

VAPC Meeting 18th October 2017 Record & Actions

Attendees:

Col (Rtd) Tony Phillips MBE (Chairman)
John Topping (Secretary)
Mr Robert Mortimer
Mr Andrew Melville
Dr David Jolliffe CB
Maj (Rtd) Duncan Bell
Rick Short
Lt Col (Rtd) Alan Skidmore
Lt Col (Rtd) Peter Shields MBE QGM
Tim Cole
Sqn Ldr (Rtd) Mick Walters
Alex Baxter
Alex Bentley
Sqn Ldr (Rtd) Mike Chambers MBE
Andy Campbell (VWS)

Apologies:

Andrew Palmer
Ms Alison Carter
Mrs Helen Singleton
Craig Gadd
Capt Peter Mason

Observer/Guests:

Steve Bentham- Bates
Jim Khambatta
Tom Wood
John Goodsir
Geoff Strivens

Absent

Nil

Item

Discussion

1. General Items

a. Introductions and apologies. - The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies confirmed.

b. Minutes of last meeting/Matters arising. - The minutes of the last meeting had been circulated.

i. Discount cards. Some responses had been received And it was an Agenda item today but it was agreed that the item would be remitted to the next meeting.

ii. Statutory Instrument. Speed bumps had been encountered due to the VAPC inserting that VAPC's are not expert committee's but it is business as normal for all members.

c. Annual Report/Recruiting 2018.

i. A formal mechanism to raise the profile and disseminate the information is required. The Minister does receive a synthesised report from all VAPC's

ii. There are 4 vacancies; one potential member had been found and all Members were asked to promote the vacancies. It is recognised that it is a convoluted process but the Minister does have to 'sign off' all appointees.

d. Members reports from external events.

i. Alex Bentley reported on the York Veterans Seminar and congratulated York Council on their approach. It followed a concept that this VAPC had used – rotating tables. The Sheffield RFCA seminar attracted a lot of employers and was very worthwhile.

e. Discount Cards. Remitted to the next meeting.

f. items from Quarterly Newsheet;

i. Information Gathering – Breakfast Clubs/Others.

It was agreed that the soft underbelly of gathering information needed to be accessed and the breakfast clubs were identified as one area worth pursuing. Members were appraised of certain risks involved in this area.

ii. AF Covenant Reporting.

The message is still not being accurately portrayed and communicated. Some LA's seem reluctant to illustrate how they are implementing the AFC which could disenfranchise other sections of their communities. How this VAPC can help to promote the AFC across our contacts highlighting the benefits of the AFC are to be explored. Work is required on our engagement mechanisms.

iii. Aged Veterans Fund Initiatives.

This fund is aimed at the over 65 year old veterans. SSAFA are targeting this fund and have had a little success. Their model seems to be working well and the ease of being able to move the money to veterans is a major attraction.

2. Healthcare

Jim Khambatta an Armed Forces Commissioning manager made a detailed Power Point delivery. The presentation covered various aspects of NHS Healthcare for veterans and particularly focused on whether services, as commissioned by CCGs, met the needs of veterans and where we could help. Discussion centred round the importance of being registered with a GP but the system was not effective enough for Veterans; do CCGs have an AF Champion; what could be done to fill cracks in the complex referral matrix (particularly for MH); what could be done to strengthen the evidence base so CCGs had hard facts. All to be incorporated into our plan.

Copies of the Power Point presentation are available from the VAPC Secretary.

3. Veterans Homelessness

John Goodsir from SSAFA spoke about the following;

i. The Beacon at Catterick which has places for 47 homelessness veterans. It is owned by Church House and is under resourced

ii. There is a large number of hidden homeless veteran's sofa surfing etc. with 23 to 35 year old veterans predominant in this area.

iii. No one appears to be addressing the release/transition process.

iv. the effect on a soldier's family when he ends the marriage and moves back into Barracks.

v. The number of aggressive homeless veterans leads to a number of problems.

vi. Gurkha veterans presenting themselves with complex medical problems.

Steve Bentham-Bates of Help 4 Homeless Veterans described the model they were using in the Barnsley/Doncaster area.

- i. They have use of 15 Local Authority accommodation units which have housed over 300 veterans over a 7 year period.
- ii. Use of the Veterans Gateway is used to channel their veterans.
- iii. He highlighted that their harmonisation process was very short. He provided examples of how they could help a veteran in hours not days.
- iv. It was highlighted as to how effective they were compared to other support organisation which were seen as having very convoluted procedures.

Project Nova are to be invited to our next meeting.

Action; Chairman.

v. Overarching issues, to be incorporated into our plan where we can help were: lack of collaboration between agencies for complex needs; training and skills development to get people on their feet; concept of homelessness not well understood (focuses on rough sleepers); families issues largely side-lined; lack of trend analysis and Government narrative to address both concerns and manage expectations realistically.

4. Management Plan.

This is going to be kept to a minimum of 2 pages. The need to explore how homelessness, which doesn't fit easily into any of our sub-groups, will be investigated.

Sub-Group focus.

Health. This will concentrate on the NHS Armed Forces Network

Policy and Government affairs.

- i. A change of title is probably needed to describe this sub group.
- ii. Arrange for members to visit the various forums.
- iii. Confirm what the real issues are that need to be staffed upwards.

Communications.

- i. Perception management
- ii. A short standardised questionnaire will be developed and produced for members to use when in contact with other organisations and individuals especially if visiting the Coffee Mornings.
- iii. It was agreed to invite the forces transition officer from 4 Mechanised Bde (NE) to the next meeting.

Action: Chairman.

Direct Support.

- i. This process needs to be developed.

<p>5. VWS Monitoring & Welfare Items.</p>	<p>Andy Campbell presented Russ Egan's welfare Report. This was circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>i. It was asked if some of the statistics could highlight the maximum time a claim had been waiting. We need to understand better the reasons for delay, appeals and general discontent so we are better armed to manage perceptions and support genuine need. Rather than the target achievement, we would like to know a bit more about the reasons behind the small numbers of longer delays etc.</p> <p>ii. Members were reminded that we represent veterans and not serving personnel.</p>
<p>6. Any Other Business</p>	<p>Members were reminded that we had the possibility of meeting 4 times a year but 3 would be scheduled to enable members to meet on an ad hoc basis.</p>
<p>7. Dates of next meetings</p>	<p>10th January 2018, 9th May 2018 and 12th September 2018</p>

SUB GROUPS/VAPC APPOINTMENTS	
Policy & Government Affairs	HEALTH
<p>Tony Phillips (Chair/Sub-Group Lead) Alex Bentley Tim Cole Andrew Palmer (Business Lead)</p>	<p>Alex Baxter (Vice Chair/Sub-Group Lead) David Jolliffe Alison Carter Robert Mortimer</p>
Communications	Direct Support
<p>Andrew Melville John Topping (VAPC Secretary)</p>	<p>Pete Shields (Sub-Group Lead) Helen Singleton Duncan Bell Rick Short</p>