

Veterans' Affairs Rehabilitation Programme Survey

Insights report
August 2020



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PublicVoice for Veterans' Affairs

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Veterans' Affairs Rehabilitation Programme survey – project overview

Survey objective

The Veterans' Affairs Rehabilitation Programme is designed to give practical support and assistance to the men and women who need it, so they can be well and independent, and achieve the best that they can for themselves, their whānau, and their communities. The purpose of the Veterans' Affairs Rehabilitation Programme survey was to evaluate veterans' experiences with the programme. The survey was designed to understand veteran experiences from their first engagement with the programme and to identify how Veterans' Affairs can best support veterans on the programme.

Methodology

The survey has been designed and built by PublicVoice. PublicVoice is an All-of-Government accredited supplier contracted to Veterans' Affairs to conduct this research project.

PublicVoice developed an online survey framework. They were then provided with a Veterans' Affairs contact list of phone numbers and emails for 82 veterans. An attempt was made to contact all veterans via telephone. 50 veterans were successfully contacted, 40 of whom completed the survey over the phone, 10 of which declined to participate. Emails were sent to a further 5 veterans, 3 of which completed the survey online. A total of 43 surveys were completed.

Start date: 24/07/2020
End date: 14/08/2020
Number of responses: 43

Project management

The survey has been managed by PublicVoice Ltd. Any queries regarding this report can be addressed to:

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Key insights

Equal partnership

In general, veterans felt like equal partners in the rehabilitation process.

71%

of respondents reported feeling like an equal partner during the rehabilitation process.



Reasons for feeling like an equal partner included Veterans Affairs' (VA) having supportive staff and good communication. Those who did not feel like an equal partner received poor communication and empathy from those they dealt with.

Support network

Veterans mostly felt they could rely on the rehabilitation programme as a support network.

78%

of respondents felt they could rely on the rehabilitation programme as a support network.



When the rehabilitation programme felt like a reliable support network it was due to supportive staff and good communication. Participants also experienced a positive life change as a result of the programme.

Where it failed to achieve this, it was again due to poor communication and a perceived lack of empathy from providers and VA staff.

Comprehensive support

Only around half of veterans felt the programme provided comprehensive support for their physical, spiritual, cultural, and medical health.

51%

of respondents described feeling comprehensively supported by the rehabilitation programme.



Veterans often felt that only one of these aspects was treated, either because they did not require support for the others, or because the others were not brought to their attention. Spiritual and cultural health in particular were not addressed.

Independence

Slightly more than half of respondents felt the programme had successfully helped them gain more independence.

65%

of respondents felt more independent because of the rehabilitation programme.



Those who did feel more independent reported that the programme helped integrate them back into daily life and the community. Those who did not feel this way often still had physical conditions that limited their independence. There were also complaints about the time frames of the programme.

Accessibility

A fair number of respondents felt that the rehabilitation programme was accessible.

71%

of respondents thought the programme was simple to access and navigate.



Respondents who had an easy time accessing the program said that the process was simple and the staff supportive and communicative. Those who struggled said that the programme was not well advertised, and that service was inefficient.

Trust

Most respondents trusted the service providers they were referred to.

83%

of respondents trusted their service providers.



Many reported trusting their service providers simply because VA had recommended them. Respondents also said they built good rapport with their providers, specifically those who also had military backgrounds.

Those who considered their service providers to be untrustworthy said it was a result of poor rapport and communication.

Case Manager (CM) and Rehabilitation Advisor (RA) support

Most respondents felt well supported by their case managers and rehabilitation advisors.

79%

of respondents reported feeling well supported by their case managers and rehabilitation advisors.



Respondents who felt well supported said they did so because of the communication and support from staff. Those who did not experienced poor communication, and perceived VA staff as having too high workloads.

Key insights: overview

Figure 1 is an illustration of responses to all quantitative questions in the survey. A 'yes' response indicates a positive sentiment towards that aspect of the programme.

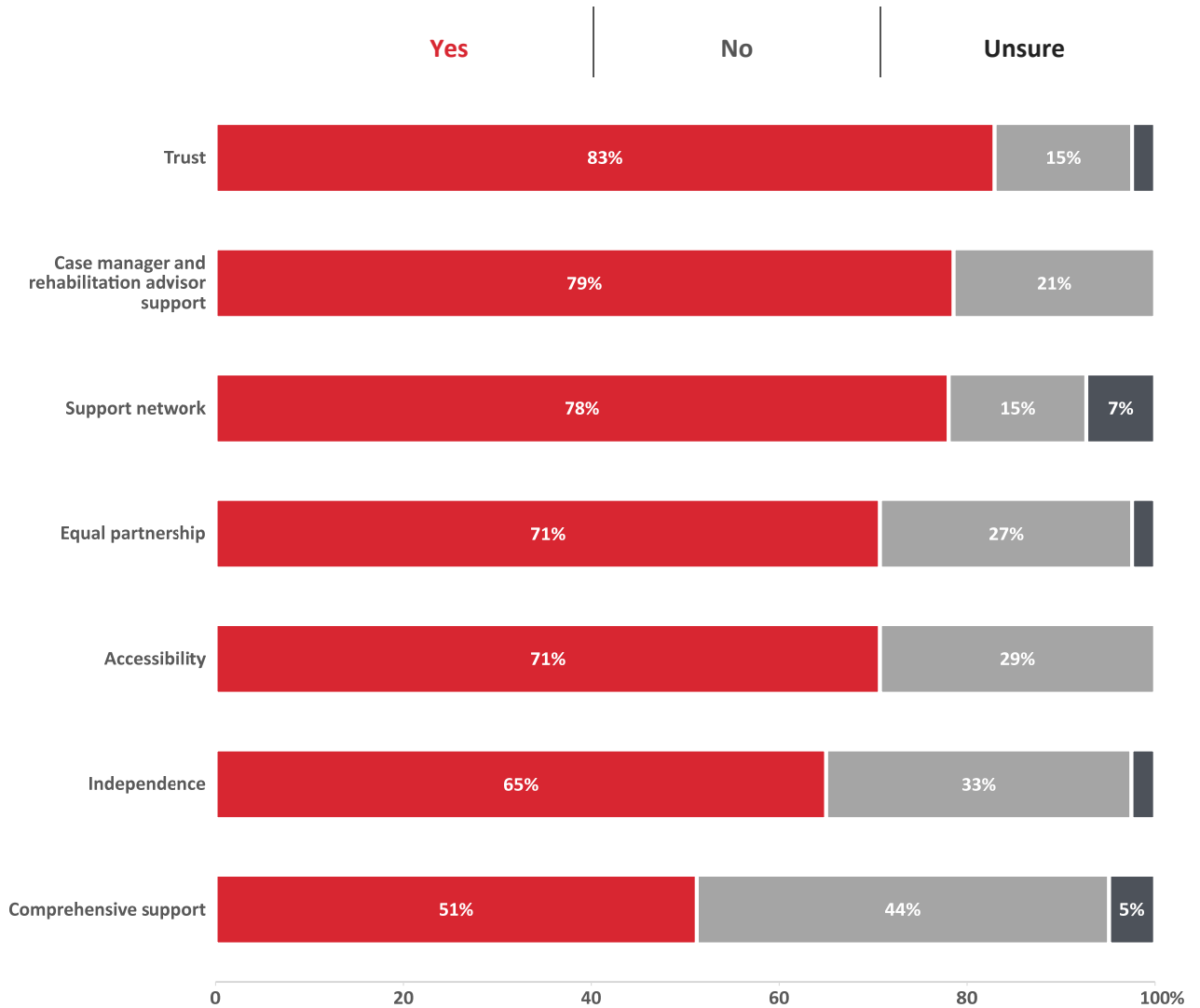


Figure 1. All questions merged – key insights

Survey results

Discovery

Figure 2 displays how veterans found out about the rehabilitation programme. The most common avenue was contact with Veterans' Affairs staff.

