



## Understanding the Needs of Older Merchant Navy Veterans



**October 2020**

## Contents

Contents .....	1
Executive Summary.....	4
Key findings .....	5
The Merchant Navy population .....	5
Characteristics of our cohort of research respondents.....	5
Our cohort’s experience of conflict and its impact on their lives.....	6
The current circumstances and needs of our veteran cohort .....	6
The service response so far.....	7
Considerations for Seafarers UK and other maritime agencies when planning future services.....	8
Identifying the true extent of the veteran population .....	8
Raising the profile of the veteran population and their needs amongst agencies.....	8
Signalling the type and range of appropriate support to meet MN veteran needs, and encouraging innovation and continuous improvement in this area: .....	8
Promoting awareness of services amongst veterans .....	9
1 Introduction.....	10
2 Research Methodology.....	11
2.1 Understanding the numbers, location and needs of veterans.....	11
2.2 Evaluation of targeted Nautilus outreach casework service .....	12
2.2.1 Assessment interviews .....	12
2.2.2 Sample MN veteran interviews .....	13
2.2.3 Caseworker interviews.....	13
2.2.4 Data analysis .....	13
2.3 Service review in the Solent region .....	13
2.3.1 Design service mapping template .....	14
2.3.2 Desktop research.....	14
2.3.3 Communication and engagement .....	14
2.3.4 Summary of responses .....	15
3 Report Structure .....	16
4 Part A: Who Are Merchant Navy Veterans? .....	18
4.1 Numbers.....	18
4.2 Location.....	19
4.3 Seafaring experience.....	19
4.4 Type of support to the Armed Forces .....	20
4.5 Key messages.....	21
5 Part B: Who Are Our MN Veteran Cohort? .....	22

5.1	Age and gender .....	22
5.2	Marital status .....	23
5.3	Current location .....	23
5.4	Seafaring career .....	25
5.5	Length of career .....	25
5.6	Theatres of operation .....	26
5.7	Seafaring roles .....	27
5.8	Perception of 'veteran' status .....	28
5.9	Key messages .....	29
6	Part C: Our Cohort's Experience of Conflict .....	30
6.1	Supporting British Armed Forces.....	30
6.2	Exposure to conflict .....	31
6.3	Other conflict exposure.....	32
6.4	Impact of conflict exposure.....	32
6.5	Impact of seafaring career .....	37
6.6	Key messages .....	40
7	Part D: Current Circumstances and Needs of Our Cohort.....	42
7.1	Finances.....	42
7.2	Housing .....	43
7.3	Mental health.....	44
7.3.1	Physical health.....	45
7.4	Personal support networks .....	48
7.5	Key messages .....	48
8	Part E: The Service Response So Far.....	49
8.1	How do MN veterans access support? .....	49
8.2	What type of services currently exist for veterans? .....	50
8.2.1	What support had interviewees already accessed? .....	50
8.3	How do services identify MN veterans?.....	55
8.4	Key messages .....	56
9	Part F: Considerations for Future Support.....	57
9.1	Identifying and engaging with MN veterans.....	57
9.2	Raising the profile of MN veterans amongst agencies.....	57
9.3	Raising the profile of services amongst veterans .....	57
9.4	Type and range of support .....	58
	References .....	59
	Appendix 1: Stakeholder Group.....	61
	Appendix 2: Survey Information Sheet .....	62
	Appendix 3: Interview Information Sheet .....	63

---

Appendix 4: Participant Consent Form .....	65
Appendix 5: Letter to Organisations in the Solent Region .....	67
Appendix 6: Questionnaire for Organisations in the Solent Region .....	69
Appendix 7: Service Map for the Solent Region .....	72

# Understanding the Needs of Older Merchant Navy Veterans

## Executive Summary

The Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report (2015) recognised the role of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) and Merchant Navy (MN) in armed conflict, and therefore their place as veterans. Although there has been some research on the numbers and needs of former Merchant Navy *seafarers* and their dependants (Institute of Public Care 2015; Opinion Research Services 2016), relatively little is known about the needs of *veterans* or the effectiveness of any services specifically developed to meet their needs.



Seafarers UK was awarded a grant by the Aged Veterans Fund to undertake a research project over a three-year period, delivered by Seafarers UK and the Nautilus Welfare Fund, with the Institute of Public Care at Oxford Brookes University as academic research partner. The overall purpose of our research has been to improve understanding of the Merchant Navy Veterans community, and, specifically, to:

- better define and understand the size, location, health and social care needs of MN veterans (born before 1st January 1950) and their dependants;
- raise the profile of UK MN veterans with ex-Service welfare providers and with local authorities and their Community Covenant teams;
- better understand the range of specialist and non-specialist services and organisations which exist and which address, or have the potential to address, the needs and aspirations of this group of veterans;
- establish and evaluate the Nautilus casework approach to the provision of specialist support to improve understanding of what works in reaching MN veterans; what support veterans need and aspire to and what this means for future service development;
- establish a set of strategic priorities arising from the research to inform the development of specialist services for MN veterans (if proven to be needed) and/or ensure that they can access services which meet their needs.

This report describes detailed findings from a range of research activities undertaken by IPC, which included:

- electronic and postal survey of 387 veterans;
- face-to-face interviews with 76 veterans in key port areas across the UK;
- and a service review in the Solent region.

## Key findings

### The Merchant Navy population

- Although there are no authoritative records, based on Table 1 on page 13, it is likely that there are more than 245,000 former seafarers, of whom around 11,500 are over 85 years in age in the UK. The number of veterans over 85 is likely to almost triple over the next 15-20 years.
- The experiences described by the Nautilus caseworkers highlights the challenge of identifying the MN veteran population.
- There are a wide range of job roles within the industries, and seafarers have a wide range of seafaring experiences. There is movement across the seafaring industries by individuals and this further complicates developing an understanding of the size of this population.
- There have been many conflicts around the world involving the Armed Forces where it is known that support was provided by MN or fishing or RFA vessels.
- Whilst seafarers and ex-seafarers of course live in a hugely diverse range of places in the UK and abroad, there are known to be concentrations of numbers in UK ports.

### Characteristics of our cohort of research respondents

- A pragmatic decision was taken to broaden the research criteria of members of the RFA and Merchant Navy who served on a civilian vessel whilst it supported the Armed Forces, and were born before 1st January 1950, to also include:
  - seafarers who worked in the fishing industry and provided similar support;
  - veterans born *after* 1st January 1950 as this will inform strategy for the future provision of services by including more Falklands veterans, many of whom are younger.
- For ease of reference, the target group throughout this report are referred to as “MN veterans”.
- Overall, we think the range of people surveyed and interviewed gives a good cross-section of Merchant Navy veterans, and as a result we think that our findings about their experience and situation is broadly representative of the Merchant Navy veteran population as a whole.
- Almost 54% of the veteran cohort included in this research are living alone – either through divorce, bereavement or having never married.
- When compared with the general population of 65 years and over, there is a significant difference in the numbers of veterans who are married – only 44% compared with 60%.
- Interviewees provided a complex picture of seafaring careers. Some interviewees had worked across seafaring industries; there was a variety of career experience including length of service, different types of roles filled and in which industry; whilst some had experience of land-based jobs, others had worked at sea all their working lives.

- Whilst a number had served in the Falklands, there was otherwise a wide range of experience of supporting the Forces in terms of geographical location and type of support provided.
- How seafarers self-identify varies greatly. Many more readily and comfortably identify as a seafarer rather than a veteran, whilst others seem to begrudge the lack of financial and emotional support which had been made available to them since the conflict ended, or since they had retired.

### Our cohort's experience of conflict and its impact on their lives

- The type of experience of conflict of both our survey respondents and interviewees varied between those exposed directly to conflict, and others who had a less direct experience.
- The majority of interviews (60%) had had first-hand experience of conflict.
- Many interviewees also had experience of conflict where it was not related to the Armed Forces, and this was sometimes seen as having as much impact as their formal veteran experience.
- When asked to describe the impact of supporting the Armed Forces in conflict zones there were more examples of impact on mental health and wellbeing than on physical health. These often related to ongoing behaviour impact and flashbacks over a long period. There were also examples where there was no impact described.
- Many of the examples echo previous research on the impact of conflict on service personnel. A larger proportion of people in our interviews reported mental health issues than are generally thought to occur in the wider population, and these seemed to be related in particular to experience of conflict rather than the seafaring life overall.
- The impact of the seafaring life on survey respondents centred in particular on physical health and wellbeing. More than a half of interviewees reported experiencing physical health problems as a result of their seafaring career (a larger proportion it appears than in the population as a whole), while alcohol abuse and dependency is also significant compared to the wider population.

### The current circumstances and needs of our veteran cohort

- As might be expected given the age profile, approximately 60% of veterans interviewed are currently facing challenges with their physical health.
- The findings illustrate both the physical and mental consequences of being a seafarer and the potential this has to exacerbate any physical or mental issues related to the ageing process more generally.
- A significant proportion of veterans were either dealing with a bereavement or had a caring role for a partner.
- Survey respondents across all age groups rated their current mental and emotional wellbeing positively, with only about 10% rating it as bad or very bad, whilst almost double (20%) the number of interviewees described their mental health as a current challenge. Physical wellbeing was rated more negatively generally and particularly amongst the older survey respondents.

- Whilst 45% of interviewees had described the impact of experiencing conflict on their mental health, only 20% reported this as a challenge in their lives today
- In terms of veterans' current situation, financial problems loomed large as challenges for interviewees.
- Particularly striking was the stoic nature of some of the interviewees' responses and their resilience – for example, casework interviewees tended to score their health, finances or wellbeing highly whilst clearly struggling with significant challenges in their lives.
- Veterans' perceptions may be overly positive when describing their circumstances.
- Sometimes individuals may be quite comfortable financially but still not be claiming all they are entitled to.
- Three quarters of interviewees belonged to seafaring organisations or networks, as would be expected given their recruitment through these organisations. Whilst many had Veterans Badges and were aware of their veteran status, there was a sense that they identified more strongly with the seafaring than veteran communities.

### The service response so far

- The findings present a consistent picture of MN veterans drawing first and foremost on their social support networks of people based on relationships of trust. Where individuals *do* access services, such as the Nautilus caseworkers, again this tends to be through more informal routes such as seafarer networks, drop-ins and social events.
- When referrals are made to services, this most often occurs when the individual has reached a crisis point, particularly in relation to their financial circumstances.
- Whilst there is a good supply of specialist services targeted at the Armed Forces serving and retired personnel, the majority of these do not specify MN veterans as part of their target population.
- It was generally acknowledged that a big challenge lies in the need for greater collaboration overall and fostering better relationships between maritime and statutory organisations. It can therefore be difficult for agencies knowing who provides what and where to refer; and therefore, for individuals knowing where to go for support.
- There is a consistent view across agencies that MN veterans inherently hard to identify. A number of reasons have been offered and it appears that how a veteran self-identifies is critical to this; seafarers have the sea in common, and therefore MN vets may identify more readily with Royal Navy counterparts; dual histories which includes the Royal Navy, and inconsistencies in how the term 'veteran' applies across populations may influence MN veterans' perceptions of what support might be available to them; the complex interplay of emotions such as guilt, pride and resignation may underly the apparent stoicism and disinclination to ask for help from services.
- There is an awareness amongst agencies that more work needs to be done to identify the true extent of the population and for some agencies, this underlines their need to share information and participate in forums.



- There is rarely conscious direct contact between individuals seeking support as a MN Veteran and health and care organisations.

### Considerations for Seafarers UK and other maritime agencies when planning future services

Whilst there is improved awareness of the veteran status amongst MN seafarers, the research findings suggest more can be done to extend this awareness more widely and ensure an appropriate range of specialist and healthy ageing support is available to meet veterans' needs in key port areas. Specifically, IPC proposes Seafarers UK and other maritime agencies consider the following activities:

#### Identifying the true extent of the veteran population

- Request information from key stakeholder organisations about the numbers of MN veterans they are aware of and/or have provided services to, and their location.
- Update 2016 data for number of Veterans Badges issued and locations of recipients.
- Interview Covenant Team Managers to test their understanding and awareness of this group of veterans.
- Build and draw on existing relationships with veterans developed through their engagement with this project to identify their wider seafaring networks of friends and former colleagues. These relationships have been based on deep, meaningful connections with veterans often expressing interest and motivation to become more involved and help where they can. For example, agencies might do well to consider recruiting veterans in a 'volunteer' capacity to progress work in this area.
- Promote collaborative working, information sharing and referrals between seafaring organisations and associations, particularly military/maritime.

#### Raising the profile of the veteran population and their needs amongst agencies

- By raising the profile of the MN veteran population and increasing understanding of the unique issues they face, agencies will be better able to focus their offer and provide more consistent access to services. For example, by developing examples of good practice that could be adopted across the sector.

#### Signalling the type and range of appropriate support to meet MN veteran needs, and encouraging innovation and continuous improvement in this area:

- For example, specialist services supporting the Armed Forces community to broaden their understanding of, and focus on, the Merchant Navy population to provide:
  - emotional support to help veterans understand and deal with the depression, anxiety and PTSD that can result from experiences of conflict and adapting to life after a seafaring career and lifestyle;
  - healthy lifestyle advice and support, for example to help limit alcohol consumption or manage Diabetes;
  - opportunities for individuals and their families to stay socially active with fellow veterans and ex-seafarers.
- Findings also highlighted a range of needs which relate to the ageing process more generally and call for the following types of generic older people services:
  - Information and advice to signpost older seafarers and their families to appropriate community services.

- Emotional support to deal with bereavement
- Caregiver respite and counselling
- Financial advice and support
- Home repair and modification assistance
- Opportunities to stay physically active

#### Promoting awareness of services amongst veterans

- Encourage and support multi-organisational advertising campaigns to raise public awareness of support for MN veterans, including the Nautilus casework service; this could benefit from the direct input of the veteran volunteers and their families suggested in the previous bullet point and developed case studies.
- Given the findings around self-identification and, in particular, MN veterans' inclination to identify more strongly as seafarers, IPC proposes that services target the seafarer population more broadly. For example, when survey respondents were asked about their preferences for care and support in terms of type of service provider, the greatest preference was for services for seafarers (56%), followed by family and friends (49%) and the NHS (40%). Veterans services were mentioned by just 20% of respondents as a preference.

# Understanding the Needs of Older Merchant Navy Veterans

## 1 Introduction

Through the Armed Forces Covenant, the Ministry of Defence (2015 p.89-90) recognised the role played by members of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary and Merchant Navy in armed conflict, and therefore their place as veterans:

*“We would like to be absolutely clear that Members of The Royal Fleet Auxiliary and Merchant Navy deserve recognition for their service to this country in successive conflicts. All those who have served on a civilian vessel whilst it was supporting the Armed Forces are recognised as Veterans. It is therefore appropriate that this group is recognised and supported by the Armed Forces Covenant. This is a sign of the nation’s gratitude.”*



Although there has been some research on the numbers and needs of former Merchant Navy seafarers and their dependants (Institute of Public Care 2015; Opinion Research Services 2016), relatively little is known about the needs of Merchant Navy veterans or the effectiveness of any services specifically developed to meet their needs. Seafarers UK was awarded a grant by the Aged Veterans Fund to undertake a research project over a three-year period, delivered by Seafarers UK and the Nautilus Welfare Fund, with the Institute of Public Care at Oxford Brookes University, as academic partner.

The purpose has been to improve our understanding of the Merchant Navy Veterans community, and, specifically to:

- better define and understand the size, location, health and social care needs of Merchant Navy (MN) veterans (born before 1st January 1950) and their dependants;
- raise the profile of UK MN veterans with ex-Service welfare providers and with local authorities and their Community Covenant teams;
- better understand the range of specialist and non-specialist services and organisations which exist and which address, or have the potential to address, the needs and aspirations of this group of veterans;
- establish and evaluate a casework approach to the provision of specialist support to improve understanding of what works in reaching MN veterans; what support veterans need and aspire to and what this means for future service development;
- establish a set of strategic priorities arising from the research to inform the development of specialist services for MN veterans (if proven to be needed) and/or ensure that they can access services which meet their needs.

Whilst the scope of the research has been defined by the Aged Veterans Fund criteria as including members of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) and Merchant Navy who served on a civilian vessel whilst it supported the Armed Forces, and were born before 1<sup>st</sup> January 1950, a pragmatic decision was taken to broaden this criteria to also include:

- seafarers who worked in the fishing industry and provided similar support;
- and veterans born after 1st January 1950 as this will inform strategy for the future provision of services by including more Falklands veterans, many of whom are younger.

For ease of reference, the target group throughout this report are referred to as “MN veterans” except where a distinction needs to be made between the different industries. **Appendix 1** lists those individuals and organisations which have supported the research activity through being interviewed themselves, promoting and distributing surveys, and through participation in the project stakeholder group.

