

# Armed Forces Commissioner - Job Description and Person Specification

## Background

Norfolk's Armed Forces Covenant was established in 2012 in response to the Armed Forces Act 2011. The Act itself sets out the Government's expectations for local partnerships to meet and address the needs of the armed forces community within their defined area but it does not specify how this should be achieved, allowing for flexibility to meet local demands.

To deliver upon the expectations of the Act, the post of Norfolk Armed Forces Commissioner was created to provide a central point of contact for Norfolk's Covenant, supported by Norfolk County Council as the lead partner. As well as chairing the Norfolk Armed Forces Covenant Board, the post acts as a critical link between all aspects of the armed forces community, statutory services and charities.

Over ten years on, the Norfolk Armed Forces Covenant Board is widely respected and often cited as national best practice for its collaboration with the NHS and the Ministry of Defence (MOD) to improve dental provision in West Norfolk and its publication of a resource directory for schools to support children of serving families cope with multiple moves. Most recently it has published an in-depth study into the needs of the armed forces community in Norfolk to act as an evidence base for statutory and voluntary organisations.

The post is undertaken on a voluntary basis but is held accountable by members of the Norfolk Armed Forces Covenant Board and the Leader of Norfolk County Council.

## Job Description and Person Specification

### Role

- The Norfolk Armed Forces Commissioner will act as principal champion for Norfolk's Armed Forces Covenant, effectively ensuring delivery of its Action Plan.
- They will apply their up-to-date knowledge and lived experience on issues facing the armed forces community (which includes current serving, their families and veterans / service leavers and their families) and communicate these effectively to a variety of audiences with a view to finding local solutions where possible.
- They will act as the link between the armed forces community and partner agencies in Norfolk by keeping regular contact with both to promote greater understanding of the community and its needs.
- They will seek and act on feedback from the armed forces community, in conjunction with the Armed Forces Covenant Senior Officer.

- They will present a balanced approach to meet the needs of the armed forces and civilian communities in Norfolk by encouraging activity that brings both communities together to promote understanding.
- They will role model inclusive behaviour including the appropriate use of language and terminology, to support Norfolk's diverse armed forces and civilian communities.

## Responsibilities

- Chair the Norfolk Armed Forces Covenant Board and be accountable for its performance. This will include:
  - Holding Board members to account for attendance and delivery on project areas for which they are the identifiable lead.
  - Making decisions on grant applications and financial expenditure in conjunction with members of the Board.
- Promote the work of Norfolk's Armed Forces Covenant both locally and nationally to unblock barriers and share good practice.
- Raise awareness of the duty of due regard to the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant with partner organisations and among the serving community.
- Work to bring all aspects of the armed forces community together to engage in relevant activity which identifies and raises awareness of issues and seeks to develop joint solutions.
- Encourage local businesses to sign up to the MOD's Defence Employer Recognition Scheme and progress through the various award levels.
- Influence public sector partners and statutory bodies to engage with the Covenant and commit to greater partnership working with a view to building better understanding of the needs of the community and the issues it faces ultimately leading to solutions.
- Act as the public 'face' of the Norfolk Armed Forces Covenant Board, both hosting and attending events.

## Key activities

- Contribute leadership vision into strategic action planning and persuading key partners to work together.
- Chair a minimum of two independent Armed Forces Covenant Board meetings each year.
- Engage public, private, and voluntary sector services.
- Attend a variety of community and civic events during the day, in the evenings and occasional weekends throughout the year.

## Term of Office

- The post holder will be expected to fulfil the role for three years.
- A two-year extension may be agreed at the three-year point through a unanimous vote of all current members of the Norfolk Armed Forces Covenant Board. The term of office will be a maximum of five years.

- The post holder may be asked to vacate the role at any point with agreement of the Norfolk Armed Forces Covenant Board should they be found to be unable or unwilling to carry out the full duties of the role. In this instance, the process will be triggered by either Norfolk County Council's Armed Forces Elected Member Champion or the County Council's Armed Forces Covenant Senior Officer, in conjunction with the Leader of Norfolk County Council following a unanimous vote of no confidence by the Norfolk Armed Forces Covenant Board.

#### Other Information

- The post holder must not be an employee of Norfolk County Council or a current serving military officer.
- It is a non-political post and therefore cannot be filled by a current elected member at any local authority.
- Where the post holder is a current chair of a local charity that already has a place on the Board, the charity would be expected to appoint a new representative to attend.
- Reasonable travel expenses may be claimed in the discharge of duties associated with the role.