

Annual Report
2019



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 second Annual Report produced by 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 is being held on Friday 11th October 2019 at the Pavilions Harrogate. 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.

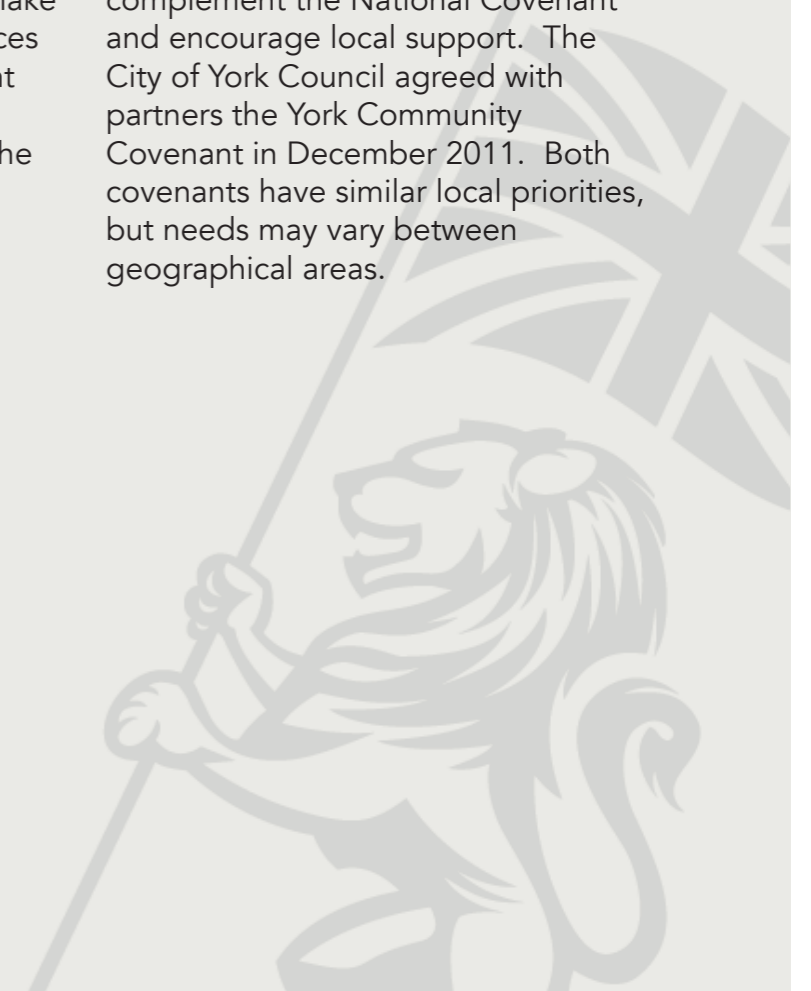
2. WHAT IS THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT?

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 2011 requires the Government to produce 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 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 co-opted 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.

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.

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.

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
- Selby District Council
- Harrogate Borough 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

The working group commissioned a small, independent research company to undertake a piece of strategic needs assessment research. Shared Intelligence presented their findings in April 2019. The findings are now being used to inform the strategic direction and countywide commissioning decisions across a range of service areas. More information is available in the report.

The City of York Council conducted a Armed Forces Community Survey to further understand the needs of the local armed forces community. More information is available in the report.

Evaluation

The evaluation of the project has been carried out by NWA research a small independent business. NWA presented their report in July 2019. More information is available in the report.

Training

The working group has developed a comprehensive training programme

- An introduction to the armed forces covenant and armed forces awareness. A one hour session delivered by local authority staff who have received the training to deliver the material. The criteria for a local trainer is that they are a veteran with some form of tuition in delivering training.

- 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
- Forces Connect delivered a one day training session on the 8th July, at Hambleton District Council, Stonecross, Northallerton, Three training courses were delivered:
 1. Elected Councillor Armed Forces Champion training
 2. Service Champion Training
 3. Armed Forces Awareness training for Call Centre and Frontline staff

We measure the effectiveness of the training among the staff in each partner authority through occasional quantitative surveys.

Practitioner's conference

A Practitioners' Conference is being held on Friday 11th October 2019 at the Pavilions Harrogate. This will provide an opportunity for the working group 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.

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 stronger. More effective 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.

This will lead to improved outcomes for the armed forces community across North Yorkshire. Particularly those that may be dealing with complex issues. We aim to better

address unmet needs and promote a more consistent approach across North Yorkshire, with sharing good practice across local authority boundaries.

To this end due to the careful management of the grant by the working group the covenant office has granted a third year to the partnership. This will enable the work undertaken so far to be developed and become imbedded within organisations, including the development of action plans, supporting the development of new services and strengthening the delivery of the covenant across North Yorkshire.

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 – Charlie Croft, Laura Clark, and Ian Cartwright

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 and Lisa Wilson

Scarborough District

Armed Forces Covenant Champion - Councillor Tony Randerson
Lead officer - Jo Ireland

North Yorkshire County Council

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

Selby District Council

Armed Forces Covenant Champion - Councillor David Buckle
Lead officer – Sarah Thompson

Harrogate District Council

Armed Forces Covenant Champion – Miss Michelle Blackburn
Lead officers – Roger Richardson, Paul Campbell and Julia Stack

Ryedale District Council

Armed Forces Covenant Champion and lead officer – Margaret Wallace

Craven District Council

Armed Forces Covenant Champion – Councillor David Ireton
Lead officer – Kate Senior





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**ARMED FORCES
COVENANT**