

<b>MINUTES</b>	<b>MEETING:</b>	Rotherham Armed Forces Community Covenant Group (AFCCG)
	<b>DATE &amp; TIME:</b>	Monday, 18 <sup>th</sup> February 2019 (2.00 – 4.00pm)
	<b>VENUE:</b>	Town Hall, Rotherham
	<b>CHAIR:</b>	Cllr Ian Jones (Armed Forces Champion, Rotherham MBC)
	<b>NOTE TAKER:</b>	Vicky Hartley (Executive Office Manager, Rotherham MBC)

#### ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES

##### In attendance:

Cllr Ian Jones (Lead Member Armed Forces, Rotherham MBC), James McLaughlin (Head of Democratic Services, Rotherham MBC), Vicky Hartley (Executive Office Manager, Rotherham MBC), Malcolm Chiddey (Public Health Specialist, Rotherham MBC), Sandra Tolley (Head of Housing Options, Rotherham MBC), Carol Wordsworth (Housing Advice Co-ordinator, Rotherham MBC), Mohammed Aref (Enquiry & Liaison Officer, South Yorkshire Police), Fiona Grayson (High Intensity Worker/Cognitive Behavioural Therapist, Rotherham IAPT, RDASH), Maj Adrian Hunt (Trustee, Rotherham MCVC & 102 Bn REME), Jim Oakes (South Yorkshire Outreach Project Manager, Rotherham MCVC), Steve Lowe (North of England Manager, Project Nova), Lesley Jane Holt (Engagement Manager, RBL Industries Lifeworks Course), Retd Major Charlie Helmn (Assistant Regimental Secretary, Yorkshire Regiment), Rtd Col Jonathan Hunt (Regional Chairman, SSAFA), Andy Wallace, (SY Case Officer, Yorkshire Royal British Legion), John Topping (Secretary, Veterans Advisory & Pension Committee for Y&H), Ron Moffett (Chairman, Rotherham MCVC Executive Board), Zarah Khan (Employability Consultant for South Yorkshire, The Poppy Factory), Laura Brown (Specialist Vocational Advisor, Forces Employment Charity for Yorkshire & Humberside).

##### Apologies:

Shokat Lal (ACEX / Lead Strategic Officer, Rotherham MBC), Jamie Noble (Head of Community, Rotherham Utd Community Sports Trust), Nigel Coleman (Employer Account Manager, DWP), Col Andy Hadfield (Deputy Commander, 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade), Tony Carlin (Head of Emergency Response, South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service), Janet Wheatley (Chief Executive, Voluntary Action Rotherham), Helen Wyatt (Patient and Public Engagement Manager, Rotherham CCG), Andrew Denniff (Chief Executive, Barnsley, Rotherham Chamber of Commerce), Retd Lt Cdr Allen Dixon, Royal Navy Reserves), Rachel Addison (Reservist Forces and Cadet Associations), Paul Douglas (Chief Operating Officer, Rotherham United Football Club), John Lewis (Chief Executive, Rotherham Titans Rugby Club), Saghir Alam (Chairperson, Council of Mosques), Kevin Alsop (Personnel Recovery Unit, MoD), Inspector Nick Maddocks (Safer Neighbourhoods Team, South Yorkshire Police).

ITEM	TITLE	ACTION
<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome, Introductions and Apologies</b>	
<b>1.1</b>	Cllr Ian Jones (Armed Forces Champion, Rotherham MBC) welcomed everyone to the meeting. Individual introductions were given and apologies noted as listed above.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Minutes of the last meeting, 10<sup>th</sup> September 2018</b>	
<b>2.1</b>	<p>The minutes of the last meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> September were agreed. Updates on progress of actions not covered on the agenda for this meeting were provided as follows:</p> <p><b>a) 2.4: Support of the AFC by South Yorkshire Police</b> - PC Doug MacDonald has very recently transferred from police response to Neighbourhoods at Rotherham South, Doug is building links with the local armed forces community in the area. An extended offer for PC MacDonald to attend future AFCCG meetings remains open.</p> <p>South Yorkshire Police are holding a Police SPOC (Single Point of Contact) briefing and Project Nova meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> March.</p>	