How veterans found out about the rehabilitation programme

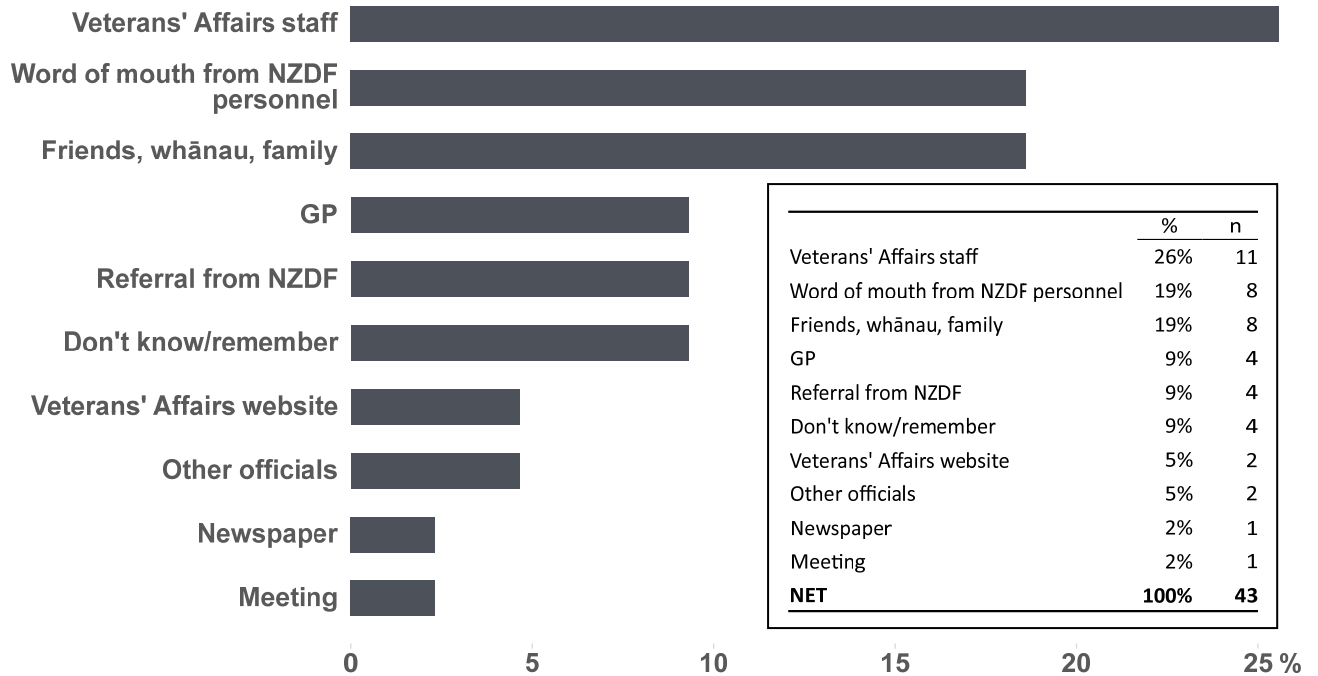


Figure 2. How did you find out about the Veterans' Affairs Rehabilitation programme?
Base n = 43

Equal partnership

Veterans reported that they felt like equal partners in the development and assessment of their rehabilitation. This section of the report provides insights into how veterans felt regarding their role as partners in the rehabilitation process.

Figure 3 shows that most veterans on the programme felt like equal partners in their rehabilitation.

Did you feel like an equal partner throughout the rehabilitation process?

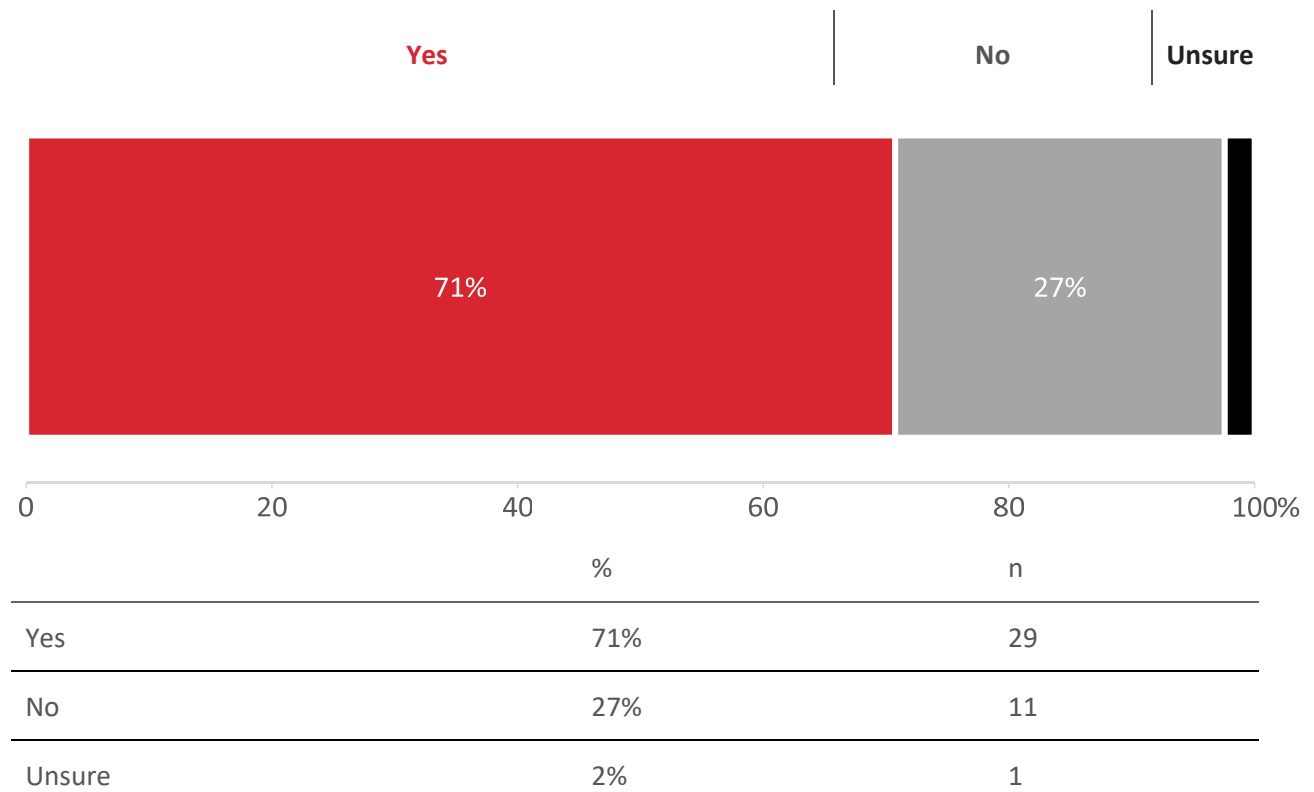


Figure 3. Did you feel like an equal partner throughout the rehabilitation process?
Base n = 41

The main reasons for this feeling of partnership are presented as strengths in the next section. Weaknesses are elements of the programme that detract from veterans feeling like partners in the process.

Equal partnership – strengths

Veterans spoke to five main themes when discussing the parts of the programme that made them feel like equal partners. These themes are:

- Supportive staff
- Good communication
- Help received
- Veterans involved in decision making
- Veteran centred

“My case manager understands what I am going through. They are not forcing me straight back into work, but rather helping me get to a place where I am able to go back and work.”

Supportive staff

“Great communication. My case manager is awesome, and she tells me exactly how it is, which I like. If I have a concern I can talk to her as well.”

Good communication

“Just the things they have done. From the start they have helped me. They got me out of a sad situation when my wife died.”

Help received

“They supported me; gave me options to choose from”

Veterans involved in decision making

“Just talking to my case manager, she keeps me informed, she lets me know what VA can do for me, and they are willing to work with other agencies.”

Veterans centred

Figure 4 indicates the frequency for each theme.

Main theme	Sub-themes	Frequency
Strengths		36
	<i>Supportive staff</i>	12
	<i>Good communication</i>	11
	<i>Help received</i>	6
	<i>Veterans involved in decision making</i>	5
	<i>Veteran centred</i>	2

Figure 4: Equal partnership – What made you feel this way? - Strengths

Equal partnership – weaknesses

The main aspects of the programme that kept veterans from feeling like equal partners were:

- Poor communication
- Not veteran centred
- Non responsiveness
- Lack of empathy

“Everything is done over the phone. There is never anything done face-to-face. You get sent to different places and people, and there is no continuation in treatments. You are just sent to appointments and they write reports and that's all. It's not a veteran cantered process, it's really just a tick box exercise. Not interpersonal at all. I wouldn't say it's a proper rehabilitation programme at all.”

Poor communication

“Case managers are not OUR case managers. They are just government employees that don't really know us, they don't know what is going on with us. They are also too remote; we need face-to-face contact”

Not veteran centred

“Not at the moment. I applied before covid and have had no help. I am still waiting.”

Non-responsiveness

“I am the one pushing for the help in the first place. I shouldn't have to be the one chasing them up, I feel forgotten about. I have to moan to get things done and beg to get things that will help me with my pain management, like beds and cushions. There are unnecessary steps to get support, they want me to go to physio to confirm my pain when a pain specialist has already done that.”

