

# Veterans WORLD

Issue 40



## Paralympic Pioneers

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# Veterans WORLD

*Veterans World* is distributed to those who work in an advisory role.

September 2016

Issue 40

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The aim of *Veterans World* is to provide up to date information on services, support and advice for the Veterans community, in particular those who act in an advisory role.

We know, from engaging with our customers, charitable organisations and partners that the key issues for the Veterans community are:



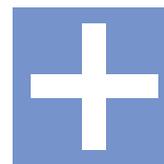
Accommodation & Housing



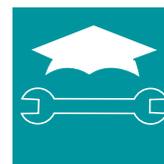
Working in Partnership



Family Matters



Health & Wellbeing



Education/ Training/ Employment

Articles in this and future issues of *Veterans World* will be about a service, initiative or event that is focussed around one of these themes. The icon and colours at the top of each page will continue the theme so that you can see at a glance the topic of the article.

# At a Glance...

## SSAFA - Norton House



If you or a family member are due to receive hospital treatment in Birmingham, then it's useful to know that Selly Oak provides serving or ex-service families with short term accommodation. The house is run 365 days a year by dedicated on-site staff who offer support, comfort and advice. The offer is open to parents, spouses, partners, brothers and sisters, grandparents and children, of any age. The home is equipped with disabled access and facilities. Any accommodation offered is subject to availability and proof of service. To find out more Tel: 0121 472 6310, Email [norton2@ssafa.org.uk](mailto:norton2@ssafa.org.uk) or visit [www.ssafa.org.uk](http://www.ssafa.org.uk)

## Veterans Garage, Manchester



Veterans Garage is a community project, restoring a Grade 2 listed WWII airport terminal building into a base for a classic car and motorcycle restoration garage. The hub will be open to veterans of all ages across the North West, and will allow those battling stress and loneliness to come together to restore cars and other vehicles. For more information about getting involved, visit: [veteransgarage.co.uk](http://veteransgarage.co.uk)

## Supporting improved care for the veterans community



Health Education England e-Learning for Healthcare, with support from NHS England, has launched an e-learning programme to help increase understanding of the armed forces population and facilitate improved care and treatment. The programme is split across three areas of care for current serving personnel, the families of serving personnel and veterans, and for veterans. For more information, please visit: [www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/nhs-healthcare-for-the-armed-forces/](http://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/nhs-healthcare-for-the-armed-forces/) or alternatively email: [andracollins1@nhs.net](mailto:andracollins1@nhs.net)

## Launch of a new counselling service for older veterans



Funded by the MODs Aged Veterans Fund, The Scottish War Blinded are now offering a free professional counselling service. The service has been set up by a consortium of six military welfare and support charities and provides counselling to any veterans born before 1 January 1950. All counselling sessions are strictly confidential and will not be shared with any third parties. Currently there is no waiting list to access this service. To find out how it works and who can use the service please visit: [www.agedveteranscounselling.org.uk](http://www.agedveteranscounselling.org.uk) or call Wellbeing Solutions on 020 7708 5000.

## Grant Helps Homeless RAF Veterans

Alabare Homes for Veterans have been granted £15,000 by the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund. Alabare Homes for Veterans offers support to service men and women across the UK who have left active service and who are experiencing difficulty adapting to civilian life. The grant will help towards specifically addressing the needs of the RAF beneficiaries who find themselves in challenging situations. For more information please visit:

<https://www.rafbf.org/news-and-blogs/grant-helps-homeless-raf-veterans>

## Armed Forces Day is coming to Liverpool



Following the success of this year's national event in Cleethorpes, Lincolnshire, attended by 120,000 people, including His Royal Highness The Duke of Kent and former Prime Minister David Cameron, Liverpool has been selected to host the next event on Saturday June 24, 2017. Liverpool City Council will now develop its own plans for next year and the event will be linked with the International Mersey River Festival - a celebration of the waterfront with family fun, music and entertainment - with activities taking place across the weekend of 24 and 25 June 2017. For more information please visit: [www.armedforcesday.org.uk](http://www.armedforcesday.org.uk)

# Paralympic Pioneers

All eyes are on Rio as Paralympians pit their skills and strength against each other to win the coveted gold medal. Today these Paralympians are heroes but the attitude to disability was very different in 1916.

