

Health Services

SSAFA Forces Help – a brief introduction to the assistance we provide and people we help

“We provide health services on behalf of the Ministry of Defence for serving personnel based overseas and their families”

SSAFA Forces Help’s Health Service currently has staff in: Germany, North West Europe, Nepal, Cyprus, Gibraltar, Brunei, Canada, Naples and Lisbon. The Service matches the best standards of the NHS and UK statutory agencies and employs a full range of clinical and managerial staff. It is funded by the Ministry of Defence.

The beginning of the Health Services

In 1892, the Association recruited and paid for its first nurse to work in Curragh Camp in Ireland. By 1897, twelve nurses were employed to work in various garrisons at home and abroad. As the British Empire expanded, more Service personnel and their families were posted throughout the world, bringing a growing need for the nursing service to work in far-flung commands. These nurses were originally named Alexandra Nurses after Princess Alexandra, the President to the Association, making them the longest established nursing service supporting the Armed Forces.

Following the implementation of the National Health Service Act in 1948, which made it a statutory obligation to provide a health service, SSAFA was asked by the Ministry of Defence to provide a health service. Meanwhile the role overseas was extended to include health visiting and a midwifery service that families would normally receive from the UK authorities.

For well over one hundred years, SSAFA Forces Help’s Health Service, working together with the Ministry of Defence, has provided a unique and exemplary service to families.

The British Forces Germany Health Service (BFGHS)

Since 1996 SSAFA Forces Help has provided Primary Health Care Services in British Forces Germany under contract to the Ministry of Defence. In January 2008 SSAFA/GSTT, (Guys and St Thomas’s) have simultaneously engaged in the formal establishment of a Limited Liability Partnership. This partnership allows for the day to day service provision of health care services with employees remaining in the direct employment of SSAFA. GSTT will be providing supporting services through contractual arrangements with other partnerships. SSAFA Forces Help Director of Nursing and Quality, Jan Dowlen-Gilliland, is also the appointed Operations Director BFG

Health Service. The new Primary and Community Care contract is a significant factor in underpinning ongoing SSAFA Family Health Services development and contains areas of enhanced responsibility within Primary Care provision.

Comprehensive health care services are provided for all those serving in British Forces Germany including Service personnel, United Kingdom based civilians and their dependants. SSAFA Forces Help employs over three hundred Nurses, Midwives, Health Visitors, Allied Health Professionals and Managers within BFG Health service. The geographical service encompasses a wide area with Hohne Region in the north, a Central Region including Paderborn and Gutersloh and further south Rhine which supports isolated detachments in Southern Europe, Holland and Belgium.

Healthcare services are needs led with a public health focus and linked with Department of Health and MOD policy. Provision reflects that within modern primary health care policy and practice in the United Kingdom.

Overseas Commands

SSAFA Forces Help provides varying models of service provision within the smaller overseas commands of Cyprus, Gibraltar, Brunei, Canada and Nepal dependent on MOD requirement. Our highly skilled workforce operates in partnership with military personnel and multi-disciplinary colleagues. In all commands there is a close interface with local health services and designated multi – agencies.

Integrated Midwifery provision in Gibraltar by SSAFA Forces Help Midwives has successfully been in place over the last five years and the service was recently awarded recognition within the international Baby Friendly initiative. A similar integrated midwifery service is currently been established in Cyprus building on established community health and midwifery provision. All services are closely aligned to the aims of the children's and young persons plan and demonstrate proactive health promotion, parenting support and school health activity by SSAFA Forces Help professionals.



The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association - Forces Help

The national charity helping serving and ex-Service men, women and their families, in need.

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