

Covid-19 Response

Helpline support for our Armed Forces Community

The Armed Forces Network recognises that not all members of our Armed Forces Community have access to the internet to find support available during this time. We have therefore compiled a list of telephone services and helplines that anyone can access. Much of this information is taken from our pathways that were used as a basis for the Forces Connect South East (FCSE) mobile phone app but we have included some new information, particularly about services that can provide emotional support and help with feelings of isolation.

Many of the services listed in this factsheet offer online support too. Please click on the blue hyperlink given for each organisation, if you have internet access, to find out what else is on offer. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list and more information about support and advice available can be obtained via the Network using the contact details below.

Thinking about our local Gurkha & Nepalese Community, we have specified where translation services are available.

For a full list of support services available, if possible, please do use the Forces Connect App which can be downloaded for free via either Google Play or the App Store. Please note that once downloaded the app also works offline.

Veterans & Armed Forces Breakfast Clubs and Drop In's

Whilst they are unable to operate in the usual manner, many of our local Veterans and Armed Forces Breakfast Clubs and Drop Ins are helping to support isolated and vulnerable members of our AF community, some via 'virtual' breakfasts, phone calls to check on members or with food parcels and meal deliveries. Please contact us for area specific information and initiatives.

Support from the Armed Forces Network during the Covid-19 pandemic

The AFN team (Kate, Jane & Mandy) are still available Monday- to Friday during office hours and can continue to offer support with any issues members of our Community may be experiencing, are struggling to get support with and need help.

One additional service we are operating at the moment is a 'Call Back' service. This is for any veterans or immediate family members in Sussex or Kent & Medway who are having to self-isolate, and/or are alone in the household and feel they need someone to talk to. This is not formal therapy or counselling but an opportunity for an informal chat with Jane Burt, our Carers & Families and Mental Health Lead.

To access the Call Back service please contact us in one of the following ways:

1. Text a request for Call Back along with your name and number to mobile number: 07768 376877
or
2. Contact us on the office number, 01273 403693 giving us your name and number and a request for the Call Back service
or
3. Referral can be made (with the persons consent) by any of our Armed Forces Service Champions/Network partners by emailing j.burt1@nhs.net or phoning 01273 403693 or 07768 376877

The Call Back service operates Monday to Friday between 09:00 – 17:00, excluding Bank Holidays.

Mental Health Support

National

Support	Contact Details	Opening Hours	Calls Costs	Interpreting Details
<u>Combat Stress</u>				
A national mental health helpline for anyone affected by Service-related mental health problems, including family members.	0800 138 1619 (for veterans and families) or 0800 323 4444 (for serving and families)	24 hours, 7 days a week	Free	Interpreting service available
<u>CALM (Campaign against Living Miserably)</u>				
Offers accredited, confidential, anonymous support to men anywhere in the UK through a helpline. Calls and chats are taken by trained staff who are there to listen, support, inform and signpost.	0808 58585	17:00 – 00:00, 7 Days a week	Free	Language translation services are available during calls via Capita Translation Services.
<u>Anxiety UK</u>				
During the coronavirus pandemic, extended helpline hours to provide additional support to as many people as possible who need help. Due to exceptionally high demand on the helpline there is a need to keep calls short so that as many calls as possible can be answered.	0344 477 5774	Mon to Fri 10:00 – 22:00 Sat & Sun 10:00 – 20:00	No more than calls to geographic numbers (01 or 02) and must be included in inclusive minutes and discount schemes in the same way. Calls from landlines and mobiles are included in free call packages.	Not specified
<u>Samaritans</u>				
Dedicated to reducing feelings of isolation and disconnection that can lead to suicide. Offering a safe place for you to talk any time you like, in your own way – about whatever's getting to you.	116 123	24 hours, 7 days a week	Free	Not specified
<u>Papyrus (Prevention of Young Suicide) – Hope line UK</u>				
Confidential support and advice to children & young people (under the age of 35) struggling with thoughts of suicide, and anyone worried about a young person such as family, friends or professionals.	0800 068 4141	09:00 – 22:00 weekdays 14:00 – 22:00 weekends, 14:00 – 22:00 bank holidays	Free	Not specified

