Gloucestershire Armed Forces Community Covenant

Annual Report– 2015/16

Contents

Introducing the Armed Forces Community Covenant – What is our Mission Statement? pg2

Developing the Covenant pg3

The Covenant Fund and Supported Projects pg4

Council Business – The Covenant Reflected pg5

Updates from Partners pg7

Contact Information pg22
Introducing the Armed Forces Community Covenant – What is our Mission Statement?

The Armed Forces Community Covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between the people of Gloucestershire and our local Armed Forces Community. It is intended to complement the Armed Forces Covenant, which outlines the moral obligation between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces at a local level.

It is a statement of our intent to encourage support for the Armed Forces Community working and residing in Gloucestershire and to recognise and remember the sacrifices made by its members, particularly those who have given the most. This includes those currently serving, those who have served, and their families and dependents in Gloucestershire.

For Gloucestershire County Council and our partner organisations, the Covenant presents an opportunity for the community to help and support present and past members of the Armed Forces.

For the Armed Forces community, the Covenant assists with the integration of Service life into civilian life as well as encouraging members of the Armed Forces community to help in their local community.

It has been a busy year for the Covenant. We have been involved in a number of projects to enhance delivery in Gloucestershire, and continued to promote fair treatment in allowing the Armed Forces to access services and to take part in local Communities. These include promoting integration, such as support for the Imjin Proms music festival, to helping provide facilities for some of our more isolated Forces community members at the Duke of Gloucester Barracks. This has been reinforced by some excellent work by our partner organisations and details of what has been achieved can be found in this report.

However, there is still work to be done. A recent report, jointly commissioned by the Local Government Association, found that nationally “many members of the Armed Forces Community perceive that they have faced disadvantage as a result of their service”. It is important that we continue to address any issues that arise and take opportunities to reduce the barriers faced by those who serve, and their families.

Cllr Shaun Parsons
Chair, Gloucestershire Armed Forces Community Covenant Partnership.
**Developing the Covenant.**

On the 14\(^{th}\) January 2016 the MOD launched a new Armed Forces Covenant brand. The new branding encompasses the Armed Forces Covenant, Armed Forces Community Covenant and Armed Forces Corporate Covenant, into a single Armed Forces Covenant brand. “The new branding simplifies and clarifies the Armed Forces Covenant, unifying all the delivery partners in their common goal to achieve the best outcomes for the Armed Forces community.” The new branding should be in use on all publications from the 1\(^{st}\) June 2016. Guidelines on how to use the brand are available via the Armed Forces Covenant website: [wwwarmedforcescovenant.gov.uk](http://wwwarmedforcescovenant.gov.uk).

In August 2016 the Local Government Association and Forces in Mind Trust released a joint report looking at local Covenant pledges and how these might be better delivered. Gloucestershire played its part in this process as one of a dozen local authorities to take part in a “deep dive” research visit, to examine in detail Covenant delivery in the County.

The visit was very productive, with Gloucestershire being noted for good practice in the areas of health and wellbeing, and thanks must go to all of the partner organisations that took part. The final report can be viewed via the Forces in Mind website ([www.fim-trust.org](http://www.fim-trust.org)) and a number of recommendations were made nationally that will be invaluable as we continue to work towards improving Covenant delivery in Gloucestershire going forward.

As part of a campaign to increase membership and raise awareness of the Armed Forces Community Covenant, all Gloucestershire Parish and Town Council’s were invited to attend an event at Shire Hall to sign the covenant and pledge their support to the Armed forces community in their area by remembering the sacrifices they have made and helping to integrate them into local life.
The following attended the event and were the first to sign up to the Covenant:

- Fairford Town Council
- Cirencester Town Council
- Up Hatherley Parish Council
- Ashchurch Rural Parish Council
- Quenington Parish Council
- Whitminster Parish Council
- Barrington Parish Council
- Cranham Parish Council
- Longford Parish Council
- Bourton on the Water Parish Council

Following the initial signing up event, we are pleased to announce that a further 21 Parish and Town Councils have signed up to become members of the Armed Forces Community Covenant. They are as follows:

