



**VETERAN AWARE AND THE ARMED  
FORCES COVENANT**



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## GETTING IT RIGHT FIRST TIME

Getting It Right First Time (GIRFT) is a national programme designed to improve the treatment and care of patients through in-depth review of services, benchmarking, and presenting a data-driven evidence base to support change.



# GIRFT WORKSTREAMS

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Acute And General Medicine	Adult Critical Care	Anaesthesia And Perioperative Medicine	Cardiology
Dermatology	Diabetes	Diagnostics And Radiology	Emergency Medicine
Urgent And Emergency Care Programme	Gastroenterology	Geriatric Medicine	Head And Neck Cancer
Endocrinology	Lung Cancer	Mental Health – Rehabilitation	Mental Health – Adult Crisis and Acute Care
Hospital Dentistry	Neonatology	Neurology	Paediatric Critical Care
Mental Health – Children And Young People’s Services	Pathology	Radiology And Diagnostics	Renal
Pancreatic Cancer	Stroke	Breast Surgery	Cardiothoracic Surgery
Respiratory	Rheumatology	Cranial Neurosurgery	Ear, Nose And Throat Surgery
General Surgery	Hand Surgery	Maternity And Gynaecology	Ophthalmology
Oral And Maxillofacial Surgery	Orthopaedic Surgery	Orthopaedic Trauma Surgery	Paediatric Surgery And Urology
Paediatric Trauma And Orthopaedic	Plastic Surgery, Hand Surgery And Burn Care	Spinal Services	Urology Surgery

# GIRFT PROJECTS

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Commissioning For Quality And Innovation (CQUIN)	Improving The Perioperative Pathway For Patients With Diabetes
National Consultant Information Programme (NCIP)	GIRFT Thrombosis Survey
Model Health System	National Perioperative Care Programme
Independent Sector Healthcare Providers	<u>Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance</u>



## VETERANS COVENANT HEALTHCARE ALLIANCE

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The Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance (VCHA) is a group of NHS providers, who have agreed to be exemplars of the best care for, and support to, the Armed Forces' community.

This is achieved through the Veteran Aware accreditation model.



# MANDATE FOR THE MODEL

The Armed Forces Act 2021; The NHS Constitution; The NHS Long Term Plan; The NHS Forward View; The Office of Veterans Affairs Veterans' Strategy Action Plan



TO JETTISON DOOR  
REMOVE COVER  
LIFT HANDLE AND  
PULL



ROYAL  
AIR FORCE

## THE OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS - VETERANS' STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

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Roll out Veteran Aware accreditation further across Trusts with all Trusts being accredited. Ensure that accreditations are being renewed in line with VCHA requirements, and continue to monitor impact and effectiveness to best support veterans.

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## THE ARMED FORCES ACT 2021

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This Act places a legal duty (the 'Covenant Duty') on specified public persons and bodies, to have **due regard** to the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant when exercising certain statutory functions in the fields of healthcare

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## HEALTHCARE FOR THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY: A FORWARD VIEW

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NHS Trusts are also recognising their role in supporting veterans through the Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance (VCHA) – a group of trusts which have been accredited as 'Veteran Aware'.

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## THE NHS CONSTITUTION

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As part of this, the NHS will ensure that in line with the Armed Forces Covenant, those in the armed forces, reservists, their families and veterans are not disadvantaged in accessing health services in the area they reside.

