

Annual Report and Action Plan

Sheffield Community Covenant
Partnership Board



Our Armed Forces sacrifice civilian freedoms, face danger and, sometimes, suffer serious injury or death as a result of their duty. In return, we have 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, support, and fair treatment.

Foreword

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.

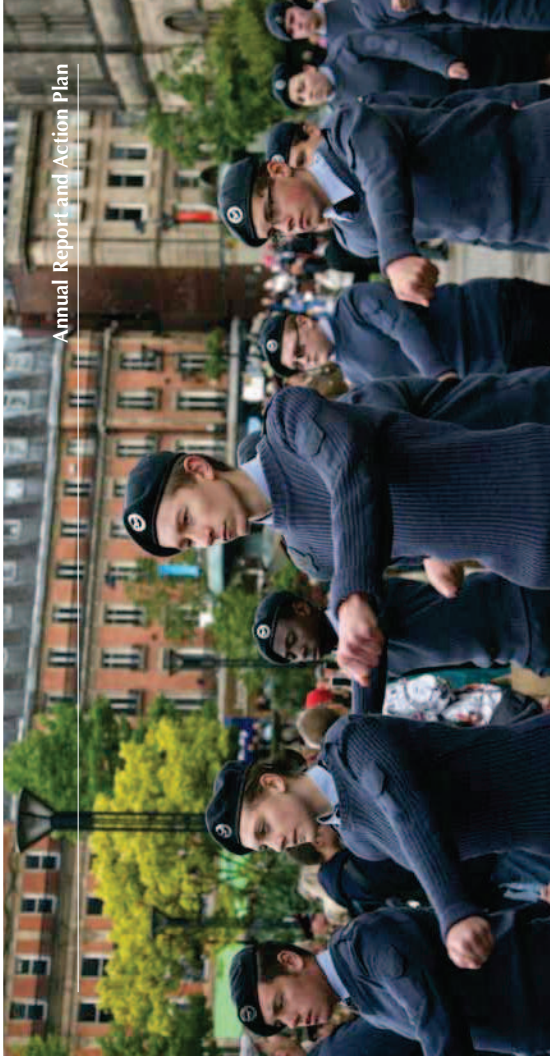
This obligation involves the whole of Sheffield: it includes voluntary and charitable bodies, private organisations, and the actions of individuals in supporting the Armed Forces.

Recognising those who have performed military duty unites the City and demonstrates the value of their contribution.

This has no greater expression than in upholding this Covenant.

**Councillor Julie Dore, Leader
Sheffield City Council**

Annual Report 2011-2012



Introduction

01 1. This is the report of the Sheffield Community Covenant Partnership Board which was established in November 2011.

The Board is working together to promote the aims of the Community Covenant, which are to:

- encourage local communities to support the Armed Forces Community in their area;
- nurture understanding and awareness amongst the public of issues affecting the Armed Forces Community;
- recognise the contribution made by the Armed Forces Community;
- remember the sacrifices faced by the Armed Forces Community;
- encourage activities which help to integrate the Armed Forces Community into local life;
- encourage the Armed Forces Community to help and support the wider community, whether through participation in events and joint projects, or other forms of engagement.

2. This report is divided into two sections, firstly a section setting out the achievements of the first year and secondly an action plan to take us forward.

Sheffield is committed to supporting the local Armed Forces Community and the actions set out in this report demonstrate that commitment.

This commitment acknowledges the sacrifices made by serving members of the Armed Forces in facing serious injury or death as a result of their duty.



National Context

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3. At the end of the Second World War there were 5,000,000 Armed Forces personnel, today the number is less than 200,000.

The Armed Forces are going through some significant changes through the Armed Forces 2020 programme.

4. Reductions in the Armed Forces are planned by the Government's Strategic Defence and Security Review. The reductions are as follows:

- The Royal Navy will be reduced by 5,000 personnel to 30,000 by April 2015 and to 29,000 by 2020
- The Army will be reduced by 7,000 personnel to 95,000 by 2015 and to 82,000 by 2020
- The RAF will be reduced by 5,000 personnel to 33,000 personnel by 2015 and to 31,500 by 2020

5. Whilst the overall number of Armed Forces personnel is reducing recruitment continues at entry level to ensure that gaps don't develop in the overall structure.