- Staunton Parish Council
- Moreton in Marsh Town Council
- Hucclecote Parish Council
- Cinderford Town Council
- Littledean Parish Council
- Corse Parish Council
- Cainscross Parish Council
- Staverton Parish Council
- Highnam Parish Council
- Quedgeley Parish Council
- Lydney Town Council
- Charlton Kings Parish Council
- Ampney Crucis Parish Council
- Newent Town Council
- Twyning Parish Council
- Painswick Parish Council
- Gorsley & Kilcot Parish Council
- Preston Parish Council
- Leonard Stanley Parish Council
- Hartpury Parish Council
- Upper Slaughter Parish Council

The recent addition of Parish and Town Councils to the list of Covenant partners is a welcome step and helps to continue the strengthening of the Covenant throughout Gloucestershire.

All Town or Parish Council are encouraged to sign up to the Covenant and for more information please contact Matt Jenns at matthew.jenns@gloucestershire.gov.uk.

**The Covenant Fund and Supported Projects.**

With the re-launch of the previously titled Community Covenant Grant Scheme in August 2015 as The Covenant Fund, there is once again dedicated grant funding available to support delivery of the Covenant. The fund has £10 million available nationally each year, with applications being accepted in small and large grant categories under priority headings announced on a yearly basis. For more information regarding the Covenant Fund please visit: [https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/covenant-fund](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/covenant-fund).
During the year, the Council has been involved in supporting a range of projects that have successfully accessed the fund. Projects that have received funding are:

**A digital future – engaging with communities:** This project, submitted by the Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum, was to provide a significant upgrade and improvement to the Museum’s IT systems, in order to improve communication, links and support with a number of key stakeholders. These include serving regiments, Veterans, schools and the general public.

**Imjin Music Festival:** In a repeat of the successful “Imjin Proms”, held in 2015, the Imjin Music Festival was a festival and concert designed to bring the local community and Military community of Imjin Barracks together. The aim was to provide a platform for cross community engagement, which is particularly important as the personnel based at Imjin comprise of over 21 different nationalities from NATO and partner nations. For more information please see the member update for Imjin Barracks below.

**29 RLC Whole Life Development:** The Whole Life Development project, based at The Duke of Gloucester Barracks near South Cerney, is a healthy living project designed for military personnel, their families and the wider community. It is a holistic project, designed to promote all-round health and wellbeing, made up of three strands: fitness and nutrition, learning and employment and emotional support and mental wellbeing.

Funding received to support this project will be used to provide military inspired “assault courses” for people to use independently or as part of a group session. It will also be used to refurbish some of the base’s youth facilities and install a kitchen that can be used by military chefs to teach children, and adults, how to prepare healthy and nutritious meals. Financial support for this project has also been provided by both Cotswold District Council and the County Council, the latter under the Active Together Fund.

**Council Business – The Covenant Reflected.**

**Education:**
Services are provided by the Gloucestershire Admissions Teams regarding school place applications made by Forces Families. The teams are responsible for offering places to children starting in September in Reception or Year 7 on behalf of schools and overseeing applications for other year groups which schools deal with themselves.

Under the Covenant:
- Armed Forces personnel can apply for a school place when overseas as long as they have a posting order.

- If married quarter or private rental allocations have not been made, the assigned Units main gate is used as the address point to prioritise their school place application.
• Families seeking school places “in-year” are able to access the In Year Admissions Team to discuss their circumstances and receive individualised advice.

• With regards to legislation and the Armed Forces Covenant a consistent approach to school admission queries and applications has been developed, offering advice and guidance to families and individual schools.

• In Year Admissions continue to liaise with service representatives, to enable service families to navigate the school admissions system in a timely way.

• Our SP protocol will continue to encourage all own admission authority schools to process applications from military families in a consistent way.

**Human Resources Policy:**
GCC remains supportive of staff (a) becoming military reservists and (b) undertaking the appropriate training. We continue to offer them the facility to take additional authorised ‘special paid leave’ in order to attend the annual training camps.

