



Out of Service

Evaluation Report

COLLECTIVE
ENCOUNTERS



NORTH



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Background

The multi award-winning **IWM North**, part of Imperial War Museums, was designed by world-renowned architect Daniel Libeskind to represent a globe shattered by conflict. The iconic building, its innovative and dynamic exhibitions, its use of digital media through hourly Big Picture Shows and its public events explore how war shapes lives and inspire and encourage debate. Since 2002 IWM North has connected with veterans from the Second World War to more recent conflicts via their Veterans North Membership Programme. The Veterans North Membership Programme encourages ex-service men and women to share their stories, helping to develop learning resources and enhance the content of IWM North's exhibitions.

Liverpool based **Collective Encounters** is an arts organisation and registered charity specialising in Theatre for Social Change. Working with professional artists and local people, the charity uses theatre to engage those on the margins of society, telling untold stories and facilitating personal and social change. Over the course of the last seven years **Collective Encounters** has been working in partnership with homeless support charities in the region to run a range of arts projects aimed at improving self-esteem, confidence and employability and providing platforms for homeless people to have their voices heard by decision-makers and the general public.

Work within the homeless community has uncovered countless stories of homeless amongst veterans. In the 1990's it was estimated by the homeless charity Crisis veterans made up a quarter of the homeless population. Although this figure has reportedly dropped. Homelessness amongst former service men and women is still a significant problem.

People leaving the services face a number of issues. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a widely known challenge faced by those who have served in the armed forces. However issues surrounding health, education, housing and relationship breakdowns are commonly experienced by veterans. Poverty, and in some cases homelessness, is one of the key reasons why many veterans seek help from charities.

William Wilberforce who heads up the national charity Veteran's Aid says *"We see it every day: payday loans eating into our people like a flesh-eating bug, cheap alcohol destroying people. What my very strong, hand-picked team do is attack these things – we're breaking those chains day after day."*

Early Service Leavers (i.e. those who left service before completing their 3 - 4.5 years minimum service) are considered to be one of the most vulnerable groups to leave service, and are more likely to suffer from PTSD. ESL's are most regularly associated with younger age and not being in a relationship. The same socio demographic associations can be linked to alcohol misuse within the UK armed forces. All of these factors combined indicate a vulnerability to homelessness. Studies also show that employment and educational support whilst in service is not provided in a rigorous way prior to transition, leading to a disadvantage for service leavers after their transition back into civilian life (1).

In 2014 The Independent and London Evening Standard newspapers established a campaign to raise the profile of homeless ex-service men and women. Prince William recently announced his support: *"The armed forces life is tough, it's unique, and it is also difficult sometimes to make the transition into civilian life afterwards"*, he said. *"It troubles me deeply that our servicemen and women possess extraordinary courage, skills and talent, yet many find it difficult to gain meaningful employment in the civilian world and can fall on hard times"*.

The official response to this issue has been slow and ineffective. In 2000 the government agreed to the Military Covenant which outlines the commitment the country has to ensuring fair treatment for decommissioned members of the armed forces. The Military Covenant is backed at a local level by the Community Covenant. This encourages local communities to support their armed forces and to promote understanding and awareness amongst the general public. Both Covenants have been criticized: neither is legally enforceable. Neither has so far been backed by sufficient resources.

Executive Summary

Overview

Out of Service is an £18,390 **Arts Council England** (Grants for the Arts) and **Big Lottery** funded project delivered over the course of 2014 by two key agents: **Collective Encounters** and **Imperial War Museum North** (IWM North).

Out of Service builds on the work **Collective Encounters** has undertaken with the homeless community in the North-West and **IWM North's Volunteering Programme**. Two complimentary strands worked together to identify whether the arts could be used as a tool for improving the experiences of veterans affected by war and conflict. These were:

Theatre for Social Change Workshops: delivered in outreach settings frequented by veterans. These workshops aimed to engage former service men and women as well as to gather information about their experiences.

Out of Service Production: A series of performances for the general public in the Main Exhibition Space of **IWM North**. This production explored the experiences of veterans in three episodes - each looking in turn at recruitment into the services, experience within the services (especially combat) and retirement from the services.

Evaluation Methodologies

An evaluation framework was agreed between **Collective Encounters** and **IWM North** at the start of the project. The evaluation assesses the overall Out of Service project with respect to personal outcomes, social & political outcomes, artistic outcomes and organisational outcomes. Summary findings are:

1. **Personal outcomes for participants:** the project has had a positive impact on participants' confidence levels and general wellbeing.
2. **Social & political outcomes:** the project raised awareness amongst both the general public and decision-makers of the experiences and challenges faced by 21st century veterans readjusting to civilian life.
3. **Artistic outcomes:** the general public, and in particular those who do not frequently access the arts, witnessed an exemplary piece of theatre. Workshop participants took part in a highly valuable collaborative arts process.
4. **Organisational outcomes:** key delivery agents developed an effective working partnership, built upon existing networks and relationships with individuals and the veterans communities in the North West (note that this outcome does not form part of this evaluation).

