

EXPERT GROUP ON THE NEEDS OF THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY IN WALES

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 5 JULY 2017

Members

Carl Sargeant AM	Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children
Reg Kilpatrick	Welsh Government – Local Government
Brigadier Alan Richmond	160 Infantry Brigade and HQ in Wales
Colonel Lance Patterson	160 Infantry Brigade and HQ in Wales
Air Commodore Adrian Williams	RAF
Sqn Ldr Stuart Cairns	RAF
Commander Al Gibson	Royal Navy
Annabel Ingram	Army Family Federation
Jen Brooksbank	RAF Family Federation
Jane Williams	Naval Families Federation
Lisa Gostling	HIVE
Ant Metcalfe	Royal British Legion
Seb Hargeaves	Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen Families Association (SSAFA)
Col Nick Beard	Reserve Forces and Cadets Association (RFCA)
Rachel Morgan	WLGA
James Greenrod	Ministry of Defence Covenant team
Neil Kitchiner	Veterans NHS Wales
Ray Lock	Forces in Mind Trust
Meri Mayhew	Forces in Mind Trust
Kevin Morgan	Department for Work and Pensions
Leeanne Plechowicz	Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service in Wales
Jan Jones	Welsh Government – Community Safety
Matt Downton	Welsh Government – Mental Health
Cerys Gage	Welsh Government – Community Safety

Apologies

Peter Evans	Royal British Legion
Lt Col Stephen Hughes	Reserve Forces and Cadets Association (RFCA)
Mike Bailey	Veterans Welfare Service
Naomi Alleyne	WLGA
Dawn North	HIVE
Ian Caws	COBSEO
Huw Thomas	Department for Work and Pensions
Peter Higson	Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board
Ian Barrow	Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service in Wales
Bon Westcott	Welsh Government – Community Safety
Martin Swain	Welsh Government – Community Safety
Jason Pollard	Welsh Government – Mental Health

ITEM 1 – WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

- 1.1 The Cabinet Secretary welcomed members to the fourteenth meeting of the Expert Group.
- 1.2 Following the recent announcement that Conwy is to host the 2018 National Armed Forces Day the Cabinet Secretary noted his delight at this decision. Thanking all those who had been involved in the successful proposal the Cabinet Secretary requested that an update on plans for the 2018 event be discussed at the next meeting.

Action:

- **Preparations for the 2018 National Armed Forces day to be considered at the next meeting.**

ITEM 2 – MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING 26 JANUARY 2017

- 2.1 The Cabinet Secretary invited members to agree the minutes for accuracy. Colonel Lance Patterson asked that para 5.3 be revised to CDT (compulsory drug test).

Action:

- **Para 5.3 of the minutes to be amended from carbohydrate deficient transferrin to compulsory drug test.**

ITEM 3 – PROGRESS REPORT ON ACTIONS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- 3.1 Jan Jones highlighted that an update on progress against all of the matters arising from the last meeting was provided in the actions log, a copy of which had been sent to all members. Jan invited the Air Commodore Adrian Williams to provide an update on preparations for the RAF Centenary, 2018.
- 3.2 The Air Commodore advised members that there would be a number of events for the public across the UK to mark the centenary, including a programme of events across all corners of Wales. The RAF 100 programme for Wales would make use of existing community events to maximise opportunity and aid resources. The Air Commodore outlined a variety of examples included in the Wales programme events, such as an event at the David Lloyd George museum, Criccieth, to recognise David Lloyd George's role as Prime Minister

in the decision to create the world's first independent Air Force, a display of historic and contemporary aircraft before the National Museum of Wales and Cardiff City Hall and a range of air and ground displays at the Wales Air Show, Swansea in 2018. It was also highlighted that as Conwy were hosting the National Armed Forces Day 2018 there would be an opportunity for the tri-services to work collaboratively and promote their areas.

