

# Step into Health – Programme Update

June 2021

## Introduction

The close cultural fit, transferable skills and shared values between the Armed Forces and the NHS are more evident than ever before. Since 18 March 2020, the MOD has undertaken 399 COVID-19 related tasks and at the peak there were 20,000 military personnel on standby with around 4000 personnel regularly committed. As of 21 May 2021, there were still around 405 military personnel committed to assist with 19 open COVID-19 tasks and there are around 5,000 personnel on standby. The cooperation, increased visibility and understanding presents a great opportunity for Step into Health. The Step into Health programme is funded by NHS England and NHS Improvement's Armed Forces Team. Going forward we are delighted to also include MOD representation on our Assurance Board and in our Stakeholder Reference Group, to ensure that together we continue to develop the programme in a way which meets the needs of both the Armed Forces Community and the NHS.



The programme supports all members of the Armed Forces Community seeking employment in the NHS. When the programme was originally set up in 2015, there was a clear focus on service personnel who are wounded, injured and sick (WIS) and we have not lost sight of this. We are also working more closely with Service Families' charities to ensure that the programme is accessible and visible to them. These groups of the Armed Forces community are as important to us as the veterans, service leavers and reservists who form the majority of our candidates.

We have spent a considerable amount of time over the last few months talking to employers and those who have made the transition into the NHS from the Armed Forces Community. This has informed our future work plans. At the time of writing there are around 1,500 potential candidates registered on the Step into Health candidate management system, our last formal evaluation told us that the system could be improved and over the next few months we will make improvements to allow direct messaging between candidates and employers.

## What the latest data tells us

There are now 104 NHS organisations pledged to the programme. In addition to providing employers with advice, support and access to candidates, pledging to Step into Health supports the achievement of both Veteran Aware accreditation and the Employers Recognition Scheme awards. Whilst we will increase this number over the coming months, we will also link into new Integrated Care Systems for opportunities to increase the reach of the programme.

218 NHS organisations use the 'Armed Forces identifier' question on NHS jobs. By using data from NHS jobs we know that there have been more than 30,000 applications for NHS jobs from members of the Armed Forces community and 1,076 job offers. The data suggests that we need to do more to support candidates with the application process and pitching at the right level, but it confirms that if they get to interview they have a 27 per cent chance of getting a job offer. We are creating new resources to support candidates at the pre-application and application phases.

## What else are we doing?

Work placements and insight days continue to be key elements of the programme and as we plan for the return to in-person events later in the year, we are increasing our support to NHS employers and facilitating shared learning and collaboration through our new monthly engagement surgeries, as well as a new series of podcasts and factsheets. The first engagement surgery focused on the ambulance service, and on July 6 we will focus on returning to live events. The themes for subsequent events include guaranteed interview schemes, work placements, supporting families, information packs for recruiters and induction programmes for the Armed Forces Community.

## Priorities for the next six months

Our top priorities for the next six months are:

- Support employers with the return to live recruiting events and work placements.
- Contribute to NHS Reset as part of the recovery from the impact of the pandemic.
- Ensure the offer to wounded injured and sick service personnel, as well as families, continues to be a focus.
- Refresh our resources for both employers and candidates.
- Expand the reach of the programme.

You can find out more by emailing us at [Deborah.poneskis@nhsemployers.org](mailto:Deborah.poneskis@nhsemployers.org), [Natalie.wong@nhsemployers.org](mailto:Natalie.wong@nhsemployers.org) or by visiting either the candidate facing website: [www.militarystepintohealth.nhs.uk](http://www.militarystepintohealth.nhs.uk) or the employer facing website: [www.nhsemployers.org/stepintohealth](http://www.nhsemployers.org/stepintohealth).