“I have been told what I will do or cessation of compensation. Agreements made have been changed without consultation. Being sent to incorrect doctors. Ignored. Laughed at. Duration has been regrettably long (2yrs +). Lied to. Told I was fishing. No empathy and possibly much more over the last few years.”

Lack of empathy

Figure 5 indicates the frequency for each theme.

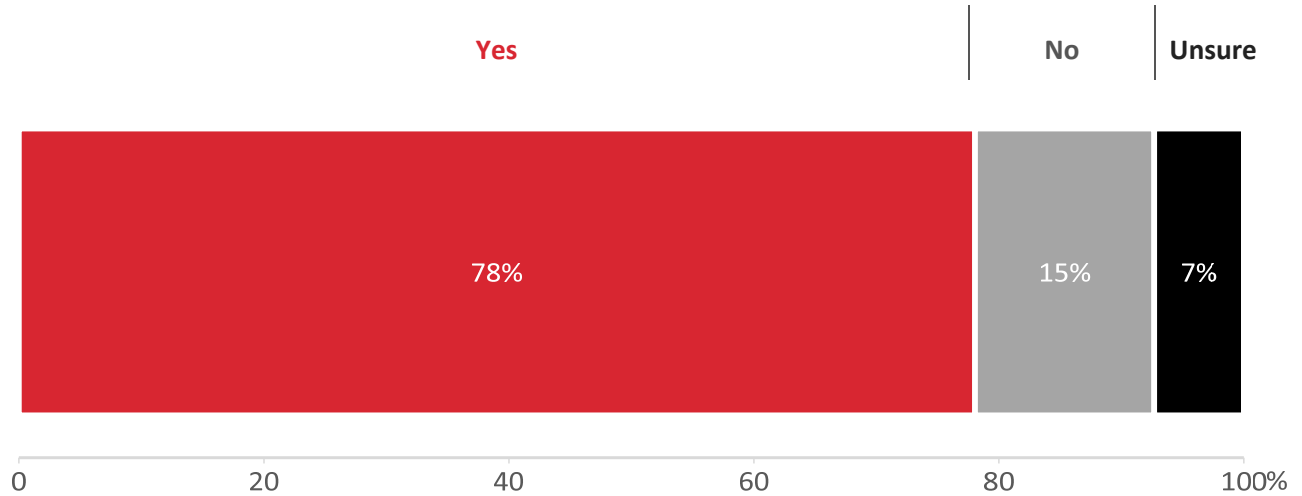
Main theme	Sub-themes	Frequency
Weaknesses		14
	<i>Poor communication</i>	5
	<i>Not veteran centred</i>	4
	<i>Non responsiveness</i>	3
	<i>Lack of empathy</i>	2

Figure 5: Equal partnership – What made you feel this way? - Weaknesses

Support network

The Veterans' Affairs Rehabilitation Programme recognises that strong and caring support networks are vital to any rehabilitation programme. The majority of veterans who answered the survey felt the programme was a support network they could rely on (Figure 6).

Did the programme feel like a support network you could rely on when needed?



	%	n
Yes	78%	32
No	15%	6
Unsure	7%	3

Figure 6. Did the programme feel like a support network you could rely on when needed?
Base n = 41

The next section discusses the strengths and weaknesses of the rehabilitation programme that impacted veterans' perspectives of it as a support network.

Support network – strengths

Five main themes emerged as strengths that made the programme feel like a support network for veterans:

- Supportive staff
- Good communication
- Good programme
- Helpful treatments received
- Positive life change

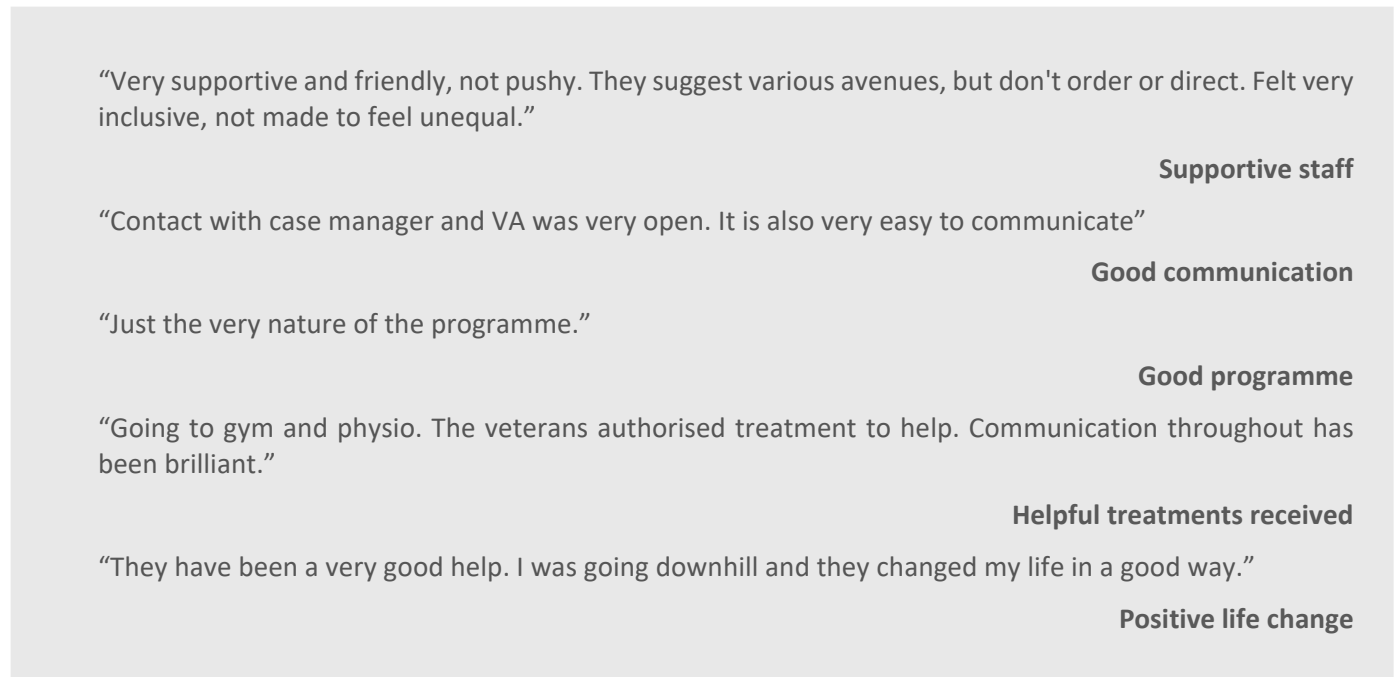


Figure 7 indicates the frequency for each theme.

Main theme	Sub-themes	Frequency
Strengths		32
	<i>Supportive staff</i>	17
	<i>Good communication</i>	8
	<i>Good programme</i>	3
	<i>Helpful treatments received</i>	2
	<i>Positive life change</i>	2

Figure 7: Support network - What made it feel like that? - Strengths

Support network – weaknesses

The main weaknesses that made the programme feel less reliable as a support network for veterans were:

- Lack of communication
- Lack of sympathy
- Challenging application process
- Unacceptable time frame
- Difficulty with treatments
- Programme not comprehensive

“Lack of communication. Call, no answer. Or answer, but don't call you back. They also don't answer emails. I was sent to a specialist by them, he then said he can't see me because I don't live in that area. Specialists struggle to get authorisation from VA to do follow ups, which means I don't get to my follow ups.”

Lack of communication

“The times that I do ask for help they make me feel like I am asking for something that I just don't need. They won't help me with pain massages, because they say it is just a 'nice to have' and not necessary.”

Lack of sympathy

“The process is quite cold and bureaucratic and, in the end, contributed negatively to my PTSD. I had to navigate many challenges to receive my pay-out benefits. Your pay-out is meant to be to the value of your last job, but I worked overseas and so I wasn't being taxed by New Zealand, and so I now only get the minimum payment. The process is slow at times as well.”

Challenging application process

“I don't feel like it's a support network as such, there are no other people I can talk to in the same situation, no other veterans that I can talk to. I would like that. But in terms of the network being my CM and doctor then yes.”

Programme not comprehensive

Figure 8 indicates the frequency for each theme.

