

Annual Report

March, 2020



THE SUB-REGIONAL ARMED FORCES COVENANT PARTNERSHIP

SUPPORTING OUR

ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY

“ As the Community Engagement lead for the region, I am keen to see the partnership delivering on the commitments of the Armed Forces Covenant to ensure that all those who serve our country, past and present, as well as their families, receive the support they deserve. ”

Lt Col M E Casey RLC



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1. INTRODUCTION

This annual report has been produced by the Sub-Regional Armed Forces Covenant Partnership (SRAFPCP) and sets out what has been achieved - working in partnership across the region - to deliver our commitments to the Armed Forces Covenant and support our Armed Forces community.

In order to build and strengthen our armed forces covenants, the partnership agreed a set of actions including: identifying local needs, developing standardised websites, providing training to public sector and voluntary sector staff, and holding an annual conference.

All of the actions set out in our Action Plan have been delivered. Furthermore, beyond, the initial funding period the partnership continues to share good practice, and consider new ways to strengthen local covenants ensuring our armed forces communities feel supported and valued.

A second Annual Conference will take place on Wednesday 11th March 2020. The conference will focus on key health issues, identified in the recent Defence Committee Report on Mental Health and the Armed Forces and the Strategy for our Veterans. The Partnership have identified Health and Wellbeing as a priority for the region - 74% of respondents to SRAFPCP's regional survey identified Health and Wellbeing as a priority for local Armed Forces communities.

The conference will provide the opportunity to:

- Hear from partners on the impact this partnership project has had in the sub region.
- Meet and network with colleagues from the military community, a wide range of healthcare professionals and representatives from the public, private and voluntary sector
- Share ideas and best practice for how the Armed Forces Community can be further supported in the region



2. BACKGROUND

2.1 OUR ARMED FORCES SUB-REGIONAL COVENANT PARTNERSHIP

In April 2017 five Local Authorities, Hull City Council, East Riding of Yorkshire Council, North Lincolnshire Council, North East Lincolnshire Council and Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council created a Sub-Regional Armed Forces Covenant Partnership (SRAFCP). The partnership secured two years grant funding from the Ministry of Defence to strengthen the delivery of local Armed Forces Covenants and provide a standardised approach to supporting the Armed Forces community throughout the region.

Through the creation of this partnership and support from the Ministry of Defence, each Local Authority has dedicated resources devoted to strengthening their local covenants.

The partnership have refreshed local Armed Forces covenants and reviewed internal policies to support reservists, veterans and their families including: annual leave provision, social procurement clauses, employee/elected member induction packages, leisure discounts, as well as advertising vacancies with the Career Transition Partnership and providing work placements for the wounded, injured and sick.

The partnership has worked closely with our public, private and voluntary sector partners, sharing good practice, raising awareness and increasing the support available for our armed forces community. Examples include leading on local Armed Forces forums to deliver on priorities set out in the Government's Veterans' Strategy, supporting local Veterans Hubs with capital and revenue resources and working with partners to ensure the Armed Forces community can access appropriate support more readily.



3. THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT

The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise from the nation that those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether Regular, or Reserve, and their families should not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services.

It is a statement of intent and relies on the people, communities and businesses to actively support it in order to make a real difference. The Armed Forces Act came into force in 2011.

All Local Authorities in England have signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant and local covenants have been produced, to reflect needs throughout the UK.

Each Local Authority within our sub region has developed a local covenant which aims to complement the national covenant and encourage local support. All of these covenants have similar priorities, but have been adapted to encompass local community need. As a partnership, we share common ambitions towards the national Covenant.

3.1 OUR SHARED AMBITIONS

Together as a sub-regional partnership, we share the following Priorities:

Housing and Related Support

To ensure the Armed Forces Community are provided with high quality guidance and support when applying for social housing and private rented accommodation

Health and Wellbeing

To enable the Armed Forces community to enjoy the same standard of, and access to, healthcare and provide priority treatment to Veterans where it relates to a condition which has resulted from their service, subject to clinical need.

Employment, Education and Training

To ensure children of members of the Armed Forces have the same access to education as any other local resident.

To provide access to training, education and skills support to Veterans to assist them to find suitable employment.

Supporting and Advising Veterans

To provide support and advise service personnel, to assist with their transition from the military into local communities, and ensure that they have access to the same welfare benefits as any other local resident.

