

Service to Civvy Street



A booklet to help service **veterans** navigate healthcare, employment, housing, education and other support available in Warwickshire.

Is this booklet for me?

If you have served at least one day in the Armed Forces you are classed as a Veteran regardless of your rank, gender, age or reason for leaving. You may have had time to plan your discharge or this may have happened suddenly. Whatever your discharge circumstances this booklet is to help you settle into the civilian way of life. In this booklet you will find information to help you adapt to your new life in Warwickshire.

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1. The military versus civvy street

Whilst serving in the military, (whether that be Royal Navy, Royal Air Force or British Army) at each unit you served at you will be used to a clear chain of command, free medical and dental care, social clubs with cheap alcohol, welfare support and camaraderie with other service men and women.

Unsurprisingly, civvy street is very different. There is often a very different chain of command at work, medical and dental care is not free, attending social clubs often cost more than on military bases, and typically it can be difficult to find answers to the simplest of questions as there are no one stop services as you might have found on military bases.

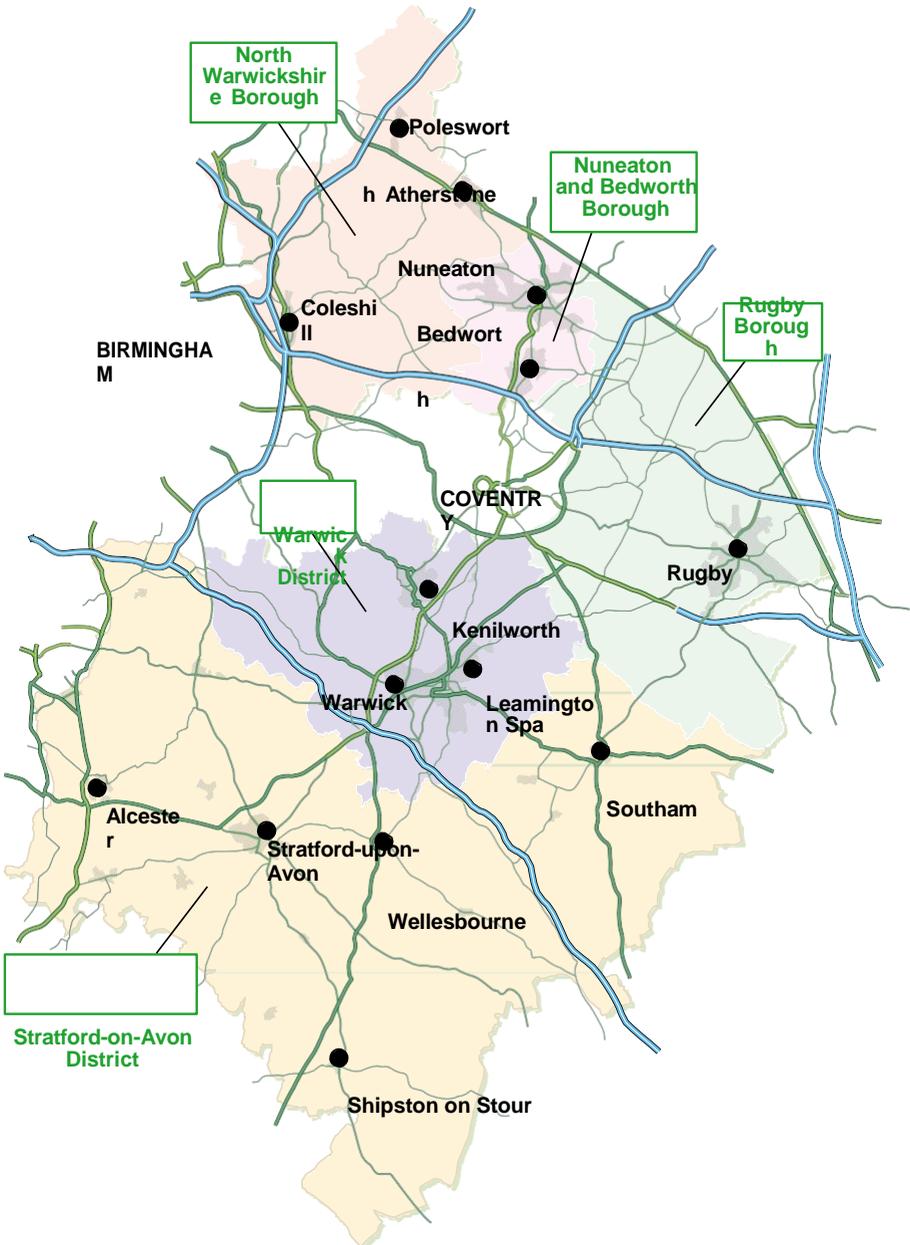
The loyalty and commitment that you have shown from serving in the military is recognised by the nation in the Armed Forces Covenant. The Covenant is committed to ensuring a fair deal for you after having served in the military.

