

# Armed Forces Covenant across Wales

The Covenant is a promise from the nation ensuring that those who serve and have served in the Armed Forces and their families are treated fairly.

## Strengthening the Covenant in Legislation

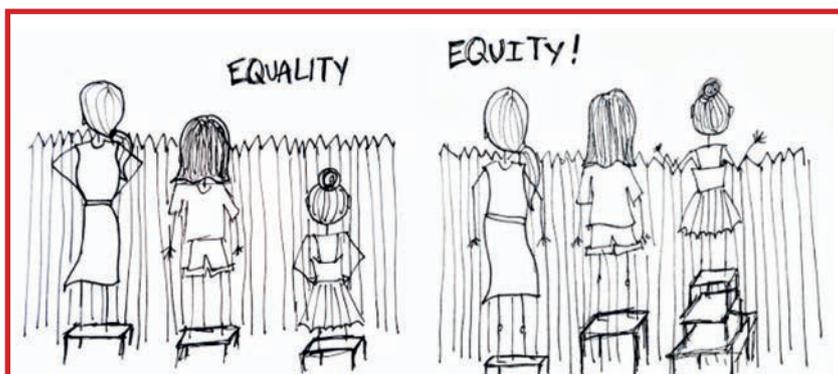
The Armed Forces Covenant was enshrined in law December 2021. The legislation will impose a new Duty on relevant public bodies, when exercising certain aspects of their public functions in the areas of housing, healthcare and education to have due regard to the three principles of the AF Covenant:

- The unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the Armed Forces;
- The principle that it is desirable to remove disadvantages arising for service people from membership, or former membership, of the Armed Forces; and
- The principle that special provision for Service People may be justified by the effect on such people of membership, or former membership, of the Armed Forces.

This will mean that in the future service providers will have to demonstrate that they have considered the principles of the Covenant when making decisions in these key areas. This is due to take effect late 2022.

### The Covenant at a local level aims to:

- Encourage communities to support the Armed Forces community in their areas and to nurture public understanding and awareness among the public of issues affecting the Armed Forces community.
- Recognise and remember the sacrifices faced by the Armed Forces community, including an individual's commitment when serving to potentially be placed in harm's way.
- Encourage activities which help to integrate the Armed Forces community into local life.
- Encourage the Armed Forces community to help and support the wider community, by participating in events and joint projects, or other forms of engagement.



The Armed Forces Covenant is supported at a local level by a partnership agreement between statutory, military and voluntary sector agencies who work together to honour and implement the national Armed Forces Covenant.



# AFC Liaison Officers in Wales

	LOCAL AUTHORITY
<b>1</b>	<b>Monmouthshire</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Newport</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Torfaen</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Blaenau Gwent</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Caerphilly</b>
	Armed Forces Liaison Officer <b>Lisa Rawlings</b> email: <a href="mailto:rawlil@caerphilly.gov.uk">rawlil@caerphilly.gov.uk</a>

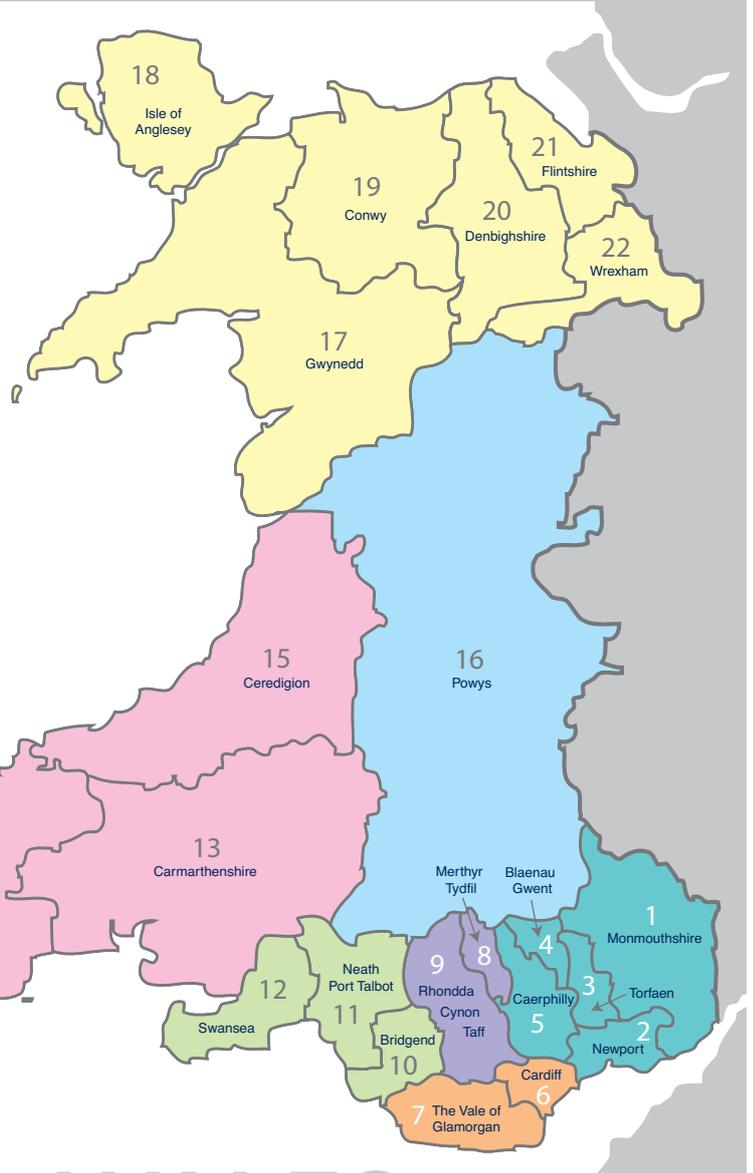
<b>6</b>	<b>Cardiff</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Vale of Glamorgan</b>
	Armed Forces Liaison Officer <b>Abigail Warburton</b> email: <a href="mailto:awarburton@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk">awarburton@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk</a>

<b>8</b>	<b>Merthyr Tydfil</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Rhondda Cynon Taff</b>
	Armed Forces Liaison Officer <b>Jamie Ireland</b> email: <a href="mailto:Jamie.L.Ireland@rctcbc.gov.uk">Jamie.L.Ireland@rctcbc.gov.uk</a>

<b>10</b>	<b>Bridgend</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Neath Port Talbot</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Swansea</b>
	Armed Forces Liaison Officer <b>Bethan Dennedy</b> email: <a href="mailto:b.dennedy@npt.gov.uk">b.dennedy@npt.gov.uk</a>

<b>13</b>	<b>Camarthenshire</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>Pembrokeshire</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>Ceredigion</b>
	Armed Forces Liaison Officer <b>Hayley Edwards</b> email: <a href="mailto:HREdwards@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">HREdwards@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a>

<b>16</b>	<b>Powys</b>
	Armed Forces Liaison Officer <b>Andy Jones</b> email: <a href="mailto:andy.jones@powys.gov.uk">andy.jones@powys.gov.uk</a>



WALES

	LOCAL AUTHORITY
<b>17</b>	<b>Gwynedd</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>Isle of Anglesey</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>Conwy</b>
<b>20</b>	<b>Denbigshire</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>Flintshire</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>Wrexham</b>
	Armed Forces Liaison Officer <b>Stephen Townley</b> email: <a href="mailto:Stephen.Townley@wrexham.gov.uk">Stephen.Townley@wrexham.gov.uk</a>

# Armed Forces Champions



## Cardiff & Vale of Glamorgan

**Cardiff** Cllr Huw Thomas (Council Leader)  
**email:** huw.thomas@cardiff.gov.uk

**Vale of Glamorgan** Cllr Eddie Williams  
**email:** edwilliams@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

## Merthyr & RCT

**Merthyr** Cllr Andrew Barry  
**email:** andrew.Barry@merthyr.gov.uk

**RCT** Cllr Maureen Webber  
**email:** maureen.webber@rctcbc.gov.uk

## South West Wales

**Bridgend** Cllr Richard Young  
**email:** cllr.Richard.Young@bridgend.gov.uk

**Neath Port Talbot** Cllr Chris James  
**email:** cllr.c.james@npt.gov.uk

**Swansea** Cllr Wendy Lewis  
**email:** cllr.Wendy.Lewis@swansea.gov.uk

**Swansea** Cllr Alyson Pugh  
**email:** cllr.Alyson.Pugh@swansea.gov.uk

## West Wales

**Ceredigion** Cllr Paul Hinge  
**email:** paul.Hinge@ceredigion.gov.uk

**Pembrokeshire** Cllr John Cole  
**email:** cllr.john.cole@pembrokeshire.gov.uk  
**preferred email:** 9thlancer1915@gmail.com

**Carmarthenshire** Cllr Phillip Hughes  
**email:** PMHughes@Carmarthenshire.Gov.uk

## Gwent

**Blaenau Gwent** Cllr Derrick Bevan  
**email:** Derrick.Bevan@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

**Caerphilly** Cllr Teresa Heron  
**email:** heront1@caerphilly.gov.uk

**Monmouth** Cllr Peter Strong  
**email:** PeterStrong@monmouthshire.gov.uk

**Newport** Cllr Mark Spencer  
**email:** mark.spencer@newport.gov.uk

**Torfaen** Cllr Jon Horlor  
**email:** jon.Horlor@torfaen.gov.uk

## Powys

**Powys** Cllr Matthew Dorrance  
**email:** cllr.matthew.dorrance@powys.gov.uk  
**email PA in first instance:**  
karen.southcott@powys.gov.uk

## North Wales

**Anglesey** Cllr Glyn Haynes  
**email:** Glynhaynes@ynysmon.llyw.com

**Conwy** Cllr Liz Roberts  
**email:** cllr.liz.roberts@conwy.gov.uk

**Flintshire** Cllr David Evans  
**email:** david.evans@flintshire.gov.uk

**Gwynedd** Cllr Thomas Ioan Ceredig  
**email:** cynghorydd.ioanthomas@gwynedd.gov.uk

**Wrexham** Cllr Beverley Parry-Jones  
**email:** david.Griffiths@wrexham.gov.uk

**Denbighshire** Cllr Julia Matthews  
**email:** Julie.Matthews@denbighshire.gov.uk



## Falklands

The Welsh Government will be marking the 40th anniversary of the Falklands conflict. On the 16th June a Falklands 40th commemorative service, led by the First Minister, will be held in Llandaf Cathedral. A Steering Group has been established to ensure a collaborative approach is in place during planning of the event. Members include the Tri-Services, the Royal British Legion and the South Atlantic Medals Association.

Additional events include a small wreath laying event, led by the First Minister at the Falklands War Memorial Stone, Alexandra Gardens, on the 16th June with the Deputy Minister for Social Partnership, Hannah Blythyn MS supporting a cycle ride with veterans on the 5th June, which starts in Cardiff at the National Falklands memorial.

## Armed Forces Day 2022

This year's Welsh National Armed Forces Day, held on the 18th June, will be hosted by Wrexham Local Authority. With £20,000 funding from the Welsh Government the event will provide an opportunity for communities in Wales to show their support for our current Serving personnel. Additional Local authority events are being planned across Wales.

## Annual Report

The Welsh Government will publish its Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report during Armed Forces week. Highlighting the continued progress in support of the Armed Forces community the report demonstrates the collaborative approach in place across many organisations in Wales.

## Veterans Scoping Exercise

Welsh Government are working in collaboration with key partners to update the action plan to deliver on the remaining recommendations. Consultations will be held across the sector to gather feedback. Outcomes to date include: 35% increase in Veterans NHS Wales funding, first Wales Resettlement Guide published, employment event 25 November, continued funding for Armed Forces Liaison Officers (£550K), £270K supporting Service children, Wales newsletter and Covenant website.

## Armed Forces Act 2021

Welsh Government have been working with MOD and partners to ensure the Statutory Guidance reflects devolved services in Wales. By the end of 2022 the final guidance will be laid before Parliament for final agreement.

# Armed Forces Covenant Training Package

**The vast majority of the 2.8 million ex-Servicemen and women living in Britain today have successfully adapted to civilian life, putting the skills and experience they acquired while serving in the Armed Forces to good use. However, a significant minority can be in need of support either at the point of discharge or many years afterwards.**

This e-learning has been developed by WLGA. It explains the commitment of the Armed Forces Covenant and how it can be honoured and implemented in the Community. It will help you understand and apply the principles of the Covenant at a local level. It also provides sources of further information and support.

**[www.covenantwales.wales/e-learning/](http://www.covenantwales.wales/e-learning/)**  
**If you would like bespoke training for your department please contact your Regional Armed Forces Covenant Officer**



ARMED FORCES  
COVENANT  
LLUOEDD ARFOG  
CYFAMOD

# Get involved...

## Sign the Covenant

Businesses, charitable organisations and public sector organisations of all sizes who wish to support Gwent's Armed Forces Community can join ... in signing the Covenant.

Each organisation can tailor their own pledge to offer the support they want to provide, each pledge can be unique. Options range from ensuring employment policies support veterans, reservists, and forces' families, offering discounts for services/products through the Defence Discount service and supporting Armed Forces Day every June.



To find out more visit

[www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk](http://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk)

## THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT FUND TRUST

The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust Makes Grants To Support The Armed Forces Community.

We manage the grant programmes funded by the Covenant Fund. We also run wider funding programmes that support the Armed Forces Community.

The people who benefit from our grants are from the Armed Forces Community. This includes serving personnel, families, veterans and families of veterans.

In some of our programmes, the wider community around a base or in an area with an Armed Forces population can also benefit; as we will support projects on one of our programmes that will help to encourage good relations between Armed Forces and civilian communities.

For more information:

[www.covenantfund.org.uk/](http://www.covenantfund.org.uk/)

# Veterans' Gateway

## The first point of contact for veterans seeking support

We put veterans and their families in touch with the organisations best placed to help with the information, advice and support they need – from healthcare and housing to employability, finances, personal relationships and more.

There is a huge network of organisations supporting the Armed Forces community, so finding the right one for your needs can be tricky. We make it quick and easy by being your first point of contact for whatever support you need, whether you are based in the UK or abroad.

Many of our team are veterans themselves so they understand the issues that people face after leaving the Armed Forces. They work with people on a one-to-one basis, connecting them with the right support as soon as possible.

The 24-hour online chat, phone, and text message service brings the Armed Forces support community together in a single place – delivered by a Royal British Legion-led consortium with Poppy-Scotland, Combat Stress, Connect Assist, The Ministry of Defence and SSAFA, the Armed Forces Charity.

The service centre, based in Nantgarw near Cardiff, is manned partly by veterans to help ensure that callers can speak to someone who can understand their experience.



## VETERANS' GATEWAY

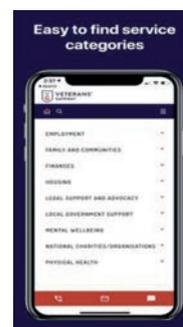
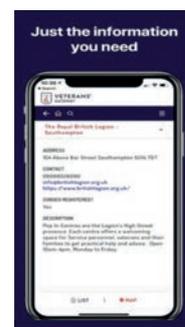
The Veterans Gateway can be contacted by:

- Calling 0808 802 1212
- Texting 81212
- Visiting [www.veteransgateway.org.uk](http://www.veteransgateway.org.uk)

## NEWS: The Veterans' Gateway App

The Veterans' Gateway App has now launched which helps veterans find support organisations in their area using their smartphone or tablet. Click here to download the App & access support from finances to employment

<https://bit.ly/2yWFBqV>



# South West Wales

Covering the Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea Local Authority areas.

## Swansea Veterans Hub

A former Royal Marine Commando from Swansea is leading a new initiative to set up a centre to support military veterans and their families in the area. Phil Jones, who runs the SO FIT Group and Swansea Outdoor Fitness, has joined forces with the organisers of the Newport Veterans' Hub to set up a similar project in Swansea.



The new Swansea Veterans' Hub opened its doors earlier this year and is run as a community interest company chaired by Phil and local veterans. The Hub is based at St Helens RFC in Bryn Road, Brynmill, Swansea. The project has been awarded funding from the Welsh Government, National Lottery and Armed Forces Covenant Trust Fund as well as the support of Ospreys in the Community and Swansea AFC Foundation. Swansea Veterans' Hub works with other Swansea organisations and specialist volunteers to provide the drop-in service on Saturday mornings from 10am to 12pm.

Phil, who is a mental health practitioner as well as running his fitness business, said the new hub acts as a centre for advice and support to military veterans in the area and their families, as well as those still serving in the military services. "The hub will be a centralised location in Swansea where veterans and their families can go to socialise and seek advice. The Hub is a non-threatening, comfortable environment, offering advice and support on issues such as careers, the NHS and mental health as well as acting as a focus for socialising and activities," he said. "From my own personal experience, mental health suffers at the transition from being in the military to civilian life. In the military you have all your colleagues, an established hierarchy and all the services in one place. And then suddenly you are in civilian life where so many things are different and more difficult to access. Just finding a dentist or GP can be challenging.

"This new centre will help with the practical side of moving from a military life to a civilian one as well as supporting veterans in their mental health and wellbeing. Opening the hub is just the beginning and we hope it will lead to other centres, activities and volunteers," said Phil. Furthermore, as part of the link-up with the St Helens RFC, the hub will be providing free match day tickets to selected league games to veterans and their families.

Further information about Swansea Veterans' Hub is available by emailing [info@swanseaveteranshub.org.uk](mailto:info@swanseaveteranshub.org.uk)



## Wales National Airshow

This July, the Wales Airshow, Wales' biggest free event, returns to Swansea Bay! On the 2nd & 3rd July 2022 the Wales Airshow will take place featuring breath-taking aerobatic displays, state-of-the-art military aircraft and vintage planes from the past.

