

# Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Date: 12 July 2024

Subject: Armed Forces Covenant Delivery in Greater Manchester

Report of: Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester and Tom Stannard, Lead Chief Executive for the Armed Forces Covenant

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## Purpose of Report

GMCA Members have consistently made strong commitments to transforming the offer for the Armed Forces Community in Greater Manchester. This report presents a brief update on the work that has subsequently taken place and also presents information about the Greater Manchester Armed Forces Covenant Roadmap that has been developed using the expertise of the GM Armed Forces Leads across the localities and City Region partners.

## Recommendations:

The GMCA is requested to:

1. Note the updates provided on progress made to deliver against the Armed Forces Covenant coherently the across GM.
2. Endorse the 5-year Roadmap as a framework to enhance cohesive delivery across the City Region.
3. Recognise the enduring and sustained effort to go even further and make Greater Manchester the best place in the UK for members of the Armed Forces Community to live and demonstrate this commitment by re-signing the GM Armed Forces Covenant.

## Contact Officers

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BOLTON  
BURY

MANCHESTER  
OLDHAM

ROCHDALE  
SALFORD

STOCKPORT  
TAMESIDE

TRAFFORD  
WIGAN

## Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

Recommendation - Key points for decision-makers		
N/A		
Impacts Questionnaire		
Impact Indicator	Result	Justification/Mitigation
Equality and Inclusion	G	
Health	G	
Resilience and Adaptation	G	
Housing	G	
Economy		
Mobility and Connectivity		
Carbon, Nature and Environment		
Consumption and Production		
Contribution to achieving the GM Carbon Neutral 2038 target		
Further Assessment(s):	Equalities Impact Assessment	
<b>G</b> Positive impacts overall, whether long or short term.	<b>A</b> Mix of positive and negative impacts. Trade-offs to consider.	<b>R</b> Mostly negative, with at least one positive aspect. Trade-offs to consider.
		<b>RR</b> Negative impacts overall.

## Risk Management

N/A

## Legal Considerations

N/A

## Financial Consequences – Revenue

N/A

## Financial Consequences – Capital

N/A

Number of attachments to the report: 2

Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Nil

## **Background Papers**

Included in report.

## **Tracking/ Process**

Does this report relate to a major strategic decision, as set out in the GMCA Constitution

No

## **Exemption from call in**

No

## **Bee Network Committee**

N/A

## **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

N/A

## **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. Efforts continue to be 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. The sum of all these parts will make Greater Manchester the best place in the UK for members of the Armed Forces Community to live.
- 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 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 Greater Manchester, each local authority has a lead officer. In October 2019, GMCA took the innovative step to have a permanent programme manager supporting and coordinating delivery of the Armed Forces Covenant across the city region. The GMCA and local authority leads form the strategic group to deliver the GM Armed Forces Programme which also incorporates the DWP, GMP, GMFRS and Health leads. Additionally, GMCA has instigated a 6 monthly Armed Forces Partnership Forum that brings together the public and VCSE partners operating in support of the community.

## 2. KEY UPDATES

2.1 **GMCA.** GMCA is becoming a partner of choice for Central Government to have a critical friend when designing programmes. Exemplified by the consultancy role that members of the Public Service Reform team had when the Op FORTITUDE and Homelessness Prevention programmes were being designed, the network-focussed approach that has been fundamental to the GM approach is recognised not only as delivering positive outcomes, but the ground truth and knowledge held by the Combined Authority is seen as vital to informing Whitehall conversations. Similarly, the GM Armed Forces Covenant Programme Lead has recently taken up the co-chair of the LGA Armed Forces Covenant Network which seeks to reinvigorate the Covenant within the LGA lobbying agenda and drive up awareness amongst Leaders and CEXs nationally.

2.2 **Partnerships.** The last 5 years has seen the development of a working level partnership that is held up as best practice nationally, most recently in the LGA-commissioned report into Armed Forces Covenant efficacy. GMCA is lauded for investing in Covenant delivery by supporting local authorities and other public sector organisations through a focal point in the Public Service Reform directorate. This has been pivotal in creating the conditions necessary to produce the GM Armed Forces Covenant Roadmap.

