

Cross Party Group on Armed Forces and Cadets

Meeting Minutes

Date: 11th March 2020

Location: Conference Room B

In attendance:

Name	Title
Alun Davies AM (Acting Chair)	Assembly Member for Blaenau Gwent
Lisa Rawlings	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
David Munsen	Veterans Advisory and Pensions Committees
Annabel Ingram	Army Families Federation
Mike Bailey	Veterans Welfare Service
Millie Taylor	SSCE Cymru
Brigadier Jock Fraser	Naval Regional Commander
Brigadier Andrew Dawes	160th Infantry Brigade and Headquarters Wales
Shelly Elgin	Help for Heroes
Professor Simon Deeny	University of Northampton
Cllr Mark Spencer	Newport City Council
Nick Beard	RFCA Wales
Andrew Malcom	DCUP
Tai Harrison	Royal British Legion
Peter Evans	Welsh Government
Curtis Shea	Office of Darren Millar AM
Malcom Andrew	MOD

Apologies:

Name	Title
Darren Millar AM	Assembly Member for Clwyd West
Llyr Gruffydd AM	Assembly Member for North Wales
Jack Sargeant AM	Assembly Member for Alun and Deeside
David Price	Veterans Partnership Wales
Air Cdre Dai Williams	Royal Air Force
Neil Kitchiner	Veterans' NHS Wales
Geraint Jones	CAIS

Summary of Meeting: Cross Party Group on the Armed Forces and Cadets - 11/3/2020 - Conference Room B

1. Welcome and Introductions

Alun Davies AM welcomed everyone to the meeting and extended apologies for the Chair, Darren Millar AM, who was unable to attend due to illness. Attendees introduced themselves for the record.

2. Updates from last meeting -

- The Group received the response from the Minister for Education regarding the definition of service children in Wales.
- Malcom Andrew noted that the definition used by the MOD (JSP342) which was referred to by the Minister for Education in her reply is only applies when claiming expenses whilst in the military and not in a wider context. The definition does not cover the needs of all service children especially children of veterans.
- Peter Evans noted that the Welsh Government had asked for a definition from the MOD. Peter acknowledged that the definition is probably not suitable for the levels of support the Government would like to offer service children.
- Mille Taylor said that different organisations may need to adopt different definitions for different purposes. The JSP response referred to by the Minister has the following issues.
 - It would count Service Children in private schools, Further Education and Higher Education settings, which is not aligned with funding that would be made available by the Welsh Government education team.
 - This particulate JSP definition does not include children of reservists or veterans, suggesting they do not require additional support in education; which we know is not the case as these children are still subject to elements of mobility, separation and transition.
 - The definition does not include Service children that have lost parents in Service.

- It is not aligned with other definitions across the UK; which means data comparisons would not be possible.
 - Alun Davies said he would raise this issue with the Minister for Education.
3. Welsh Government Veterans Scoping Exercise Update
- Peter Evans from the Welsh Government provided an update on the Welsh Government's Scoping Exercise followed by a Q&A.
 - Alun Davies asked what the Welsh Government is doing to ensure its strategy is being delivered on the front line. Peter highlighted the work of the Armed Forces Liaison Officers as eyes and ears on the ground who have been asked to raise problems they identify. The Welsh Government also laid an annual report of the Armed Forces Covenant with recommendations and actions.
 - The Group agreed to write to the Welsh Government to ask what plans were in place to secure the future of the Armed Forces Liaison Officers.
4. Presentation on the Value of the Cadet Forces in Wales -
- Professor Denny delivered the presentation followed by a Q&A.
 - It was agreed the presentation and report would be distributed to the Group.
 - The Group agreed to table the following written questions to the Minister for Education and the Minister with responsibility for the Armed Forces to ask:
 - How are the Welsh Government using the Cadet Forces to build self-confidence and communication skills in young people in education?

- How is the Welsh Government promoting the Cadet Forces in schools?
- How are the Welsh Government supporting the Cadet Forces in Wales?
- How many Cadet units are based in Welsh schools?

- The Group agreed to write to the Secretary of State for Defence, copying in the Secretary of State for Wales, to ask how the Ministry of Defence is sustaining the Armed Forces footprint in Wales.

5. AOB

- It was agreed that the subject of the next meeting would be on how serving personnel are treated in Wales and the Welsh Government's strategy in relation to serving personnel.

- The Group's AGM will take place at the next meeting.