

Agenda Item	<b>19</b>
Report No	<b>HC/46/18</b>

## **HIGHLAND COUNCIL**

**Date:** 25 October 2018

**Report Title:** **HIGHLAND ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT UPDATE**

**Report By:** **Acting Head of Policy**

### **1. Purpose/Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report outlines the work carried out by the Highland Armed Forces and Veterans' Community Covenant Partnership (formerly the Highland Armed Forces Community Covenant Partnership) in the last eighteen months and sets out future priorities and actions.
- 1.2 It also sets out a proposal for The Highland Council to sign the Armed Forces Covenant in its own right and to submit an application for a Gold Award from the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the considerable progress made with partners over the past 18 months across a range of activities which support the Armed Forces Community Covenant;
- 2.2 To agree to The Highland Council reconfirming its own commitment by signing the Armed Forces Covenant;
- 2.3 To agree to apply to the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme for a Gold Award

### **3. Introduction**

- 3.1 In October 2012 The Highland Council signed the Highland Armed Forces Community Covenant along with twelve other partners – the Armed Forces Community; Highlands and Islands Enterprise; Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service (*Scottish Fire and Rescue Service*); Highland Reserve Forces and Cadets Association; Highland Third Sector Interface; Job Centre Plus; NHS Highland; Northern Constabulary (*Police Scotland*); Royal British Legion Scotland; Scottish Natural Heritage; SSAFA (Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Families Association) Forces Help; and the University of the Highlands and Islands.
- 3.2 The Covenant is a statement of support between the armed forces and the civilian community. The aim is to encourage support for the service community in a local area and raise awareness of issues affecting service personnel. A copy of the Highland Covenant is at  
  
[http://www.highland.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/4566/armed\\_forces\\_community\\_covenant\\_for\\_highland](http://www.highland.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/4566/armed_forces_community_covenant_for_highland)
- 3.3 Highland Council has demonstrated its support to the Armed Forces Covenant with the appointment of an Armed Forces and Veterans' Champion. This role is currently held by Cllr Roddy Balfour (previously held by Cllr Carolyn Caddick). The Highland Armed Forces Community Covenant Partnership (HAFCCP) has benefited significantly from the leadership and enthusiasm shown by both Champions particularly in the role of Chair of the HAFCCP.

### **4. Highland Armed Forces and Veterans' Community Covenant Partnership Activity**

- 4.1 The former Highland Community Covenant Partnership has been renamed to align it with other organisations which support the Armed Forces community. It is now known as the Highland Armed Forces and Veterans' Community Covenant Partnership (HAFVCCP).
- 4.2 To ensure effective cross sector cooperation and partnership working, representation on the Partnership is taken from a wide variety of agencies and includes:
- Highland Council - representatives from Chief Executive's Office, Community Services and Care and Learning
  - NHS Highland
  - Police and Fire Services
  - Highlands and Islands Enterprise
  - DWP/Job Centre Plus
  - University of the Highlands and Islands
  - Scottish Natural Heritage
  - Service Personnel and Veterans Agency
  - Services representatives from the Army (Regular and Reserve forces), RAF and Cadets

- Service Charities: Veterans Scotland, RBLS, Combat Stress, SSAFA, Poppyscotland, Royal Caledonian Educational Trust, Armed Services Advice Project etc.
- Other third sector organisations as appropriate.

4.3 Formal Terms of Reference have now been developed and agreed by the HAFVCCP and these are contained at Appendix 1.

4.4 In April 2017 a bid to the Armed Forces Covenant Fund under the “Strengthening Local Government Delivery of the Covenant” strand was successful. This, with funding from the Inverness Common Good Fund and in-kind support from Moray Council, allowed the employment of a Development Officer for two years. In October 2017, Jo Lenihan took up this role (which is shared between Highland and Moray) and she has progressed the work of the Partnership significantly. It is intended that at the end of the two year contract, the projects will be self-sustaining by partners and should not require any further development work.

4.5 As previously reported the Partners reviewed the key outcomes in February 2015 to test their ongoing relevance. The agreed key outcomes to support the Armed Forces Community are as follows:

- The Economy
- Children and Young People
- Caring Communities
- Housing
- Empowering Communities

The actions to deliver against these outcomes are now contained within an Action Plan (Appendix 2) and the HAFVCCP continues to monitor progress at its bi-annual meetings.

