

Entrant company name: **Evergreen PR**

Entry title: **Getting Veterans the Care They Deserve**

Category: **Best Long-term Campaign**

### **Brief, objectives and budget**

The Royal College of GPs' (RCGP) Veteran Friendly practices programme helps GP surgeries identify, support and refer veterans for best health outcomes. However, with GP practices under pressure, signups had slowed dramatically, with an average of just 24 practices getting accredited each month prior to Evergreen being commissioned.

Evergreen PR was appointed in September 2021, initially on a project basis, to develop a campaign to use Remembrance Day 2021 to kickstart momentum and get sign-ups back on an upward trajectory.

- Initial objective: double the number of sign-ups to 50 in the month of November 2021.
- Long-term objective: Hit the NHS England set target for having 50% of GP practices in England accredited by April 2024.

### **The idea, research and planning**

We used our proprietary MERTO Map planning methodology to identify the 'most effective route to outcomes'. This audience-focused approach incorporates best practice principles in behaviour science, prioritisation and measurement to identify the 'priority strategic levers' that will have the greatest impact on the goal and eliminate wasted effort.

Initial research included an audit of GP workforce, a review of published studies on veteran healthcare, a COM-B behavioural analysis using desk research and interviews and a power-Interest analyses to inform prioritisation.

Key insights included:

- GPs comprise just 26% of the practice workforce presenting an opportunity to target other members of the practice team for the first time

- Previous campaign messaging and imagery had been very military-focused, which could alienate some audiences.
- Studies showed veterans are more likely to experience long-term health problems, yet less likely to seek support, particularly if they felt they might be misunderstood

Our idea was to bring to life the fact that you can neither identify a veteran or understand what they're going through just by looking at them. We would use this premise to drive our creative and narrative approach, while expanding our reach to the entire GP practice workforce, not just GPs.

### **Strategy, creativity and innovation**

We used creativity and innovation where it would make the biggest strategic difference”:

- Visual creative - our striking ‘split-face’ visual (half armed forces person/half civilian) brought to life the idea that veterans can’t be identified or understood simply by appearance. The line ‘the impact of service isn’t always obvious’ added further emotional resonance. The concept and language were tested and iteratively improved following feedback from veterans and GP practice staff.
- News hooks - with small budgets for the first four campaigns, we had to be smart with story development. We kept stories fresh by using new academic studies, creating terminology such as ‘hidden health needs’ or ‘silent struggle’ and aligning with experts’ warnings on the emotional impact of media coverage on current conflicts.
- Real people - real voices were central. We told the accreditation story from the perspectives of veteran patients and GP practice staff - GPs, nurses and practice managers - using those voices to target each media segment. We also uncovered ‘case study pairs’, where veterans and health professionals knew each other, adding emotional weight.

We took a systematic approach, creating highly targeted media and stakeholder packages for each healthcare professional group in GP practices.

With extra budget for campaign five, we used new Government insight showing that health professionals’ perceptions of veterans are influenced by TV news to inspire a broadcast-focused campaign, powered by a survey of 5,000 veterans.

## **Delivery/implementation of tactics**

For each campaign we:

- Devised a topical news hook to inform a master healthcare trade press release
- Adapted each press release to target healthcare media segments e.g. using quotes from GPs, nurses, practice managers
- Offered education opinion articles from GP practice staff to relevant trade media
- Created a Stakeholder Comms Kit, with ready-made social media, blog and newsletter copy, plus downloadable JPGs featuring diverse Armed Forces roles, genders, ethnicities and ages
- Updated the campaign landing page to keep it fresh and relevant - adding human stories
- Outreached to trade healthcare media and professional associations, ensuring all results pointed back to the landing page
- With a larger budget for campaign 5, we developed a survey on veterans experiencing health problems but not seeking help, receiving 5,000 veteran responses. We brought the data to life with veteran stories and the healthcare professionals supporting them, offering broadcasters filming opportunities.

## **Measurement, evaluation and impact**

The below results demonstrate continued growth in momentum.

- Campaign 1 (November 2021)
  - 13 media articles and stakeholder mentions, 40,000 'estimated views'
  - Key titles included GP Online, the British Journal of Nursing and the Practice Manager's Association
  - 79 GP practices signed up - a 220% increase on the benchmark
- Campaign 2 (April-Jun 2022)
  - 26 articles and stakeholder mentions, 80,000 'estimated views'
  - Key titles included National Health Executive, Nursing Times, Institute of General Practice Managers and Physio Update
  - 66 sign-ups per month on average over a 3-month period - 150% up on the benchmark for three consecutive months
- Campaign 3 (November 2022)

- 45 articles and stakeholder mentions, 537,000 ‘estimated views’
  - Key titles included NHS England, BBC Midlands Today, Pulse, GP Online, Nursing Times and Management in Practice
  - 1,000+ landing page visits
  - 179 practices signed up - more than double the previous record for a single month, 630% above the benchmark
- Campaign 4 (November 2023)
    - 34 articles and stakeholder mentions, 946,000 ‘estimated views’
    - Key titles included NHS England, National Health Executive, Pulse, GP Online, Nursing Times, Nursing in Practice, Practice Manager’s Association, BBC Merseyside and Daily Express
    - 100+ attendees at a joint webinar with the IGPM
    - 199 practices signed up - another new record, 729% above benchmark.
- Campaign 5 (January-April 2024)
    - 168 media and stakeholder items
    - Key successes:
      - 12 minutes on BBC1 Breakfast, 9-minutes on BBC Morning Live
      - The British Medical Journal
      - The Guardian, The Independent, Sky News, Daily Express, LBC, The Spectator
      - National Health Executive, GP Online, Nursing in Practice, IGPM
      - 5,000+ landing page visits
      - 495 sign-ups - an average of 125 per month. 416% above the baseline for four consecutive months.

This activity took us to 51% of all GP practices in England being ‘veteran friendly’ accredited - achieving the NHS England target four months early.

*The text in this case study is presented as submitted in the original award entry. Where necessary, entrants have removed or redacted information considered sensitive or confidential.*