

# Veteran Friendly GP Practices

Remembrance Day  
Stakeholder Communications  
Toolkit 2023



Royal College of  
General Practitioners



Armed Forces veteran  
friendly accredited  
GP practice

**NHS**  
England

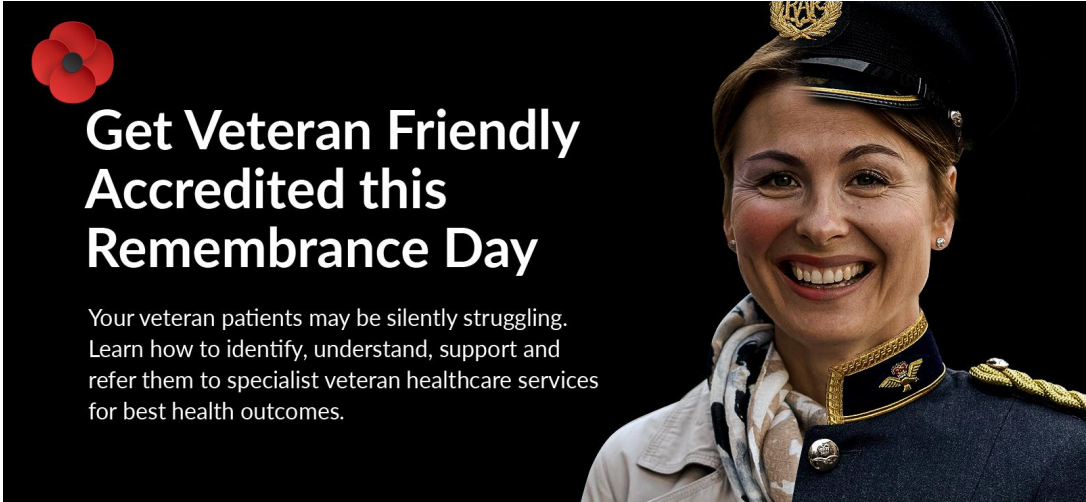


# Introduction to this Communications Toolkit

With news around current conflicts likely to make this Remembrance Day particularly triggering for England's 1.74 million military veterans, GP practices are being encouraged to take the quick and simple step of getting Veteran Friendly Accredited to support veterans who may be 'silently struggling' with their mental or physical health at this time.

While veterans may have distinct health needs, research suggests that many may be reluctant to seek help from healthcare professionals, particularly if they feel they will not be understood – with less than half (48.8%) of those who experience a mental health issue typically seeking formal medical support. Those who delay seeking support report an increase in suicidal thoughts.

As an organisation that is well respected by primary healthcare professionals, your support would be enormously appreciated in helping us to spread the word about the Veteran Friendly Accreditation scheme. This toolkit has been designed to make that process as easy as possible.



**Get Veteran Friendly Accredited this Remembrance Day**

Your veteran patients may be silently struggling. Learn how to identify, understand, support and refer them to specialist veteran healthcare services for best health outcomes.



# What is Veteran Friendly Accreditation?

The Veteran Friendly Accreditation scheme by the Royal College of GPs and NHS England is a quick-to-implement, free support programme that provides practice teams with a simple process for identifying, understanding, supporting and, where appropriate, referring veterans to specialist healthcare services.

Not only has the scheme been found to improve outcomes for veteran patients, but it also delivers significant benefits to busy practice teams too, saving time and reducing repeat appointments.

It takes just 20 minutes to sign up to the scheme and, in doing so, GP practices get:

- a simple process for identifying veteran patients and recording their status on their patient record to inform future appointments
- an improved understanding of the specific health needs of veterans and the challenges of transitioning back into civilian society
- information on the clear referral pathways for specialist physical and mental healthcare support for veterans, as well as how to provide them with priority treatment access

To date, over 2,300 GP practices have already signed up, with 99% recommending it. Primary Care Networks are encouraged to ensure that at least one practice in their network has signed up.

