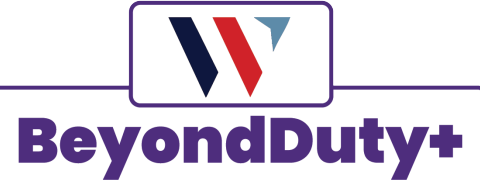


## Psychological Impact: Limb Loss



**Limb loss**, often the result of **combat injuries, blasts, or traumatic accidents** during military service, has a profound and lasting psychological impact on UK veterans. Beyond the physical limitations, amputation can significantly affect:

- **Body image and self-esteem**
- **Sense of independence** and capability
- **Mental health**, including depression and anxiety

Veterans may experience **phantom limb pain, frustration** with prosthetics, and **challenges performing daily tasks**. This loss can also deeply disrupt a veteran's identity, particularly for those whose self-worth was tied to physical strength or operational effectiveness.

Psychological effects can include:

- **Grief and mourning for the lost limb**
- **Social withdrawal** due to perceived stigma or embarrassment
- **Anger, frustration, or shame**
- **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)**, especially if the limb loss was sudden or linked to traumatic events

Support is available through the **Veterans Trauma Network, NHS prosthetic services**, and charities like **Blesma – The Limbless Veterans**, which offer physical rehabilitation, peer support, and emotional counselling tailored to those who have undergone life-changing injuries.

## Psychological Support for Limb Loss in UK Veterans

Limb loss is a life-altering experience that presents unique psychological challenges for veterans. Beyond the physical adjustment, veterans often face issues such as grief, changes in self-identity, depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). **Psychological support plays a crucial role** in

helping veterans adapt to these changes and rebuild their lives.

In the UK, psychological care for veterans with limb loss is integrated within both the **NHS** and specialised **veteran charities**. Early intervention focuses on **trauma-informed counselling** to address the emotional impact of amputation, including feelings of loss and grief. Mental health professionals help veterans process their experiences and support resilience-building.

**Cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT)** is commonly used to help manage symptoms of depression and anxiety related to limb loss, as well as to assist in coping with phantom limb pain and the stress of adapting to prosthetics. **Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)** is also employed to encourage acceptance of physical changes and foster a focus on meaningful goals and life values.

Specialist services such as **Help for Heroes' Prosthetic and Rehabilitation Centres** provide multidisciplinary support that combines physical rehabilitation with psychological therapies tailored to veterans' needs. These centres emphasise holistic recovery, offering psychological counselling alongside physiotherapy and occupational therapy.

**The NHS Veterans Prosthetics Service**, delivered by selected NHS trusts, offers comprehensive care that includes access to clinical psychologists experienced in supporting amputee veterans. This ensures psychological support is embedded within the prosthetic fitting and rehabilitation process.

Peer support groups are an invaluable resource, offering veterans the chance to share experiences, reduce feelings of isolation, and foster a sense of community with others facing similar challenges. Organizations like **The Royal British Legion** and **Walking With The Wounded** facilitate these networks across the UK.

Psychological support for limb loss in veterans is essential for promoting emotional healing, rebuilding identity, and enabling a successful transition to a fulfilling civilian life. By addressing both mental and physical health, UK veterans can access the comprehensive care needed to overcome the challenges posed by limb loss

## Contact Us

For more information and support, get in touch with our advisors and veterans with lived experience today.



[enquiries@veteranswelfaregroup.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@veteranswelfaregroup.co.uk)



0330 056 0174