Main theme	Sub-themes	Frequency
Weaknesses		19
	<i>Lack of communication</i>	6
	<i>Lack of sympathy</i>	4
	<i>Challenging application process</i>	3
	<i>Unacceptable time frame</i>	2
	<i>Difficulty with treatments</i>	2
	<i>Programme not comprehensive</i>	2

Figure 8: Support network - What made it feel like that? - Weaknesses

Comprehensive support

The Veterans' Affairs Rehabilitation Programme aims to provide comprehensive support for physical, spiritual, cultural, and medical health. This section of the report provides insights into how veterans felt regarding the comprehensive nature of their treatment. Figure 9 indicates that only half of veterans in the survey felt that they were receiving comprehensive support.

Did you feel that all aspects of your health were treated with care?

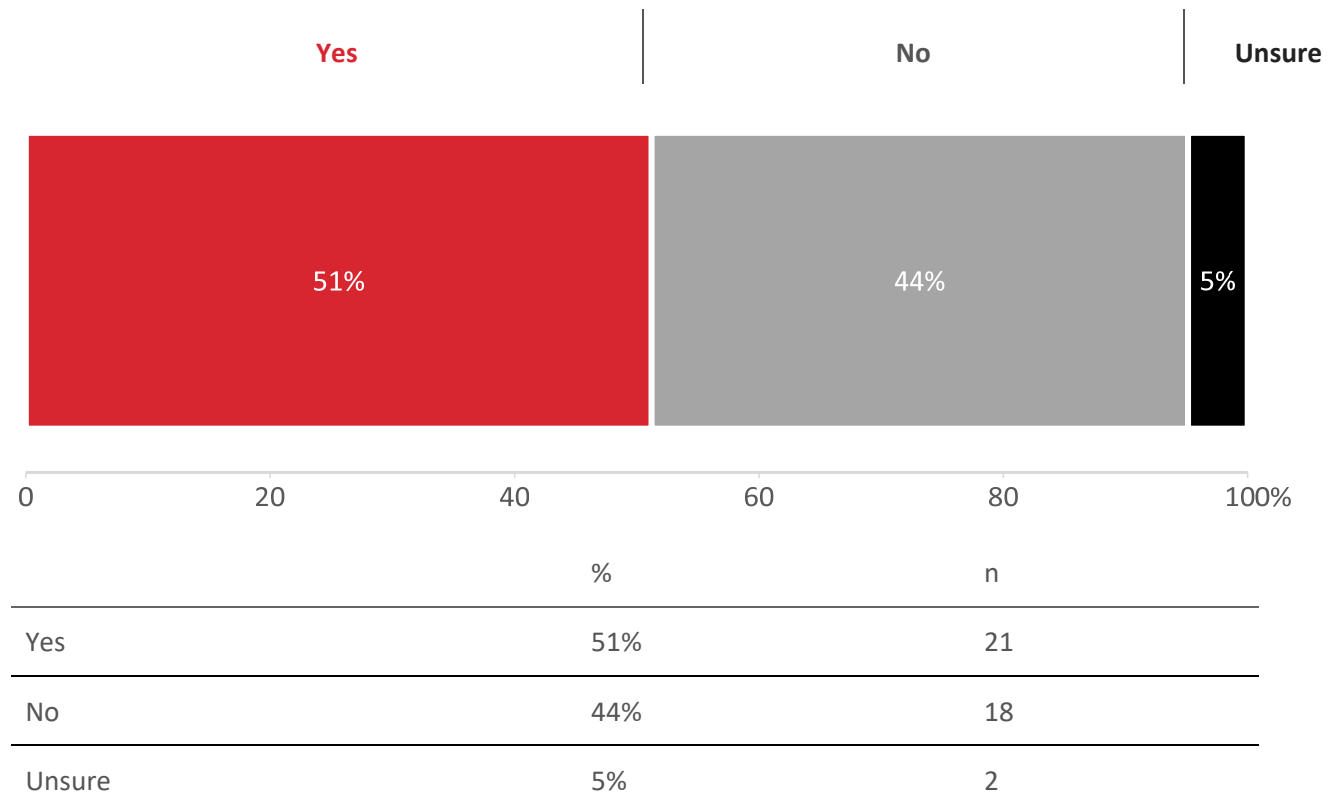


Figure 9. Did you feel that all these aspects (physical, spiritual, cultural, mental) of your health were treated with care?
Base n = 41

The reasons for the programme offering comprehensive support are discussed below as strengths. Weakness are aspects of the programme that have resulted in veterans feeling their health has not been comprehensively supported.

Comprehensive support – strengths

Veterans who felt their health was comprehensively supported identified four reasons for this:

- Supportive staff
- Comprehensive programme
- Help received from VA
- Good communication

“Support for each aspect been looked at. Hard to admit that you have a problem, but the help and assistance has helped.”

“I can tell them anything, whatever's happening, they help me straight away or they point me in the right direction.”

“Honesty is the biggest thing for me. VA always do what they say. They have never said they will do one thing and then do something else.”

Supportive staff

“Allocated a number of providers that addressed each of these.”

Comprehensive programme

“I got financial support from them, which was what I really required.”

Help received from VA

“There is someone to talk to at any time, I just have to get on the phone.”

“It’s the fact that they are there. My case manager said any time, anything, just ring”

Good communication

Figure 10 indicates the frequency for each theme.

Main theme	Sub-themes	Frequency
Strengths		16
	<i>Supportive staff</i>	8
	<i>Comprehensive programme</i>	4
	<i>Help received from VA</i>	2
	<i>Good communication</i>	2

Figure 10: Comprehensive support - What aspects of the programme made you feel this way? - Strengths

Comprehensive support – weaknesses

Various aspects of the programme led to veterans feeling that their health was not comprehensively supported. Weaknesses include:

- Mental and/or physical health addressed only
 - No need for spiritual or cultural help
- Lack of communication
- Challenging application process
- Lack of rapport with CM
- Unacceptable time frames
- High staff turnover
- Difficulty meeting appointments

“Health and mental yes, but I am not a religious person, so I have not sought out that treatment. Unlikely that I will.”

Mental and/or physical health addressed only

“There have been times where a communication breakdown caused issues and that affected my mental health.”

Lack of communication

“Haven't really had a good experience. I have been waiting one year for claims and issues are still not sorted out. Nine times out of ten they turn you down and then you have to re-apply. Not a good system.”

Challenging application process

“I can't even think of the name of the rehab person I have now. I'm on my third one. It's really lacking. You just get sent to people and they just write reports as a tick box exercise.”

Lack of rapport with CM

Figure 11 indicates the frequency for each theme.

Main theme	Sub-themes	Sub-sub themes	Frequency
Weaknesses			37
		<i>Mental and/or physical health addressed only</i>	21
		<i>No need for spiritual or cultural help</i>	5
		<i>Lack of communication</i>	4
		<i>Challenging application process</i>	4
		<i>Lack of rapport with CM</i>	3
		<i>Unacceptable time frames</i>	3
		<i>High staff turnover</i>	1
		<i>Difficulty meeting appointments</i>	1

Figure 11: Comprehensive support - What aspects of the programme made you feel this way? - Weaknesses

Independence

The Veterans' Affairs Rehabilitation Programme aims to help veterans become more independent. The majority of veterans indicated that the programme has helped them become more independent, in terms of being able to work and be a part of the community (Figure 12).

**Do you feel the programme has helped you gain more independence?
(In terms of being able to work and be a part of the community).**