## **5. Housing**

5.1 Work this year has focussed on continuing to work with partners to improve information and advice on housing options to forces personnel and veterans. Specific areas of activity are as follows:

a) The Council and other landlords who are part of the Highland Housing Register continue to subscribe to the MOD Referral Scheme, which helps people leaving the forces find social rented housing.

b) Partners are continuing to work with colleagues in the Armed Forces to ensure provision of targeted housing information and advice to service personnel to help them consider and plan for their future housing needs as early as possible.

c) The Council already ensures that armed forces personnel are treated on an equal basis to other housing applicants under our Housing Allocation Policy. This means that forces personnel or veterans receive the same priority for housing as other applicants with the same housing needs. Armed forces personnel automatically receive ‘need to reside’ or ‘local connection’ points in housing allocations and homelessness policies.

d) Information is now being collected on housing applications from forces personnel, which will help assess specific housing needs.

e) The Homes for Heroes specialist housing development in Inverness has been successfully concluded. The Council and partners are continuing to liaise with Homes for Heroes on a further development in Inverness, which is being supported through the Highland City-Region Deal. It is intended that this project will include a cluster of homes in Inverness to suit the needs of veterans.

f) The MOD owns a number of houses close to Cameron Barracks in Inverness. As a result of changes to forces policy there is a reduced need for accommodation for serving forces personnel. Nationally MOD residential accommodation is managed by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation on behalf of the military and is operated on a commercial basis. Given the current exceptional need for additional affordable housing in Inverness the Council asked the MOD to consider leasing or selling surplus forces accommodation in Inverness for use as Council managed affordable housing. Within this offer a commitment was given to ensure that ex forces personnel would be given priority in the allocation of these properties. Unfortunately the Defence Infrastructure Organisation has been unable to progress this request at this time, but the Covenant Partnership hopes to be able to engage further with them in the near future.

## **6. Health**

**6.1** As scheduled, funding for Veterans First Point Highland came to an end in October 2017. Shortly after this and further to the submission of another application to Libor, NHS Highland received notification of a second Libor Grant of £1,042,911 to provide continued mental health support through Veterans First Point in partnership with Poppyscotland (for Veterans in the North of Scotland).

**6.2** Keen on the elements of Sustainability and Community Empowerment, Libor remain committed to the funds staying in Highland. However, due to a changing sector landscape concerns about future sustainability and the desire to avoid duplication there has been a requirement to revise the original plan with a request to look at doing something different over a longer period of time. Areas for consideration include:

1. Veterans Friendly Hospitals/Health Services
2. Link Pathway to Health Services
3. Employment (NHS Employer of Veterans)
4. Combat Stress
5. Peer Support
6. Engagement Model
7. Crisis Counselling

**6.3** An updated bid/application is to be submitted end of October 2018 and it is anticipated that in achieving this funds could be released to appoint an initial Project Worker to take it forward.

- 6.4** Based in the Poppyscotland Inverness Centre, Combat Stress's Community Psychiatric Nurse, had previously been employed one day per week and her working days were increased to 2.5 days per week from August 2017, enabling her to deliver an enhanced service to veterans in the region. This increased capacity over 2.5 working days has translated into seeing more veterans and within faster time frames. On average, veterans referred to the Inverness clinic are offered an initial clinical assessment and meeting with the CPN within 20 working days.
- 6.5** The ability to provide this engagement within the Highlands is vital in ensuring that the service delivered across Scotland is equitable and accessible for all. The CPN has also had a vital role in liaison and service promotion, working closely with NHS partners, Poppyscotland and all our military connections in the area. For many veterans in the Highlands, access to our CPN, their groups and interventions remains vital for their wellbeing and ability to be sign-posted and referred to any services they require, both in terms of the physical and mental health and also their personal welfare.

## **7. Education Support Fund with Service Children**

- 7.1** Work with Armed Forces Families is continuing to be carried out and embedded in the day to day work of Highland Council's Promoting Positive Relationships (PPR) Team with an Operational Lead specifically for Armed Forces Families within the Team. An underspend on ESF monies has been allowed to be carried over which has helped maintain this focus. The MOD work is now part of the core business and is supported by the Council's Primary Mental Health Worker Team.
- 7.2** A well-attended conference on Emotional Literacy was held this year and was open to Highland Council Care and Learning Staff and partner agencies working within schools to develop Health and Wellbeing. The Conference had a specific slant on promoting work with Armed Force Families. It was well attended and very positive feedback was received.
- 7.3** Current researched approaches around adverse childhood experiences are now being practised and how this can be translated into our work with Forces Children and Young People. National approaches -Roots of Empathy, Growing Together and the MVP bystander Mentoring approach – are being rolled out and schools with Forces Families are specifically being targeted.
- 7.4** The Team continues to track Forces Families through SEEMIS (Education Management Information System) comparing the statistics with the whole school population in Highland to highlight any anomalies that may arise. Each year the numbers self-identifying as being a Forces Family have been increasing but this is still an under representation of how many are in Highland. This is ongoing work for the Team who have also been working with the Covenant Development Officer for Highland and Moray to help identify any gaps in information.

