



### Evidence based findings about the British veteran population

The Ministry of Defence estimated that there were approximately 2.5 million UK Armed Forces veterans residing in households across Great Britain in 2016, based on responses to the Annual Population Survey conducted by the Office for National Statistics. UK-wide, in 2016 the veteran population represented 5% of household residents aged over 16. Whilst the overall number of veterans residing in Great Britain is projected to decrease over the next years, the percentage of veterans of working age is projected to increase from 37% in 2016 to 44% by 2028.

The Northern Hub for Veterans and Military Families Research is a collective of academics, service providers and service users with an interest in improving the health and social wellbeing of veterans and their families across the life-span.

[www.northumbria.ac.uk/militaryveterans](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/militaryveterans)

The 2011 Armed Forces Act provided a comprehensive legislative framework for the British Armed Forces and created the requirement for an annual Armed Forces covenant report to UK Parliament each year. In order to support the armed forces community more effectively, there is an increasing demand for evidence-based findings.

One of the main goals of the Map of Need project is to provide evidence-based findings about the veteran population. Data sharing partnerships are central to the analysis within the project, allowing us the ability to statistically compare multiple data sources when examining a veteran or family issue, and then compare these with wider research findings. The approach we have adopted seeks to use multiple data sources to provide end users with the most accurate picture of a phenomenon as possible.

### By using service usage data, we are obtaining a reliable source of actual service usage.

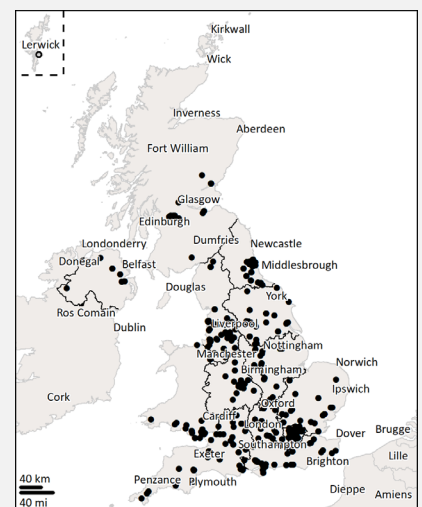
Financial hardship and housing issues are the most prevalent topics affecting veterans that seek assistance from the main charities in the sector. The data shows that most of those that seek assistance for financial hardship are in fact older veterans (>50 years). Also, the veteran population seeking financial assistance is spatially differentiated based on the military branch that they served in. UK-wide, a similar pattern in all the data analysed suggests that benevolence payments to the veteran community cannot be only explained by deprivation in a given area.

- The Northern Hub for Veterans and Military Families Research developed an online directory of services available to the veteran community.
- The online directory is publicly available at:

<https://www.veteransgateway.org.uk/ocal-support/>

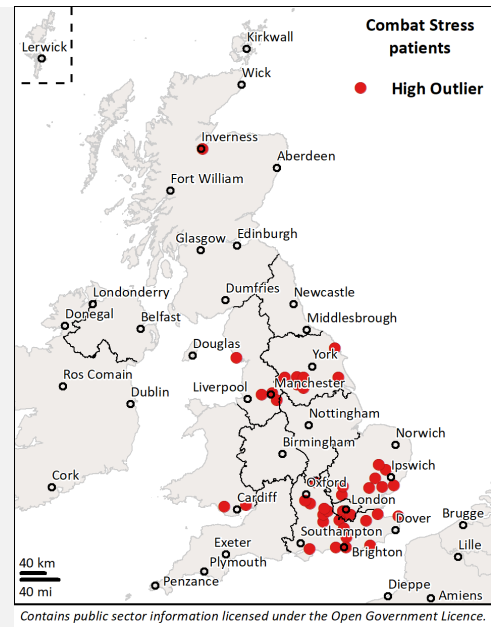
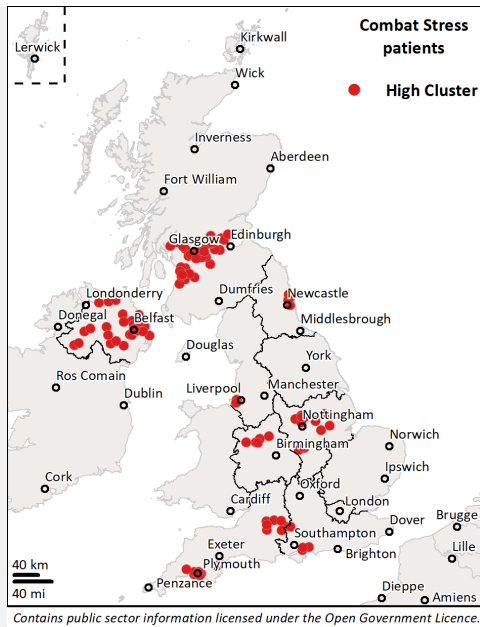
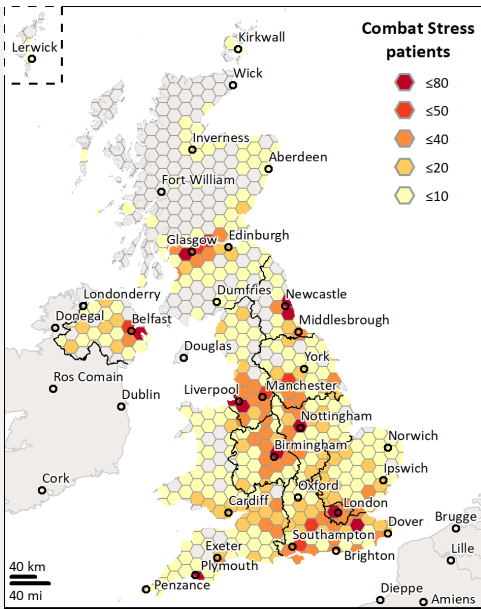
The Northern Hub for Veterans and Military Families Research

