



April 2026

5TH AGGREGATED REPORT

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Artwork displayed on the front cover of this report titled 'Poppy Song' was created by Izzy Guest, user of Hidden Wounds Service (Help for Heroes) and entrant of the QNVMHS Artwork Competition (2024).



Foreword

This year's report differs from previous editions in that it draws primarily on survey data rather than peer-review assessments. It considers three key perspectives: Our Veteran Patients; Staff, and Carers and Families. The feedback gathered across these groups continues to inform the development and direction of our standards, which have strengthened significantly since the establishment of the Quality Network for Veterans Mental Health Services.

Veterans reported high levels of satisfaction with the care provided, noting staff compassion, empathy, and professionalism, and describing care plans and treatments as meaningful and effective. Staff wellbeing remains a priority, supported through dedicated staff support and wellbeing provision. Carers and families reported more can be done but also reported feeling appropriately involved in the care process and consistently described staff as kind and professional.

Continued progress in these areas will further strengthen our standards and support the ongoing development of clinical services. The Network remains a collaborative community in which services support one another through a strong peer model, fostering shared learning and continuous improvement.

All Veterans' Mental Health Services are strongly encouraged to join the Network. Membership of the Quality Network for Veterans Mental Health Services is essential to enable high quality collaborative mental health care for all our highly valued and esteemed UK Armed Forces Veterans.

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Acknowledgements

The Quality Network for Veterans Mental Health Services (QNVMS) gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the Veterans' Foundation, whose grant funding has enabled several small charity services to access subsidised membership. This support also contributes to the ongoing development of the programme, ensuring statutory services can participate and benefit from its offerings.

Thank you also to our Veteran representative, Andy Brown, all members of our Advisory Group, Accreditation Committee and all our participating member services.



Who we are and what we do

The Quality Network for Veterans Mental Health Services (QNVMS) was established in collaboration with the Contact Group in 2020 to promote quality improvement within and between veterans' mental health services. It is one of 28 quality networks, accreditation and audit programmes organised by the Royal College of Psychiatrists' Centre for Quality Improvement.

How we support services

Our peer review process is made of three key components: a reflective self-review assessment completed independently by teams, a peer review assessment involving professionals from other services and a veteran representative, and a comprehensive written report to summarise findings. More detail on the peer review process can be found [here](#).

Another key component of the quality network is the facilitation and sharing of ideas and best practice across different members. This is accomplished through peer reviews, various webinars, and our Annual Forum held at the end of each peer review cycle.

Our standards

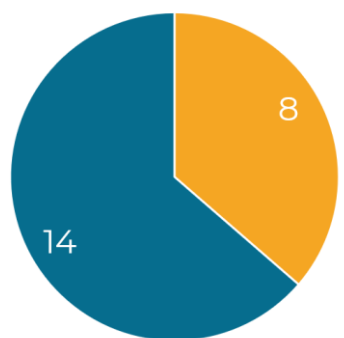
We adopt a multi-disciplinary approach to quality improvement in veterans' mental health services, using a set of [a quality standards for veterans mental health services](#). These evidence-based standards are revised every two-years to remain in line with current guidance and best practice.

Membership

Membership is open to all veterans mental health services whether these statutory services (NHS) or non-statutory services (third sector, private and charities). Services sign up to the network voluntarily by paying an annual subscription fee.

We currently have **22** member services across all devolved nations in the United Kingdom. You can find a full list of our members [online](#).

The breakdown of our members across statutory and non-statutory service provision is demonstrated in the chart below.



■ Statutory ■ Non-statutory



Progress review

Since launching this network in 2020, we have worked hard to continue to promote the network and get more veterans mental health services signed up to undergo the peer review process for quality improvement and sharing of best practice across services.

Pilot year (2020)



Where we are now (2025)

