The Barriers to Disclosure and Access to Specialist Services for Ex-Armed Services Personnel in the Criminal Justice System in Wales:

An Independent Evaluation

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Foreword

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The 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.

I am delighted to be able to introduce this important piece of research, commissioned to Swansea University by the Supporting the Transition of Military Personnel (SToMP) Project and funded by the Armed Forces Covenant fund.

Collaboration is at the heart of everything that the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Cymru Board seeks to achieve. By directing our combined attention towards the priority groups outlined in 'A Framework to support positive change for those at risk of offending in Wales', criminal justice organisations, Welsh Government and our voluntary sector partners are seeking to prevent offending and reduce re-offending in Wales through collaboration.

Coordination of this integrated approach for ex Armed Service Personnel in the criminal justice system in Wales is achieved through the IOM Cymru SToMP Project, which is primarily funded by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund. SToMP seeks to improve the identification and signposting of ex-Armed Service Personnel at all stages of the Criminal Justice System and is committed to working closely with partners to ensure the best outcomes for this priority group. With this research, we are better able to understand what is working and where we need to focus our collective attention to further improve our ability to identify ex Armed Service Personnel and signpost them to our specialist partner agencies.

I am pleased that the Armed Forces Covenant fund and Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service in Wales will be continuing to fund/resource the SToMP project until December 2020, allowing SToMP to focus on addressing these recommendations in Phase 2.

Ian Barrow

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Executive Summary

This study was designed to evaluate the barriers to identification and access to specialist services for ex-armed services personnel (ex-ASP) within the criminal justice system (CJS) in Wales. This evaluation was commissioned by IOM Cymru SToMP and independently conducted by researchers at the University of Swansea.

The research was conducted between August – December 2018 across police, probation and prison services throughout Wales, as well as with relevant third sector organisations. Primary research included quantitative, qualitative and observational methods and secondary quantitative data was also used. Data included every police force, every prison and a geographically spread number of probation services across Wales. In terms of formal qualitative data, a total of 58 individuals were interviewed across these sectors. This included both staff and service users. Many others were spoken to informally through visits to institutions and attendance at meetings.

The data highlighted specific issues within each sector, as well as broader ranging barriers across the criminal justice system. Operational factors were the key barrier to identification, particularly across police and probation services where, in the majority of services, service users were not directly asked if they had ever served in the armed forces. Greater availability of information, for both staff and service users, was also highlighted as a key operational issue. This was particularly shown to be the case for service users who may choose not to identify themselves. Other potentially disadvantaged groups in terms of identification and accessing specialist services were women; individuals convicted of sexual offences; individuals serving short custodial sentences or on remand and those serving community orders. Access to services was largely location dependent, both in terms of the help available and the support offered to access it. There also appeared to be a disparity between the provision offered by the third sector in prison, when compared to the experiences of individuals who had tried to access this help once back in the community. Overall, there was a clear need for greater collaborative working between the CJS and third sector, as well as for a substantial improvement in data recording and monitoring across the board.

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We would like to extend our thanks to all the staff across services who were so helpful in facilitating this project, despite having such busy working lives. The support from these staff made the project possible. We would also like to extend our thanks to all the service users, and staff, who took part in qualitative interviews and made this a productive and informative experience. Thanks also to all the third sector agencies who engaged with the project and gave up their time.

Terms

The term ex-ASP (ex-armed services personnel) will largely be used throughout this report. However, we will also use the term 'veteran' often in relation to agencies and events. While we acknowledge that the term 'veteran' has different connotations for some, it is a term that is commonly used in certain arenas and therefore its use here was deemed appropriate. It should be noted that it was not a term used when collecting data. To avoid excessive repetition, we may also refer to the question '*have you ever served in the armed forces'* as simply 'the question' at certain points.

The term service user is used throughout to provide consistency of language. The context / service information will allow readers to determine other terms which might be used to refer to individuals at this stage of the CJS (e.g. individual in police custody). At times, service user participants in prison cohorts may be referred to as 'men'. This is not to say ex-ASP could not be women, rather it is the nature of the prisons visited. The term 'probation' will be used to cover National Probation Service (NPS) and Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs). Finally, 'criminal justice system' will be abbreviated to CJS throughout.

Introduction

Background

Whilst the majority of service leavers adjust to civilian life without coming into contact with the criminal justice system (CJS), a significant minority will. This minority represents the single largest occupational sub group within the CJS: an estimated 3.5% of both the prison population and those serving community sentences have served in the armed forces (DASA, 2011); making up at least 161 men within the Welsh prison system[1]. This can be compared to an estimated 6% within the general population of Wales (Ministry of Defence, 2016). However, this commonly used estimate for the number of ex-armed services personnel (ex-ASP) within the CJS is likely to be conservative, especially as it was made before several influential inquires highlighted the need for a greater focus on identification of ex-armed service personnel (ex-ASP) within the CJS. (Phillips, 2014; The Howard League for Penal Reform, 2011).

The Philips Review (2014) of ex-armed services personnel (ex-ASP) in the CJS called for standardised practices to identify ex-ASP across the CJS. The existing evidence suggests that the main reason for this lack of identification is operational: that the question '*have you ever served in the armed forces'* is not being consistently asked. However, it also assumed that there are some individuals who may not wish to identify themselves. This is often attributed to shame (Phillips, 2014) however such opinions are often assumptions as, by nature of their non-identified status, it is difficult to obtain the views of those who have not disclosed. While there has been a great deal of research into ex-ASP within the CJS that has highlighted the problem of identification (Phillips, 2014; Short, Dickson, & Macmanus, 2018; The Howard League for Penal Reform, 2011) , to date there has been little work to specifically explore this issue.

The main driver for improved identification of ex-ASP within the CJS is to improve signposting and access to specialised services. The ex-ASP population do not seem to differ dramatically from the general population within the CJS (DASA, 2011; Kelly, 2014; Lyne & Packham, 2014). However, there appear to be some notable differences in terms of demographic profile, offending behaviour and needs. Ex-ASP are likely to be convicted at an older age and are more likely to commit violent and, in particular, sexual offences (DASA, 2011; Phillips, 2014; Short et al., 2018; Wainwright, Lennox, McDonnell, Shaw, & Senior, 2017).

[1] Based on the Nov 2018 population bulletin published by the Office of National Statistics https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/prison-population-figures-2018

In addition, ex-ASP within the CJS may be more likely to struggle with depression, alcohol abuse and relationship problems; they may also have specific needs around housing and employment (Albertson, Banks, & Murray, 2017; Kelly, 2014; Wainwright, McDonnell, Lennox, Shaw, & Senior, 2016) .

While there are cases of criminal offending both during and soon after leaving the military, the majority of offending behaviour occurs sometime after an individual has left the service (Phillips, 2014; Wainwright et al., 2016). This suggests that military service may not be directly related to offending behaviour; indeed, this has been endorsed by ex-ASP in other reports and academic literature (Phillips, 2014; Short et al., 2018). Nevertheless, unprepared exit from the armed forces, combined with pitfalls after service leaving and potential pre-service vulnerability may contribute to 'pathways' to offending behaviour for ex-ASP (Wainwright et al., 2016). Such issues appear most likely to befall infantry personnel who may also have joined the army at a younger age and with fewer qualifications. Certainly, it is men who served at this level who are most frequently involved with the CJS (DASA, 2011; Kelly, 2014; Short et al., 2018),

To help support ex-ASP, there are a wealth of veteran specific charities that can assist with range of practical issues such as funding, training, housing or employment; as well as some that offer emotional support through services like befriending (e.g. peer mentoring from an ex-ASP, for individuals in crisis with issues such as mental health challenges or substance misuse). Due to the heightened focus on ex-ASP within the CJS in recent years, there has been an increased allocation of resources from such charities to work specifically within the CJS and particularly within prison services. In most cases, to gain access to such specific support, ex-ASP within the CJS are required to disclose their ex-military status. The SToMP project (Supporting Transition of Military Personnel), formed in 2016, has been particularly focused on promoting identification of ex-ASP within the CJS in Wales, to improve support to this group from specialist services. This has included creating bespoke pathways for the ideal identification process within each prison and creating ex-ASP orientated roles across the national probation service, Wales CRC, prisons and police forces.

The independently conducted research presented within this report was commissioned by the SToMP project board, to evaluate the current barriers to identification and access to specialist services for ex-ASP specifically within the CJS in Wales. This work follows from several other independent reports that have highlighted the importance of the identification of ex-ASPs within the CJS and of formalising the question being asked across police, probation and prison services. The importance of identification has been emphasised, as this is the logical first step to ensuring ex-ASP are able to gain access to specialist services. This report will therefore focus on how these two processes are linked together across the CJS, with the hope of highlighting such barriers as well as identifying recommendations based on current good practice.

Research Aims

Based on the original business case for this research, this report will address three main aims in relation to the identification of armed services personnel within the criminal justice system:

- Understand the barriers to disclosure facing ex-ASP within the context of the CJS and associated agencies
- Identify how disclosure of ex-ASP status can be encouraged and supported
- Identify how ex-ASPs can be supported to access appropriate specialist services

Method

Study design

The study used a mixed methods design to capture as much data as possible across different sources. This included bringing together existing quantitative data, as well as conducting additional observational and qualitative research from multiple sectors.

Observational

In order to assess day-to-day procedures and environmental factors, observational methods were employed across custody suites and prisons services. Multi-agency meetings as part of the SToMP project were also attended, and minutes reviewed, to better understand current procedures and planned progression. The aim of this was to understand current systems and to provide an opportunity to look for 'windows' that are currently used for identification and signposting and / or how these could be improved.

Quantitative

Requests for existing data pertaining to ex-ASP were sent to individual police forces and prisons across Wales, as well as a number of third sector agencies. This was to gather existing data / knowledge about ex-ASP, as well as to develop thinking around recording practices. In addition to the existing data gathered, a brief survey was also given out at two prisons (see Appendix B). This was developed based on the qualitative data that had already been collected and was designed to provide some additional demographic information, as well as quantifiable data regarding identification and services accessed.

Qualitative

Interviews and focus groups were conducted with service users and staff across different elements of the CJS. The decision to employ individual or group-based methods was made by the researcher based on practical factors (e.g. availability of people) and interviewee preferences. This enabled the qualitative component to be flexible to individual factors in each setting, thereby maximising participation.

Ethical considerations

Approvals

The study was granted NRC approval (2018-138) to be conducted across HMPPS. Where necessary (i.e. in privately owned institutions) separate approvals were gained. Where informal notes were taken, whether on the phone or in person, it was made clear that this was the researcher's intention. For formal interviews and focus groups, where information was audio recorded (and therefore specific quotes could be used), all participants signed a consent form to indicate they understood this procedure, consented to their data being used and to anonymised quotes being included within the final report (See Appendix A).

Data protection and anonymity

All services were assigned a letter (i.e. HMP A) and participants assigned a pseudonym, where relevant. All existing data requested from other services was received in an anonymised format and surveys were conducted anonymously. For formally recorded qualitative data, all identifiable information was removed upon transcription. Where appropriate, additional editing may have taken place to ensure anonymity (e.g. where region specific slang has been used). In the interests of keeping all opinions featured within this report anonymous, it will only be made clear whether a quotation was derived from staff or a service user and from which service area.

Our findings

Context

Data was collected across police, prison, probation and third sector providers across Wales. As previously outlined, this included quantitative, qualitative and observational methods. The procedures used were based on what was practical and available, and therefore should not be considered hierarchically. A total of 58 individuals took part in formal interviews of focus groups and these individuals are therefore listed as specific 'participants'. Across sectors, but particularly within police services, conversations were had on a more informal basis and therefore these individuals have not been included within this count. Additional information relevant to data collected from each sector is provided within each subsection.

