

Sexual violence in the military

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and Sexual Assault and Abuse Services
Commissioning

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Turn to us

We are here

Go to:
nhs.uk/SARCs



The NHS in England

Under the **Health and Care Act 2022** and on 1 July 2022, 42 **integrated care systems (ICSs)** became legally established with the aim of:

- improving outcomes in population health and healthcare
- tackling inequalities in outcomes, experience and access
- enhancing productivity and value for money
- helping the NHS support broader social and economic development

and in doing so:



Recover from the pandemic

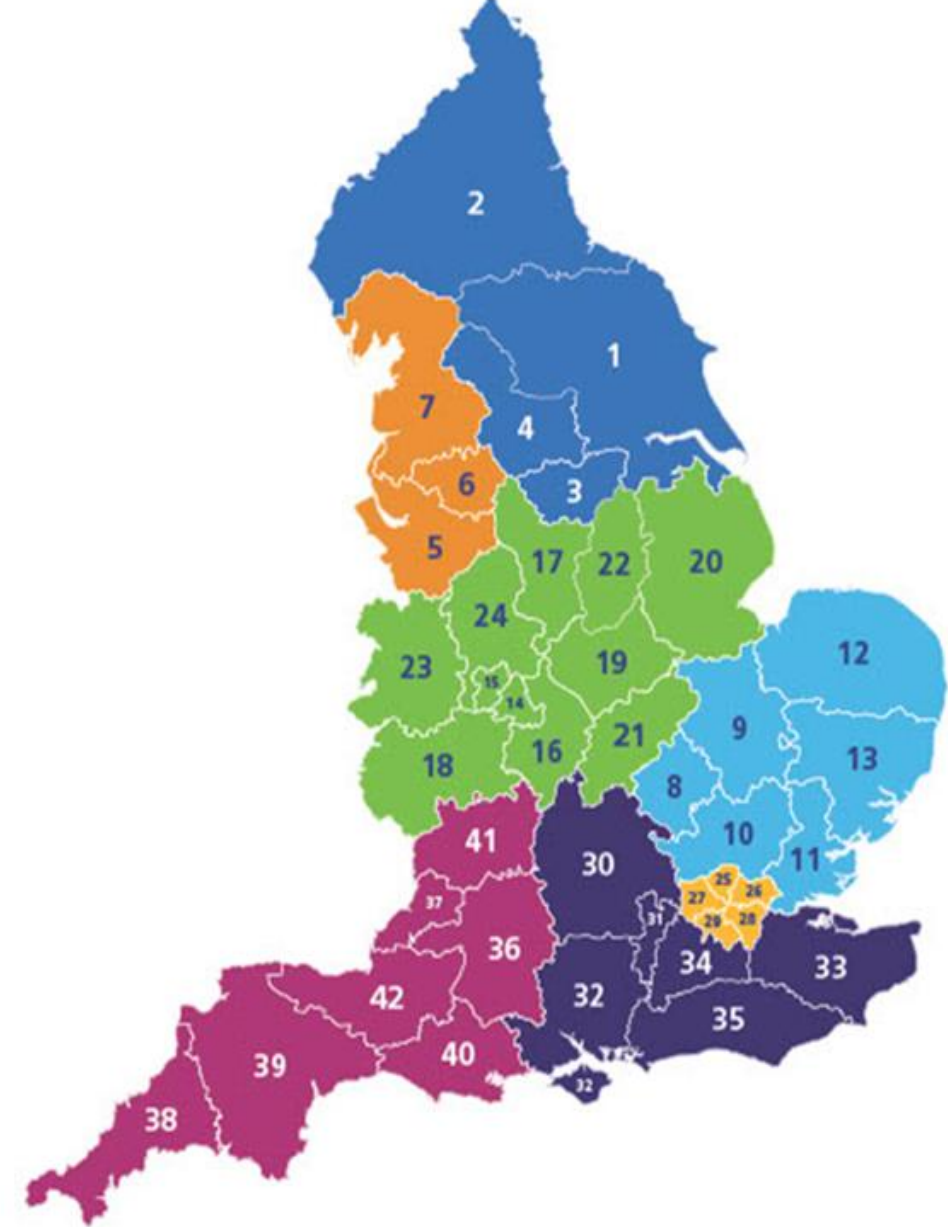


Reform and improve care



Build resilience

With a guiding principle of respect for all our staff, patients, and the wider public who support us



