

The impact of service isn't always obvious



Dear xxx

I wanted to get in touch from **[insert GP Practice name]**, where we have recently become accredited as a Veteran Friendly GP Practice.

You may have seen that a mental health charity has recently voiced their concerns that media coverage surrounding the invasion of Ukraine could be 're-traumatising' some veterans. With the impact of military service on an individual not always obvious, we wanted to make it our top priority to equip our GPs, nurses and primary healthcare staff with the skills and information to be a champion for veterans and their families. Veteran Friendly Accreditation is free and simple to implement and equips GP practice teams to better identify, understand, support and refer any patients for the best outcomes.

We believe that we see a veteran every day on average here at **[insert GP Practice name]**, and with the situation in Ukraine increasing the need some veterans will have for support, we feel this accreditation scheme needs to be a priority for all GP Practices within the area.

Already, we have witnessed such a positive impact since becoming a Veteran Friendly Practice, with excellent feedback from patients and real enthusiasm from the team, whilst it has also created the opportunity for one of our clinician's to take on a leadership role. Our staff are now more aware of the specific issues affecting patients who have served in the armed forces, which we believe makes us more responsive to their needs, and better able to provide the best possible care and treatment for our veteran patients.

The positive outcomes we have witnessed first hand, have been reflected in new research by the University of Chester on 225 Veteran Friendly accredited practices, which found that:

- 84% now have a better understanding of how to meet veterans' health needs
- 72% believe the programme has already benefited their veteran patients
- Some practices report an increase in veteran registrations since becoming accredited
- 99% of practices said they would recommend the accreditation scheme to others

The application process was quick and straightforward, taking roughly 20 minutes for one of our team to complete (any member of surgery staff is allowed to complete the application). The accreditation then lasts for three years, with practices committing to three requirements: asking patients if they have served in the armed forces; coding this information into the computer system; having a clinical lead at the surgery who can undertake necessary training. Any practice is eligible to be Veteran Friendly Accredited, as long as they are CQC rated "good" or higher.

With the Government's new Veterans Strategy Action Plan committing to making the UK 'the best place in the world to be a veteran by 2028', I feel there's never been a more urgent time to support our veterans and give them the best healthcare we can. With this in mind, I hope you will join me in supporting a campaign to roll-out the Veteran Friendly accreditation programme to all practices within the area.

More information can be found on the RCGP's website here - <https://www.rcgp.org.uk/veterans>

Please find **enclosed/attached** **[delete as appropriate and add information to support letter e.g. leaflets / testimonials if you would like]**

Yours Sincerely,

[add name / signature]