



Improving Veteran and Armed Forces Health in Cwm Taf Morgannwg

November 2025



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Cwm Taf Morgannwg
University Health Board

Foreword

On Thursday 26 June 2025, during Armed Forces Week, Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board (CTM UHB) hosted its first Veterans' Health and Wellbeing Day for the Armed Forces community.

Described as a "beacon event," it was delivered through partnership between CTM UHB, Valley Veterans Group, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, and third sector partners. Over 30 organisations came together to provide access to physical and mental health services, trauma, bereavement and housing support, while also gathering valuable feedback from veterans about their health needs.

The event strengthened CTM's commitment to improving healthcare access and understanding of veterans' unique needs, paving the way for future initiatives such as further local events, GP training, and projects to improve vaccination uptake.

Coinciding with the launch of the UK Government's VALOUR programme, which aims to improve access to care for veterans nationwide, this event demonstrated strong local alignment and action. The partnership remains dedicated to enhancing the healthcare experience of those who have served our country.

Paul Mears, Chief Executive, Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board

Councillor Maureen Webber, Deputy Leader of Rhondda Cynon Taf Council Borough Council and Armed Forces Champion

Dr Lee Thomas, GP, Newpark Surgery, Rhondda Cynon Taf

Paul Browmell MBE, Leader, Valley Veterans

In partnership with **Interlink RCT, Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations and Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil.**



A blueprint for Wales: Message by Veterans' Commissioner for Wales

Improving the health and wellbeing outcomes for Veterans through collaboration is a firm commitment made by the Ministry of Defence in its VALOUR Programme.

Veterans' Commissioner for Wales, James Philips, highlighted the work in the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region as a national blueprint.

Veterans' Commissioner for Wales -
video message to attendees



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Cwm Taf Morgannwg
University Health Board



Event Overview - A Day of Health, Honour and Hope

Held on Thursday, June 26, as part of Armed Forces Week 2025, the event was a unity of over 150 attendees including Veterans, wider members of the Armed Forces community and their families, healthcare professionals and community organisations.

Hosted by CTM UHB, in partnership with Valley Veterans, RCT County Borough Council, Interlink RCT, BAVO, VAMT, and over 30 regional third sector organisations, the event highlighted the health board's commitment to Veterans, their families, and the wider Armed Forces Community by providing inclusive support through healthcare access, resources and storytelling.

The agenda included keynote addresses combined with personal testimonials and a moving "I Served" video, which all paid tribute to those who have served, or are currently serving. In addition, an interactive healthcare marketplace enabled direct access to vital support services.

The event achieved both scale and depth, setting a strong model for future collaborative approaches within the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region between health, local authority, third sector and charity partners.

#CTMForcesHealth



Key Activities

Peter Vaughan, HM Lord-Lieutenant of Mid Glamorgan, delivered the keynote, addressing real-life challenges veterans face and the importance of collaboration.



Philip Daniels, Executive Director for Public Health, CTM UHB outlined the population health benefits of a CTM Veterans and Armed Forces collaboration.



Councillor Maureen Webber, Armed Forces Champion, RCT CBC highlighted the local authority's commitment to supporting the CTM Armed Forces community by ensuring fair access to services, championing their needs, and helping veterans and families feel valued and connected within their community.



Dr Lee Thomas, GP and **Dr Dom Hurford**, Medical Director, CTM UHB, highlighted the health board's commitment to improving access to health and wellbeing through the CTM Armed Forces Covenant.



Ben Lukowski, double gold medallist at the 2025 Invictus Games, shared his journey from brain injury to sporting success; accompanied by **George Matthews**, former Royal Marine Commando and CEO of charity 65 Degrees North. Together they highlighted the charity's approach - "Rehabilitation through Adventure."





Veterans' Voices

My healthcare experience and needs as a CTM

veteran: Paul Bromwell, founder of Valley Veterans and Steve Roberts, Trustee, Valley Veterans spoke of their personal military and post military experiences, and their healthcare needs as veterans of CTM.



A video tribute titled **"I Served"** was played to give honour to those who have served, and who continue to serve in our region, whilst also emphasising the importance of continued conversations around veteran experiences.



Colonel David Hammond, Chair of Trustees for Valley Veterans, closed the event referencing his work as a mentor for young cadets within CTM, highlighting cadet recruits as an excellent foundation for a future NHS workforce.





