

Cross-Party Group Minutes

Meeting Minutes

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| Cross Party Group Title: | Armed Forces and Cadets |
| Date of Meeting: | 8 th February 2023 |
| Location: | Virtual Meeting |

In attendance:

| Name: | Title: |
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| Darren Millar MS | Chair & Member for Clwyd West |
| Altaf Hussain MS | Member for South Wales West |
| Mark Isherwood MS | Member for North Wales |
| Samuel Kurtz MS | Member for Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire |
| Sam Rowlands MS | Member for North Wales |
| Colonel James Phillips | Veterans' Commissioner for Wales |
| Brigadier Jock Fraser | Royal Navy |
| Peter Kellam | Welsh Government |
| Millie Taylor | SSCE Cymru |
| Ella Fortune | Royal Air Force |
| Adrian Leslie | Royal British Legion |
| Cllr Teresa Heron | Armed Forces Community Covenant Champion |
| Cllr Paul Hinge | Armed Forces Champion, Ceredigion County Council |
| Cllr Julie Matthews | Armed Forces Champion, Denbighshire County Council |

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| Cllr Elizabeth Roberts | Armed Forces Champion, Conwy County Borough Council |
| Cllr Mark Spencer | Armed Forces Champion, Newport City Council |
| Cllr Eddie Williams | Armed Forces Champion, Vale of Glamorgan Council |
| Andy Jones | Armed Forces Covenant Liaison Officer (Powys) |
| Lisa Rawlings | Armed Forces Covenant Liaison Officer (Gwent) |
| Abigail Warburton | Armed Forces Covenant Liaison Officer (South West East) |
| Zoe Roberts | Armed Forces Covenant & Veteran Healthcare Collaborative Lead, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board |
| Emilia Douglass | Office of Laura Anne Jones |
| Tara Moorcroft | Office of Darren Millar |
| Emma Perrin | Devolved Nations Manager, Army Families Federation |
| Colonel David Chipp | Former Commandant of Gwent and Powys Army Cadet Force |

Apologies:

| Name: | Title: |
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| Alun Davies MS | Vice Chair & Member for Blaenau Gwent |
| Hannah Blythyn MS | Deputy Minister for Social Partnership |
| Llyr Gruffydd MS | Member for North Wales |
| Jack Sargeant MS | Member for Alyn & Deeside |
| Air Cdre Dai Williams | Royal Air Force |
| Peter Evans | Welsh Government |
| Megan Greatrex | The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust |
| Cllr David Evans | Armed Forces Champion, Flintshire County Council |
| Cllr Glyn Haynes | Armed Forces Champion, Isle of Anglesey County Council |
| Cllr Wendy Lewis | Armed Forces Champion, Swansea |

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| Cllr Beverley Parry-Jones | Armed Forces Champion, Wrexham County Borough Council |
| Neil Kitchener | Veterans' NHS Wales |

Summary of Meeting:

1. Introductions and Apologies
2. Updates
 - The Chair thanked Air Commodore Dai Williams and his team, for arranging for the Battle of Britain exhibition to visit the Senedd in November 2022.
 - The Chair paid tribute to Brigadier Andrew Dawes who has departed as Commander of 160 (Wales) Brigade.
3. Update on 2021 Census and Veterans Survey results from Adrian Leslie, Public Affairs and Campaigns Manager in Wales, Royal British Legion (RBL)
 - The Chair welcomed the Adrian Leslie to the meeting and thanked him for coming to speak to the group.
 - Adrian Leslie spoke about the 2021 Census and advised the question regarding the Armed Forces included in the Census was as a result of the Count Them In campaign by RBL and Poppy Scotland.
 - Adrian Leslie Provided information on the Veteran population in Wales and how this compared to the rest of the UK. Also compared results by local authorities and Health Boards in Wales.
 - Adrian Leslie advised that RBL's Cost of Living Grants has given nearly £2million in direct grants (UK wide) over the past three months, and only 10% of the grant applicants were over 65.
 - Adrian Leslie advised the Veterans' Survey closes this month, and the survey aims to learn more about the lives of the UK Armed Forces community, veterans and their families.
 - Adrian Leslie answered questions regarding the release of additional data in the future and housing for veterans by Local Authorities throughout Wales. Questions were also raised regarding how the data will be used, and the potential disparity in results between North and South Wales due to the differing demographics.
 - The Chair advised that they will discuss and consider the work that all Health Boards in Wales are doing to support veterans at a future CPG.

- **It was agreed that the CPG would make representations to the WLGA to ensure they are using the data from the census and veteran's survey appropriately.**

4. Update from Millie Taylor, Supporting Service Children in Education (SSCE) Cymru:

- Millie Taylor shared an update on the growth of the SSCE Cymru team and the CPD training they deliver to school staff.
- Millie Taylor updated the group on the Armed Forces Friendly School project which aims to create a positive environment for Service children to share their experience and to encourage schools to become more engaged with the Armed Forces community.
- 10 schools across Wales have achieved their Bronze status, and Ysgol Pen y Bryn in Colwyn Bay are the first school to be awarded Silver status. The schools have been very engaging, and are encouraging other schools to participate in the scheme.
- Millie Taylor updated the group on the work SSCE Cymru are doing ready for the Month of the Military Child project in April.
- Millie Taylor provided an update on service children data in Wales and how this data is collected by Local Authorities and Welsh Government.
- Update also provided on Local Authority Action Plans and engagement with Local Authorities.
- SSCE Cymru are now issuing monthly school bulletins, in place of their quarterly newsletters, which are tailored regionally.
- Millie Taylor advised how Welsh Government funding has been distributed to Local Authorities in Wales, and how SSCE Cymru encourages LAs to use the funding.
- The Chair thanked Millie for the work SSCE Cymru do and congratulated Ysgol Pen y Bryn on their Silver status.
- Millie Taylor answered questions on the definition of service children.
- The Chair advised that the CPG had suggested broadening the definition so more people could benefit and advised Welsh Government seemed open to extending this.
- The issue of some schools not including service children data during Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) was raised. The Chair agreed to follow this up with Welsh Government.
- **It was agreed that the CPG would ask the Welsh Government what consideration it has given to extending the definition of service children to make it consistent with the SSCE Cymru definition and to ensure that data on service children was recorded annually via PLASC.**

5. Discussion on Post-Pandemic Resilience and 'Winter Preparedness' in Wales with Peter Kellam, Welsh Government and Brigadier Graeme Fraser, Royal Navy:

- The Chair discussed the co-operation between Welsh Government and the Armed Forces, and how they have responded to significant events like flooding and the pandemic.
- Peter Kellam updated the group on Welsh Government's relationship with the Armed Forces footprint in Wales, and his work with the Civil Contingencies team.
- Peter Kellam and Brigadier Graeme Fraser outlined the process of requesting military aid in Wales.
- Brigadier Fraser gave examples of the variety of circumstances where the Armed Forces have provided assistance, and how this has enabled them to deepen their connections across the community.
- The Chair welcomed the opportunity to discuss the topic of resilience, and expressed thanks to the military services for their efforts during the pandemic.

6. AOB

- The Chair thanked attendees and looked forward to working together with the group going forward.
- Dates of future meetings were shared with the group.
- The Chair informed the group that an update from Armed Forces Liaison Officers in Wales will be provided at the next CPG.