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## New project to improve data on veteran health and social care provision in the UK

**A research project, led by Northumbria University, will map health and social care service usage by ex-service personnel across the UK, creating a unified dataset to inform future policy decisions.**

Forces in Mind Trust has awarded £325,000 of funding to Northumbria to improve the collection of data on how veterans use health and social care services to help understand their unique needs and required support. The Map of Need Aggregated ResearCH (MONARCH) study, will be co-funded by

the University and the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, and will collate and investigate health and social care data from multiple sources to inform better understanding of veterans' specialised needs.

To allow statutory and charity services to consider whether the three million veterans living in the UK need specialist health and social care support requires the development of a unified evidence-base. MONARCH builds on the work of Northumbria's Northern Hub for Veterans and Military Families Research to produce a map of veterans and their families' welfare needs from across the UK and ensure that policy makers can access a nationwide dataset of veteran service usage in an easily accessible format.

By examining how the veteran population as a whole use health and social care services, data can better inform policy made for veterans by charities, local and national government, and the NHS.

Established in 2014, Northumbria University's Northern Hub for Veterans and Military Families Research brings together academics, ex-service personnel and experts from a range of disciplines who are dedicated to improving the health and social wellbeing of veterans and their families.

Hub Director, Professor Matthew Kiernan, former Lieutenant Commander in the Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service, said: "Veterans' needs are highly complex and continually change. This project is truly unique and provides a strong rationale and methodology to continuously monitor such changes. This project will map a constant data flow to provide a significant evidence base which in turn will improve planning, service development and resource allocation, together with the readiness to adapt to the emerging needs of this veteran population and the changes that might occur in the health and social care systems across the UK.

"Working with our sector partners, we will build an interactive visual dashboard fed by the aggregated dataset, which will also include open-source data such as veteran census data and MoD data, and will summarise the current situation of service usage, together with the populations' main characteristics.

"Nothing on this scale has been attempted before and this project has the potential to innovate the post-pandemic public health sector in the general population by contributing useful methods and techniques for health and

social care planning.”

Michelle Alston, Chief Executive of Forces in Mind Trust said: “Ensuring that ex-Service personnel and their families live fulfilled civilian lives is at the core of FiMT’s work. Therefore, understanding veterans’ unique needs is crucial, and this project will provide a national and adaptive data feed of the health and social care use of veterans, an essential step in the development of services and policies that will drive improved outcomes for ex-Service personnel. Forces in Mind Trust is very pleased to co-fund this project to create the vital data tools needed to create proactive health and social care interventions for ex-Service personnel.”

Anna Wright, Chief Executive of the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust said: “A vital part of our work here at the Trust is understanding the needs and challenges of the Armed Forces community we serve to ensure the funding we administer is making a real difference. To fully understand these needs, access to timely and trustworthy data for those supporting this community, including our applicants and grant holders, is imperative. Building on the success of the Map of Need and taking a step further in this important data exploration, MONARCH will ensure the impacts upon veterans across the UK can be more easily understood, properly recorded and analysed, and used to bring about positive change.”

Visit the [Northern Hub for Veterans and Military Families Research’s webpages](#) to find out more about their work to improve the health and social wellbeing of veterans and their families.

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