## 2 Research Methodology

IPC undertook a number of research activities to support the aims of the project described above:



### 2.1 Understanding the numbers, location and needs of veterans

This stage involved two linked activities carried out over a 24-month period between May 2017 and May 2019 to provide an insight into the circumstances and needs of older MN veterans:

- Electronic and postal survey of 387 veterans.
- Face-to-face interviews with 58 veterans to give more in-depth understanding through specific examples of the experiences shared by MN veterans.

Survey respondents were wide ranging in terms of age, seafaring experience and current location, and a small number were living abroad at the time. Veterans were invited (**Appendix 2**) to participate in the survey, and then, as part of the survey itself, asked whether they would be prepared to be interviewed by an IPC researcher. This

was followed up by an email or letter providing more information about the interview process, included as **Appendix 3**.

A total of 48 people from around the UK were interviewed during the period October 2017 – February 2018. As the majority of these individuals were heavily involved in the seafaring community and members of established networks and associations, a decision was taken to identify and speak with veterans who may not be so ‘connected’ as it were; those who may be a little harder to reach. To this end, IPC contacted a number of previous veteran interviewees to request their support in identifying additional contacts. As a result, 10 further interviews were carried out between March to May 2019. These were either friends or former seafaring colleagues who were willing to share their experiences. This brought the total number of interviews up to 58.

Interviews were either face-to-face or by telephone, and all were recorded, transcribed and analysed. All interviewees were provided with information about the project and the interview process and asked to provide formal consent (**Appendix 4**). They were all given the opportunity to withdraw at any point.

## 2.2 Evaluation of targeted Nautilus outreach casework service

The Nautilus casework service provides one-to-one advice and assistance on financial, health and other issues to retired seafarers and their dependants in their own homes. Delivered by four case workers working in Southampton, Hull, Merseyside and Glasgow, funding was provided by Seafarers UK to increase capacity by 25% over a three-year period to promote and target specialist support directly to Merchant Navy veterans. The Caseworker role is described as providing “*a holistic service that ensures all new applicants receive a full assessment, which considers all of their needs*” and aims to “*improve people’s lives; maximise income; promote greater dignity and independence*”<sup>1</sup>.

An evaluation was carried out to answer the following key questions:

- Who has accessed the service in terms of age, gender, type of need, level of need and location?
- How have MN veterans found out about the service?
- What have been the barriers and enablers in reaching the targeted groups? What works in case finding veterans?
- What outcomes does the service aim to deliver, and to what degree have these been met (within the evaluation timeframe)?
- What other services have veterans accessed, and/or would like to access?
- What are the barriers and enablers to delivering an effective service?

The evaluation involved the following activities:

### 2.2.1 Assessment interviews

Baseline information was collected by caseworkers during initial assessments with veterans, once identified, using the Independence Star. The Independence Star is a tool for people receiving support from armed forces organisations to improve their quality of

---

<sup>1</sup> Case Worker job description provided by Nautilus Welfare Fund

life. Developed in collaboration with the Officers' Association, and with input from Help for Heroes, it covers the following six areas and provides a mechanism for people to articulate their current situation and what their needs are:

- Finances
- Housing
- Health
- Activities
- Social life
- Well-being

### 2.2.2 Sample MN veteran interviews

It was initially planned that IPC researchers would interview a sample of six MN veterans identified by caseworkers in each of the four areas covered by this service. This would give a total of 24 interviewees. However, due to challenges experienced by caseworkers in identifying an appropriate cohort only 18 were interviewed as highlighted below:

**Table 1: Interviewees identified by Nautilus Caseworkers**

Gender	Glasgow	Merseyside	Hull	Southampton and Portsmouth
Male	5	4	5	3
Female	1	-	-	-
	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
				<b>18</b>

### 2.2.3 Caseworker interviews

Each of the four caseworkers was also interviewed to obtain their perceptions and experience of how the service is developing and any obstacles or facilitating factors affecting its ability to achieve the service objectives.

### 2.2.4 Data analysis

Casework records, including the Independence Star, and data on age, gender, ethnic origin, type of need, and type of help provided to individuals was reviewed to provide further information on the process and outcome of the service. Analysis of the interviews was based on the interviewers' notes and, in some cases, recordings. These have been triangulated with the data from caseworker interviews, baseline data and casework records.

## 2.3 Service review in the Solent region

As Table 8 highlights on page 15, MN veterans currently reside in many different regions across the UK. As it was not possible to carry out a UK-wide service mapping exercise, it was decided that a service review would focus on the Portsmouth and Southampton region to offer a representation of the typical market of services for veterans. In practice, this is configured as the Solent region, which also includes Gosport, the Isle of Wight and East Hampshire.

Although the geographic focus for this service review was narrow, the aim was to gain an understanding of the nature of services and support for MN Veterans, where there may be gaps, and offer insight into the challenges that need to be overcome in ensuring that the support needs of MN Veterans are being met. The purpose of this review was to:

- present a picture of the range of existing specialist services for veterans as well as older people or community services more generally which have the potential to address the needs of veterans;
- explore the extent to which Armed Forces services reach out to MN veterans and address their needs, particularly in relation to mental health issues;
- explore how services raise awareness of, and communicate, their offer and the extent to which they work collaboratively to coordinate their work;
- highlight any obvious shortfall or pressure points in provision.

Our approach involved desktop research, engagement with providers through face to face interviews and questionnaires, service mapping, review and analysis of our findings. This consisted of various stages of activity, as described below:

### 2.3.1 Design service mapping template

We created a simple spreadsheet to act as a template which incorporated the following headings:

- Organisation
- Contact name/s and details
- Type of organisation
- Location
- Services provided, and whether generic or specialist
- Target population
- Outcomes intended

### 2.3.2 Desktop research

Baseline information for the mapping exercise was partly informed by an initial introduction and overview of the area provided by Hants and IoW Caseworker at Nautilus International. We then carried out desktop research to map the range of services in the Southampton and Portsmouth areas. The desktop research has involved a review of information provided on websites and linked publications. We aimed to gather information under the headings in the template.

### 2.3.3 Communication and engagement

In conjunction with Nautilus International, we distributed a letter, attached at **Appendix 5**, requesting a meeting or telephone interview, and questionnaire to around 40 organisations, explaining the context for and purpose of the service mapping exercise.

With the intention of securing the best possible response rate, it was agreed that Nautilus would distribute the bulk of the questionnaires to local, specialist and maritime organisations; and that IPC would make contact with local authorities and NHS organisations. The questionnaire is attached at **Appendix 6** and covers:

- providers' awareness of the MN Veteran population
- number of MN veterans in contact with/using services
- who services are provided for
- nature of services provided
- effectiveness of services
- local profile/awareness of services
- what helps/hinders people accessing services
- extent to which providers consider themselves to be part of a wider service/support network and collaborate with others
- views on whether armed forces services reach out to MN veterans

### 2.3.4 Summary of responses

The table below gives an overview of the organisations contacted together with a breakdown of their responses:

**Table 2: Summary of responses from organisations in the Solent region**

Organisation	No response	Interview	Questionnaire Returned
Age UK Portsmouth	✓	X	X
Age UK Southampton	✓	X	X
Armed Forces and Veterans Breakfast Clubs	✓	X	X
CoE Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Housing	✓	X	X
Defence Medical Welfare Service	✓	X	X
Disability Information and Advice Line	✓	X	X
Forgotten Veterans UK	✓	X	X
Gosport Advice and Information Network		✓	✓
Greenwich Hospital	✓	X	X
Harbour Cancer Support	✓	X	X
HIVE Portsmouth		✓	X
Merchant Navy Association	✓	X	X
Merchant Navy Welfare Board		✓	✓
Nautilus		✓	X
NHS Solent/Portsmouth CCG		✓	X
Portsmouth City Council		✓	X
Portsmouth Port Welfare Committee	✓	X	X
Portsmouth Primary Care Alliance	✓	X	X
RFA Association	✓	X	X



Organisation	No response	Interview	Questionnaire Returned
Rowans Hospice	✓	X	X
Royal British Legion Southampton Area	✓	X	X
Royal Maritime Club	✓	X	X
Royal Navy Benevolent Trust	✓	X	X
Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity		✓	✓
Sailors Society	✓	X	X
Shipwrecked Mariners Society		✓	X
Society of St James	✓	X	X
Solent Mind	✓	X	X
Southampton City Council		✓	✓
Southampton Primary Care Ltd	✓	X	X
SSAFA Hampshire	✓	X	X
The Naval Families Federation	✓	X	X
The Society of St James	✓	X	X
Totton and Eling Community Drop-In	✓	X	X
Veterans' Outreach Support		✓	✓
Veterans UK	✓	X	X

In-depth interviews were carried out by an IPC researcher with representatives from 10 organisations (28.6%) and questionnaires were completed and returned by 5 (14.3%). It is striking that almost 50% of those organisations originally contacted did not respond.

### 3 Report Structure

This report draws together data from the research sources described above and presents the key findings against each of the following headings:

**Part A:** Who are Merchant Navy Veterans?

**Part B:** Who are our MN Veteran Cohort?

**Part C:** Our Cohort's Experience of Conflict

**Part D:** Current Needs and Circumstances of our Cohort

**Part E:** The Service Response So Far

**Part F:** Considerations for Future Support

It should be noted that when analysing responses by seafaring career there is some duplication as many respondents served across different industries – this means that the totals by industry can be greater than the total of all responses. We have also rounded responses so some percentages may not equal exactly 100%.

Woven throughout the report are findings specifically related to the Nautilus casework evaluation and Solent service review. These are clearly differentiated by the following icons:



The primary focus of interviews with casework service users was less on their seafaring careers and experience of conflict and more focussed on their experience of the casework support and how this had influenced their lives today. For this reason, some of the data and findings featured in this report exclude the 18 interviews undertaken for the casework evaluation. This is indicated clearly.

## 4 Part A: Who Are Merchant Navy Veterans?

Through the Armed Forces Covenant, the Ministry of Defence (n.d. p.5) states:

*“Those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved.”*

In the case of civilian groups (including but not limited to the Merchant Navy and RFA), it also states:

*“..when members of these groups are deployed alongside members of the Armed Forces, they are entitled to increased levels of care and support, including in the event of injury or death, and often on a comparable basis to their Armed Forces colleagues.”*

### 4.1 Numbers

There are no precise records of the numbers<sup>2</sup> of merchant navy veterans but there is some relevant information available about numbers of the populations from which this group is drawn.

From the available data (Institute of Public Care 2015), the Royal Navy appear to comprise the largest group of serving seafarers (33,000), followed by the Merchant Navy (30,000) and the fishing fleet (12,000). The RFA is a small reserve force of approximately 3,600 (Armed Forces 2018). Thus, the total serving seafaring population is estimated to be almost 80,000. Previous research by the Institute of Public Care (2015) suggests the numbers of former seafarers (including the whole Royal Navy) and their adult dependants as shown in the table below:

**Table 3: Estimated number of seafarers**

	Merchant Navy	Fishing	Royal Navy
<b>Former</b>	150,850	95,570	367,790
<b>Former 85+</b>	7,080	4,550	55,170
<b>All adult dependants</b>	124,270	75,470	271,560

So, combining the Merchant Navy and Fishing fleet former seafarers in this table gives a total of over 245,000 former seafarers, not including the RFA. The same research projected the change in the size of these populations through to the year 2050. Although a decline in total numbers is projected, there is a more variable picture amongst the different age bands and industries. So, for example, overall, further rises in the numbers aged 65 and over, aged 75 and over, and particularly 85 and above are projected. Numbers of former merchant navy and fishing fleet seafarers aged 85 and over are projected to increase by more than 275% between now and the 2030s, while in

<sup>2</sup> The abbreviation “MN Veterans” is used in this report to apply to all seafaring veterans within the target population unless clearly distinguished as only being applicable to the Merchant Navy.

the Royal Navy, the number of former seafarers aged 85 and above has already peaked.

The oldest former seafarers are the group most likely to need help and support from maritime charities. They are key drivers of demand for care and support services. The projected increase in numbers in terms of the over-75s and over-85s among the merchant navy and fishing fleet groups highlights the need for providers to understand how they can meet the needs of frailer seafarers whether through the provision of services themselves, or by working in partnership with commissioners or other providers.

Finally, we have considered whether veterans badges might offer some clues about overall numbers, but limited data is available for the numbers of veteran badges issued. According to the Merchant Navy Association, nearly 12,000 Merchant Seafarer Veteran badges have been issued as of June 2016. However, these numbers are from one organisation only; other organisations, such as The Federation of Merchant Mariners also issues badges, but these numbers do not appear to be readily available.

## 4.2 Location

Given the lack of accurate records about who is a Merchant Navy veteran, it is also unclear where they currently live. The information that is available in this area is about the whereabouts of ALL current or former seafarers rather than specifically veterans and is drawn from a variety of research and other sources (Institute of Public Care 2015). Nevertheless, it gives us a good initial indication, supported by professionals we spoke to in the field, of the main centres around which veterans might be based. For example:

- The Merchant Navy Welfare Board identified the location of beneficiaries of merchant navy charities' grants between 2008 and 2013. The main postal town areas were: Hull, Aberdeen, Doncaster, Liverpool, Newcastle and Norwich.
- The key ports in terms of serving fishermen numbers are: Plymouth, Poole, Newlyn, Milford Haven, Fraserburgh, Ayr, Lerwick and Belfast.
- The highest concentrations of members of the RNA Shipmates Campaign (open to former Royal Navy personnel) are: Portsmouth, Plymouth, Glasgow, Bath, Exeter, Kirkcaldy, Southampton, Newcastle, Nottingham, Liverpool, Cardiff, and Dorchester.

## 4.3 Seafaring experience

The project seeks to better understand people working in three seafaring industries which are known to have supported the British Armed Forces in conflict zones - the Merchant Navy, the Fishing Fleet, and the Royal Fleet Auxiliary. The experience of the people in each of these industries might include the following:

- **The Merchant Navy:** The Merchant Navy Welfare Board in the UK has provided some internal guidelines, for others to use, to define a British Merchant Navy seafarer as any person, of UK nationality (which includes Crown Dependencies - the Channel Isles and Isle of Man - and British Overseas Territories (e.g. Gibraltar, Falkland Islands), or living in the UK and who is serving, or has served, at sea in any

capacity aboard a merchant vessel irrespective of the country of registry or ownership. This includes, but is not limited to, passenger liners, ferries, container ships, tankers, bulk carriers, and refrigerated cargo ships, Royal Fleet Auxiliaries (or their equivalent), coasters, specialist ships (e.g. deep sea tugs, salvage vessels, oil support vessels, lighthouse tenders etc.), plus large charter yachts with paid crew members.

- **The Royal Fleet Auxiliary** (RFA) is an integral part of the Royal Navy. It supplies fuel, equipment, ammunition and rations to Royal Navy warships during deployment. In addition, the RFA provides aviation support for the Royal Navy and amphibious and secure sea transport for Royal Marine and Army units. The RFA fleet includes tankers, stores ships, landing ships, a forward repair ship and an aviation support ship with a casualty reception facility.
- **The UK Fishing Fleet:** The UK fishing fleet number of registered UK fishing vessels has fallen by 29 per cent since 1996. The number of fishermen on UK registered vessels has decreased by 9 per cent since 2006 from 12,934 to 11,757 in 2016. The number of regular fishermen has decreased by 9 per cent and the number of part-time fishermen, which comprise around a fifth of all fishermen, has decreased by 11 per cent over this period (see Chart 2.9). The decrease in fishermen numbers may be associated with reductions in fleet size as well as decreased fishing opportunities (House of Commons 2017; Marine Management Organisation 2015; Scarborough Maritime Heritage Centre n.d.)

#### 4.4 Type of support to the Armed Forces

The people in all these industries have supported the Armed Forces in a variety of ways, and in a variety of conflict zones. So, for example:

- Between late September 1939 and late May 1945, a total of 25,343 merchant ships with 164,783.921 tonnes of cargo on board sailed from North America to Britain. British merchant shipping, the main target of the U-boats, lost over 1,300 vessels (some estimates are much higher) and nearly 32,076 seamen (Carr 1945 p.65).
- In World War 2: *“the Government recognised that trawlers and fishermen had an essential role in the maintenance of Britain’s sea lanes and the Admiralty was keen to get minesweeping operations underway. The Admiralty’s appetite for trawlers remained considerable throughout the war and altogether about 816 English and Welsh trawlers and in addition about 200 steam drifters were requisitioned at one time or another into the naval service”* (Scarborough Maritime Heritage Centre n.d).
- Between 1950 and 2010, the UK MN have supported Armed Forces vessels on conflict and peacekeeping missions in:- Northern Ireland; The Gulf; The Balkans; The Falkland Islands; Iraq; Cyprus; Aden; Afghanistan; Malaya; Korea; Sierra Leone; Kenya; Palestine; Suez; Burma; Borneo; Rwanda and India and more (Fear, Wood and Wessely 2009).
- In the Falklands *‘Up to the surrender in mid-June, 40 merchantmen totalling over 500,000 grt reached the South Atlantic. Without them, the war would not have been won as the Royal Fleet Auxiliary lacked the ships to transport the land forces and then support them and the warships 8,000 miles from home’* (Naval History n.d.).

