

Improving health and wellbeing support for armed forces families in England

Have your say

All comments and feedback must be received by 30 November 2020



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Foreword

By Kate Davies CBE

Director of Armed Forces Health, NHS England and NHS Improvement

Most armed forces families enjoy healthy lives, but we know that the unique circumstances of military life can cause pressures for some, such as:

- stress around deployment
- periods of separation and social isolation from family and friends
- difficulty adjusting when the serving family member returns from deployment, particularly if it was an operational tour
- caring responsibilities, including accepting and coping with changes to someone's physical and/or mental health
- moving every few years and the impact this can have on continuity of care
- coping with bereavement.



Whilst these pressures can impact an individual's health and wellbeing, everyone is different and so are their health needs.

The NHS in England provides healthcare services for families of serving personnel (regular and reserve) who have registered with an NHS GP practice and the families of veterans. We know, however, that not everyone in the NHS understands the specific health needs of armed forces families and what they are entitled to under the Armed Forces Covenant. We also know that some armed forces families have problems getting the right care and support.

We want to improve our offer to armed forces families and this engagement is an important chance to tell us how we can do this.

We want armed forces families to be able to access NHS services easily in all parts of England. We also want them to get care and support from clinicians and staff who understand their health and wellbeing needs. To help get this right, we need your views on how we can do this. We would also like to hear what you think about setting up armed forces families support networks.

We have some very effective networks in parts of England, which focus on improving armed forces families' experiences of health services, and feedback on these is really positive. In many areas, however, these links are informal and not as well developed as they could be.

Support networks that already exist:

- act as a point of contact for armed forces families and carers, offering support to help navigate the NHS
- work with armed forces families and carers to understand the challenges and issues they experience in accessing and using health services and how these can be addressed
- deliver training and share information with healthcare and other professionals to help them better understand the health needs of armed forces families
- work with armed forces families to make sure that information and training materials are reflective of military life
- train up armed forces champions who work with the NHS to support people with military backgrounds and their families when accessing and using NHS services.

It is important that all armed forces families across England have access to different types of health and wellbeing support, and we need your views on how to do this.

With your help, we want to make it easier for armed forces families to use the NHS, so that we can provide better care, treatment and support.

We recognise that things are very different for many of us as a result of COVID-19, with some communities particularly impacted. The armed forces community is not exempt from this and we know that many serving personnel and veterans have been redeployed to the NHS. We would like to express our sincere thanks to those who have supported this national effort and take the opportunity to recognise the impact this has had on their families.

Despite these unprecedented times and the pressure and worry facing us all, the NHS is adapting to these changes and is committed to improving care and support for armed forces families. As part of our response to the pandemic, we have been asked by National Voices, a coalition of health and care charities, to follow the five principles below. It is our intention that we follow these principles throughout this engagement, and when we consider the findings and make a decision on what we do next:

- Actively engage with those most impacted by the change.
- Make everyone matter, leave no one behind.
- Confront inequality head on.
- Recognise people, not categories, by strengthening personalised care.
- Value health, care and support equally.

We would like your ideas on what you think would help armed forces families. Please share your thoughts and experiences with us by taking part in this questionnaire.

Thank you for your interest and time.

Why we should focus on the health needs of armed forces families

Whilst we've made progress in recent years in how we care for veterans, it is important that we help support the different health and wellbeing needs of the whole of the armed forces community, including those of families.

Being able to effectively meet these different health and wellbeing needs is important, as one person's poor health can affect the health of another. For example, when a partner or a family member has a mental or physical health condition, this can affect the mental health and wellbeing of the rest of the family.

Where this is the case, we know that some armed forces families are dealing with this alone and feel unable to ask for help or admit that they are not coping. This sense of isolation can be made worse for serving families who move every few years.



The recent SPACE study¹ at Kings College, London, found that paternal post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) was associated with hyperactivity among children, and specifically among younger children and boys. These results highlight the importance of ensuring appropriate evidence-based interventions for military families.

Case Study

The Sussex Armed Forces Network is made up of the NHS, the Ministry of Defence (MOD), armed forces reservists, mental and physical health clinicians, the Royal British Legion, SSAFA and other charities and organisations from across Sussex (such as the police and local authorities).

These organisations work together to help improve the lives of the armed forces community.