A range of evaluation activities was undertaken including pre and post intervention health & wellbeing surveys and interviews with participants and project workers from **Collective Encounters**. **IWM North** submitted a report containing feedback. Quantitative and qualitative data was garnered from a small sample of the audience at the final performance. A further survey was distributed through social media. One audience member posted a review on Trip Advisor. Other data was gathered during the project to monitor progress; some of this is included in this report.

Key Findings

1. For veterans, telling stories through theatre is a highly effective way of creating greater understanding amongst friends and family members about their experiences.
2. This is especially true for those having difficulties making the transition to civilian life - and for those suffering from PTSD.
3. Storytelling through theatre offers veterans the opportunity to challenge misconceptions about military life.
4. Whilst veterans taking part found the experience an emotional one they deeply valued the opportunity to tell their story to their friends, family and the wider public.
5. In summary theatre has been shown to be an effective tool in improving the confidence, mental health and wellbeing of veterans.

Recommendations for future collaborations

1. It is crucial to deliver outreach workshops to access veterans, in particular those with PTSD. People with PTSD often feel uncomfortable going into a room with people they don't know so it is crucial to build trust in a familiar setting.
2. Some of the material uncovered during the workshops was highly disturbing. If work of this nature is to be delivered on a long-term basis then support for artists and workshop facilitators regarding vicarious trauma would be advised.
3. The Military Veteran's Service could be a key partner in any future projects. Unfortunately for this project a greater lead in time was needed to forge links with the service.

"I just hope the project can continue as it has the lives of people who have taken part and those that have witnessed the performances. As well as attitudes!"

The Poppy Factory

4. Some content in IWM North's exhibitions can be challenging and difficult for some veterans. In the event of future projects, strategies must be put into place to introduce and integrate them into this museum environment.
5. Accessing veterans who are experiencing problems transitioning is difficult. More time is needed for research, development, networking and building relationships with the support agencies working in this area.
6. The introduction of participants from other aspects of the Collective Encounters' programme was extremely successful, bringing to the project a number of unanticipated outcomes.
7. Closure of the Main Exhibition Space during public opening hours restricts the access of visitors to IWM North's collection and will be avoided for Visitor Programme events in future. Daytime performances must, in future, be suitable for a general public audience. Productions requiring elaborate staging, seating or including age-restricted subject matter will take place outside public opening hours.
8. The Main Exhibition Space at the IWM North is a fantastic space for mounting promenade performances, and there could be further exploration of the artistic capabilities of this in the event of any future partnership work.
9. The workshops have a highly therapeutic tone and this should be considered when planning any future work with veterans.

Project Timeline

Deadline	Milestone	Lead
December 2013	Collaboratively develop project model and secure funding	CE/IWM North
January 2014	Recruit project workers	CE
February 2014	Develop data on support agencies for veterans	CE
March 2014	Set up network of advisors	IWM North
April 2014	Agree evaluation model	CE
July 2014	20 x outreach workshops take place	CE
October 2014	40 x rehearsals/workshops take place in IWM North	CE
November 2014	Sharing of work takes place	CE
December 2014	Publish evaluation report	CE

Artistic Product

Out of Service was a documentary theatre piece that animated the Main Exhibition Space in IWM North. It was performed twice by the veterans (2.30pm & 3.30pm) on Saturday 14th November 2014. The play drew on verbatim testimony of veterans and academic and sector-based research as well as creative material generated by participants, existing war poetry and soldiers' songs. The piece ran for 35 minutes and was presented as a companion to the animated opera, **Poets of Loss**, which deals with similar issues.

On arrival the audience was recruited into small groups, each of which was given a guide. Each guide took their group on a journey through this episodic promenade piece, providing a factual narrative that underpinned the drama. Along the way, groups encountered characters whose monologues introduced them to the experiences of signing-up, being in service and coming out of service. These monologues were performed in 'silo' areas around the large space, and characters spoke in the first person, offering an intimate insight into the reality of service and post-service life. Interwoven with these intimate scenes were large-scale group sequences which took place in a central performance area, performed in traverse, and which offered a more abstract and symbolic response to the material, using song, movement and image work. The final components were large choral sequences in which the actors played a broad range of characters, to enable the full breadth of perspectives and a socio-political context to be communicated to the audience. The aim of the piece was to raise awareness in a civilian audience of the issues faced by veterans when making the transition back into civilian life and to highlight the complexity of this transition, as well as to validate and give voice to the - often hidden - personal experiences of veterans.

The two performances were scheduled pretty much back-to-back with participants only having a very short break in between. Although this is challenging - even for professional actors - participants handled it extraordinarily well, maintaining their focus (and sense of humour!) throughout the two performances.

A corporate event booked into the Main Exhibition Space directly after the performance meant that the 'get out' and strike from both this space and the Libeskind Room needed to be very quick. This put a lot of pressure on both Collective Encounters production team and IWM North technicians. The need to strike the set quickly also limited the amount of set and props that could be used during the performance.