Healthcare responsibilities for the Armed Forces community

	Serving person posted in England	Serving person posted overseas	AF families registered with DMS in England	AF families registered with DMS overseas	AF families registered with NHS GP practice	Mobilised reservists	Veterans and non mobilised reservists
Primary	DMS	DMS	DMS	DMS	ICBs	ICBs and DMS	ICBs
Community and mental health	DMS	DMS	ICBs and NHS England	DMS	ICBs	DMS	ICBs and NHS England
Secondary acute	NHS England	DMS	NHS England	DMS	ICBs	NHS England	ICBs

Integrated care boards (ICBs) commission health services for veterans and Armed Forces families registered with an NHS GP practice

ICBs need to demonstrate how they are **giving due regard to the health and social care needs of the Armed Forces community in the planning and commissioning of services**, as well as through veteran friendly GP practice / veteran aware trust accreditation

Armed Forces healthcare

Nine policy commitments setting out what NHS England will do in partnership with stakeholders detailed in *Healthcare for the Armed Forces: a forward view*

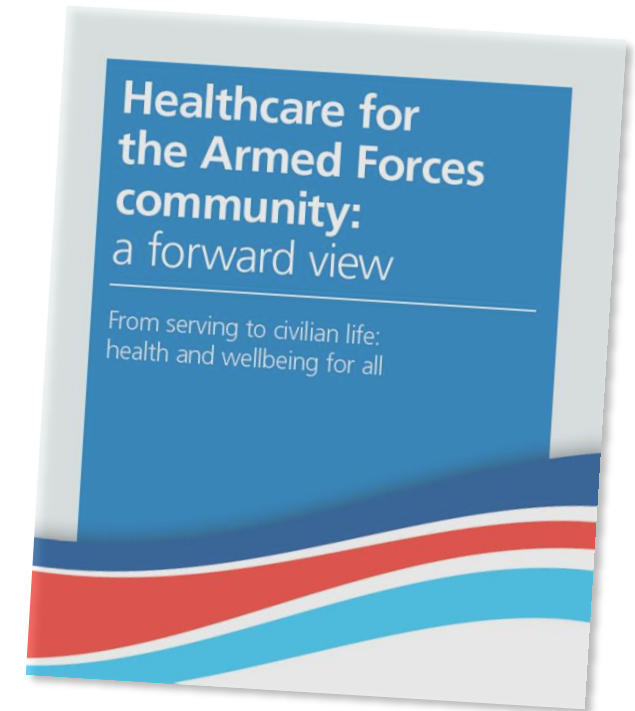
Complement the MOD's *Defence People Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy* and the *OVA's Veterans' Strategy Action Plan*

Underpinned by key considerations for ICBs

Supported by over 50 work programmes, including the commissioning of a range of dedicated services and initiatives

Dedicated work programme (informed by the *We Also Served* report), NHS England and MOD focussing on how we support those who have experienced military sexual trauma (MST) including access to SARCs and dedicated pathways

All work is informed by lived experience



We Also Served

The Health and Well-Being
of Female Veterans
in the UK

May 2021



Lauren Godier-McBard, Nicola Gillin and Matt Fossey

We Also Served...

