

July 2020

**Response to Cllr Edward's Notice of Motion on Support and Recognition for Veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder to County Council
17 December 2019**

Report by Tony Kershaw, Director of Law and Assurance

1. The Chairman of the County Council referred the notice of motion on Support and Recognition for Veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (see Appendix) submitted to the County Council on 17 December 2019, to the Leader, Cllr Paul Marshall, and the Armed Forces Champion, Cllr Pete Bradbury, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adults and Health, Cllr Amanda Jupp. The motion called on the Cabinet to advocate better treatment of veterans who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and better recognition for those who have died as a result of this disorder. The motion also called on the County Council to take the wellbeing of all those who have served extremely seriously and continually consider how it can better understand the needs of ex-services persons who are suffering from PTSD to provide the best possible support.

Cllr Marshall and Cllr Jupp, met Cllr Edwards on 31 July 2020 to discuss the motion. Cllr Bradbury was also in attendance.

2. Through the discussion, it was noted that the County Council was continuing to work with partners through the West Sussex Civilian Military Partnership Board to improve the lives of veterans and promote the services available to them, with particular emphasis on mental health services, including use of the Forces Connect South East App to all staff as a signposting mechanism. It was welcomed that the County Council had just received the Gold Award as part of the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme. The scheme, recognises organisations who pledge, demonstrate, and advocate their support for the Armed Forces Community. To win a Gold Award, organisations must proactively demonstrate that they advocate the benefits of supporting those within the Armed Forces community, encouraging others to sign the Armed Forces Covenant and to engage in the Employer Recognition Scheme.
3. Cllr Marshall and Cllr Jupp were supportive of County Council staff undertaking training in how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders in others, including veterans and this would include Mental Health First Aid Training which is aimed at the general population.
4. It was noted that the West Sussex Public Health Directorate intended to make specific reference to veterans in the forthcoming refresh of the Suicide Prevention Strategy in 2020 – this would include the relationship between mental health and experiencing traumatic events.
5. Point (1) of the motion, 'Lobby the Ministry of Defence to provide a fitting memorial to those who have served and ultimately succumbed to PTSD' was discussed in terms of what a memorial should look like. It was commented that if the monument displayed people's names there could be a potential issue around family permission and privacy. Different types

of monuments were discussed including using churches and a book with a collection of names. It was noted that a PTSD monument could be explored at County level with the West Sussex Record Office and nationally by approaching the National Museum/Jeremy Quinn, the local MP. Cllr Jupp raised a concern in terms of cost and upkeep so supported a practical solution for a PTSD monument.

6. Both Cllr Marshall and Cllr Jupp, agreed with elements of the motion but could not support the motion in its entirety for the reasons set out above and therefore, reserve the right to propose an amendment to the motion prior to debate at County Council on 18 September 2020. Cllr Peter Bradbury was in support of the motion in its entirety.

Tony Kershaw

Director of Law and Assurance

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Appendix: Notice of Motion on Support and Recognition for Veterans with
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Background papers

None

Motion on Support and Recognition for Veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

This Council advocates better treatment of veterans who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and better recognition for those who have died as a result of this disorder. The County Council takes the wellbeing of all those who have served extremely seriously and is continually considering how it can better understand the needs of ex-services persons who are suffering from PTSD and provide the best possible support.

In this country there is a National Memorial Arboretum to commemorate those who have given their lives in the service of our country. Families are able to spend time there remembering their loved ones. Every name, in one place, a calm, respectful space, where people can reflect and honour these heroes. However, those veterans who have taken their own lives, succumbing to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder caused by combat, are not remembered at the National Memorial Arboretum.

This Council believes that this must change. These service personnel have given their all in their service for our country and in many cases have been medically discharged from service because of the trauma they have seen and taken part in. Subsequently, as civilians, they take their own life and therefore are recognised as combat related casualties.

This Council calls upon the Leader of the Council and the Armed Forces Champion to:

- (1) Lobby the Ministry of Defence to provide a fitting memorial to those who have served and ultimately succumbed to PTSD;
- (2) Continue to work with partners through the West Sussex Civilian Military Partnership Board to improve the lives of veterans and promote the services available to them with particular emphasis on mental health services, including use of the Forces Connect South East App to all staff as a signposting mechanism;
- (3) Encourage staff to undertake Armed Forces Mental Health First Aid training; and
- (4) Work with the Cabinet Member for Adults and Health to ensure that health and wellbeing matters affecting veterans, including PTSD, are recognised in health and wellbeing strategies including the forthcoming refresh of Suicide Prevention Strategy in 2020.