Expect to see exciting air displays, airborne stunts, incredible ground displays, entertainment and much more. For updates, please visit the website: [www.walesnationalairshow.com/](http://www.walesnationalairshow.com/)



## NPT Armed Forces Day

To celebrate Armed Forces Day there will be an event held in Aberafan Shopping Centre on 25th June 2022.

The day will be filled with fantastic performances from a variety of acts including the Forces Sweetheart Kirsten Orsborn! The day will also have entertainment including a climbing wall and activities from Forces Fitness, as well as, information stalls from local organisations and charities. Come and join in the fun to celebrate our local Armed Forces community. See you there!

## Kev Bogdan Port Talbot, Left of Boom Project

The drop in was started in Western Bay in 2015, since Change Step began in South Wales. It was created to offer a vital support service to veterans and it quickly became a tool to end the feelings of isolation that veterans endure. It was an extra source of support for those veterans who were struggling with their mental health and/or seeking therapeutic support from the NHS or psychosocial support in general.



Starting off on a small scale in the Bulldogs gym in Port Talbot, the drop in attendees grew and a regular base in Café 12 in Taibach was created. The ethos of the drop ins was for the veterans to have access to other veterans who understood the problems that they face and to rediscover the camaraderie, brotherhood and banter of their time in service. Since 2015, many activities have taken place including a visit to the National Arboretum in Staffordshire, the Imperial War Museum in London and the Royal Welsh Museum in Brecon.

Offering access to veteran mentors, welfare rights issues or just a brew and a banjo, the numbers grew.

Today, the drop in has turned full circle and they are held in the Bulldogs gym once again.



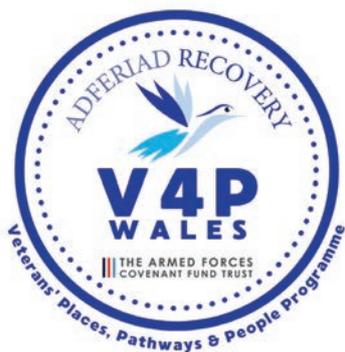
## Adferiad Veterans' Services

**Adferiad Veterans' Services Information Roadshows are to be held:**

- **MID WALES - Sunday 26th June - Pavilion, Spa Road, Llandrindod Wells**  
(in partnership with Re-live)
- **NORTH WALES - Wednesday 27th July - Cambria Coleg Yale, Wrexham**
- **WEST WALES - Wednesday 17th August - VC Gallery, Pembroke Dock**
- **SOUTH WALES - Wednesday 7th September - Ty Llewellyn, Cardiff**

**For more information contact:**

[Finola.pickwell@adferiad.org](mailto:Finola.pickwell@adferiad.org)



## Change Step Allotment Project

**Location: Plot32 - Laleston, Bridgend CF32 0HL**

Change Step took over Plot 32 October 2021, with one of our service users seeking an outdoor wellbeing activity. With the current waiting list being 2-5 Years, Laleston Allotments donated plot 32 to Change Step as a community project. So far it has had two sources of funding, from the Welsh Government and Keep Wales Tidy, this has helped completely turn the plot around. Making it easily assessable and wheelchair friendly.

When Stefan took over the plot it was in a poor state with a lot of hard work needed. Stefan has fully engaged and thrown himself at the project. He is testament to the project with him directly benefitting from improvements to his physical and mental health. Stefan is now a volunteer for Change Step at the Allotment Project, and his plan is to get fellow veterans involved in the allotment, even if this means as little as popping down pulling some weeds and having a brew.

Veterans Plot 32 has directly benefitted. X2 Change Step Service Users. X3 Other Veterans. With the warmer weather inbound this is hoped to increase.

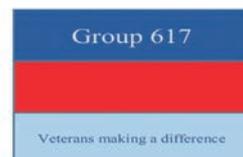


## Cardiff & Vale of Glamorgan

### Group 617 Sqn

As I look back at the achievements of Group 617 (named after the infamous Dambusters) over the last 12 months (2021/2022), I feel proud that we have overcome the lows (Covid19) and marveled at the highs (our Presidents 100th birthday), of a group of service veterans; misfits that fit. The groups future looks so much rosier as we venture out more to give our Dambusters presentation and our trips out to pastures new.

Meeting in the Penarth Pavilion on a weekly basis now, every Tuesday morning, has seen new members attracted to the banter of like-minded service veterans over a brew, when loneliness has been a problem for many of our veterans out there. We can now look forward to some exciting opportunities and visits, which until recently, was impossible.



We have 2 trips to Holland planned for 2022 - in May and then again in September. This will see the group embarking on a return to Steenburg to be part of the town's celebration of Liberation Day (4&5 May) and to visit the site of Wg Cdr Guy Gibson VC aircraft crash on 19 September 1944. It's a chance to meet many Dutch friends made during those annual visits out to Holland and pay our respects to the many Dambuster airmen who lost their lives dropping those bouncing bombs on the Ruhr dams on the 17 May 1943.



Group 617's President, Sqn Ldr George "Johnny" Johnson MBE DFM, is the last surviving Dambuster crewmember, who celebrated his 100th birthday in November 2021. This was an occasion for our members to put our service training into action, and to host a party fitting to the occasion. The family wanted a low-key celebration for the actual birthday in November 2021, so we held our event in the summer prior. With the Duke of Edinburgh's passing before his 100th milestone, plans were put in place to mark the occasion with an event being held at White Waltham (WWII Airfield), Maidenhead on the 26 July 2021. Some 70 invited guests attended including Air Marshal Sir Dusty Miller who spoke on behalf of the Royal Air Force. Sir Dusty marked this milestone and praised "Johnny" for the sacrifice he and 617 Squadron members undertook to help bring WWII to a more timely end. See our Facebook site for that birthday event dated 27 March 2022: Group 617 "Making a Difference".

Service veterans and their partners are warmly welcomed to attend our Tuesday meetings in Penarth (1000-1200 hours) to swap banter and to have a brew. Our chairman, Russ Kately, can be contacted on 07785 363692 should people wish to make contact and introduce themselves beforehand.



## Barry Veterans Group

We have had another successful Christmas at Barry Veteran Group and a busy start to the new year. We enjoyed our fishing boat trip in January and caught some cod for supper and have another trip planned for the Summer. We have our trip to the National Memorial Arboretum coming up in May and more trips planned in the future.



The group will be taking part in different hobbies such as photography and gardening. We look forward to setting up our Veterans Garden Project and hope to secure the premises ready to start planting soon. We are planning our Jubilee celebrations and can't wait to have a party with cakes good enough for a Queen!

Our group is supported with guests who are there with guidance and advice, we have members of Change Step, the Veteran Advice Officer/Armed Forces Liaison Officer, DWP Armed Forces Champion, CAB, Communities for Work, Digital Communities Wales, GVS – Glamorgan Volunteer Service and many more that drop in to offer their service.



***"Attending Barry Veterans Group has given me a sense of wellbeing again and it also never fails to leave me with a smile for the weekend" BVG Member***

If you would like to join us for support, a good laugh and good food we welcome you to our group. We enjoy breakfast rolls and every first week of the month we offer a full cooked breakfast with the works and as much tea and coffee as you can handle, so pop in for an Egg Banjo and Banter!! We look forward to welcoming you.

**Contact us: Jeff Rees - [07766 398219](tel:07766398219)**



# The Welsh Veterans Partnership

The Welsh Veterans Partnership is a Veterans and service family charity in Wales, WVPs (Welsh Veterans Partnership) working model has been commended by members of parliament, the military covenant and Welsh government. WVP help service men and women, Veterans and Service family members who have suffered injuries both mental health and physical as a result of their service. WVP help with transition providing housing pathways solutions, wraparound wellbeing tenancy support and provide mental health wellbeing projects to promote a positive transition into civilian life.

2020-2021 To meet the wants and needs of the Veterans community in South Wales WVP developed The Green Head Space (an Accessible Gardens and allotments project) Central to three WVP housing clusters and the wider south Wales area. The Project has been highly successful and oversubscribed due to the covid-19 crisis and gaps in service provision for those with poor mental health.

In 2022 WVP intend to develop The Green Head Space by replacing existing portacabin with a permanent structure to better serve an increasing veterans community. Creating a centralised wellbeing hub and treatment room for Veterans, service families and partner organisations to meet and achieve positive outcomes, this will aid to reducing isolation and boosting the mental health outcomes for veterans and the service family community.

WVP are looking forward to the coming year with great thanks to one of many partners Cardiff Council, and the Armed forces covenant and its Positive Pathways programme in its help in the development of the Green head Space. WVP thanks Enterprise Rent-a-Car for donating a wonderful Ford Ranger named Rango that has been a fantastic addition to the Green Head Space allotments project and a great lift to the Veterans community in South Wales.

Dave Price WVP coordinator says: Thank you for all your support from partners past and present, it just goes to prove that Partnerships are truly the way forward. Watch This Space Brain Swallow MD Enterprise Cars says: It's our pleasure to support WVP, such a great organisation, great to support Veterans in Wales and with us remembering that they have secured our freedom and safety and it is our opportunity to give something back. Which is so important.

**Registered Charity Number: 1159921**



Enterprise - Rent a Car Rango the Ford Ranger - MD Brian Swallow Dave Price.

## TESTIMONIALS

### CASE STUDY 1 - Mrs K / Partner, Significant other / WVP housing cluster, Cardiff / 30-40 Mrs K has reported:

■ "My partners wellbeing has greatly improved after being housed by WVP. And whilst he was improving I was noticing more P.T.S.D symptoms because of afghan being in the news. I don't know what we would of done without wvps support. My parter was encouraged to volunteer and regularly check in with the Green Head Space as part of his wellbeing programme. Our relationship has improved and our outlook as a family has to."



### CASE STUDY 2 - Mr S / Veteran / WVP housing pathway, Barry / 24 (early leaver) / Med discharge due to service in Afghanistan:

■ "Mr S has been able to overcome significant barriers in his transition process dealing with personal admin such as form filling, Mr S has been able to use the facilities at the green head space and space to both fulfil a family day out and with partners advised and encouraged completion of forms. The positive outcomes achieved has enabled MR S to receive the correct pip payments and a revised decision for his motability component.

**Mr S has reported:** "Somewhere to bring my dog and have a friendly cup of tea has helped me tremendously through this difficult time."



### CASE STUDY 3 - Mrs T / Ex Veterans Partner, significant other/ WVP housing cluster, Cardiff / Family:

■ "Coming from SAFFA safe women's refuge I was nervous to move to a new area and meeting new people as I'm Fijian. I'm really pleased in my new home and my kids going to a local good school. After school my children go to the Green Head Space where they learn about birds and bees and healthy fruit to eat. Me and my five children feel welcomed by the WVP community and look forward to the summer where we can create great memories in a safe environment."

## Cardiff Veteran Advice

The Hub		APRIL 2021— MARCH 2022 STATS												ARMED FORCES COVENANT
	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MARCH	TOTAL	
CUSTOMERS SEEN	58	58	76	56	54	58	62	63	54	79	52	45	725	
BENEFIT ENQUIRIES	29	17	27	16	17	17	16	16	14	24	15	11	219	
HOUSING ENQUIRIES	9	11	10	9	9	9	17	17	12	20	15	10	148	
DEBT/ BUDGETING ENQUIRIES	2	2	1	4	5	5	5	5	5	6	2	2	44	
HELP INTO EMPLOYMENT	7	6	6	5	6	7	7	7	7	10	6	6	80	
OTHER ENQUIRIES E.G WAR PENSIONS	11	22	32	22	17	18	17	18	16	19	14	16	222	
BENEFITS CLAIMED	£60,156	£42,260	£39,317	£47,430	£46,430	£41,430	£49,260	£44,988	£41,078	£51,556	£41,551	£32,099	£537,555	
ONE OFF PAYMENTS	£3,150	£766	£850	£3,049	£949	£887	£1221	£5275	£4518	£3,770	£1210	£1770	£27,415	

Cardiff Veteran Advice Service figures April 2021 – March 2022.

Contact us: [veteransadvice@cardiff.gov.uk](mailto:veteransadvice@cardiff.gov.uk)  
02920871071 or 07980953539

## Cardiff City FC Foundation

### Coming Home Choir for Veterans and Veteran Families

Do you like singing?  
Would you like to try something new in 2022?

Re-Live are proud to launch the Coming Home choir,  
for veterans and veteran families

No previous singing experience needed - all voices welcome.

The choir is tri-service, free from rank,  
and open to women and men.

We meet every Friday at 11am-1pm at:  
Chapter Arts Centre, Market Road, Canton, CF5 1QE

Singing in a choir can help support your health and wellbeing.  
And it's fun and friendly!

**IF YOU'RE INTERESTED PLEASE GET IN TOUCH WITH  
RE-LIVE'S VETERANS COORDINATOR  
RACHEL CLARK-YEO:  
E: [RACHEL@RE-LIVE.ORG.UK](mailto:rachel@re-live.org.uk) M: 07737 337842**

[www.re-live.org.uk/cominghome](http://www.re-live.org.uk/cominghome)

## Vale of Glamorgan Veteran Advice Service

Vale of Glamorgan Veteran Advice Service / Armed Forces Liaison Officer Cardiff and Vale.

Hi my name is Abi and I am the Armed Forces Liaison Officer for Cardiff and Vale and the Veteran Advice Officer for the Vale of Glamorgan Council. The Vale Council is proud to be the first council in Wales and third in UK to become a signatory to the Armed Forces Community Covenant in June 2011. The Council has a proud record of valuing its armed services, both past and present, and the commitment to the Covenant to support our Armed Forces Community.

The Veteran Advice service provides free, impartial, dedicated information, advice and support to members of the Armed Forces Community in the Vale of Glamorgan. The service covers a range of areas, including Benefits, Adult Social Care, Finances, Employment and Housing.

It has been a busy few months, we celebrated Remembrance Sunday in Barry with RBL, with a parade through the town and live commentary from Bro Radio with whom RBL, myself and CLLR Eddie Williams (Armed Forces Champion) had a live spot. They reported there were over a thousand attendees.



(With Dan of Forces Fitness at Romilly Park Barry).

There is so much more to come this year with the Jubilee Celebrations and the events taking place throughout the summer. We have Cycle rides to Motorcycle rides and Falklands 40th Anniversary events to Armed Forces Day events.

During these last months many of us have wanted to help support those in crisis, I approached Amy of Awesome Wales on Holton Road Barry, the Vale's first zero waste store, to offer some help. They were a drop in for Ukraine supplies and was overwhelmed with people's generosity and had a basement full of toiletries, baby products and food etc. Myself and some members of the Barry Veterans Group volunteered to sort and box up the supplies ready to be shipped, many donated to the cause.



(Remembrance Sunday 2021).



April is the Month of the Military Child and The Vale Council and SSCE Cymru joined Forces Fitness for an amazing Family Fun Day in Romilly Park. It was lovely to see the Vale's Forces families come together to enjoy this day and join one another in games such as tug-of-war and army crawls under the camo nets. We can't wait to do this again soon!



(with Jody of SSCE Cymru – Month of the Military Child)

The Veteran Advice Service continues to be busy and has received over a thousand enquiries from housing to council tax, benefits to bins. For all enquiries or help and advice please get in touch.

**Abigail Warburton – 07725704655**  
[awarburton@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:awarburton@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)

## Merthyr & RCT Cwm Taf Rhondda Cynon Taf & Merthyr Tydfil

### Cwm Taff Armed Forces Liaison Officer

My name is Jamie Ireland, and I am the Armed Forces Liaison Officer for Cwm Taff. As the Armed Forces Liaison Officer, I am responsible for raising awareness of the issues affecting the Armed Forces Community in Cwm Taff along with promoting and coordinating work to honour the Armed Forces Covenant.



I have worked for Rhondda Cynon Taf Council for over 15 years, in this time I have been fortunate to have worked in and gained significant knowledge and experience including: Housing, Council Tax and Housing Benefits, Adult Social Care and Leisure services. It is an honour to provide advice and support to members of the Armed Forces Community in Cwm Taff for whom deserve the very best services and support.

### Rhondda Cynon Taf Veteran Advice Service

The Veteran Advice Service provides free information, advice and support to members of the Armed Forces community within Rhondda Cynon Taf. The service covers a range of areas, including Benefits, Adult Social Care, Finances, Employment and Housing. Whether you're currently serving in the Armed Forces, or have previously served, you and your family can access our service for advice and support. The Veteran Advice officer attends local Veteran Groups and holds regular Veteran Advice surgeries throughout Rhondda Cynon Taf.

For further information, please contact RCT Veteran Advice Officer Jamie Ireland on: Tel: **07747 485619** (Monday to Friday 8:30am to 17:00pm)  
 Email: [VeteranService@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:VeteranService@rctcbc.gov.uk)  
 24/7 online referral: [www.rctcbc.gov.uk/veteranadvice](http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/veteranadvice)

### Veteran and Reservist Guaranteed Interview Scheme

RCT Council are proud to hold the Armed Forces Covenant Gold Employer recognition award. In January 2022 the council strengthened its commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant by introducing a Guaranteed Interview Scheme for Veterans and Reservists. This commitment is to guarantee an interview to any veterans or reservists that meet the essential criteria set out in the job profile for roles that are advertised externally.

The Council recognises that veterans and reservists can bring valuable transferable skills, qualities, and benefits. Alongside this new scheme the Council has agreed to advertise relevant jobs on the Career Transition Partnership (CTP) website in addition to normal advertising processes.

For further information regarding our Guaranteed Interview Scheme, please contact RCT Armed Forces Team  
 Tel: **07747485619** (Monday to Friday 8:30am to 17:00pm)  
 Email: [Armedforces@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:Armedforces@rctcbc.gov.uk)



Proudly  
 supporting  
 those  
 who serve

## Rhondda Veteran Awarded the 2021 - Armed Forces in Wales Covenant Award

The Armed Forces Covenant Award in Wales was won by Chief Executive and Founder of Valley Veterans Paul Bromwell.



