



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

# Taking forward the findings of the Veterans Scoping Exercise in Wales and the Strategy for our Veterans



Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.  
This document is also available in Welsh.

## Index

- 4 Ministerial Foreword
- 5 The Strategy for our Veterans
  - Background
  - A UK Approach
  - Cross-cutting factors and Key Themes
  - Responses from Wales
- 10 Wales Veterans Scoping Exercise
  - Background
  - Methodology
  - Engagement with Scoping Exercise
  - Findings
- 15 Welsh Government's Scoping and the UK Veterans Strategy
- 20 What we are doing already to fill the gaps in provision
- 23 Delivery plan
- 26 Governance
- 27 Monitoring progress
- 28 Annex 1
- 29 Annex 2
- 42 Scoping results – Graphs

## Ministerial foreword

Our Veterans rightly hold a special place in our nation's affections. Alongside those still serving in our Armed Forces, and their families, veterans have made, and continue to make, a hugely positive and very valuable contribution to our communities and our country.



The Welsh Government is proud to have played a major part in the development of the [UK Strategy for our Veterans](#) - Its implementation is a significant move forward in the provision of support for people who have given and continue to give so much.

We are committed to continue to play a full part in delivering this agenda.

The Veterans Scoping Exercise represents the Welsh contribution to the UK Strategy for our Veterans. The findings of this work provide the Welsh and UK Governments with direct feedback from the veteran community in Wales on how services are currently delivered; gaps in service provision and importantly, how improvements can be made.

We know that by working together in collaboration and partnership we can create and achieve change for our Armed Forces and veterans' community, their families and support network.

To take this work forward the Welsh Government will work in partnership with other organisations and, most importantly, veterans to address key themes highlighted through the scoping exercise - including health, housing and transition arrangements (between service and civilian life).

It is a privilege to be in this position and I am wholeheartedly committed to ensuring that this strategy will make a real and lasting difference Veterans across Wales.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hannah Blythyn".

**Hannah Blythyn**  
**Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government**

# The Strategy for our Veterans

## Background

On 14 November 2018, the UK wide Strategy for our Veterans was published. The strategy set out the principles and aims needed to continue to meet the needs of older veterans as well as the wider veteran community over the next ten years, and set the right conditions for society to empower, and support, them for the next 100 years.

The vision of the Strategy for our Veterans is that:

*‘Those who have served in the UK Armed Forces, and their families, transition smoothly back into civilian life and contribute fully to a society that understands and values what they have done and what they have to offer’.*

The strategy also *‘sets the intent for veterans public services across the UK to work towards’.*

In Wales, the Welsh Government is committed to that vision and along with our partners through the Armed Forces Expert Group, third sector organisations and Regional and Local Covenant fora, we are committed to supporting Veterans and their families in all aspects of their life. We believe this strategy will enhance and support that work and build on the significant progress that has been made to date.

## A UK approach

The UK, Welsh and Scottish Governments have worked collaboratively during all phases of the development of the Strategy for our Veterans.

From the outset, all Governments agreed on the UK-wide nature of the strategy and its application across all areas. It was agreed that *‘Each nation will determine its own means of consultation to support implementation of this strategy. These will seek views on focused questions, to build on the research and engagement conducted to produce this strategy, against a backdrop of what is already delivered’.*

The Wales Veterans Scoping Exercise is the Welsh Government’s contribution to the Veterans Strategy. The findings of the work provide the Welsh and UK Government’s with direct feedback from the Veterans community in Wales on how services are currently delivered, gaps in service provision, and how improvements can be made.

As we take forward the Scoping Exercise and implement our Delivery Plan, we will ensure that engagement with the UK and Scottish Governments continues, sharing best practice whilst reflecting the needs of veterans in Wales.

## Cross cutting factors and key themes

### CROSS-CUTTING FACTORS

#### **1. Collaboration between organisations**

- Improved collaboration between organisations offers Veterans coherent support.

#### **2. Coordination of Veterans' services**

- The coordination of Veterans' provision delivers consistent aims and principles over time and throughout the UK, ensuring Veterans, their families and the bereaved are treated fairly compared to the local population.

#### **3. Data on the Veteran community**

- Enhanced collection, use and analysis of data across the public, private and charitable sectors to build an evidence base to effectively identify and address the needs of Veterans.

#### **4. Public perception and understanding**

- The UK population value Veterans and understand their diverse experiences and culture.

#### **5. Recognition of Veterans**

- Veterans feel that their service and experience is recognised and valued by society.

### KEY THEMES

#### **1. Community and relationships**

- Veterans are able to build healthy relationships and integrate into their communities.

#### **2. Employment, education and skills**

- Veterans enter appropriate employment and can continue to enhance their careers throughout their working lives.

#### **3. Finance and debt**

- Veterans leave the Armed Forces with sufficient financial education, awareness and skills to be financially self-supporting and resilient.

#### **4. Health and wellbeing**

- All Veterans enjoy a state of positive physical and mental health and wellbeing, enabling them to contribute to wider aspects of society

#### **5. Making a home in civilian society**

- Veterans have a secure place to live either through buying, renting or social housing.

#### **6. Veterans and the law**

- Veterans leave the Armed Forces with the resilience and awareness to remain law-abiding civilians.

The Welsh Government's Scoping Exercise sought to reflect the key themes in the Veterans Strategy through the online / face to face consultation process that was undertaken. This was achieved by asking veterans and families about their experiences of the following services:

- Transition
- Employment
- Benefits and Welfare
- Healthcare
- Housing
- Criminal Justice
- Education

### Responses from Wales

Alongside the Welsh Government's Scoping Exercise, veterans and organisations in Wales were also invited to submit views on the Veterans Strategy UK consultation which was open from 15 November 2018 to 21 February 2019.



The UK consultation received 2,177 responses. Of these, 94 (4%) were from respondents based in Wales.

Veterans in Wales commenting on the UK Government consultation identified a range of relevant issues, including the following Key Themes and Cross Cutting Factors<sup>1</sup>:

### **Community and relationships**

- Loneliness and social isolation as a key theme to be tackled;
- The value of breakfast clubs, veteran hubs, coffee mornings, drop ins;
- The benefits of harnessing existing non-veteran services to include the veteran community.

### **Employment, Education and Skills**

- Work experience of the civilian workplace is needed for the Armed Forces Community;
- Civilian employers to better recognise skill sets of Armed Forces Community;
- Work with Service leavers and employers to identify skills gaps locally and tailor training to these;
- CV preparation and interview skills are important;
- Translating qualifications gained in service into the civilian workplace is needed.

### **Finance and Debt**

- Lack of budgeting and financial planning skills needs to be addressed in Service;
- Access to benefits is difficult as a result of Service pension – feeling of being disadvantaged by service;
- Gambling identified as a growing problem;
- Need improvements in financial training in service. Links to credit unions / savings plan;
- Start training earlier for civvy street – the importance of ‘through life’ transition.