Informed by literature review, interviews and a call for evidence

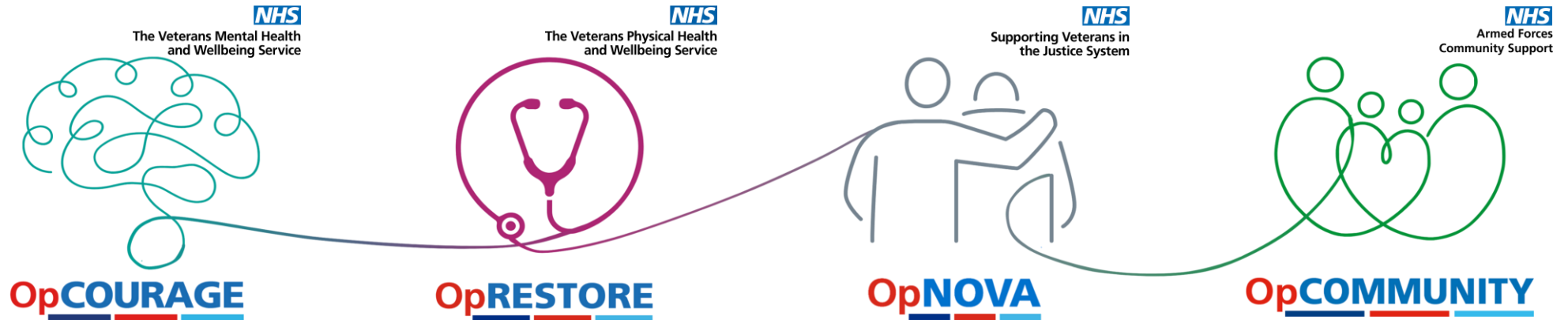
Findings split into pre service, in service and post service experience

Sexual assault and harassment remains an issue in the military

Recommended further research into sexual assault and harassment

“...and the trouble was,
in the Army, what you and I might
term a **sexual assault** just was
seen as **normal behaviour.**”

Armed Forces healthcare



Mental health and wellbeing

Service attributable physical health

Supporting veterans in the criminal justice system

ICB led pilot for wider Armed Forces community



2,518+ veteran friendly accredited GP practices



2,670+ veterans employed through Step Into Health



169 accredited NHS trusts (80%)

Sexual assault and abuse: strategic priorities and operational commitments (2018 – 2024)

Launched in 2018, the [Strategic direction for sexual assault and abuse services](#) (SAAS) was co-developed with service users and stakeholders, with cross Government commitment and collaboration

The six core priorities



Strengthening the approach to prevention



Promoting safeguarding and the safety, protection and welfare of victims and survivors



Involving victims and survivors in the development and improvement of services



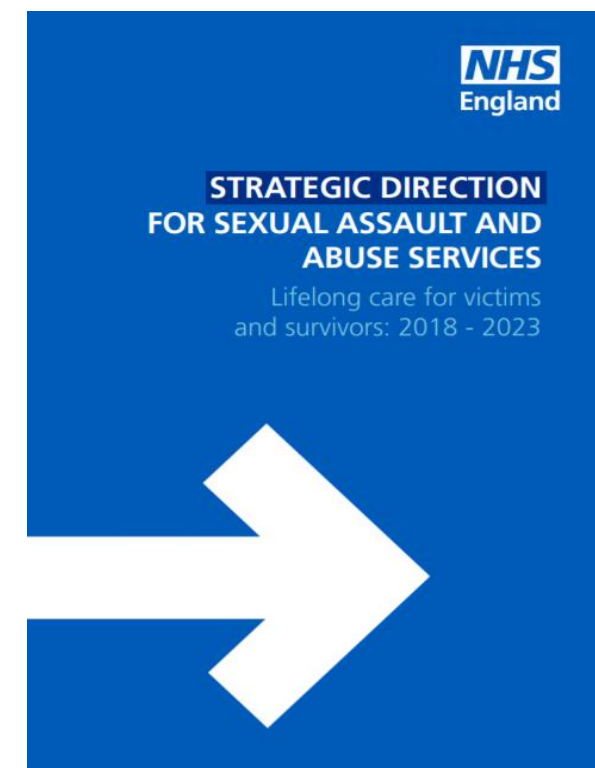
Introducing consistent quality standards