The Armed Forces Covenant Award was presented to Paul Bromwell at Cardiff City Football Stadium. Paul founded Valley Veterans 13 years ago to provide veterans with a platform to socialise and seek advice. Valley Veterans takes place every Thursday 10am at the Ton Pentre Community Hub in the Rhondda Valley. Valley Veterans Paul Bromwell has been successful in supporting Veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder through Equine Therapy.

In addition to the Armed Forces in Wales Covenant award Paul has also been honoured at the inaugural Aneurin Bevan People's NHS Awards where he received the Aneurin Bevan Community Award in recognition of his work in Rhondda Cynon Taf, supporting the Armed Forces community.

## Cwm Taf Celebrates Month of the Military Child

Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil Councils celebrated Armed Forces 'Month of the Military Child' by hosting Armed Forces Family Fun Fitness Sessions at Ynysangharad War Memorial Park and Cyfarthfa Castle.

Aimed at families and children of Armed Forces personnel who live within the County Borough and neighbouring localities, the Council, along with SSCE Cymru (Supporting Service Children in Education Wales) worked with Forces Fitness to deliver a weekend of family fun.

Both Councils continue to recognise the important role military children play within our Armed Forces community and the community in which they live. April is designated as the Month of the Military Child, underscoring the important role military children play in the armed forces community.



## Armed Forces Day 2022

Armed Forces Day takes place Saturday 18th June 2022 11:00 am to 4:00 pm in Ynysangharad War Memorial Park, Pontypridd.

This is the seventh annual Armed Forces Day event that Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council have organised. This is a one-day event with FREE admission. The event comprises of a number of elements which begin with a parade within the perimeter of the park grounds and will include a number of Military Representatives, Cadets, Standard Bearers, and a Marching Band, followed by the 'Raising of the Flag' service. The day will also include a 'Fun Day' element for all the family. Attractions/offerings this year will include, Funfair, Music Stage, with war time themed music, Walkabout Entertainment, Climbing Wall, Trailer Cave, Tank, Information Stalls and much more.

The venue does not allow for visitor car parking, however this is available in the town centre pay and display car parks. Public transport links to Pontypridd are excellent, with a central bus station and train station at either end of the town.

For further information Please contact Rhondda Cynon Taf Events Team: Tel: **01443 424123** Email: [events@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:events@rctcbc.gov.uk)



## Armed Forces Park Project

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council Armed Forces Park Project will launch in May 2022, this fantastic new project will provide all member of the Armed Forces Community with a summer pact with activities including, Tree planting and Gardening workshops, Park Walks and Guided Meditation, Armed Forces Family Lido Swimming Sessions and much more.

For further information regarding our Armed Forces Park Project please contact RCT Armed Forces Team. Tel: **07747485619** (Monday to Friday 8:30am to 17:00pm) Email: [Armedforces@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:Armedforces@rctcbc.gov.uk)



## Covenant Advice and Awareness

Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil CBC offer Armed Forces Covenant Awareness packages which can be tailored to your organisation.

Our Covenant awareness sessions help raise awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant. Support by employers to the Armed Forces community can take different shapes. It can be policies and projects that support their own employees who are members of the Armed Forces community such as setting up support networks for any reservists or veterans or offering additional paid leave for reservists. It can be policies and projects that help the wider Armed Forces community such as working with the Career Transition Partnership to find greater positions for service leavers, employing and supporting Service spouses and partners or offering a discount to members of the Armed Forces community.

For further information please contact: Jamie Ireland - Regional Armed Forces Liaison Officer  
Email: [Armedforces@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:Armedforces@rctcbc.gov.uk)  
Tel: **07747485619**

## Let's Talk Armed Forces

Are you currently serving in the Armed Forces, a Veteran or a member of the public? We would like to hear from you, your feedback is paramount to help us continue to support the Armed Forces community in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Complete our Armed Forces Survey by visiting [www.lets-talk.rctcbc.gov.uk/lets-talk-armed-forces](http://www.lets-talk.rctcbc.gov.uk/lets-talk-armed-forces)

## Veteran Support Groups in Cwm Taff Valley Veterans

Valley Veterans is a veteran-led organisation based in the heart of the Rhondda Valley. Founded over 10 years ago as an informal support group for Veterans with PTSD, Valley Veterans is now a vibrant hub with more than 140 active participants.

Current organised activities include a weekly breakfast club that is hosted in the Ton Pentre Community Centre and attracts up to 60 veterans every Thursday 10:00am till 12:00pm. Valley Veterans also provides daily equine activities at the adjacent yard that attract up to a dozen regular daily participants.

Website: <https://www.valleyveterans.org/>  
Email: [enquiries@valleyveterans.org](mailto:enquiries@valleyveterans.org)  
Phone: **07733896128**



## Taff Ely Veterans

Taff Ely Veteran Group meets 10:00am till 12:00pm every Wednesday at Rhydyfelin Community Centre, Pontypridd. All members of the Armed Forces Community and retired members of the emergency services (Blue Light) are welcome to join us for a chat, breakfast roll and hot drink. We work with Armed Forces charities and Rhondda Cynon Taf Council Veteran Advice service to provide free advice and support to all our members. Our group offers a range of activities including walking, allotments, and social trips.

Phone: **07913355911**  
<https://www.facebook.com/TaffElyVeteranGroup>



## Cynon Valley Veterans

Cynon Valley Veterans group meets 10:00am till 12:00pm every Monday at Darran Las Community Centre, Mountain ash. All members of the Armed Forces Community are welcome to join us.

The group is run by Veterans for Veterans. Various Armed Forces charities attend our group to provide support to our members. The group is supported by Rhondda Cynon Taf Council Veteran Advice Service, who provide free advice and support to members of the Armed Forces Community.

Phone: **07960411039**



## Merthyr Tydfil Veterans

Merthyr Veterans group meets every 2 weeks on a Tuesday at Merthyr Labour club 10:00am till 12:00pm. Veterans, members of the armed forces and their families are all welcome to attend for a casual get together, with guest speakers, raffle prizes and support from Armed Forces organisations.

Phone: **07853317954**

# North Wales

## Sarah sails in to ease veterans' isolation

Support is at hand for former Armed Forces personnel in North and Mid-Wales following the appointment of a specialist at Help for Heroes tasked with tackling loneliness and isolation among veterans.



Dolgellau-based Sarah Hattle, 40, left the Royal Navy, in summer 2021, after 21 years of service, and joined the Charity as Project Case Manager, a role funded for two years by the Armed Forces Covenant. She explained: "I'm quite passionate about being Welsh – although I'm originally from St Albans; I learned to speak Welsh as an adult and the children are all fluent, so I do consider myself to be Welsh now. Living in Wales and running a project on my home turf, for a charity I can really get onboard with, is very exciting.

"It's sort of a blank canvas because it's a new role for the region. I want to make a difference to existing beneficiaries and reach out to veterans who, perhaps, haven't engaged with the charity previously, whether that's through mountain-biking, a swimming club, a book club ... whatever the need I'm hoping to be able to cater for it."

The mum of four was quick to introduce her concept of a book club, which has now been expanded to cover the whole of the UK. The club was quick to receive the patronage of one veteran for whom books have taken on a new meaning post-service. Former Royal Navy Lieutenant Commander-turned-author, Mike Klidjian, donated 10 copies of his first novel, *Bluestreak*, and joined a session in February to discuss it.

Hattle added: "The virtual book club concept is ideal for veterans as they are spread nationwide, and this is something they can do online across any distance. It provides a catalyst for group work where they can engage with like-minded people and make new friends in a relaxed atmosphere.

"It has been proven connections are far more likely to be meaningful if there is a shared interest, rather than just a group based on demographics. If the only commonality in the group was just their military service, it is less likely people will connect meaningfully. I'm hopeful this will spark friendships beyond the bounds of the group."

Hattle has already lined up further authors to participate, as they offer their support to the Charity's efforts to get veterans to engage further. The next author to attend a session will be Welsh writer Rebecca F John, who will discuss her novel *The Empty Greatcoat*, a fictionalised account of a British soldier's experiences during WWI, inspired by the journals of her great-great uncle.

Help for Heroes believes those who serve our country deserve support when they're wounded. Every day, men and women must leave their career in the Armed Forces as a result of physical or psychological wounds. The Charity helps them, and their families, to recover and get on with their lives. It has already supported more than 26,500 people and won't stop until every wounded veteran gets the support they deserve. [helpforheroes.org.uk](http://helpforheroes.org.uk)

**DIWRNOD LLUOEDD ARFOG CYMRU**  
**WALES ARMED FORCES DAY**

DIGWYDDIAD AM DDIM  
FREE EVENT

**Dydd Sadwrn / Saturday**  
**18 Mehefin / June 2022**  
10am - 4pm

Llwyn Isaf • Sgwâr Y Frenhines / Queens Square

- Gorymdaith yn dechrau ym Modhyfryd am 10.30
- Arddangosfeydd milwrol
- Gweithgareddau i'r teulu cyfan
- Cerddoriaeth fyw gan Y Big Beat
- Bar ac arlwy ar y safle
- Parade starts from Bodhyfryd at 10:30
- Military displays and exhibitions
- Activities for all the family
- Live music from The Big Beat
- Onsite bar and catering

Parcio am ddim drwy'r dydd ym meysydd parcio CBSW, ac eithrio Ty Pawb – cyfyngiadau amser yn dal yn berthnasol.  
Free parking all day in WCBC car parks, except for Ty Pawb – time restrictions still apply.

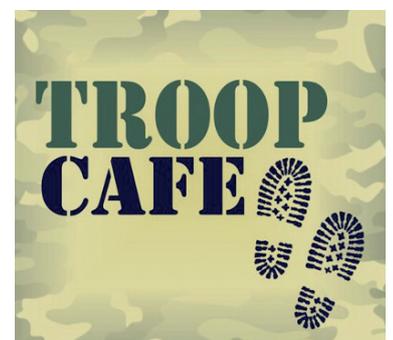
Fe ddylai cyn-filwyr sy'n dymuno cymryd rhan yn yr orymdaith o amgrych Canol y Dref ymgynnull ym Modhyfryd am 10:00 y tu ôl i'r milwyr a'r band.  
Veterans wishing to take part in the march around the Town Centre form up on Bodhyfryd @10:00 behind the marching troops and band.

Wrexham Covenant @AFLO3206018  
afcc@wrexham.gov.uk

## Troop Café

Troop Café is open to the public from 12.00 - 18.00hrs Wednesday to Saturday.

Monday, Tuesday and the mornings are available for community groups, and those supporting veterans or the military community to hire.



Mostyn Broadway - Coach Park,  
Llandudno LL30 1YL 01492 871284  
<https://www.facebook.com/TroopCafe>

**Open: 12 - 6pm Wednesday to Saturday**

For more information please contact:  
[ask@change-step.co.uk](mailto:ask@change-step.co.uk)

## Free wellbeing support for veterans looking for work and adjusting in the workplace

We recognise it's not always a smooth transition into Civvy Street. RCS-Wales offers wellbeing and mental health support to veterans when looking for work or adjusting to new work situations, through the In Work Support service and iCAN Work Scheme.



Meet Stephen. He started to get back pain and over a 5 month period it got worse until he had to take time off work. He couldn't even bend over to put his socks on. "That's when they recommended I speak to RCS. Their therapist did six

treatment sessions on my muscles and a month later I was back in work. I would 100% urge anyone in a similar situation to me to get in touch with RCS. I probably wouldn't be back in work now if it hadn't been for their help."



Diana was working in a coaching role and reported increasing levels of anxiety negatively impacting on her mental health. She contacted RCS and received 6 fully funded counselling sessions. "Before able to access the support so quickly proved to

be far more beneficial than having to wait for weeks and weeks. The therapy started within one week. My therapist was extremely engaging. I felt very relaxed with her and really able to open up. I would whole-heartedly recommend the service."

RCS In-Work Support offers rapid access to up to 6 FREE sessions of one-to-one talking and physical therapies to get you back up and running. The In-Work Support Service is part-funded by European Social Funding through the Welsh Government, providing free wellbeing support for employed and



self-employed people in Anglesey, Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Conwy, Denbigshire and Gwynedd.

**To find out how we can help you, contact:**

CALL: **01745 336442**

EMAIL: [hello@rcs-wales.co.uk](mailto:hello@rcs-wales.co.uk)



## Supporting you into the right job to improve wellbeing



"It's been extraordinary. The way I'm encouraged to see my potential and move forward. We were able to highlight skills I didn't even realise I had. I can't thank iCAN enough."

Sandra was supported by the iCAN Work scheme for 12 months. She was busy working in temporary jobs whilst looking for a career position to make the best of the skills from her Masters degree.

Sandra says, "iCAN Work is not just about getting a job, it's about bringing your awareness to what you are good at, boosting your confidence and increasing your feelings of self-worth. Showing you that your skill sets are still valued and that you can make a difference."

iCAN Work provides specialist support for people in North Wales with mental health needs to find and remain in employment, in order to improve their wellbeing and support their recovery.

The service is fully funded and offered free of charge. The programme is delivered by not-for-profit organisation RCS, and charity Adferiad in partnership with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board.



**To find out more about the scheme in Anglesey, Conwy and Denbigshire contact:**

Christine Swain, EMAIL: [icanwork@rcs-wales.co.uk](mailto:icanwork@rcs-wales.co.uk)

**For Gwynedd, Wrexham and Flintshire contact:**

EMAIL: [icanwork@cais.org.uk](mailto:icanwork@cais.org.uk)

# Gwent

**Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly,  
Monmouthshire, Newport  
and Torfaen**

# Blaenau Gwent

## **Veteran mental wellbeing training & coaching**

We are Kelly & Jamie Farr, the founders of YourNorth - we are a husband & wife team and both veterans with a combined 41 years service in the Royal Air Force.

# YourNorth

We are based in Ebbw Vale, South Wales and we deliver wellbeing workshops, First Aid for Mental Health and Safeguarding courses and success coaching. Over the past 12 months we have delivered training to 100s of members of the Armed Forces community through our 'toolkit' courses - focusing on mental wellbeing, communication, mindset, mindfulness and happiness.

We are also founders of a non-profit, YourNorth Veteran Support; a community interest company, providing free mental wellbeing training, support and signposting for the Armed Forces community. Our aim is to improve wellbeing, reduce loneliness, improve quality of life and establish an understanding community that knows how to support one another.

In April 2022 we took a group of veterans away on a free 3 day residential retreat in the Cambrian mountains in mid-Wales. This retreat was open to participants who had previously attended our courses, and was a combination of wellbeing discussions and hill walking. We have another 2 retreats planned for 2022 and are hopeful to run many more over the next few years.

### **If you are any of the following and would like to attend our courses for free, please get in touch:**

- Serving personnel
- Veterans
- Cadets
- Reservists
- Family members of the above
- An organisation that supports or employs any of the above.

The majority of our courses are run at our training centre in Ebbw Vale, and we are more than happy to deliver at a venue of your choice.

If you would like to book on to any of our workshops or would like to discuss us coming to deliver to you and your staff, please drop us an email at [info@yournorth.co.uk](mailto:info@yournorth.co.uk) or call us on **01495 357937**.

Group discounts available if you do not fall into the eligibility criteria for funded spaces.

To find out more about how we can support you, please visit our website or contact us directly:

**Email:** [info@yournorth.co.uk](mailto:info@yournorth.co.uk)

**Phone:** **01495 357937**

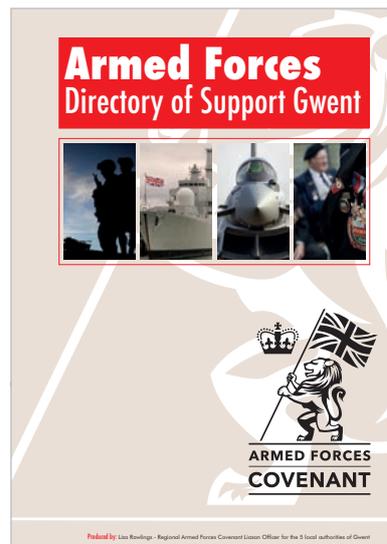
**Website:** [www.yournorth.co.uk](http://www.yournorth.co.uk)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/YourNorthUK](http://www.facebook.com/YourNorthUK)

**Twitter:** [www.twitter.com/YourNorthUK](http://www.twitter.com/YourNorthUK)

**Instagram:** [www.instagram.com/YourNorthUK](http://www.instagram.com/YourNorthUK)

## **The Armed Forces Directory of Support**



[https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/CaerphillyDocs/Council-and-democracy/Armed-forces/Armed-Forces-Directory-\(1\).aspx](https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/CaerphillyDocs/Council-and-democracy/Armed-forces/Armed-Forces-Directory-(1).aspx)



**Follow us on: Facebook Gwent  
Armed Forces Community & Twitter**



**@GwentAFC** page that promotes the work & events for the Armed Forces Community!

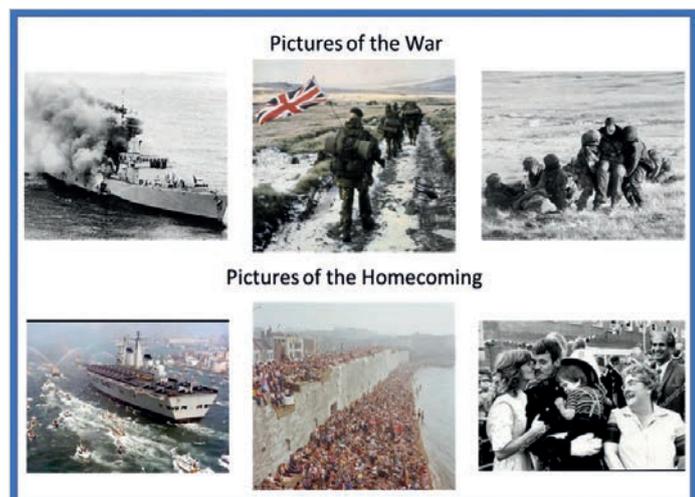
# The Serving and Veterans Association Blaenau Gwent

## Veterans Association Falklands War Memorial & Fund-Raising TAB 2022

On 2nd April 1982, Argentinian forces invaded the British overseas territory of the Falkland Islands. Argentina had claimed sovereignty over the islands for many years, confident Britain would never attempt to regain the islands by force. Despite the huge distance involved, the Falkland Islands being 8,000 miles away in the South Atlantic, Britain, under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher, undertook the extraordinary feat of assembling and sending a taskforce of warships and rapidly refitted merchant ships to the Falklands.

