



Royal College of
General Practitioners

RCGP Armed Forces Veteran friendly practice accreditation

Brigadier (Retd) RG Simpson
RCGP Veterans Champion

**The scars of conflict
aren't always visible**

Identify, support and refer your veteran
patients more effectively with our free Veteran
Friendly Accreditation programme.

rcgp.org.uk/veterans



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?

- Around 2.4 million veterans
- Of these, over 50% are aged 75 or older. 85% are male
- 2,500 who leave the Services on medical grounds per annum
- 750,000 UK Armed Forces veterans of working age residing 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

Why are veterans treated as a special group?

- Service in the Armed Forces is different from other occupations.
- Relinquish some of their own civil liberties and put themselves in harm's way to protect others.
- Risk of serious injury (for example loss of limbs, eyes or other body parts) is substantially increased.
- Armed Forces Covenant – a promise by the nation to ensure that those who serve or who have served in the armed forces and their families are treated fairly.

Why are veterans treated as a special group?

- Other differences in military lifestyle
 - Mobile life
 - Live abroad
 - Separation
 - Limited extended family
 - Provided with salary and accommodation
 - More likely to smoke / have smoked

Why are veterans treated as a special group?

- More than half (52%) of veterans have a long-term illness, disability or infirmity, which is higher than general adult population (35%).

Veterans

- On leaving the forces it is not uncommon for veterans to miss the structure, support and friendship that being in the forces can provide.
- Reliance on both formal and informal military structures and systems – could be a major barrier in the transition to civilian life.
- Transition to life outside the military likely to be stressful

2017 GP Practices Veterans Friendly Project

- Dr Mike Brookes (ex RAMC)
 - North Yorkshire GP
 - GP Veteran served in Iraq
 - a patient told him that he had specifically joined his practice to see someone who could understand his needs as a veteran.

RCGP Veteran Friendly Practices Programme



GP Practices Veterans Friendly Project

- Accredited Practices are required to:
- Nominate clinical lead in the Practice
- New patient medical ask if ever served in the military
- Use correct Snomed – “military veteran”
- Access training (online)
- Maintain CQC “positive accreditation”



GP Practices Veterans Friendly Project

- Once accredited practices provided with an information pack
 - Top Tips for GPs
 - Newsletters
 - Posters
 - Training (online)
 - Details of Referral Pathways



GP Practices Veterans Friendly Project

- So far more than 1800 GP Practices accredited NHS England (28%)
- In discussion Scotland and Wales
- Fantastic publicity



[Online version of the NHS Long Term Plan](#)[Appendix](#)[Health and employment](#)[Health and the justice system](#)[Veterans and the Armed Forces](#)[Care leavers](#)[Health and the environment](#)[The NHS as an 'anchor institution'](#)[Overview and summary](#)[Chapter 1: A new service model for the 21st century](#)[Chapter 2: More NHS action](#)[Home](#) > [Online version of the NHS Long Term Plan](#) > [Appendix](#) > [Veterans and the Armed Forces](#)

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.

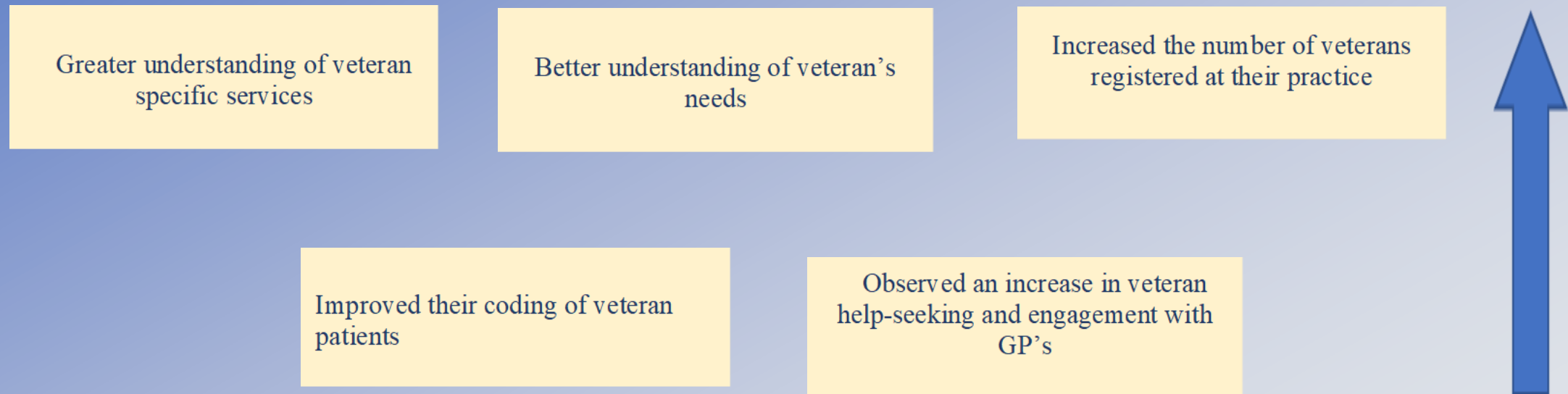
GP Veterans Accreditation

Why our programme is important both for GPs and patients?

- Supports practices to identify and code their veterans, and to appoint a clinical lead who undertakes training and other activities related to veteran healthcare.
- We provide accredited practices with an information pack to help increase their understanding of the health needs of veterans, and the services available to them.
- Practices provide evidence that they are supportive of veterans' healthcare.



Programme Evaluation University of Chester July 2021



99% Accredited Practices would recommend accreditation

84% Accredited Practices have a better understanding of veterans needs

72% Practices felt accreditation had significant benefit to veterans

**'With 18,000 serving people
leaving the military annually,
asking patients, 'Have you
ever served in the UK
Armed Forces?' could make
all the difference.'**

Brigadier (Retd) Dr Robin Simpson FRCGP
RCGP Veterans Champion



Armed Forces veteran
friendly accredited
GP practice



NHS Mental health support for veterans, service leavers and reservists

- Op COURAGE: the NHS Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service
 - Everyone at Op COURAGE is either from the armed forces community or is experienced in working with serving personnel, reservists, veterans and their families.
- Contacting Op COURAGE
 - Self referral or through a family member or friend
 - GP
 - Refer via a Charity

More information, visit www.nhs.uk/opcourage

Veterans Trauma Network

- The Veterans Trauma Network consists of twelve NHS Veterans Trauma centres and four specialist units. These contain both military and civilian medical experts who can assist *physical* service-related health problem.
- The injury will need to be as a result of service.

More information

www.rcgp.org.uk/veterans

veterans@rcgp.org.uk