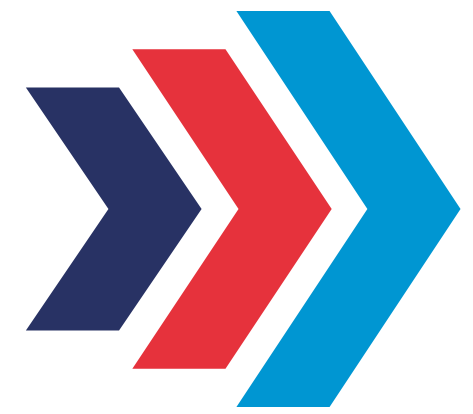


GREATERSPORT

Greater Manchester
Moving > ^ < v



**MOVING
FORCES**

**STAYING ACTIVE
IN CIVVY STREET**

Moving Forces Delivery Guide



Introduction

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Dont's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



Overview

Thank you for downloading the Moving Forces Delivery Guide.

This guide is one of the final pieces of work carried out as part of the **Moving Forces Pilot Project**, which was delivered by GreaterSport between September 2018 and December 2021.

Moving Forces was funded for three years by Sport England, with additional financial support along the way from the Endeavour Fund (now the Invictus Games Foundation) and the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust.

The aim of the project was to learn what works best when delivering a programme of physical activity sessions for military veterans, with particular focus on improving mental health and reducing social isolation and alcohol abuse.

Over the three-year pilot, Moving Forces directly supported more than 500 military veterans and their family members, with many others benefitting indirectly.

The success of Moving Forces wouldn't have been possible without all the fantastic support we received from our valued partners and supporters, which range from large, national veterans' charities and health providers to small, local sports clubs and individual instructors.

Our ambition for this guide is to make available all the learning we have captured in the last three years. Some things we got right; others, with hindsight, we now know could have been better. Our aim is to provide a simple, usable guide for any person or organisation who plans to deliver physical activity sessions for the Armed Forces community in the future.

To ensure the guide draws on as much learning and experience as possible, we have also spent several months speaking to our partners and supporters.

We asked them this key question:

‘What do you know now that you wish you'd known when you first started working with military veterans?’

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Dont's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



We've tried to include as much of their advice as possible to ensure this guide is a way for all our partners to speak as one. We're very proud that all the organisations and individuals below have contributed to, and fully support, the advice provided in this guide.

<p>Alison Bunn Area Manager Greater Manchester and Lancashire Royal British Legion</p>	<p>Tom Knight Operations Team Manager Walking With The Wounded</p>	<p>Danny Godridge Sports & Activities Team North Help for Heroes</p>	<p>Alison Salford Services Lead The Military Veterans Service for Greater Manchester & Lancashire</p>	<p>Isaac Keast Community Development Officer Curzon Ashton Community Foundation</p>
<p>Pete Bradshaw Community Coach Engagement City in the Community</p>	<p>Eddie Owen Mental Well-being Co-ordinator Sale Sharks/ Sharks Forces</p>	<p>Emma Mooney Moving Forces Champion Goldcrest Archers</p>	<p>Richie Hinson (Forces Link Coordinator - Carlisle and Eden) - Cumbria CVS</p>	<p>Lisa Murgatroyd Business Development Manager Wigan Borough Armed Forces Community HQ</p>

In addition to the support from all those named above, we also benefitted hugely from having Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) PhD student Rebecca O'Hanlon fully embedded in Moving Forces over the life of the project. We have ensured that the vast majority of recommendations made in Rebecca's final [evaluation report](#) have also been included in the guide.

- Home
- Introduction
- Overview**
- Before you start
- Delivery
- Do's & Dont's
- Promotion
- What to expect
- Moving Forces Branding
- Useful Links
- With Thanks
- Down Arrow
- Up Arrow

Who is this guide aimed at?

This guide is for anyone planning to deliver, or already delivering, physical activity sessions for military veterans.

We have tried to cover all aspects of planning and delivery. Therefore, after working through this guide, someone with very little experience of delivering activity sessions or working with veterans will be able to plan and deliver a successful physical activity project of their own.

With this in mind, if you already have some experience in project delivery and/or working with veterans, there may be some elements of this guide that you're already familiar with. There may even be things you don't agree with. However, we hope that even the most experienced project managers and supporters of veterans will find some ideas in the guide that can further improve the quality and effectiveness of their work.

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Dont's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



Before you start

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Dont's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



Mapping and planning: what's already out there?

The existing support for military veterans is extremely complex, and different in every part of the country. There are over 1,600 Armed Forces' charities registered in the United Kingdom, and many will share your project's aims.

Before you begin delivering your project, it's vital you take the time to find out what is already on offer for the Armed Forces community in the area you are planning to work in.

For example:

Where are the gaps in delivery?

How will your project be different?

Will other local organisations support your project? Or will they see it as an unnecessary duplication of existing work?

Are people already doing something similar to your project?

It's always better to have these conversations before you start, especially as it may help you to refine your approach to better fit the needs of the veterans in your area. It will also increase your chances of collaborating with local organisations, rather than competing with them.

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Dont's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



What do veterans want?

Maybe you're a keen long-distance runner and have personal experience of the huge physical and mental health benefits that running can provide. Yet if the local veterans really don't want to run, you're going to have a hard job selling your new running club to them.

Find as many veterans in your area as you can and talk to them:

What do they want to do?

If people seem keen, great!

What do they need help with?

If they're not interested, ask why.

Tell them what you're thinking of doing and see what they think.

Be open to suggestions and critical feedback rather than trying to convince people that your idea is best. Collaboration is always the best approach so, if you meet people who want to help you, find a way to include them from the start.

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Dont's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



How long will it take?

You've spoken with lots of local veterans and you're confident that your idea has gone down well. What's next?

At this point, stop and ask yourself 'What do I want to achieve by the end of the project?' You might have heard people phrase this as 'What does success look like to you?'

Maybe it's ten veterans with a new-found love of yoga? Or maybe it's a large network of physical activity sessions across several boroughs, with hundreds of veterans and their family members attending each week?

Whatever you want to achieve, you might think that six months, a year, or however long you're thinking of, will be plenty of time to get everything done. But time flies!

Once you've planned, promoted, launched, promoted again, built trust, embedded the sessions etc., you could be out of time before you've even thought about how the sessions will continue after your funding runs out. So it's important to allocate plenty of time to each step and be patient. Make realistic plans for how the sessions will continue once you've done the hard work of getting them up and running and well-attended.

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Dont's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



Exit strategy

It might feel a bit early to be thinking about completing your project. However, before you start, you need to think about how you want the project to end.

Possibilities include:

1 The sessions end.

What impact will this have on the veterans who have become reliant on your project? Will they take what they've learnt and maintain good habits independently? Or will the impact be lost as they return to old habits? Will they feel let down and less likely to engage with similar projects in the future? What can you do during the project to minimise the negative impact of ending sessions?

2 Find more funding to extend delivery beyond the end of the current project.

How will you secure this? What rationale will you give to the funders? Will you always need grant funding? What happens if you're unable to secure the funding next time round?

3 Provide routes into more established and resilient non-veteran activities.

If this is your approach, it needs to be actively supported throughout the project (preferably in collaboration with the deliverers of the non-veteran session you're recommending). That way, veterans can transition to the alternative sessions in their own time, rather than simply being given details of a similar civilian session at the end of your project.

4 Sessions to continue, but with veterans paying for delivery.

What happens to those who can't afford it?

