

Brief on the forthcoming NHS veterans' mental health complex treatment service

December 2017

Background

NHS England will shortly announce the providers of the forthcoming veterans' mental health complex treatment service (VMH CTS) that will launch on 1 April 2018.

In preparation for this announcement, we would like to remind colleagues of the purpose of the VMH CTS, which is to provide an enhanced service for veterans who have military attributable complex mental health problems, many of whom will have experienced trauma, which have not been resolved earlier in the care/support pathway.

Informed by the views of veterans and their families, the VMH CTS will focus on ex-service personnel who will benefit from the intensive provision of a range of mental health and social interventions. This may include (but is not limited to) support for substance misuse, physical health, employment, accommodation, relationships and finances, as well as occupational and trauma focused therapies.

The new service will be provided in a range of community settings across England to support consistent access to care and treatment. It will also work closely with the wider NHS, statutory bodies, local authorities and the third sector, including armed forces charities, to ensure the appropriate support is in place for patients and their families. This means having arrangements with partner organisations, especially those who provide crisis and in-patient care, to ensure that care is seamless and immediate action is taken on clinical needs and risks.

The VMH CTS will support the ambitions set out in [The Five Year Forward View For Mental Health report](#), which calls for increased provision of community based mental health services for people of all ages with severe mental health problems who need support to live safely as close to home as possible. The report also sets out the importance of working in partnership with voluntary and community sector organisations, which the VMH CTS will facilitate in terms of our ongoing work to support armed forces charities and NHS services to work together to provide a full range of services from transition to intensive treatment interventions and above all commission person centred care.

How will patients benefit from the new service?

The new community based service will benefit veterans through:

- improved access to locally delivered help and support from a military informed and aware team
- greater opportunity to integrate care and support with locally commissioned services, including communication with the patient's general practitioner
- improved access to psychiatrists and other health professionals, including where appropriate, the prescribing of medication
- improved assessment and treatment of physical health difficulties in conjunction with the patient's general practitioner
- access to peer support workers, specialist occupational therapy assessment and enhanced trauma stabilisation interventions
- an increased period of treatment of up to 32 weeks
- advice and information for families.

Upon announcing the successful bidders, appointed providers will focus on mobilising and establishing the new service with support from NHS England.

For further information, please email england.south-armedfores@nhs.net.