

A Simple Guide to Starting a Veterans Hub

And what you want to think about.



What is a Veterans Hub?

We consider Hubs to be a specialised form of a Drop-In service for veterans in their communities.

A Veterans Hub is a warm & welcoming venue that, in addition to the expected support of comradeship and a brew provides access to two or more agencies/charities at least once a month.

Not all Hubs begin in this format. we know from experience that building a Hub takes time.

Some are very vibrant and provide a lot of support including welfare, wellbeing, mental health and on-site assessments.

Are they needed?

YES! Our research with veterans identifies that 71% recognise that one day they may need the services of a Veterans Hub. Yet 62% of veterans asked are unaware of their local Hub! [Nield & Nield 2018]. So there is work for us to do.....



How we can help you

1. Provide Support and advice.
2. Knowledge on how to avoid some pitfalls
3. Guide you to training that can enhance your meetings.
4. Provide a mentor system for the organisers.
5. Share knowledge of groups that could assist your Hub.
6. Funding application guidance.
7. Access to a library of useful document templates.

Common Issues

1. Telling people & advertising where you are based
2. Informing people what you do & provide.
3. Funding and making a Drop-In sustainable
4. Providing a one size fits all Drop-In.
5. Do you choose a military type venue or not ?
6. Could a licensed premises be a problem?
7. Setting guidelines for your group and accountability.
8. Who can access your services - and how?



SOLUTIONS

Veterans Gateway

www.veteransgateway.org.uk

Set up to provide a one stop shop for veterans and groups supporting them .
There is a single phone number for all enquiries :

ASDIC

www.asdic.org.uk

The Association of ex-Services Drop In Centres is set up to connect Drop-Ins & to raise awareness of the range of services supporting the veterans community.

FCSE -Veterans Hubs

is an Armed Forces Covenant project. Partnered with the MoD, the Surrey, Hampshire, West Sussex, East Sussex & Kent County Councils, Brighton and Hove and the Medway Towns Councils

Visit <https://bit.ly/2UIZVWN>

COBSEO

www.cobseo.org.uk

The Confederation of Service Charities is a single point of contact with Government, local government, the Devolved Administrations, the Royal Household, the Private Sector, and with other members of the Armed Forces Community. to provide the best possible level of support to beneficiaries.

SMPL solutions

Is the delivery partner to FCSE-Veterans Hubs, supports ASDIC and the the Vulnerable Veterans project.

email: contact@smpl.org.uk

Check List

1. What services and support will you offer?
2. Finding a venue that is accessible as possible with a car park, bus and/or train services plus disabled access to the building.
3. Establish a core group of helpers and “doers” to build resilience and a good selection of ideas. (Have you the appropriate range of skills and experience in your team?)
4. Record what you decide.
5. Consider writing a constitution to guide your group.
6. Think about funding, approach your local SSAFA branch.
7. Public Liability Insurance; what’s *your* risk?
8. Think about your Health and safety policy.
9. Once you are ready publicity is key and needs to cross all types ie. social media, local papers, posters in Doctors surgeries , libraries , local shops and more.
10. Doing food? What about a Food Hygiene certificate?
11. Is there a First Aider and a Mental Health First Aider on your team?
12. Have you a GDPR and Data Protection policy?



Wise Words from current organisers;

from:

Surrey Heath Veterans & Families -Listening Project

“Just do it!

It's the only way to go, otherwise you'll spend a lot of time - not doing it and wishin' you had. Good luck with your exciting adventure”.

and from **AAFDI** (Aldershot Armed Forces Drop-In)

It takes time to build a group, do not expect hundreds of people coming on the first day. Be consistent and just be there. If one Veteran comes and is helped you have achieved your goal.

You can find more detailed information from our checklist at

www.smpl.org.uk/forces-connect-south-east-veterans-hubs/