	<p>The NHS Police Liaison &amp; Diversion Service for South Yorkshire have just gone through a re-tendering competition. The 4 service regions of South Yorkshire is currently provided by 3 NHS Trusts, from April the whole regional service will be provided by South West Yorkshire Partnership (SWYP) NHS Foundation Trust, SWYP already deliver the Barnsley L&amp;D provision and are strong collaborative partners working with Project Nova.</p> <p><b>b) 3.5 &amp; 3.6 ‘Have you ever served?’</b> – the Council's Customer Services and Communications Team are now working together to ensure veterans and families can better access Council services and are supported and signposted to the right service either within or outside the Council. The Veterans and Families Support Information Guide provided by York St John University has been widely circulated across the Council.</p>	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Draft Terms of Reference</b>	
<b>3.1</b>	The draft Terms of Reference for the Armed Forces Community Covenant Group was agreed.	
<b>3.2</b>	A final version will be circulated to AFCCG Members and the wider armed forces community for their information.	Vicky Hartley
<b>4.</b>	<b>Education, Training &amp; Employment</b>	
<b>4.1</b>	Zarah Khan (Employability Consultant for South Yorkshire, The Poppy Factory) and Laura Brown (Specialist Vocational Advisor, Forces Employment Charity for Yorkshire & Humberside) were welcomed to the meeting.	
	<b>Poppy Factory</b>	
<b>4.2</b>	Zarah Khan briefed on the charity and its offer.	
<b>4.3</b>	The Poppy Factory was founded in 1922 to provide employment for veterans injured during the First World War. They work with businesses across the country to provide bespoke opportunities and ongoing employment support for hundreds of wounded, injured and sick veterans and help to restore financial independence through sustainable and rewarding work. To date they have supported thousands of people back into civilian employment.	
<b>4.4</b>	Support involves helping to develop employability skills, creating or enhancing CVs, assisting with job searches and applications, interview preparation and coaching, in-work support for up to 12 months, suggestions on accessing welfare support or benefits and working with employers to make reasonable adjustments.	
<b>4.5</b>	Website: <a href="http://www.poppyfactory.org">www.poppyfactory.org</a> / Telephone: 0208 940 3305	
	<b>Forces Employment Charity for Yorkshire and Humber (FEC for Y&amp;H)</b>	
<b>4.6</b>	Laura Brown also briefed on the charity and its offer which is similar to the Poppy Factory.	
<b>4.7</b>	The FEC for Y&H was founded in 1885 and operates across the UK. Her role as a Specialist Vocational Advisor for Y&H is to provide employability and employment support to working age veterans in the UK. The charity assists with preventing working age veterans from becoming long-term unemployed so that they can sustain an income and provide a stable life for themselves and their families. They also work with those who are unemployed and work closely with welfare, healthcare and housing charities as well as working with veterans in the criminal justice sector.	
<b>4.8</b>	The charity works closely with Project Nova and in partnership with other organisations to avoid duplication.	
<b>4.9</b>	Website: <a href="http://www.rfea.org.uk">www.rfea.org.uk</a> / Telephone: 01132 469065	
<b>4.10</b>	Any available leaflets for both charities will be circulated via email to all AFCCG Members for information.	Vicky Hartley

5.	<b>Strategies, Consultations, Schemes &amp; Data</b>	
	<b>a) MoD Veterans Strategy</b>	
5.1	AFCCG Members noted a briefing paper prepared by the Council on the first ever UK-wide strategy on the delivery of support for veterans published on 14 <sup>th</sup> November. 2018. The strategy identifies six key areas (community and relationships, employment and skills, health and well-being, finance and debt, housing and contact with the law) as priority areas over the next 10 years.	
	<b>b) MHCLG consultation on new statutory guidance on social housing allocations</b>	
5.2	Sandra Tolley (Head of Housing Options, Rotherham MBC) and Carol Wordsworth (Housing Advice Co-ordinator, Rotherham MBC) updated on a consultation by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government on new statutory guidance on the allocation of accommodation by local housing authorities published on 9 January which runs to 8 <sup>th</sup> March 2019.	
5.3	They also reported on the recent review of the Council's Housing Allocation Policy and highlighted its content in relation to armed forces which provides Band 1 priority	
	a) to personnel or former members of the reserves forces who were serving in the regular forces at any time in the five years proceeding their application and to bereaved spouses and b) to civil partners or other family members including relationship breakdown where they will cease to be entitled, to reside in MoD accommodation (subject to conditions set out in the Policy).	
5.4	The Council's current housing application forms do ask the question 'Have you ever served?' and the service continues to identify members of the armed forces at the housing register application stage.	
5.5	The Council's Head of Housing Options will confirm the number of active housing register applications for armed forces and stock numbers of one bedroom flats across Rotherham to the AFCCG.	
	<i>Note: The Council's Housing Team confirmed at end February that there are currently 6 active housing register applications that have served in the armed forces and there is a stock of 2128 one bedroom flats in the Rotherham area.</i>	
5.6	The Council is also in the process of revising its Homelessness Strategy 2019-2022 and will circulate a draft to AFCCG Member for comments in advance of consideration by the Council's Cabinet later this year.	Sandra Tolley / Carol Wordsworth
	<b>c) New NHS England Scheme – 'veteran friendly' GP practices</b>	
5.7	In July 2018 a new national scheme backed by NHS England and the Royal College of GPs to improve medical care and treatment for former members of the armed services was introduced.	
5.8	Practices can qualify for veteran friendly status by offering extra support for ex-military personnel who may face additional challenges when they return to civilian life.	
5.9	A number of GPs across the country are now signing up to become 'veteran friendly' and John Topping (Secretary, Veterans Advisory and Pensions Committee for Y&H) informed AFCCG Members that surgeries in North Yorkshire have already received full accreditation (Richmondshire being the first in that region).	
5.10	Malcolm Chiddey (Public Health Specialist, Rotherham MBC) will invite Helen Wyatt (Patient & Public Engagement Manager, Rotherham CCG) to attend the next AFCCG meeting in May to provide an update on whether any Rotherham GPs have or are in the process of obtaining accreditation.	Malcolm Chiddey / Helen Wyatt
	<b>d) Service Planning for Veterans and Delivery of the AF (MoD Census 2011 – Working Age UK Armed Forces Veterans residing in England and Wales)</b>	
5.11	AFCCG Members noted the Rotherham and South Yorkshire data 'Census 2011 Working Age UK Armed Forces Veterans residing in England and Wales' published in September 2018 following a Government commitment last year to improve the data that its departments hold on the UK Armed Forces veterans.	