One hundred years ago The Royal Star & Garter Home in Richmond opened its doors to the wounded soldiers returning from the battlefields of the First World War. Typically, these shattered men were pensioned off to live without purpose, but at the Richmond Home, the Commandant, Major Dickie, refused to accept a bed-ridden future for these men, explaining that:

“All those who come to the Star & Garter have been discharged from the services ... as ‘totally disabled’... The Star & Garter, with some perversity and some disregard for authority, does not accept this grave sentence. Every patient on the contrary is regarded as a hopeful case and is submitted to persistent and continuous treatment. If nothing more can be done it is at least possible to keep alive the spark of hope.”

This pioneering approach to disability was furthered by the work of Dr Guttman in the 1940s. Guttman, whose work at Stoke Mandeville Hospital was renowned, established a paraplegic ward at the Richmond Home. He was convinced that sport was vital to the physical and the mental well-being of the disabled residents in his care. He introduced archery, ball games and other sports that could be played from a wheelchair. In 1948, to coincide with the Olympic Games being held in London, Dr Guttman launched the ‘Stoke Mandeville Games’ with an archery competition between teams from The Royal Star & Garter Homes and Stoke Mandeville. The Star & Garter team won that year, and again in 1949.



These Games were the vision of men who believed that there was ‘no such thing as a hopeless case’ and the forerunner to what is now the Paralympic Games. Their legacy continues in the care offered at The Royal Star & Garter Homes today.



Ex-Navy veteran Derek and staff member Gill

## About The Royal Star & Garter Homes:

The Royal Star & Garter Homes is a charity founded in 1916 to care for the severely injured young men returning from the battlegrounds of the First World War. Today they provide specialist care to the whole military family in their friendly, state-of-the-art Homes. Disabled ex-Servicemen and women, and their partners, can all benefit from a pioneering approach to nursing, dementia and therapeutic care.

Anyone who is physically disabled or incapacitated and has served in Her Majesty’s Forces is eligible to apply for a place in one of The Royal Star & Garter Homes, as are the partners of former Service personnel.

The Charity is celebrating its centenary: providing specialist care for disabled veterans since 1916.

# Project Nova



Project Nova is an initiative by Walking With The Wounded to support ex-Forces personnel who have entered police custody.

The project provides support to ex-Forces personnel using a 'Nova Network' of military charities and organisations, responding to their individual needs. Nova's core aim is early intervention and diversion at the point of arrest, in order to try to prevent further re-offending.

Launched in July 2014, the project is delivered as a partnership between The Forces Employment Charity (RFEA) and Walking With The Wounded. To date over 300 ex-Service personnel have been supported.

Nova currently operates in the East of England, the North East, the North West, South Yorkshire and Humberside, working in partnership with regional police forces, NHS Liaison and Diversion Teams and Anglia Ruskin University.

The project is co-ordinated nationally by Colin Back, who has worked closely with the regional Police Custody Suites to identify, support and engage with ex-Forces personnel, Colin said:

*"We are able to support those who have been in prison for some time as well as those who are facing new charges. We are doing all we can to reach every veteran who needs our help."*

