

MEDICAL ALERTS FOR DEPLOYED SERVICE PERSONNEL

Introduction

1. All Defence Medical Services (DMS) patients are recorded on the National Health Applications and Infrastructure Services (NHAIS) system. All DMS patients are linked to the NHAIS system via DMICP (GP Links). This enables medical alerts¹ to be raised for eligible² DMS patients.

Aim

2. The aim of this policy leaflet is to provide direction on the responsibilities for medical alerts for eligible DMS patients whilst on operations.

Scope

3. This leaflet describes the responsibilities for medical alerts that are raised for call / recall, and result notification from GP links for Regular personnel deployed on operations.

4. Reservists must remain registered with their own NHS medical practice, whilst on operations. Mobilised Reserves are 'fully entitled' to healthcare for the duration of their mobilisation; however their NHS GP registration must not transfer to the DMS. Mobilising (and mobilised) reservists can still be given full access to healthcare without having to change their registration status. Reservists will attend a medical during pre-deployment training to ensure they have no on-going medical issues and confirm fitness to deploy. Further information can be found in the [DMICP Registration Guidance document](#).

Background

5. Links have been established between DMICP and the NHAIS system, which allows for the administration of the military patient population within the NHS. This has resulted in improved access to laboratory systems, electronic referral and access to Call / Recall and Result Notification for screening through medical alerts.

6. There should be no necessity to receive medical alerts whilst deployed, but inevitably there have been circumstances when this has occurred. To ensure medical alerts are not missed the Firm Base Medical Centres will remain responsible for receiving medical alerts whilst personnel are deployed on operations.

Responsibilities

7. Chain of Command: To inform military personnel of their duty to report to their Firm Base Medical Centre on notification of a deployment.

8. Military personnel: To inform their Medical Centre if they are due to deploy.

9. Medical Practitioners: Medical alerts that may occur during deployment are to be identified by a Medical Practitioner during the pre-deployment³ preparation, to avoid the requirement to return the individual once deployed.

¹ Electronic clinical information transfer that notifies a medical centre when a clinical call / recall, and result notification is required for a patient.

² Eligible patients refer to regular personnel who receive their long term permanent healthcare by the DMS.

³ Reservists will be fully medically screened during pre-deployment, to determine if there are any outstanding medical investigations and/or routine screening required that will need addressing before deployment. In some instances this will result in a Reservist being temporarily downgraded until addressed.

10. Firm Base Medical Centres: To remain responsible for receiving medical alerts whilst personnel are deployed on operations. Responsibility for ensuring the patient receives medical alerts including, results and any appropriate follow up, rests with the Firm Base DMS Medical Centre where the person is registered. The only exception to this process is on ships; in these circumstances, military personnel are to be registered at a Base Port Medical Centre. The Base Port Medical Centre will then be responsible for receiving and notifying patients of any medical alerts; whilst these personnel are deployed on a ship.

11. Follow-up of abnormal results **must not** be deferred due to deployment and consideration is to be given to deferring deployment in these cases. Where medical alerts are received after personnel have deployed, and investigation or treatment is required, consideration must be given to return affected personnel from operations.

12. Personnel should not be screened routinely whilst deployed on operations, ie: as per guidance on cervical screening in [JSP 950 Cervical Screening Lft 2-13-1 v2.0](#). If an individual's routine recall date falls during a period when they are due to be deployed, the screening test should be undertaken prior to deployment, ensuring sufficient time for the results to be received and actioned. Where this is not possible (eg short notice deployment) a senior clinician from the MF must conduct a risk assessment and produce an agreed management plan with the Serviceperson, and / or personnel are to be offered screening at the earliest possible opportunity on their return.