On 2 May, the Royal Navy submarine HMS Conqueror sank the Argentinian cruiser General Belgrano, with the loss of over 300 lives. After this incident, Argentinian ships remained in port. However, the Argentinian Airforce still posed a significant threat, and the Royal Navy did indeed lose several warships to attacks from Argentinian aircraft. Its Fleet Auxiliary ships were attacked at Fitzroy and the supply ship Atlantic Conveyor was also sunk. British forces landed on the islands on 21 May. After a series of engagements against a well dug-in but ill-trained conscripted Argentinian Army, they began the battle for Stanley, the islands' capital on 11 June. The Argentinian forces surrendered on 14 June.

This year is the 40th Anniversary of the Falklands War. The Serving and Veterans Association of Blaenau Gwent includes members who participated in the conflict and want to honour the 255 British forces personnel who lost their lives by walking 255 miles, a mile for every life lost, whilst raising money for some exceptional charities - Bladder and Bowel UK and the Hospice of the Valleys. The primary goals of the Serving & Veterans Association are to support one another, bring back the camaraderie we shared when we were serving in the forces, to support members who may be suffering from PTSD and other mental health conditions. We also want to have a positive impact on the communities in which we live and work, including working with other organisations to build an understanding of the Armed Forces and how they help organise and support events and charities within the local area. This event will be a huge challenge for us, but we will support each other to complete it and raise money for charity in memory of all those who lost their lives or sustained life changing injuries both mental and physical.



Last year we completed our first hugely successful charity event, raising an incredible amount of money for our two chosen charities. The welcome home we received was both inspiring and emotional but raised the spirits of our community after months of lockdown due to the global Covid-19 pandemic. We can only hope that you all support us in the same way as last year by supporting our charities and joining us to remember the 255 who never returned.

This year's event will commence on Tuesday the 7th June from the National Arboretum in Stafford, where we will lay a wreath at the Falkland Islands Memorial in honour of the 255 who lost their lives and officially start the long walk home through Llandudno in north Wales heading south to Crickhowell, where we will rest for the last night before our final walk to our home town Brynmawr.

We had many supporters for last year's walk including Lisa Williams who was a great friend of the Veterans. We know Lisa would have supported us this year, but sadly she passed away late last year. To remember Lisa in the best way we know, we are dedicating the last leg of the walk to her and inviting members of public to join us on the walk from Crickhowell to Brynmawr Saturday June 11th setting off at 08:00 We already have some great names signing up for the last leg, so please come along and join us. [#Lastlegforlisa](#)

**Just giving:** [https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/theservingveteransassociationblaenauGWent?utm\\_term=awAXeDY3n](https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/theservingveteransassociationblaenauGWent?utm_term=awAXeDY3n)



## Tredegar HM Armed Forces Veterans Group

The group meets the first Saturday of each month at 10 o'clock JD Weatherspoons Tredegar. All welcome.

# Caerphilly

## Caerphilly Veterans Support

Since its launch in June 2021, the Caerphilly Veterans Support Hub has gone from strength to strength. We meet every Saturday and regularly have 40+ veterans and their families in attendance.



There is weekly support & services on offer to help with housing issues, debt management, employment, benefits and mental health from organisations including Woody's Lodge, Department for Work & Pensions, Citizens Advice, YourNorth, Change Step and Cornerstone Support. There is also the opportunity for veterans and their families to access free guitar lessons – including a guitar – from Guitars for Veterans Wales.



**The Hub was fortunate to be awarded funding from the Armed Forces Covenant Trust fund and several events have been arranged free of charge for the members:**

- 15 members attended the Wales v Fiji rugby match at the Principality Stadium in Cardiff in November 2021.
- We held a joint Christmas Party with Woody's Lodge for the veterans and their families, with about 60 members in attendance in December 2021.
- We had an amazing day visiting the National Memorial Arboretum in March 2022.
- 46 members went to the Imperial War Museum in London and had a fantastic time in April 2022.

### We are open:

- Every Saturday. 10.00 - 12.00
- Centre for Sporting Excellence, Ystrad Mynach, CF82 7EP
- If you have any questions, please email: [armedforces@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:armedforces@caerphilly.gov.uk). All veterans welcome!



*In addition to all of the above support and services, we offer free hot drinks, bacon rolls and create a safe space where members can relax and chat.*

# Freedom of the County Borough awarded to the Royal British Legion



The Royal British Legion has been officially granted the Freedom of the Caerphilly County Borough to honour the outstanding charitable work of the organisation supporting ex-service men and women and their families.

Christina HARRY, Chief Executive of Caerphilly County Borough Council said "On behalf of the council and all residents across the area, I would like to thank the Royal British Legion for their tireless support, dedication and outstanding fundraising efforts that have benefitted so many over the past century.

"It is an honour for us to grant the Freedom of Caerphilly County Borough as it is a fitting recognition of the outstanding contribution they make to our society every single day."

"The RBL have been a constant and reassuring presence for so many people within our community over the past century and it's safe to say that they will be there for many more years to come, offering the same amazing level of support to those people who need it most."

Services like the RBL play a pivotal role in ensuring the rights of the Armed Forces community are protected and the packages of support are available when needed.

Ken Terry of the RBL said "As the Wales representative on the Royal British Legion's Membership Council, as well as a resident of Caerphilly, it gives me great pleasure this evening to receive such a prestigious honour on behalf of the charity.

"The Royal British Legion has a long-standing friendship and strong working relationship with Caerphilly County Borough Council. As a council, you have been truly commendable at ensuring local armed forces personnel, veterans and their families receive the support they need. Thank you to all members of this council for this extremely prestigious honour."





## ARE YOU A VETERAN OF THE ARMED FORCES?

# WE CAN HELP!

- Anxious about the future?
- Struggling to adjust?
- Struggling with relationships?
- Need advice, guidance or support?

### VETERANS SUPPORT GROUP

Caerphilly County Borough Council host a weekly support group for veterans.

## STARTS 5TH JUNE



For more information contact [armedforces@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:armedforces@caerphilly.gov.uk)

Get yourself along for a brew and a chat, lets see how we can help each other.

**Every Saturday**  
10.00am - 13:00pm

Centre of Sporting Excellence  
Caerphilly Road,  
Ystrad Mynach,  
Hengoed CF82 7EP





## Problems managing bills, accommodation or threatened with homelessness?

### To make a referral for support contact Supporting People:

# 01443 864548

Text: housupport to 81400

email: [supportingpeople@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:supportingpeople@caerphilly.gov.uk)

www.caerphilly.gov.uk/supportingpeople

cefnogipobl

supportingpeople

supporting independence  
cefnogi annibyniaeth



# Monmouthshire

## Monmouthshire Veterans' Support Hub aims to reinforce confidence and give guidance to armed forces personnel

Abergavenny is the latest town in Gwent to see a Veterans' Support Hub available to all former and current military personnel, providing advice, guidance and support regarding some of life's challenges. Monmouthshire Veterans' Support Hub was launched in March 2022, with the aim of delivering high quality, person-centred support to veterans from the military and ex-military community. The Hub aims to empower veterans, and those in transition, from military to civilian life, integrating into local communities.

### Monmouthshire Veterans' Support hub is designed to:

- Develop a greater awareness of the support and services available to service and ex-service personnel and their families in their local community.
- Provide individual veterans and service personnel with the confidence, knowledge and skills to access the help they need, where and when they need it.
- Reinforce self-reliance, confidence, esteem and self-empowerment after leaving the services and improve the long-term health and well-being of the ex-services community.
- Be a place where Veterans feel they belong.
- Offer opportunities to engage with the local community and undertake activities.

Additionally, access to training on issues such as stress management, panic and anxiety, managing difficult thoughts and mindfulness is available to the armed forces community. Lisa Rawlings, Regional Armed Forces Covenant Liaison Officer, said: "As the Regional Armed Forces Officer for the 5 local authorities of Gwent, and a veteran myself, it is important to widen the access to services and information for the armed forces community. Having opened a successful hub in Caerphilly in June 2021, I wanted to strive for a Hub in each local authority on different days of the week. Therefore, a veteran on any given day in Gwent could access support."

The sessions are held in the heart of Abergavenny which is easily accessible by car, train and bus routes. If you are a veteran of the armed forces, Monmouthshire Veterans' Support Hub in Abergavenny can provide you with advice, guidance, and support on topics such as housing, benefits, debt and health and wellbeing.



Equally, if you are anxious about the future, or struggling to adjust, just talking to other veterans may help you through your journey.

Every Monday from 10am - 12pm, you can join other Veterans in Monmouthshire at Abergavenny Hub, Town Hall, NP7 5HD.

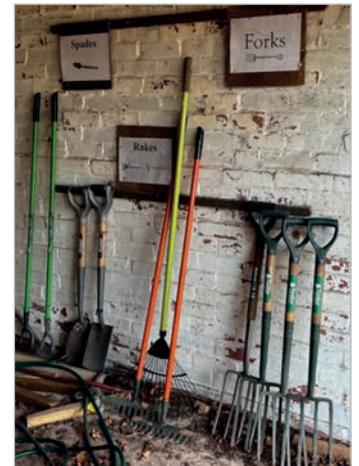
## Incredible Edible Usk Garden

The aim of the project was to further develop the community garden and surrounding areas to create welcoming spaces for members of the community to visit and spend time, take part in growing a range of fruit and vegetables, learn and take part in garden maintenance, and learn from each other methods of growing and cooking produce grown in the garden. In addition to this, enhancing the biodiversity of the area will encourage wildlife and pollinators to ensure a thriving nature space and a garden of peaceful reflection.



The shed has been adapted for use as an outdoor learning/meeting space, affectionally named 'Shedspace'. This has been equipped with several wooden benches and has seen it in regular use by the training departments of MCC (appropriate first aid equipment is also available).

The garden was proudly awarded the Green Flag Community Award during 2021 (Incredible Edible Usk Summary Details [greenflagaward.org](https://www.greenflagaward.org) which judges sites based on factors such as accessibility, safety, well maintained, environmental management, biodiversity, and community involvement. The Green Flag criteria is judged annually to ensure standards are maintained.



Additional raised beds have been installed in the garden to provide more opportunities for community members to take ownership and grow produce.



# Newport

## Newport Veterans' Hub

Newport Veterans' Hub (NVH) is a CIC formed 24th August 2021 by a small group of veterans who had themselves experienced mental health difficulties. The Hub operates in partnership with several local organisations to provide mental health and wellbeing support and signposting for veterans and their families.

With the support of Newport County AFC and Newport RFC NVH provide up to 10 free match day tickets to every home league game available to veterans and their families in addition to one to one support offered on match days, NVH has created a partnership with Newport Live and now has the use of a room and facilities at Newport Stadium and provide free food between 16:00-17:00.

We are open every Thursday 15:00-20:00 at Newport stadium NP19 4PT, our drop in Hub holds coffee evenings where veterans can come together in a non-threatening, comfortable environment, allowing our specialist volunteers to identify those most at risk, offer them wellbeing strategies, and signpost them to alternative therapies and treatments. funding for facilities hire is provided by The Community Foundation Wales.

Newport Live is a charitable trust which provides sporting, leisure and cultural activities in Newport to support by the health and wellbeing of people in the city and beyond and inspire them to become happier and healthier. NVH will now provide free use of Newport Live Facilities with our inclusive membership for up to 5 people, service users will have to sign up to this initiative which is Funded by the National Lottery community Fund. We have activity sessions available every Thursday 17:00 -18:00 at the Geraint Thomas National velodrome of Wales NP19 4PT funding is provided by the National lottery community Fund.

In addition to these activities, NVH helps raise awareness amongst organisations and the general public of the problems affecting veterans with mental health issues, and how they can help. Our aim is to bring veterans out of isolation and give them a place to socialise and make new friends creating their own support network. Our organisation is run by a team of volunteers and We support veterans and their families as a unit.



Demand for our services is expected to grow exponentially and we now seek to extend the range of services we can offer local veterans so that we can not only provide more high-quality activities specifically designed to tackle mental ill-health, but also strengthen and enhance referral pathways to external sources of specialist support and to provide infrastructure to offer consistency in the support available in Newport Gwent.



We provide veterans and their families with free match day tickets by creating partnerships with sports clubs charities and work together to provide a wide range of support to the veterans community. We do this by working with the local authority NCC, Newport AFBC, Gwent AFLO and armed forces champions, Veterans NHS Wales and organisations that support veterans in the region.

We are also pleased to announce the opening our allotment plot available to veterans and their families including access for the disabled, Toilet facilities and parking. A summer house will soon be built on site for shelter and a place to relax and engage in organised activities throughout the year. Funding for the summer house is provided by Our Port Our Voice Our Choice. We would like to thank the orange rail Army Siemens Mobility Rail, Ngage rail and Balfour Beatty for installing paths for disabled wheelchair and scooter access and to We one that has supported the initiative.

We will soon open a psychiatrist counselling service for veterans and their families which will be located at Gaer Medical Practice which will be available to veterans and their families.

**For more information please email:**  
[info@newportveteranshub.org.uk](mailto:info@newportveteranshub.org.uk)

<https://www.newportveteranshub.org.uk/contact-us/>

**Contact number: 07735301163**



## Activity sessions with County in the Community.

Activity sessions available every Thursday 17:00-18:00 @ The Thomas Geraint International Velodrome of Wales.

- Sporting Support for Veterans has continued to be a great success in Newport which so far has had a total of 41 people take part in the free weekly activity sessions provided. In total 12 Veterans 3 partner/wives and 24 service children have taken part in activities.
- The National Lottery community Fund provided RNFH with funding for 52 weekly sessions which are delivered for County in the community at a cost of 3160 per year which includes facilities, great value for money!

**Newport County AFC**

Free match day tickets available to every home league available to Veterans, Partner or carer and service children.

Supporting Veterans and their families

## New Official Partnership Newport Rugby RFC.

"We are very pleased to announce our official partnership with Newport RFC this is a great addition to the Hub, by working together this will enable us to expand the support on offer for the supported and social elements of the hub"

David Watkins CEO

- Newport Veterans Hub tea and coffee drop in is open every Thursday 15:00-20:00 at Newport Stadium social opportunities and support is available to veterans their partner or carer and service children.
- Full disabled access and parking available.
- Benefits and PIP support is available with the DWP Armed Forces Champion.
- Free training and employment support is available.

**Newport Rugby RFC**

Free match day tickets available to every home league available to Veterans, Partner or carer and service children.

Supporting Veterans and their families

## Lady Hill Allotments

Work started July 2021

Access for the disabled made a priority

Accessible to All

Newport City Council gifted Newport Veterans Hub use of a plot at Lady Hill Allotments

With the support of the veterans community, local businesses, donors and volunteers the site now has parking a toilet and disabled access.

The site has tool sheds with the addition of a large polytunnel. Funding to build a summerhouse for shelter and a place to engage with support provided by Our Voice Our Choice Our Port.

How to find us?  
East Grove Road NP23 5QE  
Please email info@newportveteranshub.org.uk

## Family weekends and days out

"As we continue to raise awareness of how our organisation works and provides support to the veterans community we hope to see the support for our organisation grow, from both the local community and businesses"

Supporting Veterans and their families

We have funding provided by the national lottery Community fund which will enable us to provide Free access to Newport Live Facilities for up to 5 people. Veterans and families will have access to a Wellbeing Gym, Gym Facilities, Swimming Facilities And Court hire for racket sports of up to 3hrs per day. For the member and 3 others.

**Carol Ellis**  
Registered Member 24084  
MBACP (Accred)

What I can help with

- Abuse, Anger management, Anxiety, Bereavement, Cancer, Career coaching, Child related issues, Chronic fatigue syndrome / ME, Coaching supervision, Depression, Development coaching, Disability, Health related issues, Identity issues, Intersity, Life coaching, Loss, OCD, Personal development, Phobias, Post-traumatic stress, Pregnancy related issues, Redundancy, Relationships, Self esteem, Self-harm, Sex-related issues, Spirituality, Stress, Trauma, Women's issues, Work related issues
- Types of therapy
- Behavioural, Brief therapy, CBT, Cognitive, Eclectic, Family therapy, Integrative, Person centred, Psychodynamic, Solution focused brief therapy, Systemic (families and groups).
- To make a referral or book appointment please email: info@newportveteranshub.org.uk or facebook.com/newportveteranshub

**Psychotherapist and counselling**

Gaer Medical Centre  
NP20 3GX  
Email: info@newportveteranshub.org.uk

# Torfaen

## Month of the Military Child

April is designated as the Month of the Military Child, which highlights the important role Service children play in the Armed Forces community.

**Month of the Military Child**  
Mis y Plentyn Milwrol

April/Ebrill | #MilitaryChildMonthCymru

The 'Month of the Military Child' is a time to applaud Armed Forces families and their children for the daily sacrifices they make and the challenges they overcome. In recognition of this, there is a vast amount of support offered to Service children across Torfaen schools (A Service child is identified by schools as a child whose parent, or carer, serves in the regular armed forces, or as a reservist, or has done at any point during the first 25 years of that person's life).

