

Meeting of the Yorkshire and Humber Veterans Advisory and Pensions Committee (VAPC) Held on 8 June 2011 at Reserve Forces and Cadets Association for Yorkshire and the Humber

Record of Discussion, Decisions and Actions

<p>Attendees: Col(Rtd) Tony Phillips MBE Mr John Anderson Maj (Rtd) Duncan Bell Ms Alison Carter Dr David Jolliffe Mr Robert Mortimer Mr Peter Shields MBE QGM Mrs Helen Singleton Mr John Topping</p> <p>Apologies: Mr Alexander Baxter Mr Alex Bentley Mr Tim Cole Mr Peter Heys Flt Lt(Rtd) Ian Johnstone RAF</p> <p>Absent: Mrs Helen Owen Mr Dave Chapman</p>	<p>Chair</p>
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Item	Discussion
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair outlined his new role with Combat Stress, which would not cause any conflict of interest. • This year notably successful and would elaborate - "Report Highlights". • He expected Y&H VAPC to build on achievement and continue "routine business" in sub-groups but would like <u>whole committee</u> to focus on a few key issues - sought <u>members</u> views on those at relevant item. • Writing annual report exposed clearly Y&H VAPC had only existed for 8 months, and consequently would delay <u>members</u> annual reports to Sep 11 so a full years contribution could be properly recognised. • Finally, sadly announced resignation of Steve Bentham-Bates due to work commitments and publicly thanked him for proving an engaged, committed and effective member.
Minutes of last Meeting	<p>The Action Log from the previous meeting was reviewed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [Action 2.8] Chairs work to develop VAPC area on SPVA Web site exposed conflicting views from other regions about biographies; while all previously agreed their inclusion some were now unsure and VAPC Chairs were to establish a coherent position. Action on this item suspended until agreed resolution is clear for all VAPCs. The view of