**2.3 Effect of Legislation.** The Armed Forces Act 2021 introduced a new requirement for some public bodies, including the NHS and local authorities, to pay due regard to the principles of the Covenant when carrying out specific public functions in the areas of housing, healthcare and education. The Government committed to review the operation of the new duty across the UK in its 2023 Covenant annual report; however this has not included the promised review of Government departments' duty and the associated review of resource for local authorities nationwide. The previously mentioned LGA Armed Forces Network is taking up these issues as they effect local government

**2.5 MOD Employer Recognition Scheme.** GMCA currently holds 8 MOD Gold Awards and 3 Silver Awards. All remaining silver award holders are currently in the process of applying for Gold. Additionally, GMP, GMFRS and NWAS also hold Gold awards.

**2.6 Organisational Development.** In order to raise awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant in GM, 2 pieces of elearning, alongside face-to-face briefing templates and guided discussion frameworks have been completed and a further 3 are in production and nearing completion. All GM local authorities have taken delivery of the Induction and Customer Facing Staff modules.

### **3. THE GREATER MANCHESTER ARMED FORCES COVENANT ROADMAP**

**3.1 Design and Purpose.** There has been significant focus on the network and partnership capabilities of the GM Armed Forces Covenant community. The creation of the Armed Forces Covenant Roadmap takes delivery to the next stage of co-design, coherence and accountability. This has been achieved through partnership with all local authorities being key stakeholders in the co-design of the direction of travel. At Appendix 1 is the Roadmap with associated Delivery Plan that seeks to formalise the way in which partners across the City Region come together to make GM the best place in the UK for the Armed Forces Community to live. The Delivery Plan is organised into sections that reflect the cross-cutting nature of serving the Armed Forces Community.

### 3.2 Key Information.

- a. Awareness must be at the heart of everything we do for the Armed Forces Community; this means that staff and volunteer awareness must be elevated through concerted and coherence campaigns.
- b. Recognising that the financial resources are scarce, every effort must be made in local government to embed Armed Forces Covenant delivery into business as usual activity, empowering local authority leads and partners to prioritise the Armed Forces Community as a Community of Interest.
- c. Recognise that the combination of financial position and restructure has left the NHS in GM having to recover hard won ground in order to best deliver for the Armed Forces Community in GM. It is hoped that the ICB are able to provide leadership and guidance to Health partners, commensurate with the participation demonstrated by other public sector stakeholders.
- d. The Roadmap and Delivery Plan is established on a 5-year rolling basis that will be reviewed on a 6 monthly basis by a Governance group comprising (as a minimum) of representation from:
  - i. 10 x LAs.
  - ii. NHS in GM.
  - iii. DWP.
  - iv. GMP.
  - v. GMFRS.
  - vi. TfGM.
  - vii. VCSFE.
- e. GM LAs have a blended approach to Covenant delivery which sees dedicated officers in some localities and in others, officers holding the portfolio as an associated duty. Regardless of approach, LAs are committed to delivering the best possible outcomes for their Armed Forces Community as they have been pivotal in creating the Roadmap for GM.

3.3 **Timeline.** The Roadmap and Delivery Plan is intended to be enduring and rolling so that potential outcomes can be captured. The Roadmap and Delivery Plan, if approved, will be launched during Armed Forces Week at the end of June 2024

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

- 4.1 In order to update it's commitment to the Armed Forces Community, it is proposed to demonstrate the City Region's determination to do more. This is enshrined in the draft Armed Forces Covenant document at Appendix 2 which is included for approval to resign during Armed Forces week at the end of June 2024, alongside the launch of the Roadmap and Delivery Plan.

#### **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.1 Recommendations appear at the front of this report.

# Greater Manchester Combined Authority

## Armed Forces Covenant Roadmap

### City Region Delivery Plan - 2024 onwards



BOLTON  
BURY

MANCHESTER  
OLDHAM

ROCHDALE  
SALFORD

STOCKPORT  
TAMESIDE

TRAFFORD  
WIGAN



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## INTRODUCTION

In 2021, the Armed Forces Act 2006 was amended to include sections 343AA(1), 343AB(1), 343AC(1) and 343AD(1). These place a duty (the Covenant Duty) on certain specified persons or bodies, in the exercise of relevant functions, to have “due regard to the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant”.

Reflecting the key concerns of the Armed Forces Community, the Covenant Duty currently applies to those relevant functions that underpin the policies where disadvantage is experienced by the Armed Forces Community.