However, to help you settle into civvy street smoothly you will need to understand about the services provided in the military and the different ways they are provided in civilian life.

Warwickshire County Council can be viewed like the MOD, they are responsible for the services provided by the county. The county is divided up into five district and/or borough councils which each have a responsibility to provide specific services in their geographic area. Think of these councils like each military base but much larger. On page 5 is a map of these areas, and page 6 has a list of the websites and main telephone numbers for each area.

4 The military versus civvy street

Warwickshire



Council contacts

Warwickshire County Council

 www.warwickshire.gov.uk

 01926 410410



North Warwickshire Borough Council

 www.northwarks.gov.uk

 01827 715341



Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council

 www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk

 024 7637 6376



Rugby Borough Council

 www.rugby.gov.uk

 01788 533533



Warwick District Council

 www.warwickdc.gov.uk

 01926 410410



Stratford District Council

 www.stratford.gov.uk

 01789 267575





2. Housing

Personnel serving in the military are provided with either single-living accommodation or married quarters. You may have already bought your own home in Warwickshire, or you may be in the process of buying one. Alternatively you may be looking to privately rent a property or you may be looking to move into social housing.

There are organisations such as Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA)

☎ 020 7463 9398

📱 www.ssafa.org.uk/how-we-help/housing

and

Royal British Legion (RBL)

☎ 08457 725 725

📱 www.britishlegion.org.uk/can-we-help/leaving-service

that you may have contacted for advice before leaving.

There is also the Joint Service Housing Advice Office (JSHAO), you may have attended one of their briefings before leaving the military. If not, their website has detailed information about the different types of housing available in civvy street. They also have a booklet called 'housing options', either email or telephone to request a copy.

☎ 01980 618925

📱 www.gov.uk/housing-for-service-personnel-and-families

✉ AWS-JSHAO-Mailbox@MOD.uk

You can still contact these organisations if you wish, but there are other ways to find out about getting a home in Warwickshire.

Buying a home



If you are thinking of buying it is best to get advice and guidance about mortgages and loans. There is an online organisation that provides independent advice for UK military personnel called 'moneyforce' (www.moneyforce.org.uk).

Banks or building societies can also provide free advice, Joint Service Housing Advice Office has information on their website, and your local council may also have advice services.

Renting a home

You may choose to privately rent through a letting agency or directly with a landlord. There are websites that list all of the letting agencies in Warwickshire that rent homes, for example, www.uklettingagent.co.uk/warwickshire/.

The other renting option is social housing which is managed by the local District and/or Borough council. District and Borough councils provide a range of housing options, for example; housing, sheltered accommodation, multiple occupancy homes, and housing association homes. More information on housing can be obtained from local council housing web pages:

North Warwickshire

 www.northwarks.gov.uk/housing

Nuneaton and Bedworth

 www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk/housing

Rugby

 www.rugby.gov.uk/housing

Warwick

 www.warwickdc.gov.uk/wdc/housing

Stratford

 www.stratford.gov.uk/housing

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Options for single persons



If you are not sure you want to live in Warwickshire you may wish to contact the SPACES project.

☎ 01748 833797 or 872940 or 830191

🌐 www.spaces.org.uk

The project is based within The Beacon at Catterick Garrison, North Yorkshire. They provide support to service leavers in securing accommodation placements across the country. This service is available for single personnel leaving the service.

There are a range of single person living options for ex-military personnel. The Joint Service Housing Advice Office can help you explore these different options.

🌐 www.gov.uk/housing-for-service-personnel-and-families

Homelessness

Occasionally people are unable to find accommodation after leaving the forces and have to spend time sleeping at friends or on the streets. For veterans finding themselves homeless in Warwickshire, the Coventry Cyrenians may be able to help. They have space to accommodate eight veterans and can be contacted on;

☎ 024 7622 8099 or (freephone) 0800 0180579

🌐 www.coventrycyrenians.co.uk



3. Employment

Veterans with military experience have unique and transferable skills. There are a number of organisations that can help sell those skills to potential civvy employers.

