



## City and County of Swansea

### Notice of Meeting

You are invited to attend a Meeting of the

## Armed Forces Community Covenant Signatories Panel

**At:** Remotely via Microsoft Teams

**On:** Monday, 15 March 2021

**Time:** 2.00 pm

**Chair:** Councillor Wendy Lewis

**Watch Online:** <http://bit.ly/380ASmF>

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### Agenda

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- 1 Apologies for Absence.
- 2 Disclosures of Personal & Prejudicial Interests from Members.  
[www.swansea.gov.uk/DisclosuresofInterests](http://www.swansea.gov.uk/DisclosuresofInterests)
- 3 Minutes. 1 - 4  
To approve & sign the Minutes of the previous meeting(s) as a correct record.
- 4 Supporting Pupils from Service Families. (Yasmin Todd) 5 - 8
- 5 Armed Forces Covenant Regional Project.
- 6 Update from MOD.
- 7 Swansea Bay University Health Board, Armed Forces Forum.
- 8 Update from Panel Members.

**Next Meeting:** Monday, 12 July 2021 at 2.00 pm

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Huw Evans'.

**Huw Evans**  
Head of Democratic Services  
Monday 8 March 2021

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Contact: Gareth Borsden - 01792 636923

**Armed Forces Community Covenant Signatories Panel**

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# Agenda Item 3



City and County of Swansea

## Minutes of the **Armed Forces Community Covenant Signatories Panel**

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Monday, 18 January 2021 at 2.00 pm

**Present:** W G Lewis (Chair) Presided

### Representing Organisations

Seamus Brennan	Royal British Legion
Rob Denman	Prison Service
Pat Dunmore	Citizens Advice Bureau
CPO Rob Evans	HMS Cambria
Sqd Ldr Phil. C. Flower	Royal British Legion Swansea Branch
Grace Halfpenny	Regional Armed Forces Covenant Liaison Officer
Thomas Hall	Blesma
Paul Jones	STOMP
Christine Morrell	Swansea Bay University Health Board
Julian North	Help for Heroes
Adrian Rabey	British Training Board
Tom Sloan	Ospreys Rugby
Neil Tomlin	Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund
John Williams	Royal British Legion
Victoria Williams	Veterans NHS Wales

### Officer(s)

Gareth Borsden	Democratic Services Officer
Dan Garnell	Local Area Co-ordinator
David Price Deer	Special Events Manager
Spencer Martin	Third Sector & Trust Fund Commissioning Co-ordinator

### Apologies for Absence

Alyx Baharie, Jackie Davies, Capt. Chris Evans, Louise Fleet, Natalie McCombe, Peter Neville, Finola Pickwell, Cllr Alyson Pugh and Sian Woodland

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#### 91 Disclosures of Personal & Prejudicial Interests.

None.

#### 92 Minutes.

**Resolved** that the Minutes of the Panel held on 16 November 2020 be approved as a correct record.

**93 Armed Forces Covenant Regional Project.**

Grace Halfpenny reported that the new member of staff, Yasmin Todd had recently recently taken up her role as the 'Supporting Service Children in Schools' officer under the Welsh Local Government Association's schools project and would attend the next meeting to discuss her role.

She would be meeting with the education department from Swansea Council shortly to discuss matters and issues that she may be able to assist with.

Tom Sloan offered his help and any assistance he could to assist the new officer through the Ospreys rugby well established links and networks in both schools and the community.

Grace Halfpenny outlined that her and her armed forces covenant officer colleagues around Wales are liaising with both Welsh Government and the Welsh Local Government Association with an aim to further improve communications between those bodies and armed forces community across Wales. The aim is to produce a new website and regular newsletter in the near future.

She also detailed that a comprehensive armed forces covenant awareness raising programme is being developed which would initially be rolled out to front line council staff with a view to expand it to the wider community.

She outlined that following observations made by the Armed Forces Co-ordinators across Wales during the pandemic, that the Welsh Government are also ensuring that the needs of veterans are being considered in national support for suicide prevention and housing support programmes. .

**94 Update from MOD.**

CPO Rob Evans (HMS Cambria) reported that due to the most recent lockdown all face to face and reservist activities had unfortunately ceased, but indicated that Rob Govier and his team are continuing their online outreach and engagement activities wherever possible.

**95 Swansea Bay University Health Board, Armed Forces Forum.**

Chris Morrell reported that the health board had held its first armed forces panel in November since the initial lockdown.

She outlined that the health board had held a Remembrance Day online commemoration and service for staff.

The early developments relating to the support for bereavement and 'care after death' programme and centre were detailed, more information will be shared when available.

She detailed that the health board are exploring the issues around the achieving of the gold employer status around armed forces and are actively looking to expand their links with reservists in their employment and those with military connections.

She outlined that the artificial limb service is currently recruiting staff which should improve the service to patients moving forward.

