

Aims of the Armed Forces Networks

The Sussex and Kent and Medway Armed Forces Networks bring together organisations serving the public to help make sure people with a British Armed Forces background are able to get help. The Armed Forces Networks, which includes members from NHS organisations, the Ministry of Defence, police, fire and rescue, local authorities, Armed Forces Regulars and Reservists as well as charities and other local organisations, aims to raise awareness of the help that is available. The Network works in partnership with the whole Armed Forces community, which includes serving and former service personnel (Veterans), immediate family members and carers.

Member organisations have named people, Service Champions, within their organisations which champion the causes of those currently or formerly in the military and their families. They provide training and education for staff and act as a first point of contact for people from the British Armed Forces and help them navigate the various systems.

All members have signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant which is a national agreement with the principle that no one should suffer a disadvantage as a result of their military experience.

The main aims for the Network are:

- Implementing through leadership and influencing others to ensure the covenant is met and any research/engagement outcomes are used.
- To support individual vulnerable and complex members of the Armed Forces community.
- To support faster appropriate care for the Armed Forces community whether a reservist/regular to be deployable or those who have been impacted by serving or an immediate member of their family.
- Holistic support for individuals, families and carers to ensure wellbeing, prevention and care.
- To support the quality and safety of the Armed Forces community.
- To support the transition and utilisation of this community as an asset to the wider population.
- Sharing of good practice across sectors and services

Resulting in:

- Improved quality of life for the individual and their families/carers.
- Quick access to a safe, quality service which has an understanding of the Armed Forces community hence enabling the care to be appropriate.
- Actively provided enhanced integrated care and support.
- A local population which understands the needs and assets of the Armed Forces community.

Please access the [Armed Forces Network](#) for support or information

Key Areas of Delivery

The Network support team will ensure the following occurs in partnership with the Networks Members and the Armed Forces community:

- **Leadership and advocacy of the Armed Forces community:** to the NHS organisations, Service Champion Network and wider system locally and nationally; initial training and refresher sessions
- **Support:** the Network team provides support directly to the Armed Forces community or relevant support organisations via direct contacts from either the Network website, email, telephone or face to face engagement. Keeping both the Service Champions and Veterans, Families and Carers Network skilled to facilitate access or provide support to the community.
- **Reporting:** ensuring all organisations collect data and provide evidence that this hard to reach community's requirements and needs are being met.
- **Commissioning and contracting:** that in all strategic planning, commissioning that the specific needs are met and that impact assessments are undertaken to ensure that they are not disadvantaged. Encouraging an integrated system.
- **Work Programmes:** there is a detailed combined work programme for both Networks to deliver and meet the needs identified in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessments, national and local reports, surveys and general feedback.
- **Training and Development:** to continue raising awareness and providing the required skills including first aid for mental health, suicide prevention. Self-management skills and how to support others for Veterans, Families and Carers.
- **Pathways:** to date a number of pathways have been developed and are shown on relevant Network website. Sussex (Surrey and Hampshire and London) and Kent & Medway.
- **Forces Connect App:** all the pathways have been put on to an App which an individual can access the information required in 4 clicks. Downloadable for both Iphones and Androids from relevant app stores.
- **Engagement:** continue with the raising of awareness to professionals and develop the Armed Forces community engagement (i.e. former-service personnel, serving, families, carers) to ensure receiving the support they require. To work in partnership in the identification of work programmes and the delivery of projects and training (includes resource materials)
- **Reservist/Regulars:** linking with both NHS Employers and the local units across both Networks and providing bespoke training, engagement and support
- **Research:** share and work with others, encouraging and supporting research.
- **Share Best Practice:** using all form of media, presentations and conversations. Enabling rollout across systems.
- **Key actions:** access to services, integration of systems, prevention.