

Annual Report
2018



SUPPORTING OUR
ARMED FORCES
AND OUR
**ARMED FORCES
COMMUNITY IN
NORTH YORKSHIRE**

North Yorkshire Armed
Forces Covenant Local
Authorities Working Group



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1. INTRODUCTION

This is the first Annual Report produced by the North Yorkshire Armed Forces Covenant Local Authorities Working Group. The report sets out what has been achieved by local authorities working together across the county, in order to deliver our commitments to the Armed Forces Covenant and support our Armed Forces Community across North Yorkshire.

The Working Group was formed in June 2017 following receipt of funding from the Covenant Fund and since October 2017 there has been significant progress, through a co-ordinated effort to implement the Group's Action Plan.

Working together, the Group has delivered the actions identified in the plan, and more, to strengthen our Armed Forces Covenant and support our Armed Forces Community (those currently serving, reservists, their families and those who have served). However, the Working Group also recognises that it still has more work to do and that the public, private, voluntary and community sectors need to work together to really make a difference within our county.

Together we are focusing on raising awareness, promoting the benefits of supporting all of our Armed Forces Community and identifying gaps in service provision and support.

Together we are improving communications and creating greater consistency in the way that we promote our services. Our websites are being updated and we are preparing training packages for staff in both the public and voluntary and community sectors.

A Practitioners' Conference will be held in October 2019. This will provide an opportunity to showcase the successful work that has been achieved throughout the county and identify the challenges which can be faced by our Armed Forces Community.

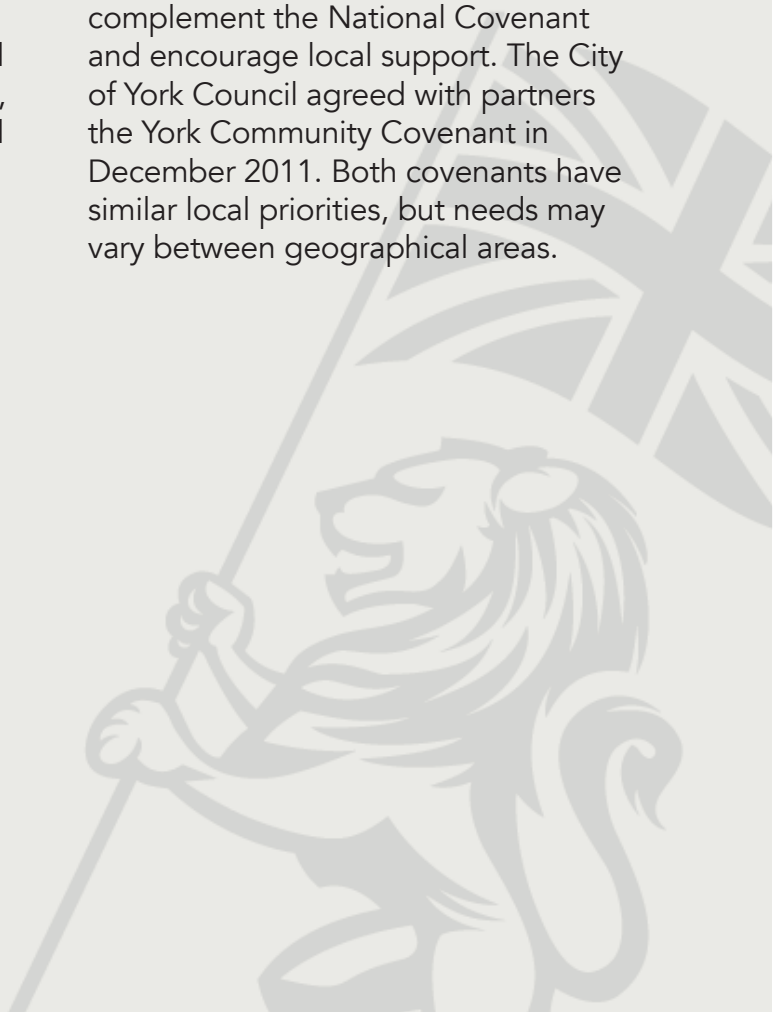
2. WHAT IS THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT?

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 people, communities and businesses to actively support it in order to make a real difference. The Armed Forces Act came into force in 2011, and the Government has produced annual reports on implementation and progress of the Armed Forces Covenant.

All local authorities in England have signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant and Community Covenants have been produced, to reflect local needs throughout the country.

The seven district councils in North Yorkshire and North Yorkshire County Council agreed, along with partners, the North Yorkshire Community Covenant in June 2011, which aims to complement the National Covenant and encourage local support. The City of York Council agreed with partners the York Community Covenant in December 2011. Both covenants have similar local priorities, but needs may vary between geographical areas.



3. OUR COVENANT PRIORITIES

The Working Group includes representatives from all District Councils across the county, North Yorkshire County Council and City of York Council (which is the lead authority for the funding from the Covenant Fund). The Group has also coopted representatives from the current serving population, and relevant charities and organisations who work with the Armed Forces.

Together we share the following priorities, which aim to improve our understanding of the Armed Forces Covenant and its benefits to the local community.



Building Communities

- To improve support for Armed Forces Communities by nurturing public understanding.
- To increase activities for serving personnel and their families using local services.
- To increase community integration for serving personnel and their families.



Employment, Education and Skills

- To improve understanding of the needs of local service children in schools.
- To improve support for service leavers to get employment, in particular, early service leavers who are still of working age.
- To provide opportunities for spouses to develop their own careers.



