



**SISTERS  
IN SERVICE**  
.org.uk

Supporting Women Veterans in Healthcare

# Peer Mentorship Scheme

**Connection • Confidence • Community**





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## Who We Are

**Sisters in Service is a safe, supportive network for female Veterans and Reservists working in health and social care - from students to professionals, NHS to private practice.**

Founded by Dr Bex Bennett and Gemma Saunders in 2024, with Mel Dyke joining the directorship in 2025, Sisters in Service was created after recognising the lack of spaces designed specifically for women with military experience now working in healthcare.

**“We’re here to make the transition from military to healthcare feel supported, understood, and shared.”**





## Our Aim

**Leaving the military is a huge shift - in identity, pace, and community. Starting university, retraining and entering the NHS adds another layer of change.**

The SIS Peer Mentorship Scheme connects members with 1:1 support to help bridge that gap. Each mentee is matched with a mentor from the same or similar profession - sometimes even within the same Trust - to share experience, confidence, and guidance.



**The scheme is  
completely  
voluntary and  
free to join**

## Why Peer Mentorship Matters

**Mentorship builds confidence, connection, and growth.**

It creates a **safe space** for honest conversations about adjusting to civilian work and student life.

**Both mentor and mentee benefit** - one by giving back, the other by gaining support and clarity.

**“My mentor not only helped me with the transition to a new working environment, but she supported me from day one... I’m grateful for the guidance and friendship I’ve made.”**

### Benefits for Mentors

- ✓ Develop mentoring and leadership skills
- ✓ Strengthen communication and reflection
- ✓ Enhance your CV and professional portfolio
- ✓ Give back to colleagues and the wider veteran community
- ✓ Receive a certificate of achievement

### Benefits for Mentees

- ✓ Camaraderie and understanding from someone who “gets it”
- ✓ Support through study or early career transitions
- ✓ Guidance on balancing work, study, and family life
- ✓ A safe place to set goals, share challenges, and build confidence
- ✓ Ongoing contact and encouragement for as long as needed



## Case Study: Hayley's Story

**After 20 years in the Army as a combat medic and mental health nurse, Hayley began a new chapter in the NHS.**

Before she even started her role, she was introduced to Gemma Saunders through the Armed Forces Network, who supported Hayley's transition from the army to the NHS.

Their early chats provided reassurance and guidance - a simple connection that made all the difference.

Today, Hayley is thriving, leading her team, and now chairs the same network that once welcomed her.



**“The support for Hayley culminated in a successful transition for her and her family. A mutual friendship with the women in the network quickly formed, too.”**

**- Gemma, SIS Co-Founder & Mentor**



**We hope to replicate this success through every mentorship pairing.**

# How the Scheme Works



## Register:

Complete a short Microsoft Form indicating whether you'd like to be a mentor or mentee.



## Match:

We pair you based on profession, region, or shared experience.



## Connect:

You'll receive an introduction email so you can arrange your first meeting.



## Stay in touch:

Decide together how and when to connect — video call, phone, or in person.



## Reflect & grow:

Continue meeting as suits you; review goals and celebrate progress.



**Every connection  
looks different**

- what matters is that it  
feels safe, respectful, and  
supportive.

# Confidentiality & Safeguarding

## **Trust and confidentiality are essential.**

Discussions within mentorships stay private unless there is risk of harm to self or others.

In those cases, mentors or mentees must contact the Safeguarding Lead immediately and follow local safeguarding procedures.

# Consent & Data Protection

## **Information is shared only to deliver the mentorship safely.**

Details such as name, contact information, and agreed preferences are handled in line with GDPR and ICO registration requirements.

Participants may withdraw consent at any time by contacting [admin@sistersinservice.org.uk](mailto:admin@sistersinservice.org.uk).

# Ending a Mentorship

## **You can finish your mentorship at any stage - just let your partner and SIS know.**

Many mentees later choose to become mentors themselves, passing the support forward.

Your journey may change, but the connections you build will last.

# Meet the Team



## **Dr Bex Bennett - Director & Founder**

**Forensic Psychiatrist, former REME Officer.  
Specialist in veteran mental health.**

[bex@sistersinservice.org.uk](mailto:bex@sistersinservice.org.uk)

Following a successful REME Army career with deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, Bex is now a Psychiatrist specialising in forensic and veteran mental health.



## **Gemma Saunders - Director & Safeguarding Lead**

**Psychotherapist & Occupational Therapist.**

[admin@sistersinservice.org.uk](mailto:admin@sistersinservice.org.uk)

BABCP-accredited Psychotherapist and Occupational Therapist, Gemma discovered her passion for veteran wellbeing at Headley Court and now trains and supports healthcare professionals across the NHS.



## **Mel Dyke - Director**

**Queen's Nurse & Health Visitor. Chair of Armed Forces Networks across two NHS Trusts.**

[admin@sistersinservice.org.uk](mailto:admin@sistersinservice.org.uk)

As a Queen's Nurse and Health Visitor leading Armed Forces staff networks across Derbyshire NHS Trusts, Mel draws on 10 years' Army service in the AGC and QARANC.



## Key Contacts & Resources

- **Op COURAGE:** NHS mental health support for veterans and families
- **Op RESTORE:** the veterans' physical health and wellbeing service
- **Combat Stress:** clinical treatment for trauma-related issues
- **Samaritans:** 24/7 listening service - Call 116 123



**“One connection can change everything.”**

**Join the network • Find your people • Thrive in healthcare**

## **Join the Peer Mentorship Scheme**

**If you'd like to be involved, complete  
the registration form via our website:  
[sistersinservice.org.uk/peer-mentorship](https://sistersinservice.org.uk/peer-mentorship)**



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