## 4.5 Key messages

Overall then, despite the relatively limited data available to date on the MN veteran population, from the evidence elsewhere we can say that:

- Although there are no authoritative records, based on Table 1 above, it is likely that there are more than 245,000 former seafarers, of whom around 11,500 are over 85 years in age in the UK. The number of veterans over 85 is likely to almost triple over the next 15-20 years.
- The experiences described by the Nautilus caseworkers highlights the challenge of identifying the MN veteran population.
- There are a wide range of job roles within the industries, and seafarers have a wide range of seafaring experiences. There is movement across the seafaring industries by individuals and this further complicates developing an understanding of the size of this population.
- There have been many conflicts around the world involving the Armed Forces where it is known that support was provided by MN or fishing or RFA vessels.
- Whilst seafarers and ex-seafarers of course live in a hugely diverse range of places in the UK and abroad, there are known to be concentrations of numbers in UK ports.

## 5 Part B: Who Are Our MN Veteran Cohort?

Part B gives an overview of who responded to the survey and who we spoke to in telephone and face to face interviews, including age, gender and where they currently live.

### 5.1 Age and gender

As stated earlier in this report, although the research project is targeting veterans over the age of 65, it was felt important to widen the age of those surveyed to ensure we understood veterans approaching the target age, as well as those already within it. This was particularly important given the numbers of Merchant Navy veterans who had served in the Falklands.

Veterans across both research activities included a range of ages and experience in different industries. The largest age band to respond to the survey was aged 75-84 (33.6%) compared with the age band of 65-74 (46.1%) being the highest responders of those who were interviewed.

**Table 4: Age of survey respondents**

	All responses		Area(s) worked in		
			MN	Fishing	RFA
<b>85 +</b>	19.9%	77	55	21	10
<b>75 - 84 years</b>	33.6%	130	79	35	21
<b>65 - 74 years</b>	30.5%	118	72	17	42
<b>Less than 65</b>	14.7%	57	32	0	32
<b>Totals</b>		<b>387</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>105</b>

**Table 5: Age of interviewees**

	All responses		Area(s) worked in		
			RFA	Fishing	MN
<b>85+</b>	13.2%	10	0	2	6
<b>75 – 84</b>	25%	19	2	1	11
<b>65 – 74</b>	46.1%	35	7	3	27
<b>Less than 65</b>	13.2%	10	2	0	7
<b>Unknown</b>	2.6%	2	2	1	1
<b>Totals</b>		<b>76</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>52</b>

In total, we interviewed 76 people; 72 men and 4 women. Of the four women, two were widows of veterans and two were seafarers; all of the men were seafarers. Male respondents formed the largest group to complete the survey (77.51%). Female survey respondents included spouses and partners as well as female seafarer veterans.

## 5.2 Marital status

Whilst approximately 77% of survey respondents were married or had been widowed, more than half were now living alone (including a high number of female respondents). Similarly, 65.5% of interviewees were married or had been widowed with more than half (53.4%) now living alone. This is not uncommon given the age profile. According to the Office for National Statistics, in 2017, the percentage of people in England over 65 years of age who were single and never married was around 5.5%, which is significantly lower than the 22.4% of single veterans interviewed for the purposes of this research. It is not surprising then that a higher proportion (60.0%) of the general 65+ population were married or in a civil partnership, compared with only 46% of married Veterans.

**Table 6: Marital status of survey respondents**

<b>Single (never married)</b>	9.2%	34
<b>Married</b>	46.1%	174
<b>Separated</b>	2.7%	10
<b>Widowed</b>	31.8%	120
<b>Divorced</b>	10.3%	39
<b>Unknown</b>	2.6%	10
<b>Total</b>		<b>387</b>

**Table 7: Marital status of interviewees**

<b>Single</b>	22.4%	14
<b>Married/in a relationship</b>	46.6%	33
<b>Widowed</b>	18.9%	18
<b>Divorced</b>	12.1%	11
		<b>76</b>

## 5.3 Current location

The survey sought responses from across the UK, and to reflect where it was thought there was likely to be concentrations of seafarers. This was largely achieved as detailed below:

**Table 8: Where survey respondents currently live**

<b>Answer Choices</b>	<b>Responses</b>		<b>MN</b>	<b>Fishing</b>	<b>RFA</b>
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	1.8%	7	1	4	2
<b>Scotland</b>	15.1%	59	23	27	14
<b>Wales</b>	5.9%	23	19	1	6
<b>North East England</b>	11.9%	47	26	16	11
<b>North West England</b>	14.8%	59	46	8	4



Answer Choices	Responses		MN	Fishing	RFA
South East England	13.5%	54	32	1	23
South West England	9.4%	37	28	0	14
Greater London	4.2%	16	8	0	7
East of England	5.5%	21	16	3	1
East Midlands	1.0%	4	3	0	1
West Midlands	1.3%	5	4	0	1
Yorkshire and the Humber	9.1%	35	20	13	9
Other (please provide postcode)	4.4%	17	-	-	-
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>93</b>

So overall, in terms of where the survey respondents currently live, the biggest concentration come from Scotland 15.10%, followed by North West England 14.84% and South East England 13.54%. Amongst 'other' 2 people (0.52%) live in the Channel Islands, 5 people (1.3%) live in Australia/New Zealand, and 6 people (1.56%) live in Canada/USA.

The current locations of interviewees were also spread across the UK and included Australia, Canada and the USA. The spread in terms of location was dependent on those veterans who were willing and able to be interviewed, as well as the location of the casework service which is currently limited to four distinct regions; these factors have limited representation in some areas. It is no surprise therefore that the largest proportion of interviews currently reside in the four regions where the casework service operates.

**Table 9: Where interviewees currently live**

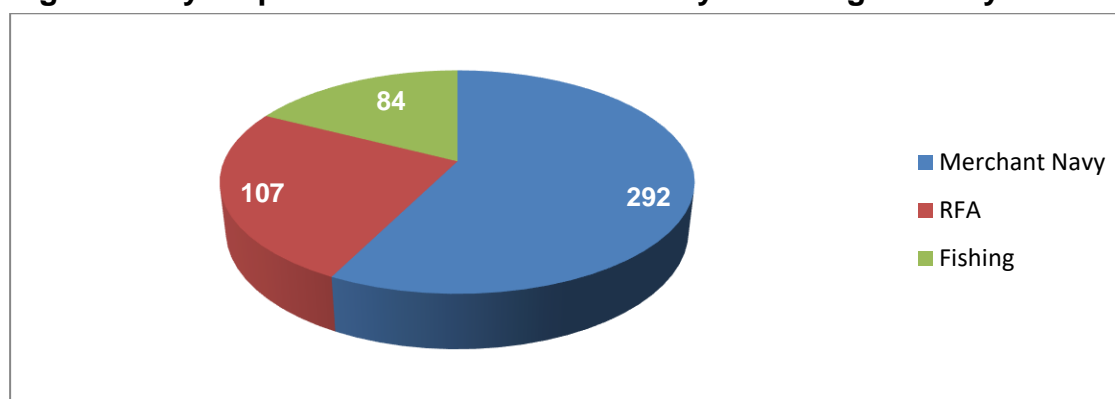
Location	Number of interviewees	
Scotland	14.5%	11
Wales	7.9%	6
NE England	1.3%	1
NW England	11.9%	9
Yorkshire and the Humber	23.7%	18
Midlands	4%	3
E England	4%	3
SE England (incl London)	23.7%	18
SW England	4%	3
Channel Islands	1.3%	1
Australia	1.3%	1
USA	1.3%	1

Location	Number of interviewees	
British Columbia	1.3%	1
		76

#### 5.4 Seafaring career

Survey respondents and interviewees were asked whether they were serving in the Merchant Navy, RFA or in the fishing fleet when supporting The Armed Forces. The majority of all those veterans who took part in both research activities were from the Merchant Navy – 65.05% of survey respondents and 86.8% of interviewees. It should be noted that the highest group of responses excluded from the survey analysis (as they had not identified a theatre of operation) comprised those working in the fishing industry.

**Fig 1 Survey respondents and interviewees by seafaring industry**



**Table 10: Interviewees by seafaring industry**

Industry experience	Number of interviewees
RFA	13
MN	64
Fishing	11

In many cases, veterans had experience across the range of industries, with a number having moved between all of them over the course of their careers.

#### 5.5 Length of career

For more than half of the interviewees (56.6%) their seafaring careers had been lengthy (over 20 years) and they had little, if any, experience of land-based work. However, there were also examples of people who had shorter careers, typically starting with, or returning to, a civilian trade (for example, hairdresser, nurse or GP):

*“I came back to England and after that I didn’t fancy going back to sea again, so I got involved in building.”*

In some cases, but not all, this followed service in conflict zones. Alternatively, deciding for personal reasons, such as having a family that they did not want to continue with a seafaring career:

*“I thought it was hard on my wife having to bring up a family on her own, and so I made the decision to finish.”*

**Table 11: Interviewees length of seafaring career**

	All*	MN	Fishing	RFA
<b>20+ years</b>	43	43	7	4
<b>11-20 years</b>	13	9	3	2
<b>6-10 years</b>	7	6	0	1
<b>5 years or less</b>	3	3	0	2
<b>Unknown</b>	10	3	1	4
	<b>76</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>

\*As some served in more than one industry the breakdown does not equal the total column.

## 5.6 Theatres of operation

Survey respondents were also asked to identify which theatres of operation they had been involved in as a merchant seaman, fisherman or whilst in the RFA. While the total number of respondents to this question was 339 (with 50 who did not respond), the totals against each theatre of operation exceed this number due to respondents having served in more than one theatre of operations, and more than one service. A list of theatres of operation was provided with the option to choose “other” and then specify an alternative theatre.

The results below provide an important snapshot of the significant spread and variety of involvement our seafarer cohort had in supporting the Armed Forces. It shows that in terms of respondents to the survey and interviewees, the greatest number had served in the Falklands, however the ‘older’ theatres were also represented, notably Vietnam and World War II.

**Table 12: Theatres of operation of interviewees and survey respondents**

	Survey	Interviews	Total
<b>Falklands</b>	153	38	<b>191</b>
<b>Gulf</b>	71	3	<b>74</b>
<b>Aden</b>	49	9	<b>58</b>
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	50	2	<b>52</b>
<b>Suez</b>	40	4	<b>44</b>
<b>WWII</b>	37	2	<b>39</b>
<b>Cyprus</b>	34	4	<b>38</b>

	Survey	Interviews	Total
Malaya	34	2	36
Iraq	24	2	26
Iceland (Cod wars)	15	10	25
Korea	19	4	23
Balkans	21	0	21
Borneo	20	0	20
Sierra Leone	19	0	19
India	17	1	18
Vietnam	11	4	15
Palestine	11	0	11
Kenya	10	0	10
Afghanistan	7	0	7
Burma	4	0	4
Arctic convoys WW2	0	1	1
Sea of Formosa	0	1	1
Rwanda	1	0	1
Other (please specify)	55	17	75

'Other' included the following: Not known (39, often widows responses), Israel (6), Nigeria (6), Somali (4), Germany (3), Japan (2), Hong Kong (2), Kuwait (2), South Africa (4) plus 13 other countries with single responses including Nigeria, Chile, India, Iran, Borneo, Yugoslavia, Bahrain, Ivory Coast, Angola, Liberia, Libya, Indonesia, Cambodia.

## 5.7 Seafaring roles

Interviewees carried out different roles at sea which can be broadly categorised as follows:

**Table 13: Interviewees seafaring roles\***

Role	Examples	Numbers
Trade	Electrician, radio officer, hairdressing, engineer	10
Seaman	Deck hand, ordinary seaman, midshipman, navigating officer, captain	25
Medical	Doctor, nurse	2
Fisherman		4
Catering and Hospitality	Purser, steward, catering officer, petty officer, cook, storekeeper, chef	19

\*excludes casework interviewees

In summary, the majority of veterans interviewed had worked either as seamen (43.1%) or in catering and hospitality (32.8%).

## 5.8 Perception of 'veteran' status

Whilst almost all of the interviewees had applied for their veterans' badge and were fully aware of their veteran status, they did not necessarily self-identify as such:

- *"it was just a job, you know, sometimes people look at you as either you're mad or you're some kind of hero."*
- *"I don't think I was a hero. Yeah, I went there and I done my job. And anybody ever tells you they weren't scared, is a bloody liar."*
- *We've got a veteran's badge; we've got a medal. Same medal as the soldiers. 'Cause we have the rosette for seeing action. And all that, but no I don't really. I never wear it. And, the merchant navy meetings now you see, we sometimes harp on about it, and some of the men there still, the men that was in the bloody, South, um, North Atlantic bloody convoys, you know what I mean and then the Arctic ones, you know. And I think, we are nothing. Three months. And it was all over, the fighting. Although it weren't for us, it was like a year.*

One interviewee went so far as to say he felt "guilty" about being recognised as a veteran:

- *"being in a couple of things like that, compared to you know, I go to the veterans club down here and listening to them, what I went through was nothing compared to what they went through, like. So, they are the real veterans, like, you know what I mean. I feel guilty about having it [veteran badge]"*.

This may go some way to explaining the relatively low numbers of veterans who have sought formal support (table 27) particularly when compared with the informal support (table 28). Particularly striking was the stoic nature of some responses – often commenting that "considering the circumstances" or "given my health problems" they really "couldn't complain" or:

- *"I wouldn't let it defeat me"*
- *"I just had to get on with it"*
- *"I'm used to coping, I don't like to complain"*

On the other hand, some felt strongly that more support and recognition was needed:

- *"Now we don't want much, but a little more of the same 'well done', 'cause when you look back, I'm like, being big-headed or whatever, but if it wasn't for the men on that merchant ship, that war could never have been pulled off."*
- *"nobody recognised the Merch, we never had anything like that, not like the army, the navy and the air force did. You know, we never had anything ... you couldn't go anywhere and say I was in the Merchant Navy"*.
- *"I mean, if you bottle it up too much, you know, that's what it can become. I mean, this is the trouble when we come home, we found that you couldn't talk to anybody"*.

- *“I think one of the biggest things that affected me during the Falkland’s War was having been into San Carlos water and come under intense air attack and then escaped without getting hurt, we then had to go to South Georgia and take all the troops off the QE2 and then go back into San Carlos water and risk air attack again. So, I think one thing that’s lived with me for a long time is kind of the injustice of that. It felt like an injustice that somehow a politician had decided that I was dispensable but the QE2 wasn’t, the people on the QE2 weren’t, you know? So that was a feeling that hasn’t really gone away.”*

## 5.9 Key messages

- Overall, we think the range of people we surveyed and spoke to gives a good cross-section of Merchant Navy veterans, and as a result we think that our findings about their experience and situation is broadly representative of the Merchant Navy veteran population as a whole.
- Almost 54% of the veteran cohort included in this research are living alone – either through divorce, bereavement or having never married.
- When compared with the general population of 65 years and over, there is a significant difference in the numbers of veterans who are married – only 44% compared with 60%.
- Interviewees provided a complex picture of seafaring careers. Some interviewees had worked across seafaring industries; there was a variety of career experience including length of service, different types of roles filled and in which industry; whilst some had experience of land-based jobs, others had worked at sea all their working lives.
- Whilst a number had served in the Falklands, there was otherwise a wide range of experience of supporting the Forces in terms of geographical location and type of support provided.
- How seafarers self-identify varies greatly. Many more readily and comfortably identify as a *seafarer* rather than a *veteran*, whilst others seem to begrudge the lack of financial and emotional support which had been made available to them since the conflict ended, or since they had retired.

## 6 Part C: Our Cohort's Experience of Conflict

Part C draws on the survey and interview data to explore the conflict experience of Merchant Navy veterans. The 18 interviews carried out as part of the casework evaluation are not included in this section.

Statistical data from the survey offers an overview of experience, and quotations from the interviews illustrate people's experience and the impact that it had on them.

