



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Veteran Friendly Framework: new veteran programme drives improvements in care and staff engagement

The Veteran Friendly Framework (VFF), the programme which is improving the lives of the Armed Forces community living in residential care across England, has received a positive evaluation of its impact. An independent review found veterans experienced an increase in social connections and felt less isolated as a result of the VFF.

The free-to-access VFF programme was launched in 2023 as a partnership between the Royal British Legion (RBL), Royal Star & Garter (RSG) and the Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance (VCHA). The VFF helps providers to offer tailored support for veterans and their partners living in care homes across England. Nearly 230 homes have now achieved VFF status, with a further 75 currently working towards approval and over 220 making active enquiries. To date, nearly 2,000 people are already being supported from the more than 25,000 veterans estimated to be living in care. The success of the programme has led to RBL and RSG committing to funding the VFF for a further two years.



Staff and residents at Maurice House celebrate its VFF status

Care City's evaluation, which was jointly funded by the Office for Veterans' Affairs with VFF partners RBL and RSG, was the first of its kind and involved care home managers, staff, veterans and families, using a range of quantitative and qualitative approaches, to understand the delivery, impact and value of the VFF. Despite the challenges of collecting data from care homes, Care City returned impressive outcomes which showed that

over 65% of veterans experience an increase in social connections, while 32% of veterans feel less isolated as a result of the VFF.

In an environment where engagement can be tough, they also found that 55% of veteran residents participated in more activities as a result of the VFF and almost half were more engaged when they did get involved. Most importantly the evaluation showed that the recording of veteran status in care planning increased by over 100%, the first critical step to ensuring a person-centred focus. "Now we understand that



veteran residents may have specific needs that require a different approach," was one Home Manager's comment.

Care City also found that staff reported the VFF-specific training not only increased their confidence in supporting veterans, but served a double purpose as a form of enrichment and professional development. They also experienced improved work satisfaction from increased connection to residents. As a VFF Champion shared at interview: "I find it so fulfilling and found it so amazing even just to ask them these questions, and then get to see photos and hear their families talk about their service."

The programme also has business benefits for care homes who are actively promoting their involvement with the VFF (over 100 of the specially designed plaques have been purchased) to those seeking care. Particularly for care homes that are located in areas with a significant military presence, the VFF was perceived as a valuable marketing tool and was felt to improve the home's reputation and visibility within the community, enhancing their services and creating a specialism, without unnecessary complexity.

The report provides strong evidence of the VFF's impact and ability to enhance care for veterans and their partners in homes across England, at a cost-effective level. It also demonstrates that the focus on personalised care and the connections created within the local military community have benefits for other care home residents, who also saw improved wellbeing, social connection and engagement in activities.



Staff and resident from Care for Veterans with the VFF certificate

In the concluding section of the evaluation report, Care City states: "Evidence suggests that the VFF has led to improvements in the wellbeing and experiences of veteran residents. Given the impact observed and its alignment with national care priorities, we strongly recommend the continued rollout of the VFF across England and expansion into the devolved UK nations."

Mark Atkinson, Director General of the Royal British Legion said: "The Royal British Legion is pleased with the evaluation of the VFF and it is encouraging to have clear evidence of the positive impact it is having on the standards of care received by members of the Armed Forces community. We're proud to continue funding this vital programme alongside our partners, and welcome the recommendation to expand its



reach so that even more veterans living in care homes can benefit from the tailored support and care they deserve.”



Care homes with VFF status display this logo

Andy Cole, Chief Executive at Royal Star & Garter, said, “A sizable cohort of our Armed Forces community now relies on essential social care services. The VFF programme makes a tangible difference by ensuring an individual's veteran status is recognised and their needs are better met, while promoting comradeship and connection amongst those who have bravely served our country. It is a simple concept, underpinned by outstanding support and training for care homes. This evaluation confirms it delivers real impact on people's lives. We are now committed to rolling the scheme out across the country.”

As a result of these strong outcomes, funding partners RSG and the RBL have committed to the ongoing project costs to December 2028. This will ensure wider scale roll-out along with ongoing identification, support and connection for many more veterans and their partners living in care across England.

[VFF-Final-Evaluation-Report-July-2025.pdf](#)

Any care homes interested in receiving more information about the VFF can visit <https://veteranfriendlyframework.org.uk>, email VFF@starandgarter.org or call 07425 326070.

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

The evaluation was funded by Office of Veterans’ Affairs (OVA), Royal British Legion (RBL) and Royal Star & Garter (RSG). Care City were selected following an open competitive tendering process with a selection panel including representatives from RBL, RSG, OVA, NHS England and DHSC.

Lead impact data:

- 66% of veterans experience an increase in social connections
- 55% of veterans participate in more activities



- 45% of veterans are more engaged in activities when they do participate
- 37% of veterans have an increased sense of wellbeing
- 32% of veterans feel less isolated.

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About Royal Star & Garter group

Founded in 1916, Royal Star & Garter provides care, support and friendship for veterans and their families so that they can live well. The charity delivers nursing and dementia care through Homes in Solihull, Surbiton, High Wycombe, and now in Worthing, having recently merged with the military charity Care for Veterans. It also offers a range of services reaching into the community, including Lunch Clubs, Day Care and a national Telephone Friendship Service.

About the Veteran Friendly Framework

The VFF is a collaboration between Royal Star & Garter, the Royal British Legion and VCHA (Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance). It aims to tackle loneliness and isolation, and deliver improved health and wellbeing outcomes for over 25,000 veterans living in care homes across England. It supports the practical, emotional and social needs for the Armed Forces community by providing care homes with resources to assess and improve their offer. <https://veteranfriendlyframework.org.uk/>

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