

CAERPHILLY ARMED FORCES FORUM (CAFF)

7th March 2019
Penallta House (Rhymney Room)



PRESENT

Kathryn Peters (Chair)	CCBC (Armed Forces Lead)
Cllr Andrew Whitcombe	CCBC (Armed Forces Champion)
Lisa Rawlings	Regional Armed Forces Covenant Liaison Officer
Ken Terry	Royal British Legion
Roger Lees	Change Step
Liam Spillane	Change Step
Annabel Ingram	Army Families Federation
Tim Parr	Solas - Pobl Group
Keith Sutcliffe	SSAFA (Gwent Area)
Brian Tansley	SSAFA (Gwent Area)
Michelle Williams	Veterans UK - VWS
John Williams	Royal British Legion Public Affairs Manager
Millie Taylor	SSCE Cymru Project Officer
Julianne Williams	RFEA – The Forces Employment Charity
Finola Pickwell	CCFC Foundation
Heather Ferguson	Project 360
Steve Lewis	Solas Cymru - Veteran
Matthew Bowden	Solas Cymru - Veteran
Charis Moon	Action on Hearing Loss
David Lancaster	Caerphilly Royal Welsh Veterans
John Buckley	Caerphilly Royal Welsh Veterans

APOLOGIES

Andy Jones	SToMP
Ant Metcalfe	Royal British Legion
Shelley Elgin	Help For Heroes
Axel Rees	Hire a Hero
Peter Wilson	Royal British Legion

KP welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for brief introductions.

1.0 ATTENDANCE, INTRODUCTION AND APOLOGIES

2.0 NOTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING OF 07/12/18

- The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record.

UPDATE OF ACTIONS

- LR updated the forum on Welsh Government Funding for the Armed Forces Covenant Liaison Officers
- LR distributed the presentation from the housing team
- LR distributed the presentation from SSCE Cymru
- LR to circulate the electronic AFC newsletter to bases in England
- LR distributed contact details of DWP Partnership Managers within SE Wales
- LR circulated the poster of the WWTW event
- LR circulated the well at home project

3.0 UPDATE FROM WLGA / Welsh Government

KP advised the forum of the following from WG:

- **Scoping exercise – gaps in services for veterans and families**
Between October 2018 and Feb 2019 the team have attended over 40 Veterans' support groups and meetings and spoke with approximately 250 veterans. Just over 1000 responses had been received to the online survey. We will now work through the comments prior to producing a report for presentation to the Ministerial Expert Group. These results will be used to inform the UK Government's Veterans' Strategy delivery process in Wales. Thanks to everyone who has supported.
- **Employers toolkit**
Working with Business in the Community Cymru, we have produced a toolkit for employers to support them in employing members of the Armed Forces community. Please do publicise to any business networks and forums.
- **Annual report**
Welsh government will launch our first Armed Forces Covenant Annual report in mid-May 2019. It will outline policies and initiatives in place in Wales to support the Armed Forces community and outline plans for the coming year. It will be laid in the National Assembly for Wales and allow progress on the Covenant to be scrutinised on an annual basis.

There were no updates from WLGA

ACTION: LR to update the forum on the outcome of the WLGA/WG decision on the AFLO's

4.0 UPDATE – ARMED FORCES LIAISON OFFICER

LR advised the forum of the following:

- Reservists Day Thursday 27th June – LA's to publicise
- Employment – Jobs Fair 12th Sept – Newport Leisure Centre. A quarter of this job fair will be aimed at the Armed Forces Community with employers interested in employing Service Leavers, Reservists, Veterans and Spouses
- HR – The introduction of Guaranteed Interview Scheme within local authorities is being explored. Torfaen County Borough Council and Newport City Council have introduced the scheme with Caerphilly and Monmouthshire in the process of scoping the possibility of implementation.
- Housing – Still awaiting the policy change for Newport, Blaenau Gwent and Monmouthshire which is imminent. To tackle the lack of bespoke homelessness provision in Gwent Solas Cymru has acquired funding from Pobl Group for a Veteran Support Worker. This position is currently advertised however in the meantime Tim Parr has been working with the first referrals. Currently 5 referrals including 2 which have been housed in the past week. Working with SSAFA to secure the funding.
- Education –Newport and Monmouth LA successful in MOD ESF funding to employ Armed Forces Education Officer – Interviews 8th March. Data collection in all schools in Gwent still ongoing with around half of responses.
- Gwent Police – Diversion programme approved – This is expected to 'go live' from May.

