



**BILLINGSHURST
SURGERY**

Armed Forces Community Handbook



Our Surgery



Thank you for choosing Billingshurst Surgery and for placing your trust in our team to support your healthcare and wellbeing.

Billingshurst Surgery is proud to support the Armed Forces community. Whether you are a Veteran, a Reservist, or a family member of someone currently serving in the Armed Forces, we are here to provide guidance, support, and access to appropriate healthcare services as part of your care with our Practice.

This welcome pack has been created to provide information about the support available to you through the Practice, and to reaffirm our commitment to the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant.

We firmly believe that no member of the Armed Forces community should be disadvantaged as a result of their service to our country.

Billingshurst Surgery serves the community of Billingshurst and the surrounding areas.

We have been an established GP Practice since the 1930's and the Practice moved into the current purpose-built building in 1990. The building was extended to its current size in 2000. Since then the practice has undergone a full refurbishment to reflect the standard of care we aim to give.

The practice currently provides General Medical services to nearly 14,000 patients in and around the town of Billingshurst.



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**Armed Forces veteran
friendly accredited
GP practice**







Our Commitment

At our practice, we are proud to support members of the Armed Forces community, including Veterans, Reservists, and families of serving personnel. We recognise the unique experiences and challenges that can arise from military service, and we are committed to ensuring that patients from the Armed Forces community receive the best possible care. Our team works to understand the specific health needs associated with service life and will help guide patients to appropriate services and support where needed. In line with the Armed Forces Covenant, we strive to ensure that no member of the Armed Forces community is disadvantaged in accessing healthcare and that their service is recognised and respected.

How we do this...

Ensuring that members of the Armed Forces Community are recognised

Providing training and support for staff to help them provide the best care for you

Providing referrals and signposting to services specific to the Armed Forces Community

Clinical Lead

The staff at the surgery are supported in providing care for the Armed Forces community by Michael Lawson who is one of our Advanced Nurse Practitioners (ANPs). Michael works as part of our Duty team but is also our **Armed Forces Network Service Champion** as well as our **Clinical Lead for Veteran's Health**.

Michael was a soldier in the Army Reserves for 24 years working as a specialist Emergency Department nurse within military field hospitals. He is currently an adult volunteer with the Army Cadet Force.

His role is to champion for the recognition and support of the wider Armed Forces Community within the practice. He is also responsible for training staff in supporting the healthcare needs of our Veteran population.



VETERAN HEALTH

The top half of the image features a desert camouflage background. On the left, a pair of tan combat boots sits on a wooden surface. In the center, a black stethoscope and two metal dog tags are placed on a folded camouflage uniform. The title 'VETERAN HEALTH' is prominently displayed in the center, with a blue heartbeat line passing through the word 'HEALTH'. Three circular icons are positioned in the upper right: a white cross, a grey cross, and a heart with a cross inside.

**Proud to support
our Armed Forces.**

We're a Veteran Friendly GP practice.

GP practices can sign up at:

rcgp.org.uk/veterans



Royal College of
General Practitioners



**Armed Forces veteran
friendly accredited
GP practice**



Armed Forces veteran
friendly accredited
GP practice



Veteran Health

Billingshurst Surgery are very proud to be recognised as a Veteran Friendly GP practice. Our accreditation showcases our commitment to ensuring that nobody should be disadvantaged because of their service to our Country.

A veteran is anyone who has served for one day or more in the UK Armed Forces, either regular or reserve.

Priority Care

Veterans are entitled to priority care if they need to be referred into hospital for a condition that could be attributed to their service. This does not replace clinical priority, but where there are two patients with the same clinical need the Veteran will be prioritised.

Conditions which may be attributable to your Service.

Musculoskeletal Issues

- Back pain
- Joint pains
- Arthritis

Hearing Issues

- Hearing loss
- Tinnitus (ringing in ears)

Mental Health Issues

- PTSD
- Anxiety / Depression
- Substance misuse

Neurological Issues

- Traumatic brain injury
- Peripheral neuropathy

Other Issues

- Limb loss
- Gulf War Syndrome
- Chronic pain

Priority access to hospital care does not apply to emergency admission

This list is not exhaustive. If you believe you have a condition which is a result of your service then please discuss this with one of our Team

Veterans also have access to alternative referral pathways which are specific to the Veteran community

It does not matter how long ago you served, or for how long.

All veterans are eligible for the same priority care as well as referral to specialist services.



 **ROYAL
AIR FORCE**



RESERVE FORCES

PROUDLY SERVING ALONGSIDE OUR REGULAR ARMED FORCES





Reservists *Keeping you Fighting Fit!*

The NHS has an important role in supporting the health and wellbeing of Armed Forces Reservists, who balance civilian life with military training and potential deployment. Unlike Regular Armed Forces personnel, whose primary care is provided by the Defence Medical Services, non-deployed Reservists receive their routine primary healthcare through the NHS.