The network also includes champions from organisations across Sussex who are advocates for the armed forces community and have the skills and knowledge to support the network, linking with other organisations or signposting to additional help.

¹ https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/0175F9117E1BFA4136C28F2DB7A3BD6C/S0007125017000162a.pdf/impact_of_paternal_deployment_to_the_conflicts_in_iraq_and_afghanistan_and_paternal_posttraumatic_stress_disorder_on_the_children_of_military_fathers.pdf

We also know that some armed forces families have problems accessing NHS services, for example when they move between NHS waiting lists and when services have long waiting lists or long periods of treatment, such as dental and children's health services.

In addition, we know that some NHS staff are unaware of the particular health needs of armed forces families, whilst some armed forces families are not sure what NHS services are available to them.

All these problems can mount up and create a difficult situation for armed forces families. We want to develop a system that supports and understands their health and wellbeing needs.

This is why we are looking at improving support for armed forces families.

Families' awareness of support services available to them is low, with 51% not knowing what health and wellbeing services are available to them².



² Lifting the lid on transition: the families experience and the support they need, Forces in Mind Trust, November 2018 <https://www.fim-trust.org/wp-content/uploads/lifting-lid-transition-families-experience-support-they-need.pdf>

What could improved support for armed forces families look like?

The health and wellbeing needs of armed forces families are wide-ranging and can be complex. It is important that we look at how the NHS can meet these needs in a flexible way.

In preparing to ask you what you think, we asked the armed forces community and organisations who work with them, what they thought were some of the most important issues. They told us the following is needed:

- Improved access to health and wellbeing services, with no disruption to care and treatment.
- Care and support that is informed by patients.
- Increased awareness across the NHS of the armed forces culture and how it may impact the health needs of families.
- Health and care staff working with patients and families to deliver personalised care and treatment that is considerate of their unique experiences and what they are entitled to under the Armed Forces Covenant.
- Increased awareness amongst armed forces families of NHS services and how to access them.
- Tackling the stigma associated with not coping or asking for help.
- Support and advice to help the whole family successfully transition from military to civilian life.
- Linking existing veterans' health services with care and support for armed forces families.



We want to hear your ideas about how we can improve care, treatment and support for armed forces families and whether setting up support networks might help.

We want to hear from as many families, serving members (Regulars and Reservists) and veterans as possible, to make sure we get this right.



We want your opinions and ideas

Whether you use NHS or Defence Medical Services, we are interested in hearing what you think would be helpful for armed forces families, including your thoughts about setting up family support networks across England.

Your feedback will be reviewed by an independent organisation, NEL Commissioning Support Unit, who will provide us with a report detailing your thoughts, ideas, and possible solutions.

We really value your help and hope you will take this opportunity to join the discussion and send us your views.

Who do we want to hear from?

This questionnaire covers NHS services in England only, but anyone can respond, regardless of where they live. We are particularly keen to hear from:

- **armed forces families** – serving and veteran (Regulars and Reservists) families, partners, wives, husbands, parents, children, young people, siblings and carers
- **people who are serving in the British armed forces** (whether as a Regular or a Reservist)
- **veterans** – anyone who has been a serving member of the British armed forces for a day or more. It means the same as ex-service personnel and includes Reservists and Regulars
- **armed forces and mainstream charities**, as well as **voluntary sector organisations** that support the armed forces community, in particular families of serving and ex-serving personnel.

Your responses will help us to improve the care and support we offer for armed forces families in England. We will share the anonymised results of this questionnaire with NHS Scotland, NHS Wales and NHS Northern Ireland so that they can consider how they could support their armed forces families.

What do we want you to do?

We want you to share your thoughts, experiences and ideas by filling in this questionnaire.

Please start at the 'About you' section of the questionnaire. The questionnaire looks long, but this is because we are gathering opinions from different groups of people. You only need to answer the sections relevant to you, which should take about 10 minutes. We really value your opinions and your time.



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are changing the way we talk with you face-to-face. We are holding some online meetings and events, which we hope you will join and make your views known. For further information, please visit: <https://www.engage.england.nhs.uk/survey/health-and-wellbeing-support-armed-forces-families/> or email nelcsu.armedforcesfamilies@nhs.net.

Look out for our updates on social media, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other social media outlets at hashtag **#forcesfamilies**.

When do we need your feedback by?