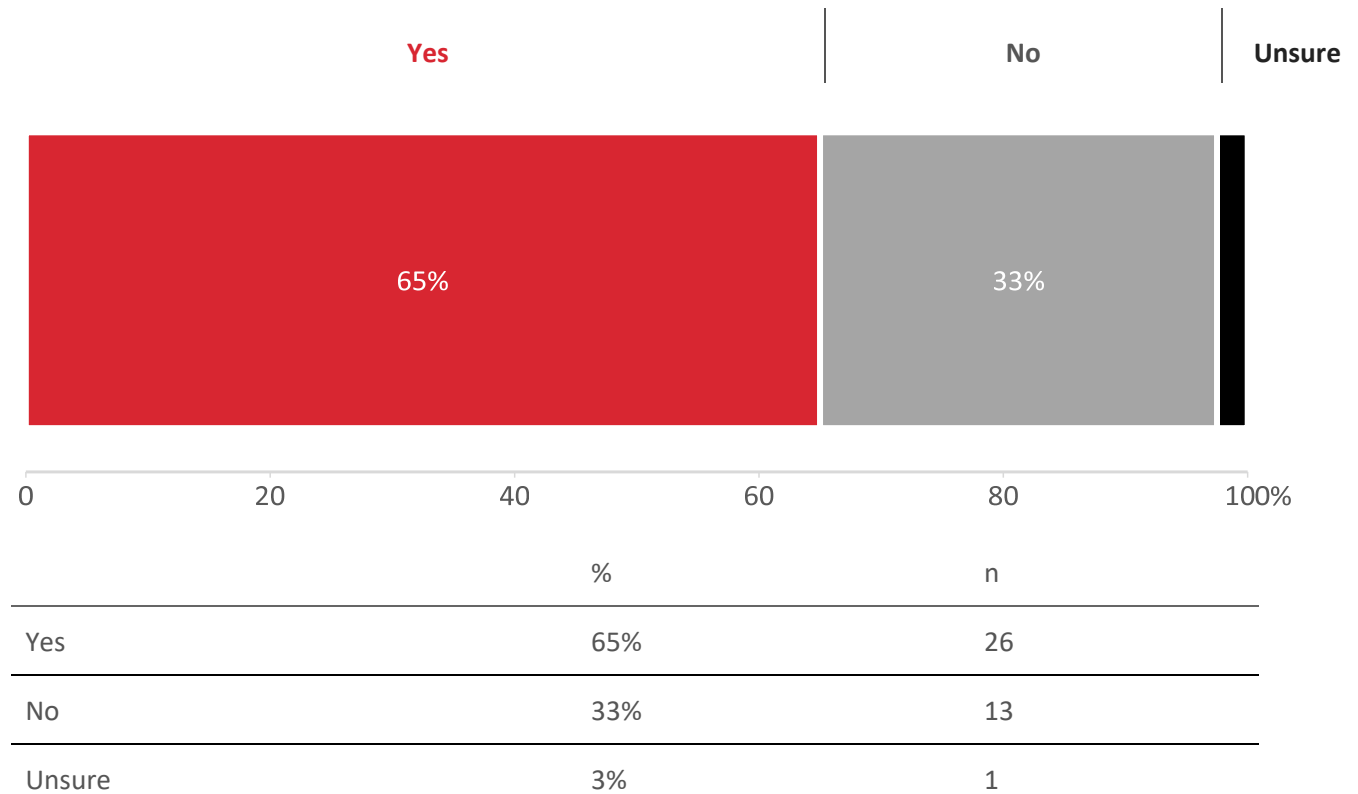


Figure 12. Do you feel that the programme has helped you gain more independence? (In terms of being able to work and be part of the community)
Base n = 40

The reasons for veterans feeling more independent are discussed in the next section as strengths. Weaknesses are limitations affecting veterans' ability to reintegrate.

Independence – strengths

The majority of respondents have noted that the programme has helped them reintegrate with work and their community. The reasons for this include:

- Programme assisting with general integration
- Programme enabled community integration
- On pension and not working
- Supportive staff
- Help allows for focused recovery
- Upskilled by VA
- Programme enabled return to work

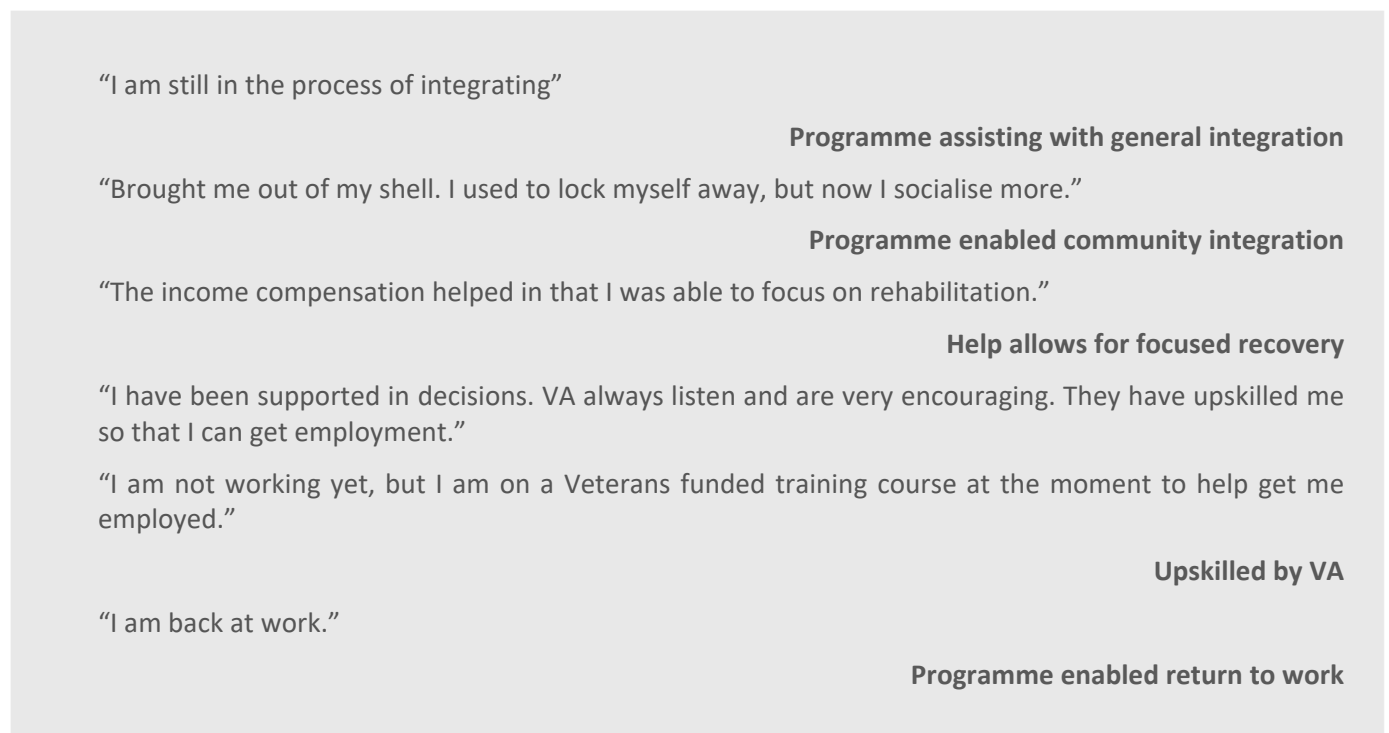


Figure 13 indicates the frequency for each theme.

Main theme	Sub-themes	Frequency
Strengths		35
	<i>Programme assisting with general integration</i>	8
	<i>Programme enabled community integration</i>	6
	<i>On pension and not working</i>	5
	<i>Supportive staff</i>	5
	<i>Help allows for focused recovery</i>	4
	<i>Upskilled by VA</i>	4
	<i>Programme enabled return to work</i>	3

Figure 13: Integration - Do you feel that the programme has helped you gain more independence? (In terms of being able to work and be part of the community) - Strengths

Independence – weaknesses

Weaknesses of the programme are identified where veterans were not able to integrate. The main themes are:

- Not able to work
- Physical conditions limit integration
- Unacceptable time frames
- Lack of rapport with VA staff
- Programme not comprehensive
- Problem accessing service providers

“Still not able to work, but I am integrating better into my community”

Not able to work

“I would like to get out more, but I can’t. But VA have tried to come up with different schemes to get me more mobile.”

Physical conditions limit integration

“NZ doesn't even come close to offering the same services as other veteran departments overseas. They could learn a lot from other places. I tried to do things, and a lady from the agency came to see me about going back to university to study, I waited a year for a reply, and that was just in the form of a general announcement saying that the military, in association with Massey, are giving veterans a 30% discount. No explanation at all. I just don’t feel empowered.”

Unacceptable time frames

“It hasn’t started yet. It took a year and half for VA to make a decision, and that was 8 months ago. During that time agreements were made, what was to be expected, which have now been recently changed, and I’m not talking small changes it was like being promised an African elephant but being given a budge while being told to take it or leave it.”

Lack of rapport with VA staff

Figure 14 indicates the frequency for each theme.

Main theme	Sub-themes	Frequency
Weaknesses		17
	<i>Not able to work</i>	5
	<i>Physical conditions limit integration</i>	5
	<i>Unacceptable time frames</i>	3
	<i>Lack of rapport with VA staff</i>	2
	<i>Programme not comprehensive</i>	1
	<i>Problem accessing service providers</i>	1

Figure 14: Independence - Do you feel that the programme has helped you gain more independence? (In terms of being able to work and be part of the community) - Weaknesses

Accessibility

Veterans' Affairs aims to achieve a high level of knowledge amongst eligible veterans about Veterans' Affairs and the rehabilitation support that it offers. The majority of respondents indicated that the programme felt easy to access and navigate.

Did the programme feel simple to access and navigate?

