

Richmondshire District Council's Response to Meeting the Principles of The Armed Forces Covenant (2020-21)

The Armed Forces Covenant (AFC) covers a number of key areas. Those relating to services provided by Richmondshire District Council (RDC) are listed below, outlining its responsibilities together with statistical information for the last three years.

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1. HOUSING	1.1 Members of the Armed Forces should have the same access to social housing and other housing schemes as any other citizen.	The North Yorkshire Home Choice Allocations Policy automatically considers members of the Armed Forces to have a Local Connection to the area. This is extended to applications from former service personnel, where the application is made within 5 years following discharge. Members of the Armed Forces have the same access to Social Housing as any other citizen.	In 2017/2018 Richmondshire District Council rehoused, into Social Housing, 5 applicants (5% of our total allocation for the year) who were either recently discharged / had historically served in the Armed Forces or who were the spouse of a currently serving or former member of the Armed Forces.	In 2018-2020 Richmondshire District Council rehoused, into Social Housing, 15 applicants (5% of our total allocation for the two-year period) who were either recently discharged / has historically served in the Armed Forces or who were the spouse of a currently serving or former member of the Armed Forces.	In 2020-21 Richmondshire District Council rehoused, into social housing, 8 applicants (8.5% of our total allocation for the year) who were either recently discharged/has historically served in the Armed Forces or who were the spouse of a currently serving or former member of the Armed Forces.
1. HOUSING	1.3 Government departments and voluntary/community	The English Churches is a charity which provides supported	Riverside Care and Support (ECHG) have expanded their	Single Persons Accommodation Scheme for Ex-	Single Persons Accommodation Scheme for Ex-

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	sectors will provide supported housing for homeless veterans.	<p>accommodation at The Beacon in Catterick Garrison for homeless veterans. Amicus Trust is a charity that provides supported accommodation in Bedford which RDC can refer homeless veterans into. Homeless veterans aged between 16-25 years can also access the Young People's Pathway and be considered for accommodation within the two supported housing schemes within Richmond although this is not specifically for ex-veterans. Phoenix House is a rehabilitation Centre based at Catterick Garrison.</p>	<p>supported housing facility and we can now refer via the Single Persons Accommodation Scheme for Ex-Services Personnel (SPACES) into any facility in Catterick Garrison, Middlesbrough, Aldershot. SPACES also have access to other various accommodation providers, such as, SHADE (St Peter's Court, Sacriston, Durham), Scottish Veterans Residences, (Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee) Launchpad, (Avondale House in Biker, Newcastle), Speke House (Liverpool)</p>	<p>Services Personnel (SPACES) continues to be accessed.</p> <p>In addition to this the Beacon Project can offer supported accommodation.</p> <p>Charities that we work with include. SSAFA and Royal British Legion.</p> <p>We provide links to other sources of advice such as the Veterans Gateway Link.</p>	<p>Services Personnel (SPACES) continues to be accessed.</p> <p>In addition to this the Beacon Project can offer supported accommodation.</p> <p>Charities that we work with include. SSAFA and Royal British Legion.</p> <p>We provide links to other sources of advice such as the Veterans Gateway Link.</p>

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			Amicus Trust (Bedford), Alabare (South West England and Wales.		
1. HOUSING	1.6 Those injured in service should have assistance with necessary adaptations to private housing.	Service personnel have the same rights to access Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) as civilians.	No applications received.	2 x DFG awarded to ex-service personnel	No formal DFG applications received from ex-service personnel
1. HOUSING	1.7 Injured service personnel's lump sum compensation is disregarded for the purposes of capital means test for affordable housing schemes, and Disabled Facilities Grant.	A Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is a statutory means tested local council grant to help towards the cost of adapting a person's home to enable them to continue to live there. When an individual applies for DFG their Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS), or War Pension Scheme (WPS) compensation payment(s) is not taken into account in the means test.	No applications received.	Not applicable to any DFG applications received. 1 x DFG awarded to ex-service personnel but in receipt of a passporting benefit therefore no means-test applied. 1 x DFG awarded to ex-service personnel but no means-test as work below threshold for financial assessment. 1 x DFG withdrawn by ex-service personnel	No formal DFG applications received from ex-service personnel