Please submit your responses by **30 November 2020**.



What happens after the engagement?

Feedback from all engagement activities is being independently analysed and written up into a report. This will be shared with decision makers to shape what support will be put in place for armed force families in the future. Implementing this will require ongoing conversations with armed forces families to ensure we are getting things right.

The engagement feedback report will be made publicly available and shared with those who gave their feedback. We will also make sure future opportunities to be involved with this work are promoted widely to ensure we hear from as many people as possible.

Who we are

NHS England and NHS Improvement is the organisation that leads the NHS in England. It is responsible for setting the priorities and direction of the NHS.

Please send us your comments and feedback:

Please fill in our questionnaire online. Alternatively, you can complete the questionnaire by phone or send us your comments via email.

By email to: nelcsu.armedforcesfamilies@nhs.net

On the internet at: <https://www.engage.england.nhs.uk/survey/health-and-wellbeing-support-armed-forces-families/>

By phone at: 0203 688 1653

By freepost to: NHS ARMED FORCES FAMILIES

If you want to find out more about this questionnaire, please visit our website at: <https://www.engage.england.nhs.uk/survey/health-and-wellbeing-support-armed-forces-families/>

Confidentiality

The findings of this questionnaire will help the NHS to improve care and support for armed forces families.

- All information that you give in this questionnaire will be processed on behalf of NHS England and NHS Improvement by NEL Commissioning Support Unit and will be handled in strictest confidence.

- Responses from individuals will be made available to NHS England and NHS Improvement, but your name and any data that could identify you will be removed. You do not have to give your name if you do not want to; we will still welcome your opinions. No individual names or identifiable data will be shared or presented in any report.
- Responses made on behalf of an organisation will be made available to NHS England and NHS Improvement. They may also be made available to the public. Responses made on behalf of an organisation should not include any confidential or sensitive data.
- The responses provided will be used to create a report, which summarises people's views and experiences of NHS health services for armed forces families and what improvements are needed. We may use quotations from responses in our final report about the engagement, but they will be anonymised.



The NHS is here for you – do you need help?

Information on health services available for the armed forces community is available on the NHS website here: <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/military-healthcare/>

For further information or help, please email england.armedforceshealth@nhs.net

Accessing NHS care and support during COVID-19

Whilst the NHS has experienced huge pressures over recent months, services remain open and you are encouraged to seek care and treatment if you are unwell. Many services are seeing patients in person, whilst others are offering virtual appointments and consultations, such as by Skype or telephone.

Registering with an NHS GP if you're a member of an armed forces family living in England

If you live in England and prefer to be registered with an NHS GP rather than a Defence Medical Services GP, it is important to do this as soon as possible, rather than wait until you need treatment. Visit www.nhs.uk to find a GP practice in your local area.

Registering with a GP practice is easy – just contact your preferred GP practice and ask to be included on their patient list. You will be asked to fill in a form so your medical record can be transferred to the practice. Make sure you tell them that you are a member of an armed forces family, so this can be added to your patient notes. This helps to ensure that you are treated in line with the Armed Forces Covenant.

Questionnaire

Introduction

We have worked with armed forces personnel, veterans and their families to find the right way to describe the groups of people who might respond to this questionnaire. You may consider yourself as one of the following:

A. Current armed forces personnel (Regular) – serving members of the British armed forces.	Please complete sections 1, 2, 4 and 5
B. Current armed forces personnel (Reservist) – serving members of the British armed forces.	Please complete sections 1, 2, 4 and 5
C. Veteran – anyone who has been a serving member of the British armed forces for a day or more. It means the same as ex-service personnel and includes Reservists and Regulars. For consistency, we use ‘veteran’ in this questionnaire.	Please complete sections 1, 2, 4 and 5
D. Member of an armed forces family – when we refer to armed forces families in this document, we mean serving and veteran (Regulars and Reservists) families and any combination of partners, wives, husbands, parents, children, young people, siblings and carers.	Please complete sections 1, 2, 4 and 5
E. Representative from an armed forces charity, mainstream charity or voluntary sector organisation that supports the armed forces community, in particular families of serving and ex-serving personnel.	Please complete sections 1, 3 and 4
F. Other	Please complete sections 1, 3 and 4

Definitions

Here are a few definitions that may help you when you are completing this questionnaire:

Healthcare services for armed forces personnel, veterans and their families

Responsibilities for armed forces healthcare are split between the MOD and the NHS, depending on the type of health service, the group of people for whom the service is being provided, where individuals live and the choices made by them.

