



**Veterans & Families – Listening Project**

**email: [veteransnfamilies@yahoo.com](mailto:veteransnfamilies@yahoo.com)**

**[www.vflp.org.uk](http://www.vflp.org.uk)**



# Welcome to our April Newsletter

The really good is it sounds like we're almost coming to the end of the Lockdown...

## ...Good News...

*We are planning to reopen our Drop-In... On the second Monday 14<sup>th</sup> June from 10:00a am – 2:00pm*

*This may be subject to change depending on the Prime Minister's future announcements regarding lockdown and the lifting of Coronavirus restrictions.*

*Please keep an eye on our website and social media for further information. We can't wait to see you all, but only when it's safe to do so.*

# Veterans Advisory and Pensions Committee (VAPC)

In the meantime our amazing communications team have arranged another interesting evening Drop-in on ZOOM, with guest speaker Tony Thompson from Veterans Advisory and Pensions Committee (VAPC) on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2020 at 7:00 pm.

For your VIP ZOOM link email:

[veteransnfamilies@yahoo.com](mailto:veteransnfamilies@yahoo.com)

12:00 pm on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> April

# Veterans Advisory and Pensions Committee (VAPC)

Tony will be talking about the work about the work of the Veterans Advisory and Pensions Committee (VAPC) and the Armed Forces Covenant.

Tony appointed by the Minister for Defence People and Veterans on 22<sup>nd</sup> February this year for a three-year period as a member of the VAPC for South West England. Tony previously served in the RAF, British Transport Police, the Civil Service and the British Red Cross. He now runs his own consultancy as well as training company in

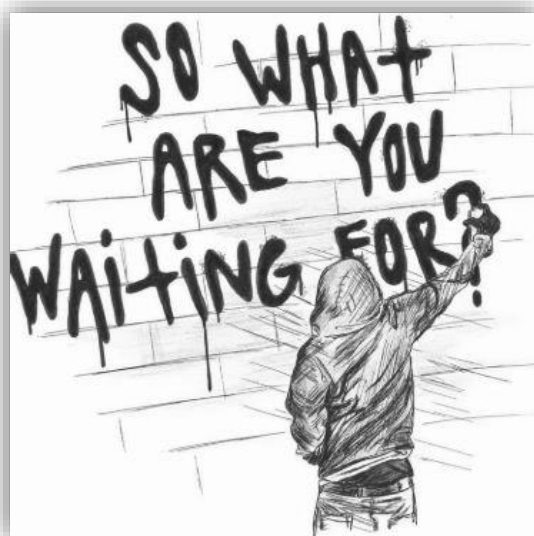
crisis and emergency management in the UK and overseas.

Tony's presentation will describe the purpose and structure of the VAPC across the UK and how the regional committees and their members work to promote the interests and welfare of veterans and their families. The talk will examine the current proposal to place into law the Armed Forces Covenant via the Armed Forces Bill which is currently before Parliament. This will place a legal duty on public bodies to have due regard to the Covenant and make sure that Armed Forces veterans are not disadvantaged by their service when accessing essential public services.

This is a really good opportunity for you to find out more information about VAPC, as well as ask Tony some questions...

For more information on VAPC visit their website:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-appointments/veterans-advisory-and-pensions-committee-vapc](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-appointments/veterans-advisory-and-pensions-committee-vapc)





# The Wellbeing Project

Well-Being Project  
Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> April  
12:00 pm – 1:30 pm



*With Ali*



**Time For....  
HOT TOPICS  
& WORK IN  
PROGRESS**

**So grab a snack... & come on right back...**



The sun is shining, the boot is packed with Easter eggs ready for our drive-by Easter egg deliveries...

Va. Va. VoooOOOoom...

# Face-to-face assessments to resume for health and disability benefits

The DWP has announced that, “in line with the latest public health guidance and adhering to strict safety protocols”, it is to begin reintroducing face-to-face assessments for health and disability benefits.

