

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

**Meeting 26 June 2018**

**Minutes**

1. **Introductions and Opening Remarks:** The Convenor welcomed the Group and thanked everyone for attending; he noted that there was strong attendance from local authority champions as well as from MSP's.

2. **Attendance:**

<b>MSP's</b>	<b>Name</b>	
1	Bill Bowman	MSP
1	Edward Mountain	MSP
1	Gordon Lindhurst	MSP
1	Jackson Carlaw	MSP
1	Maurice Corry	MSP
1	Michelle Ballantyne	MSP
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<b>Members</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
1	Alex Leith	Scottish Prison Service - VICSO
1	Alison Howard	Scottish Veterans Commissioner's Office
1	Alistair Ferrier	Skills Development Scotland
1	Ally Gemmell	Armed Services Advice Project, Stirling
1	Amelia Morgan	Venture Trust
1	Andy Waller	Army Personnel Centre
1	Annabel Ingram	Army Families Federation
1	Barbara Spence	SACRO - Veterans Mentoring Service
1	Barry Henderson	SCQF Consultant and SACRO
1	Baz Dale	RAF Benevolent Fund
1	Berni Wilkins	Custodian Wreath of Respect
1	Chris Ahern	Perth & Kinross Council
1	Dani Robertson	RAF Families Federation
1	David Cullen	North Lanarkshire Council
1	David McNeill	Help for Heroes
1	Debbie McCann	Midlothian Council
1	Elaine Middleton	Career Transition Partnership
1	Eric Fraser	Scottish Veterans Commissioner
1	George Corbett	Scottish Veterans Residences
1	Graeme Dalgliesh	SACRO - Veterans Mentoring Service
1	Graeme McGinnigle	East Dunbartonshire Council
1	Heather Wilson	Scottish Veterans Commissioner's Office
1	Helen Moodie	South Ayrshire Council
1	Ian Clarkson	North Ayrshire Council
1	Imogen Bevan	University of Edinburgh

1	James Needham	Help for Heroes
1	James Newman	Scottish Veterans Commissioner's Office
	Jen Staermose-	
1	Johnson	Defence Policy Unit, Scottish Government
1	Jim Castle	Glasgow Caledonian University
1	Jim Wilson	Veterans Scotland
1	John Greenwell	Scottish Borders Council
		Association of WRENS and Royal Naval
		Association
1	Karen Elliot	Defence Policy Unit, Scottish Government
1	Kenny Warren	MSP Staff
1	Laurie Carlaw	Poppyscotland
1	Mark Bibby	Naval Families Federation
1	Mark Harris	South Lanarkshire Council
1	Mark Horsham	Officers Association Scotland
1	Mary-Clare Macfarlane	RASC & RCT Association
1	Maurice Walsh	Aberdeen City Council
1	Michael Hutchison	Scotland's Bravest Manufacturing Company
1	Michelle Ferguson	Veterans Scotland
1	Neil Morrison	Midlothian Council
1	Peter Smaill	Glasgow City Council
1	Phil Green	Scottish War Blinded
1	Richard Baker	Lowland Reserve Forces and Cadets Association
1	Robin Gibson	Fife Council
1	Rod Cavanagh	Skills Development Scotland
1	Sandra Cheyne	SACRO - Veterans Mentoring Service
1	Scott Muir	Legion Scotland
1	Stephen Elliot	BLESMA
1	Steve Burton	Housing Options Scotland
1	Tony Carruthers	Poppyscotland
1	Usman Ali	

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3. **Previous Minutes:** The minutes of the previous meeting, which had taken place on 17 April, were agreed as an accurate record of that meeting and approved by the members.
4. **Matters arising.** There were no matters arising from the previous minutes. Two matters of other business had been identified:
  - *Adam Strachura from Age Scotland Veterans' Project's wished to provide a brief update on the new advice guide – "The Veterans' Guide to later Life in Scotland"*
  - *Alistair Ferrier from Skills Development Scotland wished to provide a short update on the work that SDS is carrying out.*
5. **Briefings:** There was one topic presented:
  - Veterans' Health and Well-Being: Eric Fraser, Scottish Veterans Commissioner, provided a brief on his report 'Veterans' Health and

Wellbeing, A Distinctive Scottish Approach'; he noted that, among other moves, the very recent Cabinet reshuffle had seen Keith Brown leaving as cabinet Secretary with responsibility for veterans and Shona Robison leaving as Health Secretary and hoped that their successors would have a similar level of impact in relation to veterans matters. His key points were:

- He felt there were Four Questions to consider:
  1. Are outcomes for veterans as good as they might be?
  2. Do we meet our obligations to veterans?
  3. Do veterans face disadvantage in health?
  4. Are veterans needs understood by health professionals?
- He had spent eight months researching for his report and had consulted a wide range of people and organisations. He felt that the impetus on health had recently gone a bit flat and that we need to adapt to changing conditions in Health and Social Care.
- Whilst most (a clear majority) of veterans receive good care there are some that fall between the cracks; pressure needs to be maintained by groups such as this to reduce this.
- It is important to recognise some of the good care that is provided and to ensure that veterans are fully embedded within mainstream health care.
- He had found that most veterans tend to be healthy having benefitted from a largely healthy lifestyle while serving; many prevalent health conditions are less common among the veterans population.
- That said, there are a number of severe conditions faced by some veterans, in particular those discharged as Wounded, Injured or Sick, that do require special attention. Whilst care for them may be suitable at present, they have concerns over the quality of care in the future – whilst care for an injured 25 year old may be good, is that same quality going to be seen in 25 or 40 years time when the care needs for that individual may have changed?

The Convenor thanked the Commissioner for his interesting and informative brief and for his report. There followed some discussion on matters relating to the report.

6. **AOB:**

- *Adam Strachura from Age Scotland Veterans' Project's provided a brief update on the new advice guide – "The Veterans' Guide to later Life in Scotland". This was well received and recognised as part of the Unforgotten Forces project*
- *Alistair Ferrier from Skills Development Scotland provided a short update on the work that SDS is carrying out. In particular he highlighted the work*

*carried out by their National Careers Service, the website My World of Work and the ongoing recruitment of Champions within SDS. This was highlighted as a good example of collaboration between organisations.*

- There followed some discussion on members of the Armed Forces visiting schools, which was being perceived as 'Recruitment' activity in some areas; this matter had been raised in a report by the Petitions Committee, concerned in respect of comments raised in it.

**7. Dates of Next Meetings:**

- To be confirmed, .