

APPENDIX 1

Key Actions	Progress in Kirklees	Outcomes
Governance		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint an Elected Member Champion to advocate for the needs of the armed forces community and help raise awareness among the public and local authorities about the unique challenges faced by the armed forces community, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet Member Champion & Elected Member Champion appointed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the visibility of the Armed Forces Covenant Duty within the organisation and promote services and networks that support veterans, reservists and cadets in Kirklees.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint a dedicated Armed Forces Covenant officer or team to oversee the implementation of the Covenant and act as a point of contact for the Armed Forces community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two officer champions are in place to elevate issues to senior management as well as coordinate meetings, progress priorities and act as the point of contact. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Covenant Board comprising of relevant Council Services and its key partners. To be chaired by the Armed Forces Champion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KAFCB established comprising of relevant Council Services, partners, MOD, military charities, health partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination, focused support, communication, accountability, resource sharing and planning between various stakeholders creates a more structured and effective approach to supporting the Armed Forces community.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify service champions to help support enquiries & issues as they arise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service champions from the following services participate in and support the work of the Armed Forces Covenant: Employee Healthcare, People Services, Housing Solutions, Homes & Neighbourhoods, Public Health, Pupil Admissions, Civic Office, Adult Services 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce an action plan based on the key issues of Health, Housing, Education, Community and Employment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An action plan has been developed in partnership with the Covenant Board and progress reported at quarterly meetings. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take part in wider regional initiatives designed to improve the support provided to residents who have served in the Armed Forces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular attendance at national/regional meetings/workshops for example Local Authority Armed Forces Network Meetings, Office for Veterans' Affairs, APSE (Association for Public Service Excellence) Armed Forces & Veterans Group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved awareness of best practices and support charities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support employees who volunteer for Reserve duties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reservists can take additional time off to complete their annual training camps (10 days paid leave) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting employees who volunteer for Reserve duties demonstrate our commitment to the Armed Forces.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council achieved the silver award in 2019. The award is valid for 5 years and was reinstated in 2024. • The Council is working towards the gold award by 2026 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has been described as a strong silver award holder by the Defence Regional Employer Engagement Director.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a dedicated section of the Council's website, and ensure that appropriate links are made with other web-based support, and networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web page with key information and links for members of the Armed Forces Community is developed and regularly updated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information is easily available on and offline with links to Housing, Health, Education and Employment, and to wider networks of support/information.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In partnership with KLTV the Board is creating an Armed Forces page on the KLTV website to host information, podcasts, vlogs and interviews to help raise awareness, celebrate our Armed Forces, and encourage access to services. Due to be launched in May 2025 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing stories about the armed forces community fosters understanding and empathy between civilians and service members, aids veterans in processing their experiences, ensures their sacrifices are recognised and appreciated, strengthens community bonds, and inspires and educates future generations about the realities and values of military service.

Raise awareness amongst organisations that provide services in healthcare, education, and housing of how Service life can impact on the Armed Forces community.

Housing

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support in accessing suitable housing, including social housing and adaptations for those with disabilities. Councils should also ensure that veterans are not disadvantaged in the allocation of housing. 	<p>Housing Solutions team: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that Veteran status is explored and considered at every assessment for homelessness undertaken. • Have identified ways of trying to produce statistics regarding their assistance to Veterans and Armed Forces members, during times of homelessness or risk of homelessness. • Have ensured that their staff have undertaken Armed Forces Covenant training and also built it in as part of their induction for new Officers. • Work with the Accessible Homes team and Adults Assessment team to deal with Veteran enquiries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness of the legal obligations related to the Armed Forces Covenant, the unique challenges faced by the Armed Forces community and helps to ensure that staff are equipped to offer appropriate support and guidance.
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Healthcare and Mental Health Support

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure access to mental health services that understand the unique challenges faced by veterans and their families. This includes providing or facilitating access to counselling and support groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A representative from Op Courage has joined the Board. • Op Courage is the Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service which is designed to help serving personnel due to leave the military, reservists, veterans and their families. • GP practices were invited to attend a special meeting which included a briefing from Op 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness and promote signposting to specialist care and treatment for veterans. • Healthcare professionals better understand the health
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	Courage on their services and how to access them.	conditions arising from Service.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that veterans and their families have access to appropriate healthcare services. This includes maintaining their position on NHS waiting lists if they move due to service commitments and providing priority treatment for conditions related to their service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives from Kirklees Public Health service, South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Dewsbury Hospital Mid-Yorkshire Teaching NHS Trust, Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust, Greater Huddersfield NHS, West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (ICB), Op Restore, Op Courage and South West Yorkshire NHS Foundation Trust are members of the Covenant Board. These services have regularly attended meetings and helped to raise awareness of specialist health, care and wellbeing support for veterans amongst partners including Health themed Covenant Board meetings have taken place for partners to raise awareness of the services and support they provide to the Armed Forces and how they can be accessed. the ICB, Primary Care Networks and GP practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff gain a better understanding of veterans' unique health needs, leading to more effective and empathetic care. • Veterans are comfortable in seeking help knowing their GP practice understands their background and needs. • Being Veteran Friendly accredited demonstrates the practice is dedicated to supporting veterans. • Accredited practices receive information and support to better identify and assist veteran patients. • The accreditation helps practices fulfil their commitment to treating veterans fairly and ensuring they receive priority treatment for service-related conditions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked with the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) to hold an event attended by thirty-seven representatives from 28 GP practices about becoming a Veteran Friendly accredited practice. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A representative from Op Restore has joined the Board. • Op Restore is the Veterans Physical Health and Wellbeing Service, an NHS service providing specialist care and treatment to veterans who have physical health problems (formerly known as the Veterans Trauma Network). • GP practices were invited to attend a special meeting which included a briefing from Op Restore on their services and how to access them. 	

