



Conference Report

of the

The 2nd Annual Veterans First Point Scotland Conference:
Past, Present and Future of Scottish Military and Veterans Mental Health,
Well-being and Citizenship

held on

Thursday, 11th May 2017
Edinburgh Napier University Craiglockhart Campus
219 Colinton Road, Edinburgh, EH14 1DJ



Dear Colleagues,

We would like to extend our grateful thanks to the nearly 200 delegates who attended our conference this month at Edinburgh Napier University during National Mental Health awareness week. It was wonderful to see both familiar and new faces there. Over 40 organisations were represented at the Conference and 18 organisations hosted table top stands to promote the partnership ethos within the Veteran community.

Col (Retd) Martin Gibson, Chairman of Veterans Scotland, once again expertly chaired our Conference by welcoming delegates and providing an excellent introduction to the V1P model. He drew on his personal experience of working closely with V1P and other Veterans charities to provide a coordinated package of support to Veterans and their families. He emphasised the importance of networking and information sharing throughout the day's event. He hoped that all delegates would leave the conference feeling more knowledgeable and equipped with a range of business contacts that would help improve services for the Veteran in need.

Linda Irvine, Strategic Lead of Veterans First Point, presented on "Where have we been and where are we going" highlighting the development of the V1P service from its initial inception in 2009 through to its current design. Linda also shared some of the emerging data from the Queen Margaret University evaluation and highlighted the future work streams of V1P which include:

- Improving the Offending Pathway
- Individual Placement Support (IPS) Pilot
- Working with the Armed Services - Proactive and anticipatory planning
- Raising Awareness and contributing to the worldwide evidence base

The V1P Network teams from across Scotland were extremely creative and entertaining as they conveyed the V1P ethos of "Co-ordination, Credibility and Accessibility" in relating how services are delivered in their respective areas. The city centre model of V1P Lothian clearly contrasts with the outreach models of V1P Borders, Lanarkshire and Highland, with V1P Grampian and Highland also looking at a collaborative approach moving forwards to overcome the geographical and infrastructure challenges! The brokerage model used in V1P Tayside compares favourably with the "in-house" approach used by V1P Fife in engaging Veterans and making best use of clinical resources to meet their needs.

Also clearly evident was the differing developmental stages of the Teams. For example, V1P Ayrshire and Arran shared their experience of the very successful launch they had in March 2017, whilst the V1P Lothian team presented data on the successful Individual Placement Project (IPS) pilot project they are hosting, over and above the routine service delivery. In summary, Clinicians and Veteran Peer Support Workers spoke passionately about overcoming the challenges in engaging Veterans and reports from Veterans themselves reaffirmed how worthwhile all of their efforts were.

As stated on the day, some of our presenters were unable to share their research data due to imminent publication however, by kind permission the following presentations have been made available for delegates:

- A Brief History of Military Psychiatry in C20th – What we learned and what we forgot by [Professor Chris Freeman](#)
- Future Directions in Veterans' NHS Wales by [Dr Neil J. Kitchiner](#)

- Defence Mental Health Services: Insights and useful lessons for the NHS and Service Charities by Dr Jeya Balakrishna MBBS, FRCPPsych, LLM



Chris Freeman.pdf



Neil Kitchiner.pdf



Jeya Balakrishna.pdf

The Conference was the official launch of the Veterans First Point website (www.veteransfirstpoint.org.uk) which includes pages for all eight centres, helpful numbers for Veterans and family members and postings on all new centre events plus V1P news updates.



In relation to how the Conference was perceived, we received 44.5% return on our feedback forms from conference delegates and identified the following themes:

- Head:** Something you have learnt from being a part of the Conference today
- Three themes:** Growth and development of V1P centres
Range of Veterans support across Scotland
NHS Wales: future advances in 3MDR and apps
- Heart:** Something you have felt or experienced from being a part of the Conference
- Three themes:** Passion, enthusiasm and commitment of V1P team members,
Partnership working
Comradeship
- Bag:** Something you will remember and take away from the Conference
- Three themes:** Made lasting contacts through networking
NHS Wales's presentation
Useful information obtain which will be moved forward on
- Bin:** Something that you thought wasn't so good or you would want to leave behind
- Three themes:** Too much crammed in and time was an issue
More interaction opportunities and chance for dialogue
Positive comments about conference – nothing to bin

On the Wednesday afternoon, Gregory Hinrichsen, Ph.D. provided an IPT and Veterans workshop for approximately 70 delegates at Surgeon's Hall on Nicolson Street in Edinburgh. The delegates once again represented a number of partnership organisations who hopefully found the session a worthwhile experience.



