

Calderdale MBC

Wards Affected: All

Cabinet

10th September 2012

Calderdale Armed Forces Community Covenant

Report of the Director for Communities

1. Issue

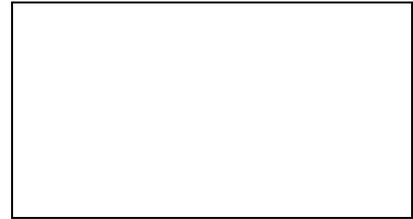
- 1.1 At its meeting on 6th October 2011, Calderdale Council supported the creation of a Calderdale Armed Forces Community Covenant to ensure that local services are appropriate to the needs of armed forces personnel and their families.

2. Need for a decision

- 2.1 Council asked that a report should be presented to Cabinet after full consultation with partners and local armed forces representatives.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 Cabinet is requested to:
- a) Recommend to Council that the draft Community Covenant attached at Appendix 1 should be signed by the Leader of Council and formally adopted on Remembrance Sunday, 11th November 2012
 - b) Forward the Covenant for consideration by the Calderdale Health and Well Being Board in order to ensure it has the commitment of all relevant statutory and civil society organisations in Calderdale.



4. Background

- 4.1 A Military Covenant has existed since the reign of Henry VIII although it was not formally enshrined into law. It was conceived as an expression of the mutual obligations which exist between the Nation, the Army and each individual soldier. It made clear that those who serve should expect to be treated fairly, to be valued and to be respected in recognition of the extraordinary commitment and sacrifices which they were called upon to make.
- 4.2 The Government, in recognising the need to do more to ensure that our Armed Forces, veterans and their families have the support they need and are treated with the dignity they deserve, has re-written the covenant as a new tri-service document. The new Armed Forces Covenant, published in May 2011, expresses the enduring general principles that should govern the relationship between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces community. This sets the tone for Government policy aimed at improving the support available for serving and former members of the Armed Forces, and the families which carry so much of the burden, especially in the event of injury or death.
- 4.3 The Government is supporting the Community Covenant scheme with a £30m grant fund over the next four years (currently in year 2). The aim of the grant scheme is to deliver financial support to projects at a local level which strengthen the ties or the mutual understanding between members of the Armed Forces community and the wider community in which they live.
- 4.4 The key principle underpinning the Covenant is that individuals (and their families) should not be disadvantaged by military service (in the past or present) and that, in some cases, special consideration is appropriate (for example, for those injured or bereaved).
- 4.5 There are a number of services within the Council that can particularly impact upon the Armed Forces community, such as housing, revenues and benefits, family support services, education and training, social care etc. Other public sector bodies also have a role to play - NHS, Police, Jobcentre Plus - as well as the voluntary sector (e.g. advice and other support services).
- 4.6 At the meeting on 6th October, it was resolved that Calderdale Council:
- (a) thanks members of the Armed Forces from Calderdale, and the rest of the UK, for putting their lives on the line to protect our freedom;*
- (b) notes that the Government has now published a new Armed Forces Covenant expressing the enduring, general principles that should govern a relationship between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces community;*
- (c) notes that the Government has launched a Community Covenant scheme encouraging local authorities to create their own "Community Covenant" to ensure that they meet their obligations to the local Armed Forces community;*

(d) commits to creating a “Calderdale Community Covenant” in order to ensure that local services such as health, housing, education and social care are appropriate to support the needs of local Armed Forces personnel; and

(e) asks that a report outlining the “Calderdale Community Covenant” be presented to Cabinet after full consultation with partners and local Armed Forces representatives, the report to identify any financial and service delivery implications.

4.7 Accordingly, representatives from a range of services and agencies have met together on a number of occasions since Council decided that a Calderdale Armed Forces Community Covenant should be created.

5. Proposals

5.1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval to the draft Community Covenant for Calderdale attached at Appendix 1. This complements the national Armed Forces Covenant and is a statement of mutual support between the civilian and local armed forces community in the Borough. It also actively encourages local communities to support the Armed Forces community. At the same time, the Covenant is intended to be a two-way arrangement and the Armed Forces and Veterans community are encouraged to do as much as they can to support their local community and promote activity which integrates the Service community into civilian life.