- SToMP refunded 2 more years
- **Covenant Local Grants applications**
Applications submitted by 9am on 11 March 2019 will be decided before the end of May 2019
Applications submitted by 9am on 5 June 2019 will be decided before the end of August 2019
Applications submitted by 9am on 9 September 2019 will be decided before the end of November 2019.
Applications submitted by 9am on 2 December 2019 will be decided before the end of February 2020
www.gov.uk/government/collections/covenant-fund

The Positive Pathways Programme will open in May 2019 for applications, but you can take part in a consultation now to help shape this funding programme The Positive Pathways Programme will have a budget of £9M to fund projects that will develop and run activities which are supportive to ex-forces mental health and wellbeing. The consultation will run until the 15th March 2019, and the Positive Pathways Programme will open in May 2019. Activities supported under the programme will link veterans to wider recovery pathways, and the Trust is asking about the best ways to do this
The programme might fund four different types of projects
Sport- adventurous and other sports including adaptive and disability sports
Art/Culture, such as music, theatre or drama projects
Getting outside; gardening, out of doors activities such as forestry
Heritage; including conservation, archaeology and similar activities

Veteran Community Centre Grant

This is a £3 million funding programme to fund renovations and improvements to veterans' community centres. Grants of up to £30,000 are available. A small number of grants of up to £150,000 will be made to more complex projects. The Veterans' Community Centres Programme is a specialist pot of funding. Applicants must be Armed Forces charities with an existing building that requires refurbishment.

- Please follow Twitter @GwentAFC and Facebook account for the Gwent Armed Forces Community
- Newsletter deadline 30th April for submissions. Next edition released June 2019

5.0 UPDATE FROM ARMED FORCES CHAMPION

AW advised the group he has attended events on behalf of Caerphilly County Borough Council. Most notably was a visit to the Houses of Parliament to discuss the ongoing work in the borough.

6.0 FEEDBACK FROM GWENT (ABUHB) ARMED FORCES FORUM

KS advised that he has been nominated to . If you normally would attend this meeting and are not on the distribution list please contact – Claire.Barry3@wales.nhs.uk

7.0 PRESENTATION FROM SOLAS CYMRU

Timothy Parr gave a presentation outlining the new project for a Enhanced Veteran Support Worker for the homeless::

- Developed specifically for veterans who are homeless or at risk of being homeless
- Veterans supported by Veterans is the key to successful transition to civilian life

How will the Enhanced Support Veterans service support the transition to civilian life?

- We will address homelessness with independent accommodation stopping feelings of isolation and suicide
- There are no services in Gwent to offer independent accommodation. Many Veterans are unable to cope with supported accommodation
- Address the issues they are experiencing – substance misuse, MH, anger, frustration so enabling continuity and stability in a safe environment with a support worker who shares common ground
- Ensure both their physical and psychological needs are met
- We will build positive change in their lives and work with them to build confidence and self esteem so they will have a clear pathway to education and employment

Sustainability of the service – research and outcomes

- Each Veteran will have their own support plan with outcomes, so they can see the progress they are making and goals to move towards. This will also allow us to monitor the outcomes of the service (Panconnect)
- We will be working with Dr. Peter Mackie at Cardiff University as part of his on-going research into homelessness for Veterans
- We will work alongside and refer to other organisations such SSAFA, Airman and families association, Combat stress, Barnardo's, Help for Heroes, Poppy Factory and Alabare
- We will look to these services for referrals as they will be best placed to know who the Veterans who need our service are

Sustainability of the service - funding

Vision for the project is:-

- Pobl Trust funding to employ one full time worker
- We will apply in the new year to the Royal British Legion for further funding for 1.75 FTE staff
- We will also seek funding from the MOD (armed forces covenant fund trust) for £300k so we can establish the service on a larger scale looking at other areas outside of Gwent with the aim of generating sustainable funding for the future

