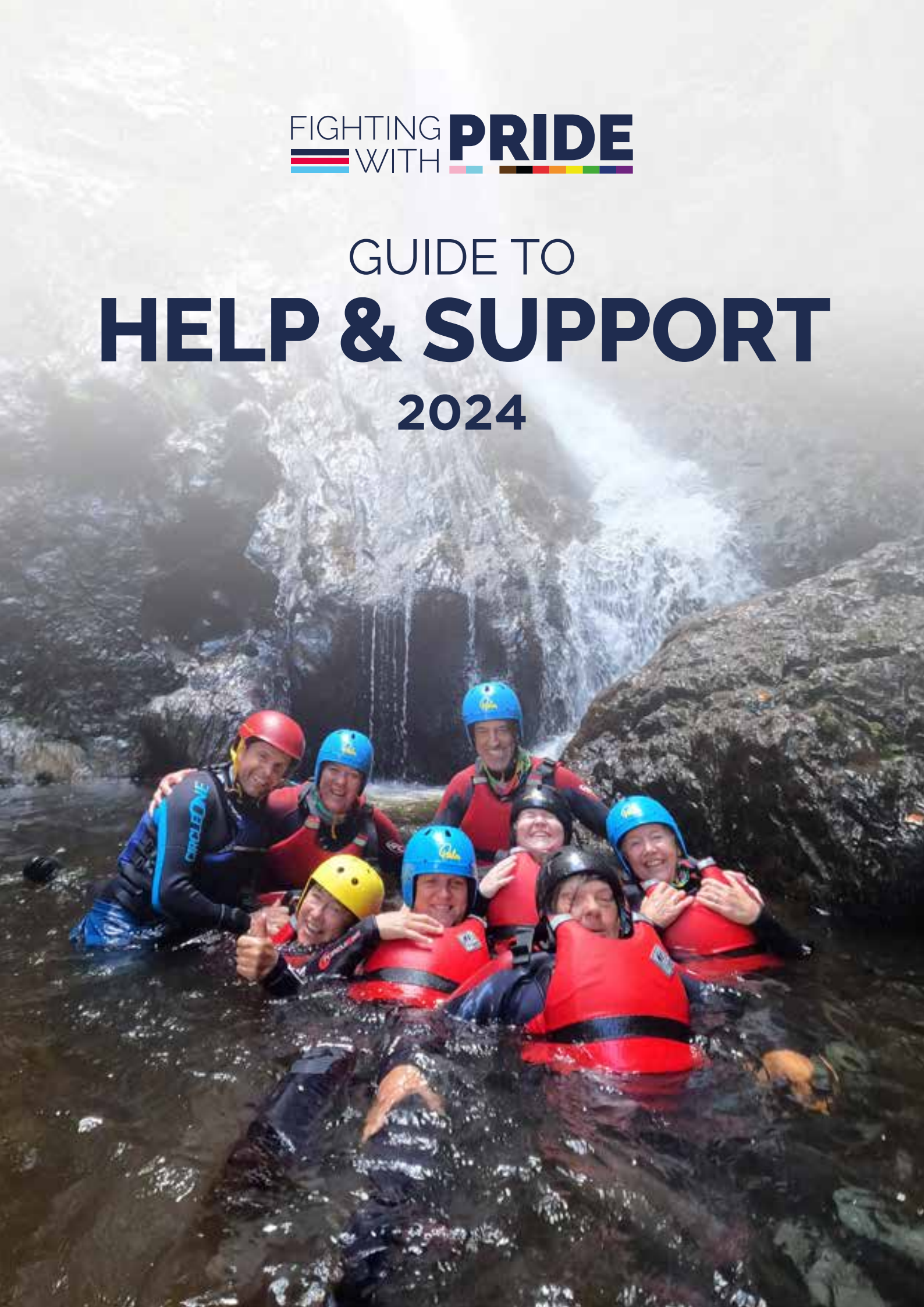


FIGHTING WITH **PRIDE**

GUIDE TO
HELP & SUPPORT
2024





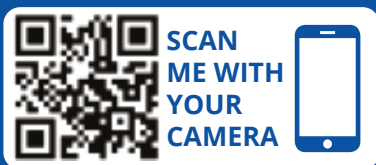
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GUIDE TO HELP & SUPPORT 2024



Published on behalf of Fighting With Pride by



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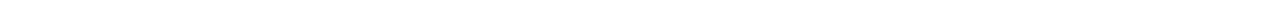
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Surging support for a remarkable community of LGBT+ Veterans

By Craig Jones MBE & Caroline Paige MBE



This first edition of the Fighting With Pride – Guide To Help & Support 2024 celebrates the service of a remarkable community of Veterans and families as they rejoin the Armed Forces family and provides a detailed guide to the far-reaching support capacity which the charity continues to build with a wide variety of partnership organisations.

For many, the journey home has been long and arduous, but the welcome seen on the pages of this publication reflects an awakening in Veterans' organisations of all that has been lost. To the Veterans we seek to support, it is the strongest possible demonstration of the heart-warming efforts of organisations across the UK as they roll out the red carpet and surge support.

Just five years ago, the nature of this community's need for this publication would have been unclear. It has been the privilege of Fighting With Pride to champion a community of Veterans, which has for decades been in the shadows and on the edge of Veteran communities.

A significant number of LGBT+ Veterans, and those falsely accused of being LGBT+, have been financially excluded as a result of the 'ban', and many have been unsure about the impact of being removed from the Services upon their status as veterans.

Today, when we stand in their vanguard of support, FWP stands shoulder to shoulder with hundreds of Veterans support organisations and the message of welcome is loud and clear.

For those most affected by the ban, even the warmest of welcomes from an organisation needs an individual act of forgiveness by the Veteran and courage to accept. Supporting LGBT+ Veterans to recognise and feel Pride and enabling a sense of belonging in their Service is the hardest of tasks. We hope that the rainbows, kindness and heartfelt best wishes in this publication demonstrate a future in which the shame so many have felt in the past is washed away.

We will not forget what these Veterans have been through, indeed we will celebrate their perseverance, but we will also look forward to a future in which they can live in greater comfort, enjoy better health and a sense of justice and wellbeing.

For some our work has been late in the day, but together we are marching forward 'at the double', with swords drawn, drums beating.

Since our charity startup began in 2020, we have shared with you something truly remarkable, as we have seen scores of Veterans lost in the years of the 'gay ban' gathered, comforted and reminded of their Service.

At first, they were drawn in by those who truly understood how hard their journey has been, but today the Pride in Veterans Standard signals a warm welcome for LGBT+ Veterans in support organisations across the UK.

Torches of inclusion burn brightly in organisations who have shown energy and commitment in their endeavours to reflect the values of today's Armed Forces and which are guiding our Veterans home.

We are far closer to the beginning of this journey than the end, but we look ahead, full of hope and admiration for all that is being done and full of Pride in our LGBT+ Veterans.

Fighting With Pride: supporting recovery and reintegration

By Kevin Bazeley, Editor



Welcome to Fighting With Pride – Guide To Help and Support 2024, a digital compendium of shared LGBT+ “lived experience” and a comprehensive directory of welcoming support services which FWP continues to build for the LGBT+ Military Community.

Fighting With Pride (FWP), the LGBT+ Military Charity, was founded in 2020 to find and support those impacted by the UK Armed Forces ‘Gay Ban’, 1967-2000, and pick up the fight for recognition and compensation for the LGBT+ Veterans impacted.

FWP recognised that in the 20 years since the Ban was lifted in 2000, no co-ordinated attempt had been made to support the recovery and reintegration of the thousands of LGBT+ Service personnel dismissed, either directly or constructively, under the illegal and oppressive ‘Gay Ban’.

These included Serving personnel who were not LGBT+, but accused and dismissed for being so anyway.

FWP was formed to bring those Veterans out of isolation and the shame they were made to feel, and to co-ordinate the campaign for justice.

While initially created to be a voice for recognition for those impacted by the Ban, our mission has expanded to help not just Veterans, but Serving personnel, Reserve Forces and adult members of our Cadet Forces, and their families.

FWP works with the main Armed Forces charities and Veteran supporting organisations to build an ever-larger welcoming help and support community for LGBT+, and to assist in research into the impacts of the Ban and LGBT+ serving personnel’s experience.

FWP is a ‘lived experience’ charity with our small team all having direct experience of living with the Ban or with being LGBT+ in the Armed Forces.

Central to the work we do for our LGBT+ Veteran community is our small team of Veteran Community Workers (VCWs). We have VCWs supporting London and the South-East of England, the Midlands, The North-West, The North-East, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and will shortly have VCWs in the South West and East of England too.

Our VCWs are not therapists or counsellors, but they are equipped to support, befriend, and provide useful information and sign-posting to organisations committed to providing a warm and supportive welcome to LGBT+ Veterans who have felt excluded and isolated for too long.

The lived experience of our VCWs means they understand the trauma and harm that was done to LGBT+ individuals during the Ban, and their understanding and compassion helps them find access to needed support services. Whether that is for physical or mental health, financial

and benefit support, housing, education, the justice system, or just Armed Forces charities that will provide a welcoming and understanding community for LGBT+ Veterans to become a member, having been excluded for so long.

Contact Us

It is easy to get in contact, just go to our website, www.fightingwithpride.org.uk and click on the link to ‘Contact us’.

If you are seeking support or information, complete the short form on Contact Us and the closest VCW will reach out to welcome you and find out how best they can help you.

Our aim is for you to be welcomed back to the military family that you lost, that you swore an oath to and dedicated your life to, and that cruelly abandoned you because of its cultural ignorance and insecurity.

And to help you see that the military family of today stands to welcome you warmly and wants you to be part of it - and recognised for the service that you gave.

Meet Fighting With Pride's Veterans Community Support Team



Kenny Bryce (He/Him/His)

Community Team Manager
and Veterans Community Worker, North-West England

Kenny is our Veteran Community Worker (VCW) Manager, responsible for our team of regional VCWs. Coming from a family with strong Armed Forces background, Kenny kick-started his career in the Royal Navy in 1980 and was privileged to have been trained in his baking skills by then CPO David Avery, responsible for Charles and Diana's wedding cake. Kenny saw out his Navy days in HMS Caledonia in Scotland.

Kenny left the Royal Navy after experiencing homophobic hostility. Embarking on a career in social care, he has over 32 years of experience working at a senior level across the UK, managing and developing services for a diverse group of vulnerable adults across the sector.

Kenny's portfolio of service development includes residential, supported Living, outreach, day services, young carers, older people services, palliative care and social enterprises. Kenny pioneered the first café run specifically for people with autism in the UK, to provide employment opportunities, and led a new residential service to a high-profile organisation's first-ever outstanding rating by CQC.

Kenny has many diverse hobbies and qualifications which include barbering, massage, tennis, gym, football and spending time with friends. Kenny is passionate about supporting people to achieve their ambitions and providing opportunities for the most vulnerable in society.

Email: kenny.bryce@fightingwithpride.org.uk



Dougie Morgan (He/Him/His)

Operations Manager
and Veterans Community Worker, Scotland and Northern Ireland

Dougie Morgan is the LGBT+ Operation's Manager-Veterans Community Worker for Scotland and Northern Ireland. He has over 38 years' experience in the British Army, serving from 1979 – 2016, including 26 years in the Black Watch. During his Regular and Reserve Service, he was the deputy chair for the British Army LGBT Forum for over two years, and the lead for all LGBT matters in Scotland.

Dougie was a Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Instructor whilst serving and has continued to ensure everyone is treated fairly and equally in all his posts after service.

After completing his military service, he worked at Edinburgh Airport as a Security Officer and a member of the Additional Needs Team, and was responsible for ensuring anyone with hidden disabilities and additional needs were supported through the Airport which could be very challenging. He is MHFA and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills (ASIST) trained.

During the Covid lockdown, he worked at Sainsbury's as a delivery driver and Gleneagles 5* Hotel as a guest planner.

In 2015 Dougie received a Proud of Scotland 'Uniformed Icon of the Year' award for services to the LGBT+ community and in 2020 the Proud of Scotland Outstanding Contribution to LGBTQI+ Life, and then in 2023 he was awarded the Scottish Veterans' Award of Inspiration of the Year and Overall Champion of the Year for his continued support to LGBT+ Veterans in Scotland.

Dougie got married to Graeme in 2016, and have been together since 2010. They live in Alloa.

Email: dougie.morgan@fightingwithpride.org.uk



Ruth Birch (She/Her/Hers)

Operations Manager
and Veterans Community Worker, Cymru/Wales and FWP Training Officer

Ruth joined the Army in February 1987 as an Analyst in the Intelligence Corps. She predominantly served in B.A.O.R. and Northern Ireland during 'the troubles', where she received a commendation from the Prime Minister of the time, John Major.

Both Ruth and her partner at the time were interrogated by the SIB, and although no evidence could be found, her partner was sent on a six-month tour to Cyprus to split them up. It proved too much with the continuous harassment and SIB continuing to investigate that after seven months apart, they were forced to split up. Twenty-five years later, by some miracle, they were reunited and have been married for seven years.

Ruth recently left HM Prison Service, after serving 25 years. During this time, she engaged with and supported veterans including staff and prisoners. She was also the prison lead on Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity setting up focus groups, writing and delivering training programmes to staff and prisoners.

Ruth is a member of her local RBL and has also been the branch Chairperson and was involved in the organisation of the annual Poppy Appeal. She is also a member of her local RAFA Association and Veterans Hub. Her motivation for working for 'Fighting With Pride' is because she feels that she has come full circle, finally coming 'home' back into the 'military family', and it is her aim to bring the LGBT+ Veterans back home where they rightly belong.

At the Welsh Veterans Awards in 2023, Ruth won 'Inspiration of the Year'

Ruth lives with her wife and two mad spaniels in South Wales. She is a campanologist, surfer, kayaker and volunteers as a tractor driver for her local RNLI station.

Email: ruth.birch@fightingwithpride.org.uk



Kate Husband (She/Her/Hers)

Veterans Community Worker, North-East England
and FWP Safeguarding Officer

Kate served in the RAF for 12 years (plus four years previously in the Royal Navy Auxiliary Service) leaving in 1996, prior to spending 25 years as an Occupational Therapist (OT) in mental health services.

Kate identifies as LGBT+ and is well aware of the difficulties and challenges they faced, having been one of the 'hidden' prior to the lifting of the Ban who felt the need to deny their true self in order to do the job they felt so proud of - serving their country.

During her OT years, she encountered many Veterans requiring treatment, support and input and is well versed in the difficulties encountered by ex-forces personnel.

Kate is a strong advocate for LGBT+ issues, becoming involved in this community, and is currently thoroughly enjoying

being part of Northern Proud Voices, a community choir based in Newcastle for LGBT+ and allies.

Having just moved back up to Tyneside after many years away, she is getting immersed in revitalising her garden, getting out and about in the beautiful countryside, and again experiencing the friendly, social hub that is Newcastle.

Kate is very proud to be a member of the Fighting With Pride Team and is looking forward to the positive work we do within and for our family of LGBT+ veterans.

