An Independent Evaluation of the SToMP (Supporting Transition of Military Personnel) Project: Phase Two

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Foreword

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The Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Cymru Board reports to the All Wales Criminal Justice Board and is led by HMPPS in Wales and the National Police Chiefs' Council, with representation from a wide range of criminal and social justice partners, including the Welsh Government. It has responsibility for supporting and facilitating the coordinated development and delivery of IOM across Wales, including oversight of the IOM Cymru programme of work.

This evaluation for SToMP phase 2 has been commissioned to reflect upon the continued collective progress of criminal justice and partner agencies in Wales in supporting ex Armed Service Personnel, with the core aim of embedding the work from Phase One, to establish sustainable and connected services for the future and being integrated within routine services. I would like to extend my thanks to the Armed Forces Covenant who have continued to part fund the SToMP project.

We recognise the processes of identification and access to support are intrinsically linked, and that service users may be more likely to disclose if 'the question' is directly asked and we continue to identify and remove the barriers faced by both practitioners and service users.

Through our collective efforts the production of videos highlighting the experiences of ex-armed service personnel in the criminal justice system has provided a beneficial resource to staff. This is alongside the branded materials visible and utilised at police custody, courts, probation offices and prisons which alert all to the ex-armed service personnel specific support and empowering those who do not wish to publicly disclose.

The challenges in the ways of working during the pandemic have seen all be flexible and embrace a new virtual world, which has led to more direct contact with Offender Managers across probation services and, as a result, an increase in direct referrals. Prisons have been making direct referrals to service charities with support from the SToMP project also during the pandemic.

I am so proud of the achievements of the IOM Cymru partners and specialist ex-Armed Service providers and thank all agencies for their continued support with this important work.

Nic Davies

Contents

Background of SToMP in Wales

The SToMP (Supporting Transition of Military Personnel) project has taken place with two phases of funding: Phase One covering 2016 – 2019 and Phase Two taking place 2019 – 2020.

Phase One

Phase One began in 2016 with a substantial grant from the Covenant fund, awarded through Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). The project was funded with two core aims: 1) to design and develop a whole-system approach for ex-ASP throughout the Criminal Justice System (CJS) across Wales, and 2) to provide strategic oversight to encourage collaborative, multi-agency work and avoid duplication. This initial funding covered Phase One of the project from September 2016 to April 2019. Throughout the 2016-19 period, financed by the initial grant, the SToMP project employed four full-time staff members seconded from other areas of the CJS: two Prison Liaison Officers (PLOs), a project manager and a business support officer. The role of the PLOs was to work directly with service users and staff on the ground, predominantly in prisons in Wales but also in probation and police forces. As the SToMP project was bid for by, and operates within, IOM Cymru (IOMC), the project is overseen by a Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) on behalf of the IOMC board. This individual leads the project and is responsible for successful completion of objectives. While the SRO is ultimately accountable to the board, they monitor project delivery and provide strategic leadership throughout its duration. In addition to the core team of employed staff, SToMP's strategic level work has been supported by a multi-agency steering committee and two main sub committees for the police and prison services.

As part of Phase One, SToMP commissioned several research reports:

- 2017: Supporting the Transition of Military Personnel (SToMP): Ex-armed service personnel, healthy relationships and domestic abuse: A qualitative study. Madoc-Jones, Lloyd Jones & Owen (Wrexham Glyndwr University)
- 2018: The Barriers to Disclosure and Access to Specialist Services for Ex-Armed Services Personnel in the Criminal Justice System in Wales: An Independent Evaluation. Davies & Davies (Swansea University)
- 2019: An Independent Evaluation of the SToMP (Supporting Transition of Military Personnel) Project. Davies & Davies (Swansea University)

The independent evaluation of the SToMP project was commissioned to assess inputs, impacts and to provide recommendations for future work. This mixed methods evaluation included data derived from the

Identification report (Davies & Davies, 2019a), as well as additional secondary data. At the time of writing that evaluation, SToMP had not yet secured additional funding and therefore recommendations were provided to be applicable to different services irrespective of SToMP's ongoing involvement. The majority of these recommendations pertained to the need for enhanced data recording and monitoring across the CJS and the third sector. While the Phase One evaluation highlighted areas of service inputs and developments, data for examining impact were not routinely collected and consequently recommendations were made to resolve this for future impact evaluations.

Phase Two

In February 2019, the SToMP project received funding for a further two years (April 2019 – Dec 2020; subsequent 3 month extension due to Covid-19, until March 2021) with the core aim of embedding the work from Phase One, to establish sustainable and connected services for the future. This was, in part, informed by the independent evaluation of Phase One.

As part of the intention to move to SToMP being integrated within routine services, reductions in staffing resource have taken place. At the time of writing (April 2020), one of the PLOs has begun to work part-time and the other was requested to return to his previous role in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the SRO had moved to a new post, with the SToMP project manager now filling that role on an interim basis alongside managing the project. More widely, the reunification in Wales of the Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRC) and the National Probation Service (NPS) took place in December 2019, leading to additional challenges to continuity. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic the SToMP team have continued to work across the CJS and service charities throughout the crisis by offering remote support.

As part of this planned ending of SToMP as a specialist, co funded project, this report was commissioned to provide a second, brief evaluation of the progress of Phase Two. This has specific reference to the recommendations made in the Phase One evaluation; with the aim of helping to guide the final stages of the project and how any good practice can be embedded.

Aims

The overarching questions addressed within this report are:

1. To what extent has the SToMP project implemented the recommendations made in the Phase One independent evaluation?
2. a. To what extent has SToMP's work been embedded within routine services and
   b. What are the barriers to the continuation of this?

Report Structure

The main body of the report will be structured around previous recommendations provided as part of the Phase One evaluation of the SToMP project. These will be discussed in terms of if, and how, they have been met and whether any additional work is needed in the future. As per the Phase One evaluation, specific recommendations will be structured by sector. Recommendations relevant across sectors and / or those made directly to the SToMP project will then be discussed, followed by a general conclusion and directions for the future.

Method

This report is based on data provided by the SToMP team in relation to the project's working to date, with a particular focus on data covering November 2019 to June 2020. This has included minutes from meetings and email updates including data summaries and information on service delivery. This has been supplemented by additional data from other sources (e.g. arrest data from police forces) where this is available.

Recommendations from the Phase One evaluation will be discussed throughout however we provide them here for clarity, alongside SToMP's self-reported achievements during Phase Two.