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		This commitment applies to those in receipt of WPS for disablement of 80 per cent or higher and receiving a Constant Attendance Allowance. It also applies to those who receive an AFCS lump sum payment and guaranteed income payment.		as moving out of the area.	
2. BENEFITS AND TAX	2.2 Payment from the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme or War Pensions Scheme is not taken into account when entitlement to income-related benefits is assessed. The same rules apply to Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit which are administered by Local Authorities who have the discretion to go beyond the £10	The Council currently disregards this income in its entirety.	During 2017/18 25 cases benefitted from this scheme, amounting to a total of £44,248 (Housing Benefit).	During 2018/19 17 cases benefitted from this scheme amounting to a total of £31,014 (Housing Benefit). During 2019/20 10 cases benefitted from this scheme amounting to a total of £18,937 (Housing Benefit)	During 2020/21, 8 cases benefitted from this scheme amounting to a total of £16,265 (Housing Benefit).

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	disregard including disregarding it entirely.				
2. PARTICIPATION AS CITIZENS	3.1 The Government are committed to ensuring that Service personnel can participate fully in elections.	The Council's Electoral Team targets service personnel each year to encourage maximum registration. This is achieved via targeted press coverage in Garrison publications. Liaison with Army unit registration Officers and through the Catterick Garrison liaison group. Service Personnel do not have to register at an address they are currently residing, they can register at an address they have previously lived at e.g., their parents' property, or at an address they would reside if they were not	Figures for 2017/18 (372) only relate to those who have registered as Service Voters. Reduction is due to non-renewal of application following the expiration of 5 years registration period. However, the use of the online application at the government's register to vote web page has assisted with more service personnel registering as ordinary voters. This facility can be accessed anywhere in the World. In Armed Forces Barracks 25% are registered as Service Personnel,	Reduction of the number of registered Service Voters in 2018/19 (319) due to non-renewals of applications following the expiration of 5 years registration period. However, in 2019/20 the number of registered Service Voters increased to 355 (General Election in December 2019). However, the use of the online application at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote has assisted with more service personnel registering as ordinary voters. This facility can be accessed anywhere	Figures on 1 December 2020 when the Electoral Register was published recorded the number of registered Service Voters as 262. Service Personnel can only register as a Service Voter if posted overseas. The number of electors registered at HM Barracks and service properties is 3238, which is 29 electors less than the previous year. The Council's website links directly to the armed forces registration page at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote to encourage

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		in the forces e.g., a private property.	75% are registered as ordinary voters.	in the World. The number of ordinary voters registered in HM Barracks and Service Properties have increased 2018/19 (374) and 2019/20 (155).	<p>using the online registration as opposed to completing an actual form.</p> <p>A change to e-mailing communications where possible, including renewals, confirmation letters, absent voting requests and other acknowledgements has proved effective to achieve a high response rate over mailing.</p> <p>An integral part of the communication strategy on registration and electoral activity is engagement with military personnel to encourage registration and</p>

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					advise on election participation.
3. RECOURSE	4.1 Armed Forces Advocates have been established at a senior level in major government departments. A number of Local Authorities have established Armed Forces Champions to perform a similar function at a local level.	The Managing Director operates as the Council's Armed Forces Champion.	<p>The Chief Executive / Corporate Director attended four liaison meetings with the Catterick Garrison Commander and MoD personnel.</p> <p>The Chief Executive attended three North Yorkshire Armed Forces/Civilian Integration Partnership Board Meetings.</p> <p>The Corporate Director attended a North Yorkshire Armed Forces Covenant Network Meeting.</p>	<p>Over the 2018-2020 period: The Chief Executive/Corporate Director attended eight Garrison Liaison meetings with the Catterick Garrison Commander and MoD personnel.</p> <p>The Chief Executive attended four North Yorkshire Armed Forces/Civilian Integration Partnership Board Meetings.</p> <p>The Chief Executive attended two Armed Forces Community</p>	<p>Over the 2020-21 period: The Chief Executive/Corporate Director attended four virtual Garrison Liaison meetings with the Catterick Garrison Commander and MoD personnel.</p> <p>The Chief Executive attended three North Yorkshire Armed Forces/Civilian Integration Partnership Board Meetings.</p> <p>The Chief Executive attended one Catterick Garrison</p>