Defence Medical Services (DMS) are funded by the MOD. They provide a range of medical services for serving personnel, which include GP, community and inpatient mental health, dental, occupational health and rehabilitation services. Eligible serving families may also access some of these medical services where the Station Medical Centre offers them, but this does not include dental services in the UK. DMS also provide healthcare services for those serving overseas. Further information is available on the www.gov.uk website³.

The NHS in England provides most healthcare services for non-mobilised Reservists, veterans, and families of serving personnel who have registered with an NHS GP practice. This includes GP, dental, ophthalmic (eye care), hospital and specialised services (such as cancer and stroke care), as well as dedicated mental health and prosthetic services for veterans. Further information is available on the NHS website⁴.

Armed forces charities also provide a range of services for the armed forces community.

Armed forces community – when we refer to the armed forces community, we mean serving personnel (Regulars and Reservists), veterans and their families.

The NHS Long Term Plan was published in January 2019 and is a 10-year plan for the NHS. It sets out the priorities for the NHS up to 2029⁵.

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/defence-medical-services>

⁴ <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/military-healthcare/>

⁵ www.longtermplan.nhs.uk

Section 1: About you

1 Please tick the option that best describes you or your organisation:

(please tick one box only)

- ☐ **Current armed forces personnel (Regular)** – serving member of the British armed forces.
- ☐ **Current armed forces personnel (Reservist)** – serving member of the British armed forces.
- ☐ **Veteran** – anyone who has been a serving member of the British armed forces for a day or more. It means the same as ex-service personnel and includes Reservists as well as Regulars. For consistency, we use only 'veteran' in the questionnaire and document.
- ☐ **Member of an armed forces family** – for the purposes of this document, when we refer to armed forces families, we mean serving and veteran (Regulars and Reservists) families and any combination of partners, wives, husbands, parents, children, young people, siblings and carers.
- ☐ **Representative from an armed forces charity, other charity or voluntary sector organisation** that supports the armed forces community, in particular families of serving and ex-serving personnel.
- ☐ **Other**

2 I am giving a response on behalf of: (please tick one box only)

A. Myself:

- ☐ Current member of the armed forces – Regular
- ☐ Current member of the armed forces – Reservist
- ☐ Veteran – Regular
- ☐ Veteran – Reservist
- ☐ Spouse or partner of someone in the armed forces who is a Regular
- ☐ Spouse or partner of someone in the armed forces who is a Reservist
- ☐ Spouse or partner of a veteran - Regular
- ☐ Spouse or partner of a veteran - Reservist
- ☐ Child of someone in the armed forces who is a Regular
- ☐ Child of someone in the armed forces who is a Reservist
- ☐ Child of a veteran - Regular
- ☐ Child of a veteran - Reservist
- ☐ Sibling of someone in the armed forces who is a Regular
- ☐ Sibling of someone in the armed forces who is a Reservist
- ☐ Parent of someone in the armed forces who is a Regular
- ☐ Parent of someone in the armed forces who is a Reservist
- ☐ Another relation to someone in the armed forces who is a Regular
- ☐ Another relation to someone in the armed forces who is a Reservist
- ☐ Other, please describe:

B. A relative or someone I care for, who is a:

- ☐ Member of the armed forces - Regular
- ☐ Member of the armed forces - Reservist
- ☐ Veteran – Regular
- ☐ Veteran – Reservist
- ☐ Spouse or partner of someone in the armed forces who is a Regular
- ☐ Spouse or partner of someone in the armed forces who is a Reservist
- ☐ Spouse or partner of a veteran – Regular
- ☐ Spouse or partner of a veteran – Reservist
- ☐ Child of someone in the armed forces who is a Regular
- ☐ Child of someone in the armed forces who is a Reservist
- ☐ Child of a veteran – Regular
- ☐ Child of a veteran – Reservist
- ☐ Sibling of someone in the armed forces who is a Regular
- ☐ Sibling of someone in the armed forces who is a Reservist
- ☐ Parent of someone in the armed forces who is a Regular
- ☐ Parent of someone in the armed forces who is a Reservist
- ☐ Another relation to someone in the armed forces who is a Regular
- ☐ Another relation to someone in the armed forces who is a Reservist

