



## **East Riding Community Covenant Delivery Group Action Plan (2019 – 2024) Annual Progress Report – 2019/20**

### ***Introduction***

This report highlights the key progress made during 2019/20 against the themed actions outlined in the East Riding Community Covenant Delivery Group's Action Plan.

### ***Cross-Cutting Factors***

- Five themed sub-groups (Children & Young People, Employment, Education & Skills, Finance & Debt, Health & Wellbeing and Housing), were set up to support delivery of actions in the plan and have provided quarterly progress updates to the Delivery Group.
- A Delivery Group Communication Plan intended to ensure a co-ordinated approach to delivery of communication-related actions across the sub-groups has been developed, including outline proposals for a series of future communication campaigns.
- Plans are in place for the first stage communication campaign, which is intended to raise awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant and promote the local support available for the Armed Forces community.
- Delivery Group members have been working together to identify local support available for the Armed Forces community, which will be used as the basis for content for new Covenant webpages to be hosted on the Council's website.
- A video created in partnership with sub-regional local authorities to show the impact and value of the Military Human and Mental Health First Aid training undertaken with staff and partners was shown at the annual sub-regional Covenant conference in March 2020.
- SSAFA provided a presentation on the role of its organisation at the September 2019 Delivery Group meeting to help raise awareness of the services and support it offers.
- 85 delegates (including council staff and partners) attended the Military Human training course (run by York St. John University) which aims to develop participants' understanding of military culture and transition into civilian life. 100% of those who had attended stated that they now felt able to support members of the Armed Forces community, with 73% reporting that they felt extremely/very well equipped to support the cohort (compared to 18% prior to the training).
- The Armed Forces Covenant e-learning package originally developed by the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Armed Forces Covenant partnership has been completed by over 400 Council staff so far.
- A sub-regional Armed Forces Covenant conference took place in March 2020, with a focus on how partners could work together to support and improve the mental health of the Armed Forces community. Feedback from the workshop was circulated to each local authority for discussion with partner organisations.

- Proposals for a second stage communication campaign, which will focus primarily on public perceptions and targeted communications with those local organisations who are supporting or could support the Armed Forces community have been agreed with the Delivery Group.
- The Delivery Group received an update on the application process for the Veterans' Pin Badge Scheme. An article appeared in Your East Riding to promote take-up of the scheme, which generated interest from approximately 30 veterans.

### ***Community and Relationships***

- Delivery Group membership now includes a representative from the Armed Forces & Veterans Breakfast Clubs. A new Breakfast Club has been set up in Driffield.
- Information on support available from HEY Smile Foundation for Breakfast Club members wanting to set up new groups has been circulated locally. Smile have also supported two veteran groups through Charity Chats, covering topics such as governance, policies, funding and future planning.
- In September 2019, the Delivery Group received a presentation outlining the support offered by the Veterans' Community Hub in Hull, which is available to both Hull and East Riding residents. Over 1,700 veterans have used the Hub so far. Since the Hub started recording in April 2019, 46 veterans from the East Riding had accessed the Hub with a total of 117 visits (representing 4% of the overall total 2,739 visits).
- A new 'Community Forum' has been set up at Defence School of Transport, Leconfield for all staff and families.
- As part of the work to develop content for the new Covenant webpages, information on support available to the Armed Forces community, particularly focusing on support for those experiencing social isolation or wanting to get involved in volunteering, has been gathered.

### ***Employment, Education and Skills***

- Potential options for supporting veterans and military spouses/partners into employment and education have been considered by sub-group members, such as for example CV drop in sessions and a Lifeworks Families course. Barriers to accessing employment and education opportunities have also been discussed and any options agreed will take account of these limiting factors. Promotion of any courses/opportunities will be targeted at communication channels used by both veterans and military spouses.
- Information to help encourage local businesses further recognise the benefits of employing veterans will be included in the new Covenant webpages. More targeted work with employers is planned as part of a second stage communication campaign.
- Plans to support the promotion of the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme are in place via inclusion of information about the scheme in the new Covenant webpages.
- The Council recognised Reserves Day 2019 through an Intranet article, asking staff who are Reservists to get in touch. A Reservist representative is now a member of the Delivery Group, and is due to provide a presentation to a future meeting, which it is hoped will help partners to identify ways in which Reservists can be further supported locally.
- Approval has been sought from sub-group members to support any future local Cadet Force recruitment programmes by displaying any relevant promotional materials in organisational buildings, where appropriate.
- As part of the work to develop content for the new Covenant webpages, information on support available to the Armed Forces community with employment, education and skills has been gathered.
- The sub-group has identified a series of actions which can be addressed as part of a second stage communication campaign, which will focus primarily on public perceptions and targeted

communications with those local organisations who are supporting/could support the Armed Forces community, such as for example, by improving awareness of the Covenant amongst local businesses/employers and a focus on how the Armed Forces can be supported into/within employment.