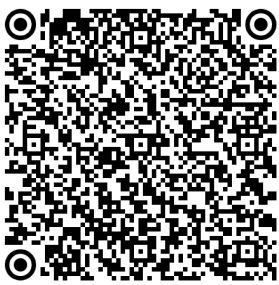
Marketplace and Networking

Attendees had the opportunity to connect with 30 local support services in a vibrant health and wellbeing marketplace. The marketplace was zoned by five key areas of importance, chosen by the veterans:

- Bereavement and Trauma Support
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Physical ailments
- Healthy Lifestyles
- Community Support services

Each attendee was provided with a printed health and wellbeing booklet to support follow - up conversations beyond the event.

The booklet is available electronically as a PDF using the QR code below.





Testimonials

“I felt privileged to be a part of the CTM Veterans event as I believe that one of the marks of any caring nation is the way it supports and respects those who support and protect its freedoms and privileges. In these times of hardship and global unrest our armed forces and veterans remain an integral and necessary part of who we are as a nation and are an inspiration to us all, and it is because of this it is essential we continue to support and help and days like this are so important.”

Peter Vaughan
HM Lord-Lieutenant of Mid Glamorgan



Arglwydd Raglaw
Morgannwg Ganol
Lord-Lieutenant
of Mid Glamorgan





“This event reflects our deep commitment as a health board to ensuring that Veterans, our wider Armed Forces community of Cwm Taf Morgannwg, and their families, receive the care, respect and support they deserve.

By focusing on their health and wellbeing, we not only address vital healthcare needs but also uphold our responsibility, through our Armed Forces Covenant, to those who have served our country with dedication and courage.”



Paul Mears
Chief Executive,
Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board



GIG
 CYMRU
NHS
 WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
 Cwm Taf Morgannwg
 University Health Board





“It was a privilege to support the CTM Veterans and Armed Forces Health Event, which aligned with our commitment to helping communities across Rhondda Cynon Taf lead healthier, more fulfilling lives.

This event offered a valuable platform to connect veterans, their families, healthcare professionals, and trusted community partners, creating a space where lived experience, expert insight, and practical support came together to address the unique challenges faced by our Armed Forces community.



As Armed Forces Champion, I remain dedicated to ensuring that those who serve and have served are not only recognised but actively supported in accessing the care and services they deserve. Events like this are vital in breaking down barriers and building stronger, more inclusive networks of care.”

**Councillor Maureen Webber
Deputy Leader of Rhondda Cynon Taf Council Borough Council
and Armed Forces Champion**





“Veterans’ wellbeing is crucial. Their unique experiences in military service are more likely to lead to physical and mental health challenges than the average member of society. Ensuring that their wellbeing is delivered, without disadvantage, through support services, like mental health care, physical health treatments, and social support, is vital for their successful transition to civilian life and overall health.

The Valley Veterans health and wellbeing event on 26th June was a brilliant means of connecting the local veteran’s community with the numerous public and voluntary agencies who can provide support to those who need it most. As Air Officer Wales, I felt inspired by the outstanding work being carried out on behalf of our Armed Forces community and commend everyone involved, especially Paul Bromwell, for making the event such a resounding success.”



Air Commodore Rob Wood
Air Officer Wales





“Valley Veterans were honoured and absolutely delighted to collaborate with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board to organise and host the joint Veterans and NHS Event in June 2025.

This was a first-of-its-kind venture, so we are very proud to have worked so closely with a very professional and friendly team from the health board over many months to bring this to fruition. Everyone’s hard work contributed to a hugely successful Event, which was of great benefit to Veterans in the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region and those Veterans visiting from other health board regions across South Wales.



We are very proud of our collaboration with the health board and that our joint event will be a blueprint for other health boards and veterans groups across the UK to organise similar events.”

Paul Bromwell MBE
Founder, Valley Veterans

Nigel Locke
Secretary, Valley Veterans





“We were proud to support the CTM Veterans and Armed Forces Health Event, which so clearly reflected our vision to help local communities live healthier and happier lives. The event provided a unique opportunity to bring together veterans and families, NHS professionals, and trusted community organisations to help enhance the health, care, and support of those who may face additional barriers to accessing services.



“As the NHS Charity for the region, we want to champion exciting and innovative collaborations like this - shaped by listening to what matters most to the community and turning those insights into meaningful action. The event was a powerful example of what can be achieved when people and organisations come together around a shared goal to support wellbeing. It was inspiring to see every organisation involved play their part in making the day a success, each contributing their time, knowledge, or resources to support our local Armed Forces community.