6. The detail of how the above is to be implemented is yet to be decided. However we should receive more information on the basing plan for both the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces by the middle of 2013.

7. The Reserve Forces currently make up 10% of forces deployed on operations. There are no plans to change the size of the Reserve Forces however the role is likely to increase and they will become a more significant proportion of the Armed Forces and be relied upon more heavily in the future.

This has implications for employers in the city who will be required to make provision for Reservists to attend training and take part in active service on a more regular basis.



8. The Armed Forces Community includes those in-service including reservists, veterans and those who care for, depend on or are close family members of these groups of people.

The local context

9. It is estimated that one person in six in the UK is currently serving or is a member of the ex-Armed Forces community either a veteran of the Armed Forces or a carer, dependent or close family member of a veteran.

People as young as 17.5 years can be sent on active service, so veterans are often much younger than people realise. Nearly a quarter of people seeking help from organisations such as the Royal British Legion are below the age of 44.

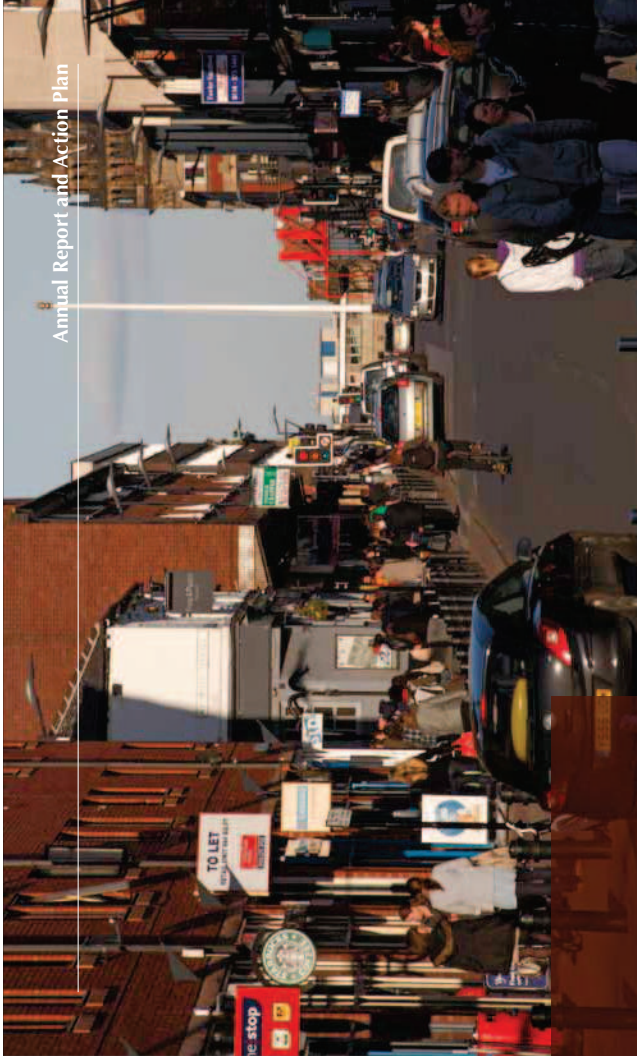
10. It is difficult at present to gain a true picture of the make up of the Armed Forces Community in Sheffield. We know there are around 50 – 60 serving families in Sheffield as well as regular reservists, cadets and veterans.

Sheffield has 5 Reserve Units; a Sea Cadets Unit; 6 Detachments of Army Cadets; and 5 squadrons of the Air Training Corps Cadets.

11. There are 5 schools in the City with service children. We also know that there have been around 300 new entrants to the Armed Forces from Sheffield in the last 5 years, the majority of which are aged 17-19 years old and there are 1,300 individuals in Sheffield receiving a pension or compensation following active service from the Military of Defence.

12. The number of Service leavers coming back to South Yorkshire from September 2012 to June 2013 is 93.

Therefore a significant proportion of these are likely to come to Sheffield. We are currently in the process of identifying how many of these are likely to have housing needs and how many have school aged children.



The next tranche of redundancies is likely to be larger and planning ahead will help the city to ensure that appropriate support is offered to ex-Armed Forces personnel.