Employment and Skills

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate access to employment opportunities and training for veterans and their families. This can include promoting the benefits of hiring veterans to local businesses and providing career advice and support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council engages with the Careers Transition Partnership and the Forces Employment Charity to explore how to strengthen relationships with the Council and KAFCB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened relationships and support for veteran employment.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A representative from Op Prosper has joined the Board. • Op Prosper is a relatively new wrap-around employment service to support Veterans into work after leaving the Armed Forces and attended a board meeting to provide an overview of their service and how to access it. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council offers a guaranteed interview scheme for Veterans that meet the essential criteria. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held an employment themed Covenant Board meeting resulting in a closer working relationship with the Forces Employment Charity and Op Prosper which was followed by meetings with the Council's Business and Skills Team and the Forces Employment Charity to encourage employment for veterans. 	
	<p>The Council's Business and Skills Team has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held one:one with the Forces Employment Charity to better understand what they do and how we might refer businesses into them to encourage employment for veterans. • Shared information about the Careers Transition Partnership and Forces Employment Charity across wider business facing teams so they can talk to businesses they support if appropriate. • Spoken to a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) group and arranged for a representative from Tommys Lounge to speak at a future event. The event will attract some of larger businesses to meet and talk about CSR, share ideas and best practice. Tommy's Lounge will have the opportunity to present and promote the benefits of recruiting veterans as well as talking about the work they do and try and create links with our larger businesses. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Officer Armed Forces Champion attended two CSR events last year to raise awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant, encourage business to show their support by signing the Covenant and also to consider recruitment of veterans and military families into their organisation. The events were attended by Cummins, Syngenta, West Yorkshire Police, Pennine Tuition, FMG, Leach Colours, Mentor Business Systems, Huddersfield Town Football Club, Euro Digital Systems, Forget Me Not Trust, Kirkwood Hospice and Hickory's Smokehouse. 	

Education

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the educational needs of children from Armed Forces families, including ensuring they have access to school places and additional support if needed due to mobility issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that information on the Service Pupil Premium is circulated to schools annually so they can identify students from an Armed Forces background and offer tailored support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools can better support the unique needs of service children, helping them thrive both academically and emotionally.
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Welfare and Financial Assistance

