

Armed Forces Covenant Action Plan 2019 – 2023

Action Plan themes are based on the outcomes identified in the Government's "Strategy for Our Veterans: Valued. Contributing. Supported" (Nov 2018). In our plan the term veterans has been replaced with armed forces community to aid inclusion.

(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/755915/Strategy_for_our_Veterans_FI_NAL_08.11.18_WEB.pdf)

The plan will be updated on an annual basis and progress reported via the Derbyshire Armed Forces Covenant Partnership.

Cross cutting themes

Cross cutting theme 1: Collaboration between organisations					RAG rating
Improved collaboration between organisations offers the Armed Forces Community coherent support					
Action number	Action	Timescale	Member/ Officer lead	Progress	
1	Nominate new Armed Forces Covenant Champion	July 2019	Leader	Cllr Kate Sarvent confirmed as Armed Forces Champion.	✓
2	Provide member and/or officer representation and engagement at Derbyshire Covenant Partnership.	Ongoing	Armed Forces Champion / SD Corporate	Officer/ member representation agreed and actively engaged in partnership activity.	
3	Work with Derbyshire County Council, Derby City Council and Derbyshire Districts to establish an officer working group to progress covenant actions.	October 2019	SD Corporate	Group launched in October 2019 to support Derbyshire Armed Forces Covenant activity and delivery of individual authority action plans. Group continues to be well attended and provides great opportunities to collaborate and share	✓

				knowledge – this has been particularly valuable during the Covid-19 pandemic – for example developing Covid-19 secure remembrance events.	
4	Support the Department for Work and Pensions and Job Centre Plus to deliver the veterans hub. The veterans hub is open to all members of the armed forces including serving, retired, veterans, and reservists. The regular hub sessions focus on health wellbeing, re-employment, volunteering etc.	Ongoing	SD Corporate	<p>Venue provided at the town hall, website and social media promotion and officer support where appropriate.</p> <p>During Covid-19 pandemic Veteran Hub activity was moved to a digital and telephone service which Chesterfield BC helped to promote.</p> <p>The Veteran Hub has now returned to the Town Hall on a monthly basis to provide information and support across a range of matters from re-employment, volunteering, housing, health and well being, funding and representation from the forces welfare charities.</p>	
5	Develop new Armed Forces Covenant Action Plan 2023 - 2027	Mar 2023	SD Corporate	Drawing upon University of Derby research project, Census 2021 data, horizon scanning, partnership knowledge.	
Cross cutting theme 2: Coordination of the Armed Forces Community services The coordination of the Armed Forces Community provision delivers consistent aims and principles over time and throughout the UK, ensuring the Armed Forces Community, their families and the bereaved are treated fairly compared to the local population.					

6	Improve access to information for the armed forces community via the CBC website. This includes developing a dedicated Armed Forces web page.	June 2020 Revised - August 2021	Communications and Marketing	The Chesterfield Borough Council website has been updated to include details of the Armed Forces Covenant, support available and key signposting.	✓
7	Continue to support CBC services and partner agencies to promote services, information, events etc. aimed at or of benefit to the armed forces community.	Ongoing	Communications and Marketing	A range of partnership campaigns supported across our communication channels including Your Chesterfield, website, intranet, social media accounts and members bulletins.	
Cross cutting theme 3: Data on the Armed Forces Community Enhanced collection, use and analysis of data across the public, private and charitable sectors to build an evidence base to effectively identify and address the needs of the Armed Forces Community.					
8	Census 2021 includes key Armed Forces data. Encourage high completion rate within Chesterfield Borough.	Oct 20 – April 2021	Assistant Census Liaison Manager / Communications and Marketing	Actively engaging with Office of National Statistics to support maximisation of completion rates in Chesterfield Borough: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media and web campaign • Information in Your Chesterfield • Pipeline of information to key local groups to cascade to communities • Promotion of alternative completion methods 	✓

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific armed forces related content shared <p>Census completion targets achieved for Chesterfield Borough.</p>	
9	Support the Derbyshire Covenant Partnership project aiming to identify the size and needs of the Armed Forces Community within Derbyshire.	2021/22	SD Corporate – via Derbyshire Armed Forces Covenant Partnership.	<p>University of Derby were commissioned by the partnership to undertake the research. The final report was presented to the partnership in June 2021.</p> <p>All partners have been using the research to further adapt and enhance services. Briefings have been provided to key Chesterfield Borough Council services and this work alongside Census 2021 data will be used to develop the next covenant action plan.</p>	✓
10	Utilise the above Derbyshire Covenant Partnership project and Census findings to develop our action plan and the Derbyshire Armed Forces Covenant further.	2022/23	SD Corporate	Key Census 2021 data including for the first time data on armed forces community size will be published in spring 2022 for the whole local authority with ward level and lower super output area data being available towards the end of 2022 / early 2023.	