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			<p>The Chief Executive attended two Armed Forces Community Covenant Regional Grants Panel Meetings (see section 5.2).</p> <p>The Chief Executive visited Phoenix House Recovery Centre; attended a Careers Fair for the Armed Forces; contributed to a MoD/Clinical Commissioning Group 'knowledge sharing' event; and sat on an Armed Forces Covenant Task and Finish Group.</p> <p>During the year, the role of the Deputy Leader of the Council was expanded to include being the Member</p>	<p>Covenant Regional Grants Panel Meetings (see section 5.2).</p> <p>The Corporate Director attended a North Yorkshire Armed Forces Covenant Network Meeting, three Catterick Garrison Working Group meetings and 3 Catterick Garrison town centre meetings.</p> <p>The Planning Manager has also attended two Catterick Garrison Master Plan meetings.</p> <p>RDC have appointed an Armed Forces Champion Member – Cllr Kevin Foster</p>	<p>Strategic Development Group meeting.</p> <p>The Corporate Director attended one Catterick Assessment Study Scope & Overview Session</p> <p>The Corporate Director attended one Catterick Vision Preparation & Scene Setting Session</p> <p>The Corporate Director attended one Catterick Vision – Partner Contribution & Input Session</p> <p>The Corporate Director attended one Catterick Vision – Draft Vision statement review.</p>

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			<p>Champion on Armed Forces issues. Cllr Ian Threlfall attended several meetings and events in this capacity.</p>		<p>The Corporate Director attended one Catterick Working Group & AS Engagement Group Discussion</p> <p>The Corporate Director attended one Review of CGCWG Reformation & Revised ToR</p> <p>The Corporate Director attended one Catterick Vision Update – Pre SDG</p> <p>The Corporate Director attended one Catterick Garrison development pre-meeting.</p> <p>The Corporate Director attended one Catterick Vision</p>
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					<p>roadmap and next steps.</p> <p>The Corporate Director attended one Catterick Improvement and Development Meeting.</p> <p>RDC have appointed a new Armed Forces Champion Member – Cllr Angie Dale</p>
3. RECOURSE	4.2 Members of the Armed Forces community should have means of recourse open to them if they believe they are not being treated in a fair or appropriate way. They can make use of established public service complaints processes.	The Council has a Complaints and Compliments Policy which is published on our website, and we actively encourage feedback on all the services we provide. Paper versions can be found at all our Community Offices.	During 2017/18 the Council received one complaint where the complainant stated a connection with the Armed Forces.	During 2018-20 there were no complaints received stating a connection with the Armed Forces.	During 20/21 there were no complaints received stating a connection with the Armed Forces.

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	The first step would be to complain to the local service provider (e.g., Local Authority). If this still does not resolve the complaint, they can access Ombudsman services.				
4. THE COVENANT AND THE WIDER SOCIETY	5.1 Reservists are unique in being members of both the Armed Forces and civilian communities. The SaBRE (Supporting Britain's Reservists and Employers) campaign seeks to deliver effective employer support to reservists.	RDC allow employees to join the Army and Naval Reserves and staff are entitled to up to two additional weeks' unpaid leave for attendance at annual camp on provision of documentary evidence from the Unit Commander. Staff must obtain prior approval from their Head of Service and must recognise the need to provide adequate notice as per the requirements of the annual leave policy.	The provision was available to staff during 2017/18 although no leave was requested / taken by staff as reservists.	As part of the Armed Forces Community Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme Silver Award – this extended leave is in place. This includes volunteer members of non-regular forces e.g., Territorial Army, Navy Reserves etc who are entitled for up to two weeks additional paid leave for military deployment, and two further additional paid days of leave to attend military events.	As part of the Armed Forces Community Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme Silver Award – this extended leave is in place. This includes volunteer members of non-regular forces e.g., Territorial Army, Navy Reserves etc who are entitled for up to two weeks additional paid leave for military deployment, and two further additional paid days of leave to attend military events.