“We’re excited to see how the learning from this event will help shape better, more joined-up care for veterans and their families right across Cwm Taf Morgannwg.”

Abe Sampson **Head of CTM NHS Charity and Income Generation**



Cwm Taf Morgannwg
ELUSEN GIGI NHS CHARITY

Read more about the CTM Charity



“It was such a pleasure to represent the CVC in RCT for the Veterans’ wellbeing event. It was a wonderful opportunity to share support with Veterans and their families, build stronger connections and to make sure those who have served feel valued and supported in their communities.”

Katy Williams
Wellbeing and Equalities Lead, Interlink RCT



“We were thrilled to be part of this incredibly special event giving recognition to Veterans. The inspirational speakers brought their experiences to life and we were truly humbled by what we heard. Long may we continue recognising Veterans in this way, as their contribution and dedication to our community is unwavering.”

Sharon Richards
Chief Officer, VAMT



“BAVO were pleased to be a part of the Veterans event, where all the regions of CTM were represented, sharing in the community passion and pride of supporting veterans of our Armed Forces. It was inspirational to see the variety of organisations offering information and support. The lived experience stories shared by the speakers and attendees enhanced the sense of pride felt on the day, through all being able to be a part of a proud community.”

Heidi Bennett
Chief Executive Officer, BAVO



Overall Feedback: Veterans



"As a Veteran myself I found the event was a fantastic celebration and collaboration of our Veterans and Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB. An inspiring and amazing event!"

Anonymous Veterans



"Just seeing the support available lifted my spirits...Informed me of service availability. A wonderful day."

Anonymous Veterans



"Veterans NHS Wales stand was fantastic as the chap there was kind enough to explain the service in detail, including referral pathways and current methods of treatment."

Anonymous Veterans



"They ALL did a tremendous job to raise awareness which is very important."

Anonymous Veterans



"Through voicing my concerns at that event, I've been able to get several physical health appointments arranged."

Anonymous Veterans





Overall Feedback: Stallholders



“Very pleased to have the opportunity to support the Veterans community and signpost to dental services as well as provide resources and advice personal to the individuals’ needs. Individuals shared their experiences and why these may have influenced their decisions not to access dental care.”

CTM Community Dental Team



“Attending the event was a valuable opportunity for WISE to connect with other services, strengthen collaborative links, and raise awareness of our self- management courses among veteran communities who didn’t necessarily know about the support we offer. It was a powerful reminder of the importance of community connection.”

CTM Wellness Improvement Service (WISE)



“Enquired with the service for one of our blind Veterans to find out when he was likely to be seen as he required a urgent procedure.”

Anonymous Stallholder



“Felt that the event was an absolute success, which provided valuable information for Veterans, their families and carers. Also felt that there was excellent networking opportunities for various services and departments within Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB, as well as broader services available to all from independent companies and worthwhile charities.”

Anonymous Stallholder



Veteran Case Studies

Jeremy Robertson Ex British Army



“I’m Jeremy, British Army Veteran who has completed multiple tours of duty. After leaving the military I felt abandoned and for many years was in a very dark place. Through Valley Veterans, I have managed to rebuild my life - they are now like one big family.

I found the health event very useful – I was impressed by the ability to directly speak to members of the health board, and to see and hear their care and compassion. Through voicing my concerns at that event, I’ve able to get several physical health appointments expedited.

It’s great to see the health board taking actively taking steps to help my Veteran family.”

Dean Twaite Ex Lance Corporal Royal Corps of Transport



“Months of uncertainty of when I would receive my operation left me feeling worn out. I was having repeated infections, given antibiotics and even admitted for treatment many times .

Not having a concrete operation date left me feeling really down heartened. Then my neighbour, who’s a good friend, told me about Valley Veterans. I went along to their event and got chatting with someone from PALS (CTM UHB’s Patient Advisory Liaison Service).

He looked into my operation for me. I didn’t know anything about PALS before - Veterans don’t always get to know what services are out there.”



Alan Jones
Ex British Army



“I found the health and wellbeing day very useful.

The presentations were very informative. I particularly appreciated being made aware of what the health board was doing for veterans as often we feel oblivious.

The marketplace made me aware of services that I could access outside of general practice, something which I have struggled to access locally.