Contact: Dr Matt Kiernan  
[matt.kiernan@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:matt.kiernan@northumbria.ac.uk)

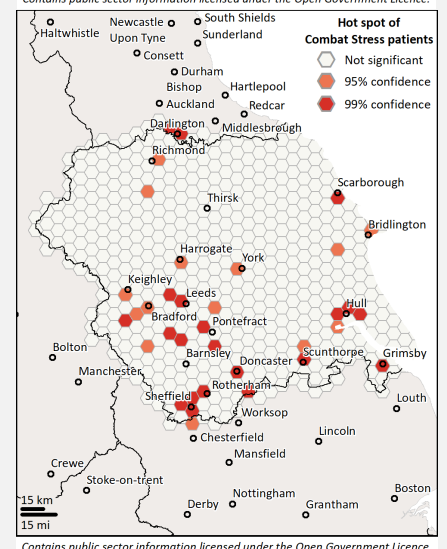
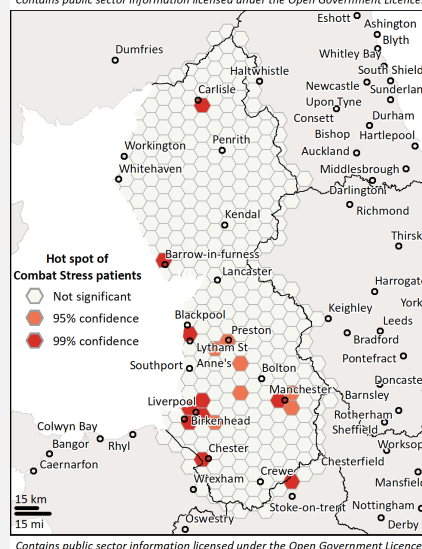
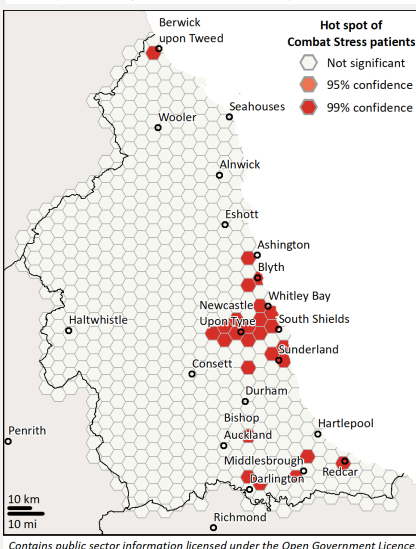
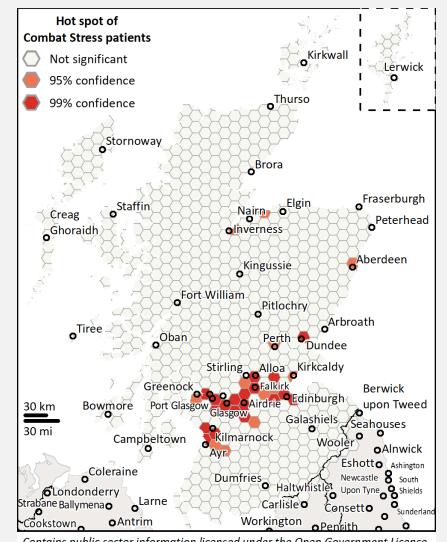
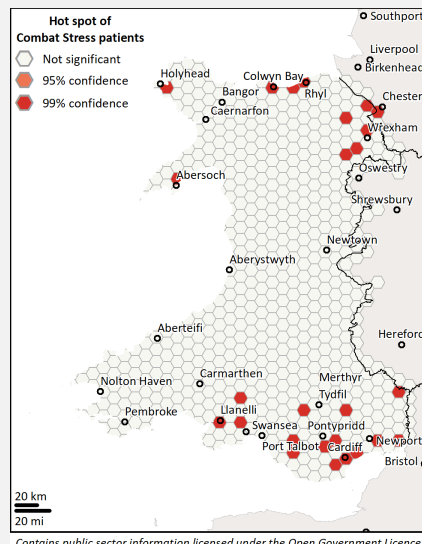
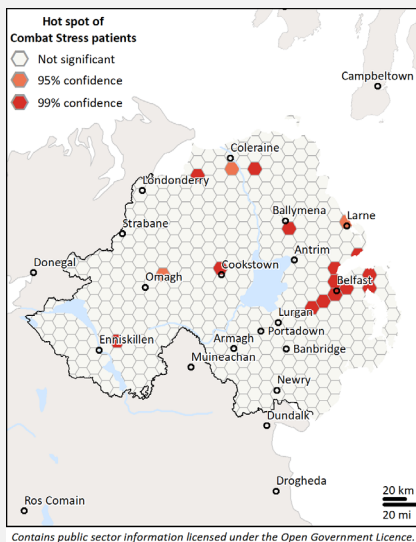


