

Date: 25<sup>th</sup> October 2019

Subject: Greater Manchester Armed Forces Covenant Delivery

Report of: Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester

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## **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

In June 2017, GMCA Members re-signed the Armed Forces Covenant and made a strong commitment to transforming the offer for the Armed Forces Community in Greater Manchester. This report presents a second update on the work that has subsequently taken place.

The report also presents information about future initiatives and campaigns that have been developed using the expertise of the GM Armed Forces Leads and Public Sector partners.

Furthermore, the report proposes that GMCA seeks to maintain delivery and its national position in the lead of developing a coherent regional approach to provide a Gold Standard Offer to the Armed Forces Community. This will require the continuance of the programme lead and the commitment to underwrite the post funding should external funding prove unavailable.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The GMCA is asked to:

1. Note the update provided on progress made to deliver against the Armed Forces Covenant coherently across GM.
2. Note the forthcoming developments across work strands to further enhance delivery of Greater Manchester's Armed Forces Covenant.
3. Approve the proposal to continue the Armed Forces Covenant post within GMCA.
4. Note the current funding arrangements in place up to end of March 2021 and the proposals for further external funding as outlined in paragraph 4.2 of the report.

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**Risk Management** – None

**Legal Considerations** – None

**Financial Consequences** – Revenue – Section 4 (relating to a commitment to underwrite the continuance of the Armed Forces Programme Lead post)

**Financial Consequences** – Capital – None

**Number of attachments included in the report:** Appendix 1 is part of the report

**Comments and/or recommendation from the relevant Overview & Scrutiny Committee** - None

**BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

- Report to GMCA – Armed Forces Covenant March 2018 - [https://www.gmcameetings.co.uk/download/meetings/id/3075/11\\_af\\_covenant\\_report](https://www.gmcameetings.co.uk/download/meetings/id/3075/11_af_covenant_report)

<b>TRACKING/PROCESS</b>		
Does this report relate to a major strategic decision, as set out in the GMCA Constitution		<b>No</b>
<b>EXEMPTION FROM CALL IN</b>		
Are there any aspects in this report that means it should be considered exempt from call in by the relevant Scrutiny Committee on the grounds of urgency?		<b>No</b>
GM Transport Cttee	Overview & Scrutiny Committee	
<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	

## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In Greater Manchester, the Armed Forces Covenant is a commitment by local authorities and their partners from across all sectors to support members of the Armed Forces community in their area. The aim is to embed and sustain activity, ensuring that members of the Armed Forces community receive the support they need in their local communities in recognition of their dedication and sacrifice. Additionally, there have and continue to be significant efforts made to nurture public understanding and awareness of the issues affecting the Armed Forces community and encourage activities which help to integrate the armed forces community into local life.
- 1.2 For the Combined Authority, the Covenant is the vehicle to bring knowledge, experience and expertise to bear on the provision of help and advice to members of the Armed Forces Community. It is also an opportunity to build upon existing good work on other initiatives. In that way, a common approach to meeting the needs of this identifiable community within Greater Manchester is being adopted, ensuring that the three underpinning principles of the Armed Forces Covenant are upheld:
- Those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, are treated fairly.
  - The Armed Forces Community should not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of services.
  - Military service and the sacrifice inherent in it should be recognised.
- 1.3 Across GM, each local authority has a lead officer. Together with the GMCA lead, they form the strategic group to deliver the GM Armed Forces Programme. Additionally, GMCA has instigated a quarterly Armed Forces partnership Forum that brings together the public and third sectors operating in support of the community in GM.

## 2. KEY SUCCESSES TO DATE FOR THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT IN GM

- 2.1 **Website and Armed Forces Covenant Portal.** The website has been launched with significant content for the Armed Forces community.
- 2.2 **Workforce Development.** The GMCA Elearning Package was produced and launched earlier this year.
- 2.3 **Marketing and Communication.** The first of five animated films produced by the GM Armed Forces programme has been distributed. The link to view is here:
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z6TTLqH2y6A&feature=youtu.be>.
- 2.4 **Health and Wellbeing.** Significant progress has been made in the area of Health, Mental Health and Social Care as part of the commitment made by the NHS in the Long Term Plan

Implementation Framework. The detail of each workstrand is in the enclosed Appendix, but the areas covered are:

- High Intensity / Complex Need Provision.
- GP Pilot Tameside and Rolling Best Practice into the GM GP Excellence Model.
- Hospital Trust Pilots.
- Suicide Prevention.
- Bereavement by Suicide.
- Broughton House.
- Greater Sport's Moving Forces Project.
- GM Suicide Prevention Month of Hope – Armed Forces Event.