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer support and advice on welfare benefits and financial assistance. This includes helping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the Council military compensation is not treated as income in means tests for the following benefits Council Tax 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering support and advice on welfare benefits and financial
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<p>veterans and their families navigate the benefits system and access any financial support they are entitled to.</p>	<p>Support/Reduction, Housing Benefit, and Disabled Facilities Grants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A representative from the Council's Welfare and Exchequer Services has been invited to join the Armed Forces Covenant Board. 	<p>assistance to veterans supports transition to civilian life.</p>
<p>Community Integration</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote community integration and support networks for veterans and their families. This can involve organising events, providing information on local services, and fostering a sense of community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has funded community organisations to arrange numerous Remembrance Day/Armed Forces activities and events over the years. For example: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In 2023-24 over £9,400 was awarded to nine local organisations - In 2024-25 almost £11,000 was awarded to six local organisations. • The Council Civic Office regularly supports a programme of Remembrance Day and other Armed Forces events throughout the year. This includes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flag raising for Armed Forces week. - Festival of Remembrance - Remembrance Sunday - Armed Forces Day Civic events planned for VE80 and VJ80 • The Rural Veterans Hub and Tommy's Lounge/Tommy's Voice are actively involved in the work of the Armed Forces Covenant Board and advocate on behalf veterans and their families. • The Huddersfield Town Centre Business Support Officer has supported Tommy's Lounge with advice on a range of issues including grants and funding, premises, marketing, links to town centre networks and the KAFCB. • The KAFCB has established a close working relationship with Kirklees Local TV (KLTV) by contributing funding to support projects and initiatives. The funding has enabled KLTV to develop a KLTV armed forces platform which features events, interviews, podcasts, case studies and testimonials. This will develop to include interviews from support services involved in the Kirklees Armed Forces Covenant Board, including the Chairperson. https://kirkleeslocaltv.com/category/kirklees-armed-forces-tv/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting and strengthening veteran and armed forces networks ensures that veterans and their families receive the comprehensive support they need to thrive, fostering a sense of belonging and stability within the community. It also helps to ensure that those who have served, and their families, receive the support and respect they deserve.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Covenant Funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KLTV - £6,500 match funding for a National Lottery Heritage Fund that secured £131,868. • Tommy's Lounge - £1,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To produce a documentary and educational workshop celebrating Huddersfield's windrush Veterans. • Support with running costs.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KLTV - £6,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To produce a series of podcasts, vlogs, case studies to raise awareness of the Covenant.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tommy's Lounge/KLTV - £1,300 match funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To produce a series of messages of support over the xmas holiday period for the Armed Forces Community.
<p>Have due regard to the Covenant Principles</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant into local policies and decision-making processes to ensure that the needs of the Armed Forces community are considered in all relevant decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council report writing guidance includes consideration of the Armed Forces when developing policy and making decisions. • Protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 now include members of the Armed Forces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council shows due regard to the Armed Forces Covenant by embedding the Covenant principles into its processes ensuring that the needs of the Armed Forces community are considered in decision-making processes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and Awareness: Provide training for council staff to raise awareness of the unique challenges faced by the Armed Forces community to ensure staff are equipped to offer appropriate support and services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following E-learning modules have been added to the Council's MyLearning portal available to staff/Cllrs. • The Armed Forces Covenant and Covenant Duty Explained: Health (Senior Officers) • The Armed Forces Covenant and Covenant Duty for Customer Facing Staff • The Armed Forces Covenant Duty Explained: Housing (Senior Officers) • The Armed Forces Covenant and Covenant Duty – Induction • Training information will be promoted via Our Week as well as being targeted to relevant services. • Colleagues in Learning and Organisational Development are working with Communications to have a more coordinated and planned approach to the promotion of the Armed Forces Covenant. • All the E-learning resources have been shared with members of the Armed Forces Covenant Board to promote to their staff and organisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council staff are aware of and comply with legal obligations related to the Armed Forces Covenant. • Fosters empathy, deeper understanding of the experiences/needs the Armed Forces community, more tailored and effective services ensuring that veterans and their families receive timely and appropriate support. • Staff become more knowledgeable about the resources and support systems available to the Armed Forces community to they can guide them to appropriate services and assistance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration: Work closely with local military bases, veteran organizations, and other stakeholders to understand and address the needs of the Armed Forces community. This includes sharing best practices and resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the Armed Forces Covenant with external stakeholders (businesses, armed forces groups, charities, residents etc) to raise awareness and understanding of the Covenant as outlined above. 	

Future Priorities

The key actions outlined above are reviewed on an ongoing basis and will continue to be monitored. Below are additional actions the Covenant Board has identified that can be delivered within existing resources.

Governance
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review frequency of Board meetings and development of subgroups to progress key actions (to be achieved within existing resources)• Explore opportunity to collaborate with West Yorkshire Combined Authority and neighbouring West Yorkshire local authorities through closer joint working, sharing best practice and making more efficient use of resources.• Engage staff with a Military background to act as a consultative group and help shape the work of the Covenant Board.• Develop case studies highlighting the challenges faced by the Armed Forces Community to serve as a resource to better understand needs and to promote changes in policies and services where required.
Housing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with Housing Solutions, Homes and Neighbourhoods and Tommy's Lounge (a local military charity) to brief staff on the Armed Forces Covenant, our Covenant Pledge and also to better understand the unique experiences of our armed force community, in particular how PTSD can affect someone and how they can best respond.
Healthcare and Mental Health Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to raise awareness of specialist health, care and wellbeing support for veterans amongst partners.• Continue to work with GP practices on their journey to become Veteran Friendly accredited.• Encourage GP practices to sign the Armed Forces Covenant as a sign of their commitment to the AFC• Arrange a Mental Health themed meeting to better understand current access and pathways to mental health support and how this can be improved• Suicide prevention training, available free via zero suicide alliance, is promoted to staff/partners working with or coming into contact with Veterans.
Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Service Pupil Premium information is circulated to schools annually
Employment and Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to work closely with the Career Transition Partnership and Forces Family Jobs to ensure jobs in the authority are clearly advertised to the Armed Forces community.• Continue to work with our Learning and Organisation Development Service to promote the eLearning to relevant services (housing, education and health) and also to all staff via 'Our Week'• The Council's Business and Skills Team to arrange for a representative from Tommy's Lounge to speak at the next Corporate Social Responsibility event to raise awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant and Community, promote the benefits of recruiting veterans and creating links between Tommy's and our larger businesses.• The Council's Business and Skills Team will follow up engagement with some of the larger engineering type businesses to raise awareness and promote the benefits of recruiting veterans.
Community Integration
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthen links with the Cadet movements in Kirklees – involvement in the Covenant Board, events and the Democracy Friendly programme• Support Tommy's Lounge to secure funding to establish a one stop shop for any issue armed forces related. This is a long-term ambition as resources need to be identified to support Tommy's Lounge to achieve this.• Identify external funding to support the Kirklees Local TV Armed Force Covenant Platform