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## London Ambulance Service

We, the undersigned, commit to honour the Armed Forces Covenant and support the Armed Forces Community. We recognise the value Serving Personnel, both Regular and Reservists, Veterans and military



# THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT

“We, the undersigned, commit to honour the Armed Forces Covenant and support the Armed Forces Community. We recognise the value Serving Personnel, both Regular and Reservists, Veterans and military families contribute to our business and our country”

Name: Damian McGuinness



*“The first duty of Government is the defence of the realm.*

*Our Armed Forces fulfil that responsibility on behalf of the Government, sacrificing some civilian freedoms, facing danger and, sometimes, suffering serious injury or death as a result of their duty.*

*Families also play a vital role in supporting the operational effectiveness of our Armed Forces.*

*In return, the whole nation has a moral obligation to the members of the Naval Service, the Army and the Royal Air Force, together with their families.*

*They deserve our respect and support, and fair treatment. Those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether Regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services.*

*Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved”*



# REMOVING DISADVANTAGE

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“Due regard to the principle that it is desirable to remove disadvantages arising for Service people from membership, or former membership, of the Armed Forces”

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# THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY

Members of the regular forces and the reserve forces; members of British overseas territory forces who are subject to Service law; former members of any of His Majesty's forces who are ordinarily resident in the UK.



The Commonwealth is made up of 56 countries around the world



# MEMBERS OF BRITISH OVERSEAS TERRITORY FORCES WHO ARE SUBJECT TO SERVICE LAW

To join the UK Armed Forces applicants must be either a British National, a British Citizen as defined by the British Nationality Act 1981, a Commonwealth citizen, a citizen of the Republic of Ireland, or a citizen of Nepal. 56 independent countries make up the Commonwealth in Africa, Asia, the Americas, Europe and the Pacific

MEMBER COUNTRY	CAPITAL
40 ST VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES	Kingstown
41 SAMOA	Apia
42 SEYCHELLES	Victoria
43 SIERRA LEONE	Freetown
45 SOLOMON ISLANDS	Honiara
46 SOUTH AFRICA	Pretoria
47 SRI LANKA	Columbo
48 TONGA	Nuku'alofa
49 TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO	Port of Spain
51 TUVALU	Funafuti
52 UGANDA	Kampala
53 UNITED KINGDOM	London
54 UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA	Dodoma
55 VANUATU	Port Vila
56 ZAMBIA	Lusaka

Maps-in-Minutes™  
The designations and the presentation of material on this map, based on UN practice, do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Commonwealth Secretariat concerning the legal status of any country, territory or area, or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

Information correct at time of printing, September 2022  
This is a free poster



# THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY

Partners; children; relatives (living in the same household, financial responsibility, assumed regular and substantial caring responsibility), bereaved family members



“I have first-hand experience of trying to secure mental health education and social support for my daughter who aged twelve was diagnosed with autism. Of note is the exacerbation of her mental health symptoms every time we moved and each time my husband was deployed ...we have been to hell and back to secure the right services for her to ensure her survival, safety and wellbeing. I realised that the professionals working with her had no concept of what the stresses and struggles might be for a military family”

“...The pharmacist said to me “oh no sweetheart. This is for veterans, not girlfriends of veterans”. I do not look like a veteran, I do not attend veteran events, I do not do ‘veteran’ activities because I do not look like them. I didn’t think healthcare providers would exclude me as well”

“I do not get the same appointment time as people who have not served because I have to spend a good chunk of the time explaining my military service. I just wish that I could walk into a room and say “I was hurt during Kosovo”, and they would just nod. I don’t need a fuss, I just want the same as everyone else”

“I lost my job of 18 years. I’d served in the Falklands, 6 terms in Northern Ireland, and the Middle East twice. I had my rank reduced from LRO(G) to RO1. Had my long service and good conduct medal taken off me unceremoniously and had my pension reduced. I was also only able to claim it when I was 65 whereas had this not happened to me I could have got my full pension as soon as I’d left the service. ... [I had my] long service and good conduct and 3 epaulettes [removed].”

“Design and provide the correct equipment for female bodies. E.g. smaller body armour plates that aren’t ‘special measure’ and don’t require 6 months to order and deliver when the deployment is short notice [...] Provide PCS [Personal Clothing System] uniform & ballistic shorts etc. design for a female physique [...].”

