



Royal College of
General Practitioners

Veteran-friendly Practice Accreditation



Who is a veteran?

- Veterans include anyone who has served for at least one day in the Armed Forces (Regular or Reserve)
- By far the majority serve over 10 years

How many veterans are there in UK?

- UK Veterans = 2.4 million
- 18,000 Service people leave military annually
- 2,500 leave the Services on medical grounds per annum
- 750,000 UK Armed Forces veterans of working age in England and Wales
- 5.4 million adult spouses, partners, widowers and child dependants
- Each NHS GP will have around 30 + veterans on their list





Armed Forces Covenant



- Understanding of the veteran community & potential health problems
- Awareness of and how to sign-post or refer to appropriate veteran-specific services
- Request priority treatment for health problems partially or wholly attributable to military service

Why are veterans treated as a special group?

- Service in the Armed Forces is different from other occupations
- Relinquish civil liberties and put themselves in harm's way to protect others
- Risk of serious injury is substantially increased
- 52% of veterans have a long-term illness/disability which is higher than in the general adult population (35%)
- *“Leaving the military introduces a rupture across all levels”*

TRIAD study, King's College London, January 2021

Veterans Mental Health

- UK veterans who served at time of recent military operations were more likely than non-veterans to report higher prevalence of:
 - Common mental health disorders 23 v's 16%
 - PTSD 8%, rising to 17% of those deployed to combat roles in Iraq & Afghanistan v's 5%
 - Alcohol misuse 10% v's 5%
 - Delayed presentation – average of 4 years for veterans to come forward about mental health

Op COURAGE

The Veterans Mental Health & Wellbeing Service

<https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/armed-forces-and-veterans-healthcare/veterans-nhs-mental-health-services/>

- Veteran's Transition, Intervention & Liaison Service (TILS)
- Veteran's Complex Treatment Service (CTS)
- High Intensity Service (HIS) – crisis in need of urgent care

Veteran's Trauma Network

- Serious injuries and long-term physical, mental or neurological health condition and disability
- VTN works with DMS, national centres of clinical expertise, NHS Veterans mental health, key charities
- Personalised care approach
- Referral by email from GP england.veteranstraumanetwork@nhs.net

Veteran's Gateway

- Veteran's Gateway – 24/7 phoneline <https://www.veteransgateway.org.uk>
- First point of contact for welfare needs including housing, finances, employment, physical and mental wellbeing



Veterans eligible for priority NHS treatment

- For conditions partially or wholly attributable to military service
- High proportion of MSK and hearing problems amongst veterans
- Highlight veteran status in referral letters, for example:

“As this patient is a military veteran and his (or her) current condition may be related to military service, this referral should be considered for priority treatment under the rules set out in the Commissioning Board Mandate, NHS constitution and Armed Forces Covenant”


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Veterans and the Armed Forces

14. We will expand our support for all veterans and their families as they transition out of the armed forces, regardless of when people left the services. Local transition, liaison and treatment services provide support for a range of healthcare and social needs. By 2023/24, these services will expand access to complex treatment services as well as targeted interventions for veterans in contact with the criminal justice system. To ensure all GPs in England are equipped to best serve our veterans and their families, over the next five years we will roll out a veterans accreditation scheme in conjunction with the Royal College of GPs.



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Veteran-friendly Accreditation

- RCGP are working with NHS England to accredit GP practices as 'veteran friendly'
- Enables practices to deliver the best possible care and treatment for patients who have served in the Armed Forces



**Armed Forces Veteran
friendly accredited
GP practice**

Veteran-friendly accreditation

- Simple voluntary online process
- Practices provide evidence that they are supportive of veterans' healthcare
- Accredited Practices are required to:
 - Nominate clinical lead
 - New patients – ask if ever served in the military
 - Use correct code “Military Veteran”
 - Attend training
 - Maintain CQC “positive accreditation”



**Armed Forces Veteran
friendly accredited
GP practice**

Veteran-friendly accreditation

- Once accredited practices provided with an information pack
- Top Tips for GPs
- Details of referral pathways
- Quarterly newsletters & updates
- Training opportunities & learning events



Programme Evaluation - July 2021

Westminster Centre for
Research in Veterans



University of
Chester

Greater understanding of veteran
specific services

Better understanding of veteran's
needs

Increased the number of veterans
registered at their practice

Improved their coding of veteran
patients

Observed an increase in veteran
help-seeking and engagement with
GP's



The journey so far....

More than **1500 GP Practices in England** are accredited as Veteran-friendly within more practices signing-up every week



rcgp.org.uk/veterans



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