

## Board of Directors' Meeting: 9 May 2024

<b>Agenda item</b>	077/24		
<b>Report Title</b>	Veteran and Armed Forces Programme of work		
<b>Executive Lead</b>	Louise Barnett, Chief Executive		
<b>Report Author</b>	Charlotte Hill		
<b>CQC Domain:</b>	<b>Link to Strategic Goal:</b>		<b>Link to BAF / risk:</b>
Safe	Our patients and community		
Effective	Our people	√	
Caring	Our service delivery		<b>Trust Risk Register id:</b>
Responsive	Our governance		
Well Led	√ Our partners	√	
<b>Consultation Communication</b>	07/02/2023 -Veteran scoping meeting		
<b>Executive summary:</b>	<p>We are thrilled to announce the recent decision made by the Chief Executive team to provide full support to the veteran and armed forces network. Our commitment involves implementing a comprehensive programme that focuses on several key areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Veteran Aware: We will establish effective identification methods, develop clear pathways for veterans, introduce passports for easy access to services, provide advocacy for their needs, establish referral systems, ensure correct governance, and work towards achieving gold accreditation.</li> <li>2. Employer Recognition Scheme: We will actively support reservists, cadet force adult volunteers, and veterans who are part of our organisation. This will include innovative recruitment strategies specifically targeting reservists and veterans, such as the "Step into Health" initiative. We will also collaborate with the 202 MMR-NHS to strengthen our partnership and support for veterans.</li> <li>3. Education and Learning: We recognise the importance of providing educational opportunities for veterans and armed forces personnel. As part of our program, we will prioritize initiatives aimed at enhancing their skills and knowledge through various educational and learning platforms.</li> <li>4. Communication and Engagement: Effective communication is key to the success of our program. We will utilise literature, leaflets, the intranet, internet, and social media to disseminate information and engage with our stakeholders. We will also actively seek public engagement and participation to foster a supportive environment for veterans and armed forces personnel.</li> <li>5. Sustainability: To ensure the long-term success of our programme, we will focus on securing appropriate funding, implementing robust project management practices, and promoting sustainability in all aspects of our work.</li> </ol>		
<b>Recommendations for the Board:</b>	The Board of Directors is asked to note the report.		

## **1.0 Introduction**

The primary objective of this report is to update the Board on the recent initiative taken to provide comprehensive support to the Armed Forces Team. This initiative aims to improve services for our staff, patients, and the overall healthcare system through a customised program of work.

## **2.0 Background**

Shropshire's population is approximately 500,000. Home to many military bases and regiments, past and present, it has an enduring strong and proud connection with its military heritage. Consequently, it has a large veteran population (estimated 8%). SATH cares for many veterans who are elderly and presenting with exacerbations of chronic disease. A noticeable growth in demand on Veteran Aware (VA) case management services are those with dementia complicated by delirium evoking traumatic memories from their military experience. Demand has also increased to support veterans, and their families, approaching the end of their life.

Over the last five years SATH have been working on a VA project called: Our Veteran, Their Service, Our Commitment. Its three main Strategic Objectives are:

- For every member of staff to have received Veteran Aware training and so understanding of why veterans and serving personnel might have particular needs consequent of their service.
- To ensure that every patient who wishes to be recognised as a veteran is identified on electronic systems in support of them accessing Veteran Aware services during their admission and in any future admissions.
- To implement processes that help identify those in particular need and support their referral and management by the local Armed Forces Covenant multiagency case management group.

The Armed Forces Covenant (AFC) is a promise from the nation that those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces and their families will not be disadvantaged by their service and that they will be treated fairly. It is a pledge that together, we acknowledge and understand that those who serve or who have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, should be treated with fairness and respect in the communities, economy, and society they serve with their lives. SATH has pledged its support for employees who join the Trust having served in the Armed Forces and are now veterans as well as supporting those employees who are Reservists and Cadet Force Adult Volunteers (CFAV) both before being appointed or signed up to being a Reservist whilst in the Trust's employment. The programme of works will review, design, and redesign, where appropriate, the following fundamental areas:

**Recruitment of Reservists:** Reservists have yet to be exploited, therefore the programme of work aims to support how they could be integrated into hard to recruit posts in addition to exploring their areas of interest.

**Recruitment of Veterans:** Attempts to tap into veteran pipelines of workforce have commenced and is our focus in our attempts to become recognised as a Gold Award ERS holder in 2025. There is a need to focus on this to ensure we attain this award and maintain our reputation.