5.2 It aims to encourage the whole community to offer support to the local Armed Forces and Veterans community and make it easier for Service personnel, families and veterans to access the help and support available from the MOD, from statutory providers and from the Voluntary Sector.

5.3 However, as well as having a clear statement of intent, it was felt important to identify further specific actions that can be undertaken by various agencies to underpin the Covenant and ensure that it has the positive impacts outlined above. This Action Plan is attached at Appendix 2.

5.4 The Council has already taken a number of steps to assist members of the Armed Forces, such as providing the maximum discretion on war widows' pensions for benefits purposes. It also provides a job related second home discount of 50% on Council Tax when personnel are stationed outside Calderdale and this will be unaffected by the recent technical reforms introduced by the Government to Council Tax support. As part of the Action Plan, the Council will consider whether there are other forms of support, such as Passport to Leisure, which could be offered to the Armed Forces community in Calderdale.

5.5 It is suggested that the Calderdale Covenant should be reviewed annually, thereby enabling the actions to be monitored and new actions identified as appropriate. It makes sense to link this review with the proposed annual Armed Forces and Veterans seminar that the Armed Forces will deliver as part of their commitment to the Covenant. It is also proposed that the multi-

agency group responsible for drafting the Covenant should now coordinate its implementation and review.

6. Options considered

- 6.1 Council has already determined that an Armed Forces Community Covenant should be developed in Calderdale and so the only options are about the specific actions proposed to deliver the ethos behind the Covenant – to ensure that individuals and their families are not disadvantaged by military service.

7. Consultation

- 7.1 A range of Council services and partner agencies have been involved in drawing up the draft Covenant and Action Plan attached to this report, including Social Care, Young People's Services, Housing, NHS, Job Centre Plus, Calderdale College and the Police.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1 The actions proposed can be accommodated within agencies' existing budgets. However, once a Community Covenant is adopted, there is the opportunity to apply for financial support from the Government for projects which strengthen the ties or the mutual understanding between members of the Armed Forces community and the wider community in which they live. This will be further considered by the coordinating group once the Covenant is formally adopted.

9. Equality and Diversity

- 9.1 The key principle underpinning the Armed Forces Covenant is that individuals (and their families) should not be disadvantaged by military service (in the past or present) and that, in some cases, special consideration is appropriate (for example, for those injured or bereaved).

10. Contribution to Delivering Population Outcomes

- 10.1 The Community Covenant contributes to the following outcomes:

- SS04 - communities engaged and local people empowered
- OP02 - improved quality of life
- EE01 - increased skill levels
- EE02 - increased employment for disadvantaged groups
- EN04 - access to affordable, good quality housing
- HC01 - improved health and reduced health inequalities
- NG11 - all communities can access services easily

11. Corporate implications

- 11.1 A wide range of Council services touch upon the lives of Armed Forces personnel and their families and it is important that there is awareness across the whole organisation of the particular needs and issues faced by these

people. Raising these levels of awareness and understanding is a key action underpinning the Calderdale Covenant.

12. Conclusion

- 12.1 A local Armed Forces Community Covenant is a way to express gratitude and respect to those members of the community who are serving, or have served, in the military. It can also help ensure that services fulfil their obligations to ensure that members of the Armed Forces Community and their families suffer no discrimination or disadvantage by virtue of their service. The Calderdale Community Covenant is designed to do both these things.
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For further information on this report, contact:

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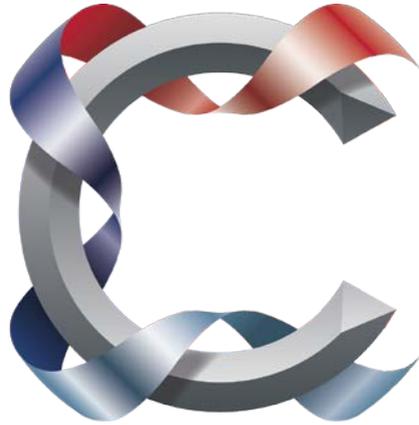
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The documents used in the preparation of this report are:

1. Report to Cabinet 19th September 2011
2. Cabinet and Council minutes
3. Service files

The documents are available for inspection at:

Northgate House, Halifax.