Table 1: Participant Key

Sector	Participants
Prison	1 - 42
Probation	43 - 55
Third Sector	56 - 58

General Demographics

Based on the numbers of ex-ASP who are known to the SToMP project, there were at least 520 ex-ASP across prison and probation services in Wales as of October 2018. Their average age was 37, and 18 (3.4%) were women. From secondary data derived from 218 ex-ASP within the prison system, 96.6 % (211) were of white descent. In terms of their military service 71.5% (156) had served in the army; 8.7% (17) in the air force, 7.8% (19) in the navy and 12% (26) were listed as service type 'undisclosed'. From descriptive data from a much smaller sample (n=22) of those who completed our survey, median service length was 4.5 years, with a range from 1-24.5 years. These men had also predominantly served in the army (92%). These data are in keeping with a number of previous studies suggesting, unsurprisingly, that the ex-ASP population in Wales does not differ from the rest of the UK.

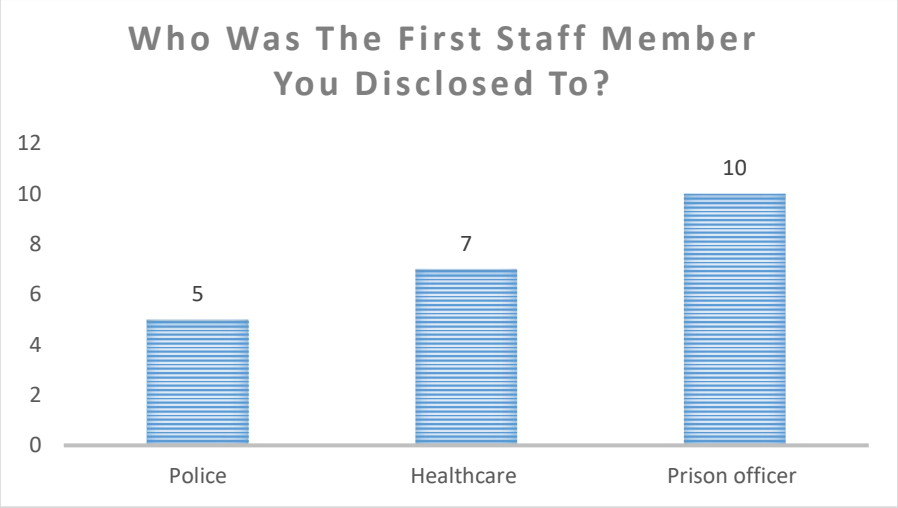

Fig 1: Survey responses to the question 'Who was the first staff member you told you served in the armed forces'? (n=22)

As part of the brief survey conducted, we asked men '*who was the first member of staff you told that you served in the Armed Forces',* with response options of police officer/prison officer/healthcare staff or other (see Appendix B). We also asked why they had first disclosed – had they informed without being asked; because they were asked, or whether staff or a peer had 'noticed' they were ex-ASP in some way. It should be kept in mind that **this detail is derived from a very small sample** however it goes some way to paint a descriptive picture. What these figures suggest is that service users are more likely to first disclose in prison and/or to healthcare staff (figure 1). It also indicates that service users may be more likely to disclose if 'the question' is directly asked (figure 2).

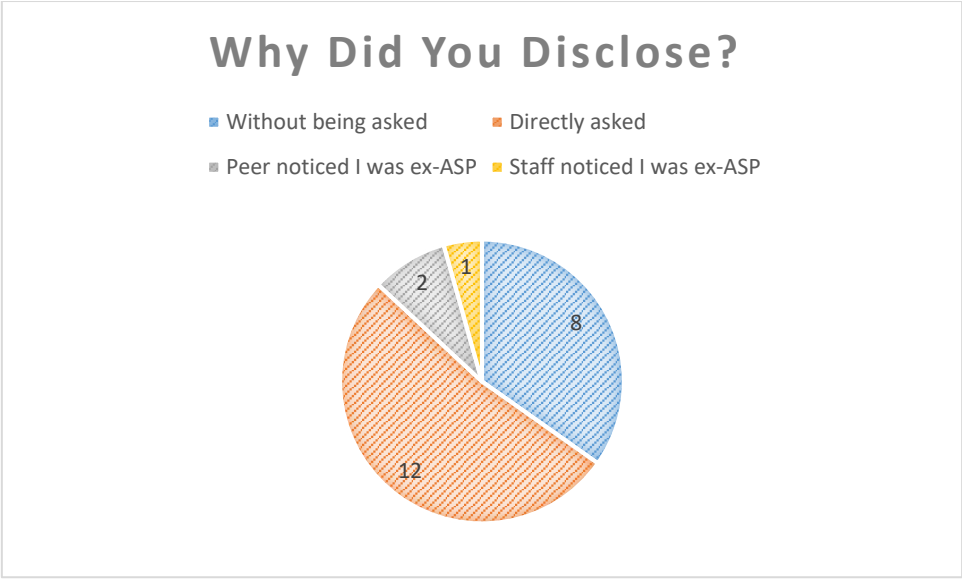

Fig. 2 Survey responses for reasons for disclosure (n=22)

What was clear from these data, and will be discussed throughout, is that **the processes of identification and access to support are intrinsically linked**. Specifically, identification is often the only means to access

specialist services (something discussed later in the report) and individual perceptions of support available or offered may directly affect an individuals' drive to identify.

"They're not sure about the support on offer. They're not sure if the support being offered is actually on offer. And they're not sure of which area of the prison they're going to, what the population is… they don't know how they're going to be perceived. Some people have had enough of the army and they don't want to be identified as they want nothing at all to do with them… and some just don't want to full stop, for their own personal reasons". Participant 42, Prison Staff Member

Detail relating to each of the three main research aims is discussed below, presented according to each service type within the pathway. While there were interrelated themes running across these different sectors of the CJS, there were also issues relating to specific service types. Common issues that arose across settings are drawn together in the final part of this section, with the intent of providing a complete representation of the barriers to identification of ex-ASP, and access to specialist services, across the CJS.

Police

Overview

Background

Custody suites are the first point of contact within the CJS following initial arrest and can be seen as the first formal opportunity for ex-ASP to be identified or signposted. Two major inquiries into services for ex-ASP within the CJS have highlighted the importance of identification at this stage (Phillips, 2014; The Howard League for Penal Reform, 2011). The intent is to ensure ex-ASP can be signposted to relevant services at the earliest possible stage. Preliminary data from a pilot project supporting ex-ASP in England who have been arrested or at risk of arrest (Project Nova) indicates that this form of early identification and support may be successful in preventing reoffending (Fossey, Cooper, Godier, & Cooper, 2017).While there has been a major push for identification of veterans within the CJS in Wales, this work has been predominantly focused within prison and probation services. This appears to be changing however, with plans for specific diversion schemes for ex-ASP to be introduced within one Welsh police force. Nevertheless, as with third sector providers, ex-ASP would first need to be identified to be offered such as a service.

Data Collected

Senior members of staff from each of the forces, who are members of the SToMP police sub group meetings, facilitated visits to custody suites within each of the forces. Five custody suites were visited across the four policing areas. The visits involved speaking to available staff – usually the custody sergeant, custody officers, healthcare workers and/or Dyfodol or diversion staff. Discussions focused on their processes, practices and attitudes around the identification of ex-ASP and signposting to relevant services. From looking around the custody suites it was also noted whether there was ex-ASP specific publicity (e.g. posters, notices) and what additional information was available. Due to the busy and informal nature of these visits, often with various people coming in and out of open rooms, written notes were taken rather than formalised audio recordings.

Quantitative data pertaining to identification of ex- ASP were requested from each force. Three out of the four forces provided such data, which varied in its level of detail. However, from this it was possible to derive the number of individuals arrested who had identified as ex, or currently serving, ASP from each force and the total number of arrests for the same time period.

Identification

Of the four Welsh police forces, only Force A asks the question '*have you ever served in the armed forces*' as formalised part of the booking in procedure (see table 2). From the data obtained across forces it was unclear whether arrests included repeated offenders, with the exception of Force A where it appeared a proportion of ex-ASP in the arrest figures had been arrested on more than one occasion. This suggests that the absolute number of individuals (as opposed to arrest episodes) may be approximately 20% lower than the arrest data. This remains substantially higher than the other forces. However, this should not be oversimplified: it should be stressed that no additional variables were considered, such as geographical location, which may have had an impact on these numbers.

*Table 2: Arrest data in relation to armed services personnel in Wales**

Police Force	% of total arrests	Question formalised
Force A	6.6%	Yes
Force B	0.1%	No
Force C	0.3%	No
Force D	N/A	No

** absolute numbers have not been reported to avoid force identification*

Nevertheless, these data suggest that directly asking a specific question regarding ASP status may have a substantial impact on identification. Indeed the importance of simple operational changes, such as integrating the question into computers systems, was one of the key issues highlighted by the report on Project Nova (Fossey et al., 2017). In keeping with Fossey and colleagues, we also found that while the question '*have you ever served in the armed forces*' was a part of routine paperwork for associated services (i.e. drug and alcohol workers; Liaison and Diversions services), not all arrested individuals will see such services. This may be due to eligibility or staffing restrictions meaning that they are not available 24 hours a day.

Custody suites are busy and the administrative processes lengthy. If the question is not formalised (i.e. it must be asked), it is understandable that staff aren't asking. It being optional also means that it is additionally governed by the views of custody staff.

Staff Views

In police forces where a question about (past) employment in the armed forces is not formalised, it was generally assumed by staff that it would be covered by questions relating to occupation. However, for individuals not currently serving, it is unlikely to encourage disclosure of military history. This was part of a wider view by staff that **'they would tell us'.**

Key point: It seems very likely that if the question was standardised, staff would be more likely to ask and service users would be more likely to identify.

Many staff members did not feel that asking about past military service was relevant as they had so few ex-ASP come through their service. The possible link between the question not being asked and the lack of identified individuals was not commonly made. Notably, this view came across perhaps most strongly from individuals who had served in the armed forces themselves. Such individuals were generally confident that if a person did not identify, they would be able to 'spot' they had served, and so there was little need to ask the question directly. Others expressed that it was the choice of the service user and, stated that if the staff member suspected an individual was ex-ASP, they would leave it up to the individual to disclose that information.

Case examples of staff who do not ask the question:

John, Custody Officer*

John served for over 25 years in the armed forces. He views military service just like any other job, and had himself made a completely successful transition back into civilian life. His view was that that those who had served in the armed forces shouldn't be entitled to any special services or treatment. He works in a custody suite where a question about having served in the forces is not routinely asked and he does not think the introduction of this question is necessary. He feels that it is people's choice to disclose and if they wish to, they will do so without being asked directly.

Alex, Custody Officer*

Alex served in the armed forces for over 10 years. He doesn't think that asking about military history should be a standardised question, as he thinks it's the individuals' choice to identify or not. He thinks this is understandable, as many people want a clean break from the forces. He says he would not know where to signpost someone who had identified but also feels that is the largely the armed forces' responsibility to provide better care for service leavers.

** pseudonyms*

Service Users

The majority of service users interviewed could not remember being asked by police at the time of their arrest. For both those who were and were not asked, many said they would not have disclosed at this point due to the possible impact on legal proceedings.

"I kept it quiet until after I got sentenced…. I know people that have had bad experiences in the past, I know lads where it's gone against them when they've got to court, depending on the nature of their offence. If its violence related, because you're trained to a certain level, with violence you then have a level of responsibility to then use that violence appropriately. I know lads that, say they would have got 5 years normally, cos they're ex-forces and they've used violence, they give them 10 years instead." Participant 36, Prison Service User

"They asked me in the police station… I said no comment." Participant 27, Prison Service User

From the survey data, for the five that said they first disclosed to police, only one did so because they were directly asked. The others either told them voluntarily or staff noticed they were ex-ASP. From the qualitative data, for the minority who reported disclosing at this stage, it was usually for the same reasons. Those who disclosed voluntary sometimes did so for opposing reasons to those above, as they felt that it might offer some benefit in terms of treatment or sentencing.