Favorable consideration is given to partners and family members of serving military officers by providing flexible working to accommodate postings at short notice.

GCC HR actively supports and attends regional meetings held by the MOD and have developed a Military Reservist Policy which is available to all staff.
Updates from Partners

The following updates have been provided by the Council’s fellow signatories and partners in the Community Covenant in Gloucestershire.

Duke of Gloucester Barracks

The Duke of Gloucester Barracks at South Cerney have together with other partners developed a project to promote the Covenant and make real improvements to the facilities at Duke of Gloucester Barracks, helping those living there and the local community to take part in physical activity together.

Imjin Barracks & the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps

IMJIN MUSIC FESTIVAL 2016

The Officers, soldiers, sailors and airmen from the 20 NATO nations who make up the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps based at Imjin Barracks, Innsworth invited the wider community to celebrate Her Majesty The Queen’s 90th Birthday on 9th June 2016 at Imjin Barracks with an evening for all the family featuring a Spitfire flypast, Beating Retreat, plenty of children’s activities and the best in local music and entertainment. The formal Queen’s Birthday Review saw local dignitaries and honoured guest invited to a cocktail reception hosted by Commander ARRC Lt Gen Tim Evans CB CBE DSO. The private event was a way of thanking the influential members of the community for their continued support to the ARRC and its international members.

Following the reception, the guests were escorted out the main festival arena where the Commanders’ Review and Sounding Retreat were performed by the Band and Bugles of the Rifles. Commander ARRC then took to the stage to welcome the public and officially open the Imjin Music Festival 2016.
Homes for Veterans

- Support for members and Veterans of the Armed Forces is already reflected in the Gloucestershire Homeseeker’s Allocations Policy. Our policy removes any local connection requirements for veterans wishing to live in Cheltenham. This policy also allows for serving veterans extended time in the priority bands to bid for properties should they become homeless.

In order to support the Armed Forces Covenant further and having identified a housing need, CBC intends to provide more homes for veterans.

In partnership with Cheltenham Borough Homes a new build housing scheme has been identified on Swindon Road in Cheltenham to build a community of 10 new homes with priority being given to Veterans and their families. These will be 5 x 1 bedroom flats, 3 x 2 bedroom flats and 2 x 2 bedroom houses. The 3 ground floor flats will have wet rooms.

This new development can offer the following advantages:
  - The size of the dwellings are a good match for meeting the needs of veterans in the greatest housing need
  - They are designed to lifetime homes standard, providing the opportunity for adaptations to be made relatively easily, should a disabled need be identified. Please note that for the ground floor accommodation, priority will be given to Veterans requiring level access. It is important that disabled Veterans requiring adapted accommodation notify Cheltenham Borough Homes housing options team as soon as possible so that their needs can be assessed early.
  - The close proximity of the flats to the other adjoining flats will provide an opportunity for peer group support and community cohesion to flourish within the proposed veteran community.
  - Swindon Road is a town centre location and there are a number of organisations within the town centre area that can provide practical assistance and support to veterans.

- To be eligible for this scheme, veterans will be required to have served at least a day in the HM Armed Forces, whether as a Regular or Reservist and be in housing need.
Commemoration

- In September 2015, a service was held for the unveiling of 2 Victoria Cross plaques that were awarded to Cheltonians who lost their lives at the Battle of Loos in 1915, which saw the biggest loss for Cheltenham in World War 1. Cheltenham Borough Council also supports and hosts several remembrance and commemorative events, such as those for Armed Forces Day, Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day, Battle of Britain Sunday and Aden Veterans.

- Funding has been granted by Cheltenham Borough Council, the Heritage Lottery Fund and War Memorials Trust for the restoration of Cheltenham War Memorial and a series of commemorative events and activities to take place throughout 2017 and 2018. The restoration work started in May 2016. As part of the restoration, volunteer experts in local history have done extensive research to identify people whose names were, due to error or lack of information at the time, omitted from the war memorial. Six people have been identified, who fit the criteria of being born, or living in Cheltenham (under its present day boundary) at the time they joined up; who died in active service, or of wounds or illness before 31st August 1921, and are not on any other UK memorial.