### ***Children and Young People***

- Young people who attend the Youth Group at the Defence School of Transport, Leconfield have 'rewritten' the Kin and Country: Growing Up as an Armed Forces Child report (released by the Children's Commissioner for England) and submitted this to the Army Welfare Service for consideration.
- The Council's Educational Psychology Service has pledged to ensure that reference to service children will be included in future training sessions undertaken with school staff regarding the attachment needs of children and young people.
- As part of the work to develop content for the new Covenant webpages, information on support available to the children and young people within the Armed Forces community has been gathered.
- The Council's Children's Performance Team provided a presentation at the sub-group meeting in February 2019, which gave an overview of the number of service children living in the East Riding, the schools attended and a broad analysis of attainment in comparison with their civilian peers.
- A representative from the Council's Employment, Education and Skills team attended the sub-group to raise awareness of the variety of family learning courses available in the East Riding, which families at the Defence School of Transport would be welcome to attend.

### ***Finance and Debt***

- Evidence of need for a dedicated resource to support veterans with financial advice and other related issues was identified and approval was given by the Council for a one-off grant to Hull & East Riding Citizens Advice to fund a part-time caseworker for approximately a year. Following this, a caseworker was recruited and started work in early March 2020. Referral arrangements have been widely circulated.
- It was recognised that a key priority for the sub-group was now to consider options that would potentially be able to fund this support longer term. Funding options have been discussed and are currently being explored.
- Ways in which the financial education and awareness of local serving personnel can be further supported are being considered by the sub-group, which includes representatives from the Defence School of Transport.
- HEY Credit Union provided an overview to the sub-group about the Joining Forces initiative. Information on the services available more locally from HEY Credit Union have been circulated to sub-group members.
- As part of the work to develop content for the new Covenant webpages, information on support available to the Armed Forces community with money advice and other related issues has been gathered.

### ***Health and Wellbeing***

- A two-day Mental Health First Aid training course focused specifically on the Armed Forces took place in April 2019 (funded by the sub-regional partnership), including 9 Council staff and 7 representatives from partner organisations. 100% of delegates stated an improvement in their personal confidence of how best to support a member of the Armed Forces community with a mental health issue after

the course, with 53% reporting a significant improvement. 100% of delegates also stated an improvement in their knowledge and understanding of how best to support a member of the Armed Forces community with a mental health issue after the course, with 73% reporting a significant improvement.

- Work to raise awareness of the Armed Forces Veteran Friendly Accredited GP Practice Scheme has been ongoing, with both a briefing note and subsequent presentation to the GP Patient Engagement Group by the Council and East Riding of Yorkshire Clinical Commissioning Group. As of the end of March 2020, 7 GP practices in the East Riding had gained accreditation.
- Options for promoting the importance of self-identifying as a member of the Armed Forces community when accessing services, including healthcare, have been considered by the sub-group. It was agreed that one of the ways that this could be promoted would be by including wording encouraging self-identification on the poster and leaflet that would be developed as part of the first stage communication campaign.
- Humber Teaching NHS Foundation Trust has been accredited as 'Veteran Aware'.
- Initial work to establish linkages with suicide prevention and reduction partnerships has begun, and the sub-group have also discussed the need to look at support for Breakfast Club members dealing with the suicide of a fellow veteran.
- Defence School of Transport hosted a successful Families Day in August 2019, with 242 people attending.
- Age UK have provided holistic support to veterans living in the East Riding, including information and advice, befriending and home support.
- As part of the work to develop content for the new Covenant webpages, information on support available to the Armed Forces community with health and wellbeing has been gathered.

### ***Housing***

- The Armed Forces Community receive additional priority in the Council's Housing Allocation Policy. There is also additional preference in the Council's housing allocation scheme for those with disabilities, which will apply to any veterans with disabilities.
- Development of the Council's Vulnerable People Housing Strategy will consider inclusion of the Armed Forces community.
- Sub-group members have considered how they might link into the yearly Housing Briefs that are hosted by the Defence School of Transport for serving personnel and their families.
- Discussions have taken place at the Housing sub-group about potential work that could be undertaken with private landlords in the East Riding to explore how they might further support veterans with housing issues.
- A national e-learning package which focuses on Housing, Homelessness and the Armed Forces Covenant has been shared with the relevant staff by sub-group members.
- As part of the work to develop content for the new Covenant webpages, information on support available to the Armed Forces community with housing has been gathered, including details of support for those in crisis.

### ***Veterans and the Law***

- Project Nova continues to support veterans in the East Riding who have been arrested and enter Police custody, as well as supporting veterans who are referred by specialist police teams, or other statutory organisations, because they are at risk of arrest.
- Discussions have taken place between Project Nova and Humberside Police regarding the work to support the Early Intervention Project in Bridlington.