Email: kate.husband@fightingwithpride.org.uk



Gemma Warden (She/Her/Hers)

Veterans Community Worker, Midlands

Gem grew up in an Armed Forces family in Herefordshire, where her father served in the Special Forces. After training as a sound engineer and working for Sony Music, she realised her passion was working in the charitable sector.

She has worked for a variety of statutory and charitable organisations, including the NHS, West Midlands Police, Worcestershire County Council, Citizens Advice and Age UK.

Gem developed and managed Age UK wellbeing services for older Armed Forces Veterans and their families across Herefordshire and Worcestershire, including information and advice services, a Veterans' dementia meeting centre, community social opportunities and has helped develop equality and diversity training.

She has been a voluntary management member of a local Veteran support centre, and is an active member of local Armed Forces Covenant strategic partnerships, contributing to local Armed Forces needs assessments for almost ten years.

Gem is passionate about taking a personalised, community approach that focuses on people's strengths, to empower those who have faced adversity, discrimination, or been disadvantaged.

In her free time, Gem enjoys creative writing, photography, playing the guitar, and walking on the Malvern Hills.

Email: gemma.warden@fightingwithpride.org.uk



Alex Meyrick (She/Her/Hers)

Veterans Community Worker, London

Before joining Fighting With Pride, Alex worked for the NHS, moving between community pharmacy and hospital pharmacy for 12 years. Working in a major London hospital throughout the Pandemic, Alex worked to provide medication, continue services and ensure the best care for patients throughout lockdowns and the ever-changing landscape of healthcare in a global emergency.

Originally moving from her home of Dorset to London in 2014 to train as an actor at Italia Conti, Alex graduated in 2018 alongside maintaining her NHS career. Her acting career highlights include representing Italia Conti at the Sam Wanamaker Festival at Shakespeare's Globe, winning the runner-up prize for the Carlton Hobbes BBC Radio Drama Award, receiving the Laurence Olivier bursary from the Society of London Theatre and along with a fantastic cast, taking an award-winning production of The Laramie Project to Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 2017.

She is a proud member of the military family and a soon-to-be Military Spouse; her grandfather served in the RAF as a ground engineer and her partner – now fiancée, Leah, has been proudly serving in the Army since February 2021. She is

ever keen to be as involved as possible in the military family to which she belongs! Alex is passionate about LGBT+ history and supporting older members of our community, with an emphasis on hearing and understanding lived experiences. She wants to highlight the stories of those who fought so bravely for the rights we now enjoy and support those who can guide us through the next stage of the fight for all members of the LGBT+ community to live freely and equally in society.

Alex spends her time attending LGBT+ events across London, writing what could tentatively be referred to as stand-up comedy and getting used to living back in the countryside with her partner in Wiltshire. She is overwhelmingly proud to be a part of Fighting With Pride, and has strong connections with the military and LGBT+ sector throughout the capital to help with anything that you may need support with. You can usually find her planning the next big event for FWP Veterans – from Pride in London to National Remembrance Events – she loves making sure LGBT+ Veterans feel included and celebrated wherever possible.

Email: alex.meyrick@fightingwithpride.org.uk



John Beckett (He/Him/His)
Veterans Community Worker, North-West England

John joined the Royal Navy at 18 years old in 1989 and specialised as a Weapons Engineering Mechanic (Radio). Following further training in HMS Dolphin he joined the submarine service.

John disclosed his sexuality to a Chaplain, which triggered an investigation. He was interrogated by the SIB Special Investigation Branch and discharged from service for being Gay.

Following discharge John approached Stonewall for advice and his case was adopted into a legal challenge alongside three other discharged personnel. This test case progressed through the domestic courts and was finally heard by the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg which overturned the military Ban.

In 1996 John joined the police service and achieved the rank of Inspector before his retirement. He spent a period on Foreign Office secondment in Jordan training overseas police officers. He qualified as an EMCC Coach and has a background in training and development. He was awarded a police commendation in 2016 for his work supporting the local community. John also represented the UK at the European LGBT+ Police Association Conference.

John's hobbies include exploring the Peak District, military history, travel and 1980s pop music. He applied for the VCW role to help support Veterans who served both during and after the Ban.

Email: john.beckett@fightingwithpride.org.uk



Anthony Knight MBE, KJ (He/Him/His)
Veterans Community Worker, South-East England
and FWP Grants Manager

Anthony is a former Royal Navy Warfare Officer with 28 years' service. His military career includes nine ships and time with the Royal Canadian Navy and NATO's Southern Region Command.

He holds five campaign medals and was awarded an MBE in the Queen's 2003 New Year's Honours list.

Anthony identifies with the LGBT+ community as a parent of a gay child. Military retirement in 2008 provided him with an opportunity to retrain as a psychotherapist and he holds mental health qualifications as both an Advanced and Senior Practitioner.

He brings in-depth knowledge of Health and Social Care matters to FWP and looks to help Veterans seeking support through the NHS OP Courage programme.

Anthony is a student of Positive Psychology and advocate of positivity, creativity, and development of character strengths.

He has also supported Veterans in the Justice System as a McKenzie Friend.

He is Vice-Chairperson of Healthwatch Portsmouth and is an Ambassador for the City of Portsmouth. He was awarded an Order of Merit by the International Society for Peace Work (IGFVT) for mental health support to Veterans during the Covid-19 pandemic and was made a Knight of the Order of St. Joachim (OSJ) for his charity and volunteer work that stretches back over 45 years. He was presented with the OSJ Benefactor Silver Medal in September 2023.

Anthony is married and lives in Portsmouth. He is an avid rugby union fan and is currently learning to play the harmonica: part of his own positivity and creativity programme!

Email: anthony.knight@fightingwithpride.org.uk



'Isolated No More' - Art by David Tovey



Fighting With Pride: a lived experience charity

By Kevin Bazeley, Editor

Over the lifetime of the UK Armed Forces gay ban, before it was finally lifted in January 2000, thousands of serving personnel who had committed to fight and potentially die for their country were cruelly treated by a government and military establishment which had failed to keep pace with culture and society.

Those individuals, regardless of gender, rank, or service were failed by the state. They were systematically hunted out, ostracised, bullied, humiliated, physically abused, and abandoned. For many, their treatment was so traumatic and damaging they still suffer today, unable to speak of what happened to them, or how they were dismissed by their seniors and peers alike.

The Lord Etherton LGBT+ Veterans Independent Review, finally allowed nearly 700 of those victims to speak their truth and have their stories heard and recorded as evidence of those dark days. The courage and strength they displayed by telling their shocking stories of abusive treatment led to wide ranging recommendations for the compensation and reparation for all that they had suffered and continue to suffer.

Lord Etherton's report published excerpts from many of those submissions as evidence to support his recommendations. What you will read in the following pages will be a small number of some of those stories in more detail. For every story you read here, there are hundreds more.

For every single veteran recalling their stories it has been deeply traumatic, bringing memories to the surface that many had tried hard to forget. For some being able to tell their story has been cathartic, for others, retelling what happened to them has been almost as traumatic as the original events themselves. But all appreciate the importance of having their stories told, revealing a previously hidden history, and teaching lessons from the past to prevent the same mistakes from happening in the future.

Please note. These stories carry the risk of triggering own experiences and memories that may be difficult to deal with. If you need help, advice, or support, please contact us through our website, or you can find organisations listed in this directory that can help.

For urgent support, please speak with a friend or family member, contact a 24-hour helpline listed below, book an emergency GP appointment, or visit A&E.

If you are in immediate danger, please call 999.

24-hour Helplines:

The Samaritans - **116 123**

Veteran's Gateway - **0808 802 1212**



“I used my lived experience to help raise awareness and promote inclusion.”

Caroline Paige MBE

Ex-RAF Flight Lieutenant and Chief Executive of Fighting with Pride

When I joined the Royal Air Force in January 1980, I knew that revealing my gender identity would preclude my service, as a “Gay Ban” was in force and I would be considered to be gay.

I'd grown up in a military family and already knew of the prejudice that existed through personal experience, after outing myself aged five. But I had gained a Private Pilot's Licence in the Air Cadets, and already had 14 years of experience of hiding who I was. It was simple, no-one would ever know, or so I thought.

I became a fast-jet navigator flying F4 Phantom fighter aircraft in air defence of the UK and Falkland Islands during the Cold War, a high-profile top gun masculine lifestyle, but the privacy of my own home now allowed opportunity to explore my own feminine identity.

The risk of being discovered generated tremendous pressure though, where one noticeable mistake meant not just losing a career I loved, but everything else - my family, friends, house, income, honour, and more.

After the Cold War ended, I volunteered for tactical trooping helicopters, seeing service in Northern Ireland and in Bosnia with the United Nations, but not being able to live my own life freely was taking a toll and I was taking more time and more risks to be myself.

Eventually, I decided enough was enough, and confided in a medical officer, asking for support to transition gender and remain in service. Although the ban was still in force I had found an incredible ally and we won permission.

In February 1999, I became the first openly serving transgender officer in the British Armed Forces, but being visible left me vulnerable to prejudice, and it was loud.

Even after the ban was lifted in January 2000, the environment remained hostile to anyone considered LGBT+. Thankfully champions, role models, allies and advocates began standing up to the intolerance that still existed, and things began to change.

Earning several commendations for exceptional service on operational deployments to Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan, meant people saw the value of my inclusion too, and began to understand.

Retiring from the Armed Forces in 2014, I used my lived experience account to help raise awareness and promote the values of inclusion to civilian organisations, from schools to local government, and wrote my autobiography to help.

But it wasn't until I joined with Craig Jones MBE as a co-author of his Anthology of LGBT+ Military Service, that I got to read those accounts that revealed the true impacts of the ban on those who hadn't been as lucky as me to survive.

The shocking treatment that destroyed the lives of those who had stood up to serve our country was dishonourable and the fact that nothing had been done to acknowledge or change that, hit hard.

We set out to do something, and Fighting With Pride The LGBT+ Military Charity was born. Its successes and achievements

over the past four-and-a-half-years are down to the incredible contributions of the team we grew, our allies and partner organisations, and the sacrifices of those veterans who came to our door, and told their stories, providing unparalleled evidence in all its pain.

The accounts in this *Guide to Help and Support* give a snapshot into this alarming period of military history, and the support and advice resources demonstrate the tremendous level of good will and support that now exists, to deliver that change, and build a better future. There is much more to do, but with your support it will happen. Thank You.



“Eventually, I decided enough was enough, and confided in a medical officer, asking for support to transition gender.”



“We are once again all of one company.”

Craig Jones MBE

Ex-Lieutenant Commander Royal Navy and Chair of Fighting With Pride

As the ban lifted and I stepped from the shadows on 12th January 2000, I arrived painfully early for a meeting nobody wished to attend.

In the years that followed I was a lonely and isolated figure in the Armed Forces where Service Chiefs were begrudgingly leading a corporate volt-faced on decades of vigorous defence of a ban. Unravelling the damage done by this spiteful policy has been the defining feature in my life.

In my career I served in a wide range of challenging military operations, but I was never alone and never shouldered a burden that could not be shared, but in those difficult first years my burden was a most unwelcome policy that 'dare not speak its name'.

For career officers, I was not a man to stand next to in the mess and I shall forever be grateful to those who recognised my isolation during those bewildering first years, and were kind.

I was carried over the finishing line of my journey to find acceptance, by people who define the values of our Armed Forces today, each one a guardian of the Covenant which we hold so dear.

Their kindness to me defined the band of brothers and sisters which together we have restored in an Armed Forces family which is finally complete - we are once again all of one company.

Today, as we find ourselves making real progress in the support of LGBT+ veterans and their families, I am immensely proud to see the serving communities of our Armed Forces become the most welcoming of LGBT+ Armed Forces employers in the world.

I glow with pride when I see our people march in Pride, in their No 1 uniform, with swords drawn and drums beating, a true embodiment of our national values.

In recent years the confidence which our serving communities have shown in celebrating the careers of the veterans has stemmed the sense of erasure felt by many in the veterans' community. Those who serve today should feel nothing but pride in those who went before, the ban was not of their making, but the warmth of their welcome lessens its impact every day.

It is in our nature as veterans to leave no-one behind and much of my journey with Fighting With Pride has involved gently reminding those who uphold the Covenant about those who were cast aside. Some of that has inevitably involved bringing the plight of these amazing veterans to Parliament.

The turning point in this campaign was the community act of courage, when many hundreds of our veterans gave evidence to the LGBT Veterans Independent Review. In doing so, they returned to the darkest of their days to remember the cruel inhumanity of the ban.

Following decades in the shadows, we can see on every page of this *Guide to Help & Support*, that our LGBT+ veterans are being welcomed, celebrated and supported in their journey in later life. This is truly something in which we can be Proud!



“I was carried over the finishing line of my journey to find acceptance by people who define the values of our Armed Forces today.”



“More suited to civilian life.”

Terry Skitmore

Ex-Army

A sunny day in early 1971 with the coach bringing newly-trained soldiers to Hyde Park Barracks. I'd just finished five months of hard training at the Guard's Depot, Pirbright, and now we were about to join our regiment. I had just had my eighteenth birthday at the Depot. I was young, strong, and very fit and prepared to serve my country.

No one knew it, but I was a virgin and never questioned my sexuality. I had seen some girls I felt I liked, but had also seen some guys I was attracted to, but had never acted on any of it.

We then did about five or six months in riding school, tough but enjoyable. I'd made a lot of good friends at the Depot, and most were still with me here.

I did all of my duties well, worked hard, loved the life. A few months into this stage and I had my first encounter with a very nice-looking guy... it just happened; we knew we had to keep it under wraps.

I didn't think of myself as gay, I just felt it was natural for me. Over the next three years, older and bolder, I had slept with both sexes, enjoyed them all and never felt guilty, but still had to keep it hidden. If I stayed out all night, I would always have to pretend I'd been with a girl.

After three years I left the Army. However, I was so unimpressed with civvy street I came back and re-joined my Regiment, signing on again (make a note – I joined twice and was accepted twice by the military).

Our nearest pub was just across the road, so like many Cavalrymen I drank there. Due to the fact soldiers frequented that pub, gay civilians would come in and chat to the guys - no big deal.

Two years further into my military career, with a clean record and five years behind me, I was suddenly interviewed by the SIB (the military cops), questioned about where I drank, had I met any famous gay civvies in the pub? Had I been to their parties etc etc. I told them nothing.

All went quiet for a few months then one morning in January 1976 I was unexpectedly called to go on Colonel's Orders, not knowing why.

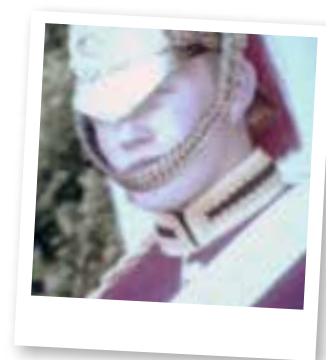
Marched in with no representation, the Colonel thrust a piece of paper in front of me and simply said: "Sign there! Your last day is January 27; no need to go back to your duties". No suggestion of an appeal... marched out.

