East Sussex Veterans Hub (ESVH) is a registered charity and member of COBSEO, focused on supporting veterans addressing the challenges of PTSD, mental ill health, alcohol and substance misuse, involvement in the criminal justice system and general welfare.

Founded in 2016, ESVH have used iREST and for over six years and later the Thrive Inside programme, both to complement its dedicated group wellbeing and coping sessions. In addition, one to one sessions have been provided for those unable to tolerate being in closed spaces or around other people It is used to counter triggers, as part of pain management and addiction. As such this provides a major contribution towards a level of stabilisation within a support plan for those involved. More recently sessions have been carried out as part of ESVH Rural Activities Package, taking advantage of being in the open and appreciating nature from a different perspective. This has led to exposure of veterans to walking

This programme is also provided via CDs and programmed headphones, supported by instruction and work-books. Again, this has proved beneficial for veterans in custody (CDs only) and those in isolation. It proved most useful during Covid 19. These programmes been well received and effective in helping veterans learn to relax, appreciate mindfulness and counter triggers and mood swings. It provides them with an element of control they otherwise had lost.

The development of an app would make this programme more accessible to the wider military community, including families, and certainly compliment our programmes. To have this delivered through contemporary technology, will provide individual veterans with a personal option or opportunity, without interaction with an organisation or others. Many find the latter a major barrier to seeking help. It would be a valuable first step to many, in addressing their issues.

ESVH will continue to use and recommend these programmes, more so as they recognise the issues experienced by veterans and the military community.

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Bernard Stonestreet (Major Ret’d)

Executive Secretary