

## **New service launched to reduce rates of re-offending in the Armed Forces community**

*Thames Valley Police announce collaboration with SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity*

Thames Valley Police (TVP) has today (6/7) launched a service that provides support for members of the Armed Forces community to prevent re-offending.

The Armed Forces Referral Service aims to help reduce crime, rates of offending and re-offending by providing better access to support for veterans and their families that come into contact with the police.

TVP is one of the first forces in the UK to launch a service that provides members of the Armed Forces' community with opportunities to access practical support from SSAFA, the oldest national military charity, upon coming into contact with the police through either welfare or criminal incidents.

### **TVP Armed Forces Referral Service Lead, PC Antony Colton, said:**

"Anyone who comes into contact with TVP and who is identified as having any links with the British Armed Forces will be offered the opportunity to be referred to SSAFA, a charity that offers practical, emotional and financial support to serving personnel, veterans and their families.

"The purpose of this service is to better support our Armed Forces community whilst helping reduce crime and rates of offending and re-offending.

"The Armed Forces Referral Service will make it easier for them to get the support they need, from organisations and charities best able to provide it.

"No matter how complex their needs, working together we can do more."

### **Julie McCarthy, Director of Volunteer Operations, SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity, said:**

"Working with Thames Valley Police will ensure that we will be able to provide support to more veterans and their families who find themselves in the criminal justice system.

"SSAFA is extremely grateful to the Armed Forces Covenant Fund for providing a grant to support a wider SSAFA project working with veterans and families in the criminal justice system. We hope this project will help with the rehabilitation of veterans and in turn lower re-offending rates."

TVP are holding a live web chat on 18 July between 6:30pm and 7:30pm where anyone can ask questions to a panel from TVP regarding the Armed Forces Referral Service.

-ENDS-

## **Notes to editors**

SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity (formerly known as the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen & Families Association), provides lifelong support to anyone who is currently serving or has ever served in the Royal Navy, British Army or Royal Air Force, and their families. This includes both regulars and reserves.

SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity, has been providing lifelong support to our Forces and their families since 1885. Every year our staff and team of volunteers help more than 60,000 people, from Second World War veterans to young men and women who have served in Afghanistan and Syria.

For more information visit [www.ssafa.org.uk](http://www.ssafa.org.uk) and follow us on Twitter: [@SSAFA](https://twitter.com/SSAFA).

For more information, please contact the SSAFA press office by calling 020 7463 9321 or emailing [Emily.Garner@ssafa.org.uk](mailto:Emily.Garner@ssafa.org.uk)