2.5 **Transition Pilot.** GM and its place-based offer to the Armed Forces Community is a key partner in the delivery of the Defence Transition Service (DTS) that will launch later in the year. This will see the

2.6 **Housing and Homelessness.** The needs of the Armed Forces community are now fully wrapped into existing support and forthcoming work on access to housing and homelessness reduction.

2.7 **Criminal Justice System.** Significant progress within GMP has seen the offer to all those affected by crime enhanced over the last twelve months. Work to embed a GM Out of Court Disposal solution is also nearing completion.

2.8 **MOD Employer Recognition Scheme.** GMCA was awarded the Bronze Award earlier in 2019 and the Silver Award will be formally awarded to GMCA on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2019. This demonstrates not only direct support of employees who are serving Reservists or Veterans, but also recognises the support and advocacy that GMCA does on behalf of the Armed Forces Community. Furthermore, Wigan Council also received a Silver Award and Trafford and Tameside Councils received Gold Awards under the MOD scheme.

### 3. FORTHCOMING INITIATIVES

3.1 **Marketing and Communication.** The four films to follow the first, generalist animations are in production at the script-writing stage. These will be co-produced with specialists from across GM contributing to the key, awareness-raising messages. Additionally, [www.gmarmedforces.com](http://www.gmarmedforces.com) will receive major updates in the coming months to better signpost to locality Armed Forces Covenant delivery and service provision.

#### 3.2 **Health.**

- Rollout across GM of Veterans Covenant Hospital Alliance and Stockport/WWL NHS Trusts piloted pathways.
- High Intensity Service (HIS) Pathfinder Scoping.

### 3.3 **Housing and Homelessness.**

- Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) / Armed Forces Post came online September 2019 and work scoping has taken place.
- Complex Housing Needs Study in scoping, linking carefully to the HIS Pathfinder.

3.4 **DWP / Salford University Third Wave Project.** Salford University's recent Sanctions, Support and Service Leavers project represented the UK's first substantive research to focus on veterans within the social security benefits system. The findings of the project made a series of findings, which have resulted in a follow on project that GMCA will support as part of the GM Armed Forces Programme. This work will hopefully result in national consent for all partners to support DWP to level their playing field with regard to ensuring a common gold standard of support for DWP customers who are members of the Armed Forces community.

3.5 **GM Armed Forces Service Directory.** A joint venture was recently commenced with Broughton House contributing to the effort to build on the success of the placing of support services for the Armed Forces community on the Veterans Gateway. It is planned to produce the directory in a form that it can be held and updated on [www.gmarmedforces.com](http://www.gmarmedforces.com) and will be searchable on a both a geographical and need basis.

3.6 **Reserve Forces and Cadets Association (RFCA) / GMCA Forces Friendly Business Forum.** A partnered approach to bring together the business community in support of the Armed Forces community across GM.

3.7 **Further Workforce Development – Housing elearning.** Following on from the success of the Armed Forces Covenant e-learning, a further module is available to be adapted which discusses housing need and provision. This will be evaluated and scoped for production following the GM Housing Strategy work.

3.8 **Criminal Justice System.** The next phase of work to enhance provision for those affected by encounters with the Criminal Justice System will be to scope a coherent support pathways for those who receive custodial sentences and their families.

## 4. **GM ARMED FORCES PROGRAMME FUTURE**

4.1 Since its inception, the GM Armed Forces Programme has had a partnership approach and co-production at its heart. The GM Lead Officers Group is well established, but in an effort to stay abreast of developments and at the focal point of coordination across the region, significant working relationships and best practice sharing pathways have been forged across the country. with:

4.2 Future work drives the imperative to retain the post, in line with the Reform Board's aspiration to create a focal point at the heart of GM. Funding obtained from MHCLG has ensured that the GM Armed Forces Programme has been extended to end-March 2021; further external funding will be sought and bid for on a rolling basis in order to retain the

programme manager role and funding for specific projects. However, in order to secure the programme and continue the post in the PSR team as part of GMCA, a cost share is proposed between:

- GM HSCP.
- GMCA.
- 10 x local authorities.

