

**||| THE ARMED FORCES
COVENANT FUND TRUST**

**ONE IS
TOO
MANY**

**A FUNDING PROGRAMME
TO REDUCE VETERAN
SUICIDES**

Project updates, insights and overview following the
Veteran Suicide: One Is Too Many webinar 1 March
2023

A WORD FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE, ANNA WRIGHT...



Our vision at the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust is for a thriving Armed Forces community that is valued and supported within our society.

Those within the Forces community who are suffering from poor mental health are amongst those most in need of this support - no more so than those with suicidal ideation.

Our One Is Too Many programme, with funding from HM Treasury, was established to get to the root causes of this mental health challenge. The funded projects have undertaken innovative, sometimes groundbreaking work in support of this cohort, and I thank each and every person involved with the projects across the UK and laud the courage of those who've come forward to take part in or engage with the projects, for whom this work seeks to benefit.

The purpose of this booklet is not only to share the important work taking place under the One Is Too Many programme, making each of the projects more accessible and celebrating the great work taking place. It is also something physical that we hope will be useful as a conversation starter when working with those supporting our Armed Forces community.

The useful links, contact details and information that follows could provide a first step, a next step or a useful resource to keep handy.

I really hope you find this useful.

Anna

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ABOUT THE VETERANS' MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING FUND

In the Autumn Budget 2018, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced £10M to support Veterans' Mental Health and Wellbeing needs, with additional funding granted to the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust in 2019 and 2020. In total £30M has been committed through programmes designed to make an ongoing and sustained change to the lives of veterans.

Funding through this programme has been awarded to the following programmes:

Positive Pathways

£11.6M to 230 projects

The Positive Pathways programme awarded fixed grants of £35,000 or £70,000 for projects developed by and for veterans that focus on improving veterans' mental health and wellbeing by getting veterans out and active, with projects connecting into wider pathways of care.

Strategic Pathways

£1.94M to seven projects

(with continuation grants totalling £900K to six of these projects)

Grants were awarded to seven national organisations to provide support and mentoring to organisations delivering activities under the Positive Pathways Programme.

Veterans Should Not Be Forgotten

£2.4M to 120 projects

This emergency funding programme, launched in 2020 made grants swiftly to projects designed to alleviate distress and isolation amongst vulnerable veterans during the Covid pandemic

One is Too Many

£2.13M to 9 projects

This specialist programme funded projects that aim to reduce suicide risks within vulnerable veterans in a co-ordinated and targeted way.

Veterans' Places, Pathways and People

Over £9M to 14 projects

There is significant interconnectivity between these programmes, with learning from the Strategic Pathways programme having influenced the national projects under the VPPP programme.

Positive Pathway projects at a high level of maturity have been able to integrate into the regional portfolios; being part of wider interconnected pathways to ensure that veterans can access support that is right for them.

ABOUT THE ONE IS TOO MANY PROGRAMME

Part of the Veterans' Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund, the One is Too Many programme awarded grants of up to £300,000 to two-year projects that aim to reduce suicide risks within vulnerable veterans in a co-ordinated and targeted way.

Collaborative working is a key element of this programme, with projects required to show they will be likely to reduce suicides in veterans through providing direct support to groups of veterans who are at significant risk of suicide and are not accessing support; or delivering a project that will have a clear and demonstrable impact on suicide prevention through changing how support is offered to save lives.

The Trust awarded £2,135,137 to nine projects across the UK, to organisations who have experience in working with individuals who are at increased risk of suicide.

All applications were reviewed, both internally by the Trust and also by an expert advisor, Professor Alan Finnegan - professor of nursing and military mental health, and also the director of the Westminster Center for Research in Aging Mental Health and Veterans at the University of Chester. Professor Finnegan was able to provide a comprehensive assessment of all applications, whilst also helping to ensure that in them there was no duplication of existing services, considering issues around safeguarding and highlighting real areas of innovation.

Four projects are working to provide support to veterans in the Devolved Nations, and the remaining five have dedicated their support UK-wide.

The approaches taken by the funded organisations all differ. Some are undertaking a partnership approach with another specialist organisation that has experience in suicide prevention. While others have joined forces with NHS partners to share experience, learning and best practice to provide services going forward.

Organisations are also delivering original research activities in order to further understand the journey the veterans are taking, and to encompass this learning into future intervention projects.