- 3.3 An additional strand during 2018 would be the rollout of the RAF STEM programme across Wales. The programme, which is to be launched in January 2018, and in collaboration with Welsh Government officials in education, will include support from key organisations such as Rolls Royce and Airbus.
- 3.4 Thanking the Air Commodore for his update the Cabinet Secretary highlighted the importance of a co-ordinated approach and asked for a RAF Centenary working group to be established.
- 3.5 Commenting on the late instruction received at the event to mark the Centenary of the Battle of the Somme Colonel Patterson reinforced the importance of a collaborative approach from an early stage.
- 3.6 Rachel Morgan provided an update on the work underway to review the role of the Armed Forces Champions. Rachel explained that a sub-group had been established consisting of Local Authority Armed Forces lead officers and the model role description would be reviewed within the sub-group.
- 3.7 The Cabinet Secretary asked if the Expert Group members should review the role of the Armed Forces Champions collectively. Jan advised that this would be taken forward after summer recess, with all Champions invited to attend a meeting with the Cabinet Secretary to discuss their role and the support provided by Welsh Government. Leeanne Plechowicz suggested that the Armed Forces Criminal Justice Champions should also be involved.
- 3.8 Ant Metcalfe noted the opportunity to instil continuity across all Local Authorities through the Armed Forces Liaison Officer posts.

Action:

- **An RAF Centenary working group to be established.**

ITEM 4 – STOMP UPDATE

- 4.1 Leeanne Plechowicz provided an overview of the SToMP model, a whole system approach to supporting ex-Service personnel who come into contact with the Criminal Justice System in Wales. Covenant funding from the Ministry of Defence, in addition to resources from Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service in Wales, has enabled delivery of the project. Through the use of strategic multi-agency co-ordination the aim of the project is to improve the identification and signposting of Armed Forces personnel to specialist armed

forces services at all stages of the criminal justice system. It was noted that recording practices have improved since January 2015, with more than double ex-Armed Services personnel identified on HMPPS systems.

- 4.2 Leeanne explained that a Steering Group had been established and is chaired by the SToMP project manager. One of the pieces of work being taken forward by the project manager is to commission research exploring the barriers to self disclosure by ex Armed Services Personnel in a criminal justice setting. She is also working closely with Barnardos Cymru, Public Health Wales and the ACEs Hub to ensure that research conducted into those affected by Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) includes an Ex Armed Service cohort or that separate research is commissioned. The project manager is also facilitating discussions between the four police forces in Wales with regards to improving identification and developing a consistent referral and/or diversion process across Wales. She is also liaising with the Chief Clerk to the Justices to develop a briefing pack for sentencers and has facilitated training to probation court teams to increase awareness of ex Armed Service Personnel.
- 4.3 A SToMP Prisoner Pathway' is being developed to ensure a consistent assessment and referral process to specialist support services. As part of the Pathway two Prison Liaison Officers (PLOs) have been appointed to support prison staff and Offender Managers working across all South Wales prisons, including in the Endeavour Unit. The PLOs are scoping existing good practice, and enhancing and adapting existing processes to ensure consistency of service to all ex ASP leaving custody. Leeanne confirmed that a robust collaborative model is in place in HMP Cardiff. Regular prisoner coffee mornings occur with prisoners and specialist services, followed by discussions between specialist services and prison staff about specific cases about to be released to encourage partnership working and reduce duplication.
- 4.4 With regards to the Endeavour Unit, Leeanne is completing research herself into the resettlement experience of ex Armed Service Personnel who have been released from the Unit since it opened in 2015. She is exploring whether the Unit model met their needs both within custody and in preparation for resettlement and will produce a report in January. Leeanne agreed to report back findings at the next meeting.
- 4.5 All prison staff in the Shaun Stocker Community in HMP Berwyn, (based on the Endeavour Unit model) have received training on the needs of ex-Armed Forces personnel arranged by SToMP and delivered by York University and Nick Wood. SToMP are working closely with HMP Berwyn to support their development of referral pathways between prisons and their Community and from the unit into specialist charities.
- 4.6 Leeanne explained that SToMP has applied for a small Covenant Grant so that it can hold a series of Community Days across the six prisons in Wales to better integrate local communities, businesses, and specialist charities with ex-Armed Forces personnel and their families.

