

PRESS RELEASE

6th November 2018

Sir Mike Penning pledges support to help veterans re-transition into society after prison



As part of a series of Remembrance events, Sir Mike Penning joined Care after Combat, the charity working to help prisoner veterans to reintegrate into society after leaving prison, to help spread the word to MPs about its vital mentoring services.

Sir Mike has had close links with the charity from its inception in 2015 when it was co-founded by two of his close long-term friends, Jim Davidson OBE and Simon Weston CBE.

The charity highlighted to MPs that it is only currently able to reach 1 in 10 prisoner veterans and increased funding is urgently needed to roll out its services UK-wide and support all eligible veterans currently serving sentences.

It is estimated that there are currently 3,500 former servicemen incarcerated in England and Wales. According to Care after Combat this represents the largest single occupational cohort within prisons – and one of the most vulnerable groups.

Care after Combat mentors incarcerated veterans serving the final eighteen months of their sentence to help them make the successful transition from prison life, back into the civilian population.

Over the past 3 years it has expanded its scope to provide services for over 300 incarcerated veterans in almost 30 prisons, helping to reduce first year reoffending rates amongst service users to only 8 percent. This is compared to the 45 percent first year reoffending rate amongst the wider prisoner population.

Speaking at the session, Jim Davidson OBE, Chief Executive Officer of Care after Combat said:

“I was really pleased to come to Parliament today and receive so much support and encouragement from MPs. At a time when our prison service is struggling to cope, Care after Combat could play a greater role to reduce reoffending and help former veterans by restoring the sense of stability and purpose which they enjoyed whilst serving in the Armed Forces. While we welcome the additional £10 million cash injection to the Armed Forces Covenant Fund to support mental health projects, we call on Government to recognise the specific requirements of this group and increase funding for veteran prisoner community transition services.”

Sir Mike Penning MP said:

“I am absolutely delighted to support my good friend Jim Davidson and his charity Care after Combat. The Armed Forces Covenant is an agreement between our country and those who put their lives on the line to defend it, and we have a responsibility to look after the welfare of all our veterans, especially as they leave the Armed Forces and make the massive and often daunting challenge of transitioning to civilian life. Care after Combat provides dedicated support for those least able to make this transition and who often fall into the prison system as a

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result. We must do everything we can do end this vicious cycle and I am pleased to pledge my support.”

<<ENDS>>

Notes for editor:

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