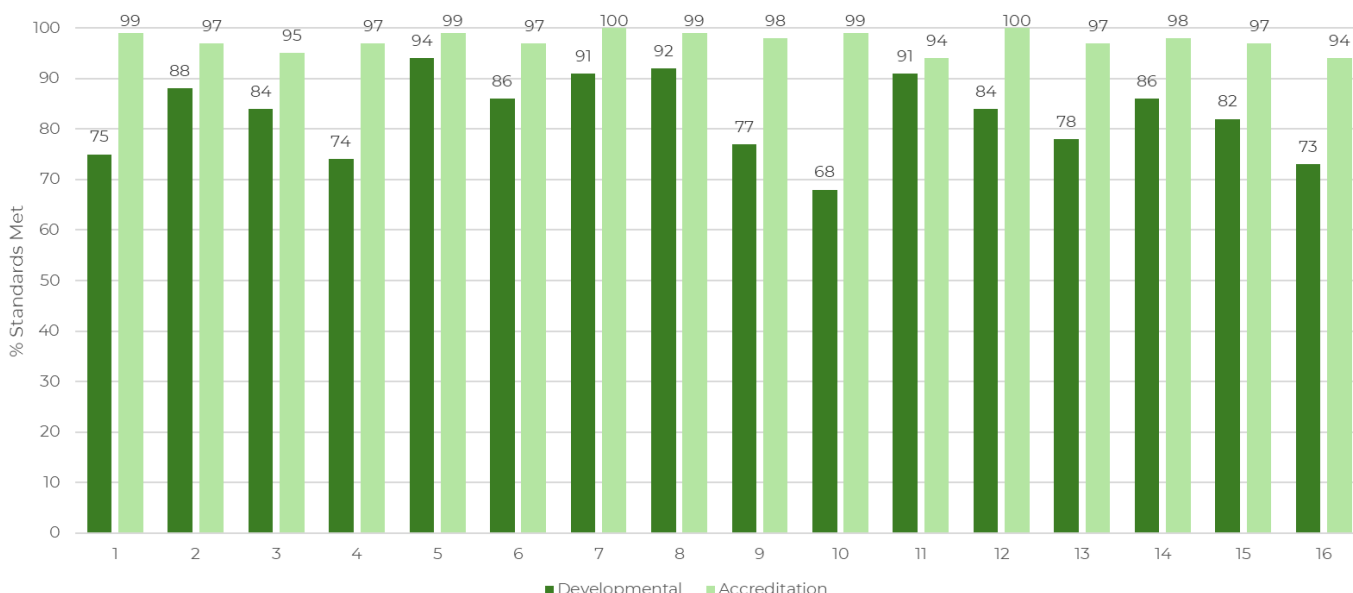


Throughout this period, we have collected a significant amount of feedback from staff working in veterans' mental health services, as well as veterans and family members that have been supported by services.

How are services improving?

When veterans' mental health services first join the network, they begin on the developmental pathway. This is aimed to be a less rigorous assessment process so that teams can become familiar with the standards and receive some bespoke feedback against any standards that may not be met currently. Following this year, services have the option to move onto the accreditation membership. They would need to demonstrate that they are meeting the threshold of standards required, which is set out in our standards publication.

The chart below demonstrates how our current accredited members performed against the standards in their first developmental view compared with their accreditation review.



Following their first peer review assessment, service performance against our standards increased by an average of **19%** in their subsequent accreditation review!

Introduction

This report presents an overview of the feedback received from individuals involved in or accessing veterans mental health services, including staff, veterans, and carers. The data was collected between February 2024 and July 2025, using surveys designed in alignment with the third edition of the QNVMHS quality standards.

Unlike previous years, where peer review assessments formed the basis of our aggregated reports in terms of compliance against standards, this year's report draws primarily on survey data. We have used the survey responses to identify key themes and experiential insights, offering a valuable perspective on how services are perceived and experienced by those who deliver and receive them.

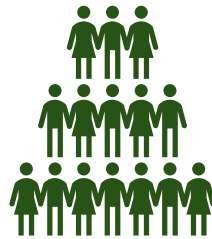
Data collection

During the reporting period, nine veterans' mental health services participated in peer review assessments.

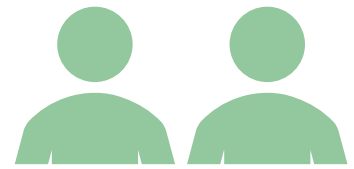
The data collected is as follows:



78
staff
completed
surveys



85
veterans
completed
surveys



36
carers
completed
surveys

The themes contained within this section of the report are as follows:

1. Compassionate staff
2. Care and treatment planning
3. Staff support and wellbeing
4. Team training and development
5. Carer involvement and support

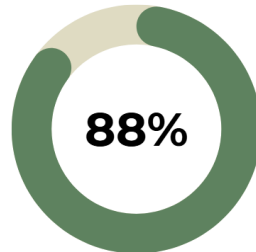
This feedback will inform the ongoing development of the QNVMHS standards and review processes, ensuring they remain responsive to the lived experiences of veterans, carers, and staff. While this year's data collection was limited in scope, the insights gathered offer a meaningful snapshot of service strengths and areas for growth.

