



# Veterans NHS Wales Service

**Dr Mary Self**  
**Medical Director Mental Health LD Care Group**  
**Consultant Psychiatrist VNHSW**

# A bit of history...

- 2008 one of 6 pilot sites funded by MOD/WG based in Cardiff
- 2010 success led to All Wales Veterans MH service
- Subsequently renamed VNHSW
- VNHSW established reputation for military mental health expertise
- First UK national veterans mental health service



# Service Aims

- Primary aim of VNHSW is to improve the mental health and wellbeing of veterans with a service related mental health problem.
- Secondary aim is to achieve this through the development of sustainable, accessible and effective services that meet the needs of veterans with mental health and wellbeing difficulties who live in Wales.



# Outcomes

- Able to access services designed for their needs
- Given comprehensive assessment of psychological/social needs
- Signposted to services for physical needs
- Management plan takes into account families
- Families signposted if appropriate
- Promotes multi agency working including addictions
- Early links with military to facilitate early intervention
- Provide timely trauma focussed interventions
- Promotion of recovery model
- Provide expert advice to MH local services



# Service overview

- Outpatient service for service related MH problems
- Expert multidisciplinary team
- Access to military records (with consent)
- Comprehensive assessment
- Collaborative management plan
- Collaboration with third sector eg Change Step, Poppy factory
- Evidence based interventions; CBT, STAIR, EMDR, MI, TF-CBT
- Telephone/video/face to face
- Awareness raising of veterans issues
- Research and evaluation



Opt-in by veterans



90 minute assessment



Does not meet criteria  
VNHSW



Meets criteria VNHSW

Signposted relevant service



Psychiatric  
appointment



Psychological  
therapy



Signposted  
third sector



# Some statistics

- CTM referral numbers for 20/21 = 87 (down from 159 year before)
- 33 referred from primary care, 23 self referred, 31 from third sector
- Majority aged 31-35
- 96.5% males 3.5% females
- 73.1% received assessment within 4 weeks
- 78% entered treatment – 63.7% within 28 weeks
- 76% signposted to additional services



# More figures

- 86.1 % veterans attending army personnel > RAF > Marines > Navy
- Average length of service of 5-9 years
- 46.9% employed, 10.2% available for work, 7.1% retired
- 62.9% experienced at least one military trauma, 26.1% unknown
- 91.4% deployed on at least one occasion; 42.6% Northern Ireland, 38.3% Afghanistan
- 72.3% diagnosed with PTSD and 44.8% of those with complex presentation



# Response to treatment

- 40 % showed recovery on PCL-5
- 65 % showed reliable improvement in function
- Feedback; strong therapeutic alliances with veterans; veterans felt they were listened to, understood and respected and were happy with the therapist that treated them. The statement with the highest level of agreement was 'I would recommend this service to other Veterans'
- Improvement; three areas where improvements could be made are the waiting times, facilities (e.g. seating, temperature and lighting), involving veterans in making choices about their treatment



# Veterans speak

- 'I will be leaving knowing how to manage and control not only my feelings, but also what brought me in in the first place. I am now more confident and accepting of the circumstances I was involved in and feel that I have techniques that will continue with me throughout my life in all areas. I am now me again!'
- 'I was treated with respect throughout the whole experience, I felt involved in the decision about what therapy was the best course for me. The therapist was outstanding.'