Face-to-face assessments for:

- Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (IIDB) claimants in England will resume from 12 April 2021;
- Work Capability Assessments (WCAs) (for claims for the additional limited capability for work component of Universal Credit and Employment and Support Allowance) and Personal Independence Payment (PIP), will resume from May.

The DWP says that initially, this will only be for those who it is unable to fully assess by other channels and that claimants will be invited for their appointments by letter, which will clearly set out what to expect at their appointment.

It adds that:

“Face-to-face assessments will take place alongside existing paper-based assessments, and telephone assessments (for WCAs and PIP), which will continue to take place where suitable.

REF: [www.disabilityrightsuk.org/news/2021/march/face-face-assessments-resume-health-and-disability-benefits-0](http://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/news/2021/march/face-face-assessments-resume-health-and-disability-benefits-0)

REF: [www.gov.uk/government/news/face-to-face-assessments-to-resume-for-health-and-disability-benefits?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_source=75f28f2c-87aa-4520-ba62-1eafa32d8e0f&utm\\_content=immediately](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/face-to-face-assessments-to-resume-for-health-and-disability-benefits?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=75f28f2c-87aa-4520-ba62-1eafa32d8e0f&utm_content=immediately)



Looking for a Trust funded project in your area? Check out the all new AFCT Project Finder, *for Forces, families and veterans*.

Featuring a host of Trust funded projects across the UK, the AFCT Project Finder is the new way to discover more about the great work taking place in your area. It's never been easier for the Forces community to get involved in something really positive!

[Help getting started](#)

[Download to your mobile device](#)

REF: <https://covenantfund.org.uk/find-a-project-in-your-area/>





**11:30 a.m., Saturday, 28th August, 2021**  
**Muster at Duke of York column, Horse Guards Parade, London.**  
**March to the Palace.**

## **Justice for Northern Ireland Veterans March**

**Justice for Northern Ireland Veterans Original Group, U.K.**  
**Veterans One Voice, Rolling Thunder & Million Veterans March**

REF: Seen on Twitter – 21.03.21

## **Justice for people affected by mental health law**



## **Why we are concerned**

This January, the government published a White Paper on



reforming the Mental Health Act 1983. This Act does badly need changing, but there are major problems with the White Paper. Although it contains a large number of proposals:

- It is full of loopholes, lacks 'teeth' and falls far short of our full human rights, especially the rights set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- We can still be detained in psychiatric hospitals against our will, if it's thought there **may** be real risk otherwise, even though no one else can be locked up for that reason and risk assessments are known to be highly unreliable
- The White Paper is strongly based on a medical model of mental distress/trauma
- It fails to tackle multiple discrimination effectively.



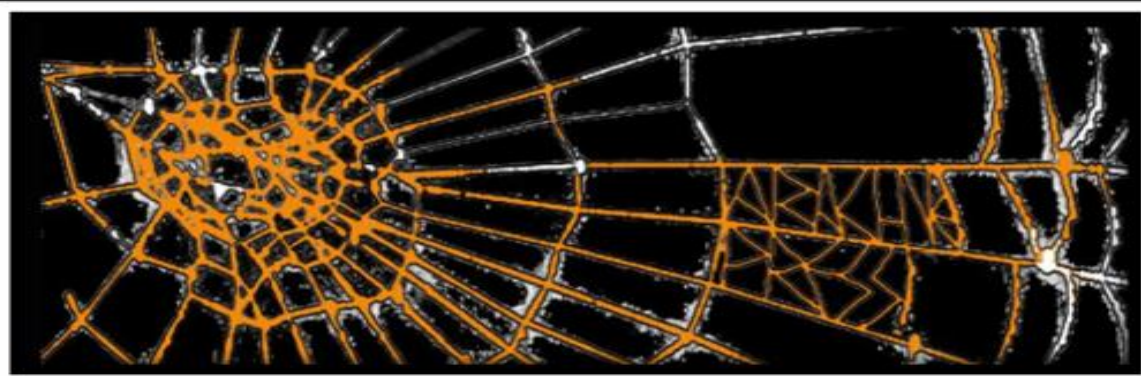
These human rights breaches are completely unacceptable. That is why the user-led group, Liberation, is leading a campaign against the White Paper.