### 6.1 Supporting British Armed Forces

Interviewees were asked to provide details of how they were involved in supporting British Armed Forces:

**Table 14: Interviewees type of support to Armed Forces**

Type of support	All*	RFA	Fishing	MN
Minesweeping	2	1	1	0
Medical support	5	0	0	5
Firefighting and towing	1	0	0	1
Evacuating civilians	3	1	0	2
Carrying troops	25	2	3	24
Carrying supplies	14	3	1	12
Carrying fuel	11	2	1	11
Carrying arms	7	1	1	7
Unknown	3	0	0	3

\*As some provided more than one type of support the total number exceeds the number of interviews.

Interviewees elaborated on these categories and gave vivid examples of the kind of environment that people were working in, and the kind of tasks involved. These included many examples of delivering supplies:

- *"We were taking arms and foodstuffs and everything you could think of, down to toothpaste, razor blades, even 7 o'clock razor blades, they had them in the army, they were army issue 7 o'clock blades, we took all stuff like that see, coffee, dried milk, everything that we could carry for our army down in the Middle East and in Cyprus."*
- *"We were running aviation fuel to all the marines for their choppers and fighter bases."*
- *"We were carrying military equipment."*
- *"And in the 1970's, the Suez Canal, we were taking arms down to the British, they were having problems in Cyprus so we were taking arms."*
- *"We were landing portable radar sets, tanks, effectively every kind of army equipment you can think of."*

Almost 33% of veterans transported troops and supported injured personnel:

- *“We carried 130-odd troops down there. We had a very large upper deck which was very useful for landing helicopters. But basically we were just supply.”*
- *“We took on board the injured prisoners as well as a few of the people, but it was mainly the injured and we looked after them, then eventually we took all of, I think it was 4,000 prisoners of war, back home at the end of the war so it was a very interesting experience.”*

## 6.2 Exposure to conflict

There were different types of experience within the conflict zones, with some veterans having had direct exposure to conflict (for example being fired upon), whilst for others experience was indirect (for example delivering fuel but remaining away from the fighting).

**Table 15: Interviewees exposure to conflict**

<b>Direct exposure</b>	38
<b>Indirect exposure</b>	18
<b>No exposure</b>	2

There was a similar range of exposure amongst those with RFA or fishing experience, whilst there was more direct exposure amongst those with Merchant Navy experience.

**Table 16: Interviewees exposure to conflict by service**

	<b>RFA</b>	<b>Fishing</b>	<b>MN</b>
<b>Direct exposure</b>	6	4	34
<b>Indirect exposure</b>	4	3	14

Quotations from the interviews again illustrate the range of experiences of veterans, from direct exposure:

- *“We used to take the troops in and out of Belfast. So we’d be fired on there going up and down.”*
- *“We were next to the Sheffield when she got sunk.”*
- *“Wasn’t directly in any conflicts as such, I went afterwards, the nearest one I can think of is in the early ‘70’s I was on the Northern Island run, taking the troops over to Northern Island which got a bit hairy at times.”*
- *“Cause we knew it was a minefield we were gonna go through. If it goes off, you’re gonna break your back if you’re not, you know what I mean?”*
- *“I thought when soldiers blacked their faces up, I thought that was just on Hollywood films, didn’t know they did that in real life. And there they all was and that just dawned on me then, this is bother, this is trouble. I knew before, as they was getting the ship blacked out and that, and that brought it home.”*

..to more indirect (or perhaps subsequently minimised) exposure:



- *“I never felt threatened.”*
- *“We weren’t really in conflict, in 1975-76 I was on a tanker up in the Cod Wars in Iceland, but that wasn’t really a conflict, it was just a little misunderstanding.”*

### 6.3 Other conflict exposure

In addition to the descriptions of exposure to conflict when supporting the Armed Forces, many interviewees related stories of their exposure to conflict in other circumstances, which could clearly be just as direct and significant for those involved:

- *“Then I’d started going on a South American run. Little did we know that we were carrying armaments to the Chileans who were having problems down there in Chile but we didn’t know what we were doing, we were just carrying arms to the militias, they called it the Rivers of Blood that conflict, that was brutal, nothing to do with the British but we were taking arms to the militia down there. I can’t think of the chap’s name down in Chile at the time, he was killing everybody, you know, that was against his regime, kind of thing.”*
- *“The first one I did was Nigeria, twice pirates tried to board us but we managed to fight them off and the last one I did, she was the biggest one in the world at the time, 47,000 tonne. We carried 750 passengers.”*
- *“During the 6 day war in Israel we had just tied up and we were getting unloaded before we went up to pick oranges up for Glasgow and it was the second day and there were flying over and we were told to get straight back into the Mediterranean because we’re at war. We thought it was just a drill. So we went out to the Mediterranean straight away and as we just turned down to the Mediterranean and there was an Israeli gunboat going past us and they were throwing grenades in the water, what they were doing that for was to stop any terrorists swimming under the ship and putting a landmine on the ship to blow the ship out of the water. It was a bit nerve wracking, but you just get on, we just carried on with it. You didn’t realise it.”*
- *“There was always something going on that you couldn’t go ashore, because it was too dangerous, up in the Persian Gulf and all that. The Arabs used to come on board the ship and we had to stop them boarding, because they would steal. What we were afraid of was in case any of them had guns.”*
- *“With my first brush, I suppose, was Cod War, we had, we were ranked by the gun boats, they sank gun boats, they fired over us so that was first involvement I suppose.”*

### 6.4 Impact of conflict exposure

This is one of the key areas we wanted to explore with our respondents and interviewees, to help us get a good picture of whether the conflict experience had led to subsequent challenges in coping or in additional health support needs for veterans. Interestingly, there is no previously published research on the impact of serving in conflict areas on the physical and mental health and wellbeing of MN veterans, although there is wider evidence on the impact on Armed Forces veterans.

The Institute of Public Care (2015) has previously identified well-known wider occupational and other factors which impact on the health and wellbeing of current and former seafarers:

*“...commercial fishing is Britain’s most hazardous occupation, whilst merchant seafaring is regarded by some as second only to this”.*

The same report identifies a number of lifestyle issues including smoking, alcohol consumption, and a relatively sedentary lifestyle.

*“This can affect fitness and high death rates for accidents at work in the merchant fleet (between seven and 20 times greater than for shore-based workers even in the safest national fleets (Roberts 2000 p. 253-265))”.*

Indeed, a recent study of the impact of piracy on seafarers found that there was a lasting impact, however...

*“..it is only one traumatic experience that seafarers face, and the ongoing exposure to maritime trauma has an independent effect on post-traumatic stress symptoms linked to poorer wellbeing” (Seyle 2018 p23-28).*

There is also wider evidence about the impact of working in conflict situations. Some of the findings from these studies are, we think, potentially relevant to Merchant Navy veterans. For example, it is clear from a number of studies of people in conflict situations such as the Armed Forces and their support services that a higher incidence of mental health and physical health problems than for the general population can arise (Busuttill 2010a; Busuttill 2010b) and that this can be for a number of reasons, including:

- Direct experience of trauma or injury.
- Death, injury, trauma of colleagues, wider public or indeed enemies.
- Being away for long periods from family and friends.
- Pre-service vulnerabilities – so for example people may join to escape a difficult life situation including for example abuse or previous trauma.
- Earlier onset of physical disorders related to a rigorous physical and sometimes hazardous life – including for example orthopaedic including chronic pain/ENT problems; physical disorders associated with mental health illness.
- Trauma when leaving a service and adjusting to civilian life and very different lifestyles.
- Reluctance to seek help – including for example many men’s tendencies to be less likely to seek help, and the potential lack of understanding of and by civilians, as well as possible shame, stigma or guilt about their experience, role and responsibilities.

Certainly, we found from our survey and interviews that there are both physical and mental consequences of being involved in conflict situations, and seafarers are affected in both physical and mental ways by their seafaring experiences due to the nature of the occupation. This can compound any physical or mental issues related to the ageing process. We explore this in this section in terms of the impact of conflict, and in the next section which focuses on the overall impact of the seafaring life.

Survey respondents were asked about the impact of their experience on their physical and mental health. Only a small number reported an injury – 13 respondents (3.6% of all respondents) – with the nature of the injuries as set out in the table below. Interviewees described relatively few examples of physical impact, although a little

higher than survey respondents – 8 respondents (13.8% of all interviewees) and even fewer directly related to the conflict.

**Table 17: Survey respondents' injury in theatre of operation**

Type of injury	Number of injuries reported
Lower limb	8
General/non-specific physical injury	7
Neck or back	6
Upper limb	5
Unknown	5
Mental health/stress/anxiety	2
Other musculoskeletal	2
Hearing	2
Frostbite	1
Eyes	1
Rope related	1
<b>Total number of injuries</b>	<b>40</b>

Descriptions ranged from the nonchalant to the graphic...

- *"I caught a couple of ricochets in Falklands but nothing to stop me or anything."*
- *"When we did the first run I was ok, but when we came back I got something called the Argentinean bug, with them having dysentery and what have you, they were malnourished, I got this bug off them, I was really, really ill. We had a medic on board who said I'd have to go to Stanley hospital, as quick as possible, to get some fluids in me. I was in there for about 4 days."*

However, one of the most striking differences between the responses of those who completed the survey and those who were interviewed was the number who reported an impact of their experience on their mental health. Only 4.4% of survey respondents (17 of 387 veterans) identified an impact compared with 44.9% (26 of 58 veterans) of interviewees. We think that the reason for this is likely to be veterans' understandable initial reluctance to discuss such a sensitive and perhaps painful aspect of their life – until assured of an interviewer's understanding and confidence.

**Table 18: Type of impact of conflict on interviewees**

Type of impact	Number of interviewees (% all interviewees)
Mental health	26 (44.9%)
Alcohol	4 (6.9%)
Isolation	0 (0%)

Physical health	8 (13.8%)
-----------------	-----------

A similar proportion (approximately half) experienced a mental impact across each of the industries. We think this level of mental health impact is possibly still under-reported even in the interviews, but nevertheless represents a significant proportion of veterans who have experienced mental health problems – and significantly higher than the generally reported proportion of 25% in the population as a whole (Mind 2014). Once again, the quotations illustrate this well, and perhaps suggest that the impact on alcohol consumption is also under reported:

- *“Only shandies now, no, but I used to drink, I was pretty bad on it.”*
- *“The only thing I would say probably, that when we got back from the Falklands maybe we did drink a little bit more than we did before. But that seemed to pass after about 6 months and then went back to normal. You miss, sometimes, the difference and the situations like that, it was the same after [me mate finished as well?] there was excitement there all the time. You come back to the normal hum drum everyday life.”*
- *“I’m legally classed with spinal disabilities, problems with my legs, I’ve got cirrhosis of the liver, so basically I’m just falling to pieces really, but that’s all through drinking and abuse of alcohol, which was my fault, I can’t blame anyone for that, it’s just one of those things and like I say, now I don’t drink like I used to but one time I was drinking 3 bottles of spirits a day. And that was solely and purely because after the ship sunk, if you can imagine, I’d be lying in my bunk after working 12/14 hours, I’m beat and I’m on a ferry boat and the next thing I’m looking at a train coming through the wall, makes you wonder what they hell is going on, I thought, am I dreaming, I can see this train and then the next thing all the water was in. within 6 minutes that ship sunk and I was trying to put the passengers together and the ship’s turning over, trying to get people to the other side.”*

**Table 19: Type of impact of conflict on interviewees across industries**

Type of impact	RFA	Fishing	MN
Mental health	5	3	24
Alcohol	0	0	3
Isolation	0	0	0
Physical health	2	2	6

Some veterans or their spouses described the impact experienced at the time of the conflict for their spouses and not just themselves:

- *“My husband worked in the MN all our life; I was like a single parent and have been depressed and anxious”*
- *“I was a widow with five children in school”*
- *“My wife seems to have absorbed it all”*

Many interviewees vividly described the subsequent and ongoing impact of their experience, some specifically referring to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), others describing flashbacks, anxiety and depression. Clearly for many people their

experience of conflict continues to echo across their daily lives' many years after the events themselves:

- *“on the bridge and whichever officer was on board, he would let the Claxton go and that was a god forsaken noise. That really made me scream. My nerves have never been right since”*
- *“two squaddies, one grabbed me and I don’t know if he nudded me or punched me, I went out like a light, ‘cause I don’t fight. It’s all for nothing, all for nothing. I swear on my mum’s memory, it was all for nothing. It were just, like, in the 1940s, 50s and even before that, the old fashioned queer bashing”.*
- *“I still bear the mental scars of the Falklands”*
- *“The horror of seeing thousands of holocaust survivors attempting to reach Palestine through the port of Haifa while being prevented from doing so by the Forces is an experience not to be forgotten. “*
- *“I am less capable of handling stressful situations”*
- *“I become very angry even years after the event to the point where I could not discuss the campaign without being angry....if I talk about it I will be depressed for a day or two...I don’t talk about it much.”*
- *“After returning from the Falklands my menstrual cycle was totally changed and chaotic which my GP told me was due to stress, although I did not know I was stressed.”*
- *“I turned into an introvert and started drinking heavily, my marriage ended a few years after, my drinking is lighter now but I have flashbacks and start again.”*
- *“I’ve been getting counselling for me depression and me anxiety because I had anxiety attacks and with me being this low, I just feel helpless, you know, and insecure. And disappointed as well.”*
- *“I’m just so angry and I get a migraine and I’ve just got to hide from my own family because the tension and the stress, and you do feel helpless and you feel disappointed, you know, and it makes you anxious.”*
- *“Everybody thought I was different when I came back from there, I couldn’t see it but they could. Distant. Within myself, more emotional but colder to other people. More aloof. That sort of thing.”*
- *“I suffered with the silence. Because when the paras went off, after being hyped up for all these months making sure they were alright, and all the responsibility, once all the paras had gone off, the whole ship went flat and I believe I suffered a bit from post-traumatic stress where it’s silent. When I’m at home now, if my wife is out I have the radio on, I can’t bear silence. I think that affected me a little bit.”*
- *“I think what I did was totally cocoon myself in the fact that I was responsible for the navigation and I wasn’t going to let anything else affect that. We would have burials at sea... I made a point of not getting involved in any of that. I doubt if a day that goes past where I don’t think about it. The war”.*

Clearly, for many Merchant Navy veterans the physical and mental health impact of their conflict experience has been significant, and had a major influence, for some, on their subsequent life choices and on their wellbeing.

## 6.5 Impact of seafaring career

As well as the impact of conflict, interviewees were also asked about the impact that their seafaring career overall had, if any, on their physical or mental health. A little over half described a physical impact relating to their seafaring career (compared to just 13.8% relating it to conflict experience, and a prevalence of around 20% in the population as a whole with long-standing issues<sup>3</sup>), perhaps not surprising given the potential impact of long-term exposure to physically demanding activities for many in the Merchant Navy.

Around 21% described a mental health impact (compared to almost 45% relating it to conflict experience) – which matches figures for the prevalence of mental health issues in the population. Clearly most veterans with alcohol issues relate this to the overall career circumstances than to the impact of conflict experiences. This is high compared to UK population estimates of around 3.1% as harmful or dependent drinkers in the population (Drinkaware 2016).

**Table 20: Type of impact of seafaring career**

Type of impact	Number of interviewees (% all interviewees)
Mental health (generally)	12 (20.6%)
Alcohol	9 (15.5%)
Isolation	4 (6.9%)
Physical health	30 (51.7%)

**Table 21: Type of impact of seafaring career across industries**

Type of impact	RFA	Fishing	MN
Mental health (generally)	5	3	10
Alcohol	2	1	9
Isolation	1	1	2
Physical health/injury	6	3	28

The interviews gave us more detailed insight through examples into the kind of ongoing health issues that veterans put down to a seafaring life. In terms of mental health:

- *“I’d say that being at sea is very selfish. And I think seamen are selfish. Though you’re living with blokes, and now women, all the time, you’re still in your own little thing. I don’t like crowds. I’ve said to my wife a couple of times, we’ll wait for the next bus, or if we go to Tesco on a Saturday and it’s chocka, I get annoyed. And I have noticed now that I get annoyed quickly now. Little things I can lose it. I usually have a go at her about it. she’ll tell you that I do lose me rag a lot quicker now.”*
- *“Anyway, steamed back to Singapore, the captain came and spoke to me and said they will be sending you to see a doctor when we get to Singapore. I was having*

<sup>3</sup> The Office for Disability Issues updated Department for Work and Pensions estimates which show there are 11.6 million disabled people in Great Britain, of whom 5.7 million are adults of working age, 5.1 million are over state pension age and 0.8 million are children.

panic attacks about 4 times a day. I'd never had one in my life, I didn't know what they were. Anyway, we got to Singapore, and I was put in a hotel, because the boat was going to Australia, and I was flown home. There was nobody to meet me; I had to make my own way from my auntie's house in Southend, the East End of London. I went down the tube station to catch the train to where my auntie lived and it was crowded and when all the people were coming off the train I thought I was back in the tank and I took very bad. It was like mud coming at me, a wall of mud. I just dropped my luggage and tried to run up the escalators and fell over. I woke up with ambulance men with me giving me oxygen. So I eventually got home to Lowestoft, where I lived with my parents and I was put on Valium. My father took me to see a couple of psychiatrists but we couldn't get any answers. I've been trying now since 1968 but I can't get a solicitor, I've tried solicitors, SSAFA tried for me, all they could say was that Agent Orange which they used in '67/'68 and then it was banned. SSAFA told me that every single veteran from America was on a special pension if they served in that time or they were in Vietnam at that time, because of the effects of the Agent Orange."