Recently the council has been awarded £3,500 from Welsh Government, in collaboration with SSCE Cymru, to offer health, wellbeing and resilience-building workshops from the Military veteran organisation Forces Fitness. This means that every primary class with a Service child will benefit from a 1 hour workshop, and each secondary with Service children will receive up to 3 hours of workshops.

The funding will also enable free supportive resources and materials for schools in Torfaen to support the specific needs and challenges of Service children. There are currently 25 Service children eligible for support in Torfaen across a total of 17 schools and it is expected that more children qualify. As a result, parents and carers are encouraged to come forward to schools if they have children with any connection to the armed forces.

In addition to this support, Regional School Liaison Officer (RSLO) for Service children, works in collaboration with the 160th (Welsh) Brigade to support Service Children in Education in Wales (SSCE Cymru). The Forces Fitness sessions available will be great fun for all children involved, and will inject some fun into their weeks, during what has been a challenging time for all of us, not least of all children."

Torfaen Council continues to support the local Armed Forces community, including current serving personnel, ex-Military personnel, and their families, through their commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant. Armed Forces Champion for Torfaen, Cllr Alan Jones said, "The 'Month of the Military Child' gives us a chance to reflect on the sacrifices and the challenges Armed Forces families and their children overcome on a daily basis.

I am really pleased to learn that further support is being offered via our school, where Service children will get the chance to experience some new and exciting activities to support their wellbeing and build resilience."

**For more information, please visit:**  
[www.sscecymru.co.uk](http://www.sscecymru.co.uk) #MilitaryChildMonthCymru

# Powys

## Hay On Wye

Veterans Advice Clinic, we have dropped the designation from “drop in” to Change Step Veterans Advice clinic (VAC) and referral service for those individuals who do not wish to sign up on service because of reasons they perceive may affect them at work. New VAC in Hay on Wye, POC is Jim Glass, from the Tackling Loneliness project change Step. Who is currently planning an art exhibition along with one of Adferiad Change Steps external Vendors, Radiate Arts.



Delivered by  ADFERIAD RECOVERY

## VETERANS' DROP IN

In Partnership with 

**Pull up a sandbag and have a brew**

**1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the Month**  
**10.00 hrs to 12.00hrs**

Royal British Legion, 8 Market St, Hay-on-Wye, Hereford HR3 5AF

SUPPORTED BY  ARMED FORCES COVENANT FUND TRUST

0300 777 2259  
[www.changestepwales.co.uk](http://www.changestepwales.co.uk)  
[ask@change-step.co.uk](mailto:ask@change-step.co.uk)  
or search **ChangeStepWales** on social media

## Next Steps & Left of Boom Project

Over the last 6 months Mark Lloyd along with Neil Lawman have both liaised well through the Next Steps and Left of Boom Project, to offer a more comfortable environment to focus their wellbeing for their veterans, what better to get out and about and have a natter. This is a service that has been tailored to suit the individuals who have signed up for Service with Change step.




**LYNN ONN RESERVOIR WALK AND TALK THERAPY**

## THE GAME CHANGE PROJECT

## Veteran's Wild Camping Weekend

Where? Llwydcoed Mill, Aberhafesp, Newtown, Powys SY16 3JE –check website for directions and follow signs to **Mid Wales Off Rd.**

When **Saturday 2nd – Sunday 3rd July 2022**

What will I need? Outdoor clothing (prepare for all weather) sturdy footwear, waterproof coat, tent and camping gear, this is wild camping, no luxuries! You will need a packed lunch for Saturday—we will provide refreshments and a BBQ supper on Sat eve. **There is no charge for this activity!**

Who can attend? Anyone who has served in the armed forces, their families or carers. We aim to be as inclusive as possible—please contact us to discuss any special requirements.

- Horse whispering experience
- Mindfulness
- 4x4 Adventure
- Bush craft
- Music around the campfire

A fun packed and inspiring weekend. A chance to unwind and reconnect with yourself, your family and fellow veterans in the heart of the mid Wales countryside.

We can't wait to welcome you and let the adventure begin!



Funded by the Veterans Foundation

Contact us to book:

Phone 07766 606276

Email

[ask@gamechangeproject.com](mailto:ask@gamechangeproject.com)

Find us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/thegamechangeproject>

Website: <https://www.thegamechangeproject.co.uk>



## FORCES FESTIVAL WALES

A FREE 1-DAY FESTIVAL FOR VETERANS AND VETERAN FAMILIES

**SUNDAY 26TH JUNE**  
**12PM – 5PM**

**FESTIVAL LOCATION:**

PAVILION MID WALES, SPA ROAD, LLANDRINDOD WELLS, LD1 5EY  
ACCESSIBLE VENUE WITH GOOD PARKING

**FREE BUFFET & REFRESHMENTS**

You are warmly invited to join us for this 1-day festival to celebrate the creative voices of our Armed Forces community in Wales.

**FESTIVAL LINE UP:**

- THE COMING HOME CHOIRS
- SPOKEN WORD PERFORMANCES
- SHOWCASE OF VETERANS ARTWORK
- DRUMMING WORKSHOPS FOR CHILDREN
- LOTS OF STALLS

To attend the festival or book a stall to promote your services to our Armed Forces community, please get in touch with Re-Live's Veterans Coordinator, Rachel Clark-Yeo. 07474 797775 or [rachel@re-live.org.uk](mailto:rachel@re-live.org.uk) [www.re-live.org.uk/forcesfestivalwales](http://www.re-live.org.uk/forcesfestivalwales)



# West Wales

## Age Cymru Dyfed

### The West Wales Veterans Archive: People's Collection Wales.

With the support of the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust Age Cymru Dyfed has established a pioneering digital veterans' archive for West Wales. Located on People's Collection Wales, in the National Library of Wales, the archive contains many personal accounts from veterans in Wales uncovering personal stories never told or heard before.

Commencing in early 2020, just as the Covid pandemic began to bite and strengthen its grip, the WWVA now holds well over 400 accounts ranging from veterans who served from 80 years ago, to post-war national service, to some of the forgotten conflicts such as Malaya, Borneo, Aden, to more recent service. It contains audio interview recordings, written transcripts, photographs and most recently has introduced filmed interviews with some of our WW2 veterans. The archive is becoming an unparalleled source of veterans' recollections in Wales and is one which will provide a legacy for decades to come well after those who have contributed and also those who have collected the stories, have long gone. It's potential as a tool for intergenerational learning, for family and academic historians, the media and others is both practical and vast.

So how do older veterans telling their stories match with the traditional activities of Age Cymru Dyfed which is itself an older persons' charity with a 30yr history in West Wales? The answer is very simple, for the method is based on identification, engagement, and valuing our veterans through empathetically developing on-going and trusting relationships which ultimately enable them to sustain their personal independence for as long as possible. Older veterans will talk and share, but only if they wish, their memories of their often very long lives. Sometimes, this will involve childhood and family memories, but in most cases older people look back on their time in Armed Forces or related occasions with pride and especially enjoy being knowing that by having their stories held on People's Collection Wales in the National Library of Wales, that their stories will inform future generations for years to come. Its their legacy to us.

From the charity's perspective this innovative story-telling approach is a very gentle way of getting to know older veterans, and by showing them respect and dignity from the outset, enables us to find out a little more about their daily lives and therefore find those areas of support they may need to protect and enhance the physical and emotional wellbeing. Age Cymru Dyfed provides a range of practical support to older veterans throughout Dyfed which assists them to retain their independence for as long as possible. This spans from enabling hundreds to access financial support, including appeals to DWP, finding and adapting housing, befriending, creating, skilling up and supporting digital connections, meeting in social groups, etc. Age Cymru Dyfed's methods of practical support have been tried and tested over many year and now employing over 70 staff throughout West Wales, the charity is very much the voice for older people and therefore older veterans within the region.

We were delighted and even a little overwhelmed with the news in late 2021 that the UK-Community Archives & Heritage Group had made Age Cymru Dyfed's West Wales Veterans Archive the winner of their 'Wellbeing' award. They said 'The judges were impressed by the way this project connected the simple act of truly being human and listening to someone's story with the formation of an archive. Participants are made to feel heard and valued while their narratives can connect and reconnect them with families and friends.'

The West Wales Veterans Archive can be found on [www.peoplescollection.wales](http://www.peoplescollection.wales)



WWVA - Royal Marine Commando D-Day Veteran Ted Owens of Pembroke Dock with former Royal Marine Roger James. Sat by Ted is Liz Halsted, Ted's Niece.



WWVA - Dame Stephanie Shirley CH who in 1939 as 5yr old Kindertransport refugee arrived unaccompanied in order to escape Nazi persecution. This is her ID pass issued upon arrival in the UK. Note she was then called Vera Buchthal.



WWVA - Now 100yrs old, Pauline Penrose was a WAAF 'Plotter' and 'Draughtswoman' during WW2 serving on the frontline Fighter stations of Hornchurch and North Weald and at one time was seconded to Air Sea Rescue. Pauline was videod for the WWVA in March 22 at her home in Llechryd.



WWVA – Photo capturing Ian Davies relaxing in Kosovo, 2006.



WWVA – Michael Evans engaged in navigation work on HMS Scimitar.



# Riverside Retreat Veterans Camp CIC

**Retreat - Refocus - Reconnect**

Camping and outdoor activities for the Veteran community. Located in Llanddeusant, Western Brecon Beacons National Park, within the Geopark at the foot of the black mountain, Llyn-y-fan, Lady of the Lake legend. The camp is 40 minutes from Brecon, Ammanford and Carmarthen respectively. The Riverside Retreat Veterans Camp is located within a 5-acre site bordered by woodland and the river Sawdde. The veteran's camp has its own secluded access. Wildlife is abundant here, from salmon and trout, otters, bats and tawny owls to red kites, buzzards, rabbits, and field mice.



The veteran led campsite team facilitates a calm, relaxing and therapeutic environment that supports the veteran's community to retreat, refocus and reconnect. We believe that the outdoor natural environment plays a huge part in well-being and harnessing this is part of the service we provide in a tailored support package for the beneficiaries. The safe and tranquil setting enables the veteran community to relax or interact through 1:1 support sessions; mentoring and engagement in outdoor activities aimed at increasing confidence and self-esteem, reduce social isolation, and enhance mental well-being. This project is veterans-led, tailored by what the veterans would like to achieve.

The activities on offer include green woodwork, painting, photography, astronomy (stargazing and meteor showers - we have dark skies status), fishing, walking, horticulture, farm animal husbandry, bushcraft, wild camping, campfire stories, woodland management, and black-smithing. Riverside Retreat Veterans Camp welcomes self-referrals and by other organisations and charities.

**For further information, please contact Alan and Michelle.**

**M: 07379795622**

**E: riversideretreatvc@gmail.com**

**FB: riversideretreat vc cic**

**www.riversideretreatvc.co.uk** (under construction)



## Woody's Lodge West & Mid Wales

Woody's Lodge West & Mid Wales has been extremely busy over the last 3 months. We have seen the opening of some of our new satellite drop-in centres Cardigan, Lampeter and Machynlleth, which has seen many veterans and their families utilising these facilities to be around like-minded people and seek support where needed. These drop ins were also attended by supporting organisations such as Adfriard, Help for Heroes and age Cymru, who we work closely with, to support our beneficiaries.



Our West Wales hub location in Penlan farm, which is an 11-acre small holding situated in picturesque valley in Penrhiwpa, Llandysul, has hosted various activities from Photography classes to arts and crafts and the preparations for the launch of our Bee keeping project. As well as more work being carried out in the renovation of our new soon to up and running, training and Hub facility.



We also had the pleasure of visiting the Dig for victory project run by the VC gallery in Pembrokeshire and very much look forward to collaborating with them in the very near future.

**If you would like to find out more about Woody's Lodge and the amazing work, we do across the whole of Wales please visit our website [www.woodyslodge.org](http://www.woodyslodge.org)**



## Links

Links Combined Forces with the support from the Armed Forces Covenant held its first Armed Forces Community Breakfast Club in the Drill Hall, Llanelli, on 19th February '22. The event was a great success and very well attended considering the adverse weather conditions. A broad range of services were represented, including the Army, RAF, Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Reservists, and family members.



The breakfast was cooked by Links Veterans with Links staff overseeing the running of the morning. The Armed Forces Community Breakfast gave the opportunity for all to meet up with likeminded people, grab a brew, have some banter and reduce isolation in the community.

Regional Armed Forces Covenant Liaison Officer, Hayley Edwards, attended the event to provide her support as well as the Llanelli Veterans Association, Llanelli and West Wales Welsh Guards Association, Llanelli Royal British Legion, and the Armed Forces Bikers.

Michele Rees, General Manager of Llanelli mental health charity Links said "The breakfast club has been a long time coming, and without the support of Carmarthenshire Council and the Armed Forces Covenant this would not have been possible. I am delighted that anyone from the Armed Forces Community who could not attend our NAAFI mornings during weekdays, can now join us monthly for breakfast on a Saturday at the Drill Hall, 10am until 12:30pm."

A special thank you to Manager Mark Hayes, SQMS for DAGACF Steve Seaborne, and Steve Davies at the Llanelli Cadet Training Centre, (The Drill Hall), for opening up and donating the use of this wonderful venue. The Breakfast Club will be held in the Drill Hall on a monthly basis, welcoming existing and new members from the veteran community.

**For more information please contact Links on 01554 757957 or email: [combined.forces@links.uk.net](mailto:combined.forces@links.uk.net)**



## Update from armed forces liaison officer

Hi, I am Hayley Edwards and I am the Regional ARMED FORCES COVENANT LIAISON OFFICER (AFLO) for West Wales. I am employed by Carmarthenshire County Council and work in partnership with the two other Counties of Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion.



I am also a serving Army Reservist. My employer is very supportive of my Reserve Service and acknowledge the benefit of employing reservists and veterans who have great transferable skills that employers can benefit from in employing members of the Armed Forces Community. On that note since my last update I have been posted to Headquarters 160th (Welsh) Brigade as part of the Engagement Team. My civilian role dovetails well with my Army Reserve role and responsibilities. These are; Civil Engagement Lead in to include Armed Forces Covenant Armed Forces Covenant; principle advisor to the Deputy Commander on Community Engagement matters within Wales; provide specialist Army Reserve advice to the Head Quarters; and project lead for specific major engagement events. I will be posted there for three years so will have much work to do alongside my civilian job.

In West Wales I am pleased to announce that all three Councils in West Wales are working to achieve the next level in the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme. All were awarded Bronze recently. A further two have applied for the Silver award, with one steadily working towards this for application next year.

I applied for a grant from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust to run breakfast clubs for our Veterans and Armed Forces Community in partnership with our Veterans Charities in West Wales. Links in Carmarthen had a very successful inaugural breakfast club in February and March with over 60 and 70 attending respectfully. VC Gallery and Woody's Lodge support similar breakfast clubs in Pembroke Dock, Haverfordwest and Cardigan which are proving to be very popular. Check out their websites for further information.



*Hayley working in 160th (Welsh) Brigade*

**I can be contacted on:**  
**[HRedwards@carmarthenshire.gov.uk](mailto:HRedwards@carmarthenshire.gov.uk)**  
**07717 450846**

## VC Gallery

The VC Gallery is running breakfast clubs across the County in partnership with Pembrokeshire County Council and funding with Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust. The breakfast clubs are open to all members of the Armed Forces Community.

For those who work during the week it provides an excellent opportunity to join in and connect with others from the Armed Forces Community. A great time was had by all, and it was good to see new veterans and members tucking into a hearty breakfast! One Veteran Commented " I haven't laughed like this since I left the armed 14 years ago!"





# VETERANS' BREAKFAST



**VC Veterans and family breakfast**  
**Cozy Diner, Laws St, Pembroke Dock**  
**Last Saturday of the month**  
**£6 per person Breakfast Tea/Coffe**



To book your place please call or email  
 Danielle Tel:- 01646 685688  
 Email:- danielle@thevcgallery.com






**Supporting Service Children in Education (SSCE) Cymru is a Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) programme funded by Welsh Government.**

Since the programme began in 2014 SSCE Cymru has worked with schools, children and young people, Local authorities, Welsh Government, education professionals, Armed Forces families and support organisations to gather their views and experiences, build networks across Wales and raise awareness and understanding of the experiences of children of Armed Forces personnel.

### SSCE Cymru Participation Lead Officer





Funded by the Armed Forces Education Trust, the WLGA has recently appointed Joanna Wolfe as the new SSCE Cymru Participation Lead Officer (PLO). Jo will take the lead on developing the SSCE Cymru Service children ambassador scheme, along with other activities relating to listening and responding to Service children, and celebrating their experiences.

Contact:  
[Joanna.wolfe@wlga.gov.uk](mailto:Joanna.wolfe@wlga.gov.uk)



### Armed Forces Friendly Schools Cymru

#### OBJECTIVES

1. Embed good practice for supporting Service children
2. Create a positive environment for Service children to share their experiences
3. Encourage schools to become more engaged with their Armed Forces community.



#### CRITERIA THEMES

- IDENTIFY**  
Service children and a key member of staff
- UNDERSTAND**  
Service children and their individual needs
- ENGAGE**  
With SSCE Cymru and the Armed Forces community.

The RSLOs will work closely with all schools to support them in achieving their status, through completing activities/actions on the SSCE Cymru School checklist.

Visit [www.SSCECymru.co.uk](http://www.SSCECymru.co.uk) for further information



### SSCE Cymru network webinars 2022

WELLBEING SUPPORT

Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup>  
April  
14:00-17:00

SERVICE CHILDREN VOICE

Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup>  
July  
14:00-16:30

SERVICE FAMILY SUPPORT

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup>  
October  
14:00-16:30

#### OBJECTIVES

- Share information with schools about relevant organisations and support
- Share good practice examples
- Provide information about funding opportunities for schools and local authorities.