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					The Council have an AFC action plan which includes the promotion of the AFC Employer Recognition Scheme and encourages businesses and organisations to become AFC signatories.
4. THE COVENANT AND THE WIDER SOCIETY	5.2 The Armed Forces Community Covenant Grant scheme aims to support projects at a local level to strengthen ties between members of the Armed Forces community and the wider community in which they live.	<p>The Chief Executive sits on the Armed Forces Community Covenant Regional Grant Panel which considers applications for funding local projects.</p> <p>The Council provides 'match funding' for such projects via its various social grant schemes.</p>	<p>The Chief Executive attended two Armed Forces Community Covenant Regional Grants Panel Meetings.</p> <p>The Council is continuing the delivery of the Healthy Horizons project for older veterans as part of the Ex Forces in North Yorkshire wider project. One of the veteran clients from the project has</p>	<p>The Chief Executive attended two Armed Forces Community Covenant Regional Grants Panel Meetings.</p> <p>RDC' Business and Community Team actively promote the funding opportunities for community groups and organisations and offer support in making applications to the grant. We encourage</p>	<p>RDC' Business and Community Team actively promote the funding opportunities for community groups and organisations and offer support in making applications to the grant. We encourage applications to apply to RDC funding streams as match funding and demonstration of Council support for the project.</p>

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			<p>been invited to cut the ribbon at the start of the Tour De Yorkshire in Richmond Town on Saturday 5th May 2018.</p> <p>The Council continues to be an active partner in the delivery of the North Yorkshire Armed Forces Community Covenant Network group</p>	<p>applications to apply to RDC funding streams as match funding and demonstration of Council support for the project.</p> <p>The Council continues to be an active partner in the delivery of the North Yorkshire Armed Forces Community Covenant Network group. The Working Group have delivered the following priorities as part of the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research • Training • Practitioners conference <p>The group continues to take a North Yorkshire wide approach, sharing best practice and ideas on how best to</p>	<p>The Council continues to be an active partner in the delivery of the North Yorkshire Armed Forces Community Covenant Network group.</p> <p>The Council has a dedicated web page to promote the AFC</p> <p>The Council's Garrison Area Partnership are currently working on ways to support the AFC within their workplan.</p>

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				<p>support our armed forces communities.</p> <p>During 2018 and 2019, the Pop-Up Shed programme offered free sessions to those aged 40 and over who live in North Yorkshire and had served in the armed forces, completed National Service conscription, or worked in the Merchant Navy in support of the military at some point. It also offered volunteering opportunities for younger veterans, family members and carers. It provided a safe, supportive and friendly setting where ex-forces could socialise, learn new skills, and hone existing skills by</p>	

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				working alongside each other.	
5. THE COVENANT AND THE WIDER SOCIETY	5.3 Build on links between Reserve Forces and Cadet Associations and youth groups.	Richmondshire District Council ensures there are opportunities for young people who are members of Reserve Forces or Cadet Associations to engage with youth projects across the District.	The Council provides opportunity for the Cadet Associations to play a role within community events such as the Tour de Yorkshire.	The Council provides opportunity for the Cadet Associations to play a role within community events such as the Tour de Yorkshire.	The Council provides opportunity for the Cadet Associations to play a role within community events such as the Tour de Yorkshire.
5. THE COVENANT AND THE WIDER SOCIETY	5.4 Show public displays of support for the Armed Forces, including donations to charities such as Help for Heroes or the Royal British Legion, or active participation in homecoming parades or Armed Forces Day.	Richmondshire District Council participates in the annual Armed Forces Day commemorations in Friary Gardens, Richmond inviting service personnel and their families; Royal British Legion Branches; representatives of various local groups and charities who support the military community both serving and retired;	In 2017/18 the Chairman of the District Council held a civic reception hosting the Nepalese Ambassador, Dr Durga Bahadur Subedi and representatives from Colburn Town Council at Mercury House at which they discussed how links between the communities could be strengthened.	Poppy Appeal collection tins were once again placed throughout the offices in October and November 2018 and 2019, with all money raised through weekly dress down days in November going to the Poppy Appeal. Our Annual Armed Forces Day Flag Raising Ceremony was held in both	Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, public displays of support were very limited during 2020-21. We did fly the Armed Forces Day Flag in Friary Gardens and outside Mercury House from Monday, 22 June 2020 until Monday, 29 June 2020. The flag was raised by the Chairman but, due to the restrictions, it