On the eve of the Conference we also held an evening reception in the Great Hall at Edinburgh Castle hosted by Major-General Riddell-Webster, Governor of Edinburgh Castle, for Conference speakers and invited guests. Attendees were welcomed to Edinburgh Castle by solo Piper, Torquil Corkerton and the reception included performances by youth Piper Max Gray and Drummer Patrick Bent, violin soloist Thoren Ferguson, poetry readings by Tracey Harvey and personal reflections by Dr Greg Hinrichson, Ph.D. and Tommy McLeod of V1P Highland.

In conclusion, we would wish to acknowledge all the commitment and hard work undertaken by all our partners in making the conference the success it has been and look forward to working with you all in the future and seeing you next year at our 3rd Annual Veterans First Point Scotland Conference.

A number of requests were made by guests for copies of the poems which the authors have kindly made available and they are attached here.



CIVVY STREET by **Tracy Harvey**

He's finnin it hard tae adjust,
Tae life oan "civvy street."
Tae lay the ghosts tae rest,
Tae find his feet.
His adrenalins still pumping,
Every slammed door,
Every back firing caur exhaust,
Has his hairt thumping,
Body jumping.
Stomach churning.

Every action
Has a reaction.
Hypervigilant.
Belligerent.
Fight or flight.
Cannae sleep at night.
Owre thinking.
Heart sinking.
Bad dreams
Sweating.
Nae forgetting.
The things he's seen.
Grief.
The pals he's lost.
That's whit hurts the most.
He misses the banter,
The camaraderie,
The laughs.
The craic.
That sense o somebody ha'en his back.

And noo he's sleepin oan the street,
Disnae hae enough tae eat,
Disnae ken where tae stait
Tae get the help he needs.

Suicide rates in veterans exceed,
Those that die in battle.



STAND UP FOR THE ARMY WIFE by Rev. Weeillan Walker

You changed a little, owre time, since you went away.
You phoned us, mibbe twice a month,
Wrote blueys more to say.
To tell me how your day went,

Ask about the boys,
Longing for to see us all,
Fetch the weans new toys!
I didnae ever let you ken,
The troubles here we had.
The boys were misbehaving,
Cos they were missing you,
Their dad.

The neebor, shouting owre the fence,
Swearing at me too,
Because the dug was barking.
I just thocht of you.

I kept it all tight under wraps,
Wore a smile for all to see.
Kept our house in order,
For when you came back to me.

It was a struggle sometimes,
I'll tell you now you're back,
But the boys and I made it through,
Despite the dad we lack.

You swear a lot, quick to shout,
Never sleep to deep.
I ken it willnae last long though,
Some memories are yours to keep.

You'll hide a tear at silly things,
Well, silly things to me.
Yet, equally, the smallest token,
Gies ye muckle glee.

Of all the things I don't quite get,
There is one that I do,
Whatever pains are in your mind,
We will see them through.

I'm very sure you saw some stuff,
That caused you grief and strife.
But we'll take our time to work it out.
You. Your boys. Your wife.

For when you went off fighting,
On yet another soil.
Life didnae stop back in your home,
We all had our toil.
The wee things got harder,
Because you wereny there.

One parent doing both jobs,
For owre half a year.

I guess the point I'm making is,
Aye, you had it rough,
But covering the home guard,
Was also very tough.

Waiting by a phone at night,
That often didnae ring.
Explaining – “it wisnae daddy’s fault,
He’s got tae dae his thing!”

So no matter what we put up with,
Living the army life.
Remember, you’re no’ the only soldier serving....

“STAND UP”

For the Army Wife!

Much respect to all who have served and fallen but please spare a thought for the other half of the soldier, also serving in their own way. Dedicated to Hayley, who Kev describes as his “Rock”, a “true army wife” and “the boss”.

Special Acknowledgement

All at veterans First Point would like to take this opportunity to give special thanks Dr Chris Freeman for his informative presentation at this conference, his support for Veterans First Point services and its development. Dr Freeman sadly died on the 20th August 2017 and he will be sadly missed by all.



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