#### AUDIENCE

1. School staff
2. SSCE Cymru network members
3. Service families.

See the [SSCE Cymru website](http://www.SSCECymru.co.uk) for further information and to book a place.



# Forces Fitness

**The highly qualified team of Military Veterans at Forces Fitness are now delivering across the whole of Wales and within 22 Local Authorities!!**

Our inspiring sessions can be delivered in Welsh and English to Organisations, Sports clubs and places of education.



Forces Fitness Ltd is a Multi Award winning Company that includes the Education Award at the National Fitness Awards and a Gold Employer Recognition Scheme Award, awarded from the MOD. We provide a number of education and training programs, focusing on health, well-being and building resilience within schools, colleges and universities.

Our current Health, Well-being and building resilience program we deliver with SSCE Cymru has seen us deliver to over 10,000 learners since the start in 2021, sessions have taken place in Newport, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Torfaen, Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Cardiff, Pembrokeshire, Swansea, Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Rhondda Cynon Taff and Neath Port Talbot. This program has seen us engage with thousands of pupils including hundreds of service Children. A huge 98% of the attendees would like to do similar activities again with us and 99% said they had fun during our sessions!

As an Organisation we have now worked with over 450+ places of Education and 35,000+ learners with this number growing daily!



**“Great session for children to learn about team building and problem solving with others while having great fun. Instructors were fantastic and were great with the kids.”**



**“I’m going to use the tips to build on making myself physically / mentally healthier.”**

**“I enjoyed and had fun. We were told information about our health and diet/nutrition and to stay fit and healthy.”**

**“The session was very straight forward and allowed me to understand easily.”**



**“The instructor was extremely helpful and constantly provided tips and factual information in an entertaining and rewarding way.”**

We work in partnership with many local authorities, schools, colleges and organisations across the whole of Wales on tailored programs to suit their needs. We can conduct sessions for all learners within their place of education and can run specifically-designed workshops for them. We are here to build sessions around their vision and desired outcomes!

The Forces Fitness team of qualified instructors has gained a reputation for being the lead organisation in Wales to operate within schools to improve pupils’ health and well-being whilst providing fun engaging activities.



**For further information, please contact email: [sean@forcesfitness.co.uk](mailto:sean@forcesfitness.co.uk) or visit [www.forcesfitness.co.uk](http://www.forcesfitness.co.uk)**



## Introducing the VAPC Wales

As the Chair of the Veterans Advisory Pension Committee for Wales, it is my pleasure to provide an overview of who we are and what we do for this newsletter. There are thirteen regional VAPCs, nine in England, two in Scotland, one in Wales and one in Northern Ireland.



Our purpose is to provide a distinct, identifiable and independent point of reference for the veteran community and those who support it to raise respond to and promote issues relating to veterans' services through the Veterans Strategies (UK and Wales) and the Armed Forces Covenant.

### What does this mean for veterans in Wales?

Our committee, is made up of veterans, veterans' charities and those working to support veterans in Wales. We meet six weekly as a committee but we also have created specialist themed subgroups to tackle the key issues faced by veterans; these are:

1. **Community and relationships**
2. **Employment, education and skills**
3. **Finance and debt**
4. **Health and wellbeing**
5. **Making a home in civilian life**
6. **Veterans and the law.**

### Help us to help you

Whilst as a committee, we do not respond to individual issues, we do have members who can help. However, we are keen to identify issues and trends that are affecting veterans across Wales and make representation on your behalf. We will work with Welsh Government, Local Authorities, Service providers and others to make Wales the best place for veterans and their families. We are committed to working towards this and with your help, we will.

We need to know what works, what doesn't and receive your suggestions. The UK owes a debt of gratitude to its veterans and it is our mission to ensure you and your families are not disadvantaged by your service and where possible, we as a society ensure there is the knowledge and resources to meet your needs when you need it. Please get in touch email: [contact@vapc.wales](mailto:contact@vapc.wales)

# Veterans Awards

**In Wales, there are tens of thousands of former military personnel, who upon transition from the armed forces have gone on to contribute immensely to their local community. The Veterans Awards looks to celebrate these true hero's along with the companies that support us.**

The Veteran's Awards CIC is a Not for profit organisation that promotes the positives from our military and veteran community across the UK. It's been put together by Veterans for Veterans, serving reservists and those companies that support us. We reward our community in the areas of Fitness, Business, Health and Well-being and the wider community!

This Year our shortlisted finalists and FREE certificate giving day will be held in the fantastic Cardiff Castle and our Main Awards ceremony will be held at the Village Hotel hosted by Radio X DJ Polly James. The event is supported by the Welsh Government, Royal Navy, Royal Marines and the British Army. During the evening will we hear from Brigadier J Fraser MBE and Brigadier A Dawes CBE, Head of the Army in Wales and the Commander of 160th Infantry Brigade. The event is also supported by Royal Navy Reserves from HMS Cambria, 1st Battalion Welsh Guards and the fantastic Corps of Drums of the Royal Welsh, Shenkin IV and the brilliant Goat Major!

The aim of the awards is to celebrate the success coming from within our community and inspire future service leavers that great things can happen when they do decide to leave the Armed Forces.



Please feel free to follow our social media sites and keep an eye out our web page to see who our amazing finalists are this year!



**To find out more about The Veterans Awards, contact [info@veteransawrds.co.uk](mailto:info@veteransawrds.co.uk) or check out Facebook - Veterans Awards.**  
**[www.veteransawards.co.uk](http://www.veteransawards.co.uk)**  
**tel: 07891 402 326**

# Veterans UK

**Veterans Services, part of Veterans UK, provide one to one support to service personnel, leavers, veterans and their families.**

## **Veterans Welfare Service (VWS)**

provides holistic support to serving personnel, veterans and their dependants with an enduring welfare need, including assistance with injury and bereavement compensation claims, transition support for personnel being medically discharged and confidential help and support for those who have life limiting illness.

[www.gov.uk/guidance/veterans-welfare-service](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/veterans-welfare-service)

## **Defence Transition Services (DTS)**

provides holistic, support to Service leavers and their families who are most likely to face challenges as they leave the armed forces, assisting them with adjusting to civilian life by simplifying, coordinating and streamlining access to support across a range of topics, including housing, finances, employment and access to healthcare. Help for service leavers from Defence Transition Services -

[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

## **Integrated Personal Commissioning for Veterans (IPC4V)**

provides bespoke support to Service Leavers suffering from complex physical, neurological and mental health issues resulting from a Service -attributable injury. You can access more information on our services and referral forms available on the webpages above or by calling the Veterans UK helpline - **0808 1914 2 18**

## **Want to contact us?**

### **Defence Transition Services:**

[DBSVets-DTS-Wales-Mid@mod.gov.uk](mailto:DBSVets-DTS-Wales-Mid@mod.gov.uk)

(South and Mid Wales)

[DBSVets-DTS-North@mod.gov.uk](mailto:DBSVets-DTS-North@mod.gov.uk)

(North Wales)

### **Veterans Welfare Service:**

[Veterans-UK-VWS-Wales-Mid@mod.gov.uk](mailto:Veterans-UK-VWS-Wales-Mid@mod.gov.uk)

[Veterans-UK-VWS-North@mod.gov.uk](mailto:Veterans-UK-VWS-North@mod.gov.uk)



# Veterans Foundation

## **Funding opportunity: Grants from The Veterans' Foundation**

The Veterans' Foundation has established a substantial grants programme to support charities and organisations that provide support to those in need among serving armed forces personnel, veterans, operationally qualified seafarers and their immediate families.

The broad range of charities and organisations supported by the Veterans' Foundation is extensive and covers every aspect of social care including: homelessness, employability, poverty, disability, welfare issues, mental health, marriage guidance, care during old age and confidence building.



## **VETERANS' FOUNDATION**

### **Two grants are available:**

- 1)** Grants of any sum up to a maximum of £30K may be awarded. Trustees will also consider a bid for a spread grant up to a maximum of £30K, i.e. £30K as £10K for each of the next two or three years.
- 2)** Grants of any sum up to a maximum of £40K for the exclusive use on salaries over a two-year period may be awarded i.e. £40K as £20K for each of the next two years. In some cases, the grant award may be limited to one year and grantees will be asked to reapply at a later date for the second year of funding.

The grants are competitive, and the VF gives priority to charities and organisations who can demonstrate that they are directly involved in the provision of support to those in need, as well as well-run organisations of low to medium wealth.

Instructions, guidance and the application process for all grants can be found online here:

<https://www.veteransfoundation.org.uk/grant-application/>

**If you have any queries, please contact**  
[grants@veteransfoundation.org.uk](mailto:grants@veteransfoundation.org.uk)

# Employment

**Thursday 25th November @ Celtic Manor Hotel an Employment fair was held to promote Employers and Service Leavers/Veterans in Wales.**

On the day there were 48 Employers attending and we had 122 service leavers registered, however the number was more like 200 as we were unable to register some Veterans and families of Service Leavers.

On the day we had 4 offers of employment and approximately 10 further job offers which we are awaiting start dates.

The day showcased employers in Wales and it was great day to show the value of skills from Service leavers and this resulted in renewed engagement across the whole of Wales.

***We have now set a date to repeat this in 2022 on November 17th again at the Celtic Manor!***



# DWP and the Armed Forces Covenant



**As part of the Armed Forces Covenant, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has initiatives that help current and former armed forces personnel and your families access Jobcentre Plus services.**

This includes having an armed forces champion in every Jobcentre Plus district who ensures that we provide support that meets your needs. This page explains the role of the armed forces champion and the way you and your families can access our services.

## ARMED FORCES CHAMPION

**The armed forces champion provides Jobcentre Plus support to:**

- veterans
- service leavers
- serving personnel within their resettlement period
- spouses and civil partners of serving and ex-service personnel

Champions maintain close contact with Jobcentre Plus staff, who make the champion aware of armed forces issues and raise issues with them if you request it. Champions are not always based in the jobcentre.

**The role of the armed forces champion is to:**

- develop and maintain joint working arrangements between Jobcentre Plus and the armed forces community in their Jobcentre Plus district.
- provide information to Jobcentre Plus staff about specific armed forces initiatives.

- provide an understanding of the issues the forces community face that can be a barrier to employment.
- be the first point of contact for Jobcentre Plus staff and services welfare and families staff to advise on queries regarding individual armed forces cases - including serving personnel, your families and veterans.
- focus specifically on the Jobcentre Plus support available to veterans, service leavers, those within a resettlement period and spouses and civil partners of serving and ex-service personnel – where necessary and appropriate, the champions will work to put support in place.

They also work to raise the profile of the service community in terms of the skills, knowledge and experience they can offer, and work with colleagues to ease some of the barriers to work you face. The champion will tailor their activities to match the needs of the armed forces community in their district. This means some activities may differ from district to district. The role and responsibilities of the champion remain the same regardless of location.

Each of the services has appointed points of contacts who form a link with the relevant champions within their area.

## Contacts:

**Sarah Mallaghan** - Wales Armed Forces Lead: **07741673209**

**Jackie Barton** - South East Wales: **07826876346**

**Gareth Thomas** - South West Wales: **07553677929**

**Kat Graham** - North and Mid Wales: **07917732894**

[Wales.armedforceschampions@dpw.gov.uk](mailto:Wales.armedforceschampions@dpw.gov.uk)

# DEFENCE EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME

The Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) encourages employers to support defence and inspire others to do the same. The scheme encompasses bronze, silver and gold awards for employer organisations that pledge, demonstrate or advocate support to defence and the armed forces community, and align their values with the Armed Forces Covenant.

The ERS is designed primarily to recognise private sector support although public sector organisations such as the emergency services, local authorities, NHS trusts and executive agencies are also eligible to be recognised.

**For more information please visit**  
Defence Employer Recognition Scheme



# Citizens Advice - Support

## Helping people find a way forward

In life we can all face problems that are challenging to deal with. At Citizens Advice we believe no one should have to face these problems without good quality, independent advice. That's why we're here: to give people the knowledge and the confidence they need to find their way forward - whoever they are, and whatever their problem.

## We give advice to millions of people

Our network of independent charities offers confidential advice online, over the phone, and in person, for free. When we say we're for everyone, we mean it. People rely on us because we're independent and totally impartial.

You can contact an adviser through our national phone service, Advicelink between 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday:

**Advicelink: 0800 702 2020**

**Text relay: 18001 0800 1448884**

**[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/wales/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/wales/)**



A partnership between the Gwent Armed Forces Covenant and Citizens Advice Caerphilly Blaenau Gwent (CACBG) aimed at taking advice to the ex-armed forces is beginning to grow.

The financial demands of life out of uniform can overwhelm armed forces veterans as the majority of day-to-day bills are taken care of while they are serving. Working with CACBG the Armed Forces Covenant are taking the advice to former military personnel to help them manage their money and maximise their incomes.

Lisa Rawlings, Gwent Region Armed Forces Covenant Lead met with Advice Services Managers Lucy Williams and Keith Thorne from CACBG to help them understand the issues faced by veterans.

A large number of ex-armed forces personnel amass debts as a result of trying to manage their finances and Lisa sees this increasing as the cost of living crisis hits households.

Debt Services Manager Keith Thorne was able to explain the advice and support his teams can offer across Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent. He said: "We have specialist financial capability advisers who can offer practical support such as budgeting, covering priority bills and we can work with them to deal with any debts. "As lockdown measures are easing, we are really looking forward to going back out into the community and building our partnership with the Armed Forces Covenant for the benefit of ex-military personnel."

Lucy's teams are able to offer further specialist advice to help maximise incomes. Lucy said: "We are able to look at what other help veterans could receive. We can calculate benefits entitlements to ensure service users are maximising their income as far as possible. "We don't just look at the veteran, we look at the overall household to make sure they are receiving what they are entitled to. We can also provide information on a wide range of issues from housing, employment and family related matters to mention a few."

**If you need help and support from Citizens Advice, you can call Advicelink Cymru on 0800 702 2020 or log access the webchat by visiting [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/wales/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/wales/)**



## 5 Reasons to employ Veterans in your business...

- 1 Veterans are highly qualified.**
- 2 Veterans have valuable attitudes and are adaptable.**
- 3 Veterans are skilled workers.**
- 4 Veterans make highly effective employees.**
- 5 Employing veterans is good for business and society.**



# Army in Wales



## 160th (Welsh) Brigade

The role of 160th (Welsh) Brigade is to Command the Firm Base in Wales. Firm Base is the term we use to describe the provision of enduring essential support that enables the Army to live work and operate wherever it is permanently based.

160th (Welsh) Brigade plays a key part in what we call the 'lived experience' for MoD personnel and their families in Wales. 160th (Welsh) Brigade is also the Army's connection to the government and society of Wales.

**Our tasks and outputs throughout the year are varied and range as follows:**

### Firm Base

We are developing a regionally focused personnel hub in Wales called Pers Hwb; to improve the physical, educational, and vocational development of service personnel throughout their careers.



The promotion of 'Life-Skills' and wellbeing for our serving personnel will help to equip them throughout their careers and beyond as they transition to civilian life. We work closely with our Armed Forces communities and stakeholders, to include third sector organisations, other public services and government agencies to enable the promotion of Life Skills and wellbeing.

We also administer and look after our Command Garrisons and Stations that we are responsible for and provide support to our Regular and Reserve Units within Wales.

### UK Resilience

160th Wales Brigade provides the 'Command and Control Centre' for the delivery of UK Ops within Wales. Most notably the military response to COVID over the last two years. All mission specific tasks, from setting up mobile testing and vaccination units, to driving and decontaminating ambulances were planned and coordinated from 160th Wales Brigade and delivered by the deployed personnel working out in the community.

### Ceremonial

Throughout the year military units within Wales are requested to support ceremonial duties like the like the Royal Gun Salutes that mark important, mainly Royal occasions, Armed Forces Day and Remembrance Events.

Our Engagement Branch within 160th Wales Brigade will support, coordinate, and lead with engagement for these events throughout the year in Wales. This enables the Armed Forces to engage with and remain relevant and connected to the communities and society that our Armed Forces, work live and operate in.

## Exercise Cambrian Patrol

Exercise Cambrian Patrol is the world's premier military patrol exercise that is held annually in Wales. It attracts in the region of 140 military teams from UK Armed Forces and Armed forces around world. Delivering this event is part of the Brigade's Military output in support the UK Field Army development of warfighting capability.

## Army Cadets in Wales

As a Brigade we support our Army Cadet Force across Wales. We have a dedicated Cadet Training Team that assure, advise, and deliver training throughout the year to our Army Cadets.

Our work includes training and upskilling our highly valued Cadet Force Adult Volunteers to enable them to deliver inspiring and safe training for our cadets. The 'Cadet' Cambrian Patrol Exercise and the Annual Cadet Camp are two major events that we deliver for the Army Cadets in Wales.



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Imagery courtesy of Reserve Forces Cadet Association



Imagery courtesy of Reserve Forces Cadet Association

# Royal Navy in Wales

## It's been a busy year for Welsh members of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines.

Circa 3000 Sailors and Marines commute to and from their homes in Wales to their Ships, Air Stations, Base Ports and Marine Units. Swansea affiliated HMS SCOTT, the Royal Navy's deep ocean survey vessel has recently returned from a record-breaking nine month deployment in the Atlantic. The survey ship has gathered data from the depths of the North Atlantic in a higher resolution than has ever been obtained before.



Aircraft Carrier HMS PRINCE OF WALES is currently leading a NATO Task Group, in company with other Royal Navy units as they prepare for Exercise Cold Response. Cold Response is a long-planned, defensive exercise bringing together thousands of troops from NATO allies and partners, testing their ability to work together in cold weather conditions across Norway, on land, in the air and at sea.