### **Health and wellbeing**

- Identification and data around veterans needs to improve – implications for priority treatment, signposting to services;
- More specific medical support needed for Armed Forces / veterans;
- Tailored treatment for substance misuse should be looked at;
- Enhance roll out of the GP accreditation scheme is needed;
- Need for better data on loneliness and social isolation;
- Increase awareness of Armed Forces issues for NHS staff – training, resources;
- ‘Flagging up’ veteran status on systems – there is a lack of systematic data collection on the Armed forces;
- Prosthetics provision – differences within the UK;
- Mental health support should include families who can suffer greatly.

---

<sup>1</sup> UK veterans strategy feedback was contained in the Analysis Report produced by RPA analysts for the MOD (28 June 2019).

## **Making a home**

- Enhanced priority in social housing – need to examine priority for Armed Forces / what is appropriate in existing guidance and legislation;
- Greater promotion of existing initiatives;
- Greater local coordination needed;
- Veteran's Gateway to be promoted as the one stop shop;
- Better signposting to local groups and hubs.

## **Data**

- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and data sharing seen as a key block – veterans have to tell story continuously which can be traumatic;
- Identification is a problem;
- Key gaps remain in knowledge e.g. Numbers of Homeless veterans. This impacts on perceptions of veterans and how people see them;
- NHS records – there is a lack of consistent identification;
- Criminal justice system – progress in prisons needs to be built on – identification and support during release.

# Welsh Government's Veterans Scoping Exercise

## Background

In April 2018, the then Cabinet Secretary for Local Government & Public Services outlined plans for a Scoping Exercise to be undertaken by the Welsh Government to identify any gaps in services for veterans and families in Wales. The objectives of the exercise were agreed at the Armed Forces Expert Group on 26 September 2018<sup>2</sup>.

The Scoping Exercise was designed to support implementation of the first ever **UK Veterans Strategy**. The results of the Scoping Exercise would inform the Welsh Government's future policy decisions and delivery of services for this community and contribute towards the shared vision contained within the UK Veterans Strategy.

## Methodology

An online and hard copy survey was produced by the Welsh Government Armed Forces policy officials, following consultation with providers and colleagues from the Welsh Government's Knowledge and Analytical Services.

The survey consisted of a combination of quantitative and qualitative questions to assess demographics, experiences of public services in Wales since leaving the Armed Forces, and potential recommendations for how these services could be improved for veterans and their families. Within the survey there was a designated section for organisations who are involved in the delivery of services to the Armed Forces community. The survey sought information on the organisations' area of delivery, where they believe the gaps in public service provision for veterans are and their recommendations on how to improve services.

The survey was promoted across the Armed Forces sector in Wales. A bilingual call for responses was issued through the following:

- Military and third sector Charities
- Regimental Associations
- Regional and Local Authority Armed Forces fora
- Social media channels
- Statutory / Public bodies
- Breakfast clubs,
- Armed Forces Expert Group members
- National Assembly Cross Party Group for the Armed Forces and Cadets
- Armed Forces Liaison Officers.

Hard copies of the survey were available from the Armed Forces policy team in Welsh Government and provided to veteran support groups in person.

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://gov.wales/expert-group-needs-armed-forces-community-wales>

## Engagement with Scoping Exercise

Between October 2018 and February 2019, the following activity took place to support the scoping exercise:

- An online / hard copy **survey** generated 1007 usable<sup>3</sup> responses from veterans, families and support organisations;
- Officials attended over 40 **veteran support groups / meetings** with providers of services for the Armed Forces community. Of these, 22 were specific support groups run by veterans for veterans. Meetings were held across all Armed Forces Covenant regions of Wales (where regional Armed Forces fora meet regularly);
- Officials engaged directly with over 250 veterans and family members via support groups.

---

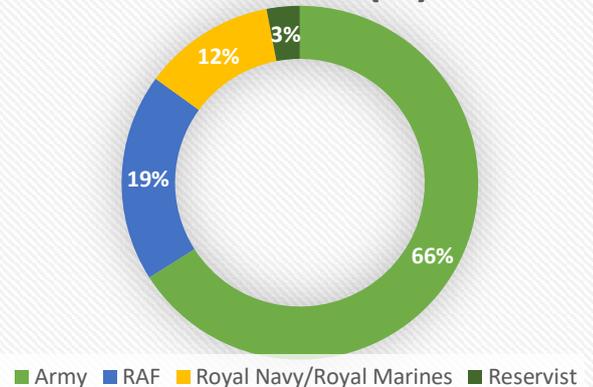
<sup>3</sup> A number of responses did not contain any recordable data aside from 'opting in' to the survey so were not included in final assessment.

## The Findings

### Age & Gender

1% 18-25  
 78% Male  
 9% 26-35  
 18% 36-45  
 22% Female  
 27% 46-55  
 44% over 55

### Branch of the Armed Forces (%)



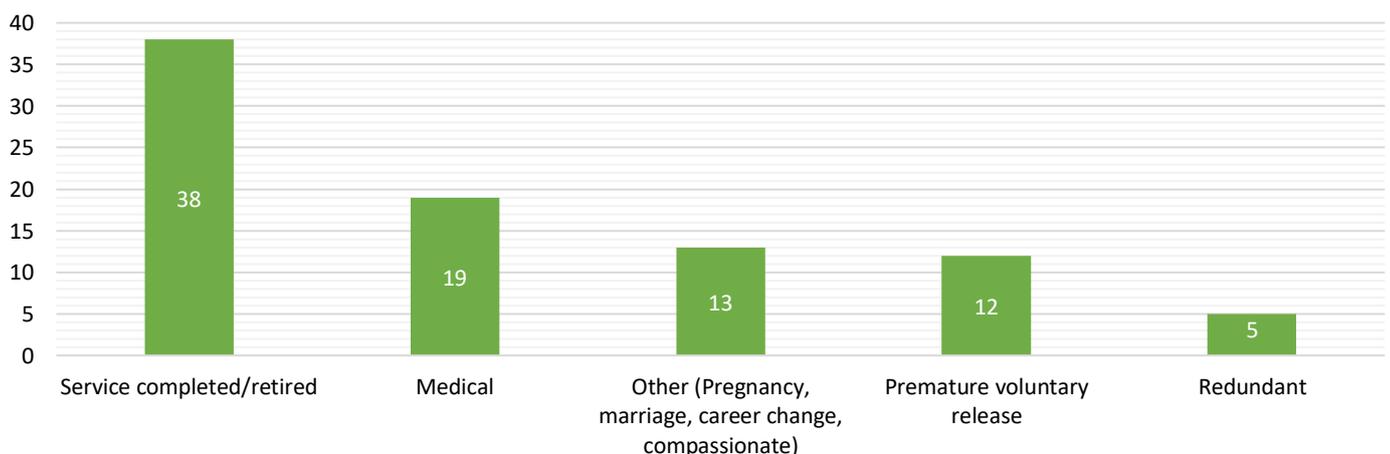
### Length of Service

11% between 0-4 years  
 29% between 5-10 years  
 17% between 10-15 years  
 41% over 15 years

### When they left

1.1% within the last month  
 13% in the last 4 years  
 18% in the last 5-10 years  
 67% over 10 years ago

### Reason for Leaving (%)



\*remaining 13% of participants selected Administrative, Disciplinary, Prefer not to say or pensioned.