7.5 The team is working in a more collegiate joined up way with 3 Scots Welfare, Royal Caledonian Education Trust (RCET), partner agencies and the Council's Care and Learning Staff. A Military Liaison Group (MLG) has been established which meets regularly and is chaired by the Council's Promoting Positive Relationships Forces Operational Lead. This has allowed more clarity and positive partnerships.

A scoping exercise and chronology was undertaken to enable the Welfare Staff, Royal Caledonian Education Trust and Care and Learning Staff to deliver a more joined up approach. Partners have worked together to create a training package looking at cycles of separation adapted from the previous cycles of deployment work.

7.6 A bid has been submitted to the latest MOD ESF Fund to continue more focussed work in 2019.

## **8. Other Highland Armed Forces and Veterans' Community Covenant Partnership Activity**

8.1 Since the last report, three full Partners' meetings have been held and continue to be very well attended with an increasing representation from a range of supporting organisations.

8.2 University of the Highlands and Islands - the university (UHI) is keen to reengage with the Partnership to help deliver the intent and specifics of the Covenant. A new organisational contact, the dean of students, has met with the Project Officer (Armed Forces Covenant) Highland & Moray to discuss the work of the partnership, the action plan and the opportunities for mutual benefit. These include the promotion of curricular opportunities and the potential for research.

UHI already works closely with the armed forces in a variety of ways: including at HMNB Clyde, where we have students enrolled this year on the HNC Engineering systems, BEng Mechanical, BEng Electrical and Electronic and the BEng Energy programmes.

8.3 UHI's colleges in Argyll, Moray and Inverness are now registered as learning providers on the Enhanced Learning Credits Administration Service (ELCAS) for members of the Armed Forces who want to get an SCQF level 6 or above qualification, with funding support, and further hope to attain whole institution recognition from ELCAS in due course.

8.4 These meetings present an opportunity for all partners to share information and updates and to identify opportunities for joint working. Regular updates from the Armed Forces help agencies and partners to identify issues which may develop over the next 1-3 years and beyond, allowing preparation time for relevant actions to be put in place. The Action Plan which has been developed will help to inform and guide the Partnership activity over the next two years.

8.5 The close working relationship which has been developing over recent years has seen more efficient service delivery across a number of areas, including handling of welfare cases with the support of the appropriate organisations.

## **9. Events**

9.1 The Armed Forces in Highland remain extremely active in supporting and engaging in local events.

In 2017 WW1 Commemorations included:

- The Battle of Arras, with a Service at the War Memorial in Cavell Gardens, Inverness
- The Battle of Ypres (the major event for the Highlands with a Service at the War Memorial at Cavell Gardens, Inverness)
- The Battle of Cambrai (the largest Tank Battle in WW1) was commemorated at the 2017 Remembrance Day Service

In 2018 events included:

- unveiling of Victoria Cross commemorative plaques
- the Black Watch, 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland (3 SCOTS) Homecoming Parade in Inverness in September

With remaining events for 2018 including:

- Inverness Military Wives Choir performances on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> November
- final Centenary Commemoration events throughout Highland

9.2 Cllr Roddy Balfour has now been appointed as a Trustee of the Scottish National War Memorial – a key role in ensuring Highland has a strong voice in Remembrance and Commemoration.

9.3 Highland Gathering – on Tuesday 20 November 2018 the first Highland Gathering as part of Veterans Scotland 'Informing Scotland' programme will be held in the Town House. This will comprise a number of informative presentations from partners covering health, employability and transition.

## **10. Armed Forces Covenant Fund**

10.1 The funding themes for the Armed Forces Covenant Fund in 2017/18 were:

- Families in stress
- Strengthening local government delivery of the covenant
- Armed Forces Covenant: local grants
- A single grant to produce a map of need for the Covenant Fund
- A single grant to produce an outcomes framework for the Covenant Fund

10.2 Under the theme of 'Strengthening local government delivery of the covenant' Highland Council and Moray Council were successful in obtaining funding for a joint project to employ an officer for 2 years to review delivery of local authority services to the Armed Forces community in line with the principles of the Covenant.