My little red discharge book read – "Conduct – VERY GOOD, "He no doubt has ability, but is MORE SUITED TO CIVILIAN LIFE".

No career, no pension, and effectively ousted!

I would have fought and died if I had to, but apparently my natural sexual preferences were more important.

PS - I was not the only one that day - eighteen men were "dumped".



“I would have fought and died if I had to, but apparently my natural sexual preferences were more important.”



“I kept it hidden all through both regular and reserve service.”

Rowena Purdy

Ex-RAF

In early 1964, I walked through the gates of No 1 Initial Training School, RAF South Cerney wearing a duffle coat and with all my goods in a rather tatty rucksack to start my new life in the Royal Air Force.

But first I had to complete my officer training course and then continue to gain my flying badge as an Air Electronics Officer (AEO).

From childhood, I had been hiding a very strong female identity and had this been discovered I would not have been allowed to continue in the RAF, so I kept it hidden all through both regular and reserve service.

My four-month initial training course was totally out of my comfort zone, but after a struggle, I graduated, received my commission as an Acting Pilot Officer and moved on to my flying training in Yorkshire to learn all necessary skills to qualify me as an AEO and be awarded my flying badge (aka brevet or wings).

After my maritime operational training, I joined my first squadron at RAF Ballykelly in Northern Ireland followed by RAF Luqa in Malta flying the venerable Mark 3 Shackleton.

Whilst in Malta, I was selected to undergo Chinese language training and was subsequently subjected to a very detailed security vetting session. After my three-year language course I was seconded to the Foreign Office and posted to Hong Kong for two years.

At the end of this tour, I returned to the UK to convert to the Vulcan - not my choice. Although I was offered further service as Specialist Aircrew, my wife, whom I later divorced, was against it, so I retired and travelled around the Far East as a China specialist for a number of electronics companies.

I also made two decisions which shaped my future: I accepted a place at Oxford University to read for an Honours BA in Oriental Studies with Chinese; and accepted a commission in the Royal Auxiliary Air Force as a Maritime Operations Officer.

My degree took me back to Hong Kong as the General Manager of an electronics factory in China for a short time over the Handover of Hong Kong.

After my return to the UK, I was appointed, on contract terms, as a Staff Officer on Full Time Reserve Service terms responsible for a number of Reserve RAF squadrons. I was awarded my Air Efficiency medal, the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal and my RAF and Station Colours for motor sport.

When my contract was terminated I moved to Lincolnshire when I started to suffer from non-congruent headaches and mental health problems.

These subsequently led to me being diagnosed with gender dysphoria so I made the very difficult decision to transition from male to female, but with support from my family and friends.

I am the Chairman of our Parish Council and a member of my local Women's Institute. I am also on Motorsport UK's LGBTQ+ Expert Committee and I have been featured on a number of magazine articles and podcasts.



“From childhood, I had been hiding a very strong female identity and had this been discovered I would not have been allowed to continue in the RAF.”



“I was intensely angry at the potential risk to my career.”

Roly Woods

Ex-Royal Navy

I joined the Royal Navy in 1978 in the dark days of the “Gay Ban”. It was illegal to be gay in the military and you’d be dishonourably discharged if discovered.

We were regularly lectured on the wrongs of being gay, the negative impact on team cohesion and operational effectiveness, and the security threat of blackmail, neatly ignoring the fact that we were only blackmailable because of the ban itself!

I was forced to live a double life - always looking over my shoulder, watching what I said, making up stories about girlfriends and straight nights out and not being able to be myself to close navy friends - not because they would out me, but to avoid putting them in a position of having to choose. I even had a straight run ashore route and a gay run ashore route (for navy pals) in my hometown!

But I was one of the lucky ones that pretty much got away with it - there was one incident as executive officer and second in command of a Type 23 frigate, HMS Lancaster, when out of the blue I was summoned by the Captain, an officer I had immense respect for, and asked outright if I was gay, as rumours had been brought to his attention.

I managed to stay calm, denied the accusation and coolly explained that I had been helping a pal with some problems. I then had to lie to my officers about not being gay.

I was intensely angry at the potential risk to my career and that everything that I/we had worked so hard together to achieve as a team in the ship could be destroyed.

I was also extremely pissed off that I had to turn on myself in order to save face with the team that I worked so well with; and that I still had to lie about my sexuality at the very end of the 20th Century.

Later in 2000, following the ECHR judgement, UK law was changed, enabling LGBT personnel to serve openly in the Armed Forces.

I remained cautious, not fully outing myself initially and carrying on as before, to see how things developed. Things didn’t change overnight - there were still homophobes although they were less vocal and now firmly in the wrong in the eyes of both the law and military discipline.

Eventually it was clear to me that the changes were here to stay and after that I never looked back - I joined the RN LGBT community, became an out and proud naval officer and in 2006, just 10 years after fighting to save my career on HMS Lancaster, I found myself leading the first-ever military contingent to march officially in a UK Gay Pride event in uniform.

What an amazing day that was - the roar that went up from the crowd as we hove into view on London’s Oxford Street was overwhelming. Years of shame and darkness eclipsed in the most amazing rainbow-coloured way possible!

Having been very firmly in the closet for many years, looking over my shoulder whenever I was on the gay scene, I was finally out and immensely proud.



“Out of the blue I was summoned by the Captain, an officer I had immense respect for, and asked outright if I was gay.”



“The interrogation lasted almost the whole day...”

Pauline Rimmer MA BEd BA

Ex-Army

In December 1973 I took the Queen's shilling, got my Gideon Bible and marched off to Guildford WRAC Centre on 2 January 1974. I was just seventeen.

Saying goodbye to my blood family, I joined my adopted Army family.

The earliest relationship I had, if indeed it was that, was at Guildford, waiting for trade allocation. I'd been recruited as an analyst with Army Intelligence, but couldn't get my head around what that meant.

I tried Military Police briefly, but losing my Army ID in a gay club in London during training, strongly suggested being an MP was not for me.

I reallocated (again) and was waiting for a driver training course when I met the first woman who educated me about what being gay in the Army meant. I remember her very fondly, but it didn't last and we went our different ways.

After driver training there were no relationships other than platonic friendships.

One morning I was called to the admin office. Two NCOs from the Special Investigation Branch (SIB) of the Military Police were waiting.

My name was on a list of (alleged) lesbians in my Unit. The list was supposedly provided by someone recently discharged for being gay.

The interrogation lasted almost the whole day; my room was searched, and letters, cards, photographs, clothing, all my belongings, scattered with no respect.

I was still seventeen. I had no support or advice and spent the day being bullied, threatened and cajoled into admitting something I wasn't even sure of myself.

They found nothing, except letters, cards, and photographs from friends. Those who signed off 'with love' or 'miss you' had their names added to their list.

I had two such visits from SIB at Wilton.

In 1976 I was posted to Rheindahlen in Germany and there I met 'the one'. She was the first real love of my life and we were inseparable. I was nineteen and she slightly younger.

Relationships were open secrets amongst the 'other ranks'. Everyone knew who was with whom.

The first sign of trouble was being found twice 'in a compromising situation' by the night orderly officer watching TV as we both sat on my bed.

Sometime later I'd been away on exercise for ten days and on my return, I was told to report to Guildford the following Monday morning for discharge.

On 9 December 1977 I was discharged with no money, no home and few prospects. I was bereft.

I returned to Germany, got a job and a flat and our relationship flourished. When the Army learned that we were still seeing each other she was posted back to UK.

Our relationship lasted for a while, but eventually we parted ways. I still think of her with great affection.

I have been happily married now for thirty-two years.

I went on to serve with distinction in the Police and the Prison Service in England and New Zealand before retiring as a Prison Inspector in 2018.



“I had no support or advice and spent the day being bullied, threatened and cajoled into admitting something I wasn't even sure of myself.”



“Bullied and threatened into describing intimate information.”

Paul Wilson

Ex-Royal Highland Fusiliers Regimental Band

Music is like a heartbeat within me, and it's been that way for as long as I can remember.

Back in 1982, when the Band of the Scot Guards swung by my school, it felt like destiny knocking on my door. I got the amazing chance to perform alongside them, and from that moment on, I knew I wanted to be part of the military band scene.

So, in 1983, at just 15 years old, I jumped at the opportunity to audition for the Army Band. It was the start of a thrilling adventure that took me to Bridge of Don Barracks in Aberdeen for training.

Amidst the hustle and bustle of barracks life, I also came to terms with my own identity, navigating the ups and downs of being gay in a world where being yourself always felt like an uphill battle.

Fast forward to 1985, and I found myself stationed in Berlin with the Royal Highland Fusiliers, ready to kickstart my career as a bandsman.

It was exciting, but also a bit nerve-racking, especially with the warnings from some of the more seasoned band members about the challenges of being openly gay.

Then came 1987, a year that brought both highs and lows. The Regiment moved back to Edinburgh, and I was thrilled to be part of the preparations for the Military Tattoo.

But things took a sharp turn when an unfortunate revenge incident exposed my sexual orientation to the military police, leading to a series of tough times and, eventually, dismissal from the Army.

Looking back, I can't help but wonder about the paths not taken. What if things had been different? What if I'd had the chance to enjoy the camaraderie, the security, and maybe even a promotion or two within the Army Band? It's a bittersweet thought, especially considering the changes in the law that came later, offering possibilities I never got to explore.

Through it all, though, there have been bright spots. In 2015, I married my wonderful husband, Jim, and together, we've built a life filled with love and happiness.

Sure, there have been tough times, moments when the memories of my Army days hit me hard, but Jim's always been there to support me through it all.

And let's not forget the amazing experiences I've had along the way – from performing at the Edinburgh and Berlin Tattoos to rubbing elbows with Royalty and exploring countries like Germany and Italy, and far-off Kenya. Those are memories I'll always hold dear, reminders of the incredible journey I've been on.

So, while my time in the Army may have come to an unexpected end, the music still plays on in my heart, a constant reminder of the passion and joy it's brought into my life.



“While my time in the Army may have come to an unexpected end, the music still plays on in my heart.”



“The bullies won - I needed to leave the Army.”

Lynne Saunders

Ex-Army

I joined the Army in December 1989. I was requested to sign a form with no explanation or opportunity to read it properly. The form affirmed I was not homosexual. On the same day I swore allegiance to our Queen, and started my career with a lie.

I started training as a kennel maid. I was in my element, but only when on duty. Away from the kennel my introduction to homophobia within the Army began, including constant harassment, bullying and name-calling. I couldn't take it anymore, so I asked to be moved.

My move did not stop the abuse; it got worse. Verbal and physical abuse, not just from the men, but the straight women too. Every day was a constant battle to not say "Fuck this" and walk away. I wanted a career in the Army, but I also wanted to be happy.

You could not talk to anyone. Your colleagues, officers, even doctors or padres. You did not know who you could trust.

I served in the First Gulf War, where things were just about OK. There were some that continued to "have a go", and it's sad to think that it all became the norm. This was the way the Army treated me. Not what I had expected from being in the Army, but you just got on with it.

Back home we welcomed a new private into our group. She did everything with us and made out she was a lesbian. One day she simply disappeared from the barracks. We later found out that she was a 'mole' from Special Investigation Branch.

In the middle of the night the block was raided. Ordered - even physically dragged - from our beds we were forced to stand to attention in our underwear or even naked while screamed at with vile, hateful names. Our property was searched and we were interrogated to make us admit we were lesbians.

This would go on for hours, and became a regular occurrence. At one point I was physically strangled. There were straight women soldiers who admitted to being gay just to get this abuse to stop and get out of the Army!

Eventually, I decided, enough was enough. I had fought in a war, worked hard in any role I'd been given, but that was not good enough. The bullies won. I needed to leave the Army.

My recollection now of my time in the Army is so mixed. Many great memories of my service, buried among so many bad ones of the abuse and attacks. Recalling those memories affects me now.

I've tried hard to lock away the negativity of my experiences, but they will remain with me always. My hope was for a long career in the Army, but in the end enough was enough. Her Majesty's Army treated me badly, and I had to live a lie.



“Our property was searched and we were interrogated to make us admit we were lesbians.”



“Bullied and threatened into describing intimate information.”

Liz Stead

Ex-RAF Senior Aircraft Woman

I joined the Women's Royal Air Force in Kingston-upon-Hull in November 1965 when I was 18 years old, wanting a career with adventure and travel.

After Basic Training at RAF Spitalgate, I was posted to RAF Boulmer, and did my Air Defence Radar training at RAF Bawdsey. I did well and my RAF Records still show that my conduct was 'exemplary'. I played netball and squash for RAF Boulmer.

In 1967 I was selected for a detachment to RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus as they were replacing radars under the domes at Mount Troodos.

Returning to RAF Boulmer, I began a relationship with another WRAF. It became difficult not to be aware that Senior WRAF were monitoring our movements.

This resulted in a posting to RAF Stanmore in 1968. That Autumn my girlfriend did not turn up to a pre-arranged meeting in Alnwick, the local town to RAF Boulmer.

I subsequently found out that she had been arrested for stealing money and was at the Medical Centre under 24-hour guard. I was asked to report to HQ at RAF Boulmer, where I was presented with a statement that a Special Investigation Branch officer said my girlfriend had written.

It was not in her hand, although signed by her. The content had little relevance to our relationship. I was then coerced into making my statement. I was bullied and threatened into describing intimate information that was crude and extremely personal.

As soon as the Special Investigation Branch officer had the signed statements admitting our relationship, we were released. We spent the weekend trying to recuperate, feeling shocked and wondering what would happen next.

I returned to RAF Stanmore the following Monday. I was told to report to the Admin Office, where I was interrogated once again. My belongings were searched and my personal letters taken. I was then put under guard while the Special Investigation officers went through the letters. I was asked if I wanted to see a psychiatrist, to which I replied "No, I'm not mad!".

Declared 'security risks', we were given general tasks in admin offices for the next few months. This was a very difficult and painful time.

In January 1969 we were discharged. We settled in London, our lives shattered ruthlessly.

Both of us obtained jobs, not without some difficulty, as our Certificate of Service stated "Services No Longer Required".

Explaining it to prospective employers was never simple.

Over the years it has been a struggle to forget these events. Coming to terms with one's sexuality at that time after the exclusion was painful, exhausting and challenging.

My evidence to Fighting with Pride was the first time I had put this to paper; it is still so vivid in my mind after 55 years. I was surprised how easy it flowed onto the pages; it indicates it will never be forgotten.



“I was presented with a statement that a Special Investigation Branch officer said my girlfriend had written.”



“I am so glad things are different now for current serving personnel.”

K F Johnston

Ex-Army

I was too busy waving to gathered friends and family saying goodbye to me from the platform to notice how close the train was to the entrance of the dark tunnel. It was taking me into what I was hoping would become a happy, successful future - my escape, from a moderately traumatic childhood. It was Spring 1986. I was 18 years old.

I have some very fond memories of my twelve years of service; hot summers in Wales, London, Germany and the Cotswolds. Even the cold of winter gave us some great times; however, there were always dark clouds over my life.