Health, Welfare and Housing

- To improve co-ordination of support available to veterans in North Yorkshire.
- To improve support to families during deployment.
- To improve access for serving personnel and their families to local health and welfare services.



Support and Advice

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

4. THE JOURNEY SO FAR

North Yorkshire wide approach:

The North Yorkshire Armed Forces Community Covenant is a partnership including District councils, North Yorkshire County Council and City of York Council.

- Richmondshire District Council
- Hambleton District Council
- City of York Council
- Scarborough Borough Council
- North Yorkshire County Council

Other Local Authorities supportive of the covenant

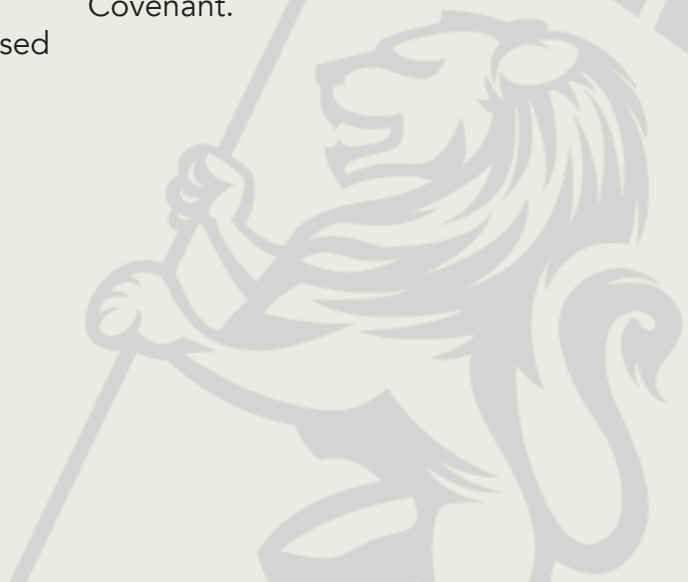
- Selby District Council
- Harrogate District Council
- Ryedale District Council
- Craven District Council

The partnership secured 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 county.

Through the creation of this partnership and with support from the Ministry of Defence, the Local Authorities have now dedicated resources devoted to strengthening their local Community Covenants.

The partnership values our public, private and voluntary sector partners and recognises that partners can both contribute to and benefit from pledging support to the Armed Forces Covenant. Over 2,000 businesses in the United Kingdom have already pledged support for the Armed Forces Covenant and awareness is being raised throughout the county to encourage more of our public, private and voluntary sector partners to support the Armed Forces Covenant.



A working group made up of representatives from the partnership authorities and a representative of the Army Families Federation meet on a regular basis.

The Working Group agreed the following five actions as a focus for the project's development.

- North Yorkshire wide approach
- Research
- Evaluation
- Training
- Practitioners conference

Research

A research programme is being undertaken through two projects.

- We have commissioned a small, independent London-based research company to undertake a piece of strategic needs assessment research. Shared Intelligence are due to present their findings in January 2019 and these will be used to inform the strategic direction and county-wide commissioning decisions across a range of service areas.
- We continually measure awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant among staff in each partner authority through occasional quantitative surveys. This research runs alongside the awareness training of local authority staff.

Evaluation

An evaluation of the project is due to be undertaken during June 2019.

Training

The training programme is being delivered through five methods:

- A one hour introduction session delivered to local authority staff, elected members and partner staff about the armed forces covenant and armed forces awareness.
- A train the trainer module delivered by Warwickshire County Council.
- A military culture and transition session delivered by York St John University.
- The military human - a full day or two half days delivered by York St John University.
- An e learning module based on Warwickshire County Council's e-learning module.

Practitioner's conference

A sub-group is organising the event which is scheduled to take place in October 2019.

NEXT STEPS

North Yorkshire Armed Forces Covenant Local Authorities Working Group will continue to progress with strengthening delivery of their local Community Covenants and enhancing the services provided for the Armed Forces Community.

Through partnership working there will be greater awareness of the needs of our local Armed Forces Community and stronger links between service providers and our residents.

The lasting impact of this project will be demonstrated by the creation of a sustainable and continuously joined-up and consistent partnership approach across North Yorkshire.

This will lead to improved outcomes for veterans and their families, with unmet needs in the community.

Consequently they can now look forward to a consistency of approach across local authority boundaries within the North Yorkshire boundaries, benefitting from best practice that is being shared between the authorities.

To this end the Working Group has started to explore what services could be developed or started for the armed forces communities at a county and local level, post funding from October 2018.



TOGETHER WE ARE WORKING TO SUPPORT OUR LOCAL ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY

North Yorkshire Armed Forces Covenant Local Authorities Working Group

City of York Council

Armed Forces Champion - Councillor Keith Aspden
Lead officers - Jennifer Allott, Ian Cartwright and Clare Taylor

Richmondshire District Council

Armed Forces Champion - Councillor Ian Threlfall
Lead officers - Callum McKeon and Chloe Lewis

Hambleton District Council

Armed Forces Champion - Councillor Bridget Fortune
Lead officers - Dr Justin Ives, Lisa Wilson

Scarborough Borough Council

Armed Forces Covenant Champion - Councillor Sandra Turner
Lead officer - Jo Ireland

North Yorkshire County Council

Armed Forces Covenant Champion - Councillor Carl Les
Lead officers – Neil Irving and Anthony Ruddy

Other Local Authorities that have committed to the North Yorkshire Armed Forces Community Covenant and are supportive of the work of the Working Group are:

- Selby District Council
- Harrogate District Council
- Ryedale District Council
- Craven District Council



A great place to live, work & play



**ARMED FORCES
COVENANT**