**Peer Support:** There is an opportunity to better identify, value and connect with the veterans, cadet force adult volunteers and reservists who work in SATH.

**Staff Awareness Training:** Training sessions are provided for our staff, and we have also provided an online training package, accessible via our dedicated intranet page. Further work is required to enhance access and the offer of the training package in addition to ensuring compliance.

**Veteran Champions:** The champions as well as any other member of staff supportive of the veteran aware work are provided badges for them to wear and to help them be identified and trigger conversations between staff and with patients. We need to ensure that the champions have a support group and that we have the capacity to meet the demand.

**Identifying patients who are veterans or serving armed forces personnel:** To date we have been dependent on our veteran awareness training and champions to trigger conversations between clinicians and staff and identify veterans. Additional work is required to streamline and improve this process.

**Clear pathways to refer patients to community partners:** Patients with particular and complex needs are referred directly to the Operational case Management Group. More work is required to better define the governance process that includes policies, procedures, and clear patient pathways.

**Networking with community providers, and meeting service users:** There is potential and opportunities to work more cohesively with service partners to ensure an enhanced level of experience for both patients and staff.

**Command structure:** The Governance and Command Structure require review. As this workstream will continue to remain voluntary and dependent of staff education and empowerment to identify military patients in their care and identify unmet needs that might be helped address through referral to local armed forces services, including charitable organisations.

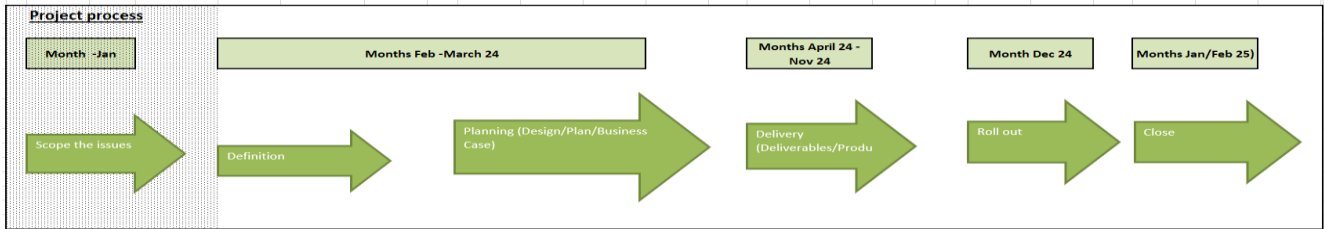
**Veteran Awareness Accreditation:** The Veteran Covenant Healthcare Alliance drives and supports NHS organisations to become Veteran Aware. There is a formal quality assurance framework to adhere to and update to ensure accreditation.

**Funding:** A Charitable Fund within the Trust's Charity have been opened. Initially it received funds from a successful bid from an external charity – the Armed Forces Covenant Trust Fund. Other sources of income to bolster this fund is required and options will be explored.

### **3.0 Details**

The proposed programme of work will involve the collaboration of senior key leads from our organisation's Armed Forces and Veteran network, as well as external stakeholders. Together, they will provide support and guidance to teams in implementing the actions generated from this programme. The overall objective of the programme is to enhance our internal and external ways of working, with a focus on embedding the foundational principles necessary to improve the health and wellbeing of our workforce in line with our organisation's values.

The images below depict an outline of the programme timeline.



The programme plan encompasses various workstreams, including veteran awareness, an employer recognition scheme, education and learning initiatives, communication and engagement strategies, and future sustainability measures. By addressing these areas, we aim to enhance our support for veterans and armed forces personnel, both within our organisation and in the wider community.

Our objective is to create a platform for our reservists to collaborate with the NHS and the AMS in addressing the workforce challenges faced by both organisations. Through this collaboration, we aim to generate a range of ideas and actions that will mutually benefit each organisation. The Armed Forces Covenant (AFC) and the specific services provided by Veteran Aware are crucial components of our system's strategic plans. Therefore, our programme is designed to enhance our services in a way that ensures the Armed Forces, veterans, and their families feel valued and supported.

By prioritizing their needs and actively involving them in the development and implementation of our initiatives, we hope to create an environment where they feel respected and recognized for their service. Through this programme, we will work towards improving the services we offer, ensuring that they are tailored to the unique requirements of the Armed Forces, veterans, and their families.

#### **4.0 Recommendation**

The Board of Directors is asked to note the contents of the report.

[Charlotte Hill]  
 [Business Manager for CEO]  
 Feb 2024