

Quicker access to specialist NHS care for Armed forces' veterans in Wales

£100,000 additional funding will go to Veterans NHS Wales, the UK's only dedicated national service to support the emotional and mental health needs of armed forces veteran by providing dedicated veteran's therapists in each health board area.

The Welsh Government already invests £585,000 a year to support the service.

The additional funding will allow the service to increase Consultant Psychiatrist sessions by 50% and offer more veterans' quicker access to a specialist doctor for medication options, reviews and second opinions. It will also provide more dedicated support to veteran therapists enabling them to concentrate on providing interventions to our veterans who need support.

Latest figures show more than 2,879 veterans have received care from Veterans NHS Wales since it was set up in April 2010.

Health Secretary, Vaughan Gething said:

"As we approach Remembrance Sunday, the entire country will pause to reflect and remember the sacrifice of our armed forces personnel in conflicts and wars across the world. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to both current and former armed forces personnel.

"I'm determined to ensure our veterans receive the very best healthcare. The new investment I'm announcing today will ensure veterans receive faster access to assessment and treatment services, ensuring they receive the care and support they need."

Dr Neil Kitchiner, the Director of Veterans' NHS Wales Director and its Consultant Clinical Lead said:

"I am very grateful to the Welsh Government for their continued support to VNHSW. This increase funding of £100,000 announced today will allow us to increase our Consultant Psychiatrist sessions by 50% and offer more veterans' quicker access to a specialist doctor for medication options, reviews and second opinions.

"We will also increase our part-time administrator's hours which will allow them to be more accessible to telephone and email queries from veterans and referrers. It will also speed up referral to assessment times. The inclusion of a fulltime psychology graduate for the first time will enhance training and support to our Peer Mentors in delivering guided self help interventions and improve our data collection, analysis and reporting to our key

stakeholders.”