The Veterans Service Directory

The Challenge

The UK currently has nearly three million veterans. Many, including their families, require support from a range of different services. Help is available but with more than 3,000 charitable bodies and all the NHS Trusts providing different types of help it is typically uncoordinated and can often seem bewildering to veterans and their families. At the same time there is no national database of veterans, so understanding where veterans are, what they need and how to reach them has been virtually impossible. To date, there has been little understanding of veterans' specific regional needs, the social and health services available in those regions, and the numbers of ex-servicemen and women and family members who need access to those services.

Solution

To address this gap the Ministry of Defence (MoD) Covenant Grants Team commissioned the team at Northumbria University's Northern Hub for Military Veterans and Families Research to produce a map of veterans' and their families' welfare needs across the whole of the UK. The Map of Need research project enables the MoD to make informed funding decisions based on evidence of existing provision against identified need at regional and national levels. Northumbria's research team, with US partners Ripplenami Inc., developed an app called the Veterans' Service Directory. This enables health and social care professionals, as well as those working in military charities, to access a directory of all quality assured services available to veterans across the UK. It can be downloaded to smart phones, tablets and computers.

Impact

The Veterans' Service Directory provides a vital information-gathering function. Data analysis now provides a comprehensive view of ex-service personnel needs to the MoD, along with valuable insights as to where in the UK there is most need. Over time it will show whether veterans' needs are increasing or decreasing. The implications of the Map of Need are vast. At a regional level, specific resources and funding can be targeted to areas in most need. At a national level, 2.75 million veterans and their families will have an increased awareness of the available support services in their local area. At a global level, the Veterans' Service Directory App is a completely new concept, paving the way for mapping public health needs and services worldwide.

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Organisation Overview
Ministry of Defence

The Ministry of Defence is a British ministerial department, supported by 27 agencies and public bodies. It is responsible for implementing defence policy by protecting the security, independence and interests of our country at home and abroad.

' The reports being produced by the Map of Needs project team at Northumbria University are proving valuable to the Ministry of Defence and across Government and the third sector as we seek to better target support and meet our commitments under the Armed Forces Covenant'

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