The Career Transition Partnership (CTP) can help you to find a new job and provide you with further training. The CTP is specially designed for ex-service personnel regardless of rank or armed force served in.

☎ (For job advice) 0121 236 0058

☎ (For training) 02894 456172 or 456182 or 456208

☎ (For general enquiries) 0207 469 6661

📱 www.ctp.org.uk

One of the things that you will need to do is create a Curriculum Vitae, known as a C.V. This document should outline your education, job and life achievements history. There are many websites and books available that can help you create a C.V. The libraries in Warwickshire have books on creating a

C.V. To find out where your nearest library is if you have access to the internet, click on the Warwickshire County Council website then click on the 'your library' link. Also in Warwickshire you could go to your local Job Centre Plus.

How to contact Jobcentre Plus depends on the help you need - eg finding a job, changing an appointment, checking an existing claim or making a new claim or complaint. Go to www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus for further information.

Each of the District and Borough councils has information to help you find employment on their websites. Go to their webpage and click on the 'jobs' link for more information.

There is a website called 'CivvyStreet'

 www.civvystreet.org

who specifically help ex-Service personnel find employment. They have a lists of job vacancies and can help with writing a C.V. If you would prefer to talk to someone at **CivvyStreet** call the free phone number:

 (freephone) 0800 678 5848

'The Poppy Factory Team' specialise in getting injured service personnel back to work. Contact them on;

 020 8940 3305

 www.poppofactory.org/looking-for-work-2.html

Fancy something completely different for work?



SkillForce works with partners organisations to give service leavers the skills, experience and basic qualifications to explore a new career working with young people. To find out more;

 01623 827651

 www.skillforce.org/get-involved/military-to-mentors

Another option is training as a teacher. The Government has launched a 'Troops to Teachers' scheme to encourage service leavers who have suitable qualifications to become teachers. To find out more;

 (freephone) 0800 389 2500

 www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching/troops-to-teachers.aspx
or

 www.troopstoteachers.ctp.org.uk

Starting your own business



Each year more people decide to start their own business and become self-employed. There are many benefits in working for yourself, but it is also not an easy option. Each of the five district and borough councils have a section on their website called 'business' where support and advice are available. The

Government website has information on self-employment.

 www.gov.uk/business

The CivvyStreet website has a section called 'be your own boss' giving you advice on starting a business, and the Royal British Legion also provide ex- service personnel financial help with starting a business.

 www.britishlegion.org.uk/can-we-help/help-with-starting-a-business

Since September 2010 the Prince's Trust in partnership with Help for Heroes has helped injured, wounded and sick ex-military personnel under the age of 30 to take part in tailored secondments with the Trust's team programme.

These programmes give ex-military personnel who have been injured in recent conflicts, new skills to sell to potential employers and enhance C.Vs. To find out more;

 020 7543 1298

 www.princes-trust.org.uk/support_us/partnerships/help_for_heroes.aspx

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4. Healthcare

In the military the med centre is the provider of healthcare, whereas in civilian life healthcare provision isn't that simple. In the UK healthcare is provided by the National Health Service known as the NHS. But the NHS is split up into different parts and different people have different responsibilities for providing care. Think of it like different trades having responsibility for different tasks but on a much larger scale.

How healthcare is organised

The NHS is organised into primary and secondary care. Primary care can be thought of like the med centre. It is where you would go for most of your health care. Primary care is made up of GP practices; think of these the same as med centres. GP stands for general practitioner; GPs are medically trained doctors just like the ones in the med centre. In GP practices there

It is really important you register with a GP practice and when doing so, tell them you are a veteran and ask for this to be recorded on your medical notes.

Secondary care is made up of places where you would go for more specialist health treatment. For example, if you needed an operation you would go to a hospital. There are services in secondary care that care for people's mental health. The NHS looks after both physical and mental health.

How to register with a GP practice



Click on www.nhs.uk/Pages/HomePage.aspx, where it says 'services near you' click on the GPs tab, enter your postcode, and a list of GP practices will appear. Or if you would prefer to talk to somebody call NHS Direct on 111.

Your first visit to the GP practice

Form FMED133 is issued at your discharge medical. This should be given to your new GP practice, so they can obtain details of your previous medical

Tell your GP you are a veteran

It is really important to make sure your GP knows you are a veteran because some health services can be accessed more quickly if your health is suffering as a result of your military service. Your GP cannot get you access to these services more quickly if they do not know you are a veteran.