The commemorative activities will be led by various partners and will include a touring play; a re-enactment of a military field hospital; work with groups on ‘hidden histories’ including the impact on mental health and links with Indian and African communities; exhibitions; educational materials; a concert; subsidised trips to the Great War Museum and display of a painting which was considered to be Cheltenham’s war memorial before the memorial was erected. The Royal British Legion will also provide co-ordination of the involvement of armed forces groups and uniformed youth groups.

Representation

- There is a place on Cheltenham Partnership for a delegate from the Cheltenham Branch of the Royal British Legion, to represent serving and ex-military personnel and their families.

Information

- The armed forces community page on the Cheltenham.Gov.Uk website includes an armed forces section which contains information on the covenant, local charities and commemorative events.
The website can be viewed by clicking here.

**CBC staff**

- Any reservists employed by Cheltenham Borough Council are supported with paid leave.
- A team of civilian employees also participate in the emergency planning and response for the Royal International Air Tattoo.

**Cotswold District Council (CDC)**

**Armed Forces celebration at Cirencester**

Cotswold District Council commemorated Armed Forces Day on Monday 20th June by hosting flag raising ceremonies at both its Cirencester headquarters and its Moreton Area Centre office.

The ceremonies were attended by representatives of the British Legion and other veterans, South Cerney-based 29 Regt, Royal Logistic Corps, military cadets from the Deer Park School, Cirencester, pupils from Dormer House School, Moreton, the public, and members and staff of the Council.

At Cirencester, Vice Chairman of the Council, Cllr Julian Beale, said: “I was proud to host the ceremony at Trinity Road, welcoming past members of the Armed Forces to celebrate this special day. Despite the poor weather, I was also very pleased to see so many attendees from local schools, the public and the Council, which shows a growing awareness about the role of the armed forces in helping to safeguard the wellbeing of our communities and making the world a safer place.”

The ceremony at Moreton-in-Marsh was hosted by the Chairman of the Council, Cllr Mark Annett, who added: “Thankfully the rain eased off in time for the event at Moreton, and it went very well. In particular, it was wonderful to see so many young school children attending the ceremony alongside several serving soldiers from South Cerney - the pupils asked lots of interesting questions about life in the Armed Forces and also enjoyed carrying out an impromptu military drill.”

Armed Forces Day was first launched in June 2009 to show support for the work of serving troops and cadets, as well as service families and veterans.
A representative from the Rifles is invited to the Chairman’s Charity Dinner.

Forest of Dean District Council attended a ‘Bugles breakfast at Beachley Barracks.

We hold a minutes silence on Remembrance day.

Through its annual support for Armed Forces Day the Council recognises and applauds the contribution that the entire Armed Forces Community has made to the nation. We have an Armed Forces Day flag raising ceremony on the Monday prior to the day in question to which we invite the Rifles and British Legion to attend.

The Council demonstrates similar support for the British Legion through annual ‘Poppy Day’ collections and provides the use of some of its premises at no cost in support of the Poppy Appeal.

We have invited the relevant Town/Parish Council to take ownership of where VC memorial plaques will be located as part of the WW1 commemorations.

We have actively supported a member of staff to become a Royal Navy reservist.

The community engagement team at Forest of Dean District Council has had meetings with Captain Richard Hunt with regards to Sedbury and Barracks community integration. A 1 Rifles team entry to the annual Relay for Life in support of cancer research has been encouraged and signposting to dementia awareness sessions has taken place.

A member of the community engagement team is nominated officer lead operationally on the covenant. In the past this person has attended the local covenant grants panel meeting and liaised with project applicants and the Barracks.

From a housing perspective the Council recognises the needs of all current and ex-servicemen and women; those serving with 1 Rifles who seek accommodation locally will be treated as having a local connection.
- Community Engagement team have linked with Step Together Volunteering to support a member of the armed forces to volunteer with the Forest Youth Off-Road Bike Project.

- Members of the Hive @ Beachley, have attended events put on by Forest Routes (www.forestroutes.org) a themed project within the Community Engagement Team – at one of these events a connection was made with learn direct who want to do outreach courses for wives.