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Dont's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



Funding

As you're planning your project, keep a close eye on the different funding streams available. Things to consider when looking at funding options are:

1

What's available?

Have a look at every funder you can find, some of which may have several streams of funding available for different kinds of project and target groups. If you've already made connections with local veterans' organisations, ask them if they know of any good sources of funding.

2

What's the criteria?

Most funders will have strict criteria, especially for projects with larger budgets. For example, some funding streams may only be available for projects that are delivered by an established charity with a track record of supporting the Armed Forces community. In this case, you'll need to get a qualifying charity on board and co-develop your plans with them. However, for smaller amounts of funding from local providers, you may qualify as long as you provide a detailed plan of what you aim to do. If in doubt, get in touch with the funder to see if you meet the criteria. Most funders will appreciate you taking the time to check before applying, and they may even be able to signpost you to other sources of funding that might be a better fit for you.

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Dont's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



3

Does your idea fit well?

If you find a fund that is targeted at improving the employability of early service leavers, it's not going to be a good fit for your Tai Chi sessions for older veterans. Focus instead on the funds where your project is ticking all the boxes the funder is focusing on. This will vastly improve your chances (and save you a lot of wasted time writing funding bids!) in what will most likely be a competitive application process.

4

Stick to what you want to do.

When you find a source of funding that 'almost' matches the aims of your project, it can be tempting to change your project to match the funding criteria. Before you do this, stop and ask yourself:

- › **'If I get this funding, will I still be able to do what I'm passionate about?'** Remember why you wanted to do this project in the first place. The last thing you want to do is find yourself committed to delivering a project that you don't fully believe in.
- › **'Is this what the veterans want?'** If you've found ten veterans who are excited about starting a football team, how are they going to react when you tell them you've got funding for rugby instead?

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Dont's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



5

Check the application process.

- › **How detailed is the application form?** Allow yourself enough time to complete this without rushing it. Ask a trusted and experienced friend or colleague to proofread your application and suggest improvements.
- › **Can you provide all the evidence needed?** Don't wait until the deadline day to make sure this is all available to attach to your application.
- › **When is the submission deadline?** If it's next week, will you have time to complete a quality application? Is there another, more realistic deadline in a few months' time?
- › **When will you get a decision and when would the funding be paid?** Make sure this aligns with your projected start date.

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Dont's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



Collaboration with partners

There's a lot of advice in this section. That's because collaboration isn't just a good idea, it's absolutely vital. As mentioned earlier, there are over 1,600 Armed Forces charities registered in the United Kingdom, and countless more projects aiming to support them. For your project to flourish in this busy and often competitive sector, you will have a far greater chance of success if you have support from people and organisations around you who want the same things as you do.

You may have already talked to some local organisations when doing your research as part of your early planning. Keep those conversations going, and update them with progress, especially if/when you secure funding.

In your area, there will most likely be local teams or representatives from large Armed Forces charities such as:

[Royal British Legion](#)

[Walking with the Wounded](#)

[Combat Stress](#)

[Help 4 Heroes](#)

[Blesma](#)

[SSFSA](#)

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Don't's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



There will also be smaller local charities and groups, including [armed forces and veterans breakfast clubs](#).

You might also want to contact your local [Active Partnership](#), who may be able to support your project in a variety of ways, including signposting you to funding opportunities, connecting you to local sports clubs and leisure facilities, or offering expert advice on the delivery of physical activity sessions.

Get in touch with as many organisations as you can and tell them what you're going to be delivering. Think about what their aims are and try to frame your project as something that can support their work, rather than just asking for their help. For example, a mental health treatment service might want to signpost their clients to a socially focused physical activity session to supplement and support their recovery. These kinds of partners are a great boost to any veterans project. Not only do they offer general support, advice and connections, they will also signpost veterans to your project, boosting your attendance figures and helping you to make an impact where it's most needed.

You can also signpost/refer veterans to your partners. For example, if a veteran attending your project opens up about struggling with their mental health and needs some professional support, you will have a trusted partner to connect them to. The more varied your partners and supporters, the more options you'll have to signpost veterans to, no matter what support they need.

When you do reach out to potential partners and supporters, don't be put off if you don't hear back straight away. Most organisations who work with veterans will be extremely busy, so be patient, polite and persistent. If you've chased someone a few times and they're still not replying, look for an alternative contact in the same organisation. When you do manage to speak to someone and start to build a connection, ask them if they can introduce you to other people and organisations who they feel would be interested in what you're doing. An introduction always has a much higher chance of getting a reply than a cold-contact email, so having an ally who believes in what you're doing can be extremely valuable.

Another benefit of collaboration is that it helps when you have to say 'no'. For example, if you're asked by a local organisation to provide extra sessions or volunteers for an event but you don't have the capacity, you can connect them with a partner rather than simply saying 'no'. This will build respect and confidence in your project because you'll be demonstrating a will to help and collaborate, even if you're not able to take on the extra work yourself.

Once you've built this fantastic network of partners, don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it. If your project is required, the Armed Forces community will want to help you succeed if they can, so don't keep problems to yourself. Every single one of your partners will have faced countless problems and challenges along the way and will be able to pass on their hard-earned experience to help you.

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Don't's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



Politics

As much as we wish politics wasn't a factor, you will experience political challenges and barriers, whether it's a clash of personalities in a local veterans' group, a reluctance amongst some veterans to engage with certain local authorities, or even charities who are trying to protect their share of funding.

There's no easy way of dealing with these situations when they crop up, but it helps if you can:

Avoid taking sides or involving yourself in other people's battles.

Stay positive, patient and polite.

Know when to calmly and respectfully step away from a partner organisation, especially if being associated with them is harming other more positive and reliable relationships.

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Dont's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



Safeguarding

It's essential that you have robust safeguarding policies and procedures in place before you begin delivery.

If you are looking to emulate the Moving Forces delivery model, we recommend that your sessions are open to all veterans (and families, where possible). Most will require no extra support and will get all they need by attending the session and possibly helping out as a volunteer. However, there will be a minority that are vulnerable and need extra support. You have a legal responsibility to put steps in place to ensure the safety of all attendees and, if necessary, signpost or refer them to more specialist services.

Ensure that either the instructor or another person who will attend each session has completed appropriate mental health, safeguarding and GDPR training before the sessions start. This person will then be able to spot signs of any safeguarding or mental health issues, open a conversation with the person affected, and refer/signpost to appropriate services if required. However, accept that some people will not want to talk and, unless there's evidence of significant risk or harm, you should respect their decision. The safeguarding training will make it clear what to do in cases where a serious issue is identified, including the reasons why referrals to safeguarding services don't apply to GDPR.

As well as having mental health, safeguarding and GDPR training, it's important that the instructor and/or project lead has knowledge of as many support services for veterans and families as possible, including being familiar with the referral pathways for each. There is a detailed list of services at the end of this toolkit, but a good place to start is by visiting the Veterans' Gateway and exploring the variety of approved services available.

Alcohol

Don't include alcohol as a part of your activities. Some veterans may roll their eyes at this and insist that the best way to make the session sociable and more attractive to other veterans is to follow each session by a trip to the pub, or to organise a separate social event where drinking would be encouraged. This is not helpful and potentially dangerous for those veterans who have ongoing struggles with alcohol dependency. It also doesn't encourage healthy behaviour. Be firm and confident that the activity itself is social and provides all the bonding that is needed. Of course, some members may choose to go for a drink after the activity session, but it's important to stress to the group that this is their own choice and there is no expectation for attendees to join them.