13. Information is not routinely recorded when individuals access services and we need to develop our understanding of the needs and particular circumstances of this customer group.

To help us gain a better understanding of the local Armed Forces Community Sheffield City Council's Equalities Monitoring Guidance has been updated to actively ask customers if they have served in the UK Armed Forces.

The following questions are suggested for inclusion in monitoring forms:

Service Personnel and their Families

Are you currently serving in the UK Armed Forces?
 Yes No

Are you a veteran or ex-serviceman or women of the UK Armed Forces?
 Yes No

Are you a member of a serviceman or women's immediate family?
 Yes No

Are you a reservist or in part time service such as in the Territorial Army?
 Yes No

14. The establishment of a Community Covenant in Sheffield aims to ensure that the local Armed Forces Community is not disadvantaged in the services offered in Sheffield.

This will also give local people and service providers an opportunity to support Armed Forces personnel returning to their communities.





Establishing the Community Covenant Partnership

Chair:	Councillor Julie Dore,	Leader of Sheffield City Council
Board Members:	Councillor Clive Skelton	Member Armed Forces Champion Councillor for Beauchief and Greenhill Ward
	Lieutenant Colonel Simon Smith	Commanding Officer, 38th Signal Regiment representing the Armed Forces Community
	Kevan Taylor, CEO	Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust, (TBC)
	Sue Skalycz	Department for Work and Pensions
	Richard Webb,	Executive Director, Sheffield City Council
Officer Support:	Julie Bullen	Director of Customer Services Sheffield City Council

15 On the 9 November 2011 Sheffield Cabinet agreed to establish a local Community Covenant in the city. The Community Covenant was signed at a special ceremony on 10 November

Mr David Moody, the Lord Lieutenant of South Yorkshire

Mr Andrew J Coombe, the High Sherriff of South Yorkshire
Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Parsons, Officer Commanding 38 Signal Regiment (V)

Commander David Pickthall, Royal Navy Chief of Staff, Naval Regional Commander for Northern England

Colonel (Ret'd) Richard Elliot, Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Councillor Sylvia Dunkley, Lord Mayor of Sheffield

Councillor Julie Dore, Leader of Sheffield City Council
Families Association

Mr Russ Murray, County Manager, Royal British Legion

Mr John Mothersole, Chief

Executive, Sheffield City Council

16. This prepared the way for the development of the Sheffield Community Covenant Partnership Board.

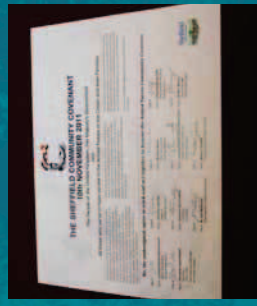
Sheffield Community Covenant Partnership Board has been established with representation from the local Armed Forces Communities and key organisations in the City.

The membership is currently as follows:

17. The role of the Board is:

- a. To promote the signing of the covenant by partner organisations and members of the charitable and voluntary sectors and ensure that the commitments made are adhered to.
- b. To establish a joint action plan and identify resources to support projects which strengthen the ties between members of the Armed Forces Community and the wider community in Sheffield.
- c. To monitor the impact of the covenant and ensure that the aims are met.

- d. To provide oversight of all the activity within Sheffield relating to the Community Covenant Grant Scheme
- e. To ensure that key services (health, housing, employment, etc) within the City are briefed and able to support the Armed Forces Community.
- f. To encourage the Armed Forces Community to be active members of their local communities
- g. To report annually to Full Council on the implementation of the Community Covenant.





18. Cllr Julie Dore (the Leader Sheffield City Council) has been appointed as the Chair of the Community Covenant Partnership Board ensuring that military involvement is embedded at the highest levels within the city.

Progress to date

The Partnership Board has established a Grant Panel to consider bids received for the Community Covenant grant and report their recommendations to the Partnership Board. Several bids have been considered throughout the year, but unfortunately none have been successful for Ministry of Defence funding yet.

- 19.** The Board meets on a quarterly basis and links to these related bodies:
- Yorkshire and Humber side Armed Forces Network (Health)
 - Sheffield Health & Well Being Board
 - Employment & Work Task Force
 - Reserve Forces and Cadet Association for Yorkshire and Humber side.

