



# The South Yorkshire Armed Forces Covenant Action Plan

2019-2020



## **The South Yorkshire Armed Forces Covenant steering group**

The steering group was established in 2011. The group comprises the Armed Forces Lead Councillor and Armed Forces Contact Officer from each of the Covenant groups in Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield. The steering group's purpose is to identify and work in partnership to address key issues across the region affecting the Armed Forces community.

The group work together to ensure barriers are challenged and changed, providing clear actions and outcomes in the delivery of the Armed Forces Covenant regionally. The South Yorkshire Armed Forces Covenant group is fundamental to providing strategic support to the Armed Forces Community in the region through effective partnership collaboration.

## **The South Yorkshire Armed Forces Covenant Project**

The South Yorkshire Armed Forces Covenant project supported by the Covenant Fund was conducted between 2017 and 2019 as a regional community capacity building enterprise. The findings of a South Yorkshire Armed Forces community survey directly informed the development of Covenant Action Plans across the region (Albertson et al. 2018<sup>1</sup>). Covenant group members from across South Yorkshire attended Action Learning sessions to facilitate the drawing up of Covenant Action Plans, which were shared at a regional consistency event in February 2019. The outputs of these sessions are incorporated into this regional Covenant Action Plan, which is structured around the six key thematic areas from the Governments "Strategy for our Veterans" (2018<sup>2</sup>). The project activities were evaluated and the final report contains the South Yorkshire Covenant model approach to strengthening the delivery of Covenant pledges (Albertson et al. 2019<sup>3</sup>).

1. Albertson, K. E., Albertson, K., Stevenson, J., and Murray, E. (2018) Mapping the Armed Forces Community across the region, Data report, Sheffield Hallam University.

2. Her Majesty's Government, The Northern Ireland Office, The Scottish Government and Welsh Government (2018) The Strategy for our Veterans: Valued, Contributing, Supported SG/2018/236.

3. Albertson, K. E., Albertson, K., Stevenson, J., and Murray, E. (2019) The South Yorkshire Armed Forces Covenant model, Final report, Sheffield Hallam University.

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## Theme 1: Community & Relationships

To support the AFC into healthy relationships and their integration into our communities.

**We will.....**

Increase the visibility of the regions existing Armed Forces community support services and organisations.

**By...**

- Understanding what is available and promoting on Council websites and covenant partnerships.
- Identifying gaps and meeting needs.
- Utilising Veterans Outreach Project vehicle to promote support throughout the region.



## Theme 2: Employment, Education & Skills

The support the AFC into appropriate employment.

**We will.....**

Promote the covenant's employment pledge, ensuring that all employment opportunities for the community are fully exploited.

**By...**

- Encouraging employers to sign up to the pledge and promoting the benefits of the AFC as valued employees.



## Theme 3: Finance & Debt

The assist the AFC to be financially self-supporting and resilient.

**We will.....**

Ensure that the community is aware of advice services that are available.

**By...**

- Ensuring that local advice services ask if people are veterans and are aware of their needs.
- Promoting advice services on Council websites and through the covenant partnerships.



## Theme 4: Health and Well-being

To ensure we have an understanding of the health needs of the AFC strategically embedded.

**We will.....**

Work towards enhancing AFC registration with GPs and that they are made aware of the needs of the AFC and these are included in Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and Health and Wellbeing Strategies.

**By...**

- Gathering data evidence from GPs and embedding AFC issues into strategies.



## Theme 5: Making a Home in Civilian Society

To assist the AFC to have a secure place to live.

**We will.....**

Provide advice, information and signposting for the AFC on housing options.

**By...**

- Ensuring housing and homeless assessments ascertain AFC membership status.
- Ensuring housing professionals understand what advice and options are available to the AFC.



## Theme 6: Veterans & the Law

To support the AFC to be resilient and to remain law abiding citizens.

**We will.....**

Ensure that members of the AFC in contact with the criminal justice are able to access appropriate support.

**By...**

- Mapping out available support services and identifying gaps.
- Promoting existing dedicated support services to the AFC.



## Cross Cutting Factors

We will work collaboratively to oversee the coordination of services, the gathering and sharing of data and strive to address public perceptions and enhance the understanding and recognition of the AFC across the region.

**As a Region we will**

- Share data and information across South Yorkshire to identify relevant funding and development opportunities.
- Collaborate on both the coordination and promotion of dedicated services across the region.
- Regionally promote the identification of barriers and work together to actively remove them.
- Utilise regional communication tools to address public perceptions and understanding and encourage recognition.
- Share best practise in local development of achieving the 6 regional Action plan priority areas.