The anticipated cost per organisation is £6k per annum.

## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

5.1 Recommendations appear at the front of this report.

## **APPENDIX 1 – ARMED FORCES COVENANT IN GM – WORKSTRANDS IN DETAIL**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

#### **1. ACHIEVEMENTS**

1.1 **Website and Armed Forces Covenant Portal.** As part of the iterative process of raising awareness of the GM Armed Forces Programme, the website was launched earlier this year. At [www.gmarmedforces.com](http://www.gmarmedforces.com), an information portal has been produced which gives information on service provision across GM, using the Veterans and Families Service Directory as part of the Veterans Gateway. This GM Portal has been compiled by the GM Armed Forces Programme lead in partnership with localities to produce a coherent service directory.

1.2 **Workforce Development.** The GMCA Elearning Package was produced earlier this year, capturing first-hand accounts of what life is like in and following transition from military service. It was extremely well received, with all LAs taking the package to place on their Learning Management System. Additionally, it is available on the Armed Forces Covenant Portal at:

- <https://www.elearning.gmarmedforces.com/#/>.

1.3 **Marketing and Communication.** As part of the externally funded programme, GMCA was mandated to create five short animated films to raise awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant in GM. The first one has been produced and was very well received across social media platforms and by stakeholder groups. The link to view is here:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z6TTLqH2y6A&feature=youtu.be>.

The next four films are in production and will be released to coincide with significant events / timings:

- Health – late October / early November to coincide with Remembrance.
- Housing and Homelessness – late November in the lead in to Christmas.
- Education – early in 2020.
- Employment and Skills – February 2020 to coincide with the creation of a GM Forces Friendly Employers Forum.

1.4 **Health and Wellbeing.** Significant progress has been made in the area of Health, Mental Health and Social Care as part of the commitment made by the NHS in the Long Term Plan Implementation Framework:

- **High Intensity / Complex Need Provision.** A piece of work to understand and provide a solution to those Veterans requiring acute mental health provision and intensive care coordination and management is nearing completion. The proposal is to pilot a robust clinical case management service that would provide comprehensive case

management to military veterans with complex needs but also deliver critical interventions whilst veterans are engaged with the service rather than refer onto other services and risk veterans falling out of the system.

- **GP Pilot Tameside.** A recent project was conducted in Tameside to increase the identification of military service in primary care records. The project included a wide range of both practice- and veteran-facing activities. Veteran-facing activities aimed to get veterans to tell their GP that they have served in the Armed Forces and would like this recording on their primary care record. Examples of these activities included:
  - arranging text messages from practices asking about military service;
  - adding military service to the new patient registration form;
  - displaying posters at GP practices encouraging veterans to tell their GP about their military service; and
  - active outreach at Armed Forces events across Tameside encouraging veterans to tell their GP practice about their military service.

A report has been produced to support other localities adopting this approach, along with leaflets, posters and a video, which are available to use across GM<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, this activity underpins the aim to enrol all GP surgeries across GM into the Royal College of GPs Military Veteran Aware Accreditation Scheme<sup>2</sup> by providing tangible evidence of benefits to patient and GP. The aspiration is to incorporate this in the GM GP Excellence Model.

- **Hospital Trust Pilots<sup>3</sup>.** Two innovative and exciting pilot schemes are underway in Stockport and Wigan. Stockport NHS FT and Wigan Wrightington and Leigh NHS FT have looked in detail around the entrance and departure from in/out patient services in their hospitals and are working in partnership, with the support of Stockport Council, Wigan Council, GMCA and GM HSCP to provide a template for the other 16 FTs in GM to consider adopting. It is hoped that this project will lead to all FTs across GM applying for Veterans Covenant Hospital Alliance<sup>4</sup> status and be able to provide considerable depth to their service provision for Veterans and their families.
- **Suicide Prevention.** Recognising the issue of suicide amongst Veterans, the GM Armed Forces Programme has worked closely with the GM Suicide Prevention Executive. As a result, one of the individuals highlighting their story in the recent Shining a Light on Suicide campaign, was Owen, a former Royal Engineer from Bury. This has served to further raise awareness of the mental health needs of the Armed Forces community.

