



Veteran Friendly Framework programme

Royal Star & Garter, Royal British Legion and the NHS are working in collaboration to ensure that every veteran in the UK who lives in a residential care setting receives more tailored support.

The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise from the nation that those who serve or have served in the armed forces, and their families, are treated fairly, and a statement of the moral obligation which exists between the nation, the Government and the Armed Forces. The new Covenant Duty is a legal obligation on certain public bodies to 'have due regard' to the principles of the Covenant and awareness amongst organisations that provide services in healthcare, education, and housing of how Service life can impact on the Armed Forces community, and how disadvantages can arise due to Service when members of that community seek to access key local services.

The Duty will require organisations delivering local services to pay due regard to the Covenant principles when exercising functions in the areas of housing, healthcare, and education. "Due regard" means that organisations in scope of the Duty will need to consciously consider the unique obligations and sacrifices made by the Armed Forces; that it is desirable to remove disadvantages faced by the Armed Forces community; and that special provision may be justified in some circumstances.

Based on existing veteran accreditation programmes currently used within NHS Trusts and GP settings, we are creating a framework specifically for residential care home settings. This includes: identifying veterans and providing training resources to better support staff to create a veteran friendly culture, address social isolation and signpost to the range of statutory and charitable services for veterans.

The Veteran Friendly Framework (VFF) will initially apply to residential settings for older people to help providers to offer support to the approximately 40,000 veterans living in care homes across the UK.

Recent research by Northumbria and Anglia Ruskin Universities estimated that only around 20 of the 15,000 care homes in the UK currently offer specific support to those who have served in the UK Armed Forces. The research identified issues of loneliness, social isolation, experiences of trauma and lack of comradeship within the veterans

This pilot will enable the project team to develop and standardise the framework for care home providers nationally to achieve Veteran Friendly status.

Our aim is to support all care home providers across England to become VFF accredited, providing residents with better recognition of their military service and reducing unwanted variation in care for veterans.. Most care homes may not fully understand the social, emotional or physical needs of veterans or the impact their military service can have on their



experience of life, work, family, and physical and mental health. Care homes responsibilities under the 2022 Act are also not yet fully understood.

The programme is currently being scoped to commence in the North West of England, and will provide support, resources, and staff training for the first cohort of care homes on their journey to VFF status.

It is anticipated that it take between a hundred and a hundred and twenty hours commitment to work through the eight standards, with the expectation that the homes will provide evidence for each standard within their application form. Each home will be provided with evidence examples and training packages for staff, and will be given support by a VFF team member, as well as support from local Royal British Legion volunteer branches.

Once successfully completed, the care home will undergo a one-year review, and will work towards developing an action plan to evidence the improvements that they have made to each standard.