



Female Veterans

TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

Statement of Need

What the evidence tells us are the needs of female veterans

IDENTITY

Women often do not identify with the term 'veteran' and face specific, **complex and multi-layered issues as a result of their service.**



Less than **31%** of women who have served identify as a veteran¹

WHAT DO FEMALE VETERANS NEED?

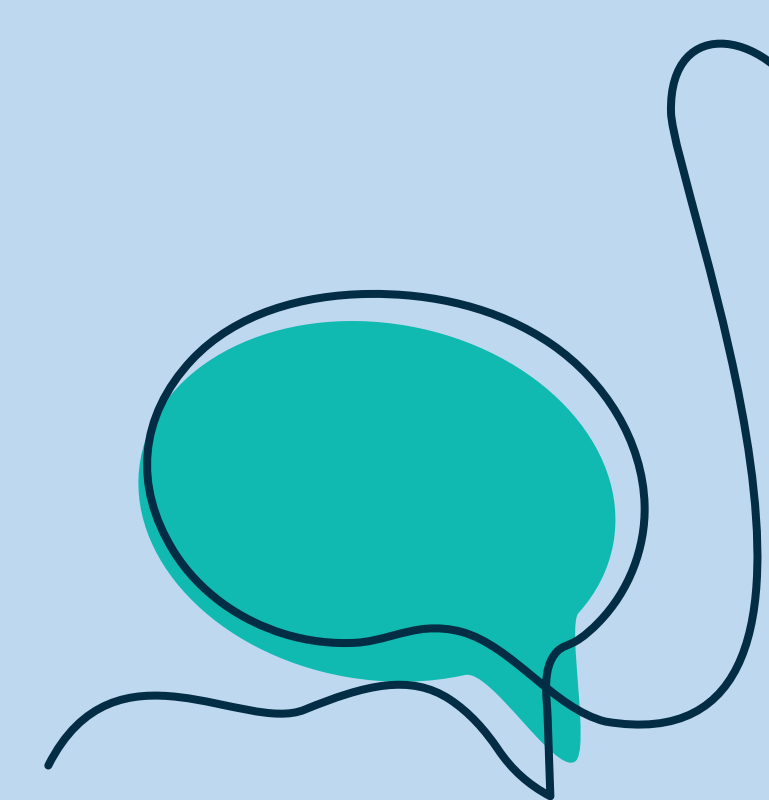
- Recognition of the specific needs of female veterans
- Empowerment for women to define their military service in their own terms
- Services should inquire about military service inclusively, rather than using singular terms like "veteran"
- Special attention to the impact of Services Bans (marriage, pregnancy, and gay bans)
- Provision of support for those negatively affected, especially LGBTQ+ individuals

ACCESS TO SERVICES

Women often don't access veteran facing services as they are seen to be **male dominated and not able to meet their needs.**

WHAT DO FEMALE VETERANS NEED?

- Women need to feel welcome, equal and able to access veteran support services
- Services should be personalised based on the individual's needs and what matters most to that person
- Professionals need to have greater awareness, understanding of the specific needs of women and respond in a way that makes a difference to them

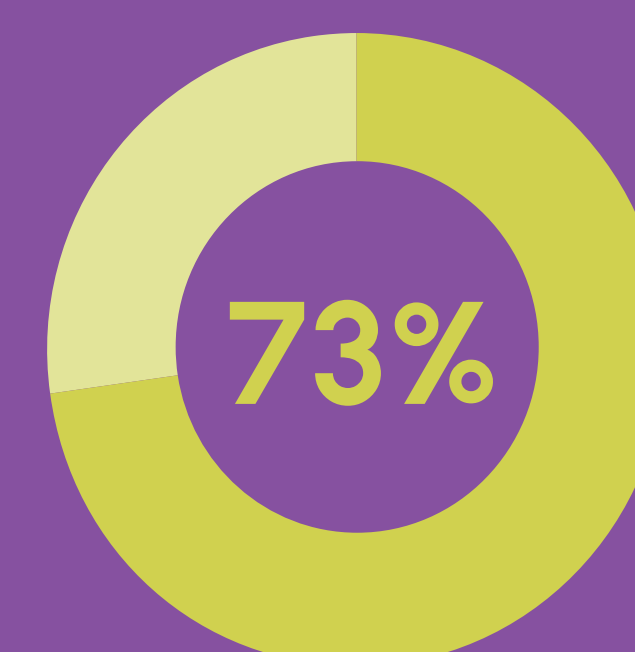


BULLYING, DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT AND SEXUALLY INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOURS INCLUDING ASSAULT AND RAPE

A significant percentage of women have faced or witnessed one or more of these issues during service.



85% felt that they were **treated differently** to their male counterparts



73% of women reported **witnessing or experiencing sexual discrimination**²

WHAT DO FEMALE VETERANS NEED?

- The widespread and insidious impact of this issue needs to be acknowledged and accepted across the sector so women feel seen and heard and therefore supported in a way that reduces shame and stigma
- Where appropriate and needed, services should be female only, delivered by women

DISTRUST AND MORAL INJURY

Women often feel **betrayed and let down** by the Military as they did not respond to their needs, complaints and requests for help and support.

WHAT DO FEMALE VETERANS NEED?
Recognition that this may affect interaction or lack thereof with services.

TRANSITION, EMPLOYMENT AND FINANCE

60% of women feel they had received little support or preparation for life as a civilian⁴

44% of women report[ing] being unemployed for long periods of time⁵



WHAT DO FEMALE VETERANS NEED?

Women need better and more targeted support during transition to find appropriate and sustainable employment taking into account caring responsibilities.

Resulting in:

- Fewer financial struggles
- Less impact on mental health due to loss of identity
- Less likely to get involved in criminal activity

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

'Women in the British Army have been found to be seven times more likely than men to suffer from musculoskeletal injuries.....they are ten times more likely than men to suffer from hip and pelvic stress fractures³

Women are often left with long term impact on their physical and mental health as a result of service.

WHAT DO FEMALE VETERANS NEED?

- Women's specific health needs as veterans need recognising and professionals to have a better understanding of the potential causes
- Women need to feel confident to declare their military service and be supported into specific Armed Forces pathways where appropriate and wanted

AREAS OF LITTLE EVIDENCE

There are many areas that still are largely under researched and therefore no practical action is being taken to improve the situation.

WHAT DO FEMALE VETERANS NEED?

More research and data capture is needed to better understand specific issues for female veterans such as the criminal justice system, race and faith, care services, loneliness, digital poverty and accessibility and Reservists.

Only 2% of veteran research focuses on females⁶

¹ Lauren Godier-McBard, Nicola Gillin and Matt Fossey, We Also Served: The Health and Wellbeing of Female Veterans in the UK (Chelmsford: Anglia Ruskin University, 2021), 104.
² Godier-McBard, Gillin and Fossey, We Also Served, 30.
³ Paula Edwards and Tony Wright, No Man's Land, (Dudley: Salute Her UK, 2019), 5.

⁴ Edwards and Wright, No Man's Land, 16.
⁵ Edwards and Wright, No Man's Land, 18.
⁶ Christina Dodds and Matthew Kiernan, "Hidden Veterans: A Review of the Literature on Women Veterans in Contemporary Society," *Illness Crisis and Loss* 27, no. 4 (2019): 2.

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