Local emotional support helplines

Support	Contact Details	Opening Hours	Calls Costs	Interpreting Details
Release the Pressure (for Kent & Medway residents)				
Free expert advice from trained counsellors is available for every mental health concern, including: anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, money worries, relationship troubles, stress, and suicidal thoughts.	0800 107 0160	24 hours, 7 days a week	Free	Not specified
Sussex Mental Health line (for Sussex residents)				
Service offering support and information to anyone experiencing mental health problems including stress, anxiety and depression. The service is also available to carers and healthcare professionals. Although not a counselling service, all operators are prepared to listen and help callers to identify and clarify their immediate problems and to explore ways of coping or suggest alternative avenues of help.	0300 500 0101	24 hours, 7 days a week	Your call will cost the same as it would to call a landline number (e.g. numbers with standard area codes such as 01903 or 01273). Many providers will include a 0300 number in any free minutes packages.	Not specified
Shout (access via a mobile phone)				
A UK crisis text service available for times when people feel they need immediate support. Texter will be put in touch with a trained Crisis Volunteer (CV) who will chat to them using trained techniques via text. The service is designed to help individuals to think more clearly and to take their next steps to feeling better.	text 'CONTACT' to '85258	24 hours, 7 days a week	Free	Not specified

Addictions

Support	Contact Details	Opening Hours	Calls Costs	Interpreting Details
Drinkline				
National alcohol helpline. If you're worried about your own or someone else's drinking, you can call this free helpline in complete confidence.	0300 123 1110	Mon – Fri 09:00 – 20:00, Sat & Sun 11:00 – 16:00	Not specified	Not specified

Support	Contact Details	Opening Hours	Calls Costs	Interpreting Details
<u>Frank</u>				
National drugs charity offering friendly support and advice to anyone concerned about their own drug taking or someone else's.	0300 123 6600	24 hours, 7 days a week	Calls from a landline cost no more than a normal national call (01 or 02 numbers). Calls from a mobile phone vary in cost depending on network. The call may show up on the bill.	You can talk to FRANK in 120 languages – just call the same number and an interpreter will be there if you want.
<u>Gamcare</u>				
National Gambling Helpline providing confidential advice, information and emotional support to anyone experiencing problems with gambling.	0808 802 0133	24 hours, 7 days a week	Free	Ask for language line support in your chosen language. You will then be able to have a 3 way conversation with an interpreter and a trained advisor
<u>DrugFAM</u>				
For those affected by someone else's drug or alcohol addiction or bereaved through drug or alcohol use. Many of their clients feel a huge sense of relief at being able to talk to the trained support team and realise that they no longer have to cope on their own.	0300 888 3853	09:00 – 21:00, 7 days a week	Free	Not specified
Abuse				
Support	Contact Details	Opening Hours	Calls Costs	Interpreting Details
<u>National Domestic Abuse Helpline</u>				
Team of highly-trained female staff who offer confidential and non-judgmental support, and information on your rights and options.	0808 200 0247	24 hours, 7 days a week	Free	Translators are available if English is not your native language
<u>Mankind Initiative</u>				
Confidential helpline for male victims of domestic abuse and domestic violence who are suffering abuse from their current or former wife or partner (including same-sex partner).	01823 334244	Mon-Fri 10:00 – 16:00	Not specified	Not specified