Gloucester City Council

- The City Council support staff who are members of the Territorial Army (TA) or other military support service through flexible employment arrangements.

- Building control provide a free advice service and do not charge for any applications made for extensions or alterations to a domestic property for armed forces personnel returning with any disability.

- The City Council will continue to work with the armed forces on a number of events including the sale of poppies for Remembrance Sunday and the promotion of Armed Forces Day through staff news letters and inclusion in the Council’s events calendar. In addition, the Council will continue to make a financial contribution to support Armed Forces Day in June of each year (currently £2,000).

- The City Council continues to work in partnership with the Armed Forces to increase links to the local service units by welcoming service personnel and their families to the area by supporting various activities including sporting and charity events, and developing the potential for Ministry of Defence (MOD) discounts.

- The Council will continue to support the British Legion’s Poppy day through an arrangement with GL1 for free use of accommodation for their Remembrance Sunday event. Linked to this, in partnership with Amey (the Council’s Street care contractor) we will ensure that planting around the war memorial is in good order throughout the year and especially for Remembrance Sunday.

- The war memorial at the cenotaph and the war graves at Gloucester cemetery will continue to be maintained to a high standard to recognize the sacrifices made by service personnel.
The City Council will continue to support Army Recruitment Events by allowing access to suitable sites.

As well as continuing to deliver the specific measure listed above the City Council also delivers a range of support services as follows:-

**Housing Advice / Homelessness**

Members of the armed forces have a local connection to the district of their choice. This includes those currently serving; those who have served within the immediate preceding 5 years; bereaved spouse or civil partner who has recently or will cease to be entitled to Ministry of Defence accommodation following the death of their service spouse (and the death was wholly or partly attributable to their service); existing or former members of the reserve forces who are suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is wholly or partly attributable to their service.

Special rules are required for those in the armed forces to comply with The Localism Act recognising the services they have offered the country. On discharge members of the armed forces, with a Homeless priority need (dependent children or vulnerable as a result of disability) will be awarded Gold band for 6 months from the discharge date. Applicants who are homeless but with a non-priority need are given Silver band from their discharge date. Should they become homeless again within 5 years of the discharge date and have a priority need and are unintentionally homeless, applicants will be awarded Gold band again for 6 months from Notice being received. Non-priority need or Intentional homeless applicants will be awarded Silver band, backdated for 6 months from the date of the Notice being received.

Over the past 12 months, nine applicants have been rehoused in Gloucester through the Gloucestershire “Homeseeker Choice Based Lettings scheme” where they had been a member of the armed forces.

Managers within the Housing Advice and Homelessness Services receive regular updates from the Countywide Homelessness Coordinator regarding vacancies in Alabare schemes. The reports they send cover the South West and Wales so officers are able to look at a wider variety of options to prevent homelessness within the armed forces community. We also work with the British Legion who can look at possible financial assistance for clients who may require support with furnishing properties, finances to secure accommodation and give general support to clients who need support.
**Benefit Claimants**

Where applicants are in receipt of housing benefit (HB) and/or council tax support (CTS), in common with most local authorities, the City Council has adopted a policy to disregard as income some extra elements of war disablement pensions.

- The intention of the policy is that Housing Benefit (HB)/Council Tax Support (CTS) claimants who get certain war pensions should get more HB/CTS than they otherwise would. This currently applies to 28 cases.

- In 2014/15 the Council awarded an extra £39,338 in HB as a result of this policy, and the Council received subsidy from DWP covering 75% of this expenditure - therefore the cost to the City Council of this policy in 2014/15 was around £9,835.

**Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)**

There is further help with housing costs through the use of DHP.

- The City Council has a local procedure on awarding DHP, and under this procedure the client team would disregard as income some extra elements of war disablement pensions (the same as in housing benefit). There is no requirement to record this; however, officers believe the number of DHP customers who have benefited from this will be low.

**Under-occupation reductions in Housing Benefit**

- Legislation does have a provision to assist armed forces personnel in that a bedroom used by members of the armed or reserve forces will not be counted as a ‘spare’ room.