	<p>Y&H VAPC members remained that we would wish to have the facility, yet retain individual choice about whether to contribute to it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was discussion on emerging results of central work on Military Covenant, AFCS (Independent Medical Expert Group Report & Recommendations, implementation Boyce Review recommendations) – which sparked prosthetic limb discussion, Community Covenants; and members attention drawn to several pamphlets; Chair covered slide of where covenants sat in societal expectations, included in pamphlet and would provide members ideal model engaging with community/ LAs. • The last minutes accepted as true record of meeting.
Functional Reports	<p>Governance/Local Authorities (LA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work was continuing on the traffic light assessment, which must be completed by end on Jun 11 for inclusion in Annual Report. • Chair asked <u>all Members</u> to support effort by being prepared to visit those categorised RED or YELLOW in VAPC advocacy role, • He wished to <u>prioritise urban areas</u> where veterans were concentrated; RBL had a map showing these which will help ID these. Chair would seek RBL permission to use it. <p>Welfare</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pete Shields outlined current case load; RWS/VWS report this period considered “thin” (Chair agreed) so lacking utility; this would be pursued. • He reiterated process for referral of individual cases raised last meeting because this VAPC had got it wrong in one case raising potential for negative perceptions, albeit through best intentions. <u>Member</u> attention again drawn to clear process explained in Members Handbook. • Stewardship Review proposals and our response discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Replace 20%WP by lump sum £12K; admin savings recognised but only if lump sum at appropriate level. Concerns about ability of vulnerable vets to handle lump sum without support/advice. ○ WP Lump sum at Age 90; not supported and difficult to justify. ○ Remove Housing Adaption Grant; econ efficiencies accepted and welfare state support acknowledged, but some scepticism regional variations (post code lottery) may disadvantage some. • Pete Shields outlined RWS/VWS monitor role sub-group taking forward IAW Handbook guidance. He explained RWS/VWS settling into reorg but would provide grass roots information to VAPC in due course. • Once monitoring role develops <u>all VAPC Members</u> asked to be prepared to support visit programme on their patch if requested, which would help them build local patina. • Process would require a formal VAPC Chair report <u>by 30 Apr 12</u>. • Discussion - confidentiality issues & multiple agency sensitivities; one agency perceived “closer hold” than others; Chair asked <u>members</u> for objective evidence of any negative impact on vets welfare to decide if a direct approach to that agency (SSAFA) required/appropriate. <p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Jolliffe explained engagement plan effected with N.Lincs, now being run out to Yorks & Humber. • He explained reorg that clustered SHAs into 6 groups, making VAPC advocacy more effective.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He further informed us of new people in influential posts (D/Dir – Clare Jones) who were strongly positive about our engagement and with CEs being tasked directly to nominate AF Champions. • CE Hull SHA (Chris Strong) was also NHS lead for AFN across Y&H Region and will chair a Y&H meeting - date tbc. • He outlined sub-group engagement programme for next few months. <p>Public Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Topping had drafted a generic Press Release; with Chair for approval after which would be circulated for general utility of <u>members</u>. • He would engage friendly media (BBC Local) in one area first to learn lessons & develop model for <u>members</u> to utilise on own patches. • This sparked deep debate about national v regional positioning, which Chair directed be raised at Keypoint Item later in meeting. • John Anderson outlined his awareness campaign on his patch, which was fairly extensive and an example of best practice for all <u>members</u>, showing the sort of relatively low resource things that can be done. • The location of promotional material was not certain; <u>Sec</u> to follow up.
Chairman's Report	<p>Chair introduced Y&H VAPC Annual Report (AR), stating he wished to applaud <u>members</u> who contributed to meetings, engagements, policy and advocacy as effect achieved has been to establish Y&H VAPC presence as a recognised, trusted and credible stakeholder whose opinion was actively widely sought; a remarkable presence to establish in just 8 months work. He had circulated draft to Sub-Group leads and highlights included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership applauded on establishing respected presence in just 8 Months. Cross representational skills and commitment welcomed. • No mean feat in large region mix of urban/rural, including 24 LAs, 14 SHAs, 5 Regional Forums with over 13K WPs & 1K AFCS dependents. • We made a comprehensive, ambitious 3 Year Plan that is on target and remains extant; detailed objectives may need tweaking and amendments may arise from discussion on key issues for next year. • Stretch objective of establishing links has been resounding success; we linked to all LA, SHA, main Service and Ex-Service Organisations and invited as permanent members of 4 influential Regional Forums. Involved in at least 4 x community covenant developments and instrumental in appointment AF champions; have established a vast, active network and presence. • Grass Roots feeling of dependents remains an area he would wish to gain greater visibility of and so become a man focus for next year. • Y&H VAPC members completed over 50 engagements in 8 months advocating in various forum for Veterans; a huge effort! • Chair firmly believes we have done much to increase awareness of veterans and their dependents needs amongst a significant and effectively focused network of contacts, we have forged.
Keypoint Item	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair wished VAPC to continue and build on the excellent work so far; sub-group business was now established and therefore “routine”. • He wished VAPC to concentrate on better transparency of grass roots opinion and focus resources on 3 policy areas for concentrated effect. • Selection entailed discussion on: Pensions (Hutton) & AFCS, AF & Community Covenants, Housing & Financial Inclusion, Public Info, Veterans in Custody and Prosthetics. • Former 3 discussed in detail - decided they were already in our 3 year

	<p>plan being actively pursued, also part of another organisations major campaign, aligned with our views and consequently covered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing issues were however identified for increased attention by LA sub-group; particularly ensuring prioritisation mechanisms when councils offload delivery of housing to private sector maintain service covenant conditions according to the 4 priorities; the “Choice Housing” policy was specifically mentioned. Alex <u>Bentley</u> requested to outline issue for discussion at next meeting. • The Y&H VAPC decided on following Key Point issues to concentrate all <u>members</u> resources upon for next year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Funding of Prosthetic Limbs: Government position is clear, stated in various documents, but ability to deliver state, charity, service funding streams is not certain. Pete <u>Shields</u> requested to provide form of words for objective by end Jul 11. ○ Veterans in Custody: This issue regularly aired in committee, illustrating a broad interest and indicating concern in our region, on which we would like greater resolution. Alex <u>Baxter</u> requested to provide form of words for objective by end Jul 11. ○ Public Information: The regional nature of vets requirements and hence VAPC footprint was well understood. The place of regional campaigns was also appreciated. However, there was also perceived gap between Central Government and Regions at national level that affected effectiveness of “outreach” to dependencies. Y&H VAPC believe this gap needs closing. <u>Chair</u> requested to provide form of words for objective by end Jul 11.
AOB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting Frequency: Committee agreed to change to 3 per year to ease other commitment burden. Given Y&H VAPC engagement, sub-groups and membership of other Regional Forum this was considered fully effective, sensible measure and also deliver expense efficiencies. <u>Secretary</u> and <u>Chair</u> to liaise and draw up calendar to be effective <u>after</u> next meeting. All <u>members</u> note. • VVADS: This programme has previously been discussed and appears to be working well and speeding up referrals and appointments. • Widow case: Y&H VAPC involvement in assisting a widow (not on WP) fight a multinational corporation not paying compensation for death of husband overseas was outlined. • RBL 90: Committee appraised of events and Y&H VAPC extends congratulations to RBL with who we enjoy excellent relations. • Public Sector Efficiencies: Progress with these as they might impact on SPVA/VAPCs was covered; the position of Hd Vets Svcs SPVA, outlined in the publication @SPVA, was welcomed by Y&H VAPC.
DONM	Date of Next meeting - 7 September 2011 , 11:00 - 15:30hrs at RFCA, York.