In terms of audience feedback, surveys conducted with 16% of the audience demonstrated that 100% of respondents thought the show was of high quality, that the subject matter was handled well and that they had enjoyed the experience. Some audience members commented that they were surprised by the inclusion of the short animated opera, with one person commenting it was a little too high-brow for them.

16% of the audience completed audience questionnaires. Some audience members completed surveys directly after the performance, others were encouraged to complete the questionnaire online. Survey questions asked the audience what they felt about the quality of the piece, and importantly about the issues it raised. They were specifically asked if the play made them feel different about veterans or those affected by conflict. 90% either responded 'very much' or 'quite a bit'. Audience comments included:

"Almost prepared to say it was life changing".

"Thought provoking".

"Powerful, thought provoking".

"Emotional, dramatic, real".

"A very powerful performance that cuts through to the heart. it changed my opinion of soldiers".

"Very informative".

"Impressed by content, thought provoking and true".

"Brilliant".

"I've just been doing the war poets at school. I got really into it".

"Enjoyable and enlightening".

"A performance at 2.30pm highlighting the issues regarding those veterans suffering from mental health issues when returning such as PTSD -was very thought provoking and clearly a lot of effort had gone into it's production".

"Very memorable".

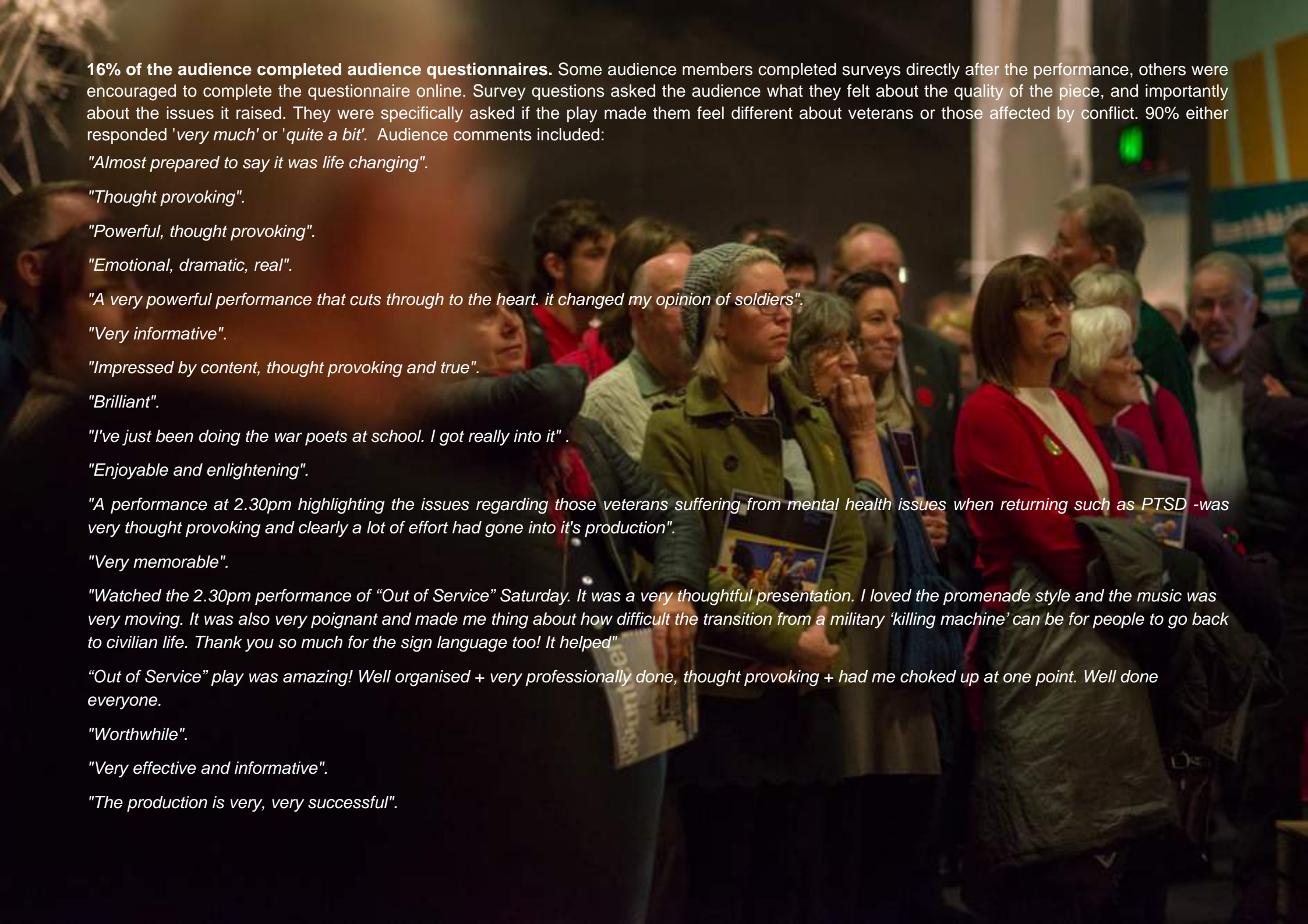
"Watched the 2.30pm performance of "Out of Service" Saturday. It was a very thoughtful presentation. I loved the promenade style and the music was very moving. It was also very poignant and made me think about how difficult the transition from a military 'killing machine' can be for people to go back to civilian life. Thank you so much for the sign language too! It helped"

"Out of Service" play was amazing! Well organised + very professionally done, thought provoking + had me choked up at one point. Well done everyone.