Action: LR to distribute a copy of the presentation to be sent to members

8.0 UPDATE FROM CAFF MEMBERS

8.1 Action on Hearing Loss

- Our Aged Veterans project offers information and support to older veterans with hearing loss or tinnitus, and their families and carers, across England and Wales.
- The project focuses on supporting veterans born before 1 January 1950, but we will assist all veterans who contact us
- Our aim is to help older veterans with hearing difficulties access local support services and, as a result, feel better able to connect with their families, friends and communities.
- We provide information and support to older veterans in local community settings or through home visits for those who are unable to travel.
- We offer:
 - basic hearing screenings
 - information about assistive equipment
 - support to help you access NHS services
 - information on benefits
 - information about local community groups
 - other complementary information and support.
- We also provide support to the families and carers of older veterans with hearing loss or tinnitus, and work with community groups to enable them to be more inclusive of veterans with hearing loss.

8.2 Project 360

- Project 360° is a partnership project between Age Cymru, Woody's Lodge, and Age Alliance Wales (AAW) members. It is Wales-wide and is running for three years until June 2020. The project is funded by the Aged Veterans Fund initiated by the Chancellor using LIBOR money, and its beneficiaries are military veterans in Wales aged 65 or over.
- The overall aim of the project is to improve services provided to older veterans through our project partners, whilst keeping older military veterans at the heart of the process.
- Current activity includes:
- Completing research with veterans aged 65 or over across Wales, including research with unpaid carers. This will inform an internal grants process with project partners as well as being shared more widely. This research ends 29 March 2019.
- Working with Age Alliance Wales member Cruse Bereavement Care Cymru to establish bereavement support for older veterans in Wales. More information will be shared when this service is up and running.
- Tendering for peer to peer advocacy for older veterans through project partners, to be established from May 2019.
- Rolling out an Armed Forces Community Training package to Age Alliance Wales staff, alongside a resource to support effective engagement with older veterans accessing AAW services and support.
- Supporting AAW members to initiate asking the question to identify veterans engaging with their organisations
- Through the project funding Woody's Lodge have been developing their South Wales base near Barry including increasing engagement with veterans in the wider area, and expanding the range of relevant agencies, establishing a North Wales site in Colwyn Bay, establishing drop in satellite drop in centres in North and South Wales and employing a support officer in South and North Wales.
- Date for the diary: The Project 360° conference will be taking place on Thursday 24 October 2019 at Cardiff City Stadium open for any organisations working with veterans and older people in Wales. More information will be circulated in the near future.

8.3 SSCE Cymru

- Currently in 5th year of the project
- With support from AFCLO's trying to obtain data of service children numbers in schools
- Hopeful that the question will be on the PLASC for 2020 – working with the WG Cabinet Secretary to achieve this goal.
- Current task to update resources available and ensuring that knowledge and best practice is shared.
- Next Stakeholder day 19th March held at RAF Valley. Currently over 30 delegates registered to attend

8.4 Army Families Federation

- There is a new member of staff due to start shortly that will cover South Wales
- A new piece of research commissioned by all 3 service families federation in conjunction with the Forces in Mind Trust to realise the families experience and the support they need
<https://www.fim-trust.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Transition-Final-Report-FINAL-ONLINE.pdf>
- There will be a new employment platform launched for spouses of serving personnel

Action: LR to circulate Lifting the Lid on Transition research paper

8.5 CCFC Foundation – Veterans Project

- Cardiff City FC Foundation have teamed up with the Royal British Legion to create a Veteran's Project, designed to use the power of Cardiff City FC to engage with socially isolated retired and ex-armed forces personnel or those at risk of becoming lonely in and around Cardiff.
- We want to help veteran's re-build old connections, develop new relationships and help them to become more mentally and physically active.

- Our project seeks to focus on these key issues and provide structure and support that allows them to come together, have fun and take part in a range of new activities led by their interests that target physical and mental activity.
- Working closely with the Sporting Memories Foundation, we are also developing sporting and military reminiscence materials that will be used to support those suffering from dementia, as well as working with the team at the Sporting Memories Foundation to up-skill and train members of the group and wider community to deliver reminiscence activities.
- Wales has one of the largest proportions of veterans in the U.K with 7% of all veterans currently living here. Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan has a veterans' population of around 27,320 and 8% suffer with mental health issues including depression and anxiety. Introduced himself to the forum having been in post a few weeks
- Currently have a 'Tea and Toast' session every Wednesday 10-12pm held in Cardiff City Football Club. Additionally they will be running family sessions starting shortly and will be on a weekend.

