



Have you ever served in the Armed Forces?

Veterans' Wellbeing Group

Information Leaflet

Shining a light on the future



- **Are you worried about adjustment to civilian life?**
- **Feel you should be happier? Less anxious?**

What is a veteran?

An ex member of HM Armed Forces (HMAF), or a Merchant Navy seafarer or a fisherman who served in support of HMAF.

What is wellbeing?

Wellbeing means being well, both in mind and body.

How the group can help you

We know that the experiences people have during military service and the move to civilian life afterwards can sometimes lead to mental health problems.

The Veterans' Wellbeing Group aims to help protect and improve your mental health as well as aid your transition to civilian life. It provides an introduction to various mental health topics, such as depression and anxiety, as well as how to manage them and maintain your wellbeing.

So we can best understand and help you, the group is run by NHS staff who are either veterans themselves or who have been trained in veteran issues.

Veterans who accessed the group in Blyth have said:

“A good course, it has helped me a lot”

“Helped me concentrate on my problems and helped focus my mind... when you are lost and have not got to the bottom of your problems this has helped with the people there and the contacts.”

“More advertisement of this, as an ex-serviceman, in my darkest days I would avoid most things, we are creatures of habit and very good at staying under the radar. That being said, if I had known about the wide variety of treatment that is available to me I may have engaged in it a lot sooner and not tried to commit suicide. I feel a big poster campaign should be done i.e. billboards up and down the country, TV, mailbox etc.”

“The facilitators were very good allowing the sessions to flow thereby allowing complete involvement by all the participants,”

About the group

The Veterans' Wellbeing Group is set out like a course, but there are no exams or essays! At the end of each session there will be a free period, for group members to discuss any issues or problems they are experiencing which the group may be able to help with.

What we cover

The course is run in modules. The first module is an introduction to the group. You will be asked to read through this before joining. It covers everything you need to know, as well as detailing the group rules.

Other modules are:

- Alcohol and drugs, depression and sleep
- Worry and social anxiety
- Anger
- Employment, education and training – facilitated by the Regular Forces Employment Agency
- Managing the military identity – a special module that looks at the transition from service life to civilian life.

They are run on a loop so you can join the group at the start of any module – there is no waiting for the beginning of a new course to join! The last module is a personal one to one session.

Length of the course

It is run over 12 weeks and each module consists of two sessions. The first introduces the topic, the second reviews how you've put the knowledge into practice and the changes you might have made. Each session is two hours.

How to join

If you are an ex member of HM Armed Forces, a Merchant Navy Seafarer or a fisherman who served in support of HM Armed Forces you are eligible to join. Applications from Commonwealth and NATO veterans are also welcome.

Simply call or write to us at

Northumberland Veteran's Wellbeing Group
Northumberland Primary Care and Improving Access to Psychological
Therapies (IAPT) Service
West Farm House
1-2 West Farm Court,
Station Road, Cramlington, NE23 1AX
Tel: 01670 396 130

Sunderland Veterans Wellbeing Group
Sunderland Primary Care Psychological Wellbeing Service
Grange Park Clinic
Monkwearmouth Hospital
Newcastle Road
Sunderland
SR5 1NB
Tel: 0191 566 5450

We will contact you for an assessment where you will need to provide your service details.

Location and cost

The group based in Northumberland, will rotate around localities, is open for all in the Northumberland area and is easily accessible by public transport. Please telephone 01670 396 130 for details regarding course dates, locations and times.

Please contact the Sunderland Veterans' Wellbeing Group on 0191 566 5450 for details regarding course dates, locations and times.

The Veterans' Wellbeing Group is provided by the NHS free of charge.

Acknowledgements

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This information can be made available in a range of formats on request (eg Braille, audio, large print, BSL, easy read or other languages). Please contact the Patient Information Centre Tel: 0191 223 2545

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