# Why is it needed?

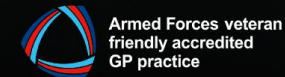
There are 1.74 million veterans in England - with a veteran defined as anyone who has served a day or more in the Armed Forces - and they may have distinct health needs as a result of their service. Common health issues for veterans include post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), drug and alcohol problems, adjustment disorders, musculoskeletal (MSK) disorders and hearing issues.

However, research shows that many may be silently struggling with physical or mental health problems as they worry that they won't be understood by civilian health and care professionals - with less than half (48.8%) of those who experience a mental health issue typically seeking medical support.

In addition, while the average GP practice sees a veteran patient every day, around half (47%) of practices may be unaware of how many of their patients are veterans - with many healthcare professionals and veterans not fully aware of the specialist veteran healthcare services that exist.

## The impact of service isn't always obvious

Your veteran patients may be silently struggling. Learn how to identify, understand, support and refer them to specialist veteran healthcare services for best health outcomes.



# What are the benefits of accreditation?

Research shows that getting accredited benefits both veterans and practice staff. Veterans get faster access to the right support for a better patient experience and improved outcomes, while practice staff say it makes them feel motivated and proud of their role. There is also the potential to save time through reduced repeat appointments.

In addition, practices receive materials to promote their Veteran Friendly status, sending a strong signal to veteran patients that they are dedicated to supporting them, making it more likely that they will feel comfortable seeking help when they most need it.

Accreditation can also be used to demonstrate evidence of meeting CQC obligations and the legal requirements of the Armed Forces Covenant, which requires that no veteran should face disadvantages in accessing health services and should receive priority care for military attributable conditions, subject to clinical need.



***“I really struggled with my mental and physical health after I left the military. The care I received from my Veteran Friendly Accredited practice saved both my life and my marriage.”***

***- Jon Lynn, Veteran***

# How to show your support

Your support of the **Veteran Friendly Accreditation** scheme is hugely appreciated! If you are committed to helping us inspire more practices to get accredited, there are a number of ways that you can support our campaign this Remembrance Day:



On your  
website

In your  
newsletter

On your  
social  
channels

In  
presentations

# What we have provided

In this toolkit, you'll find suggested text that can be used to easily promote the **Veteran Friendly Accreditation** scheme across different communication channels, such as social media, website, newsletters and presentations. Feel free to tailor them to align to your organisation's voice and audience.

You can download a selection of Veteran Friendly Accreditation campaign images to accompany any copy, [here](#).

# Suggested website and newsletter copy

## 100 words

### **Get Veteran Friendly Accredited**

This Remembrance Day, **[INSERT THE NAME OF YOUR ORGANISATION]** is joining the Royal College of GPs in encouraging GP practices to become Veteran Friendly Accredited to support veterans who may be silently struggling with their mental and physical health.

The quick-to-implement, free support programme provides busy practice teams with a simple process for identifying, understanding, supporting and, where appropriate, referring veterans to specialist healthcare services – improving health and wellbeing outcomes and saving time by reducing repeat appointments.

Getting accredited makes a big difference and it only takes 20 minutes. Join the 2,300+ practices that already are - 99% recommend it.

Sign up here: [rcgp.org.uk/veterans](https://rcgp.org.uk/veterans)

## 60 words

### **Get Veteran Friendly Accredited**

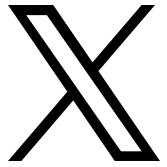
The RCGP is encouraging GP practices to become Veteran Friendly Accredited to support veterans who may be silently struggling with their health.

The quick-to-implement support programme provides busy practice teams with simple processes for identifying, supporting and referring veterans to specialist healthcare services, improving health and wellbeing outcomes and saving time by reducing repeat appointments.