Summary of Recommendations from the Phase One evaluation report:

POLICE

► SToMP should continue to work with the police to ensure that the question '*have you ever served in the armed forces?*' is asked and recorded as part of the booking in procedure across the four forces.

► Data recording should include information on

    o ASP status (current or previous service)

    o Signposting rates

    o Referral rates (and to whom)

    o Number of leaflets / cards distributed

► Deliver appropriate training / support to front line staff and especially custody sergeants.

► Consider researching the perceived issues of ex-ASP status in relation to sentencing.

PRISON

► The planned review of staffing use and provision in relation to SToMP within prisons should be used as an opportunity to gather data to determine the level of ex-ASP dedicated resources needed and their impact. This would also enable a formalised economic evaluation of SToMP and ex-ASP specific services within Welsh prisons to be conducted.

► There is a need for improved data recording and monitoring regarding ex-ASP referrals, needs, use of (specialist) services and any impact on reoffending. It is essential that steps are taken to develop and use systems to collect such data.

► SToMP could be leading the way in monitoring and championing equity of services for ex-ASP cross the board (e.g. by age, offence type, ethnicity and location)

► As part of its second funded phase, SToMP may wish to consider how the VICSO role could become fully embedded within routine services. This may require collaborative discussion and / or individualised plans based on feedback from each institution. In-line with this, SToMP could continue to help facilitate the sharing of best practice between establishments (e.g. VICSOs visiting veterans' coffee mornings in other prisons).

PROBATION

► The equity of services needs to be examined to ensure no service users are disadvantaged (e.g. by location)

► Embedding knowledge and procedures needs to continue so that champions can work independently. This includes refining the information which is provided re meetings and events to ensure appropriate prioritisation.

► A dynamic information database of local and national resources could be created, that could be edited in real time to ensure ongoing relevance

► An ongoing audit of probation offices / approved premises should be introduced to show where and why the question *'have you ever served in the armed forces'* is being asked and recorded as part of formalised paperwork

► Improved data recording is needed to know where identification has occurred (i.e. pre-identified in prison or again/first time at probation) and which services people are being referred to

COLLABORATION

► The work on the needs assessment form and the processes for recording / sharing information needs to continue and be appropriately evaluated.

► Work to enhance collaboration between statutory agencies and the third sector should continue. To achieve this, SToMP may wish to consider the use of anonymous feedback; focus groups and strategic meetings to understand operational barriers and how these can be addressed

► Ways to develop service user involvement need to continue especially for strategy level meetings. This should build upon the achievements already made in this area.

► Data recording and monitoring mechanisms are needed to evaluate how multi-agency support is being coordinated

DATA

► Data collection must be improved to enable ongoing monitoring and evaluation. The current lack of empirical evidence, particularly longitudinally, means that it is very difficult to formally assess the impact of the project or of the other services for ex-ASP within the CJS.

► Improve data collection and monitoring procedures to permit economic evaluation of both SToMP and specialised ex-ASP provision across the CJS. Particular assessment of staff costs, with a view to how SToMP's services could be embedded within existing structures

► Improved data collection and monitoring practices to enable easily conducted, ongoing evaluation of SToMP and its impacts

► Consideration of how to embed existing good practice and create consistent, sustainable services for ex-ASP across the CJS should be a major part of SToMP's next phase.

SToMP's self-reported key achievements for Phase Two To date[1]

- Consistent access to ex service personnel specific support helplines in the Welsh estate.
- Developed a monthly data report disseminated to all our stakeholders to monitor the increasing identification and address needs.
- Commenced a programme of briefings aimed at empowering service charities to work with offenders.
- A briefing to service charities; working with people who commit sexual offences briefing.
- Evaluation of briefing to service charities; working with people who commit sexual offences briefing.
- A briefing to service charities; working with people with personality disorders.
- Evaluation of briefing to service charities; working with people with personality disorders
- Remembrance Day Communication campaign/ awareness raising.
- VE Communication campaign/ awareness raising
- Mental health scoping exercise on links and referrals between custody and community mental health and veterans NHS wales.
- VICSO hours business case for profiled hours.
- SToMP held an event where HM Prison and Probation Service in Wales (HMPPS) in partnership with G4S, police forces and the MoD, publicly signed the Armed Forces Covenant.
- Linking and awareness between DV services and EX ASP service charities
- Information pack on criminal justice in Wales, specifically for the Defence Transition Service
- Timeline map for identification in police custody
- Timeline map for identification in prison

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[1] Thanks to Lisa McKenna for providing this summary of SToMP activity over the period to April 2020

Phase Two Evaluation Findings

Police

Context

As part of Phase One of the SToMP project, a specific police subgroup was formed made up senior staff from each of the Welsh forces who were leading on ex-ASP issues. This group's mission statement was "*To work jointly to provide support to Welsh ex Armed Service Personnel (hereafter known as ex ASPs) who find themselves in police custody following arrest or bail return, to enable them to receive the best support available.*" (see Appendix B). The Phase One evaluation showed the police sub-group meetings to be largely well attended and forces to be engaged. However, this was juxtaposed with findings from the Identification Report, which highlighted that many police staff did not consider identification of ex-ASP as necessary, believing that ex-ASP would self-identify; these views tended to be held in the police forces where the question '*have you ever served in the armed forces*' was not routinely asked. This appeared to lead to a cyclical dynamic in which the lack of detainees identifying as ex-ASP reinforced ideas that asking about military history was unnecessary. The report therefore highlighted the potential importance of this question being routinely asked by some forces.

Despite enthusiastic engagement in Phase One, Phase Two engagement has been more varied including a subgroup meeting being cancelled due to low attendance. However, a change of staff within two forces in March/April 2020, and the project manager taking over the chair of the police workstream saw engagement with ex-ASP issues and the SToMP project significantly increase. Representatives have actively engaged from the four force areas, and there has been discussion of current gaps in identification alongside agreements to work collaboratively to close these. Clearly this is promising, however it is critical that practice and procedures are fully embedded to ensure momentum is maintained.

FINDINGS / PROGRESS

PHASE ONE RECOMMENDATION:

► SToMP should continue to work with the police to ensure that the question '*have you ever served in the armed forces?*' is asked and recorded as part of the booking in procedure across the four forces.

