



Report of:	Meeting	Date	Item No.
Terry Rogers, Armed Forces Champion	Council	30 July 2015	10

Armed Forces Champion Report

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To inform the Council of the current position on various issues relating to the Armed Forces Community Covenant at Wyre Council.

2. Current and future issues

- 2.1 Summary information is included in Appendix 1 on the following issues:

- Housing
- Health
- Example of help provided during 2014 -15
- Veterans in the Community
- Pharos Project (Youth Offending Team and Schools)
- Funding
- Organisation Referral
- Meet The Marines 2015
- Report of Armed Forces Team Member

3. Questions and comments

- 3.1 I am, unfortunately, unable to attend the meeting on 30 July, but I will respond to any comments made or questions asked by e-mail.

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Armed Forces Champion: Progress Update
From April 2014 to July 2015

1. **Housing**

A comprehensive approach to housing both HM Service leavers and Veterans in our communities has been undertaken by Local authorities across the UK. I am pleased to announce that Wyre Council adopts the said policy under the Armed Forces Community Covenant. If a service leaver or veteran meets certain criteria within a prescribed time of discharge from HM Forces they will automatically qualify for Band B registration by local Registered Social Providers under the Fylde Coast Lettings Policy, adopted by all 3 Fylde Coast authorities. In the case of homelessness a priority for housing will be given as per normal criteria together with referral to the Housing Options Team.

Health

Serving members of HM Forces and their families are subject to both military and NHS services as per Ministry of Defence guidelines. Veterans in Wyre are again subject to normal NHS guidelines on health with the caveat that if their illness or injury was sustained in service a fast track approach to NHS services can be implemented at the request of the GP/Hospital/Community Health providers under Armed Forces Covenant guidelines implemented by NHS England. I, in my role as Armed Forces Champion, am able to make referrals to the Military Veterans Service (NHS) for Medical and mental health issues which affect a large number of veterans in Wyre.

Examples of the help provided in 2014/15

The first example concerns a Homeless Veteran living in a garden shed of a friend in Hambleton. After intervention by the AFC for Wyre, the Royal British Legion and the Housing Options Team at Wyre this man was found accommodation in the Wyre area within the private sector and referred to medical GP and Benefit services within a two week period.

The second example involves a family from Cleveleys recently discharged from service in the Royal Navy due to illness of the spouse, who were living with parents on their return to Wyre. On seeking rental accommodation in Wyre the family were successfully referred to Regenda Homes and duly accepted as a Band B applicant for housing under the Covenant Scheme.

The final example is a veteran from Fleetwood who was experiencing problems with rent arrears whilst in the private sector housing. He was successfully referred to the benefit team at Wyre and is now in receipt of housing and council tax benefit and a repayment plan has been implemented for the arrears.

Veterans in the Community

I have established a team of Veterans in our community who will help and assist with different projects in and around the Wyre area, particularly the delivery of the Pharos Project and school visits.

Pharos Project

The Pavilion at Memorial Park is now available and I will be introducing the project from late August 2015.

Funding

A new tranche of funding via the Ministry of defence is to be announced on 15 August 2015. I will be applying for monies to ensure a number of projects can be implemented in Wyre. Bids will be made, within the criteria to be applied, for schemes which will support service leavers and their families to overcome barriers to family life, help them to access non-core healthcare and to integrate effectively within the civilian communities.

Organisation referral

The following organisations are used for implementation of the Armed Forces community Covenant:

The Royal British Legion

SSAFA

Royal Air Force Charitable trust

Royal Navy Charitable Trust

Army Charities

Help for Heroes

42 North West Brigade

Military Veterans Service NHS

Wyre Council

Lancashire County Council

Armed Forces Champion Wyre Council

Registered Social Providers Fylde coast Area

Meet the Marines 2015

I am pleased to announce I have secured a visit to Fleetwood by the Royal Marine Commandos Team. The event will take place from the 24 November until 27 November 2015 at the Marine boating lake and Sea Cadets base in Fleetwood and will consist of attack boat displays, Laser Quest and other Royal Marine events. My thanks go to the events team at Wyre for their help and assistance in this matter. I have asked the Mayor to attend and elected, Members are also more than welcome, but are asked to let me know by email as soon as possible if they wish to attend, so that numbers can be finalised.

Report of Armed Forces Team member (Paul Deacon)

I have been involved in the following:

Blackpool Victoria Hospital Equality & Diversity Consultation

Following a request to attend this event, I gave advice about the requirements of the Armed Forces Community Covenant and examples of best practice from around the UK, which assist in identification of AF personnel and veterans, with the potential of early diagnosis and appropriate specialist support.

Fylde Coast Engagement and Armed Forces Week

Wyre's Armed Forces Team continue to maintain and develop good relationships with veterans and serving armed forces organisations, taking part in activities with veterans associations, organised throughout Armed Forces week. I took part in the Blackpool Taxi Pull an annual event with taxi drivers raising money for Armed Forces Charities.

Mental Health referral to Naval Families Federation

During the course of my work supporting victims of anti-social behaviour, I was made aware of a case of a partner of a serving Naval Rating, who has been suffering from mental health problems due to isolation, this person was referred to the Naval Families Federation who subsequently offered support to this individual following our assistance and referral.

Voluntary Veterans Work

I have recently stood down as chairman of the Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde Royal Marines Association after 3 years but am pleased to report that I have been elected as the regional Chairman. I am a member of the Board of Trustees currently focussing on the modernisation of The Royal Marines Association nationally and am the point of contact for all Royal Marines Association activities in the north of the UK. This has involved developing partnerships with the serving Corps (Royal Marines) the reserve unit in Liverpool and veterans' branches across the north. I am using the training and many of the skills that I have learnt whilst working for Wyre Council. These partnerships will be further strengthened in November with the visit to Fleetwood by the Royal Marines recruiting team.

I recently attended a Veterans Welfare and Trauma Risk Management (PTSD) annual conference. Primarily a networking conference, there were presentations about support services for those who have served in the Armed Forces given by Combat Stress (a specialist mental health service that cares for sufferers of post-traumatic stress disorder) , Help 4 Heroes Hidden Wounds Project (also supporting AF personnel who suffer with mental health issues), Care after Combat (a charity set up by Jim Davidson OBE to support Veterans in Prison with alcohol related problems), SSAFA (the primary Armed forces support charity) and Silverline (a national telephone befriending service for the elderly).

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