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		<p>cadet forces; local dignitaries and the wider community. The Council holds fundraising events for the Poppy Appeal. The Council allocates resources (e.g., free coach parking) for Armed Forces parades and events in the District.</p>	<p>Our Annual Armed Forces Day Flag Raising Ceremony was held in June 2017 in Friary Gardens, Richmond. Those in attendance included service personnel and their families; Royal British Legion Branches; representatives of various local groups and charities who support the military community both serving and retired; cadet forces; HMS Heroes from local schools; local dignitaries and the wider community.</p> <p>Poppy Appeal collection tins were once again placed throughout the offices in October</p>	<p>June 2018 and June 2019 in Friary Gardens, Richmond.</p> <p>In 2018 the Chairman of the Council, Councillor Bill Glover led officials from the authority along with forces personnel. Councillor Bill Glover gave the initial address and Lt Colonel Stephen Jordan, Garrison Commander replied on behalf of the armed forces. The ceremony also included the unveiling of a memorial plaque on the war memorial in the gardens to mark the 100th year of the Royal Air Force. They were joined by veterans, civic leaders, councillors,</p>	<p>was not possible to hold an event.</p> <p>The other events attended were:</p> <p>Saturday, 15 August 2020 – The Royal British Legion VJ Day Commemorations</p> <p>Sunday, 8 November 2020 – a Remembrance Sunday event in Richmond and a Remembrance Sunday event in Reeth</p> <p>Wednesday, 11 November 2020 – Remembrance Day Wreath Laying in Reeth</p>

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			<p>and November with all money raised through weekly dress down days in November going to the Poppy Appeal.</p> <p>The Chairman and Vice-Chairman attended various military functions throughout the year including the Yorkshire (N&W) Army Cadet Force Presentation Day, various RAF Leeming events/parades, a Royal Air Force Association Battle of Britain Service, Remembrance Day services, and passing out parades at Catterick Garrison.</p>	<p>representatives from the Police, St John's Ambulance and Royal British Legion, scouts and girl guiding associations, Help for Heroes, and forces personnel – Army and RAF.</p> <p>In 2019 the Chairman of the Council, Councillor Stuart Parsons, led officials from the authority along with forces personnel. Councillor Parsons gave the initial address and Colonel Peter Stitt, Commandant of the School of Infantry replied on behalf of the armed forces. They were joined by veterans, civic leaders, councillors, representatives from the Police, St John's</p>	

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				<p>Ambulance and Royal British Legion, local school children from MKC (Military Kids Club) Heroes, scouts and girl guiding associations, Help for Heroes, and forces personnel – Army and RAF.</p> <p>The Chairman and Vice-Chairman attended various functions with military connections throughout 2018 including an Annual Reception at RAF Leeming, the HQ 4th Infantry Brigade & HQ Catterick Garrison Reception and Beating Retreat, the presentation of a Bevin's Boys Veterans Badge, Catterick Garrison HQ and Royal British Legion Festival of</p>	

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				<p>Remembrance, Remembrance Sunday Service & Wreath Laying, a Passing Out Parade of Gurkha Company Recruit Intake 2018, Help for Heroes and Tour de Yorkshire Celebration Evening, British Gurkhas and Nepalese Community Catterick & Darlington Celebration of Nepalese New Year BS 2076/AD 2019 and an event at which the Army Foundation College exercised its Freedom of the Borough of Harrogate.</p> <p>In 2019 various events with military connections were attended by the Chairman and Vice-</p>	

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				Chairman including the Yorkshire (North and West) Army Cadet Force Presentation Day, RAF Leeming Annual Reception, 4 SCOTS Beating Retreat and Cocktail Party, Help for Heroes Phoenix House Community Open Day, Official Opening of a Special Exhibition at the Green Howards Museum, Ripon City Council & Ripon Branch of the Royal Air Force Association Battle of Britain Civic Event, Catterick Garrison Community Engagement Dinner, Remembrance Sunday Services and Wreath Laying Ceremony's, 2ITB Passing Out Parade	

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				<p>of Gurkha Company Recruit Intake 2019.</p> <p>In 2018 and 2019 both Chairman held an Annual Civic Reception and Dinner to which representatives from the Army, RAF and Cadet Force were invited.</p>	