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<sup>1</sup> Available at <https://www.tameside.gov.uk/armedforcescovenant>.

<sup>2</sup> NHS Long Term Plan Implementation Framework Reference D5, p43.

<sup>3</sup> NHS Long Term Plan Implementation Framework Reference D5, p43.

<sup>4</sup> Part of the NHS Getting it Right First Time initiative, the Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance (VCHA) is a group of over 30 hospitals which aim to improve the healthcare that veterans receive from the NHS. Veteran Aware hospitals will help provide integrated care and a single source of advice to veterans on the support available to them



- **Bereavement by Suicide.** In a similar vein, the GM Bereavement by Suicide project has its staff asking the Armed Forces identification questions when those affected by suicide contact the service. The GM AF Programme has promoted the service and has also created bespoke information to support the Armed Forces community in GM. This has been formed into a webpage which can be accessed here:
  - <http://www.shininglightonsuicide.org.uk/the-military-community/>.
- **Broughton House.** As the sole provider of nursing care for members of the Armed Forces community in the NW, Broughton House has received a £3M loan towards the construction costs of its innovative care model. Phase 1 is nearing completion with subsequent phases now funded. Furthermore, Broughton House has significant experience in caring for Veterans and links are being forged with GM care provision best practice in order that the organisation's learning can be shared with others operating in the care sector in GM.
- **Greater Sport.** As part of a linked bid for funding, GM is home to the Moving Forces project which links sport and fitness activity to mental and physical wellbeing. This programme is now in its second year and is active across Tameside, Rochdale and Manchester local authority areas. It will engage across the ten localities from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020 and is a key part of the Health offer across GM.

1.5 **Transition Pilot.** GM is a key partner in the delivery of the fledgling Defence Transition Service (DTS). This will see DTS staff discuss military personnel seeking to transition from Service and live/work in the GM area with a focal point within GMCA. This allows for a fully networked approach, through the GMCA lead officers and locality place based teams, to provide advice, guidance and support to those leaving the military to settle in GM, as well as assisting with spousal employment and issues such as school placement. The stakeholder group took place on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2019 with full operational capability set to be achieved later in the year. In addition, information leaflets are in production to support this activity, which will signpost to the GMCA focal point; these will be distributed to military resettlement centres in soft copy by 30<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

1.6 **Housing and Homelessness.** As part of the drive to embed the needs of the Armed Forces community into the wider transformation of public service delivery, the GM Armed Forces programme has meshed into the wider GM Strategic Housing Group work. In January 2019, MHCLG sought consultation on a number of issues surrounding housing access for the Armed Forces community and the Armed Forces and Housing team in GMCA coordinated a consolidated response from all GM stakeholders, including GMHP. This has resulted in the needs of the Armed Forces community being fully encapsulated in the GM Housing Strategy and the forthcoming pan-GM framework that will improve access to social housing. Additionally:

- **Housing First.** When Housing First went live, it did so with two distinct points at which former members of the Armed Forces could be identified. This is to enable the signposting to additional support options that may be available to the Armed Forces community.
- **A Bed Every Night (ABEN) Scheme.** All those accessing support through ABEN are asked if they have previously served in the military in order to enhance the offer of support available to them at the point of entry and thereafter in the scheme. To date, 4% of those asked have confirmed former service, which is representative of the number of Veterans in the wider GM resident population.
- **GMHP.** In operation for 18 months, GMHP has an active workstrand that supports the Armed Forces community, both in the respects of tenant population and employees. This work has led to a number of GMHP members setting up bespoke Armed Forces projects and GMHP, as a consortium, signed the Armed Forces Covenant in May 2019. GMCA colleagues are embedded in the work to enhance the Covenant offer from GMHP and are actively engaged in work to support housing providers do more to support the Armed Forces Community.

#### 1.7 **Criminal Justice System.**

- GMP has embarked upon a programme of enhancing its support to the Armed Forces community and has created a network of divisional leads and champions to further the work. The programme is fully aligned with the wider GM Armed Forces Programme and the GM Armed Forces Programme Manager sits on the GMP Armed Forces Steering Group and the GM Adult Offender Management Board.
- As part of the wider work around Out of Court Disposals, an Armed Forces strand has been developed that will see all those identifying as former service personnel being referred into a military third sector partner to achieve risk assessments and action planning. This is a precursor to further scoping to deliver support to Veterans in custody and their families.