"Worthwhile".

"Very effective and informative".

"The production is very, very successful".



Artistic Process

Collective Encounters has a strong track record of excellence both in its artistic output and its participatory and collaborative processes. Meaningful collaboration between artists and communities, arts and non-arts organisations, academics and practitioners are the cornerstones of our practice. Artists, academics, veterans, support agencies for veterans and homeless people and people with experience of socio-economic disadvantage came together to take part in the successful delivery of Out of Service.

Participatory workshops: Participatory workshops were led by an experienced theatre for social change facilitator - lead artist on the project - Aidan Jolly. Initially workshops took place in a number of outreach settings. This enabled Aidan to meet with participants in locations where they already felt safe and comfortable before bringing them to the IWM North building for more focused work. Most participants had not been involved in drama before, very few had any musical ability. Some were reluctant and suspicious at first, with one participant stating "I'm not going to be a tree". The aim of the workshops was to generate a bank of character ideas, scenes, images and movement which could be given to a professional playwright to craft into a script.

Each workshop lasted between 2 - 3 hours and had a varying number of participants, depending on the location and setting. Aidan developed a way of working with the group that ensured each participant felt able to have a say and that their views were listened to both by him and other participants. The range of stories uncovered is evidence of the very different experiences veterans have. Issues raised through these stories included the process of being recruited to the services; decommissioning; the impact of military service on relationships and families; the portrayal of the military and ex-service personnel in the media; perceptions amongst the media and general public regarding just and unjust wars.

During a workshop participants were introduced to military songs from the First World War, the Second World War and the Napoleonic Wars. They were then encouraged to write new songs and lyrics about their own experiences. Several played instruments. Other exercises included the improvisation of difficult experiences in the military or during transitioning from the military. These included a soldier in Northern Ireland having to confront his partner because she had gone off base without permission, another involved a humiliating job interview.

Following the workshops the material was passed to the writer, and over four weeks the draft script was prepared.

Rehearsal period: The draft script was presented to the veterans for feedback. At the same time new members of the creative team, including two Co-Directors, were introduced to the group alongside some additional participants who had worked with Collective Encounters' programme for homeless people in Liverpool. On reading the script the veterans were surprised to hear so many of their own words, ideas, stories and views reflected back at them.

Over a period of six weeks the team met twice a week to prepare and rehearse the thirty-five minute performance. All rehearsals took place within the IWM North building. Participants were, in general, highly committed to attending these meetings whenever they were needed.

Two technical rehearsals were held in the Main Exhibition Space in the evening when the building was closed to the public. Two technical/dress rehearsals happened in the week before the performances. Collective Encounters' production team worked with IWM North technicians.

Outcomes for Participants

Improving confidence: The project aimed to trigger a degree of personal change within participants by having a positive impact on their confidence levels. The lead artist commented that self confidence within the group was clearly an issue for all participants, even for those without PTSD. Those suffering from PTSD said that their experiences had distanced them from the world, contributing to family breakdown and an over reliance on alcohol. Talking about their experiences, meeting new people and taking part in a positive activity reduced isolation and increased confidence. At various points each participant disclosed information to the group that they hadn't told anyone else. Of the group the lead artist commented *"the group was also exceptionally mutually supportive possibly because it provided opportunities to meet other veterans in a supportive environment"*.

Improving wellbeing: The project also aimed to improve participants' sense of wellbeing. This was measured using pre and post participation WEMWBS surveys conducted with the participants who took part in the final performance (see appendix for full results). WEMWBS is a scale of 14 positively-worded items, with five response categories, for assessing a population's mental wellbeing. Post-participation questions showing the greatest post-intervention improvements were *'I have been feeling loved'*, *'I have been feeling cheerful'* and *'I have been feeling useful'*. These data are supported by the experiences of the creative team who found the participants extremely focused and hard working. Being with the group gave off a sense of camaraderie and team work.

Other outcomes: At the end of the project all participants took part in an evaluation film where they talked about their experiences over the past few weeks. The non-veterans who took part reported that whilst they were initially apprehensive about joining the group they soon became passionate about the issues and the experiences of the veterans - and were committed to telling the veterans' stories as honestly and clearly as they could.

The participants also stated that it was wonderful to work on a piece that wasn't about their own issues. During an evaluation workshop the group was asked whether anyone had experienced any 'light bulb' moments whilst working on the piece. One non-veteran said that although he had found the experience challenging, he knew it was for the greater good. Another said it raised a lot of questions about his own personal beliefs.