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Don't's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



Sign up process and ground rules

Depending on the requirements of your funders, you'll most likely have to collect some data on the delivery of your project, including attendance figures and key demographics. This evidence will also improve your chances of securing funding and other support in the future. A short, simple sign-up form is the easiest way to gather evidence, either online or on paper.

Avoid presenting new attendees with long, detailed questionnaires, as this can be a barrier. Capture the minimum amount of information you need at the first stage. Once the veterans are attending the sessions regularly and you've earned their trust and respect, it may then be appropriate to ask them to complete a more in-depth survey to help capture the impact of the project in more detail.

One thing that must form part of the initial sign-up process is asking people to prove their veteran status before they attend a session. The vast majority of veterans will be glad that you are doing this, as they will want to ensure that only genuine veterans are attending the sessions (assuming your sessions are exclusively for veterans, and possibly their families).

If someone pretending to be a veteran (often referred to as a 'Walter Mitty' or 'Walt') is found accessing a veterans' service or activity session, not only will they personally face anger from genuine veterans, but the reputation of the service or session they have managed to infiltrate will also be tarnished. News travels fast when a 'Walt' is outed, and it takes a long time to rebuild trust if your project's sign-up process was at fault.

At the sign-up stage, make it clear what the ground rules are: don't turn up to sessions under the influence of any substances, including alcohol; no discrimination or bullying; no racism; no sexism; no homophobia; no politics, etc. If your session is also linked to a social media page or group (including WhatsApp groups, or similar) you should also make it clear that the group rules apply there.

It's a good idea to work with the veterans to co-design the rules before you launch the sessions, as well as agreeing what the consequences of rule breaches should be (e.g. initial warning, temporary ban, or permanent ban).

Having rules in place from day one makes sure everything is clear upfront. It's much harder to introduce new rules part way through your project, when problematic behaviour may already be established as acceptable within the group.

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Dont's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



Delivery

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Dont's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

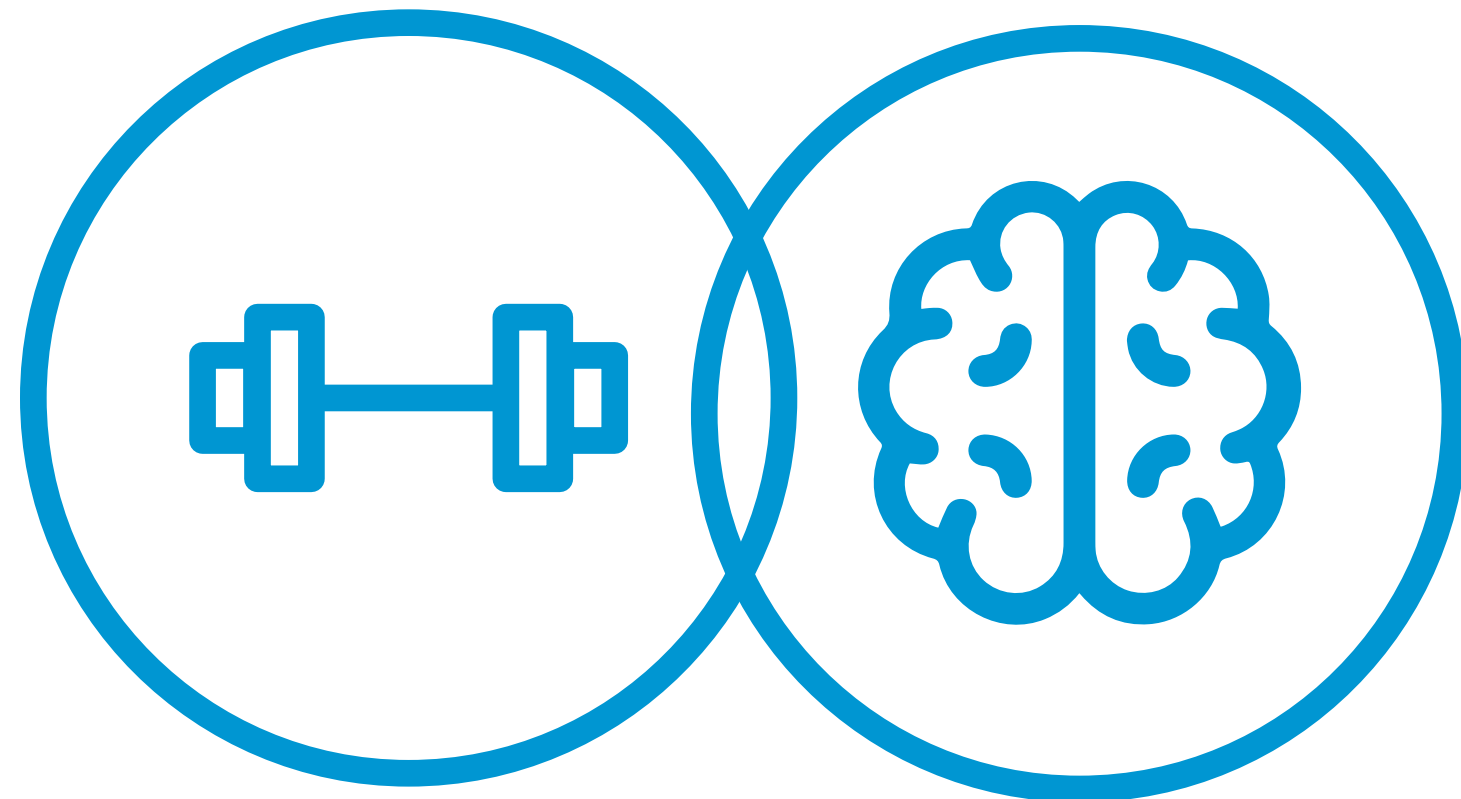
With Thanks



Delivering the activity sessions

You've done all your research and planning, secured your funding, made links with partner organisations, and you're finally ready to start delivering your activity sessions. Of course, there are countless ways you can deliver a session. Which way is best?

In this section, we've provided guidance on what we believe is the best way to deliver activity sessions for military veterans. This is based on what we found to be most effective during the three-year Moving Forces pilot, as well as advice from our hugely experienced delivery partners and key recommendations from the MMU PhD student's evaluation report.



Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Dont's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



Barriers – and how to overcome them

A good way to plan your delivery is to start by thinking about the many barriers that will prevent veterans from engaging with your project. Behaviour change is an extremely difficult thing to achieve, so removing as many of these barriers as you can makes it much more likely that the veterans you want to help will actually turn up and benefit from the sessions. Read on for some of the most common barriers faced by veterans and some ideas on how to overcome them.

‘I want to spend my spare time with my family’

This was one of the most important things we learnt during the Moving Forces pilot. Many veterans work long hours and place huge value on spending their spare time with their families. Often, veterans would attend a session once or twice and, despite enjoying it, didn't feel able to keep coming regularly because of the impact on their family time.

In response, we started opening as many sessions as possible to veterans' families. The results were hugely

positive, including:

- ▶ Increased attendance, especially for weekend sessions when people are always looking for things to do with their children and grandchildren.
- ▶ Veterans who don't yet feel confident enough to participate turn up at the sessions to watch their children and grandchildren. These veterans still enjoy the most important benefits of attending (socialising with other veterans and families, improved mental wellbeing, less social isolation etc.), then often start to participate once they see that the session is accessible and fun.
- ▶ Veterans' families, who are often just as much in need of support as the veterans themselves, benefit in the same way from the sessions.
- ▶ Veterans report enjoying the opportunity to be role models for their children and grandchildren.
- ▶ Increased pride and ownership of the project from the veterans and their families, who then go on to recommend the project to friends and wider veterans networks.

