisations and charities. The initiative has been running since 2016 in North East Lincolnshire and veterans are identified via universal credit as the application

⁶⁴ [About Us - CTP | Career Transition Partnership](#)

⁶⁵ [Career Transition Partnership annual statistics: UK Regular Service Personnel Employment Outcomes, 2015/16 to 2019/2020 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

⁶⁶ [National Insurance contributions relief for employers who hire veterans - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

has a marker of a veteran or having served in the Armed Forces. DWP in Grimsby have contacts with SSAFA, RBL and Combat Stress amongst others. The service also covers Immingham and has a drop-in service once a month at 'The Knoll' in Cleethorpes. Anecdotally, there are only a small number of known veterans who have attended the local Jobcentre office over the years. It is important to acknowledge that jobseekers do not have to identify themselves as veterans so this will always affect the accuracy of any figures provided.

In the recent Armed Forces Community Survey conducted by NELC, when asked as a Veteran what was their experience of moving from military working life into civilian life, over a third of respondents said they found it 'easy'. However, 13% found it 'challenging', 15% found it 'difficult', and a small proportion 8% found it 'hard', 'daunting' or 'terrifying'. This response seems to confirm what has been reported locally and anecdotally, namely that not all service leavers will necessarily need extra support. Some example comments from this question are as follows: 'Quite easy', 'Straight forward with no issues and I knew where to get help if needed' and 'Hard at first until we got into civilian life routine'.

Defence Employer Recognition Scheme

The Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (DERS) encourages employers to support Defence and inspire others to do the same. The Scheme includes Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards for employer organisations that pledge, demonstrate or advocate support to the MOD and the Armed Forces community, and align their values with the AFC.

Bronze Award. Employers must pledge to support the Armed Forces and have signed the AFC. The employer must be open to employing members of the Armed Forces community.

Silver Award. Employers must proactively demonstrate a positive approach to employing members of the Armed Forces community: including having in place supportive policies towards Reservists regarding mobilisation and offering additional paid leave (minimum of 5 days) to support them to undertake annual training camps.

Gold Award. Employers must be an exemplar within their market sector, advocating support to Defence People issues to partner organisations, suppliers and customers with tangible positive results.

North East Lincolnshire Council is fully engaged in the DERS and has recently achieved the Gold Award in 2021.

Transition

The Transition Mapping Study conducted by the Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT)⁶⁷ was one of the first major reviews to identify five major reoccurring themes during the resettlement process:

- The resettlement experience varies greatly- no two journeys are the same.
- The differences between military and civilian life are underestimated.
- Families matter and are crucial to good resettlement and therefore should be better supported.
- Financial awareness and competence are important to a good resettlement.
- The provision of support is improving but in a somewhat piecemeal fashion.

FiMT revisited this study in 2017 and noted that whilst improvements had been made, such as the launch of the Veteran's Gateway in April 2017 (a single point of contact for leavers and greater co-ordination amongst leaver's charities), more support and work was needed to address family breakdown, common mental health disorders (PTSD), harmful drinking and unemployment. FiMT projected the cost of poor transition to civilian life as £105m in 2017 rising to £110m in 2020.

Strategy for Our Veterans

In November 2018, the Strategy for our Veterans was jointly published by the UK, Scottish and Welsh Governments. The Strategy set out an enduring vision and principles for support to veterans across the UK with outcomes being set for 2028 for five cross-cutting factors and six key themes that give tangible aspirations against which success can be measured⁶⁸.

Defence Transition Services

Defence Transition Services (DTS) is run by the MOD's Veterans UK. It exists to provide information and support for those service leavers and their families who are most likely to face challenges as they leave the armed forces and adjust to civilian life. DTS is a one-to-one service, facilitating access to support services, including local authorities, the NHS or trusted charities. DTS can help with issues and provide support and guidance on various aspects affected by leaving Service life, including health, accommodation, finance and debt, children, family and relationships and employment. They can be accessed via self-referral or through an external organisation, such as a charity. Service leavers can also access DTS via their unit. A family member of a Service leaver may access DTS via self-referral⁶⁹.

As part of the recent armed Forces Community survey, when asked as a member of the Armed Forces Community, "do you feel you are able to integrate into your local community", a large proportion 89% said 'yes' and 11% therefore said 'no'. This response is encouraging that what has already been done in North East Lincolnshire in terms of providing veteran community support by AFMET and from within 'The Knoll', Blighties coffee lounge and the Hive. In bringing together the veteran community and the local community together through these initiatives highlights the ongoing hard work within North East Lincolnshire. However, there is

⁶⁷ [transition-mapping-study.pdf \(fim-trust.org\)](https://www.fim-trust.org/transition-mapping-study.pdf)

⁶⁸ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/755915/Strategy_for_our_Veterans_FINAL_08.11.18_WEB.pdf

⁶⁹ [Service leavers' guide - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/service-leavers-guide)

clearly room to further strengthen these relationships and recognise that some veterans still feel under appreciated.