## Feedback

Along with the quantitative feedback received through the scoping survey, respondents were given the opportunity to provide detailed feedback.

From that detailed feedback, a range of gaps in service were identified that require action, based on the experiences of respondents. The key themes were:

### **Poor resettlement / Transition experience**

- Lack of support provided when leaving services.
- Courses not available in Wales / not relevant.
- Lack of specific help provided in areas such as housing, health, employment.
- Military qualifications not translating to civvy street.
- Expectation management – need clearer information on what to expect after Service.

### **Lack of support provided on ‘Civvy Street’ / difficulty finding information**

- Little / varied provision with regard to housing allocation including move on accommodation.
- Difficulty accessing NHS support for mental health issues.
- Rural areas – only basic services available and difficult to find.
- Local civilian agencies not making provision for Armed Forces / not coordinated.
- Lack of dedicated help available.
- No bereavement support for families / difficult to find.
- Not enough ‘drop ins’ / hubs.

### **Covenant not being implemented / upheld / not doing what it should**

- Priority health not being delivered / lack of awareness of the policy. Frontline staff lack of knowledge.
- Poor awareness of the Covenant / what policies it delivers. Lip service being paid - no actions.
- Veterans having to fight to get services that should be part of Covenant.
- Housing – confusion and variation in policies; lack of provision.

### **Lack of knowledge / understanding from services**

- Employers not recognising military skills. Being unaware of the skills available within the veteran community.
- Lack of understanding of Service issues including compensation payments.
- Health, Housing providers not being aware of circumstances / issues being faced.

### **Loss of identity / difficulty readjusting / not feeling valued**

- Feelings of being isolated, lonely and missing comradeship.
- Veterans removing themselves from society.

### **Service resulting in being disadvantaged**

- Compensation payments counting against benefit system.
- Feeling worse off financially after having served.

### **Negative experience of charities**

- Not following through into actions.
- Charities finishing due to funding shortfalls / ending – impact on beneficiaries.
- Duplication and competition
- Lack of coordination

### **Lack of support for families**

- Problems accessing healthcare including mental health services.
- Lack of understanding about service life and mobility / impact on spouses.
- Housing and local connection
- Difficulties accessing schools after service.

### **Veterans not being identified**

- E.g. Health, Housing – then other policies and provision does not follow e.g. Priority treatment.
- Not being told about additional support available as veteran status not known.
- Inconsistent identification of service children – school support. Admissions.
- Criminal justice system – inconsistent identification in custody suites / police forces.

During July - August 2019 Welsh Government officials undertook 6 additional regional consultation events with Armed Forces sector representatives to start identifying **potential actions** to be taken forward. Invitations were issued to all partners via the Regional Armed Forces fora.

The findings of these events are included at Annex 2.

The potential actions will be provided to the relevant Action Group for consideration along with the Terms of Reference for each group.

## Welsh Government’s Scoping Exercise and the UK Veterans Strategy

The following table maps and highlights the consistencies between a selection of the Wales scoping exercise findings and the Cross Cutting Factors and Key Themes of the UK Veterans Strategy.

UK Veterans Strategy – Cross Cutting Factor / Key Theme	Relevant Scoping Exercise finding(s)
<p><b>Cross cutting factor:</b></p> <p><b>Collaboration between organisations - Improved collaboration between organisations offers Veterans coherent support.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need for increased support and collaboration between organisations.</li> <li>• Increased support and funding greater coordination of services, collaboration and communication across the sector.</li> <li>• Lack of communication across the sector putting veterans at a disadvantage.</li> <li>• Improved communication streams between organisations that would improve collaboration and overall support.</li> <li>• Poor consistency between areas and sometimes within organisations – lack of communication between departments.</li> <li>• Need for All veteran organisations to come together and share information.</li> <li>• Competition for funding leading to duplication and impact on veteran caught in middle.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cross cutting factor:</b></p> <p><b>Coordination of Veteran’s services - the coordination of Veteran’s provision delivers consistent aims and principles over time and throughout the UK, ensuring Veterans, their families and the bereaved are treated fairly compared to the local population.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding and following of ‘the Covenant’ highlighted as an issue for some;</li> <li>• Priority health treatment not being implemented or a lack of awareness of policy which means veterans are having to fight for their service. Inconsistent delivery.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Military Service leading to being disadvantaged, either financially or in other ways.</li> <li>• Increased coordination required between providers.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cross cutting factor:</b></p> <p><b>Data on the Veteran community-enhance collection, use and analysis of data across the public, private and charitable sectors to build an evidence base to effectively identify and address the needs of Veterans.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not being identified as a veteran was an experience of some in Wales and ‘never being asked’ if they had served;</li> <li>• Implications for healthcare and accessing appropriate treatment; accessing housing support;</li> <li>• Need for more consistent data around numbers, location of veterans / families in order to plan services;</li> <li>• Service children not being identified consistently seen as a gap – lack of data;</li> <li>• Need to make it easier to identify veterans.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cross cutting factor:</b></p> <p><b>Public perception and understanding - the UK population value Veterans and understand their diverse experiences and culture.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of knowledge / understanding from frontline civilian services about experiences of Armed Forces;</li> <li>• Implications for employment - Lack of recognition by civilian employers of qualifications achieved whilst serving / lack of understanding.</li> <li>• Regarding services such as health, veterans highlighted a lack of understanding about the impact of Service life leading to painful delays and waits for treatment.</li> <li>• Lack of understanding of Armed Forces compensation payments amongst frontline staff and issues around expectations of employment post-service also featured.</li> <li>• Poor recognition of skills and experiences gained.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Cross cutting factor:</b></p> <p><b>Recognition of Veterans- Veterans feel that their service and experience is recognised and valued by society.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Veterans feeling like a burden on society;</li> <li>• Feeling under-valued post Service and missing comradeship;</li> <li>• Loss of being part of something special, comradeship and no-one understanding or concerned with past experiences;</li> <li>• Feelings of being 'left on your own' and isolated from society.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key theme:</b></p> <p><b>Community and relationships- Veterans are able to build healthy relationships and integrate into their communities.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor experience of transition leading to poor integration into society;</li> <li>• Need for support workers / mentors to aid the transition and re-integration;</li> <li>• Improved education on what to expect on civvy street;</li> <li>• Drop ins / hubs to help tackle loneliness and isolation;</li> <li>• Important to retain links with Military community.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key theme:</b></p> <p><b>Employment, education and skills- Veterans enter appropriate employment and can continue to enhance their careers throughout their working lives.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment was rated as poor or very poor by 38.6% of veteran respondents ;</li> <li>• Targeted help required when seeking employment;</li> <li>• Employers being more aware of what veterans can bring to the workplace in terms of skills and leadership qualities. Not appreciating/knowing the value of veterans.</li> <li>• Military qualifications to be recognised in civilian life.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key theme:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finance (Benefits and debt) was rated as poor or very poor by 49.7% of Veteran responses;</li> <li>• Issues with benefits such as Universal Credit and PIP;</li> </ul>