“I need to make a decision. Have the kids see their mum everyday or see a dentist; they cant have both”



# VETERAN AWARE

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The Veteran Aware accreditation model is a set of eight standards which grade success. These standards cover Organisational and Strategic Development; Employment, Recruitment and Staff Practice; Patient and Community Support

Pass or fail accreditation

The organisation signs, and is compliant with, the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant

The organisation has a clearly designated Armed Forces Team

The organisation is an Armed Forces friendly employer

The organisation is able to clearly and accurately identify members of the Armed Forces community

The organisation has clear and defined collaborative partnerships with Armed Forces organisations

The organisation can appropriately refer to Armed Forces support organisations

The organisation raises awareness of the Armed Forces community

The organisation is educated in the needs of the Armed Forces community



# EIGHT STANDARDS OF CARE

## THREE WORK STREAMS

### Organisational and Strategic Development

The organisation signs, and is compliant with, the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant

The organisation has a clearly designated Armed Forces Champions Team

The organisation is able to clearly and accurately identify members of the Armed Forces community

The organisation has clear and defined collaborative partnerships with Armed Forces organisations

### Employment and Staff Practice

The organisation is an Armed Forces friendly employer

The organisation is able to clearly and accurately identify members of the Armed Forces community

The organisation has clear and defined collaborative partnerships with Armed Forces organisations

The organisation can appropriately refer to Armed Forces support organisations

The organisation raises awareness of the Armed Forces community

The organisation is educated in the needs of the Armed Forces community

### Patient and Community Support

The organisation is able to clearly and accurately identify members of the Armed Forces community

The organisation has clear and defined collaborative partnerships with Armed Forces organisations

The organisation has clear and defined collaborative partnerships with Armed Forces organisations

The organisation can appropriately refer to Armed Forces support organisations

The organisation raises awareness of the Armed Forces community

# THE ORGANISATION SIGNS, AND IS COMPLIANT WITH, THE PRINCIPLES OF THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT

*“The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise by the nation that those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, should be treated fairly and should not face disadvantages when seeking to access public or private goods and services in the UK. The Covenant also provides for special provision to be made for those who have given the most, where this is justified”.*

If an injury or illness is the **direct result** of service, the patient may be entitled to **priority treatment** but not above another patient with a **higher clinical need**.

The patient might have to **re-locate** while in the middle of receiving the course of treatment. How treatment plans can continue with minimal disruption, after re-locations.

Patients on a waiting list for treatment in one area might be required to move to another area before they are treated. They may experience **delays in receiving treatment**.

There may be a **lack of access to special services** that were being provided to the patient in their previous location. This should be taken into account during the referral process

Health professionals should be aware that the patient might have already experienced a **prolonged wait time** for treatment, and so any decision to conduct a **new assessment**.

# THE ORGANISATION HAS A CLEARLY DESIGNATED ARMED FORCES TEAM

## Executive

Executive Board

Direct report to Executive Board



## Experts

Clinical Lead \*

Management Lead \*

Therapies Lead \*

Communications Lead

Patient Experience Lead

Education and Training Lead

Identification Systems Lead

## Champions

Lived Experience

Anyone can be a champion

Attend training



# THE ORGANISATION IS AN ARMED FORCES FRIENDLY EMPLOYER

## Employing veterans

- ✓ Language
- ✓ Transient career trajectory
- ✓ Culture
- ✓ Career breaks
- ✓ Skill transference

## Employing serving families

- ✓ Transient career
- ✓ Military locations
- ✓ Culture
- ✓ Career breaks
- ✓ Flexible working
- ✓ Childcare

## Employing direct from service

- ✓ Reduce loss of skills
- ✓ Reduce loss of knowledge
- ✓ Reduce loss of confidence
- ✓ Military support
- ✓ Financial stability

## Retaining staff

- ✓ Understanding language
- ✓ Understanding culture
- ✓ Offering extra training
- ✓ Appreciation of service
- ✓ Health awareness



EMPLOYER  
RECOGNITION  
SCHEME

GOLD AWARD

Proudly  
supporting  
those  
who serve

#GoldERS2022

# THE ORGANISATION IS ABLE TO IDENTIFY MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY

Members of the regular forces and the reserve forces; members of British overseas territory forces who are subject to Service law; former members of any of His Majesty's forces who are ordinarily resident in the UK. Partners; children; relatives (living in the same household, financially dependent, assumed regular and substantial caring responsibility), bereaved family members

“Have you, or anyone in your immediate family, ever served in the British Armed Forces?”