The highlight of the day for me personally was liaising with two of the nursing staff, who helped me complete attendance allowance forms for my wife. This is a very large document and I had been struggling to complete it.”



Positive Actions Since the Event

General Practice

GP Training

Dr Lee Thomas, veteran accredited GP, RCT, delivered a lecture to the GP Valleys Trainee Scheme on Armed Forces health and wellbeing.

Few GPs have a military background, and many have little to no familiarity with the UK's Armed Forces. An interactive lecture gave an overview of the British Armed Forces composition, recent Theaters of Operation, as well as established and potential future health needs.

The lecture will be run again with the next trainee intake.

GP Signposting

GPs across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region have access to 'Community Health Pathways', a website detailing local pathways for supporting clinical staff. Since the event a new page entitled 'Veterans Health' has been added to the site supporting GPs to:

- Identify and code any veteran patients
- Explore and manage veteran related topics e.g. physiological complaints, severe and enduring injuries, occupational exposures
- Refer to secondary care as per the Armed Forces Covenant

Improving Veteran Identification in General Practice

Following the success of the CTM Forces Health event, a key area for improvement was identified around the need to increase the number of veterans who self-identify when accessing primary care services. Feedback from the event highlighted that many veterans within the community do not disclose their service background when registering with or attending GP practices. This can limit opportunities for healthcare teams to recognise and respond to the specific health and wellbeing needs that may arise as a result of military service...



...In response, an improvement project will launch across the eight accredited veteran-friendly GP practices within Cwm Taf Morgannwg, starting in Rhondda Cynon Taf as a pilot area. The project aims to raise awareness among patients about the benefits of self-identifying as a veteran, while also equipping practice staff with the knowledge and confidence to sensitively ask the right questions at registration and during consultations. The project seeks to ensure that veterans are appropriately identified within practice systems, enabling timely access to tailored support pathways and specialist services where required.

The overarching goal is to build a clearer picture of the veteran population within the area and enhance the quality of care they receive. A better understanding of who veterans are within these practices will allow healthcare teams to take a more proactive and informed approach, ensuring that their unique experiences and needs are recognised as part of their ongoing healthcare journey.

Increasing Veteran Awareness within Hospital Settings

The Health Board's People Experience Team is working towards introducing a poppy symbol on hospital electronic whiteboards to raise awareness of patients having an armed forces background when being admitted into hospital. This will be supported by a staff education programme to raise understanding of what this symbol means for supporting the patient's health journey and for supporting better community signposting.

This piece of work will be undertaken in collaboration with Veteran Hubs and members of our Armed Forces community, and their families, to inform and drive conversations in these settings.

Enhancing Holistic Support

The Veteran's partnership has prompted a conversation between the Health Board's People's Experience Team and the Valleys Veterans Hub in relation to the support of a Padre on a voluntary basis.

It has also increased awareness of the Patient Advice Liasion Service (PALS) and the Bereavement Team with a reported increase in support related requests.





Dental Services in Cwm Taf Morgannwg

The CTM Community Dental Service made a new connection with the MOD for supporting reservists who have been deployed, and who as a result, may miss their dental appointment while in middle of treatment.

National conversations have also been initiated regarding the new Dental Access Portal, for supporting Veterans to register for dental care in Cwm Taf Morgannwg.

Self - Management in the Community: Cwm Taf Morgannwg WISE Programme

Following event conversations, WISE is working directly with Diabetes UK to make information around diabetes management available to Veterans and to signpost them to type 2 Diabetes courses. WISE is also working with several new community partners to promote their self- management courses.

Enhancing Participation for RCN Cadets Nursing Scheme for Supporting Careers in Nursing and Healthcare

Young people that are, or have been, in the cadet forces in Wales for two years or more have developed attributes and gained skills, qualifications, and had experiences that gave them a clear advantage - an edge- in applications for further and higher education and for employment.

One aspect of cadet training and development that is directly relevant to the health board is the Royal College of Nursing King's Nursing Cadets Scheme.

Created in 2019, and originally named Royal College of Nursing Prince of Wales Nursing Cadets Scheme, some 1,156 cadets have either completed or are currently taking up the programme of whom 163 are based here in Wales. Closer collaboration with CTM UHB has the potential to increase the capacity for more cadets to join the scheme, hopefully increasing the throughput of young people pursuing a nursing career.