## 2. **ONGOING WORK**

2.1 **Marketing and Communication.** The four films to follow the first, generalist animations are in production at the script-writing stage. These will be co-produced with specialists from across GM contributing to the key, awareness-raising messages. Additionally, [www.garmedforces.com](http://www.garmedforces.com) will receive major updates in the coming months to better signpost to locality Armed Forces Covenant delivery and service provision.

#### 2.2 **Health.**

- Once the full lessons have been identified, the creation of a template to support NHS Trusts applying for Veterans Health Covenant Alliance and the 'Stepping Hill Model' of support will be rolled out.

- As part of the GM Suicide Prevention Month of Hope, an Armed Forces event is being planned.
- Work is underway to understand the compatibility of the NHSE High Intensity Service (HIS) Pathfinder Programme and the GM aspiration to support those who have acute and complex mental health issues, requiring intensive care management and coordination.

### 2.3 **Housing and Homelessness.**

- **Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) Post.** Funding drawn down from MHCLG has assisted in securing the two-year secondment of an individual to support GM's MEAM agenda. This post will also complete a number of smaller projects to further analyse the needs of the Armed Forces community in a number of areas. This work will provide a template to approach service design and provision.
- **Complex Housing Needs Study.** Rudimentary Analysis from Salford identified that there is a cohort of Veterans that have highly intensive, complex needs borne out of their chaotic lifestyles. There are currently few facilities to provide the first step out of homelessness and work is being scoped to understand the quantum and begin to understand how their needs could be met, using existing facilities and enhancing pathways.

### 2.4 **DWP / Salford University Third Wave.** Salford University's recent Sanctions, Support and Service Leavers project represented the UK's first substantive research to focus on veterans within the social security benefits system. The findings of the project made a series of recommendations, including:

- Ensuring that all JCP staff are provided with training on the adjustments and easements applicable to Armed Forces veterans and their families and, more broadly, around the mental/physical health impairments that may affect some veterans.
- Reviewing the efficacy of the AFCs, mapping good practice and identifying areas requiring improvement.

Following the publication of the report, the DWP asked the research team to develop a collaborative project (Third Wave) to address some of the key recommendations. Discussions are underway with funders and DWP to have GM as pilot area to trial interventions to support DWP's transformation into an organisation that gives gold-standard support to the Armed Forces community. The GM Armed Forces Programme Lead will act as a coordinator for the project and will support by offering the GMCA Armed Forces e-learning package as an option to upskill DWP staff.

### 2.5 **Reserve Forces and Cadets Association (RFCA) / GMCA Forces Friendly Business Forum.** Charged with promoting all activities Armed Forces Covenant-related, the RFCA have agreed to work in partnership with GMCA to establish which employers have signed the Covenant in GM. This will facilitate the creation of a Forces Friendly Employers Network, which aims to:

- Provide a forum for best practice in supporting the employment and development needs of ex-forces personnel and their families.

- Spread the positive message amongst other employers of the benefits of employing ex-forces personnel.
  - E.g. the Government's introduction of a one-year moratorium on employer national insurance contributions for companies hiring former armed service personnel.
- Encourage other employers to sign the Armed Forces Covenant and demonstrate support to the Armed Forces community across GM.

It is anticipated that this network will form in early 2020 to coincide with the Employment and Skills animation video, as previously discussed.

### 3. **NETWORK AND WORKING RELATIONSHIPS**

- MOD (London) Armed Forces Covenant Team.
- MOD (NW) Military Cooperation and Integration.
- MOD Defence Transition Service.
- NW Veterans Advisory and Pensions Committee.
- Veterans UK.
- NHSE Armed Forces Commissioning Team.
- NHS NW Armed Forces Network.
- GM HSCP.
- DWP (regionally and nationally).
- LGA Armed Forces Covenant Officers Group.
  - Sharing of best practice and information with over 40 local authority and regional leads.
- Liverpool City Region.
- Lancashire County Council and the Lancashire Armed Forces Covenant Hub.
- Northumbria University's Northern Hub for Veterans and Military Families Research.
- WMCA.