<p>6.</p> <p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p> <p>6.3</p> <p>6.4</p> <p>6.5</p> <p>6.6</p> <p>6.7</p> <p>6.8</p> <p>6.9</p> <p>6.10</p>	<p><b>Action Planning</b></p> <p><b>a) Feedback from Rotherham Action Learning event, November 2018</b></p> <p>Dr Katherine Alberston, Sheffield Hallam University with her colleagues Mandy Wearne and Janet Butterworth (Inspiration NW Ltd) facilitated a 'Rotherham Action Learning' event on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2018 involving AFCCG Members and the wider armed forces community. The session was aimed to reflect on the South Yorkshire survey findings and recommendations, recognise achievements to date and capture and prioritise ideas for Rotherham's 5-year Armed Forces Community Covenant Action Plan.</p> <p>The session was very well attended and positive feedback received from attendees.</p> <p><b>b) Draft Rotherham Armed Forces Community Covenant 5-Year Action Plan (2019-2024)</b></p> <p>Following the session in Rotherham on 12<sup>th</sup> November as outlined above, four key themes were identified that will form Rotherham's 5-year Armed Forces Community Covenant Action Plan. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good Governance</li> <li>• Clarity and prioritisation of work streams</li> <li>• Exchanging information between partners</li> <li>• Strengthening communication and engagement</li> </ul> <p>James McLaughlin (Head of Democratic Services, Rotherham MBC) presented a draft high level Action Plan which had been circulated to the AFCCG via email shortly before the meeting (18<sup>th</sup> February) and tabled.</p> <p>The Action Plan is intended to be a living document, kept under regular review and monitored via standing item on all future AFCCG meeting agendas.</p> <p>During discussion it was highlighted that the Council will not be leading on all activity outlined in the Action Plan and there is an expectation that AFCCG Members will take responsibility for leading on specific areas.</p> <p>AFCCG Members agreed the content of the Action Plan subject to any further comments and confirmation of responsible leads and monitoring arrangements. Comments should be submitted to James McLaughlin by Friday, 29<sup>th</sup> March.</p> <p>John Topping (Secretary, Veterans Advisory and Pensions Committee for Y&amp;H) highlighted the need to continue to share good practice across all areas and not reinvent the wheel. He will share work of the North Yorkshire Armed Forces Community Covenant Network with the Rotherham AFCCG.</p> <p><b>c) South Yorkshire-wide Action Planning Event, 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2019</b></p> <p>A small group of representatives from Rotherham (AFCCG Members and wider armed forces community) are due to attend the South Yorkshire-wide Action Learning event on Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> February. The aim of the session is to work with Barnsley, Doncaster and Sheffield to draw up South Yorkshire's first regional Armed Forces Covenant Action Plan. Dan Jarvis, Mayor of Sheffield City Region is also expected to be in attendance.</p> <p>The South Yorkshire Armed Forces Covenant Action Plan will be shared with AFCCG Members once written up and approved by the South Yorkshire Armed Forces Community Covenant Group.</p>	<p>AFCCG Members / James McLaughlin</p> <p>John Topping</p> <p>Vicky Hartley</p>
<p>7.</p> <p>7.1</p>	<p><b>Project &amp; Partner Updates</b></p> <p><b>a) Outreach Provision across South Yorkshire (SYAFC Project)</b></p> <p>AFCCG Members noted the report and verbal update from Jim Oakes (Project Manager, South Yorkshire Outreach Project) on the veterans outreach connection project. An online booking system has now been established and it is intended to launch the vehicle / trailer in early April 2019.</p>	