In addition to providing our external assessment, Professor Finnegan is the principal investigator for the ongoing programme's evaluation and we look forward to being able to share the findings at the program end.

In March 2023, the Trust held a webinar focusing on the programme, called "Veteran Suicide: One Is Too Many".

A recording of the webinar, plus details of organisations who can help those struggling, can be found on our website at:

www.covenantfund.org.uk/resources/veteran-suicide-one-is-too-many-webinar/

ONE IS TOO MANY
A FUNDING PROGRAMME TO REDUCE VETERAN SUICIDES

9 Projects Awarded
£2.1m
2 Number of years projects funded for

Direct support to veterans at significant risk of suicide, who are not accessing support **OR** Projects with a clear and demonstrable impact on suicide prevention through changing how support is offered to save lives

Northern Ireland
inspire
wellbeing ability recovery

Wales
ADFERIAD RECOVERY

Scotland
NHS Lothian
Forces Employment Charity

UK Wide
ROYAL MARINES CHARITY
theBATON
ssafa The Armed Forces Charity
HMLP for HEROES SUPPORT FOR OUR WOUNDED
Forces Employment Charity



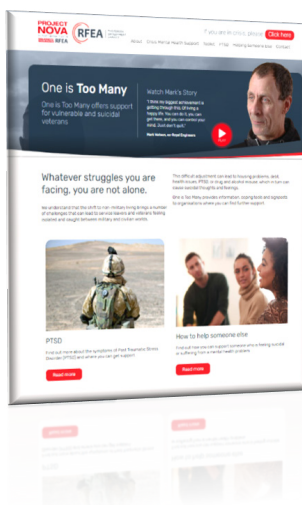
THE FORCES EMPLOYMENT CHARITY

Project Nova - now known as Op Nova

The Forces Employment Charity were awarded £100,000 to deliver Op Nova - reaching more veterans who are at risk of suicide by reaching out to veterans who are in contact with the Police, with the 'One is Too Many' message.

They aim to become a centre of excellence for support to suicidal veterans.

Project Overview from the Organisation



The shift to non-military living brings challenges that can lead to Service leavers and veterans feeling detached and in between military and civilian worlds.

The reality for many is that this can potentially lead to housing problems, debt, health issues, PTSD, or drug and alcohol misuse. One is Too Many seeks to understand these difficulties experienced by vulnerable veterans and how they can lead to suicidal thoughts and feelings, with a focus on those who are not successfully accessing the support that they need.

Funded by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, the project aims to reduce suicide risks within vulnerable ex-Forces personnel in a coordinated and targeted way.

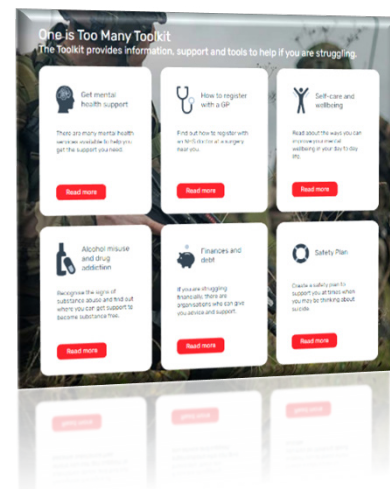
Specialist training has been delivered to nationwide Op Nova teams and police forces. This training looks at the most effective ways to deliver the right support to vulnerable individuals.

One Is Too Many Toolkit

A One is Too Many Toolkit has been developed providing information, support, and tools to help those who are struggling.

Suicide within the military community is a sensitive but important topic that needs to be approached and discussed in an honest, yet supportive way. This programme aims to lead that conversation.

If you feel you want to be a part of that conversation, contact us today.



Email opnova@forcesemployment.org.uk

Secure criminal justice email address for Police, Probation Service and Liaison and Diversion use only: opnova@forcesemployment.cjsm.net
www.forcesemployment.org.uk/programmes/op-nova/

FOR MORE INFORMATION:



SSAFA/ SAMARITANS PARTNERSHIP

In partnership with the Samaritans, SSAFA were awarded £300,000 to produce an ambitious strategy, informed by dedicated scoping, consultation and user research, to maximise combined expertise, knowledge and services to reach veterans in need.

