



Fareham & Gosport and
South Eastern Hampshire
Clinical Commissioning Groups

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Steve Manley
Health Watch Hampshire

SENT VIA EMAIL

Dear Steve

Thank you for your enquiry on 20 July 2015. Firstly apologies for the delay in getting back to you – given the time that has passed I hope that you find the responses here to be suitably comprehensive.

I will go through the points raised in order, and answer each one in turn. If you, or others, would like any further clarification on any aspect of this response, then please just let me know and I will endeavour to help further.

1. Participants were asked if they had registered as a Veteran with their GP. Of 91 respondents, 36% were unsure and 26% had not registered. When asked why, the overwhelming reasons were that they were not asked or did not think it mattered. How do GP Surgeries in your area ensure that people registering for the first time are asked if they are a service leaver or Veteran so that it can be recorded?

Our CCGs fully accept that the essential first step to ensuring that the needs of Veterans can be fully addressed is to identify this group of people as Veterans in the first place. Although progress has been made in this regard over the years, further steps are being taken to help more people to have their needs recognised – this is now part of the core GP contract for 2015/16, that GP Practices must determine whether patients are indeed Veterans, and that if so they are now coded correctly, facilitating a proper assessment of their needs.

2. A number of respondents commented that medical records from the Ministry of Defence had not been received by their GP so their medical records remain incomplete. How does the CCG ensure that there are effective processes in place for the transfer of medical history when leaving the Armed Forces?

It is recognised both nationally and locally that there is a need to improve the process for the transfer of medical records between NHS England and the Ministry of Defence. The progress being made to make the necessary improvements is reported on at the Armed Forces Network, which our CCGs attend regularly, along with Local Authorities and voluntary agencies.

3. Some of the feedback received suggests that some Veterans feel that GPs are not aware of local services available for Veterans, and are therefore unable to effectively signpost people for more support and information.

We recommend that all GPs surgeries have copies of the NHS information leaflet entitled 'For those who served: Meeting the healthcare needs of Veterans in England' readily available and that all healthcare professionals are fully conversant with the contents of these materials.

We recommend that all GPs surgeries have a copy of the 'Royal College of General Practitioners' booklet entitled 'Meeting the Healthcare needs of Veterans – A Guide for General Practitioners' readily

available and that all healthcare professionals are fully conversant with the contents of these materials.

We recommend that Veterans in your area who require extra support/help/services are initially signposted to Veterans Outreach Support in Portsmouth.

We also note that the NHS Choices website has been significantly updated and where appropriate, Veterans should also be signposted to this resource.

Our CCGs have made all the above information available to all local GP Practices, via the GP 'intranet', which is used by doctors as their primary source of standing information. The NHS information leaflet has been available for several months on both of our public-facing websites, in a dedicated section relating to services for veterans which also features a link to the Hampshire County Council website. The CCGs are also taking part in a GP practice questionnaire being disseminated across all of Hampshire, which has been developed by NHS North East Hampshire & Farnham CCG and the Hampshire County Council Public Health team, to better understand the county's Armed Forces families, veterans and reservists population. The findings from this questionnaire will be included within a new health needs assessment of this population, which will enable all Hampshire CCGs, including ours, to ensure that services are commissioned meet the requirements of this cohort of patients.

4. Secondary Care Services: Feedback received as part of the survey suggests that some Veterans are not having their treatment prioritised as stated in the Covenant. Can you assure us that everything possible is being done to uphold this guidance in your area? How is this monitored to ensure the best possible service for Armed Forces Veterans?

The CCGs support, and adhere to, the principle of the Covenant and where clinically appropriate Veterans can be seen as a priority. However, of course, all patients are treated according to the NHS 18 week target, and on the basis of their clinical need. This information is not currently available to monitor access for veterans.

Again, please do come back to me if there is anything in this response which you would like to explore further.

Yours sincerely



Richard Samuel
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