In the film and in other evaluation activities veterans cited the importance of the project in enabling them to tell their stories, and said that for them this was the aspect they would remember the most. Many of events they spoke about within a group setting had been long-buried in their memories. All spoke of a sense of release and of getting rid of demons through the process of sharing. The lead artist also commented on the therapeutic nature of the project and how this differed from Collective Encounters' usual participatory programme. During the project one veteran commented, *"I'm so grateful I've had a chance to be involved in this project. It's been a chance to reach other people, and make new friends. It's taken away the loneliness aspect of my PTSD, and has taken me out of my shell so I'm not just staring at four walls"*.

Most surprisingly, considering some of the veterans' initial apprehensions about the piece, many said they would very much like to do something like this again. Some veterans also showed an interest in getting involved in other aspects of Collective Encounters' programme. One veteran is already a member of Veterans North and other veteran participants have now expressed interest in joining IWM North's volunteering programme.

Participants on taking part in the project:

"It helped to push my boundaries".

"It was great to meet people from different backgrounds".

"I enjoyed not being left out".

"It is mental health healing".

"It's something I would consider doing again, to my surprise".

"It has raised lots and lots of questions about my personal belief, when I have had a chance to reflect I will let you know more".

"I have made new friends that I thought I would have never made".

"I enjoyed the empathy, companionship, friendship and care that was taken. It was hard work that I was a little unsure that I could cope with, but found new strength and determination to continue."

"I enjoyed meeting new friends, seeing the audience reaction. I really enjoyed acting and singing".

"I feel privileged to have been part of something amazing".

"It was a unique experience with a unique company - thank you!"

"After she had watched the play my daughter said to me she finally understood what I had been through".

"I think it has helped all the group members get rid of some ghosts, and that's been really impressive. That's what's really impressed me".

"We don't normally talk up and talk naturally about these things. But we have here".

"I'm so glad I joined. I was isolated and now I'm not".

Extract from interview with participant P:

Why did you join this project?

I didn't join this project, this project joined me. I never had any intention of taking part. I then started coming along. But there was no way I was going to perform. Or so I thought.

Was it what you expected?

It was nothing like I expected. For two reasons. The first reason with PTSD it is quite hard to come into a room with a group of people that you don't know. Surprisingly I feel comfortable with you guys. Given that I don't know you. It was great to meet other veterans as well and knowing that your problem wasn't specific to yourself. From that point of view I've made some good friends as well, which I will hope will continue after this project has finished.

It's been an interesting journey and one that I may possibly be interested in doing again.

Extract from interview with participant L:

I can't thank this programme enough for helping me. Some of it has been tough going. At the end of the day the script is excellent in getting to that detail of what happened to veterans during conflict. I'd like to add I am proud of the fact I have been able to take part in this. And to be given the naval part of that scene. That story was 100% true. You have got hold of one of my worst nightmares and demons. To get that out in the open and to make people aware of what happens in the midst of conflict and battle. I am very proud I have done that.

Of the creative process, participants said they were surprised at how quickly everyone (including the civilians in the room!) started working together as a team. Many participants commented how great it was to work with people from such different backgrounds e.g. homeless people, actors, veterans and musicians. The veterans also commented that it was sometimes easier to watch other people tell aspects of their story, as for them, it was still quite emotional and raw. The creative team clearly valued this aspect of making participatory performances and felt it was an approach that could be built on in the future.