NHS Dentists

Like finding and registering with a GP you can use the web www.nhslocal.nhs.uk

look at the 'find services near you' box, type in your postcode and select 'dentist'.

Paying for health care

If you visit your GP practice you will not have to pay. But if your GP writes you a prescription, you will have to pay a 'standard prescription charge'. If you go to an NHS dentist to have teeth checked and cleaned this will also be a standard charge. These costs are much cheaper than having to pay for

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private healthcare. Some people can get help with these costs, for example, if receiving benefits, you will be entitled to free prescriptions.

You can call ☎ 0300 330 1343 or go to www.nhs.uk/nhsengland/Healthcosts/pages/Prescriptioncosts.aspx to find out more information on help with prescription and dental costs.

Physical health



Fitness is a big part of life in the military with fitness tests. In life outside the military keeping fit is more difficult, as you will no longer have access to a free gym. On page 31 there is information about leisure facilities in Warwickshire and 'free' places where you can keep fit.

There are other things that keep our physical health good apart from fitness such as not drinking too much alcohol, cutting down or giving up smoking, eating a balanced diet for example having a takeaway once a week rather than every day and drinking lots of water. GP practice staff can provide support and advice about healthier lifestyles as can a number of Warwickshire services:

For drug and alcohol support contact **The Recovery Partnership**, <http://cw-recovery.org.uk>. They have drop-in sites in:

Nuneaton ☎ 024 7664 1100

Stratford ☎ 01789 206770

Rugby ☎ 01788 569582

Leamington Spa ☎ 01926 885000

Coventry ☎ 024 7663 0135

You can attend alone or with family or friends.

For stopping smoking support contact **Warwickshire Stop Smoking Services**, www.smokefreewarwickshire.org who have a freephone number 0800 085 2917 or go to NHS www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Services/S both have useful information on services available to help you quit.

For healthy eating tips look at the NHS Change 4 Life website, www.nhs.uk/change4life. There is also a healthy eating section on the Warwickshire Council website, www.warwickshire.gov.uk/healthyeating.

There is lots of information available on the NHS website at:

www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Sexualhealthtopics.

Sometimes you might need to see a healthcare professional if you think you might have a sexually transmitted infection or you would like advice about contraception. To find out more about the sexual health services available in Warwickshire go to www.warwickshire.gov.uk/sexualhealth or www.respectyourself.info, alternatively, go and see your GP.

Mental health



Keeping your mind in good shape is really important. Taking care of your physical health can also improve your mental health. In everyone's lives there are times which are more difficult than others, changing jobs and moving home are two of these. Most people cope with life changing events

really well, but sometimes people need to talk to someone about these events who aren't friends or family. Your GP can put you in touch with these services. Alternatively you can find out more about how to access these services at www.warwickshire.gov.uk/mentalhealth, or on the NHS Choices website www.nhs.uk/livewell/mentalhealth or visit www.warwickshire.gov.uk/booksonprescription.

Another option if you are concerned about your mental health is to talk to somebody over the phone. A 24/7 phone service in Coventry and Warwickshire is provided by Mental Health Matters, Tel: 0800 616171 or visit their website

at www.mentalhealthmatters.com/our-services. Mental Health Matters also have a text message services (SMS), the number for this is 07786 202242.

Occasionally veterans have found that they need to talk to someone immediately, for example in the middle of the night. In this case The Samaritans can help. They are a free listening service open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, you can phone them on 01789 298866 or 08457 909090. They also have a branch in Stratford-Upon-Avon where you can see someone during the day if you wish. To find out more about how they can help go to www.stratfordsamaritans.org.uk.

In Coventry and Warwickshire there is a service called IAPT which stands for Improving Access to Psychological Therapies. This service is for people who are feeling stressed, anxious, low in mood or depressed. To find out more look at www.covwarkpt.nhs.uk/IAPT. Alternatively call the

service on 0845 521 6100 to book yourself an appointment.

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Some veterans have said that years after leaving the military they have something happen to them, for example, one of their parents dies, that then reminds them of a bad situation they were in when they served in the military. This may cause sleep disturbance, mood swings with friends and family, and generally hinder everyday life. Support can be obtained by talking to someone who has experience of working with ex-military personnel. To find out more go to the following website www.covwarkpt.nhs.uk/veterans.