Theme 1: Compassionate staff

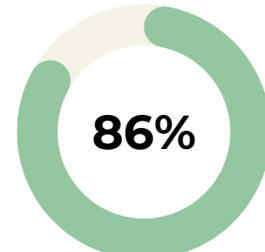
Overwhelmingly, one of the things that came through from the veteran and carer surveys was the compassionate support given by staff. This consistent feedback highlights the strength of interpersonal care provided by teams and the lasting impact that has on veterans and families going through the process.



Of **veterans** felt treated with compassion, dignity and respect.



Of **veterans** felt listened to and understood by staff.



Of **carers** felt treated with compassion, dignity and respect.

This feedback highlights the value of dedicated and caring staff across services who are continually offering support to veterans and their carers and ensuring their needs are met and that they are treated well. Many veterans felt well-informed and reassured during treatment, with staff maintaining clear communication and demonstrating genuine empathy.

Veteran feedback

Positive experiences shared by veterans are included below.

"[Staff name] was incredible and she was able to make me feel safe and confident in a way I have never experienced. [Staff name] is an incredible therapist who managed to get exactly the right tone with me to gently give me strength to make necessary changes."

"I was also very impressed with my therapist's understanding of the trauma that women experience in the military environment. He was very compassionate and extremely validating"

"I really appreciated the time they took to listen which had a positive impact on me. Their support helped me cope better with work challenges and made me realise how my mental health is affected by workplace issues. I've only become aware of this through the understanding and care shown by them and others in the group. Thank you is a small word to say for what they have given me."

Carer feedback

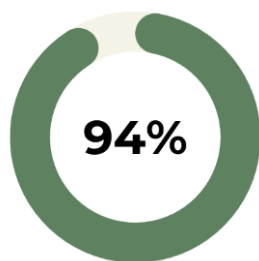
Similarly, carers expressed an appreciation for the professionalism and kindness of staff, as well as valuing their understanding of the unique challenges faced by veterans in forming a caring environment.

"I think they try very hard to be accommodating and flexible in support. [I] visited the centre once and [it was] very welcoming."

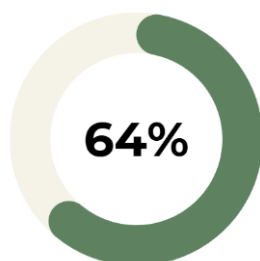
"They went the extra mile to get help for my husband."

Theme 2: Care and treatment planning

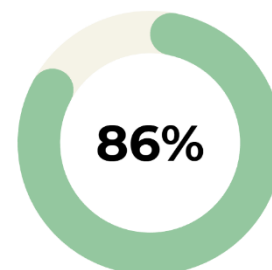
While the care, support and treatment were frequently commended there was a large proportion of veterans who responded to the survey who did not have a care plan or were not aware of them.



Of **veterans** felt involved in decisions about their care, treatment and discharge planning.



Of **veterans** confirmed that they had a written care plan.



Of **carers** felt involved in discussions and decisions about the veteran's care, either fully or somewhat.

This feedback suggests that services are putting effort into ensuring there is collaborative care delivered with meaningful involvement from veterans and carers. However, the findings indicate that veterans may not be receiving or understanding their documented care plans which may indicate an area for improvement.

Veteran feedback

From the comments shared by veterans it is clear that services offer person-centred care and that the care and treatment was effective for them.

"I was seen quickly and was given excellent care and advice I am very grateful to [Service Name] for helping me with mental health problems."

"The help I was given helped me to push on with my life. The treatment was explained both verbally and written."

"I did learn a great deal about PTSD and how to cope better living with it. I am now very aware about how I feel and can now cope a lot better than before. I'm very grateful for the help I received and all the staff were fantastic."

Carer feedback

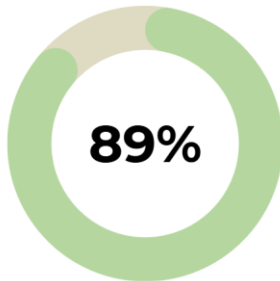
The experiences shared by carers highlights that they value the support their loved one is receiving from the service as well as their own needs being met.

"In my experience I was able to contact my Peer Support Worker with my concerns regarding my husband's behaviour/mood knowing this would be passed on to his therapist as he wouldn't always remember or think to mention anything that had happened between sessions. His everyday memory has been badly affected by his experiences."