**Please act now and email your MP in support of our campaign.**

1. Submit the form on the website page:

[https://actionnetwork.org/letters/1837b52a60f0e0fcf3f9717343252b79?source=direct\\_link&](https://actionnetwork.org/letters/1837b52a60f0e0fcf3f9717343252b79?source=direct_link&) - it will find your MP

2. Send it & share this action on social media!

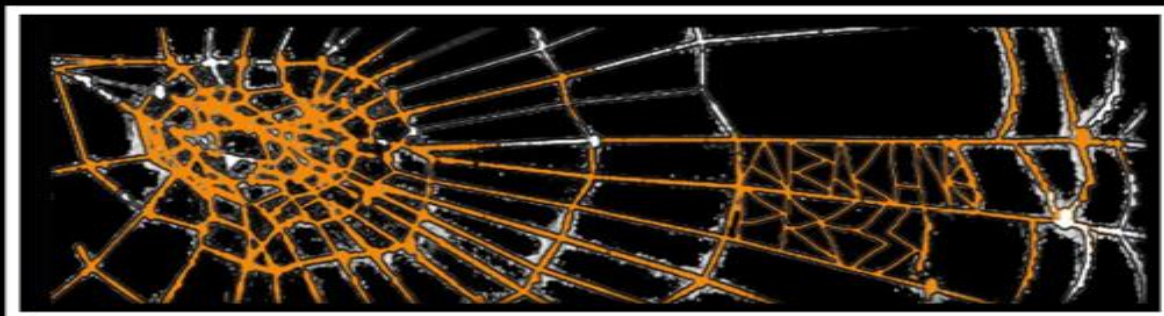


## **Call for submissions for fiction anthology by D/deaf writers**

Arachne Press is planning an anthology of fiction and poetry by D/deaf and hard-of-hearing writers, which will be produced as a printed book, an eBook and a series of videos. The eBook will contain links to the videos, which will also be on the Arachne website, and probably YouTube.

The editors are Lisa Kelly (co-editor of Magma 69, The Deaf Issue; co-Chair of Magma Poetry, first collection A Map Towards Fluency published by Carcanet) and Sophie Stone (RADA trained Actor, Writer: Paine's Plough, The Bunker, BBC Radio 3 and Co-founder of DH Ensemble theatre Co).

They have chosen the theme of movement, to fit with the overarching theme for this year and next of 'maps and mapping'.



You can interpret this however you want: ideas might include movement as communication and connection, mobility and stillness, being moved emotionally, movement within and after lockdown, or freedom of movement. No erotica, horror, gratuitous violence, sexism, racism, or homophobia.

You can apply in written English, or by video in BSL, SSE or whatever UK based form of sign you wish; or in writing and sign. We will pay royalties.

They will be translating everything that arrives signed into English, and we will also be translating everything that arrives written, into BSL. They will discuss with you in detail so that they get these translations right.

For the submission, use a phone to video yourself and send a file no bigger than 400MB. If your file is larger, let them know and they will arrange an alternative method.

You can send in one story of up to 2000 words/15 minutes of signing, and up to three poems around 650 words/5 minutes each which total up to 2000 words/15 minutes of signing, or one poem and one story.

Unpublished work is preferable, but if you have published something that is a perfect fit, they will consider it, provided you hold the copyright.

**Deadline for submissions is 14 April 2021 and publication is planned for 16th September 2021**

All submissions via <https://arachnepress.submittable.com/submit>.

## SUPPORTING VETERANS IN SOUTH WALES

When many people think of Royal Navy in geographic terms, they think only of the clusters of sailors, marines, veterans and families around the main base ports of Portsmouth, Plymouth and Faslane. However, naval communities can be found across the length and breadth of the UK (and indeed beyond), and it is critical that serving personnel, families and veterans have access to the right support, wherever they are.

