

Service Standard reassessment report

Apply for a medal

From: Defence Digital
Assessment date: 27/6/2023
Stage: Alpha - reassessment
Result: Met
Service provider: Digital Foundry

Assessment panel

Personal information will not be published. It is only included here for internal purposes.

Lead assessor: Stacey Crump
User research assessor: Jane Reid
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Previous assessment reports

Apply for a medal - alpha assessment 1/3/2023

Service description

The service enables veterans or their power of attorney or next of kin to apply for medals that they are eligible for following service in the UK Armed Forces (The Army, the Royal Navy, the Royal Marines, the Royal Air Force, the Home Guard or the reserve forces.)

Eligibility criteria varies by medal.

Currently, the MOD Medals Office (MODO) processes c.50,000 cases for medals and veteran's badges each year.

The new service will also serve non-military users where applicable. Through this service, civilians will be eligible for the Nuclear Test medal, due to launch in 2023, and for which an overall increase in applications is expected.

Service users

This service is for:

- Veterans
- Users assisting veterans to complete their own applications
- Users holding the veterans' Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA)
- Surviving relatives claiming posthumous veteran medals
- Back-office users processing the applications

Covering, advisory note

The Apply for a Medal service team has made sufficient progress to give the panel confidence that they can move into private beta. The service team should now consider whether the rest of their plan can be completed within the current private beta timescale.

1. Understand users and their needs

Decision

The service met [point 1 of the Standard](#).

What the team has done well

The panel was impressed that:

- the team has used data from internal sources and the 2021 Census to better understand the size and make-up of the main user groups. This has given them a clearer picture of where applications are coming from, for example veterans and next of kin
- the user researcher is making concerted efforts to find a diverse range of users, for example tapping into other organisations to arrange pop-up research in the community
- the team continue to iterate existing personas based on feedback

What the team needs to explore

Before the next assessment, the team needs to:

- consider using specialist research recruitment services to find current and potential future users, such as those who are hard to reach or reluctant to engage. This will eliminate bias which may exist through informal recruitment channels.

- continue to iterate existing personas to ensure they include users with accessibility needs and those with assisted digital needs. Consider separating them out and using the [Digital Inclusion Scale](#) to clearly communicate the needs of assisted digital users.
- conduct user research across users' end to end journey (including all offline channels). Ensure all journeys where users apply for a medal and a veteran's badge are considered, as well as potential touchpoints with Veterans ID Card

2. Solve a whole problem for users

Decision

The service met [point 2 of the Standard](#).

What the team has done well

The panel was impressed that:

- the team have found a digital solution to wet signatures
- the team have considered when the question about the veterans badge could be asked. They've then used content within a targeted question to fulfil this potential need
- the end-to-end user journeys have been mapped and also considered using [one thing per page](#)

What the team needs to explore

Before the next assessment, the team needs to:

- continue looking at more content solutions to guide users who might have already applied for a badge (or might want to in the future) in the beta plan
- continue looking at content solutions to prepare and hand-hold users through the application process - including things such as lead times. They should ensure they have time to make changes to, and research adequately, this content
- follow through on improving the receipt part of the user journey

3. Provide a joined-up experience across all channels

Decision

The service met [point 3 of the Standard](#).

What the team has done well

The panel was impressed that:

- content improvements in the digital channel will also be made to the existing paper form. This means that the support team will be able to offer tailored support for both the digital and paper methods, making the service work for all users
- the team is working on a notification strategy and have explored user needs around users being kept up to date with the status of their application, which can take up to 12 weeks. The team have plans to use GOV.UK Notify to meet this need

What the team needs to explore

Before the next assessment, the team needs to:

- consider talking to other government teams about the work they've done to keep users informed about the progress of an application, including delays

5. Make sure everyone can use the service

Decision

The service met [point 5 of the Standard](#).

What the team has done well

The panel was impressed that:

- the team are committed to using GOV.UK design system components and patterns
- they have engaged with veterans who are not active members of veteran charities and networks, and are working to understand the needs of vulnerable users
- they are reassessing content and will research and iterate changes to the service since the first assessment
- they are using the GOV.UK Prototype Kit to start accessibility testing

What the team needs to explore

Before the next assessment, the team needs to:

- start accessibility testing for users of screen readers, screen magnifiers, etc. This was a recommendation from the previous reassessment and should be started as soon as possible
- do more research with users who have [assisted digital support](#) needs. Does the service work for users with low digital literacy or are low in confidence when using digital products?

6. Have a multidisciplinary team

Decision

The service met [point 6 of the Standard](#).

What the team has done well

The panel was impressed that:

- the team recruited a content designer to review content and user evidence
- the content and service designers showed how working together can help to understand a whole problem

What the team needs to explore

Before the next assessment, the team needs to:

- consider the time they will need to test and iterate thoroughly, which may mean scaling up the team or extending the private beta phase

11. Choose the right tools and technology

Decision

This was not part of the alpha reassessment. However, the tech assessor provided feedback for the team to consider on [point 11 of the Standard](#).

What the team has done well

The panel was impressed that:

- the team used mainly appropriate tools and technologies
- they applied relevant tips and guidance from the cross-government community of practice (for example, their use of Pingdom)
- the team reused work from within the Department and across Government
- the team used analytics to understand users' entry paths into the service

What the team needs to explore

Before the next assessment, the team needs to:

- continue with their work to replatform from GOV.UK PaaS
- make sure they have found replacements for all the functions provided by GOV.UK PaaS, such as security monitoring

Next steps

Met - alpha reassessment

This service can now move into a private beta phase, subject to implementing the recommendations outlined in the report and getting approval from the CDDO spend control team. The service must meet the standard at beta assessment before launching public beta.

The service team is invited to book in a '[Get feedback on your Service](#)' peer review in four weeks time.

To get the service ready to launch on GOV.UK the team needs to:

- get a GOV.UK service domain name
- work with the GOV.UK content team on any changes required to GOV.UK content

This report will be published in the Defence Service Manual

If there is a factual inaccuracy in the report, contact the facilitator immediately. If they do not hear from you within five working days of sending this report out, it will be published in the Defence Service Manual.

Email

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- Service designer – Jon Gough
- Developer – Michael Sheehan (observer /support with questions)
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