[](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-covenant-supporting-information)

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| **MINUTES** | | **MEETING:** | Rotherham Armed Forces Community Covenant Group (AFCCG) | |
| **DATE & TIME:** | Monday, 27th February 2023 (2.00-4.00pm) | |
| **VENUE:** | Rotherham Town Hall | |
| **CHAIR:** | Cllr Eve Rose Keenan, Armed Forces Champion, Rotherham MBC | |
| **SUPPORT & MINUTES:** | Vicky Hartley, Member & Civic Support Manager & Armed Forces lead officer | |
| **IN ATTENDANCE** | | | | |
| Cllr Eve Rose Keenan | | Armed Forces Champion, Rotherham MBC | | |
| Vicky Hartley | | Member & Civic Support Manager & Armed Forces lead officer, Rotherham MBC | | |
| Major Adrian Hunt | | Veterans Advisory Pensions Committee (VAPC) Member & SSAFA | | |
| Cllr Ian Jones | | Chair, Rotherham Military Community Veterans Centre Executive Group | | |
| Elaine Mason | | Project Nova Caseworker, South Yorkshire | | |
| Ron Moffett | | Member, Royal British Legion (Rotherham) | | |
| Steve Bentham-Bates | | Chief Executive Officer, Help 4 Homeless Veterans | | |
| Malcolm Blease | | Chairman, Royal Airforce Association (Rotherham) | | |
| Fiona Grayson | | High Intensity Worker/Cognitive Behavioural Therapist, RDaSH IAPT Rotherham, Doncaster & South Humber | | |
| Katie Merrills | | High Intensity Worker/Cognitive Behavioural Therapist, RDaSH IAPT Rotherham, Doncaster & South Humber | | |
| Hannah Hall | | Engagement & Inclusion Lead, Patient Experience, Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust | | |
| Colonel (Retd) Jonathan Hunt | | Regional Chairman, SSAFA | | |
| **APOLOGIES RECEIVED** | | | | |
| Colonel McPherson | | High Sherriff of South Yorkshire | | |
| Sandra Tolley  Carol Wordsworth | | Head of Housing Options, Rotherham MBC  Housing Advice Co-ordinator, Rotherham MBC | | |
| Helen Wyatt | | Engagement Manager (Rotherham), NHS South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board | | |
| Major MP Lynch | | The Yorkshire Regiment | | |
| Aisha Morgan | | Senior Mental Health Nurse, Veterans’ Mental Health Complex Treatment Service, NHS | | |
| Capt David Tomlinson | | 102 CS Bn REME | | |
| Christine Bradley | | Project Co-ordinator, Hidden Faces (Rotherham MCVC) | | |
| Steve Lowe | | Regional Manager, Forces Employment Charity / Project Nova | | |
| Neil Halsey | | Armed Forces Champion, Department for Work and Pensions | | |
| **Item** | **Title** | | | **Action** |
| **1.**  **1.1** | **Welcome, Introduction and Apologies**  Cllr Eve Keenan, Armed Forces Champion and Chair of the Rotherham Armed Forces Community Covenant Group welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted. | | |  |
| **2.**  **2.1**  **2.2**  **2.3** | **Minutes of the last meeting, 26th September 2022 and Matters Arising**  There were no matters arising from the last meeting.  Fiona Grayson, RDasH advised that 7.7 of the draft minutes (report from Aisha Morgan) was incorrect in terms of references to the process for TILS (NHS Veterans Mental Health Transition, Intervention and Liaison) and requested that the reference be removed from the minutes.  Vicky Hartley, Rotherham MBC’s Member & Civic Support Manager confirmed that the draft minutes would be amended accordingly following the meeting.  ***Post meeting update***  *Minutes updated and published on the* [*Council’s website*](https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/file/3165/meeting-minutes-september-2022)*.* | | | Vicky Hartley |
| **3.**  **3.1**  **3.2**  **3.3**  **3.4** | **The New Armed Forces Covenant Duty**  Vicky Hartley, Rotherham Council’s Member & Civic Support Manager and lead officer for Armed Forces introduced a paper setting out the new Armed Forces Covenant Duty which came into force on 22nd November 20022. The Duty is a legal obligation on certain public bodies to ‘have due regard’ to the principles of the Covenant and requires decisions about the development and delivery of certain services to be made with conscious consideration of the needs of the Armed Forces community.  