In 2020 the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) began working with **Woody's Lodge** to support the veteran community in South East Wales. A £44,000 grant from the RNRMC and its funding partner, Greenwich Hospital, allowed Woody's Lodge to actively engage with the Royal Navy & Royal Marine veterans community through the appointment of a new dedicated RN/RM Project Officer, as well as enabling greater access to social, signposting and support facilities. The funding has increased Woody's Lodge reach and improved their support provision, which has been vital during the uncertain and challenging times faced by many during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Woody's Lodge was founded in 2016 in memory of Paul "Woody" Woodland, a Royal Marine and member of the Elite Special Boat Service who lost his life in a training exercise in 2012. Woody's Lodge is a social hub, which guides veterans to the help and support they need to re-engage with their families and communities. Woody's Lodge offer support with financial issues, housing and employment and healthcare referrals.



*Royal Navy veteran Gerald Owen, pictured here during his WW2 flying days.*

REF: <https://www.rnrmc.org.uk/news/supporting-veterans-south-wales>





## BEHIND THE BLOCKBUSTER

■ A METAL movie star is to take centre stage when the Tank Museum in Dorset celebrates the real-life role of a Second World War armoured workhorse. Movie buffs will be given the opportunity to see Sherman M4E8 – the vehicle used in the 2014 Brad Pitt feature *Fury* – at two experience days. They will see how the tank played a pivotal role in the Allied victory while getting the inside track on the hit film. The events are set to take place on May 14 and October 15. Visit [tankmuseum.org](http://tankmuseum.org) for further details.

REF: 14 APRIL 2021 [www.soldiermagazine.co.uk](http://www.soldiermagazine.co.uk)



### A place to remember

Our Memorial Wall is a place to remember our friends, supporters and residents. Creating a special Memorial Page for your loved one is a wonderful way to keep their memory alive.

VISIT MEMORIAL WALL >



REF: <https://starandgarter.org/memorial-wall/>



well, i had to chase some people away and  
tear a bag open, but yeah, basically.

## REUNITED AT LAST

Picture: Royal Star and Garter



■ THERE were emotional scenes in military care homes as the go-ahead on indoor visits meant veterans got to hold hands with loved ones for the first time in a year.

This image shows the moment former Household Cavalryman Alan Heath was reunited with his wife Judi at the Royal Star and Garter home in High Wycombe.

The ex-soldier, who suffers from dementia, described it as "lovely". Mrs Heath added: "It's been absolute hell not being able to touch him."

Covid guidelines now permit one single home visitor if they wear PPE and take a lateral flow test.

# Many congratulations

## ROYAL NAVY AND ROYAL MARINES CHARITY APPOINTS NEW CHAIRMAN

The Board of Trustees of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity is delighted to announce that Dr Brian Gilvary will succeed Sir Bill Thomas as the new Chairman of the Charity when Sir Bill completes his six-year term of office in July 2021.



An exhaustive process to find the Charity's next Chairman was led by Vice-Chairman Andrew Jameson in which over 150 potential candidates with a range of backgrounds in industry, the military and civil society were approached and whittled down to a high-calibre shortlist. Brian was the unanimous choice to lead the Board and shares a deep personal commitment with the RNRMC's mission to champion and support the remarkable men and women of the Royal Navy, past and present, as well as their immediate families, particularly at a time when the demand signal for support in the wake of Covid-19 has never been greater.

Brian Gilvary is Executive Chairman of Ineos Energy, a division of the INEOS Group focusing on oil and gas and the energy transition. Prior to this he was BP plc's Chief Financial Officer and Board Director from 2012- 2020, having joined the company in 1986. During his time at the British multinational oil and gas company, Brian acted as BP's principal negotiator on a series of large transactions and complex legal matters.