**Gloucester Museum and Folk Museum**

- The City Council offers discounts to Defence Privilege card holders and staff to attend the Freshers Fair each year at Imjin Barracks to inform the residents about all the things on offer. In addition, Gloucester City Museum & Art Gallery and Gloucester Folk Museum welcome all military personnel and veterans. The museums hold a wide variety of exhibitions, events and activities at both museums throughout the year, as well as being places to come to find out about Gloucester’s history, to enjoy our collection of world renowned works of art, to reminisce and sometimes simply to reflect.
**Guildhall**

- The Guildhall offer discount to military personnel to the Cinema and are also signed up to a scheme where the venue is listed for military personnel to find.

**Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Considerations**

- As a result of several discussions with Armed Forces personnel regarding their needs and required support from the City Council and other agencies. There is ongoing dialogue through the Council’s Community Engagement Team with military personnel to ensure a good relationship continues.

**Stroud District Council (SDC)**

- SDC Employee Handbook allows for 10 days additional paid leave for employees to attend summer camps as volunteer members of non regular forces.

- SDC works with the Poppy Factory who help to find work for wounded, injured and sick ex-service personnel in their own community.

- SDC gives concessions to ex-military and war pensioners at our Joint Use Sports Facilities.

- The authority disregards in full the following incomes for the purposes of assessing entitlements to localised Council Tax Support: War widows/widowers pension; war disablement pension; and Armed Forces Compensation Scheme payments.

In addition Stroud District Council supports the Armed Forces in the following ways:

- A dedicated page is now available on their website specifically for the Armed Forces Community.

- SDC have started to build up a picture of where the Armed Forces community resides in Stroud District. This enables us to monitor demand for specific services and, ultimately, meet need more effectively.
• Omega Rifles, based in Stonehouse, now work with employers to provide long term, sustainable employment for service leavers and their families. Contact number 01453 827333.

**Allocation of Affordable Housing:**

Gloshomseeker is the countywide online system for allocating affordable housing in Gloucestershire.

Gloshomeseeker policy has changed and members of the armed forces are now given local connection to an area of their choice i.e. are effectively exempt from the connection criteria which apply to all other applicants. They are also given extra priority if they are losing their accommodation in that they are given the relevant homeless priority for six months rather than the one month for everyone else.

Armed forces are defined as: those currently serving, or served within the immediate preceding five years; bereaved spouse or civil partner who has recently or will cease to be entitled to MoD accommodation following the death of their service spouse and the death was wholly or partly attributable to their service; existing or former members of the reserve forces who are suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is wholly or partly attributable to their service.

**Tewkesbury Borough Council**

**The Reserve Forces Training and Mobilisation Policy**

The Reserve Forces Training and Mobilisation Policy supports the council’s commitment to the Armed Forces Community Covenant and our pledged commitment to support service personnel and their families living in the county. We recognise the valuable contribution that Reservists make to the UK Armed Forces, their communities and the council. This policy intends to define our obligations and our commitment towards all employees who are members of the Reserve Forces.

**Imjin Music Festival 2016**

Funding from TBC’s Community Grant Fund helped support the Imjin Music Festival as a whole, which saw large numbers of the community attend the event on Innsworth Station and also supported elements of the festival which sought to engage with the local community, for instance the schools music completion.
**Housing Services**

The Housing Services team is very aware and supportive of military personnel as they move into civilian life. It has provided support through giving talks to personnel on the base, information via the Welfare Team and direct one to one advice and guidance.

**Green Space**

Local ward members and the parish council have supported the redevelopment of a piece of military waste ground, adjacent to Imjin Barracks. The aim, following clearance, is to create a green space/park for local people to be able to enjoy and improve the visual appearance of the local area.

**Others**

- Continuing support for Armed Forces Day and Help for Heroes activity.
- TBC CEO and Tewkesbury Borough Mayor attending events at Imjin Barracks and military events both within the borough and the county.
- Promoting employment opportunities within TBC to staff at Imjin Barracks and Ashchurch MoD site.