<p><b>Finance and debt - Veterans leave the Armed Forces with sufficient financial education, awareness and skills to be financially self-supporting and resilient.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for more debt and financial advisors available both during and post-Service;</li> <li>• Need for a disregard of War disablement pension when assessing benefits and for more benefits, subsidies and discounts to be made available;</li> <li>• Understanding from services of nature of service life / potential impact on finances.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key theme:</b></p> <p><b>Health and well-being- All Veterans enjoy a state of positive physical and mental health and wellbeing, enabling them to contribute to wider aspects of society.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better access to healthcare;</li> <li>• 34.2% of veteran respondents rated healthcare as poor or very poor;</li> <li>• Improved mental health, priority treatment and prosthetics support;</li> <li>• Difficulties accessing civilian health services compared to in-Service;</li> <li>• Greater awareness and publicising of services required;</li> <li>• Improved awareness amongst health staff needed;</li> <li>• Improved data and use of Military Medical records required.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key theme:</b></p> <p><b>Making a home in civilian society- Veterans have a secure place to live either through buying, renting or social housing.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing was identified as poor or very poor by 31.9% of veteran responses.</li> <li>• Priority for housing for certain groups – currently veterans receive little / no priority;</li> <li>• Better advice and information;</li> <li>• Greater clarity on the term Veteran in relation to housing and what veterans are / are not entitled to;</li> <li>• Consistency on what veteran status means in housing allocations;</li> <li>• Poor provision for veterans in housing sector. Veterans disadvantaged compared to other groups who may be vulnerable.</li> </ul>

**Key theme:**

- **Veterans and the law - Veterans leave the Armed Forces with the resilience and awareness to remain law-abiding citizens.**

- 20.8% (178) of veteran's respondents stated that they had been involved in the CJS;
- Stigma upon release and discrimination in employment market;
- Poor mental health provision/support – need for improved veterans' mental health services in prison;
- Greater support on release required;
- Positive work in Wales with organisations attending prisons / offering services.

## What we are doing already to fill the gaps in provision

The Welsh Government and partners have previously undertaken significant work to address many of the issues raised in the Scoping Exercise and Veterans Strategy. Some of these include:

Theme	What we are doing
<b>Benefits and Finance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 2017 we acted on the Royal British Legion's (RBL) Insult to Injury campaign to introduce a full disregard of all Armed Forces compensation payments when assessing social care needs.</li> <li>The Welsh Government financed a promotion campaign on the benefits of possessing a Defence Privilege Card. The card provides discounts on retail and leisure and can be used to access free swimming in Wales for veterans and Serving members of the Armed Forces.</li> </ul>
<b>Data</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have established metrics in delivery of services for veterans in mental health, substance misuse and prosthetics;</li> <li>Work is continuing to enable the collection of data on Service children in schools.</li> </ul>
<b>Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We introduced the Supporting Service Children in Wales Fund in 2018/19 to support the well-being of Service children. Approximately £250k was awarded during 2018/19 to individual schools, groups of schools and Local Authorities which provided full or partial funding for 27 successful bids.</li> <li>The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018, makes provision for a new statutory framework for supporting children, including service children with additional learning needs (ALN).</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have provided approximately £233k in the academic year 2017/18 through our Further and Higher Education Scheme to support Service leavers and veterans gain qualifications.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Health and Well-being</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have continued to provide approximately £700k per annum for Veterans NHS Wales which includes research into treatment-resistant Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)</li> <li>• We have made an additional £20m funding available to Health Boards to improve all mental health services, including those for veterans.</li> <li>• We will provide an additional £500k a year to be invested in specific national and regional approaches to tackle suicide and self-harm prevention.</li> <li>• Provided services and support to 308 veterans during 2016/17 to receive treatment after struggling with substance misuse.</li> <li>• We have committed to fund free swimming for Serving personnel and veterans until 2021 to support their health and well-being.</li> <li>• The Welsh Health Specialised Services Commission has provided £120k between 2016 and 2018 to support the Armed Forces Fast Track Pathway enabling Serving personnel to return to duty quicker.</li> <li>• We have introduced and launched a newly designed electronic poster to be printed and displayed in GP surgeries to remind GPs of Veterans' Covenant healthcare priority.</li> <li>• We have worked with all Local Health Board Armed Forces Champions to support and promote veterans' healthcare.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have provided an approximately £930K in funding from 2013 to support veterans requiring prosthetics.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Housing</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Published a <b>Housing Pathway</b> which gives information and signposting to support, and options available to ex Service personnel and their families.</li> <li>• Supported <b>Ty Ryan</b> a self-build scheme targeted at veterans gaining skills and qualifications during the build. This has provided homes for veterans and their families who have been involved in the build.</li> <li>• <b>Working with the Gwent Armed Forces Liaison Officer</b>, Local Authorities in the area have amended their housing policy to take account of time served in the Armed Forces for inclusion on housing waiting lists.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Support on returning to civilian life</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have funded Armed Forces Liaison officers across Wales for <b>two years, with a funding package of £500k.</b></li> <li>• Working with key partners during 2018, the Welsh Government published an <b>Employment Pathway and an Employers' Toolkit.</b></li> <li>• The Welsh Government has fully supported the <b>SToMP project</b> which provides a Veterans Pathway in prisons across Wales, helping veterans access support and rehabilitation prior to, and on discharge from prison.</li> </ul>

## Delivery plan - Taking action to address the gaps

At the Armed Forces Expert Group, chaired by the Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government held on 18 September 2019, a draft delivery plan was approved highlighting key **Headline Actions** that will be examined and taken forward to tackle the gaps in services raised during the Scoping Exercise. These actions were informed by:

- The recommendations put forward by veterans, families and organisations in the Scoping Exercise (via survey and in person);
- Regional meetings held with key stakeholders during July - August 2019 (see annex 2 for full list of meetings and issues raised).

Going forward these will be considered by the Armed Forces Expert Group, chaired by the Deputy Minister, the Programme Board and the Action Groups.

