



VETERANS' GATEWAY UPDATE MARCH 2017

Veterans' Gateway launch is fast approaching so here is an update on the project's progress over the last month.

Our Partners & Stakeholders

The Veterans' Gateway Consortium hosted a workshop for referral partners at SSAFA's HQ on 20 February. Veterans' Gateway collaborative partner approach is ground-breaking not only for the military charity sector, but for the charity sector as a whole, and its meetings like this that help inform truly collaborative ways of working. The Consortium team gave a briefing on progress to date and kick started some lively discussion on the service and how it will function. There were some excellent questions from the floor and these are helping to form a Frequently Asked Questions list that will be shared with partners. A similar partner briefing took place at Poppy Scotland Headquarters on 7 March 2017 to update Scottish charities.

If you have any unanswered questions about the Veterans' Gateway then please send them in to James Dubrey, and they will be added to the FAQs document jdubrey@britishlegion.org.uk

Over the last month, the Consortium has also established good links with officials in the administration of the Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly and with Mark Lancaster MP, who will all help spread the Veteran's Gateway message and need, when it comes to launch.

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

The Service

As launch approaches, the Veterans' Gateway website is going through the final testing procedures. User acceptance testing is the penultimate phase of the process where users test the site to make sure it can handle required tasks in real-world scenarios. Colleagues at partner organisations have joined veterans to put the website through its paces and the testing has revealed some bugs to iron out before the service goes live. We'll spend the final week doing this and refining content to ensure that it's ready for the start of April.

Launch

Veterans' Gateway will launch to the general public and media on **Thursday 25 May**. Launch plans will be shared with partners ahead of this date. The PR strategy for the launch will predominantly focus on placing the stories of individuals who struggled to find the support they needed with media across the UK, to help demonstrate the need for the service. Following the launch on 25 May, the Veterans' Gateway team will require further beneficiary stories to continue to engage with the media over the coming months and would welcome any suitable case study suggestions for inclusion in post-launch PR activity.

The marketing campaign will begin on 25 May as well – across digital, social and partner channels, and the same day will also see stakeholder events in each of the devolved administrations

A Three-Phased Promotional Plan

From launch and beyond, Veterans’ Gateway will follow a three-phased plan, which is laid out in this table below:

PHASE 1: SWITCH ON SWITCH ON & INTRODUCE VETERANS’ GATEWAY	PHASE 2: LAUNCH BUILD UNDERSTANDING AND DRIVE PEOPLE TO THE SERVICE	PHASE 3: MAINTAIN CONTINUE TO BUILD AWARENESS & COMPREHENSION
<p data-bbox="336 495 491 517">3 APRIL – 24 MAY</p> <p data-bbox="384 535 443 557">Go live!</p> <p data-bbox="277 575 544 633">The website, phone number, Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn sites will all be live, allowing people to contact us.</p> <p data-bbox="277 651 531 710">Partners can introduce Veterans’ Gateway to potential users ahead of the public launch by:</p> <ul data-bbox="277 728 544 857" style="list-style-type: none"> - Having the Veterans’ Gateway logo and a page of content on their site - Follow Veterans’ Gateway on social media - Posting about Veterans’ Gateway twice a week in the run up to the public launch <p data-bbox="277 875 544 969">Veterans’ Gateway can be communicated internally to staff and volunteers too, however, external communications should be limited to the above.</p>	<p data-bbox="651 495 805 517">25 May – 23 June</p> <p data-bbox="655 535 801 557">Wider public launch</p> <p data-bbox="592 575 778 611">The SMS and live web-chat functionality go live.</p> <p data-bbox="592 629 850 710">The wider public launch will include digital and offline advertising, more content on Twitter, Facebook, and a national and regional PR launch.</p> <p data-bbox="592 728 850 804">We will connect with the online military community and find people who will share the news of Veterans’ Gateway.</p> <p data-bbox="592 822 850 934">Partners will have access to toolkits of promotional collateral, such as posters and leaflets, and digital communications such as Twitter and Facebook posts which they can use to help sign post to Veterans’ Gateway.</p>	<p data-bbox="963 495 1134 517">June 2017 onwards</p> <p data-bbox="979 535 1118 557">Ongoing marketing</p> <p data-bbox="911 575 1177 611">Marketing activity at key time, around key areas of need, with partners.</p> <p data-bbox="911 629 1177 665">Ongoing digital advertising and offline advertising at key times.</p> <p data-bbox="911 683 1177 759">Marketing activity will be increased through partner marketing where possible and utilising free advertising space.</p>

If you are interested in featuring the Veterans’ Gateway logo and a page of content on your site for the Go Live phase, please email zvermani@britishlegion.org.uk.

Most importantly for the Go Live phase however, please familiarise yourself with the site from 3 April and from this date share the URL and contact centre number:

- www.veteransgateway.org.uk
- 0808 802 1212

And if anyone asks you what Veterans’ Gateway is, below is a reminder that you can share with them:

What is the 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.