



What is the Veterans In-Service Injury Network?

The Veterans In-Service Injury Network is a Scotland-wide service for UK veterans.

It offers veterans, who have a **physical health** condition, illness or injury that remains a concern despite treatment by the Defence Medical Services and/ or NHS, the option to have their treatment to date reviewed by a team of specialists.

Physical health condition? It might be an injury or scarring that has not quite healed right, or a respiratory or skin condition that just won't go away. It might be joint or hearing issues that have developed decades earlier than your civilian colleagues, family and friends.

How does it work?

It is a simple process to start; ask your GP, Practice Nurse, Physiotherapist or Occupational Therapist for an appointment to discuss your physical health condition, illness or injury in order to be referred to the Veterans In-Service Injury Network.

The referral will be processed by the Veterans In-Service Injury Network coordinator, who will request a multi-disciplinary team meeting of specialists with expertise in your area of condition, illness or injury. The majority of these specialists are veterans or reservists.

The specialists will develop recommendations for your GP and/or referrer to take forward – it may be that there are possible options for alternative treatment, it may also be that there are no further treatment options and that they recommend possible options for meaningful long-term support tailored to you.

Who can be referred?

- **UK veteran** - Veterans are defined as anyone, who has served for at least one day in HM Armed Forces (Regular or Reserve), Royal Fleet Auxiliary or Merchant Naval Seafarers, who have seen duty on legally defined military operations
- A physical health condition, illness or injury that was most likely the result of military service, which remains a concern despite treatment.
- A physical health condition that was most likely the result of military service and has developed a lot earlier than expected.
- Existing treatment options in your NHS board area have been exhausted.

What if I'm not eligible?





If you haven't exhausted all the treatment options in your NHS board area or if this is the first time that you are sharing your condition, illness or injury with a healthcare professional, then the Armed Forces Covenant may be the best option for you.

The AFC is a **promise** by the nation to ensure that the Armed Forces and Veterans community are not disadvantaged by their service.

It is also a **legislative duty** for the NHS across primary¹ and secondary² healthcare, and for local authorities across healthcare, education and housing services.

The duty says that the NHS and local authorities must pay due regard to the unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the Armed Forces through the principles that:

- **the disadvantages faced by the Armed Forces and Veterans community as a result of service should be removed**
- **special provision may be justified for those, who have given the most such as the bereaved and the injured**

Who is covered by the promise? The promise covers:

- serving members of His Majesty's Forces (Regular and Reserve)
- serving members of British Overseas Territories' Armed Forces, who are subject to UK Service law
- veterans, who are ordinarily resident in the UK, including Royal Fleet Auxiliary, Royal Naval Auxiliary Service or Merchant Naval Seafarers, who deployed on legally defined UK military operations
- relevant family members.

Who is covered by the duty? The duty covers:

- serving members of the His Majesty's Forces (Regular and Reserve)
- serving members of British Overseas Territories' Armed Forces, who are subject to UK Service law
- veterans, who are ordinarily resident in the UK (not including RFA, RNXS or MN veterans)

¹ Primary care is often your first point of contact with the NHS and is delivered by your GP, practice or community nurse, allied health professionals such as your physiotherapist or occupational therapist, dentist, pharmacist or optometrist.

² Secondary Care is specialist healthcare and is delivered in hospitals, or by specialist clinics and community services; for example, a community mental health team or a rehabilitation service.



- relevant family members.

Why is the AFC important? There are a number of ways that the AFC can be applied to support you. These examples are not exhaustive.

- If an injury, illness or condition is likely linked back to service, access to specialist services should be prioritised in line with clinical need.
- If a service family member moves to a new NHS area (because their spouse, partner or parent is posted/ assigned) whilst receiving treatment, they should resume their treatment with the least delay possible.
- If a service family member moves to a new NHS area (because their spouse, partner or parent is posted/ assigned) whilst on a waiting list, they should retain their relative place on the new NHS waiting list.

In line with clinical need? Clinical need is determined by the clinician or specialist. It means that those with the greatest or most urgent need will go first.

It's not in my military medical records! It is not necessary for the illness, injury or condition to be recorded in your military medical records. It is recognised that many service personnel chose not to disclose physical and mental health issues for a variety of reasons; for example, the stigma of reporting injury.

What can you do to ensure that the AFC is applied? Please do the following:

- Speak to your GP surgery so that they can flag your Armed Forces and Veteran's status on the system.
- Highlight to anyone referring you into specialist services (for illnesses, injuries or conditions linked to service) that you should be considered for prioritised access in line with the Armed Forces Covenant.

Where can you go for advice? Each NHS board has an Armed Forces Champion. Their contact details can be found on the Veterans Assist website - [Veterans Assist Scotland » Subjects » Veterans Champion](#)

Where can my GP find Armed Forces and Veterans Awareness training? There is training available on TURAS Learn - <https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/65580/scottish-government-armed-forces-and-veterans-recognition-scheme-healthcare>

Reference Document: Statutory Guidance on the AFC Duty.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1116148/Armed_Forces_Covenant_Duty_Statutory_Guidance.pdf