Closing Summary: A Scalable Model of Partnership and Impact

The CTM Veterans and Armed Forces health and wellbeing event has proven to be more than a one-off success. It is a scalable model of collaboration that is inspiring regional and national adoption. Its energy, outcomes and reach have sparked interest across Veteran Networks, Health Boards / Trusts, and community forums, with hubs such as Bulldog's Gym in Port Talbot and organisations as far as Somerset already exploring replication of the model.

Supported by partners like Adferiad, our approach demonstrates how innovative, community-led health initiatives can spread rapidly and deliver meaningful impact well beyond the region. The event has enhanced the patient experience by strengthening links between Veteran Hubs of the region, the health board's Patient Experience Team, and Armed Forces Liaison Officers (AFLOS) of the CTM region.

Through the regional partnership, we are ensuring concerns are better heard, support is better signposted and services are more closely aligned to the needs of Veterans and their families.

For the Cwm Taf Morgannwg NHS Charity, this collaboration has led to new connections with local Veterans' organisations and community partners; deepening its understanding of how charitable support can unlock collaborative, wellbeing-focused activity. It has also provided a practical model for how the CTM NHS Charity can seed and sustain future community-led health initiatives across CTM, establishing its role as an enabler of meaningful partnership and impact.

Crucially, this high-impact model has been achieved at low cost through resource pooling and partnership working, delivering excellent value for money. The result is a meaningful, inclusive, and replicable event framework that leaves a lasting impression on participants and provides a clear blueprint for others to adopt across Wales and beyond.

Watch our event highlights



Acknowledgements and Sponsorship

The planning committee for this event wishes to thank all partners for their outstanding commitment and support to delivering this successful pilot event in Cwm Taf Morgannwg.



Appendix 1:

Survey responses by **Veterans and Armed Forces Community** of Cwm Taf Morgannwg

Overall ratings

9.6

The event achieved an overall rating of 9.6 out of 10 based on 27 responses by Veteran and members of the wider Armed Forces Community of CTM.

Results breakdown

67% (18/27) respondents) rated it a 10/10

26% (7 respondents) rated it 9/10

Only 2 respondents (7%) rated it below 9/10

Key Reasons for Satisfaction

- “An excellent community event that showcased the work that’s already been accomplished at Valley Veterans, while offering a valuable space to network with services that can potentially support veterans.”
- “This sort of collaboration is very much needed within communities”
- “Great information that attendees were previously unaware of”
- “Wide range of services provided”
- “Very Informative and well organised”
- “Outstanding event”
- “Lots of good help and advice available”
- “Amazing event”
- “Happy to see so many organisations offering help to veterans”
- “Information for everyone was excellent”



Overall Impression and Feedback Summary by Veterans

The event was highlighted as beneficial overall, with attendees finding great value from the information shared, the professional delivery, and the variety of services available.

Personal Impact

In response to the question:

Do you feel that attending this event supported your health and wellbeing in any way:

92.3% of respondents said yes (24/26)

7.7% said *No (2/26).

*Of the No responses, one individual did not respond to the question and one identified themselves as an “advocate not a Veteran”

Specific feedback of the above question:

- “Felt very uplifted”
- “Extremely Positive Experience”
- “Help is all about Information – as and when it is needed”
- “Well planned”
- “Had access to services that I was unaware of”
- “Informed me of service availability”
- “Wonderful day”
- “Just seeing the support available lifted my spirits”
- “Lots of good help and advice available”



Some service specific mentions related to event satisfaction and overall experience

- “Veterans NHS Wales stand was fantastic as the chap there was kind enough to explain the service in detail, including referral pathways and current methods of treatment”
- “The physiotherapist stall was really practical. I felt the stalls reflected help available from lots of different sources for veterans and their families”
- “Mental health and wellbeing stalls!”
- “Quite a lot - will writing / re-writing, bereavement, health support services - Diabetes UK and WISE”
- “Dental services”
- “Stop Smoking - I will Try”
- “Too many to mention”
- “They ALL did a tremendous job to raise awareness which is very important”

Follow up conversations

When asked the question: do you plan to follow up with any of the services or contacts made at the event:

77% (20/27 respondents) saying they plan to follow up with contacts made at the event, while,

23% (6/26) said they do *not plan to follow up.

*Of the do not responses, one individual did not respond to the question

This shows a strong level of engagement and interest, with over three- quarters of the respondents intending to take further action based on the connections and information gained at the event.





