

**Scottish Parliament Cross-Party Group on
The Armed Forces and Veterans Community**

8 March 2017

This meeting took place in The Scottish Parliament, starting at 6:00pm.

Attendance:

Name	Organisation
Alex Edmonds	University of Edinburgh
Annabel Ingram	Army Families Federation
Beverly Bergman	University of Glasgow
Bob Bertram	Scotland & NI Area RAF Association
Chris Dunlop	Veteran
Col Charles Wallace	HQ 51 Inf Bde & HQ Scotland
Deborah McKinnon	Help for Heroes
Dr Alex Quinn	Veterans 1st Point
Dr Louise Richards	Division of Clinical Psychology Scotland
Graeme Dalgliesh	Sacro - Veterans Mentoring Service
Jackson Carlaw MSP	Eastwood
Jim Wilson	Veterans Scotland & Secretary
Karen Elliot	Association of Wrens & Royal Naval Association
Lachlan Bruce	Scottish Government
Lawrence Mannion	Help for Heroes
Linda Irvine	Veterans 1st Point & NHS Lothian
Lt Col Gordon Mackenzie	HQ 51 Bde
Mark Harris	Naval Families Federation
Martin Gibson	Veterans Scotland
Maurice Corry MSP	Scottish Government & Convenor
Neil Morrison	Veterans Scotland
Pat MacKinnon	Thistle
Ross Swinton	Veteran
Scott Muir	Sacro - Veterans Mentoring Service
Sharon Fegan	Veterans 1st Point Scotland
Stephen Elliot	Legion Scotland
Steve Burton	Blesma
Tony Carruthers	Housing Options Scotland
Willie Smith	Veteran

Apologies: Apologies had been received from Jackie Baillie, Willie Rennie, George Adams, Liam Kerr, Edward Mountain and Eric Fraser.

1. **Introduction and Opening Remarks:** Mr Maurice Corry MSP, Convenor, opened the meeting, welcomed everyone and thanked all for attending. The main focus of the evening's meeting was to be 'Health' and he confirmed that Mr Keith Brown MSP was unavailable for this meeting but that he would be invited to the next one in June. Since the last meeting Mr Corry had visited a number of veterans centres and was looking forward to hearing further about the developing work of the Firm Base structure;

he was also arranging to meet Mark Lancaster MP, in his capacity as Minister for Veterans in the UK Parliament.

2. **Minutes of the previous meeting:** The minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2016 were agreed and accepted as an accurate record of that meeting. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

4. **Item 4:** Combat Stress were not in attendance so Lt Col (Retd) Neil Morrison, Health and Well-Being Pillar officer from Veterans Scotland provided an overview on the recently issued Forces in Mind Trust report 'Call to Mind Scotland Report' which is available at: <http://www.fim-trust.org/reports> along with other research. He highlighted some simple pieces of work that could be done – for example producing leaflets for distribution across the NHS on the topic of Priority Treatment for veterans as a result of service, and encouraging GP's to identify where conditions could be Service related when referring to secondary care – these would go some way to meeting the Armed Forces Covenant. He highlighted the need for greater liaison between Health and Social Care, in particular encouraging greater liaison between NHS and Local Authority AF&V Champions.

Jackson Carlaw MSP identified that many of these issues had been discussed at previous meetings, citing an example of one of the first meetings he attended in 2008. It was recognised that these matters can be cyclical and that regular updates benefit our veterans and maintain awareness of the issues that may be faced by some veterans.

5. **Item 5, Veterans 1st Point:** Linda Irvine presented a brief on Veterans 1st Point, a Scotland wide network based in 8 NHS Regions which provides support to veterans with mental health issues through peer support workers and access to mental health services; a copy of her Powerpoint slides is at Annex A

6. **Item 6 – Dr Beverly Bergman:** Dr Bergman has carried out intensive research into the health of the ex-Service community in Scotland as part of a Phd Study. The study compares the health records of 57,000 veterans who served between 1960 and 2012 with a corresponding civilian population of 173,000 and focusses on 48 health outcomes. Key messages from the study, Powerpoint slides of which are at Annex B, are:

- Longer service is generally associated with better long term health
- Older veterans (now aged 65-70), and Early Service Leavers, are at risk of worse health outcomes – physical and mental
- More recent veterans generally enjoy better health than their never-serving peers
- Smoking may be an important influence on veterans' health.
- 'Less likely' does not mean 'never'. There may be a small number of vulnerable (and hard-to-reach) veterans within the 'low-risk' group

7. **Open Forum:** The Firm Base network in Scotland was discussed, the structure of Firm Base in Scotland is being reviewed by 51 Infantry Brigade and its terms of reference are being updated. 51 Brigade see the Firm Base network as a vehicle to consider issues relating to disadvantage facing the serving community. Such issues should be resolved at the most local level before being raised to higher levels and should only be raised through the Community Engagement Task Force commanders, Firm Base Steering Group and to Scotland Office, MoD and Scottish Government where resolution cannot be found locally.

8 Next Meetings: Tuesday 13 June 2017 (Families)

Wednesday 13 Sep 2017 (Transition and will include AGM)

The meeting closed at approximately 8:00pm