☐ Other, please describe:

C. My organisation (note: responses on behalf of organisations may be made available to the public). Please state your organisation and location

D. Other (please state)

3 My current or previous British armed forces' experience, or that of the person I'm responding about, relates to: (please tick all boxes that apply)

- ☐ Army
- ☐ Royal Air Force
- ☐ Royal Marines
- ☐ Royal Navy
- ☐ Other (please state)
- ☐ Does not apply to me

4 The first part of my postcode or my BFPO number (relevant to the family home) is:

This will help us see where, geographically, we are getting responses from. We won't use it to identify where you live.

- 5** If you are a member of an armed forces family living overseas, and do not receive care from a defence facility, do you get support from the Defence Global Practice or European Joint Support Unit?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Does not apply

- 6** A) If you live in England, are you registered with an NHS GP practice or Defence Medical Services GP practice?

☐ NHS GP practice ☐ Defence Medical Services GP practice
☐ Neither ☐ Does not apply (please go to 7A)

- B) If you are not registered with an NHS GP in England, please let us know why not.

- 7** A) Would you like to be kept up to date with information about the results and next steps, following this questionnaire?

☐ Yes ☐ No *If yes please go to 7B*

- B) Please give your email or postal address

Contact information you give us will only be used to keep you up-to-date on the findings from this questionnaire and what happens next. We will not use this information for any other purpose and will not share it with any other organisations.

Section 2

This section is aimed at current armed forces personnel (Regular or Reservist), veterans and their families.

Developing support for armed forces families

The NHS Long Term Plan (LTP) says that 'We will expand our support for all veterans and their families as they transition out of the armed forces, regardless of when people left the services'.

Armed forces families have already told us a lot about what support they need and how existing services can be improved.

Setting up armed forces families support networks across the country is one idea for improving support. These support networks could bring the NHS, Defence Medical Services, local authorities, Families Federations and voluntary and community organisations together with organisations like the police and fire services.

We have some very effective networks in parts of England which focus on improving armed forces families' experiences of health services, and feedback is really positive. In many areas, however, these links are informal and not as well developed.

Support networks that already exist:

- act as a point of contact for armed forces families and carers, offering support to help navigate the NHS
- work with armed forces families and carers to understand the issues they experience in accessing and using health services and how these can be addressed
- deliver training and share information with healthcare and other professionals to help them better understand the health needs of armed forces families
- work with armed forces families to make sure that information and training materials are reflective of military life
- train up armed forces champions who work with the NHS to support people with military backgrounds and their families when accessing and using NHS services.

We want all armed forces families across England to have access to different types and levels of support, and we need your views on how to do this.

With your help, we want to make the NHS easier for armed forces families to use so that we can support them better and ensure they get the care and information they need.

We want to hear whether you think setting up networks, such as those described, would help and support armed forces families.

1 What kind of information and support would be helpful for you, as part of an armed forces family? (Please tick all that apply)

- ☐ A single point of contact to go to with queries about healthcare issues and available services
- ☐ Help accessing health services
- ☐ A way to provide feedback to help improve services
- ☐ Information about health services for physical health conditions
- ☐ Information about mental health services for children, young people and adults
- ☐ Information on accessing support when feeling lonely, isolated, or facing a crisis
- ☐ Help with being directed to non-health related support (such as housing and benefits)
- ☐ Support for carers
- ☐ Support for children and young people
- ☐ Other (please tell us more)

2 How can we better support armed forces families with their health and wellbeing needs? (Please tick all that apply)

- ☐ Improved communications between armed forces families and their health care providers
- ☐ Improved understanding of the armed forces lifestyle across the NHS and the health needs of families
- ☐ More joined up care for armed forces families, particularly for those who are mobile and for those with complex medical needs
- ☐ Central point of contact to help coordinate care and support
- ☐ Improved access to health and wellbeing services with no disruption to care and treatment
- ☐ More information on NHS services and how to access them
- ☐ Support and advice to help the whole family successfully transition from military to civilian life
- ☐ Linking existing veterans' health services with care and support for armed forces families
- ☐ Other (please tell us more)

3 A) What would be the benefits of an armed forces families support network in your area?

B) What would be the challenges of setting up an armed forces families support network?