20. The Board have been examining housing and employment opportunities for Service leavers wanting to settle in Sheffield. This work has included understanding the potential barriers to Service leavers looking to live and work in the City, as well as exploring ways in which work could be better co-ordinated going forward.

21. Military senior officer time has been given to enhance the support for the Community Covenant and support the Partnership Board.

A local armed forces forum has been established, chaired by the Local Commanding Officer, consisting of representatives from the local military and associated organisations as well as charities such as the Royal British Legion, SSAFA and Combat Stress.

22. Councillor Clive Skelton has been appointed as the Member Armed Forces Champion to enhance the support for the Armed Forces Community and is the Council's representative member of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association for Yorkshire and the Humber.

23. The issues facing Service leavers may not be immediate as veterans may find themselves in difficult circumstances a number of months/years after leaving the Forces.

There is an increasing demand for services caring for Veteran's mental health, for example, and work is already in progress via the Yorkshire & Humber Military Health network.

From November 2012, a veteran's outreach worker has been appointed by Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust as part of a regional pilot whose remit is to support the Armed Forces community in the area, signposting and offering brief mental health support.

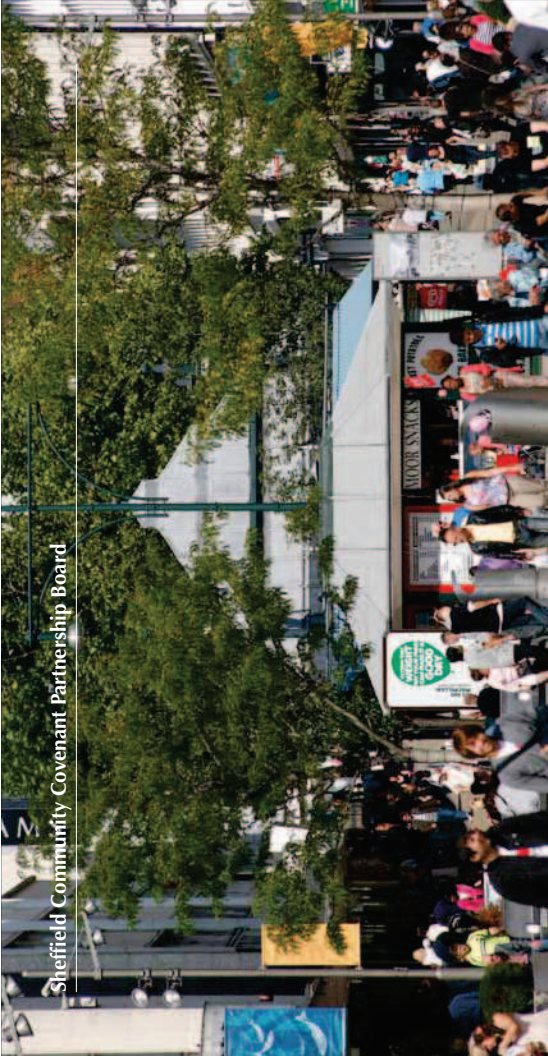
24. The council has created dedicated Armed Forces pages on its website. These can be found here <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/in-your-area/armed-forces> and include information on:

- Support and advice available to the Armed Forces Community
- The Community Covenant and how support can be pledged
- Heroes Welcome scheme
- Events

25. Sheffield has been celebrating the Veterans and Armed Forces Day for the last 6 years. The last celebration was held on 23 June 2012 promoting the role of the Armed Forces and honouring the veterans who have served. The day included a Veterans

parade and ceremony in the city centre, wartime music and dance and displays from the Armed Forces. A stall was staffed by Customer Services during Veterans and Armed Forces Day to promote the aims of the Community Covenant, advertise the Community Covenant Grant and provide information about wider Council services.

26. Information about vacancies within Sheffield City Council is routinely shared with the Armed Forces Careers Transition Partnership through a direct link from into Sheffield City Council's website. This supports recruitment of ex-Armed Forces personnel and encourages wider integration the city.



