

Communications checklist

When asking women how services could be improved, communication was one of the most significant issues. This checklist provides some ideas of things you can think about or action to better communicate and engage with female veterans.

1 Decide what you want to communicate to female veterans

- ☐ Plan your communication campaign to include what you want to communicate, to which groups and how you are going to do this. Remember many female veterans have a lack of awareness of what support is on offer as it's not promoted to them.
- ☐ Identify SMART objectives (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound)
- ☐ Understand your audience by acknowledging the specific needs of female veterans.
- ☐ Veterans are often perceived as male, which can make women feel excluded from services or not welcome. Communication should reflect a commitment to inclusivity and ensure female veterans feel represented and included.
- ☐ Involve female veterans in the design and development of any communication to ensure it is fit for purpose.

2 Remember these top tips:

- ☐ Establish a consistent tone
- ☐ Communicate regularly
- ☐ Be clear and concise
- ☐ Be polite and respectful
- ☐ Be responsive to enquiries. Female veterans tell us they are really bad at asking for help and it often takes a crisis to reach out, so a quick response is essential.

3 Be clear about who is eligible for this service provision.

- ☐ It is especially important if the provision is a female-only space that the definition of female-only is made clear in communications material.

4 Use simple and inclusive language

- ☐ Many women do not identify with the term 'veteran' and therefore use of other terms and language should be used - ex-service, ex-military.
- ☐ Ask the question 'Have you ever served in the British Armed Forces?' to better engage with female veterans.

5 Use inclusive and welcoming imagery



- ☐ Use images of women in both military and non military settings.
- ☐ Consider using a montage of images to show the diversity of the female veteran experience or alternatively use animation or graphics if you need to protect identity.
- ☐ Have images of real women that represent diversity of the female veterans (by age, race, service, rank, sexuality, religion, disabilities, service job roles i.e. combat experience or not and civilian jobs roles, mothers, carers etc).
- ☐ The use of female imagery helps challenge stereotypes and assumptions and therefore increases awareness that women also served.

6 Think about your colour scheme

- ☐ Whilst you may be restricted by your own branding, we recommend using tri-service colours alongside colours not associated with the military.
- ☐ Avoid excessive use of pink, and also khaki (which alienates Navy and RAF communities given its strong association with the Army).

7 Decide what communications channels to use to reach out

- ☐ Recognise that many female veterans use word of mouth to identify suitable and safe services.
- ☐ Consider digital illiteracy especially amongst the older female veteran community.
- ☐ Consider stakeholders outside of the veterans' sector to reach 'hidden' female veteran communities i.e. via sports, arts, faith groups.

8 Review your effectiveness - what works and what doesn't?

- ☐ Ask female veterans to take a look at your draft communications material and provide feedback.

**The best communications strategy and materials cannot substitute for a welcoming and inclusive environment, especially in that first interaction with a female veteran.**