- "The first time I went back, fishing trip, 6 months after the episode, 1968, I went to sea on a trawler and as I was taking my cup of tea up the wheel arch, I went past the engine room and just the smell of the engine rooms, I took another bad panic attack and just ran. Got in my bed. So when we got ashore, at the end of that trip, I knew I couldn't go back on the boats and I did a year as a bus conductor."
- "Second go on these old tide-boats I just became unable to function, I had virtually a nervous breakdown, I was working day and night on there to keep the thing going and I just gave up eventually, got very tearful, wouldn't do anything and I was put in the Catherine Rigby hospital in South Africa, which is a sort of whites only sort of place, they'd not long had independence and they looked after me and pumped me full of vitamins and I was in there for 3 weeks or a month, put on weight again, got a lot better, I flew back to the UK and then was immediately put in Netley Hospital, which is a joint services hospital, navy and army, and they came and an army psychiatrist, and being RFA we just got lumped in with the same thing, just as well I did actually because I then had 3 or 4 months' leave after that until I was ready to go back."
- "They've always just put me on medication. For years they just kept upping the medication and what they don't understand is it's alright saying 'counselling' but counselling doesn't work for everybody. I've had to isolate myself; I help people out where I can, but most of the time I'm on my own. Here I've got 269 acres if I want to walk around. I'm no good at sitting in rooms of people, like therapies and that, it's not me, I just can't see the concept of that, you know."
- "Well, I still go down to that harbour and see what's happening down there. I still miss it. We go on the ferry and there's couple of tankers in the anchorage, because I've been in that anchorage a few times. I do miss the sea. They say it's in your blood, it was in my dad's as well, that's where I got it from. I do miss it. But when you're actually there you think what the hell am I doing here, sometimes. You go back, you go back and you go back again. I do still miss it even after all this time."

There were examples of alcohol abuse and dependence:

- "I went into a deep depression. I lost me job on the ship, well, I didn't lose me job, but I was drinking heavily, smoking heavily for a year. And all I could think of was 'I should be on the ship' and I had to change me lifestyle."

- *“We were boozers, we were fighters, we were womanisers, you know, this idea of woman in every port, you couldn’t do that ‘cos we were too busy fighting and boozing, you know, women were the occasional every other port, the rest of the time it was boozing.”*
- *“I probably went out too much with friends here, drinking too much, but then just about everybody did then in the services.”*

Some people also recognised the challenges of living a relatively solitary life as a seafarer:

- *“Because I suppose, being at sea, you are a bit solitary.”*
- *“I’ve learnt you see, when I was at sea, I was only home for so many days, and I weren’t bothered about neighbours. Me wife did all that, when I finished, I don’t bother with it now but I don’t want people knowing my business.”*
- *“my wife would tell you my personality’s changed. I’ve become far more from being a party goer to a person more content to be on his own.”*

Finally, interviewees also described some of the impact that a seafaring life had on physical health and wellbeing:

- *“I’ve nearly had this hand ripped off once”*
- *“a steel bar fell all the way down and hit me on the head. I can’t spell now and I wasn’t colour-blind but now I am. Basically me memory’s gone. me left arm only works goes up about six inches and out about six inches”.*
- *“I’ve got COPD. Which is not very good for me lungs and that’s down to me being at sea, being in the cargo because we didn’t have any health and safety in them days, you know, working with hazardous materials, fumes. The red lead paint, you know all the stuff that’s banned now and we just worked with it like all the cargos were loose cargos, not like now, container ships, we handled all loose cargo, dust, all stuff that’s banned now.”*
- *“Even the white finger, I wanted to know what that was caused by and they said pneumatic chipping hammers, electrical stuff, chipping the decks and stuff like that with these chipping hammers, it was all motorised mechanical stuff that we used on the ships. That’s why me hands are knackered now. They shouldn’t be really, but they are.”*
- *“I’ve had 2 new knees. And that’s vibration I think, it’s just shot me knees.”*
- *“I can’t really think, the only thing, all the years I was a radio officer using the Morse key I did get a repetitive strain injury in my right hand and I had difficulty using that, my hand would just seize up in the middle of messages. It happens to quite a lot of RO’s I think. When I was on leave, I went to see a specialist and basically all he told me was you can’t write anymore, learn to use your left hand. Well, it’s not as easy as you think, going from right to left, so basically I can’t really write letters, my wife does that now, not many. I do have difficulty writing. You got repetitive strain injury and that was it, I didn’t do anything about trying to get compensation or anything like that, can’t be bothered going down that line. I just let it go.”*
- *“He needed help with dressing and bathing, that sort of thing. He went to Canada one time, he was on the Cunard ships, the cruises and I know he fell from the deck to the lifeboat when they were doing training, he fell 40 feet and he was in hospital*



for a long time in Canada, but that's all I know about that, he did a lot of damage to his back."

- "I fell down the ladder. Usual business, you know. I just caught my heel and fell down to the deck and broke my leg. I guess that injury laid you off for a while? About 3 months it was actually."
- "So I'd gone to check everything was stowed away properly and he rung around to go into the wind, so she just took a great big [sea?] and threw me over the side and I still had one of the weighs in my hand, I wrapped it round my wrist and I was banging on the side of the ship, and I could feel [the waves?] slipping at me, and I thought this is it, and then she rolled and poured me back on board again. The [unclear] was 300 mile an hour so I never felt anything and I made my way forward, and when I turned down, they went cor, and you can see the scars there, the bone came right through, just totally crushed hanging over the side, course I took my glove off and it was just full of blood. They took me to, I was in a place called [unclear], I was there quite a while, almost 2 months before I could go home."
- "I dislocated this knee once and the skipper didn't want to go in, he said we were going back in 2 days' time, I couldn't straighten it, it was locked, so it was 5 days to go home, and the 3 out so I was like that for 8 days, we got into Hull and they sent an ambulance down, they took me to the old Royal Infirmary, which is gone now, and this doctor and nurse, the old beds were metal things, and the doctor just put his foot on the end and just pulled, I nearly hit the ceiling!"
- "Physically, me back's shot. I've had, in the last 3 years, I've had 4 prolapsed, slipped discs, at the last consultation, last year, consultant up at Leicester said you're 50-odd but your back's 80. And he's put that down to being at sea, the work I did at sea."

## 6.6 Key messages

- The type of experience of conflict of both our survey respondents and interviewees varied between those exposed directly to conflict, and others who had a less direct experience.
- The majority of interviews (60%) had had first-hand experience of conflict.
- Many interviewees also had experience of conflict where it was not related to the Armed Forces, and this was sometimes seen as having as much impact as their formal veteran experience.
- When asked to describe the impact of supporting the Armed Forces in conflict zones there were more examples of impact on mental health and wellbeing than on physical health. These often related to ongoing behaviour impact and flashbacks over a long period. There were also examples where there was no impact described.
- Many of the examples echo previous research on the impact of conflict on service personnel. A larger proportion of people in our interviews reported mental health issues than are generally thought to occur in the wider population, and these seemed to be related in particular to experience of conflict rather than the seafaring life overall.
- The impact of the seafaring life on survey respondents centred in particular on physical health and wellbeing. More than a half of interviewees reported experiencing physical health problems as a result of their seafaring career (a

larger proportion it appears than in the population as a whole), while alcohol abuse and dependency is also significant compared to the wider population.

## 7 Part D: Current Circumstances and Needs of Our Cohort

In this section we draw on the qualitative data sourced through our in-depth interviews with MN veterans around the UK to summarise their current circumstances and challenges – and the extent to which they have good networks and support to help them in their current life. Interviewees were asked about the challenges they were facing in their current circumstances, including health related issues unconnected to their seafaring work.

**Table 22: Summary of current challenges for interviewees**

Current challenges	Number of interviewees
Financial	20
Housing	11
Mental	15
Physical	45

### 7.1 Finances

In the interviews most veterans from all 3 industries described financial problems. The interviews explored the extent of some of these problems including the impact now of decisions not (or lack of opportunity) to invest in pensions during the career:

- *“The unfortunate thing is that when I left P&O in 1993, to emigrate here, I was on an extremely good contract and then when I re-joined 11 years later, I had to take a much inferior contract so the pension arrangements that I have are far less favourable than my colleagues .. the sickness benefits arrangements are far more favourable for them than they are for me, so those are not things that you consider when you change your career, even for a short time. I had hoped to work quite a lot longer than right now, so what has put me under a substantial amount of stress recently is not only have I been ill but I’ve also been worried that I’m not going to manage to get back to work”*
- *“I had council tax arrears and that sort of thing .. I’ve got quite a big debt with the rent, but that’s been taken care of now, so I’m paying it.”*
- *“Well I never got a merchant navy pension, all the years I sailed in the merchant navy, I never got a pension out of it, a seaman’s pension, because it was voluntary and I couldn’t afford to pay, because we had 3 children on the floor and me wages were just covering the rent directly and gas and food money on the table while I was away at sea, you know. I get a little bit of help from Nautilus, I get a quarterly money off them to help with gas and electric because me wife’s got severe COPD.”*
- *“I’m used to getting planes, ships, boats, trains whatever, packing me bag, going away and earning a few shillings but I feel helpless now, living on a pension.”*
- *“I get frustrated, you know, that I can’t work anymore, I’m not producing money, because I’ve always produced money, I’ve never stopped just like that, you wonder what’s happening don’t you.”*
- *“Well, they gave me a grant. I get £360 twice a year, so big help. Because I lived abroad and being out of the country for many years, I’ve never had all me stamps*

*and unbeknown to me at the time, the companies I'd been sailing for hadn't been paying the stamp as well. There was a lot of skulduggery going on."*

- *"I've never claimed anything off the government, only the bus pass and my pension, last October I started getting that. I've never claimed the dole or anything like that. I wouldn't know how to do anything like that. I believe that the medical stuff is my right because I've paid in for it but to improve it, I would like to see a bit more recognition for this type of thing for merchant seamen and RFA and fishing people, because that fishing game is hard graft."*
- *"The only thing I complain about is my pension is short, from seafaring."*
- *"Well, one from Chichester used to send me every month a grant or £300 but it's been knocked on the head, I don't know why. Just one of those things. Otherwise I'm using my own money as it is, not that I spend a lot, I've enough clothes now, some of them even fit me!"*
- *"At the minute, we are struggling financially, I have to admit that, I'd like to do more but because I was in the merchant navy and never in my day can remember anybody saying 'do you want to join a pension scheme?' I didn't have any pension, so and it's the same in the catering business, you don't, so when I retire, I only get the basic £170 odd pension. I did lose a lot of money through divorce in my first marriage, so basically, I started again up this area. It's like a new life, I came up here in 1990 and we've been married 25 years. I bought a house, everything a lot better than previous, but I we bought the house in '95, I took an endowment policy out and they have crashed, so when the house was due to be paid 2 years ago, we didn't have it, we didn't even have half from the policy."*



Using the casework 'independence star', a significant proportion (78%) of veterans scored their 'Finances' highly, initially suggesting they are coping well in this area. However, 80% of the support provided by caseworkers had been of a financial nature; the most common was the application of grants to assist with a range of home improvements, including adaptations to aid mobility. 22% were struggling to manage their finances due to lack of savings. One individual was at risk of his home being repossessed.

## 7.2 Housing

Interviewees described a range of dissatisfaction with their accommodation arrangements, often referring to 'bad' decisions taken earlier in their career:

- *"Me wife's got severe COPD, she's on oxygen 16 hours a day so the electric is on all the time, I've got to keep her warm, the house warm for her, you know. I was offered accommodation over there, I would love to move over there but I can't with my wife being the way she is. We own our own home and I just couldn't do it at the present time, I'd love to move there but not at the present time."*
- *"I am thinking of going into an apartment or something."*
- *"Well I've lived in London all my life, mainly about a mile from here, that's where I was born. If I'm truthful, I would say that I would leave tomorrow."*
- *"That's another reason I need to get a flat really, because me eyesight's just gonna, well I hope I don't lose it. My merchant navy pension would be wiped out on rent if I rented a flat. I think I would like a pensioner's bungalow, you know, all on the flat."*

*I've been gardening these past few days and I got shingles three years ago and my garden, I just lost control of it, you know".*

- *"Well, I mean, when I first moved in here, I mean, it was a dump. But even the council, the council gave me £200 to get some paint. I said, look, I can't paint. 'cause my hands are bad and I've got this, I've got that, well you'll have to get somebody to do it, won't you?"*



The majority of veterans (85%) were happy with their living arrangements and accommodation, scoring 'Housing' as a 4 or 5. Just under half of the cohort (45%) were owner occupiers.

### 7.3 Mental health

Survey respondents were also asked to rate their current health and wellbeing to help understand their current needs for care and support. In rating their overall mental and emotional wellbeing respondents were generally positive across all age groups with only between 7% and 12% rating themselves as bad or very bad. This contrasts with the less positive picture presented from interviews.

**Table 23: Overall mental and emotional wellbeing of survey respondents**

Rating	All ages	Under 65	Aged 65 – 74	Aged 75 – 89	Aged 90 plus
Very good	29%	34%	30%	28%	26%
Good	33%	29%	38%	38%	42%
Neither good nor bad	28%	27%	21%	27%	22%
Bad	8%	5%	10%	7%	3%
Very bad	2%	5%	2%	0%	7%

Many interviewees described the longer-term impact of their seafaring career on their mental and emotional wellbeing. Many of the comments made related to veteran's ability and willingness to socialise:

- *"I'm not very social, so I see neighbours and wave but that's about it."*
- *"But I'm happy on my own to be quite honest. I'm so used, sometimes I don't move out of here for days, I go out Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, in the morning, I'm back in the afternoon. Never go out in the night-time. I've not been out in the night for 2 years."*
- *"We go out socially, but I wouldn't say I go as much as I used to. One, the people aren't here and two, there aren't the places to go, the locals and things."*
- *"My wife knows everybody; I don't know anybody. I keep myself to myself."*
- *"No, I don't think anybody wants to know my problems. Everyone's got their own problems and some people are worse off than I am. Especially when you see the lads who have lost limbs coming back. I'm certainly not going to go to one of these"*

*places where you all sit in a circle and see which one has got the blackest cat, but then that' me."*

- *"You know, I was in a terrible state, sort of like contemplating getting rid of myself".*
- *"I mean, if you bottle it up too much, you know, that's what it can become. I mean, this is the trouble when we come home, we found that you couldn't talk to anybody".*

A handful of veterans described the emotional impact of being in a caring role with their spouse:

- *"I'm stressed out a lot of the time because of what's going on with me missus, me good lady wife.*



20% of current challenges described by interviewees related to their emotional wellbeing. 28% of veterans scored their 'Wellbeing' as low, and in these cases, depression, anxiety and ill health were the predominant issues. The other 72% often described their "resilience" despite challenges in their lives and many of the Veterans were regular visitors of seafaring lunch clubs and events.

A number of individuals had experienced suicidal thoughts in the past. However, as the examples below demonstrate, this was not always related to their seafaring career. Some were struggling with the emotional challenges of a bereavement or caring for a partner:

**Table 24: Challenges with emotional wellbeing**

Emotional wellbeing	No of veterans	Comments
Suicidal thoughts	2	<i>"I lost 3 children to drugs and alcohol"</i>
Depression/anxiety	6	<i>"I'm a recovering alcoholic"</i>
PTSD/flashbacks	1	<i>"I wasn't happy .. I bottled it up .."</i>
Recovering alcoholic	3	<i>"I couldn't face the day"</i> <i>"I was a wreck .. stuck in a rut"</i> <i>"It can be a strain .. wife won't wear hearing aid"</i> <i>"I'm lost without her"</i>

### 7.3.1 Physical health

In rating their overall current physical wellbeing, there was some similarity between the 20% 'bad' or 'very bad' in our sample and the estimates across the UK for people with a significant disability. This at first glance suggests that a seafaring life does not necessarily have a negative impact in later life on physical wellbeing. However, we need to be cautious in this interpretation as, for example, it does not take account of the morbidity rates in the respective populations – we have spoken, of course, only to the survivors. Obviously also there was an expected increase in bad/very bad rating amongst older survey respondents, particularly in the oldest group.