Driving collaboration and reducing fragmentation



Ensuring an appropriately trained workforce



Turn to us

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Go to:
nhs.uk/SARCs



Sexual assault referral centres

47 SARCs providing help 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Support anyone who has been raped, sexually assaulted or abused, both recent and non-recent

Specially trained doctors, nurses and support workers

Provide emotional, practical and medical support

SARCs can be accessed directly without the need for referral or police involvement

Sexual assault referral centres

Assessment

Liaise with referrers (self, police, social care, education)

Comprehensive clinical assessment and forensic medical examination (where indicated)

Clinical offer

Offer emergency contraception / pregnancy testing

Offer or refer for HIV post exposure prophylaxis (PEP) medication

Offer dry blood spot testing for blood borne viruses

Onward care

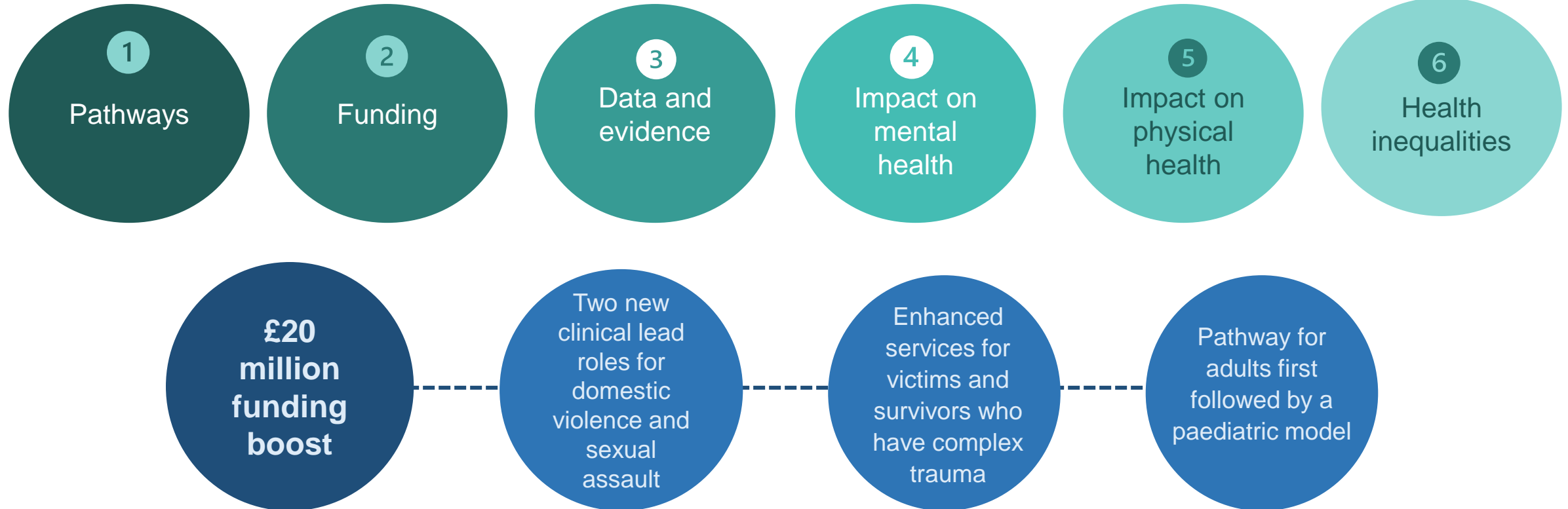
Onward referrals to other health services

Onward referral to independent sexual violence advisor (ISVA)

Provide follow-up to ensure on-going support is in place

New SAAS strategic direction (2024 – 2029)

The SAAS strategic direction is in the process of being refreshed to reflect the role of integrated care boards in its delivery and incorporate domestic abuse and sexual violence. Extensive engagement has informed six new priorities:



Commissioning a forensic nurse advisor for the military community accessing SARCs