# THE ORGANISATION IS ABLE TO IDENTIFY MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY

## Employment

Subject matter expert, lead or mentor can read and mark the application

Guaranteed interview scheme

Data

## Staff – Families

Organisational leave policy development  
Support resources

## Staff – Serving

Operational staff planning  
Permanent staff training

## Staff – Reservists

Operational staff planning  
Policy training  
Organisational leave policy development

## Staff – Veterans

Staff peer-support network  
Support resources  
Staff helpline

# THE ORGANISATION IS ABLE TO IDENTIFY MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY

What services are your patients accessing more?

What treatments are they less likely to complete?

Are they on waiting lists longer?

Are there charities who can work directly with services?

Can charities offer bespoke training for services?

Can the organisation target its resources for better outcomes?

Can the organisation identify areas of expertise or excellence?

Can the organisation identify areas for research?

Can the organisation find need for additional funding?

Are there departments that are asking patients less or more?



After asking if James if he had served, Joanne got to work. She connected him with an organisation who was able to support him to go back to the site of the D-Day landings, and to support him in replacing his lost medals. His family were given funding to make changes to his home so he could recover in peace, surrounded by those he loved.

# THE ORGANISATION HAS PARTNERSHIPS WITH ARMED FORCES ORGANISATIONS

- There are currently 1,843 Armed Forces charities.
- The sector's total annual income was £1.1 billion, and the sector's total annual expenditure was £985 million (as of 1 April 2019).

**Limited resources**  
**Limited awareness**  
**Limited training**



# THE ORGANISATION HAS PARTNERSHIPS WITH ARMED FORCES ORGANISATIONS



Meet the needs of:

Patients

Staff

Community

Organisation

# THE ORGANISATION CAN APPROPRIATELY REFER TO ARMED FORCES SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS

## Refer the first time The right time

"Have you, or anyone in your immediate family, ever served in the British Armed Forces?"

Have they moved recently from a different area because of deployment or discharge?

"Why do you want to know?"

"There may be additional services that are available to you if you are. If you are, would you like me to add this to your notes?"

Add their status to their notes and demographics, and continue.

Is their injury or illness the direct result of their time in the Armed Forces?

<p><b>Accessing Support</b> As a member of the Armed Forces community, individuals and families are still able to access support, even if they have not been disadvantaged by Armed Forces service. Please turn over to find additional support.</p>	<p><b>Priority and Specialist Treatment</b> If injury or illness is the direct result of service, they may be entitled to specialist or priority treatment. If this is the case, please contact your clinical lead</p>
<p><b>Conducting Reassessment</b> Is this reassessment necessary? Can contact be made with their previous assessment? If is necessary, explain to them the reason they must be assessed again</p>	<p><b>Waiting List</b> Are they on a similar place on your service waiting list, relative to their previous place? If you are not sure, please contact the previous service to determine how long they were on the waiting list and amend as necessary.</p>

Do you believe the individual has faced disadvantage in receiving care today as the result of Armed Forces service?  
If you do, please raise your concerns to your Armed Forces Lead/s or Armed Forces Champion/s