This places a responsibility on NHS services, particularly general practice, to recognise Reservists within their patient population. By recording Reservist status and understanding the potential physical and psychological impacts of military service, the NHS can provide appropriate care and support to help Reservists maintain both their health and operational readiness.

Priority Care

As with Veterans, Reservists are also entitled to priority care if they need to be referred into hospital for a condition that could be attributed to their service. This does not replace clinical priority, but where there are two patients with the same clinical need the Reservist will be prioritised.

Conditions which may be attributable to your Service.

Musculoskeletal Issues

- Back pain
- Joint pains
- Arthritis

Hearing Issues

- Hearing loss
- Tinnitus (ringing in ears)

Mental Health Issues

- PTSD
- Anxiety / Depression
- Substance misuse

Neurological Issues

- Traumatic brain injury
- Peripheral neuropathy

Other Issues

- Limb loss
- Gulf War Syndrome
- Chronic pain

Priority access to hospital care does not apply to emergency admission

This list is not exhaustive. If you believe you have a condition which is a result of your service then please discuss this with one of our Team



Reservists also have access to alternative referral pathways for physical and mental health issues.

TOGETHER,
WE ARE
**STRONGER
TOGETHER**

Supporting Armed Forces Families

Behind every uniform is a family that makes sacrifices, shows strength, and stands together through every challenge.

You are not alone. We are here for you.

FAMILIES ARE THE HEART OF OUR FORCES COMMUNITY.



EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Access to wellbeing services, counselling, and peer support when you need it most.



PRACTICAL HELP

Guidance and assistance with housing, finances, employment, and education.



COMMUNITY & CONNECTION

Building friendships and networks with others who understand your journey.



RECOGNITION & APPRECIATION

Honouring the strength and resilience of our Armed Forces families.

YOUR STRENGTH. THEIR SERVICE. OUR THANKS.

Proud to Support Armed Forces Families ♥

For support and resources, visit **GOV.UK/MOD-FAMILIES**



Forces Families

Get the Support you deserve

As an Armed Forces-friendly practice, we are committed to recognising the sacrifices made by service families and ensuring they receive the support they deserve. We understand that the health and wellbeing of military families is an important part of supporting the wider Armed Forces community.

Through services such as **Op COMMUNITY**, NHS England's dedicated support and wellbeing service for the Armed Forces community, veterans and their families can access specialist support when needed. We can also help signpost patients to local and national organisations offering advice on wellbeing, social support, financial concerns, carers' services and other challenges that may arise during or after military service.

Behind every member of the Armed Forces is a family making sacrifices of their own. Billingshurst Surgery is proud to support our Armed Forces families and to recognise the vital role they play in serving our country.

Challenges Faced by Armed Forces Families

Armed Forces families often face challenges that many other families do not. Long periods apart due to deployments, training and military commitments can place extra pressure on partners and children. Moving home regularly can make it difficult to build lasting friendships, stay close to family, and maintain employment or education.

Children may have to change schools several times and adapt to new surroundings. Families can also worry about the safety and wellbeing of loved ones who are serving. Despite these challenges, Armed Forces families show great strength and resilience, and their sacrifices deserve recognition, understanding and support.

At Billingshurst Surgery, we recognise that military service affects not only those who wear the uniform, but also the families who support them. Partners, spouses, children and wider family members often face unique challenges including periods of separation, relocation, caring responsibilities and the uncertainty that can come with military life.





Carers

Caring for a Veteran

Many family members and friends provide care and support to veterans, often without recognising themselves as carers. This may include helping with everyday tasks, attending medical appointments, managing medications, providing emotional support, or assisting with mobility and personal care.

Caring for a veteran can be rewarding, but it can also be physically and emotionally demanding. Some veterans live with long-term health conditions, injuries or the lasting effects of military service, including mental health difficulties. Carers may balance these responsibilities alongside work, raising a family and their own health needs, which can lead to stress, exhaustion and social isolation.

Service may end, but the journey continues. We're here to support veterans and the people who care for them.

At Billingshurst Surgery, we recognise the important role that carers play in supporting veterans. We encourage carers to let us know about their caring responsibilities so we can help identify the support available. This may include access to carers' assessments, local support groups, wellbeing services, practical advice and organisations that specialise in supporting the Armed Forces community.

Looking after your own health is just as important as looking after someone else. If you care for a veteran, you are not alone. Our team is here to help you access the advice, support and services you need to maintain your own wellbeing while continuing in your caring role.

Help is available. Don't struggle in silence. Please discuss with one of our Team if you are in need of help and support to care for your loved one.

Services and Support

A wide range of services are available across the UK to support serving personnel, veterans, reservists and their families. Whether you need help with your physical or mental health, housing, employment, finances or caring responsibilities, there are organisations that can help. The NHS works alongside military charities and specialist services to provide support at every stage of military and civilian life.

