



VETERANS' GATEWAY UPDATE JULY 2017

Following the formal launch on 20 June, please see below an update of the solid progress that Veterans' Gateway has been making in the last month.

Veterans' Gateway Media Launch

On 20 June, Veterans' Gateway was formally launched to the press and public. Spokespeople from across the consortium were placed in a variety of outlets alongside veteran case studies. Tobias Ellwood MP, the newly appointed Armed Forces Minister carried out key interviews on Sky New Sunrise, BBC Breakfast and ITV's Good Morning Britain.

In addition to the output generated through the media partnership with The Sun which included online, print and digital content, the launch coverage totalled more than eleven minutes of television, two and a half hours of radio airtime and seven articles which appeared across print and online platforms.

Social Channels

Since the social media channels were unveiled in April, the platforms have generated a huge amount of interest, regularly posting updates to inform people about the service and encouraging any veterans, their families and carers to contact Veterans' Gateway if they are in need of assistance.

In the past few months the Facebook page has built up more than 3,500 likes and over 1,000 people are now also following the Veterans' Gateway Twitter feed.

The positive impact of the launch campaign has already seen a huge increase in the numbers of people contacting Veterans' Gateway. As of 30 June there have been 445 telephone calls to the helpline, leading to 228 referrals to 19 partners. There have also been 345 people 'asking a question' through the website form and 196 live chats.

What happens next?

The formal launch marked the completion of the second phase of the promotional plan. Veterans' Gateway has now entered the third phase of its development which is to continue to increase awareness and comprehension amongst veterans, enable the service to adapt to the demands made of it, and allow us to identify new partners and to expand the database supporting the geo-location tool.

Partners and stakeholders can expect to see Veterans' Gateway advertised and marketed at key times, primarily through a sustained PR plan and the social and digital channels, as well as, where possible, utilising free advertising space.

Governance changes / New independent chair of Veterans' Gateway appointed

While these changes will help us maintain our profile, there have also been important changes to our governance. Up until now, and during its development stages, Veterans' Gateway has been administered by the Consortium partners. In early June, several key changes were made to the governance structure of Veterans' Gateway, including the appointment of a new independent Chairman.

The new independent Chairman will be David Hatcher. David comes with a wealth of prior military, defence and organisational experience. David graduated from the Royal College of Defence Studies in 2004 and went on to advise government and MPs on matters relating to defence, security and international trade, in the UK and Europe through various organisations including Eurodefense UK and the CEPS.

The operational structure of Veterans' Gateway has also been updated. Consortium members will now share the lead of various reference groups covering different work streams. Reference groups will include those responsible for: Veterans; Stakeholders; Partners; Marketing and Communications. David Hatcher will chair the Strategic Group, into which the reference groups will ultimately report.

These changes will allow Veterans' Gateway to further evolve and develop in direct response to those veterans who use the service in the months and years ahead. David Hatcher started in his new role in June 2017.

BACKGROUND

What is Veterans' Gateway?

In November 2016 the Ministry of Defence announced £2 million of funding from the Covenant Fund for a one-stop service to better support British Armed Forces veterans in need. The service responds to calls from veterans' charities and groups for help in navigating the wide range of services and organisations set up to support those who have served in the Forces.

The service will be the first point of contact for veterans and their families to access information, advice and support on a range of issues including healthcare, housing, and employment. It will allow information and services from partners to be accessed from one place and all enquiries will be followed up to ensure that veterans receive the right support.

The Veteran's Gateway will provide website, online chat, phone line and text message services available to any veteran, from anywhere in the world, 24 hours a day. Veterans can access face-to-face support through the Veterans' Gateway network of partners and organisations across the UK and overseas.

The Brand

Veterans' Gateway now has complete brand guidelines. These guidelines contain the usual structural design guidance such as fonts you should be using, colour palettes and logo dimensions. However, it also contains brand principle that cement the character of our brand, bringing it to life through a specific tone of voice and key imagery.

If you would like a copy of the brand guidelines please email Zohra Vermani, zvermani@britishlegion.org.uk