Many summer days were spent sitting in the sun with endless cold beverages, enjoying the banter and laughter of colleagues and friends - who enjoyed the freedom of being in love. A freedom denied to me, because being gay was illegal.

I refer to my service during the 1980s and 1990s as the Dark Ages, a period where each day I had to choose between living a lie or facing the prospect of jail and a dishonourable discharge, should I have found the courage to criminalise myself by openly showing my love for another man. Courage I could never find.

Despite being in my prime, and having the normal, natural functions and enjoyment of life stolen from me, I continued to serve my country proudly as best I could. I served in the Gulf War,

and later peace-keeping duties within the Middle East, as well as regular detachments and duties in many other regions.

I completed my service despite living in fear, desperation, isolation and desolation for the most part, but also out of sheer grit and determination to complete the contract I had signed up for.

Although the vast majority of my colleagues and senior ranks were decent, friendly, caring people, there were the sinister ones who thrived on bullying.

From the early days, I was bullied, mainly verbally, but occasionally physically. I had contemplated suicide a couple of times, even unsuccessfully attempting it on one occasion.

Such was the feeling of sheer angst I was feeling at the time, about halfway through my career, I couldn't take anymore and I flew to the USA, where I toured the States by Greyhound, hoping fate would intervene with a job and accommodation, albeit illegally.

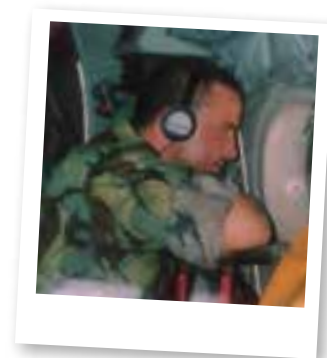
I returned to the UK, but immediately took myself up into the wilds of the Scottish Highlands intending to hide away, but after a couple of days I was reminded that the Highlands in January isn't the Bahamas.

After some weeks sofa surfing, I eventually handed myself in, and had to face jail time for being AWOL.

My subsequent years of service remained chequered, not helped because I couldn't seek help for my growing depression. This left many irreparable psychological scars, but I was becoming hardened, and carried on.

I am so glad that things are different now for current serving personnel in the military.

Fighting with Pride has been liberating and life altering for me.



“I completed my service despite living in fear, desperation, isolation and desolation.”



“A dawning realisation that I tried to ignore - that I was gay.”

Kenneth Wright

Ex-RAF

I took a non-traditional route into the RAF. Badly injured as a civilian police officer after nine years' service, I lost my confidence. Seeking a new career, and simultaneously exiting a failing marriage, I joined the RAF Police in 1988.

Doubting my fitness, I had a two-week physical assessment at RAF Hedley Court before commencing basic training at RAF Swinderby. Thereafter, to RAF St Athan and RAF Newton, where I was awarded the RAF Police Baton of Honour.

I was posted to Strike Command at RAF High Wycombe. Attached to a small police flight, our main duty was the protection of the new Primary War HQ and UK Regional Air Operations Command.

Being an advanced police driver, I offered advanced driving training courses to civilians and service personnel on base in my free time.

This proved popular and led to a tour of UK bases, sponsored by Volvo, presenting a safe driving course. In 1990 I was awarded a personal commendation for services to the RAF as part of the New Year's Honours List.

All of this in the shadow of heavy personal turmoil, and a dawning realisation that I tried to ignore - that I was gay.

I hid it well. But on a fateful night on a terrified visit to a bar in London, I met my life partner. Colin and I met over a beer, 35 years together this year!

My journey into desperation, the pressure of living a lie to family and the service I loved caught up with me and I had a breakdown.

I confessed to the Station Medical Officer and within hours was in front of the Station Commander I had only recently trained to pass his advanced driving test. "I have no idea why I must do this. I'm only losing a good man".

Colin and I went through an unpleasant and, nowadays, wholly illegal interview by the RAF Provost and Security Services. He was a civilian, but he still had to go through this. I was required to leave "due to circumstances outwith his control".

I didn't think it had much impact on me. I did take part in the formation of "Rank Outsiders" but decided life was too short and went on to enjoy a successful civilian aviation career.

I joined 3 Sqn Tactical Provost Wing, a reservist unit, for a short time, until work overseas called me away. The Squadron Leader of that unit said, "Welcome back. We got it wrong the first time, that won't happen again".

I said I didn't think any of this had much impact on me, but as a founding member of "Fighting With Pride", I was reduced to tears when we were "permitted" as gay veterans to March past the Cenotaph for the first time in 2021.

On telling my story for the Independent Review I asked Colin to read my account. "What do you mean, 'you weren't really affected?'. Your hair turned grey overnight". I never knew. Thirty-five years and I never knew.



“The pressure of living a lie to family and the service I loved caught up with me and I had a breakdown.”



“Is this the day it all comes crashing down?”

Kevin Bazeley ACMA CGMA

Ex-RAF, Flight Lieutenant GD(N)

Apart from a couple of years in the middle of the '70s when I just wanted to be one of the Tomorrow People in the British sci-fi TV series, the only career I'd ever wanted was flying in the Royal Air Force. Like the Tomorrow People, I had a secret. One so secret that I didn't even know it myself until well into my service.

I went to RAF Cranwell late 1985, graduating in March 1986 on the proudest day of my life, with my parents watching in the crowd, me as a sword bearer and a mighty Vulcan howling overhead for our flypast.

I had no conscious idea that I was gay at that time, all I'd heard made it abundantly clear I could not be gay in the military, or to be frank, in any version of a happy future life, and so that was it, I wasn't gay!

Those early years I was too busy, or was it just too deep in denial, to worry about it. Graduate, get on a squadron. That was my focus.

I took the traditional junior officer route - married, two kids - before realising I was gay. Denial is not a place that is healthy to live forever and so we separated. It was a horrible decision to take, but I still believe it was the best one for us all from a short list of bad options.

The RAF, as all the Armed Forces, was still subject to "The Gay Ban" and so I knew that my coming out was limited, I was now a target, despised and hunted. Every conversation, every trip to explore the new world I found myself party to, every liaison could mark the end of everything I had worked for. Before I was just lying to myself. Now I was lying to everyone!

Eventually my own clumsiness was my undoing, losing a wallet with a membership card for the Gay Bikers Motor-Cycle Club. Then followed weeks of waiting for that knock on the door, to be driven off to the police flight. Waking every day thinking is this the day it all comes crashing down? The days passed and I began to think I'd got away with it. No such luck!

August 4th 1994, the boss is there to meet the aircraft. He comes up to the nav station where I'm packing up, "Don't worry about that, come with me", the sentence that marked the beginning of the end.

Thirteen months of suspension doing all I can to fight and change their minds all to no avail and I'm ordered to resign, discharged, out.

I was ex-military, but according to the military, not a Veteran. But ex-military know what to do. We get on, we make a bad situation better. I retrained as an accountant, I forged a new life. But I still wake up from dreams of being in the RAF. I still miss it. I don't think that will ever leave me.



“Eventually my own clumsiness was my undoing, losing a wallet with a membership card for the Gay Bikers Motor-Cycle Club.”



**“I was petrified -
I could go to prison!”**

Andy Cowe

Ex-Royal Navy Marine Engineering Mechanic, Submarine Squadron, HMS Splendid

I joined HMS Fisgard in January 1983, signing up to be an Artificer Apprentice, an apprenticeship to become a Chief Petty Officer and eventually an Officer.

My dream to be a submariner was all I wanted to do as a child. I joined straight from school; it is fair to say completely innocent and a virgin in life - literally.

I had joined this man's world. But I had a secret which at the time wasn't an issue, but would haunt me the rest of my life.

HMS Fisgard was a Naval Academy where I did 11 months before recategorizing to a Marine Engineering Mechanic. I struggled with the fast-track academia. I joined HMS Sultan where I did my mechanics training and then on to HMS Dolphin to do my Submarine training and back to HMS Sultan to do the nuclear training.

I was drafted to HMS Splendid in 1985, a nuclear Hunter Killer Swiftsure Class submarine designed to hunt other submarines.

Things started to go wrong. To work on submarines you were strictly security vetted. You'd go in for questioning and they would dig in to everything about you.

I had a secret, I was non-binary. I'd known my name from early childhood should have been Andrea. I thought that was childish, something that would pass, I'd grow out of it, the Navy would make a man of me.

I was petrified: I could go to prison! In my dream job, my parents so proud of me, I was so proud of myself and this secret was eating me alive.

After a year of lies and looking over my shoulder, seeing the only option was to end my life, I asked for help and admitted I was confused about my sexuality.

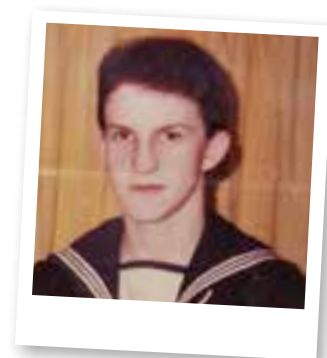
I was immediately isolated and told not to talk to anyone. More questioning. I was sent for seven weeks of psychiatric assessment, was outed to my parents and subject to more invasive questioning and deemed "Temperamentally Unsuitable" and "To be discharged".

Then subjected to more humiliation, having to request punishment and discharged. Although I wasn't "Discharged Dishonourably" the way I was made to feel and treated as a disgrace to everyone had a lasting impact.

My parents were initially supportive, but asked me to leave as an "embarrassment". I couldn't find work and was going through a breakdown, I couldn't get a reference for work and it was all my fault. I was the disgrace.

Thankfully with the help of some friends who supported me and literally saved my life, I moved away from home and in the 30+ years since have built a career for myself and survived.

The scars are still there, both from the Navy and the civilian counselling I had in the 80s and 90s. I have never had a relationship and am only learning to trust and be close to people again. I still miss that feeling of pride and being in submarines. Everyday!



**“After a year of lies
and looking over my
shoulder, seeing the only
option was to end my
life, I asked for help and
admitted I was confused
about my sexuality.”**



“The day I had always hoped would never come arrived.”

Brian Wheeler

Ex-Royal Navy

I had a yearning, an affinity if you like, to go to sea so joining the Royal Navy was an obvious choice for me. But I knew that I was gay from a very young age, so joining the Navy was always going to come with risks. I'd have to hide who I truly was for much of my life.

But in 1992, aged 21, I became an RN Meteorologist & Oceanographer at RNAS Culdrose in Cornwall.

I was carving out quite a good career there, having had several successful trips to sea on exercise and having been just selected as a potential Officer Candidate, when the day I had always hoped would never come arrived.

In Summer of 1994 I had been away at sea on exercise for three weeks training to deploy to the Caribbean. On return, I discovered two friends I shared a house with had been through my belongings whilst I was away and found intimate letters from someone I was seeing outside of the Navy.

They had taken them to work and handed them to our senior officer and I was to be taken in to custody and investigated by the Special Investigation Branch.

I went in to work on the Monday following a weekend where suicide was a constant thought and was taken into custody and put in a holding cell whilst the SIB were called.

I underwent two full days of intense and intimate questioning about my sex life, my partner, the letters that had been handed in; it was relentless and much of it highly emotional and degrading. They made me feel like a sexual deviant.

I was then sent home for over three months whilst the investigation took place. Not out to my parents at the time, this was an extremely difficult situation, which also ended the relationship I was having with the person outside the Navy as I blamed him for everything that had happened.

I was called back to Culdrose for dismissal three weeks before Christmas. Suffering badly with flu, I was told that if I didn't travel I'd be AWOL and arrested. So I travelled and two days later I was in the Culdrose infirmary with acute pneumonia, fighting for my life for nearly two weeks - an incident that left me with life-long asthma. I was then discharged just a few days before Christmas.

I spent a year unemployed, suffering with deep depression and attempted suicide twice during this period. But then I discovered Rank Outsiders and joined the fight to lift the ban and spent 13 years fighting the Government of the day until finally winning our case at the ECHR. Something I will forever feel proud of.

However, alongside this and still wishing to serve my country, I had joined the Civil Service and carved out a successful career that saw me working at Dstl Porton Down and 10 Downing Street.

But even working in No. 10 couldn't replace the void in my heart that was left by being dismissed from the Senior Service.



“Even working in No. 10 couldn't replace the void in my heart that was left by being dismissed from the Senior Service.”



“People like you are a disease - you know what we do with a disease?”

Christopher Voce

Ex-Royal Navy, Able Seaman

Under the unforgiving August sun of 1981, after the rowdy cheers of a gruelling football match had faded, a disparate group of us military lads huddled in a dimly lit hut. Our plan? To sit through a documentary on sexually transmitted diseases.

But just as I was about to step inside, a stern RAF sergeant pulled me aside with a chilling whisper: “People like you don’t belong here.”

Inside that musty Nissen hut, with its glossy tiled floors and rusted bars on every window, we were twelve souls carrying our burdens, from AWOL charges to darker deeds. It wasn’t just a barracks; it felt like a prison, especially with the constant surveillance from those gravel-ground patrolling officers.

The Glasshouse, as we called it, wasn’t just infamous; it was a breeding ground for brutality. Threats lurked in every corner, and tormentors prowled freely. I’ll never forget the towering Scottish lad who made it his mission to make my days a living hell or the chilling words of an Irish Army officer who saw me as nothing but a “disease” to be cut out.

But on a fateful day in 1981 – September 12th – I saw my chance at freedom, leaping from a speeding train as it passed through an abandoned station. As the angry shouts of my oppressors faded into the distance, tears of relief and defiance mingled on my cheeks.

Alone on that deserted platform, I found strength in knowing that the human spirit could endure even the darkest nights. Those eight words from the RAF sergeant, “You don’t belong here,” echoed in my mind, fueling my resolve to build a future where love conquers hate and prejudice is a distant memory.

Though the Navy may have turned its back on me in 1981, I proudly wear the badge of service. In sharing my story, I hope to inspire others to believe in a world where acceptance reigns supreme, and the bonds of humanity are unbreakable.



“Though the Navy may have turned its back on me in 1981, I proudly wear the badge of service.”



“I was probably one of the first transsexuals to be discharged from the Army.”

Kathryn Preston

Ex-Army

During my childhood I always felt different to the other children around me. At secondary school I was bullied every day, probably because I was perceived as being different. It was an all-boys school.

I was academically bright, and my teachers wanted me to stay on for 'O' Levels. However, my parents didn't want me to stay at school for another year, so I decided to join the Army. Both my parents were ex-Army from the Second World War.

I joined the Royal Engineers Junior Leaders Regiment in 1963 at the age of 15. During my two and a half years at Old Park Barracks, Dover, I was beaten up every day by my fellow boy soldiers.

I was obviously perceived as different. The only respite was during leave and the few days I spent in the medical centre with concussion following being forced to "run the gauntlet" of everyone in the squadron.

On leaving Junior Leaders and joining the Regular Army in Cove, near Farnborough, this abuse abated. However, I still always felt different, and had thoughts of being transsexual.

I never mentioned this to anyone. I then went to The School of Military Survey at Hermitage, near Newbury, and later was posted to the Map Depot in Aden in 1966.