At Billingshurst Surgery, we are proud to support the Armed Forces community and can help you access the services best suited to your needs. The following pages introduce some of the support available and explain how to access them.

OpRESTORE

Referral through GP Practice

Op Restore is an NHS service that provides specialist care for Veterans and Reservists with physical health problems related to their time in the Armed Forces. It supports those with injuries or conditions affecting muscles, bones, joints, hearing, vision, pain and other service-related health issues. Following a referral from a GP or healthcare professional, patients are assessed by clinicians with expertise in military-related injuries and rehabilitation. The service works with local NHS providers to ensure veterans receive the right treatment and ongoing support. **Op RESTORE aims to improve recovery, independence and quality of life for those living with service-attributable physical health conditions.**

Veterans

Reservists

Restoring health after service.

Specialist NHS care for physical injuries and conditions related to military service.

OpCOURAGE

Referral through GP Practice

Able to self-refer

Op Courage is the NHS **mental health service** for serving personnel approaching discharge, reservists, veterans and their families. It provides specialist assessment and treatment for conditions such as anxiety, depression, PTSD and other mental health difficulties. The service also offers practical support with housing, employment, finances and substance misuse, working closely with other organisations to ensure people receive the right care and support.

Veterans

Reservists

Families

Mental health support with courage and compassion.

Helping veterans and their families access specialist mental health care

OpCOMMUNITY

Referral through GP Practice

Able to self-refer

Op Community is an NHS service that supports the wider **health and wellbeing** of the Armed Forces community, including veterans and their families. It helps people access the right services for their individual needs, offering advice, signposting and referrals to specialist support. This may include help with mental wellbeing, social isolation, financial concerns, housing, employment and local community services, ensuring individuals and families receive joined-up care and ongoing support.

Veterans

Reservists

Families

Carers

Connecting the Armed Forces community with the right support.

Helping veterans and families access health, wellbeing and community services.

OpFORTITUDE

Referral through GP Practice

Referral through housing authority

Able to self-refer

Op Fortitude is a government-funded service that helps veterans who are **homeless or at risk of becoming homeless**. It provides rapid access to housing advice, emergency accommodation where needed, and ongoing support to secure long-term housing.

OpNOVA

Referral through Police and Custody Services

Referral through HM Prison Service

Able to self-refer

Op Nova is a specialist service for veterans who have been arrested, are at risk of entering the criminal justice system, or are leaving prison. It provides practical and emotional support to help veterans address issues such as housing, mental health, substance misuse, finances and employment.

OpASCEND

Able to self-refer

Op Ascend is a career support programme from **Forces Employment Charity**, helping veterans, service leavers and military families build successful civilian careers. The service offers personalised employment advice, career coaching, CV support, interview preparation, skills development and access to employers who value Armed Forces experience.

What is the Chavasse Clinic



A specialist musculoskeletal clinic for Service Personnel (Regular or Reserve) and Veterans.

Clinic Dates

This clinic is held on alternate Thursday's within the Fracture Clinic on floor four at the LMS building at the Royal Sussex County Hospital, Eastern Road, Brighton BN2 5BE

Sessions currently run on Thursday between 08:30 and 16:30 for pre-booked appointments only.

Legacy behind the Clinic

In Spring of 2014, the BDA published a report that they had commissioned Professor Tim Briggs to write with regards to the Service Personnel and Musculoskeletal problems. This report built upon Prof Briggs previous work on "getting it Right First Time", and was dedicated to the memory of Captain Noel Godfrey Chavasse VC and Bar.

Noel Chavasse qualified in medicine from the University of Liverpool in 1912 and worked for Sir Robert Jones, the founder of the British Orthopaedic Association (BOA) as his houseman.

He joined the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) in 1913 and was attached to the 10th Battalion of The Kings (Liverpool Regiment), the Liverpool Scottish, a Territorial battalion.

During World War one (WW1), Chavasse was promoted to Captain and remained attached to the 1st/10th (Scottish Battalion) of The Kings (Liverpool Regiment). He saw Action in Belgium June 1915 where he was awarded the Military Cross (MC) and mentioned in Despatches.

In 1916 Noel was awarded his first Victoria Cross whilst rescuing men from no-man's land during the battle of Guillemont despite being injured himself.

His second Victoria Cross was awarded during the allied offensive of Passchendaele in 1917, where he was again wounded but refused to leave his post and continued to care for his men. He died two days later of his injuries on the 4th August 1917.

Captain Chavasse's headstone is in a small cemetery in Brandhoek New Military Cemetery Ypres and is the only one on the Western Front carved with two Victoria Crosses.



Captain Noel Godfrey Chavasse VC

How did the Clinic start?