**VETERAN AWARE**

An aid to support patients who are members of the Armed Forces community

<b>Little Troopers</b> Military Children	<b>SSAFA</b> Support & Advice	<b>Help for Heroes</b> Live Well	<b>Veterans Gateway</b> Directory of Services
<b>Op RESTORE</b> Physical Injuries	<b>Op COURAGE</b> Mental Health	<b>Op Fortitude</b> Homelessness	<b>Op NOVA</b> Criminal Justice
<b>Defence Medical Welfare Service</b> Healthcare Charity	<b>Royal British Legion</b> Support & Advice	<b>Blind Veterans UK</b> Sight Loss Charity	<b>BLESMA</b> The Limbless Veterans Charity

Hover your smartphone camera directly over the QR code, or use the hyperlink to be taken directly to the website

**VETERAN AWARE**

"Have you, or anyone in your immediate family, ever served in the British Armed Forces?"

**Regular** – Individuals currently serving  
**Reservists** – Volunteer Reservist & Regular Reservist  
**Veterans** – Those who have served for at least one day in the Armed Forces, as a Regular or as a Reservist  
**Families of Regular, Reservists and Veterans** – Spouses, civil partners, partners, and children for whom they are responsible, but can extend to parents, and other family members  
**Bereaved** – The immediate family of Service Personnel and Veterans who have died

*"Those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether Regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved"*  
**Armed Forces Covenant**

# THE ORGANISATION HAS PARTNERSHIPS WITH ARMED FORCES ORGANISATIONS

# THE ORGANISATION CAN APPROPRIATELY REFER TO ARMED FORCES SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS

## **Trusted and Reliable**

Secure funding streams

Established

Charity commission;  
business number

Peer reviewed;  
research

## **Safeguarding**

Leads

Policies and procedures

Clarity on website

## **Communication**

Easy to refer

Clear criteria

What next?

# THE ORGANISATION RAISES AWARENESS OF THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY

Who are you?

Who are they?

Where are you?

Where are they?

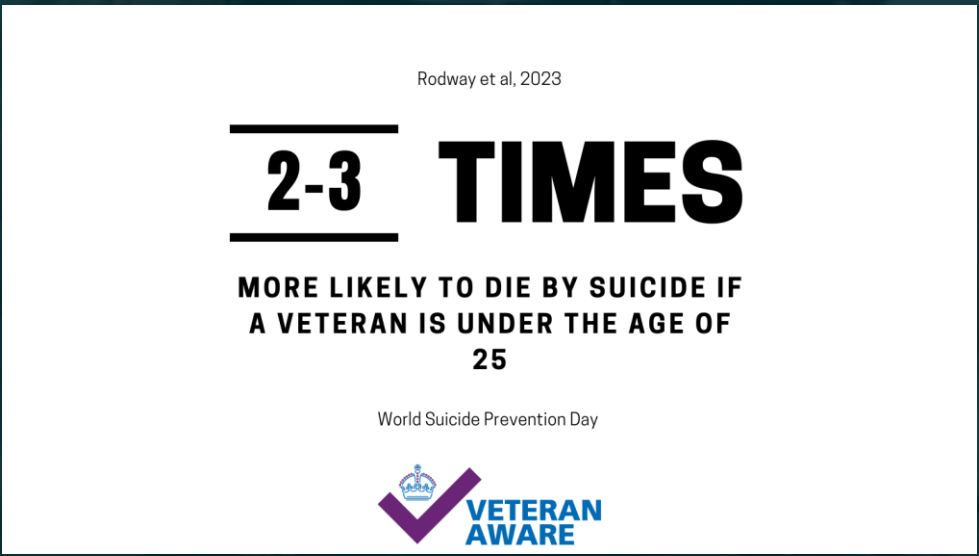
What do you need?

What do we offer?

When do I come to you?

When do you come to us?

