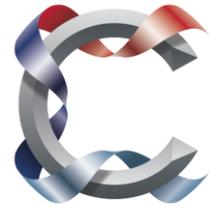




The Community Covenant e-Newsletter

Issue #3, March 2013



Welcome!

Welcome to the third Community Covenant e-Newsletter! In this edition we have reports on the news that all of the Scottish local authority areas have signed Community Covenants, a look at the responsibilities local councils have in education and an update on a number of successful grant scheme projects. We will also look at the real benefits Community Covenants are having up and down the country on the lives of the Service Community and the local population.

We welcome your thoughts – information on how to provide feedback or join our mailing list is located at the end of this e-Newsletter.

Scotland is all signed!

The enthusiasm for the Community Covenant is continuing across the country, but particularly in Scotland where we are delighted to announce that all 32 local authority areas have signed a pledge with their local Armed Forces unit. These partnerships are already beginning to have real benefits at the local level, and we thought it would be great to offer you a highlight of the work that is happening across Scotland.

DG First Contact was established by Dumfries and Galloway Council's Armed Forces Champion to develop a strategy with key decision makers and service providers in Dumfries and Galloway to support ex-service personnel. This group have already made significant achievements amongst which Dumfries and Galloway becoming one of the first regions in Scotland to set up a priority system for re-settling veterans in the social housing sector.



3 Rifles receive freedom of the City of Edinburgh

The Getting it Right for Forces Families project has been strengthening links between the Armed Forces and the Highland community for a number of years. A public protection event is now held annually considering issues such as combat stress, alcohol misuse, domestic abuse, self-harm and suicide, post traumatic stress disorder, disability, homelessness, child and adult protection for those working within the Armed

Forces and Civilian Welfare service organisations. These events help to dispel myths and preconceptions about forces families and help improve responses from all agencies to ensure they are getting the right help at the right time.

Glasgow City Council has developed Glasgow's Helping Heroes to provide a one point of contact "Gateway Model" which aims to improve access to

For Your Diary

14 March 2013

**Community Covenant Grants
Scheme Panel**

29 March 2013

**Funding closes for local Armed
Forces Day events**

March 2013

Reopening of the Libor Fund

Community Covenant Grant Scheme

We are currently investigating the possibility of running the Community Covenant Grant Scheme at a regional level rather than centrally through the MOD head office. However, whether the fund is administered centrally or regionally we expect the next panel to be held in June. We will of course let everyone know the new procedures when the final decision has been made.

The next panel will be held on 14th March and we have received a bumper batch of 106 bids. Good luck to everyone who put in an application!

"THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL ARE DELIGHTED TO LEAD THE WAY IN SCOTLAND ON SUCH AN IMPORTANT ISSUE"

Carolyn Caddick,
Highland Council's Armed Forces
and Veterans Champion

and co-ordination of advice and support for service personnel, veterans, their families and carers in Glasgow. They work with a range of organisations across health, housing, social care, employability, financial services and specialist armed forces agencies to support service personnel, veterans, their families and carers to address any issue that affects them. In addition to a website, Glasgow's Helping Heroes has a helpline and one to one support from staff employed by SSAFA Forces Help Glasgow through funding from Glasgow City Council and Glasgow Works. The staff are all ex-service men or women.

Scottish local authorities have also been successful in bidding for funding from the Community Covenant Grant Scheme. A group in Edinburgh used their funding to replace a mobility adapted mini bus to provide affordable

“WE HAVE BEEN OVERWHELMED BY THE SUPPORT OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES. THEIR COLLECTIVE DESIRE TO CONTINUE BUILDING AND DEVELOPING THE ACHIEVEMENTS ESTABLISHED SO FAR WILL ENSURE THAT WE CONTINUE TO PROVIDE THE VERY BEST FOR OUR PEOPLE, BOTH NOW AND INTO THE FUTURE. I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO THANK ALL THOSE WHO HAVE MADE THIS POSSIBLE.”

Brigadier Paul K Harkness,
Commander 51 (Scottish) Brigade

door-to-door service to allow elderly and disabled people from the local and Armed Forces communities to access local facilities. Meanwhile, a group from Dumfries to build a log cabin to increase accommodation for injured combatants to have week long holiday.

We are delighted that all of Scotland has signed up, and we look forward to celebrating the same milestone in England and Wales!

Update on the Community Covenant Grant Scheme

Since the Community Covenant Grant Scheme was launched in 2011 some £6M has been allocated to 160 projects in six rounds of funding. We are starting to receive final reports on those projects that we have funded and we wanted to share some of the great feedback we have received.