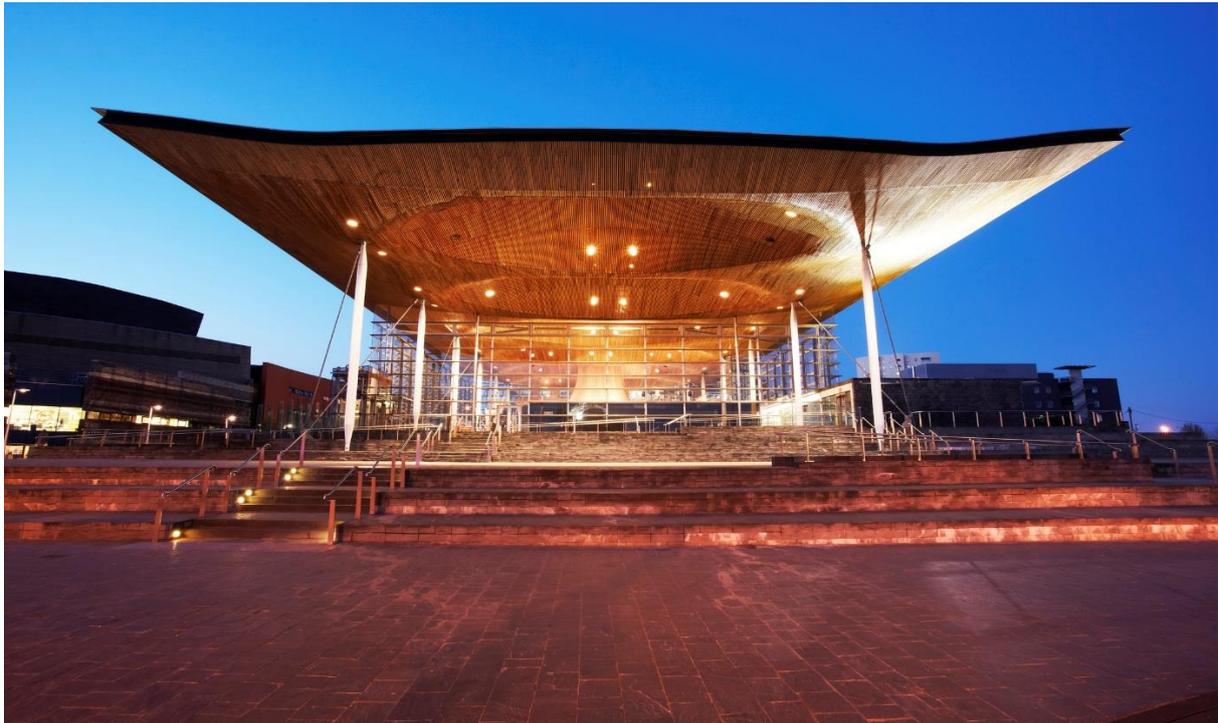
### The Headline Actions are:

<b>1. Housing</b>	<b>1.1</b> Consider updates to the Welsh Government housing guidance to ensure greater consistency and awareness of Armed Forces amongst housing staff.
	<b>1.2</b> To consider amending priority need to include veterans with Service-related conditions.
	<b>1.3</b> To consider amend housing guidance to provide recognition of divorced / separated spouses.
	<b>1.4</b> To encourage and promote the collection of data on veterans applying for social housing, ensuring they are identified at point of access. Requirement for Local Authorities and housing associations to identify.
<b>2. Health</b>	<b>2.1</b> To promote and encourage the identification of veterans within the healthcare system.
	<b>2.2</b> Promote and raise awareness of veterans' issues amongst health staff.

	<b>2.3</b> To ensure Veterans mental health treatment in Wales is meeting current need.
	<b>2.4</b> To ensure mental health support providers, such as Veterans NHS Wales, engage with prisoners prior to release.
	<b>2.5</b> To ensure veterans experiencing substance misuse have the support required to help deal with Service experience.
	<b>2.6</b> To ensure ALAC prosthetists have the appropriate training to respond to new technological advances. Establish forum to consider delivery of prosthetic services for veterans.
<b>3. Employment</b>	<b>3.1</b> To promote the skills and benefits Service leavers and veterans bring to the workplace.
	<b>3.2</b> To launch and promote Forces Families Jobs with Families Federations in Wales. Partners and the sector to promote this initiative to beneficiaries.
	<b>3.3</b> To help ensure veterans can relate the skills gained during Service to skills required in the civilian workplace.
<b>4. Transition</b>	<b>4.1</b> The Welsh Government to work with the Armed Forces sector in Wales to support and enhance CTP/DTS services in Wales.
	<b>4.2</b> To improve the signposting and information available to Service leavers and veterans to support them on settling into the community.
<b>5. Education</b>	<b>5.1</b> To raise the profile of the needs of Service children in schools in Wales, providing support where needed and improved data.

<b>6. Information and Awareness</b>	<b>6.1</b> To raise the profile and information flow amongst Local Authorities and front line staff on support and services available to the Armed Forces community.
<b>7. Governance</b>	<b>7.1</b> To ensure issues and areas of good practice identified at local level are escalated for discussion at the Armed Forces Expert Group.
	<b>7.2</b> The Welsh Government to explore a Cross Government Armed Forces delivery group with officials across policy areas (scoping programme board as potential vehicle).
<b>8. Criminal Justice</b>	<b>8.1</b> To build on the support already in place for the identification of veterans entering the criminal justice system.
	<b>8.2</b> To raise the awareness of information available on support at a local level for those leaving custody.
<b>9. Finance</b>	<b>9.1</b> To provide clear information and training on financial management and accountability prior to transition.
	<b>9.2</b> Support existing work by DWP and partners to engage with the Armed Forces community and promote to veteran networks / groups.

## Governance – Addressing and reporting back on the issues raised



The Welsh Government is now establishing new Governance arrangements to take forward the Scoping Exercise findings. The key elements will be:

- A new Programme Board being established to oversee delivery of the scoping exercise Headline Actions.
- 7 new thematic Action groups comprising experts and key delivery organisations to take forward the delivery of headline Actions.

Working alongside the Armed Forces Expert Group, these new groups will support the delivery of the Veterans Strategy outcomes thereby ensuring that the findings of both the Wales focused consultation (Scoping Exercise) and the UK consultation (Veterans Strategy) are taken forwards in Wales for the benefit of our veteran community.

## **Monitoring progress**

An update on delivery against the Scoping Exercise will be included in the Welsh Government Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report going forward and laid before the National Assembly for Wales. Progress will also be shared through the following:

- Armed Forces Expert Group;
- Armed Forces Liaison officers and Regional /Local Covenant fora;
- MOD / Office of Veterans Affairs forums;
- UK Government and devolved colleagues via Veterans strategy work-streams;
- National Assembly Cross Party Group on the Armed Forces and cadets.

The Welsh Government would like thank everyone who participated in and supported the Wales Veterans Scoping Exercise and UK Veterans Strategy work.