Community Consultation

Armed Forces Covenant Community Consultation

The Armed Forces Covenant Action Plan Consultation was conducted and closed on 28th April 2021; it had run for 12 weeks. The survey was designed to hear from organisations who currently provide for the armed forces community, or wished to do so, and those individuals who make up the armed forces community within North East Lincolnshire.

The survey was placed on the NELC website, 12 organisations across North East Lincolnshire responded along with 54 individual responses. The responses seem to confirm what has been reported locally and anecdotally, caution nevertheless needs to be taken as the level of responses to this survey were low and cannot therefore be seen as representative of the local armed forces community. Individual responses have been inserted where appropriate throughout the assessment.

In terms of responses from organisations, organisations were asked whether they were having trouble in supporting the Armed Forces Community, and 17% answered 'yes'. It was highlighted that this was due to the pandemic. A further question was asked whether their organisation in question will find challenges in supporting a local action plan, and a third of respondents said 'yes'. Again, the issue of the pandemic and resources was flagged as a reason behind this.

Finally, organisations asked whether they thought there was a need for better collection and use of data across all sectors to build an evidence base to further identify veteran needs, all respondents answered 'yes'. There is a clear consensus that data for the armed forces community in terms of data collection and sharing needs to be improved and it is evident that there is a willingness to do so and points to the opportunity of more research in the future.

Local Services

Local initiatives to North East Lincolnshire are as follows:

- Veteran support webpage on North East Lincolnshire Council's website⁷⁰.
- Dedicated veteran support website 'Armed Forces North East Lincolnshire.'⁷¹
- Armed Forces HIVE, also known as the Knoll, which is AFMET's HQ in the heart of Cleethorpes. From the Knoll, AFMET work closely with like-minded organisations such as the NHS and the Department of Work and Pensions, with local groups such as the Grimsby Institute, and with military charities such as SSAFA, Royal Naval Association (RNA), Royal Air Force Association (RAFA) and Royal British Legion (RBL). When services personnel, a veteran or a family member require assistance, the team will work tirelessly to provide personalised support and intervention, coordinating with specialised professional services to help address the challenges they are facing. Veterans can physically visit the HIVE and the team offer various drop-in sessions.
- Veteran café lounge called Blighty's Café. A dedicated space where veterans can relax within the community and discuss their concerns.
- Armed Forces & Veterans Breakfast Clubs. A dedicated club that is run at "The Wheatsheaf" in Grimsby⁷².
- Veterans Still Serving in North East Lincolnshire, a support group for former armed service personnel and their families. Allowing the opportunity for those to speak about their problems and struggles that they face in a safe and non-judgemental environment.

We acknowledge that there are several charities and subsequent charitable work that is being undertaken that is not listed or mentioned in this assessment.

Conclusion

Overall, the needs assessment suggests that there is some good local support available for veterans, including the housing and employment support available for veterans and their family members. However, one of the main areas of need highlighted by this assessment has been that local data and intelligence is limited in its availability and not always robust. This however is not uncommon and is nationally recognised, though improvements can be made.

This needs assessment has helped to dispel some myths around mental health and homelessness that often surround the military community and has shown that effective support is already available. This is an important conclusion as it helps demonstrate that many service leavers successfully transition and enjoy a good quality of civilian life. However, it is important to acknowledge that there are those veterans who do need extra support and as their 'pathway' into civilian life is not as clear as it is for other veterans; each individual is unique.

Although this needs assessment has highlighted areas of success and areas of concern, it has also highlighted areas that need to be researched further. It is still very difficult to ascertain

⁷⁰ [Armed forces - NELC | NELC \(nelincs.gov.uk\)](https://nelincs.gov.uk)

⁷¹ [Armed Forces Cleethorpes | About the Team - Armed Forces Cleethorpes \(armedforcesnortheastlincolnshire.co.uk\)](https://armedforcesnortheastlincolnshire.co.uk)

⁷² [Grimsby – Armed Forces & Veterans Breakfast Clubs \(afvbc.net\)](https://afvbc.net)

a more accurate figure for how many veterans live within North East Lincolnshire, though it has been acknowledged that not everyone will wish to identify as a veteran. However, the 2021 census in time will provide us with a more accurate figure.

Future Actions and Proposed Next Steps

The following recommendations have been produced based upon the national and local evidence, as well as best practice of what is effective in improving the health and well-being of ex-Armed Forces personnel.

- Build on this health needs assessment. By using a qualitative research approach to better understand the veteran experience in the absence of complete and reliable statistical data. NELC may like to consider conducting qualitative research with family members, within the Armed Forces community, through focus groups or other methods to complement any existing quantitative data.
- Improve data collection, particularly in GP practices and in primary care. Further work is required to encourage GP Practices and members of the Armed Forces community to record military connections.
- Improve partner organisation data collection. The willingness to do so has been highlighted by partner organisations in North East Lincolnshire.
- Improve the knowledge and training of 'front of house' staff and intervention teams across the partnership, so that veterans with service-related health issues or other wellbeing needs can be signposted more effectively to the most appropriate services.