



VETERANS ORTHOPAEDIC SERVICE

The Veterans Orthopaedic Service (VOS) is located within The Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (RJA), Oswestry, Shropshire. RJA is recognised worldwide as Centre of Excellence for Orthopaedic clinical care and research that treats patients from every part of The United Kingdom.

RJA was established in the immediate aftermath of The First World War and thus, has a legacy as a military hospital that pioneered orthopaedic treatments for injured military patients. For many years, RJA has been treating both serving personnel and veterans from all the UK Armed Forces. In 2014, The Veterans Orthopaedic Service was established as a bespoke service by Lieutenant Colonel Carl Meyer, who is a serving officer in the Royal Army Medical Corps; a highly experienced Consultant Trauma and Lower Limb Surgeon, with operational tours in Iraq and Afghanistan where he treated both serving military and civilian trauma casualties. It was Colonel Meyer's initiative, leadership and inspiration that not only established VOS, but has led it to become the go-to choice of Veterans from every corner of the United Kingdom

Since the establishment of VOS, there has been significant expansion and demand for treating veteran patients. In 2019 alone, the Service had 2463 patients, including over 300 surgical procedures. Therefore, to meet the increasing demand and need, in 2018 a fund-raising appeal was initiated for a new bespoke Veterans Orthopaedic Centre within RJA.

With the support of a significant donation of £6 million from The Headley Court Trust, the initial target of £1.5 million was greatly exceeded. As a result, in February 2020, VOS was delighted to announce that a new two storey Veterans Centre, specifically designed for providing the highest standards of care to our veteran patients, was to be built. The Centre became fully operational in December 2022

Facilities include a state-of-the-art Outpatients Department that provide a range of orthopaedic treatments, rehabilitation and welfare services. There are also several education, training and research facilities; together with administrative space for key personnel, which are vital to the efficient running of the overall Veterans Orthopaedic Service.

This provides a veteran's footprint within an NHS Centre of Excellence. Whilst the Centre primarily provides veteran's outpatient services necessary to cope with the expanding demand, importantly, it also houses a Veterans Hub that allows a wide range of support and advice on welfare issues, including mental health, PTSD, homelessness, debt and benefits. VOS works with Veterans Outreach Services and United Kingdom Military Charities within the Centre to provide this support. Whilst VOS is the first service of its kind in the United Kingdom,

our strategic ambition is to enable other centres of outstanding NHS practice to develop similar Veterans Services; thus establishing a network of Veterans Secondary Healthcare Services throughout the United Kingdom.

As with the whole of the NHS, there have been significant restrictions and limitations imposed by the Covid-19 Pandemic, but the Veterans Orthopaedic Service has now returned to full operation in its support of The UK Armed Forces Veterans.

Referral Procedure and Process.

The Service is available to any former Member of HM Forces (both Regular and Reserve) regardless of when they left service or how long they served. Under the Armed Forces Covenant and NHS Patient Choice Framework, referral to VOS is via GP.

- England. Within England, under the Patient Choice Framework, you can be referred to a provider of your choice. Your GP will advise you of the process. Compliance with our local Value Bases Commissioning policy will apply in all cases. More information about this is available on our website.
- Wales. Your GP will follow the Welsh Veteran Policy so that you can be referred out of area for treatment
- Scotland. Your GP will follow NHS Scotland Policy with funding agreed by the relevant Health Board to facilitate referral.
- Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland rules prohibit referral to England unless arranged by a Northern Ireland consultant surgeon.

For More Information

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