The Project was also successful in obtaining an award of £6,000 from the Covenant Fund to develop a microsite for the Armed Forces community in Highland and Moray.

10.3 In 2018 management of the Armed Forces Covenant Fund was transferred to the newly created Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust following a decision that it should be independent of the Ministry of Defence. The Ministry of Defence commits £10 million per annum to support projects for the Armed Forces community. The current grant programmes are:

- Armistice and Armed Forces Communities Programme: Remembering and Supporting their contribution
- Local Grants and Digital Development Programme (grants up to £20,000)
- New ways to Tackle Serious Stress in Veterans, Carers and Families Programme

## **11. Future Priorities**

11.1 The Highland Council area continues to be viewed by the military in Scotland as one of the leading Local Authorities in the implementation of the Armed Forces Community Covenant and its close linkages and collaboration with Moray Council is particularly noted.

11.2 The Highland Armed Forces and Veterans' Community Covenant Partnership will continue to monitor the changing situations with regard to its Armed Forces community. Actions to mitigate any negative change will be identified and any necessary support instigated through the Partnership and working groups, underpinned by a relevant and up-to-date action plan that is reviewed and monitored regularly.

11.3 The Partnership is also mindful of the significance of the World War 1 commemorations which draw to a close in this centenary year and will continue to encourage and help communities to deliver appropriate final events.

11.4 It is also considered that there may be an opportunity for closer engagement with the private sector who could be invited to send a representative to Partnership meetings. This would help to develop further areas of work around eg employability, work placements etc. This is a key activity within the Action Plan.

11.5 The Military Family are very important to the Inverness community with many families living in the City and Area having past and or present links to the Armed Forces. The Inverness Partnership is focussed on preparing Children's and Adult Plans and in doing so will engage with local Armed Forces representatives to discuss how best to represent the needs of the Military Family which could involve representation on the Inverness Community Partnership. The HAFVCCP is also keen to have a military representative involved in the Highland Community Planning Partnership to ensure a Highland-wide understanding of the issues the Armed Forces community faces but also the opportunities which arise from having a large community of this nature within Highland.



11.6 Key activities identified in the action plan will be progressed by the Partnership such that at the end of the tenure of the Project Officer (Armed Forces Covenant) it will continue to deliver identified improvements in support for the local Armed Forces community and identify future priorities as they arise.

## **12. Armed Forces Covenant and Highland Council**

12.1 Whilst in 2012 the Highland Council signed the Armed Forces Community Covenant with its partners, the Council has never signed the Armed Forces Covenant in its own right. A number of other Local Authorities have signed their own Covenant agreement and it is recommended that the Highland Council should also do this. A template of such an agreement is set out at Appendix 3.

## **13. Defence Employer Recognition Scheme**

13.1 The Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (DERS) encourages employers to support defence and inspire others to do the same. The scheme encompasses bronze, silver and gold awards for employer organisations that pledge, demonstrate or advocate support to defence and the armed forces community, and align their values with the Armed Forces Covenant.

13.2 In 2015 the Highland Council was awarded a Silver Award and is now being encouraged by the Highland Reserves Forces' and Cadets' Association to apply for the Gold Award in 2019. In Scotland currently 3 Local Authorities hold the award – Dumfries and Galloway, Dundee and Inverclyde. For this to be awarded, the Council needs to be able to evidence its support for members of the Armed Forces community; ensure that its workforce is fully aware of its positive policies towards the Armed Forces Community and actively inspire other organisations to support Defence and the Armed Forces community.

13.3 It is considered that Highland Council can provide strong evidence and tangible outputs in all these categories and it is therefore recommended that an application is submitted in 2019.

## **14. Implications**

14.1 Resource: If bids are made for further funding for projects or officer time this would be subject to the normal approval processes.

14.2 Community Implications: The ongoing work of the Partnership will deliver positive impacts on the Armed Forces Community in Highland ensuring they have effective access to services and support from a wide range of partners.

14.3 Legal, equality, climate change/Carbon Clever and risk implications - there are no known implications arising from this report at this time.