Project Overview from the Organisation

The main aim of this work is to better understand our ways of working, veteran community needs, service gaps and models of partnership in order to establish an ambitious strategy to support those in the Armed Forces community experiencing suicidal ideation.

Through dedicated scoping and consultation, we have explored partnership models to establish best practice in areas such as governance, safeguarding, quality assurance and service delivery.

Through extensive service mapping, evidence review and gap analysis, we have generated proposals across four key areas; research and understanding, training, reach and access, and service delivery to see how we could enhance our support veterans expressing suicidal ideation.

We have contributed to, and participated in, coproduction workshops facilitated by The University of Northumbria's Northern Hub for Veterans and Military Families Research. These workshops have brought together government, statutory, third sector and academia to coproduce a 'model of safety' which, if implemented, will better support vulnerable veterans.

By 31 March 2023, we will have coproduced our own strategy report which outlines proposals across our four key delivery areas. This could then be taken forward by SSAFA and Samaritans as part of a wider partnership.

Flexibility in our approach gives us the ability to incorporate external research and recommendations from fellow One Is Too Many grantees as required.

“Flexibility in our approach gives us the ability to incorporate external research and recommendations from fellow One Is Too Many grantees as required.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

**SSAFA: gary.williams@ssafa.org.uk
Samaritans: military@samaritans.org.uk**



RMA - THE ROYAL MARINES CHARITY

Lifting the Lid

The Royal Marines Charity were awarded £250,250 to build upon the success of their 'Lifting the Lid' campaign. This project embeds community-based support pathways, enhances professional skills and reduces stigma amongst the Corps family through developing best 'prevent and recovery' practice tailored to the unique experience of Royal Marines, encouraging those at risk to engage with services.

Project Overview from the Organisation

RMA – The Royal Marines Charity aims to be the central pillar of the Royal Marines Family, drawing together those who aspire to join, those who serve, those who have served and their families. Our Lifting the Lid campaign, as part of the OITM-funded projects, aims to promote and encourage help-seeking at times of need.

We are championing language such as “Don’t let ‘pride’ prevent asking for help. Remember, it takes a stronger person to know when they require support and to ask for it when needed. Do not suffer in silence, ‘lift the lid’... speak to someone and utilise the support available.”

Recognising the strengths of the Commando values, spirit, and mindset we, as a charity, have set our own standards to mirror those it takes to become a Royal Marine. We aspire to deliver our support to the whole Corps Family in this way.

It is in recognition of the Commando Mindset that we launched this campaign: the Royal Marines cap badge and the Green Beret, our 'Lid's' represent a long and enduring history of flexibility, change and strength. The Royal Marines are frequently praised for their agility, adaptability, and forward-thinking, leading them to be the first to understand, adapt and overcome.

We know that we all need good mental health and wellbeing – it’s essential to living happy and healthy lives, and can help us sleep better, feel better, do the things we want to do and have more positive relationships. It can also help us deal with difficult times in the future.

Through our social media channels, we have created posts and films to promote positive messages regarding health and help-seeking. This includes a series of short videos with the message: ‘what you see of someone on the outside is not necessarily what they are feeling on the inside’. Equipping practitioners and volunteers to understand the unique characteristics of both serving and veteran Royal Marines, and identify their support needs, has also remained a priority.

The social media campaign around 'Lifting the Lid' has been immensely powerful. It has been viewed over 1 million times since its re-launch in 2021, with calls to action referrals, training, and general advice: and we boosted this presence during Mental Health Awareness Week in May (94,013 unique views) and World Suicide Prevention Day in September 2022 (52,659 unique views).

Lifting the Lid will be an enduring message that we will continue to promote to serving, veterans and their families. Danny Egan the Director of Health and Wellbeing for RMA-the Royal Marines Charity says:

“We have learned so much throughout this project; this in turn has driven our own organisational development. My team are better equipped to deal with suicidal ideation, our systems enable us to recognise signs, symptoms and personal stressors that might suggest enhanced risks to beneficiaries and the professional relationships we have forged have created lasting partnerships and collaborations.”