- 4.7 Leeanne advised that additional resource has been obtained to fund a Transition Pathway for ex ASP being discharged from Colchester military prison and resettling back in Wales. Work commences July.
- 4.8 Colonel Patterson commented that ex–Armed Forces personnel based in HMP Parc were more willing to undertake self-development and following their release they were less likely to re-offend. Concern was expressed regarding the decision to move ex-Armed Forces personnel based in HMP Berwyn to a general wing to support their transition back into the community.
- 4.9 The Cabinet Secretary emphasised the importance of the work on ACEs and noted that it is yet to be understood if the issue is service related or as a result of a previous adverse experience. He encouraged members to engage with the ACEs Hub to identify pre-service issues. Findings would be followed up at a later date.
- 4.10 The group discussed the linkages between domestic violence and family breakdown whereby the spouse and children have 90 days following the family breakdown to find alternative accommodation. Colonel Patterson agreed to provide further information on the Ministry of Defence policy. Jane Williams spoke about the SFA (Service Family Accommodation) policy (JSP464) giving the detail regarding regulations for those living in SFA if there is a family breakdown and those needing to move on after completion of Armed Forces service. Jane explained that during family breakdowns Commander approval can be sought for those families that are perceived as vulnerable to move to single accommodation during the reconciliation phase. The family have 93 days to reconcile differences after which alternative accommodation would need to be sought. The Cabinet Secretary asked for further detail on the policy and that consideration be given to a whole support pathway to prevent homelessness.

Actions:

- **Leeanne Plechowicz to report findings back at the next meeting on the research underway in relation to the Endeavour Unit model and the experience of ex Armed Service Personnel released from the Unit**
- **Colonel Patterson and Jane Williams to provide further information on the MoD policy relating to family breakdowns and service accommodation.**

ITEM 5 – FORCES IN MIND TRUST

- 5.1 Ray Lock and Meri Mayhew attended on behalf of Forces in Mind Trust (FIMT). Ray explained that FIMT was founded in 2012 following a £35m Big Lottery Fund 20 year endowment and its aim, through grant awards, is to improve the transition process for Service personnel and their families.

- 5.2 Ray confirmed that obtaining evidence concerning transition issues can be challenging and identified a number of FIMT grant funded projects in Wales that are in place. This includes a project to research veteran transition into the community being undertaken by Glyndwr University. Since FIMT's establishment 80 projects have been funded totalling £12m.
- 5.3 Meri spoke about a variety of FIMT reports. The 'Our Community – Our Covenant' report is in its second edition and provides an opportunity to identify gaps and test the self assessment tool. Work on transition mapping has been undertaken whereby the transferrable skills that Service personnel can bring to the workplace were made clear. Further work however is needed in relation to Early Service Leavers (ESLs). Meri praised the recent Call to Mind report and noted that the UK summary is soon to be published. A report profiling the provision of services to Armed Forces Veterans under the supervision of Probation Services has recently been published and includes clear links to Wales. A study in Kings is being undertaken exploring the barriers around domestic violence and abuse. Meri confirmed that funding has been given to posts to support transition in the tri-service family federations.
- 5.4 Jane questioned the approach of the Kings study and whether or not it encompassed mental or physical abuse. Meri confirmed that the study covered the whole perspective, mental and physical.
- 5.5 Brigadier Richmond commented that whilst the work of the Career Transition Partnership was welcomed Early Service Leavers (ESLs) don't receive the full benefits of the support package. Ray commented that further work would be useful to explore ex-Service personnel previously in the care systems that have turned their lives around. Jane advised that the Naval Families Federation has in place Transition Guides for those leaving the service. A link to the guide would be shared with the group.
- 5.6 The Cabinet Secretary asked for two collaborative pieces of work to be undertaken, firstly an exploration of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) of those entering the services, and secondly an exploration of ACEs and ESLs. Jan commented that whilst there are linkages between ESLs and ACEs research would be useful to compare and contrast the two.
- 5.7 Reg Kilpatrick questioned whether further work should be carried out to improve recruitment to the services, providing more support for those who have identified with ACEs. The Cabinet Secretary said that whilst many Armed Forces personnel suffered with ACEs these were more likely to be identified following transition.
- 5.8 Ant Metcalfe commented on the Business in the Community toolkit and the skills that Armed Forces and ex-Service personnel can bring to the workplace. It was noted that whilst the Army has a duty of care to up skill its recruits and is the largest provider of apprenticeships amongst the tri-services, ESLs don't always take up the opportunities offered to them. Brigadier Richmond advised that greater use should be made of the Regimental Associations to identify members of the Armed Forces who may require additional support.