She highlighted that the new legal obligation impacts organisations responsible for delivering principally statutory functions in healthcare, education and housing services and reported the Council was already compliant and had been for many years in terms of Education and Housing.  As the Council does not lead on primary care services, the appropriate healthcare providers will be asked to provide an update on implications to the Covenant Group at a future meeting.    In light of the new Duty, the Rotherham Armed Forces Community Covenant Group’s 5 Year Action Plan will be reviewed and incorporate further detail on what should be covered by the new Duty and provide further detail on how Rotherham meets these legal requirements. The updated plan will be brought back to the Covenant Group for review at the next meeting in May and in the meantime the Council will continue to raise awareness of the new Duty. | | | Vicky Hartley |
| **4.**  **4.1**  **4.2**  **4.3**  **4.4**  **4.5**  **4.6**  **4.7** | **Support to Homeless Veterans**  Vicky Hartley updated on the position in relation to the remaining Sheffield City Region funding to support homeless veterans or those veterans at risk of homelessness. She confirmed £7k was carried over from March 2022 funding and is available to access until December 2023 as reported by Housing at the last meeting of the Covenant Group on 26th September 2022.  This scheme can provide financial support to assist with securing accommodation in the form of rent in advance and bonds, a deposit for housing association tenancies and any other associated set up costs for a new home (for example assist to provide carpets, furniture, bedding, and other household items).  It was reported that £1,036 of the £7k had been spent.  Major Adrian Hunt, Veterans Advisory Pensions Committee & SSAFA raised that there has been a delay with acknowledgement and response in relation to a submitted application. Vicky Hartley asked that Major Hunt send through the information directly to her to look into further with Housing colleagues in the Council.  ***Post meeting update***  *Case details and referral form sent through via Major Hunt and followed up with Sandra Tolley in the Council’s Housing Team and financial support provided to the veteran.*  The referral form to apply for financial assistance through the Council would also be re-circulated to all Members of the Covenant Group.  ***Post meeting update***  *Referral form emailed to all Members of the Covenant Group on 14th April 2023.*  It was important that the Council does not lose this funding and Vicky Hartley would discuss this further with the Council’s housing and homelessness leads.  The Covenant Group would also welcome an opportunity to discuss the Council’s Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy with Shiloh, Rotherham and support to rough sleepers in Rotherham. | | | Major Adrian Hunt / Vicky Hartley  Vicky Hartley  Vicky Hartley  Vicky Hartley |
| **5.**  **5.1**  **5.2**  **5.3**  **5.4** | **Veteran Friendly GP Practice Accreditation**  Cllr Eve Keenan, Rotherham’s Armed Forces Champion confirmed as of January 2023 that 14 GP practices had completed the declaration and were listed as compliant in terms of veteran friendly accreditation.  Details of all those GP practices with accreditation can be obtained via the following link: [Veterans' healthcare toolkit: Veteran friendly GP practice accreditation (rcgp.org.uk)](https://elearning.rcgp.org.uk/mod/book/view.php?id=12533&chapterid=285)  **Recognised Codes**  Major Adrian Hunt, Veterans Advisory Pensions Committee & SSAFA raised the issue of the GP’s IT systems. GP surgeries have or are upgrading to a new computer based system called SNOMED CT. This new system does not take letter codes, and requires a 9 digit code. This effectively renders the previous code 13jy as invalid. The outcome is a new generated code for the SNOMED system that veterans can add to their records recognising their military service. Veterans need to ascertain if their personal GP surgery is issuing the new system. If so, then the 9 digit code 302121005 should be added to their records (SNOMED CT ConceptID 302121005).    It was suggested that it would be helpful to know what IT systems are being used by Rotherham area GPs. Vicky Hartley would liaise with Helen Wyatt, Engagement Manager (Rotherham), NHS South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board regarding this on behalf of the Group.  ***Post meeting update:***  Senior Contracting & Service Improvement Manager (Primary Care for Rotherham), NHS South Yorkshire Integration Care Board confirmed on 14th April 2023 that 26 of the 28 are on SystmOne and 2 are on EMIS, both of which use SNOMED codes. | | | Vicky Hartley |