4. OUR PRIORITIES

Our priorities were set as part of the original funding bid - SRAFCP continue to develop these, and use them to inform local provision alongside The Local Authorities action plans.

4.1 A SUB-REGIONAL APPROACH AND RAISING AWARENESS

SRAFCP have continued to raise awareness of the Armed Forces covenant through a standardised methodology.

These include the establishment and development of Armed Forces forums and/or steering groups. This has resulted in a more strategic partnership approach to the covenant and cross-organisation priority setting. It has increased awareness among private, voluntary and public sector organisations and allows

for improved partnership working with Military organisations and charities.

A regional communications plan was agreed which has resulted in consistent branding across the partnership.

Local co-ordinators have delivered presentations to external organisations throughout the region, focussing on consistent and positive messages on the Covenant and the Armed Forces community.

4.2 IMPROVING OUR WEBSITES AND OUTWARD COMMUNICATIONS

Local Authority websites have been updated to include a single point of contact as well as local and national sources of support following a review of website provision around the Armed Forces.

The partnership have refreshed their covenants and have conducted or are conducting communications campaigns throughout the region, raising awareness of the needs of our Armed Forces Community and what support

is available. These have included print adverts as well as use of social media during Armed Forces week.



4.3 OUR TRAINING PACKAGE

Armed Forces Covenant e-learning

An existing e-learning package was adapted by the partnership for use within each local authority. This has ensured that each organisation has access to training for front line staff during induction and encourages existing staff to ask 'have you ever served in HM Armed Forces?'

Military Human CPD - York St John University

Military Human training was delivered across the region between January 2019 and May 2019. An initial delivery of 5 sessions in each area was agreed by the regional board, after the success of the first deliveries a further session in each area was booked. In total 6 deliveries in each area took place, resulting in 384 front line members of staff being trained across the region.

A pre training and post training survey was created to measure the impact of the training. Of the attendees who responded to the post training survey, 98% thought that the training was very good or excellent. All felt more confident and were more aware of the support that is available. Attendee's roles predominantly covered East Riding of Yorkshire, Hull, North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire.

Attendees came from a variety of different backgrounds including Local Authority, Fire & Rescue, Housing associations, Voluntary Sector including Armed Forces Charities, NHS, and Department for Work and Pensions.

More than 60% of attendees worked directly with members of the public.

Armed Forces Mental Health First Aid training

There were six deliveries of the Armed Forces Mental Health First Aid two-day training across the region. These took place between March and May 2019. Across the region 87 attendees attended the two day training sessions.

A pre-training survey and post-training survey were designed to measure the impact of the training across the region. Of the 27 attendees who responded to the survey, 25 felt confident or very confident after the training to give support and advice to members of the Armed Forces Community who have mental health issues, two people already felt confident before attending the course.

Attendees' roles predominantly covered the SRAFCP area. However, some also covered West Yorkshire, Sheffield, North of England and South Yorkshire.

66.7% of attendees worked directly with members of the public and 15.8% directly managed staff, the remaining are responsible for strategic decision making/commissioning of services or in a variety of roles in prisons, schools etc.



4.4 OTHER LOCAL INITIATIVES

Hull City Council

- Policies and Procedures developed to support the Armed Forces Community
- Increased membership of the Armed Forces Forum and partnership engagement
- Refreshed Covenant
- Introduced a Data Sharing Protocol for organisations who work within the City
- Veteran Multi Agency Case Conferences set up to support complex cases
- Pathway Reviews set up and flyers produced to promote services
- A 'one stop shop' Community Hub established in the City Centre

North Lincolnshire Council

- Permanent Armed Forces officer to lead on Covenant
- 85 staff trained in military transition and Mental Health First Aid
- Covenant awareness presentations delivered to front-line staff in external private and public sector organisations
- 60 internal staff used Covenant E-learning and shared with partner organisations
- 4000 visitors to Armed Forces Day - creation of Armed Forces Events Team
- Developed Armed Forces Forum - 22 partners and an agreed Armed Forces Action Plan
- Joint working with CCG to support GP military accreditation and Veteran Aware hospitals programme
- Provision of building for Veterans Hub and business case for staffing and community projects
- Silver Award in 2019 through Defence Employer Recognition Scheme