The Phase One evaluation highlighted the disparity between the one force where 'the question' was asked as part of the formalised booking procedure and the others where it was not: the rate of identified ex-ASP

was 6.6% in the force where it was asked and 0.1 % and 0.2 % in the forces where it wasn't (Davies and Davies, 2019). There have been no changes to this, and Force A remains the only force where those arrested are routinely asked if they have ever served in the armed forces. For the current evaluation phase, data were only available from two forces as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Arrest data in relation to ex-ASP across two police forces in Wales

Police Force	% ex-ASP of total arrests		Question formalised?
	2018/2019	2019/2020	
Force A	6.6	6.1	Yes
Force B	0.1	0.1	No

Since 2019, Force A have developed a specialised diversion scheme for ex-ASP and Force B are hoping to introduce a similar model. It is worth noting that Force A appears to be increasing its engagement with ex-ASP issues as a direct consequence of their data which clearly indicates the high number of ex-ASP they receive. To this end, Force A is now in the process of investigating if any of these data can be linked to longitudinal information regarding re-offending rates. This provides an excellent example of how data recording and monitoring is essential to ongoing service delivery (in relation to ex-ASP and in other areas). As emphasised in the Phase One evaluation, using data to drive decision making is key to developing, implementing and sustaining service change and best practice.

While SToMP has continued to encourage identification and signposting, this situation does not seem to have gained much traction over the last year – perhaps largely due to the reported difficulty of making changes to centralised computer systems. Certainly SToMP should continue to highlight the difference in the number of reported ex-ASP in custody within Force A – where the question is asked as part of the routine booking procedure – and the other forces where it is not.

► Data recording should include information on

- o ASP status (current or previous service)
- o Signposting rates
- o Referral rates (and to whom)
- o Number of leaflets / cards distributed

Data recording continues to be limited in these areas and consequently, SToMP have responded by promoting the need for ex-ASP 'champions' at each of the custody suites across the different regions.   In addition, publicity in the form of posters and leaflets has been promoted to signpost ex-ASP in custody suites to specialist services. However there are no data at present as to the effect of this strategy on self-referral to services.   It is notable that Force A, who have introduced an identification question and a diversion scheme pilot, do not have a specific champion as part of SToMP. This may provide an example of a service in which action in relation to ex-ASP individuals is embedded in planning and delivery.

► Deliver appropriate training / support to front line staff and especially custody sergeants.

Videos[2] produced by SToMP to raise awareness of ex-ASP specific issues within the CJS have been made available on the four police force's staff pages. These feature short interviews with staff and service users to highlight the challenges faced within this population and provide useful context and case studies. This may encourage custody staff to be more engaged with ex-ASP issues (e.g. to consider an arrested individual's military service history) and encourage engagement with ex-ASP initiatives at a more senior level. Whilst these provide a potentially helpful starting point, consideration should be given to supplementing these with evidence and information regarding how identification at the point of arrest may benefit ex-ASP in the future (particularly in terms of reoffending).

It is recognised that some individuals may disclose ex-ASP status to custody nurses and, where relevant, mental health teams, rather than to the police, SToMP plans to also deliver virtual awareness training for these frontline staff.

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[2] These videos can be found at: https://www.iomcymru.org.uk/SToMP

► Consider researching the perceived issues of ex-ASP status in relation to sentencing.

The Identification Report showed that one tangible factor negatively impacting disclosure of ex-ASP status was a concern that to do so would result in harsher sentencing at court. Unfortunately, the funds available for the core SToMP project did not include funding for specific research into this issue. However, the need to better understand the possible reasons for non-disclosure; and to examine whether the impact of ex-ASP status on sentencing (or any other concern) may be supported by evidence remain relevant.

The Identification Report also recommended that SToMP strengthen relationships with court staff (Davies & Davies, 2019). Since September 2019, an ex-ASP 'champion' role within the courts has been developed as a named point of contact. At court or during induction, the service user can inform the court staff or Offender Manager via the Equality Monitoring form of their ex-ASP status. This information is subsequently recorded on Deluis and used to informs the data report. Data on the effectiveness of this process in identifying individuals should be closely monitored with particular attention to any unexpected differences between sites.

Summary

There has been no change in which forces ask the question *'have you ever served in the armed forces'* as part of the booking-in procedure, although the evidence continues to indicate that this may make the single biggest difference to identification rates in police custody. SToMP has worked to raise general awareness of ex-ASP issues across the forces through video-based training and to embed 'champions' in each of the custody suites. While useful, the evidence from the previous reports (Davies & Davies, 2019a; Davies & Davies, 2019b) suggests that ensuring processes and procedures are embedded in routine practice is essential and that data need to be collected and reported to quantify and qualify their impact and value.

Final recommendation: *SToMP should continue to assist in the championing of data recording and monitoring, in terms of both identification and signposting. Moving forward particular attention should be paid to the impacts of these initiatives such as service referral and uptake and ultimately links to reoffending.*

Prisons

Phase One of the SToMP project paid particular attention to developing services in prisons and this appears to be where the most robust infrastructure for ex-ASP remains. Identification rates have remained at around 3.7% for ex-ASP in custody over the last year. Regular coffee mornings for ex-ASPs are still held at each prison and a number of service charities continue to routinely attend these.

The annual report for the Chief Inspectorate of Prisons for England and Wales included data from an *anonymous* survey of 5845 prisoners and showed 4% of BAME prisoners and 8% of white prisoners report having served in the armed forces (HMI of Prisons, 2018). This indicates that identification in prisons covered by the SToMP project remains lower than the inspectorate estimate. It would be helpful to understand the reasons for this (e.g. regional variation) and to ensure that the potential additional 2.3%-4.3% who disclose anonymously (the method used in the inspectorate report) disclose using the existing methods available to them within Wales

SToMP pathways to identification within prisons are fully embedded across institutions in Wales and, following a steep increase in identification rates during the project's inception, rates of identification have not changed over time. This indicates that SToMP may have done everything they can to encourage disclosure and it may be the case that there will remain individuals who choose not to publicly identify. What is important within this is that these individuals are, as far as is possible, not disadvantaged in their access to specialist services through this choice.

PHASE ONE RECOMMENDATIONS:

► The planned review of staffing use and provision in relation to SToMP within prisons should be used as an opportunity to gather data to determine the level of ex-ASP dedicated resources needed and their impact. This would also enable a formalised economic evaluation of SToMP and ex-ASP specific services within Welsh prisons to be conducted.