Of course, with children attending, there is an additional safeguarding aspect to consider. However, if safeguarding policies are followed properly, there should be minimal risk. You might also need to take extra care in ensuring the 'banter' in the sessions is appropriate.

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Don't's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



'I can't get there at that time'

It sounds obvious, but it's vital that you get the timing of your session right. You might be tempted to provide sessions in the daytime on a weekday, as that's when facilities are easier and cheaper to hire, and instructors have more availability. However, it's important to remember that most veterans, just like many others, will be busy working during office hours. During the Moving Forces pilot, the vast majority of successful activity sessions took place on weekday evenings and weekends.

There is the odd exception to this rule: for example, if your project is focused on working with older veterans who are more likely to be retired (Moving Forces' daytime Tai Chi sessions were popular with older veterans).

You also need to think about the duration of the session. For midweek evening sessions, we found that an hour is about right in most cases, particularly if the activity is of fairly high intensity (such as football or climbing). Veterans might not consider a 30-minute session worth the journey there and back, whereas a two-hour session will be harder to commit to regularly, as people might feel like it takes up their entire evening. Longer sessions can also be too physically demanding and intimidating for those who are less fit.

Again, there are exceptions: some outdoor activities, such as sailing, kayaking and walking, are likely to take longer than an hour. They are also more suited to weekends when people are likely to be free in daylight hours and for longer periods of time.

As with everything else, check with the veterans to find out what day, time and duration works best for them.

During the Moving Forces pilot, the vast majority of successful activity sessions took place on weekday evenings and weekends.

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Don't's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



'It's hard for me to get there'

Location is key, and making sure the veterans can get there easily is one of the most important things to consider when choosing a venue:

Where do most of the veterans you're in contact with live and work?

Are there areas they are reluctant to go to? (e.g. high crime areas)

Is the location easily accessible via public transport? If so, what is the cost to the veteran?

Are you providing transport? If so, what will the cost be to your project and is this sustainable in the long term?

When you have some possible venues in mind, speak to the veterans and ask them which one they'd prefer. If none of the venues you have in mind are popular amongst the veterans, you might need to look again.

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Dont's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



'I can't afford it'

Some veterans, particularly those who are most vulnerable and in need of support, will face financial pressures during and after transition from military to civilian life. Making your sessions affordable will make it easier for them to attend regularly.

Depending on funding, you may be able to offer sessions for free, which is how the majority of Moving Forces activities were run during the initial three-year pilot. However, when sessions are free, it tends to be more likely that people will cancel at the last minute or just not turn up. It's hard to prove why this happens, but one theory is that people view free things as zero value, and therefore more disposable, forgetting someone else is covering the actual 'cost'.

Things you can do to reduce last minute drop-outs or no-shows at free sessions are:

- › Display the actual cost per person on the booking form and make it clear that these costs are being covered by your project.
- › Ask people to pay a deposit, which is refunded when they attend.

If your funding doesn't cover all the costs of delivery, or if you don't have any funding at all, then the veterans might have to pay for the sessions. You may be able to offer a small number of free places for those who can't afford it, however, establishing and checking affordability criteria (means testing) for this can be difficult.

Be open and transparent with the veterans when deciding on session costs. Not only will this help veterans to feel valued as part of the project, it will also provide reassurance to them that all money collected is being used for the good of the project.

Finally, consider the cost of equipment needed to participate. Whilst it might be reasonable to expect veterans to have appropriate clothing and footwear, it might be an extra boost if you can provide some training gear. This will also increase loyalty and ownership of the sessions amongst the veterans. If the session requires specialist equipment, such as golf clubs and bicycles, providing equipment, at least in the early stages, will encourage people to attend and give things a try without having to invest in all the gear right from the start. Running sessions without providing equipment can exclude those who are probably most in need of support.

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Dont's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



‘I don’t want to commit to something that’s only running for a few weeks’

Activity projects are often limited to a certain number of sessions, usually because of funding restrictions. This can have several drawbacks:

- ▶ It can often take several weeks before attendance levels pick up, by which time there might only be a few sessions left.
- ▶ It can often be a big commitment for veterans to try something new, due to both the time needed and nerves about stepping out of their comfort zone. Therefore, the thought that sessions might only continue for a few weeks can make it seem like they’re not worth the effort, especially if they only find out about the project halfway through.
- ▶ Veterans might not be able to commit to attending sessions every week. For example, they might work varying shift patterns, so knowing they’re going to miss at least half of the sessions can be off-putting. This is especially true if the focus of your project is for people to progress and learn new things each week.
- ▶ By the time the sessions come to an end, veterans (and families) will have bonded. Some will have come to rely on the sessions for their mental and physical wellbeing, so having this support suddenly stop can have a negative effect.

Therefore, it’s best to run activities for as long as possible. This will also give you more time to build up the reputation, awareness and attendance in the first weeks of delivery, without the added pressure that you only have a limited number of sessions left. It will also make it easier to accommodate people who have to miss the odd week because of work or family commitments.

Of course, your funding might mean you can only commit to a certain number of sessions for now. Yet it’s important that you have a plan in place, or at least the intention, to continue the sessions in the long term, whether through securing more funding or asking veterans to pay for sessions once the funding runs out. Again, speak to the veterans openly about this. If they value the session, they will want to help.

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do’s & Dont’s

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



‘I want to enjoy my spare time, not get beasted by a PTI’

Many veterans will associate exercise with their time in the military, where they would have been regularly ‘beasted’ by physical training instructors (PTIs) and expected to push themselves as hard as possible. Not only can this make even the thought of physical activity unpleasant, it can also have negative effects on people’s wellbeing, making them feel like they’re failing or ‘letting the team down’ if they’re not able to keep up. It can also cause people to compare their current fitness levels with how they were when they were younger, causing them to be self-critical and damaging their self-esteem.

This is why, with all Moving Forces activities, the focus is on keeping sessions fun, relaxed and social. Veterans can put in as much or as little effort as they feel comfortable with, without judgement. The important thing is that they turn up whenever they can, take part when they’re ready to, have a laugh, and build new and lasting friendships.

Of course, there will be some veterans who want to challenge themselves and progress quickly; others will just be happy to be out of the house and catching up with friends. It’s important you can accommodate both.

‘I do miss it, but my playing days are over’

Some veterans might not feel physically able to take part in an activity session, either because of a lack of fitness or a long-term injury or disability. It’s important to find ways to enable these veterans to be involved if at all possible.

They might want to volunteer as a coaching assistant, look after the equipment, help with promotion of the sessions, or just be happy to come along and watch. This means that, even if they can’t take part physically, they will still benefit from meeting new people, as well as have something to look forward to and a reason to get out of the house each week. People with a long-term injury or disability are at greater risk of social isolation and poor mental wellbeing, so ensuring they are able to attend and feel part of the group can be a huge boost.

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do’s & Dont’s

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



‘I don’t want to get my hopes up and then be let down’

Sadly, many veterans will have experience of being let down after they were promised support. This can be worsened by a perception amongst many veterans that non-military organisations are unreliable and untrustworthy. Therefore, building trust is absolutely crucial to the success of your project.