Key point: Disclosure of ex-ASP status prior to sentencing is deemed by many service users to impact on sentencing. This may be an area that would benefit from additional research.

As highlighted above, service users were concerned that previous service could have a particularly negative impact if convicted of a violence offence. This was commonly deemed as unfair, due to the way people felt the army had trained them, or the inherent army culture, and the subsequent impact this had had on their actions within, and adjustment to, civilian life.

"If you're an infantryman or a specialist, basically you're trained to kill every day that you're there. That's the reality of it… So, if you're training someone to do that day in day out and you're hyping them hyping them hyping them and then you go right then, there's a two-day course there, you're retired. It's not enough. Some guys can adjust, they're like that, some guys get stuck there at that high tempo. It's scary really, when you think about it. There's a lot of domestic violence, a lot of guys that take it out on their wives, there's guys take it back to the streets... people take it all different places don't they and it ends badly."

Participant 1, Prison Service User

"I think it took me maybe seven or eight years to adjust to civilian life...I was always fighting but in the army that was part and parcel of letting steam off. Couple of pints, good punch up, that was a good night! But you come back into the civilian world, have a good punch up, you're banged up know what I mean?" Participant 37, Prison Service User

With this in mind, it is perhaps understandable that many individuals choose not to disclose at this point. For those that did, it seemed more common to have disclosed to a health worker whilst in the custody suite, rather than custody staff. This was also suggested by our survey data (see fig 1). However, regardless of who they disclosed to, there was little evidence that identification information had gone with them to prison or of signposting to veteran specific services.

"She [nurse in custody suite] just tried to give me a mental health leaflet, which I found quite random. I got done for fighting and she said 'have this you might have mental health issues'. Cheers nice one, thanks love.... Asked if I'd served and then just gave me a mental health leaflet, said I might have anger issues I need to deal with and sent me back into the cell." Participant 33, Prison Service User

While service users in police custody might not know where to seek help, nor do many custody staff. Again, how much weight is given to this may be related to the apparent 'chicken and egg' scenario of identification: in custody suites where ex-ASP are not identifying, the perception is that they see very few. If this is believed to be the case, there seems to be little incentive to know about specialist services. On the whole this indicates that while operational changes seem necessary, this may be also need to be accompanied by additional staff training.

Fig 3: A representation of key issues in identifying ex-ASP in within custody suites

However, many staff – and service users – felt that asking questions about a person's past was not necessarily relevant or appropriate to the role of the police. With the increased use of Liaison and Diversion

pathways, it may be the case that the staff working within these agencies are better placed to inquire about military history and to potentially signpost to relevant services.

*"It's just on the computer. They just go 'what's your name? What's your address? Have you ever served in the armed forces? Yeh. Tick. Have you got any mental health issues? Yeh. Tick... but I didn't expect it do you know what I mean? **I just broke the law. Didn't expect them to sit down and say 'how is everything?' you don't expect anything like that off the police**."* Participant 23, Prison Service User

Throughout custody suites, there was a general lack of any publicity that might encourage individuals to disclose their ex-ASP status. While it **should be noted that none of the service users interviewed suggested this would have helped them to come forward,** many commented that they were not aware of the help available until the came into prison. Had they known at an earlier stage, it is possible that they may have been more inclined to disclose; particularly if the benefits to disclosure (e.g. access to specialist services) were deemed to outweigh, or possibly help mitigate, the potential cost (e.g. longer sentence). If some individuals had been able to access such services prior to their custodial sentence, it is possible that the offending that led to this could have been prevented in some cases.

"I didn't ask for any help when I left that was my problem, I just got on with it like. I weren't really aware of it, of all the charities and everything, I wasn't aware of none of them until I come here. And that's 10 years later. I weren't asked if I was in the army until I come here." Participant 37, Prison Service User

Access to specialist services

"*You shouldn't have to come to jail to get help".* Participant 38, Prison Service User

All custody suites visited provided a signposting leaflet to service users upon departure, with four out of five providing leaflets with contact details for veteran specific charities. However, no additional detail was provided as to the nature of their services or inclusion criteria. All of the suites had some specific literature to hand out, but this would only be provided to individuals who had identified themselves as ex forces. However, the point at which signposting information is provided within the custody suite appears to be a subject of debate. Staff in all the custody suites reported that the leaflet was either given to the service user, or placed in their belongings, before they leave. Staff also reported that the leaflets were often found discarded outside the building. It has therefore been suggested that it would be more appropriate for this to be provided during the time in the cell, where detained individuals are most likely to read it. It may be

important for such practice factors to be considered with more specific conversations around identification and signposting for ex-ASP.

One police force was able to provide numbers regarding how many service users were signposted (i.e. information given to them) or referred (i.e. formal referrals made) to all external agencies. Of their ex-ASP arrests within this force between 2017 - 2018, 57 (65%) were signposted and 6 (6.9%) were directly referred to such services. While very much preliminary, these data begin to suggest that identified ex-ASP may be more likely to gain information for, and in some cases access to, additional services. However additional details are needed to complete the picture, in terms of where ex-ASP are being referred to and what effect this may have on future outcomes. While recording such data may create additional work, it is essential to understanding the process of identification and signposting with custody suites. If this is to be promoted to both staff and service users, it is only meaningful when some benefit attached. The benefit may relate to service signposting and access but could also include reduced reoffending. This would be helpful to research further.

Key point: How could early intervention for ex-ASP be improved to prevent reoffending?

Several third sector agencies expressed a desire to improve links with police services. One in particular had clearly made a concerted effort to enhance this. Where posters were observed in custody suites, it was always for this charity and their data shows that they had five referrals from the police force over the last two years (5% of their total referrals from the CJS). While relatively few, based on the current numbers of ex-ASP being identified from that police force, this is at least some evidence of a relationship forming. However, a member of the charity commented that it had been difficult to maintain meaningful links with the police as they did not have specific funding to pursue this work:

"It's all totally localised and totally and utterly based on relationship you have… And what'll be interesting is you'll get referrals from a custody then one of the officers there will move and it ebbs off. So we've got to constantly try and renew our relationship with probation, custody suites, all the rest of it but we don't have time to do that and we don't the money to actually have staff dedicated to doing that. So it's really hard. And a lot of the time when we've got a good relationship with them, they know that we can save them time, hassle, money... it's important to do this work but we haven't got any funding for it so we don't."

Participant 55, Third Sector Staff

Taking from the preliminary findings of Project Nova, it appears that early intervention through engagement with third sector agencies, at the point of arrest, could be beneficial in improving outcomes. Supporting this may require redirecting existing resources and / or seeking additional provision.

Key point summary

Understand the barriers to disclosure facing ex-ASP within the context of the police:

- Across three out of four Welsh forces, the question '*have you ever served in the armed forces'* is not part of the formalised paperwork in custody suites
- Directly asking the question appears to increase identification
- Staff views may mean asking this question is not seen as important or necessary
- Associated staff in healthcare or other agencies may be more likely to ask but they will not see everyone who comes into custody
- Service users may not wish to identify due to concerns about the impact of their ex-ASP status on future sentencing

Identify how disclosure of ex-ASP status can be encouraged and supported:

- The question could be a formalised part of the booking in procedure. Where this is not possible, there could be a push for staff training to improve awareness of the importance of asking about armed service history
- As some service users may be more likely to disclose in healthcare, or elsewhere, the question should be asked at these additional points as well as reception.
- Publicity should highlight that disclosure may mean additional support, with information available about this.

Identify how ex-ASPs can be supported to access appropriate specialist services

- Information regarding specialist services could be provided as part of general signposting leaflets across all forces. The role of these services should be clear. This would therefore make access to such services more accessible to all, including individuals who may choose not to identify.
- More detailed military specific information packs could be provided for those who have identified
- Staff and associated agencies working within custody, such as Liaison and Diversion staff, could be more knowledgeable about specialist services.
- With additional funding, third sector agencies may be able to provide additional training and support to police custody staff.

Prison

Overview

Background

The main focus of previous studies and reports has been on ex-ASP within the prison system. This has also been the case in Wales, where much of the resource has focused on identifying and supporting this cohort. Alongside an improvement in identification procedures, there seems to have been a concurrent improvement in access to specialist services. However, how this works and what is available varies hugely from prison-to-prison and, to some extent, depends on offence type and sentence length amongst other factors.

Data Collected

Formal interviews and / or focus groups were conducted in four of the five prisons, with a total of 42 service users taking part. All but two service users agreed to be audio recorded. Within the one remaining prison, formal qualitative research was not possible due to staff issues. However two veterans' coffee mornings were attended in order to informally speak to the men. Many prison staff, particularly VICSO (Veteran in Custody Support Officers) were spoken to on an informal basis during prison visits. Formal interviews were conducted with a further four members of prison staff at both operational and non-operational levels.

A brief survey was handed out at one veterans meeting within one prison, and as an add-on to a series of focus groups in another. This was developed from the qualitative data already collected and was designed to collect some initial quantitative data about service and disclosure. Twenty-four men filled out the survey, with 22 completing all data fields.

Identification

Talking to both staff and service users, identification procedures seem to have greatly improved over recent years within prison settings. Asking the question *'have you ever served in the armed forces'* is a part of standardised administrative procedures at reception upon entry into all prisons in Wales. Nevertheless, whether it is asked, when it is asked and whether it is recorded seems to vary.

*"People come in should be asked, at reception, **its only as good as the people that are on reception that you know they're gonna ask them on reception**. **When they come through reception an officer should ask them if they're ex-forces personnel, I'm not convinced if they do or they don't.** And there should be something on the system, **I'm not sure if they mark it on there**. The first time they get formally asked and that's marked on there is through a third-party provider, which is the nurse... they mark that onto their system…We should have prison orderlies, peers, who tell them what's available with the forums and things but that's informal. They go upstairs, to the first night centre, the peers there should ask them and again flag that to the officers. They then have a basic custody screening tool, they should be asked in both one and part two, and that would be marked on PNOMIS".* Participant 30, Prison Staff Member

As outlined by this staff member, if the process is operating correctly, individuals entering the prison should be asked on multiple occasions by staff and preferably also by peers. The importance of this was reflected in conversations with service users, who said that people may not always be sure whether to disclose when they first enter the prison; nor may they wish to if they are still awaiting sentencing.

*"**It's an unknown quantity**. Because they've been somewhere else, they don't always know what they're stepping into. So that's where we come in really and we're over there and we say, none of that mate, you are who you are, get over with us. But unfortunately we're still missing them cos they're not disclosing in reception."* Participant 1, Prison Service User

Interestingly, in contrast to previous suggestions, there was not a huge amount of evidence to suggest shame was a key driver behind individuals not identifying. Both survey and qualitative data showed that occasionally service users suggested that peers may not identify due to embarrassment. One issue that came out from conversations with staff and service users was the opinion that some individuals may not disclose as they are still receiving their war pension and do not want this to be affected.

I did go and speak to one guy, ex-marine, done a bit of prison, done a bit of service. Said to him 'what's your service number?' 'Dunno'. Within the conversation, he did know he just didn't want to tell me. He said listen, I've got my war pension, I don't want to be involved with anything whatsoever.
Participant 30, Prison Staff Member

When asked about decisions of others who may choose not to disclose, the two most common answers were that a) people either didn't know why others might choose not to identify or b) that it was to do with the rise of Islamic extremism in other prisons making individuals afraid to disclose. While there is no

evidence of this directly impacting on identification in prisons in Wales, it is possible that it may be a factor in the thought processes of individuals arriving from other prisons and / or first timers, as they are unsure what they may be entering into.

For those who may not have wanted to disclose at reception, it was particularly important to be subsequently asked and many said that they first disclosed to a peer. The veteran peer mentor system that is in place across the prisons seems to work well to improve the identification process and to promote awareness of veteran specific events.

"I think the peer mentors we use on the induction unit, I think that having a peer ask a man that's come in ask a man if he's a veteran I think is a good thing… ***there are often the occasions whereby a guy has come into custody and if he's got problems he might not disclose them to an officer but he may disclose them to another prisoner.*** *Because it may be that he feels more comfortable speaking to someone who's not a prisoner, as opposed to that guy in a white shirt, he might have a negative impression or view of that men in the white shirt; the police arrested him and they've taken him into custody. So he might have a very very negative view of the authority, regardless or not if he was a veteran, and he's even if used to that authority, it doesn't matter. He's now at a different end of that scale. So I think for that reason I think peers are very useful".*
Participant 7, Prison Staff Member

"I was never asked here. It was another veteran that told me about the veterans' meetings, that was the only way I actually found out. I saw posters about charities and whatnot but I didn't know how to get hold of them or who to speak to. It was only by pure chance that from talking to another inmate that had served, he told me oh there's this thing on". Participant 15, Prison Service User

Key point: Veteran peer mentors may improve identification and are widely viewed positively by both staff and service users.

Clearly however, as with staff, the success of peer mentors is largely dependent on the motivation of the individual to do that job. Other factors such as the health of the peer mentors and their other commitments and responsibilities also impacted on the availability of peer mentoring and thus delays in identification. Perhaps this can serve as a reminder that while peer mentors may have a positive impact, they should not be replacing the work of motivated staff members.

"There's this officer, he's just flat out on it like. He's always coming around to see us. Always like if there's a meeting he's always like 'right there's a meeting here boys', if you don't want to come just come for the tea and coffee and all this. Yeh he's brilliant like, awesome he is. You need someone like that."
Participant 23, Prison Service User

Two other points were raised in relation to identification. First is the false identification of 'Walter Mittys' or 'Walts': men who claim to have served in the armed forces when they have not. This is an occurrence that appears reasonably common within the prison system and may be a barrier to people attending meetings, or to charities offering support.

"It annoys me, I lost friends… We've had one that went the whole hog, he actually came to the meetings. And we had to look into his actual service - he'd never been in the girl guides never mind anything else."
Participant 40, Prison Service User

How far the individual is able to take the pretence seems somewhat down to the involvement of ex-ASP staff. Those who are closely involved and speak to newly identified men reported that they were able to detect 'Walts' quite quickly. However, in other prisons where staff may be less engaged, these individuals may become disruptive to veteran's groups and *"clog up the system"* (Participant 56, Third Sector Staff). In relation to access to services. There seems to be a common assumption amongst staff and service users that they can tell very easily if someone is lying. This may well be the case but it may also be beneficial for formal verification to take place, whenever this is possible, and for there to be a possible protocol to be followed for when staff are unsure about someone's ASP status.

Second, within the scope of the current project, we did not aim to access ex-ASP within the CJS who had not publicly identified. Clearly, this is a common limitation across research studies by virtue of their unidentified status. As everyone we spoke to had already identified, we can only use their reasons for not initially disclosing, or their speculated reasons for others choosing not to. Notably, in the brief survey we distributed, there was a considerable range in the estimations of the numbers of non-identified ex-forces personnel within the prison system. However most men did not know of any, and did not seem to think it was a substantial number. This implies that if there are a substantial proportion of men who have not identified, they are managing to keep this quiet even from their peers.

When considering the individuals who have not disclosed, it may be worthwhile to bear in mind that **disclosure is a choice.** Providing that when the question is asked it is done so in a meaningful way and

specialist services are advertised and reliable, it is up to the individual whether they choose to identify as ex-ASP. It may therefore be important to consider:

Key point: How might individuals who choose not to disclose to the CJS access specialist third sector services?

This question is particularly relevant in relation to access to services within the prison system and how non-identification may act as a necessary or unnecessary barrier to support and third sector provision.

"We can't be too intrusive. You know? You can't hold a man by the ears and scream in his face 'were you an effing veteran tell me now!' Unfortunately that doesn't really work that well. So the way that we do it now... its screening isn't it? And ***it has to be a gentle nudge, a gentle prod, look, we hold meetings, we put posters up, there may be some way we can help you."*** Participant 26, Prison Staff

As encapsulated in the above quote it would be operationally difficult, and possibly unhelpful, to repeatedly ask every prisoner if they had ever served in the armed forces throughout their time in prison. What may be more effective, and certainly this was the impression given by service users, is **to ensure a) information about ex-asp services is clear and available and b) those services do what they say they will do.**

Access to specialist services

"They had to get it out of me to be honest when I come here. They twisted my arm, ***they said well look if you're ex-services, then believe me it goes for you****, when I was on the induction wing. So I says yeh alright. So the benefits I've had since then is... nothing, basically.* ***There's been no benefit****".* Participant 27, Prison.

The championing of identification of ex-ASP in the CJS is largely based on the assumption that identification will provide benefits, most likely in terms access to specialist services. If this is the case, one would assume that as the word gets around that identifying 'goes for you', then those who may not have identified may be encouraged to do so.

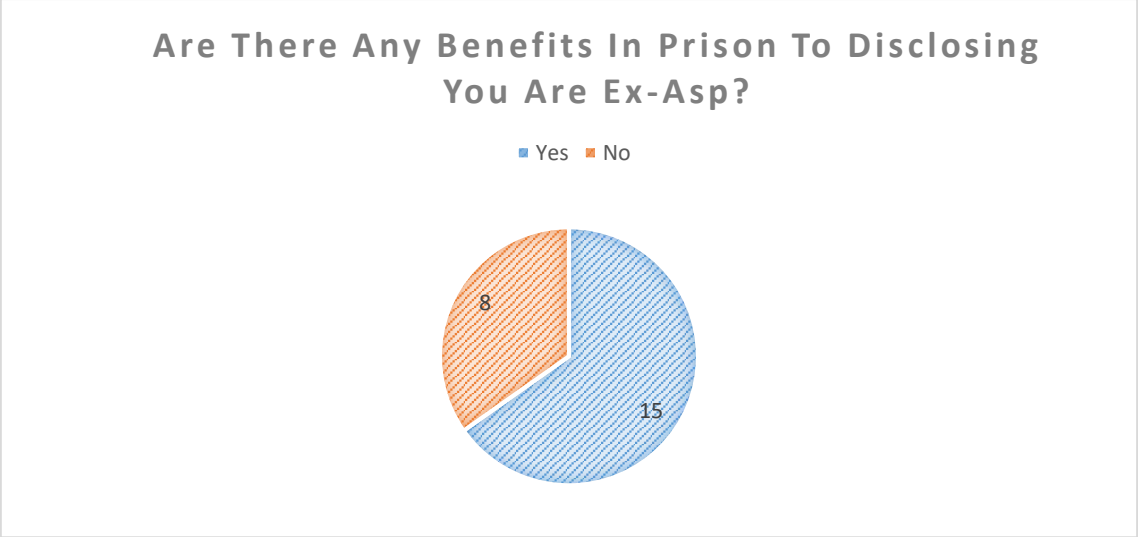

Fig 3: Survey data in relation to perceived benefits of disclosure in prison

Of the 24 men who completed our survey, 23 responded to the question '*are there any benefits of telling staff you served in the armed forces'*. Of those, 15 responded that there were benefits to disclosure. These benefits were mainly listed as access to veteran specific services (coffee mornings and/or specific wings) and better treatment from staff.

"I know for a fact that some people in this establishment are veterans and they haven't declared it. They don't want to. And they've got their own reasons for that, whether its embarrassment, whether it's a dent in their pride I don't know. But it's their prerogative. And today, I think I had 14 people here [veterans meeting] and I've got 30 veterans in this establishment... the amount of people that have been here and found out 'ooh we're entitled to this, ooh we're entitled to that', I thought it would have gone around like wildfire".
Participant 7, Prison Staff Member

As mentioned in the above quote, across the prisons the main gateway, or at least perceived gateway, to accessing specialist services is through veterans' coffee mornings. As part of this research, at least one of these events was attended at each prison, with the exception of one institution where frequent cancellations made attendance impossible. The basic format was the same across prisons – identified veterans have two hours in a common area, alongside invited third-sector agencies, to chat to each other and to charity representatives. There is usually free tea, coffee and biscuits. Indeed, for some men this is what meetings represent: a break from the wing and free cup of coffee.

"The regime is so repetitive, so having something a bit different can be real highlight. Even going across to have coffee and biscuits - that's a highlight." Participant 15, Prison Staff Member

The establishments where this was the view were also those where veterans' meetings were most poorly attended, although there was a high turnout from outside agencies. In some meetings there was a lack of structure with none of the individuals from outside agencies being introduced; thus making it difficult for the men to approach them. In others, rooms were small or physical layouts – such as the charities sat at a 'top table' with the prisoners sat in chairs in front – making confidential communication difficult.

"More one-to-ones, cos you don't really have many one-to-ones with people. When you're in groups its, when you need the help, we're sat there but it's all loud. Trying to talk to someone but you've 15 other people doing one-to-ones there and it's distracting. So one-to-ones would be better. So you can just, they just pay their attention to you. Not just write a few details down ' yeh sound, wanna just come over here, write a few details down.' Just concentrate on you. Make you feel wanted. And like they're gonna help you."

Participant 23, Prison Service User

This was voiced as a particular issue for some individuals, who described not wanting to attend the veterans' meetings as they did like spending time in group settings or wanted one-to-one support. Non-attendance was viewed as problematic as some prisoners did not know how else to access specialist services.

*Case example: Richard**

Richard is in his fifties and is coming to the end of a significant prison sentence for a violent offence. He's not particularly interested in spending time with other ex-servicemen as he doesn't want to talk about those times. He feels this is dwelling on the past and he wants to look to the future. However, he wants involvement from veterans' charities to take advantage of the services available to him. Earlier on in his sentence, he didn't attend veterans' meetings as he didn't feel they would be of any use until closer to his release. He had attended meetings in his last prison but only after a fellow inmate 'kept on at him'. He said he hadn't known how the charities would have been able to help. Richard experiences social anxiety and feels put off group meetings for this reason, especially when he doesn't know what to expect. He would like it if there was an easier way to meet with charity reps on a one-to-one basis.

**pseudonym*

Key point: It may be important to ensure the ways in which prisoners are able to access services do not present additional barriers.

In some cases, there were also rumours – or reports from men who had served previous sentences – that the charities could not provide the support they offered once back in the community.

"I've heard from other people, it's only second-hand information, that when you get out the support seems to stop... as soon as you're out of the prison system that support for veterans seems to disappear. I've heard it from multiple sources, so I have to believe there's some element of truth to it."

Participant 23, Prison Service User

Service user views of work of the service charities in those prisons where their work was closely monitored by prison staff were generally more positive, in comparison to institutions where there was little interaction between staff and third sector organisations.

"The resettlement with a normal prison is nothing is it, it's hardly anything. But with the charities, they try, especially in this jail I think personally that they try and find out everything which you need and they try and set up everything they can for your release. I think its brilliant myself." Participant 38, Prison Service User

There were however what appeared to be exemplary pockets of good practice. These are highlighted below in a hypothetical case example that has been designed to include positives taken from each prison and suggestions from both staff and service users.

Hypothetical case example: Prison Y

Staff Member Y works in Prison Y and they are dedicated to working with ex-ASP. This may not be their only role but within whatever role they have, they have protected time to manage ex-ASP. This staff member is not necessarily ex-forces themselves but they are committed to the job; prisoners respect them and see them as reliable. They have a list of every identified ex-ASP and they make sure that each of these individuals has an information pack, which details all the relevant charities in terms of what they offer. Staff Member Y has also placed publicity around the prison, to show the services available for ex-ASP and who to contact. If a prisoner wants to contact a charity, Staff Member Y can help them set up a one-to-one meeting. There are also free phone numbers for several service-user chosen veterans' charities. Staff Member Y has clearly established with all the charities what they are able to provide. All the charities also understand that they must work collaboratively when this is in the best interests of the service user. They must also follow up on what they say they will do and Staff Member Y monitors this. As part of the services for ex-ASP, Staff Member Y organises a monthly coffee morning. Because prisoners at Prison Y feel they have access to specialist charities, Staff Member Y asks them every month who they would like to come to the coffee mornings. This may be a speaker or someone who can provide specific information about an issue such as pensions. At these meetings, prisoners can also raise any issues that they have as ex-ASP prisoners (i.e. not general operational issues about the prison). Minutes are taken and at each meeting, Staff Member Y discusses the actions that have been taken in relation to each point. After the formal aspect of the meeting, there is social time for the prisoners to chat over coffee / tea and biscuits.

Data Recording and Monitoring

Across institutions there was substantial variation in data recording and monitoring practices. When prisons were contacted directly, some were unable to provide an exact number of current identified veterans; while others were able to provide this alongside further demographic data. It is important to note that there was a lack of any data across institutions regarding referrals and follow-up into the community. Such data are useful at a national level but could be important to individual institutions who may be aiming to improve services or to better understand how much provision should be allocated to ex-ASP. For example, if there was sufficient data to show that identification and access to services was directly related to smoother resettlement (and subsequently a reduction in reoffending), some institutions with currently limited provision may be encouraged to provide additional resources to ex-ASP. However, where no such data are available, it is difficult to make suggestions as to the benefit of services and how they could be improved.

"I do wonder if it's value for money, all of it, if we've only got 5 or 10 people a month telling us they're veterans. If we can make one of them a success, one of them not commit crime again, then I think it's worth it. Which is probably cheaper than having the in prison anyway, in the longer term. If it stops them offending so often... I think it is value for money but it's hard just to judge them on what you see in the prison".
Participant 30, Prison Staff

Key point: If we are to know whether providing ex-ASP specific services is beneficial, and therefore have the backing to promote the benefits of identification, there needs to be a change in recording practices.

Veteran specific wings and the role of ex-forces staff

A detailed account of veteran specific wings will not be presented here: it has been previously addressed by others (Plechowicz, 2018) and is beyond the remit of this evaluation. However, there are a few specific points to be made relevant to the aims of this report. Many men interviewed on the veteran wings expressed their enthusiasm at being there, and had specifically requested a transfer to allow this. In other prisons without such wings, it appeared that the general view of them was positive and many said that they would like to go. Clearly, if these wings are widely viewed as positive, this may act as an additional incentive for some to identify.

From our data, veterans' wings were not run with a particular military style or focus, rather they were quiet wings with a wealth of information readily available to support access to specific services. When asked about why they liked the veterans' wings, responses usually centred around there being no trouble; the wing being

largely drug-free and of it being a place of mutual respect between with other inmates and staff. This perhaps asks the question:

Key point: If all prisoners had the opportunity to be on quiet, drug-free wings in an environment of mutual respect, would there be such a desire to be moved to a veterans' wing?

Through conducting this research, it became clear that there is some debate around whether veteran specific wings are a positive or whether they are negative in terms of supporting division between ex-ASP and civilians, thus making the transfer to civilian life more difficult. Further research may be beneficial to assess the long-term outcomes of individuals leaving prison from such wings. There is also discussion of whether ex-ASP prisoners experience advantages over their civilian counterparts in terms of access to more services due to their ex-ASP status. This debate will not be entered into here and as such, the following should not be viewed as an endorsement of veteran specific wings or the specific employment of ex-ASP staff. However, the level of information available to service users on veterans' wings regarding access to specialist services was significantly greater than on 'regular' wings. Due to the specificity of these units, posters and leaflets could be displayed within the wings and, as the ex-ASP service users spent more time together, there was much more information sharing between peers. While this would clearly be impractical on non-specialist wings, it may be worth considering how information could be readily available to all ex-ASP. One participant suggested that an information pack may be a starting point for this:

"I think it would be a good idea if when people that do identify themselves as ex-forces go into prison, whether it be remand or whatever, are given some sort of - it doesn't have to massive - but an information 'pack' if you like, with services that are available, or if they feel they've got any issues, these are the people to contact and this is what's available within the prison, these are the representatives on the staff who could help you."
Participant 52, Probation Staff Member

Across prisons, with very few exceptions, service users expressed that they felt they had greater respect from prison staff who had also served and felt more able to speak to them about their issues.

"And if someone you don't know comes up to you and says 'do you want to speak about it, you know I can help you'... you're a stranger, you might not get anywhere but if someone for example comes into the jail and I go up to them, it's just a little bit extra on top of me being a stranger but we've got shared experiences from the past where we might have some common ground. So I'd definitely say it helps, cos even if they don't take it that hand of...friendship, if you want to call it that, is there and they know it's there if they want to take it. If they don't I can't force them, but if you ever need it, it's there so just grab hold of it and let me know." Participant 7, Prison Staff Member

If staff are comfortable doing so, it may be beneficial for them to indicate this status (i.e. with a tie pin or similar), to provide that option to service users. This may be a potentially useful factor to encourage ex-ASP to ask for help when they need it.

"It's hard to know who's been ex-military unless they tell you and you feel awkward asking them about their personal lives cos it's crossing an invisible line. But the ones who are upfront about it, some of them treat you really well". Participant 8, Prison Service User

Differing needs and requirements from third sector services

Whilst conducting the research for this evaluation, it became clear that there exist several sub groups – and there are likely to be more – who may have different needs and support requirements from specialist services, thus:

Key point: Do services meet the varying needs of different populations in a prison setting?

Individuals serving long or life sentences

The majority of the current support provided by third sector agencies is focused on how help can be provided at the point of release. While this support is often necessary and welcome, it is not relevant for those who are serving long sentences. This may just be the nature of the situation. However it is also possible that there may be additional services that could help those serving longer sentences to make the most of their time or improve wellbeing, both for them and potentially for their families.

*Case examples of long-term prisoners accessing specialist services: Malcolm and Andrew**

Malcolm is serving a life sentence and he does not receive any visitors. Whilst serving this sentence at his previous prison in England, he received weekly visits from a volunteer from a veterans' charity. This was essentially a befriending service and was clearly something meaningful to him. Upon moving to his current prison in Wales, the charity followed his movements and he was sent a letter from the charity's local representative. They informed Malcom that they would be happy to continue the befriending support that he had been receiving. Now that he is closer to his point of release, the same charity is assisting him with practical support for when he leaves.

Andrew has also served a long sentence. He is the veteran peer mentor at his prison and this is clearly a role that has provided him with a sense of purpose and meaning. He is very much respected by both staff and other prisoners for the work that he does. Thanks to the proactive veteran liaison staff at his prison, he was introduced to resettlement support to assist him when he is released. This has made him feel hopeful about his next steps.

**pseudonyms*

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

The number of individuals with a diagnosis of PTSD in the CJS in Wales was not specifically examined as part of this report. However, it was consistently raised as an issue by both staff and service users. There is clearly confusion about diagnosis and about how specialist support can be reached in prison. While NHS Veterans Wales provides an excellent service for those with service-attributable PTSD, they do not have the resources to extend this to within the prison service; nor may the treatments that they offer be wisely entered into within a prison environment. It may be the case that PTSD provision cannot be provided within priso ns. **However, either way, it could be beneficial for staff and service users to be more informed about what is and is not available in order to manage expectations.** It should also be noted whilst conducting this research, a far greater number of individuals indicated that they had PTSD than might be statistically expected. Further research is needed to determine if reporting PTSD might be serving another function (e.g. being an 'acceptable' method of asking for help in comparison to reporting anxiety or depression, and / or to demonstrate having seen active service). This notwithstanding, it is suggested that the provision for supporting those with PTSD within the prison service should be assessed and that information made available across the board.

Remand/short sentences

As some individuals do not feel comfortable disclosing their ex-ASP status prior to sentencing, or because it may take some time for them to do so, some may be missing the opportunity to access specialist services. This may be particularly the case within establishments where assess to such services revolves around veterans' coffee mornings. As these are monthly, quick turnover means that potential assistance through these meetings may be lost. This is where additional resources – such as information packs and freephone numbers – may be of particular benefit.

Individuals who have been convicted of a sexual offence

This is perhaps the group for whom access to specialist services needs the greatest attention and support. This is a complex area that warrants extensive further discussion beyond the scope of this report. In-line with a wealth of previous evidence, we found that, based on data available from one prison, **a substantial proportion of ex-ASP in Welsh prisons are likely to be serving time for a serious sexual offence. This figure is likely to represent at least one third of all ex-ASP within prisons in Wales.** Figure 4 shows data collected over two years from one prison estate in Wales.

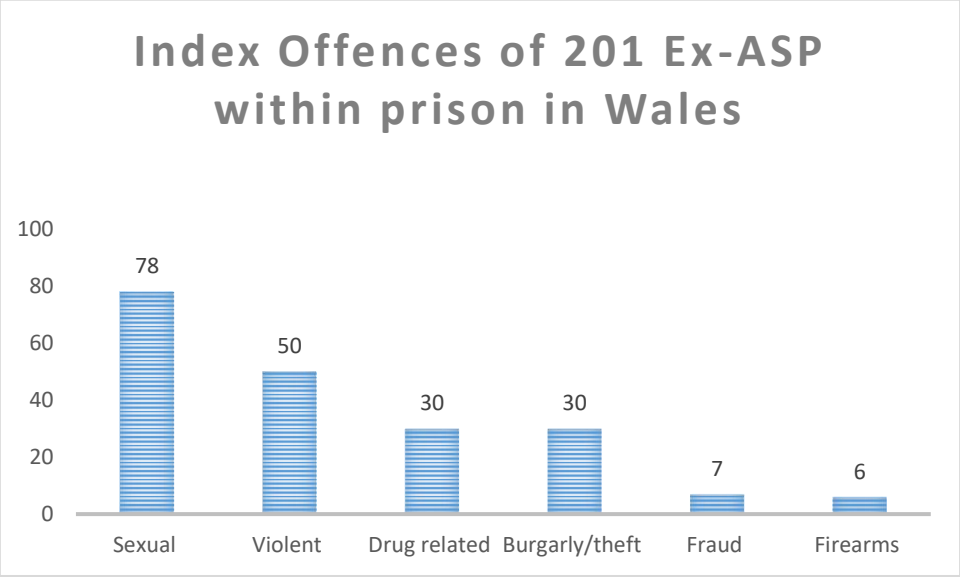

Figure 4: Proportion of index offences from a sample of 201 ex-ASP within prison in Wales

"You've got people going to prison for murder and nothing's said about them. But because you've gone to prison and you've been to sex offenders' prison, you're the lowest of the low."

Participant 9, Prison Service User

A particular area of note is that appears to be a number of veteran charity representatives – at varying levels – who do not wish to support individuals who have been convicted of a sexual offence. This was reflected in the veterans' coffee mornings attended specifically for this cohort, as well as in conversations with specific agencies and prison staff.

"All these new agencies are starting up… And it's annoying cos they're all coming up and saying we can help you! We can help you! But it all goes back to the ones with the deep pockets and ***they learn it's us and it's a no****."* Participant 11, Prison Service User

Individuals convicted of sexual offences may be additionally disadvantaged in terms of accessing support as they may be refused help from their regiments or may not even want to ask due to the nature of these offences. In addition, several individuals described previously being active members of veterans' groups and now being ostracised from such activity.

"In other jails that I've been to, veterans won't talk to other veterans if they're sex offenders. It doesn't matter, veterans or not, the perception is the same." Participant 7, Prison Staff Member

"It's embarrassing [applying for regimental funding] ... especially with people you've served with and you've come out and they've gone up the ranks and it gets back to them..." Participant 10, Prison Service User

Many individuals convicted of sexual offences also have particularly stringent licence conditions upon their release from prison. This is often particularly the case for those who have offended against minors. We examined data from 231 ex-ASP prisoners who had been convicted of sexual offences and found that over 70% of these offences were against children. Indeed, when considered as a proportion of the wider ex-ASP prison population, such offences made up 25% of all convictions. Special consideration may therefore be required in terms of how information is shared with external agencies to assure assistance is in line with individual restrictions. Indeed, this was an issue highlighted by third sector staff (as discussed further in subsequent sections).

Notably, many previous reports have suggested that shame was a primary reason for not identifying. With that in mind, it would be reasonable to assume that men convicted of sexual offences may be less likely to identify. However, while we cannot speak for the unidentified, those that we did speak to who had been convicted of such offences seemed, if anything, to be prouder of their military service. Indeed it was

apparent in some individuals – and explicitly stated by others – that this was an important part of feeling more positive and regaining self-worth.

"[being ex-ASP in prison] It didn't help me, it didn't hinder me, ***it just made me feel good****... I still go down the library now and can look at the website and look at all the deceased. I was on there the other day and I actually found photos of myself, it was really good like. When I get a bit down I go down there and I go onto that site and it's a bit of a pick-me-up... like I said I'm a loner now, obviously I do get bouts of depression..."*
Participant 54, Probation Service User

*"****You've been annexed from civilisation****. You can't talk to anybody from the area you live because they're not from there.* ***It gives you something in common, you could call it a bond, and it does help.****"*
Participant 39, Prison Service User

It is possible that individuals convicted of sexual offences may particularly benefit from engagement with specialist services. If this is the case, such engagement could be a step towards reducing reoffending. With this in mind, it may be important for third sector agencies to consider clarifying their inclusion criteria for offering support.

Key point: Being convicted of a sexual offence seems to be a particular barrier to accessing specialist services for ex-ASP

Women

Several women who had identified as ex-ASP and were serving time in the same prison in England but plan to be released to Wales were made known to the researcher. Due to barriers in gaining access to visit these individuals, they were not interviewed. However, staff working with them were. It was abundantly clear that, in comparison to male prison, ex - ASP specific services are not available and these women are at a substantial disadvantage in terms of their ability to access specialist services.

Key point: How can identification and access to specialist services be improved for women who currently in, or will be released back to, the CJS in Wales?

Key point summary

Understand the barriers to disclosure facing ex-ASP within the context of prison services

- Service users may not want to disclose on reception
- Service users may not know if disclosure is positive or negative
- Service users may be not be aware of additional support available
- Individuals arriving from other prisons may fear religious extremism
- Service users may be concerned about losing pensions
- The question may not be asked at all times. If it is asked, this information may not always be recorded.

Identify how disclosure of ex-ASP status can be encouraged and supported:

- It is important for the question to be asked at multiple stages
- The use of peer mentors appears to encourage disclosure
- Ex-ASP staff may wish to make this status known
- Potential benefits for ex-ASP status should be published to encourage disclosure
- Disclosure should be recognised as a choice

Identify how ex-ASP can be supported to access appropriate specialist services

- Availability to access specialist services should not be dependent upon identification
- Veterans coffee mornings should be run with service user input and awareness of those who may not want to take part.
- Referrals to charities and subsequent actions should be monitored, to ensure service users are getting the support they have been offered**.**
- Multi-disciplinary collaborative thinking around how to ensure support is available for all, including groups that may currently be disadvantaged (e.g. women and individuals convicted of a sexual offence
- Data recording and monitoring practices should be improved to better assess ongoing resource provision.

Probation

Overview

Background

Whilst the Philips Review (2014) called for improved identification and signposting provision for ex-ASP across the CJS, our research suggests there appears to have been relatively little focused placed on this within probation in Wales compared to prison services. The Probation Institute published a report (Ford et al, 2016) to profile the provision for ex-ASP under the care of probation across sites in England. This report highlighted the particular importance of identification of ex-ASP within probation, as a part of better understanding individuals' and how their history may relate to offending behaviour. The potential value of strong, in some cases subcontracted, partnerships with third sector agencies was also discussed. The SToMP project has helped to create 'Veteran Champions' within probation services throughout Wales: offender managers (OMs) who have received additional training around services for ex-ASP. This staff members act as 'go to' points for other OMs who may have queries around signposting for ex-ASP on their caseload. Within the National Probation Service (NPS) in Wales, there are 24 offices and veteran champions in ten of these; whereas the Wales Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) has 23 offices and two champions.

The following section will be relatively brief compared to the subsequent sections. This is not because it is not deemed important. In fact**, accessing specialist services may be of particular benefit for individuals in the community** following a custodial sentence or are serving community orders; as many of the veterans' charities are able to offer support with housing and employment. However, in comparison to the prison service, the barriers to identification appear less complex and the messages from staff and service users on how this could be improved were very clear, particularly in relation to identification.

It should be noted that no court staff were spoken to as part of this evaluation. We were informed that these staff regularly ask about armed service as part of the equalities form and that this information should then go to their offender manager (OMs). It was suggested that if cases are not being subsequently picked up as ex-ASP, this may be an administrative error. Nevertheless, while this may well be occurring, evidence for this is at present anecdotal.

Data

Eight offender managers were contacted across different geographical areas of Wales. All but one were Veteran Champions within their service[2]. Of these, seven responded and six were interviewed. Due to geographical / time constraints, an additional two champions were spoken to informally on the telephone. Across the eight staff spoken to, seven were OMs within the NPS and one at an approved premises. Through these staff members, requests were made for research information to be given to any ex-ASP they had on their caseload who may be willing to take part in the research. Five service users within probation were then interviewed.

Identification

Apart from one service, where the question *'have you ever served in the armed forces'* was a formalised part of induction paperwork, staff from the other services were very clear that they felt the main barrier to identification was operational: that the question was not being routinely asked.

*"There does seem to be massive gaps in identifying veterans... There doesn't seem to be any indicators of veteran service in any of the papers, in the induction pack for example. There are posters on the walls and there is verbal encouragement for OMs to ask their cases on induction have they ever served. But if they forget the poster or forget what the champions told them in the tasking meeting 3 weeks ago, then there's nothing to focus that thought in the paperwork… So it really needs to be integrated into the whole system, it sort of bounces around the periphery… **There's nothing formalised, that's the barrier. Veterans are fortunate if they're picked up"**.* Participant 44, Probation Staff Member

***…it's that identification, which I think is probably the main barrier for us, is knowing.** I'd say in prison there seems there's been a better push for that and I guess it's a more structured environment and there's people going in from different services, from different charities. Whereas in the community it's less structured and people don't always come to us from prison, they might come to us from court or be transferred from other probation areas or transferred from the CRC, so it's not always that straightforward that identification process. **And one thing that I've picked up on is that we just don't ask the question or we don't enough, or as consistently.** So what I'm trying to do, I'm nagging my colleagues, is we've got an equality and diversity form, trying to get that as part of the induction. It's got a question in it along with like other barriers and disabilities and stuff and then 'have you ever served in the armed forces'.* Participant 43, Probation Staff Member

[2] One was contacted specifically due to her work with one female ex-ASP

In addition the question not being asked within probation induction procedures, there appeared to be a lack of information sharing between the police, prison and probation services. This means that currently even if someone has been identified within one service, this information may not go with them into another.

Key point: If data was consistently recorded and appropriately shared, would service users who had previously identified in prison need to 're-identify' to probation services?

There may be individuals who, for whatever reason, did not identify in prison but choose to identify upon release. However no direct evidence for this was found as part of the present evaluation. Additional evidence was found however, in line with reports from police custody staff, **that women would be even less likely to be asked if they had ever served in the armed forces.**

"Recently, someone's asked 'well what about her?' and I thought 'I didn't ask her cos she's female, just didn't think to ask'." Participant 43, Probation Staff Member

It is perhaps understandable that there is no great pressure to ask 'the question' or to increase knowledge around specialist services for those working in probation compared to prison services. As there are only a handful of prisons within Wales, the number of veterans are necessarily concentrated. However, when compared to the number of probation offices, it is perhaps understandable that OMs feel it is not a common issue when they may see so few. Furthermore, similar to what may be occurring within police stations, if identification rates are low this may reinforce the belief that there are few ex-ASP on the service caseload.

All service users interviewed for this evaluation had served a custodial sentence and this is where they had identified and learned about the services available. It should be noted that, due to the lack of formalised practices for identification post-court in probation offices, **serving a community order may act as a barrier to access specialist services as it may be the case that these individuals are less likely to be identified and sign posted.** Indeed, this appeared to be reflected in data provided by HMPPS in Wales. This showed the NPS caseload of identified ex-ASP to be 4.5%, compared to 2.2% within the CRC.

Key point: Ex-ASP serving community, rather than custodial services, should not be disadvantaged due to poor identification practices in probation services.

Once again, identification within probation is likely to be closely related to the services available for ex-ASP and their quality. On the service user side, this may be particularly relevant to those who are serving community sentences as many will have received information regarding specialist services during their time in prison. For probation staff, increased knowledge about specialist services may provide motivation to ask service users if they have served. This is because such services may be able to assist staff in the handling of

that service user, thus effectively reducing their workload. However – as will be discussed in the following sections – relationships between probation and the third sector are often unclear.

Access to specialist services

Within probation services, awareness of the potential importance of identifying ex-ASP and supporting them to access specialist services seems to have been greatly improved through the implementation of Veteran Champions. All individuals who were contacted as part of this evaluation were enthusiastic about the role, clearly feeling that it was necessary due to current attitudes and procedures. All SToMP champions who had not served in the armed forces were very positive about the training had received through the 'Military Human' programme.

"And just the difficulties are more than just that stereotypical post-traumatic stress disorder PTSD which you just hear of, it's just a lot wider isn't it? So it did, as I say, open my eyes a bit."
Participant 43, Probation Staff Member

Only one of the champions interviewed had a military history themselves and felt that this had benefits in building a rapport with service users. The rest of the champions interviewed did not have military history, although two had military links through family. Interestingly, the general sense was that this would not be a barrier to their interaction with ex-ASP, however they recognised that ex-ASP might feel more comfortable speaking to someone else who had served in the armed forces.

"It's the individuals, I wouldn't say it's the same for everyone or for every offender... I think with veterans it is a bit of a barrier for some, not saying all, but for some it is that brotherhood that they have with people that they've been in the army with, the forces or whatever, the trust that they have in that group. Sometimes I could be an outsider because I've not experienced that and I'm not part of that so ***I guess it's just appreciating that and trying not to force anything on that but respecting that. You know, you can't break that down with everyone".*** Participant 43, Probation Staff Member

"They automatically think we don't understand. And maybe we might not understand but we can try to empathise… I think it would be a barrier from their part. Because no matter how much you try and empathise, if somebody's very set in their ways it might just be an automatic guard up there 'you're not gonna understand me so I'm not gonna try." Participant 45, Probation Staff Member

Notably, whereas service users in prisons often discussed the importance of fellow ex-ASP staff, this was not something expressed by those interviewed within probation services. While some had experienced issues with the veterans' charities upon leaving prison, none reported any barriers to working with non-ASP staff in probation services.

None of the service users interviewed from probation services had experienced barriers to accessing services due to a lack of knowledge. All felt they would know where to go if they needed additional support however several said they did not need anything. For those that were looking for such assistance, the main barrier was feeling let down by charities who they had met whilst in prison and these agencies not then delivering what had been offered.

"…they give you all this bullshit to be honest with you're inside jail, to come out and to be left... everybody else who leaves jail has got to stand on their own two feet, I get it. ***But don't come into prison and promise the world, to supply nothing****. Cos obviously there are people out there a lot worse off than I am... I would hope they didn't have the same experience as me, I hope they have been supported in the community. But from my own personal experience, absolutely nothing****. And you know, the money they pump into these charities in order to help ex-serviceman released from prison I think somebody should be doing something. And if they're not, well then they should be held accountable for it."*** Participant 51, Probation Service User

"But I've got to say it was all talk 'yeh we'll sort you out when you get out' and that was the end of it, ***never heard from any of them ever again****..."* Participant 52, Probation Service User

As has been previously mentioned, these experiences may highlight the need for greater monitoring of the activity of veterans' charities within the CJS and for collaborative working; particularly when individuals are at the point of release.

Key point summary

Understand the barriers to disclosure facing ex-ASP within the context of probation services

- In most offices, asking if someone has ever served in the armed forces is not a part of routine post-court paperwork
- Poor communication between different sectors within the CJS

Identify how disclosure of ex-ASP status can be encouraged and supported

- Veterans Champions seem to have a positive impact in encouraging staff to ask 'the question' and providing a point of contact for anyone with an ex-ASP on their caseload.

Identify how ex-ASPs can be supported to access appropriate specialist services

- Better communication and collaborative working between prison, probation and third sector agencies
- Greater accountability of charities within the prison system and monitoring of actions once individuals go through the gate, with the hope of managing expectations and improving the services provided.

Third sector agencies

There are a wealth of veteran's charities operating across the country, a number of whom are allocating resources specifically to work within the CJS. As it stands however, in-line with the resource allocation for much of this work, such agencies have been focused on assisting within prisons. As identification is not down to such organisations (and has usually been established once a service user has made contact with them), this section will focus on how these charities work with the CJS in order to support access to specialist services for ex-ASP. As discussions of some of the work of the third sector has been included previously. This section will therefore serve to provide additional information, and perspective, that has not already been mentioned.

It was clear from speaking to representatives from third sector agencies working within the CJS, as well as CJS staff and service users, that while things had improved there was still a long way to go in terms of collaborative working. Many service users felt that the way some charities operated towards other charities was unprofessional with some not wanting to 'share' service users with others in order to protect funding.

"They're just competing. Like 'we can get you this, we can get you that' or 'they're [other charity] useless, they say this, they say that, this is what they're saying. Is that in a banter way? I don't know, I've heard quite a few things…. It's alright these agencies come in but they want to help you with funding, ***they want to compete for funding. Who can get the most funding for who. That's not help****. It is help but it's not help. Its great getting funding but... sometimes it's not the help that people need is it?"* Participant 25, Prison Service User

"…there's that many people wanting the bite of a funding cherry, that can be diluted so that actual service users think 'who do I go with here?' That's why any agency we've worked with, we've said you've got to be willing to work with the other organisations, not stealing, not working against each other."
Participant 30, Prison Staff Member

If this is indeed occurring, it should be addressed. It is clear that collecting data for recording and monitoring processes may be essential part of this process, to help ensure best practice and accountability across the board.

Many staff members wanted a centralised access point, as a source of consistently updated information to know where to go for what help. However this is only useful if such information is easy to navigate, up to date and an impartial representation of what is available. Views of one widely used resource were generally negative because it didn't meet these 'standards'. Staff across services, highlighted the multiple roles they fulfil and the lack of time available to find relevant charities. This was something that SToMP appears to have

helped with a great deal, however there is still a lack of knowledge for what's available particularly within community-based services.

"I think as a service leaver and a veteran, it can be very confusing to know where to go for assistance… But there's thousands of military charities, which one do you go to? If it's not made clear to the service user and the first email they write or the first phone call they make is a rejection...? I don't think it takes a lot to actually be quite clear what criteria you need to get assistance. So maybe it's up to us to make it clearer for the service user." Participant 57, Third Sector Worker

A particular issue – as outlined above in the prison specific section – is confusion around the specific remit of each charity, both in terms of what kind of help they offer and who they are able to offer it to. This seems to be especially relevant when it comes to individuals convicted of sexual offences. Staff and service users reported conflicting messages both within and between charities regarding who they were able to help. There were reports of some charities agreeing to come into specialised wings as long as it was kept secret and of refusing money raised by such wings to give to the charity. Sexual offending is a difficult and complex issue. However there is no escaping the fact that by **not working with individuals who have sexually offended, veterans' charities may be overlooking a substantial proportion of ex-ASP.**

One of the general issues that was particularly relevant in relation to sexual offences, was charity case workers not fully understanding licence restrictions. This was principally raised in relation to housing and employment. This highlights a need to consider how different agencies and the third section work together and share information.

"If we're in the process of helping a prisoner, we really need to know - possibly from the probation officer - that if they're coming out under license, what those license requirements are. Because that is particularly applicable to housing... If we don't know that, they may be offered a flat in the next street from where they're not supposed to be. So we need to know that. ***But we don't automatically get that information, it's like trying to get blood out of a stone****."* Participant 57, Third Sector Worker

Something that was highlighted by probation staff, and charity workers, was a lack of co-working. In some cases, neither seemed to fully understand the remit of the other. While staff may be encouraged to refer clients to charities, there appears to be little knowledge or agreement about how agencies can work together.

"I've actually attended a few probation meetings where the probation officer has invited me down to their meeting… But again its personality driven for that person to realise I'm not here to interfere, I'm here to assist.

And I prefer the meetings when the three of us are in the room…. It means that I suggest something it means straight away the probation officer says 'no' well then that's managing the individuals expectations and they know straight away that we can't go down that avenue but don't worry we'll find another one... so we can make decisions quite quickly... rather than me speaking to that individual to the phone and I think it's a great idea but then I've set that person up to fail because it's a no from the probation officer because of my lack of experience in that area." Participant 58, Third Sector Worker

On the one hand, in terms of interaction with the CJS, community based third sector agencies for ex-ASP are treated almost like statutory ones. For example, the aspect of this evaluation concerned with evaluating barriers to 'accessing specialist services' is effectively focused on specialist provision from third sector agencies. However, the involvement with the third sector – particularly within the community – does not fit with this.

Key point: There is a lack of communication, of understanding and of collaboration that appears to act as an additional barrier to service users accessing services.

It is very clear that there needs to be consideration across all sectors of the CJS regarding how to work with the third sector. From the charities' side, they may not always have the resources to undertake this work. However, with the right evidence, the likelihood of receiving funds for this specific work is greatly increased. With that in mind, the importance of meaningful data recording and monitoring cannot be stressed enough. This is essential to show what is working, what isn't and how improvements can be made, as described by one third sector worker (participant 56) below:

"Data's become something, because we've had to prove our worth, we've involuntarily had to get interested in. Because really, when you first start working as a mentor, you're not interested in that at all. You're interested in going to someone's house and getting them out the shit. And the idea of infographics don't really factor. But actually, as time goes on, and you want to improve what you do, you've got look at the data haven't you?"

This agency was also able to provide perhaps the best example of data monitoring, including data relating to the numbers on their caseload; the demographics of each of these individuals; where they were referred from; what their needs were; levels of engagement and the outcomes of receiving support.

Key point: Until there are data recording referrals to specialist services and engagement once service users go into the community, how we know what is working or necessary?

Research Limitations

The major limitation of this research is that it did not reach those service users who had not identified. While this was never its aim, this is clearly a population that it would be beneficial to attempt contacting. Gaining information regarding this cohort could be useful to provide an estimate of numbers and to better understand the reasons for non-disclosure. It is perhaps useful to consider however that while it is assumed there are many men in the criminal justice system who have not identified, particularly in prisons, we did not find any evidence to support this within the remit of this project. An additional population we did not reach was female service users, however we were able to speak to affiliated staff and contact has been made with the service users.

It should also be noted that all service users were accessed through staff. While there we have no reason to suspect any biases, the possibility remains. In addition – with the exception of police services – we only spoke to staff who were in some way involved with veteran-specific services. Future work may benefit from canvassing larger staff samples of those working in a more general capacity across services.

Conclusions

Best practice

One challenging aspect of this report was knowing how to present a set of data that is so clearly intertwined. Conducting the research showed there are a number of extremely committed and caring individuals, across all sectors, who are working to improve service for ex-ASP within the CJS. It is hoped that these examples of good practice will continue to spread, so that issues specific to individual services are reduced to create better working across the board. Some such examples were:

- The question *'have you ever served in the armed forces'?* being asked as part of formal administrative procedures across one police force. This was accompanied by good recording practices, enabling this force to link current or past service to a range of demographic variables.

- In prison services, the question being asked at multiple points (e.g. at reception, on induction, in healthcare) and being asked, or followed up, by ex-ASP peer mentors.

- Enthusiastic and engaged ex-ASP specialist prison staff who were aware of available services and made this information easily available to service users. These were also the staff who monitored the activities of charities and made activities cooperatively decided by ex-ASP service users.

- Prison staff who ensured information about ex-ASP status and any help they needed, or were receiving, went with them when they moved on to another prison or back into the community

- Third sector organisations who collaboratively engaged with statutory agencies to work more collaboratively with service users

In addition to good practice, there were many site-specific barriers that have been discussed throughout this report; there appeared to be some fundamental barriers that permeated across services. With the hope of combatting these, and thereby improving the identification of ex-ASP and access to specialist services across the CJS, the following recommendations are suggested:

Recommendations

- A standardised question such as '*have you ever served in the armed forces?*' should be a routine part of paperwork across police, prison and probation services to improve identification. Identification rates should be recorded for individual custody suites / prisons / probation offices to better assess where improvements are being made.

- It would be beneficial to record where – and to who – ex-ASP disclose. In line with this, third sector organisations should be encouraged to ask self-referred individuals how they obtained the information that put them in contact.

- Where not already occurring, prison institutions may wish to initiate a service user forum to ensure that services are run with their direction consultation. Such meetings should be minuted, along with any actions, and this information should be available to relevant staff and service users.

- Statutory agencies within the CJS may wish to agree standardised paperwork to be completed by third sector agencies, to ensure appropriate monitoring of service delivery. With service user permission, such data could be shared with relevant CJS staff members (e.g. VICSOs / OMs). Anonymised data relating to where individuals are referred, their needs and the services provided should be electronically recorded to allow ongoing monitoring and continuity. Any data that is retained should be stored in line with GDPR practices.

- Publicity and information around ASP specific support should be widely available across the CJS for service users and staff to make informed decisions. Service sectors may wish to consider auditing individual services to ensure availability of information is consistent.

- Data sharing practices could be improved to ensure that once ex-ASP status is disclosed, that information goes with that individual across the CJS.

- Identification is a choice and access to specialist services should not be solely dependent on it. With this in mind, it may be important to consider how information can be accessed and individuals can make direct contact with services.

- There appear to be some sub-groups for whom services are not equal. This includes women; individuals who have been convicted of a sexual offence and those serving community orders rather than custodial sentences. It may be important to consider how identification and access to specialist service can be equal for everyone across the CJS.

- To enhance data recording and monitoring across statutory services to enable reporting in this area. This is particularly critical in relation to signposting and referrals to charity / third sector provision.