Support	Contact Details	Opening Hours	Calls Costs	Interpreting Details
<u>Men's Advice Line</u>				
A confidential helpline for male victims of domestic abuse and those supporting them. Offering advice and emotional support to men who experience abuse, and signpost to other vital services that help keep them and their children safe. Men's Advice Line is aimed at men who are experiencing domestic abuse, but also take calls from family members, friends or practitioners and frontline workers.	0808 8010327	Mon 09:00 – 20:00 Tues 09:00 – 17:00 Wed 09:00 – 20:00 Thurs 09:00 – 17:00 Fri 09:00 – 17:00	Free	If English isn't your first language you can ask for a telephone interpreter or ask someone you know to do it for you.
<u>National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline</u>				
Emotional and practical support for LGBT+ people experiencing domestic abuse. Abuse isn't always physical - it can be psychological, emotional, financial and sexual too. Speak out, don't suffer in silence.	0800 999 5428 Also offers a Sexual Violence Support Service <i>T: 020 7704 2040</i> (ask to speak to someone from the SVSS)	Mon – Fri 10:00 – 17:00 Wed & Thurs 10:00 – 20:00	Free	Not specified
<u>SupportLine</u>				
Provides a confidential telephone helpline offering emotional support to any individual; children, young adults & adults, on any issue. The Helpline is primarily a preventative service and aims to support people before they reach the point of crisis. It is particularly aimed at those who are socially isolated, vulnerable, at risk groups and victims of any form of abuse.	01708 765200	Hours vary so ring for details	Not specified	Not specified
<u>Respect</u>				
Confidential helpline offering advice, information and support to help people stop being violent and abusive to their partner. You can talk to them in confidence about your violence and domestic abuse. A friendly Helpline Advisor will listen	0808 802 4040	9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday	Free	If English isn't your first language you can ask for a telephone interpreter or ask someone you know to do it for you.

Support	Contact Details	Opening Hours	Calls Costs	Interpreting Details
to you without judgement and give you honest advice.				
Bereavement				
Support	Contact Details	Opening Hours	Calls Costs	Interpreting Details
<u>Cruse Bereavement Care</u>				
National Helpline is staffed by trained bereavement volunteers, who offer emotional support to anyone affected by bereavement. If you get an answer machine it's due to all the phones being busy, please leave your contact details and they will ring back.	0808 808 1677	Mon - Fri 09:30 – 17:00 (excluding bank holidays), Extended hours on Tues, Wed and Thurs evenings, when open until 20:00.	Free	Language line is available
<u>Winston's Wish</u>				
Supports bereaved children, young people, their families, and the professionals who support them. In order to protect staff, their Helpline is currently operating a remote service. Please leave a message on their voicemail with your first name and a contact number (with area code) and a Helpline Practitioner will call you back from a withheld number as soon as possible.	0808 802 0021 Crisis Messenger Text WW to 85258 (available 24/7)	09:00 – 17:00, Mon – Fri	Free	Not specified
<u>Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide</u>				
Helpline is still operating and provides an opportunity to talk confidentially with someone who has been bereaved by suicide and to know that you are not alone in your experience. For those aged 18 and above.	0300 111 5065	Mon – Fri 09:00 – 21:00 Sat & Sun cover during this pandemic	Calls cost no more than calls to geographic (01 and 02) numbers and must be included in inclusive minutes and discount schemes in the same way. Contact your provider for more information	Not specified
<u>Blue Cross for Pets</u>				
For people in distress due to the death, loss or separation of their pet.	0800 096 6606	08:30 – 20:30 7 days a week	Free	Not specified

Support	Contact Details	Opening Hours	Calls Costs	Interpreting Details
Pet Bereavement Support Service continues to be provided as usual, as our teams are home-based. Trained volunteer listeners are available by phone or email for anyone who wishes to speak to an understanding person about pet loss. Helpline is confidential, and available to anyone experiencing pet loss, whether they are pet owners, veterinary staff or workers at animal organisations who need support at this time.				

Cancer

Support	Contact Details	Opening Hours	Calls Costs	Interpreting Details
<u>Macmillan Support Line</u>				
Cancer information and support specialists offering a listening ear. Can talk about whatever matters to you. Can also offer guidance and help you find the right information and support in your area. If you need to talk, they'll listen.	0808 808 0000	7 days a week, 09:00 – 17:00	Free	Interpreter service available so you can speak to a cancer support specialist in your own language, via an interpreter. Tel: 0808 808 0000 State, in English, the language you want to use.