# THE ORGANISATION RAISES AWARENESS OF THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY



# THE ORGANISATION RAISES AWARENESS OF THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY



These posters are a very useful tool in helping people understand what it means to be part of our Military community and how their information will be treated with respect and confidentiality



CLARE SCHERER MBE,  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
Naval Children's Charity

[www.navalchildrenscharity.org.uk](http://www.navalchildrenscharity.org.uk)  
[www.veteranaware.nhs.uk](http://www.veteranaware.nhs.uk)

## Your Rights to Confidentiality

Military Children and Young People

- 1 UNDERSTAND**  
If your parent, step-parent, or guardian serves or has served in the military, you are a member of the Armed Forces community.
- 2 IDENTIFY**  
We ask if you are a member of the Armed Forces Community because you may be entitled to additional support.
- 3 THE 'ACT'**  
You may have heard of the Official Secrets Act. It is okay to talk about your caregiver's time in the military, including countries you have lived in, countries they have visited, or time spent away.
- 4 CONFIDENTIALITY**  
You have the same right to confidentiality as anyone else. You can talk freely to your clinician about what is affecting you without anyone else needing to know. The military will not find out.
- 5 EXPLAIN**  
Receiving treatment for an injury or illness will not affect your caregiver's military career. It will not affect any promotions. Your health and wellbeing is the most important thing to us.



## Are your staff asking patients if they've served in the Armed Forces?



### Ask

"have you ever served in the UK Armed Forces?"



### Record

on your organisation's patient record system



### Personalise

care by considering appropriate referrals to Veteran services

## Armed Forces Day 2023

HAVE YOU EVER SERVED?

# THE ORGANISATION RAISES AWARENESS OF THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY



An aid to support patients who are members of the Armed Forces community



[Little Troopers](#)  
Military Children



[SSAFA](#)  
Support & Advice



[Help for Heroes](#)  
Live Well



[Veterans Gateway](#)  
Directory of Services



[Op RESTORE](#)  
Physical Injuries



[Op COURAGE](#)  
Mental Health



[Op Fortitude](#)  
Homelessness



[Op NOVA](#)  
Criminal Justice



[Defence Medical Welfare Service](#)  
Healthcare Charity



[Royal British Legion](#)  
Support & Advice



[Blind Veterans UK](#)  
Sight Loss Charity



[BLESMA](#)  
The Limbless Veterans Charity

Hover your smartphone camera directly over the QR code, or use the hyperlink to be taken directly to the website



"Have you, or anyone in your immediate family, ever served in the British Armed Forces?"

- Regular** – Individuals currently serving
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- Veterans** – Those who have served for at least one day in the Armed Forces, as a Regular or as a Reservist
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**Armed Forces Covenant**

# THE ORGANISATION IS EDUCATED IN THE NEEDS OF THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY

Training	Mode	Cost	Duration
<u>NHS Healthcare for the Armed Forces</u> E-Learning for Health	Online	Free	6 x 20 minute modules
<u>Service Champion Training</u> Sussex Armed Forces Network	Online	Free	One Day
<u>Improve Veterans Wellbeing</u> Combat Stress	Online	Free	4 x 90 minute modules
<u>The Military Human</u> York St John University	Online F2F	Various	Various