8.6 SSAFA

- KP and BT informed the group that a considerable amount of time is devoted to veterans in local prisons. There are currently 32 out of 270 in one such prison.
- SSAFA has been supporting the Solas Cymru project organising the first months bond and rent – the first two clients have just been housed
- KS informed the group that Peter Alan will now drop the admin fee when housing a Veteran on the Solas Cymru Project
- Currently work with Raven House Trust to provide food and furniture for people in need throughout the old county of Gwent and beyond.
- There is a possible reduction in the amount of branches in Wales. KS will update as soon as he receives further information.
- Volunteers still undergoing GDPR and Safeguarding training
- Still requests to help with funeral costs as most are averaging over 5000 pounds.

8.7 RBL – Risca

- Purchased hearing aids for their members in branch for meetings
- Event with a school in Newport 27th June
- County meeting will be held in October

8.8 Veterans NHS Wales

- KS (SSAFA) informed the members that a steering group meeting was held over the last few weeks however only 2 attended – (Group members indicated that they did not receive an invite
- KS reminded the group that you can self refer to Veterans NHS Wales however it can take up to 16 weeks from referral to seeing a psychiatrist
- Still struggling to employ a psychiatrist to the service provision

8.9 Veterans UK

- MW informed the forum that her area of coverage has now expanded and is repeatedly allocated casework from England
- Continues to work with partners and attends as many drop in sessions as able

8.10 Change Step

- Change Step Aged Veterans is dedicated to serving the needs of former Armed Forces personnel aged 65 or over, and their families, in Cardiff, Conwy and Denbighshire.
- We help older veterans live an active and fulfilling life by providing information and one-on-one support. We offer events and activities, telephone and community befriending, digital inclusion training, and much more. Surprisingly still veterans who have not claimed their military pension. Most recent case is of a 64 year old who has missed out on 4 years of their pension.

- The Aged Veterans Project is due to finish at the end of March and they are still waiting on news on whether funds can be found. The peer mentor funded project will however continue.
- They have 10 food bank tokens per quarter to be able to distribute to veterans in need.
- Concerned that prison leavers are not supported adequately
- A lot of clients are referred by the Admiral Nurses – the clients with dementia will be at a loss if the project ends.

8.11 RFEA

- Informed the group that the ability to access the Right Job site can continue indefinitely and would be activated upon request
- They exist to provide life-long, life-changing support, jobs and training opportunities to service leavers, veterans and reservists.
- Currently has a large caseload. Operating from Maindy Barracks and in the RBL shop in Cardiff City Centre
- Offered support to the Solas Cymru clients that attended the meeting

8.12 Royal British Legion – Publicity and Public Affairs

- Briefed the forum of the statistics on the Infographic which highlights the support the RBL has given to the Armed Forces Community
- The Poppy Appeal in Wales raised over 2 million. He thanked the forum for their continued support
- A consultation took place in the Cardiff Office on the Veterans Strategy which was well attended
- Over 425,000 was issued in grants this year

8.13 The Royal Welsh Association – Caerphilly Branch

- JB commented to the members that there was virtually no support offered to him on leaving the Armed Forces – He is pleased to see how much support is now available
- DL informed the forum of the new Caerphilly Armed Forces Veterans Breakfast club that operates from Toby Carvery in Caerphilly every Saturday morning. He cannot thank Toby Carvery enough for their continued support and hoped the group would promote this new club in the area

Action: LR to circulate details of Caerphilly Armed Forces Veterans Breakfast Club

8.14 SToMP – Not in attendance

- LR has informed group that their project has been refunded for a further 2 years.
- Dedicated prison Pathway for veterans
- Currently 26 Armed Forces Champions within the prisons which have been trained on veteran support
- Sub Group in co-ordination with the Police as IOM Cymru

9.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

NIL

11.0 DETAILS OF NEXT MEETING: 10am 7th June 2018, Ty Penalta.