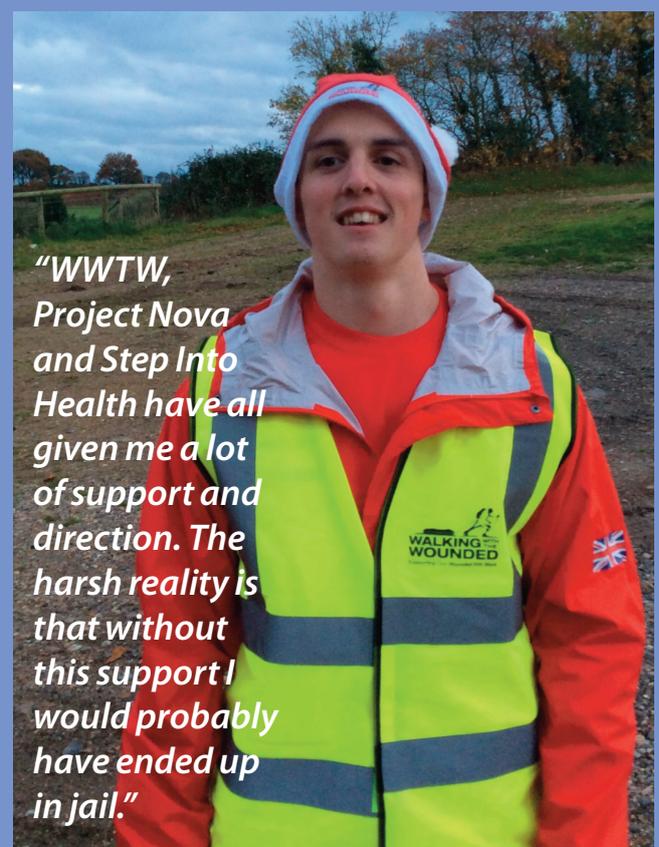


## How it works

Following arrest, when being booked into police custody, the custody sergeant asks: "Have you ever served in Her Majesty's Armed Forces?"

If the answer is yes, the veteran is offered Project Nova support and if they accept it, Nova will meet with the veteran, complete a needs assessment and arrange bespoke support, addressing the needs that may have caused the offending behaviour.

Other referrals happen when a police officer, NHS member of staff or housing officer spots a veteran who may be on the cusp of offending.



*"WWTW, Project Nova and Step Into Health have all given me a lot of support and direction. The harsh reality is that without this support I would probably have ended up in jail."*

Sean served with the Royal Artillery for six years, leaving in January 2014. Shortly after being discharged, he was arrested for assault. The custody sergeant suggested Sean allow Project Nova to get in touch.

Following discussions with Colin Back regarding his aspirations, Sean became interested in WWTW's Step Into Health programme and a career within the NHS. He completed a two-week Step Into Health course at the Norfolk & Norwich Hospital and was offered a work placement in the physiotherapy department in February 2015.

Sean then made the decision to work towards becoming a Physiotherapist and in September, he successfully secured a place on a one year Access to Higher Education Course: Science for Health Practitioners at City College, Norwich, where he is currently studying Chemistry, Biology and General Science. After this, Sean hopes to be accepted into University so he can continue his training.

In March 2015, Sean agreed to act as a mentor and met another veteran who had been referred to Project Nova.

For more information Contact:

Colin Back: [colin@regularforcesemployment.co.uk](mailto:colin@regularforcesemployment.co.uk)

Mobile: 074148 81366

Twitter: [@supportthewalk](https://twitter.com/supportthewalk)

Facebook: [@walkingwiththewounded](https://www.facebook.com/walkingwiththewounded)

# Combating Isolation and Loneliness



*Royal British Legion Scotland: at the heart of Scotland's veteran community*

Research throughout the years has shown that veterans of all ages and backgrounds can encounter a range of challenges upon leaving

the Armed Forces including isolation, unemployment and housing issues.

In 2015 the Royal British Legion (RBL) Scotland received over 2,000 requests, from either a veteran directly or a family member, looking for an RBL befriender to help them combat loneliness and isolation.

The local Legion Scotland befrienders all receive full training enabling them to go out and give two hours a

week of their own time visiting veterans, many of whom have no-one else to talk to. The befrienders can also provide valuable advice and signpost to vital support services run by Legion Scotland and other military charities which can have long lasting positive change to the veteran's.

To find out more about the service or to enquire about becoming an RBL befriender please contact Legion Scotland.

Website: [www.legionscotland.org.uk](http://www.legionscotland.org.uk)

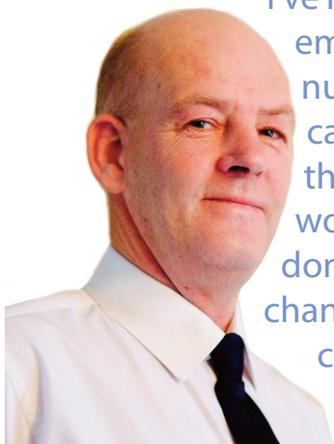
Tel: 0131 550 1583

Email: [Info@legionscotland.org.uk](mailto:Info@legionscotland.org.uk)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/LegionScotland](https://www.facebook.com/LegionScotland)

Twitter: [@legionscotland](https://twitter.com/legionscotland)

"Legion Scotland's befriending service makes a massive difference to the general wellbeing of the veterans. Some members of the ex-service community have had no interaction for months and it is heart breaking. Everybody needs to talk. I had to struggle on my own to get better while I battled depression and homelessness so I hate the idea of someone having to go through a similar situation."



