



In 2020 FWP raised the profile of the unmet support needs of LGBT+ Veterans and was successful in winning support from a very wide range of Veterans organisations. The charity has now diversified its focus and entered a delivery phase. FWP has 4 key aims:

- Policy development : to enable and ensure the Armed Forces Covenant reaches LGBT+ Veterans and addresses the enduring impact of the ban.
- Capacity building : to ensure that all organisations which are signatories to the Armed Forces Covenant take account of the unmet needs of LGBT+ Veterans, outreaching with confidence, offering a warm welcome, shaping existing services and creating new ones where needed.
- Confidence and community building : to ensure that LGBT+ Veterans, many of whom have good reasons to be sceptical, recognise the welcome and support that exists in many Veterans organisations. FWP aims to support them to step forward. FWP is networking lonely and isolated LGBT+ Veterans to enable befriending and peer support.
- Research : to ensure that quantitative and qualitative research is undertaken which provides the evidence base needed to establish what happened to our LGBT+ Veterans and assess how these experiences have impacted upon lives today (health, welfare, finances, family and housing). Research will be used to enable the development of support services.

Update

1. In partnership with military charities and Veterans Scotland, FWP will establish a full time Senior Support Worker position in England and Wales in the coming months and a part time Support Worker in Scotland. Discussion are in progress at CEO level with RBL and SSAFA concerning loan and sabbatical arrangements and other options. These relationships demonstrate FWP's commitment to capacity building across the Veterans sector, enabled by our lived-experience team.
2. In partnership with the Veterans Gateway and RBL, FWP will create a 24/7 LGBT+ Veterans support line in the coming months. The service will be branded FWP and it will be supported by staff with a high level of awareness of the issues faced by LGBT+ Veterans. FWP is supporting lived-experience training of Veterans Gateway staff and teams from H4H, Combat Stress, HIS, TILS, RBL, SSAFA and others.
3. Following the announcement of the return of medals to LGBT+ Veterans in February, 60 veterans have stepped forward to FWP seeking support or asking to be kept informed through newsletters and bi-monthly town hall meetings. Many will join FWP's AFCFT funded befriending weeks to be held in Snowdonia in July and September 2021. They are also connecting to FWP's social history and research programmes. Beyond Covid it is intended to bring LGBT+ Veterans together regionally and our professional Support Workers will be in place to support this soon.

4. Our work with Westminster regarding reparations continues to be a vital focus and we are working directly with the Minister of State in the Lords (Baroness Goldie) and the Minister For Defence People and Veterans (Johnny Mercer) helping ensure that they always have the complete picture. We were called to give evidence to the Select Committee on the Armed Forces Bill and we are working with all political parties to raise awareness cross party and impartially. We wish all parties to have the shared vision that the UK will be the best place in the world to be an LGBT+ Veteran, as much as for any Veteran. We are also working with Armed Forces Commissioners and Teams in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, supporting policy development, capacity building, confidence building and research.
5. With the support of NHSE, FWP is developing an LGBT+ Standard, which will support the hundreds of LGBT+ Organisations working with LGBT+ Veterans to guide service development. The standard will draw upon FWP's lived experience and be implemented with a delivery partner. Our paper about Enabling Early Intervention describes the opportunity we seek to deliver change across the Veterans sector.
6. Supported by funding from the Audio Content Fund, FWP is creating content that will be used by community radio and more widely in audio broadcast to tell the lived experience stories of the ban. With the support of the Prison and Probation Service (PPS) and NHSE, FWP is creating a lived-experience video training aid which will support teams in organisations working with LGBT+ Veterans by raising their awareness of the history of the ban and its enduring impact. The NHS resource will be used to brief HIS, TILS, H4H, Combat Stress and others on the impact of the ban upon health and wellbeing. The PPS resource will be used to support awareness in the criminal justice system.
7. FWP is working in partnership with Northumbria University, the Imperial War Museum and Queer Britain to create a national depository for the history of the ban and displays which will map the pathway to the successes of today's Armed Forces. It is our aim that the history of the ban will sit alongside the positive message that our Armed Forces are places where LGBT+ personnel are welcome and valued.
8. FWP's research programme has launched and an FWP research assistant will be established with Northumbria University's team in the coming weeks. Our first research paper will feature in the Canadian Journal of Military, Veteran and Family Health in the summer of 2021. The research leadership team is preparing a substantial bid to expand the scale of the research which will involve developing an allied education programme (not unlike Shell Shock) which will link with our work with the IWM.
9. FWP will soon commence a recruitment search for a Chair in succession of Patrick Lyster-Todd who will complete his term in July. During Patrick's term as Chair, he has helped steer the charity to remarkable success and we are delighted that he will remain a full board member. BIE Executive are supporting the search and in discussion with senior leaders from defence and industry including 3 and 4 star officers and FTSE 100/250 Directors. Being a veteran or LGBT+ are not essential criteria. The recruitment of the Chair being undertaken alongside a skills audit and will likely be followed by the recruitment of additional Trustees. Caroline Paige and Craig Jones are to resign as Trustees and will continue to lead FWP as the Joint Chief Executives. With the support of the OVA, Governance, HR, financial and Information Systems professionals are now working across the organisation to support organisational development.