**Armed Forces Day**

Tewkesbury Borough Council commemorated Armed Forces Day on Monday, 24 June with a special flag raising ceremony. The ceremony took place at the council’s offices on Gloucester Road at 10.30am on 24 June and was led by the Mayor of Tewkesbury Borough Cllr Claire Wright and joined by representatives from ARRC, as well as council staff and councillors.

The mayor read a short poem in honour of all those that serve and have served in the Armed Forces and then raised the flag, which remained flying until after Armed Forces Day on Saturday, 29 June.

Mayor of Tewkesbury Borough Cllr Claire Wright said: "Armed Forces Day gives us the opportunity to show our gratitude to everyone who serves, or has served, in the Armed Forces. We all lead busy lives and it can be so easy to let their hard work and dedication to our country passes us by."

Following the ceremony, a reception was held in the mayor's parlour.
Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust supports all employees who are members of or wish to join the Volunteer Reserve Forces.

Gloucestershire NHS Foundation Trust (GHNHSFT) is extremely and visibly supportive to the Armed Forces Personnel community, reservists in particular. Driven by their senior management, this support has been advocated in many ways through their internal and external channels. GHNHSFT have created an online presence supporting reservists in their ‘Work for Us’ section of their website, advocating the benefits of joining the reserves and providing a host of links to make joining as easy as it can be.

This public web presence also goes to show that GHNHSFT position themselves as the reservists’ employer of choice, backed up by the publication of their reservist-friendly HR policy that clearly highlights their special paid leave of two weeks plus an additional unpaid week to accommodate training commitments. GHNHSFT has also taken a lead on forming a Regional NHS Medical Reserves Committee to build specific relationships for the benefit of Medical Reserves. For this they have been awarded as one of the winners of the Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) for 2015. This award was presented by the Defence Secretary.

View here for more information.

Gloucestershire NHS Foundation Trust also supported Armed Forces Day this year making a plea to Veterans to Seek Support. Please view here for more information.

Gloucestershire NHS Foundation Trust also joined people across Herefordshire and Gloucestershire to talk about mental health issues for Time to Talk Day. This was organised by the National Anti-Stigma Campaign, “Time to Change”.
DWP Jobcentre Plus

DWP offer a range of employment/benefit support to ex-service personnel which is discussed with individuals as and when they access the benefit system. Anyone can access our vacancy database by registering with our online system – Universal Jobmatch.

For employment opportunities, all Civil Service vacancies are advertised on Civil Service Jobs which is part of the Gov.uk web portal. Jobcentres do work with employers to create work experience placements and work trials for those benefit claimants that would benefit from them. Individuals can discuss these with their work coaches.

**DWP support the covenant by:**

- Working with the Service Personnel Veterans agency the DWP pay the Armed Forces Independence Payment to eligible individuals.

- They continue to have an Armed Forces Champion in each Jobcentre Plus District to work with the military, service personnel, service support organisations and veterans support organisations.

- They provide their staff with guidance and information in supporting ex forces personnel and provide a directory of service support organisations.

- Advertise local forces Jobsfairs arranged through the CTP.

- Have a 1% target of DWP employees enlisted with reserve forces.

Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group

Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is responsible for commissioning all secondary and community services required by Armed Forces’ families where registered with NHS GP Practices and services for veterans and reservists when not mobilised. The CCG is committed to the priority treatment of the estimated 9,000 veterans across the County. All veterans are entitled to priority access to NHS hospital care for any condition as long as it’s related to their service, regardless of whether or not
they receive a war pension. Veterans can access this priority care by making their GP aware of the fact they are a veteran when they register with their practice. NHS priority access to veterans is also explained under Choose and Book guidance and is available at (http://www.chooseandbook.nhs.uk/staff/communications/fact/armyforces.pdf).

The CCG remains committed to delivering the Governments mandate to NHS England and its requirement relating to the Armed Forces Covenant; in particular for veterans, reservists and their families (and serving families not covered by Defence Medical Centres). The CCG fully supports the principle of ‘no disadvantage’ as set out in the Armed Forces Covenant and the mandate, in particular the transition of service personnel and their families back into the community (whether due to injury, end of service or as a demobilised reservist).