► As part of its second funded phase, SToMP may wish to consider how the VICSO role could become fully embedded within routine services. This may require collaborative discussion and / or individualised plans based on feedback from each institution. In-line with this, SToMP could continue to help facilitate the sharing of best practice between establishments (e.g. VICSOs visiting veterans' coffee mornings in other prisons).

The role of the VISCO has been actively promoted through SToMP and has included the submission of a business case in December 2019 for specifically profiled hours for VICSO staff (see Appendix C). This scoping provides a clear outline of the VICSO role and its potential value. At the time of writing (April 2020) there is one dedicated full-time staff member at one prison with such an allocation. In all other prisons, the hours available for VISCO work were deemed insufficient to complete the role or were inconsistently allocated (see appendix D). Having scoped the provision needed, it is now necessary to gather data to demonstrate the impacts of VICSO staff on ex-ASP wellbeing and ultimately on reoffending. This is likely to require additions to the role specification (to include time for data collection and collation) and / or a plan for this to be achieved independently. As outlined in the previous identification report, absence of robust outcome data and / or an economic analysis may a) negatively impact the incentive for prisons to formalise this role, and b) limit the conclusions that can be drawn about the impacts (positive or negative) such a role might have. This is likely to be important beyond SToMP as this has the potential to provide learning relevant to creating specialist roles for other purposes or with other specific groups.

PHASE ONE RECOMMENDATION:

► There is a need for improved data recording and monitoring regarding ex-ASP referrals, needs and use of services and very little follow-up data to show whether the use of specialist services has any impact on reoffending. It is essential that steps are taken to develop and use systems to collect such data.

The development and implementation of recording and monitoring systems to enable the systematic collection, collation and reporting of data remains to be addressed. This continues to be essential in order to inform how statutory services make best use of their resources and to understand the quantity and quality of input from other agencies (e.g. military charities). This will also help ensure service provision is comprehensive, coherent and impactful across these services.

PHASE ONE RECOMMENDATION:

► SToMP could be leading the way in monitoring and championing equity of services for ex-ASP across the board (e.g. by age, offence type, ethnicity and location)

This recommendation was made with particular reference to the findings from the Identification Report, which showed that ex-ASP services may not be equal for all in prisons. This appeared to be particularly the case for women; those with sexual convictions; and those who may not choose to identify as ex-ASP.

As there is no women's prison in Wales, Phase Two has seen SToMP build links with prisons in England from which women residing in Wales are usually released. Awareness session training has also been provided to all co-ordinators. Given the much smaller numbers of ex-ASP women, there remains a need to develop a clear understanding (from SToMP or other sources) about how female ex-ASP needs may differ and how these might best be met. Having begun to map female-specific provision, the existing links with the women's pathfinder project within Wales, forces charities and direct input from service users in this group would be ways to take this forward.

In an effort to raise awareness and reduce stigma for those convicted of sexual offences, SToMP delivered a workshop for CJS and service charity staff in conjunction with the Divisional Sexual Offending Unit, National Probation Service. The purpose was to increase participants' understanding of the needs of this population. While places filled quickly, attendance was reportedly lower on the day. Feedback from the workshops was very positive with attendees citing that the workshops had changed the way they thought about those individuals with sexual convictions. This would appear to be an area of good practice and SToMP may wish to consider how these workshops could be rolled out to wider audience.

The focus on embedding specific 'pathways' to identification of ex-ASP for each prison led to an initial increase in identification rates which has remained stable over time. However as noted earlier, this rate may be lower than the actual rate of ex-ASP individuals within the prison system (see above). The subsequent introduction of materials to alert all prisoners to the ex-ASP specific support helplines in the Welsh estate may reach some of those who do not wish to publicly disclose. It is essential that access and use of this service is evaluated to ensure that it fulfils the functions it was established to meet. In addition, it would be useful for SToMP to work with the prisons to try to reach this population (e.g. through anonymous surveys) to better understand the needs of these individuals and to ensure that those individuals who chose not to publicly disclose their ex-ASP status are not disadvantaged due to this.

PHASE ONE RECOMMENDATION:

- ► The work on the need's assessment form and the processes for recording / sharing information needs to continue and be appropriately evaluated.

SToMP continues to champion the use of the Hardfacts form to record ex-ASP needs in prisons and the agencies they are connected with however the extent of its use and the quality of the information captured within it needs to be assessed. As outlined our Phase One evaluation it is also essential to establish ways for

this information to be appropriately stored and formally shared in addition to any verbal information sharing that might take place. Routine use of such a form would provide a simple mechanism to collect valuable data about needs and potentially service signposting and use.

Summary

SToMP has embedded a number of processes (e.g. identification) and supports (e.g. coffee mornings) across the prisons within Wales. However, the challenge of ensuring that routine formal processes for data recording and monitoring are in place continues. Consequently, quantifying the impact of specialist ex-ASP provision in prisons is limited to case examples and practice descriptions.

Final recommendation: *SToMP should continue to ensure the prison processes they have established are embedded in practice and continue to work to ensure equity. The need to focus on data collection, monitoring, reporting and linking to outcomes / impact and economic analysis remains.*

Probation

Phase One data (April 2019) and Phase Two data (Feb 2020) show there has been no change in the number of identified ex-ASP on community caseloads over the last 10 months, with the number remaining close to 3% of the total caseload.
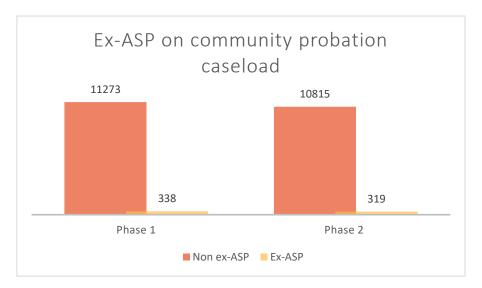

Figure 1: Non ex-ASP and ex-ASP on probation within the community

PHASE ONE RECOMMENDATION:

► The equity of services needs to be examined to ensure no service users are disadvantaged (e.g. by location).