Brompton-on-Swale CE Primary School, which has particularly strong links to the Royal Dragoon Guards, was awarded £28,000 from the Community Covenant Grant Scheme to erect new floodlights on their sports pitches. The school provided its own financial contribution to the project through the PTA and the school's revenue budget. Construction work started soon after the grant was awarded and pupils and local families quickly began to see the benefit from the



Team Talk at Brompton-on-Swale School

Publicising the Community Covenant

It is important to ensure that all Council staff are aware that you have signed a Community Covenant and who is your Armed Forces Champion. Therefore, when someone contacts the council looking for guidance everyone knows where to direct them.

Perhaps you could hold a workshop for council staff or put out an information note.

new floodlights. During March the school hosted the Year 5/6 (9-11 year olds), Year 3/4 (7-9 year olds) and Girls area football tournaments. Approximately 216 children were involved in these events. 26% of the school's population are children from Armed Forces Families and the sporting events run by the school allow further links to be built between Armed Forces families and local civilian families.

Veterans F1rst Point ran a one day conference aimed at increasing awareness of veterans' issues, the services available and to enhance co-ordination between the military, charity sector and statutory organisations. 118 delegates attended the conference, with the majority coming from a health authority, local authority or voluntary organisation. Feedback from the delegates who attended the conference was very positive, with many emphasizing how useful it had been. One delegate noted that they had gained an "increased awareness of the many agencies available to help veterans", whilst another felt that the day had given him "some great ideas as to how we can develop a service suitable for veterans in [our area], based on what goes on a V1P".

Funding for Armed Forces Day Events

Communities across the UK are being encouraged to apply for funding to hold events as part of Armed Forces Day.

Since 2009, Armed Forces Day has been marked annually with events large and small throughout the UK, and this year the celebrations will fall on Saturday 29 June, with a major national event held in the City of Nottingham. Last year over 200 events took place in all parts of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

If you are a council, organisation or a member of a local community you can apply for funding from the MOD to host an event, whether big or small. A maximum of £10,000 is available per application for up to 50% of the total cost. Anyone interested in applying for funding must submit an application form by 29 March 2013.

Funding for Armed Forces Day events is completely separate from the Community Covenant Grant Scheme, and the Grant Scheme cannot support local Armed Forces Day events.

To find out more about the application process and funding criteria, visit the [Armed Forces Day website](#) or contact the Ceremonial Events and Commemorative Team on PersTrg-DSSec-CECTMailbox@mod.uk.

Local Government Responsibilities: Education

Delivering the Covenant is not just a matter for national government, but also local authorities who are responsible for many of the services used by the Armed Forces Community.

Due to the mobility of Service life, families can be posted to new areas at very short notice. This can have significant implications for the education of Service children, as they may arrive in a new area halfway through the school year or miss application deadlines. Local authorities should ensure that the children of serving personnel are not at a disadvantage when applying for school places.

When determining the arrangements locally for schools admissions, it is important to take into account the changes we have made to the Schools Admissions Code. In England, schools can now exceed the 30-pupil limit for infant classes in order to accommodate Service children, and greater emphasis can now be given to the children of UK Service personnel in their oversubscription policy. Similarly in Wales, the Schools Admissions Code notes that local authorities should offer place to Service children in advance and should accept a unit postal address for applications from Service personnel. In Scotland the situation varies from area to area as local authorities are responsible for setting their own allocation priorities. However, web pages offering guidance for Service families on interrupted education and the support available went live in 2012.

Local councils should also encourage schools to apply for funds from the fund for Schools with Service Children, which has now allocated £6M in grants applicants throughout UK.

Another important responsibility of the local authority is to ensure uninterrupted Special Educational Needs provision for Service families, even when they move between areas. For Service children who move around within England and Wales there is legislation in place requiring the old local authority to transfer a SEN statement to the new one, and the new local authority has to arrange the provision in the statement they have taken over.

So what can a local authority do to ensure that these commitments are met? There are numerous examples demonstrating the benefits that can be achieved.

Oxfordshire County Council has received praise from Ofsted for the work they have done in support of Service families. As a result of the changes to the Schools Admissions Code, it has been made easier for Service families' children to secure school places by using base addresses prior to postings rather than waiting for families to have identified home addresses.

Surrey Heath Borough Council's Family Support Workers provide targeted support to Service children moving schools, and they are putting together an induction booklet for Service children transferring to schools in the area.

Buckinghamshire County Council, working with their local military community, have successfully reached agreement to expand the Bucks Pupil Premium to Reservists who are on active duty and to fund for 5 years the pupil premium if the parent on active service is killed in action.