Gloucestershire Constabulary

Gloucestershire Constabulary support staff who are regular and volunteer reservists by granting leave, in appropriate cases, to enable them to undertake their public duties and any appropriate training. We also support them by granting them the facility to take additional authorised ‘special paid leave’ in order to attend the annual training camps.

GFirst LEP

Gfirst LEP based at Oxtalls Campus fully support the Armed Forces Community Covenant and have made their services available to any leavers of the Armed Forces as follows:-

- A free one to one appointment with a qualified careers adviser.
- Support can focus on careers advice and skills analysis.
- Appointments can also be very practical in the short term by creating CVs or supported job search.
- Everyone aged 19 or over is eligible, whatever their employment, education or benefit circumstances are.
The Royal British Legion (RBL) is the UK’s leading armed forces charity and one of its largest membership organisations. Members get together through the network of branches and clubs all over the country and overseas to participate in social, fundraising and welfare activities. They provide financial, social and emotional care and support to all members of the British Armed Forces - past and present and their families. The Legion is also the national Custodian of Remembrance, safeguards the Military Covenant between the nation and its Armed Forces and is best known for the annual Poppy Appeal and its emblem the red poppy.

The Royal British Legion Annual Report and Accounts 2015 are now available and include a review of their activities and financial position for the financial year ending 30 September 2015. An indexed PDF version is available to view or download.
Contact Information

1st Battalion The Rifles

Commander: Lt. Col. Karl Hickman
Contact Name: Major Iwan Williams
Email: 1RIFLES-HQCOY-CO@mod.uk

29 Regiment – Royal Logistics Corp

Commander: Lt. Col. Rhodes
Contact Name: Major Dave Martin
Email: 29RLC-RHQ-SSO@mod.uk

Cheltenham Borough Council

Champion: Cllr Steve Jordan
Contact Name: Helen Down
Email: helen.down@cheltenham.gov.uk

Cotswold District Council

Champion: Cllr Carol Topple
Contact Name: Joseph Walker
Email: joseph.walker@cotswold.gov.uk

DWP Jobcentre Plus

Champion: Martin James
Email: MARTIN.JAMES@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK

Forest of Dean District Council

Champion: Cllr Terry Hale
Contact Name: Lena Maller
Email: Lena.Maller@fdean.gcsx.gov.uk

GFirst LEP

Contact Name: David Owen
Email: david.owen@gfirst.co.uk

Gloucester City Council

Champion: Cllr Lise Noakes
Contact Name: Gareth Hooper
Email: gareth.hooper@gloucester.gov.uk
Gloucestershire Constabulary
Champion: Martin Surl
Contact Name: Ali Wilde
Email: ali.wilde@gloucestershire.pnn.police.uk

Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group
Champion: Mary Hutton
Contact Name: Andrew Hughes
Email: andrew.hughes8@nhs.net

Gloucestershire County Council
Champion: Cllr Shaun Parsons
Contact Name: Matthew Jenns
Email: Matthew.jenns@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Gloucestershire Voluntary and Community Sector Alliance
Champion: Dr Claire Mould
Contact Name: Matthew Lennard
Email: matt.lennard@glosvcsalliance.org.uk

HQ Innsworth Station, Imjin Barracks
Commander: Lt Col. A. Maskell
Contact Name: Lt. Col. (Retired) Bernard Barton Ancliffe
Email: InnsworthStn-SSO@mod.uk

NHS England
Champion: Debra Elliott
Contact Name: Jenny Kirby
Email: jenny.kirby@nhs.net

Royal British Legion
Champion: Kay Scase
Contact Name: Garry Mills
Email: GMills@britishlegion.org.uk

Stroud District Council
Champion: Cllr June Cordwell
Contact Name: Philip Bishop
Email: philip.bishop@stroud.gov.uk

Tewkesbury Borough Council
Champion: Cllr Claire Wright
Contact Name: Adrian Goode
Email: adrian.goode@tewkesbury.gov.uk