Designation: Acting Head of Policy

Date: 12 October 2018

Author: Dot Ferguson, Senior Ward Manager, Ross, Skye and Lochaber

# Highland Armed Forces and Veterans Community Covenant Group (HAFVCCG)

## Terms of Reference

The HAVCCG supports the whole Armed Forces community in Highland which includes:

- Regular Armed Forces
- Reserve Forces
- Veterans
- Families of those who serve, or have served
- Cadet Forces

## Aims

1. To embrace the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant in supporting the Armed Forces community residing in Highland.
2. To build on the partnership and good practice that exists in Highland between the Armed Forces community, statutory providers and third sector organisations.
3. To develop, monitor and review commitments made in the HAFVCCG Action Plan.
4. To realign service provision (where appropriate) to meet the changing needs of the Armed Forces community in Highland in response to recommendations from the Scottish and UK Governments and guidance on best practice.
5. To publicise the work of the HAFVCCG and ensure the Armed Forces community are aware of and can access support at a local level.
6. To meet the measures agreed in the [Highland Armed Forces Community Covenant](#):

### Economy

- To work with the Armed Forces community in Highland to identify potential employment opportunities for the Armed Forces and their families based upon a skills audit undertaken by the Armed Forces. To work with the Armed Forces community in Highland to promote the role of the cadets as a means of preparing for future employment.

### Children and Young People

- To work with the Armed Forces community and their families and support access to universal service provision and improve outcomes for children and young people.
- Support and engage with specialist staff in the Armed Forces, to assist any children and families with additional needs.

### Caring Communities

- To work with the Armed Forces community to ensure they have appropriate advice and information and encourage benefit uptake where appropriate.
- To support and engage with the Armed Forces community to promote and maintain the health and wellbeing of this community.

### Housing

- To work with the Armed Forces community to provide information and advice on housing options.

### **Empowering Communities**

- To support the Armed Forces community to ensure they have the opportunity to contribute and be part of their wider community.

### **Membership**

Membership of the HAFVCCG will be made up of representatives from key stakeholders that support the Armed Forces and Veterans community in Highland:

- Councillor appointed Armed Forces and Veterans' Champion – Chair
- 3 SCOTS, The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland
- 7 SCOTS, 51<sup>st</sup> Highland, 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland
- Armed Services Advice Project (ASAP)
- DWP Job Centre Plus
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- Highland Council (representatives from key departments that support health, housing, education, finance, employment)
- Highland Reserve Forces and Cadets Association
- Highland Third Sector Interface
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE)
- NHS Highland
- Police Scotland
- Poppyscotland
- Royal British Legion Scotland
- Royal Caledonian Education Trust (RCET)
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- Skills Development Scotland (SDS)
- SSAFA Forces Help
- University of the Highland and Islands (UHI)
- Veterans Scotland

Representation from other interested parties will be invited as required

### **Governance**

The HAFVCCG will produce an annual report for The Highland Council

### **Decision Making**

Decisions will be arrived at by consensus and recorded in the minutes of the HAFVCCG

### **Frequency of Meetings**

The HAFVCCG will meet twice yearly or more frequently if required. Specialist themed sub-groups may also be created as appropriate.

# HIGHLAND ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT PARTNERSHIP ACTION PLAN

APPENDIX 2

Priority 1				
1.1 Review Highland Armed Forces Community Covenant Partnership (HAFCCP)				
Theme	Action	Who	Outcome	Update
HAFCCP  <i>Project Outcome 2 Timescale Oct 18</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review remit of group to ensure the membership and aims relevant.</li> <li>• Agree and issue TORs for group</li> <li>• Establish working/focus groups to implement actions</li> <li>• Contact members who have not attended recent meetings to ascertain reason – refer to commitments made as signatories of Covenant. Amend membership as appropriate</li> </ul>	Members of HAFCCP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HAFCCP’s membership has representatives of appropriate organisations</li> <li>• Members are aware of the role of the HAFCCP and of working groups</li> <li>• Documented roles/remits available for new members or when change of personnel</li> <li>• Signatories of Covenant reminded of original commitment and purpose, ensuring membership remains relevant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current format of group satisfactory – members agreed that use of working/focus groups would be more effective way to deal with specific issues (as per MLG Education)</li> <li>• All Covenant signatories re-engaged with group</li> </ul>
Action Plan  <i>Project Outcome 2 Timescale Oct 18</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HAFCCP agrees, monitors and reviews action plan</li> <li>• Agree procedure for reviewing and monitoring actions</li> </ul>	Members of HAFCCP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action plan provides vehicle for the HAFCCP to improve support for AF community in Highland</li> <li>• Action plan evolves in line with legislation and recommendations from Scottish Gov, UK Gov and other stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First draft action plan accepted at HAFCCP meeting March 18</li> <li>• Action plan updates - Aug 18 &amp; Oct 18</li> </ul>
1.2 Highland Armed Forces Community (AFC)				
Explore ways of focussing support in areas of provision where gaps have been identified through review of policies and procedures.				
Better supported AFC	Microsite first point of call for AFC moving to Highland and those already here. Staff and public better informed about the Covenant and AFC Promote educational support provided by HC	Focussed information on practical ‘life’ issues (housing, education, work, healthcare, facilities, and leisure) ensures the AFC are better informed about moving to and living in Highland and support available  Staff able to provide better support from sound knowledge base  Families aware of priority given to supporting children from the AF Community under the Covenant		