Original project concluded in January 2022

Funded by NHS England, health and justice commissioning in the North East and Yorkshire region

Aimed to streamline referral and support pathways between Catterick Garrison and regional SARC service

Aimed to raise awareness of SARCs within the military community

Improve professional health support for survivors of sexual assault

Highly commended by HSJ in the Military and Civilian Partnership award



Rape and sexual assault military pathway:

Assessment and action following sexual assault and onward referral to SARC

Person discloses sexual assault (recent or historic) to commander

Safety assessment e.g. domestic abuse, child protection, life threatening injury

Priority is to ensure individual's opinions and wishes are respected and the reporting individual is given choices and support with regards to reporting to the police and attending a SARC

Police

- Commanders obliged to report to police as soon as possible
- The individual can still choose to engage or not with police (Service or civilian)

Sexual Assault Referral Centre

- SARCs open to all
- Confidential, medical and practical support
- Access via self referral, police or CoC
- Does not require police involvement
- Evidence can be collected and stored for 7 years

Ongoing welfare / compassionate support

Recommendations

Work together to commission and recruit a senior healthcare professional who will act in a forensic nurse advisor for sexual assault (military) - achieved ✓

Improve the awareness of and communications regarding SARCs within the Armed Forces community



Ambitions

Forensic Nurse Advisor (Military) role to be replicated across England, as part of regional SARC contracts

All Commanding Officers to have access to Initial Disclosure training including in education, promotional courses and mandatory training

All victims to have access to a Forensic Nurse Advisor for advice, treatment and support, in the UK and when posted overseas



Domestic abuse and sexual violence – safety in the workplace

In 2022 NHS England created a work programme focussed on domestic abuse and sexual violence to:

Transform the NHS's response to DASV – implementing a public health approach

Build on robust safeguarding processes and improve support for victims

Better support staff who experience these crimes

All NHS organisations have been asked to appoint a DASV executive and operational lead

Launched and signed the Sexual Safety Charter

NHS England has included a new question in the NHS Staff Survey for the first time

St Giles Trust have been awarded a 24 month contract to provide lived experience support for the national DASV programme



The image shows a poster for the NHS Sexual Safety Charter. At the top right is the NHS logo. The main text reads: "We're making the NHS a safer place to work". Below this is the call to action: "Join us in signing the Sexual Safety Charter". A QR code is located in the bottom right corner of the poster. Below the poster, a list of commitments is visible, including:

- 7. We will ensure appropriate, specific, and clear training is in place.
- 8. We will ensure appropriate reporting mechanisms are in place for those experiencing these behaviours.
- 9. We will take all reports seriously and appropriate and timely action will be taken in all cases.
- 10. We will capture and share data on prevalence and staff experience transparently.

Our ask of you

Sign up

Sign up for and share the Armed Forces stakeholder brief and share in your teams

Share

Share our social content organically on social media and by retweeting @NHSArmedForces

Speak about

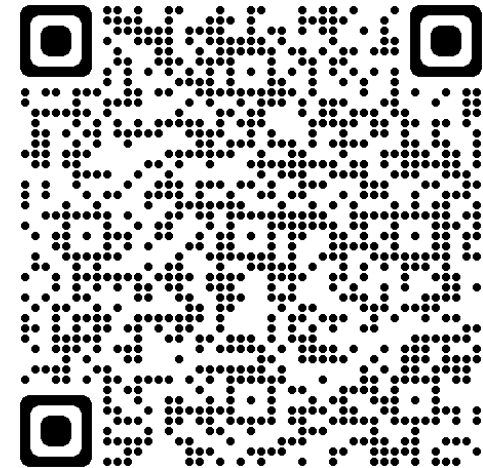
Promote SARC's within your networks

**Sign up for the Armed
Forces stakeholder
brief**



<https://forms.office.com/e/yJU1CGGzT>

**Find out about the
Sexual Safety Charter**



Email: england.domesticabusesexualviolence@nhs.net

**Thank you
and
questions**