News

Showing support for our **Armed Forces**



'ETERANS URGED TO REACH

By CHARLOTTE PAGE

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THE men and women who make up the Armed Forces community across the country are being celebrated this week.

It's Armed Forces Week and Hertfordshire County Council, on behalf of The Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant Board, known locally as Hertfordshire Heroes, is encouraging veterans to share their service history with their local GP practice to ensure they have access to the valuable support availa-

Hertfordshire Heroes is advocating for veterans to share their service history with their GP, who can grant priority access to support and care when necessary.

This additional support for ex-servicemen and women includes direct referrals to both specialist physical and mental health services such as the NHS' Op Courage Service, as well as referrals for social prescribing for supportive military charities such as The Royal British Region.

Helping Hertfordshire GP practices become more veteran friendly has been a key priority for the Armed Forces Covenant Board, as the partnership looks to deliver the Armed Forces Covenant locally and ensure that veterans have access to all the services available to them.

Former military GP, Doctor Henry Grundy-Wheeler, who is now the clinical lead for veteran healthcare at the Church Street Partnership GP practice in Bishop's Stortford, said: "When accessing healthcare, it is always important that veterans feel able to share their service history, so they can be made aware of the wide range of support available to them.

"As part of the military covenant, various organisations led by the Government, allow priority access to veterans for certain treatments related to service attributable or service acquired medical complaints.

Therefore, sharing your service history with your GP will allow access to a range of bespoke services that may be

pertinent to a veterans health. In some instances, this priority access can result in faster treatment and prevention of long-term health conditions."

Veteran Ashlee Manning, who now works as a social prescriber and GP Link Worker for Herts Help Hospital & Community Navigation Service, said: "I served in the Royal Logistics Corps when I was only 16. When I left, I struggled to re-adapt.

"Moving from the Army to being a civilian again was difficult - especially being a veteran in my 20s - but I was too proud to reach out for help.

"I realise now it took courage to reach out and I have never looked back since.

"Since doing the social prescribing, it has really opened my eyes to the amount of support out there within the community, and how many professionals are really keen to help."

Councillor Terry Douris, chairman of the Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant Board, said: "For ex-servicemen and women who have served their country so gallantly, I would encourage them to share their service history with their doctor to ensure that any healthcare needs they may have are met."

Flag-raising ceremonies have been taking place across the country this week in a nationwide show of support for Britain's Armed Forces.

Hertfordshire County Council, in partnership with Hertford town Council, took part in a socially distanced flag raising ceremony yesterday at Hertford Castle to honour the community's armed forces and veterans.

Meanwhile Broxbourne Borough Council held a flag-raising ceremony at Bishops' College in Cheshunt.

Councillor Siobhan Monaghan, cabinet member for housing and community services, said: "We have raised the flag to recognise and salute the commitment and sacrifices our Armed Forces make to protect our country."

Mayor of Broxbourne David Taylor added: "Armed Forces Day is an opportunity for the nation to say thank you to our Servicemen and women, past and present, for their readiness to serve and protect the UK and its interests, both at home and abroad."



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