Broadly, key concerns include:

<b>Education</b>	<b>Healthcare</b>	<b>Housing</b>
Admissions	Aspects concerning access and quality	Allocation policy for social housing
Additional learning needs support		Homelessness
Student wellbeing		Disabled facilities grants
Use of Service Pupil Premium funding (where applicable)		Tenancy strategies (where applicable)

The Covenant Duty will apply to specified public bodies and persons exercising specific public functions in the fields of education, healthcare and housing including:

<b>Education</b>	<b>Healthcare</b>	<b>Housing</b>
Local Authorities	Local Authorities	Local Authorities
Governing Bodies of maintained schools	NHS in GM ICB	
Proprietors of Academies	Primary Care Networks	
Non-maintained special schools	National Health Service Trusts	
Governing bodies of further education institutions	NHS Foundation Trusts	
Special post-16 institutions		

This delivery plan encompasses the outcomes for the Covenant duty but also includes the areas of Employment, Skills and Finance as well as Collaboration, Awareness and Recognition of the Armed Forces Covenant to ensure Greater Manchester is fully meeting its commitment to its Armed Forces Community and moving forwards to make Greater Manchester the best place in the UK for members of the Armed Forces Community to live.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The traffic light system outlined below relates to how the progress will be assessed and how it plans to make improvements:

<b>Green</b>	Means that the necessary arrangements are in place, up to date, and meet the required standard
<b>Amber</b>	Means that some measures are in place, but others require review or improvement
<b>Red</b>	Means that standards are not met and need to be addressed

Where the score is amber or red, the Delivery Plan will be used to summarise how GMCA plans to address the areas for improvement that have been identified. The GMCA Armed Forces Covenant Programme Manager will support LA Leads and others across the Public and VCSFE sectors to improve the rating. The monthly Armed Forces Covenant LA Leads meeting will be used to discuss key issues surrounding the Delivery Plan. Quarterly, a Governance Group, incorporating all LAs, key partners in delivery and a Veterans voice will meet to discuss progress and amend the Delivery Plan accordingly.

The Roadmap and Delivery Plan has been developed using:

- [How to deliver the covenant in your area England \(Ministry of Defence\)](#)
- [The Veterans' Strategy \(HM Government\) 2022-2024](#)
- [Veterans Strategy Action Plan](#)
- [A Decade of the Covenant – FiMT Report](#)
- [UK Armed Forces Families Strategy \(HM Government\) 2022-32](#)

## The Veterans' Strategy 2022-2024

The Delivery Plan considers all the key themes and cross-cutting factors in the Veterans' Strategy 2022-24, notwithstanding the fact that the Delivery Plan caters for the full membership of the Armed Forces Community:

Key themes	Cross-Cutting Factors
<p><b>1. Community and Relationships</b>  <i>Veterans are able to build healthy relationships and integrate into their communities</i></p>	<p><b>1. Collaboration Between Organisations</b>  <i>Improved collaboration between organisations offers veterans coherent support</i></p>
<p><b>2. Employment, Education and Skills</b>  <i>Veterans enter appropriate employment and can continue to enhance their careers throughout their working lives</i></p>	<p><b>2. Coordination of Veterans' Services</b>  <i>The coordination of veterans' provision delivers consistent aims and principles over time and throughout the UK, ensuring veterans, their families and the bereaved are treated fairly compared to the local population</i></p>
<p><b>3. Finance and Debt</b>  <i>Veterans leave the Armed Forces with sufficient financial education awareness and skills to be financially self-supporting and resilient</i></p>	<p><b>3. Data on the Veteran Community</b>  <i>Enhanced collection, use and analysis of data across the public, private and charitable sectors to build an evidence base to effectively identify and address the needs of Veterans</i></p>
<p><b>4. Health and Wellbeing</b>  <i>All veterans enjoy a state of positive physical mental health and wellbeing, enabling them to contribute to wider aspects of society</i></p>	<p><b>4. Public Perception and Understanding</b>  <i>The UK population value veterans and understand their diverse experiences and culture</i></p>
<p><b>5. Making a Home in Civilian Society</b>  <i>Veterans have a secure place to live either through buying, renting or social housing</i></p>	<p><b>5. Recognition of Veterans</b>  <i>Veterans feel that their service and experience is recognised and valued by society</i></p>
<p><b>6. Veterans and the Law</b>  <i>Veterans leave the Armed Forces with the resilience and awareness to remain law-abiding citizens</i></p>	