## HIGHLAND ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT PARTNERSHIP ACTION PLAN

Theme	Action	Who	Outcome	Update
<p>Microsite</p> <p><i>Project Outcome 3 Timescale end Oct 18</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a microsite for AFC with input from Highland Council, service providers and external organisations</li> <li>• Arrange relevant focus group to test effectiveness of site</li> <li>• Identify reciprocal links with key organisations</li> <li>• Display logos of key partners</li> <li>• Identify responsibility for updating post Oct 19</li> </ul>	<p>Proj Off Highland Digital Services Highland Council Focus groups to be decided</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear statement of the Covenant and what it will and won't do for AFC</li> <li>• Clear, relevant information easily accessed for all sectors of AFC (serving, reserves, veterans, cadets, families)</li> <li>• Clear advice and sources of support on education, employment, health, housing, finance, news, events, moving to Highland</li> <li>• Searchable directory of services for front line staff/professionals</li> <li>• Clear statement on adaptations within policies for AFC (eg housing, ed)</li> <li>• AFC aware of the microsite as a source of local information and where to go for help</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development well underway. Proj Off to distribute link and arrange meetings with selected organisations to review and input on content/design</li> <li>• Link to microsite to be distributed prior to HAFCCP meeting for review by attendees</li> <li>• PPR and Youth teams working on content for Children &amp; Young People</li> </ul>
<p>Awareness Training</p> <p><i>Project outcome 4 Timescale Jun 18 – Jun 19</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an effective training programme to raise awareness of AF Covenant and AFC</li> <li>• Investigate best format for delivery – online, face to face, newsletters and stories</li> <li>• Identify staff for targeted awareness training eg Access point, housing, benefits, school staff, health and social care</li> </ul>	<p>Proj Off HC Learning &amp; Dev Team Other providers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistently high forces-friendly service delivery where needs both anticipated and if possible mitigated to reduce disadvantage.</li> <li>• Members, Ward Managers and Area Service Managers in all wards briefed on the Covenant and the AFC</li> <li>• Covenant better established and understood and staff able to apply its principles through service provision and policies</li> <li>• Staff aware of issues that may affect the lives of serving AF personnel and how this may impact on families, particularly children</li> <li>• Staff aware that a small proportion of ex-service personnel may be adversely affected by their service and may present with a complex range of issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Warwickshire Council has made available 4 eLearning packages to raise awareness of AFC and Covenant. 2 for staff in public facing organisations, 2 for AF personnel and families.</li> <li>• Highland Learning &amp; Development team working on packages for front-line staff and housing staff to ensure compliance with Scottish policy and to make more relevant locally</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: Work on adapting Warwickshire modules halted – Edinburgh Covenant project team are launching their own training which more Scotland</i></p>