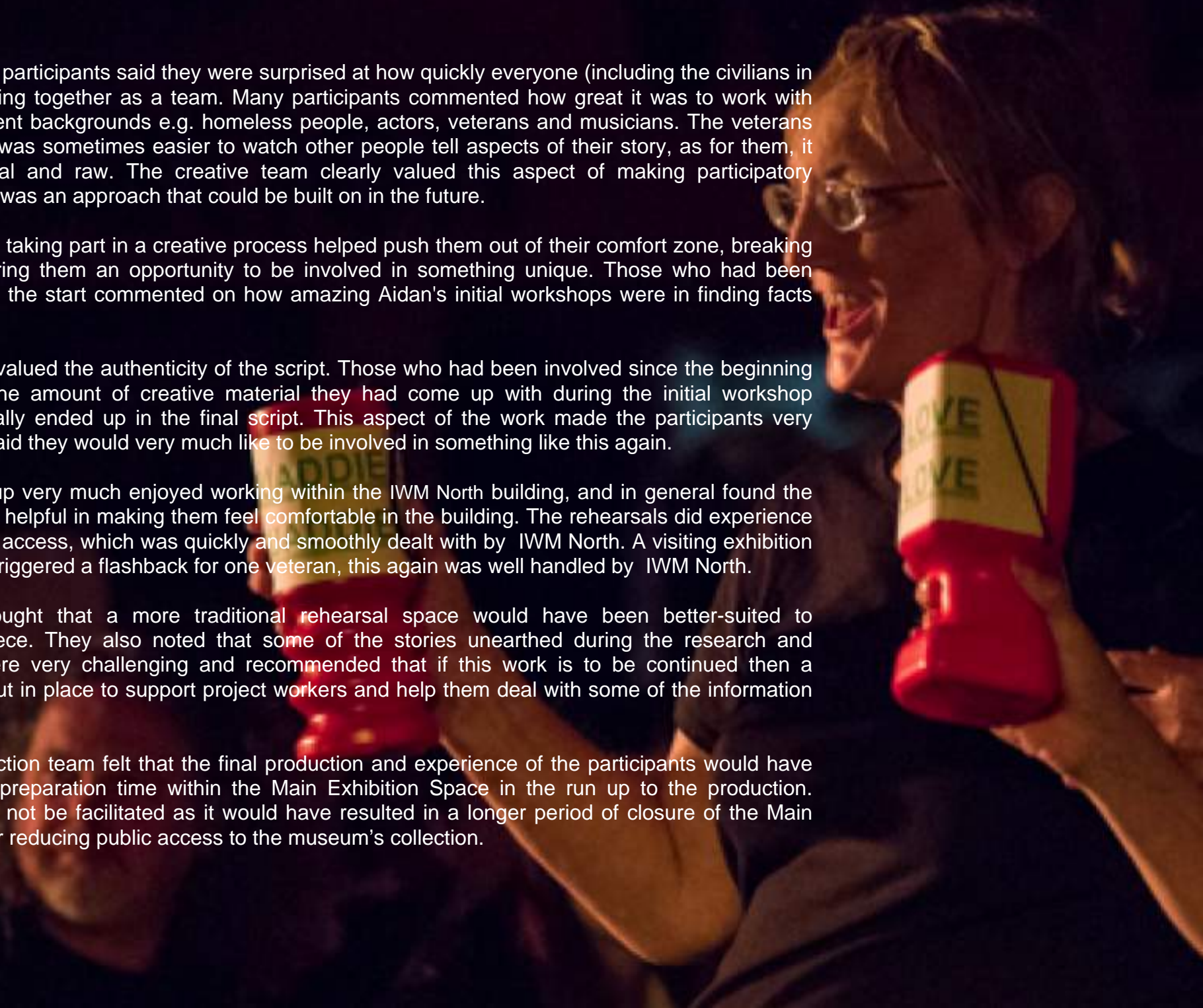
The participants felt that taking part in a creative process helped push them out of their comfort zone, breaking down barriers and offering them an opportunity to be involved in something unique. Those who had been attending sessions from the start commented on how amazing Aidan's initial workshops were in finding facts and unearthing stories.

All participants greatly valued the authenticity of the script. Those who had been involved since the beginning couldn't quite believe the amount of creative material they had come up with during the initial workshop sessions that had actually ended up in the final script. This aspect of the work made the participants very proud, and all of them said they would very much like to be involved in something like this again.

The majority of the group very much enjoyed working within the IWM North building, and in general found the staff at IWM North very helpful in making them feel comfortable in the building. The rehearsals did experience one issue over disabled access, which was quickly and smoothly dealt with by IWM North. A visiting exhibition within the building also triggered a flashback for one veteran, this again was well handled by IWM North.

The creative team thought that a more traditional rehearsal space would have been better-suited to preparations for the piece. They also noted that some of the stories unearthed during the research and development period were very challenging and recommended that if this work is to be continued then a provision needs to be put in place to support project workers and help them deal with some of the information imparted by veterans.

The creative and production team felt that the final production and experience of the participants would have benefited from greater preparation time within the Main Exhibition Space in the run up to the production. Unfortunately this could not be facilitated as it would have resulted in a longer period of closure of the Main Exhibition Space, further reducing public access to the museum's collection.



Social & Political Outcomes

Out of Service aimed to raise awareness of experiences of late 20th & early 21st century veterans returning to civilian life through a free public performance in the Main Exhibition Space of IWM North.

To have an impact, the performance needed to be relevant and authentic. It was crucial that the material used came directly from the experiences and stories of the veteran participants, and that these stories were positioned within a wider national context. Participants were asked what they wanted the play to achieve. They said that they wanted to challenge preconceptions within the mainstream media and the general public (the hero narrative) and also to highlight the problems with the services and support available in helping them readjust. They also commented that unlike those who had suffered physical impairments such as the loss of a limb veterans mental health problems were invisible to the outside world.

Creative material was gathered through the outreach workshop sessions that took place in Manchester early on in the project. The creative material included interviews with veterans and their families and character ideas and scenarios developed by the core group. Other desk research was undertaken too. This involved talking to those who support veterans through Post Traumatic Stress Disorder including Dr Alan Barrett, Clinical Psychologist & Clinical Lead at the Military Veterans' Service and a review of the academic literature pertaining to this issue including Dr Celia Hynes's *Systematic Review of the Literature Relating to the Health, Housing, Education, Employment, & the Criminal Justice System of those leaving the Armed Forces* and *The Experience of Homeless Ex-Service Personnel in London* - a report undertaken by the University of York and commissioned by the Ex-Service Action Group on Homelessness (ESAG).

Feedback from participants during rehearsals and after the performances was unanimous in celebrating the authenticity of the script. Veterans appreciated the continual collaboration on ideas, the assimilation of stories and details, and in one case the inclusion of a highly significant episode that represented a turning point in the life of one ex-service woman.

