

MINUTES	MEETING:	Rotherham Armed Forces Community Covenant Group (AFCCG)
	DATE & TIME:	Monday, 24 th May 2021 (2.00 – 4.00pm)
	VENUE:	Virtual via Microsoft Teams
	CHAIR:	Craig Tyler, Head of Democratic Services, Rotherham MBC
	SUPPORT & MINUTES:	Vicky Hartley, Executive Office Manager & Armed Forces Lead Officer, Rotherham MBC

In Attendance: Craig Tyler (Head of Democratic Services, Rotherham MBC), Vicky Hartley (Executive Office Manager & Armed Forces lead officer Rotherham MBC), Major Adrian Hunt (Chairman, Rotherham MCV & 102 Bn REME), Elaine Mason (Regional Co-ordinator for South Yorkshire, Project Nova), Retired Colonel Jonathan Hunt (Regional Chairman, SSAFA), Captain Terry Reilly (PSAO, 146 Divisional Support Company, REME), John Topping (Secretary, Veterans Advisory & Pensions Committee for Y&H), Ron Moffett (Royal British Legion & Rotherham MCV), Samantha Mulholland (Wellbeing Practitioner, Sheffield Mind), Captain David Tomlinson (102 Battalion REME), Fiona Grayson (High Intensity Worker/Cognitive Behavioural Therapist, RDaSH).

Speakers/Guests: Adam Seymour (Mental Health Nurse, Veterans' Mental Health High Intensity Service, North of England), Ruth Fletcher Brown (Public Health Specialist, Mental Health & Suicide Prevention Lead, Rotherham MBC), Louise Peppard (Senior Strategy Business Manager, Rotherham, Doncaster & South Humber NHS Foundation Trust), Kate Tufnell (Head of Adult Mental Health Commissioning, Rotherham CCG).

Apologies Received: Natasha Aucott (Homelessness Development Officer, Rotherham MBC), Jill Jones (Homelessness & Temporary Accommodation Placement Manager, Rotherham MBC), Sandra Tolley (Head of Housing Options, Rotherham MBC), Jamie Noble (Head of Community, Rotherham United Community Sports Trust), Kevin Alsop (Personnel Recovery Unit North, Ministry of Defence), Marie Shadwick (Partnership Assistant, JobCentre Plus / DWP), Malcolm Blease (Chairman, RAF Rotherham), Sahfiq Hussain (Chief Executive, Voluntary Action Rotherham), Andrew Denniff (Chief Executive, Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber of Commerce), Lt Col McPherson (Rotherham Military Community Veterans Centre).

Item	Title	Action
1.	Welcome, Introductions and Apologies	
1.1	It was noted that the Council's Armed Forces Champion, Alan Buckley had lost his seat in the borough's all-out elections in early May and a new appointment would be made to the position and would be confirmed by the Leader of Rotherham Council.	Vicky Hartley to inform Members once confirmed.
1.2	In the absence of an Armed Forces Champion, the meeting was chaired by Craig Tyler, Head of Democratic Services supported by Vicky Hartley, Executive Office Manager and lead officer for Armed Forces, Rotherham Council.	
1.3	Individual introductions were given, and apologies noted as listed above.	
2.	Minutes of the last meeting, 15th February 2021 & Matters Arising	
2.1	The minutes of the last meeting held on 15 th February 2021 were agreed. Updates on progress of actions were picked up as part of the meeting agenda with updates provided as follows: a) 5.3 (Support to Homeless Veterans - Homeless Veterans' Service Provision). All South Yorkshire Councils have now received a share of the £55k funding from Sheffield City Region to support homeless veterans (£16,250 for Rotherham). Vicky Hartley, Rotherham MBC reported that the Council's housing team were in the process of developing a new referral form to access the funding which will be shared as soon as available. In the meantime, until the referral form is completed, any referrals should be sent to housingsolutionsteam@rotherham.gov.uk or telephone 01709 336009.	Vicky Hartley/ Natasha Aucott, RMBC to inform Members as soon as this information is available.