## UK Armed Forces Families Strategy 2022-32

The Delivery Plan considers the core workstreams of the UK Armed Forces Families Strategy 2022-32:

<p><b>1. Family Life:</b> Family units that are supported to understand and cope with deployment, mobility and separation and the unique stresses of the military lifestyle. Wherever they live, they are aware of the support that is available, and how to access it. When children and adults are at risk of harm, they are protected through a multi-agency approach facilitating a swift response.</p>
<p><b>2. Service Life:</b> Coordinated career management and welfare processes that focus on nurturing the serviceperson with their family alongside them and preparing them for a successful transition to civilian life.</p>
<p><b>3. Family Home:</b> A flexible accommodation policy that reflects modern family constructs, allowing families the choice and freedom needed to nurture a family home.</p>
<p><b>4. Children's Education:</b> The opportunities available to children from armed forces families are maximised through robust research, effective collaboration and dissemination of best practice. This informs the wider policies and practice that underpins how the governments of the UK and external partners support these children. 15</p>
<p><b>5. Childcare:</b> Families have access to good quality, enriching and safe childcare that meets their needs. This allows service personnel to fully engage with their duties, and the greater flexibility gives the family more opportunities, improving general wellbeing.</p>
<p><b>6. Non-UK Families:</b> Non-UK families are valued and accommodated in supportive UK government and Defence policies cognisant of their experiences. This helps to mitigate potential disadvantage conferred by their immigration status wherever possible and provide wider support that is sensitive to cultural backgrounds.</p>
<p><b>7. Supporting Partners:</b> The skills and experiences of partners and spouses are widely understood, valued and sought after. They can navigate extensive cross-sector provision to access timely support that meets their needs and helps them to develop and pursue their own career path.</p>
<p><b>8. Health and Wellbeing:</b> Families are able to access timely integrated, mental and physical health and wellbeing services. Professionals provide continuity of support cognisant of the military context, sharing information, to ease relocation between nations and regions, especially for the most vulnerable</p>

## ARMED FORCES COVENANT ROADMAP FOR GM OVERVIEW

THEME	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5
<b>Community and Relationships</b>	Create effective governance to oversee the Delivery Plan and report to the GMCA	Create a mobile AFC marketplace to raise awareness in localities	Scope the value of the 'Veteran in Need' protected characteristic	Review ICT systems and their interoperability to create a marker system	Fully embed the AFC as a Community of Interest in Devolution in GM
<b>Employment Education and Skills</b>	Tackle SEND issues in the AFC and deliver common standards across localities	Ensure that school admission policies are aligned with Armed Forces Act Statutory Guidance	Deliver the Courses for Forces Initiative	Continue to advocate for guaranteed interviews for the AFC in the Private Sector	Have a fully functional AFC employment and skills hub
<b>Finance and Debt</b>	Understand the quantum of Veterans and Service Families suffering through the Cost of Living Crisis	Create a financial support network in GM that exists to guide advise and directly support the AFC	Develop a clear financial support pathway for the AFC	Deliver a fully kitemarked network of advice and support providers	
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	Develop NHS in GM Leadership to augment front line activity	Deliver a pan-GM JSNA for the AFC	Drive to 100% AFC literacy in GM Health professionals	Create a Health portal for the AFC that allows effective navigation through the Health system	Ensure that all staff working in Health are aware of the AFC in their patient cohorts
<b>Making a Home in Civilian Society</b>	Assure partners that we have coherency in all housing related policies for the AFC	Embed the AFC in the Housing First model in GM	Demonstrate the efficacy of a coherent housing offer in GM and lobby for change	Drive to 100% AFC literacy in GM Housing and Homelessness professionals	Deliver a package of housing offers that are specifically for the AFC and effectively market
<b>Armed Forces Community and the Law</b>	Embed the AFC in the Reducing Reoffending Management Board as a key priority	Support the creation of an effective multi-agency network to build on existing work	Seek to commission research across the GM prison estate applying regional approaches	Create case for change for Veterans Wings in each HMP	Deliver a replicable support package for victims and perpetrators of crime