There is also a condition called post-traumatic stress disorder, more commonly known as PTSD. The NHS state that PTSD is an anxiety disorder caused by very stressful, frightening or distressing events. Being involved in military combat, terrorist attacks or witnessing violent deaths can cause PTSD. The condition can develop immediately after experiencing one of these events, or it may develop some time after the event, for example months or years later. More information on PTSD, including the signs and symptoms can be found at: www.nhs.uk/conditions/Post-traumatic-stress-disorder.

PTSD can be treated. If you think you might be suffering from PTSD talk to someone, for example, your GP, or the staff at Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust. Their website address is www.covwarkpt.nhs.uk/veterans or you can call Mental Health Matters on 0800 616171 from a landline or 0300 330 5487 from a mobile. They are available to talk to 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

Another free service for veterans is the 'Big White Wall'. This is an online service designed for veterans who do not wish to see someone face to face to talk through problems. Veterans who have used this service have found that it can relieve stress, loneliness, anxiety and depression. To find out more go to www.bigwhitewall.com.

Other sources of health care support for veterans

Information about the NHS healthcare available can be found at: www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Militaryhealthcare/Veteranshealthcare.

Veterans UK have information on specialist support available.

 www.veterans-uk.info/specialprogrammes.htm

 (freephone) 0800 169 2277

5 steps to wellbeing

There is evidence to suggest that following the five steps listed below will improve mental wellbeing. The NHS suggests that if you approach these five steps with an open mind and try them, you can judge the results for yourself.

- 1 Connect:** Means connecting with the people around you; your family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. Spend time developing these relationships.
- 2 Be Active:** You don't have to go to the gym. Take a walk, go cycling or play a game of football. Find the activity that you enjoy, and make it a part of your life.
- 3 Take Notice:** Be more aware of the present moment, including your feelings and thoughts, your body and the world around you. Some people call this awareness "mindfulness", and it can positively change the way you feel about life and how you approach challenges.
- 4 Keep Learning:** Learning new skills can give you a sense of achievement and a new confidence. So why not sign up for that cooking course, start learning to play a musical instrument, or figure out how to fix your bike?
- 5 Give:** Even the smallest act can count, whether it's a smile, a thank you or a kind word. Larger acts, such as volunteering at your local community centre, can improve your mental wellbeing and help you build new social networks.

Find out more at www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression.

Emergency care

Emergency care is provided in A&E (Accident and Emergency) departments. These departments assess and treat patients with serious injuries or illnesses. A&E should be visited or 999 called for life-threatening emergencies only, such as:

- loss of consciousness
- acute confused state and fits that are not stopping
- persistent, severe chest pain
- breathing difficulties
- severe bleeding that cannot be stopped

In the Warwickshire there are two hospitals that have A&E departments which are open 24 hours a day.

Warwick Hospital, Lakin Road, Warwick, CV34 5BW

 www.swft.nhs.uk

 01926 495321

and

University Hospital Coventry, Clifford Bridge Road, Coventry, CV2 2DX

 www.uhcw.nhs.uk

 024 76964000

There is a third hospital that provides urgent care, but this is not 24 hours.

Stratford Hospital, Arden Street, Stratford-Upon-Avon, CV37 6NX

 www.swft.nhs.uk

 01789 205831

Domestic Abuse

It is an all too common myth that domestic abuse / domestic violence only occurs between a husband and wife. Domestic abuse can occur between partners of the same sex, between family members, or between partners in a current relationship, or one that has ended. Sadly, it is also a myth that domestic abuse is just about violence. It isn't. You can be experiencing domestic abuse if your partner doesn't allow you to control your finances, stops you seeing your family, controls your access to information, or even what you wear. Domestic abuse is, in many ways, all about control.

In Warwickshire there is a domestic abuse service called Warwickshire Against Domestic Abuse that can help. You can call them on 0800 408 1552 or go to their website www.talk2someone.org.uk.

To explore the signs of abuse you can go to:
www.talk2someone.org.uk/victim/test or www.helpguide.org/mental/domestic_violence_abuse_types_signs_causes_effects.htm.

There are many organisations that can help if domestic abuse is happening. Your GP can put you or your loved one in contact with local support groups and charities. Or, the National Domestic Violence Helpline:

 (24 hour freephone) 0808 200247

Suicide

Some veterans have reported having thoughts of taking their own lives. If you have had these thoughts, talk to someone as soon as possible. There are people who can help you. You might wish to talk to a friend or family member, or call **The Samaritans** (01789 298866 or 08457 909090). You could also call your GP and ask for an emergency appointment or go to A&E and tell the staff how you are feeling. There are also websites such as;

 www.nhs.uk/conditions/suicide

 www.common-unity.com

 www.forwardforlife.org



5. Education

During your service you would have had basic and trade training. In some trades the training you receive is widely recognised in civvy street, for other trades the training is specialised for the military environment. As part of resettlement you may have started re-training for a new career, or you may now be thinking you might like to gain new skills. **The Career Transition Partnership** (page 10) can help you to decide what job it is you would like to do so that they can help you work out the best options around education.