Community Covenant

AN ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT

BETWEEN

**CALDERDALE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL AND LOCAL
PARTNERS**

AND

**THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY IN THE BOROUGH OF
CALDERDALE**

We, the undersigned, agree to work and act together to honour the Armed Forces Community Covenant

Signatories

Signed:

Signed:

Name:

Name:

Position Held:

Position Held:

Signed on behalf of the Armed Forces

**Signed on behalf of Calderdale
Council**

Signed:

Name:

Position Held:

Signed on behalf of Calderdale Health & Well Being Board

Dated 11th November 2012

SECTION 1: PARTICIPANTS

1.1 This Armed Forces Community Covenant is made between:

The serving and former members of the Armed Forces and their families working and residing in the Borough of Calderdale

and

Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council and its partners.

SECTION 2: PRINCIPLES OF THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT

- 2.1 The Armed Forces Community Covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and its local Armed Forces Community. It is intended to complement the Armed Forces Covenant, which outlines the moral obligation between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces, at the local level.
- 2.2 The purpose of this Community Covenant is to encourage support for the Armed Forces Community working and residing in the Borough of Calderdale and to recognise and remember the sacrifices made by members of this Armed Forces Community, particularly those who have given the most. This includes in-Service and ex-Service personnel, their families and widow(er)s in Calderdale.
- 2.3 For Calderdale Council and partner organisations, the Community Covenant presents an opportunity to bring their knowledge, experience and expertise to bear on the provision of help, advice and support to members of the Armed Forces Community.
- 2.4 For the Armed Forces community, the Community Covenant encourages the integration of Service life into civilian life and encourages members of the Armed Forces community to help their local community.

SECTION 3: OBJECTIVES AND GENERAL INTENTIONS

- 3.1 The Calderdale Armed Forces Community Covenant complements the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant which defines the enduring, general principles that should govern the relationship between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces community
- 3.2 It aims to encourage everyone within a community to offer support to the local Armed Forces community and make it easier for Service personnel, families and veterans to access the help and support available from the MOD, from statutory providers and from the Voluntary Sector.
- 3.3 The scheme is intended to be a two-way arrangement and so the Armed Forces community are encouraged to do as much as they can to support their community and promote activity which integrates the Service community into civilian life.

SECTION 4: MEASURES

4.1 Calderdale Council and local partners will:

- a) Ensure that key services are briefed and able to support both serving Armed Forces and ex-service personnel with their enquiries and service requests. In order to support this, work will be undertaken in order to better identify customers who have military connections.
- b) Publicise and promote an Armed Forces central point of contact telephone number.
- c) Ensure that we continue to support employees who volunteer for Reserve duties.
- d) Work to identify Armed Forces personnel/Veterans within the Borough and ensure that their “voice” is heard as part of wider community engagement activity.
- e) Develop and promote a dedicated section of the Council’s website, and ensure that appropriate links are made with other web-based support and networks.
- f) Work to improve our understanding of Ex-Service personnel identified through the Borough’s Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Clinical Commissioning Group’s Clear and Credible Plan.
- g) Identify a senior officer to participate in local/regional Armed Forces support networks and be the lead contact within the Authority for liaison with the Armed Forces.
- h) Consider the appointment of a Member Champion for the Armed Forces.
- i) Take part in wider regional initiatives designed to improve the support provided to residents who have served in the armed forces. This will include signing up to the Regional Charter that will demonstrate Yorkshire and Humber Authorities’ support for the ex-service community.
- j) Regularly review the Health Needs of Ex-Service Personnel Local Action Plan through the Calderdale Health & Well Being Board.
- k) Report annually to the Calderdale Health & Well Being Board on the impact of the Calderdale Community Covenant.

4.2 The Armed Forces will:

- a) Deliver an annual seminar to Members to present their operational experiences and what any planned changes as a result of defence policy might mean at a local level.