Specific references to follow up contacts / service connections

- NHS Veterans Services
- CTM Wellness Improvement Service (WISE)
- Diabetes support services
- NHS Falls Prevention
- Vaccinations
- Dental Services
- Diabetes
- Physiotherapy
- Padre service

Finally, when asked whether they would attend a similar event in the future,

100% of respondents (27/27) said yes.



Appendix 2:

Feedback of **Stall holders** at the Veterans and Armed Forces Community (pilot) event in Cwm Taf Morgannwg - 26 June 2025

Overall ratings

9.48 The event achieved an overall rating of 9.48 out of 10 based on 27 stallholder responses.

Results breakdown

77.8% (21/27 stall holders) rated it 10 /10

7.4% (2 stall holders) rated it 9/10

7.4% (2 stall holders) rated it 8/10

3.7% (1 stall holder) rated it 7 / 10

3.7% (1 stall holder) rated it 5 / 10

Thematic Analysis of Overall Event Experience and Atmosphere by Stall Holders

- Many participants described the event as “brilliant,” “fantastic,” “fabulous,” “amazing,” and “inspiring.”
- Attendees felt it was a valuable celebration of veterans, fostering a sense of community and collaboration.
- The event created a warm, welcoming environment and gave participants pride in being part of something important.





Example quotes:

- “As a Veteran myself I found the event was a fantastic celebration.”
- “Lovely welcome from everyone.”

Below is a summary of emerging themes based on stall holders’ feedback of their overall experience from event participation:

Theme 1: Networking and Collaboration

- Strong appreciation for the networking opportunities with veterans, service providers, charities, and health board staff
- Attendees valued sharing knowledge and making professional links across organisations
- The event was seen as a good platform for partnership working and collective support for veterans

Example quotes:

- “Excellent networking opportunities for various services and departments”
- “Good to meet other service providers as well as veterans”

Theme 2: Organisation and Communication

- The event was praised as well-planned, well-organised, and efficiently run
- Staff were described as attentive, supportive, and welcoming.
- Communication before and during the event was strong, with clear arrangements and effective delivery.

Example quotes:

- “Communication was excellent, the event was well planned and set up”
- “The organising staff were efficient and attentive throughout”

Theme 3: Learning and Information Sharing

- Presentations and stalls provided valuable information about services available for veterans and families
- Attendees reported gaining knowledge to take back to their organisations

Example quotes:

- “The presentations were engaging and informative”
- “I was able to improve my knowledge of different services and made valuable links”



Interactions and engagement

When stall holders were asked whether they had meaningful interactions with attendees; linked to the event objectives and purpose, **93%** (25/27 stalls) said yes and **7%** (2 stalls) said no.

When stall holders were asked whether they collected contact information or leads for future engagement, **89%** (24/27 stalls) said yes and **11%** (3/27 stalls said no).

When asked to rate the overall engagement at their stalls, the average response rating was **8.59 out of 10**.

When stall holders were asked whether they felt their participation contributed positively to the event's objectives, **96%** (26/27) said yes and **4%** (1/27) said no.

Thematic Analysis of Event Value by Stall Holders:

Theme 1: Networking and Collaboration

- Networking emerged as the dominant theme, with participants emphasising the value of connecting with veterans, families, and other agencies
- Many highlighted building new partnerships, engaging with wider veteran groups, and planning future collaborative sessions
- Networking with other stallholders was also valued as a way to share learning and make professional connections

Example quotes:

- “Networking, engagement and further opportunities to provide our services in our communities”
- “Made contacts with 3 veterans’ groups and will be delivering digital support sessions”
- “Networking with other stall holders very useful and gives us chance to make new connections”





Theme 2: Awareness Raising of Services

- Organisations reported being able to increase visibility of their services to veterans, families, and professionals.
- Some highlighted the chance to raise awareness of new or specialist services (e.g., Alcohol Care Team, Childhood Bereavement in Military Families, Cyber Security).
- Many felt the event was a valuable platform to distribute information, resources, and guidance to those who may not otherwise access their support.

Example quotes:

- “Awareness of our Alcohol care team service within the health board as a relatively new service”
- “Raised awareness of Childhood Bereavement in Military Families.
- “We were able to highlight the work of our organisation and raise our profile with clients”

Theme 3: Direct Support and Engagement

- Several comments described meaningful one-to-one conversations with veterans and families.
- Some organisations were able to offer on-the-spot support (e.g., vaccine discussions, grief support materials, urgent referrals for veterans’ healthcare needs).
- Feedback noted that these interactions helped address individual needs immediately while also building trust and awareness.