Dementia

Support	Contact Details	Opening Hours	Calls Costs	Interpreting Details
<u>Dementia Connect Support Line</u>				
Hosted by the national Alzheimer's Society, offering information, advice and support for people living with dementia and their families. Dementia advisers will listen and give you the support and advice you need, including coronavirus advice, connecting you to the help you need.	0333 150 3456	Mon to Wed 09:00 – 20:00 Thurs & Fri 09:00 – 17:00 Sat and Sun 10:00 – 16:00	Charged at local standard rate	0300 222 1122. When your call is answered, say the English word for the language you would like to use. Please note, you'll need to give your name and telephone number in English (or have someone with you to do this). Hang up your phone and wait. An interpreter will usually call you back within five minutes.

Older People

Support	Contact Details	Opening Hours	Calls Costs	Interpreting Details
The Silver Line				
Only national confidential and free helpline for older people open every day and night of the year. Callers are free to express their feelings, and describe their lives honestly. No question too big. No problem too small. No need to be alone.	0800 470 8090	24 hours, 7 days a week	Free	Not specified

Sight Loss

Support	Contact Details	Opening Hours	Calls Costs	Interpreting Details
Blind Veterans UK National Support Service				
Blind Veterans UK are ensuring that the most vulnerable veterans they support are receiving everything they need right now. More than 90% of the blind veterans served are over 70 and so most at risk from the Coronavirus (COVID-19) in the coming months. As a result their immediate priorities have changed. Having to self-isolate, their older beneficiaries need their help right now with daily tasks, such as shopping, medication, and emotional support through this difficult time. For that reason Blind Veterans are temporarily changing their service model, introducing the National Support Service, mobilising their staff to provide practical, essential support to help the most vulnerable.				
Primarily delivering an outreach service on the telephone as well as a practical support service to blind veterans, due to the social distancing restrictions currently in place, but also using those calls to identify those with the greatest need. Immediate concerns are to work quickly to help those who are most vulnerable- whether they need food delivered, medication from their pharmacy or a friendly voice over the phone.	01273 391447	Mon – Fri 09:00 – 16:00	Not specified	Not specified

Telephone Friendship Groups and Befriending

Support	Contact Details	Opening Hours	Calls Costs	Interpreting Details
Royal Air Forces Association (RAFA)				
In response to Covid-19 have launched the initiative 'Operation Connect'. The services available include:				
Project OUTREACH – A telephone outreach service – contacting vulnerable individuals by telephone to check on their welfare, offer them ongoing telephone friendship from a regular volunteer and alert them to other support services	0800 018 2361	Not specified	Free	Not specified

Support	Contact Details	Opening Hours	Calls Costs	Interpreting Details
Project HELPLINE – A friendship helpline for anyone in our RAF community to call if they are feeling isolated, are in need of more specific support or simply want a chat with someone friendly who understands.				
<u>RAF Benevolent Fund Group Calls Service</u>				
The Silver Line partners with the RAF Benevolent Fund to provide free, regular, group friendship telephone calls which enable up to six like-minded older people with links (veteran, partner, spouse or widow(er)) to the RAF to chat to each other from the comfort of their own homes. They offer an easy way to connect with people who have an RAF background, to make new friends and share stories and experiences of their life in the RAF.	0300 222 5703 support@rafbf.org.uk	Mon – Thurs 09:30 – 16.30, Fri 09:30 – 16:00	Free	Not specified
<u>Seafarers Link Service</u>				
Group friendship calls for those with a maritime background including Merchant Navy, Royal Marines, Deep Sea Fisherman, retired Royal Navy, WRNS and RNA members: Seafarers Links are free, regular, group friendship telephone calls which enable up to six like-minded people to talk at the same time.	0207 7224 2072 Jan.Williams@the-silverline.org.uk	Not specified	Free	Not specified
<u>Call in Time</u> Call in Time may not be suitable for people with memory loss, dementia or mental health issues who require higher level support. These conditions may affect the person's ability to build a telephone friendship with a volunteer. In some instances, people with these conditions may actually find the calls more distressing.				
Telephone friendship service for people aged 60 and over. You'll be matched with a likeminded person who's keen to make a new friend, and every week	0800 434 6105	Not specified	Free	Not specified