The best ways to build and maintain trust include:

- ▶ **Patience:** accept that it will take time for the project to gain momentum and a positive reputation amongst the Armed Forces community. This is normal, so don’t get frustrated with lack of early engagement.
- ▶ Have one or two main instructors who take ownership of the sessions and build rapport with the veterans.
- ▶ Ensure that the instructors are relentlessly reliable, punctual and consistent. Cancelling sessions at the last minute, or even turning up late, will be hugely damaging to any trust built up in previous weeks, and will take much longer to rebuild.
- ▶ If you do have to cancel a session for a valid reason (e.g. the venue is closed for maintenance, or the instructor has a family emergency) make sure you give attendees as much notice as possible, and be open and honest about the reason for the cancellation.

- ▶ Equally, be understanding and patient when attendees don’t turn up or are late. As described in this section, there could be any number of barriers that prevent people attending. Just tell them not to worry and encourage them to come again next week. If they continue to miss sessions, ask them what could be done to help them attend more regularly. It might be something as simple as asking another veteran who lives nearby if they can give them a lift.
- ▶ Plan to deliver sessions regardless of the number who attend. For example, if you have a five-a-side football pitch booked but only two people turn up, make sure you have something planned that will be fun without feeling like an afterthought. Those two people will appreciate the instructor’s dedication and will be more likely to go away and encourage their friends to come along next time. Do not, under any circumstances, say “we haven’t got enough people to run the session, so we’ll try again next week.”
- ▶ Having more than one regular instructor (or at least having someone on standby) will minimise the risk of sessions being cancelled. It also means that all the pressure isn’t on one person’s shoulders. Though the wellbeing of the attendees is vital, it’s equally important to ensure that the person running the sessions is supported too. They will need help from time to time, either to share ideas or concerns about the session, or simply just so they can take a break for a week or two without feeling like they’re letting the veterans down.

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do’s & Dont’s

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



» Despite what you might hear, the people who run the project and deliver the sessions don't have to be veterans themselves. As long as they are good at what they do, approachable, reliable and have a good sense of humour, they will build trust and respect amongst the veterans just as well as a fellow veteran would. However, if any non-veterans who are involved in delivering a project would like to have a better understanding of military culture and how best to work with a group of veterans, they might want to complete a short course, such as The Armed Forces Covenant e-learning programme.

» The venue you use can also have an effect on the reliability/consistency of sessions. Questions you might want to ask before booking a venue might include:

- Is it weatherproof? For example, does the grass football pitch flood or cut up badly in heavy rain? Is the activity safe to run in all weathers? How many sessions are likely to be cancelled due to weather?

- If it's an evening session, will it still be light enough in the winter? Is it floodlit? Would you be better moving it to a weekend daytime slot?

- Can you guarantee that the venue will continue to be available for as long as you need it?

Despite what you might hear, the people who run the project and deliver the sessions don't have to be veterans themselves.

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Dont's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



Other Do's and Don'ts for delivering sessions



Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Dont's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



Do's



Remember that physical activity alone isn't enough.

Provide opportunities for veterans to take ownership of the project by helping to plan and co-deliver sessions, assisting with promotion or volunteering as coaches, or becoming peer support mentors or 'Moving Forces Champions'. If you can, help them to access courses such as instructor training, mental health and safeguarding. Also ensure there is enough time and space in the session for people to socialise. Whilst the physical and mental health benefits associated with exercise are well known, it is these wraparound elements that will be most effective in reducing social isolation and improving mental wellbeing and resilience.

Encouraging veterans to take ownership of the project will also increase the likelihood of them promoting the sessions to other veterans through word of mouth: by far the most effective way to reach other veterans in your area.



Provide an easy way for attendees to stay in touch between sessions.

This might be via a Facebook or WhatsApp group (or similar) and gives the veterans more opportunities to chat, have a laugh, and get to know each other outside the sessions. If possible, include the instructor in the group, as they can keep people updated on plans for the upcoming session and might even be a simple way to keep track of the number of people who will be attending week by week. It's important that the project lead or instructor is an admin for the group, as they will need to monitor it to ensure people are adhering to the ground rules.

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Dont's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks





Set limits on attendance and make booking a requirement.

At first, you will most likely have low attendance figures. Yet it's also important that you know the maximum number of attendees you can accommodate safely (and pay for). Asking people to book onto sessions not only gives you an idea of how many people to expect each week, it also means you won't have to face the awkward situation where 12 people turn up to your climbing session when you only have space for eight. Allowing 'over-booking' because you expect some people not to turn up is a big gamble and definitely not worth the risk.



If you can, provide more than one activity to ensure you're catering for as many veterans as possible.

Putting a football session on alone, for example, will exclude some veterans from getting involved. If there's a group of veterans who aren't interested in football but want to be involved, ask them what they want to do instead.



Stick to activities that are known to be popular and effective.

With Moving Forces, the activities that were most successful included football, climbing (indoor and outdoor), archery, walking, Tai Chi, yoga, kayaking and sailing (water sports have the added benefit of being 'blue space' activities, which is proven as hugely beneficial to wellbeing). Sessions that didn't take off, despite our best efforts, included rugby, table tennis and running. That's not to say that these activities can't work but, once again, always ask the veterans what they want first.



Promote and run the sessions in a way that makes them appeal to all veterans.

If you promote a session as 'a mental health-focused climbing session for veterans' you might put a lot of people off who (at least at first) don't want to open up about their mental health, or even identify themselves as someone who is struggling, including those people who might benefit most from talking to someone. Instead, we advise going with something simple like 'Veterans' climbing session' and maybe add that it will be 'fun, relaxed and open to all abilities.' The mental health benefits will still be there, even if you don't advertise them.

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Don't's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks





Encourage serving personnel to attend sessions.

Transitioning from the military to civilian life can be challenging for some, so having support during transition can be essential in helping veterans go on to lead happy and healthy lives in civvy street. By encouraging regulars and reserves to join your sessions before they leave the Armed Forces, they will be able to benefit from the consistency and support provided by your project and the other veterans during and after transition.



Provide routes for veterans to join civilian groups when ready.

For example, at the Moving Forces indoor climbing session, a civilian climbing club ran a session at the same time in the same space. The groups got to know each other over the weeks and months, and eventually some veterans also joined the civilian group. This also happened at the archery sessions. This is important, as it prevents people from becoming stuck in 'veteran bubbles'. Having this route into civilian groups not only helps veterans to increase their social circle within their chosen activity, it also improves their confidence in everyday life by engaging with non-veteran groups. This increases their access to support and reduces social isolation.



Use venues that are less intimidating for veterans who may be uncomfortable with large groups of people and noisy environments.

This can be a tricky balancing act, especially if you're running a session at peak times, but make sure you do all you can to help new attendees feel safe, supported and welcome. Having a peer support volunteer who can meet new attendees before the session and then show them where to go, introduce them to the group, etc. can be very useful.



Work with the veterans to co-design a way to mark Armed Forces Day and the period leading up to Remembrance Sunday.

This might be a good opportunity to do something with one or more of your local partners, such as some fundraising.

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Dont's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks





Know what you're good at and do it well.

If you're a club that provides good climbing facilities and instruction, do that well and that will be valuable in itself. Adding things such as breakfast clubs can be a nice way to increase engagement for those who want more contact. However, always check with your regular attendees first to see if it's what they want to do and is offered at a time that suits them. As mentioned earlier, it's also important to provide opportunities for veterans to volunteer and take ownership of the sessions, however, many won't have the capacity to do this and will just want to attend for the activity session itself.

You may be tempted to add on extra services, such as employment support or mental health support, particularly if you come across funding streams that could support them. Before you do this, remember that there are many established, experienced and high-quality services for veterans that you can signpost to, rather than personally taking the time and expense of providing appropriate professional training and/or treatment.

