

Boost for South East's Veterans as Initiative Consolidates Support to Ex-forces

The Veterans' Outreach Supports' (VOS) new initiative, 'Partnership in Mind' brings together key South East veteran charities to support ex-forces personnel.

PORTSMOUTH, UNITED KINGDOM, March 29, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The South East currently has a broad offering of provision to support veterans; however, extensive research by VOS identified that the region, in

common with other areas of the UK, lacked coordination to understand the needs of veterans and as well as a central hub of comprehensive knowledge around regional resources. Thanks to the leadership and generous funding provided by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust (AFCFT), [Veterans Outreach Support](#) (VOS) has assembled a portfolio of projects named



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Ian Millen, CEO Veterans Outreach Support

‘Partnership in Mind’ reflecting the collaborative, joined-up approach of the projects involved, and the emphasis on the wellbeing and mental health of veterans and their close families. The ‘Partnership in Mind’ initiative signals a new, holistic approach for the support of veteran support services across the South East region.

Data released over the last four years highlights the stark need for the initiative:

In 2018 it was identified that 15% of all Combat Stress service users at the time also lived in the South East region,

with Portsmouth identified as one of the hot spots of users identified.

According to the MOD Annual Population Survey, published in 2019 just under 20% of armed forces veterans live in the South East.

Figures published by South East based charity Veterans Gateway in Feb 2021 showed that over 14% of all calls received were related to various categories of mental wellbeing.

Funding of approximately £800,000 for the Partnership in Mind portfolio was awarded to VOS as part of The Veterans' Places, Pathways and People (VPPP) programme, a nation-wide scheme funded by The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, which is designed to empower regional charities to better improve the lives of their veterans.

VOS became the [Armed Forces Covenant Trust's](#) grant holder for the South-East region Portfolio, starting its partnership with a diverse group of like-minded charities in January 2022. Their portfolio programme 'Partnership in Mind' will act as an inclusive hub to bring together 9 South East based veteran and ex-forces charities to improve the provision of care to those who have served and their families, by direct support in places that are veteran-friendly, with people who understand and can help them or can help them by enabling clear pathways to wider and specialist sources of support.

This mix of portfolio elements ranges from well-established and well-founded armed forces charities to those at an earlier stage of development who are delivering quality support on a smaller scale, but who can grow their capabilities and reach veterans through membership of the collaborative portfolio.

The South East's Partnership in Mind portfolio unites; Fighting with Pride, The Poppy Factory, Veterans' Growth, Walking With The Wounded, First Light Trust, Veterans in Action, Kent Arts & Wellbeing, Defence Medical Welfare Service and the Veterans Community Network. The collaboration will create an integrated pathway to improve the access of veterans to employment opportunities, access to education, financial advice, wellbeing support, housing information and legal services – all of which are factors related to the quality of an individual's life and mental health. From a delivery perspective the collaboration will improve the process of sharing information, best practice and referral pathways, going far beyond the reach of the funded projects by establishing links with local councils, the NHS, other charities and others involved in providing support to those who have served.

In particular, whilst delivering meaningful support in their own right, people in the portfolio projects will be trained to recognise mental health issues and be aware of the risks involved when specialist help is not sought. They will understand veterans' needs better, and have the knowledge, connections and mechanisms to signpost to and directly access sources of clinical support through statutory and other charitable partners.

The Partnership in Mind initiative supports the UK Government and Office for Veterans' Affairs overarching aim of making the UK the best place to be a veteran in the world. In 2018, the UK Government published a paper entitled 'A Strategy for Our Veterans', which outlined their goal that, "By 2028, the aim is that every veteran will feel more valued, supported and empowered, and in accordance with the Armed Forces Covenant, will never be disadvantaged in accessing public or commercial services as a result of their service." Ian Millen, CEO of Veterans' Outreach Support and Commander Royal Navy (Retired) says better collaboration and coordination of support services are essential to addressing the key themes that can affect the lives of veterans;

“In over 14 years of operation, VOS has observed that many of our service users have complex, inter-related problems, and it is widely accepted that housing, debt and employment problems can directly lead to mental health challenges, just as mental health and addiction challenges can lead to problems in relationships, housing, employment, debt and many other areas.”

“Integrated care pathways address the biological, psychological and social impacts of trauma and other mental health-related problems. Where projects can address these problems directly, they will and where they are unable to support either through lack of expertise, complexity or risk to the individual veteran, they will draw upon the collective power of the network and its extended range of partners, especially for the provision of specialist mental health support in the South East.”

Simon Lock, Business Manager, Walking with the Wounded;

“Walking With The Wounded (WWTW) is delighted to be part of the Veterans Places, Pathways and People project in the Southeast of England, in Partnership with Veterans Outreach Support (VOS). The project aligns with WWTW's collaborative ethos; with the coming together of various military charities to support veterans' wellbeing. WWTW is looking forward to working more closely with VOS and the other partners within the project over the next two years.”

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