Brian is also the senior independent director of Barclays plc; a non-executive director of Air Liquide SA, the Royal Navy and the Francis Crick Institute. Since April 2020 he has also served as a Trustee of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

REF: <https://www.rnrmc.org.uk/news/royal-navy-and-royal-marines-charity-appoints-new-chairman>





# ROLLING THUNDER 3

sat 28th August  
LONDON

EDINBURGH

veterans ride in support  
of soldiers A to Z  
All welcome

REF: Seen on Twitter – 21.03.21



Press release

## **Face-to-face assessments to resume for health and disability benefits**

In line with the latest public health guidance and adhering to strict safety protocols, the department plans to begin reintroducing face-to-face assessments for health and disability benefits.

From: [Department for Work and Pensions](#)  
Published: 29 March 2021



## News

# NHS launches 'Op Courage' veterans' mental health service

**Armed forces veterans suffering a mental health crisis will receive specialist care as part of a new Op Courage service launched by NHS chief executive Sir Simon Stevens today.**

Doctors, nurses and other NHS staff will work with military charities to provide therapy, reha services and, in extreme cases, inpatient care to hundreds of former soldiers, sailors and RAF personnel each year.

Those needing urgent help will receive a same day referral.

The "high intensity" treatment has already been trialled in some areas and will be rolled out across the country by next month as part of Op Courage, which brings together specialist services for veterans.

Involving charities will help NHS staff to understand the experiences and issues faced by those who have risked their lives for their country and may have lost comrades or been injured themselves.

It also helps to integrate veterans with mental ill health back in to everyday life.

**Speaking at the annual Kings' Centre for Military Health Research Veterans' mental health conference at King's College London, NHS England chief executive Sir Simon Stevens is expected to say:** "We owe a special debt of gratitude to those who risk all for their country and the NHS is determined to do its part in honouring that.

"Anyone can be affected by mental ill health but armed forces veterans may have seen and experienced things that few others – thankfully – will.

"That can create a special set of challenges which working with military charities helps to overcome and that it what is at the heart of Op Courage – ensuring that the NHS is a National Hero Service."

Armed forces

Mental health

REF: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2021/03/nhs-launches-op-courage-veterans-mental-health-service/>

# Suited And Booted And Ready To Help Veterans In The South West

Apr 6, 2021 | Armed Forces Community, Latest News, Military Charities, Military Families, Veterans, Welfare

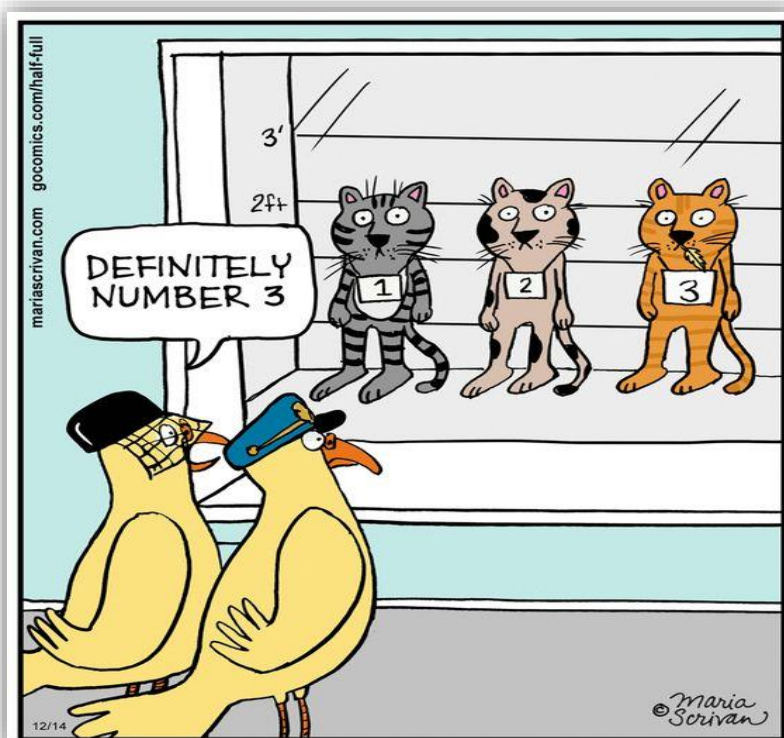


Suited To Help is a new, non-profit, non funded organisation based in Plymouth that provides unemployed veterans suitable workwear for job interviews.