"I've received letters, emails and numerous phone calls from veterans thanking us for the work that we've done because we've changed their lives completely."

One of Legion Scotland's Wellbeing Co-ordinators William McMaster, who is also Vice Chairman of his local branch, has witnessed first-hand the positive impact the service has on veterans.

"The amount of people contacting us last year is a stark reminder that veterans across Scotland are in need of support. Our befriending service is simple but highly effective. We know that some veterans may feel isolated and lonely after leaving the military and having someone to talk to, share a laugh with and confide in can make a huge difference to people's lives."



Stephen Baird, Head of Wellbeing, Legion Scotland



### Case study

An RAF Aircraft Engineer and his pet spaniel Vegas are helping veterans in Ayrshire combat loneliness. David Gibson, Chief Technician at RAF Brize Norton's 70 Sqn, became a Legion Scotland befriender last year and now spends a few hours a week with two elderly veterans in the region.

David, who has completed several operational tours in Iraq and Afghanistan learned about the Ayrshire Befriender Group, which is part of the Irvine branch of Legion Scotland and felt that he could help.

Now, David visits two veterans whenever he's home and takes along Vegas, talking about all sorts of things from football to their military days, and regularly taking them to local cafes.

David said: "A job change away from an operational environment has allowed me to have a bit more time at home. I have always wanted to do something in the local community. When I heard about the befriending service I was interested straight away as I had more time to commit. It's very easy to find yourself alone and when I visit the guys they enjoy having a laugh and talking about their time in the military.

"The most important thing for me to do is listen. Anyone can sit and listen yet make a real difference to someone's life. The men I visit love interacting with Vegas. Whilst I visit elderly WWII veterans, any ex-service person, of any age can suffer from isolation or need someone to talk to. We haven't seen the long-term effects that conflicts such as Iraq and Afghanistan may have but it's logical to think that this service is only going to increase over time."

Veterans UK is the MOD's dedicated support organisation for service personnel, veterans and their families and **We're Social...**

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For more information check out [GOV.UK](http://GOV.UK)  
or for help and advice call the Veterans UK helpline on

**0808 1914 2 18**



# Corporate Covenant – Going for Gold



Having now been signed by nearly 1000 organisations the Armed Forces Corporate Covenant is going from strength to strength. The Armed Forces Covenant for businesses is a voluntary pledge made by organisations who wish to demonstrate their concrete support for the Armed Forces community. It complements the Armed Forces Covenant and sits alongside the community covenant.

All covenants signed by businesses include a core statement of commitment that those adopting the scheme sign up to. This covers the two key principles of the Armed Forces Covenant, which are:

- no member of the armed forces community should face disadvantage in the provision of public and commercial services compared to any other citizen
- in some circumstances special treatment may be appropriate, especially for the injured or bereaved

Each organisation is then encouraged to offer support in a way most appropriate to their situation and capacity, with the pledge document including a 'menu' of options for them to sign up to. This menu covers employment support for veterans, reservists, service spouses and partners, as well as support for cadet units, Armed Forces Day and discounts for the Armed Forces community. There is also an opportunity for companies and charitable organisations to add their own commitments based on local circumstances.

## Employer Recognition Scheme

The Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) acknowledges employers who have provided exceptional support to the Armed Forces community and defence by going above and beyond their covenant pledges.

Through a three tier approach of bronze, silver and gold awards, the scheme recognises the different levels of commitment provided by employers. This allows the Ministry of Defence to publicly thank and honour those organisations for their support.

Gold award holders proactively advocate and support Defence, communicating their commitment both internally to employees and externally to the wider community through established policies and examples of support; are positive to all service personnel during recruitment; enable reservists to fulfil their annual training and mobilisation commitments and demonstrate significant support for cadet instructors, armed forces veterans (including wounded, injured and sick) and military spouses/ partners.

Gold award winners include: The AA, BAE Systems, Barclays, Deloitte, National Express and Tesco.

