

KEYS GROUP MILITARY CONNECT STAFF NETWORK

November 2024

In November 2024 Keys Group wrote its pledge and signed the Armed Forces Covenant. [View >](#)



Diane Palmer

Our Keys Group Associate Clinical Director for Adults - Diane Palmer, was appointed as our Lead Armed Forces Champion and a steering group was formed to ensure the organisations upholds the principles of the AF Covenant and implements our pledge.

Progress to Date

Public Signing

Diane Palmer, Emma Beaumont and Claire McLoughlin attended a Public signing at the Reserve Centre in Birmingham.



Staff Network

Since its launch on 16th January 2025, the Staff Network has met monthly, welcoming guest speakers from military charities such as Walking With The Wounded and SSAFA.

HR Policies

HR Policies have been amended to reflect our commitment to offer guaranteed interviews for military spouses, veterans and reservists.

Charities



We are working closely with the Recruit for Spouses agency and leading military charities such as The Poppy Factory, The Forces Employment Charity, and Walking With The Wounded, all of whom specialise in supporting veterans into employment.

[Poppy Factory](#)

[Walking with the Wounded](#)

[The Forces Employment Charity](#)

Keys Group Veteran Story - Meet Sip Powers MBE!



We're thrilled to welcome Sip Powers MBE to the Keys Group team as our new Health and Safety/Quality Assurance Manager for Outdoor Education!

Sip is an MCI and Development Coach aspirant and UIMLA guide, having delivered top level Joint Service Adventure Training courses and lead worldwide expeditions for the last 34 years of his military service.

His key development over the last decade has been delivering adaptive training for wounded, injured and sick service personnel via Battle Back.

Sip's main focus has been working as a freelance instructor within his own company Extreme Outdoors assisting service personnel, veterans and the civilian community to develop their personal outdoor skills whilst having fun and assisting their health and well-being.

As a Master Coach and professional mentor Sip has been heavily involved within the education sector at KS3 & 4 developing and supporting students within the SEND category. He is also a DofE Assessor and has delivered bronze scheme awards.

In his free time Sip is the Lancashire County Representative for the charity Combat Stress supporting over 300,000 veterans within this region. He is a member of the Bowland Pennine Mountain Rescue Team and an accomplished paddler, climber, mountaineer, alpinist and MTBiker. He has competed in over 18 Ironman triathlon events and successfully completed a number of endurance solo challenges including the recent [Enduro214](#) nonstop, 26-day round of all 214 Wainwright's, self-supported in order to raise awareness and funds for Combat Stress.

Sip's secret passion is his 3-year-old Blue Staffy 'Ruby' and baking late at night for his friends when they climb on his wall in the back garden.

Support Available to Veterans, Reservists and their Families

Op COURAGE: The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service

Op COURAGE is an NHS mental health specialist service designed to help serving personnel due to leave the military, reservists, armed forces veterans and their families.

[Mental health support for veterans, service leavers and reservists - NHS](#)

Veterans' NHS Wales

Veterans' NHS Wales is a specialist mental health service for veterans living in Wales who are experiencing mental health difficulties relating to their military service.

[Veterans' NHS Wales - GOV.UK](#)

Defence Employer Recognition Scheme

We have now achieved the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Bronze Award - and we're incredibly proud to be recognised for our support of the Armed Forces community. We're happy to stand alongside other organisations committed to making a difference.



Next Steps

National Memorial Arboretum

We are hosting a special networking event at the National Memorial Arboretum on 6th November to mark Remembrance and celebrate our collaborative work with key stakeholders from the MOD, NHS, and military charities.



Walking With The Wounded Fundraising Event

We're planning to take part in the Walking With The Wounded 'Walk Home for Christmas' fundraising event in December 2025, and we're looking for Keys Group staff who would like to get involved.

Contact

If you are a veteran or reservist and would like to learn more, share your story, or join our Staff Networking Group, please contact Diane Palmer, our Associate Clinical Director for Adults and Lead Armed Forces Champion, at Diane.Palmer@keys-group.co.uk.

Help Us Recognise Our Armed Forces Connections

We'll soon be sending out a short survey to all Service Managers to help us understand how many of our colleagues and the people we support have a military background or connection.

We'd love your help identifying:

- Any staff members who have served in the Armed Forces (including Reserves)
- Any people we support who have served or have a close military connection

Please keep an eye out for the survey in your inbox and take a few minutes to complete it. Your input will help shape how we celebrate and support those with Armed Forces links across our services.