They collect new and second-hand donations from individuals and businesses to support those in need. This is to reduce barriers to employment, ease the financial impact and promote self confidence when attending a job interview.

They are a military family and proud to support the veterans in Plymouth and local surrounding areas. Suited To Help are collaborating with several veteran charities and organisations in the area to offer our support to those in need. They also take self referrals for support and can be contacted via email [suitedtohelp@gmail.com](mailto:suitedtohelp@gmail.com) or on Facebook and Twitter @suitedtohelp

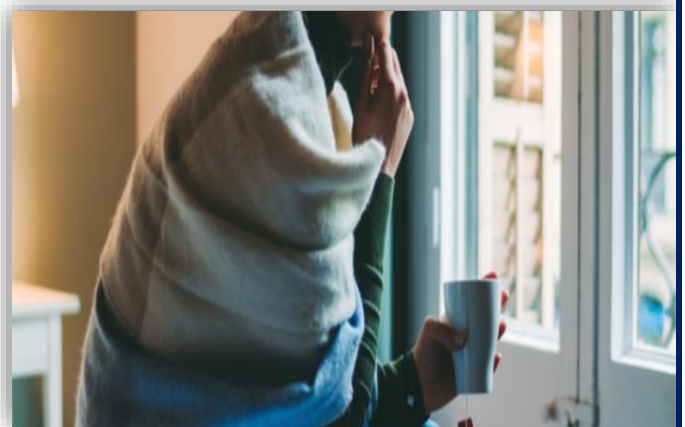
They kindly ask for donations of gently used or new items of workwear such as suits, smart shoes, trousers, shirts, ties, belts and accessories.





## Long COVID: what support is available?

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, we are learning more about the illness and the impact it has. One thing we now know is that for some people it has a more long-term effect, dubbed long COVID.



Long COVID is a term used to describe the effects of COVID-19 in the weeks and months following the initial infection. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance states that long COVID is defined by symptoms lingering for more than 12 weeks after diagnosis.

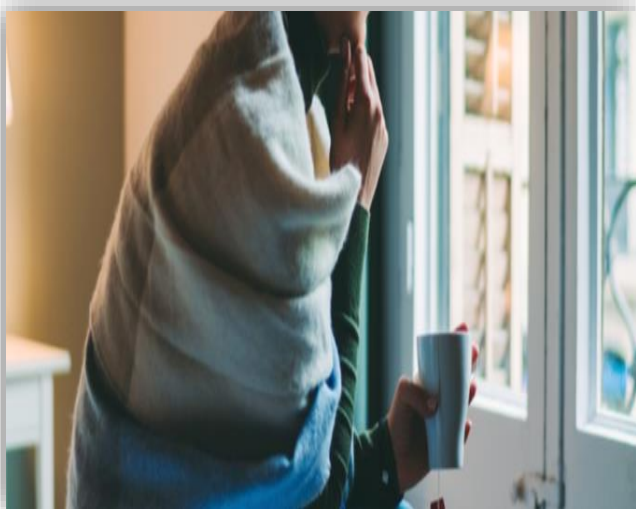
We currently don't know why some people experience long COVID and others don't, but research suggests one

in five people with coronavirus develop longer-term symptoms. On 18<sup>th</sup> February, a major £2.2 million research project was announced which will look to improve treatment and understanding of long COVID that will prove vital as more people are affected.

Dr Rajeev Dhar, consultant psychiatrist at the newly launched long COVID clinic at [Cromwell Hospital](#), and Alice Bruce, clinical head of rehabilitation services and respiratory physiotherapist at [CHD Living's Kingston Rehabilitation Centre](#) (this is an unsecure link!!!), explain what support is available for those diagnosed.