The performance at the event also looked to raise awareness of the Military Covenant amongst local decision-makers and the general public. The Military Covenant is an informal understanding that in return for personal sacrifices made by members of the armed services, on their return to civilian life they must always be treated fairly, be valued and respected as individuals and they (and their families) will be sustained and rewarded by commensurate terms and conditions of service. Although this informal commitment is in place, no specific actions or provisions have been made by local or central government to ensure it is upheld. Councillors from Salford, Liverpool and Manchester were invited to attend the performance. Two turned up. Audience members left the performance with an Aide Memoire highlighting five actions they could take improve the experiences of veterans, and this included lobbying local decision-makers to have the Military Covenant enshrined in law.

Audience feedback received was unanimous in reporting that the production was thought-provoking and authentic. Some audience members went so far as to say it had completely transformed their views on soldiers. IWMN staff said the piece was powerful, touching and informative.

Engagement & Reach

Outreach Workshops: The outreach workshops had a three month lead-in time. Networking was undertaken with **TiPP** (Theatre in Prisons and Probation) and **Start in Salford**. A further 44 homeless and veteran support organisations were contacted. A flyer was printed promoting the workshops. All workshops were offered for free and at a time convenient to either the group or the agency. In addition to this the lead artist arranged to run outreach sessions and speak at two separate Manchester events. The first was a conference run by the Royal Exchange Manchester called **Backstage, Me?** This conference was for organisations delivering arts practice with the homeless community. The delegation was made up both of individuals from the homeless community and those representing the relevant organisations. The second event was a Veterans North Event at IWM North. Approximately 75 people attended the majority of whom were veterans (these figures are not included in the final participant figures).

Demographics: Unsurprisingly participants was predominately male, white and ethnically British, with the majority of participants aged between 30 - 50. Nearly all of the participants were from a socio-economically disadvantaged background: only one participant held officer rank and only two were in employment. In keeping with the findings in Dr Celia Hynes' *Systematic Review of the Literature Relating to the Health, Housing, Education, Employment, & the Criminal Justice System of those leaving the Armed Forces (2013)*, all members had joined the armed forces at a very young age and some had joined as an alternative to hanging around with their mates and getting into trouble.

Performances: Marketing started two months before the performances. IWM North sent press listings information to over 550 named regional and national contacts. Four weeks prior to the event it was featured in an e-News bulletin that went out to over 9,000 subscribers.

Collective Encounters designed and printed 1000 A6 flyers and distributed them to community centres and arts and cultural venues in Manchester, Salford and Liverpool as well as to Collective Encounters participants. Both organisations set up a webpage for the performance and it was also advertised on site via posters.

A digital trailer and eflyer was also designed and distributed to Collective Encounters' 4000 strong database and to a specific list of new contacts made up of regional Councillors and support agencies for homeless people and veterans. The eflyer was also sent by IWM North's Learning and Access Department to approximately 220 contacts, including 124 members of Veterans North. Collective Encounters and IWM North undertook social media activity within the three-week run-up to the event. The event was also retweeted by Guardian journalist Simon Hattenstone.

Entry to the performance was free. No booking system was put in place. This decision was made as the performance was taking place in a building open to the general public. Some individuals, who were key stakeholders of Collective Encounters, were able to reserve seats before the day of performance. In total 19 reservations were made prior to the show opening.

On the day a desk was set up by Collective Encounters in the foyer/shop of the IWM North building. Information was also provided to visitors by IWM North front-of-house staff and volunteers. Salford Quays was also flyered on the day of the event. The general public was encouraged to reserve a place via the desk. The majority of the final audience booked tickets this way.

Some audience members were asked how they had heard of the event and responded "a friend told me about it", "I was in the area", "I was coming to the IWM today anyway", "I had seen some stuff online", "I was invited by a fellow councillor".

Audience Profile: Collective Encounters led on gathering a profile of the audience and their engagement with the arts in general. 60% of respondents said they never or rarely go to watch theatre. 100% of respondents had never seen a Collective Encounters show before.

Online Statistics	IWM North	Collective Encounters
Total number of e-news recipients	9365	3874
Views of webpage	348	119
Twitter impressions	1565 (actual)	32, 214 (potential)
Twitter retweets/clicks	33	33
Facebook impressions	2055 (actual)	42, 798 (potential)



Engagement Figures	Target	Actual
Numbers of artists	3	5
Number of participants	80	40
Number of outreach workshops	40	34
Outreach agencies	20	44
Live audience	300	135
Non-live audience	1000	673
Number of participation sessions	60	50
Number of performances	3	2
Employment of artists in days	60	93



Analysis

Engagement & Reach

Participation targets were lower than expected. The lead facilitator had difficulty identifying non-veteran voluntary sector organisations that knew they were working with veterans, and had difficulty engaging veteran support agencies in the project. Often veterans do not declare their service background so although 44 different organisations were contacted, often support workers could not confirm whether service users had a military background. Further research, advocacy and networking needs to be done with both the voluntary sector and veteran support agencies if work is to be undertaken with veterans in the future. Research should also be undertaken regarding whether the arts could be used as a professional development tool for veteran support agencies and other professionals whose work involves supporting veterans.