## Combat Stress referrals (2017/18)

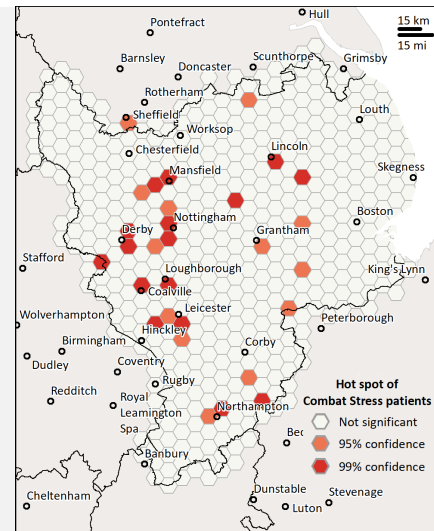
- In the financial year 2017/18, a quarter of all service users managed by Combat Stress were concentrated in two regions: South East and South West England.
- South East England stands out having 15% of all Combat Stress service users.
- Prevalence vary considerably between regions. Northern Ireland had the highest crude rate, 1.57 service users per 10,000 population, whereas in London the rate dropped to 0.17 service users per 10,000 population. UK wide, the average was 0.67 service users per 10,000 population.
- Some of the local authorities with high prevalence rates of service users also display a relatively high presence of stationed military personnel and/ or military pension recipients. This was the case in local authorities such as Rushmoor, Gosport, Richmondshire and Plymouth. However, there were also examples of local authorities that (a) do not have stationed military personnel, and/or have a low presence of military pension recipients but (b) also have a relatively high prevalence of service users per 10,000 population. This occurred mostly in Scotland and Northern Ireland, but also in some English LA areas such as Worcester, Tonbridge & Malling and Mansfield.
- The average age of the service users was similar among the regions/countries. UK wide the mean age was 47 years (standard deviation of  $\pm 12$  years). The exception to this trend is in Northern Ireland where the average age of the service users was higher i.e. approximately 51 years old (standard deviation of  $\pm 11$  years).
- Across the UK, a distinctive spatial distribution pattern emerged across the devolved administrations and English regions. In England, most of the postcode clusters of Combat Stress service users were concentrated in or around major cities, such as Liverpool, Newcastle, Plymouth and Portsmouth.
- The same patterning did not emerge in Northern Ireland and Scotland, with postcodes displaying a high number of service users being more widely dispersed across the devolved administrations. This dispersal pattern raises several issues such the challenge of meeting the needs of service users living in remotes areas, and the difficulties of having to travel longer distances to reach support services.
- The location of Combat Stress service users was generally poorly correlated with overall deprivation levels in a given area. However, levels of (specifically) income deprivation demonstrated a stronger association with the spatial distribution of Combat Stress service users. This would indicate that, although the Index of Multiple Deprivation (in total) is a poor predictor of the areas with veterans with mental health problems, the income dimension of this measure is of some utility.
- In some regions, income deprivation explained more than 10 percent of the spatial variation in Combat Stress service users. In one instance - the North West of England - income deprivation explained approximately 29 percent of this variation. This relationship was strong enough to show that the association between income deprivation and Combat Stress service users could not have happened due to random chance. Overall, the results highlight the need for more research into the association between income deprivation and the mental health of the veteran population. The well-documented conundrum concerning this relationship is that of 'causality' versus 'drift'. Simply put, does living in low-income areas exacerbate veterans' mental ill health or does poor mental health predispose veterans to low earnings?
- The spatial distribution of Combat Stress service users was strongly associated with the distribution of military pension & compensations. Therefore, this would suggest that the distribution of military pension & compensation recipients, which is publicly available data, might serve as a useful proxy indicator when seeking to locate areas with veteran populations who are experiencing mental ill health. For instance, in the South West, the location of military pension & compensation recipients explained approximately 86 percent of the variation in spatial distribution of Combat Stress service users.