Colleges

At college you can study full time during the day, part time during the day or evening, or by distance learning depending on which suits you best. You can study vocational qualifications, A levels or a degree.

Warwickshire College has six sites in the county, with more than 1,500 courses, these can be found on their website.

 www.warwickshire.ac.uk/courses.aspx

 0300 456 0047

North Warwickshire and Hinckley College also has six sites in the county, with a wide range of courses for adult learners.

 www.nwhc.ac.uk/adult-learners/introduction

 024 7624 3000

Stratford-Upon-Avon College has one site offering a wide range of courses.

 www.strat-avon.ac.uk

 01789 266245

Universities

There are two Universities in the wider Warwickshire area.

Coventry University

 www.coventry.ac.uk

 024 7688 7688)

and

University of Warwick

 www.warwick.ac.uk

 024 7652 3523

Both provide a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. If you haven't studied before at University level you would do an undergraduate degree first, for example, a BEng qualification would mean studying for Bachelors degree in engineering. But if you already have a degree, a postgraduate degree could be considered to get more specialised knowledge, for example, a MEng qualification would mean studying for a Masters degree in engineering.

Warwickshire County Council's Adult and Community Learning Service



There are a wide range of services for adults provided by Warwickshire County Council. Courses are run during the daytime and evening at many locations across the county. The courses run include brushing up English and Maths skills, developing Information & Communication Technology (ICT)

skills as well as painting and cooking courses. To see all the courses available go to;

 www.warwickshire.gov.uk/furthereducation

Help to pay for education

As part of the Armed Forces Covenant there will be financial support available to help pay for University study. This scheme is for ex-military personnel leaving on or after 17th July 2008. Look at the 'courses4forces' website for more information.

 www.courses4forces.co.uk/cms/view

or call;

 RAF 01400 268182

 NAVY 020 3926 25954

 ARMY 01264 381565 or 381580

Before you leave the military you might have registered for Enhanced Learning Credits (ELC), these can be used up to ten years after leaving the forces. For more information on ELC go to www.militaryresettlement.com.

Other providers of education for service leavers

Access Training provides many vocational courses such as plumbing, decorating, bricklaying, and carpentry but can also give you advice on starting your own business.

 www.accesstraininguk.co.uk/armed-forces-resettlement/funding-options

 0800 345 7492

Best Practice provides training courses in IT, management, business, learning and development.

 www.bestpractice.uk.com/elc.html

 01923 255225

Education for your children



If you have children and you have lived in Warwickshire for a while you may have already registered them in a local school. If you have children and are moving into the area you will need to register them with a school. Warwickshire County Council is responsible for school admissions. The instructions

for finding primary (children aged 4 to 11) and secondary (children aged 11 to 16) schools in the area are available at www.warwickshire.gov.uk/admissions, if you would prefer to talk to somebody call 01926 742037.

Each of the five district and borough council websites have information on nursery and pre-school schools for children that haven't yet reached primary school age. There is also information about colleges for dependants who are aged 16 and wish to leave school but continue in education. To find out more information go to the 'schools' link on your councils website. See page 6 for council website links.

The Family Information Service



Warwickshire's Family Information Service (FIS) offers free help and advice on all aspects of family life to parents, carers and young people. The FIS offer a wide range of services such as finding childcare, schools, dealing with bullying, legal advice, as well as counseling and bereavement services.

To find out more;

 www.warwickshire.gov.uk/fis

 01926 742274

 fis@warwickshire.gov.uk

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6. Benefits and Taxes

When you were paid wages during your service you would have noticed on your payslip that each month you had been deducted tax and national insurance (NI). In the UK every working person pays these so that the Government has money to spend on for example, the NHS, the Armed Forces and schools. There is another monthly tax called 'council tax', whilst serving you would have paid Contribution in Lieu of Council Tax (CILOCT). The amount of council tax you pay in civilian life depends on three factors; where you live, the value of your home and if there is one or more adults living there. The website www.gov.uk/council-tax, explains everything you need to know about council tax.

Some people are eligible for council tax reductions, for example, if you live on your own you will pay 25% less. Council tax is paid monthly and can be paid in a number of ways, by posting a cheque, by direct debit, by telephone using a debit or credit card, at a post office using a payment card, or through your bank using BACS (Bankers' Automated Clearing Services).

To find out more

about council tax contact your local District or Borough Council. Either go to the council webpage and click on the 'council tax' link, or if you would prefer to talk to somebody call the main switchboard and ask to be put through to the 'council tax department'.

The world of benefits and taxes is really complicated; for example, there are benefits for families with children, jobseekers, disability, working on a low income, or not being able to work because of an injury. The list of benefits is long and the Government's website shows all the different benefits available (www.gov.uk/browse/benefits). There are people who can help you work out what you are entitled to receive. Remember, you have served in the Armed Forces and paid your taxes and NI contribution, so if you need some support on resettling into civilian life, ask for it, you may well be entitled to more

support.

To find out about benefit entitlement you should contact your local council first. If they cannot answer your questions, contact one of the following veterans' organisations who specialise in money matters;

The Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (SPVA)

 www.gov.uk/government/organisations/service-personnel-and-veterans-agency/about

 (freephone) 0800 085 3600

The Veterans Advisory & Pensions Committee (VA & PC)

 www.veterans-uk.info/new_vapc/index.htm

 (freephone) 0800 169 2277

Discounts



The Government as part of the Armed Forces Covenant has introduced a scheme that gives ex-service personnel discounts. It is called the Defence Privilege Card which costs £4.99 and is valid for five years. This card allows you to obtain discounts in some

high street shops, some online retailers and also cashback with some online shopping. To find out more go to www.defencediscountservice.co.uk.

General money advice

'**Moneyforce**' (www.moneyforce.org.uk) can also advise you on budgeting, debts, and saving in civvy street. The website has a series of 'MoneyFit' quizzes for you to find out how well you currently handle your money.

If you are worried about money matters, such as debts, talk to someone, either visit your own bank or contact 'Moneyforce'. If you need to borrow money do not use an unlicensed lender known as a loan shark, they will charge you a much higher interest rate to borrow money than a licensed lender such as your bank.

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7. Veterans groups

There are local Warwickshire veterans groups that can help you find information you need when leaving the forces. They are also a place where you can meet other people who have left the Armed Forces and who may have been through similar experiences to you. Sometimes ex-service personnel think that veterans groups are only for 'old' veterans, for example, those who fought in the world wars. In fact veterans groups are for anyone who has served in the military.

For Armed Forces personnel who are non-British citizens and demobbing, the local Warwickshire veterans groups can help with the process of becoming a naturalised British citizen.

The Royal British Legion (RBL) was formed on 15th May 1921 after World War One and was granted 'Royal' status in 1971. Most people think of the Poppy Appeal in connection with RBL. This annual appeal helps veterans and their families in many ways. There are local RBL groups in Warwickshire, your nearest can be found online or by telephoning the RBL.

 www.britishlegion.org.uk/counties/warwickshire/contact-us/branches

 08457 725 725 (main RBL telephone number)

The Veterans Contact Point (VCP) offers free and confidential advice to all veterans and their families in Warwickshire. The main centre is in Nuneaton but they have outreach services in other parts of the county each week. The VCP contact details are;

 www.veteranscontactpoint.co.uk

 024 7634 3793

SSAFA have been supporting veterans and their families since 1885. To contact the Warwickshire branch:

 warwickshire@ssafa.org.uk

 01926 491 317.

The British Limbless Ex-Servicemen's Association (BLESMA). BLESMA was founded in 1932 helps veterans who have lost a limb during their military service.

 www.blesma.org

 020 8590 1124

There are many veterans' groups who can help you such as;

- The 'Not Forgotten' Association for the ex-service disabled
 www.nfassociation.org
- Blind Veterans UK
 www.blindveterans.org.uk
- Help for Heroes
 www.helpforheroes.org.uk
- The Soldiers Charity
 www.soldierscharity.org
- Combat Stress, ex-services Mental Welfare Society
 www.combatstress.com
- Stoll – housing and helping veterans
 www.stoll.org.uk
- The RAF and NAVY have their own ex-Service personnel websites.
 RAF: www.rafa.org.uk
 NAVY: www.rnrmc.org.uk
- The Confederation of Service Charities
 www.cobseo.org.uk

They have a link listing all the organisations that can advise and support;

 www.cobseo.org.uk/member-organisations

For example, if you click on the 'employment' link and it will tell you all the organisations that can help.