4 What would be the three MOST important objectives an armed forces families support network would need to deliver? (please select your top three)

- ☐ Act as a point of contact for armed forces families, offering support and guidance to navigate the NHS
- ☐ Work with armed forces families to understand the challenges and issues they experience in accessing health services and how these can be addressed
- ☐ Deliver training and share information with healthcare and other professionals to increase awareness and understanding of the health needs of armed forces families
- ☐ Work in partnership with armed forces families to make sure that information and training materials reflect their experiences of military life
- ☐ Train up service champions who work with the NHS to support people with military backgrounds and their families when accessing NHS services

5 What is working well now when coordinating support for armed forces families between different organisations?

6 What is not working well and needs improving when coordinating support for armed forces families between different organisations?

7 Would you like to be involved in developing support for armed forces families? This might include responding to more surveys, attending meetings or giving your views in other ways.

- ☐ Yes (please provide your contact details below and we will be in touch) ☐ No

Section 3

This section is aimed at representatives from armed forces charities, other charities and voluntary sector organisations that support the armed forces community, in particular families of serving and ex-serving personnel.

Other organisations who would like to share their views, should complete this section of the questionnaire.

A. About your organisation

For each statement below, please put a tick in one box only:

- 1 Does your organisation offer care, treatment or advice to the families of serving and ex-serving personnel?**

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

If you answered no or don't know, please skip questions 2 and 3

- 2 What kind of care or treatment does your organisation offer?**

- 3 How would you describe the kind of care or treatment your organisation offers?**

- ☐ Formal support (through an NHS contract)
☐ Formal support (funded through other statutory organisations, such as local authorities or the MOD)
☐ Formal support (funded through charities / voluntary sector organisations)
☐ Voluntary unpaid support
☐ Informal advice and signposting

☐ Other (please tell us more)

B. Providing information and support

- 4 What information does your organisation provide about local health services that are available?**

A) Has this information been tailored for armed forces families?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐ Don't know

B) If yes, please describe how you have tailored this**5 A) In your experience, or that of your organisation, what are the top three areas of healthcare related support that armed forces families ask your organisation for?**

1
2
3

B) Have you or your organisation been able to support armed forces families with these requests?

☐ Yes ☐ No (please complete question 5C) ☐ Don't know

C) If you responded no to question 5B, what would help improve the support you can offer?

- ☐ Training or support to understand the armed forces community and its culture
- ☐ Information about the specific needs of armed forces families
- ☐ Information about the NHS or other support services that are available to armed forces families
- ☐ A way to network with other providers of support services for armed forces families
- ☐ Other (please tell us more)

6 A range of organisations, both locally and nationally, provide information, care treatment and support for armed forces families. Are you aware of what support is available for armed forces families in your area / the region(s) you cover?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

7 A) Do you think there is enough information and support to help armed forces families access healthcare services and other support?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

B) Please tell us what the information and support gaps are**8 Are you aware of the NHS services available to help armed forces families access support for their mental health?**☐

Yes

☐

No

☐

Don't know

9 What healthcare information is essential to armed forces families?**10 What healthcare information is essential to children and young people within armed forces families?****11 What, if anything, could be better about the information that is available?**

If you would like to give suggestions for improvement, please do so here:

C. Care coordination**12 What is working well now when coordinating support for armed forces families between different organisations?**

13 What is not working well and needs improving when coordinating support for armed forces families between different organisations?

14 How could partnership working between organisations, such as the NHS, MOD, charities and the voluntary sector be improved?

D. Developing support for armed forces families

The NHS Long Term Plan (LTP) says that ‘We will expand our support for all veterans and their families as they transition out of the armed forces, regardless of when people left the services’.

Armed forces families have already told us a lot about what support they need and how existing services can be improved.

Setting up networks across the country is one idea for improving support. These support networks could bring the NHS, Defence Medical Services, local authorities, Families Federations and voluntary and community organisations together with organisations like the police and fire services.

We have some very effective networks in parts of England which focus on improving armed forces families’ experiences of health services, and feedback is really positive. In many areas, however, these links are informal and not as well developed.

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- work with armed forces families to make sure that information and training materials are reflective of military life
- train up armed forces champions who work with the NHS to support people with military backgrounds and their families when accessing and using NHS services.