Key Theme	GMCA Area for Improvement	Action	Owner	Time	RAG
<b>Community &amp; Relationships</b>					
<b>All members of the AF Community are able to build healthy relationships and integrate into communities through effective collaboration and listening to the voices of those who have or are serving</b>	No coherent map of safe places and effective deliverers of support for members of the Armed Forces (AF) Community across GM currently exists in a usable form	<i>Work alongside the NW Veterans People Places and Pathways Programme (The Forces Wellbeing Collective) to create digital mapping of safe organisations.</i>	CT / AFCHQ	Y1	Yellow
		<i>Create bespoke GM links to launch to map/directory once achieved</i>	CT / AFCHQ	Y1	Yellow
	Understand the need for AF Domestic Abuse Awareness as the AFCHQ in Wigan are delivering the Hope & Home Programme funded by AFCFT until April 25	<i>Monitor and support AF Domestic Abuse training and understand the need to scale up and spread across GM</i>	CT	Y2	Red
	The support offer for the AF community across GM needs better coherent promotion	<i>Investigate options for a coherent 'marketing' strategy</i>	CT / SW	Y1-2	Red
		<i>Investigate the creation of a GM AF Covenant marketplace that travels to each locality to promote outcomes for the AF community and showcase delivery methods (Bury model)</i>	CT / CW	Y1-2	Yellow
	It is indicated that people do not know about GM Armed Forces Partnership and the organisations involved.	<i>Awareness raising of the partnership and its work on the local Armed Forces Covenant.</i>	All LA Leads	Y1-5	Green
		<i>Promote GM elearning and web-hosted elearning</i>	All LA Leads	Y1-5	Green
		<i>Commit to making the GM AF Induction elearning mandatory for all staff</i>	All LA Leads	Y1	Red
		<i>Commit to making subject matter-based AF elearning mandatory for all appropriate staff groups</i>	All LA Leads	Y1-2	Red
	Lots of good work already takes place but there is no formal mechanism to capture it or bring about collective change	<i>Template the Manchester City Council approach to coherent delivery and use networks, leads and champions to promote awareness and delivery in each LA</i>	CT / AH / All LA Leads	Y1	Yellow
		<i>Create a GM AFC Learning Portal that can be accessed by all in order to share best practice and further local standards in Covenant delivery</i>	CT	Y2	Red
	LAs continue to build on their excellent work to promote the Armed Forces Covenant and	<i>Design a systemic approach to AF Covenant Advocacy in each locality</i>	CT / LA Leads	Y2	Red

	act as Ambassadors for take up in Covenant signings in their locality				
	Stockport Council has begun work to understand the power of procurement and local business conversation to promote their AF Covenant activity and this should be replicated across the City Region	<i>Support Stockport AF Covenant business intervention model and understand its value in promoting the AF Covenant in the Private Sector</i>	CT / Stockport MBC Lead	<b>Y1</b>	
	Activity takes place in each locality but is not linked	<i>Deliver learning-based template for Private Sector AF Covenant engagement based</i>	CT	<b>Y2</b>	
	All customer facing organisations and departments must ask the question in order to identify members of the Armed Forces community	<i>Better use the GMCA web page to publicise AF Covenant activity and promote community-based approaches to Covenant delivery</i>	CT	<b>Y1-2</b>	
	Public Sector systems are generally poor at allowing markers to be placed to denote membership of the Armed Forces Community and individuals who are cannot be tracked through their public service support journey	<i>Develop literature, products and a roadshow to highlight the importance of asking the AF Community identification questions</i>	CT / LA Leads	<b>Y1-2</b>	
	There is currently no formal report to the population of GM or central government regarding GM's AF Covenant delivery	<i>Scope a mechanism to allow IT markers and tracking of members of the AF Community that is communicable across public sector IT systems</i>	CT	<b>Y2-4</b>	
	Ensure that the voice of the AF community is heard and embedded in the GM AF Covenant Roadmap	<i>Create an Annual GM AF Covenant Report that seeks to inform the general public and central government on how GM is performing in its Mission to become the best place in the UK for members of the AF community to live</i>	CT	<b>Y1 Onwards</b>	
	No formal mechanism exists to take Armed Forces Covenant and Community support needs into the Devolution conversation and understand the opportunities that the Trailblazer and subsequent Deals present	<i>Create a Veterans' Voice Engagement Network in Stockport</i>	CT / AP	<b>Y1</b>	
	Ensure that the GMCA Roadmap supports and provides a framework for non-local government public sector organisations	<i>Template the experience of Stockport to create a GM Veterans' Voice Engagement Network across</i>	CT / AP	<b>Y1</b>	
		<i>Create direct link with GMCA Strategy Team to open conversation re the AFC and its utility as an identifiable Col with a strong network</i>	CT	<b>Y1</b>	
		<i>Focus on DWP as a key emerging partner for multiplying effect in localities</i>	All	<b>Y2</b>	
		<i>Ensure that GMFRS Covenant delivery is coherent with the action plan by engagement with the GMFRS Lead and the AF staff network</i>	CT	<b>Y1-5</b>	