Equally, providing every support service that a veteran needs in one place can sometimes cause them to become too reliant on one resource, making them more isolated and unwilling to engage with wider groups.

A wider network of well-connected and trusted partners is a healthier and more resilient way to support the needs of veterans and their families.

You may also find that established veteran support services will be more likely to recommend your session to their clients if your offer is simple and consistent. If your group is constantly adding extra strands for mental health support, etc., organisations may not be able to continue referring their clients to you unless you can prove the treatment meets their stringent standards. Even if you are able to provide proof, they may not have the time or resources to check this, and therefore would have to stop recommending you to avoid any risk.

If you do feel it would be appropriate to bring in some specialised professional support, it might be effective to include one of your trusted partners in a session. However, talk to the veterans first to see how they would feel about this, as they might not welcome something that could feel like an intrusion into their weekly social session. The response might also depend on how the partner plans to interact with the group.

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Dont's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



For example, giving the veterans the option to stay after a session if they want to get some financial advice might be more welcome than taking up the first 20 minutes of a regular one-hour session with a presentation to the whole group.

Also remember that, even if you or someone you know has experienced an issue, what worked for you may not be appropriate for a veteran, or the advice you give may stop them seeking the best help for their situation. In addition, you should never advise someone on their finances or debt as any actions they take could have a significant negative affect on their lives – it is best to refer to the specialist organisations.



If you can, provide a way for people to engage online.

For example, offer a regular online workout session, where they can follow an instructor’s workout and chat to other veterans before and after the class, maybe via Zoom or Microsoft Teams. This could be vital for people who are unable to get to the face-to-face sessions.



As well as regular weekly sessions, consider having larger, one-off events.

This might be a social event, a family fun day, fundraiser or a weekend expedition. Again, ensure that veterans are encouraged to help co-design and co-deliver these events, as having something bigger to aim for outside the regular sessions can be rewarding for everyone involved.

Top tip: Providing food can significantly boost attendance and adds an extra opportunity for attendees to socialise.



Know your limits when advertising accessibility.

If you advertise a session as fully accessible for all disabilities, you need to understand exactly what this means. Are the instructors qualified to offer this safely? Do you have access to necessary specialist equipment? If in doubt, ask more experienced veteran support organisations who work with disabled veterans for advice.

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Dont's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



Don'ts



Don't focus on providing free or discounted gym memberships.

This one can be quite controversial, as there is an appetite from many veterans to have access to a local gym. However, from our experience at Moving Forces, gym memberships don't help our overall aims for the following reasons:

- › High cost (unless a local leisure provider/ gym is covering fees).
- › Mainly attracts veterans who are already regularly going to the gym and want to take advantage of a discount.
- › Difficult to capture attendance and feedback. This makes it hard to know what impact the project is having, making reporting to funders challenging.
- › No social element. Though there is value in people going to the gym and working out, most of the time they will do this alone or with one or two existing friends. Therefore, there is little or no reduction in social isolation.



- › Less opportunity to volunteer and support others.
- › Minimal opportunity for the project I lead or regular instructor to engage with attendees. This means veterans who may need signposting to specialist services could be missed.

Don't try to make the sessions 'military specific'.

If you're running a rugby session, run a rugby session, just as you would for non-veterans. Don't be that instructor who tries to explain a passing drill to a group of veterans by likening it to a battlefield manoeuvre, especially if you're not a veteran yourself! It won't go down well...

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Don't's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks





Don't make your sessions competitive.

For some veterans, particularly those who might suffer with anxiety, depression or low self-esteem, competitive sport can be detrimental to wellbeing and cause distress before, during, and after the session. They might worry about making mistakes and 'letting the team down' before and throughout the session, which greatly reduces any chance of enjoyment. After the session, they might reflect critically on their performance, adding to their already low self-esteem. This can be further compounded if they are in a team where some of their teammates are used to playing at a higher level and might get frustrated by the mistakes and lower skill level of others, especially if it results in the team losing.

There are some activities, however, where it might be very difficult to avoid a competitive element: for example, a veterans' football team might want to take part in a local veterans' tournament. The tournament itself can be a good opportunity for veterans to mix with wider groups and build networks.

However, it's crucial that all players are made aware that if they don't want to play, or if they think that playing might be detrimental to their wellbeing, they will not be expected or pressured to take part, even if that means there aren't enough players to take part in the competition.

Also, depending on the group and the activity, a competitive edge might start to creep into the regular sessions, with players criticising or expressing frustration when others make mistakes or lack ability. In these cases, it is important to make it clear to all attendees that the session is supposed to be relaxed, fun and social, and that players should encourage each other positively rather than criticise.

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Dont's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks





Don't have 'ice-breakers' at the start of sessions.

For some veterans, finding the confidence to come to the session in the first place might have been challenging enough. Asking them to then talk to the whole group at the start of the session might be the last thing they need. On the other hand, if one or more veterans decide to open up and share something personal, what is intended to be a short five-minute introduction might turn into an impromptu, uncomfortable (and potentially unsafe) 40-minute group therapy session.

In practice, the best ice-breaker is the session itself. Veterans will introduce themselves to each other and share what they want to when they feel ready. Eventually, they'll start to turn up early for a catch up before the session and will hang around after for the same reason. It's important to make sure they have permission and space for this.

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Dont's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



Promotion

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Dont's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



Social media

Facebook is currently the best way to reach veterans on social media. There are lots of Facebook groups for veterans, and some may allow non-veterans to join and share opportunities. Others only allow veterans to join. If you're not a veteran yourself, you may be able to encourage some of your attendees to join the groups and promote the sessions for you. However, you must make sure they don't feel pressured to do this.

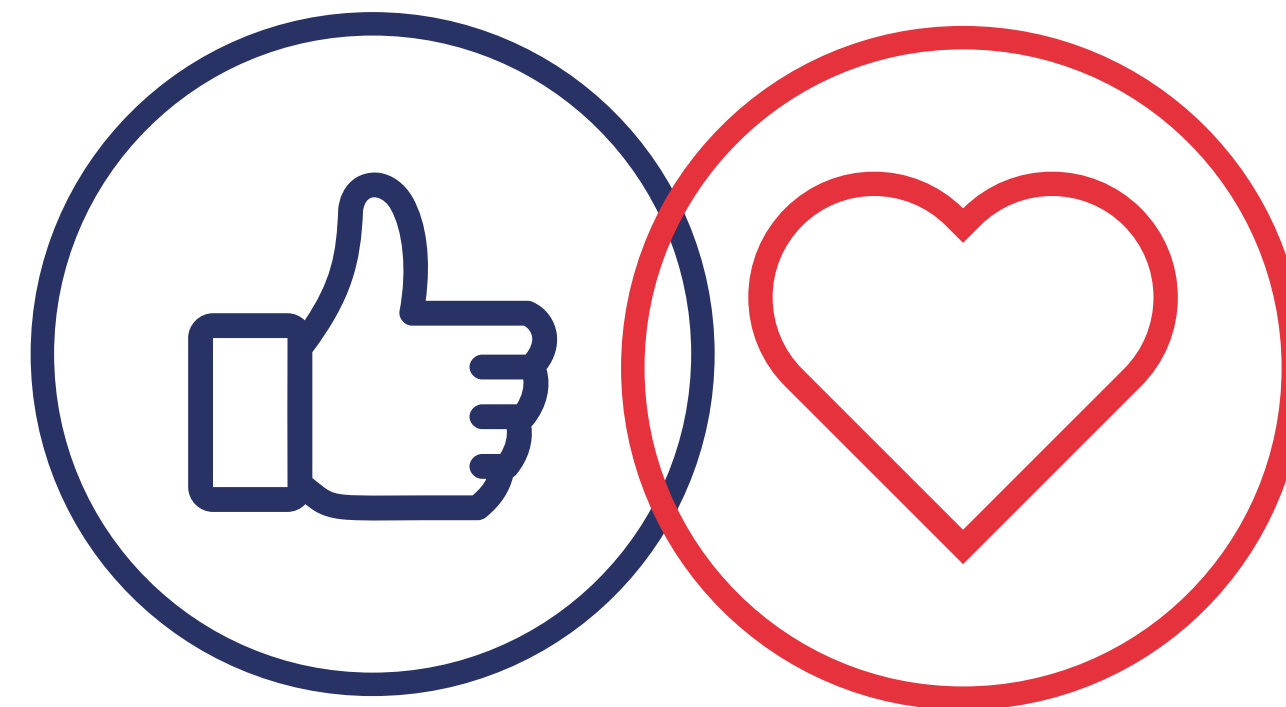
Have your own Facebook page for the project and promote your activities on there as regularly as you can, without being repetitive or 'spammy'. Encourage existing attendees to like and share the posts to their networks.