## Barclays 'Armed Forces Transition, Employment and Resettlement' (AFTER) programme

 Every year, through the AFTER programme, Barclays supports thousands of Servicemen and women with their transition into civilian employment after serving in the Armed Forces, and aims to highlight the economic value these highly skilled individuals can bring to the corporate world.

Established in 2010, Barclays AFTER helps to address the issues faced by ex, as well as current Service personnel – regardless of rank, Service or circumstance – in their transition, by providing work placements, direct employment opportunities, CV and interview coaching, and money management sessions, as well as millions in funding for education and vocational courses for Service Leavers through Service charity partnerships.

In addition to employability support, through AFTER, Barclays offers a number of bespoke banking services which help to make banking easier for the wider Armed Forces and veterans' community. Their latest offering is a dedicated digital portal for the Armed Forces and veterans' community, promising access to tailored and relevant banking products. The new hub provides bespoke information on all the relevant services available to military members, such as free telephone banking hotlines for those on operations and exercises.

Ashok Vaswani, CEO of Barclays UK, said; "We want to make it much easier for serving and former military personnel to understand and access our services which is why we are launching a dedicated Armed Forces portal and committing to do more to better serve their needs."



# Funding for the Future



Haig Housing is the leading UK provider of rental housing for ex-Service people. With £8.6 million funding from the Ministry Of Defence's (MOD) Veterans

Accommodation Fund,

Haig Housing has exciting plans to increase the properties on two of the existing estates; Edinburgh and Morden. The Morden development will provide a further 78 homes being made available for the ex-Service community.

In February 2014, the MOD invited applications for a £40 Million Veterans Accommodation, provided by LIBOR fines levied on banks, to support projects which provide veterans' accommodation. Successful projects met the two principles of the Armed Forces Covenant; that members of the Armed Forces community should not face disadvantage as a result of Service and that special consideration should be given in some cases.

Haig Housing has over 1,400 properties situated on small well managed estates ranging in size from about six houses up to the largest estate in Morden of over 270 homes. The properties, a mix of family-sized houses, maisonettes and flats, are spread throughout the United Kingdom in over 50 different local authorities. The properties are for rental only at a charitable rent roughly comparable to the rents charged by Local Authorities. Haig offers general needs housing and special housing solutions for severely wounded and disabled Service and ex-Service personnel which include options other than just rental; shared ownership for example.

The new accommodation will be used to house:

- Single service leavers who need transitional support and a secure residence.
- Transfer of current Haig tenants whose needs have changed.
- New Veteran families seeking housing assistance.

Haig Housing, the leading provider of charitable housing to the ex-Service community, has had a significant presence in Morden since 1930 and now has 270 homes on the estate.

The development will provide a safe environment and will benefit from the excellent community links; transport, schools etc. The properties will be intelligently constructed and adjustable to family needs; for example, internal walls could be easily reconfigured to meet the family's changing need over time.

They may also be able to move people, now perhaps living in a home too big for them, to a better home on the same estate. This means that they will keep all things familiar to them; doctors, bus routes, friends, family, neighbours and existing support networks but be housed somewhere better suited to their needs. In addition, the larger home could now be freed up to house a family to make better use of the rooms available. This means they could help two separate ex-Service families with their housing needs by the provision of just one property.

Haig Housing have seen a 30% increase in applications in just the last three years whilst their stock has grown by only 3.4% in the same period. In London and the South East demand is currently very high with at least 11 eligible people for every one house which might become available.

For more information:

Tel: [020 8685 5777](tel:02086855777)

Email: [enquiries@haighousing.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@haighousing.org.uk)

Web: [www.haighousing.org.uk](http://www.haighousing.org.uk)





# The Ripple Pond



**The Ripple Pond is a self-help support network for the adult family members of physically or emotionally injured service personnel and veterans.**

The Ripple Pond was established in 2011 by Julia Molony and Sue Hawkins, both mothers to physically injured soldiers. They individually reached out in a time when their lives were changing forever and found little in the way of support for the family members of the injured. Realising if they were in this position others would be too, they formed The Ripple Pond.

The emphasis is on meeting others in a face-to-face situation (where possible), to give and receive support from those who are on a similar journey. It is not a crisis organisation and does not offer therapy but the very act of being heard, acknowledged and accepted is hugely cathartic, talking about a situation might not change it but it can help a person to accept it, and knowing they're not alone in their struggles can be a huge relief.