	<p>This will be used to provide immediate support to veterans to provide appropriate accommodation and support i.e. in the form of a personalisation fund which may include bond and rent in advance to secure private rented accommodation, deposit for housing association tenancy and any associated set up costs for a new home, e.g. carpets, furniture, bedding and other household costs. Veterans would not have to repay anything back to the Council.</p> <p>b) 6.6 (15th Birthday of the founding of the Yorkshire Regiment and Official Opening of the British Normandy Memorial). Members were reminded of the key date of 6th June 2021 for these two events. All Members were reminded / encouraged to send social media greetings to show support.</p> <p>c) 6.14 – 7.17 (South Yorkshire Outreach). Major Adrian Hunt, Chairman, Rotherham MCVF informed Members that discussions were due to take place with the South Yorkshire Councils later in May regarding the future of the Outreach Service and he would report back to the AFCCG on the outcome of discussions in due course.</p>	
3.	Health & Wellbeing	
3.1	<p>Leads from the Council, NHS, RDaSH and CCG were welcomed to the meeting. The main purpose to discuss mental health and well-being and how they can further support and work with Members of the Rotherham AFCCG to ensure that veterans and their families enjoy a state of positive physical and mental health and wellbeing, enabling them to contribute to wider aspects of society (one of the main priorities of the AFCCG 5 Year Action Plan, 2019-24).</p> <p>Mental Health</p>	
3.2	Adam Seymour (Mental Health Nurse, Veterans' Mental Health High Intensity Service, North of England) provided an overview of the new NHS Veterans Mental Health and Well-being Service branded as Op Courage. This is the new overarching name for the three NHS Veterans' Mental Health Services known as Transition, Intervention and Liaison Service (TILS), Complex Treatment Service (CTS) and High Intensity Service (HIS).	
3.3	He confirmed the new service is now available to those leaving the armed forces and veterans providing a much needed service to those who are struggling with their mental health, are in mental health crisis and / or need urgent and emergency care and treatment. This is being delivered through provider led mental health care collaboratives, comprising organisations across the NHS and independent and third sectors. This approach is intended to fully join up mental health care pathways, so that co-ordinated decisions are made across organisations to improve experiences and health outcomes for those using the service.	
3.4	The North of England Team can be contacted via telephone 0300 300 1493 or email veteranshis.lypft@nhs.net	
3.5	Members of the AFCCG welcomed the offer to have further discussions with the Veterans Liaison Support Officer, Nigel Davies from the Mental Health High Intensity Service, North of England (<i>Walking With the Wounded</i>) who works closely with Adam Seymour and who was unable to attend this meeting.	Vicky Hartley to invite Nigel Davies to a future meeting of the Group.
4.	Suicide Prevention, Early Intervention & Recovering from Mental Health	
4.1	Ruth Fletcher-Brown (Public Health Specialist, Mental Health & Suicide Prevention Lead, Rotherham Council) outlined work taking place in the Council working with lead partners and informed Members of the AFCCG of the support available to improve the mental wellbeing of people living in Rotherham and on suicide prevention.	
4.2	<p>In summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rotherham has a Suicide Prevention Action Plan and Multi-Agency Group. The Group is chaired by Public Health and meets on a regular basis to monitor and look at action to be taken to improve the mental well-being of people living and working in Rotherham. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suicide Prevention Training is offered throughout the Council and available to the AFCCG should any Members wish to attend. • 'Be the One' website was launched between the Council and CCG in September 2019 – to talk, listen and care working to reduce the number of lives lost to suicide in Rotherham. Also aimed to ensure everyone has easy access to support and advice. Website: https://www.be-the-one.co.uk/ • Rotherhide was launched by the CCG and Amparo offers support across South Yorkshire for bereaved and those affected by suicide (see paragraph 6.5). • The Council has a series of other action and recovery plans – loneliness and a mental health and wellbeing recovery cell as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. 	AFCCG Members to contact Ruth Fletcher-Brown direct regarding Prevention Training
4.3	<p>Ruth also highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of recent suicides have been veterans and Rotherham is currently above the national average. The Council works closely with South Yorkshire Police and the local coroner which covers Rotherham and Doncaster areas. • It is not always known that individuals are veterans and important to collect real time data and details of an individual's life and write out to those organisations to find out what contact (if any) they had with that individual. • Males account for around three-quarters of suicide deaths and the female rate is starting to increase. • The need to identify veterans who have accessed medical services and have this information / data is key. 	
4.4	The AFCCG through the Council's lead officer for Armed Forces will continue to work closely with Ruth Fletcher Brown on raising more awareness, early identification, intervention, signposting and promotion of available services.	
4.5	Ron Moffett (Royal British Legion & Rotherham MCV) will liaise with Ruth Fletcher Brown outside the meeting to obtain appropriate promotional materials to share with the wider armed forces community via the South Yorkshire outreach service.	Ron Moffett / Ruth Fletcher Brown.
5	Step Into health Transition Pathway for the Armed Forces Community & Hospital Accreditation Scheme	
5.1	Louise Peppard (Senior Strategy Business Manager, Rotherham, Doncaster & South Humber NHS Foundation Trust (RDASH)) provided an overview of work of the trust in relation to armed forces.	
5.2	RDASH were in the process of developing plans to become veteran accredited and working on ensuring and strengthening links with Primary Care colleagues.	
5.3	Louise outlined the work in relation to the 'Step into Health' programme that supports the armed forces community to connect to NHS organisations in terms of employability (provides training opportunities, clinical and general work placements, insight days and application support).	
5.4	RDASH were also in the process of considering looking at organising some veteran specific events.	
6.	Veteran Friendly GP Practices Accreditation	
6.1	Kate Tufnell (Head of Adult Mental Health Commissioning, Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)) outlined work being undertaken in the CCG and updated on the current status in Rotherham with regard to the GP veteran friendly accreditation scheme.	
6.2	From the data provided by the Royal College of General Practitioners (as of 24 th May 2021), it was understood that there were a total of 19 accredited Veteran Friendly practices across South Yorkshire (1 in Barnsley, 13 in Doncaster, 2 in Rotherham and 3 in Sheffield) .	
6.3	Members of the AFCCG raised concerns regarding the very low number of accredited GP practices in Rotherham given this scheme has been in place for around 2 years. Kate highlighted that the COVID pandemic had impacted on this highlighting there was a need to revisit this and look at the process and quality contracts. This may also require a re-launch as part of the wider recovery work within the CCG	

6.4	It was agreed that 6 monthly progress updates would be provided to the AFCCG on this and it was hoped there would be an increase in Rotherham accredited practices.	Kate Tufnell, CCG
6.5	Support Services Kate also outlined the following available services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving access to psychological therapy (IAPT) services. • Rotherhive - provides a range of verified practical mental health and wellbeing information, support and advice for adults in Rotherham. • Amparo - provides emotional and practical support for anyone affected by suicide. 	
7.	Covenant Group Member Updates	
7.1	John Topping (Secretary, Veterans Advisory & Pensions Committee for Yorkshire and Humber) raised concerns regarding the significant delays in veterans being able to access their pensions. This issue had been raised with the lead Minister.	
7.2	Ron Moffett (Royal British Legion & Rotherham MCVC) confirmed that the Royal British Legion had celebrated 100 years earlier this month and that a wreath had been laid at Clifton Park in Rotherham to mark the occasion. He also reported that as a result of the COVID pandemic this had reduced the RBL casework referral resolution timescales from 14 days to around 3 days due to virtual working and not having to travel across the region.	
7.3	Samantha Mulholland (Wellbeing Practitioner, Sheffield Mind) reported that Sheffield Mind were looking to expand their walk-in group to Rotherham and had launched an online toolbox. Members were also invited to attend an online conference on 'Understanding Military Family' scheduled for Thursday, 24 th June 2021, 1.00pm which can be booked via Eventbrite or through the Sheffield Mind website .	
7.4	Elaine Mason (Regional Co-ordinator for South Yorkshire, Project Nova) updated on work of Project Nova highlighting that everyday life is a challenge for some veterans.	
	Other Business	
7.5	AFCCG Members highlighted the importance of involvement from the voluntary sector and business engagement and would welcome a further discussion with those leads that are representatives on the AFCCG on how they can further support the armed forces community.	VAR and Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber of Commerce.
7.6	It was suggested to have a Directory of available support in Rotherham and across the region similar to a directory produced by City of York Council. <i>Note: All information is currently accessible through the Rotherham Council website with appropriate links to support organisations to enable those organisations to maintain and update their own webpage content to avoid the need to regularly review to ensure accurate content that would require regular publishing and re-distributing..</i>	
	Armed Forces Day, Saturday, 26th June 2021	
7.7	Vicky Hartley, Rotherham Council reported that due to the COVID-19 pandemic and Government guidance on social distancing, restrictions on gatherings, the traditional civic ceremony to mark Rotherham's Armed Forces Day would not take place as usual this year. The day would not go forgotten and further discussions were underway with the Mayor of Rotherham as First Citizen of the Borough and leads from the armed forces community on how the day can be marked safely to show appreciation for all serving personnel and ex-servicemen and women.	
8.	Dates of Future Meetings	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday, 6th September 2021 (2.00 – 4.00pm) • Monday, 13th December 2021 (2.00 – 4.00pm) 	