- b) Deliver an annual update to the Calderdale Heath & Well Being Board presenting their operational experiences and what any planned changes as a result of defence policy might mean at a local level.
- c) Promote individual, voluntary involvement in community activities by the Armed Forces Community to demonstrate and consolidate their inclusion in the wider local community.

CONTACT S

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THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT

An Enduring Covenant Between

The People of the United Kingdom

Her Majesty's Government

– and –

All those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces of
the Crown

And their Families

The first duty of Government is the defence of the realm. Our Armed Forces fulfil that responsibility on behalf of the Government, sacrificing some civilian freedoms, facing danger and, sometimes, suffering serious injury or death as a result of their duty. Families also play a vital role in supporting the operational effectiveness of our Armed Forces. In return, the whole nation has a moral obligation to the members of the Naval Service, the Army and the Royal Air Force, together with their families.

They deserve our respect and support, and fair treatment.

Those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether Regular or Reserve, those

who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most, such as the injured and the bereaved.

This obligation involves the whole of society: it includes voluntary and charitable bodies, private organisations, and the actions of individuals in supporting the Armed Forces. Recognising those who have performed military duty unites the country and demonstrates the value of their contribution. This has no greater expression than in upholding this Covenant.

Calderdale Armed Forces Community Covenant

Action Plan 2012 - 2013

Action	Timescale	Responsibility
Promote the Covenant through awareness seminars to partners	Ongoing	Armed Forces
Promote individual voluntary involvement in community activities to demonstrate inclusion in the local community	Ongoing	Armed Forces
Military Health to feature in local Clinical Commissioning Groups' and the local Health and Well Being Board's strategic plans and also to be included in the NHS PCT Cluster's Operating Plan for 2012/13 to go forward to the new NHS Commissioning Board as a key area of strategic commissioning	March 2013	NHS
NHS lead to be identified for commissioning Military Health	March 2013	NHS
Secondary care activity usage by Armed Forces personnel and their families and veterans identified and quantified and used to inform commissioning plans	Ongoing	NHS
Requirement to identify and assess the health need of Armed Forces personnel and their families and veterans to be built into the Joint Strategic Health Needs Assessment process	Ongoing	NHS
Ensure the district has representation at the regional NHS / Armed Forces Network	November 2012	NHS
Commission services in line with the new operating model for Military Health, specifically by 1. Understanding need; 2. Defining priority outcomes; 3. Ensuring national support to enable commissioning; 4. Accountability to deliver outcomes	Ongoing	NHS
Ensure that armed forces personnel at the end of	April 2013	CMBC Housing Services

their service contracts and bereaved spouses are given a high degree of priority for social housing when required to vacate service accommodation		Pennine Housing 2000
Ensure that all requests for service forms used by Calderdale Council include a question that asks whether a potential client is or has been a member of the armed forces	October 2013	CMBC
Encourage housing associations operating in the Borough to include having served in the armed forces as a community contribution in local letting plans	April 2013	CMBC Housing Services
Encourage Jobcentre Plus customers who have served in the Armed Forces within the last two years to contact their local CTP Regular Forces Employment Consultant for support in obtaining employment	Ongoing	Jobcentre Plus
Ensure Jobcentre Plus teams and advisers are made aware of, and work to meet, the particular needs of former Forces personnel and some service partners in relation to skills training needed to move into work when leaving the Forces	Ongoing	Jobcentre Plus
Ensure that appropriate local signposting information is available for former Armed Forces personnel on the Jobcentre Plus District Provision Tool	March 2013	Jobcentre Plus
Adult Health and Social Care to use the information gathered at assessment to inform the planning of services and to liaise with the Armed forces and Clinical Commissioning Group re future funding issues	Ongoing	Adult Health and Social Care
Increase awareness amongst staff, through team briefings and training, of the fact that Armed Forces personnel (both active and retired) are potentially more vulnerable to harm caused by crime and ASB	From November 2012	Calderdale Community Safety Partnership
To use the above awareness when assessing risk and vulnerability of victims (and their families) of crime and ASB	Ongoing	Calderdale Community Safety Partnership