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.rma-trmc.org/wellbeing/mental-health-and-wellbeing/lifting-the-lid/
Launch film - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQQms2B2ebk&t=2s>
YouTube Links: <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/H4Yifi9Qlig>
Talk, listen, hear - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UgmCQBFAFil>



ADFERIAD RECOVERY

Left of Boom

Adferiad Recovery (formerly CAIS), were awarded £285,013 for their 'Left of Boom' project, which will reduce and prevent suicide by vulnerable veterans through providing a bespoke peer mentoring service across Wales, specifically addressing this risk within veterans. The project benefits from Change Step's networks and experience and provides timely interventions to those least likely to access the support they need.

Project Overview from the Organisation

Left of Boom will provide direct assistance to groups of veterans who are at significant risk of suicide and not otherwise accessing support.

When faced with a crisis, staying "Left of Boom" means making proactive decisions, staying ahead of the evolving situation, leading confidently and with purpose. We've adopted this approach by providing support before, during and post crisis and by preemptive responses in responding to need as it arises and at crucial times.

Delivery is led by three Peer Mentors across Wales with specific remits to identify, engage, and support vulnerable veterans at risk of suicide, and to provide coordinated and targeted approaches to promptly reach those at risk quickly. The Peer Mentors offer a range of flexible engagement opportunities that address the needs of the veteran, including face to face, telephone and online video platform interaction.

Alongside us, delivery partners Hafal and Papyrus provide specific expertise.

Hafal enables access to their online CLIC platform that aims to reduce loneliness and isolation through always available, safe, and moderated peer support. Left of Boom will establish forums within this framework specific to military veterans and their families, as well as the wider CLIC community throughout the UK. Users may discuss anything, but most conversation is in the context of mental health.

"Without this service I would have given up"
- Ex Cpl RRW

Papyrus will adapt their existing online materials to the needs of veterans under the age of 35, their families and in particular the children of veterans. These materials will include a self-help package, safety plan, risk assessment and access to a telephone helpline for veterans and their families. They will also lead on planning service user scoping groups to achieve the above.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

roger.lees@adferiad.org
www.adferiad.org.uk/v4p/



INSPIRE

Every Life Matters

Inspire were awarded £300,000 to deliver the 'Every Life Matters' programme. They have taken a proactive, targeted and integrated approach to identify, address and reduce suicidality and concomitant risk factors, combining prevention and intervention using a case-managed, stepped-care delivery model tailored to older Northern Ireland veterans.

Project Overview from the Organisation

The One is Too Many project has been delivered by Inspire within the unique, complex circumstances that exist for veterans in NI. For this special veteran population they must manage the ongoing real and perceived threat to their personal security manifest by hypervigilance, extreme guardedness and mistrust of and reluctance to engage with traditional NHS statutory services. Living in a "post-conflict" society, therefore, adds to the complexity of trust and safety which makes this cohort of NI veterans especially difficult to both identify and engage. It is worth also noting that the mental health needs of the NI general population are at least 25% higher than the rest of the UK.

Our programme meets the twin objectives of the One is Too Many programme. We work collaboratively with a range of stakeholder and partner organisations providing direct targeted support in identifying and assessing at risk veterans and safely case managing them into appropriate treatment to mitigate the risk of suicidality. We also rolled out a programme of suicide awareness training into the veteran community, building the necessary knowledge, skills and experience to ensure that signs of suicide are not missed, dismissed or avoided at any time, thereby reducing potential future suicide levels.

Our programme is structured as follows:

- Awareness raising campaign through local press campaign and psychoeducational newsletters delivered in partnership with the NIVSO and local veteran support groups
- Suicide awareness training adapted for NI veterans and family members over the age of 16; to ensure sustainability we will train a cohort of NI veterans to deliver this suicide awareness training
- Case managed assessment and intervention to target, identify and assess at risk veterans and safely case manage into appropriate treatment to mitigate the risk of suicidality, including:
 - ◇ Psychological therapy
 - ◇ A mindfulness programme
 - ◇ Equine assisted therapy

Each of the intervention programs runs either singularly, adjunctively or sequentially and the veteran is safely case managed through to a planned ending.

Feedback received so far

"I gave the impact a '10' because if I didn't get the support they (Inspire) gave me I would definitely not be here now."

"It's been a different world for me since I've started to talk to Inspire. Since me and you (Inspire Case Manager) were talking and I know you came from a similar background it has given me the sense for the first time it is all going the right direction."