I was posted back to England, to Barton Stacey, when the Map Depot was closed in Aden in 1967, and in 1969 I was posted to the Map Depot in Bahrain.

While there I finally came to terms with the fact I was actually transsexual. I spoke to my CO, who referred me to the medical people. They then sent me to the military hospital at Netley near Southampton.

After several months there I was given a medical discharge in 1970, officially transferred to the Reserves.

Obviously, my preference would have been surgery and a transfer to the WRAC, but that was clearly not an option. I eventually found civilian medical help and transitioned in 1972 with surgery in 1974.

My self-confidence increased massively from that point. I was probably one of the first transsexuals to be discharged from the Army.

Since then, I have had a productive life. Ordinary jobs until age 30, then a career in Computer Programming, including achieving a BSc (Hons) in Computing, Geography and Organisation Studies mid-career. I retired at age 60 and have since written a couple of books and have a decent social life.



“I was given a medical discharge in 1970, officially transferred to the Reserves.”

FOUGHT FOR PEACE, BUT STILL CAN'T FIND IT?

HELP for
HEROES

**The battle for justice doesn't stop.
We're proud to campaign with Fighting
With Pride for as long as it takes.**

**We stand with anyone affected by
their military service. No exceptions,
no exclusions.**

**We're by your side in the Veterans War.
Get in touch today to see how we can help.**

Visit helpforheroes.org.uk/get-help



SCAN ME



Guide to Fighting with Pride's Help & Support Programme

By Kevin Bazeley

The Pride in Veterans Standard (PiVS) is a programme developed by Fighting With Pride (FWP), open to any organisation that provides veterans support or services, who are committed to being inclusive and welcoming to LGBT+ Veterans, serving personnel, reservists, adult cadet forces and their families. As of mid-April 2024, over 175 different organisations have made their commitment to PiVS, and this number is increasing every week.

Organisations who become members of PiVS usually already have experience of working with veterans and supporting their specific needs following their departure from the services. Making a commitment to PiVS shows that they also recognise the needs of LGBT+ Veterans, and how their experiences of the "gay ban" may prevent them considering or accessing support services. Recent studies have shown that veterans most impacted by the "gay ban" suffer significant issues around trust, isolation, loneliness, finances and homelessness, and endure physical and mental health and wellbeing challenges.

PiVS members are given support and guidance to help them provide services in a supportive and empathetic way that

meets the unique needs of the LGBT+ military community, and signposts their inclusive disposition.

Being part of PiVS demonstrates an organisation's commitment to:

- **Warmly welcoming LGBT+ Veterans, serving personnel, reservists, adult cadet force members and their families.**
- **Ensuring all staff, volunteers and members have an awareness of the different challenges faced by LGBT+ service people, in particular, those who were impacted by the Armed Forces "gay ban".**
- **Have a clear understanding of the needs of LGBT+ Veterans and tailor support offerings to help meet their needs.**
- **Understand that for some LGBT+ Veterans, their experiences have impacted their mental health, so ensure any support in this area is tailored to their specific needs.**
- **Promote inclusion, dignity and respect for LGBT+ people in everything they do.**
- **Recognise the different groups in the LGBT+ community and understand their needs may be different.**

The following is a list of organisations already committed to PiVS. Individuals seeking help sometimes aren't sure what support they are looking for, so we have kept things straightforward and listed organisations in the order in which they joined PiVS, with a brief description of what service provision they offer.

FIND OUT MORE

To find out more details, contact Dave Small, FWP's PiVS Manager at pivs@fightingwithpride.org.uk or visit our website to sign up to become a member at: www.fightingwithpride.org.uk/pride-in-veterans-standard



Re-Live

Our Life Story process invites people on a transformative journey and places their story centre stage. This process can be thrilling, cathartic and life-changing. We co-create Life Story theatre shows and online sharings, as well as art forms such as comics and choirs, enabling audiences to witness the untold stories of our times. We also provide experiential training for health and social care workers, in areas such as 'Experiencing Dementia', 'Compassionate Communication' and 'Life Story Creativity'.

www.re-live.org.uk



Veterans Community Network

The aim of VCN is to support Veterans, Reservists and their families in accessing the treatment and support services to help cope, adjust and manage situations such as mental health, housing, benefits and social isolation.

www.vcn.org.uk



Stepway CIO

STEPWAY is a military charity supporting all Veterans and family members in civilian life, no matter their background or circumstance. The charity provides support services that not only combats adjustment disorder but has a proven record in saving lives!

www.stepway.org



Riverside Retreat Veterans Camp CIC

Providing camping in the Brecon Beacons, free of charge for veterans, their families and carers.

www.facebook.com/RetreatVCCIC



Veterans Volunteer Service

The Veterans' Volunteer Service (VVS) is a new incentive created by Gary Hart and Poppy Gold at The Rock, a BMMA-associated gymnasium and dojo in Littlehampton. The scheme aims to utilise the skills offered by military veterans who offer a wide range of skills from first aid, communications, engineering repairs to catering and self protection techniques.

www.veteransvolunteerservice.org.uk



Veterans Growth

Our mission is to provide horticultural therapy to veterans facing mental health issues. Set amidst beautiful Sussex farmland, our site offers a relaxing green space where veterans can come to immerse themselves in nature and learn horticultural skills.

www.veteransgrowth.org



Guy's & St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

Our vision is to advance health and wellbeing, as a local, national and international leader in clinical care, education and research. We aim to deliver world leading, personal and responsive healthcare, giving the fullest and best lives to our patients and their families.

www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk



Care after Combat

Care after Combat is a UK based charity providing support within the Justice System for the well-being of former British Armed Forces personnel and their Families.

www.careaftercombat.org



Sporting Force

Sporting Force is a registered charity that supports armed forces serving personnel, reservists, veterans and their families, throughout the UK. We provide education, exercise, and social events to help our beneficiaries by relieving mental health and social isolation.

www.sportingforce.org



Scottish Veterans Commissioner

The Scottish Veterans Commissioner works to improve outcomes and opportunities for veterans and their families in Scotland. This involves championing the challenges they face and influencing policymakers to address any changes required in devolved public services so that their needs are met.

www.scottishveteranscommissioner.org



Veterans Outreach Support

We support veterans from the UK Armed Forces and Merchant Navy along with their spouses, partners and carers throughout Portsmouth, the Isle of Wight, Gosport, Fareham, and more widely, Hampshire and the south of England. A welcoming and relaxed setting where UK veterans and family members can drop in for confidential social or psychological support for their welfare, wellbeing & mental health.

www.vosuk.org



Veterans Support Network CIC

VSN engages with the local infrastructure in Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire, to aid in the transition of our armed forces into the veteran community. Our working priority is (SMI) Serious Mental Illness amongst our Veterans.

www.veteransupportnetwork.org.uk



Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust

We are the main provider of hospital care to approximately 750,000 people in Manchester and Trafford and the single biggest provider of specialised services in the North West of England.

www.mft.nhs.uk/the-trust



Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service

GMFRS is one of the largest fire and rescue service in England, covering an area of 493 square miles and serving a population of 2.87 million residents, with many other people working or visiting the region. We do a lot more than simply putting out fires, delivering a range of services from 41 strategically placed fire stations across Greater Manchester.

www.manchesterfire.gov.uk



Scottish Veterans Residences

Scottish Veterans Residences provides supported housing for former members of the UK Armed Forces who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

www.svronline.org



Alabare Christian Care & Support

We've been supporting people who are homeless, vulnerable or marginalised for over 30 years, empowering individuals to live a fulfilled and independent life. We do this by providing safe accommodation and helping them gain the skills and confidence they need to embrace the life they deserve.

www.alabare.co.uk



Veterans in Communities

Veterans in Communities (VIC) is an East Lancashire based Armed Forces Charity. VIC supports former ex-service men and women who have served in any of the branches of the Royal Navy, Army, Royal Marines, Royal Air Force, the Emergency Services (Blue Light) and their families. By the nature of service life some will experience difficulties transitioning and with returning to 'Civvy Street', and many miss the social side of service life and just want to socialise again with like minded people.

www.veteransincommunities.org



Cobseo – The Confederation of Service Charities

Cobseo, as the Confederation of Service Charities, provides a single point of contact for interaction with Government, including local government and the Devolved Administrations; with the Royal Household; with the Private Sector; and, of course, with other members of the Armed Forces Community.

www.cobseo.org.uk



Veterans First Point Tayside

Veterans First Point (V1P) has been developed by Veterans for Veterans and is staffed by an alliance of clinicians and Veterans. The service we provide is free at the point of access and provided as part of the NHS. V1P works in collaboration with a large range of both statutory and third sector providers to meet the needs of veterans 'whatever they may be'.

www.veteransfirstpoint.org.uk/drop-center/tayside



Veterans Housing Scotland

Veterans Housing Scotland has over 100 years' experience in providing homes for Veterans in Scotland who are disabled.

www.vhscot.org.uk



Veterans Tribe Scotland CIC

We support Veterans and their families by delivering a variety of welcome get-togethers with crafts in a number of areas in Scotland. Our programme of creative and wellbeing events includes craft workshops, bushcraft and metal detecting, model making, art sessions and woodcraft.

www.veterantribescotland.co.uk



HMP Parc

The philosophy of our prisons is to rehabilitate residents and equip them to re-integrate into mainstream society on release. We seek to normalise prison conditions as far as possible and reflect life in the outside community. Our aim is to create an environment in which staff and residents feel safe, and causes of prison stress are minimised.

www.hmpparc.co.uk



Icarus Charity

Flexible mental health provision. Icarus was formed in response to a need for more immediate and effective support. We are committed to improving the quality of mental health provision for our veteran community.

www.icaruscharity.org



The Warrior Programme

The Warrior Programme enables individuals to manage their emotions and to develop the resilience, focus and motivation to succeed in today's world. The programme has been developed over the last fifteen years to meet the demands and challenges experienced by past and present members of the armed forces and their families.

www.warriorprogramme.org.uk



Adferiad Recovery

Adferiad is a member-led charity that provides help and support for people with mental health, addiction, and co-occurring and complex needs, to maximise their personal potential, and achieve a better quality of life. Our expert staff and volunteers apply a whole person approach to help people in all areas of their lives so they can live with dignity and as independently as possible.

www.adferiad.org



Lancashire Armed Forces Covenant Hub

Lancashire's public services and partners working with local organisations to transform the offer to Lancashire residents from the Armed Forces community.

www.lancashire.gov.uk/armed-forces



Squirrel Friends

Squirrel Friends is a Peer-to-Peer support group founded by three trans women from South Wales, with the aim to provide a safe and engaging place for anyone within the UK who needs support with their gender identity issues, as well as family members who may be having difficulty understanding their loved one or who just need support themselves.

www.squirrelfriends.org.uk



Valley Veterans

Valley Veterans is a veteran-led organisation based in the heart of the Rhondda Valley. Founded over 10 years ago as an informal support group for PTSD sufferers, Valley Veterans is now a vibrant hub with more than 140 active participants.

www.valleyveterans.org



Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust

We provide community and mental health services for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

www.leicspart.nhs.uk



Healthier Heroes CIC

Overcoming social isolation, homelessness and improving mental health and wellbeing in the Veteran community.

www.healthierheroescic.co.uk



Lord Kitchener Memorial Holiday Centre

Kitchener's is a unique Suffolk charity overlooking the sea in south Lowestoft, offering hotel style holiday accommodation to British and Commonwealth ex-armed service men and woman; British ex-merchant service men and women; and recently to British ex-emergency service men and women, and their spouses or partners, widows and widowers.

www.kitchenerslowestoft.co.uk



Officers Association Scotland

Officers' Association Scotland provide lifelong employment and welfare support to officers and their families throughout their transition and beyond. We provide personalised, practical and impartial employment support, training and resources with networking opportunities and employer events, complimented by a varied and current jobs board.

www.oascotland.org.uk



Probation Service - Yorkshire & The Humber

The Probation Service is a statutory criminal justice service that supervises high-risk offenders released into the community.

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/probation-service/about



Garrison Farm CIC

We provide sustainable support for service leavers and veterans transitioning to agriculture and land-based businesses through a nationally recognised, locally focused veteran food brand.

www.garrisonfarm.org



Burnley FC in the Community

When people who have served in the armed forces return to civilian life, they can often find it hard to adjust. We support and run a number of projects across the East Lancashire region that helps veterans connect with others in a similar situation, avoid feelings of loneliness and isolation and improve their overall health and wellness.

www.burnleyfccommunity.org/veterans



Isle of Wight NHS Trust

Isle of Wight NHS Trust is the only integrated acute, community, mental health and ambulance health care provider in England. Established in April 2012, the Trust provides a full range of health services to an isolated offshore population of 140,000.

www.iow.nhs.uk/get-involved/veteran-aware



Sierra Nevada Corporation Mission Systems UK LTD

SNC MS UK leverages over half a century of proven heritage from parent company, SNC, as a trusted leader in innovative, advanced technology solutions and open architecture integrations for aerospace and national security customers.

www.sncmsuk.com



The War Widows Association

We are primarily a campaigning and pressure group. As part of the UK Military Bereaved Family we want to ensure that war widows and widowers are always treated fairly and receive all the benefits and assistance to which they are entitled.

www.warwidows.org.uk



Defence Medical Welfare Service (DMWS)

Defence Medical Welfare Service (DMWS) is an independent charity providing medical welfare to those who have, and continue to, serve on the frontline. We support all members of the Armed Forces Community across the services, including serving personnel, reservists, veterans, and their family members/carers. This includes The Merchant Navy. We also provide support to those in other frontline roles including the Police.

www.dmws.org.uk



Great Western Hospital

The Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust provides healthcare services in Swindon and the surrounding area.

www.gwh.nhs.uk



Help for Heroes

We understand the difficulties people face when starting a new life after leaving the military. Finding work, somewhere to live, a purpose, and a place in society, can feel overwhelming. Help for Heroes is the leading Armed Forces and veterans' charity in the UK. With your support, we can help our veterans and their families live well after service.

www.helpforheroes.org.uk



RAF Association

For over 90 years, the RAF Association has championed a simple belief – that no member of the RAF community should ever be left without the help that they need.

www.rafa.org.uk



Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board are working collaboratively with the public and the Cardiff and Vale UHB workforce to make our health board more sustainable for the future. Together, we can improve equity for all of our patients - both today and tomorrow.

www.cavuhb.nhs.wales



Glasgows Helping Heroes

Provide a one point of contact Gateway Model, which will improve local access to a range of services including financial, housing and employability advice and capacity for service personnel, veterans, their families and carers.

www.ssafa.org.uk/get-help/glasgow-helping-heroes



Crowdsafe Crowd Management Ltd

CSCM are an award winning Crowd Management supplier of staff, that was founded in 2020. Born out of a desire to increase the standards in the event security industry. CSCM employs over 200 staff, from SIA licensed security operatives, SIA Licensed Close Protection Operatives, NVQ 3 Supervisors, event safety stewards, Event Control Room Operatives, SIA licensed Response Teams, a dedicated staff welfare team and more.