As a serving officer in The RAMS and an orthopaedic surgeon who had trained at the prestigious Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital in Oswestry, Lt Colonel Benjamin Caesar, a Consultant Trauma and Orthopaedic Surgeon at UH Sussex, was inspired by this story of selfless commitment and sacrifice.

He felt compelled to follow Captain Noel Chavasse VC and Bar example and set up the Chavasse Clinic to run on his days off in spare room in the fracture clinic at the Royal Sussex County Hospital in 2016.

With support from the Sussex Armed Forces Network and my Charity in recent years, the clinic proved to be a success and popular with not only Veterans population, but also both Regulars and reservists of all services that attended. This was recognised by the Trauma and Orthopaedic Directorate who formally recognised this clinic as part of Lt Col Caesar work has continued to support the clinic as it develops and grows.



THE CHAVASSE CLINIC

How to refer :

Referrals are welcome from an appropriate medical practitioner (e.g. GP/Physio) for patients with musculoskeletal problems who have served in HM Armed Services, Regular, Reserve or Veteran in any service.

Please note: This is not a Walk-in-Clinic

Please complete a Chavasse Clinic Referral form and contact our appointments team at the booking Hub, RSCH with the referral to the Chavasse Clinic.

0300 131 6770

uhssussex.outpatients.bookingcentre@nhs.net

The Chavasse Clinic
Royal Sussex County Hospital
Eastern Road, Brighton BN2 5BE

The clinic has provided life changing care to more than 500 patients with lower limb and knee injuries.



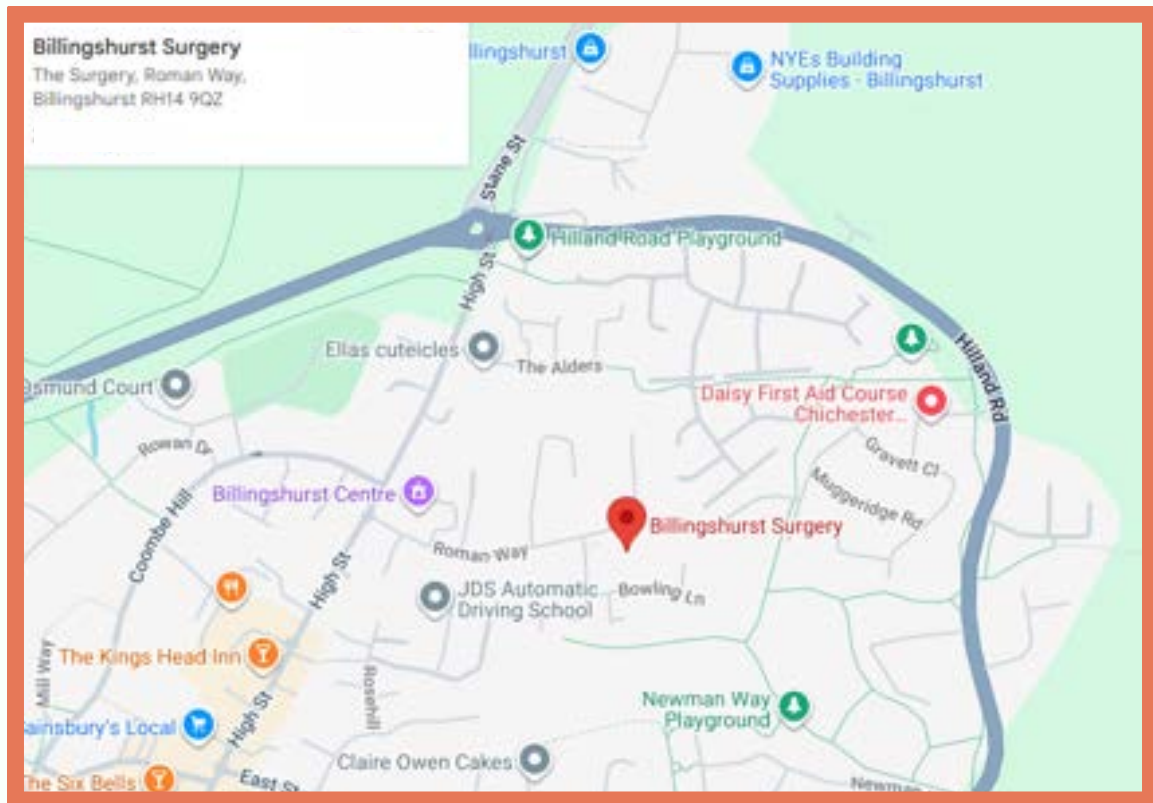
The Chavasse Clinic
Royal Sussex County Hospital
Eastern Road Brighton BN2 5BE

NHS
University Hospitals Sussex
NHS Foundation Trust



THE CHAVASSE CLINIC





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All information contained within this document was correct on date of issue. This will be reviewed every 12 months and redistributed if any significant changes.