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

**If you are in emotional distress or despair, call Lifeline on 0808 808 8000 and speak to a counsellor immediately
Email hello@inspirewellbeing.org**



**Northumbria
University**
NEWCASTLE

THE BATON

Veteran Suicide: Understand, Identify, Prevent

The Baton were awarded £299,894 to work in partnership with Service families who have been bereaved by suicide. This project will co-produce a foundation of evidence and a model of safety to support other grant holders to develop their services and integrate them with statutory healthcare across the UK, to provide long-term support to reduce suicide.

Project Overview from the Organisation

Over the last 11 years, the Baton's support of its beneficiaries has increased with regards supporting emotional and mental health, whether this is Service-attributed or not.

As a small charity, we are able to offer short-or-medium-term intervention and support. If there is a need to provide long-term support for those veterans who present with mental health issues, we work closely, and in collaboration, with the veteran and their family/carers and other established charities, together with local service providers to establish the most appropriate intervention, whilst assisting with transitions through peer support.

Thanks to One Is Too Many funding, we will co-produce a veteran-specific model of safety and intervention for those at highest risk. We have designed the project in collaboration with military families who have been bereaved by suicide through a series of pre-study focus groups.

The project team will work with 30 families to understand the complex life events which lead to suicide. Our project aims are to:

1. develop an understanding to establish whether suicidal ideation in veterans and serving personnel is any different to that of the general population and identify/explain why
2. co-produce an integrated model of safety which uses a multi-agency approach to identify, manage and reduce the risk of suicide
3. co-produce an intervention model which will assist other OitM grant holders and existing veteran mental health services across the UK to manage those at the highest risk of suicide
4. develop and provide access to the MOD with a nationally recognised expert reference group of families who have experienced the loss of a serving or veteran family member through suicide
5. conduct a post-project study into the aftermath of suicide in military families.

The co-production workshops that have been held across the UK, have culminated in a data set that has been utilised to inform the development of an evidence-based strategy. The strategy is based on a Model of Safety and is accompanied by a comprehensive framework and a toolkit for service providers, including third sector, charities and statutory organisations. The Strategy echoes the voices of the bereaved families who took part in the study and contribution made by representatives from across the Armed Forces sector.

Our pre-study focus groups held with military families who have been bereaved by suicide suggest that veterans and Service personnel face additional pressure when considering mental health crisis and suicidal ideation. These focus groups have identified what information they believe needs to be gathered and understood to develop a meaningful evidence-based and robust solution for the future.

This project is unique in that the families will provide the essential information and data to produce a meaningful, evidence-based intervention/care pathway together with a bespoke risk assessment tool. This work will be the first step in a long road to developing a national veteran suicide prevention policy; however, it will provide the firm evidential foundation on which that journey can begin.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

<https://www.thebaton.co.uk/one-is-too-many-oitm/>



HELP FOR HEROES

Veterans' Suicide Awareness & Self-Help (SASH)

Help for Heroes were awarded £300,000 to change how support for veterans suffering mental health difficulties is accessed. They are empowering families and peers to help save the lives of those at risk of suicide. The project will upskill and educate, facilitating better help-seeking behaviour in at-risk individuals.

Project Overview from the Organisation

Our 'Read between the lines' media campaign ran over Sept-Oct 22 and saw key pieces of coverage on BBC Breakfast, four ITV regional news channels, printed media, an advert and do-good message on Heart Radio as well as an advert on 300 buses in high veteran populated areas. We also had over 150 regional press articles and coverage on 30 regional radio stations.

Alongside this, we ran a large social media campaign across all platforms, including video case studies from veterans and patrons, including key research statistics, myth busting content around suicide and signs to look out for, signposting people to take the online training.

Recovery College Courses

Our new course 'Suicide Awareness and Self-Help: Start the Conversation' was launched in January 22, with two versions: one for families and one for veterans.

We have delivered four sets of each course comprising 3 x 4hr modules. Twenty-six students have completed them, with great feedback from both students and facilitators.

Course information can be found [here](#).

Veterans and their families can register for future course dates by emailing

getsupport@helpforheroes.org.uk

Veterans' Feedback:

"This was a brilliant course and everyone that has done the short ZSA course should follow it up with this one."

"Fantastic course, the facilitators made you feel at ease and delivered, truly meaningful sessions."

"Now more than ever, we need to look out for others that struggle but need to be able to do it in a safe and managed manner - this course provides us with the tools to do exactly that."