You might even have some budget available for paid adverts on Facebook. Give this a try with low expenditure first to see what impact it has before you commit to larger amounts.

Twitter tends to be better for engaging with partners, such as national charities and local veteran support services. Again, make sure you use a dedicated Twitter account for your project or organisation rather than using your personal account. Check with partners before tagging them in posts if you can, as they may have advice on what to include or leave out of tweets. This will increase the likelihood of them retweeting you, helping you to reach their wider networks.

Share photos each week that capture what you want to convey to potential new members. For example, a picture of everyone smiling in a group at the end of the session with their arms around each other's shoulders says 'this is a fun, social session with people of all different ages, sizes and fitness levels'. On the other hand, a photo of someone doing press-ups with a pained look on their sweaty face might say 'this is a session that's going to push you hard'.

Always double check that the veterans being photographed are happy for the content to be shared on social media



Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Dont's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



Word of mouth

The **most powerful tool for promotion**, particularly in the Armed Forces community, is word of mouth. If a veteran hears from another trusted veteran that your project is good and reliable, they'll give it a chance. If you keep building this trust and respect, the word will spread far and wide.

Video case study

Capture a video case study, maybe with a veteran who has really benefitted from your session, and ask them if they'd mind saying a few words about it on video. This can be powerful if done well, as it is a way of amplifying 'word of mouth' recommendations from veteran to veteran.

As mentioned above in relation to photographs, always check that the veteran being filmed is happy for the content to be shared on social media.

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Dont's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



Printed flyers and posters

Printed flyers and posters can feel like an important way to reach the veterans in your area, but think carefully about the pros and cons before committing to the cost.

1

Will the details of the session be accurate for a reasonable amount of time?

The last thing you want after paying for and distributing thousands of flyers is to realise that you might need to change the time, day, location or cost.

2

Where will the posters be displayed?

Do you have permission to put the posters up?
Are veterans likely to see them there?

3

Do you have partners on board who do regular mailouts to veterans?

For example, a local charity who sends a monthly or quarterly magazine to their members?

4

Do you have a partner organisation that regularly sees veterans face-to-face and is happy to recommend your project to them?

For example, job centres, housing providers, social prescribers. Providing these organisations with flyers to have on their desks can increase the likelihood that they will remember to signpost suitable veterans to you.

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Dont's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



What to expect

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Dont's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



Overview

At this point, hopefully you're full of enthusiasm about your project and the prospect of making a difference in veterans' lives. That positivity is going to be essential for your project to become a success. However, there will be times when you face challenges that will be hard to overcome and could even prompt you to question whether it's all worth the effort.

First of all, it is definitely worth the effort. If you're prepared to be patient, listen to feedback and learn something new every day, you'll give yourself the best chance of making a positive impact on the lives of veterans and their families.

To help you prepare for the bumps in the road ahead, we've included a couple of examples of challenges that you may be faced with during your project.

There will be many others, but read on for the two things we encountered the most often, particularly in the early stages of the project.

Slow starts

You may be extremely lucky and have ten veterans turn up to your yoga session on the first day, followed by 20 the following week (if this happens, can you give us a call and tell us your secret?!). However, it's much more likely that numbers will start off low and stay low, possibly for several weeks. This is not necessarily a sign that you're doing it wrong. If you've followed the advice in this guide and spoken to local veterans at each stage, your sessions should eventually build.

If you're only getting a couple of people turning up at first, don't let them think you're disappointed. Instead, show them that you're delighted to see them and then do everything you can to make that session as fun and rewarding as it can be. Those few veterans who turn up in the early weeks will be your best assets, as they'll be the ones going back to their friends to tell them whether the session is worth attending. Ask them for advice about how to get more people to attend. If people who said they'd turn up don't, give them a call and make sure they know they'll be welcome next week. It might be the third or fourth session when they eventually pluck up the courage to come along, then another month before they come again. You'll need the patience of a saint at times, but trust that your efforts and enthusiasm will not go unnoticed. This trust and rapport you build with those first few veterans who attend will be worth it ten times over in the long run: they will become your biggest and proudest ambassadors.

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Dont's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



The veteran who knows better than anyone else

The vast majority of people who run programmes for veterans will have met at least one of these characters (in many cases, it will have been the same one!).

This veteran will tell you with supreme confidence that what you're doing or planning to do won't work because it's not how they would do it. They will then go on to explain exactly what you need to do instead. This might be someone who has been helping veterans for some time, either in their work or as a volunteer, so it can be quite intimidating to be challenged like this, especially if you're not a veteran yourself and/or you're new to this kind of role.

Things they might say that can be red flags include:

- › “The best way to get veterans to socialise is to get them all in the pub and have a few beers.”
- › “I know a lot of veterans and they all think the same as me.”
- › “I was in a bad way a few years ago and ‘X’ worked for me, so that’s what you need to do, because if it worked for me, it’ll work for all veterans.”
- › “I applied for funding, but I didn’t get it. This is what I was going to use the money for, you need to do that instead.”

- › “I know all the veterans round here, and if you want me to recommend your project to them, you need to do it my way.”
- › “I don’t know why you’re working with ‘X organisation’, they are no good because ‘x,y,z’”

Most of the time, even if this person isn't being particularly helpful, they will almost certainly be genuinely trying to help. Be patient and diplomatic, rather than defensive. They may well have some good advice and insight, of course, so it's important to listen and make sure you understand what they're saying. However, if the main points they're making contradict what you've heard from experienced partners, other groups of veterans, and the advice provided in this guide, you should have the confidence to politely thank them for their advice, while insisting that you're going to stick with your existing approach.

[Home](#)[Introduction](#)[Overview](#)[Before you start](#)[Delivery](#)[Do's & Don't's](#)[Promotion](#)[What to expect](#)[Moving Forces Branding](#)[Useful Links](#)[With Thanks](#)

Other things to bear in mind

Don't assume all veterans are over 70.

66% of veterans who engaged with the Moving Forces three-year pilot were under 55.

Not all veterans are men.

Around 10% of veterans are women. Over the three years of the Moving Forces pilot, 17% of members were women.