Progress to date (continued)

27. Sheffield City Council is recognised as a Reservist 'supportive employer'.

28. Sheffield Health & Social Care NHS Foundation Trust now has a designated Human Resources lead for Reservist staff working for the Trust.

29. DWP has an Armed Forces champion who has arranged for advisors to receive information/awareness regarding the issues that can be faced by ex-Armed Forces personnel and the help that is available to them.

This information is updated and maintained to ensure that advisors are able to make appropriate referrals.

Ex-Armed Forces personnel seeking employment are able to access the full range of the JobcentrePlus offer which is tailored according to individual circumstances.

In addition they are able to signpost individuals who would benefit from specialist help to appropriate organisations eg those supporting ex forces personnel in jobsearch, those assisting people with mental health or substance misuse issues.

The DWP Work Programme contractors are also able to take early referrals of ex-Armed Forces personnel. Individuals will be advised that they may wish to take this up from the 3 month point of their claim.

30. The current regulations governing the payment of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit do not provide for income from War Widows/Widowers Pension to be disregarded in full when calculating entitlement.

Sheffield City Council currently operates a local scheme whereby this income is disregarded in full. In taking this approach recipients of these incomes receive the maximum available support to assist with rent and Council Tax payments.

31. Whilst the premise is that the Armed Forces Community should be integrated into mainstream provision, service providers should ensure that they take into account their unique circumstances in delivering services.

Consideration has therefore been given as to whether children of Armed Forces personnel should be prioritised for school admissions.



Following consideration it was decided not to name the group as a special priority as the number of admissions is low and there is no identified problem with school admissions for this group in Sheffield. Support for this group of children has also been considered and is available citywide through the Multi Agency Support Teams.

32. Over the past three years Sheffield City Council has surveyed, maintained and cleaned all the City's war memorials, demonstrating a huge commitment to recognising the contribution and remembering the sacrifices made by members of the Armed Forces Community.

33. An open letter has been prepared on behalf of the Chief Executive, for distribution to all local organisations and businesses in Sheffield raising awareness of the Community Covenant. The letter encourages organisations to sign up to the covenant, raises awareness about the Community Covenant Grant scheme and encourages local businesses to support the national Armed Forces discount scheme.

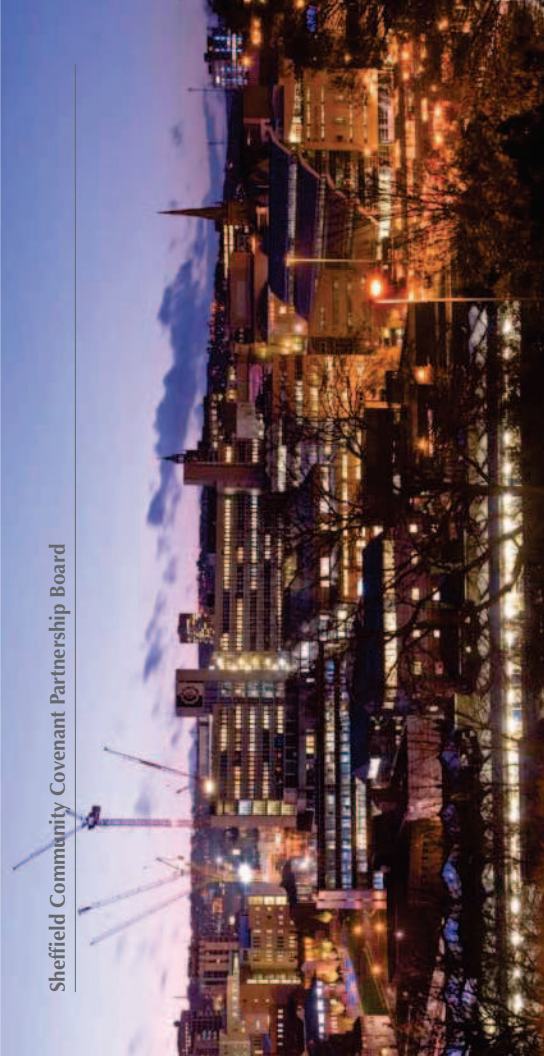
34. The "Heroes Welcome UK" scheme started in Scarborough in 2008 when a few local businesses grouped together to offer a warm welcome and recognition to Armed Forces personnel living in and visiting the town.