Social & Political Outcomes

The project was very successful in changing attitudes towards veterans, both amongst the general public and the non-veteran participants. This evaluation report will also be made freely available online via the Collective Encounters website and distributed to all project stakeholders and veteran organisations. This will enhance the social outcomes achieved. The performance was also attended by two local Councillors, which should help to draw attention to the issue in the longer term.

Taking into account the number of international conflicts the UK has been involved in over the last twenty years, there is still much more to be done to lobby for greater support for decommissioned veterans. The issue is slowly becoming of interest in the mainstream media as evidenced by The Independent and Evening Standard's Christmas campaigns.

Documentation from this project, and any future work should look to harness this interest and use it as a tool for lobbying for changes to the Military Covenant and Community Covenant.

Outcomes for Participants

In terms of personal change, outcomes that can be achieved depend on the backgrounds and issues faced by each individual. This project has shown that issues facing veterans range from severe PTSD to addiction, crime, the effects of poverty, low confidence, isolation, family breakdown, poor mental health and wellbeing. For those experiencing PTSD the work takes on a more therapeutic role. The common outcomes valued by all participants are the ability to tell their stories and their experiences, working together as a team and meeting new people.

Artistic Process & Product

Evidence in this report shows the artistic processes were very successful both for participants and the creative team alike. Participants found the workshops and rehearsals inclusive, engaging and challenging. In the event of future partnerships between IWM North and Collective Encounters, consideration should be given to how veterans are introduced to the exhibitions given the potential effect on those suffering from PTSD.

From the feedback gathered from the audience and IWM North staff the performance was of very high quality. Logistical issues around the preparation of performance spaces and the closure of the Main Exhibition Space would need to be discussed if future performances of this nature are to take place. Age suitability of performances also needs further discussion.

Credits

Acting Company

Lynda Cash, Paul Mia, Allan Walker, Lee Griffiths, Ian Copeland, Steve Shaughnessy, John Dermody, George Grace, Katie Toale

Actor Guides

Philomela Watkinson , Paul Mangan, Erin Power, Tamsin Cook, Rachel Hankin, Frank Reynolds

Creative Team

Writer - Sarah Thornton
Co-directors - Mandy Redvers-Rowe & Abi Horsfield
Musical Director - Aidan Jolly
Musician - Lis Murphy
Stage Manager - Fiona Hilton
BSL Interpreter - Melanie Sylvester

Poets of Loss Credits

Composer & Musical Director - Patrick Dineen
Original Libretto - Dic Edwards
Adapted for Animation by Sarah Thornton
Animation by Gavin Wood
Singers - David Pisaro & Elise Dyer

Collective Encounters

Executive Director - Annette Burghes
Artistic Director - Sarah Thornton
Creative Producer - Amanda Redvers Rowe
Lead Artist - Aidan Jolly
Marketing Coordinator - Fiona Darling
Administrator - Anna Rymer

Page 3 reference: 1 C. Hynes, M. Thomas, R. Mottershead, *Systematic Review of the Literature Relating to the Health, Housing, Education, Employment and the Criminal Justice System of those leaving the armed forces* (2013).

Acknowledgements

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For the IWM North

Director - Graham Boxer
Visitor Programme Manager - Rosemary Mawdsley
Head of Learning & Access - Joyce Murdoch

Photographic credits

Andy Spearpoint
Mark McNulty

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Appendix 1

WEMWBS SUMMARY RESULTS

Answer Options	a = pre-intervention & b = post interventions	Rating Average	Difference
I've been feeling optimistic about the future	b	3.10	
I've been feeling optimistic about the future	a	3.33	0.23
I've been feeling useful	b	3.20	
I've been feeling useful	a	4.11	0.91
I've been feeling relaxed	b	3.38	
I've been feeling relaxed	a	3.67	0.29
I've been feeling interested in other people	b	3.40	
I've been feeling interested in other people	a	4.11	0.71
I've had energy to spare	b	2.90	
I've had energy to spare	a	3.22	0.32
I've been dealing with problems well	b	3.22	
I've been dealing with problems well	a	3.44	0.22
I've been thin I've been thinking clearly	b	3.30	
I've been thinking clearly	a	3.56	0.26
I've been feeling good about myself	b	3.10	
I've been feeling good about myself	a	3.44	0.34
I've been feeling close to other people	b	3.11	
I've been feeling close to other people	a	4.00	0.89
I've been feel I've been feeling confident	b	3.20	
I've been feeling confident	a	4.00	0.80
I've been able to make up my own mind about things	b	3.33	
I've been able to make up my own mind about things	a	3.67	0.34
I've been feeling loved	b	2.50	
I've been feeling loved	a	3.88	1.38
I've been interested in new things	b	3.50	
I've been interested in new things	a	4.13	0.63
I've been feeling cheerful	b	2.90	
I've been feeling cheerful	a	3.88	0.98