

Section 3: Vulnerable Groups - Veterans

Veterans' Health: [Source: Royal British Legion UK Household Survey/NHS England]

This issue is important in Darlington with high numbers of military families in the area and strong links to Catterick Garrison. Darlington Armed Forces Community Covenant signed up to by Darlington Borough Council, Darlington Partnership, the Armed Forces and representatives of veterans' and voluntary organisations, for the future benefit of all residents.

- The North East has 190,000 ex-service personnel and 80,000 dependants resident;
- A third of the ex-Service community living in England said their day to day activities were limited by health or disability. This proportion was higher in the North East.
- 89% are aged over 45.
- 15% of veterans in the North East report a drinking problem.
- 23% of veterans experience adverse mental health.
- 9 veterans are receiving treatment for substance misuse - 2 for alcohol and 7 for drugs.

A major piece of research has been undertaken by the Royal British Legion and the charity Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT) at a national level to provide information about the ex-service community across the UK. The report 'A UK Household Survey of the Ex-service Community' was published in 2014. It provides extensive information about the ex-service community and their dependants as well as dispelling the myths surrounding ex-service personnel.

2014 Household Survey Report



2014householdsurve
yreport.pdf

The Health Needs of the Ex-service Community 2015 provides a regional analysis of the findings from the 2014 UK wide survey.



14-11 Health Needs
Assessment.pdf

Housing

There are two strands to the approach to providing housing for vulnerable groups:

1. Ensuring that vulnerable people are able to live as independently as possible within the community
2. Provide supported accommodation for those who need it but also enabling as much independence as possible

In recent years there has been an increasing shift away from some forms of supported housing by offering more housing choices. This is partly the result of more services being

delivered in the community, partly increased use of Assistive Technology but also the housing choices that people want to make.

There are about 4,000, mainly rented, properties that can be described as supported housing and about 3,500 of these are aimed at older people and include sheltered housing, Extra Care, specially designed blocks of flats and bungalows and properties linked to the Lifeline service. There are about 120 properties that are purpose designed for older people who want to buy or part own. As there is a good supply of accommodation for rent the main focus for growth in housing for older people is owner occupation where there is an under supply. A number of new developments are set to double the stock of specialist accommodation for owner-occupation in the next two years but more will be needed.

Other supported accommodation meets a range of needs from homeless people to people with physical disabilities, domestic abuse, people with learning disabilities and people living with mental health problems. There is no specific specialist accommodation for those formerly servicing in the Armed Forces as numbers are very low; their needs are being met within existing provision.

Mental Health

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) published a report in January 2016 which provides statistical information on mental health in the UK Armed Forces for the period 1 April 2007 to 30 September 2015. It summarises all initial assessments for a new episode of care among Service personnel at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services (Departments of Community Mental Health (DCMH) for outpatient care, and all admissions to the MOD's in-patient care contractor) by quarter.

Personnel assessed with mental disorders at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services have increased steadily from 0.6% of UK Armed Forces personnel at risk in April-June 2007/08, to 0.8% in July-September 2015/16. It is unclear what proportion of this rise is due to the success of anti-stigma campaigns and a true rise in mental health disorders. In the latest quarter, **1,350** UK Armed Forces personnel had **1,398** new episodes of care for a mental disorder at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services.

Higher presentations in certain demographic groups remained broadly similar to that seen in previous quarters:

- **Army and RAF** personnel - the lower rates of mental disorder seen among Royal Marines may be due to the recruitment selection process, support received as a result of tight unit cohesion and high levels of preparedness for combat;
- **Females** - this is replicated in the UK civilian population and may be a result of females being more likely to report mental health problems than males;
- **Other Ranks** - higher educational attainment and socio-economic background are associated with lower levels of mental health disorder and this may explain differences in the rates between officers and other ranks;

In line with previous findings, Adjustment Disorders were the most prevalent disorder during the period July-September 2015/16, accounting for 32% of all new episodes of care seen at a MOD DCMH. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) rates remained low with less than 0.1% of all UK Armed Forces personnel assessed with this disorder between July-September 2015/16.

The full report is available [here](#) [pdf 753KB] together with key data in the following [INFOGRAPHIC](#) [pdf 418KB]