## HIGHLAND ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT PARTNERSHIP ACTION PLAN

				<p><i>focussed and has been offered to HC</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brief on AF Covenant and work of HAFCCP distributed to Cllrs and Ward mgrs.</li> </ul>
<p>Education Pamphlet</p> <p><i>Project outcome 3 Timescale End 18</i></p>	<p>Produce a promotional pamphlet as per Argyll and Bute 'Welcoming AF to ...'</p>	<p>HC Ed staff Proj Off RCET</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information booklet available for families moving to Highland <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How education systems correlate</li> <li>Details of schools</li> <li>Explanation of early years provision</li> </ul> </li> <li>Link from microsite</li> <li>Link to ADES 'Forces Children's Education' website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work in progress</li> </ul>
<p>Education offer</p> <p><i>Project outcome 3 Timescale Ongoing</i></p>	<p>Promote positives of education in Highland – small class sizes, support under ASL, military keyworker/MLG GIRFEC Free uni tuition fees if qualify</p>	<p>Highland PPR team Proj Off</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents aware that all children supported under ASL if needed</li> <li>Support for children of AF families through MLG and keyworker ensures issues identified allowing early intervention and support as required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information included on microsite under 'Schools and Learning'</li> </ul>
<b>Priority 2</b>				
<b>Raise awareness of the Armed Forces community and the Covenant amongst local businesses and the civilian population</b>				
Theme	Action	Who	Outcome	
<p>Business collaboration</p> <p><i>Project outcome 4 Timescale Jan 18 – Jun 19</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate how CPP, Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses can work to raise profile of AF Cov and benefits of employing service leavers/veterans – possible business seminars in areas of high AF population (eg Inverness, Wick, Thurso)</li> <li>Encourage signing of Covenant to show</li> </ul>	<p>CPP Chamber of Commerce Federation of Small Businesses Ward Mgrs Cllrs DWP SDS HRFCA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local businesses sign a Covenant pledge</li> <li>Employers are aware of how military skills translate to civilian employment market</li> <li>Recruitment of AFC (service leavers, reserves, veterans, spouses,) increased and more opportunities identified</li> <li>Attraction/retention of more of AFC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highland Gathering to be organised by Veterans Scotland/HC</li> <li>Possible seminar with CPP/Chamber of Commerce following Highland Gathering to explore how to better engage with commercial partners/businesses</li> </ul>

## HIGHLAND ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT PARTNERSHIP ACTION PLAN

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>commitment</li> <li>Raise awareness of MOD Employers Recognition Scheme (ERS)</li> <li>Explore use of Knowledge Hub to investigate best practice models for taking to commercial partners</li> </ul>			
Promotion of Covenant and AFC  <i>Project outcome 4 Timescale Jan 18 – Jun 19</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify opportunities/ events/platforms for raising awareness in all HC wards.</li> <li>Work with military units and other interested parties to raise awareness Dates of note: 8 October 2018 – Battle of Cambrais 11 November 2018 – Nations Tribute – Beacons of Light</li> <li>Explore steps for local organisations (eg HC, NHS Highland) to work towards Gold ERS. Set up working group to take this forward</li> <li>How are other HAFCCP organisations meeting this requirement? Interest in eLearning by other orgs?</li> </ul>	Proj Off Units Community officers Ward Mgrs Cllrs HRFCA Veterans Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wider civilian community aware of covenant, AFC and contribution make to local society/economy</li> <li>Military/civic community engagement improved</li> <li>Military families understand entitlement/support available under the Covenant from HC and other stakeholders</li> <li>Highland Council's commitment to the AFC and Covenant rewarded by Gold ERS recognition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highland Gathering</li> <li>NHS Learning – modules on Veterans health and the Covenant</li> <li>Staff awareness training</li> </ul>
<b>Priority 3</b>				
<b>3.1 Improve employment and education opportunities for service leavers and spouses</b>				
Better supported	Work with partners to identify employment and education	Service leavers provided with early information about local employment and education opportunities, including information on training required for particular roles and where this can be		

## HIGHLAND ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT PARTNERSHIP ACTION PLAN

AF Comm	opportunities	obtained		
Theme	Action	Who	Outcome/Outputs	
Service leavers employment & FE/HE  <i>Project outcome 5 Timescale Dec 18</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with CPP to map employment gaps and promote these to service leavers through existing channels (CTP/SDS/DWP)</li> <li>• Work to identify opportunities for home working</li> <li>• Work with Chamber of Commerce to identify SME opportunities</li> <li>• Identify opportunities for recruitment fayres working with other orgs</li> <li>• Work with FE/HE to promote education as an opportunity</li> </ul>	CPP/MEP Proj Off DWP SDS CTP UHI NHS Chamber of Commerce Military Reps HRFCA Veterans Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment opportunities identified early and promoted to local service leavers</li> <li>• Information on qualifications/training requirements and where these can be obtained – possible use of resettlement grant,</li> <li>• Opportunities/grants identified eg SERI, SDS Individual training accounts (ITA's)</li> <li>• SME opportunities identified</li> <li>• FE/HE offered as positive alternative to employment on leaving service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overlaps with priority 2 – business collaboration</li> </ul>
Spousal employment & FE/HE  <i>Project outcome 5 Timescale Dec 18</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with CPP/SDS to map employment gaps and promote these to AF families Eg NHS, teaching, early learning/child care</li> <li>• Work with FE/HE organisations to identify training ops for employment gaps and promotion of FE/HE as an alternative to work</li> <li>• Work to identify opportunities for home working</li> <li>• Work with units to identify</li> </ul>	CPP/SDS Proj Off HC Comms DWP UHI NHS SDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment opportunities identified</li> <li>• Information on qualifications and training requirements available and where these can be obtain</li> <li>• FE/HE offered as positive alternative to employment</li> <li>• Information promoted to families on posting notification to allow spouse to consider training before moving</li> <li>• Information on communications available for those interested in working from home</li> <li>• Information on special arrangements for teachers with non-Scottish qualification more widely publicised</li> <li>• Reserve opportunities identified</li> <li>• Local businesses sign Covenant – improved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overlaps with priority 2 – business collaboration</li> </ul>