Victoria Williams (Veterans NHS) outlined that the service continues to be very busy with 33 referrals in the last 3 months, all referrals are now being dealt with online, which has helped speed up the process and aid engagement and take up.

She referred to the staff changes that have recently occurred within the service.

## **96 Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund.**

Neil Tomlin, Area Director, South England & South Wales outlined to the panel the background and history to the fund.

He stated that anyone who had served in the royal air force, regardless of length of service and their partners and families were eligible for help, advice and assistance.

He outlined that 27m had been spent in 2020, all of which had been raised through donations. The number of people helped had risen to seventy one thousand last year, up from fifty two thousand the year before.

He outlined the various forms of welfare support, grants and assistance that is available to veterans and their families.

He referred to the impact of the pandemic on the service, its fundraising efforts and their ability to deliver some of its services.

Various members of the panel outlined that they could link up and support with the efforts and work of the fund and indicated that conversations and dialogue would continue outside the meeting, particularly around the potential use of cadets, reservists and veterans in activities and the expansion of the link to the NHS support services.

The funds printed brochure 'a guide to our services' had been circulated with the agenda papers.

More detailed information can be found online at <https://www.rafbf.org/>

## **97 Update from Panel Members.**

### Hafal

Stephen Sullivan outlined that only 1 application from Swansea had been submitted during the last tranche of funding applications relating to garrison farm community interest company.

He outlined that Hafal were successful with their application with the 'force for change' programme which will include an element of digital inclusion for veterans.

### Royal British Legion

Phil Flower spoke further to the discussion in the previous item, and outlined that the cadet forces in the area who remain very active online currently would always welcome the involvement of veterans in their activities. This could prove beneficial to all parties going forward.

This could include both involvement online and actual physical attendance in the future when lockdown restrictions are eased.

He outlined that 2020 was the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Royal Air Force Air Cadets.

He outlined the plans for a series of events, which pandemic restrictions allowing would include – schools poster competition, vintage car and motorcycle rally's, hog roast, black tie dinner, sky dives, penalty shoot out at a Swans game & Pen y Fan climb.

He also indicated that a virtual parade & church service would take place on 7<sup>th</sup> February and he would circulate details for anyone who wished to take part.

### Blesma

Thomas Hall outlined that his organisation continues to operate through the pandemic, mostly online, but with actual physical visits to people if necessary.

He outlined issues that had been highlighted to him relating to winter fuel payments and that the DWP had been experiencing issues with a new computer system, which had resulted in some people being wrongly removed from the list and not receiving their payments.

He also referred to an issue a client had been having with Citizens Advice in Bridgend.

Pat Dunmore (Citizens Advice) outlined the current working procedures as a result of Covid in Swansea/Neath Port Talbot and indicated it should be very similar in Bridgend.

The meeting ended at 2.55 pm

**Chair**

## SSCE Cymru update – March 2021

### About SSCE Cymru

The SSCE Cymru mission is to provide the best possible educational support to Service children in Wales. This is achieved through the following three areas of the programme mission:

- Gathering knowledge and evidence
- Producing resources and coordinating activities
- Supporting policy and systems.

### Service children in Wales

Kirsty Williams MS, Minister of Education, has committed to identifying Service children, however currently there is no formal mechanism for this data collection process. SSCE Cymru is working with the Welsh Government to arrange for a question be added to the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC).

The RSLOs have been working with all 22 local authorities to conduct a data collection activity, providing a snapshot of data as of 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021. The RSLOs are now working with the LAs to establish how they plan to maintain this data in the future.

LA	Schools with SC	Number of Service children		
		Definition 1*	Definition 2**	Total
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	6	13	2	15
Bridgend County Borough Council	32	64	37	101
Caerphilly County Borough Council	24	64	50	114
Cardiff Council	31	59	23	82
Carmarthenshire County Council	44	77	64	141
Ceredigion County Council	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Conwy County Borough Council	18	41	35	76
Denbighshire County Council	25	50	52	102
Flintshire County Council	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Gwynedd County Council	8	9	11	20
Isle of Anglesey County Council	8	45	7	52
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	21	36	30	66
Monmouthshire County Council	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Neath Port Talbot Council	26	72	Unknown	72
Newport City Council	24	72	18	90
Pembrokeshire County Council	20	118	47	165
Powys County Council	32	224	Unknown	224
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	50	114	41	155
Swansea Council	30	53	43	96
Torfaen County Borough Council	17	25	Unknown	25
Vale of Glamorgan Council	27	286	Unknown	286
Wrexham County Borough Council	16	23	17	40
	<b>462</b>	<b>1433</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>2007</b>

Plus an additional 85 SC identified in four independent schools.



## Regional School Liaison Officers (RSLOs) for Service children

Funded by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, four RSLOs are now in post for the two-year project. Focused on supporting schools to understand the needs of Service children and embed activities to ensure sustainable support systems.