There are three avenues of support for members, the main being group meetings. These are kept small in numbers, ensuring everyone has the opportunity to share and be heard. They happen every four to eight weeks depending on the groups needs and are facilitated by a volunteer member who is known as a Group Administrator.

The Ripple Pond also have a 'buddy' system where new and existing members are put in touch with one another, so regardless of whether there is a meeting in the diary, they can still access one-to-one support.

The Ripple Pond also have a 'private' Facebook page. This is a judgement free area where members can share their stories, celebrate a good day or commiserate after a bad day and ask questions. There will always be someone around to comment and offer support.

The Ripple Pond currently has groups running throughout the UK with the potential for more. All we need to organise a group are more than 2 members wanting to meet and a Group Administrator.

The Ripple Pond gained charity status in March 2015 and now has two administrative staff based in the Hub in Aldershot and a Director based in Devon. Funding has been gained from Annington Limited, The Royal British Legion and more recently The Army Benevolent Fund and The Wates Foundation.

For more information please get in touch with the Hub at:

Email: [admin@theripplepond.org](mailto:admin@theripplepond.org)

Tel: 01252 913021

Web: [www.theripplepond.org](http://www.theripplepond.org)

# Financial help for Officers in need

The Officers' Association aims to help former Officers in financial difficulties

# OA

OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION

Life beyond the Services

On demobilisation after the First World War, hundreds of ex-Officers found themselves in desperate circumstances, often with no job, money or home. Determined that something should be done for these men who had

sacrificed so much for their country, Earl and Countess Haig, supported by Admiral of the Fleet Earl Beatty and Marshal of the Royal Air Force Viscount Trenchard, along with the City of London, organised a highly successful public subscription. The result was the Officers' Association (OA), which received its Royal Charter in 1921.

Almost a hundred years on, the OA continues to support former officers and their dependants in a variety of ways, giving advice on benefits and sources of assistance, helping them manage their finances and providing financial support to those in need.

The OA's Head of Benevolence, Evelyn Strouts, explains that former Officers often find themselves in financial difficulties as a result of family breakdown, injury, physical or mental illness, redundancy, bereavement and inadequate pension provision. "Our work is targeted at people who cannot afford an adequate standard of living,"

"Our aim is to take an increasingly holistic approach, looking at all aspects of a beneficiary's life," says Evelyn. "We want to accompany people on a 'journey of change' so that with our help, they can improve the quality of their life in a number of areas." We are

93-year-old ex-RAF Officer Howard Hands\*, appreciates the difference the OA makes. He received financial help to install a stair lift in his home after he found that he was unable to climb the stairs. "I cannot thank the Officers Association enough," he said. "This means that I can continue to live in my own home. Moving was unthinkable, and could never be the same."

\*Name changed for privacy purposes.

constantly looking at how we can improve and extend the services we offer, with a telephone befriending service just one of the things on our radar for the future."

Local volunteers play a vital part in helping the OA make decisions about the help it gives. Around 200 of these ambassadors, known as 'Honorary Representatives', visit applicants to collect detailed information the OA needs when considering each case. Conducting interviews, helping complete application forms, and submitting reports of their findings to the OA's Benevolence Department. The aim is to develop an all-round picture of the applicant, pinpointing where help might be needed most.

For more information on how the OA can help financially, or for any other benefits or housing queries, please contact the Benevolence Team on 020 7808 4175. If you would like to join the Association as an Honorary Representative, email [a.bailey@officersassociation.org.uk](mailto:a.bailey@officersassociation.org.uk) to arrange to speak with the Honorary Representative Support Manager.





*“We aim to support them to live a more independant life, to maintain a socially acceptable standard of living and to retain their dignity.”*

**Evelyn Strouts**  
OA Head of  
Benevolence



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Accommodation & Housing



special housing and accommodation projects for veterans



Healthcare



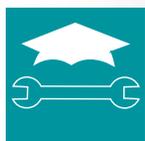
special healthcare programmes for veterans from the NHS, charities and other providers



Working in Partnership



sharing best practice to better support our veterans community



Education, Training and Employment



leaving the forces and helping veterans find work and improve their skills



Family Matters



support for families including those bereaved by service