



## Carer leaflet

We have written this document to provide information to those caring for a veteran accessing psychological treatment through Veterans' NHS Wales. You may not consider yourself a carer however, a carer has a broad definition that may include your relationship. We consider a carer is someone who looks after/supports a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, mental health problem or addiction.

### Support for yourself

If you support someone struggling because of their physical or mental ill-health, learning disability or drug or alcohol problem, your own life may have been affected. For example, your free time, work and relationships may have changed. You may also be struggling to manage any practical or financial changes. It is common for carers to neglect their own needs; therefore, it is important to maintain your wellbeing.

Carers Wales is an organisation which supports carers in Wales and their website provides a wealth of information about support which may be available to you - <https://www.carersuk.org/wales>

They also have a confidential helpline for carers which is open Monday-Friday 9am-6pm

You can also access a free carer's assessment through your local authority. Through this assessment, you will speak privately with someone about your caring responsibilities and how they are affecting you. You may be directed to access support from specialist organisations or be put in touch with groups that understand your caring role. This may include financial, practical and/or emotional support.

**If you are interested in finding out more, please follow the relevant link based on where you live:**

[Swansea](#)

<https://www.swansea.gov.uk/article/5349/Carers-needs-assessments>

[NPT](#)

<https://www.npt.gov.uk/1522>



## Discussing a veteran's care with you

It is important to know that we won't be able to discuss details of a veteran's care (e.g. appointment dates & times, their management plan) unless we have consent from the veteran that they are happy for information to be shared.

Therefore, if you think it's important to be kept informed, it would be helpful to discuss this with the veteran in your life and ask them to give their consent for this sharing of information.

## Confidentiality

We think it is helpful for those supporting veterans to understand our policy regarding confidentiality. Veterans' NHS Wales is a team, so it may be necessary for other members to access information about their care. There are also some circumstances where we in the public interest may be required to disclose information to other agencies that would otherwise be kept confidential—examples of this include where someone is at risk to others or evidence of serious criminal activity.

## Crisis

We are not a crisis service, and so if you or the veteran in your life needs immediate support for their mental health or wellbeing, we would advise you to visit your GP local A&E department and call one of the 24/7 support lines listed below:

### Community Advice and Listening Line (CALL)

**0800 132737**

The CALL helpline is a confidential service which provides emotional support and information/literature on Mental Health. It can be accessed by anyone is concerned about their own mental health or that of a relative or friend.

### The Samaritans

**116 123 (English)**

**0808 164 0123 (Welsh)**

The Samaritans helpline offers a free, safe place for you to talk 24 hrs a day, 7 days a week. The helpline is non-judgemental and the volunteers will not tell you what to do, they will just listen.



## Supporting veterans to engage with treatment

It can be scary to engage with therapy; for example, opening up to someone about your mental health problems or describing past experiences can be difficult. However, much can be gained through therapy, and we are committed to adapting therapy to suit everyone. Therefore, veterans are encouraged to continue with therapy.

You can do several things to support a veteran to engage with our service. For example, if they find it helpful and give their consent, you can attend their appointments. They may also be reassured if you help them get to appointments or wait for them. If possible we recommend veterans do not drive home on their own. The Combat Stress guide described below also provides valuable information specifically supporting veterans experiencing common mental health symptoms. If you have any particular concerns or would like to find out more about supporting the veteran in your life, please contact us.

## Support for veterans' medication

If the veteran you support has concerns or questions about medication, your local pharmacy is the best point of contact. More information is available through <https://www.wmic.wales.nhs.uk/>.

## Other relevant organisations and sources of information

### Organisations which support adults

**Combat Stress** – Have written a guide for family members/carers to work through, which covers symptoms of common mental health conditions experienced by Veterans, how to support veterans with these symptoms and how to look after yourself. We recommend that you take the time to work through the guide linked here -

<https://selfhelp.combatstress.org.uk/family/page1.php>

### Organisations which support children

Children who are close to veterans experiencing mental health difficulties may also need support. Some relevant organisations are listed below:

**Childline** – 0800 1111

**Young Minds** – 0808 802 554 (for parents who are concerned about their child)

**TGP Cymru** – <https://www.tgpcymru.org.uk/what-we-do/> offers support to veterans and their families to support their mental health. If you are interested in engaging with this service, Veterans' NHS Wales is able to refer to this organisation, so please let us know.

**Contact us with any queries.**

**Please get in touch if you have any questions.**

**Email – [SBU.Veterans@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:SBU.Veterans@wales.nhs.uk) Telephone – 01792 532967**