

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

Meeting 9 January 2019

Minutes

1. **Introductions and Opening Remarks:** The Convenor welcomed the Group and thanked everyone for attending; he noted that there was a busy agenda and thanked those who had travelled a considerable distance in order to brief the Group. He noted that there had been an increase in the number of Breakfast Clubs across Scotland and recognised the value that these provide for veterans in many local areas.

2. **Attendance:**

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MSPs

Bill Bowman	MSP
Michelle Ballantyne	MSP
Jackie Baillie	MSP
Maurice Corry	MSP (Convenor)
Graeme Dey	MSP

5 MSPs

Members

Adam Stachura	Age Scotland
Aileen Hill	LAFVP
Aileen Ponton	SCQF
Alan Cameron	Stand Easy
Alison Howard	SVC Office
Alistair Ferrier	SDS
Amelia Morgan	Venture Trust
Bruce Smith	LVC
Carolyn MacLeod	NTO ADES
Charles Wallace	SVC Office
Chris Hughes	Veterans Scotland
Claire Biggar	ENU
Cllr Debbi McCall	Midlothian Council
Domonic Ind	St Michael's Episcopal Church
Elaine Middleton	CTP
Graham Meacher	SSAFA
Graham Short	ADES
Ian Cumming	Erskine
Jilly Carrell	AFF
Jim Castle	GCU
Jim Wilson	Veterans Scotland

John Mooney	DPU
Karen Elliot	Association of WRENS/RNA
Kenny Warren	DPU
Laura Cox	51 Bde
Mark Bibbey	Poppyscotland
Mark Harris	NFF
Martin Nadin	SVR
Mary-Clare MacFarlane	OAS
Maurice Walsh	RASC & RCT Association
Melanie Dickson	H4H
Michelle Ferguson	SBMC
Morag Malcolm	DPU
Natalie Cutler	LAFVP
Nina Collins	RCET
Rhona Dubery	SVC Office
Richard Baker	SWB
Robbie Gibson	LRFCA
Stephen Elliot	Veteran
Steve Burton	BLESMA
Tony Carruthers	HOS
Trish Mullen	CTP
Usman Ali	Poppyscotland

44 Members

3. **Previous Minutes:** The minutes of the previous meeting, which had taken place on 19 September 2018, 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.
5. **Matters for Consideration:** There were two key matters for consideration by the meeting; these were 'A Strategy for Our Veterans' and 'Education'.
 - A Strategy for Our Veterans: Mr Graham Dey MSP, Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans, thanked the Convenor for inviting him to the Cross Party Group and to provide an update on the Scottish Government's work on the Strategy for Our Veterans. The Scottish Government is working closely with UK Government on the strategy which seeks to look forward 10 years and further to identify the needs of the veterans' community. He identified that, whilst Defence is a reserved matter, services provided for veterans and their families, tend to be devolved; this is particularly the case with Employment, Health and Housing.

He was pleased that there is a consensus of support across all parties for our Armed Forces and Veterans Community and that there is a strong foundation of support to build upon. He had spent much time recently visiting military charities and was struck by the effectiveness of many of them and recognised that much of the 3rd Sector could benefit from the examples set, in reducing duplication of effort. During this consultation

phase he had come across many good suggestions and examples of good practice. The public consultation phase will continue till the end of February 2019; data collected by the UK Government will be shared with the Scottish Government. A key principle of the strategy will be to identify how support to the Armed Forces and Veterans Community can be provided by mainstream services.

There followed some discussion on the Strategy, during which matters relating to Universal Credit were raised, it was agreed that Mr Dey would meet Steve Burton, Ian Cumming and Michelle Ferguson to discuss the matter in greater depth.

- **Education:** Four presentations were provided on the topic of 'Education'; these include:
 - The Education of Children of an Armed Forces Family – Graham Short and Carolyn MacLeod; Association of Directors of Education Scotland.
 - Skills Development Scotland – Alistair Ferrier SDS
 - Transferrable Qualifications Study update – Aileen Ponton SCQF
 - Developing Champions in Colleges and Universities – Jim Castle (GCU) and Claire Biggar (ENU)

copies of the accompanying presentations are attached.

During the presentations, there was discussion in relation to Pupil Premium payments and some of the difficulties experienced accessing them, the complexity of providing continuity of education for children experiencing multiple moves between education systems and different curriculums, and the difficulties experienced for education attainment records not being easily electronically transferrable between systems.

6. **Open Forum:** The Convenor invited Ian Cumming to provide an update on the work of the Reid McEwan Activity Centre at Erskine. He showed a DVD of the activities centre and highlighted the benefits in reducing loneliness and isolation, and described plans to extend similar facilities across Scotland.

7. **Dates of Next Meetings:**

- 24 April 2019 (Employability)
- 11 June 2019 (A Strategy for Our Veterans Update)
- 10 September 2019 (AGM)

Attached:



20190109 ADES
Education - Nationa



20190109 SDS
Presentation CPWG



20190109 SCQF
Veterans Presentatic



20190109 GCU
Developing Champi