**Table 25: Survey respondents' overall physical wellbeing**

Rating	All ages	Under 65	Aged 65 - 74	Aged 75 - 89	Aged 90 +
Very good	10%	9%	14%	9%	0%
Good	39%	50%	37%	40%	20%
Neither good nor bad	31%	27%	30%	32%	37%
Bad	15%	11%	12%	15%	33%
Very bad	5%	4%	7%	5%	10%

Interviewees also described examples of the physical challenges they now face:

- *"I can't spell now, and I wasn't colour-blind but now I am. Basically me memory's gone. me left arm only works goes up about six inches and out about six inches".*
- *"I've got a problem with walking."*
- *"2 years ago I ended up in hospital with bowel cancer, so that was a long operation and I was all clear, then I was in the house and I was in the bath and my wife was here, I said to her, have a look at this and my testicles were swollen up and she phoned the doctor straight away and doctor came in and the ambulance was here in 10 minutes and hospital again, so took that away, so I'm not very much man anymore."*
- *"I've been diagnosed Motor Neurone Disease."*
- *"The only thing I've got now is just a bit of arthritis but that's in both hands and that's just from getting old. It's the only place I've got it, so I'm quite happy with that, as long as it stays there and doesn't affect my golf. That's it really."*
- *"He wasn't well, he was waiting for a knee operation that he couldn't have, he had non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, he'd had a heart attack, he had all sorts of things but he continued his life."*
- *"I'm disabled, I had a brain haemorrhage a few years ago, and I'm not allowed to drive."*
- *"Last year I was diagnosed with diabetes 2, and I was grossly overweight."*
- *"When I had the brain clot, I did nothing for the first time in my life, sitting around doing nothing for 2 or 3 months and I've got very bad angina, I had to have a bypass, as one did in those days, so I had the bypass. I had a heart attack again in '98, another clot in '99, a cerebral clot, still a bit weak on that side and my balance is not good, however I've just had an aneurism in my belly stented during the summer so I'm just getting better from that, and going to get my knee done, something I need to sort out."*
- *"I've got emphysema, COPD so not working."*



32% of veterans had experienced physical health issues as a direct result of being a seafarer and 51% had long term conditions usually associated with the ageing process or poor lifestyle. One third of veterans had developed Diabetes Type 2 which they put down as being a result of their seafaring lifestyle including high alcohol intake.

Despite the often challenging and significant physical or emotional issues described by veterans' a high proportion (78%) scored their 'Health' as a 4 or 5. Research demonstrates that it cannot be assumed service users' views on their outcomes will correspond with those of organisations and practitioners (Felton 2005). Particularly striking was the stoic nature of responses – often commenting that “considering the circumstances” or “given my health problems” they really “couldn’t complain”.

The table below gives an overview of the physical problems experienced by veterans, some of which are a direct result of a seafaring career and lifestyle:

**Table 26: Physical problems experienced by casework interviewees**

		No of veterans
Seafaring career and lifestyle	Back problems	4
	Poor hearing	1
	Wrist injury	1
	Brain injury	2
	Spinal injury	1
	Diabetes type 2	6
Sensory problem / disability	Poor sight	1
	Poor hearing	2
	Stroke	2
Long term condition	Poor mobility/Wheelchair bound	2
	Angina/Heart attack	5
	Cancer	5
	Arthritis	2
	Rheumatism	1
	Dementia	1
	COPD	1
	Epilepsy	2
	High blood pressure	3
	High cholesterol	2
Other	Poor circulation	1



## 7.4 Personal support networks

Interviewees were asked to describe their personal support and friendship networks. Almost 74% said they maintained contact with other seafarers through seafaring organisations and networks and 36% described their ongoing friendships with fellow seafarers. As the original contact made with interviewees was through stakeholder organisations and networks it is unsurprising that so many mention these organisations and networks. It is unclear to what extent this reflects the whole MN Veteran community.

**Table 27: Personal support networks**

<b>Seafaring organisations and networks</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Friendships</b>	<b>27</b>

## 7.5 Key messages

- As might be expected given the age profile, approximately 60% of veterans interviewed are currently facing challenges with their physical health.
- The findings illustrate both the physical and mental consequences of being a seafarer and the potential this has to exacerbate any physical or mental issues related to the ageing process more generally.
- A significant proportion of veterans were either dealing with a bereavement or had a caring role for a partner.
- Survey respondents across all age groups rated their current mental and emotional wellbeing positively, with only about 10% rating it as bad or very bad, whilst almost double (20%) the number of interviewees described their mental health as a current challenge. Physical wellbeing was rated more negatively generally and particularly amongst the older survey respondents.
- Whilst 45% of interviewees had described the impact of experiencing conflict on their mental health, only 20% reported this as a challenge in their lives today
- In terms of veterans' current situation, financial problems loomed large as challenges for interviewees.
- Particularly striking was the stoic nature of some of the interviewees' responses and their resilience – for example, casework interviewees tended to score their health, finances or wellbeing highly whilst clearly struggling with significant challenges in their lives.
- Veterans' perceptions may be overly positive when describing their circumstances.
- Sometimes individuals may be quite comfortable financially but still not be claiming all they are entitled to.
- Three quarters of interviewees belonged to seafaring organisations or networks, as would be expected given their recruitment through these organisations. Whilst many had Veterans Badges and were aware of their veteran status, there was a sense that they identified more strongly with the seafaring than veteran communities.

## 8 Part E: The Service Response So Far

Having gained an insight into the lives of our MN veteran cohort, their needs and lives today, Part E now considers the range and type of services currently available to meet this need. Doing so will enable us to identify any obvious gaps in provision and what the most effective approaches might be to reach out to this relatively little-known veteran population. This section seeks to answer the following research questions:

- How do MN veterans access support?
- What type of services currently exist for this cohort?
- How do services identify MN veterans?
- How well do services understand this population?

To do so we draw on our findings from:

- the service mapping and review exercise undertaken in the Solent region;
- veterans' descriptions of their experiences accessing and receiving support, including the Nautilus targeted outreach caseworker service;
- veterans' survey responses in relation to accessing, and preferences for, support.

### 8.1 How do MN veterans access support?



44% of veterans interviewed reported that they had originally become aware of the casework service through their existing seafaring networks and social events, and 33% through word of mouth (of a friend or ex-seafarer).

**Table 28: How did veterans access the casework service?**

	Number of veterans
Word of mouth	6
Nautical Society lunch/events	5
Merchant Navy Association	3
Resident of seafarer supported housing	2
Local newspaper RFA article	1
Citizen Advice Bureau	1
	<b>18</b>



There is a general view amongst agency staff interviewed that MN veterans are less inclined to engage through specific formal channels; for instance, they are less inclined to visit a GP, and, similar to above, more likely to access services via **less formal drop-ins, and coffee clubs**, such as those offered by VOS, and Age UK Portsmouth.

Individuals often engage with agencies **through referrals**. For instance, accessing support at Shipwrecked Mariners through referrals from the Fisherman's Mission, SSAFA, Nautilus and Shipwrecked Mariners' volunteers, as well as from CAB, housing charities, hospital social workers, and community specific organisations. It was notable that referrals sometimes occur because people have been refused financial support by local authorities, reflecting the squeeze on housing support budgets, and the tightening of eligibility criteria.

It was also the view of staff that **dual histories** are common. That is to say that some MN veterans have had previous Royal Navy service, and vice versa. It was felt that those with dual service histories sometimes approach military charities, such as the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC), for support. (If MN Vets have had previous RN service, they can access RNRMC funded services. In the case of MN veterans with no previous military service, RNRMC's charitable objects mean there are restrictions on access to some services, although MN veterans would not be turned away from advice services).

Some were of the opinion that the definition of "veteran" in this context is problematic and therefore likely to have a detrimental impact on how people identify and self-refer. One interviewee went so far as to describe the term "veteran" as a "nuisance", raising the question of when and how the Armed Forces Covenant applies. Quite simply, **the meaning of veteran is different for armed forces**, compared to the MN. The latter must have served in conflict zones, whereas the former must have served for at least one day in Her Majesty's Armed Forces. Therefore, self-identification and presenting issues are likely to be very different. It was suggested that the service number and associated veteran's ID card given to a military veteran reinforces this difference: for example, at one café, a discount is offered on presentation of a veteran's ID card. In the absence of a universal veteran's ID card, MN veterans cannot give evidence, and are therefore unwittingly marginalised.

Perhaps most striking is that more than half of survey respondents (55%) said they did not know where to go to access additional practical or emotional support. Accessibility of services is a common challenge across the country and current government policy is to encourage local authorities and partners to improve the quality of information, assistance and advice. Given the life experiences and networks of MN veterans this suggests they may be particularly vulnerable in this area.

## 8.2 What type of services currently exist for veterans?

### 8.2.1 What support had interviewees already accessed?

A relatively small number of interviewees were receiving some form of formal support (such as home care) through public or private agencies, and more people mentioned informal support from their families. This may in some way explain the relatively low numbers of veterans who have sought formal support (table 27) particularly when

compared with the informal support highlighted in table 28. Particularly striking was the stoic nature of some responses – often commenting that “*considering the circumstances*” or “*given my health problems*” they really “*couldn’t complain*” or “*I just had to get on with it*”, “*I don’t like to complain*”.

**Table 29: Type of support**

	Number of interviewees
<b>Formal</b>	37 includes 18 casework recipients
<b>Informal</b>	22

The table below gives examples of the types of organisations which were providing some kind of support to interviewees. This included: financial support, medical treatment, counselling, holiday respite and provision of technology or household items:

**Table 30: Type of formal support**

	Number of interviewees
<b>Nautilus</b>	20 includes 18 casework recipients
<b>Merchant Navy Association</b>	4
<b>NHS</b>	5
<b>Fishermen or Seafarer missions</b>	4
<b>SSAFA</b>	1
<b>SAIL</b>	1
<b>RN Patrol Service</b>	1
<b>Blind Veterans Association</b>	1
<b>Council (including home care)</b>	3
<b>Fisherman’s Union (sic)</b>	1
<b>Shipwrecked Mariner’s Society</b>	2
<b>British Legion</b>	1

The table below gives examples of the types of informal support which interviewees mentioned. This included social activities and help with shopping, household chores, odd jobs and transport:

**Table 31: Type of informal support**

	Number of interviewees
<b>Friendships and networks</b>	15
<b>Family</b>	21
<b>Neighbours / the community</b>	11
<b>Domestic cleaner</b>	1



The most common support provided by caseworkers was related to benefits checks or applications (53% in total), closely followed by the application of grants to assist with a range of home improvements, including adaptations to aid mobility (27%). Listed below is a breakdown of the type of support provided to the 18 veterans identified:

**Table 32: Range of caseworker support provided to veterans**

Type of support	No. of veterans	% of support	Detail
Grant application	12	27%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Short break</li> <li>■ Walk-in shower</li> <li>■ Wheelchair upgrade</li> <li>■ Home improvements</li> <li>■ New boiler</li> <li>■ New carpet</li> <li>■ Decoration</li> <li>■ New mattress</li> <li>■ Replacement furniture</li> <li>■ New TV, clothes</li> <li>■ Gas fire</li> <li>■ New windows</li> </ul>
Benefit check	11	25%	
Pension check/advice	5	11%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ State</li> <li>■ Private</li> <li>■ Merchant Navy</li> </ul>
Housing Benefit and /or Council Tax reduction application	3	7%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Assisted application for Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit.</li> <li>■ Anxious he is not receiving all entitlements. Assistance to claim care component of Disability Living Allowance.</li> </ul>
Attendance allowance	2	4%	
DLA award review	1	2%	
PIP application	1	2%	
Carers allowance	1	2%	
Information and Advice	7	16%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Housing options</li> <li>■ OT/rehabilitation</li> <li>■ Adaptations</li> <li>■ Dementia</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Debt</li> <li>■ Seafarers link</li> <li>■ Merchant Navy Association</li> </ul>
<b>Housing</b>	1	2%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Securing bungalow at Trinity House in Hull</li> </ul>
<b>Dispute with provider</b>	1	2%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Protracted dispute related to previous care package and charges. Addressed concerns about overcharging and quality of care of provider.</li> </ul>

When asked to describe what they had found to be the most helpful element of the service, the most common response from interviewees was the financial support they had received (almost 50%) followed by having someone else to talk to and be able to contact when help is needed (41%). Veterans described feeling at ease sharing their 'story' with the caseworker and the positive impact the support has had on their lives:

- *It gave me reassurance and peace of mind*
- *It takes the pressure off*
- *Help to get back on my feet*
- *I feel happier*
- *I feel more resilient*
- *I feel more comfortable and less worried all the time.*
- *I have a warmer house and lower bills so I don't worry so much about money*
- *I feel less guilty about my daughter running around after me*
- *I see light at the end of the tunnel*
- *It's been lifesaving*

It was clear from some of the responses that having support from a caseworker who is "born and bred" in the local area and who they considered to be "working class like me" was particularly appreciated. Feedback from both veterans and caseworkers highlighted the importance of taking time to build trust and rapport through regular face-to-face contact, either in the veteran's home or at a seafaring drop-in and that having a genuine connection and first-hand knowledge of the local area made it all the more easier to do so. Caseworkers clearly found the time spent face-to-face with veterans to be the most enjoyable and rewarding aspect of their role and, overall, felt they had enough time to do this well.



Having carried out the desktop research, conducted interviews with providers and other organisations, and analysed questionnaire responses we populated a comprehensive service mapping template, as far as possible. To enable easier reference, we have prepared an adapted version, which is included at **Appendix 7**. A total of 38 services were identified across the region which were split equally between specialist services and general services

for older people. The specialist services can be broken down as follows in terms of their target population:

**Table 33: Breakdown of services by target population**

Armed Forces and/or Veterans	59%
Ex-service personnel	18%
Seafarers or maritime professionals	14%
Merchant Navy veterans	9%

The tables below illustrate the breakdown of services by type:

**Table 34: Breakdown of general services by type**

Information and advice, signposting	22%
Community and volunteering	22%
Mental health and emotional wellbeing	17%
Homelessness	17%
Physical health	11%
Carers	11%

**Table 35: Breakdown of specialist services for Armed Forces / veterans by type**

Social and community	33%
Housing	11%
Activities	11%
Information and advice, signposting	11%
Mental health and emotional wellbeing	11%
Physical health	11%
Financial	6%
Dementia	6%

**Table 36: Breakdown of specialist services for seafarers and MN veterans by type**

Information and advice, signposting	25%
Finance	25%
Activities	25%
Mental health and emotional wellbeing	25%

Hampshire County Council is explicit in stating that its support for armed forces should be embedded in mainstream services, based on identified need, and not on providing preferential services. Priority treatment will only be offered to veterans if they have physical or mental conditions arising from military service.

There was clear evidence from the interviews that there is a good deal of collaboration between agencies, and recognition that it is vital in order to achieve the best outcomes for a population group that presents in numerous ways. There are some excellent examples of collaboration between agencies – one agency offered the view that “if you are a veteran, there is no better place to get support than in the Solent Region”. For example, the VOS drop-ins regularly bring together around 40 provider organisations; and HIVE Portsmouth is a shared endeavour of Portsmouth City Council, NHS Portsmouth CCG and Portsmouth VCSE organisations; and the Portsmouth Military Mental Health Alliance, through an Armed Forces Covenant award, is funding a two year programme to support the mental health and wellbeing of veterans and their families. However, there is plenty of room for improvement, and numerous barriers arise from organisations not working together. There were numerous examples of knowledge gaps amongst agencies, and limited collaboration. It was suggested that budget constraints and tight funding criteria can prevent organisations working together.

A number of interviewees suggested that information sharing is poor and that this is clearly an obstacle to greater collaboration. There was in places an acceptance that there remains a need to break down barriers with some military and maritime charities – perhaps reflecting the difficulties with the definition of veteran, as noted previously. Conversely, some specialist organisations argued that the collaboration gap occurs not with maritime charities, but with statutory organisations: there is sometime little read-across with adult social care assessment staff and processes, and with local authority housing services.

Finally, the low response rate of organisations to the initial contact made by IPC, as summarised in Table 2 on page 6, further demonstrates the apparent disinterest, or perhaps reluctance, to share information between organisations or take a more collaborative approach.

### 8.3 How do services identify MN veterans?



The four caseworkers interviewed described their day-to-day challenge and frustration in working to identify this cohort of veterans, and suggested the following were the underlying problems:

1. Different maritime and military agencies are unwilling to share the data they each hold about veterans (“self-protectionism”).
2. MN veterans are inherently difficult to identify, not least because many don’t self-identify as such (“I was just doing my job”). Pride, stoicism and even guilt about having the veteran badge were sometimes expressed during interviews which has the potential to influence veterans’ willingness to seek support.