The February 2020 data report from SToMP showed there to be 15 ex-ASP champions recruited by SToMP across probation offices in Wales. As of June 2020, this increased to 28 following action by the SToMP project manager to address some of the service gaps. With the champions in place, SToMP intends to provide staff awareness sessions and has used Microsoft teams to share information with champions at a national and local level. Nevertheless, with 47 probation offices across Wales, there are still a large proportion of offices without this provision. However, it is also important to balance this against the number of ex-ASPs within any one office (estimated at around seven per office, based on the number identified divided by the number of offices). Consequently it may be of greater benefit to look at implementing a model of 'cross office' or Local Delivery Unit (LDU) level champions rather than further office level recruitment. This could provide greater oversight of the number of ex-ASP accessing services but also assist in the ongoing bridging of communication between SToMP and higher-level decision makers.

As part of Phase Two, SToMP published a Memorandum of Understanding for both them and ex-ASP champions to adhere too (see appendix E). Within this document, there is an obligation to *"evaluate the impact of the ex-ASP champion role"*. It is vital that appropriate evaluation methods are put in place to ensure this intention can be rigorously met. Given that some offices have champions whilst others do not, there exists a naturally created opportunity to assess the impact of this role.

PHASE ONE RECOMMENDATIONS:

► Embedding knowledge and procedures needs to continue so that champions can work independently. This includes refining the information which is provided re meetings and events to ensure appropriate prioritisation.

► A dynamic information database of local and national resources could be created, that could be edited in real time to ensure ongoing relevance.

A particularly significant development in this area has been the introduction of an app from the Veterans' Gateway, which provides a list of local services for ASP and ex-ASP depending on their location[3]. While not attributable to the SToMP project, they can be accessed by staff and service users. Such resources also reduce the burden on the SToMP project to develop and maintain their own information about available services and means that ex-ASP champions are more easily able to access relevant information. In addition to this, more succinct updates and resources are produced by SToMP and shared with champions using Microsoft teams.   This approach to service information sharing is likely to aid probation champions to operate most effectively within this role, through reducing the volume of email update information; something champions previously reported as sometime difficult to prioritise (Davies & Davies, 2019a). The SToMP team may wish to monitor engagement with and the impact of these resources.

PHASE ONE RECOMMENDATION

► An ongoing audit of probation offices / approved premises should be introduced to show where and why the question '*have you ever served in the armed forces'* is being asked and recorded as part of formalised paperwork

► Improved data recording is needed to know where identification has occurred (i.e. pre-identified in prison or again/first time at probation) and which services people are being referred to

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[3] More information can be found at https://support.veteransgateway.org.uk/app/answers/detail/a_id/820

An audit of the use of the identification question within probation teams, and actions resulting from this, remains a useful piece of work given the reintegration of CRC and NPS and the impacts COVID-19 have had on service design and delivery. This could help to set standards for best practice across Wales and determine where and how these are being met.   In addition to examining whether service users are being asked if they have ever served in the armed forces, it would be helpful to routinely check which (if any) additional services they are connected with (particularly for those entering probation from a custodial sentence). Gathering and using such data would help track what support is being offered, by which services and to whom; it could also contribute to answering the wider question of the impact of these inputs.   As has been commented on throughout this report, the issues highlighted here regarding data recording and monitoring are not exclusive to probation services.

Summary

The landscape of ex-ASP identification has remained stable over time with fluctuations in the number of champions across probation services. Alongside this, the development of the online resource by the Veterans Gateway Consortium is a significant achievement and should aid the work of probation staff as well as other criminal justice agencies. There is a need to develop a strategy for evaluating the impact of the probation champions in relation to activities such as identification, information sharing and signposting.

Final recommendation: SToMP should continue to develop their strategy for ex-ASP identification and support across probation and monitor the impact of future awareness training on staff. The increase in the number of champions provides an opportunity to consider the most effective model for linking champions to offices, however this also requires data to be collected to measure the impact of this role. Developing and introducing methods of data recording and monitoring is also needed to inform strategy and to determine the impact of the involvement of third sector services.

Cross sector recommendations

Here we will address the progress of the more general recommendations made in the Phase One evaluation, as well as the points from this report that are relevant across sectors and to the SToMP project as a whole.

PHASE ONE RECOMMENDATION:

► Work to enhance collaboration between statutory agencies and the third sector should continue. To achieve this, SToMP may wish to consider the use of anonymous feedback; focus groups and strategic meetings to understand operational barriers and how these can be addressed

SToMP has continued to try and work collaboratively across third sector and statutory agencies. The main point of contact for this is the SToMP quarterly steering group meetings, to which representatives from the CJS, specialist charities; governmental agencies and academia are invited. Attendance and engagement from across sectors were relatively strongly when the project began and have notably lessened over the last three years; particularly in terms of attendance from the CJS and specialist charities, who are the most directly involved with SToMP's work. Forty-one agencies are on the invitee list for the steering group (above and beyond SToMP staff) representing seven government agencies; four police forces; six prisons; AFLOs (Army Family Liaison Officer) from five regions; 15 service charities and four representatives from the police and crime commissioner's office. As noted in the SToMP Phase One evaluation, 16 of the 41 agencies invited have only attended one meeting or fewer. It could be useful to consider which agencies may need to be core attendees and which could be included on a 'for information' list, or when specific items appear on a meeting agenda.
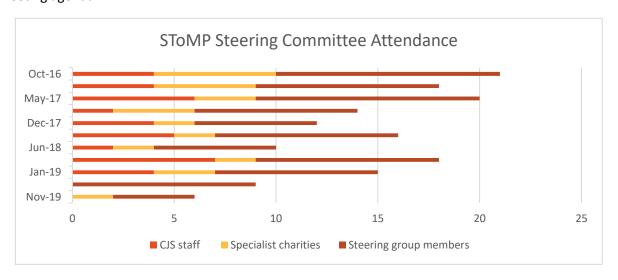

Figure 2: SToMP steering committee attendance over three years[4]

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[4] AFLO attendance not included. These members were only invited in 2019 and, over the three years, five attended one meeting and two another. Thus for the purposes of clarity, they were not included here.

Due to low attendance across the prison and police subgroups and the main steering committee, SToMP merged these meetings into a 'conference' type half day meeting, where best practice could be shared across sectors. The first meeting of this type was scheduled for 18th May 2020 however, given the coronavirus pandemic, it was held as a teleconference.   Attendance comprised one representative from each prison and police force; one representative from probation services and three representatives from service charities, and consequently the meeting was reduced to 45 minutes (from an original plan of 2-4 hours).