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- SupportLine

 www.supportline.org.uk/problems/armed_forces.php

They have a list of organisations that can help and support ex-military personnel.

- Forces Line provided by SSAFA

 www.ssafa.org.uk/how-we-help/forcesline



8. Other information about Warwickshire

You may have previously been based in Warwickshire when you were serving, or this might be your first time living in the county. This section gives you some information of things that you might be interested in doing in your spare time.

Facts about Warwickshire

- Approximately 545,474 people live in the county. Most of these people are of working age (i.e. aged between 16 and 64 years), a total of 347,804 (Census 2011).
- From the top to the bottom of the county it's 60 miles.
- More information about the make-up of the county can be found at www.warwickshireobservatory.org
- There are two castles in the county; one in Kenilworth and one in Warwick.
- Stratford-upon-Avon was the birth place of Shakespeare.
- More information on the county's history and places to visit can be found at www.visitcoventryandwarwickshire.co.uk

Libraries



There are many libraries in the county. These are not only places to borrow books; they provide you with access to the internet and hold many useful resources about the local area. To find out where your nearest library is, go to www.warwickshire.gov.uk/libraries

Leisure facilities



On most military bases you would have had free access to a gym and some larger units you would have had a swimming pool. In civilian life you have to pay to go to a gym or swimming pool. However, there are many council owned sports centres in the county which are much cheaper to use

than privately owned facilities. To find out where your nearest council leisure facilities are, go to www.warwickshire.gov.uk/librariesandleisure

Free outdoor fitness facilities

Warwickshire has a number of country parks where you can walk, run or cycle for free. A list of these parks, events happening in them and parking charges can be found at;

 www.warwickshire.gov.uk/parks

Your District and/or Borough council also has a number of parks and green spaces in your local area, see their main website for information.

Crime



If you have been the victim of, or seen a crime, you need to report this to the Police. One Police force covers the whole of Warwickshire. You can contact Warwickshire Police by calling 101 or 01926 415000. In an emergency you should dial 999.

If you have information to report about a crime, you can also call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 or visit;

 <https://crimestoppers-uk.org>

Every community in Warwickshire has a local policing Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT). You can find contact details for your local SNT at;

 www.safer-neighbourhoods.co.uk

If you have been a victim or witness of crime, free support is available through the Warwickshire Victim and Witness Information Partnership. You can contact the service by calling 0845 120 2325 or drop in without an appointment between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday to;

Warwickshire Justice Centre, Newbold Terrace, Leamington Spa, CV32 4EL
Further information about the service is available at;

 www.warwickshire.police.uk/inneedhelporadvice/VIPFolder

Nuisance or anti-social behaviour (ASB) can cause individuals alarm and distress. If you are experiencing ASB you can report this to your District or Borough Council who will investigate and take appropriate action. Contact details for all areas are available at;

 www.warwickshire.gov.uk/antisocial

If you have been a victim of crime committed because of who you are (known as a hate crime), you can report it to a dedicated hate crime helpline by calling 0845 129 2221. You can also report a hate crime online, and find information about other services that can support victims of hate crime at;

 www.report-it.org.uk/report_a_hate_crime

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Volunteering



You may have some spare time that you would be willing to use to help in your community. Volunteering is a great way to meet new people, gain new skills and it looks good on your C.V. too.

A list of volunteering opportunities in the county can be found at;

 www.warwickshire.gov.uk/volunteering

Two organisations often looking for volunteers are;

Warwickshire Wildlife Trust

 www.warwickshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/volunteer

 024 7630 2912

The National Trust

 www.nationaltrust.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer

 0870 240 0274

A comprehensive list of organisations that need volunteers in Warwickshire can be found at;

 www.do-it.org.uk

Events

In addition to the 'visit Coventry and Warwickshire' website you can find out things that are happening in Warwickshire by joining an online forum.

 www.warwickshireonline.com

'Warwickshire Life' is a monthly magazine that contains information about events, eating out, walking routes, homes, competitions and offers in the county. The magazine also has a website.

 www.warwickshirelife.co.uk

A final note

We hope the information in this booklet helps the transition from military to civilian life more smoothly. If you are unsure of how something works in civvy street or need more information ask someone, particularly one of the veterans groups as many of those people have been in exactly the same situation.

Warwickshire County Council also has a 'directory of services' on their website where you can look up organisations that can give advice on a particular topic, for example benefits advice.

 www.warwickshire.gov.uk/directory

