



'Flags for Forces'

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Overview



- Introductions
- Project background
- Champions network
- Referral pathways
- Current situation and success stories
- Q&A



Background



- Ex Armed Forces prison rates are not believed to be significantly high - it is estimated by the National association of probation officers and a 2010 study undertaken by DASA that 3.5% of the prison population was made up of veterans. However other studies suggest that these numbers could be up to 15%. Knowing the exact number is difficult because it relies on the self-referral of inmates and there are significant barriers to this within the prison system
- Police data relating to members of the Armed Forces community coming through the criminal justice system might be a better representation, however that data has only started to be gathered
- Sussex police signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant in 2017 and are part of the local Sussex Armed Forces Network
- Many of the members of the Armed Forces community seen in custody in Sussex have been arrested for drug or alcohol related violence, and this use of drugs or alcohol is often a coping mechanism for underlying issues



Champion Network



- Sussex police have assigned staff as Armed Forces champions as it was felt that members of the Armed Forces Community might not be recognised or, if they were recognised, there wasn't a dedicated source of support for them
- The Champion role was initially introduced to assist members of the Armed Forces community with assessment whilst in custody, but has since been expanded to anyone in contact with police. Champions follow referral pathways to the right services with the aim to offer support in a variety of areas, including housing, employment, finances and any drug or alcohol abuse and ultimately help break any cycle of offending
- Currently the custody system is based upon those who are arrested answering a Yes/No question (self referral) about whether or not they or an immediately family member have ever served in the Armed Forces
- The out of custody process involves identifying members of the Armed Forces community in any context and affording them the same support and referral mechanism as offered to those via the custody system
- Sussex police has a way of 'flagging' the person as a member of the Armed Forces on its system that allows Champions to make follow up contact with them



Armed Forces support – out of custody pathway

The “Armed Forces” definition includes anyone who has served in HM Armed Forces, Regular or Reserve, or Merchant Mariners who have seen duty on legally defined military operations. It also includes **all** immediate family members.

Have you or your immediate family served in the British Armed Forces?

Member of public



Any Police contact

Police



Immediate concerns

Police champion



Contacted by phone

If available Champions may attend, or otherwise assist by liaising with relevant support agencies in areas such as emergency housing.

Referral

There is a database of Police Champions on the intranet where Officers and Staff can get contact details for help and assistance.

Forces can access specific support in such areas as alcoholism, disability, blindness, mental health, caring demands, financial difficulties, housing issues, unemployment, drug abuse and homelessness

Partner Agency



Appropriate support

No immediate concerns
Provide referral card

YES – If they are creating a niche report the Officer or Staff member adds the “Armed Forces Veteran” flag to the subject on niche and sets a 1 year end date. They note under remarks any specific points about their service, or concerns that they want a Champion to be aware of

Police champion



Regularly screens all flags and identifies concerns



Out of custody contact and needs assessment

Referral



Armed Forces support - custody pathway

The "Armed Forces" definition includes anyone who has served in HM Armed Forces, Regular or Reserve, or Merchant Mariners who have seen duty on legally defined military operations. It also includes all immediate family members.

Have you or your immediate family served in the British Armed Forces?

Person arrested



Taken into Police custody

Custody Sgt



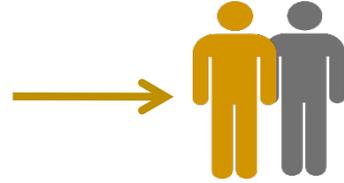
DP identified as Forces

Immediate MH concerns*
Referral form

PCLDS



Standard in-custody referral



Direct intervention in custody, PCLDS Champion notified

Referral

Partner Agency



Appropriate support

Other immediate concerns



There is a database of Police Champions on the intranet where custody staff can contact numbers for Officers who can help. If available they may attend custody, or otherwise assist by liaising with relevant support agencies in areas such as emergency housing.

No immediate concerns

Police champion



Regularly screens all flags and identifies concern



Out of custody contact and needs assessment

Referral

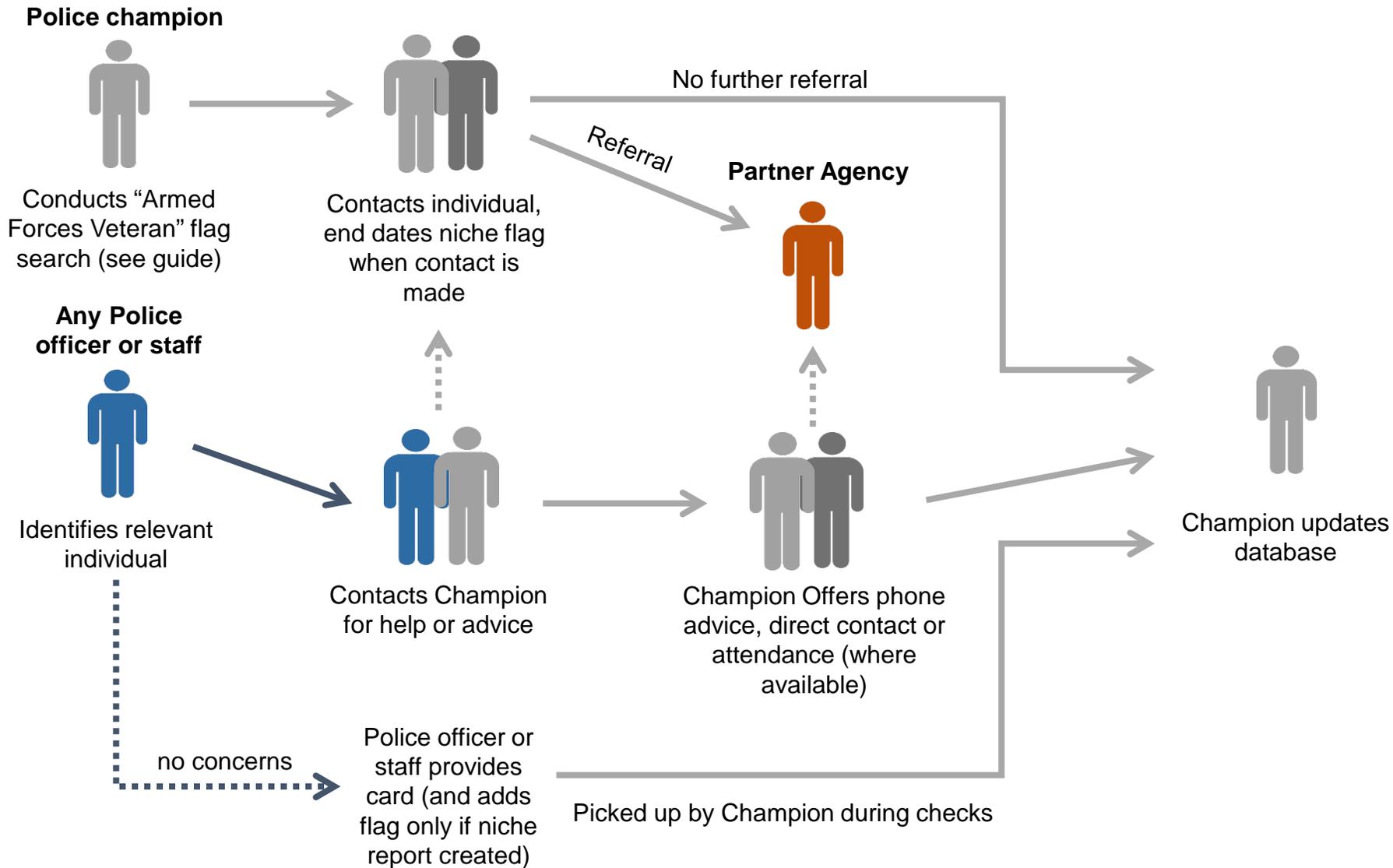
Forces can access specific support in such areas as alcoholism, disability, blindness, mental health, caring demands, financial difficulties, housing issues, unemployment, drug abuse and homelessness

The Sgt adds the "Armed Forces Veteran" niche flag and sets a 1 year end date. They can note under remarks any specific points or concerns they want the Champion to be aware of as part of the referral



Armed Forces support – Champions actions

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Current Situation



- Sussex Police have had Armed Forces Champions since 2016 working with members of the Armed Forces community
- The “Flags for Forces” Project was launched in March 2018. At this time there were 5 members of the Armed forces community identified. Since then more than 50 have been identified.
- Moving forward we have identified the need to obtain reliable contact details for those with a more hectic lifestyle thus allowing the champion a more structured means of contact with the individual
- Champions engaging with members of the Armed Forces community in custody has provided the most positive results so far. This instant access to support, often when they are at a time of crisis, tends to break down barriers and make individuals more receptive
- Within Sussex police we are looking to recruit more Champions and encourage more proactive identification in the community
- Our ability to identify individuals has significantly improved however we sometimes struggle obtaining the reliable contact details that we need to follow up with people



Success Story



- **Crawley custody 2018**
 - Male in custody repeatedly for minor offences, he was spoken to and identified as a member of Armed Forces community – he had no family and no idea what support he was entitled to having left the Armed Forces over 20 years ago
 - I was contacted as armed forces champion and came down to talk to him in more depth – long conversation about his current situation and offending history / armed forces history / mental health
 - Due to male remaining in custody I was able to make contact with a charity called ukhomes4heroes. They travelled down to see him and arranged for a further consultation with him. This then lead to them assisting him with moving out of area, being housed and getting support with finding a job / managing his lifestyle



Any questions?