

The Rt Hon David Davis MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS
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PSEN

LIBOR Funding

CST

Wednesday 21st July 2015

Dear George

Thank you for the meeting last week. We must do it again!

I undertook to write to you about the military charity that I thought deserved support from the LIBOR fund.

Care after Combat was formed by Jim Davidson OBE, Simon Weston OBE and Goose Cryer MC in September 2014. The charity aims to support former servicemen with alcohol and substance misuse and reduce reoffending by veterans within the criminal justice system.

The charity is unique in that it is the only one offering peer mentoring to veterans both inside and outside prison. They are currently working with the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) in three prisons and there is great demand for their help across the country.

There is great competition between military charities, reflecting the enormous public support for our armed forces. This can make it difficult for new charities to establish themselves, even when their work has a great impact. Care After Combat would be excellent candidates for funding from the LIBOR fines.

Whilst the majority (90%) of service personnel make a successful return from military to civilian life, the overall cost of poor transition is significant. In a recent paper NHS England reported the financial burden to be £111m in 2014; with alcohol misuse £35m; mental health issues £26m; unemployment £21m; family breakdown £16m; homelessness £5.5m and imprisonment £4.4m. The cost per prisoner is significant (approximately £35K per annum) with the cumulative costs incalculable.

Re-offending rates among this relatively small but nevertheless significant cohort are comparatively high. Care after Combat aims to reduce re-offending rates in the veteran population through peer mentoring based on a shared service background,

providing a sense of understanding, trust and support. Care after Combat's mentoring is provided by veterans who have undergone formal training and are validated by NOMS.



Each prisoner has his own mentor and the mentoring continues beyond the prison gate for a period of up to 12 months and beyond.

Findings to date are encouraging. There are grounds for optimism that Care After Combat's methods are effective and that the defining characteristics of peer mentoring play an important part in reducing re-offending rates.

Peer mentoring, with its combination of enhanced credibility, social support and practical assistance is well worth its relatively low cost in promoting greater stability and mobilisation of resources in the lives of veterans who have lost their way.

At present, Care After Combat is working with three prisons: HMP Winchester, HMP Wayland and HMP The Mount.

Winchester had 12 veterans that fit Care After Combat's criteria. Two have since been released and are being supported outside prison. The remaining veterans will each have their own mentor. HMP Wayland has 17 veterans currently receiving mentoring. HMP The Mount will get its first team visit on the 22nd July.

Demand for Care After Combat's services is high. NOMS Wales want them to work at all of their prisons.

The prisons visited by the charity have been pleased by the simplification of working with one charity rather than several. The benefits of a comprehensive approach to mentoring both inside and outside prison are felt both by prisoners themselves and staff at the prisons.

Care after Combat is the only charity providing mentoring for veterans both inside and outside prisons.

This is not the easiest of projects to raise money for. The public is concerned for their veterans and looks to the HMG to fulfil the Armed Forces Covenant. This is why it would be right to allocate funds from the LIBOR fines to Care After Combat.

They have a structure that works; a committed and enthusiastic team; and if properly funded the opportunities to help ex-servicemen struggling with the transition to civilian life are adequately supported.

Care after Combat on behalf of HMG can get the results that the public demands and ensure that veterans who fall on hard times are given the support they need.