**Annex 1 – Engagement across the Armed Forces sector September 2018-February 2019.**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Host / meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Host / Meeting</b>
4/9/18	Conwy VSC	02/11/18	Care and Repair - Shotton
5/9/18	Woody's Lodge (North Wales)	02/11/18	Tom Harrison House
6/9/18	Valleys Veterans	6/11/18	Armed Forces forum
19/9/18	All Wales charities meeting	8/11/18	Swansea University
20/9/18	Valleys Veterans	13/11/18	Help for Heroes
26/9/18	Armed Forces Expert Group	14/11/18	WLGA Armed Forces Network
27/9/18	Veterans support group	15/11/18	Cardiff and Vale Community Health council
2/10/18	Change Step group	20/11/18	Change Step group
2/10/18	Woody's Lodge North Wales	20/11/18	Woody's Lodge (South Wales)
3/10/18	National Assembly for Wales Cross Party Group	4/12/18	Change Step group
3/10/18	SToMP Steering Group	4/12/18	Change Step / Hafal – Aberystwyth
8/10/18	North Wales AFF Delivery Group	6/12/18	Valleys Veterans
15/10/18	Change Step group	19/12/18	Change Step group
17/10/18	Armed Forces Covenant Conference	21/12/18	Veterans support group
22/10/18	Veterans NHS Wales Therapist meeting	8/1/18	Llanelli Veterans Association
23/10/18	Change Step group	14/1/18	Endeavour Unit, Parc prison
24/10/18	VC Gallery	7/2/19	National Assembly for Wales Cross Party Group
24/10/18	Armed Forces Forum	12/2/19	Covenant meeting
25/10/18	Woody's Lodge (South Wales)	13/2/19	Veterans NHS Wales
30/10/18	H4H North Wales	20/2/19	LINKS – NAAFI group, Carmarthen
31/10/18	Project 360	20/2/19	LHB forum
31/10/18	Change Step group		

Additional data collection was undertaken at formal Armed Forces Covenant meetings and Regional Forums during March-August 2018.

## Annex 2

Scoping delivery meetings – July 2019

Recommendations put forward by attendees for consideration.

Meeting	Theme	Recommendations / suggestions
Merthyr Tydfil	Transition	<p><b>Wales transition pack provided to Service leavers coming to Wales.</b> Utilise <i>Welcome to Wales</i> document. Engage with MOD and Transition at 160 to ensure hard copies are available to Service leavers transitioning through Wales.</p> <p><b>More transition / CTP courses / Job fairs in Wales.</b> Lack of courses in Wales – MOD need to explore how more transition courses can be hosted in Wales, utilising ERS (Defence Employer Recognition Scheme) organisations etc. Also, what funding is available to support service leavers to travel to courses if they are not available in Wales?</p> <p>MOD should look at training such as Trivalis homes GRAMO (Get Ready And Move On) training providing financial literacy.</p>
	<p>Lack of support / difficulty finding information</p> <p>Lack of knowledge / understanding from services</p>	<p><b>Regional roles / experts within local authorities</b> e.g. Veterans advice service in Cwm Taf. Supporting veterans and frontline staff with queries. More of these roles needed.</p> <p>Specific <b>national / regional event</b> in Wales for <b>practitioners</b> in the Armed forces sector. Champions etc can then learn exactly what each charity does in detail. Share good practice.</p> <p><b>Development of further hubs/support groups.</b> Can be led by volunteers. Low</p>

		<p>level support / signposting. Utilise council hubs.</p> <p>Alcohol services – RBL pilot in Bristol (veterans alcohol support worker). Improve links between Veterans NHS Wales and drug and alcohol services. <b>Question must be asked to identify veterans consistently.</b></p> <p>Housing – Single point of access housing registers don't exist in every area – veterans then have to engage with LA and every housing association.</p> <p><b>Change priority need</b> - expand to injured veterans and time limit after service e.g. Priority for 3 years after leaving plus if service induced injury.</p> <p><b>AFLOs – funding must continue.</b> Good work will be lost.</p>
	Covenant not being implemented / upheld / not doing what it should	<p><b>Specific role in Government / Ministerial position.</b> AT UK level, H4H and others calling for this post. Department of Veterans Affairs.</p> <p>Examine work of Ombudsman and holding Covenant delivery to account.</p>
	Lack of support for families	<p>Projects such as Barnardo's / Change step 'Listen in' ended when funding ran out. <b>Improve awareness of existing family services</b> e.g. H4H, Tros Gynnal Plant (TGP). TGP however covers only a limited area = postcode lottery.</p> <p>Lack of provision for children.</p>
	Service resulting in being disadvantaged	<p><b>Ensuring all disregards are being applied for housing benefit, social care</b></p>

		Consistency needed in local authority charging and treatment of compensation payments.
	Veterans not being identified	<p><b>Questions need to be asked in all services</b> e.g. Housing. Data must be published e.g. Rough sleeper count.</p> <p><b>MOD need to improve data sharing with key providers.</b> Opt in so details can be shared with providers and contact made. Utilise DTS.</p> <p>Criminal justice system – <b>Veterans’ Gateway leaflets and cards to be distributed to every police force in Wales for custody suites.</b></p>
<b>Carmarthen</b>	Data / local feedback	Having a breakdown of <b>localised suggestions / feedback</b> from scoping for this area would be beneficial. Provide suggestions regarding local issues raised in support groups etc in Hywel Dda area.
	Lack of support for families	If Veterans NHS Wales were to provide family therapy it would not be for combat related mental health issues. Would require <b>additional resource</b> and create a two tier service.
	Lack of support / difficulty finding information	<p><b>Increased provision in crisis teams</b> – simply not enough capacity within services (veterans or not).</p> <p><b>Improved transport options to access services.</b></p>
	Poor resettlement / transition experience  Employment	Nearest resettlement centre is Tidworth – too far. <b>CTP should run workshops in Wales.</b>

		<p><b>Spouses should be able to utilise enhanced learning credits.</b></p> <p><b>Work with MOD and Welsh businesses to offer more work placements / experience for Service leavers – expand to more business networks / groups – consistent message.</b> Utilise existing MOD / 160 links with businesses.</p> <p><b>During final medical leaving service, appointments / registration with local GP should be made.</b></p>
	<p>Covenant not being implemented/ upheld / not doing what it should</p> <p>Lack of knowledge / understanding from services</p> <p>Lack of support on civvy street</p>	<p><b>AFLOS – should have consistent aims</b> set with the Welsh Government– all doing different things currently.</p> <p><b>AFLO funding must continue</b> (not necessarily indefinitely) or good work will be lost. Policies must be embedded.</p> <p>Housing – Wales wide legislation should offer more <b>support and consistency</b> in terms of allocations / priority for veterans.</p> <p>Health - priority treatment – recording will be difficult as relies on referral letter. <b>Can GP contract reflect / include priority treatment at UK level?</b> (not only down to health board as GPs are independent).</p> <p><b>Look at how priority treatment cases can be recorded.</b></p>
	<p>Covenant funding / projects</p>	<p><b>More local feedback for national UK bids required. Improved process of checking with local areas about large scale bids.</b></p>

