



Norfolk Armed Forces Covenant Board Minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2023

Virtual meeting held on Microsoft Teams

Present:

Air Cdre Kevin Pellatt (KP)	Norfolk Armed Forces Commissioner (Chair)
Sqn Ldr Fran Spencer (FS)	RAF Marham
Tim Allen (TA)	Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association Norfolk
Dr Andrew Hayward (AH)	NHS
Dr Andy Griffiths (AG)	NHS - Norfolk and Waveney ICB
Jocelyne Newman (JN)	RAF Marham
Stephen Heard (SH)	Veterans' Advisory & Pensions Committee
WO 1 Michael Rendall (MR)	Royal Navy
Cllr Alison Webb (AW)	Breckland District Council
WO2 Richard Stevens	3 Royal Anglian Regiment
Paul Smith (PS)	RBL
Cllr Keith Kiddie (KK)	Norfolk County Council
Wayne Farrow (WF)	DWP
Capt Christian Eade (CE)	1 st The Queen's Dragoon Guards
Thomas Humphries (TH)	Norfolk County Council
Merry Halliday (MH)	Norfolk County Council
Bev Herron (BH)	Norfolk County Council

Apologies:

Andy Tovell (AT)	Norfolk County Council
Sqn Ldr Stew Geary (SG)	Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association Norfolk
Craig Chalmers (CC)	Norfolk County Council
Sarah Rhoden (SR)	Norfolk County Council
Maj Ben Matthews (BM)	1 st The Queen's Dragoon Guards
Chris Haystead (CH)	Norwich City Council
Anne Berry (AB)	NHS
Vanessa Plumley (VP)	RAF Families' Federation
Frank Hughes (FH)	SSAFA
Cllr Stuart Dark	West Norfolk and King's Lynn District Council
Nigel Clarke (NC)	NHS
Jan Feeney (JF)	Norfolk County Council
David Powell (DP)	NHS

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies.

- 1.1. KP welcomed everyone attending and listed the apologies.
- 1.2. KP wished to thank Maj Gavin Rushmere for his eight-year contribution to the Covenant following his departure and wished him well.
- 1.3. KP apologised the minutes of the previous meeting in March had not been included in the agenda pack but thanked those who had made comments. On behalf of the Board, he agreed the minutes.

2. Presentation – Working Well – Tom Humphries Skills Policy Manager, NCC.

- 2.1 TH gave a presentation on the Working Well project – slides to be circulated with minutes.
- 2.2 KP asked how are you accessing the work market? TH said this will be through a specific role 'employment specialist' who will develop relationships with employers. Initially this will mean cold calling employers.
- 2.3 TH added service charities will be able to refer into the scheme.
- 2.4 PS asked if a veteran who was in receipt of a pension be eligible? TH replied they could, no matter how much pension is.
- 2.5 PS queried what happens at end of 12-month period if they have not been successful in getting / retaining employment? TH was confident that the timeframe was achievable.
- 2.6 WF explained the DWP runs a similar project (Working Health) which covers 18 months and does not cold call employers as they already have contacts. This feels like duplication. He asked if TH has briefed job centres? TH replied yes, there is a programme of engagement underway with Job Centres and through the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- 2.7 KP thanked TH for the presentation and TH left the meeting.

3. Update on the Budget

- 3.1. BH presented a paper on the current budget position. The Board noted the paper, and no questions were raised.

4. Output from the Veterans' Workshop

- 4.1. It was agreed that the event went well and KP thanked Tim Allen for being master of ceremonies, MH / BH for organising and Stew Geary and Anne Tansley-Thomas for their facilitating of panel interviews.
- 4.2. MH took Board through the paper. The following points were made:
 - The Board agreed with the proposed areas of action in the paper which were to carry out a desk top review of good practice in the sharing of information with

the armed forces community, developing a pilot project with the social care sector to identify and support veterans living in residential care, to run an event for military and civilian charities to improve understanding and identify opportunities to work together, and to work with local authority housing officers to improve charities' understanding of access to social housing.

- Members discussed the fact that some had lived experience of serving but had never been asked by statutory agencies whether they had served and that it was important to improve this.
- It was agreed that a desk top exercise to look at good practice would be useful.
- SH felt that there could be an opportunity to use significant events in the calendar such as Remembrance to carry out co-ordinated comms. The Board agreed but felt this would need to be looked at in more detail as it would require agreement from various agencies.
- PS agreed that starting with care homes would be useful and described work that RBL already does in relation to his Branch in Aylsham. AH added there are over 10,000 living in residential care in Norfolk, many of whom will be veterans.
- Board agreed that an event that brought together service and civilian charities would be beneficial. CE offered the use of Robertson Barracks for such an event.
- PS / AW expressed support for promoting the work of the Covenant.
- AG noted work being carried out by Daniel Williams with respect to bringing together a VCSE assembly and the potential for holding one specifically for the armed forces. It was agreed that this idea should be further explored. Action for KP/MH/BH/AG to pick this discussion up offline.
- CE will look at how service personnel can be better supported, and their awareness increased as they transition out of the forces.
- AH is currently exploring holding events at Robertson Barracks and RAF Marham to provide service leavers with information on how they make use of the NHS including how to register with a GP. The importance of the NHS Step Into Health programme was discussed.

5. Recruitment of a new Armed Forces Commissioner

- 5.1. MH took the Board through the paper and the formal process for recruitment.
- 5.2. The Interview panel will include Cllr XX as NCC provides resources to support the Board, someone from the current serving community and one other.
- 5.3. KP offered some thoughts in relation to what is needed for someone to do the role. The main criteria being someone with lived current experience of service.
- 5.4. MH asked for volunteers for the panel – XX had already expressed an interest and XX declared during the meeting. MH / BH will contact volunteers nearer the time to arrange the details. [Post Meeting note – XX and XX also volunteered]. [[Names redacted to retain the integrity of the recruitment process]].

6. Updates from members of Board

- 6.1. SH – provided an update on the Royal College of GPs Veteran Friendly accreditation scheme. Norfolk is top of the table with 70% of practices accredited

(as an ICB this is 60% because of the inclusion of Waveney). SH also noted that the Ministerial target set for the scheme changed last week to ensuring that 100% of PCNs have at least one accredited practice. Norfolk already meets these criteria.

7. AOB

None.

8. Date of future meetings.

- Informal workshop: Thursday 18 January 2024 – via Teams.
- Formal meeting: Wednesday 20 March 2024 – hybrid meeting at Norfolk County Council Offices.