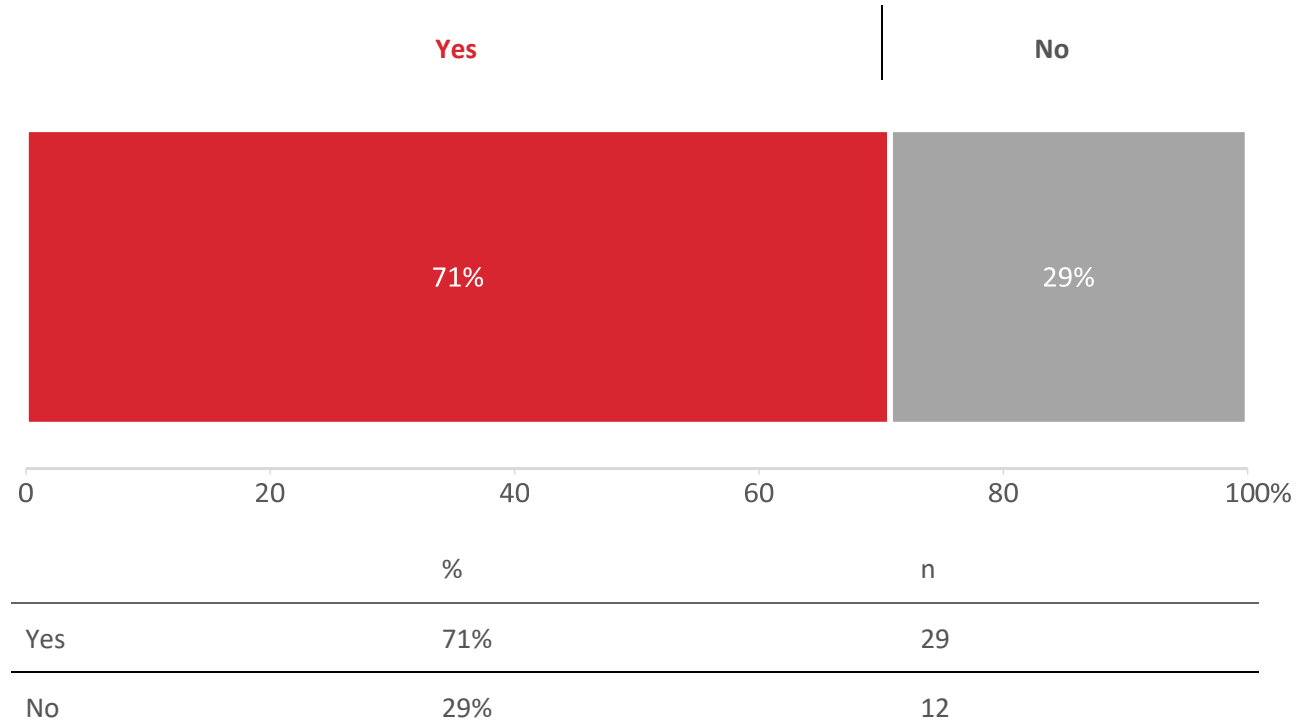


Figure 15. Did the programme feel simple to access and navigate?
Base n = 41

In the following section, themes which veterans identify as enablers to ease of access and navigation are presented as strengths. Limitations to ease of access and navigation are presented as weaknesses.

Accessibility – strengths

Ease of access and navigation were experienced by most veterans in the survey. The main themes are:

- Process is easy
- Supportive staff
- Good communication
- Help from military contacts received

“Currently very easy and very accessible, but in the past no, when they were fairly new it was difficult and hard to know about, but that has changed. I was very lucky.”

“Right from the start, from the first call it was easy. Managed to get through the paperwork just fine.”

Process is easy

“All the information provided was clearly outlined, and when I had questions they were promptly answered.”

“I just dealt with my Case Manager, and he did everything.”

Supportive staff

“All the phone calls and emails, the communication helped.”

“VA were so helpful with reminders to carry on and keep going and to do things if I had forgotten.”

Good communication

“My brother, who is military personal, helped me through the initial stages with the documentation.”

“I had help from people I served with.”

Help from military contacts received

Figure 16 indicates the frequency for each theme.

Main theme	Sub-themes	Frequency
Strengths		33
	<i>Process is easy</i>	13
	<i>Supportive staff</i>	10
	<i>Good communication</i>	8
	<i>Help from military contacts received</i>	2

Figure 16. Accessibility - Did the programme feel simple to access and navigate? - Strengths

Accessibility – weaknesses

Veterans experienced several weaknesses in relation to accessing and navigating the programme. These included:

- Programme not well advertised
- Difficult process
- Inefficient service
- Time consuming process
- Lack of communication
- Service providers cannot complete forms
- Lack of rapport with service providers

“I only knew I was entitled to access this once I was in trouble.”

Programme not well advertised

“No, it’s overwhelming, my wife does all of it. There are a lot of forms to fill in. They also want your medical history, but you can’t access medical information prior to 2000 to prove to VA what happened. Local GP’s also struggle with filling out the forms for VA - they are not sure what is required of them.”

Difficult process

“When I contact my case manager, he generally can’t answer my questions, and then it takes him one month to get back to me, that is too long.”

Inefficient service

“It just was not hard, it was long, but not hard.”

Time consuming process

“Dealing with a whole bunch of outside agencies all the time. I have only had one face to face meeting, I would like more. I was told by service provider that I have no skills that will get me a job in a covid world, left feeling very despondent.”

Lack of rapport with service providers

Figure 17 indicates the frequency for each theme.

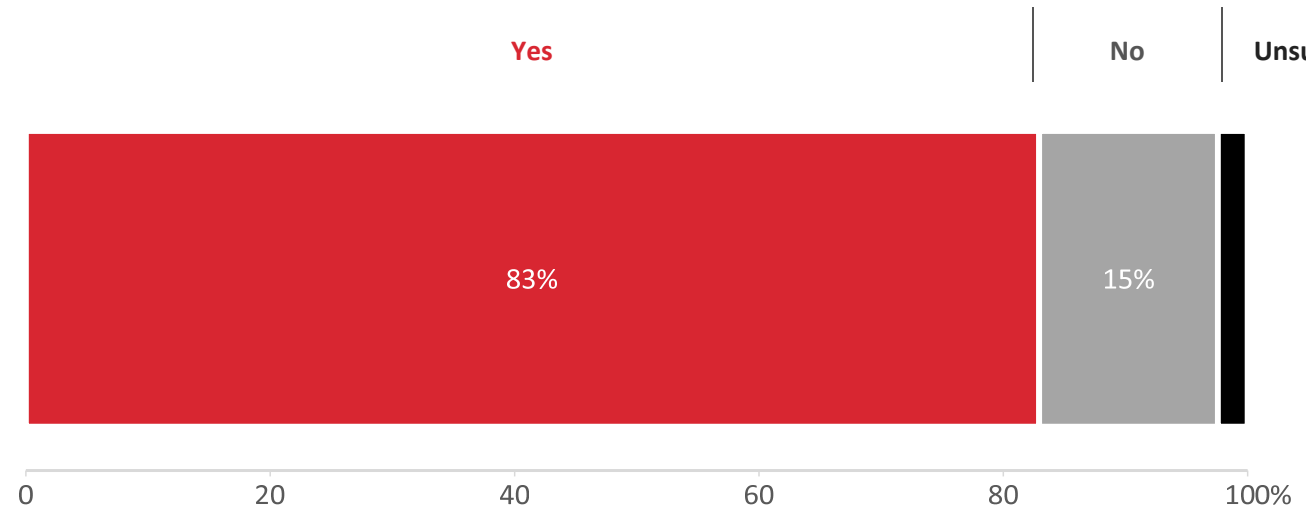
Main theme	Sub-themes	Frequency
Weaknesses	<i>Programme not well advertised</i>	23
	<i>Difficult process</i>	5
	<i>Inefficient service</i>	4
	<i>Time consuming process</i>	4
	<i>Lack of communication</i>	3
	<i>Service providers cannot complete forms</i>	1
	<i>Lack of rapport with service providers</i>	1

Figure 17. Accessibility - Did the programme feel simple to access and navigate? - Weaknesses

Trust

Veterans' Affairs aims to be a trusted supporter. The majority of veterans trust the service providers they have been referred to by Veterans' Affairs.

Did you trust the service providers you were referred to?



	%	n
Yes	83%	34
No	15%	6
Unsure	2%	1

Figure 18. Did you trust the service providers you were referred to?
Base n = 41

The following section breaks down the strengths and weaknesses of service providers that lead to them being perceived as trustworthy or not.