| **6.**  **6.1** | **Veterans Data Dashboard (Office for Veterans’ Affairs)**  Vicky Hartley reported that a National Veterans Data Dashboard had been recently made public by the Office of Veterans Affairs (OVA). The dashboard provides a snapshot to showcase to the public, to veterans and to service providers what information is available on the armed forces community. The current version only covers government data but in future it is hoped that the OVA may broaden the scope of data coverage to other services.  Link available via: [Veterans’ Data Dashboard | Tableau Public](https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/office.for.veterans.affairs/viz/VeteransDataDashboard_16746497502490/Story1) | | |  |
| **7.**  **7.1**  **7.2** | **Rotherham’s Armed Forces Day, Saturday, 24th June 2023**  Vicky Hartley reported planning has begun for Rotherham’s Armed Forces Day to be held on Saturday, 24th June in Rotherham Town Centre.  The Council’s Events Team will be leading on the event organisation with the Civic Office supporting with the organisation. Event Planning Working Group meetings are in the process of being organised and a bid for funding and request for flypast has been submitted. | | |  |
| **8.**  8.1  8.2  8.3  8.4  8.5  8.6  8.7  8.8  8.9 | **Covenant Group Member Updates**  **SSAFA North East & Yorkshire**  Major Adrian Adrian and Col Jonathan Hunt (Ret’d) updated on the Regional Office in Catterick (Team of 5 covering South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire and North East). The regional Casework Manager is Callum Crane and his contact details would be shared.  SSAFA’s AGM is due to take place on 13th April.  ***Post meeting update*** *(Permissions sought to share details as follows):*  Callum Crane, Regional Casework Manager, SSAFA North East & Yorkshire  Tel: 020 4566 9117  Email: [Callum.Crane@ssafa.org.uk](mailto:Callum.Crane@ssafa.org.uk) or [northeast.region@ssafa.org.uk](mailto:northeast.region@ssafa.org.uk)  **Help for Homeless Veterans (H4HV)**  Steven Bentham Bates updated on a recent decision to restrict their support to veterans in South, East, North & West Yorkshire and North and NE Lincolnshire.  Fuel Support Grant had been introduced in October 2022 in partnership with the Veterans Foundation. H4HV had exchanged their exhibition trailer for a van (RAF Recruiting vehicle) and upgraded their minibus for a 12 seater with disabled ramp access. Therapy Farm visits will commence again on 21st March and 28th April will be the 1st anniversary of the Barnsley drop in hub. There will also be a production of a TV series and publication of a book of poems by their ambassador.  Cllr Keenan, Rotherham’s Armed Forces Champion has also recently been appointed as a H4HV Trustee.  **Royal British Legion**  Ron Moffett reported on the successful RBL sponsored veterans seminar held on 8th December 2022 at Rotherham Town Hall. He reported that a significant amount of funding has been set aside nationally to support the cost of living crisis with grants available to assist veterans. There had also been a recent change of the RBL Caseworker for Rotherham. Further details of the caseworker would be shared with the Covenant Group as well as information on upcoming RBL advice and information days.  ***Post meeting update*** *(Permissions sought to share details as follows):*  *New RBL Casework covering Rotherham (South & West Yorkshire)*  Sharon Beardon, Casework Services Manager  Email: [SBeardon@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:SBeardon@britishlegion.org.uk)  RBL Advice & Information Days / Coffee Mornings   * Rotherham Town Centre Indoor Market Advice & Info (9.30-13.30, 25th April). * Tesco Rotherham Town Centre Coffee Morning (10am to 11.30am on 22nd April). * Brinsworth Community Hub Advice & Info (9.30am to 2.00pm, 23rd April). * Morrisons Advice & Info (11.00-14.00, 30th April).   **Royal Air Force Association**  Malcolm Blease informed the Group that there were a number of veteran welfare cases that he was currently dealing with.  **Project Nova**  Elaine Mason reported that Project Nova was expanding in the North and a new casework was required for Hull and that there continues to be good partnership working with local authorities, NHS and charities to support veterans.  **RDaSH**  Fiona Grayson reported that Katie Merrills will take over from her when she retires shortly as High Intensity Worker/Cognitive Behavioural Therapist, Rotherham IAPT, RDaSH IAPT Rotherham, Doncaster & South Humber.  **Rotherham MCVC**  Cllr Ian Jones reported that the MCVC is starting to evolve and back to the position where they now have the same numbers at the weekly drop ins. MCVC are assisting a significant number of veterans with complex needs (debt, health issues, domestic abuse, homelessness). Chris Bradley is leading on supporting this work ‘Hidden Faces’ and they are currently establishing a veterans database and continuing to be successful in obtaining grants to support veterans. A trip to the Veterans Therapy Farm is being organised for 21st April and MCVC continues to operate weekly, breakfast clubs.  **Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust**  Hannah Hall reported that the The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust is Veteran Aware Accredited and work continues to promote what veterans are entitled to in terms of priority access to NHS care, NHS waiting lists etc, raise awareness and to tackle health inequalities. A Veteran Aware Staff Survey is being sent out borough wide to help improve the service and veteran case studies are very welcome.  **Rotherham’s Armed Forces Champion**  Cllr Eve Keenan reported that she was delighted to have been recently appointed as a Trustee of Help 4 Homeless Veterans. She had attended an Army Engagement Event at Magna on 1st February where Army careers and development opportunities were discussed and promoted, has recently attended the South Yorkshire Veterans’ Breakfast Club, provides support and manages veterans casework and confirmed that  Rotherham Council is currently looking at revalidation of the Defence Employee Recognition Scheme given it has been some 5 years since last awarded (2018). She is also assisting with raising funds for the Royal British Legion. | | | All Covenant Group Members to send case studies to Vicky Hartley |
| 9.  9.1  9.2  9.3 | **Any other Business**  **Proposal for Drop in Facility in Rotherham for Veterans**  A suggestion of a drop-in facility in Rotherham Town Centre was made by Steve Bentham Bates, Help for Homeless Veterans supported by the Council’s Armed Forces Champion, Cllr Eve Keenan.  Vicky Hartley informed the Group that in the first instance, there would be a need to identify demand given there are already a number of other local charities that lead on providing support to veterans and given other support hubs that are available across the borough. Covenant Group Members would therefore be asked to feedback direct on whether they are supportive of this before the next Covenant Group meeting in May.  **Farewell to Fiona Grayson**  Cllr Keenan and Covenant Group Members in attendance thanked Fiona Grayson for all the work she has done over the years on the Covenant Group and in her role as High Intensity Worker/Cognitive Behavioural Therapist, RDaSH to support veterans. | | | All Covenant Group Members to feedback to Vicky Hartley |
| 10.  10.1 | **Future Meetings**  These would all be held in person at Rotherham Town Hall (2-4pm) on Mondays:   * Monday, 8th May 2023 * Monday, 7th August 2023 * Monday, 30th October 2023   ***Post meeting update:***  8th May meeting re-arranged to 15th May due to the additional Bank Holiday as a result of the King’s Coronation. | | |  |