Example quotes:

- “Positive one-to-one conversations with veterans”
- “Our Specialist Immunisation Nurse was able to have a meaningful conversation with those who had vaccine hesitancy”
- “We offered on the spot support and resources and provided age-appropriate grief materials”





Theme 4: Referrals and Follow-Up Opportunities

- The event created opportunities for future referrals and follow-up work.
- Several organisations noted direct referrals from veterans, as well as new contacts with groups and services that would lead to future sessions and outreach.

Example quotes:

- “We had referrals from the event”
- “Already planned a session with Chest Patients support group in Merthyr”
- “Opened dialogue with chaplains and caseworkers who can now signpost families to our services”

Event outcomes: Thematic Analysis of Areas of Greatest Benefit (from attending) by Stall Holders

Theme 1: Overall Organisation & Value

- The event was described as great, insightful, and well organised.
- Attendees consistently felt it was beneficial both personally and professionally.

Example quotes:

- “Thought it was a great event really well organised”
- “It was all really insightful”
- “All of the event was beneficial”

Theme 2: Engagement with Veterans

- A strong theme was the value of directly interacting with veterans, their families, and carers.
- Attendees highlighted the importance of veterans being recognised, heard, and supported.

Example quotes:

- “Talking to veterans and other stall holders”
- “Interacting with our valued veterans, their families and carers”
- “Meeting with veterans and hearing what the health board were saying”
- “Veteran stories ... the video of the veterans, the vast majority of which were present on the day”





Theme 3: Networking & Collaboration

- Many praised the networking opportunities, both with other stallholders and with key professionals and decision-makers in the veterans' and Armed Forces community.
- The event enabled new professional connections that can help improve services and outreach.

Example quotes:

- “Networking”
- “The ability to connect with some impressive staff and key decision makers.”
- “Having an opportunity to build networks with professionals from other organisations”

Theme 4: Showcasing Services & Learning

- Organisations valued the chance to showcase their services, gather feedback, and learn how to improve.
- The event provided insight into veterans' needs and the changing landscape of support.

Example quotes:

- “The opportunity to showcase our services, collect feedback ... and the benefits of taking care into community settings”
- “We gained insight to better serve Military-Affected Families”
- “Hearing the great work that is being done for the veterans and future work”

Theme 5: Location & Accessibility

- The fact that the event was held where veterans already meet was seen as a major positive, removing barriers to access.

Example quote:

- “Being based where the veterans already meet. Often times we expect people to travel to us”





Theme 6: Inspiration and Personal Stories

- Personal stories shared by veterans and staff were seen as inspiring and impactful.
- The video featuring veterans was described as a highlight that made the event more meaningful.

Example quotes:

- “Telling my story hopefully inspired others”
- “Listening to some of the heroic stories and the well put together video”

Summary of Stallholder Feedback

The reported findings show that the event’s greatest strength was networking, collaboration, and raising awareness of services.

Organisations valued the connections made with veterans, families, agencies, and other providers. The event also enabled direct support, meaningful conversations, and immediate referrals, strengthening service visibility.

The feedback also reinforced the overwhelmingly positive reception that was experienced by attendees on the day of the event.

The most valued aspects were:

- Direct engagement with veterans and their families.
- Networking and professional collaboration.
- Opportunities to showcase services and learn.
- Recognition of veterans’ voices and experiences.
- Accessible location within the community.
- Inspirational storytelling through personal accounts and video.

Overall, this analysis highlights that the event was seen not just as a networking platform, but also as a space of recognition, inspiration, and community connection.

The main limitations noted were restricted space and limited engagement time with veterans, which reduced some organisations’ ability to fully connect.





Areas for Improvement and Event Limitations

While networking and engagement were strong, a few participants reported limited engagement time with veterans.

Tight space was also raised as a factor that made conversations harder. It was also noted that some veterans may have been hesitant to engage on sensitive topics (e.g. being active).



Appendix 3: Event Costs

Venue hire of Valley Veterans Community Centre	£160
Refreshments and buffet lunch (150 attendees)	£1100
Printing of CTM health and wellbeing booklet	£152
Total event delivery cost	£1412