www.cs-cm.co.uk



Fares4Free

There are more than 220,000 Veterans of all ages living throughout Scotland. Many of these veterans face difficulties transitioning to civilian life or in later years due to various reasons. Medical conditions such as PTSD, anxiety, and many more, can result in veterans missing vital appointments due to being unable to use public transport. We may be able to help!

www.fares4free.org



Leicester City Council

We are the Leicester unitary authority, which means we take responsibility for many of the major decisions which affect people's lives. This includes decisions around schools, roads and setting council tax.

www.leicester.gov.uk



Sadies Butterflies

Sadies Butterflies is a transgender support group with free membership.

www.facebook.com/p/Sadies-Butterflies-100080694842416



The Armed Forces Equine Charity

We engage with our beneficiaries within the community to better understand their needs and to remain focussed on our goal. To achieve this we deliver bespoke programmes which harness the power of horses to inspire recovery, promote learning and provide opportunities for recreation, regardless of age or ability.

www.armedforcesequine.com



Wrightington Wigan and Leigh NHS Foundations Trust

Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is a major acute trust serving the people of Wigan and Leigh. Innovative and forward thinking, the trust is dedicated to providing the best possible healthcare for the local population in the Wigan Borough and surrounding areas.

www.wwl.nhs.uk



RecruitME

The RecruitME team recruit for businesses & organisations across the Midlands and East of England. All our consultants are part of the Armed Forces Community and the team understand the latest developments, challenges and intricacies in the sectors we work in, whether it be new technology, Industry 4.0, rapid changes to the working landscape, skills gaps or the latest industry trends. Service delivery is at the heart of everything we do.

www.recruitmeuk.com



Beyond the Battlefield

Beyond the Battlefield was formed as a charity to look after the well being of the Ex-service Community in both parts of the Island of Ireland. The charity fulfils a number of roles which will concentrate on working with a group of counsellors in order to assess and treat Ex-service people who suffer with a variety of symptoms and problems that indicate they are suffering from Post Traumatic Stress disorder. This service is open to all service personnel from the Forces, the Police and the Emergency services through to anyone who because of service or indeed through their connections to the services has or is suffering with PTSD.

www.beyondthebattlefield.org



Northern Ireland Veterans Support Office

The Northern Ireland Veterans' Support Office was established to develop the capacity to deliver the Armed Forces Covenant in Northern Ireland. We achieve this by developing strong working links between Devolved Government Departments, Local Government Veterans' Champions and the voluntary and charitable sector. This ensures that veterans living in Northern Ireland do not experience disadvantage as a result of their Service in the Armed Forces and have the same access to services and support as any other citizen.

www.nivso.org.uk



Veterans NHS Wales Cardiff and Vale

Helping Veterans Getting Back On Track With Their Lives. Specialised, priority service for individuals who have served in the Armed Forces, at any time in their lives and who are experiencing mental health difficulties related specifically to their military service

www.veteranswales.co.uk



Combat Stress

We are Combat Stress, the UK's leading charity for veterans' mental health. For over a century, we've helped former servicemen and women with mental health problems such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety and depression. Today we provide specialist treatment and support for veterans from every service and conflict, focusing on those with complex mental health issues.

www.combatstress.org.uk



Op Courage South East
Op COURAGE is an NHS mental health service, created to be there for those who have served in the UK armed forces. Whether you're currently serving and due to leave the military, a reservist or a veteran, this service is to give you the information and guidance you need to navigate civilian life.
www.opcouragesth.southeast.nhs.uk



Powys County Council
County Council for the Powys region of Wales
www.powys.gov.uk



Caerphilly Veterans Support Hub
Caerphilly Veterans Support Hub is a community group for veterans and their families, located in Ystrad Mynach, Caerphilly.
www.caerphillyveteranshub.org




Derbyshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
We are a provider of NHS mental health, learning disabilities and substance misuse (drug and alcohol) services in Derby city and Derbyshire county. We also provide a wide range of children's health services and we run the East Midlands Gambling Harms Service. We employ 3,000 people delivering services from a number of community bases across the whole of Derbyshire and from inpatient units in Derby and Chesterfield. Across the county and the city, we serve a combined population of approximately one million people.
www.derbyshirehealthcareft.nhs.uk



Links Combined Forces
Links is a unique Llanelli Mental Health Charity, providing support and learning opportunities to those within our community who have or are experiencing mental ill-health. Links aims to help people to build their self confidence and self esteem by offering a range of supportive creative learning opportunities as well as progressive, person-centred personal development plans.
www.links.uk.net



Cambridge University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Provider of NHS healthcare and treatment for Cambridgeshire.
www.cuh.nhs.uk



Airedale NHS Foundation Trust
Airedale NHS Foundation Trust is an award-winning NHS hospital and community services trust providing high quality, personalised, acute, elective, specialist and community care for a population of over 200,000 people from a widespread area covering 700 square miles within Yorkshire and Lancashire.
www.airedale-trust.nhs.uk



Armed Services Advice Project – Citizens Advice Scotland

We support people in the Armed Forces community across Scotland. Serving, ex-Service, regular, reserve or a dependant, we can help.

www.adviceasap.org.uk



BuildForce Group CIC

BuildForce is a Community Interest Company, set up and run by a collection of construction companies. We are dedicated to improving skills and diversity in construction by recruiting from the incredible talent of our service leavers and veterans. Our services focus on making industry more accessible with transparency on careers available, by using our tailored programme for your pathway into industry.

www.buildforce.org.uk



Company of Makers

Company of Makers exists to support Veterans who are struggling on civvy street no matter how long ago they left the Armed Forces. We design and make products inspired by the British military's influence on pop culture. Think of Sergeant Peppers or the MOD's and the RAF roundel, then you'll be in the right ball park. From trench coats to duffle coats, khaki to navy blue, sailor collars to camouflage fabric. Military chic is everywhere, as influential as ever and as cool as ever. The purpose behind all this creativity is to help fund making workshops for ex-Service personnel and their families who are struggling with life on civvy street.

www.companyofmakers.com



HorseBack UK

HorseBack UK inspires positive change, encourages confidence and self-esteem, and promotes recovery in an individual. Using horsemanship and outdoor activities, we deliver nationally accredited personal development and wellbeing programmes which offer our participants new coping strategies, life skills and the tools to build resilience.

www.horseback.org.uk



Rhondda Hub for Veterans

The hub is a place located in the Rhondda Valleys where we proudly support veterans in need of assistance and advice. We primarily focus on finding suitable and reliable homes for veterans who are currently, or at risk of being, homeless. We also help veterans in a number of additional ways such as giving financial advice, help with finding employment, organising food vouchers, and support in other areas.

www.rhonddahub.org.uk



Scotty's Little Soldiers

Scotty's Little Soldiers is a charity dedicated to supporting bereaved military children and young people. Inspired by the experience of Army widow Nikki Scott, the charity honours husband Corporal Lee Scott's memory – both as a loyal soldier and a loving father – and provides a practical yet personal way for the public at large to show their appreciation for those brave individuals who make the ultimate sacrifice in the service of their country.

www.scottyslittlesoldiers.co.uk



Armed Forces at Tesco

Bringing together former and current members of the armed forces, and their families. Ensuring they are supported with transition from military life, their families have the advice and support they need and helping colleagues who are reservists.



Our priorities

- Support service leavers
- Providing access to Tesco as an example of what service leavers can expect from a civilian employer
- Supporting former military colleagues with transition from military life
- Supporting colleagues with family in the Armed Forces
- Supporting colleagues who are Reservists



The V Word

A vibrant community created by women veterans, for women veterans. From peer-to-peer support and workshops, to research and online training resources, we have you covered. We believe in the power of community, where women veterans rise together, support each other, and rewrite the narrative, creating a tidal wave of positive change that resonates through generations!

www.theword.uk



Havant & East Hants Mind

Havant and East Hants Mind work to promote good mental health within our locality. We seek to support and empower people to lead a full life as part of their local community.

www.easthantsmind.org



Op Courage Midlands

Op COURAGE: The Veterans' Mental Health and Wellbeing Service provides specialist care and support for: Those due to leave the Armed Forces, reservists, those who've already left. It is developed by veterans, for veterans. Op COURAGE is available across England and since 2017, has helped nearly 30,000 people.

www.opcouragemidlands.nhs.uk



TESCO

As a leading multinational retailer, with more than 330,000 colleagues, we aim to serve customers every day with affordable, healthy and sustainable food – to help them enjoy a better quality of life and an easier way of living.

www.tesco-careers.com



Velindre University NHS Trust

Velindre University NHS Trust provides a range of specialist services which deliver outstanding outcomes. Our staff are highly motivated, and work tirelessly to provide high quality, responsive services to patients and donors. Our research is world class, and many of our clinicians and scientists are leaders in their field with international reputations.

www.velindre.nhs.wales



CAPS Independent Advocacy

CAPS is an independent advocacy organisation providing collective and individual advocacy in East Lothian and Midlothian. We also host several experience-led projects across Lothian. Our service for veterans covers all Scotland.

www.capsadvocacy.org



Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

Website for the Rhondda Cynon Taf's Borough Council


www.rctcbc.gov.uk



Step Together Volunteering

We are a charity that supports vulnerable and marginalised individuals through 1-1 support, coaching and volunteering placements in the community. We work with young people, people with criminal convictions, and the Armed Forces community. Our support doesn't have a time limit, we work with our clients until they have the confidence and skills they need to look forward to a more positive future.

www.step-together.org.uk



Trafford Veterans CIC

Trafford Veterans was set up in 2015 to provide peer support and outreach in the Borough of Trafford, Greater Manchester. We run a number of activities and encourage people to share their hobbies and skills to form new projects and groups. Working in partnership with Sale United FC, we are establishing a hub in Trafford that will be used as a place of support for the veterans and emergency service community.

www.traffordveterans.org



Derbyshire Community Healthcare Services

We serve a patient population of more than 1.1 million people across Derbyshire and Derby. We became a standalone NHS organisation in 2011 and a Foundation Trust with greater autonomy from 2014. We're now integral to the Joined Up Care Derbyshire (JUCD) partnership of health and social care organisations working ever more closely as an Integrated Care System. We care for patients across a wide range of services and locations, including 10 community hospital and 28 health centres. We also deliver care from patients' own homes, GP practices, schools and care homes.

www.dchs.nhs.uk



Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

www.merthyr.gov.uk



Monmouthshire County Council

Monmouthshire County Council

www.monmouthshire.gov.uk



Op Courage London

The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service is a free NHS mental health services for all ex-serving members of the UK Armed Forces and service personnel, including those who are making the transition to civilian life, and reservists. We work with any veteran and service leavers who live in the Greater London region or are registered with a GP in these areas.

www.londonveteranservice.nhs.uk



Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund

For more than 100 years, the RAF Benevolent Fund has been supporting members of our RAF Family through thick and thin providing practical, emotional, and financial support whenever they need us. We provide lifelong support to serving and ex-serving RAF personnel and their families. We'll consider any request for assistance, however big or small, providing a tailor-made approach to each individual situation. From mobility aids and confidential counselling to financial grants, we offer a range of support tailored to the individual's needs.

www.rafbf.org.uk



Age UK

Age UK is a national organisation offering support and guidance to help older people live better into their later years. They campaign & research, provide information & advice, help get access to health care and wellbeing programmes.

www.ageuk.org.uk



Forces Employment Charity

The Forces Employment Charity provides life-long, life-changing support, jobs and training opportunities to Service leavers, veterans, reservists and their spouses, partners and children, regardless of circumstances, rank, length of service, or reason for leaving.

www.forcesemployment.org.uk



Gosport Voluntary Action

Gosport Voluntary Action (GVA), a registered Charity, is the umbrella body (Council of Voluntary Services) for Gosport and surrounding areas. It provides help and support to over 200 local, voluntary and community groups in the Borough, that need help with governance issues, finding funding, recruiting and managing volunteers and accessing training.

www.gva.org.uk



Walking With The Wounded

At Walking With The Wounded, we empower veterans by reigniting their sense of purpose, enabling them to make a positive contribution to their communities and lead independent lives.

www.walkingwiththewounded.org.uk



Leicestershire County Council

Leicestershire County Council

www.leicestershire.gov.uk



Veterans HQ Liverpool

Provides support to ex-servicemen and women and for those leaving the services and residing in the Liverpool area.

www.veteranshq.org.uk



TALK TO US

During these uncertain times, it can be difficult to ask for help.

Forcesline is a free and confidential helpline to support you, no matter the problem. Make that first step for long lasting help - **don't keep quiet, talk to us.**

CALL FORCESLINE

0800 260 6767

FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL. OPEN WEEKDAYS, 09:00 TO 17:30

ssafa | the **Armed Forces** charity

Regulars | Reserves | Veterans | Families

Registered as a charity in England and Wales Number 210760 in Scotland Number SC038056 and in Republic of Ireland Number 20202001. Established 1885.

SCAN HERE
TO CONTACT
US ONLINE



ssafa.org.uk/forcesline



SSAFA Wales

SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity is a trusted source of support for serving personnel, veterans and their families in their time of need. Founded in 1885, we're extremely proud of our long-standing heritage and of all the work we do with inspiring people from Powys, across the UK and around the world.

www.ssafa.org.uk/powys



Breaking Ground Heritage CIC

Breaking Ground Heritage was developed to work alongside Operation Nightingale to deliver positive outcomes for projects that utilise heritage and archaeology as a recovery pathway . Founded by an Ex-Royal Marine, who had himself been through the Operation Nightingale project and witnessed first-hand the benefits that participating in projects of this kind of project can bring. These profound experiences are what have driven Breaking Ground Heritage to excel and deliver the best projects possible for its beneficiaries.

www.breakinggroundheritage.org.uk



Click Therapies Ltd

Click Therapies provide evidence-based psychological online therapy. We deliver affordable and professional services that are approved by UK and international guidelines. Our mission is to provide clients with a personalised psychological wellbeing service that is easily accessible, anytime, anywhere.

www.clicktherapies.com



THE BLOCK Armed Force's Community Advice & Crisis Support CIC

We offer short to medium-term accommodation, and support residents recovering from physical, mental or social injury following their time in service. Any service personnel will tell you stories about being in the Block, that is the name given to the place where service personnel are accommodated whilst at their barracks. A place of dignity and used as a base and a foundation for daily life.

www.theblockaff.org



The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders Regimental Association

You are not alone. We are the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders Association, your family of veterans who care for you and will support your wellbeing. We provide information on financial assistance, mental health support, housing advice, and social connection. Learn how we and other agencies and charities can help you today.


www.argylls.co.uk



Challenge The Wild

Challenge The Wild specialises in providing outdoor events to charities, companies, the public sector and private groups. Our team has provided forward thinking organisations with the opportunity to attend an event which is unique, raises profile, improves the physical and mental well-being of participants, builds exceptional teams and stands out.


www.challengethewild.com




Gloucester Hospital
We are an NHS trust of around 8,000 people, providing care for the population of Gloucestershire and beyond.
www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk




Loughborough Wellbeing Centre
The Loughborough Wellbeing Centre CIO has been delivering Wellbeing Cafés, groups and activities for adults who experience mental health problems in the Charnwood area since October 2015. Our centre provides them with a safe, supportive and welcoming place to go to for the benefit of their mental health and wellbeing. We aim to support people's recovery and resilience to mental health issues and encourage a peer support network that will enable them to feel part of the community again.
www.thewellbeingcafe.org



Radiate Arts
Radiate Arts CIC is an inclusive, not-for-profit company working with local community groups, schools, libraries, charities and wider organisations. We facilitate creative workshops and experiences that promote positivity, connection and wellbeing.
www.radiatearts.co.uk



The Poppy Factory
The Poppy Factory supports veterans and family members on their journey into employment, helping them overcome any barriers.
www.poppyfactory.org



The VC Gallery
Combating Loneliness & Social Isolation for Veterans & Community. We help service veterans and those in the wider community by getting them engaged in a variety of art projects. We passionately believe that art and culture can improve health, wellbeing, and overall quality of life.
www.thevcgallery.com



Tri Services and Veterans Support Centre
Working in partnership with Fighting With Pride, Tri Services and Veterans Support Centre is committed to providing inclusive and welcoming support to LGBT+ Veterans, serving personnel and their families.
www.veteransupportcentre.org



Firing Line Museum of The Queen's Dragoon Guards and The Royal Welsh
Firing Line Museum is an accredited museum that celebrates the Welsh soldier over a period of 300 years; a time which saw ordinary Welshmen travel the world, carrying out military service at battles such as Waterloo (1815) and Rorke's Drift (1879), and more recently in Iraq and Afghanistan. Using hands-on and dressing up activities, informative permanent and temporary displays and educational events, the museum stands as a testament to the extraordinary contributions made by ordinary Welshmen to their Regiments (1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards and The Royal Welsh), to history and to Wales.
www.cardiffcastlemuseum.org.uk



Sacro

Sacro is a Scottish community justice organisation which works to deliver life-changing services that empower people, give hope and protection, and help to build safe communities. Sacro provides a wide range of direct, innovative services in Community Justice, Community Safety and Public Protection. All our services are designed to help build safe communities by reducing conflict and offending. The organisation works with a broad range of people, including those harmed by crime and those responsible for that harm.

www.sacro.org.uk



Woody's Lodge

Our vision here at Woody's Lodge, is to provide an inviting meeting space for veterans of the Armed Forces, Emergency Services and Reservists to re-engage with life, their families and their communities.

www.woodyslodge.org



Alabaré

Providing a pathway of support for veteran. Alabaré Homes for Veterans provides supported accommodation to British Armed Forces veterans who are homeless or at risk of becoming so. Support includes help with mental wellbeing and support accessing future employment.

www.alabare.co.uk/what-we-do/veterans/gyn-filwyr-cymru



Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Greater Manchester is one of the country's most successful city-regions. Home to more than 2.8 million people and with an economy bigger than that of Wales or Northern Ireland. Our vision is to make Greater Manchester one of the best places in the world to grow up, get on and grow old. We're getting there through a combination of economic growth, and the reform of public services.

www.gmarmedforces.com



Mission Motorsport

Mission Motorsport, The Forces' Motorsport Charity aids in the recovery and rehabilitation of those affected by military operations by providing opportunities through motorsport and the automotive industry.

www.missionmotorsport.org



Stoll

We provide affordable, high-quality housing and support services to enable vulnerable and disabled veterans to lead fulfilling, independent lives.

www.stoll.org.uk



East London NHS Foundation Trust

East London NHS Foundation Trust. We provide a wide range of mental health, community health, primary care, wellbeing and inpatient services to young people, working age adults and older adults across the City of London, Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets, Bedfordshire and Luton.

www.elft.nhs.uk



Royal British Legion

The Royal British Legion is at the heart of a national network that supports our Armed Forces community. We're here through thick and thin – ensuring their unique contribution is never forgotten. We've been here since 1921 and we'll be here as long as they need us. We are the country's largest Armed Forces charity, with 180,000 members, 110,000 volunteers and a network of partners and charities; helping us give support wherever and whenever it's needed.

www.britishlegion.org.uk



Veterans Trauma Network

Veterans Trauma Network Wales was established in 2019 to ensure that ex-Service Personnel who suffered physical injury as a result of their service, can access the timeliest and most appropriate care for their injuries following discharge from the Armed Forces. Most veterans' injuries can be dealt with using routine NHS referral pathways. However, the severity or unusual nature of some combat injuries means that veterans sometimes need specialist input that may not be available in their health board.

www.cavuhb.nhs.wales/our-services/armed-forces-services/support-for-veterans/veterans-trauma-network-vtn-wales



Hull 4 Heroes

Increasingly, veterans return from service to find they do not have the support network and resources to meet their most basic needs. When their resources are depleted, these veterans can become homeless and without hope. Hull 4 Heroes aim to ensure that their transition back into civilian life and regular employment is as seamless as possible.

www.hull4heroes.org.uk



NHS Somerset

NHS Somerset is responsible for commissioning health and care services for our 580,000 residents. NHS Somerset plays a pivotal role in bringing together the NHS, Somerset Council and voluntary sector partners to work as one integrated care system, or ICS, called Our Somerset. Through Our Somerset, we deliver joined up services to improve the lives of people in our area. NHS Somerset is the statutory NHS organisation responsible for implementing a health and care strategy developed by the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP).

www.nhssomerset.nhs.uk



Animo et Fide Ltd

We are a consultancy company specialising in wellbeing and mental resilience. Everyone on our team has the professional qualifications required to give you the very best service and advice. With more than two decades of experience in our area, we work with companies of all sizes, and in all industries. We are dedicated to offer bespoke and off-the-shelf solutions, so that you can focus on what really matters to your business.

www.animoetfide.com



Op Courage (North of England) HIS/CTS

Op COURAGE: The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service provides specialist care and support for those due to leave the armed forces, reservists and those who've already left. Developed by veterans, for veterans, Op COURAGE is available across England.

www.leedsandyorkpft.nhs.uk/our-services/veterans-mental-health-high-intensity-service-north-england-team

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rnrmc.org.uk
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What Makes the Difference CIC



We serve veterans, first responders, and their families as they transition within roles or out of military and first responder careers into civilian life. We work closely with both the individual and their family, understanding that this journey is a shared experience. We recognise the different experiences of each of these groups. Using a mix of tailored 1-2-1 coaching and group workshops we work with the individual, their partner and their children to help them describe and understand the patterns of thinking and behaviour in their lives. When we know how each of us create these patterns we improve our understanding of ourselves and others. We start to remove the barriers and misunderstandings and move to a place of openness and clarity in our interactions.

www.whatmakesthedifference.org

ABRH Ltd



ABRH are a partnership which is built on passion, expertise and a commitment to transforming the way people communicate. Co-Founded by Ali Baird and Rich Hilton, ABRH is committed to help individuals and organisations overcome communication barriers and to elevate their personal and professional lives. We bring a wealth of experience from diverse industries, combining our strengths to create a dynamic and systematic approach to improving communication in the work environment.

www.abrh.solutions

Essex Partnership University NHS Trust



Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (EPUT) was formed on 1 April 2017 following the merger of North Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (NEP) and South Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (SEPT). Since then, EPUT has grown from strength to strength, providing many community health, mental health and learning disability services to support more than 3.2 million people living across Luton and Bedfordshire, Essex and Suffolk.

www.eput.nhs.uk

Hafren Forest Hideaway



Group accommodation in the perfect mid-Wales hideaway locations.

www.hafrenforesthideshow.com

M.A.S.H



Social isolation and a lack of access to relevant and valid support affects Armed Forces Veterans and their dependents significantly. We at M.A.S.H ensure all Armed forces veterans and their dependants can access a safe social space where they can feel secure and confident in accessing signposted support in a confidential setting. The Hubs offer an inclusive range of events and activities to ensure all are able to access and that no one is left behind.


www.mashuk.org.uk

Royal Naval Association (RNA)



With over 11,000 members across 250+ branches in the UK and overseas, we are a family of current and former Naval Service personnel, relatives and supporters of our country's Royal Navy. Whether we are catching up with friends at our regular social events, fundraising, advising on welfare and employment matters or just providing an arm around the shoulder, our natural willingness to help others stems from the tradition and camaraderie that life in the Royal Navy instils. Everything we do is inextricably linked to our core values of unity, loyalty, patriotism and comradeship.


www.royal-naval-association.co.uk



Waterloo Uncovered

Waterloo Uncovered is the groundbreaking charity combining world-class archaeology with veteran care and recovery. A world where the Armed Forces community can build brighter futures for themselves by exploring the past. To use the transformative power of archaeology to enrich the lives of veterans, serving personnel and their family members.


www.waterloouncovered.com



Advocacy Focus

Advocacy Focus lives by the motto of "nothing about me, without me." We want every person we support to know that they have power and can take control over every decision in their lives. We help people live the lives they want to live, by providing high quality advocacy services across the North-West.


www.advocacyfocus.org.uk



With You (At the Armed Forces Community)

With You is a charity providing free, confidential support to people experiencing issues with drugs, alcohol or mental health. Our name reflects who we are – a positive place where people can progress, connect with others and get friendly, expert help. It lets people know that we will work alongside them and treat them with warmth, compassion and respect.

www.wearewithyou.org.uk



WRAC Association

The Women's Royal Army Corps Association aims to maintain contact between former members of the QMAAC, ATS and WRAC and women still serving in the Army, fostering mutual friendship between them and providing for social gatherings. Fostering esprit de corps, comradeship and welfare, and preserving the traditions of the QMAAC, ATS and WRAC.


www.wraca.org.uk



Veterans First Point Lothian

Veterans First Point (V1P) has been developed by Veterans for Veterans and is staffed by an alliance of clinicians and Veterans. The service we provide is free at the point of access and provided as part of the NHS. V1P works in collaboration with a large range of both statutory and third sector providers to meet the needs of veterans 'whatever they may be'.

www.veteransfirstpoint.org.uk



Hywel Dda Health Board

Part of NHS Wales providing healthcare to the people of Wales

www.hduhb.nhs.wales



The Bridge for Heroes

As a small charity with a big heart, The Bridge for Heroes has a committed team of trustees, staff and volunteers who all go the extra mile to ensure that the Armed Forces Community (AFC) in King's Lynn, West Norfolk and beyond, receive help and support when needed. We pride ourselves on our 'can-do' attitude. Whatever the issue, problem or concern, we look at how we can support individuals and their families, whether by giving direct support or making referrals to more specialised services. We work collaboratively with a variety of organisations, statutory agencies, and charities, all of whom are able to provide targeted support. We help these parties understand the needs of the AFC so that we can work together to provide holistic support over the immediate, medium and longer-term. Our service provision includes one-to-one and group sessions, a programme of activities, and informal social engagement aka a brew and a catch-up!

www.thebridgeforheroes.org



Armed Forces Outreach Service

The Armed Forces Outreach Service supports members of the Armed Forces community, including those who have left (regardless of how long ago) or leaving the Armed Forces, regardless of reason for discharge. The service also offers support and advice to serving reservists and to family members of the above groups on housing, employment, debt management, pensions, mental health referrals and access to other local authority services.

www.armedforcesoutreachservice.org



Community Veterans Support

Community Veterans Support works out of the Coming Home Centre, in Glasgow, and is a friendly and welcoming environment for the socially isolated, elderly, early service leavers and veterans transitioning to civilian life. The centre provides tea, coffee and a daily hot meal free of charge and this quality shared time is so important to many veterans. Community Veterans Support also works with visiting veterans who may need support in tackling issues such as homelessness, physical disability, mental health problems, pensions, housing, and benefits support. Friendship and camaraderie are nurtured through adventure activities. Community Veterans Support is for every veteran, regardless of their age or length of service.

www.facebook.com/communityveteranssupport



Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

We are the largest health organisation in Wales, with a budget of £1.87 billion and a workforce of over 19,000. The Health Board is responsible for the delivery of health care services to more than 700,000 people across the six counties of north Wales (Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham). The Health Board coordinates the work of 96 GP practices, and NHS services provided by 78 dental and orthodontic practices, 70 optometry practices and opticians and 145 pharmacies in North Wales.

www.bcuhb.nhs.wales



Service Dogs UK

Service Dogs UK is the only accredited PTSD assistance dog charity in the UK for both the Armed Forces and Emergency Services

www.servicedogsuk.org



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atkinsrealis.com/digital

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NHS Kent and Medway (ICB)

NHS Kent and Medway is the NHS organisation that plans and buys healthcare services to meet the needs of 1.9million people living in Kent and Medway.

www.kentandmedway.icb.nhs.uk



Anxious Minds

Anxious Minds was founded in 2015 stemming from the CEO's personal experiences with PTSD, anxiety, and depression. This gives us both a detailed understanding of the reality of mental health and a passionate desire to improve the situation. Our passionate mission and commitment at Anxious Minds is to improve the mental well-being of the people we serve here in the North East. We work towards a strong set of core values and principles that are upheld in everything we offer. Fundamentally we believe that individuals who suffer from Mental Health do not receive enough support. We started this charity in order to address this and provide better support.

www.anxiousminds.co.uk



Surrey & Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust is the leading NHS provider of mental health, well-being and drug and alcohol services across Surrey and north east Hampshire. It is also the main provider of learning and neurodevelopmental disability services. We support people of all ages, delivering high-quality care across our 97 services, all of which are registered with the Care Quality Commission. Individual treatment and support, which helps people work towards recovery, is at the heart of everything we do.

www.sabp.nhs.uk



Lothians Veterans Centre

Lothians Veterans Centre is a small independent charity which supports military veterans and their families. We operate a drop-in centre in Dalkeith and have a small team of staff who are readily available to tackle any challenge that arrives through our door. It is a safe and welcoming environment that can provide instant assistance, support and advice in relation to a wide range of services, including health and wellbeing; housing; employment; benefits; pensions; further education and training; access to health services; welfare; comradeship; and activities. Veterans can also just drop in for a brew and a chat.

www.lvc.scot



Barry RFC Armed Forces Hub

Barry Rugby Football Club operate an Armed Forces hub to provide a welcoming space where serving and veterans can find a free, warm, welcoming, safe space.


www.facebook.com/barryrfcarmedforceshub



Swansea Veterans Hub

Swansea Veterans Hub is a social and support group which aims to bring veterans out of isolation and give them a place to socialise and make new friends. As well as offering support and activities, we link up with other local and national organisations to ensure our members can access the services they need.


www.swanseaveteranshub.org.uk



Marshall E-Learning Consultancy (Ciphr)

Marshall E-Learning the learning e-learning consultancy for diversity, inclusion and unconscious bias e-learning courses. We now have a library of over 200 courses, which can be taken individually and tailored for your organisation. Or taken as a subscription service for one affordable annual fee. Working with Marshall E-Learning we can ensure compliance but our distinctive approach to updating and tailoring content means we together we can make a genuine impact in your workplace.