Further information about the RSLOs can be found on the [SSCE Cymru website](#), including a map of their regions and an overview of the ways they will be working with schools.

## Case management

The mobility of Armed Forces families can have an academic, social and emotional impact on Service children. As a result, issues may arise that require support outside of the capacity of the school and/or local authority (LA). In these instances, the [Regional School Liaison Officers \(RSLOs\) for Service children](#) in Wales will work with the school and LA to identify support that could be accessed to overcome the barrier/s that the individual child or small groups of Service children are facing.

The RSLOs will coordinate intervention/s, monitor the progress and measure the impact, following a consistent all-Wales process. They will have access to funding for these interventions when required, which was secured as part of the funding bid to the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust.

The case management support from RSLOs is available for schools to access at any point of the year. Schools should contact the RSLO for their region to discuss accessing the support.

## 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. It is a time to applaud Armed Forces families and their children for the daily sacrifices they make and the challenges they overcome. SSCE Cymru would like to encourage education settings to carry out activities during this month to celebrate and raise awareness of the unique experiences this group of children and young people have and become a more Armed Forces-friendly environment. Ideas of how schools can get involved are available [here](#).

## SSCE Cymru – Service parent/carer survey report

During September-October 2020, SSCE Cymru conducted a 'parents/carers of Service children' survey. Giving them the opportunity to share their experiences about living in/moving to Wales, the impact their lifestyles have on their children's education and the support they have received from schools.

There were 121 full responses, which were used to produce the findings report analysis, available [here](#).

## SSCE Cymru resources

- In 2020, SSCE Cymru launched a suite of new resources aimed at supporting schools, families and Service children. Everything is available on the new website [www.SSCECymru.co.uk](http://www.SSCECymru.co.uk), including: [new SSCE Cymru School Toolkit](#), [Directory of support](#), [Welsh films](#) and [Case studies](#).
- A Covid-19 support information page is available on the SSCE Cymru website, which is regularly reviewed and updated [www.SSCECymru.co.uk/schoolsandlocalauthorities/covid19support](http://www.SSCECymru.co.uk/schoolsandlocalauthorities/covid19support)
- [Service children – funding guidance for schools in Wales](#) was last updated in August 2020 to now include information and advice on the funding available through the MODs Education Support Fund (ESF), the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust 'Force for Change programme' and from the Armed Forces Education Trust.
- Listening to our Service children – we have been running discussion groups with over 100 Service children in 14 schools across Wales to gain an understanding of their experiences. The findings report is available [here](#). These findings also fed into the SCiP Alliance [Listening to Learn: The Voices of Service Children](#) report.
- [SSCE Cymru Winter newsletter](#).

## CPD training for schools

Developed by the RSLOs based on the content of the SSCE Cymru Toolkit, a training package is now available for schools and educators in Wales. The RSLOs will be delivering this training in schools during visits/virtual meetings, to educate school staff on the experiences of Service child and facilitate discussions on actions the school can take to embed good practice. The session can take up to two hours for a group of up to 10 participants.

## Funding update

### Welsh Government – Supporting Service Children in Education in Wales Fund (2020/21)

Welsh Government announcement: [£250,000 fund to support service children in schools across Wales](#). £200,000 is to be distributed to the local authorities in Wales in March 2021 based on funding plans developed with SSCE Cymru. For further information on how the funds will be distributed, visit the [SSCE Cymru website](#).

### The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust – Forces for Change Programme

Awarding grants up to £10,000 (previously £20,000) to projects supporting Armed Forces communities to become less isolated and engage more in their local area. Application deadlines for 2021 have not yet been set.

## MODs

There were seven applications from schools in Wales for the MODs Education Support Fund 2021. Five of those were successful, securing just over £160,000 in total. The ESF guidance and applications process is currently being reviewed to reflect feedback from the regional panels.

## Definition of a Service child

The Welsh Government have recently clarified their definition of a Service child to be:

*A 'Service child' has parent(s) – or person(s) with exercising parental responsibility – who is/are Service personnel:*

- *In HM Regular Armed Forces*
- *In full commitment as part of the full-time Reserve service*
- *Is a veteran who has been in service within the last two years*
- *One of their parents died whilst serving in the Armed Forces and the pupil receives a pension under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme or the War Pensions Scheme.*

SSCE Cymru also encourages schools and education settings to consider identifying and supporting Service children that fall outside of this definition by continuing to access and utilise the many resources available on the SSCE Cymru website and through the SSCE Cymru Network.

## Plans for 2021

- Produce and launch a SSCE Cymru Service family guide.
- Produce an E-learning version of the CPD training package.
- RSLOs school visits/meetings – focused on helping schools to understand the experiences of their Service children and embed support.
- Organise a school conference – led by Service children.
- Enhance Service children voice in Wales.

For further information, contact: [SSCECymru@wlqa.gov.uk](mailto:SSCECymru@wlqa.gov.uk)