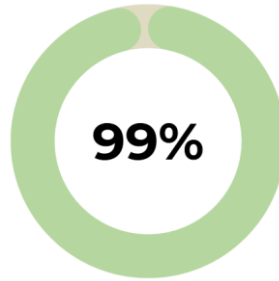
"I'm very grateful for the support provided by the service. It's clear that the clinicians care about the veterans and their wellbeing."

Theme 3: Staff support and wellbeing

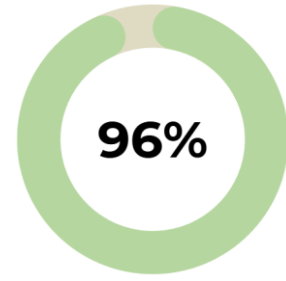
Staff experiences were also highly positive with many individuals sharing the wide range of efforts services would put into place in ensuring their health and wellbeing was supported.



Of **staff** felt that the service actively supports their health and wellbeing.



Of **staff** are able to raise concerns about standards of care.



Of **staff** confirmed that they are able to take breaks during the working day.

Overall, staff feedback indicated a generally positive culture, with reports of feeling supported in their wellbeing and confident in raising or escalating concerns. Also, as a majority of staff confirmed that they can take breaks this demonstrates services implementing sustainable and supportive working conditions.

Supervision variances

The frequency and delivery of supervision varied across services.

33%

Of staff reported receiving clinical supervision monthly.

43%

Of staff reported receiving line management supervision monthly.

18%

Of staff reported receiving reflective practice sessions monthly.

Staff feedback

The feedback from staff highlights that overall, there are positive support mechanisms in place for staff wellbeing. A few comments from staff however, suggested improving the provision of staff support and how caseloads are managed to support high workloads.

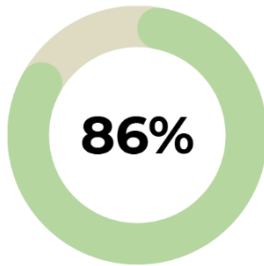
“Colleagues are compassionate and supportive of each other. CPD is well supported. Good collaboration with other teams to support best outcome for the individuals we support.”

“The service provides a three-strand approach wellbeing welfare and mental health.”

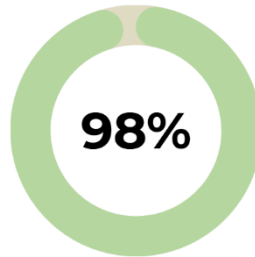
“The service works hard to support the wellbeing of the team and CPD opportunities are excellent.”

Theme 4: Team training and development

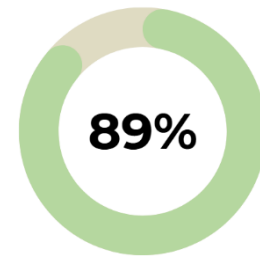
Another theme that emerged from an analysis of staff feedback was the emphasis services place in the training and professional development opportunities for staff. Many staff also reflected positively on the commitment to continuous improvement within services and staff being involved in service development and design.



Of **staff** felt that they had the necessary training to deliver the interventions they provide.



Of **staff** are aware of clear and effective systems in place to report any safety incidents.



Of **staff** know how to identify and manage an acute physical health emergency.

Staff feedback

The feedback from staff highlights an appreciation for the investment services place in their professional development by providing a range of CPD opportunities. Staff also appreciate the aspect of peer support and valuing teamwork and team building.

"The service is person centred and our values are aligned to achieving positive outcomes for veterans focusing on the strengths of veterans and our commitment to continual and relevant training for all staff."

"The service does staff wellbeing teamwork training and development well."

"The service overall is very supportive. The service provides excellent CPD. The service is constantly evolving in a positive way to benefit the clients and support the team."

Suggested improvements

As well as the positive feedback, some staff across services highlighted that further developments could be made for staff support and training. This includes:

Better funding to expand services and support staff workloads

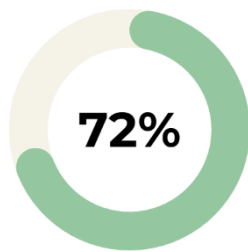
Services could look at expanding specialist roles to support complex cases and provide support or training to upskill staff. Caseload caps could also be implemented to protect clinical time and address workload.