5.9 Dr Neil Kitchiner spoke about the 3MDR therapy used to treat those suffering with post traumatic stress disorder. Currently in its initial stages Neil agreed to report back any results in 18 months.

Actions:

- **The Naval Families Federation Transition Guides to be shared with the group.**
- **Two collaborative pieces of work to be undertaken**
 1. **an exploration of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) of those entering the services**
 2. **an exploration of ACEs and ESLs.**

ITEM 6 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

6.1 The Cabinet Secretary was pleased to hear that planning for HMS Cambria had recently been passed and invited Colonel Nick Beard to provide an update. Colonel Beard confirmed that the new naval facility was going through the OJEC (Official Journal of the European Union) tendering process and that it is scheduled for completion late 2018 and to be opened formally in 2019.

6.2 Brigadier Richmond provided an update from 160 Infantry Brigade and HQ in Wales. In Wales the bases to be affected by Army 2020 Refine and the Defence Estates Review include the disbandment of the Army Reserve Centre at Prestatyn and the relocation of 101 Battalion REME to Keynsham. It was noted that 160 Brigade are keen to enhance facilities available at Kinmel Camp, Bodelwyddan.

6.3 There is at present a £25k roll over of the Welsh Government funding given towards the Armed Forces Employability Pathway (AFEP). Launched in 2015, 157 candidates have attended the course of which 51 have joined the Regular Army with 33 having joined the Reserves.

6.4 The Employer Recognition Scheme and Armed Forces Wales Awards will take place on the 30 November. Brigadier Richmond asked the group to give consideration to nominating anyone deserving of an award.

6.5 Concerns were raised over the future of the MoD Education Support Fund (ESF). The ESF provides significant funding to schools to support service children, especially given that the Service Pupil Premium (SPP) isn't applicable to Wales. A lot of good work was going on in Welsh schools as a result of the funding; highlighted in the recent Service Children in Education conference. James Greenrod confirmed that discussions regarding ESF were ongoing and if in the future the fund continued there would likely be less of it. Consideration may be given to prioritising some of the Covenant fund if it doesn't continue. James advised having a metric in Wales to identify that the lack of SPP meant that pupils were at a disadvantage. Jan confirmed that discussions were underway with education officials to ascertain the possibility of such a metric.

- 6.6 Ant Metcalfe advised the group that the Royal British Legion (RBL) is working to increase the number of Admiral Nurses within Wales, helping those with dementia and their families. The Count Them In campaign continues to be one of the RBL's focuses for 2017. A research opportunity being driven by the National Office for Statistics, focusing on Serving or ex-Serving personnel was highlighted. Further information would be circulated to the group.
- 6.7 Jane noted the changes being made to the education curriculum and advised that service families were starting to ask questions on how the new curriculum would affect them. Further engagement would be taking place in the autumn. Jane agreed to feed back any issues at the next meeting.
- 6.8 The Cabinet Secretary noted that Peter Higson was unable to attend the meeting and asked for the issue concerning dentistry to be postponed and discussed at the next meeting.

Actions:

- **Information on the National Office for Statistics research opportunity focusing on Serving or ex-Serving personnel, to be circulated to the group.**
- **Dentistry issues to be postponed and discussed at the next meeting.**

ITEM 7 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 7.1 The Cabinet Secretary thanked the members for their important contributions. The next meeting will be held on the 24 January 2018.