

**Meeting of the Yorkshire and Humber Veterans Advisory and Pensions Committee (VAPC) Held on 8 December 2010 at Reserve Forces and Cadets Association for Yorkshire and the Humber**

**Record of Discussion, Decisions and Actions**

<p><b>Attendees:</b>                  Col(Rtd) Tony Phillips MBE                  Mr Alexander Baxter                  Maj(Rtd) Duncan Bell                  Mr Alex Bentley                  Mr Steven Bentham-Bates                  Ms Alison Carter                  Mr Tim Cole                  Dr David Jolliffe                  Mr Robert Mortimer                  Mrs Helen Singleton                  Mr Eddie Devlin                  Flt Lt(Rtd) Ian Johnstone RAF</p> <p><b>Apologies:</b>                  Mr David Chapman                  Mrs Helen Owen                  Mr John Anderson                  Mr Peter Shields MBE QGM                  Mr Peter Heys                  Mr John Topping</p>	<p>Chair</p>          <p>Regional Welfare Manager                  Secretary</p>
---	--

Item	Discussion
Introduction	The Chair opened the meeting and provided a detailed update on progress made since the inaugural meeting on 14 Oct 2010.  The following Key Issues were covered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● VA&amp;PC Vision Statement: To be Recognised as the Effective Advocate for Veterans' Affairs</li> <li>● Requirement for a Policy Member from each Sub-Group to work with the Chairman on formulating and raising policy issues to SPVA and Ministerial Level if necessary. <b>[Action 2.1]</b></li> <li>● Identification of Local Authority / NHS Trusts where our work is not well known <b>[Actions 2.2a &amp; b]</b></li> <li>● Associated Letters of Introduction to Leaders of Council's, Chief Executives, NHS Trust Executives and Regional MP's. <b>[Action 2.3]</b></li> <li>● Identification of opportunities for PR representation via BBC Regional News and Local newspapers <b>[Action 2.4]</b></li> </ul>
Minutes of last Meeting	The Action Log from the previous meeting was reviewed and agreed that all had been completed. the minutes were accepted as correct and a true record of the meeting.

Administration	<p>The Secretary covered the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Access to the GoogleDoc Shared Working Area (Enclosure 1)</li> <li>● Procedures for submitting expenses for WELFARE activities and GENERAL activities</li> <li>● The need for a streamlined method of collecting and collating member activity for onward reporting</li> <li>● The poor availability of Training Dates from SPVA <b>[Action 2.5]</b></li> </ul>
Chairman's Report	<p>The Chairman provided detailed information on a number of subjects including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Cascade of Information/Communication/Knowledge/CAG Feedback</li> <li>● NYCC Welfare Pathway/ECHG-Beacon &amp; Life Force.</li> <li>● Outlines of Forces in Mind Trust and Fighting Fit (Dr Murrison).</li> <li>● Discussion on transparency of veterans, DASA statistics and Min AF views on central Veterans Administration</li> <li>● Veterans Services Study</li> <li>● Vice Chair – Nominations/Decision</li> </ul> <p><b>Members are referred to the List of Web Sites for specific details: ChairReport8Dec.ppt, slide 9 (Enclosure 2)</b></p> <p>A number of issues arose including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Support for Veterans in / Released from Prison</li> <li>● Impact of GP Trusts assuming responsibility from PCTs</li> <li>● Capabilities of GPs making assessments on veterans claims</li> </ul> <p><b>NOTE: Subsequent to Meeting the chair has requested the inclusion of the following details regarding this issue:</b></p> <p><i>Interesting background may be found in 2 reports by the Howard League; one already published "Leave no Veteran Behind" <a href="http://www.howardleague.org/fileadmin/howard_league/user/pdf/Veterans_inquiry/Leave_No_Veteran_Behind_.pdf">http://www.howardleague.org/fileadmin/howard_league/user/pdf/Veterans_inquiry/Leave_No_Veteran_Behind_.pdf</a> and one being compiled for publication Jun 11 "Less Crime, Safer Communities" <a href="http://www.howardleague.org/military-inquiry/">http://www.howardleague.org/military-inquiry/</a> that is also outlined in enclosed press Release from Howard League.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The need to identify and target Local Authorities / NHS Trusts which are not aware of Veterans' Affairs - with a view to encouraging the adoption of best practice as demonstrated by HULL and NYCC with regards to Pathways.</li> <li>● Identification of Veteran and Vulnerable Veterans to ensure focussed use of resources</li> <li>● The need for Member's comments on the Resettlement Consultation paper (Enclosure 3)</li> </ul> <p>The Chairman concluded by thanking members who had volunteered to act as Sub Group Leads and also to those who had offered to stand for the role of Vice Chair. The Meeting agreed that the Chairman could make an executive decision regarding this appointment.</p>
Regional Welfare Manager	<p>Mr Eddie Devlin, The Regional Welfare Manager for our region, provided a good overview of the changes within Welfare Services and</p>

	<p>their provision since the restructuring of SPVA and the suspension of War Pensions Committees.</p> <p>The key issues he raised included a significant increase in welfare needs from young veterans and their dependants due to increased survivability from injuries and wounds.</p> <p>He also reported on the improvements in picking up Veteran's and their needs prior to their release from service. This attacks the potential for veterans to disappear off the radar on exit from the Services.</p> <p>His final point regarded the new complexities of the veteran and associated dependants compared to traditional models. As an example he recently assisted with a case where a veteran had identified dependents through a number of relationships.</p> <p>The Regional Welfare Manager agreed to provide Activity Reports for the committee and also to assist in making arrangements for a presentation on the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme to be made. <b>[Action 2.6]</b></p>
Functional Reports	<p>The Chair outlined how each Sub-Group should provide detailed reports for the meetings. It was understood that Sub-Groups had not yet had time to form properly and the need for Sub-Group Meetings was identified. <b>[Action 2.7]</b></p> <p>In order to assist in the identification of skills and experience within the committee, Members are requested to provide a general Biography for inclusion in the GoogleDoc shared area. Members are also requested to identify a single sub group to support where they currently sit within more than 1. <b>[Action 2.8]</b></p> <p>Mr Alex Baxter provided an update presentation on the activity of the Health and Local Authorities Sub Group (Enclosure 4).</p> <p>The Chair emphasised that our overall role was to be both the Advocate and Ombudsman of Veterans' Affairs.</p>
AOB	<p>The Chair reported that several members had raised the issue of commercial businesses advertising for work from veterans - mainly on a no win, no fee basis.</p> <p>He pointed out,that whilst less than ideal, it was not an activity that could be challenged other than by raising our own profile within the Region - by making us the first point of contact.</p> <p>He also thanked Mr Bentham-Bates for the identification and listing of all the MP's within our Region. The Chair will include all these in his letter run to Local Authorities and NHS Trusts etc.</p>
DONM	<p>The Date of the Next meeting is 9 Mar 2011, at 11:00 to 15:30hrs at the RFCA in York.</p>