

Minutes of the Cross Party Group for the Armed Forces and Cadets

Wednesday 25th January 2017 1200 – 1300
Pierhead Seminar Rooms, The Pierhead Building

Attending:

- Darren Millar AM - Chair
- Paul Pavia - Secretary
- Dr Neil Kitchiner - Principal Clinician & Honorary Research Fellow, Veterans' NHS Wales
- Col. Lance Patterson – Deputy Commander, 160th Infantry Brigade
- Geraint Jones – Director, Change Step
- David Ireland, Mentor, Change Step
- Steve Stokoe, South Wales Manager, Change Step
- Lisa Leece, The St John & Red Cross Defence Medical Welfare Service (DMWS)
- Lt. Col. Stephen Hughes – Reserve Forces and Cadets Association Wales
- Peter Evans – Royal British Legion
- Anthony Metcalfe – Royal British Legion
- Commander Steve Henaghen – Royal Navy (representing Commodore Jamie Miller CBE)
- Prof. David Rose – UNSWIS
- Alison Griffiths – Help for Heroes
- Seb Hargreaves – SSAFA
- Annabel Ingram – Army Families Federation
- Richard Mottershead – Senior Mental Health Nurse, University of Chester
- Mark Isherwood AM - Regional Member for North Wales
- Russell George AM – Member for Montgomeryshire
- Nathan Gill AM – Regional Member for North Wales
- Sam Gould - Researcher (Nathan Gill)
- Caroline Jones AM – Regional Member South Wales West
- Researcher (Caroline Jones)
- Air Commodore Dai Williams
- Ben Lewis – Cardiff University

Apologies received from:

- Janet Finch-Saunders AM
- Simon Thomas AM

- John Skipper
- Commodore Jamie Millar CBE
- Brigadier Alan Richmond OBE

1. Chairs' welcome, introductions and apologies

2. MOD Estates Update

Col. Lance Patterson, Deputy
Commander of 160th Infantry
Brigade

Col. Patterson talked through the implications to Wales from the 'Better Defence Estate' strategy and 'Army 2020 Refine'.

A discussion then took place on the update.

Action: For the Chair to write letters to the UK Government, Welsh Government and Welsh Office to request to maintain Wales' fair share of armed forces footprint and that any reorganisation should not be detrimental to Wales.

3. Presentation: Data from the 2015-16 annual report and 3MDR study with treatment resistant veterans

Dr Neil J. Kitchiner, Principal
Clinician & Honorary Research
Fellow, Veterans' NHS Wales

Dr Kitchiner gave a presentation on [Veterans' NHS Wales](#).

A discussion then took place about the presentation and the data break down for each Local Health Board in Wales. Dr Kitchiner stated that there is a financial gap which is preventing the service being sustainable in the longer-term (approx. £250k).

Action: For the Chair to write to the Welsh Government to express concerns over the adequacy of current funding VNHSW and request a review.

4. Change Step Funding Update

Geraint Jones, Director, Change
Step

Geraint Jones proceeded to give an update on CAIS/Step-Change Funding. He said while they had benefitted from financial support from some armed forces charities, they had found difficulty with the Royal British Legion and the Army Benevolent Fund because of its national grant funding criteria for external grants.

Action: For the Chair to write to the Director-General of the Royal British Legion to request a meeting regarding its grant funding eligibility criteria and to explore potential support for Change Step.

- 5. General issues update:** Darren Millar
Gliding & Flying for Air Cadets;
Royal Navy Reserve Facility
(Cardiff); Review of the impact
Armed Forces Covenant in
Wales.

The Chair gave an update on Gliding and Flying for Air Cadets, following the letter he received from the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State and Minister for Defence Veterans, Reserves and Personnel, Mark Lancaster MP.

Action: For the Chair to write back to Mr Lancaster thanking him for his response.

Lt. Col. Stephen Hughes gave an update on the new Tri-partide service facility to replace HMS Cambria.

The Chair led a discussion on the CPG generating its own inquiry on the impact of the Armed Forces Covenant on Welsh armed service personnel, veterans and their families, following a letter from the Chair of the National Assembly's Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee, who stated that the Committee could not allocate time for an inquiry within its current forward work programme.

There was strong consensus that the CPG should conduct its own inquiry but that it would require external secretariat support to drive the process forward.

Action: Peter Evans (RBL) will discuss this internally with colleagues to see if it could provide the capacity to allow the CPG to take this work forward.

Action: Ben Lewis will also look at this from a research perspective to see if Cardiff University can supply inquiry support.

- 6. Commemorating 35th Anniversary of the end of the Falklands War** Darren Millar

The Chair led a discussion on whether the CPG wanted to hold a commemorative event to mark the 35th anniversary of the end of the Falklands Conflict. Col. Patterson stated that a national military event was taking place in Wrexham on 24th June but that should not preclude an event taking place at the National Assembly.

Ideas put forward were a Book of Remembrance, which would be opened in the Senedd the week marking the end of the conflict (14th June end date so from 12th June). Col. Patterson said that a Drumhead Service could also be organised for 14th June.

Action: For the Chair to write to the National Assembly's Presiding Officer asking for the event to be commemorated in the NAFW and to offer some suggested options of how the event could be properly marked.

AOB

Darren Millar

- SSAFA social care contract with RAF to continue.
- Integration work with Somali Merchant Seaman.
- Cadet Expansion Programme (Fitzalan High School); RN fostering link with new facility, as well as Middleton College (Denbighshire) [there would be a more focused update at the next meeting].
- Veterans housing.