<p><b>Port Talbot</b></p>	<p>Employment</p>	<p>More <b>research and engagement work with employers</b> to identify skills gaps. Communicate these to MOD / during transition to inform CTP etc.</p> <p><b>Promote work placements</b> / work trials to Service leavers (and spouses). Secure support of Welsh employers to host work placements.</p> <p><b>Internship programme in civil service</b> – allow Service leavers to access roles in civil service.</p> <p>Procurement practices e.g. <b>Public sector contracts, should reflect Armed Forces Covenant</b> – encourage employers to recruit from Armed Forces / take advantage of skills.</p> <p>DWP / Welsh Government etc will set up a <b>taskforce</b> when a major employer makes people redundant. Why not when people leave the forces which is constant?</p>
	<p>Poor resettlement / transition experience</p>	<p>Veterans in Criminal Justice System (CJS) may not have been through transition / accessed the courses / ELCs. <b>Ensure those leaving prison can access transition</b> e.g. Via DTS. Referrals from prison to DTS upon release.</p> <p>Only one Police force ‘asks the question’ based on SToMP / IOM report ‘Barriers to disclosure’. All should ask and be provided with Veteran’s Gateway literature.</p> <p><b>Regional transition events</b> to be held e.g. Cardiff city stadium, Liberty stadium examples. CTP / MOD involvement.</p>

	Lack of knowledge / understanding from services	<p>Ensure the Welsh Government conference /events promoted to <b>practitioners</b> / those ‘on the ground’.</p> <p><b>Training of frontline staff in local authorities etc must be improved</b> – too slow and inconsistent delivery. WLGA training package.</p>
	Lack of support on civvy street / difficulty finding information	<p>More <b>localised information</b> needs to be available via the Veteran’s Gateway e.g. Support groups, hubs. <b>Map of provision in Wales must be updated and promoted / publicised/</b></p> <p>Stronger ‘exit strategies’ needed for when therapy / support ends from providers. E.g. More formal process to signpost veterans to available support after Veterans NHS therapy, alcohol therapy ends. Utilise support groups and hubs.</p>
	Covenant not being implemented / upheld / not doing what it should	<p><b>Public service boards should have standing item on Armed Forces</b> / annual report from AFLO on delivery of Covenant in the area. Links to duties under Wellbeing Future Generations Act.</p> <p>Health – <b>Asking the question</b> should be mandatory / results recorded.</p>
	Lack of support provided on civvy street / difficulty finding information	<p>Difficulty accessing specialist mental health provision in CJS e.g. <b>Veterans NHS Wales should provide assessments prior to release.</b></p> <p>Veterans NHS Wales – additional funding so service can be extended to chronic pain, family support.</p>

		<p><b>Funding guide for the sector in Wales</b> to be produced about what funding is available to support Armed Forces – similar to Service children funding guide produced by SSCE Cymru.</p> <p><b>Crisis teams need more capacity.</b></p>
	Lack of support for families	<p>Barnardo's project supporting children. Still a gap as project has not been replaced. Need a <b>service supporting children.</b></p> <p>Service children – need a commitment and <b>date when PLASC will collect Service children data.</b> Admissions code must be strengthened to recognise Service children more.</p> <p>Service children – <b>fund regional officers similar to AFLOs</b> to work with schools.</p>
<b>Cardiff</b>	Poor resettlement / Transition experience	<p><b>CTP roadshows needed in Wales</b></p> <p><b>CTP workshops needed in Wales</b></p> <p><b>DTS – formal commitment required to hold surgeries / outreach in Wales.</b></p>
	Lack of knowledge / understanding from services.	<p><b>Covenant funded training modules from C&amp;V college need to be used across all sectors</b></p> <p><b>Ensure veteran services more accessible and link with general services e.g. Audiology. Staff need to be aware of veteran specific services available.</b></p>

	Employment	<p>Teach veterans how to use the correct language during CV writing and applications</p> <p><b>Forces Families Jobs</b> – promote.</p>
	Covenant not being implemented/upheld	<p>GP accreditation scheme to be rolled out across Wales. Veteran friendly status. Royal College of GPs.</p> <p><b>Priority treatment – need to collect information. Expectations must be managed with better messaging.</b></p> <p>Work with <b>HEIW on training for frontline staff in health</b> – potential link with AFLOs.</p> <p><b>Veterans Gateway</b> - regular training for those who work in the call centre from partner organisations.</p> <p>Wales to sign the ‘Veteran’s Pledge’.</p> <p>A Welsh Department of Veterans affairs – cross government coordination.</p>
	Negative experience of charities	<p><b>New charities</b> given a briefing as to how important sustainability is and what is expected of them e.g. liability and pitfalls</p> <p><b>Legacy Work</b> should be made the norm when running any project – e.g. Training - Action on hearing loss training all staff. Project 360 training older people volunteers in Age Cymru.</p> <p><b>Covenant Board</b> clearer guidelines as to the structure of the application process.</p>

		<p><b>Sustainability</b> of funding must be examined – ensure local partnerships have role. Strengthen link between small grants panel and large grants UK level.</p>
	Lack of support on civvy street	<p><b>Together for mental health</b> delivery plan and strategy needs to mention veterans (Strategy does)</p> <p><b>Funding for Veterans NHS Wales</b> to replace the Help for Heroes funding.</p> <p>Education as to what is priority treatment. Expectation management. Possible re-branding?</p> <p><b>Female orientated services-</b> there are now more female service leavers than before with different needs and requirements.</p>
	Education	<p><b>PLASC</b> to identify service children</p>
	Data	<p><b>Base-line numbers of substance misuse – do all DACW services ‘ask the question’? if not they should.</b> Nature of the issue means it has been under-reported.</p> <p>Housing – <b>collect information as part of housing application as standard across Local authority / Housing association.</b> Waiting lists.</p> <p>Service children – collect data via PLASC. Progress and timeline is needed.</p>
	Lack of support for families	<p><b>TGP working with Veterans NHS Wales. Limited area. Further funding required to roll out across Wales.</b></p>

		<p><b>Veterans NHS Wales to support families.</b></p> <p><b>Barnardo's project gap has not been filled. Service for children required.</b></p>
<b>Llandudno</b>	Poor resettlement / transition	<p><b>RFCA</b> - creation of a 'jargon buster' to help with gaining employment. A Welsh Jargon buster for those in transition with help on what devolution is and what is devolved.</p> <p>Have civilians or those who have transitioned well out of service to look at service leavers CV's and applications.</p>
	Lack of support provided on Civvy street	<p><b>Priority treatment-</b> name is misleading, a change of name could be beneficial e.g. priority pathway</p> <p><b>Enhanced Learning Credits-</b> more courses to be made available and application needs to be simpler.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FOI request to see where the budget is being spent, how much of it is being used.</li> <li>• Education representative at the NWAFF.</li> </ul>
	Covenant not being implemented	<p><b>AFLOs</b> to have continued funding past 20/21</p> <p><b>NHS Wales</b> funding the equivalent of AFLOs- only 2% of NHS staff are aware of VNHSW.</p> <p><b>RFCA-</b> checking companies who have silver and gold awards are still meeting the criteria- they can revoke the award if they deem not fit.</p> <p>Covenant needs to core fund projects.</p>