Sign up here: [rcgp.org.uk/veterans](https://rcgp.org.uk/veterans)



# Suggested Twitter/X posts



For use any time:

- Your military veteran patients might be silently struggling with health issues. Sign up for information on how to easily identify, understand and support them and, where appropriate, refer them to specialist veteran healthcare services. <https://rcgp.org.uk/veterans>
- Get Veteran Friendly Accredited and support those veterans who are silently struggling. It takes just 20 mins and your practice will receive training and advice to make it easy to identify and support veterans, improving health outcomes. <https://rcgp.org.uk/veterans>
- Stop the silent health struggle that many veterans are facing. It takes just 20 mins for practices to sign up for the Veteran Friendly Accreditation scheme, but it can make a huge difference, improving health outcomes and reducing repeat appointments. <https://rcgp.org.uk/veterans>

**In any posts, please use the hashtag #VeteranFriendlyGP**

# Suggested LinkedIn post



**For use ahead of and on Remembrance Day:**

This Remembrance Day, GP practices are encouraged to take the quick and simple step of getting Veteran Friendly Accredited to support veterans who may be silently struggling with their mental or physical health at this challenging time.

While news around current conflicts is likely to have a triggering effect on some military veterans, many may be reluctant to seek help from healthcare professionals, particularly if they feel they will not be understood - with less than half (48.8%) of those who experience a mental health issue typically seeking medical support.

The Veteran Friendly Accreditation scheme is a quick-to-implement, free support programme that sends a strong signal to veteran patients. Signing up will enable you and your practice team to easily identify, understand and support veterans and, where appropriate, refer them to specialist healthcare services designed especially for them - improving health and wellbeing outcomes and saving time by reducing repeat appointments.

Getting accredited makes a big difference - and it only takes 20 minutes. Join the 2,300+ practices who are already champions for veterans and their families - 99% of practices recommend it.

Sign up here: [rcgp.org.uk/veterans](https://rcgp.org.uk/veterans)

**In any posts, please use the hashtag #VeteranFriendlyGP**

# Suggested Facebook post



**For use ahead of and on Remembrance Day:**

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Getting accredited makes a big difference - and it only takes 20 minutes. Join the 2,300+ practices who are already champions for veterans and their families - 99% of practices recommend it.

Sign up here or let your GP practice know about the scheme by sharing this link: [rcgp.org.uk/veterans](https://rcgp.org.uk/veterans)

**Get Veteran Friendly Accredited this Remembrance Day**

Your veteran patients may be silently struggling. Learn how to identify, understand, support and refer them to specialist veteran healthcare services for best health outcomes.



# For PowerPoint presentations

## Did you know:

- A veteran is anyone who has served a day or more in the UK Armed Forces
- There are 1.74 million veterans in England and research shows that many may be silently struggling with physical or mental health problems as they worry that they won't be understood by civilian health and care professionals
- The average GP practice sees a veteran patient every day - yet many may be unaware of how many of their patients are veterans
- The NHS provides a range of dedicated services for veterans – find out more at [www.nhs.uk/armedforceshealth](http://www.nhs.uk/armedforceshealth)

## Get Veteran Friendly Accredited

- The quick-to-implement, free support programme will enable you and your practice team to easily identify, understand and support veterans and, where appropriate, refer them to specialist healthcare services designed especially for them
- Not only has the scheme been found to improve health outcomes for veteran patients, but it also delivers significant benefits to busy practice teams too, saving time and reducing repeat appointments
- It takes just 20 minutes to sign up - with over 2,300 practices already Veteran Friendly Accredited. 99% of practices recommend it

Take the quick and easy step to sign up here: [rcgp.org.uk/veterans](http://rcgp.org.uk/veterans)

# Get in touch

If you would like further support to spread the word about Veteran Friendly Practices, please do get in touch. We can help in lots of ways, such as:

- providing case studies relevant to your region or audience
- finding spokespeople for interviews and podcasts
- providing relevant data for your region or professional sector
- writing bespoke copy for your communications channels

Email us at [veterans@rcgp.org.uk](mailto:veterans@rcgp.org.uk)



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**NHS**  
England