<p><b>7.2</b></p> <p><b>7.3</b></p> <p><b>7.4</b></p> <p><b>7.5</b></p> <p><b>7.6</b></p>	<p><b>b) Understanding Military Culture and Transition (SYAFC Project)</b></p> <p>Cllr Ian Jones (Armed Forces Champion, Rotherham MBC) updated on the training element of the South Yorkshire Covenant Fund Project. To date there have been 63 deliveries and 730 members of staff have been trained, with all dates being booked until the end of the project in June 2019.</p> <p>There has been low take up in Rotherham over the last few months and AFCCG Members were asked to encourage their colleagues to attend the training.</p> <p>Remaining dates for Rotherham are 28<sup>th</sup> February, 26<sup>th</sup> March, 24<sup>th</sup> April, 28<sup>th</sup> May and 26<sup>th</sup> June. Places can be booked by emailing <a href="mailto:Directions@rotherham.gov.uk">Directions@rotherham.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Social isolation continues to be highlighted across South Yorkshire.</p> <p>At the end of the project, Nick Wood (Education &amp; Development Lead, York St John University) who delivers the training will write an impact report which will follow with an event later in the year to show how the data has been used.</p> <p><b>c) Partner Updates</b></p> <p><b>7.7</b> <b>Project Nova</b> – Steve Lowe advised that January had been a very busy month with 29 referrals from South Yorkshire, 23 of these were from the Police, 3 from L&amp;D, and 3 Community/self-referrals.</p> <p><b>7.8</b> From initial assessments mental health and wellbeing remained the highest initial support need, followed by friends and community, managing strong feelings, positive use of time, relationships and family, accommodation, drugs &amp; alcohol, living skills and self-care, crime free life, parenting and caring.</p> <p><b>7.9</b> <b>Yorkshire Royal British Legion</b> - Andy Wallace (SY Case Officer) also provided an update on the active caseloads across Yorkshire. From October to December 2018 there were 45 new cases. There are 147 active cases across the area with £56,368 spent to meet beneficiaries needs - main issues are housing, employment and debt.</p>	
<p><b>8.</b></p> <p><b>8.1</b></p> <p><b>8.2</b></p> <p><b>8.3</b></p> <p><b>8.4</b></p> <p><b>8.5</b></p> <p><b>8.6</b></p>	<p><b>Planning for Armed Forces Day 2019</b></p> <p>Vicky Hartley (Executive Office Manager, Rotherham MBC) updated on developments of planning for Armed Forces Day due to be held on Saturday, 29<sup>th</sup> June (10.30 – 4.30pm) in Rotherham town centre.</p> <p>The Council has a larger budget than in previous years due to securing sponsorship from AESSEAL, McDonalds, the Council's Housing Directorate 'Gain Share Fund' and Studio Lux Photographers (increase from £2.5k to £6k).</p> <p>The event will get underway with a Military parade through the town centre followed by a service of worship. There will be performances from a variety of singers, displays of military vehicles and weapons, WW1 &amp; WW2 re-enactors, living history camp, walkabout acts, face painter, balloon modeller, inflatable helter skelter slide, paint ball range, vintage bus and vehicles etc.</p> <p>In addition there will be a concert held in Rotherham Minster on the eve of Armed Forces Day on Friday, 28<sup>th</sup> June.</p> <p>A bid will be submitted to the MoD to part fund the event (mainly infrastructure costs).</p> <p>AFCCG Members were asked to give some consideration to volunteering on the day and contact Vicky Hartley if available and willing to do so.</p>	<p>AFCCG Members</p>
<p><b>9.1</b></p>	<p><b>Other Business</b></p> <p><b>Suicides in Rotherham</b></p> <p>It was reported there has been an increase in the number of suicides in Rotherham. It is not confirmed if any of the recent suicides are from the armed forces community. There is a Suicide Prevention Lead Officer in the Council who is working with relevant organisations / agencies and there are a number of support services available.</p>	

9.2	During discussion it was highlighted there is a need for Coroners to undertake proof of service checks or ask the question and this is something that AFCCG Members should consider lobbying on.	
9.3	It was also noted that John Topping (Secretary, Veterans Advisory and Pensions Committee, Y&H) regularly engages with the Minister for Defence through his Committee role and is willing to assist with any channelling / routing of information to the Minister.  <b>ID Card for Veterans</b>	
9.4	A brief discussion took place on ID Card for Veterans. <i>Note: Shortly after this AFCCG meeting, the MoD announced its intention to launch a new ID card. Further details can be found here:</i> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-veterans-id-cards-rolled-out-to-service-leavers">https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-veterans-id-cards-rolled-out-to-service-leavers</a>	
10.	<b>Next Meeting</b>	
10.1	Monday, 20 <sup>th</sup> May (2.00-4.00pm, Rotherham Town Hall).	