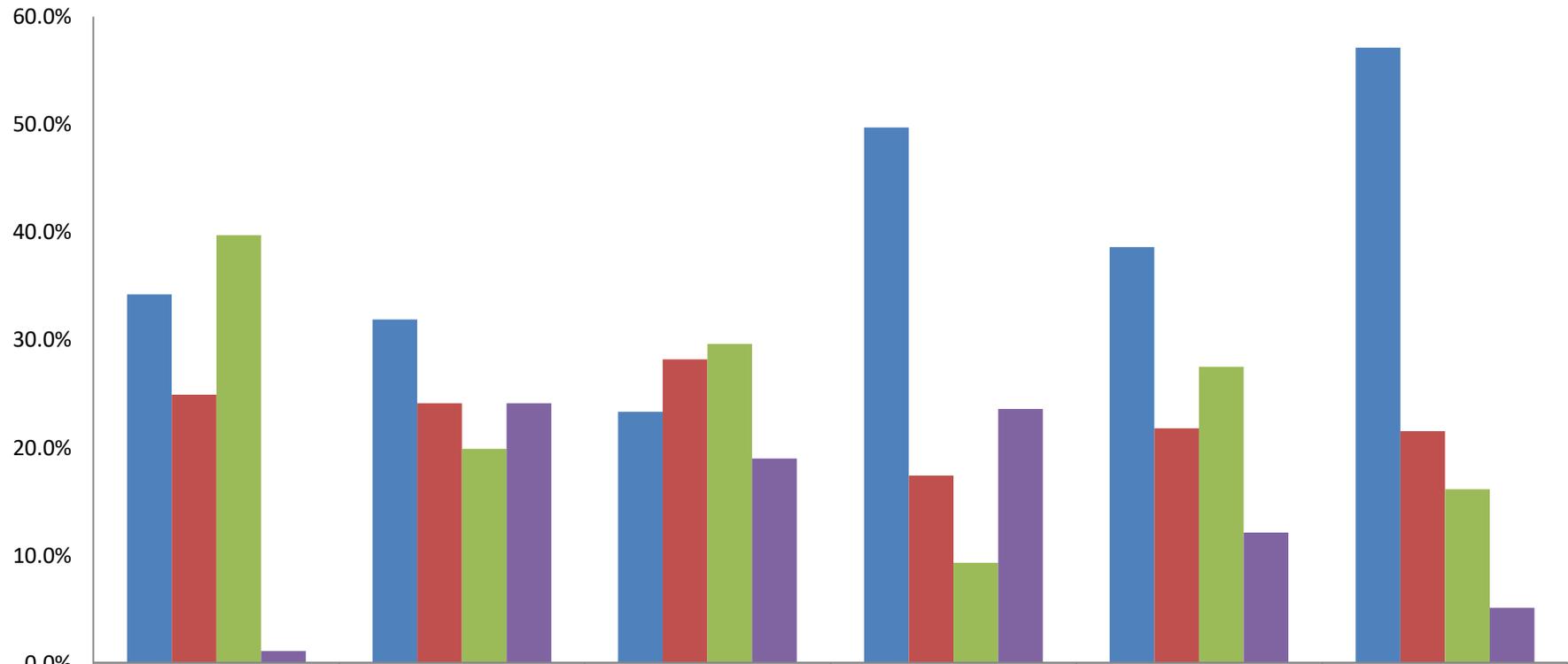
	Lack of knowledge/understanding from services	<p><b>VNHSW</b> to be easier to find veterans services on LHB websites.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change algorithms to show page even if different terms are searched for e.g. veteran, service leaver, army etc.</li> </ul>
	Negative experience of charities	<p><b>Veteran's Gateway</b> to be given funding for sustainability. More charities will invest resources to here e.g. individual call centres will be disbanded for the VG call centre if they know it will be live for a long time.</p>
	Family support	<p><b>SSCE Cymru</b> - create a small informative document for all schools.</p> <p>Project 360- bereavement counselling in Wales for Veterans aged 65 and over.</p>
	MOD	<p><b>Transition App</b>- through DTS?</p> <p>Compulsory 3 month period before leaving service where you cannot deploy and have to engage with transition.</p> <p><b>Financial advice</b> to be part of basic training.</p>
<b>Caerphilly</b>	Inconsistent policies / priority need / support needed after transition (sometimes years down the line).	<p><b>Consistent legislation / guidance</b> from Welsh Government regarding housing allocations.</p> <p>Postcode lottery e.g. Gwent local authorities have amended local policies.</p> <p><b>Ensure divorced / separated spouses are protected e.g.</b> Local connection and previous disadvantages faced are recognised in housing allocations.</p>

	Funding	<b>Portion of Covenant funding to be allocated to departments / devolved government to help local delivery of national priorities.</b>
	Lack of knowledge / understanding from services.	<b>Services should be mainstreamed within statutory bodies e.g. AFLOs.</b>  <b>AFLOs – need consistent KPI’s, targets, aims</b> working with Welsh Government and respective regional Armed Forces partnership.
	Lack of knowledge / understanding from services.	<b>Employers – consistent briefings for employers needed re: strengths, skills of veterans.</b> Currently variation between Mod engagement, charity, Government, AFLOs.  <b>Employers to be consistently invited / represented at regional Covenant forums.</b>  <b>ERS and local employers – link to transition e.g. Work placements, work experience for Service leavers in their local area.</b>
	Poor resettlement / transition	Need a <b>resettlement centre in Wales /</b> demonstrate why it is needed.  <b>CTP contract must be changed to reflect Wales coverage and localised support working with local partners.</b>  Making more briefings <b>mandatory</b> for Service leavers.  <b>Ensure Wales-specific information is provided to Service leavers via 160, Tidworth, CTP etc.</b> e.g. Welcome to Wales.

	<p>Lack of support provided on Civvy street</p>	<p><b>Utilise existing job fairs (non-Armed forces) that run in local areas to advertise to those in transition / veterans via CTP, RFEA etc.</b></p> <p><b>Asking the question e.g. Custody suites.</b></p> <p><b>Leaving Criminal justice system – ‘two transitions’: from Service and from prison. Must be recognised.</b></p> <p><b>Explore ‘Early action together’ training via Home office. Link to veteran awareness for Police forces.</b></p> <p><b>WLGA training package needs updating.</b> AFLOs not using it consistently, seen as too long.</p> <p><b>Support for older veterans required reflecting specific needs.</b></p>
	<p>Covenant not being implemented</p>	<p><b>Service children – extend ‘excepted status’ to those on transition / moving back to Wales.</b></p>

Results of Scoping exercise – Rating experience of services

**Annex 3- Can you rate your own experience of the following**



	Healthcare	Housing	Education	Benefits and Welfare System	Employment	Transition into civvy street
■ Poor or Very Poor	34.20%	31.90%	23.30%	49.70%	38.60%	57.10%
■ Neither Good nor Bad	24.90%	24.10%	28.20%	17.40%	21.80%	21.50%
■ Good or Very Good	39.70%	19.90%	29.60%	9.30%	27.50%	16.10%
■ N/A	1.10%	24.10%	19%	23.60%	12.10%	5.10%

### Annex 4- What areas need improving