Trust – strengths

Strengths of service providers that enabled trust amongst veterans were:

- Trustworthy providers
 - VA service providers therefore trusted
- Good rapport
 - Service providers with military background preferred
- Good service

“They are professional, and I believe that there is accountability.”

“I trust the ones I have now, I don’t have to worry about them. They can be there without me having to be present.”

Trustworthy providers

“They were contacted through VA and I trust VA”

Trustworthy providers - VA service providers therefore trusted

“Just felt a good connection with them.”

Good rapport

“But it does depend on the personalities involved, the people on the VA list give service and follow up. They make sure you get someone compatible. My counsellor understands me as he is ex-army too. He gets what I mean when I say things.”

“They are all ex-military, so they understand me.”

Good rapport – Service providers with military background preferred

“I haven’t had a lot of referrals, but I have had no problems.”

Good service

Figure 19 indicates the frequency for each theme.

Main theme	Sub-themes	Sub-sub-themes	Frequency
Strengths	Trustworthy providers		34
		VA service providers therefore trusted	17
	Good rapport		10
		Service providers with military background preferred	4
	Good service		7

Figure 19. Trust - Did you trust the service providers you were referred to? - Strengths

Trust – weaknesses

There were six key themes that lead to veterans not trusting their service providers:

- Lack of rapport
- Lack of communication
- Inadequate service provision
- Not service providers as promised by VA
- Confidentiality concerns
- Lack of availability

“First providers I had were being investigated for fraud. It felt like a tick box exercise for those doctors.”

Lack of rapport

“Communication is a problem. Not all the information is passed on. Went to see a specialist, reports were written about me and I was never sent them.”

Lack of communication

“Nope, the first doctor my VA case manager sent me to, with strong assurances they were trained in the American Medical Association Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment (AMA Guides (4th Edition), the doctor had performed many of those evaluations for VA and was a preferred provider, wasn’t, hasn’t and is not. They have not performed any evaluations for Veterans Affairs, “certainly in the last 25years” said the doctor I had to wait months to see.”

Not service providers as promised by VA

“I have been let down a couple of times. When I was referred to a civilian counsellor, she didn’t understand me at all, she did not understand my experiences. She ended up reporting me to the police due to a misunderstanding. But when I have been referred to military specialists, they understand me, and I feel like I can talk to them and they help me. One major concern with civilian doctors is once I saw a civilian my medical records were open to employers to check. This hinders me getting employment. But when I am treated by the military, it is all confidential and then I am not disadvantaged when I am trying to find employment. Overall, I wouldn’t be where I am now without VA and I am grateful for that.”

Confidentiality concerns

Figure 20 indicates the frequency for each theme.

Main theme	Sub-themes	Frequency
Weaknesses		15
	<i>Lack of rapport</i>	6
	<i>Lack of communication</i>	4
	<i>Inadequate service provision</i>	2
	<i>Not service providers as promised by VA</i>	1
	<i>Confidentiality concerns</i>	1
	<i>Lack of availability</i>	1

Figure 20. Trust - Did you trust the service providers you were referred to? - Weaknesses

Net promoter score

58.1

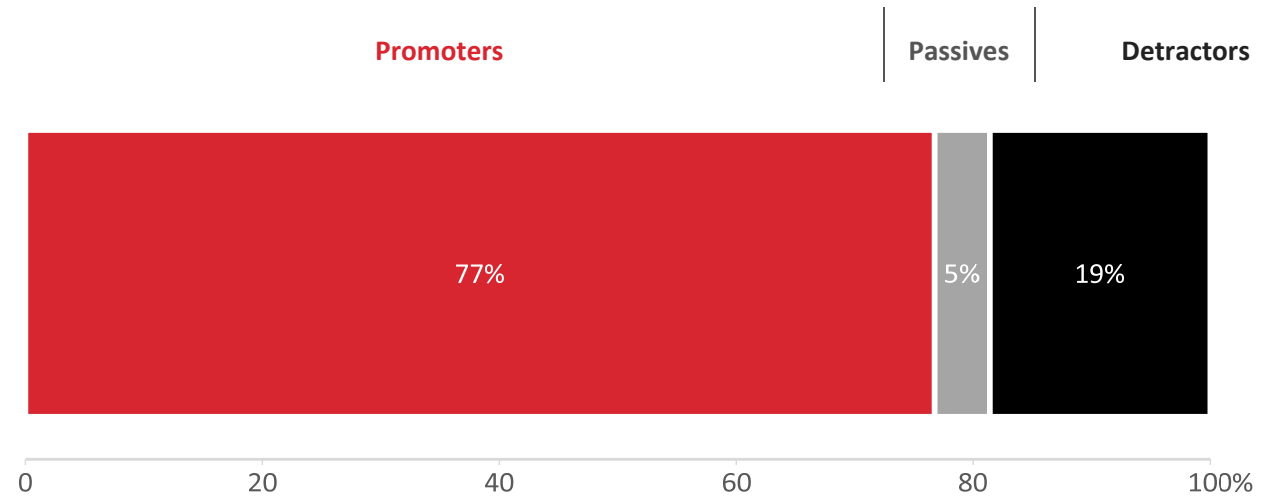


Figure 21. Would you recommend the rehabilitation programme to other former NZDF personnel? NPS average – merged
Base n = 43

The Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a business performance metric used to measure growth and customer satisfaction. The NPS is calculated by asking respondents to rate their likelihood to recommend the programme to others, on a 10-point scale. Those who answer 0-6 are Detractors, 7-8 are Passive, and 9-10 are Promoters. The NPS is equal to the percentage of Promoters minus the percentage of Detractors.

The NPS score indicates different things, depending on the culture of the country in which the question is asked. In New Zealand and Australia, **30** is considered an **average** score.

The fact that the Veterans' Affairs rehabilitation programme has a score of nearly 60 shows that the programme is, overall, perceived in a positive light by veterans. If Veterans' Affairs decide to run this survey annually, the NPS will be a key indicator of overall yearly performance.

Case manager and rehabilitation advisor support

Most veterans felt supported by their Case manager and rehabilitation advisor .

Did you feel well supported by your case manager and rehabilitation advisor?

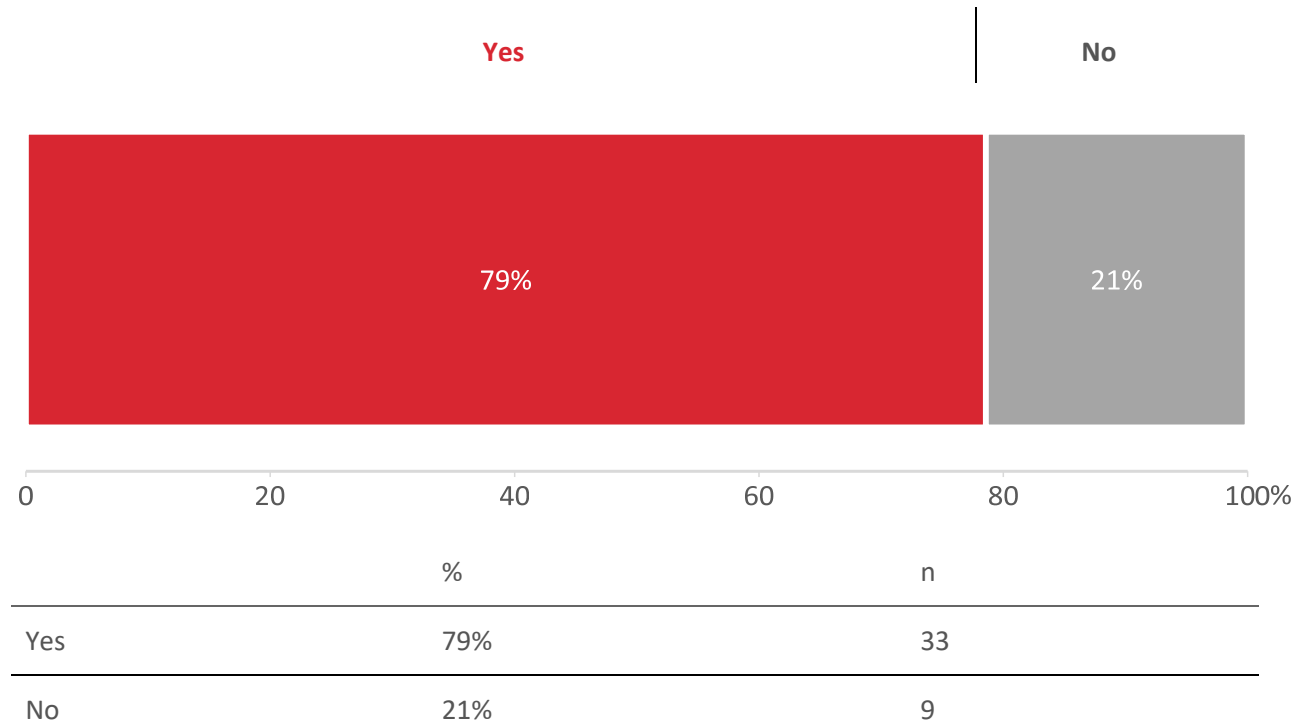


Figure 22. Did you feel well supported by your case manager and rehabilitation advisor?
Base n = 42

The following section breaks down the strengths and weaknesses of veterans' case managers and rehabilitation advisors.