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Please contact Sian Rankin, H4H Project Lead at sian.rankin@helpforheroes.org.uk

H4H/Zero Suicide Alliance (ZSA) Awareness Training

Through our partnership with Zero Suicide Alliance (ZSA), we have created a free 30-minute online suicide awareness training module.

Since its launch, our training has been accessed over 7,700 times with over 3,800 people completing the training to date. As well as educating people on how to have a conversation around the difficult topic of suicide, the training is also allowing us to capture valuable data on gender, age, region, connection to the Armed Forces, peoples reason for taking the training and areas of concern for themselves or those they are supporting.

We are seeing that people often have more than one concern and their top four concerns are: mental health, loneliness and isolation, alcohol and substance misuse and sleep issues.

We can also see a perception change when asked the question 'is suicide preventable?' from 94.5% answering 'yes' before the training to 99% after completing the training.

Take the training here: [Suicide Awareness Training | Help For Heroes](#)



Further work

Our Public Affairs team have produced guidance and a factsheet to distribute to local authorities to encourage them to recognise veterans more in local suicide prevention action plans.

We have ongoing dialogue with MPs, local councillors, Local Government Association, NHS Trusts and the MOD. Work will continue across this year to raise awareness and promote the online training and Recovery College courses within networks.



NHS Lothian

ALERT - act together to prevent suicide

NHS Lothian, on behalf of the Scottish Veterans Health and Wellbeing Alliance, received £249,950 to work across the Scottish public and third sector to deliver ALERT.

One of the Alliance partners will play a leading role in this development - the Centre for Military Research, Education and Public Engagement (CMREPE) at Edinburgh Napier University. CMREPE is currently the only military research centre based in a recognised Gold Covenant University working with key military stakeholders across Scotland and internationally through various networks related to veterans' mental health and wellbeing. At the heart of the centre is a multidisciplinary team of academics, practitioners, veterans and military personnel.

Project Overview from the Organisation

Informed by veterans, they will deliver, research, innovate, teach and disseminate evidence-based innovations which support veterans at risk of suicide ensuring a specific focus on veterans who are most at risk, whether that is through identity, interest or place.

To address the key questions of what works for whom in what set of circumstances we will employ a realist evaluation design, with four workstreams, which will contribute significantly to evidence based practice of what works to help prevent suicide and self harm for veterans in Scotland

We will gather data and evaluate this in relation to different interventions. We will then use the responses to examine perceptions of the various interventions offered. Findings will address gaps, positive opportunities to develop and embed interventions, and themes related to perceptions and expectations.

To address the key considerations, we will:

1. Conduct a comprehensive review of the existing literature relating to veterans self-harm and suicidal presentations.
2. Review existing evidence on which monitoring and assessment tools will be used across interventions.
3. Implement adapted Interpersonal Psychotherapy for veterans (IPT-V) and examination of the effectiveness.
4. Examine the effectiveness of existing social prescribing initiatives delivered by the Wellbeing Alliance, including the exploration of engagement techniques and activities to understand the current practices. This will be achieved using questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups of Veterans, Service Providers and Family members.

We will Verify and disseminate key findings across the UK through appreciative inquiry workshops with key stakeholders, veterans, and respondents. Our study will develop a specific evidence based intervention IPT-V which staff across the SVWA will be trained and supervised in to deliver to veterans in Scotland. The IPT-V treatment manual will be developed alongwith on learning resources which will utilise the developing Combat Stress Learning platform.

Through our work, we will be immersed in the lived experiences of those who provide and receive support. Our project will allow us to increase the evidence base of what works for whom and under which set of circumstances, and we will create transferable learning which can be used across the wider UK veteran community veterans at risk at risk of suicide, their families/carers and the wider community, respectful of their human rights.

Finally, we will maximize strategic connectivity across the Scottish landscape by ensuring that key stakeholders leading on the implementation of National Veterans Mental Health Action Plan, the newly published Scottish 10 year suicide prevention plan "Creating Hope Together", "SeeMe" the national anti-stigma and discrimination social movement and the anticipated national Self Harm strategy.

“Through our work, we will be immersed in the lived experiences of those who provide and receive support.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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On behalf of The Armed Forces Covenant Trust Fund we would like to thank all the projects for contributing to this publication.

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