Support	Contact Details	Opening Hours	Calls Costs	Interpreting Details
they'll give you a call. Not having someone to talk to regularly can be lonely, particularly if you're used to sharing your home and time with others. A friendly, 30-minute chat on the phone every week can make all the difference.				

Armed Forces Community General Information and Advice

Support	Contact Details	Opening Hours	Calls Costs	Interpreting Details
SSAFA Forces Line				
A free and confidential service that provides support for serving (regulars and reserves), ex-Forces and for their families. SSAFA is outside of the military chain of command, they will listen and they will not judge.	0800 731 4880	Mon - Fri 09:00 – 17:00	Free	Not specified
Royal British Legion				
Run a national information and advice line for veterans and their families.	0808 802 8080	08:00 – 20:00, 7 days a week	Free	Not specified
Veterans Gateway				
National point of contact for veterans seeking support. Putting veterans and their families in touch with the organisations best placed to help with the information, advice and support they need – from healthcare and housing to employability, finances, personal relationships and more	0808 802 1212	24 hours, 7 days a week	Free	Not specified

LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender)

Support	Contact Details	Opening Hours	Calls Costs	Interpreting Details
Switchboard LGBT Helpline				
An information, support and referral service for lesbians, gay men and bisexual and trans people – and anyone considering issues around their sexuality and/or gender identity. A place for calm words when you need them most. There to help you with whatever you want to talk about.	0300 330 0630	10:00 – 22:00, 7 days a week	Not specified	Not specified

Support	Contact Details	Opening Hours	Calls Costs	Interpreting Details
Nothing is off limits, and they understand how anxious you might feel before you pick up the phone.				

Criminal Justice

Support	Contact Details	Opening Hours	Calls Costs	Interpreting Details
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[The National Prisoners Families Helpline](#)

The National Prisoners' Families Helpline can support you if a family member is in contact with the criminal justice system. They provide advice and information on all aspects from what happens on arrest, visiting a prison to preparing for release.	0808 808 2003	<p>Mon – Fri 09:00 – 20:00</p> <p>Sat & Sun 10:00 – 15:00</p> <p>Please note the Helpline is closed on Bank Holidays.</p>	Free	Not specified
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[Victim Support](#)

Independent of the police and anyone can contact them for support, regardless of whether the crime has been reported or how long ago it took place. Offers immediate emotional support as well as helpful information and practical advice over the phone.	0808 168 9111	24 hours, 7 days a week	Free	Has an interpretation service for people who do not speak English as a first language.
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Sexual Health

Support	Contact Details	Opening Hours	Calls Costs	Interpreting Details
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[National Sexual Health Helpline](#)

If you would like to talk to someone about a sexual health issue, you can call the National Sexual Health Helpline. Your call will be treated with sensitivity and in strict confidence.	0300 123 7123	<p>Mon – Fri 09:00 – 20:00</p> <p>Sat & Sun 11:00 – 16:00</p> <p>Open on bank holidays.</p>	Free	Not specified
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[Terence Higgins Trust](#)

The UK's leading HIV and sexual health charity. Supporting people living with HIV, and helping the people using our services to achieve good sexual health. Our helpline is called THT Direct and offers support advice and information.	0808 802 1221	Mon – Fri 10:00 – 18:00	Free	Not specified
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Brain Injury