Better funding to expand services and support staff workloads

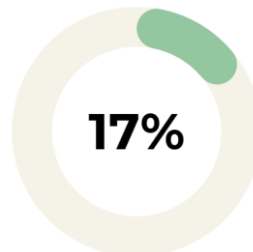
Modern case management systems can be implemented to integrate assessments and care plans which support teams to access information whilst reducing clinical admin time.

Theme 5: Carer involvement and support

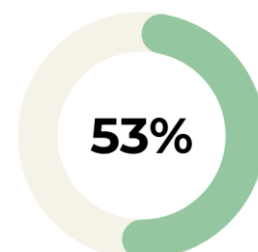
Support for carers (including family members, friends, and partners of veterans accessing veterans' mental health services) varies considerably across different services. Some teams have established resources and structures to address carers' needs, while others focus primarily on supporting veterans directly. However, in the services where carers are offered dedicated support, feedback from carers has been consistently positive, as highlighted in this section.



Of **carers** were offered individual time with staff to discuss concerns, family history and their own needs.



Of **carers** were encouraged to attend a carer support network or group by the service.



Of **carers** were supported to access a statutory carers' assessment.

Carer feedback

The feedback from carers demonstrates how strongly they value and appreciate veterans' mental health services, not only for the support provided to their loved ones, but also for the care and consideration shown to them as carers.

"The support given to families ensured we were part of my husband's treatment. Information given was clear with any questions answered professionally. I felt listened to and respected."

"Regular contact and support chats group classes were really helpful for understanding."

"Continued support to my husband. Offered help to us both."

"[The service] took myself and my husband through many interviews with kindness and compassion also empathy."

Identified gaps

Feedback from carers did highlight some areas where services could improve, including:

Improved signposting to carer support networks or groups

Allocate dedicated time to speak to carers and ask about their needs

Improve awareness of a statutory carers' assessment, including what it is and how to access it

Suggested Improvements

For all the groups who are surveyed, a question is asked around what they think could be done to improve the service. While some of these suggestions are out of the services immediate control (e.g. funding and resources), it is helpful to see the things that are important to staff, carers and veterans. This is broken up into three key areas below.

Funding and resources

Respondents from all three groups highlighted the need for greater funding and more operational resources. Staff expressed concern about increasing workloads and emphasised the importance of sustainable funding to maintain salaries and ensure high-quality, consistent support for veterans. Carers and veterans suggested increasing the number of therapists and expanding access to specialist or residential services so more veterans can receive the intensive care they need.

"More funds to be able to sustain and maintain salaries for our excellent staff."

STAFF FEEDBACK

Staffing and capacity

Closely linked to funding, many respondents emphasised the need for greater staffing capacity. Staff reported feeling stretched, noting that additional team members would help manage caseloads and reduce pressure. Veterans and carers also felt that more staff would improve flexibility around appointment times, reduce waiting lists and create more opportunities for carer support groups.

"The ability to take in more people or services spread across the country."

VETERAN FEEDBACK

Access and availability

Some staff and veterans felt that the physical accessibility and number of service locations could be improved. Suggestions included expanding to additional sites, offering more online support options, and ensuring environments are accessible for people with physical injuries or mobility limitations.

"Nearer the ground floor would be better for those carrying physical injuries."