Not all ex-forces personnel will identify as veterans.

Some might associate the word 'veteran' with older vets and might instead describe themselves as 'ex-forces' or 'ex-squaddies'. You might want to make sure your promotional materials and social media posts include these various terms for veterans to ensure you're communicating to all ex-forces personnel.

Don't assume that most veterans will already be physically fit.

Many people become inactive after leaving the Armed Forces for a variety of reasons:

- ▶ Sport and fitness are free whilst serving, so the cost of keeping active in civvy street can be a barrier.
- ▶ Serving members of the Armed Forces are required to maintain a high level of fitness. When they leave the forces, they no longer have this 'stick' to encourage them to stay active.
- ▶ Veterans are more likely than the general population to have joint problems and other long-term injuries.

▶ Veterans can sometimes have a negative relationship with exercise because of the 'beasting' approach in the Armed Forces. This can lead them to believe that exercise has to be painful and unpleasant to be effective, which can make physical activity seem less appealing. This is also something to be aware of when veterans do become active again, as they may instinctively push themselves too hard too quickly, causing injuries and reducing the likelihood that they will keep attending.

Not all veterans have life-changing injuries and/or poor mental health.

Coverage in the media tends to focus on veterans who suffer with life-changing injuries and/or poor mental health, such as amputees and people with a diagnosis of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). There will, of course, be a significant minority of veterans accessing your project who have, at some point, needed extra support for their health and/or welfare. However, the reality is that most veterans transition well to civilian life.

If you've met one veteran, you've met ONE veteran.

Sometimes people assume that all veterans are very similar because of their shared experiences. Yet every veteran has their own unique story. Some will turn up to sessions and be loud, confident and energetic from the first minute; others might need a few weeks before they're confident enough to start speaking to other participants.

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Don't's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



Moving Forces Branding

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Dont's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



Moving Forces Branding

Now that you've read the guide, if you're keen to deliver your project based on the values and advice we've offered above, we consider you to be a Moving Forces delivery partner. Therefore, please feel free to use the Moving Forces branding and promo templates, which you can access for free via the GM Moving Resource Space.

[To do this, you will need to request a user account by clicking here.](#)

Once you've activated your account and logged in, click on 'project resources' and within which there will be a collection called 'Moving Forces' and you'll then have access to everything you need.

Moving Forces is trusted and respected by a large number of veterans, families and support organisations. Using the branding will help them to understand the kind of session you're looking to deliver and should help you

to gain that all-important trust as you build your project.

In return for using the branding (as well as providing you with this guide). We ask that you maintain the quality and values that we have worked hard to establish throughout the pilot. We also ask that you work with all Moving Forces delivery partners and supporters to collectively maintain the standards expected throughout the Armed Forces community.

Thank you for taking the time to read this guide. We wish you the best of luck with the delivery of your project.

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Dont's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



Useful Links

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Dont's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



Useful Links

Veterans Gateway

‘There is a huge network of organisations supporting the Armed Forces community, so finding the right one for your needs can be tricky.

We make it quick and easy by being your first point of contact for whatever support you need, whether you are based in the UK or abroad. Many of our team are veterans themselves so they understand the issues that people face after leaving the Armed Forces. They work with people on a one-to-one basis, connecting them with the right support as soon as possible.’

[Visit here](#)

Op COURAGE: the Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service

‘Op COURAGE is an NHS mental health specialist service designed to help serving personnel due to leave the military, reservists, armed forces veterans and their families.’

[Visit here](#)

The Royal British Legion

‘From providing expert advice and guidance, to recovery and rehabilitation, through to transitioning to civilian life – we can be by their side every step of the way. And it’s not just members of the Armed Forces but their families too. If there is ever a reason we can’t help, our vast network will mean that we know someone who can.’

[Visit here](#)

Walking With The Wounded

‘Walking With The Wounded gets those who’ve served – and their families - back on their feet. We do four things: [employment](#), [mental health](#), [care coordination](#) and [volunteering](#) which are saving jobs, homes, relationships and lives for the veterans who are struggling since leaving the military.’

[Visit here](#)

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do’s & Dont’s

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



Combat Stress

‘For over a century we’ve been helping former servicemen and women deal with issues like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety and depression. Today we provide specialist treatment and support for veterans from every service and conflict, focusing on those with complex mental health issues related to their military service.

Combat Stress provides a range of community, outpatient and residential mental health services to veterans with complex mental health problems. We provide services in-person, and via phone and online.’

[Visit here](#)

Help 4 Heroes

‘We believe those who serve our country deserve support when they’re wounded. Every day, men and women have to leave their career in the Armed Forces as a result of physical or psychological wounds; their lives changed forever. We help them, and those still serving, to recover and get on with their lives by providing physical, psychological, financial and welfare support for as long as they need it. It also supports their families, because they too can be affected by their loved one’s wounds.’

[Visit here](#)

SSAFA – The Armed Forces Charity

‘SSAFA helps the armed forces community in a number of ways, though our focus is on providing direct support to individuals in need of physical or emotional care. Addiction, relationship breakdown, debt, homelessness, post-traumatic stress, depression and disability are all issues that can affect our members of our Armed Forces community. Many of these problems only become apparent when an individual has to leave their life in the Forces and join ‘Civvy Street’. SSAFA is committed to helping our brave men and women overcome these problems, and rebuild their lives.’

[Visit here](#)

Blesma: Military Charity for Limbless Veterans

‘Blesma, The Limbless Veterans, is an Armed Forces charity dedicated to assisting serving and ex-Service men and women who have suffered life-changing limbloss or the use of a limb, an eye or sight. We support these men and women in their communities throughout the UK.’

[Visit here](#)

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do’s & Dont’s

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



The Invictus Games Foundation

‘The Invictus Games use the power of sport to inspire recovery, support rehabilitation and generate a wider understanding and respect for wounded, injured and sick Servicemen and women.’

[Visit here](#)

The Armed Forces Covenant

‘The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise by the nation ensuring that those who serve or who have served in the armed forces, and their families, are treated fairly. It is a pledge that together we acknowledge and understand that those who serve or who have served in the armed forces, and their families, should be treated with fairness and respect in the communities, economy and society they serve with their lives.’

[Visit here](#)

The Armed Forces Covenant E-learning Programme

‘This is aimed at front-line staff who engage with individuals and families on a regular basis. The training provides an overview of the unique challenges of Service life and how staff can help support the Armed Forces Community. It will help staff understand and apply the principles of the Covenant at a local level. It includes sources of further information and support.’

[Visit here](#)

Active Partnerships

‘There are 42 Active Partnerships across England who work collaboratively with local partners to create the conditions for an active nation using the power of sport and physical activity to transform lives.’

[Visit here](#)

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Dont's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust

‘The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust (the Trust) supports the Armed Forces Covenant by delivering funding programmes that create real change to Armed Forces communities across the UK.

The Armed Forces Covenant Fund has four broad funding themes now and in future years:

1. Non-core healthcare services for veterans.
2. Removing barriers to family life.
3. Extra support, both in and after Service, for those that need help.
4. Measures to integrate military and civilian communities and allow the Armed Forces community to participate as citizens.’

[Visit here](#)

Home

Introduction

Overview

Before you start

Delivery

Do's & Dont's

Promotion

What to expect

Moving Forces Branding

Useful Links

With Thanks



GREATERSPORT

Greater Manchester
Moving > ^ < v



With Thanks

To our funders Sport England, The Invictus Games Foundation and The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, and to all our fantastic partners and supporters.