Support	Contact Details	Opening Hours	Calls Costs	Interpreting Details
Headway				
Helpline will remain open to anyone who requires support or information about brain injury. The team cannot answer medical questions about the virus and won't be able to offer advice on any symptoms related to it, but they can offer reassurance and a friendly voice.	0808 800 2244	09:00 – 17:00 Mon – Fri but you can leave an answerphone message at any time	Free	Not specified

Carers Support in Sussex

Support	Contact Details	Opening Hours	Calls Costs	Interpreting Details
Carers Centre Brighton & Hove				
Working with the local authority and partners in the voluntary sector to maintain the Carers Hub support line so that carers can be provided with up-to-date information.	01273 977000	Mon – Fri 09:00 – 17:00	Not specified	Not specified
Care for the Carers East Sussex				
Working hard to make sure that unpaid carers feel supported and connected and have the information to care safely during coronavirus Care for the Carers is still running its services, with services normally delivered face-to-face being replaced by phone or online contact. Contact their team to discuss what you need and they will do their best to help you get the right support.	01323 738390 Text: 07860 077300	Mon – Fri 10:00 – 17:00	Not specified	Not specified
Carers Support West Sussex				
Focussing resources on supporting carers via phone and online support. Offering Emotional support, Carer Contingency Planning, Carers Assessments, Practical guidance (including equipment and grants) and Information provision Working to enable delivery of peer to peer support, using a	0300 028 8888	Mon – Fri 09:00 – 17:00 Wed 09:00 – 19:00 Sat 10:00 – 12:00	Not specified	Not specified

Support	Contact Details	Opening Hours	Calls Costs	Interpreting Details
combination of phone and online methods, so carers are receiving the invaluable support needed in the local community.				

Carers Support in Kent and Medway

Support	Contact Details	Opening Hours	Calls Costs	Interpreting Details
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Carers Support East Kent

Where they can, carer support and assessments will be undertaken by telephone or online and they will keep in touch with members of carers' groups. They are exploring other ways to support Carers and the people they care for during this difficult time. Please do keep in touch with them, in particular if you need support – they are still here to support Carers, albeit by telephone or online.	0300 302 0178	Mon, Weds & Fri 08:30 – 18:00 Tues & Thurs 09:00 – 17:00 Closed bank holidays	Not specified	Not specified
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Carers First Medway

If you need some support, or you just want to contact them for a chat, their team are available to talk and find the help you need. Their community team have collated a wealth of local information during this challenging time and are ready to help and will make contact with those who request support either by phone or video chat.	0300 303 1555	Mon – Thurs 09:00 – 17:00 Fri 09:00 – 16:30	Not specified	Not specified
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Imago (Dartford, Gravesham, Swanley & Swale and Medway)

Supporting family and friend carers and working with them to identify what will make the greatest difference to improve their health, wellbeing, confidence and motivation. The service offers information and guidance, and emotional and practical support including Carers Assessments Also offers Carer support Groups	0300 011 1965 Central Hub	Mon – Fri 08:30 – 17:00	Not specified	Not specified
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Support	Contact Details	Opening Hours	Calls Costs	Interpreting Details
<p>(currently online, due to Covid-19) Telephone befriending and counselling and wellbeing calls. Also completing benefit forms and Carers Assessments over the phone where possible.</p>				
<p><u>Involvement West Kent</u> Service available to those living in Maidstone, Tonbridge & Malling, Borough Green, the Weald, Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks and parts of Dover and Folkestone. Please get in touch to see if you or someone you know would be eligible. Where they are not able to provide the service they will signpost to a local organisation.</p>				
<p>Point of contact for Carers living in the West Kent area needing support, information and assistance. Currently operating, 'Safe and Well', which is a telephone befriending service available for the most vulnerable and isolated members of the community who are self-isolating due to Coronavirus. Members of the team will be offering daily or weekly phone calls, which will be determined by a short telephone assessment.</p>	<p>0300 081 0005 Press option 5 to access Safe & Well</p>	<p>Not specified</p>	<p>Not specified</p>	<p>Not specified</p>