Closer to home the Royal Navy have provided assistance within each of Wales Health Boards. Regular and Reserve logistics experts have been used to ensure personnel and equipment have been delivered to the right place at the right time, whilst also providing a crucial link between the military and their civilian colleagues as part of the Covid response force, generated to provide Military Assistance to Civil Authorities (MACA).



More recently 88 Sailors and Marines have been assisting the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust with driving duties. For many communities here in Wales the sight of a sailor or marines uniform is uncommon and the teams have reported the positive reception they have received from the public when engaging in these duties.

A common thread from all those involved has been how challenging but personally rewarding this tasking has been, with no two days alike. Port Talbot born Maritime Reservist, Petty Officer Wilfred Rabone, has been working with the Paramedics and Emergency Medical Technicians in North Wales.

Based in Llangefni, Anglesey PO Rabone states; "This has been a rewarding deployment. It will leave memories that I will remember long after my Naval career ends, hopefully I will be remembered by some of those patients that I have assisted in the treatment of."



HMS CAMBRIA, the RN's £11 million reserve unit, newly sited in Cardiff Bay will celebrate its 75th anniversary in 2022 and has recently been awarded the Freedom of the City and County of Cardiff.

As such the unit is planning a number of community events to highlight the unit and the contribution of her Ship's Company to the public and business communities they return to.



# Royal Air Force in Wales

## News from the RAF - Wales and the Battle of Britain Exhibition now on Tour!

In the last edition, we told you about the “Wales and the Battle of Britain” Historical Exhibition and said it was about to go on tour around Wales.

That tour is now well underway, and has already included places like Pembroke Dock, Pontypridd, Monmouth and Newtown. Its been great to see it has generated a lot of interest and support, ranging from Veterans to School visits.

**In the coming few weeks, it will be going to the following places:**

**Caerphilly 11 - 19 April**

(Blackwood Miners Institute)

**Aberystwyth 20 April - 10 May**

(National Library of Wales)

**Brecon 16 - 18 May**

(Guildhall)

**Wrexham 13 - 18 June**

(Tŷ Pawb)

**Llandudno 30 June - 10 July**

(Holy Trinity Church)

**Llanelli 1 - 6 August**

(Library)

**Carmarthen 9 - 15 August**

(Library)

**Neath Port Talbot 5 - 11 September**

(Aberfan Shopping Centre)

**Swansea 12 - 18 September**

(City centre location)

There will be more dates to follow and we will publicise these on RAF online and share with the Armed Forces Liaison Officers and ask them to publicise on Local Authority websites.

Alongside this, at RAF Valley, which trains all of today's fighter pilots, they have started to name some of their aircraft after Welsh Pilots who flew in the Battle of Britain. The picture shows the Texan aircraft named after Prestatyn born Harold Bird Wilson, who was Flying Officer Bird-Wilson DFC in 1940, but who later became a Second World War flying ace. He stayed in the RAF and retired as Air Vice-Marshal Bird-Wilson CBE DSO DFC and Bar AFC and Bar. This is a great initiative by RAF Valley to recognise the bravery and service of Welsh Pilots who fought in the Battle of Britain.



Texan Aircraft with Mr Gareth Davies MS.



Wing Commander (Retd) Tim Payne showing school children around the exhibition in Pembroke Dock.



Newtown - Councillor Joy Jones Deputy Mayor Newtown and Air Commodore Adrian Williams Air Officer Wales and MOD Welsh Language Champion.



Pembroke Dock - Squadron Leader John Dunn taking to Mr Dennis Tidswell a Battle of Britain veteran.

# HEALTH

**During the COVID-19 pandemic, Cwm Taf Morgannwg Community Health Council (CTMCHC), the statutory independent patients' 'watchdog' for the NHS in Wales; continues to represent the patients' voice.**

CTMCHC wants to hear about your experiences (good and bad) when using NHS services at this time. There are number of ways you can get in touch, this includes sharing your views via the CHC national online survey

<http://ow.ly/ezy50ER6ZG>

If you require an Easy Read version it can be found here: <http://ow.ly/vXkN50GcKjc>

RCT, Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend residents can:  
**Telephone: 01443 405830**

**Email: [enquiries.ctmchc@waleschc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries.ctmchc@waleschc.org.uk) or send a message via:-**

[f https://www.facebook.com/CTMCHC](https://www.facebook.com/CTMCHC)

[t https://twitter.com/ctmchc](https://twitter.com/ctmchc)

[i https://www.instagram.com/cwmtafmorgannwg\\_chc](https://www.instagram.com/cwmtafmorgannwg_chc)

CTMCHC provides a **FREE**, confidential and independent complaints advocacy service for people who need support to raise a concern about NHS care and treatment.

Telephone: **01443 403590** and/or email:

[advocacy.ctmchc@waleschc.org.uk](mailto:advocacy.ctmchc@waleschc.org.uk)

**Visit their website where you will find links to all of CTM CHC's online surveys and further information.**

<https://cwmtafmorgannwgchc.nhs.wales/get-involved/live-surveys/>

Cwm Taf Morgannwg  
Community  
Health Council



Pembroke Dock - Air Cdre Adrian Williams addressing the guests at the opening of the exhibition with guest of honour Mr Dennis Tidswell.



Pontypridd - Councillor Maureen Webber, Armed Forces Champion and Air Commodore Adrian Williams Air Officer Wales and MOD Welsh Language Champion.



Monmouth - Councillor Lisa Dymock, Armed Forces Champion and Cabinet Member for MonLife, Air Commodore Adrian Williams Air Officer Wales and MOD Welsh Language Champion and Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Gwent Prof. Simon Gibson CBE.



## There are some amazing charities working closely with the Armed Forces Community. Here's just some of them....

### ■ AFF

#### We're here for you

As we all know, life has been a little different for everyone recently.

Here at AFF we have been working hard to carry on providing help and support for Army families around the world.

Life as we know it may have been put on hold, but Army life definitely hasn't stopped. AFF Wales Co-ordinator Sadie has continued to keep in contact with a lot of families and worked hard to help keep spirits high. She has held virtual bingo, virtual coffee mornings, delivered Army&You magazines to families and been there to offer help and support for those serving and their families.

We will help with any issues you have as an Army family. You may have come to a dead-end through your own efforts and are not satisfied with the answers you have been given or perhaps you want to highlight an issue.

#### Some of the main areas we deal with are:

- Housing
- Health and additional needs
- Education and childcare
- Employment and training
- Foreign and commonwealth
- Army reserve
- Family life
- Deployments
- Money matters

If you would like to get in contact with AFF you can reach Sadie at [wales@aff.org.uk](mailto:wales@aff.org.uk) or 07527 492868



### ■ Adferiad Recovery

Adferiad Recovery make fantastic start in helping portfolio partners deliver veterans' mental health support.



In December it was announced that Adferiad Recovery was awarded a grant by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust to help our fantastic portfolio partners to deliver a wide variety of veterans' mental health support services.

Adferiad's grant will be used to co-ordinate a dynamic and co-ordinated portfolio of projects that will take an informed approach across Wales. We will ensure that there are connected pathways which work well for veterans; that there are safe places for veterans to go which connect into these pathways; and that volunteers and staff who support veterans have access to training and work closely with other organisations within veterans' mental health pathways.

Working with our portfolio of 12 partners working nationally in Wales, as well as other local third sector military charities, we have made some excellent progress so far following a very successful webinar with partners last week.

Through the funds given to us by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, we're excited to continue to support our charity partners and through regular correspondence we will be harnessing and sharing best practice amongst each other in the network to truly develop the most effective mental health services for veterans.

We'd like to say a massive thank you to the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust and everyone involved in this exciting partnership for their collaboration so far. We look forward to continue to working with you all!

#### Our 12 portfolio partners are:

- Woody's Lodge
- Icarus online
- Alabare
- TGP Cymru
- The Salvation Army
- Mission Motorsport
- Fighting with Pride
- Radiate Arts
- VC Galley
- Links Combined Forces
- Defence Medical Welfare
- Firing Lines Museum

## ■ Blind Veterans UK

### Could Blind Veterans UK help you or someone you know?

Blind Veterans UK is the national charity for ex-Service men and women with severe sight loss. Founded in 1915 in response to blinded soldiers returning from the First World War, and previously known as St Dunstan's, Blind Veterans UK has supported tens of thousands of Armed Forces and National Service veterans to rebuild their lives after sight loss.



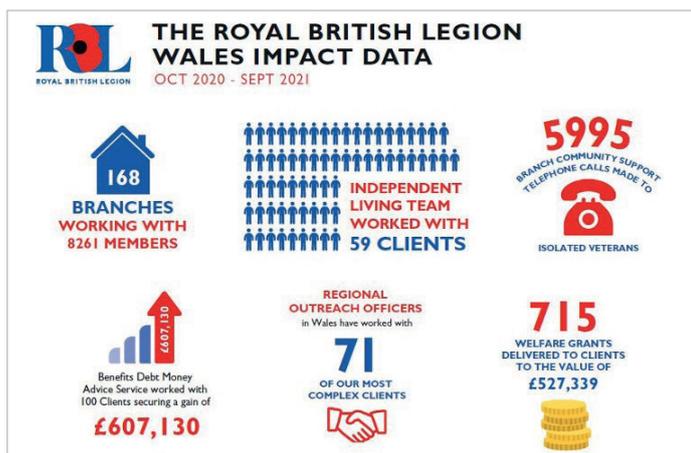
While Blind Veterans UK initially cared for veterans blinded in active Service, today they help veterans no matter what caused their sight loss. They help veterans to learn vital life skills and give them the tools they need to be safe in their own homes. Giving veterans free rehabilitation, training and support they need to live independent lives.

Blind Veterans UK has a network of local support teams all over the UK who give veterans the rehabilitation and training they need closer to them, either in their own home, their local area, or remotely. They also have two dedicated centres supporting wellbeing in all aspects of blind veterans' lives including holidays and respite breaks. As well as providing free specialist equipment, the charity also supports veterans to find new hobbies such as art and other creative activities.

If you or someone you know is entitled to Blind Veterans UK's free support then please call **0800 389 7979** or visit [blindveterans.org.uk/support](http://blindveterans.org.uk/support).

## ■ Royal British Legion

### The Royal British Legion Wales Impact Infographic October 2020 until September 2021



I am pleased to be able to share with you the latest Royal British Legion Wales impact infographic for the reporting period 01st October until 30th September 2021, a period which was once again dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic and how the Legion (and many other charities) had to adapt and deliver their services in new and innovative ways.

### As you will see in the infographic below:

- Legion welfare team delivered 715 welfare grants directly supporting beneficiaries and if applicable their families to the value of £527,339,89p. This was an increase of £92,817 (against £434,522 in previous year) and an additional 70 grants delivered.
- Within this total the biggest areas of need were around Brown/White household goods (total of £147,058), Funeral costs of £56,828, Mobility grants of £84,551, Debt support of £24,865 and Employment grants of £26,893.
- The Benefit, Debt and Money Advice (BDMA) team across Wales worked with 100 clients and they secured a gain to those they worked with to a value of £607,130. With this total made up of insolvency applications, grants awarded for priority debt, tribunal wins (PIP, ESA and UC) to name but a few.
- The Wales Independent Living Team (ILA) worked with 59 clients to ensure that they remained safe and living independently living in their own homes where possible.
- Regional Outreach Officer (ROO) worked with 71 of the most vulnerable clients over this period providing support, guidance and advice to individuals who are often faced with homelessness, mental health problems, domestic violence or drug and alcohol addiction.
- The Branch Community Support service (BCS) based within our Branches and Membership provided 5995 calls to lonely and isolated veterans (over 16 calls a day on average). A service that proved itself invaluable over the current circumstances and a massive increase on the 2195 calls made the previous year.

We have seen an increase in demand for our support and services over the period of this report and some of that can be attributed in my opinion to the impact of COVID-19 on individuals/family finance as well as mental well being.

At any one time a Legion Case Officer will be working on around 40-50 individual cases all at various stages of completion with many of these cases requiring detailed and complex case work often in partnership with other RBL services, other charities, and statutory services.

## ■ Royal British Legion

### The Royal British Wales Festival of Remembrance 2021 by Ant Metcalfe Area Manager Wales.

The Royal British Legion Wales Festival of Remembrance returned to St Davids Hall in Cardiff on Saturday 06th November 2021 after a one year break due to the COVID restrictions for its 41st Festival of Remembrance.

The Wales Festival always takes place the week before the National Festival of Remembrance in the Albert Hall, so that our Standard Bearers and Membership have the option to attend both events. The Welsh Festival also aims to follow the theme and feel of the national event but with a strong reflection on Welsh commemorations and activities. For the 2021 Festival the event focused on a celebration of Legion 100 (our centenary since our formation in May 1921), reflections on 30 years since Op Granby in 1991 and the more recent events of the Armed Forces in Wales contribution to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Wales Festival is presented in two half's with a short interval and held together by our host Eddie Butler, the first half focuses on suitable musical entertainment, readings and personal reflection in line with the Festival themes. This year we were brilliantly supported by Only Men Aloud, Cardiff County & Vale of Glamorgan Youth Choir, Ify Iwobi on piano and Regimental Band and Corps of Drums of the Royal Welsh. With WO1 Robert Grovier RN sharing his personal reflections on Op Granby as a 18 year old radio operator in 1991.

After the interval Rig Hon Mark Drakeford MS First Minister for Wales delivered a moving poem composed by veterans at the VC Gallery in West Wales and then thanked all Armed Forces and emergency services for their contribution to the COVID-19 pandemic. The event then draws to a close with the Muster Parade and then the poignant and reflective Service of Remembrance.

The Wales Festival of Remembrance relies on many partners from across Wales (and beyond) to enable it to take place and really is a collaborative event that showcases the dedication, hard work and off course sacrifice of those past and present that make up our Armed Forces Community in Wales. The 42nd Wales Festival of Remembrance will once again take place 05th November 2022 and will have a strong focus on 40th Anniversary commemorations of the Falklands Conflict in 1982.



Only Men Aloud performing.



Placing of the Book of Remembrance as Part of The Drum Head Service.



The silence and the poppy drop.



WO1 Rob Grovier RN – reflections on Op Granby.



First Minister in conversation with a Chelsea Pensioner.



Ify Iwobi performs "Flying High".

## ■ SSAFA The Armed Forces charity

**SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity, has been providing lifelong support to our Forces and their families since 1885.**

Last year our teams of volunteers and employees helped more than 85,000 people in need, from Second World War veterans to those who have served in more recent conflicts or are still currently serving, and their families. SSAFA understands that behind every uniform is a person. And we are here for that person – any time they need us, in any way they need us, for as long as they need us.

### HOW WE HELP

Through our UK-wide branch network, we've more than 5,200 volunteers, which includes trained SSAFA volunteer caseworkers who provide personalised, face-to-face support to those in their local area. Our trained welfare advisors and volunteers work with each person to find out exactly what they need. Once we've assessed what is required, we'll help the individual or family access the required assistance. They may just need someone to listen. More often than not, we put them in touch with the support services they need to help them get their lives back on track. Whether it's financial, practical or emotional, we provide the right kind of support - ensuring independence and dignity are protected at all times.

### WHAT DO WE DO?

**Welfare advice and support** - Our UK-wide and overseas network of branches in local communities and service committees on military bases offer practical, financial and emotional support. We help serving personnel, reserves, veterans and their families with everything from financial hardship to family breakdown.

**Tailored services** - We mentor people as they transition from the military to civilian life, help families adopt, aid veterans in the criminal justice system and provide a support service to the UK Gurkha community. All our services are designed to meet the specific needs of the Forces community and are run by SSAFA employees, with support from teams of volunteers. We offer a range of safe and comfortable housing options, including long-term accommodation for older and disabled veterans and short-term housing for families of injured service personnel and victims of domestic violence.

**Case referrals** - Please contact the Wales Regional Office  
Email: [wales.region@ssafa.org.uk](mailto:wales.region@ssafa.org.uk) Tel: 02922 941004

**ssafa** | the  
Armed Forces  
charity

## ■ Help for Heroes

**Help for Heroes supports veterans and serving personnel, who have received physical or psychological wounds because of their service, to recover and get on with their lives by providing physical, psychological, financial and welfare assistance for as long as they need it.**

It also supports families, too, because they can also be affected by their loved one's wounds. Working with local organisations and other charity partners, the Charity's experts deliver tailored holistic support at accessible locations within the community.

The Charity believes people deserve a fair deal from the country they risked everything for. With almost no funding from the Government, it relies on the generosity of the great British public, its partners and volunteers to keep going. It has already supported more than 26,500 people and won't stop until every wounded veteran gets the support they deserve.

**Telephone: 01443 808910**

**Web: [helpforheroes.org.uk/get-support](http://helpforheroes.org.uk/get-support)**

### Community Hubs:

#### Newport Sports Village -

Sporting activity and one-to-one advice  
Second Tuesday of the month, 11:00-13:00

#### Carmarthen Leisure Centre -

Sporting activity and one-to-one advice  
First Wednesday of the month, 11:00-13:00

#### Rhydyfelin Football Club -

Model making and one-to-one advice  
Second Wednesday of the month, 11:00-13:00

#### Nuffield Health Gym Bridgend -

Sporting activity and one-to-one advice  
Third Wednesday of the month, 11:00-13:00

#### Colwyn Bay Leisure Centre -

Sporting activity and one-to-one advice

**HELP for  
HEROES**  
SUPPORT FOR OUR WOUNDED

## ■ The Royal British Legion Admiral Nurse Service

**Supporting Carers and Families of those with Dementia.**

### What Do We Do?

The Royal British Legion Admiral Nurses offer specialist support, information and advice to the carers of people with dementia. Admiral Nurses are registered nurses specialising in dementia. The service aims to help carers gain the necessary skills to assist with dementia care, promote positive approaches in living well with dementia and improving quality of life. The Service has been developed in partnership with Dementia UK, a national charity which promotes and develops Admiral Nursing.



