

They had realised on discharge that the qualifications they had gained whilst in the Army were not transferable to the civilian employment market, and saw an opportunity to establish a skills transition service to assist former service personnel into civilian employment.

He indicated that there is an enhanced learning fund from the MOD which people can utilise and help pay towards course costs, but they have to make a contribution themselves to the training. Both companies now have 200 plus courses available across a wide range of employment activities. He outlined the various companies that they link with to provide employment opportunities.

He stated that the companies has now over 1800 veterans on their books and has just been awarded a "Silver award".

He outlined that a drop in centre has recently been opened in Eaton Road, Manselton in association with SSAFA and members of the panel were welcome to attend.

He indicated he would also be grateful if members of the panel would promote and share the services offered by both companies as much as was possible.

7 UPDATES FROM PANEL MEMBERS.

Panel Members provided verbal updates relating to the current and proposed activities, events and workloads of their respective groups/organisations, including the following areas.

Veterans NHS Wales

Victoria Williams reported that the service has had 35 referrals in recent times, but the waiting list was now down to six months.

She outlined that the Awareness Day Event held in conjunction with South Wales Police on 6 October at the Army Reserve went very well and they had received excellent feedback from attendees.

She referred to the link up with Barnardo's and Military Families.

She also detailed the pilot scheme being run by Aberystwyth University relating to legal aid being available to former military personnel.

Change Step

Kev Bogdan reported that their service continues to be busy with 10-12 referrals a month. He indicated they have recently become involved with a scheme at Swansea Prison following the success of a scheme at Parc Prison Bridgend.

South Wales Police

Alison Fisher referred to the "Keep Safe Calling Card" project that has been introduced. She indicated that all former military personnel are encouraged to sign up.

It can greatly aid with identifying appropriate support and assistance for ex service personnel, especially those with mental health issues, PTSD etc, particularly around the time of arrest.

She indicated the Police are encouraging doctor's surgeries to participate in the scheme and stated she would distribute the information to the Panel following the meeting.

Age Cymru Swansea Bay

Nicola Russel-Brooks reported on the potential for her organisation on behalf of the Panel to be involved in a bid for funding with Age Alliance Wales. She indicated that the majority of potential funding would be aimed at refurbishment works at Cambria and the "Woodies" scheme. Steve Jones of the Royal Navy indicated he thought it was intended that Cambria would be vacated within the next few years, so was unsure what the background to the funding bid could be.

She referred to the outline aims and basis of the non-capital programme part of the project and stated she had struggled to get full information and as such was unsure whether to commit to support to the scheme. The aims of the scheme were outlined and discussed, and Members of the Panel felt that a lot of the proposals were already being carried out in Swansea and could lead to work duplication, so couldn't recommend support.

University of Wales Trinity St David's

John Howells referred to the start of Phase 1 of the building in SA1 had started with an anticipated completion date of September 2018. He also referred to and distributed information on a new degree course they would be starting relating to Hotel Management. The course would have 3 intakes a year and have strong work related experience with the Marriott Hotel.

SSAFA

Dave Singletary invited all Members of the Panel to the annual SSAFA Ball in the Aberavon Beach Hotel on 4 February 2017.

He raised the issue of the Authority including a questionnaire on all their forms relating to military service. Officers to look into the issue and report back.

He also stated that as he is on the Neath Port Talbot panel he indicated the possible benefits of a joint meeting or event between the 3 local panels in order to share information, ideas, best practice etc. Members of the panel welcomed the suggestion.

He also raised a query on the Age Concern "boxes" that older people have previously been provided with to sort medicines/family contacts in case of emergencies and whether they were still available. Nicola Russel-Brooks indicated she thought the scheme was still active but would establish a contact point and report back.

Royal British Legion

Tony Colburn reported that the Remembrance day event held in Mumbles had been successful and well attended. He indicated though that his branch like many others continue to struggle to find active volunteers to arrange and organise events.

Navy

Steve Jones of the Royal Navy confirmed his view that it was intended that Cambria would be vacated within the next few years, and to new premises in Cardiff Bay.

He also raised the issue of the high cost to the reserve of placing the Trailer into the city centre and castle square area.

The Chair asked that the best wishes of the Panel be passed to Lt Cdr Ruth Fleming following the recent birth of her baby daughter.

Chair

June Burtonshaw reported on the discussions she had undertaken with the Leader regarding the securing of a budget for the work of the Covenant, to cover such events as Armed Forces Day, Silence in the Square and assistance for the use of the City Centre for Armed Forces promotion/publicity. She would continue to progress these funding discussions with the Leader.

She indicated that the full Council at its meeting on 1 December had unanimously supported the motion relating to the Royal British Legions "Count Them In" questionnaire for the census. She indicated she had also received the support of 2 local MP's for the campaign.

Aartic Training/British Training Board

Adrian Rabey reported further to his earlier presentation and indicated that their organisation had recently run a "hospitality" course and all 4 former military personnel who attended had secured employment. He also referred to a fund raising event in Gowerton they had been involved with recently which had raised over £1400.

Special Events

Nigel Jones referred to the successful "Silence in the Square" held which attracted close on 1000 people, and welcomed the Chair's work to secure a budget for Covenant events.

The meeting ended at 2.55 pm

CHAIR