www.marshallelearning.com



University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust

University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust (UHBW) is the newly merged Trust comprising University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust and Weston Area Health NHS Trust. Bringing together a combined workforce of over 13,000 staff, the new Trust delivers over 100 different clinical services across 10 different sites serving a core population of more than 500,000 people. With services from the neonatal intensive care unit to care of the elderly, we provide care to the people of Bristol, Weston and the south west from the very beginning of life to its later stages.

www.uhbw.nhs.uk



University Hospitals Plymouth

To provide excellent care, with compassion, wrapped around people's individual needs. Together with our partners we will develop nationally leading integrated health and care, unlocking better outcomes and reducing inequalities, and develop UHP as a regional specialist centre to improve lives across Plymouth, Devon and Cornwall. UHP has a unique role, one of few trusts in the country to fulfil four distinct roles in the peninsula health and care system – spanning community and social care, mental health, acute and through to specialist and tertiary services.

www.plymouthhospitals.nhs.uk



London Ambulance Service NHS Trust

As the mobile arm of the health service in London, our main role is to respond to emergency 999 calls, getting medical help to patients who have serious or life-threatening injuries or illnesses as quickly as possible.


www.londonambulance.nhs.uk



Caerphilly County Borough Council

Caerphilly County Borough Council

www.caerphilly.gov.uk



Powys Teaching Health Board

Powys Teaching Health Board is one of seven health boards in Wales. The very rural nature of Powys means that the majority of local services are provided locally, through GPs and other primary care services, community hospitals and community services. But with such a sparsely populated area we do not have the critical mass of people locally to provide a District General Hospital within Powys. Therefore, we pay for Powys residents to receive specialist hospital services in hospitals outside of the county in both England and Wales.

www.pthb.nhs.wales



The Ripple Pond

The only registered UK charity solely supporting the adult family members of physically or psychologically injured British Forces personnel and veterans.

www.theripplepond.org



The Royal British Legion Scotland

Since 1921 we have stood for and provided support to veterans and their families. When servicemen and women return to civilian life after serving with the Armed Forces some are in need of community and friendship, maybe as a result of their experiences in the services or purely because they are no longer part of the 'military family' they had come to rely. We make a difference every day to the lives of those veterans through our comradeship and befriending programme, developing strong communities and supporting remembrance. Our large family network is spread across Scotland and helps support veterans and their families to get on with their lives and assists those who require assistance.

www.legionscotland.org.uk



Sahir House

Sahir House is a vibrant and inclusive Merseyside-based charity with a big heart. Our organisation serves a unique dual purpose – we promote better sexual health and wellness for all and we support the needs of LGBTQ+ people across our region. Since our formation, at the height of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the 1980s, the needs of people living with HIV have been fundamental to our development and core to our purpose.

www.sahir.org.uk



Age Scotland

Age UK is a national organisation offering support and guidance to help older people live better into their later years. They campaign & research, provide information & advice, help get access to health care and wellbeing programmes.

www.ageuk.org.uk/scotland



Breckland Council

Breckland Council

www.breckland.gov.uk



Scottish LGBTI Police Association

Advance LGBTI equality, inclusion and support throughout policing in Scotland and within the communities we serve. The Association aims to deliver our vision by focusing on the following key areas: visibility, membership, engagement and governance.

www.lgbtipolice.scot



Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust

Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust provides acute and specialist healthcare for over one million people every year. We particularly serve the local communities in the eight boroughs that form the North West London Integrated Care System. Formed in 2007, we are one of the largest NHS trusts in the country, with more than 15,000 staff.


www.imperial.nhs.uk



Milton Keynes University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Milton Keynes University Hospital (MKUH) NHS Foundation Trust is a medium sized general hospital that provides a full range of acute hospital services and an increasing number of specialist services to the growing population of Milton Keynes and the surrounding areas of Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire, including Luton, and the areas covered by Cherwell District Council, Oxford City Council and South Oxfordshire District Council. With around 550 beds and employing more than 4,000 staff, the hospital sees and treats more than 400,000 outpatients and over 100,000 emergency department patients each year, in addition to delivering a wide range of elective (planned) and non-elective procedures.

www.mkuh.nhs.uk



SSAFA

SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity is a trusted source of support for serving personnel, veterans and their families in their time of need. Founded in 1885, we're extremely proud of our long-standing heritage and of all the work we do with inspiring people from Powys, across the UK and around the world.

www.ssafa.org.uk



Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service-Op Courage Community Partnerships

St Andrew's Healthcare is a charity providing specialist mental healthcare for patients with some of the most complex, challenging mental health needs in the UK. We provide care across a number of services, including Men's Mental Health, Women's Mental Health, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Neuropsychiatry, Autistic Spectrum Disorder and Learning Disability, with the majority of our 600 patients referred to us via the National Health Service. We develop innovative ways to help patients recover, creating a package of care designed around each individual, their preferences and needs. We focus on physical and spiritual wellbeing as well as mental health.

www.stah.org/community-partnerships/veterans



Milton Keynes City Council

Milton Keynes City Council

www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/armed-forces-support



Ashfields Primary Care Centre (Sandbach GPs)

Ashfields Primary Care Centre is a Veteran Friendly Accredited Practice for the Sandbach area, Cheshire.

www.sandbachgps.nhs.uk



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Small business insurance

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TRINITY



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ARMED FORCES CHARITY

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The Psychotherapy Clinic

Our service is a private therapy service supporting adults experiencing depression, anxiety and trauma. Our fantastic team of specialists provide psychological treatment services with our aim being to help you to relieve emotional pain, so that you can live the life you want to lead. We are located in Willenhall, Walsall in the West Midlands. Our clinic rooms offer a warm, welcoming and comfortable space for you to come to meet with your therapist. In addition to face to face support, we offer support via video or telephone call.

www.thepsychotherapyclinic.co.uk



Blesma, The Limbless Veterans

Blesma is a specialist Service charity, an Association. Its Members are the war wounded, disabled veterans and their dependants. Blesma shall work tirelessly to meet the challenges of injury, to bring comfort, and to help its Members realise their fullest potential.

www.blesma.org



Scotland's Bravest Manufacturing Company

Scotland's Bravest Manufacturing Company is Scotland's leading social enterprise and a market leader in the production of signs. We provide employment to military veterans as well as to those with disabilities and while doing so, provide nationally recognised training and qualifications with ongoing development opportunities.

www.scotlandsbravest.org.uk



ILM Highland

ILM Highland is an independent charity and social enterprise, providing home improvement, electrical recycling and retail services to the Highlands of Scotland. Our home improvement services provide free support and assistance to the most vulnerable in our community, enabling them to maintain their independence.

www.ilmhighland.co.uk



Veterans in Crisis Sunderland

Veterans in Crisis Sunderland – VICS. If you are a veteran and you're registered with a Sunderland GP and need help (or you know of someone that is), we will be very pleased to hear from you. Our mission is to do everything we can to get veterans back on their feet, however long it takes. However, you don't need to be in crisis – all veterans are welcome.

www.veteransincrisis.co.uk



Vale of Glamorgan Council

The Vale of Glamorgan Council has 54 elected members or Councillors, each representing an electoral division, or ward. The Council is led by the Leader and Cabinet, a body of eight Councillors that makes key decisions about policy and budget. The Council's Chief Officers are divided into Directors, Heads of Service and Operational Managers. As service managers they make recommendations to, and are held accountable by the Cabinet.

www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk



Be-inn Unity CIC

We are a Social Enterprise who exist to inspire and educate communities so that individuals are empowered to thrive. We want to remove social stigma from mental health and reduce suicide in our communities. We work in collaboration with individuals and communities with a trauma informed and attachment led approach. We support and enable the conditions for growth through a variety of opportunities and make decisions based on our values.

www.beinnunity.co.uk



Blackpool Council

Blackpool Council providing municipal services for the residents and businesses of the Blackpool region.

www.blackpool.gov.uk



Veterans Scotland

We recognise that for many Veterans and their families, aspects of life after leaving the Services can be challenging. With over 50 Veterans' organisations in Scotland alone, we understand that it can be frustrating to find just the right person to help with a problem. The Veterans-Assist website has been set up to put in one place most of the resources you might need, whether it is finding the right school or college for you or your kids; options for somewhere to live; getting access to a War Disablement pension; or finding a route into employment.

www.veteransscotland.co.uk



RFS Career Academy

The RFS Career Academy was launched in 2017 with one simple mission: to support military spouses and the Armed Forces Community in to work, wherever you are in the world. Through our FREE programmes and services, we provide support, up-skilling, training and coaching & mentoring opportunities. We work in collaboration with progressive, supportive industry sector experts and organisations to give you the tools to develop, grow and gain confidence in the workplace or to secure employment.

www.careers.recruitforspouses.co.uk



Ara Recovery 4 All

Ara is a registered charity formed in 1987 by an enthusiastic group of volunteers. It is estimated that Ara has helped over 40,000 people with alcohol, drug, gambling and mental health issues and has saved an estimated £50 million in costs to the community. Over many years Ara has provided structured treatment, counselling, housing support, education, training and employment guidance as well as many other interventions to promote recovery and a healthier life. Today Ara is a major provider of supported housing services in Bristol as a partner in the Recovery Orientated Alcohol and Drugs Service (ROADS). Ara has an extensive and expanding service providing counselling and support for problem gamblers.

www.recovery4all.co.uk



Blackpool Football Club Community Trust

Blackpool FC Community Trust (BFCCT) is the official charity of Blackpool FC, based at Bloomfield Road Stadium. Working with residents as young as two years old up to adults in the later stages of life, Blackpool FC Community Trust provide a diverse range of programmes to increase social inclusion opportunities; improve physical fitness, health, and education; and lessen involvement in anti-social behaviour.

www.bfcct.co.uk



George Eliot NHS Trust

George Eliot Hospital NHS Trust provides a range of elective, non-elective, surgical, medical, women's, children's, diagnostic and therapeutic services to a population of more than 300,000 people. Located on the outskirts of Nuneaton and its services cover a large footprint, including areas of North Warwickshire, South West Leicestershire and North Coventry.

www.geh.nhs.uk



Garforth Care Homes

Anyone who cares for a parent or other relative with dementia knows the level of care it takes to provide a good quality of life. It's extremely challenging even if you're fit and healthy and have the best of intentions. Accepting help from professionals can be difficult at first. However, with dementia being such a serious and unpredictable condition, there may come a time to consider other options. If you're based in the Garforth area of West Yorkshire, we can be that option for you if the time has come. Our homes cater for the long and short-term needs of people aged over 65. We firmly believe that the foundation of a caring environment comes from its people. Our care homes are run according to our four values of care, which are displayed around both our homes in Garforth. These values extend to both staff and residents, as a caring environment is one where people are in harmony with each other.

www.garforthcarehomes.com

Meet Dave Small (He/Him/His) Pride in Veterans Standard (PiVS) Manager

Dave joined the Royal Navy in 1980 and spent his naval career in the Communications General Branch. He became a warrant Officer in 2003, around the same time as coming out. He was a founding member of the LGBT Navy working group, which was formed to progress the changes that allowed LGBTQ+ people to serve.

After leaving the Navy, Dave moved into the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (E&D) field and has held roles as the E&D Manager at Portsmouth City Council and, most recently, the University of Portsmouth. His roles have focused on developing inclusion policy, establishing staff networks, community engagement, ensuring organisations meet their Equality Act 2012 legal obligations, and embedding equality and diversity best practices. This work included a strong focus on LGBTQ+ inclusion.

Between 2008 and 2011, Dave worked at the LGBT charity STONEWALL as a client manager for organisations engaging with the charity and its workplace programme. He specifically looked after organisations from Local Authorities, Fire and Police Services, Higher Education, and the Armed Forces. While at Stonewall, he played a lead role in securing the Army and Security Services joining the Diversity Champions Programme. Dave says highlights from his time at Stonewall included seeing, in the same year, the RN, RAF and Army appearing in the WEI top 100 together for the first time, assisting in the development of the Military LGBT staff forums, and being involved in supporting the three services at London Pride, which saw all three marching together in uniform for the first time in 2008.

Dave lives in Portsmouth with his husband, Manny, and their dog, Hilda.



To find out more contact Dave Small, our PiVS Manager at: pivs@fightingwithpride.org.uk or visit our website to sign up to become a member www.fightingwithpride.org.uk/pride-in-veterans-standard



Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

PROUD SUPPORTER OF THE ARMED FORCES

Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust (GSTT) comprises five of the UK's best-known hospitals – **Guy's, St Thomas', Evelina London Children's Hospital, Royal Brompton and Harefield** – as well as community services in Lambeth and Southwark.

It has a long history of high-quality care, clinical excellence, research and innovation and is a proud supporter of the Armed Forces.

EMPLOYMENT

GSTT supports the employment of the Armed Forces community recognising military transferable skills and qualifications in our recruitment and selection process; working with the Career Transition Partnership (CTP) / Forces Employment Charity (FEC) to support the employment of Service leavers. The trust achieved the Employment Recognition Scheme (ERS) Gold Award in 2022.

NHS STEP INTO HEALTH

We support Step into Health - where members of the Armed Forces community can connect to NHS organisations to set up training opportunities, clinical and general work placements, insight days and receive application support.

GSTT ARMED FORCES & VETERANS NETWORK

We have a thriving diverse Armed Forces Network that reaches out regularly to the Armed Forces Community in our Staff, Patients and wider community footprint across London with Staff forums, briefs, social events and community drop-ins.

LONDON ARMED FORCES NETWORKS

The GSTT Armed forces Team is active across multiple Armed Forces Networks across London and nationally.

ARMED FORCES AWARENESS TRAINING

We ensure that our staff are fully aware of the needs of the Armed Forces Community by conducting the NHS Healthcare Awareness Training and Military Human CPD courses.

SERVICE SPOUSES AND PARTNERS

We connect with our Forces Families, and provide flexibility in granting leave for Service spouses and partners before, during and after a partner's deployment.

RESERVES

We have a Reserves policy to support our employees who are members of the Reserve Forces; granting additional paid/unpaid leave for annual Reserve Forces training; supporting any mobilisations and deployment; actively encouraging members of staff to become Reservists.

CADET ORGANISATIONS

We have a policy to support our employees who are volunteer leaders in military cadet organisations, granting additional leave to attend annual training camps and courses; actively encouraging members of staff to become volunteer leaders in cadet organisations; supporting local military cadet units; recognising the benefits of employing cadets/ex-cadets within the workforce.

NATIONAL EVENTS

GSTT supports Armed Forces Day, Reserves Day, Jobs Fairs, conferences, Poppy Appeal Day and Remembrance activities.

ARMED FORCES CHARITIES

We support Armed Forces charities with fundraising and supporting staff who volunteer to assist.

VETERANS COVENANT HEALTHCARE ALLIANCE (VCHA)

As a Veteran Aware Trust, we are leading the way in improving veterans' care within the NHS, as part of the Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance (VCHA) we strive to be the exemplars in GSTT and the Community.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Official social media includes: LinkedIn and 'X'

For more information email

armedforces@gstt.nhs.uk





For further information on Fighting With Pride visit:

www.fightingwithpride.org.uk

 @fightingwpride  @fightingwithpride

Sign-up to receive our regular news updates