A previous request by SToMP for (non-anonymised) feedback from invitees, indicated that finances and staff time were core reasons for waning attendance. This was despite SToMP already offering a teleconference option for those who are not able to attend in person. In order for the meeting structure to be most effective it may be useful for SToMP to further revisit the terms of reference, the core meeting(s) agenda and invitee list(s) (see above). It is recognised that funding priorities and targets can all impact, therefore it may be useful to collect anonymised data from invitees / previous attendees to ensure that all possible reasons for not attending are considered including the competing priorities these representatives may have. Addressing these points (ToR, agenda, core attendees, reasons for non-attendance) may aid in ensuring consistency of engagement with those considered key members of the SToMP project

PHASE ONE RECOMMENDATION

► Ways to develop service user involvement need to continue especially for strategy level meetings.

The need for service user engagement has been recognised by SToMP and the project manager has become involved in HMPPS led service user engagement strategy groups. Additionally, the production of videos highlighting the experiences of ex-ASP in the CJS as engagement has provided beneficial resources to staff and may have empowered service users.   However, seeking ways to involve service user representatives in shaping and informing the strategic direction of SToMP should be pursued. It is recognised that there are challenges associated with this (e.g. the service being designed as a strategic brokering project not intending to have direct service user involvement; the impact of the London Bridge murders during an engagement event, 2019; the impact of COVID-19), however this could provide an opportunity to inform strategy and delivery. As SToMP is a member of the national service user involvement group, it may be possible to use this forum to support this.   This could include direct service user involvement in (parts of) the steering group, or mechanisms for questions and ideas to be channelled from service users to the steering group for

response. Further, engagement with specific service user groups (e.g. ex-ASP women) could be particularly useful when addressing specific issues.

► Data recording and monitoring mechanisms are needed to evaluate how multi-agency support is being coordinated

► Improve data collection and monitoring procedures to permit economic evaluation of both SToMP and specialised ex-ASP provision across the CJS. Particular assessment of staff costs, with a view to how SToMP's services could be imbedded within existing structures

► Improved data collection and monitoring practices to enable easily conducted, ongoing evaluation of SToMP and its impacts

► Consideration of how to embed existing good practice and create consistent, sustainable services for ex-ASP across the CJS should be a major part of SToMP's next phase.

Core recommendation:

► **Data collection must be improved to enable ongoing monitoring and evaluation. The current lack of empirical evidence, particularly longitudinally, means that it is very difficult to formally assess the impact of the project or of many other services for ex-ASP within the CJS.**

We have grouped these recommendations as they address core issues of data collection and reporting, service monitoring and embedding good practice and processes.

Following the Phase One evaluation, SToMP began to circulate a monthly data report regarding ex-ASP based on data from NDelius. This report includes data regarding the total number of identified ex-ASP; their 'location' (custody and community teams); numbers of ex-ASP per Welsh prison and the identified needs of ex-ASP compared to non-ASP from the standard needs assessment form. Such information is a useful starting point, however in order to collect data to directly inform strategic development, we again recommend an extended template such as that proposed for SToMP information recording from the Phase One evaluation:

- **Demographics**: Age; gender; ethnicity
- **Military service:** Branch; service length; date left; reason for leaving
- **Needs:** e.g. mental health; housing; accommodation; relationships; drugs etc
- **Referrals:** a record of all referrals to which organisations
- **Engagement:** is the service user engaging/attending? If not, why not?
- **Outcomes** from service engagement (e.g. access to housing, resources, specialist support)
- **Offending behaviour:** record of index offence; record of any reoffending

Of these domains, the SToMP data report contains demographics and information relating to needs. As previously commented, the needs information may be particularly informative in tailoring services to ex-ASP to ensure relevance. It may be that there are lessons that can be drawn from the ways in which Police Force A has collected and used data to inform their decision making in relation to ex-ASP provision and the development of their diversion scheme pilot.

Changes in ways of working during the pandemic have led the SToMP team to alter the way they report and use data. One particularly beneficial addition to the monthly data report has been the number of ex-ASP being added to caseloads and the number of cases closed. This provides a much more dynamic picture of ex-ASP within the CJS, as opposed to reporting absolute numbers every month. In addition to this, as the team are necessarily less mobile, they have started making direct contact with OMs who have recorded as service user as ex-ASP to ask if they require any additional support. Regardless of the pandemic restrictions, this may be a more sustainable and cost-effective way of working in the future.

We still deem the original recommendations for data recording and monitoring to be relevant and important. We would also recommend not solely reporting absolute numbers of identified ex-ASP but instead including detail of the 'flow' to distinguish between those already identified and those newly identified, in addition to where identification occurred.

Additional progress

In addition to work undertaken in relation to the previous recommendations, SToMP has undertaken several additional pieces of work that have added value to the project.

Mental health service provision

The Identification Report highlighted a lack of knowledge amongst both staff and service users in relation to mental health provision for ex-ASP in prisons. In Nov 2019, the SToMP project conducted a scoping exercise

in collaboration with the Welsh prison estate to provide a clearer picture of these services. In addition to the possibility of commissioning PTSD services for all prisoners, the possible capacity of NHS Veterans Wales to expand their services to include custody was also discussed. While it is clearly important that individuals with this diagnosis receive appropriate care, what remains unclear is the proportion of ex-ASP in custody who have PTSD and therefore the cost implications of service expansion. As highlighted in the previous report, the nature of the PTSD treatments offered by NHS Veterans Wales may also not be appropriate to be delivered in a custody setting and changes to intervention delivery may be needed. However it may be difficult to know how services are best able to do this without knowing the level of need. If such a service was to be provided solely to ex-ASP with service attributable PTSD, there would need to be data-driven evidence for why this was occurring specifically for this cohort and not for others with the same diagnosis and a different history.

SToMP also identified that more general mental health awareness was needed, alongside more coordinated working between Welsh government, HMPPS and secondary mental health services. This therefore served as a good example of SToMP encouraging an all systems approach to ex-ASP service provision.

Domestic violence and ex-ASP

As discussed in the introduction, SToMP commissioned an academic report on domestic violence committed by ex-ASP individuals (Madoc-Jones et al, 2017).   Last year this work was progressed through beginning to build connections between the domestic violence services and armed forces charities. This has included developing a relationship with the charity Relate in order to improve education around healthy relationships for ex-ASP. SToMP has also started to build connections with the Welsh government.