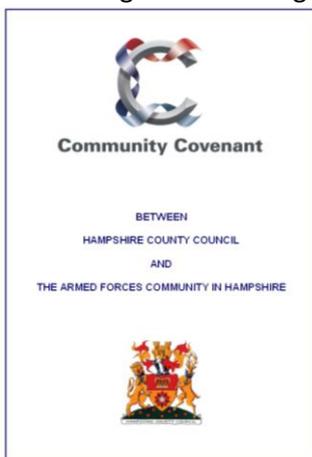
In following issues we will cover other areas where local authorities have a key role to play in driving forward delivery of the Covenant.

Benefits of the Community Covenant: Hampshire County Council

Now that around 250 local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales have signed a Community Covenant we are starting to see great examples of the real benefits that the scheme can have.

Hampshire has a significant Armed Forces population, with a tri-Service population of around 22,000 and the highest percentage of veterans per head of population. The wider armed forces community is estimated at 130,000, a number larger than the population in all but two districts of the County. Work on the Community Covenant is overseen by the Civilian and Military Partnership Board, and Councillor Keith Mans was appointed as the Armed Forces Champion.

Access to housing was highlighted as a key issue for Service families. Hampshire is a 2 tier area where the 11 district councils have responsibility for housing matters along with the unitary authorities of Southampton and



Hampshire community Covenant

Portsmouth City Councils. Hampshire County Council has been working to develop links between the PRU, JSHAO and district housing teams and has also facilitated housing briefings for SPVA and the service charities SSAFA and RBL .

Another area identified by Hampshire was the need to ensure that Service children, and particularly their access to school places, are supported. Approximately 5% of the school children in Hampshire come from Service families and the Council are working closely with schools to look at how

to spread best practice, and have established a newsletter in order to spread ideas and practical solutions. For example, Talavera Infant School has set up The Camouflage Group, for those children who have parents serving in Afghanistan. The school has supported the children to pack shoeboxes of goodies to send out for Father's Day. They have also had the opportunity to interview a soldier, sample rations and write letters.

Having a significant Veteran population, issues around employment and the transition to civilian life were judged to be key. The Hampshire Economic Military Partnership has been formed, to bring together key organisations and stakeholders to work together to undertake projects to support the economic development and prosperity opportunities of Service personnel, Reservists, Veterans, and their families. Furthermore, the Council is also working closely with RBL, SSAFA, Age Concern Hampshire and the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency to develop a better understanding of the roles of each partner, and to identify an integrated pathway. This ensures that individuals in need of support are well looked after and provided with the most appropriate advice to solve their particular issue no matter which individual organisation they initially contact.

“WE HAVE MADE VERY GOOD PROGRESS WITH THE WORK WE ARE DOING AS PART OF THE COMMUNITY COVENANT TO HELP ADDRESS THE ISSUES FACED BY SERVICE FAMILIES IN HAMPSHIRE, AND OUR COMMITMENT TO THIS PROGRAMME UNDERLINES HOW MUCH WE VALUE THEIR PRESENCE WHICH HAS HELPED SHAPE THE COUNTY AND ITS COMMUNITIES.”

Councillor Keith Mans,
Armed Forces Champion

This is just one of the great examples of best practice that we are hearing about up and down the country. Remember to send us an annual report setting out your delivery of the Community Covenant to help us spread best practice and publicise the work that you are doing.

First World War Commemoration

Next year will mark the 100-year anniversary since the start of the First World War. The Department for Culture Media and Sport has teamed up with the Imperial War Museums and the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to provide funding for local communities and councils who wish to mark the occasion.

The HLF offers help to communities wishing to commemorate the centenaries of the First World War, and can provide funds to help groups explore the history and legacy of the war and its impact on local communities across the UK. HLF is actively seeking and welcoming applications for all kinds of heritage projects, large and small, that aim to mark the anniversaries of the First World War. Check out the [HLF booklet](#) and [online guidance](#) to find out what funding is available.

Creating a Website

One of the most important steps a local authority can take after signing a Community Covenant is to establish a Community Covenant webpage within their existing website. This should include key points of contact within the Council, information about what a local authority has done under the framework of the Community Covenant, what they plan to do and links to key local organisations. It is important to make sure that when visitors to your website search for the Community Covenant they are able to find the information they need.

A number of local authorities have a dedicated page or series of pages on their website to direct members of the Armed Forces community to relevant Council departments or external organisations. Check out the websites created by [Hertfordshire County Council](#) and [Hull City Council](#) to see fantastic examples of what can be achieved.

To be added to the distribution list or to submit feedback or article proposals, please contact us at COVENANT-MAILBOX@MOD.UK