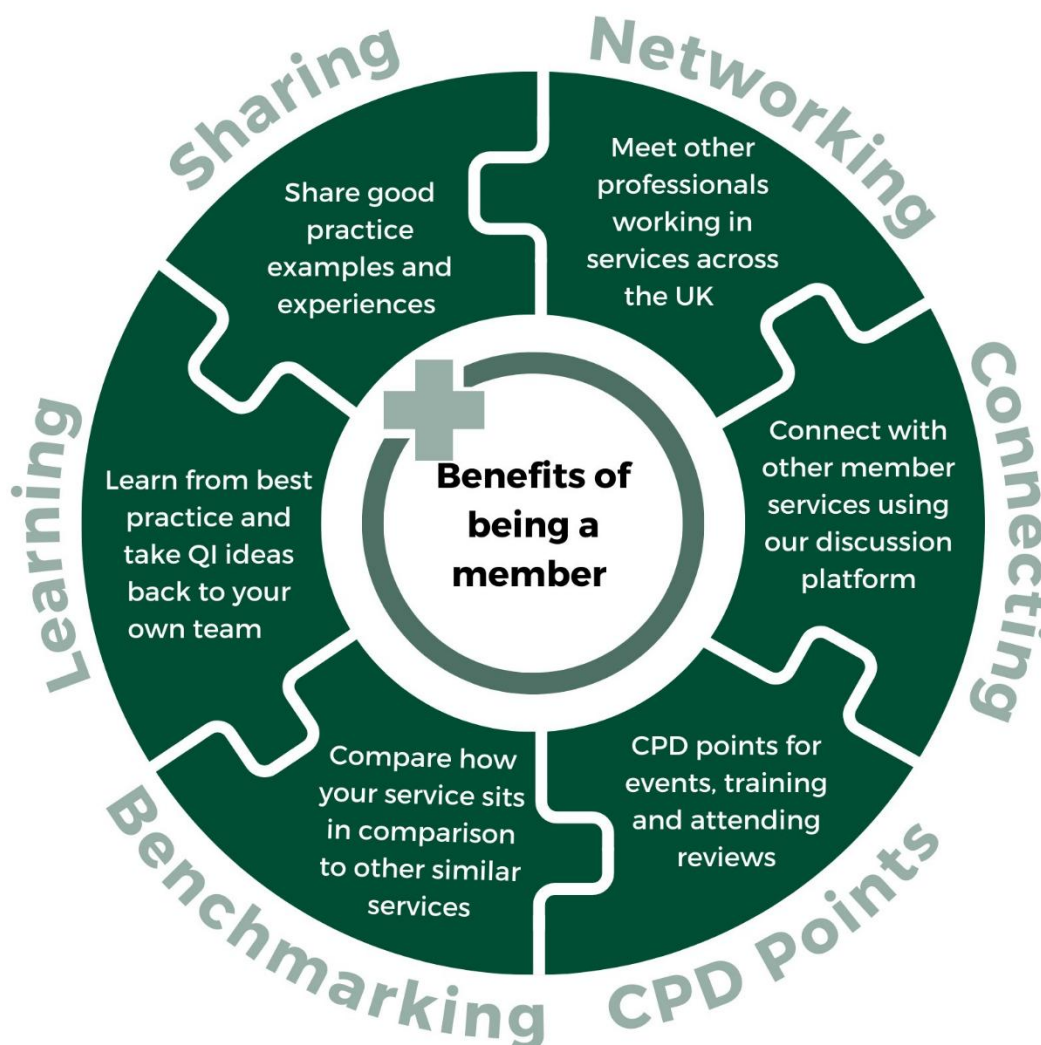
VETERAN FEEDBACK

"A more suited larger premises for base."

STAFF FEEDBACK

Membership benefits

All veteran's mental health services signed up to the Quality Network for Veterans Mental Health Services will have access to a range of membership benefits. These are summarised below.



Additionally, a range of publications are produced to support member services in a number of different ways. These publications include

SERVICE LEVEL REPORTS

Type of standard	Number of standards	Number met	Number not met	Number N/A	% met
Type 1	100	100	0	0	100%
Type 2	30	30	0	0	100%
Type 3	4	3	1	0	75%
Total	134	133	1	0	99%

Comprehensive reports on how your service is meeting our standards, with tailored recommendations.

ANNUAL REPORTS

3rd AGGREGATED REPORT
 Author: Jenni-Jarvis, Holly-Rafter, Emma and Sarah
 Publication date: November 2023
 Publication no: CQV 433

Annual reports to be used for benchmarking, learning lessons and seeking ideas for best practice.

NEWSLETTERS/BULLETINS

contact
 RCPSYCH
 VETERANS QUALITY NETWORK FOR VETERANS MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
 Issue 03, December 2022

WELCOME

Throughout the year, we share newsletters or bulletins to showcase what our members are up to and any areas of

Appendix 1: List of members

The following list details the veterans' mental health services that participated in this year of membership (2025-2026).

Anxious Minds

Avon & Wiltshire MH Partnership NHS Trust

Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Brooke House Health and Wellbeing Centre

Camden and Islington NHS Trust

Cardiff & Vale University Health Board

Combat Stress

Cumbria Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust

Defence Medical Welfare Service

East Durham Veterans Trust

Essex Partnership University NHS Trust

Help for Heroes

Icarus Online SCIO

Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Mode Rehabilitation

NHS Lanarkshire

NHS Tayside

Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust

PTSD Resolution

RMA - The Royal Marines Charity

Strategic Planning & Performance Group - Department of Health

Veterans Outreach Support

Walking with the Wounded

Appendix 2: Contact details

Contact the team

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Website

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/qnvmhs

Online discussion platform

veterans@rcpsych.ac.uk or www.khub.net

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