Changes to working during the Coronavirus pandemic

Physical distancing measures, in place since March 2020 due to the pandemic, have
led to significant changes in working across the CJS. SToMP has reacted flexibly to these changes. This seems to have led to more direct contact with OMs across probation services and, as a consequence, an increase in direct referrals. A similar change has occurred in ways of working across the prison service: SToMP reports that communication has ceased with senior prison staff, due to the other pressures they have experienced throughout this period. VICSOs have also not been able to dedicate time to veteran specific duties and veterans' coffee mornings have not been able to occur. Nevertheless, this has meant that prisons have been making direct referrals to service charities with support from the SToMP project. These new ways of working may mean that referrals are easier to record and track. As lockdown restrictions are eased it may also be

beneficial for SToMP to request feedback from service users and staff about their experience of service provision during this time. This may help to inform and improve 'normal' services, as well as providing important information for future occurrences and associated measures.

Conclusion and future directions

Summary of SToMP's key gains:

During this evaluation phase, the SToMP project has engaged in a number of key activities and service developments:

- Creation of relationships with female prison estate
- Organising training regarding the needs of ex-ASP with a diagnosis of personality disorder
- Organising training regarding the needs of ex-ASP with sexual convictions
- Consistent access to ex service personnel specific support helplines in the Welsh estate.
- Developed a monthly data report disseminated to all our stakeholders to monitor the increasing identification and address needs.
- Mental health scoping exercise on links and referrals between custody and community mental health and NHS veterans Wales.
- Linking and awareness between DV services and EX ASP service charities

Areas for ongoing development

There remain a number of areas where further development should be considered and, where appropriate, targeted:

- Standardisation of how ex-ASP are identified across services and teams within those services and signposting / referral processes
- Whole system approach to data recording and monitoring with a particular focus on:
  - The impacts and economic analysis of specific ex-ASP provision within the prison estate
  - Referrals to specialist services and assistance provided
  - How the provision of specialist services for ex-ASP is related to reoffending and wellbeing (in the short, medium and long term)
- Stakeholder feedback
- Service user engagement

Phase One of SToMP appeared to raise awareness of ex-ASP issues within the CJS in Wales and to improve identification, particularly in the prison service. Relationships with specialist charities were also strong and there seemed potential for the project to progress. SToMP has made further gains as part of Phase Two, however the lack of systematically collected information and data continues to limit the conclusions that can be drawn about the impact of the project. Whilst the recording of activity and 'inputs' of staff are more embedded in practice, collecting information and data on the effect these have on individuals or at a service level still requires the development and implementation of a systematic approach. The importance here is on collecting meaningful data i.e. data that can enable tangible impacts to be assessed e.g. access to services, needs being met / addressed. Thus it remains important to collect data in order to determine the service user impacts and potential economic value of the work of the SToMP project.

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Appendices

Appendix A: SToMP's self-reported key achievements

Phase One

- Training delivered for CJS staff across Wales

- Communication campaigns/ awareness raising within criminal justice agencies.

- Promotion of DEWIS online service directory to support ex ASP charities to register as well as utilising as an end product.

- Branded promotional material produced collaboratively with our stakeholders.

- Prisoner pathway implementation and review.

- Military Corrective Training Centre (MCTC) prisoner pathway for men returning to Wales into the community or transferring to a Welsh Prison

- Positive networking events; Armed Forces Day, prison community days.

- Sharing good practice and consulting with Welsh Government, the Armed Forces Covenant Trust, the Defence transition service and COBSEO (Cobseo, as the Confederation of Service Charities).

- Commissioning of research, Wrexham Glyndwr University:
  Ex-Armed Service Personnel, Healthy Relationships and Domestic   Abuse: A Qualitative Study.

- Completion of Commissioned research, Swansea University: Ex-Armed Service Personnel in the Criminal Justice System in Wales – Barriers to identification and Signposting to Specialist Services

- Completion of Commissioned three short films which are Welsh specific and draws on; problems faced leaving service, which included them being uploaded on National probation services learning platform.

Phase Two

- Consistent access to ex service personnel specific support helplines in the Welsh estate.

- Developed a monthly data report disseminated to all our stakeholders to monitor the increasing identification and address needs.

- Commenced a programme of briefings aimed at empowering service charities to work with offenders.

- A briefing to service charities; working with people who commit sexual offences briefing.

- Evaluation of briefing to service charities; working with people who commit sexual offences briefing.

- A briefing to service charities; working with people with personality disorders

- Evaluation of briefing to service charities; working with people with personality disorders

- Remembrance Day Communication campaign/ awareness raising.

- VE Communication campaign/ awareness raising

- Mental health scoping exercise on links and referrals between custody and community mental health and   veterans NHS wales.

- VICSO hours business case for profiled hours.

- SToMP held an event where HM Prison and Probation Service in Wales (HMPPS) in partnership with G4S, police forces and the MoD, publicly signed the Armed Forces Covenant.

- Linking and awareness between DV services and EX ASP service charities

- Information pack on criminal justice in Wales, specifically for the Defence Transition Service

- Timeline map for identification in police custody

- Timeline map for identification in prison

Activities pending: -

- Increasing Champion's within NPS and CRC and refresh of briefings/awareness

- Healthy relationships proposal aimed at prevention - ongoing

- Self-assessment

- PREVENT briefing for service charities

Mission Statement and Terms of Reference for Police Subgroup

Mission Statement

To work jointly to provide support to Welsh ex Armed Service Personnel (hereafter known as ex ASPs) who find themselves in police custody following arrest or bail return, to enable them to receive the best support available.

1. **Background**

   The group was formed to assist in the co-ordination of ex ASPs across the 4 police forces of Wales.

   It will support ex ASPs in custody in accordance with the Armed Forces Covenant. The group will ensure the involvement of partners and organisations who will help it to achieve positive outcomes.

2. **Membership**

   Chair   SToMP
   Admin   SToMP

   North Wales, Gwent, South Wales and Dyfed Powys Police Forces

   Support services as required to assist ex ASPs

   SToMP may invite representation from any organisations, when necessary to assist with areas in need of support.

3. **Terms of Reference**

   To consider:

   o   the needs of ex ASPs in Police custody throughout Wales.
   o   to identify and share best practice.
   o   to work together to deliver solutions to areas of identified need.
   o   To monitor individual Pathways and address changes.
   o   To provide case studies

4. **Meeting Frequency.**

   Meetings are to be held every 4 months.

A minimum of 3 meetings per year.

5. **Papers and Minutes.**

SToMP to be informed by members of any subjects for inclusion in the agenda at least 10 days before the date of the next meeting.

