

# North West Probation – Support for Veterans

[keywords: *veterans, peer support*]

## Overview

Around 1 in 20 people on probation are veterans, many of whom face a range of challenges, often (e.g. trauma) linked to their service, and struggle to integrate with others; while their shared identity, and experiences, including supporting their colleagues in challenging situations, are a potential asset. Recognising the need for specialist provision for this group, one team member (Gareth Mills) approached Standing Tall, a local charity founded by a veteran and triple-amputee (Andy Reid MBE), which provides a range of services to promote mental and physical health and wellbeing. Together, they developed a 6 session group work programme for veterans on probation – focusing on issues such as substance misuse, trauma, reintegration, and employment skills. The programme is open across three PDUs in and around St Helen's, and has been running since 2023.

## Its impact

We have seen a real improvement in the confidence and engagement of those on the programme, and participants have formed strong mutually supportive bonds together. The programme's wider impact is being formally evaluated at the time of writing (October 2024).

## What's special about it

We are not aware of any other structured interventions of this sort in probation settings elsewhere.

## Wider applicability

If the evaluation confirms the anecdotal evidence of the programme's impact, it is hoped to roll it out further across the region. And we see real potential, and need, for similar initiatives around the country.

## Further information

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See also: [KnowX.uk/NorthWest1-KBT24.pdf](https://www.knowx.uk/NorthWest1-KBT24.pdf) (overview)