				This information alongside the research conducted for action 8 will be used to develop the next Armed Forces Action Plan.	
Cross cutting theme 4: Public perception and understanding					
The UK population value the Armed Forces Community and understand their diverse experiences and culture.					
11	Sign the revised Derbyshire Armed Forces Covenant.	March 2019	Leader	Signed March 2019. Website, social media and press coverage.	✓
Actions 1,4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 contribute to this cross-cutting theme.					
Cross cutting theme 5: Recognition of the Armed forces Community					
The Armed Forces Community feel that their service and experience is recognised and valued by society.					
12	Working with Armed Forces Charities and organisations to develop an annual programme of events and activities to recognise and value the contribution of the armed forces community past and present. This includes Armistice Day, Remembrance Sunday, Armed Forces Day, commemoration of key dates	Annually by April each year for the forthcoming year.	Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer	<p>Annual events programme developed in consultation with Armed Forces organisations.</p> <p>Covid-19 secure events for 2021/22 included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covid-19 secure 11th hour ceremony • Covid-19 secure Remembrance Sunday service and event • Assistance and advice to local ceremonies • Flag flying and social media campaign for Armed Forces Day 	✓

				In 2021/22 we were able to increase cadet, school, armed forces and support organisations engagement following some reduction in covid-19 restrictions. We hope to be back to full programmes for 2022/23.	
13	Continue to support the Civic Cadet roles and encourage Armed Forces Cadet Units and other young people via schools, clubs and associations to take part in the annual programme of recognition events and activities.	Ongoing	Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer.	In 2021 we were able to increase engagement with cadet units, schools and organisations to enable attendance at key events in a Covid-19 secure way. Approximately 200 young people took part in events in 2021 and we expect this to grow to around 450 in 2022.	
14	Honour decorated service personnel and the wider remembrance of the sacrifices made by local residents e.g. Legion d'Honneur, Victoria Cross etc. receptions.	Ongoing	Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer.	No ceremonies during 2021/22.	

Key themes

Key theme 1: Community and relationships					
The Armed Forces Community are able to build healthy relationships and integrate into their communities.					
Action number	Action	Timescale	Member/ Officer lead	Progress	

Actions across the plan contribute to this theme.					
Key theme 2: Employment, education and skills The Armed Forces Community enter appropriate employment and can continue to enhance their careers throughout their working lives.					
15	Attain the Bronze Award in the Ministry of Defence's Employer Recognition Scheme.	June 2019	SD Corporate	Applications completed and status awarded in June 2019.	✓
16	Amend annual leave policy to include up to 10 days paid leave days per calendar year to undertake reservist duties.	2019/20	HR and Support Services Manager	Leave policy amended and approved.	✓
17	Register as an employer with links to our recruitment portal on the Forces Families jobs website.	December 2019	SD Corporate	Registration completed.	✓
18	Work towards the Silver Award of the Ministry of Defence's Employer Recognition Scheme.	2021/22	SD Corporate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended MOD Silver Award webinar • Expression of interest completed for Silver Award in 2021/22 • Application form and evidence gathered 	✓

19	Attain the Silver Award in the Ministry of Defence's Employer Recognition Scheme.	2022/23	SD Corporate	We achieved the silver award ahead of plan following significant progress and a successful application. We were awarded the Silver award in autumn 2021.	✓
Key theme 3: Finance and debt The Armed Forces Community leave the Armed Forces with sufficient financial education, awareness and skills to be financially self-supporting and resilient.					
Actions 4, 5, 6, 7, 8,9 contribute to this theme.					
20	Signposting to armed forces specific advice and support including SSAFA (The Armed Forces Charity), The Royal British Legion, Chesterfield Armed Forces and Veterans Hub.	June 2019 – Revised August 2021.	Communications and Marketing	Chesterfield Borough Council website has been updated to provide more comprehensive support information along with sign posting to key agencies.	✓
Key theme 4: Health and wellbeing All the Armed Forces Community enjoy a state of positive physical and mental health and wellbeing, enabling them to contribute to wider aspects of society.					
21	Introduce concessions available at Queen's Park Sports Centre and the Healthy Living Centre, Staveley for active armed	2019/20	SD Leisure, Culture and Wellbeing	Agreed as part of the overall concessions policy development.	✓

	forces members and flexible terms for membership.			Bespoke flexible membership packages developed for armed services personnel who may be deployed.	
Key theme 5: Making a home in civilian society The Armed Forces Community have a secure place to live either through buying, renting or social housing.					
22	Implement the Home Options Policy (Choice based lettings scheme) developed in partnership by the Derbyshire and Staffordshire Moorlands Home Options Partnership. Includes various exclusions to local residency requirements and preferences for armed forces applicants	2019/20	SD Housing	Partnership policy and arrangements in place.	✓
Key theme 6: The Armed Forces Community and the law The Armed Forces Community leave the Armed Forces with the resilience and awareness to remain law-abiding civilians.					
Currently no actions identified for this theme, but this will be reviewed following the completion of the Derbyshire Armed Forces Covenant Partnership project to assess the size and needs of the local armed forces community.					