Case manager and rehabilitation advisor support – strengths

Veterans identified three main strengths of their case managers and rehabilitation advisors:

- Supportive staff
- Good communication
- Good rapport with staff

“They are good. Always available and understandable, they never push. They accept you as an individual and look to your needs.”

“Regular calls, his willingness to be supportive. They want to help with the administration to get you onto the programme.”

“Just a nice person to understand me and point me in the right direction. And always provides the support I require.”

Supportive staff

“Constant contact and support.”

“Correspondence was great. If I needed them, I could just pick up the phone and give them a call.”

“Their availability, just have to get on the phone.”

Good communication

“I have had a good experience with them.”

“They are amazing.”

“They are just honest, and I like that. My CM is just magic and if she is not there, and I can’t get hold of her, there are other CMs that I can contact, and they help me.”

Good rapport with staff

Figure 23 indicates the frequency for each theme.

Main theme	Sub-themes	Frequency
Strengths		41
	<i>Supportive staff</i>	17
	<i>Good communication</i>	13
	<i>Good rapport with staff</i>	11

Figure 23. Case manager and rehabilitation advisor support - Did you feel well supported by your case manager and rehabilitation advisor? – Strengths

Case manager and rehabilitation advisor support – weaknesses

Veterans experienced five main weaknesses with their Case managers and rehabilitation advisors:

- Lack of communication
- Overloaded VA staff
- Lack of rapport with staff
- High staff turnaround
- Inefficient staff

“I don’t have a rehabilitation advisor. My case manager lacks in communication, she is often training new staff and so away from her desk so I can’t get hold of her.”

Lack of communication

“My CM has a massive case load and so there is minimal support. She does follow through with things, I do get my disability pension, but that’s all.”

Overloaded VA staff

“My first CM - not so much, she was always there if I needed her, but she didn't keep in touch for 10 months. It felt like she didn't care. My new CM rings every few weeks, I don’t mind this, but it does make me feel like I am under the microscope. But because she is more involved, she is helping me.”

Lack of rapport with staff

“I have had three different case managers, they keep getting changed, and I haven't heard from the latest one at all. He doesn't check in or provide any feedback.”

High staff turnaround

“When I was having problems with my service providers, I was told I have to negotiate with them, but I don’t have the contract with them, VA does. When applying for permanent disability allowance I have been told to apply for something different and it’s a whole new set of paperwork. They are not meeting deadlines; I have been waiting for something for four months. It’s very frustrating for veterans. We get the feeling that they are waiting for us to die so that they don’t have to pay us.”

Inefficient staff

Figure 24 indicates the frequency for each theme.

Main theme	Sub-themes	Frequency
Weaknesses		17
	<i>Lack of communication</i>	9
	<i>Overloaded VA staff</i>	3
	<i>Lack of rapport with staff</i>	3
	<i>High staff turnaround</i>	1
	<i>Inefficient staff</i>	1

Figure 24. Case Manager and Rehabilitation Advisor support - Did you feel well supported by your Case manager and rehabilitation advisor ? - Weaknesses

General feedback

Veterans were asked for any general feedback regarding the programme. Feedback has been categorised into strengths and weaknesses.

General feedback – strengths

General feedback from veterans indicated that the main strength of the programme was the support it provided for them. The main themes are:

- Gratitude
- Positive life change because of VA
- Help received

“Everything is just really appreciated”

“They are doing genuinely lifesaving stuff. Overall, the experience as a whole has been very positive. They are supportive when needed, whenever I contact them. Without them and their help, I wouldn't be here now.”

Gratitude

“VA changed my life; they have made me who I am today.”

“The programme is a life saver; I am very grateful. Offer a great service. Wouldn't still be married if it wasn't for them.”

“More than happy with the assistance, it's been great, it takes the stress away.”

Positive life change because of VA

“The services that they provide are adequate, they do help.”

Help received

Figure 25 indicates the frequency for each theme.

Main theme	Sub-themes	Frequency
Strengths		16
	<i>Gratitude</i>	8
	<i>Positive life change because of VA</i>	6
	<i>Help received</i>	2

Figure 25. General comments - Do you have any other comments about the Veterans' Affairs Rehabilitation programme? - Strengths

General feedback – weaknesses

General feedback from veterans indicated various weaknesses of the programme. These include:

- Lack of communication
- Programme not well advertised
- Expectations not met
- VA staff overloaded limiting support
- Lack of rapport with VA staff
- Unacceptable length of time
- Difficulty with application process
- Concern over support ending

“At least be told when they are dealing with your case and be given a timeline of when you can expect an outcome. They need to work on their communication. Process for review is grindingly slow, board needs to meet more often and make decisions faster. Also, they need to be more specific about what information they want and how much information they want.”

Lack of communication

“This programme has got to be put out there more. A lot of veterans don't know the programme is there.”

Programme not well advertised

“Please implement a spartan programme.”

Expectations not met

“Disappointing, I want to be able to support myself, I need a goal. I should be treated with respect and being told to go home just because my mother is English seems to be the foundation of Veterans Affairs thinking. They aim to find any way not to assist.”

Lack of rapport with VA staff

Figure 26 indicates the frequency for each theme.

Main theme	Sub-themes	Frequency
Weaknesses		25
	<i>Lack of communication</i>	6
	<i>Programme not well advertised</i>	6
	<i>Expectations not met</i>	5
	<i>VA staff overloaded limiting support</i>	2
	<i>Lack of rapport with VA staff</i>	2
	<i>Unacceptable length of time</i>	2
	<i>Difficulty with application process</i>	1
	<i>Concern over support ending</i>	1

Figure 26. General comments - Do you have any other comments about the Veterans' Affairs Rehabilitation programme? - Weaknesses

Survey questionnaire

- 1) How did you find out about the Veterans' Affairs Rehabilitation programme? Select all that apply
- GP
 - Treating specialist
 - Veterans' Affairs staff
 - Veterans' Affairs website
 - Referral from NZDF
 - Word of mouth from NZDF personnel
 - Friends, whānau, family
 - Other sources (please specify)
 - Don't know/can't remember

Equal partners

- 2) Did you feel like an equal partner throughout the rehabilitation process?
- Yes
 - No
 - Unsure
 - Not applicable
- 3) What made you feel this way?
- 4) Did the programme feel like a support network you could rely on when needed?
- Yes
 - No
 - Unsure
 - Not applicable
- 5) What made it feel like that?

Comprehensive support

The programme aims to provide comprehensive support for physical, spiritual, cultural and mental health.

- 6) Did you feel that all these aspects of your health were treated with care?
- Yes
 - No
 - Unsure
 - Not applicable
- 7) What aspects of the programme made you feel this way?

Accessibility

- 8) Do you feel that the programme has helped you gain more independence? (In terms of being able to work and be part of the community)
- Yes
 - No
 - Unsure
 - Not applicable
- 9) Why do you think that?
- 10) Did the programme feel simple to access and navigate?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure
- Not applicable

11) What made it feel this way?

Trust

12) Did you trust the service providers you were referred to?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure
- Not applicable

13) Why did you feel this way about them?

14) Would you recommend the rehabilitation programme to other former NZDF personnel?
Definitely not (0) - Definitely (10)

15) Did you feel well supported by your Case manager and rehabilitation advisor ?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure
- Not applicable

16) What aspects of their support made you feel this why?

Other comments and contact

17) Do you have any other comments about the Veterans' Affairs Rehabilitation programme?

18) Would you like contact from Veterans' Affairs regarding anything you have discussed today?

- Yes
- No

19) Please provide your most up to date contact information so VA can get in touch with you.

- Name
- Email Address
- Phone Number

Thank you

Thank you for taking this survey. Your response is very important to Veterans' Affairs.