- Inclusivity of services should be a standing agenda item on staff meetings relating to ex-ASP service provision, particularly where these involve multidisciplinary agencies.

- Continued development of collaborative working, both within the statutory agencies and between them and the third sector.

- Consideration of relationships with the third sector, how they are managed and how communication could be improved.

- Audits conducted to review the identification process in each office / approved premises.

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Appendix A: Information and permission sheet

Ex-Armed Service Personnel in the Criminal Justice System in Wales: Barriers to identification and signposting to specialist services.

Service Evaluation

Information Sheet

We are currently working on a project to evaluate services for ex – armed forces personnel (ASP) within the criminal justice system (CJS). We are especially interested in evaluating how ex-ASP are being identified and sign posted to specialist services. We will be speaking to staff and service users within the CJS, to gain information from people's own experiences. At the end of the project, we will write a report about what we have found and suggestions for how things could be improved.

The evaluation will be conducted by Dr Gabriel Davies, who works for Swansea University.

Why are we doing this?

We would like to find out more about the barriers to disclosure and identification for ex-ASP in the criminal justice system. We are aiming to improve both this process and signposting to relevant services.

Why have I been asked to take part?

You have been asked to take part because you are either a service user or a staff member within the CJS/third sector. You have disclosed that you have served in the armed forces and/or you work with individuals who have served.

What do you want me to do?

We are interested in speaking to you about your experiences. This may be one-to-one, as a group or within community meetings. Gabriel may audio record these discussions or make written notes. She will only do this with your permission. All recorded information will be anonymous. At the end of the discussion, Gabriel will ask again if its ok to include things you've said in the final report. If during a discussion with Gabriel you would like to tell her something but do not want it recorded, please just let her know.

How long will you keep the information for?

Any information that we have recorded (written or audio) will be kept until the final report has been written. After that it will be thrown away.

If you are happy for discussions with Gabriel to be recorded, please sign the first box. She will ask if you are happy to sign the second box after your discussion.

Your name: _____

- I understand that notes may be taken from conversations (written or verbal) I have with Gabriel Davies and that this information may be used in a later report. ☐

- I am happy with the information that has been recorded. It may be used in the final report. I have had the chance to tell Gabriel about any information that I do not want to be included. ☐

Appendix B: Survey

Swansea University
Prifysgol Abertawe

Ex-Armed Forces Personnel in the Criminal Justice System
Survey

We would like to learn more about people who have served in the Armed Forces who are in prison, to find out how services could be improved. ***This research is independent from HMPS*** *and all responses are anonymous.*

1. Age: 18-25☐ 25-34 ☐ 35-44 ☐ 45-54 ☐ 55-64 ☐ 64+ ☐

2. Which branch of the armed forces were you in? Army☐ Navy ☐ RAF ☐ **Other:** _____

3. How long did you serve in the armed forces? __ years __ months **What year did you leave?** _____

4. a) Who was the first staff member you told that you served in the Armed Forces?

Police officer☐ Healthcare Staff☐ Prison Officer ☐ Probation Officer☐ Other: _____

b) How did staff originally find out that you served?

I told them without being asked ☐ I told them because I was asked ☐

Another prisoner noticed that I was ex-forces ☐ A staff member noticed that I was ex-forces ☐

c) Are you happy that staff know that you've served? Yes ☐ No ☐

5. Are there any benefits of telling staff you served in the Armed Forces?

_____

6. a) How many men in this prison do you think have served in the Armed Forces but *have <u>not</u> told staff*?

_____

b) Why do you think some men might not want staff to know about their military history?

_____

7. Which kind of offence were you charged with?

Sexual ☐ Violence ☐ Drug Related☐ Burglary/Theft☐ Prefer not to say☐ Other _____

8. a) Are you on remand? Yes☐ No☐ **b) If no, how long is your current sentence** __ years __ months

9. a) Have you ever asked for help from a veterans' charity? Yes ☐ No ☐ ***(if no, please go to question 10)***

b) If yes, did you get the help you needed? Yes ☐ No ☐ **c) If no, why not?**

_____

10. Why have you never asked for help from a veteran's charity?

They can't help me ☐ My prison sentence is too long ☐ I don't want any help ☐

A veterans' charity let me down in the past ☐ I don't feel like a veteran ☐ I don't know who to ask ☐

Other: _____

Thank you completing the survey! When you are finished, please fold it and return

IOM Cymru SToMP's response to the recommendations of Dr Davies research "The Barriers to Disclosure and Access to Specialist Services for Ex-Armed Services Personnel in the Criminal Justice System in Wales: An Independent Evaluation "

	Recommendations of research	**Response**			
		NPS/CRC	**Prison**	**Police**	**Agency**
1.	A standardised question such as '*have you ever served in the armed forces?*' should be a routine part of paperwork across police, prison and probation services to improve identification. Identification rates should be recorded for individual custody suites / prisons / probation offices to better assess where improvements are being made.	Standard question 'have you ever served in the armed forces?' is on the equalities form completed by Court Staff, this is then recorded on Delius (NPS database). A data dashboard has been produced by SToMP to monitor identification rates.	An Ex Armed Forces Personnel identification in custody timeline flowchart had been produced by SToMP. The alert is identified on C-NOMIS (prison database). The Prison-NOMIS Application Support Team have released user guide. A data dashboard has been produced by SToMP to monitor identification rates.	All police forces have or are planning to include this question and have recorded for signposting through their diversion schemes. This will be monitored and assisted through the SToMP police sub group. A data dashboard has been produced by SToMP to monitor identification rates.	
2.	It would be beneficial to record where – and to who – ex-ASP disclose. In line with this, third sector organisations should be encouraged to ask self-referred individuals how they obtained the information that put them in contact.	Court staff will be first contact, but if disclosure is later in CJ journey, it will be recorded through contact notes. The IT system at present does not support reporting on this process, but will be proposed.			The second part of this recommendation will be shared with charities and the local authority Armed Forces Liaison officers via the SToMP steering group.

3.	Where not already occurring, prison institutions may wish to initiate a service user forum to ensure that services are run with their direction consultation. Such meetings should be minuted, along with any actions, and this information should be available to relevant staff and service users.	Building on the good practice in our prisons, SToMP is encouraging service user forums in the community through NPS and CRC.	All Welsh establishments hold service user meetings as part of the SToMP All Wales Prisoner Pathway. This is monitored and recorded on the prison checklist through the SToMP prison sub group. This also provides as escalation route to SToMP for recommendations by service users.		
4.	Statutory agencies within the CJS may wish to agree standardised paperwork to be completed by third sector agencies, to ensure appropriate monitoring of service delivery. With service user permission, such data could be shared with relevant CJS staff members (e.g. VICSOs / OMs). Anonymised data relating to where individuals are referred, their needs and the services provided should be electronically recorded to allow ongoing monitoring and continuity. Any data that is retained should be stored in line with GDPR practices.	The SToMP Steering Group will consider how best to address this recommendation. In addition, the recommendation is equally applicable to any referral to the voluntary sector by criminal justice agencies. As such the recommendation will be shared with the Future Probation and Resettlement Service team as they consider the commissioning model for 2020 and beyond.			
5.	Publicity and information around ASP specific support should be widely available across the CJS for service users and staff to make informed decisions. Service sectors may wish to consider auditing individual	In collaboration with the four polices forces SToMP commissioned a suite of promotional materials to be utilised at all stages of the criminal justice system, from custody suites, court through to probation offices and prisons to aid identification and empower ex service personnel to seek support. This consistent promotional material encourages self-disclosure and highlights			

	services to ensure availability of information is consistent.	those national, sustainable charities that are available to support ex-ASP to encourage self-referral.	
6.	Data sharing practices could be improved to ensure that once ex-ASP status is disclosed, that information goes with that individual across the CJS.	Data sharing practices is a wider issue for all our CJ statutory services and all CJ support services. This recommendation will be shared and highlighted appropriately. This recommendation has been shared by SToMP with the national NPS leads group and the national Offender Management in Custody team to encourage a digital solution to sharing Ex-ASP status between NPS/CRCs and prisons. It is hoped that this will be resolved by 2020.	
7.	Identification is a choice and access to specialist services should not be solely dependent on it. With this in mind, it may be important to consider how information can be accessed and individuals can make direct contact with services.	In collaboration with the four polices forces SToMP commissioned a suite of promotional materials to be utilised at all stages of the criminal justice system, from custody suites, court through to probation offices and prisons to aid identification and empower ex service personnel to seek support. This consistent promotional material encourages self-disclosure and highlights those national, sustainable charities that are available to support ex-ASP to encourage self-referral; whether or not the individual chooses to disclose to the CJ practitioner.	
8.	There appear to be some sub-groups for whom services are not equal. This includes women; individuals who have been convicted of a sexual offence and those serving community orders rather than custodial sentences. It may be important to consider how identification and access to specialist service can be equal for everyone across the CJS.	SToMP will take forward this recommendation in Phase 2 with two regional sessions arranged, open to all ex service personnel charities in "how to work with people who commit sexual offences". We will also develop a pathway for the two main welsh women prisons, and collaborate with the IOM Women's workstream to assure alignment.	
9.	To enhance data recording and monitoring across statutory services to enable reporting in this area. This is particularly critical in relation to signposting and referrals to charity / third sector provision.	SToMP has developed a monthly data report which includes monitoring of identification by organisation and area and highlights needs to ensure appropriate signposting. This report is shared with All SToMP stakeholders.	

10.	Inclusivity of services should be a standing agenda item on staff meetings relating to ex-ASP service provision, particularly where these involve multidisciplinary agencies.	SToMP Steering Group will continue to ensure that agencies consider their service provision offer for all of our Ex ASP service users, including women and sex offenders. NPS, via SToMP is facilitating two training sessions for our partners on risk and sexual offending, to improve understanding of this cohort and the role NPS plays in assessing and managing risk, to increase confidence of these charities in working with this group. SToMP are also working closely with HMP Eastwood Park and HMP Styal ensure that female Ex ASP are able to receive the same support from Ex ASP specialist agencies as their male counterparts. SToMP will continue to work with the Women's Pathfinder to ensure that the projects are aligned. Where appropriate, SToMP will encourage specific agenda items within relevant partnership meetings, to ensure that inclusivity of services remains a priority.
11.	Continued development of collaborative working, both within the statutory agencies and between them and the third sector.	SToMP will continue to work in collaboration with all stakeholders to identify, record, verify and support all ex-ASP's that come into contact with the CJS. Ex ASP remain a priority group for HMPPS in Wales and Welsh Government under the Framework to support positive changes for those at risk of offending in Wales and for all IOM Cymru Board members until 2023. SToMP has been successful in obtaining Continuation and Sustainability funding from MOD Covenant Fund until December 2020 and continues to ensure that progress is embedded to ensure sustainability by partners post SToMP.
12.	Consideration of relationships with the third sector, how they are managed and how communication could be improved	SToMP will continue to work in collaboration with all stakeholders to identify, record, verify and support all ex-ASP's that come into contact with the CJS. s. SToMP will continue the Steering group, Police sub group and Prison sub group until at least December 2020 to further develop and maintain these relationships. A key focus of Phase 2 of SToMP is ensuring we continue to embed positive working relationships directly between criminal justice agencies and the Ex ASP voluntary sector, that will continue without the need for SToMP in the future. Our Champions model will be a key method of delivering this. Communications methods will be considered within Phase 2.
13.	Audits conducted to review the identification process in each office / approved premises.	SToMP has developed a monthly data report which includes monitoring of identification by area and highlights needs to ensure appropriate signposting. This report is shared with all SToMP stakeholders. This report will be completed on a regular basis to consider trends and patterns, with the potential to conduct deep dive exercises on areas that appear to require more focused intervention to improve identification processes.