Staff recounted very similar difficulties identifying a distinct population in the region; there is rarely conscious direct contact with MN veterans and those who do seek support don’t routinely present as such. This is not to say that veterans have no presence, merely that for various reasons, they do not coalesce as a single group in significant numbers. It is estimated by one large provider organisation in Portsmouth that MN Veterans account for 2% of the service user population.



Whilst there appears to be no particular demand for services from MN veterans per se in this region, there was a consistent view that there are a range of familiar presenting issues, eg loneliness, addictions, housing and homelessness, debt and physical and mental health problems. Most beneficiaries of support services and financial aid are older, often struggling with bills on low pensions. This partly reflects declining current and recent working population, associated with changes in the nature of merchant seafaring globally. People tend to require help at a time of more acute need and are often reluctant to seek support earlier.

The local authorities in the region are signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant, and, as such, aim to raise awareness among serving personnel, reservists and veterans of the support they can access from local authorities and provide a wider understanding of the needs of the local veteran population and serving personnel during their transition to civilian life.

#### 8.4 Key messages

- The findings present a consistent picture of MN veterans drawing first and foremost on their social support networks of people based on relationships of trust. Where individuals *do* access services, such as the Nautilus caseworkers, again this tends to be through more informal routes such as seafarer networks, drop-ins and social events.
- When referrals are made to services, this most often occurs when the individual has reached a crisis point, particularly in relation to their financial circumstances.
- Whilst there is a good supply of specialist services targeted at the Armed Forces serving and retired personnel, the majority of these do not specify MN veterans as part of their target population.
- It was generally acknowledged that a big challenge lies in the need for greater collaboration overall and fostering better relationships between maritime and statutory organisations. It can therefore be difficult for agencies knowing who provides what and where to refer; and therefore, for individuals knowing where to go for support.
- There is a consistent view across agencies that MN veterans inherently hard to identify. A number of reasons have been offered and it appears that how a veteran self-identifies is critical to this; seafarers have the sea in common, and therefore MN vets may identify more readily with Royal Navy counterparts; dual histories which includes the Royal Navy, and inconsistencies in how the term 'veteran' applies across populations may influence MN veterans' perceptions of what support might be available to them; the complex interplay of emotions such as guilt, pride and resignation may underly the apparent stoicism and disinclination to ask for help from services.
- There is an awareness amongst agencies that more work needs to be done to identify the true extent of the population and for some agencies, this underlines their need to share information and participate in forums.
- There is rarely conscious direct contact between individuals seeking support as a MN Veteran and health and care organisations.

## 9 Part F: Considerations for Future Support

Whilst there is undoubtedly an improved awareness of the veteran status of MN seafarers, resulting not least from the engagement with veterans and agencies as part of this research, and the targeted casework carried out by Nautilus, more can be done to understand and meet their needs; there is a wide range of support for Armed Forces veterans and their families which could better adapt its offer and marketing to reach out to the MN veteran population; and there is much variation in awareness of services for veterans, their families and the organisations that come into contact with them.

IPC proposes the following set of activities for consideration by Seafarers UK to understand the true extent of the MN veteran population in key port areas such as Portsmouth and Southampton, and to improve support for this population group:

### 9.1 Identifying and engaging with MN veterans

- Approach each stakeholder organisation (and potentially other large service providers in key seafarer locations) to request information about the numbers of MN veterans they are aware of and/or have provided services to, and their location.
- Update the 2016 data in relation to the number of Veterans Badges issued and the locations of recipients.
- Interview Covenant team managers across four key seafarer locations to test their understanding and awareness of this group of veterans.

### 9.2 Raising the profile of MN veterans amongst agencies

- Further engagement with commissioning and provider agencies to raise the profile of the MN veteran population and increase understanding amongst professionals of the unique issues they face, so they can focus their offer and provide more consistent access to services.
- This could include providing clear information and guidance to organisations that are commissioning health and social care services that may impact on MN veterans and their families; and developing examples of good practice that could be adopted across the sector.

### 9.3 Raising the profile of services amongst veterans

- Promote collaborative working, information sharing and referrals between seafaring organisations and associations, particularly military/maritime. For example, the Veterans' Gateway, which provides a first point of contact for armed forces veterans seeking support, is an example of how high-level collaboration aims to improve ease of access to services, but which does not currently consider the needs of MN veterans.
- Expand on IPC's work to identify MN veterans through previous veteran interviewees and recipients of the Nautilus casework support. Many were active members of their seafaring community, keen to get involved with this research project and well-placed to identify others. IPC suggests building and drawing on these existing relationships which are based on deep, meaningful connections and perhaps even considering recruiting veterans in a 'volunteer' capacity to progress work in this area.

- Encourage and support multi-organisational advertising campaigns to raise public awareness of support for MN veterans, including the Nautilus casework service; this could benefit from the direct input of the veteran volunteers and their families suggested in the previous bullet point and developed case studies.
- It is to stimulate a diverse range of appropriate services, both in terms of the types of services and the types of provider organisation, and ensure the market as a whole remains vibrant and sustainable.

#### 9.4 Type and range of support

Finally, IPC suggests that Seafarers UK focus its engagement with key stakeholders, such as those identified here, to signal the type of services needed to meet MN veteran needs, and encourage innovation, investment and continuous improvement in this area. This includes, on the one hand, the need for specialist services supporting the Armed Forces community to broaden their understanding of, and focus on, the Merchant Navy population to provide the following types of support:

- Emotional support to help veterans understand and deal with the depression, anxiety and PTSD that can result from experiences of conflict and adapting to life after a seafaring career and lifestyle.
- Healthy lifestyle advice and support, for example to help limit alcohol consumption or manage Diabetes.
- Opportunities for individuals and their families to stay socially active with fellow veterans and ex-seafarers.

Given the findings around self-identification and, in particular, MN veterans' inclination to identify more strongly as seafarers, IPC proposes that services target the seafarer population more broadly. For example, when survey respondents were asked about their preferences for care and support in terms of type of service provider, the greatest preference was for services for seafarers (56%), followed by family and friends (49%) and the NHS (40%). Veterans services were mentioned by just 20% of respondents as a preference.

Findings also highlighted a range of needs which relate to the ageing process more generally, rather than being specific to any seafaring career and/or experience of conflict. IPC therefore suggests the need for ongoing, generic older people services for seafarers including:

- Information and advice to signpost older seafarers and their families to appropriate community services.
- Emotional support to deal with bereavement
- Caregiver respite and counselling
- Financial advice and support
- Home repair and modification assistance
- Opportunities to stay physically active

**Institute of Public Care**  
**October 2020**

---

## References

- Armed Forces (2018) The Management of Defence. Available at: <http://www.armedforces.co.uk/mod/listings/I0003.html>
- Busuttil, W. (2010a) Combat-related stress. Promoting men's mental health. Oxford: Ratcliffe
- Busuttil, W. (2010b) Management of Mental Health in Veterans: The role of the Third Sector Charity Combat Stress
- Carr, G.J. (1945) Health problems in the merchant navy. British journal of industrial medicine, 2(2)
- Drinkaware (2016) Consequences: Adult drinking in the UK. Available at: <https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/research/data/consequences/>
- Fear, N., Wood, D. and Wessely, S. (2009) Health and social outcomes and health service experiences of UK military veterans. ACDMH/KCMHR, King's College, London for the Department of Health
- House of Commons Briefing Paper Number 2788 (2017) UK Sea Fisheries Statistics
- Institute of Public Care (2015) UK Seafarers' Demographic Profile, Maritime Charities Funding Group
- Marine Management Organisation (2015) UK Sea Fisheries Statistics
- Mind (2014) Mental Health Facts and Statistics. Available at: <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/statistics-and-facts-about-mental-health/how-common-are-mental-health-problems>
- Ministry of Defence UK (2015) Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report
- Ministry of Defence UK (no date) The Armed Forces Covenant: An Enduring Covenant Between the People of the United Kingdom Her Majesty's Government and all those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces of the Crown And their Families
- Naval History (no date) Battle Atlas of the Falklands War 1982. Available at: [http://www.naval-history.net/F22-Falklands\\_War-Merchant\\_Navy.htm](http://www.naval-history.net/F22-Falklands_War-Merchant_Navy.htm)
- Opinion Research Services (2016) Older Seafarers' Needs, Maritime Charities Group
- Roberts, S. (2000) Occupational mortality among British merchant seafarers (1986-1995), Maritime Policy & Management, 27: 3
- Scarborough Maritime Heritage Centre (no date) Trawling during World War 2. Available at: <http://www.scarboroughsmaritimeheritage.org.uk/article.php?article=352>

Seyle, D et al (2018) The long-term impact of maritime piracy on seafarers' behavioural health and work decisions. *Marine Policy* Vol 87

## Appendix 1: Stakeholder Group

The following individuals and organisations have supported the research activity through being interviewed themselves, promoting and distributing surveys, and through participation in the stakeholder group.

Organisation	Contact person
Merchant Navy Association	Captain John Sail
Federation of merchant Mariners	Derek Bristow
Nautilus UK	Mick Howarth Cathy Wilson
Seafarers UK	Barry Bryant John Hood
Merchant Navy Welfare Board	David Parsons Peter Tomlin
Shipwrecked Mariners Society	Malcolm Williams
Merchant Navy Association of Northern Ireland	Ian Jones John Coulter Ivan Tennant
RFA Association	Ray Bennett
Poppy Scotland	Gary Gray
South Atlantic Medal Association	Alan Burgess
RMT	Mark Carden
Fishermen's Mission	David Dickens
The Watch Ashore	Susan Williams
Seafarers Link	Christine Rankin

## Appendix 2: Survey Information Sheet



# “Our Forgotten War Heroes” Veterans from the Merchant Navy, Fishing Fleet and RFA

## Why take part?

The Institute of Public Care at Oxford Brookes University is carrying out research funded by the Aged Veterans Fund on behalf of Seafarers UK and Nautilus Welfare Fund. The study is looking at the health and social care needs of all who served on a civilian vessel whilst it was supporting HM



Armed Forces and who are now recognised as Veterans. Improving our understanding will help us plan support services better in the future.

## Who should complete the survey?

We are particularly interested in people born before 1st January 1950, however we would also like to hear from younger veterans who were members of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, the Merchant Navy or the fishing fleet and served on a civilian vessel whilst it was supporting the Armed Forces.



## How to complete the survey?

The survey will take no longer than 10 minutes to complete and your details will remain confidential and will not be used for anything apart from the purposes of this research.

Either you, your spouse, partner or case worker can complete the survey.

You can complete the survey online at

[https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ZFSQHG\\_D](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ZFSQHG_D)

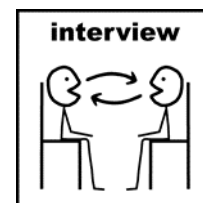
or complete and return a hard copy using the self-addressed envelope.

## Appendix 3: Interview Information Sheet

# Aged Veterans Fund – Understanding the needs of older Merchant Navy veterans

### Our invitation

We are looking for 30 people (or their partners) from the Merchant Navy, RFA and Fishing communities who supported the Armed Forces in conflict zones and who would be willing to take part in discussions to explore their experiences, and their current health and care needs in more detail. It is likely you will have completed our recent survey and have given us your contact details and this is why we are getting in touch.



### What is this project about?

We have been awarded a grant by the Aged Veterans Fund to carry out a research project to improve our understanding of the Merchant Navy, Fishing and RFA Veterans communities, and to evaluate two specialist services designed to support this specific group of seafarers. This project will be delivered by Seafarers UK and Nautilus with the support of a wider group of organisations with an interest in understanding and meeting the needs of this group, and our academic research partner, the Institute of Public Care at Oxford Brookes University.

The project will deliver the following aims:

- To better define and understand the size, location, health and social care needs of the Veterans from the Merchant Navy, RFA and Fishing communities and their spouses/partners.
- To raise the public profile of UK Veterans from these communities.
- To establish and evaluate two approaches to providing specialist support:
  - The provision of four new homes for veteran merchant mariners at Mariners' Park in Wallasey.
  - The provision of a caseworker service in Hull, Merseyside, Southampton and Glasgow to support veteran mariners in their own homes.
- To establish a set of strategic priorities arising from this research to inform future service development.

A report summarising findings from the research work will provide conclusions and recommendations for responding to the health and care needs of these seafaring veterans.



## What will the discussion be about?

We would like to talk to you about your experiences in conflict zones and what this meant for you, and what your care and support needs are now. The interview will last about one-and-a-half hours and includes time to gain your consent. The rest of the time will be spent talking with you and will take place at your home, or by telephone. With your permission the interview will be tape recorded.

**If you are interested in participating:** please tell the member of our research team who contacts you or if you do not want to go ahead, please tell them. Please do ask any questions you may have about this too.

If you do agree to take part, you retain the right to withdraw from the study at any stage for any reason. You just need to tell the researcher of your decision. You will not be asked to explain your reasons for withdrawing.

If you agree to participate in the interview you will be asked to sign a consent form and return it to the researcher.

If you become distressed or upset at any point during the course of the interview you can stop at any time without giving an explanation or the researcher might decide to stop the interview and double check that you are fine to continue. The researcher will bring with them information and contact details for the Seafarer Support helpline where you will be signposted to specific local and national support services.

## What will happen to any information/data that is collected from you:

The recordings and transcripts of the interviews will be kept in a secure place to ensure confidentiality and will not be passed on to any third parties. Before sharing results of the study, data will be anonymized in order to protect your identity.

**Who is organising the research:** The research team is based at Oxford Brookes University and is working in partnership with Seafarers UK and Nautilus. The team consists of Juliet Bligh, Dr Miguel Sharpe and Julia Whyard.

If you have any queries regarding the conduct of the project in which you are being asked to participate, please contact:

Institute of Public Care  
Oxford Brookes University  
Harcourt Hill Campus  
Oxford  
OX2 9AT  
UK



Tel: +44 (0)1865 790312

[ipc@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:ipc@brookes.ac.uk)

## Appendix 4: Participant Consent Form

# Participant Consent Form

**Title of the project:** Aged Veterans Fund – Understanding the needs of older merchant navy veterans

**Main investigator and contact details:** Juliet Bligh (Principal Consultant)

Institute of Public Care  
Oxford Brookes University  
Harcourt Hill Campus  
Oxford  
OX2 9AT  
UK  
Tel: +44 (0)1865 790312

Email: [jbligh@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:jbligh@brookes.ac.uk)

**Members of the research team:** Dr Miguel Sharpe (Senior Consultant) and Julia Whyard (Senior Consultant)

Please **initial** the following statements before signing this consent form:

I agree to take part in the interview. I have read the Participant Information Sheet which is attached to this form. I understand what my role will be in the project, and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that I am free to withdraw from the interview at any stage, for any reason and without prejudice.

I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded.

I have been provided with a copy of this form and the Participant Information Sheet.

I agree to be tape recorded in the interview and to use direct/anonymised quotations (if required).

Data Protection: I agree to the University processing personal data which I have supplied. I agree to the processing of such data for any purposes connected with the Research Project as outlined to me.

Name of participant

(print).....Signed.....Date.....

Participant consent form

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS FORM TO KEEP

-----

If you wish to withdraw from the research, please complete the form below and return to the main investigator named above.

Title of Project: Aged Veterans Fund – Understanding the needs of older merchant navy veterans

**I WISH TO WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 5: Letter to Organisations in the Solent Region

Dear

### **Supporting Merchant Navy veterans and their families - we need your help!**

The Armed Forces Covenant is “a promise from the nation ensuring that those who serve in the Armed Forces are treated fairly”. Under the new measures, all those in the RFA and Merchant Navy who have served on a civilian vessel while it was supporting HM Armed Forces will now be recognised and supported by the Covenant. In December 2015, the Armed Forces Covenant was extended to cover members of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary and the Merchant Navy.

The Institute of Public Care (IPC) at Oxford Brookes University is carrying out work for Maritime Charities Group to build a better understanding of the support needs of Merchant Navy Veterans and their families.

As part of this, IPC is mapping services provided in the Portsmouth and Southampton areas that currently or potentially might provide support to this group of people. IPC is looking at both specialist, and non-specialist services, and keen to explore what they do, how they work together, how people access them, and where there might be some unmet needs.

IPC is very interested in talking to you, so that your knowledge and experience of working in the area can be taken into account. Graeme McLaren, who is carrying out this work for IPC, would like to arrange to discuss this further with you, either in person, or on the phone. Either way, it would take about an hour, and would cover some, or all, of the following questions:

- What is the nature of your organisation, what does it seek to do, and who is your target population?
- What services do you provide? Are they veteran-specific? If not, are they:
  - Community services
  - Housing services
  - Older peoples' services
  - Mental health services
  - Advice and information services
  - Other
- What is your awareness of the MN Veteran population?
- How many MN Veterans have you/do you provide services for, or come into contact with?
- How effective are your services? Do you have performance or inspection reports? Or feedback on quality from people who use them?
- What's the local profile of your services, and how do people find out about them?
- What helps/hinders people accessing services?
- Do you consider yourself to be part of a wider service/support network?

