



10 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES



1. Definition and self-identification

A veteran can be of any gender, sexuality, ethnicity and nationality, with an age of 16 or above. They will have had a variety of experiences. If you engage with veterans, you should consider asking about previous military service alongside other data.



2. Experience of Service

Veterans' experience of service will be unique. Most have a positive experience but some may not, which can have implications during transition and post-service.



3. Identifying as a veteran

Some veterans are less likely to identify themselves as such. This is particularly true for those who may have had a negative experience of service. Veterans from the LGBTQ+ community may also find engaging with services a challenge due to the historic ban on serving in the armed forces.



4. Families

It is important to ensure veterans' families are supported when seeking employment, or accessing education or healthcare. Veterans' families may have had to move house many times in support of a military career with long periods of time without a family member being present.



5. Armed Forces Covenant

Organisations that have signed the Covenant, or have a legal duty to consider the Covenant, should ensure that veterans and their families are treated fairly.



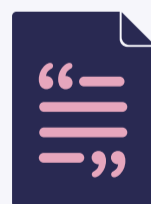
6. What is transition from service?

Transition from service is the adjustment from the armed forces to civilian life. If you are interacting with someone needing help adapting to civilian life, resources and advice can be found at the Veterans Gateway. Those who have just left service may have access to additional training and funding to support re-training from the Ministry of Defence.



7. Asking for help and military culture

Military values are focused on self-reliance, service to others and a strong team ethos, which many veterans will carry with them into civilian life. If you provide a service or work with veterans, you might find that veterans are reluctant to ask for help and might downplay the support they require.



8. Telling their story

Think carefully about why you are asking a question that you or anyone else might find difficult to talk about or that could be traumatic. Avoid, where possible, asking veterans or their families to repeat their story multiple times.



9. Accessing services and expectations

Military service can leave veterans with limited experience of accessing public services, often because these are done for them during their service. They might not know what is available, how to access it or where to go.



10. Challenges and barriers

There could be a range of challenges or barriers that veterans will face when accessing your service or engaging with your policy. It should be recognised that as with anyone affected by a life changing event, there will be a period of adjustment to be experienced not just by the veteran, but also by their families.