The agenda to be sent out one week before date of next meeting.

The minutes will be sent out no more than two weeks after the meeting.

Appendix C: Business case for VICSO profiled hours

INTRODUCTION

SToMPs objectives include, design and develop a consistent, whole-system approach for ex-Armed Service Personnel across Wales and provide strategic oversight, encourage collaborative, multi-agency work and avoid duplication.

Within our meeting structure we have two main sub-committees: one of which is prison focussed. This group comprises of management level staff and prison officers working in a specialist role with ex-ASP, this group: -

- Considers the needs of ex ASPs throughout the Welsh Prison estate.
- Identifies and shares best practice.
- Works together to deliver solutions to areas of identified need.
- Monitors individual Pathways and address changes.

It is at this group that our discussions continue to revolve around the profiling of ViCSO hours. We do have ViCSOs in every establishment in Wales who work tirelessly to support those ex ASP in their care, However, many of these hours are not profiled, and the bulk of the work is undertaken in their own time, voluntarily.

DETAIL

As we have signed the Armed Forces covenant, this seems a perfect opportunity to action our pledge as HMPPS Wales and show a clear commitment to assist our Ex ASPs in the criminal justice system by committing a stable resource of profiled hours for ViSCOs across the whole of the Welsh estate.

The following list details the activities a ViCSO's undertakes:

- Arrange and facilitate local Armed Forces Forum meetings within the establishment
- Escort 3rd party support services
- Attend local and regional Armed Forces Forums
- Carry out administrative tasks with agencies for the veterans in custody
- Provide cover for veteran's charity events
- Visit other establishments to witness other veteran provision
- Dial in or attend SToMP sub groups within Wales
- Arrange and take part in charity events (although this work is for charity, it needs to be recognised as work for veterans, as the money raised is for veteran's community services)
- Passing on information to team members.
- 5-minute face to face with those who identify ex-ASP.
- Arranging agencies to visit on the legal visits system.
- Networking with outside agencies and acting as their SPOC.
- Increasing knowledge of local and National agencies/policies/assets
- Monitoring and reviewing pathway with establishment veterans care teams.
- Promoting process and care teamwork.
- Monitoring and updating posters and peer advisors with establishment.
- Updating PNomis on veterans.
- Liaising with depts. within establishment other veteran's issues, specifically liaise with reception, healthcare.

- Meeting men on reception/induction to identify and support ex-ASP men.
- Completion of official verification paperwork which enables ex-ASP to access support from military charities on their release, vital to their resettlement and rehabilitation

Due to committed hours being withdrawn we are missing a number of opportunities: -

- Promotion of veterans' specific wings for sentence progression
- Underutilisation of service charities working in the custody setting due to requiring an escort.
- Identifying other veterans in the establishment
- Lack of Ex ASP forums reduces peer support.
- Events to promote the support available to veterans within the CJS, including through the gate services
-

The following mapped resource highlights the discrepancies within each establishment and indicates the number of potential ex ASP.

CONCLUSION

With identifying ViSCO roles as good practice (as detailed below), the vital and vast work that they undertake and the missed opportunities, we would like a commitment to ensuring profiled hours are reinstated in all establishments and are protected.

'A Guide to Working with Veterans in Custody' was published to help criminal justice practitioners engage with ex-ASP. HMPPS launched the Veterans in Custody Support (VICS) model.

This was adopted as **best practice** by the MOD and MOJ and rolled out across the prison estate. Although a lack of consistent application has been identified.

 (Phillips, 2014; HMIP, 2014).

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ex-armed-service-personnel-in-prison-and-on-probation states the following can improve outcomes for ex-ASP in custody and under community supervision:

- a mental health assessment

- access to education and resettlement services

- access to alcohol misuse services

- mentoring services provided by ex-ASP charities

It is becoming increasingly accepted that ex-ASP respond to and are motivated to engage with armed service specific services and activities and/or staff who are ex-ASP themselves, or show an understanding of military.

(Phillips, 2014 Former members of the Armed Forces community and the criminal justice system: A review on behalf of the Secretary of State for Justice Appendix D: VICSO hour allocation across Welsh prisons

Appendix D: Current provision of VICSO hours across the Welsh prison estate

Prison	VICSOS No	how are VICSO hours resourced	No of VICSO Hours	Additional comments
HMP D	1	Resettlement	5 per month	uses 5 hours per month to cover vets meeting
HMP F	1	Operational & St Giles trust	8/10 hours per month	Did use operational post which enabled him to cover meeting. This post has just been discontinued.
HMP B	1	Resettlement	open	When needed hours come from resettlement allocation.
HMP C	1	Operational	as needed	Only does veterans work when time becomes available
HMP E	1	Profiled	full-time	Full time Supporting mentor post.
HMP A	1	personal	0	Unable to facilitate any VICSO hours. All hours worked as VICSO done in personal time.

Appendix E: Key points from MoU Ex-ASP probation champions

Role	Responsibility
Ex-ASP Champion	Act as a visible point of contact in relation to ex-ASPs (within parameters as agreed with PDU Head / Head of Service.
	Maintaining their familiarity with HMPPS good practice guide Working with Ex-Armed Services Personnel: A National Good Practice, Guide for practitioners and managers.
	Maintaining their familiarity with the EQuiP process and submitting relevant feedback / change requests as required.
	Promote the identification of ex-ASPs.
	Assist in service verification by accessing Service Police Crime Bureau intelligence on behalf of offender managers.
	Encourage the signposting of ex-ASPs to support services.
	Develop relationships with Local Armed Forces Liaison officer, ex-ASP charities and local Armed Forces Covenant partnerships.
	Develop links with their local prison and the Veterans in Custody Support Officers (VICSOs) to develop a cohesive and comprehensive approach to this cohort.
	Communicate any barriers to delivery of the ex-ASP champion role to SToMP / line management.
SToMP	Provide regular updates to ex-ASP Champions regarding local charities and available support.
	Gathering information about tested resources in their communities available to veterans, to be stored electronically so that it is available for all staff to access.
	Develop colleague's knowledge and working practices.
	Collate a list of the VICSO's and update staff with this information.
	Collate a list of the Champions and update staff with this information.
	Provide networking opportunities for ex-ASP champions in agreement with PDU Head / Head of Service.
	Ensure ex-ASP Champions are confident in role and receive adequate training.
	Evaluate the impact of ex-ASP champion role.