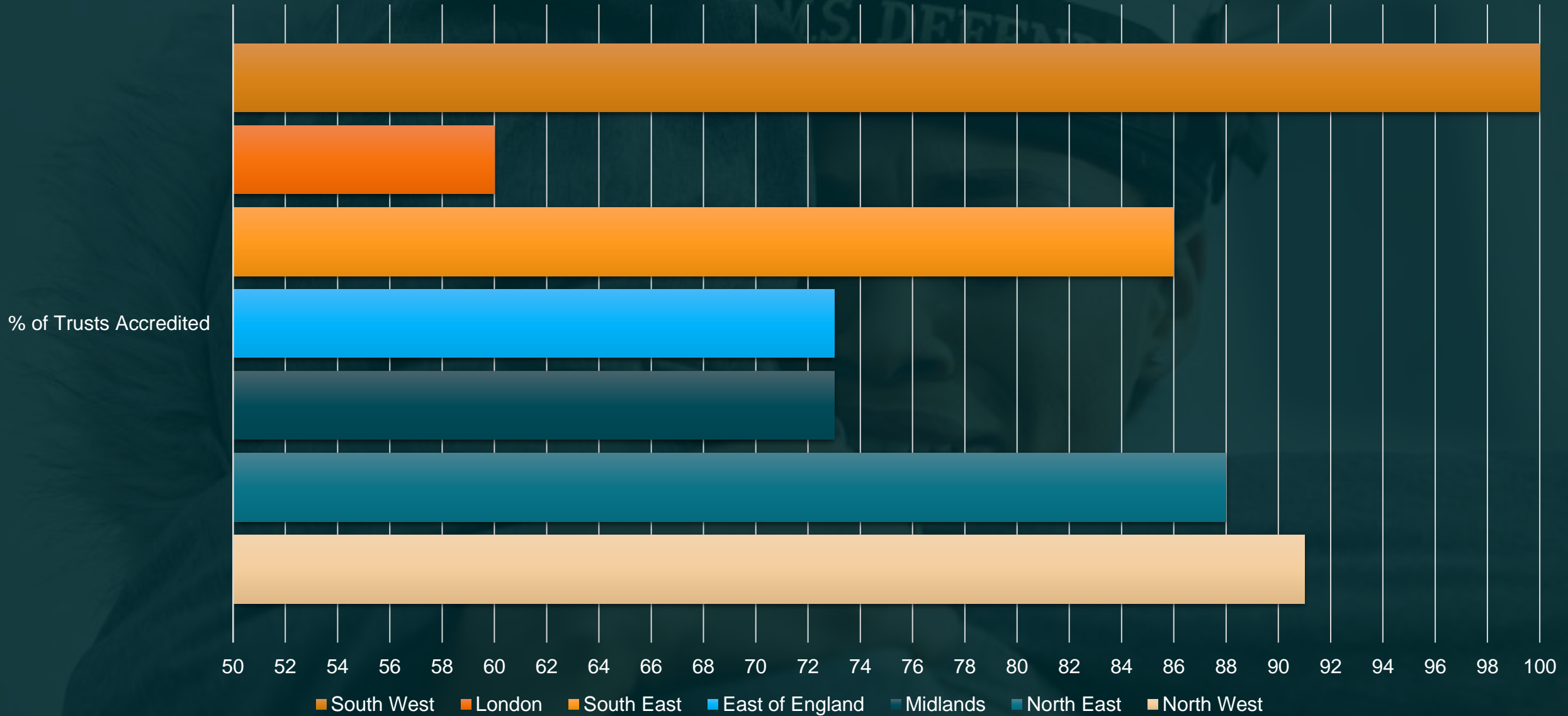
Suicide Awareness Training - veteran edition



# VETERAN AWARE ACCREDITATION



# DATA



# CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT



**Audit**

**Evidence collection**

**Site visits**

**Data collection**

**Patient surveys**

# MODEL REPLICATION

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- ✓ Create a set of standards and be consistent
- ✓ Co-develop with the people who will deliver the standards
- ✓ Co-develop with the community you are working with
- ✓ Decrease variation but encourage initiative and creativity
- ✓ Celebrate what has gone well, alongside what has not
- ✓ Encourage sharing all information
- ✓ Collect evidence and document themes
- ✓ Create single points of contact who do not change
- ✓ Explore all cohorts of the community
- ✓ Provide resources the community need
- ✓ Meet organisations and people where they are at



Veterans Covenant  
Healthcare Alliance

# THANK YOU

[www.veteranaware.nhs.uk](http://www.veteranaware.nhs.uk)

[www.gettingitrightfirsttime.co.uk](http://www.gettingitrightfirsttime.co.uk)

Twitter: @NHSVeteranAware @VCHAAnna

LinkedIn: Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance

Email: [rnoh.vcha@nhs.net](mailto:rnoh.vcha@nhs.net)