The scheme has now grown and been adopted by a number of towns and cities across the UK. The scheme

is a display of support to the local Armed Forces. It is a voluntary scheme and can be adapted by each area to show the support appropriate for that community.

Sheffield has joined the scheme and by doing this we are displaying support to the local Armed Forces and supporting businesses to offer a warm welcome and/or special recognition, like a small discount.

Local organisations and businesses can join the scheme by registering here (add link to website). Each organisation registered will receive a window sticker to display their support and be asked to make clear their offer, which is individual to the business.



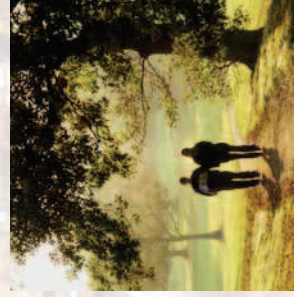
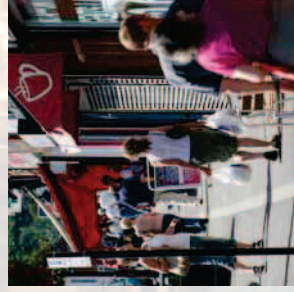
Action Plan

The Community Covenant Partnership Board has brought together organisations in the city to recognise and support the Armed Forces Community. The aims of the Community Covenant are as follows:

- encourage local communities to support the Armed Forces Community in their area;
- nurture understanding and awareness amongst the public of issues affecting the Armed Forces Community;

- recognise the contribution made by the Armed Forces Community;
- remember the sacrifices faced by the Armed Forces Community;
- encourage activities which help to integrate the Armed Forces Community into local life;
- encourage the Armed Forces Community to help and support the wider community, whether through participation in events and joint projects, or other forms of engagement.

The Community Covenant Partnership Board has developed an action plan. The plan is designed as a living document which will develop and grow over time. The actions will be monitored by the Board and an annual report will be produced to monitor progress.

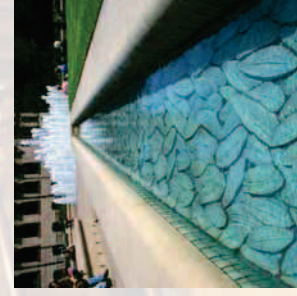


1 Aim	Activity to support the aim	Responsible body	Timescale
Encourage local communities to support the Armed Forces Community in their area	1.1 Heroes welcome implemented in Sheffield to encourage local businesses to provide a warm welcome to serving personnel and offer recognition and perhaps a discount to show support 1.2 Support the forces discount scheme and promote this to local businesses 1.3 Routinely consider the needs of the Armed Forces Community in the design and delivery of services 1.4 Work with communities to access the £30m Community Covenant Grant Scheme 1.5 Encourage key strategic partners within the City to support the Community Covenant	Sheffield City Council Sheffield City Council Sheffield City Council Sheffield City Council Sheffield City Council	November 2012 January 2013 On-going On-going April 2013

2 Aim	Activity to support the aim	Responsible body	Timescale
Nurture understanding and awareness amongst the public of issues affecting the Armed Forces Community	2.1 Produce specialist web pages on www.sheffield.gov.uk to promote the signing of the Community Covenant pledge, promote awareness and detail sources of support and advice 2.2 Organise a conference of local service providers to raise awareness of the community covenant aims actions to support the commitment 2.3 Raise awareness within schools of the specific support needs facing children and families of Armed Forces military personnel and those returning to civilian life 2.4 Develop a better understanding of the local Armed Forces Community by monitoring use of services such as housing, job applications and workforce census to better understand specific needs 2.5 Recognise the Armed Forces Community in the production of Equality Impact Assessments 2.6 Veterans Outreach Worker to develop a plan to heighten public awareness.	Sheffield City Council Sheffield City Council Sheffield City Council Sheffield City Council Sheffield City Council NHS	November 2012 June 2013 January 2013 January 2013 From April 2013 December 2012

3 Aim	Activity to support the aim	Responsible body	Timescale
Recognise the contribution made by the Armed Forces Community	3.1 Provide a concession to current and ex-Armed Forces personnel by waiving the fee for a Disabled Person's (Blue Badge) Car Parking Badges 3.2 Review the relevant policies that apply to membership of non-regular forces (e.g. Territorial Army) to ensure that adequate support is provided to Sheffield City Council employees serving as Reservists 3.3 Prioritise assessment for equipment and adaptations for Armed Forces personnel. Currently the wait for non-urgent assessment is up to 3 months 3.4 When Council Tax Benefit is abolished in April 2013 and replaced by Council Tax Support, it is the Council's intention that its Council Tax Support Scheme will continue to disregard income from War Widows/ Widower's Pension and War Disablement Pension in full. In taking this approach recipients of these income will continue to receive the maximum available support to assist in the rent and Council Tax payments.	Sheffield City Council Sheffield City Council Sheffield City Council	April 2013 January 2013 January 2013

4 Aim	Activity to support the aim	Responsible body	Timescale
Remember the sacrifices faced by the Armed Forces Community	4.1 To increase awareness and participation in the Veterans and Armed Forces Day 2013 4.2 Support other commemoration activities within the City, Sheffield City Council / Sheffield Health & Social Care NHS Foundation Trust./Department for Work and Pension 4.3 Support the organisation 'Combat Stress' to set up a self help support group in Sheffield and promote this service to those who will benefit from it	Sheffield City Council Ongoing Sheffield City Council	June 2013 Ongoing April 2013



5 Aim	Activity to support the aim	Responsible body	Timescale	
Encourage activities which help to integrate the Armed Forces Community into local life	5.1 Explore the possibility of developing an apprenticeship/service leaver scheme to support early service leavers linked to the Future Horizons programme	Sheffield City Council	January 2013	
	5.2 To extend the eligibility for the slice card, Sheffield's discount leisure scheme, to include serving Armed Forces personnel	Sheffield City Council	June 2013	
	5.3 Offer a Multi Agency Support Team assessment to all Armed Forces personnel returning to civilian life and with children in Sheffield schools	Sheffield City Council	December 2012	
	5.4 Ensure compliance with the new statutory guidance to give priority to Armed Forces personnel for Council housing and support prioritisation by Registered Providers	Sheffield City Council	March 2013	
	5.5 Develop a protocol between services to support prevention of housing crisis	Sheffield City Council	March 2013	
6 Aim	5.6 Ensure appropriate access to employment information and support for Service Leavers	Jobcentreplus	On-going	
	5.7 Ensure appropriate access to health information and support for Service Leavers	Sheffield Health & Social Care NHS Foundation Trust	On-going	
	5.8 Veterans Outreach Worker and the Anxiety/PTSD team to plan and advertise a series of educational sessions to promote awareness.	Sheffield Health & Social Care NHS Foundation Trust	December 2013	
	Encourage the Armed Forces Community to help and support the wider community, whether through participation in events and joint projects. Or other forms of engagement	6.1 Work with the local Armed Forces Community and UK online centres to develop a project to support digital inclusion	Sheffield City Council	December 2012
		6.2 Work with local communities and interest groups to promote access to the Community Covenant grant	Sheffield City Council	On-going
6.3 Work with the voluntary, community and faith sector to understand how they can contribute to the Covenant		Sheffield City Council	June 2013	
6.4 Encourage Armed Forces Service Leavers to be more active in their communities e.g. through volunteering or becoming a school governor		Sheffield City Council	June 2013	

Conclusion

The information contained in this report sets out the achievements and the aims of the Community Covenant Partnership Board.

The Board will continue to demonstrate its support for the Community Covenant and act as champions encouraging others to support the covenant.

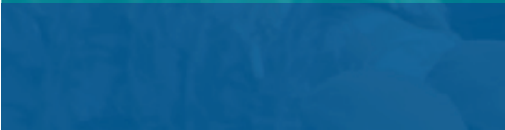
The actions set out the next steps to improve the local offer to the Armed Forces Community. This is a work in progress and will develop in time. This report will be reviewed annually by

the Community Covenant Partnership Board and updated as appropriate. A joint approach will help us to achieve these aims.

There are many challenges facing the Armed Forces Community at this time and being welcomed and supported in Sheffield goes a small way to thanking those who face serious injury or death as a result of their duty.

October 2012





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