## HIGHLAND ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT PARTNERSHIP ACTION PLAN

	personnel on posting to allow early promotion of opportunities for spouses		engagement – increased employment opportunities	
<b>3.2 Asking the Question</b>				
Accurate data on AFC in Highland	Explore ways of improving available data on HC AFC	Service providers have access to more reliable data about location of veteran population		
Theme	Action	Who	Outcome/Outputs	
Opportunities  <i>Project outcome 5 Timescale Dec 18</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With partners work to identify opportunities to 'Ask the Question'</li> <li>Develop standard protocols to enable data sharing amongst agencies</li> </ul>	NHS Education Highland Council DWP SDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved mapping of AFC and its needs will assist organisations in planning and commissioning of services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A question on a person's AF status to be included in 2021 census</li> </ul>

Acronyms			
HC	Highland Council	SERI	Scotland's Employment Recruitment Incentive
MC	Moray Council	JSHAO	Joint Service Housing Advice Office
LA	Local Authority	FE/HE	Further Education/ Higher Education
CCP	Community Planning Partnership	HRFCA	Highland Reserve Forces and Cadets Association
AFC	Armed Forces Community	DWP	Department of Work & Pensions
UHI	University of Highlands & Islands	RFEA	The Forces Employment Charity
HIE	Highland & Islands Enterprise	SACRO	Scottish Assn for Care & Resettlement of Offenders
CTP	Career Transition Partnership	DMWS	Defence Medical Welfare Service
SDS	Skills Development Scotland	ASAP	Armed Services Advice Project
		RCET	Royal Caledonian Education Trust



## Company XYZ

---

We, the undersigned, commit to honour the Armed Forces Covenant and support the Armed Forces Community. We recognise the value Serving Personnel, both Regular and Reservists, Veterans and military families contribute to our business and our country.

Signed on behalf of:

**Company XYZ**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**[COMPANY XYZ  
LOGO HERE]**

# 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.

## Section 1: Principles Of The Armed Forces Covenant

1.1 We **Company XYZ** will endeavour in our business dealings to uphold the key principles of the Armed Forces Covenant, which are:

- *no member of the Armed Forces Community should face disadvantage in the provision of public and commercial services compared to any other citizen*
- *in some circumstances special treatment may be appropriate especially for the injured or bereaved.*

## Section 2: Demonstrating our Commitment

2.1 **Company XYZ** recognises the value serving personnel, reservists, veterans and military families bring to our business. We will seek to uphold the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant, by:

- *promoting the fact that we are an armed forces-friendly organisation;*
- *seeking to support the employment of veterans young and old and working with the Career Transition Partnership (CTP), in order to establish a tailored employment pathway for Service Leavers;*
- *striving to support the employment of Service spouses and partners;*
- *endeavouring to offer a degree of flexibility in granting leave for Service spouses and partners before, during and after a partner's deployment;*
- *seeking to support our employees who choose to be members of the Reserve forces, including by accommodating their training and deployment where possible;*
- *offering support to our local cadet units, either in our local community or in local schools, where possible;*
- *aiming to actively participate in Armed Forces Day;*
- *offering a discount to members of the Armed Forces Community;*
- *any additional commitments **XYZ** could make (based on local circumstances).*

*[We would encourage you to sign up to as many of the above as appropriate to your business.  
Please amend to provide details of how you intend to meet each commitment.]*

2.2 We will publicise these commitments through our literature and/or on our website, setting out how we will seek to honour them and inviting feedback from the Service community and our customers on how we are doing. *[Amended as appropriate for your business.]*