Doncaster

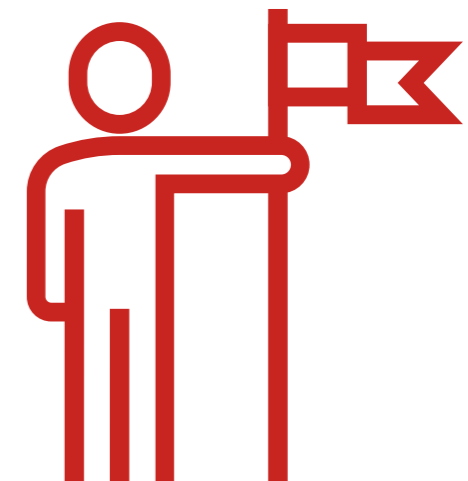
- Dedicated Veterans Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) refreshed.
- NHS Hospital awarded the Veteran Aware accreditation
- Developed performance management - over 2,000 veterans supported 2018 - 2019 in Doncaster through our local partnership network.
- Increased membership of Doncaster Armed Forces/Veterans Steering Group and partnership engagement
- Joint working with CCG to support GP military accreditation and Veteran Aware hospitals programme
- 48% of the Doncaster work and pensions, employment coaches have completed the Veterans awareness training
- Dedicated Armed Forces Communication and Engagement Plan. First campaign delivered in February with a reach of over 60,000 with over 7,000 engagements of retweeting, comments and video watched fully.

North East Lincolnshire Council

- Customised information packages and the launch of the Blighty Coffee Lounge at North East Lincolnshire's Community Hive has led to an increase Veterans accessing services and referrals to local services.
- North East Lincolnshire continues to work with the NHS to encourage GP Surgeries to register Veterans
- The Community Hive hosted the latest CatZero Veterans Development programme, which provided popular with Veterans and the Hive and CatZero will continue to develop these programmes to benefit local veterans.
- Supported the development of Veteran's Friendly Hospital initiatives across Northern Lincolnshire and Goole Hospital trusts.
- Targeted local employers leading to an increase in service leavers and veterans gaining better paid jobs
- 17 partner agencies were engaged in transition and mental health first aid training, broadening awareness of the issues for veterans and establishing a base for future collaborative working.

East Riding of Yorkshire Council

- Re-signed the East Riding Community Covenant
- Revised the East Riding Community Covenant Delivery Group Action Plan, using the key themes and outcomes from the national 'Strategy for our Veterans' as a broad framework
- Reviewed membership of the East Riding Community Covenant Delivery Group
- Established sub-groups of the East Riding Community Covenant Delivery Group to support delivery of the themed sections in the Action Plan (e.g. Housing, Employment, Education and Skills, Finance & Debt, Health & Wellbeing, Community & Relationships)
- Developed an East Riding Armed Forces Directory of Local Support
- Work is currently underway to develop a short training session for front line staff to gain a more detailed understanding of the Armed Forces Covenant, the differences between military and civilian culture, an awareness of the issues/difficulties some of the Armed Forces community may face and advice on how staff might effectively signpost them to appropriate help within the East Riding.



5. THE WAY FORWARD

SRAFPC will continue to progress with strengthening delivery of their local Community Covenants and enhancing the services provided for the Armed Forces Community.

“The lasting impact of this project is demonstrated by the creation of a stronger, sustainable and joined-up partnership approach across the Yorkshire and Humber Sub-Region.

This is leading to improved outcomes for veterans and their families who, when dealing with sometimes complex issues and

seeking to address unmet need, can look forward to a consistency of approach across Local Authority boundaries within the Sub Region, benefiting from best practice that is being shared between the areas.”

Tracy Harsley,
Chair of the Armed Forces
Sub-Regional Partnership Board

TOGETHER WE ARE WORKING TO SUPPORT OUR LOCAL ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY

Lt Colonel Mick E Casey RLC
Major Tim Atkinson RLC

Kingston upon Hull City Council
Councillor Allan Gardiner
Tracy Harsley
Maxine Hunter

East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Councillor David Elvidge
Emma Thompson
Kerry Hooley
Jenny Phillips

North East Lincolnshire Council
Helen Isaacs
Alex Baxter
Chris Shaw
Gavin Marshall

Doncaster Borough Council
Councillor Paul Wray
Lisa Swainson
Jessica Farr

North Lincolnshire Council
Councillor Elaine Marper
Stuart Minto
Sarah Dauris

A special thank you to:
Lt Colonel Allan Hinton RLC



**ARMED FORCES
COVENANT**