

Factsheet - Veterans Welfare Service (VWS)

When did the Veterans Welfare Service first start?

VWS was first set up in 1948 with a remit to deliver help and advice to War Disabled Pensioners and their widows/ers, this along with the administrative support of War Pensions Committees has been the core business for many years.

What are today's objectives?

Today it still stands to serve that same ex-service client group. But the service now also extends to AFCS claimants and can be accessed by any 'veteran', all of whom can at least expect to receive help, advice and signposting to a multitude of appropriate organisations that can help with their problem. Although it is a 'face to face' visiting service in peoples' homes, much help and advice is given over the telephone.

Does the service cover all of the country?

Every postcode throughout the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland has a welfare manager serving it. The 140 staff are based in 25 locations across that area, some in privately rented accommodation, some working from home but the majority still in shared accommodation with Department of Work and Pensions. Aspirations of moving to MoD accommodation are held but IT links currently mean this is not possible.

How are the service objectives delivered?

Whilst VWS staff are experts on statutory benefit entitlement, clearly majoring in War Pensions/AFCS claims, they work closely with all other service providers. Key partnership links are held with Department for Work and Pensions, War Pensions Committees, local authorities and ex-service organisations and also extend to a responsibility of understanding all local and regional organisations that exist to deliver a service of some kind. The key is knowing what is available, making the joins and acting as a referral organisation.

How has VWS helped the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency SPVA deliver operational objectives?

VWS has for many years supported the operational sections in achieving their targets and increasing customer satisfaction. Welfare Managers can help resolve claim issues, evidence gathering, clarification of information and the delivery of bad news like Overpayments.

Can VWS compliment the AFPAA element of agency work under the SPVA banner?

VWS already receives some referrals from the Service Pensions sections, working in the same way as they do for the SPVA Operational arm we can help resolve difficult casework by acting as a 'face to face' arm. Work with the JCCC in the support of Visiting Officers in the 'Death in Service' process is an integral part of our work and under the terms of the appropriate JSP, VWS are now the recognised body for liaison between the veterans' family/dependants and the teams deciding on AFCS/AFPS claims. What better way than using agency internal resources to support agency business. The gathering of evidence for Substantial Relationships and help in completing applications for medals are other examples of the way VWS can contribute to the work of SPVA and foster customer relations in the process.

What other ways are VWS helping to serve veterans?

VWS is currently working with Veterans Policy Unit to develop better working protocols in respect of 'Vulnerable Service Leavers', those discharged with more severe disablements. This will compliment the work already done to support those medically discharged. Close working with tri-service welfare units, remaining an integral part of the resettlement process and continuing to raise awareness of the agency and the services available to the ex-service community will continue to build on the message that veterans have someone to turn to when they leave service and need help.

For further information please contact Service Personnel and Veterans Agency:

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