

The Gurkhas and Nepalese Community Factsheet

1. Members of the British Army

Gurkhas have been part of the British Army for 200 years. Some 3,640 Gurkhas are currently serving in the 'Brigade of Gurkhas' which is the collective name for the units of the British Army that recruit soldiers of Nepalese nationality. There are 7 major units in the Brigade:

- The Royal Gurkha Rifles (Folkestone, Kent)
- The Queen's Gurkha Engineers (Maidstone, Kent)
- Queen's Gurkha Signals (Nuneaton, Warwickshire)
- The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment (Aldershot, Surrey)
- Gurkha Company (Sittang) at the Royal Military Academy (Sandhurst, Berkshire)
- Gurkha Wing (Mandalay) at the Infantry Battle School (Brecon, Wales)
- Gurkha Company Catterick (Infantry Training Centre, Catterick)

2. Nepali's in the UK

In 2009 all retired Gurkhas won the right to live in the UK and the current estimated population of Nepali people in the UK is around 80,000 to 100,000.

Figures compiled annually by the charity the Gurkha Welfare Trust estimate the numbers of the retired population of ex- Gurkhas who have settled in the UK. The latest data suggests almost 16,000 "Heads of Family". Please see overleaf for map including breakdown by area which gives an indication of where they reside.

3. Accessing Services

There is a general lack of awareness amongst the Nepali community of how UK health and social care systems work. As a result many Nepali people are not accessing GP services or other vital healthcare and support. Hence, there is a need to create awareness amongst the Nepali communities about the available health services. It is also important that frontline staff understand the needs of this community to ensure that the Gurkha/Nepalese are not at a disadvantage due to cultural barriers.

4. Language and Interpreting Services

Research (from across the UK) into the health needs of the Nepali community highlights a significant lack of awareness of how to access interpreting services amongst the community. It is imperative that professionals offer the services of a Nepalese speaking interpreter to patients/clients if language is a barrier.

'Informal' interpreting arrangements (such as using family or friends) are inappropriate and can create barriers around a person's care and treatment, particularly if there is a need to discuss sensitive health issues with professionals.

5. Gurkha/Nepalese Healthcare Toolkit

The Armed Forces Network is developing a comprehensive resource kit that is aimed at both the Nepali community and professionals with the aim of improving the community's access to health and social care services. The resources available include health information (such as translated written materials, audio and film formats). We also offer training packages for professionals. For further information, please contact Jane Burt at j.burt1@nhs.net.

6. The Gurkha Welfare Trust (GWT)

The GWT is a registered UK charity that offers advice and support to Gurkha veterans and their families both in Nepal and the UK. They work closely with government bodies and with service charities such as SSAFA, the Royal British Legion and the ABF – The Soldiers Charity to ensure ex-Gurkhas receive available statutory support.

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7. Gurkha Welfare Trust Estimated Population 2017