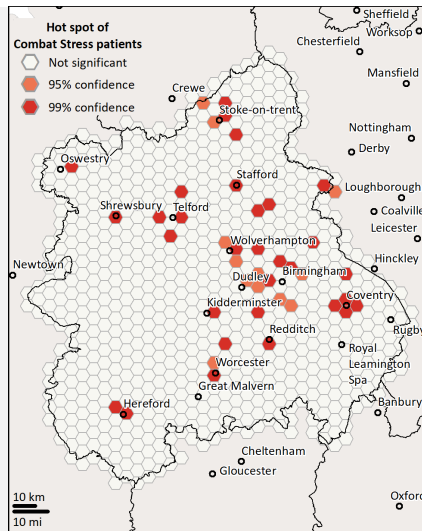
- In England there are areas where the clusters concentrate on and around a city, such as in Liverpool, Newcastle, Plymouth and Portsmouth. The same do not occur in Northern Ireland and Scotland, where the clusters are dispersed across large areas of the devolved administrations.
- Regarding the outliers, we can find several postcode sectors with a high number of patients across areas with low number of patients. These outliers can be found mostly in England's regions.



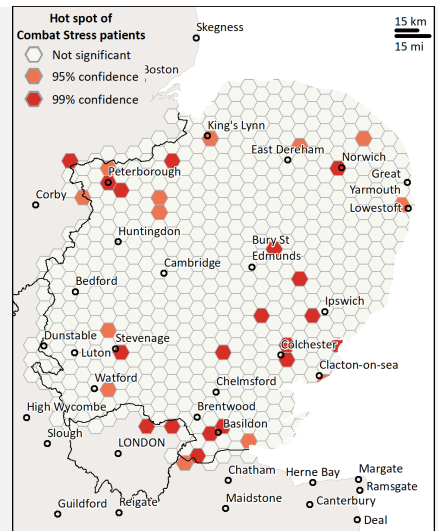




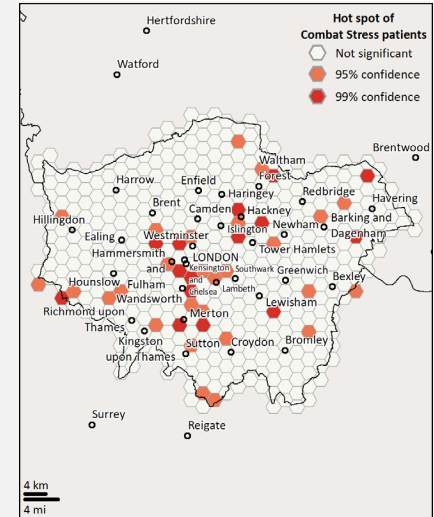
Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence.



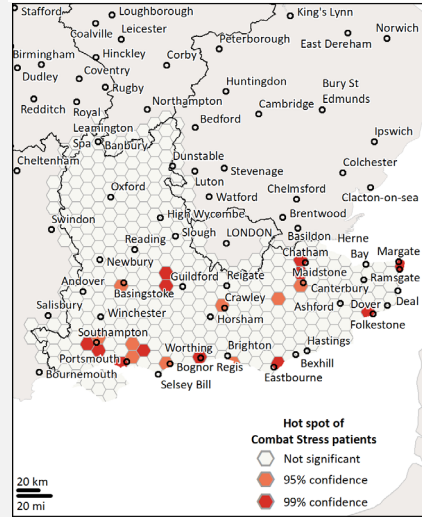
Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence.



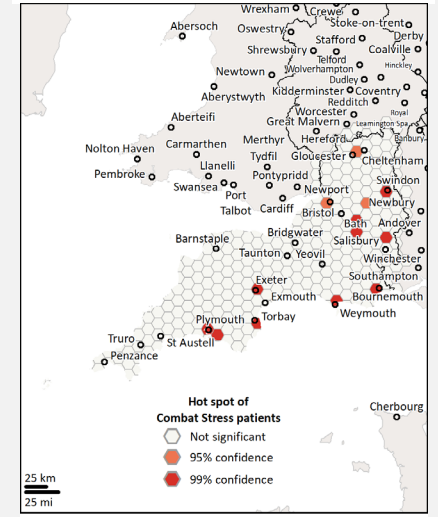
Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence.



Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence.



Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence.



Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence.