

Difficulties in transition: veterans in the criminal justice system

Dr Linda Cooper

Veterans and Families Institute

Anglia Ruskin University

UCLAN Conference, 2nd October 2015



Overview

- Recommendations of the Phillips Report (2014):
- Improved support and rehabilitation necessary for veterans in the Criminal Justice System (CJS)
- Changes in practice needed to identify veterans on CJS pathway, including Police custody
- Need for earlier provision (before sentencing) of appropriate Liaison and Diversion schemes

Liaison and Diversion Services (L&D)

- NHS model to identify those with existing mental health issues, particularly youths, involved in the CJS (NHS England, 2014)
- Pilot extended to include Armed Forces programme
- Full implementation anticipated 2017/18
- ISSUE: assumes all veterans diverted to L&D have mental health issues; **this is not the case**

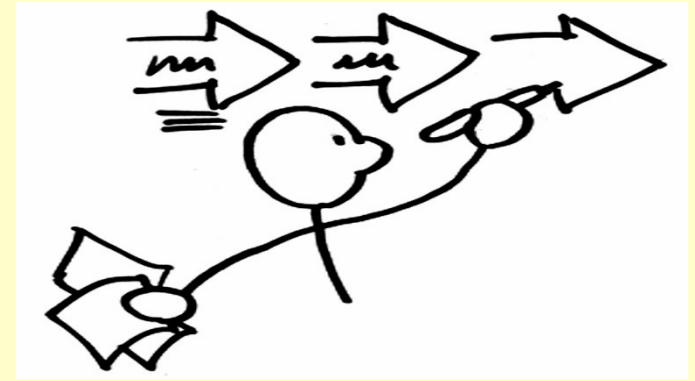
Project Nova

- Working with Walking with the Wounded, Forces in Mind Trust and RFEA (Forces Employment Charity) partners to support veterans who find themselves in the criminal justice system
- Pilot study in East of England, Anglia Ruskin (VFI) working with WWtW, FiMT, RFEA and two Police constabularies

Project Nova – key aims for this veteran population

- To increase our knowledge of previous offending on recidivism
- To produce a model based on existing interventions to reduce offending
- To consider the effect of alcohol or substance misuse on criminal activity
- To understand if veterans are accessing support services
- To explore the characteristics, demographic profiles and historical offences
- To consider if there are patterns emerging between offending prior to Military Service and on discharge





Project Nova – the process

- Veteran is taken to Police Investigation Centre
- Custody sergeant identifies offender as a veteran
- Veteran is screened for referral
- Consent gained to pass details to Nova team
- Project Nova leaflet given to veteran
- Normal judicial process continues
- Contact made by Nova team
- 'Needs assessment is carried out
- Bespoke package of support is provided

Tools used for first stage analysis (1)

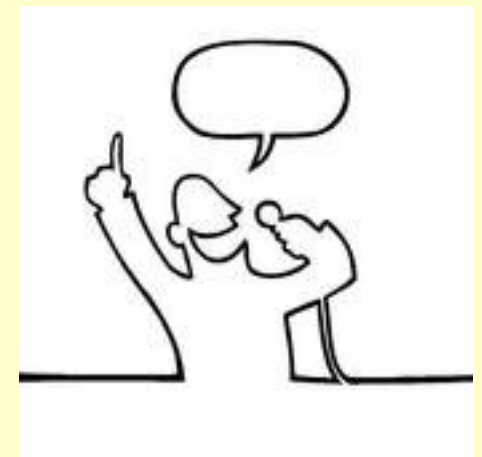
- Primary Care – Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (VA, 2015) – shortened test to begin to identify indicators of possible PTSD – four questions, Yes/No answers
- Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (SWEMWBS) (Stewart-Brown *et al.*, 2009) – seven questions exploring measurement of positive aspects of mental health. Higher the score, the higher the suggested level of mental well-being

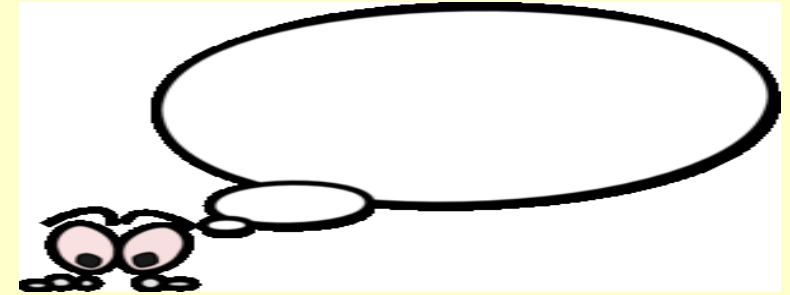
Tools used for first stage analysis (2)

- Work and Social Adjustment Scale (WSAS) (Mundt and Marks, 2002) – allows respondents to rate their problems and determine how that impairs on a particular activity. Five questions, Likert Scale 0-8.
- Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) (Public Health England, 2015) – to identify possible risk of alcohol dependence. Ten questions on alcohol consumption and outcomes ‘how often/how many?’ etc.

Anecdotal Issues

- Overnight arrests – availability of Nova team
- NHS support services only available M-F, 9-4pm
- Volume of referrals – stretched resources
- Transient veterans difficult to contact
- Difficulties/co-dependency with families





Early thoughts

- Consideration needs to be given to the use of the effectiveness of the L&D programme and implications for the association of L&D with mental health
- Interim Report to be published soon, full report expected mid-2016
- Ambiguity as to what point do/should the Military relinquish responsibility for veterans following transition

Thank you for listening. Any questions?

(linda.cooper@anglia.ac.uk)





References (1 of 2)

- Forces in Mind Trust, 2013. *The transition mapping study: understanding the transition process for service personnel returning to civilian life*. London: Forces in Mind Trust.
- Gov.uk., 2014 [Online]. *Review of veterans within the criminal justice system: call for evidence*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/review-of-veterans-within-the-criminal-justice-system-call-for-evidence>. [Accessed: 09.04.15].
- MacManus, D., Fossey, M., Watson, S., and Wessely, S., 2015. Former Armed Forces personnel in the criminal justice system. *The Lancet Psychiatry*. Vol 2, No 2, p121-122.
- Ministry of Defence, 2011 [Online]. *The Armed Forces Covenant*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/49469/the_armed_forces_covenant.pdf. [Accessed: 07.04.15].
- Mundt, J.C., Marks, M., *et al.*, 2002. The work and social adjustment scale: a simple measure of impairment in functioning. *British Journal of Psychiatry*. Vol 180, p461-464.
- NHS England, 2014 [Online]. *Liaison and diversion operating model*. Available at: www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/ld-op-mod-1314.pdf. [Accessed: 17.04.15].

References (2 of 2)



- Phillips, S., 2014 [Online]. Former members of the armed forces and the criminal justice system: a review on behalf of the Secretary of State for Justice. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/389964/former-members-of-the-armed-forces-and-the-criminal-justice-system.pdf. [Accessed: 02.04.15].
- Public Health England, 2015 [Online]. AUDIT - Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test. Available at: <http://www.alcohollearningcentre.org.uk/Topics/Browse/BriefAdvice/?parent=4444&child=4570>. [Accessed: 03.09.15].
- Stewart-Brown, S., Tennant, A., Tennant, R., Platt, S., Parkinson, J., and Weich, S., 2009 [Online]. Internal construct validity of the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS): a Rasch analysis using data from the Scottish Health Education Population Survey. Available at: <http://www.healthscotland.com/uploads/documents/9566WEMWBS%20HQoL%20Paper%202009.pdf>. [Accessed: 15.09.15].
- Veterans Affairs, US, 2015 [Online]/ PC-Post Traumatic Stress Disorder short test. Available at: <http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/assessment/screens/pc-ptsd.asp>. [Accessed: 11.09.15].
- Walking with the Wounded, 2015 [Online]. *Project Nova*. Available at: <http://walkingwiththewounded.org.uk/how-we-help/wwtw-special-projects/project-nova/>. [Accessed: 17.09.15].