We want to make sure that all armed forces families across England have access to different types and levels of support, and we need your views on how to do this.

With your help, we want to make the NHS easier for armed forces families to use so that we can support them better and ensure they get the care and information they need.

We want to hear whether you think setting up networks, such as those described, would help and support armed forces families.

15 What would be the benefits of armed forces families support networks?

16 What would be the challenges of setting up armed forces families support networks?

17 What would be the three MOST important objectives an armed forces families support network would need to deliver? (please select your top three)

- ☐ Act as a point of contact for armed forces families, offering support and guidance to navigate the NHS
- ☐ Work with armed forces families to understand the challenges and issues they experience in accessing health services and how these can be addressed
- ☐ Deliver training and share information with healthcare and other professionals to increase awareness and understanding of the health needs of armed forces families
- ☐ Work in partnership with armed forces families to make sure that information and training materials reflect their experiences of military life
- ☐ Create service champions who work with the NHS to support people with military backgrounds and their families when accessing NHS services

18 What are your ideas for how we could support armed forces families better?

19 How can we involve you in developing support for armed forces families?

Section 4

This section gives you an opportunity to share any further feedback or ideas about NHS health services for the families of armed forces personnel (Regulars and Reservists) and veterans.

We are also interested to know how, in your experience, the health of serving personnel and veterans can impact their family.

Please use the text box below to do this.

**Please now complete the monitoring questions at the end of this document.
Thank you for your time.**

Section 5

Equality monitoring questions

We would find it useful if you could answer the questions below so we can see what types of people have responded and if any groups are not represented in the responses to this questionnaire.

For each question below, please put a ✓ in one box only or provide the information required.

1 A) How old are you?

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12-15 | <input type="checkbox"/> 16-18 | <input type="checkbox"/> 19-25 | <input type="checkbox"/> 26-40 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 41-65 | <input type="checkbox"/> 66-74 | <input type="checkbox"/> 75 or over | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |

B) If you are responding on behalf of someone else, please tell us how old they are

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0-4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5-8 | <input type="checkbox"/> 9-12 | <input type="checkbox"/> 13-15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 16-18 | <input type="checkbox"/> 19-25 | <input type="checkbox"/> 26-40 | <input type="checkbox"/> 41-65 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 66-74 | <input type="checkbox"/> 75 or over | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say | |

2 Which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself?

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Male | <input type="checkbox"/> Female | <input type="checkbox"/> In another way | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|--|

3 Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were given at birth?

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|

4 Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|

If yes, please provide more information about your condition, if you wish to do so.

5 Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation? (Only answer this question if you are aged 16 years or over)

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heterosexual/straight | <input type="checkbox"/> Gay | <input type="checkbox"/> Lesbian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bisexual | <input type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |

6 What is your ethnic group?

White

- ☐ Welsh
 ☐ English
 ☐ Scottish
 ☐ Northern Irish
☐ British
 ☐ Irish
 ☐ Gypsy or Irish Traveller
☐ Any other White background (please state):

Mixed

- ☐ White and Black Caribbean
 ☐ White and Black African
☐ White and Asian
☐ Any other mixed background (please state):

Asian or Asian British

- ☐ Indian
 ☐ Pakistani
☐ Bangladeshi
 ☐ Chinese
☐ Any other Asian background (please state):

Black or Black British

- ☐ Caribbean
 ☐ African
☐ Any other Black background (please state):

Other ethnic group

- ☐ Arab
 ☐ Prefer not to say
☐ Other (please state):

7 What is your religion or belief?

- ☐ No religion
 ☐ Buddhist
 ☐ Christian
 ☐ Hindu
☐ Jewish
 ☐ Muslim
 ☐ Sikh
 ☐ Atheist
☐ Agnostic
 ☐ Any other religion (please state)
☐ Prefer not to say

Thank you for your time

If you or someone you know cannot read this document, please contact us by email at: nelcsu.armedforcesfamilies@nhs.net or phone 0203 688 1653 and we will do our best to provide the information in a suitable format or language.

यदि तिपाईं यस दस्तावेजको एक प्रत नेपालीमा प्राप्त गर्न चाहनुहुन्छ भने, कृपया nelcsu.armedforcesfamilies@nhs.net मा ई-मेल गर्नुहोस्।