### Am I Eligible?

To qualify for this service the carer or person with dementia needs to be a beneficiary of the The Royal British Legion. This includes anyone who has served in the British Armed Forces and their family and carers.

**Contact the Admiral Nurse Service on 0333 011 4497**

The Legion works with Dementia UK to provide Admiral Nurse support - a service that supports their beneficiaries, which can be the carer or the person living with dementia, who have served in the UK Armed Forces. The focus of the service is to maintain independence and improve the quality of life for carers and families and to provide the practical advice they need. Admiral Nurses have the experience to facilitate the service every step of the way, offering: skilled assessments to determine the needs of family carers and the needs of the person living with dementia; information and practical advice for carers and their families on supporting those with dementia; to work with carers and families to provide emotional and psychological support throughout the caring journey; advice on how to care for someone with dementia and help to develop skills to encourage positive approaches to living with dementia.

### Regional South Wales Areas Covers:

Bridgend, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Vale of Glamorgan, Merthyr, Monmouthshire, Neath Port Talbot Newport, Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent. In terms of postcodes, we cover all CF and NP postcodes and SA10 – SA13. Telephone: **0333 011 4497**

Email: [admiralsouthwales@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:admiralsouthwales@britishlegion.org.uk)

### National Admiral Nurse Service:

If you live in an area of Wales not covered by the above Telephone: **0808 802 8080**

Email: [Ansupport@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:Ansupport@britishlegion.org.uk)

### Referral Criteria:

Carers and people with dementia who have served in the UK Armed Forces for at least 1 day as a Regular or Reservist (including National Service), their families, and carers.

#### Postcode areas for the South Wales RBL Admiral Nurse Service

Health board	Postcode area
Aneurin Bevan Health Board	NP – All areas covered
Cardiff & Vale University Health Board and Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board	CF – All areas covered
Abertawe Bro Morgannwg and Swansea Bay University Health Board	SA1 1 - SA1 8, SA2 0, SA2 7, SA2 8, SA2 9, SA3 1 - SA3 5, SA8 4, SA9 1, SA10 9, SA11 2 - SA11 7, SA12 9, SA13 2 and SA13 3
Powys Teaching Health Board and Wye Valley NHS Trust	HR3 5 – Llanigon HR3 5 – Hay-on-wye HR3 5 – Ffordd-las HR3 5 – Glasbury
Powys Teaching Health Board	LD3 7, LD3 8 and LD3 0

## ■ BLESMA The Limbless Veterans

Blesma Wales and West continues to provide direct welfare support and grants to members and widows to ensure that their needs have been met quickly. The Support Officer (Tom Hall) supports with Prosthetics issues and liaises with NHS ALACs closely in support of members. The Support and Outreach Officers, along with the help of Blesma Volunteers and Members who are not 'at-risk,' are supporting with essential tasks such as shopping, paying urgent bills, repairs to disability and mobility aids, and offering Blesma befriending calls and contacts through Welfare and wider Volunteers. Blesma continue to collaborate closely with other services, 3rd sector, agencies, and local community groups to provide help with War Pension, benefits, and entitlements issues. They are offering practical or emotional support to Blesma members who may be isolated or lonely in communities across Wales and West.

In all aspects it is “business as usual” with essential physical visits by the Blesma Support Officer taking place to those most in need. The Outreach Officer has been constantly in touch with members by phone, video calls and virtual events, which have replaced physical get-togethers. The period during the pandemic has been extremely busy with more younger veterans being supported with poor mental health and older members assisted with the purchase and repair of mobility and disability aids. With the reopening of Limb Centres the Support Officer has been in close touch with ALACs to address prosthetics concerns, ensuring that provision requirements have been met and priority appointments offered. Blesma staff and Volunteers are taking every precaution to ensure they are not a potential risk to Members and for all member contact a comprehensive risk assessment process has been carried out.

## Activities and events

Blesma have postponed all physical UK and overseas Blesma Events until at least the end of March 2021 but all Activities and Events after this date will be under review with local Covid 19 Rules. Local Wales and West events are similarly affected, and Members are being contacted and updated accordingly. Blesma Wales and West Outreach developed online and video activities, including weekly virtual Tea and Toast, interactive Quizzes, fitness sessions and Amputee Health Discussion Groups.

The Outreach Officer is also running events such as virtual Escape Rooms, crafting workshops, and seated yoga which are proving popular amongst the members. Blesma have also continued their Making Generation R (Resilient) sessions online, running communication workshops for members and widows, including recently extending the sessions to Secondary Schools.

## Information for our members and supporting agencies

If members require any additional support at this time or agencies have veterans who they wish to refer for Blesma support, or they find members in need, they can make contact with the Blesma Support Officer:

Tom Hall - Tel: **07780 165085**

E mail: [bsowest@blesma.org](mailto:bsowest@blesma.org) or the Outreach Officer, Jason Suller – E mail: [outreachwest@blesma.org](mailto:outreachwest@blesma.org)

**More information:** <https://blesma.org/news-media/blesma-news/> or [www.blesma.org](http://www.blesma.org)



## Stay connected with Sparko

**Do you know someone who served in the Royal Navy and who is feeling isolated from his or her Naval family and friends?**

They might live far from loved ones, or have been isolating because of Covid-19, or maybe they can't meet up with old shipmates because they're not as mobile as they used to be.

**Maybe you are in that situation yourself . . . If any of this sounds familiar, the Royal Naval Association (RNA) Sparko TV initiative might be just the ticket.**



Sparko is essentially a tailored version of the internet, accessed through a TV set from the comfort of a sofa or armchair, which promotes wellbeing and mental health thereby improving quality of life. The Internet and social media make it easy to connect people around the world – so long as you can use the technology. Sparko does not interrupt or interfere with normal TV programmes – the camera is only activated for a video call or live activity, and shows a small light when in operation. A privacy slider is included to cover the lens when it is not in use. If you know someone who served and who would benefit from Sparko, an Expression of Interest form (available at <https://royal-naval-association.co.uk/sparkotv/>) should be completed. Then just send it to Lynda Pearson, RNA Welfare Programme Manager, who will respond as soon as possible.

*\* To use Sparko the TV must have an HDMI port available (most televisions less than 15 years old should have this) into which Sparko is plugged.*

**Perhaps best of all, through the RNA, the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) – see <https://www.rnrmc.org.uk/> – and the Armed Forces Covenant Trust Fund <https://covenantfund.org.uk/> it is free for Naval veterans.**



## ■ Samaritans launches app

**Military veterans are set to benefit from a dedicated new mental health app to help them deal with the long-term emotional challenges of adjusting to life after the Forces.**



The free Samaritans Veterans app comes on the back of joint research the leading suicide prevention charity carried out with the Royal British Legion, which found that veterans wanted to understand more about their emotional wellbeing and to hear from people with similar experiences. Those leaving the military and former Armed Forces personnel can access emotional health and wellbeing information, videos, exercises, podcasts, and create wellbeing to-do-lists in the app to help look after themselves and connect with the veteran community.

The new app is part of a programme at the charity that works with the Ministry of Defence and military charities to support serving personnel in the Armed Forces, veterans and their families, and is funded by a £3.5m LIBOR grant.

Samaritans volunteers provide emotional support to the military community with concerns including mental health, isolation and loneliness, family and relationship problems, and most contacts are from veterans. In April 2020, the first full month of the pandemic lockdown, the charity saw the largest volume of military contacts since Samaritans began to record contacts from the military community in 2018 and 79% were veterans.

Samaritans Veterans App will support veterans to learn ways to manage their emotional responses to situations, deal with the new day-to-day reality and help to identify challenges and develop ways to overcome them. The app also has access to volunteering and peer support by connecting people to the wider veteran community.

**The Samaritans Veterans App is available to download (Samaritans Veterans) on your phone from the App Store (iOS) or Google Play (Android).**

## ■ Woody's Lodge

Situated in the heart of the Ceredigion countryside, Penlan Farm is the rural idyll from which the Welsh veteran's charity Woody's Lodge runs its Mid and West Wales operations. The project, funded by an Armed Forces Covenant Trust Positive Pathways grant, aims to provide a natural space where veterans, blue light personnel and their families can get away from it all, reconnect, enjoy new activities and access much-needed support. An integral part of the Woody's Lodge 'Green, Green Grass of Home' initiative, at present, the 11-acre farm site is operational as a drop-in, support and activities centre but is also undergoing significant development to expand its capability.

There are two cottages on site – one currently houses the temporary offices, whilst the other is in the process of being renovated after a catastrophic water leak in early 2021. Once the building work is complete later this year, the renovated cottage will house the new social, training and activities hub. The remaining cottage will become a holiday respite centre, offering a quiet, safe space for veterans and their families to stay when they most need it. There are also plans for a large craft and woodworking workshop in the adjoining barn area. Outdoors, there are also huge developments afoot. The lower field has been cleared in preparation for the Penlan beekeeping project, with plans to turn the rest of the space into allotments where veterans and the local community can come together. Alongside this, a new polytunnel growing project is underway and the peaceful memorial garden is currently undergoing a spring spruce up. The remaining farmland will be used for outdoor activities like bushcraft, nature photography, campfire get-togethers and camping. The camp site facility is a particularly important element of what Penlan Farm offers – a safe, quiet place where veterans, emergency services and their families can access free, seasonal holidays in the tranquil Welsh countryside.

### **Penlan Farm Operations Manager Steve Owen, a veteran of Afghanistan, explains:**

*"Being able to access natural spaces like Penlan Farm is essential for the wellbeing of many veterans, especially those who are living with mental health issues. Having a quiet, green space where they can relax, reconnect with family, join in with an activity or just be around likeminded people who understand them means a lot. We're working hard to make sure they have a place where they feel at home and can be themselves again."*

*So far, we've done most of the hard graft ourselves, with great support from local businesses and the community,*

*but are always looking for volunteers who would like to get involved in helping to develop the site, whether they're veterans or not. Everyone's welcome, it's all part of forging new social links for veterans throughout the West and Mid Wales community."*



**If you'd like to volunteer, or are a veteran, police, fire or ambulance service worker and would like to know more about accessing activities and support at Penlan Farm, Llandysul, please call **01559 361328**.**

## ■ Flat Holm Island Project

Over the next 3 years, Woody's Lodge is embarking on a very exciting partnership with Cardiff City Council's Flat Holm Project Team to assist with visitor and heritage improvement projects on Flat Holm Island. Cardiff City Council have received funding through the National Lottery Heritage Fund to assist with these improvements on the Island.



Flat Holm Island lies just 5 miles from Cardiff and Barry, the tiny island is a different world with a wealth of history and wildlife. Since the Dark Ages, Flat Holm has been a retreat for monks and since then has acted as a sanctuary for Vikings, Anglo-Saxons, silver miners, smugglers, and cholera victims. Fortified in Victorian times and again in World War II.

This joint partnership will see groups of around 10 Woody's Lodge patrons and staff, visit the Island for up to seven days at a time and undertake some of the improvement projects that do not require specialist contractors.

### **Some of the agreed projects our staff and patrons will be conducting during the 3-year project:**

- Refurbishment of visitor toilet facilities.
- Minor repairs of a roof on one of the island buildings.
- Clearing scrub and debris from WW2 gun emplacements and other structures on the island.
- Improvements to the island campsite field and facilities.
- Refurbishment of wooden structures and steps across the island.
- Assistance in refurbishing the Victorian extension on one of the island cottages.
- Clearing and re-pointing water catchment area.
- Ongoing maintenance.



*Woody's Lodge Staff arriving for our initial visit to Flat Holm Island January 2022.*



*Woody's Lodge Senior Management Team during our first visit to Flat Holm Island.*



*Project Officer Mark Hodgkinson pictured with island Warden Matt and Veteran Kevin during our second visit to Flat Holm Island.*

The project is already underway and will be overseen by our Project Officer Mark Hodgkinson. Mark has already visited the island twice once with our senior management team and once with one of our veterans Kevin who works within the building trade. During these initial visits we have compiled the list of initial work to be completed during the project and taken our first measurements of the visitor toilets, which will enable our first group patrons to visit and start improvements on the island at the end of March 2022.



Project Officer Mark and veteran Kevin measuring up visitor toilets in preparation for our first refurbishment project at the end of March 22.

We are very excited about this partnership, that is going to benefit our patrons and Flat Holm Island in many different ways. We are also very optimistic that we can assist in bringing other organisations to this partnership and see improvements to one of our iconic Welsh landmarks which will assist in delivering the history of Flat Holm Island to the wider population of Wales and the UK.

## TGP CYMRU

### TGP Cymru Veteran and Families Engagement Service is now accessible across Wales!

Referrals can be received for Veterans dealing with difficulties within family relationships, who have at least 1 child in the family (can be living together or separately).

**Group workshops and individual family interventions are delivered via Zoom or Teams and our service aims to support Veterans and their families to:**

- Identify their strengths and communicate in a way that identifies their needs.
- Explore and jointly find solutions that enable needs to be met and help everyone affected to move forward.
- More effectively manage conflict (that can often lead to family breakdown if left unaddressed).
- Seek specialist services when needed.

Group workshops are run regularly, so please contact us if you would like to know dates for our next programme!

**Here's a link for our leaflet:**

<https://www.tgpcymru.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/VFES-Flyer-V4-ENG.pdf>

**Any questions, please contact Tina Foster:**

email: [Tina.Foster@TGPCymru.org.uk](mailto:Tina.Foster@TGPCymru.org.uk)

tel: 07951096208

## VETERANS LEGAL LINK

Serving those who serve us

**Free legal advice, casework and signposting for veterans and their families.**  
Also supporting our Blue Light services.

Police Investigations

Criminal Law

Legal Aid Help

Family Law

Military Injuries

Employment

Mental Health

Criminal Injuries



[www.veteranslegallink.org](http://www.veteranslegallink.org) email: [help@veteranslegal.co.uk](mailto:help@veteranslegal.co.uk)

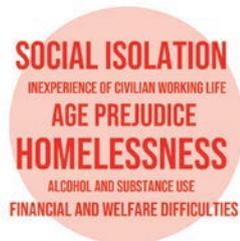
## ■ The Poppy Factory

### Employment support for the Ex-Forces community



The Poppy Factory supports veterans with health conditions on their journey into employment, helping them overcome any barriers. Four out of five of five of the veterans we work with report a mental health condition.

Veterans are at the heart of our service. We empower them to plan their own future, supporting them into employment that reflects their aspirations, skills and circumstances. Specialist support and meaningful employment can be truly life-changing, significantly improving veterans confidence, financial security and wellbeing.



Our expertise is in helping the most vulnerable in the ex-Forces community. Some come to us years after leaving the Armed Forces. Many have served in recent conflicts such as Afghanistan and Iraq.

"I feel absolutely reborn now, compared to how things were before." Gary - Veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan

### Who we help

Our employment support is available to those who have served for one day or more in the Armed Forces or Reserves, and have any kind of physical or mental health condition that is a barrier to employment. A physical or mental health condition does not have to be attributed to Service.

To be eligible for support, veterans must be unemployed. However, we are exceptionally able to look at individual cases where an employed veteran has been confirmed as going through redundancy, or their current role is negatively impacting their health.

### Support into employment

- ✓ Advice on job opportunities to match each veterans own skills and goals.
- ✓ Support with CVs, Job application forms and preparing for interviews.
- ✓ Support with training and qualifications when they are needed.
- ✓ Signposting and referrals to partner organisations, regular joint working

### In-work support

- ✓ Regular contact with veterans after moving into employment.
- ✓ Help identifying workplace adaptations so veterans can stay in work.
- ✓ Working with veterans and their employers to find creative solutions.
- ✓ Contact with health professionals and partners to ensure consistent support.



Find out more - [www.poppyfactory.org](http://www.poppyfactory.org)

## Are you, or do you know someone, who has served in HM Armed Forces?

(Regular, Reservist or National Service)

### Change Step supports veterans helping them to:

- re-build old connections and develop new ones.
- become more mentally and physically active.
- have fun and take part in a range of activities.
- meet other retired or ex-service personnel - old and young alike.



# Heritage Centre

Now Open to Visitors



**Wednesdays 11am - 3pm**

**Saturdays 11am - 3pm**

Next to the Old Gate to Beachley Barracks

**Everybody Welcome**

**Come and enjoy a significant piece of local history**

**Contact Telephone: 07501 237052**

## Royal Air Force Association

### **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

**Could you give a little time to be a friendly face to someone in your community?**

Volunteer Befrienders wanted, flexible around you, to make friendly visits to RAF veterans.

**Could you make a difference to someone's life?**

**Please get in touch, contact:**

[volunteers@rafa.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@rafa.org.uk) or **0800 018 2361**

Find out more about our work at [www.rafa.org.uk](http://www.rafa.org.uk)



*Am* recovery for all

Is it time to

**TAKE A  
LOOK AT  
YOUR  
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Talk to us

0330 1340 286

[recovery4all.co.uk](http://recovery4all.co.uk)

National  
Gambling  
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Service



Registered Charity 1002224

Follow us   @aragamblingservice

## Be a force for our forces Be a SSAFA volunteer

At SSAFA you'll be joining a dedicated team on the frontline of volunteering. You'll be working closely with local veterans, serving personnel and their families to make a positive difference to their lives. You will be part of a team that directly helps our Armed Forces community.

Roles available include secretary, treasurer, fundraiser caseworker along with many more.

**YOUR  
FORCES  
NEED  
YOU**

**Join us today and be part of something extraordinary.**

Call **0800 0325612**

Email [volunteer.support@ssafa.org.uk](mailto:volunteer.support@ssafa.org.uk)

Visit [ssafa.org.uk/newrecruits](http://ssafa.org.uk/newrecruits)

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Armed Forces  
charity