# Know the signs

As you might expect, many of the symptoms are very similar to the symptoms you'd first experience with COVID-19.



People with long COVID may experience fatigue, breathlessness, pain in the chest, joints or muscles, and a persistent cough, though this will vary from person to person.



"While most symptoms are physical, long COVID also has a lasting effect on mental health too, with many patients reporting anxiety, depression and problems sleeping since having the virus," Dr Dhar says. "Elsewhere, people have described experiencing brain fog, bringing problems with concentration and memory."

Authored by Andrea Downey · Reviewed by Dr. Sarah Jarvis MBE 19<sup>th</sup> Feb 2021

REF: [www.patient.info/news-and-features/long-covid-what-support-is-available?xnpe\\_tifc=blxp4foJxDHdxDQ\\_4.LsOMpJRfn-x.YXbIYpbfYA4.sLOGll4I\\_8tfHX4FzAb.nX4kPNhkeLxDU.rkndbue\\_4D\\_8xdQ.blh\\_xl1T&utm\\_source=exponea&utm\\_campaign=PA%20Newsletter%2056th%20edition&utm\\_medium=email](http://www.patient.info/news-and-features/long-covid-what-support-is-available?xnpe_tifc=blxp4foJxDHdxDQ_4.LsOMpJRfn-x.YXbIYpbfYA4.sLOGll4I_8tfHX4FzAb.nX4kPNhkeLxDU.rkndbue_4D_8xdQ.blh_xl1T&utm_source=exponea&utm_campaign=PA%20Newsletter%2056th%20edition&utm_medium=email)



We have moved venue to the **High Cross Church (HCC)**, Knoll Road, Camberley, Surrey; GU15 3SY.



**EXCITING**

News on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2021 at 10:00 am V&F-LP will  
be **re-opening**..... We know, how great is that!!!

## Re-Opening...

There is parking at Knoll Road car park, situated at the rear of  
High Cross Church – Knoll Road, Camberley, Surrey; Camberley  
GU15 3TA.



We are just as excited as you are with the news!!



Then every it will

2<sup>nd</sup> MONDAY of each month V&F-LP will be open 10:00 am–2:00  
pm.

We have PPE requirements too, which means that we have had  
to reduce the number of how many of us can actually meet - to  
**15\***; at the moment. This means you will have to email us to  
let us know that you want to attend beforehand:

**veteransnfamilies@yahoo.com**



What's that you smell.... Yep. That'll be the complimentary tea &  
coffee as well as delicious bacon or sausage baps, from THE best

baps in town by Colin down at HCC.

These will be available from 10:00 am – 11:00 am  
and will require pre-booking.

It's fantastic that we'll be meeting again, it will be really lovely  
to see you again and catch-up.

Remember you need

to

email: [veteransnfamilies@yahoo.com](mailto:veteransnfamilies@yahoo.com)

to book your place(s).



#### What Veterans UK does

We provide free support for Veterans and their Families,  
Including a helpline, Veterans' Welfare Service and injury /  
Bereavement compensation scheme payments.

Veterans UK is part of the Ministry of Defence

Email: [veterans-uk@mod.gov.uk](mailto:veterans-uk@mod.gov.uk)

Freephone (UK only): 0808 1914 2 18

Telephone (overseas): +44 1253 866 043

Normal Service 10.00 am to 3.00 pm Monday to Friday

For more information visit their website:

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/veterans-uk](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/veterans-uk)

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[www.facebook.com/VeteransnFamiliesListeningProject](http://www.facebook.com/VeteransnFamiliesListeningProject)



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Veterans & Families – Listening Project  
email: [veteransnfamilies@yahoo.com](mailto:veteransnfamilies@yahoo.com)  
[www.vflp.org.uk](http://www.vflp.org.uk)

V&F-LP is an independent member of ASDIC.  
The association of Ex-Service Drop-in Centres,  
Linking Veterans' Drop-ins together across the  
United Kingdom.



\*Subject to change.



Take care  
From the team V&F-LP

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