- How do you work together with other organisations? Do you share information, or are you part of networks, for instance?
- Do you think services primarily aimed at armed forces veterans are open to MN Veterans?

Are you aware of needs of MN Veterans and their families that are not being met at the moment? And if so, what might be done to address the situation?

## Appendix 6: Questionnaire for Organisations in the Solent Region

The Armed Forces Covenant is “a promise from the nation ensuring that those who serve in the Armed Forces are treated fairly”. In December 2015, the Armed Forces Covenant was extended to cover members of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary and the Merchant Navy (MN).

The Institute of Public Care (IPC) at Oxford Brookes University is carrying out work for Maritime Charities Group to build a better understanding of the support needs of Merchant Navy Veterans and their families.

As part of this, IPC is mapping services provided in the Portsmouth and Southampton areas that currently or potentially might provide support to this group of people. IPC is looking at both specialist, and non-specialist services, and keen to explore what they do, how they work together, how people access them, and where there might be some unmet needs.

IPC is very interested in hearing from you, so that your knowledge and experience of working in the area can be taken into account. Please consider the questions in the response form, and respond to as many as you feel able to give your views on. The response boxes will expand as much as you need. Please email your response to Graeme McLaren at IPC. His email address is [gmclaren@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:gmclaren@brookes.ac.uk). Thank you.

Question	Response
What is the nature of your organisation, what does it seek to do, and who is your target population?	
What services do you provide? Are they veteran-specific?	
If not, are they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Community services</li> <li>■ Housing services</li> <li>■ Older peoples’ services</li> <li>■ Mental health services</li> </ul>	

Question	Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Advice and information services</li> <li>■ Other</li> </ul>	
What is your awareness of the MN Veteran population locally?	
How many MN Veterans have you/do you provide services for, or come into contact with?	
How effective are your services? Do you have performance or inspection reports? Or feedback on quality from people who use them?	
What's the local profile of your services, and how do people find out about them?	
What helps/hinders people accessing services?	
Do you consider yourself to be part of a wider service/support network? If so, how would you describe it?	
How do you work together with other organisations? Do you share information, or are you part of networks, for instance?	

---

Question	Response
Do you consider that services primarily aimed at armed forces veterans are open to MN Veterans?	
Are you aware of needs of MN Veterans and their families that are not being met at the moment? And if so, what might be done to address the situation?	
Other comments?	



## Appendix 7: Service Map for the Solent Region

Organisation	Description	Target Population	Location
Agamemnon Housing Association <a href="https://agamemnonha.org/">https://agamemnonha.org/</a>	Our aim is to provide affordable and sensitively managed sheltered housing for people over 60 years of age, giving priority to those who have served in the Armed Forces and their surviving partners or relatives.	Armed forces veterans	Portsmouth
Age UK Portsmouth <a href="http://www.ageuk.org.uk/portsmouth/">http://www.ageuk.org.uk/portsmouth/</a>	Practical and social support for older people in Portsmouth and South-East Hampshire. We offer a lifeline to many of our service users, providing vital contact for the local community, offering a friendly face, a helping hand and companionship. Without our services many older people would remain isolated, as it is often the only time they leave their home and have contact with other people. Services include: Veterans Befriending and Information support, Information and Advice, Benefits access, Blue Badge applications, Solicitor appointments, Help Around the Home, Personal Assistant Service (HATH+), Activities and Events, IT Training, Café, Gardening, Hair Salon and Chiropody. We also trade and sell Age UK insurances and endorsed products.	General	Portsmouth/SE Hants
Alzheimer's Society <a href="http://www.alzheimers.org.uk">http://www.alzheimers.org.uk</a>	We provide an Activity group for veterans with dementia and their carer (Kitbags and Berets). We meet 2nd Thurs of each month 13:30-15:30 at the Frank Sorrell Centre, Prince Albert Road, Southsea PO4 9HR.		Portsmouth
Armed Forces and Veterans Breakfast Clubs <a href="https://www.afvbc.net/clubs/southampton/">https://www.afvbc.net/clubs/southampton/</a>	Facilitate veterans meeting in a safe, relaxed, social environment	Ex-service personnel	Southampton

Organisation	Description	Target Population	Location
Armed Forces and Veterans Breakfast Clubs <a href="https://www.afvbc.net/clubs/portsmouth-southsea/">https://www.afvbc.net/clubs/portsmouth-southsea/</a>	Facilitate veterans meeting in a safe, relaxed, social environment	Ex-service personnel	Portsmouth
CESSAHA CoE Soldiers Sailors and Airmens Housing Assoc <a href="http://www.cessaha.co.uk">http://www.cessaha.co.uk</a>	Sheltered accommodation (Rented flats) in Portsmouth, Gosport and Fareham for former military personnel and their dependents including National Service, former reserve service, MOD and RFA who are over 60 and able to live independently. Manage 3 properties including one in Portsmouth owned by Greenwich Hospital which house ex RN, RM and WRNS/QRNNS. One of which is in Portsmouth	Ex-Service personnel and their immediate dependants aged 60+	Portsmouth
Citizen's Advice Gosport <a href="http://www.gosportcab.org.uk/">http://www.gosportcab.org.uk/</a>	Free, independent, confidential, and impartial advice. We help people to resolve their problems. We can deal with a range of issues, including debt, employment, consumer or relationship issues. We offer advice in person, by telephone through our Adviceline service and in the form of webchat and/or email which can be accessed through the Citizens Advice website at: <a href="https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/">https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/</a>	General	Gosport
Citizen's Advice Portsmouth <a href="http://www.portsmouthcab.org.uk">http://www.portsmouthcab.org.uk</a>	Impartial, confidential and free advice service. We deliver predominantly money advice, including debt, financial capability and financial advice. We have a welfare rights/benefits team and an information service that runs from Portsmouth Central Library. For money advice we can be contacted by phone and webchat and clients can just drop in face to face (no appointment needed) during our opening hours.	General	Portsmouth

Organisation	Description	Target Population	Location
Company of Makers <a href="http://www.companymakers.com">http://www.companymakers.com</a>	We run free 'making' workshops in Portsmouth. From creative skills to using cutting edge technology, including 3D printing, Wood-working workshops, Sewing, Ships' crests heritage project or come to a Portsmouth FC match with us.	Ex-service personnel and their families	Portsmouth
DIAL <a href="http://www.p-d-f.org.uk">www.p-d-f.org.uk</a>	Part of Portsmouth Disability Forum. Free and impartial confidential service supplying information and advice. We offer people of all ages help and support to make choices and decisions that are affecting their daily lives, this also includes practical help like filling in forms and talking to other agencies and services on their behalf.	General	Portsmouth
FirstLight Trust <a href="http://www.firstlighttrust.co.uk">http://www.firstlighttrust.co.uk</a>	A charity for veterans of the Emergency Services and Armed Forces. First Light Trust can help: This is achieved through our growing local network of cafes and centres, we support veterans and their families where it matters – in their community and in their homes.	Armed forces and emergency services veterans, and active service personnel about to leave and undergoing transition, and their families	Gosport
Forgotten Veterans UK <a href="https://www.forgottenveteransuk.com">https://www.forgottenveteransuk.com</a>	Commemorate, celebrate and assist the Armed Forces members and the Veteran community. We operate a simple traffic light system where we grade areas to ensure the money we raise goes to the right places. Buddy Scheme for veterans and their families. Campaign locally and nationally to secure better support for veterans and to lobby other veteran Charities to work better with other veteran organisations.	Armed Forces veterans and their families	Portsmouth

Organisation	Description	Target Population	Location
Good Neighbour Network <a href="https://www.goodneighbours.org.uk/">https://www.goodneighbours.org.uk/</a>	120+ local groups offering community support. Practical and emotional help	General	Hampshire
GP Links			
Hantsweb (Hampshire County Council) <a href="https://www.hants.gov.uk/community/armedforces/charitysupport">https://www.hants.gov.uk/community/armedforces/charitysupport</a>	Online portal providing advice and information	General with targeted page for armed forces community	Hampshire
Harbour Cancer Support <a href="http://www.harbourcancer.org.uk/">http://www.harbourcancer.org.uk/</a>	Provides practical and emotional support for anyone affected by cancer. The drop-in centre at Gosport provides: coffee mornings; counselling; befriending; complementary therapies, and support for children	General	Gosport
Joining Forces for Families <a href="http://www.portsmouthcab.org.uk">http://www.portsmouthcab.org.uk</a>	Funded by the Armed Forces Covenant and delivered by Citizens Advice Hart, Rushmoor and Portsmouth. The service operates through a referral process	Serving personnel and their families	Portsmouth
Mesothelioma UK <a href="http://www.mesothelioma.uk.com">www.mesothelioma.uk.com</a>	This project provides a specialist veteran's nurse based in Portsmouth and Southampton. These nurses work closely with the charities existing professional nurse forum. The Armed Forces project provides a benefits and finance advisor that is aware of the compensation available. The veterans nurse will work with multiple organisations and healthcare professionals responsible for meeting the healthcare needs of Armed Forces personnel and veterans to raise awareness about mesothelioma and available support.	Armed forces personnel and veterans	Portsmouth and Southampton
Nautilus International <a href="https://www.nautilusint.org/en/">https://www.nautilusint.org/en/</a>	Range of services and advocacy for members	Seafarers and other maritime professionals	National but with Hants and IoW casework

Organisation	Description	Target Population	Location
Portsmouth Carers' Centre <a href="http://www.portsmouthcc.gov.uk">http://www.portsmouthcc.gov.uk</a>	Emotional support and provide information and advice, Emergency Card for carers in case of an emergency, Break fund to help the carer access a break when things become too much, Free training, 30+ Support groups, sitting service and a Carers Café.	Carers	Portsmouth
Portsmouth Disability Forum <a href="https://www.p-d-f.org.uk/">https://www.p-d-f.org.uk/</a>	User led organisation which owns Frank Sorrell Centre which is run for the benefit of disabled people their families and personal assistants, disability groups and organisations in and around Portsmouth as well as supporting the local churches in our community	General	Portsmouth
Portsmouth Street Pastors <a href="http://www.streetpastors.org.uk">http://www.streetpastors.org.uk</a>	Street Pastors offer reassurance, safety and support through caring, listening and helping to those in need in Portsmouth between the hours of 10pm and 3.00am. Trained volunteers from local churches, work in and around the nighttime venues and can signpost to relevant agencies.	General	Portsmouth
Portsmouth Together <a href="http://volunteer.portsmouth.gov.uk">http://volunteer.portsmouth.gov.uk</a>	City-wide partnership that seeks to develop and extend volunteering across Portsmouth. Located in Portsmouth Central library where it runs 2 volunteering drop-in sessions per week, for those that would prefer not to use online services.	General	Portsmouth
Rowans Hospice <a href="http://www.rowanshospice.co.uk">http://www.rowanshospice.co.uk</a>	Veterans Living Well service available to older veterans and their family/carers living with a serious life limiting illness. Particularly those who are socially isolated. Also signposting to other agencies. Home visits are also offered and links to the veterans' volunteer companions service can also be made. Drop-in is available Monday to Friday 9am-4.30pm.	Older veterans	Portsmouth

Organisation	Description	Target Population	Location
Royal British Legion Southampton Area <a href="http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-support/the-legion-near-you/southampton/">http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-support/the-legion-near-you/southampton/</a>	Provides extensive support for veterans which includes grants and financial assistance, advice and advocacy, help living independently, and housing and care homes	Armed forces veterans and their families	Southampton
Samaritans of Portsmouth and East Hampshire <a href="https://www.samaritans.org/branches/samaritans-portsmouth-and-east-hampshire">https://www.samaritans.org/branches/samaritans-portsmouth-and-east-hampshire</a>	Listening support service for anyone going through a difficult time emotionally.	General	
Seafarer Support <a href="http://www.seafarerssupport.org">http://www.seafarerssupport.org</a>	Free, confidential referral service. As the single point of contact for the UK maritime charity sector, working with nearly 150 charities and organisations, Seafarer Support can help individuals and professionals to avoid the effort and stress of approaching numerous charities and organisations by directing people to the most appropriate sources of help.	Serving and retired seafarers	National
Service Dogs UK <a href="http://www.servicedogsuk.org">http://www.servicedogsuk.org</a>	Trains and provides assistance dogs, from rescue, to support people who have PTSD to achieve unique partnerships that will greatly enhance the lives of both.	Armed forces and emergency services	West Sussex, Surrey and East and North Hampshire
Shipwrecked Mariners Society <a href="https://shipwreckedmariners.org.uk/">https://shipwreckedmariners.org.uk/</a>	Provision of support and financial assistance through grants	Serving or former merchant mariners and fishermen	National
Shore Leave HASLAR <a href="http://www.shoreleavehaslar.com">http://www.shoreleavehaslar.com</a>	Horticultural Therapy programme and is based in the Memorial Garden within the old Haslar Hospital in Gosport. We use plants, gardening and related activities as a therapy for veterans with physical and mental health support needs. Veterans will need a referral from their	Armed forces and MN veterans	Gosport

Organisation	Description	Target Population	Location
	GP or other health professional before they can access this project.		
Society of St James <a href="http://www.ssj.org.uk">www.ssj.org.uk</a>	Homeless Day Services is direct access day service for people who are street homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.	General	Portsmouth
Solent MIND <a href="http://www.solentmind.org.uk/">http://www.solentmind.org.uk/</a>	Provides support, advice, and information for people with mental health problems. Services include: health, wellbeing and recovery support, employment and training, dementia reablement, home-based support (including housing, benefits and debt advice), counselling, advocacy support, social activities and self-help groups, support for the elderly, and outreach support.	General	Southampton
Southampton Veterans' Drop-In Centre <a href="#">Appx 4 service map table.docx</a>	Providing local Veterans with a helping hand, whether that is by getting them out of the house and in amongst company, connected with local support, into housing and back into employment.		
SSAFA Gosport <a href="https://www.ssafa.org.uk">https://www.ssafa.org.uk</a>	Lifelong support to the Armed Forces, past and present, and their dependant family.	Armed forces veterans and their dependents	Gosport
SSAFA Portsmouth <a href="https://www.ssafa.org.uk">https://www.ssafa.org.uk</a>	Lifelong support to the Armed Forces, past and present, and their dependant family.	Armed forces veterans and their dependents	Portsmouth
The Salvation Army <a href="http://www.salvationarmy.org.uk">http://www.salvationarmy.org.uk</a>	Hope House is a Homeless Hostel in Portsmouth with 32 single rooms. We support single homeless adults with varying complex needs and also provide 15 additional overnight winter beds. We offer staffing on site 24/7. Hope House also supports clients at risk of homelessness as part of our floating support, to enable	General	Portsmouth

Organisation	Description	Target Population	Location
	clients to remain in their own homes. Hope House also manages a community house which is for vulnerable females and supported by our floating support team		
Two Saints <a href="http://www.twosaints.org.uk">http://www.twosaints.org.uk</a>	5 bed second stage accommodation in Havant where we support clients to gain independence and move onto their own independent accommodation. We also support clients in the community to help prevent eviction and sustain current accommodation, as well as clients who are homeless. We support our homeless clients to find accommodation and signpost to other services to prevent future homelessness. We can give debt advice and support to access other services. We run drop-in's on a daily basis for clients to access support.	General	Havant
Veterans' Outreach Support <a href="http://www.vosuk.org">http://www.vosuk.org</a>	Confidential social or psychological support. general welfare support in the form of legal, housing, financial and employment help from experienced third sector welfare agencies such as SSAFA and The Royal British Legion (TRBL), as well as wellbeing support in the form of peer mentoring. VOS also employs an in-house clinical team of mental health practitioners and can recommend further support through Combat Stress and the NHS.	Armed forces and MN veterans and their families and dependents	Portsmouth
The You Trust <a href="http://www.theyoutrust.org.uk">http://www.theyoutrust.org.uk</a>	YOU offers Advice Portsmouth, Counselling Portsmouth, Into Work, Floating Support, Registered Care and Supported Living, which support a range of people with issues including, but not limited to, Housing, Welfare benefits, Debt, Employment, Family issues, Consumer issues, Paid employment, Volunteer work, Domestic abuse, Depression, Bereavement, LGBTQ community, People in transition, GP surgeries, Accessing the community, Personal care, Attending appointments, Maintaining a tenancy/finances. Counselling Portsmouth	General	Portsmouth



---

Organisation	Description	Target Population	Location
	is a means tested service. Advice Portsmouth is a free legal advice service.		