ACTION LOG

Serial	Action	Action Owner	Due Date	Notes	Completed Date
Meeting 4, 8 June 2011					
COMMITTEE STANDING ORDERS					
3.1	Members are to ensure they are familiar with the VA&PC Processes as set out in the Appointment Packup.	All Members	Ongoing	Of paramount importance is understanding how to deal with enquiries of a Welfare Nature.	Tx to Standing Orders
3.3	Members are to provide monthly updates of their activities to their Sub Group leads. Sub Group Leads are to collate these and pass to the Secretary	Members and Sub Group Leads	End of Each Calendar Month	Simple, short sentences will suffice. Data should be sanitized, especially for Welfare type activities.	Tx to Standing Orders
3.6	All Members are to provide environment scanning with regards to changes to their PCT's into GP Trusts and to keep the Health Sub Group Lead informed.	All Members	Ongoing	Members are to continue this action	Tx to Standing Orders
3.9	Members are to gather evidence from individual veterans they encounter with regards to ascertaining the awareness of the VA&PC amongst the veteran community in our region.	All members	Ongoing	Members are to continue this action	Tx to Standing Orders
3.10a	Members are to provide feedback regarding any services provided to veterans which fall below an acceptable standard.	All Members	Next Meeting	Members are to continue this action	Tx to Standing Orders
3.10b	Members are to report, via the Welfare Sub Group Lead, any cases which appear to be on hold due to the rationalization of records at SPVA.	All Members	Next Meeting	Members are to continue this action	Tx to Standing Orders
COMPLETED ACTIONS					
2.4	The PR Sub Group Lead is to produce material for use in PR and Media Opportunities and to look for opportunities to represent our role with Regional BBC News and Newspapers.	Chair and PI Sub Group	Next Meeting	John Topping has effectively taken the lead in this area. All Members to liaise directly with John regarding PR and Information distribution to the Media.	8 Jun 11
3.2	Secretary to order 20 Business Cards per Member and distribute	Secretary	14 April 2011	Email sent to SPVA 27 Jul 11	27 Jul 11

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3.4	Secretary to inform SPVA of the committee's outstanding training needs	Secretary	1 April 2011	Only 2 members now require training	8 Jun 11
3.5	The Secretary is to liaise with the Leads for Welfare, PI and Local Authorities in adopting the Gap Analysis Report Format produced by the Health Sub Group.	Secretary and Sub Group Leads	1 April	Reporting Formats now adopted	8 Jun 11
3.11	Mr Topping is to produce a Press Release for committee use based on the formal SPVA Press <i>Releases</i> <Note these are available via the <i>GoogleDocs Portal</i> >.	Mr Topping	14 April	Mr Topping has effectively taken the lead in this area	8 Jun 11
OUTSTANDING ACTIONS					
2.8	Members are requested to provide a general Biography for inclusion in the GoogleDoc shared area.	All Members	30 April	ONGOING – (NOTE Deletion of Bio for resigned members: Data Protection)	
3.7	The Secretary is to meet with the RFA Chief of Staff to investigate their distribution method for the Region's MPs	Secretary / LA Lead	Next Meeting	The LA Lead was asked to take this forward – Update at next meeting.	
3.8	The Chair is to request the inclusion of the Skipton/Ripon areas in the next tranche of DASA Statistics.	Chair	Next Meeting	Update needed from Chair	