

Cross-Party Group on The Armed Forces and Veterans Community

25 October 2022 at 6:00pm

The meeting was held in the Scottish Parliament and on line.

Minute

Present

A list of those attending is at Annex A

Agenda item 1

Introductions and Opening Remarks Maurice Golden MSP (Convenor) welcomed everyone to the meeting, noting that it was good to be able to hold a meeting within the Parliament building, but welcoming those that were attending on-line by Teams. He handed over to Maurice Corry (Chair) who indicated that there was a busy agenda this evening and that we would be discussing Trends in Scottish Veterans' Health, a report published by the Scottish Veterans Health Research Group from the University of Glasgow. This important research was being published today. The other main topic for discussion was the impact upon veterans of the Cost of Living Crisis

Agenda item 2

Confirmation of attendance. The meeting was attended by 3 MSP members and 43 other members. A list of those attending is at Annex A.

Agenda item 3

Minute of the previous meeting, The minute from the previous meeting, which took place on 22 June 2022, was reviewed. The minute was accepted as an accurate record of the meeting. There were no matters arising from the minute that would not be dealt with in the agenda.

Agenda item 4

Trends in Scottish Veterans' Health.

Tom McBarnet, CEO of the Forces in Mind Trust, introduced Professor Beverly Bergman from The University of Glasgow's Scottish Veterans Health Research Group, who were launching their report 'Trends in Scottish Veterans' Health' that day. This important research compared the long term health of 78,000 veterans with

253,000 people with no record of service. Copies of the report were available at the meeting and online (on the FiMT website) at: [Trends in Scottish Veterans' Health \(pcdn.co\)](https://www.pcdn.co/Trends-in-Scottish-Veterans-Health).

Professor Bergman presented the report, supported by a Powerpoint presentation, at Annex B. The presentation was well received and a number of points were discussed; these included:

- The benefit of having a benchmark of the health position of veterans when compared to the civilian population should not be underestimated. It was recognised that this is true of wider topics than health.
- Linking health to socio-economic spread provides useful comparators.
- This was a unique study, made possible by the foresight in making data collection possible.
- The socio-economic element of the study recognised the impact on Early Service Leavers in particular, as they are likely to return to the areas they joined the Services from.

Following the presentation, the meeting adjourned for a buffet provided by the research project; this gave an opportunity to discuss the details in more depth.

Agenda item 5

Cost of Living Crisis. The Group reassembled to discuss the Cost of Living Crisis and its impact on members of the Armed Forces and Veterans Community and on Service Charities. A number of speakers contributed to the discussion, with charities indicating increased demand for their services.

In particular, requests were being made to assist with covering the cost of food and fuel – for example the RAFBF had experienced a 40% increase in enquiries for financial assistance and had provided £18,750 in home fuel grants (at an early stage of Winter). Poppyscotland had opened up processes for seeking financial support and requests are increasing.

Drop in Centres, such as Lothians Veterans Centre, V1P Fife, SMSA and Community Veterans Support highlighted the importance of making available a warm place to go, a hot meal, the provision of top up payments for fuel cards and such like. Sharing information on where support may be available from, and enabling those in need to make decisions on where to find the most appropriate support was seen as important.

It was agreed that a short paper would be prepared for discussion at the next meeting to highlight some of the steps that can be taken to alleviate the impact of the crisis.

Date of next meetings:

January 25th (Wed)

March 30th (Thu)

June 20th (Tue) including AGM

October 18th (Wed)

Topics for consideration that have been suggested include: Employment; Health, Housing, Female Veterans Issues; it has also been suggested that we invite the Scottish Veterans Commissioner and The Scottish Government Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Veterans to provide updates. I would welcome any further suggestions for consideration.

Annex A
to AFVC CPG Minute
25-Oct-22

MSPs in attendance

Carlaw J (Jackson), MSP	On Line Attender
Sweeney P (Paul), MSP	On Line Attender
Maurice Golden MSP	Present

Attending

Allana Kyle	Present
Ally Gemmell	On Line Attender
Anthony Phillips	On Line Attender
Austin Hardie	Present
Beverly Bergman	Present
Bill Bowman	Present
Caroline Belch	Present
Caroline Cooke	Present
Catriona Reid	On Line Attender
Chris Smith	On Line Attender
Colin Boag	Present
David Deveney	Present
David Gibson	On Line Attender
Debbi McCall	On Line Attender
Dorinda Wolfe Murray	On Line Attender
Doug Mackay	Present
Emma Perrin	On Line Attender
Eric Fraser	On Line Attender
Fiona MacDonald	On Line Attender
Fiona Maxwell	Present
Gart Atkinson	On Line Attender
Gene Maxwell	On Line Attender
helen bolland	On Line Attender
Ian Stewart	Present
Jason Schroeder	Present
Jim Wilson	Present
Joyce Macmillan	Present
Karen Elliot	On Line Attender
Lesley Iannarelli	On Line Attender
Malcolm Farrow	On Line Attender

Maria Corretge	Present
Mark Horsham	Present
Mike Almond	Present
Moira Bailey	On Line Attender
Neil Morrison	On Line Attender
Ryan Macdonald	Present
Sandra Cheyne	On Line Attender
Stephen Elliot	On Line Attender
Susie Hamilton	Present
Tom McBarnet	Present
Vanessa Plumley	On Line Attender
Vicky Brindley	On Line Attender
Wendy Brown	Present