		<i>Sit on the GMP Strategic Working Group to ensure that they are supported on their Covenant journey and to ensure coherence</i>	CT	Y1-5	Green	
		<i>Continue the monthly coordination drop in for LA Leads</i>	CT / All	Y1-5	Green	
		<i>Create a GM Elected Members forum to provide a space for councillors with Covenant responsibility</i>	CT	Y1	Red	
	The MOD sponsored guidance for LAs is being renewed in the forthcoming 'Our Community our Covenant v4' and LAs should prepare for reinvigoration of activities	<i>Revisit the toolkit within previous guidance to ensure adherence to best practice, noting in particular to hold public facing forums</i>	CT	Y1	Yellow	
	Best practice in being a supportive employer of the AF community suggests that staff networks and associations be used to bring together like-minded individuals	<i>Understand existing staff networks across LAs and begin a learning account, using the GMFRS staff network as exemplar of GM best practice</i>	CT / JP	Y1	Yellow	
		<i>Provide a template for staff engagement that is effective for the GM LAs</i>	CT	Y2	Red	
	The AF community is not represented in all appropriate strategies across the GMCA work spectrum	<i>Embed AF community into GMCA/GMFRS EDI strategy rewrite</i>	CT / JE	Y1-2	Yellow	
	Legislation placed a Duty of Due Regard on public sector organisations in local government and Health to pay attention to the potential disadvantages faced by the Armed Forces Community	<i>Bury Council has taken the lead in enhancing the legislated duty and creating a protected characteristic, akin to e.g care leavers – the impact of this needs to be understood in determining the best way to deal with Veterans / Armed Forces community members in need</i>	CT / CW	Y2	Yellow	
		<i>Parcel lessons identified from Bury Council work to create case for change in Greater Manchester</i>	CT / CW	Y2	Red	
		<i>Lobby central government, if appropriate, for enhancement to legislation following the Bury Council model</i>	CT	Y3	Red	
	<b>Employment Education &amp; Skills</b>					
	<b>Members of the Armed Forces Community can access appropriate</b>	There is no coherent directory of appropriate courses across FE establishments in GM which are directed towards the AF community	<i>Work to understand the interrelationships between FE establishments</i>	CT / VC	Y1	Red
			<i>Create a directory of Courses for Forces</i>	CT / VC	Y2	Red

<b>employment and can continue to enhance their careers throughout their working lives</b>	Service Children FE are not best supported in GM as the AF Community is hidden	<i>Work to provide a coherent strategy for all Service children, including:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Raising Awareness of SPP</li> <li>- Identifying Service children</li> <li>- Providing education establishments with a toolkit to support their AF community</li> </ul>	CT / LM	Y2	
	Awareness of what is available for those transitioning out of the AF and into GM is not well known	<i>Reinvigorate the relationship with the Career Transition Partnership (CTP) and Veterans UK and provide them with the GM AF Covenant Guide</i>	CT	Y1	
	Private sector support for the employment of the AF Community is sporadic and most successful at locality level	<i>Work with other areas of GMCA to target mega-vendor deals as a way of garnering wider support for the AF community</i>	CT	Y1-5	
		<i>Engage the GM Chamber of Commerce to understand opportunities to promote the AF community</i>	CT	Y1	
	As the AF community in GM is Veteran heavy, little emphasis is placed on supporting serving and/or transitioning families by local authorities	<i>Create a pan-GM school place access information guide and coherent school place policy across the 10 LAs</i>	CT / All leads	Y1-2	
		<i>Create a Children with SEND support provision pathway and ensure adoption across the 10 LAs</i>	CT / All leads	Y1-2	
		<i>Service children are considered in the design and commissioning of services from birth – 19</i>	CT / GMCA EY	Y2	
	Service Pupil Premium is not understood and not universally applicable	<i>Understand the rules surrounding Service Pupil Premium drawdown and ensure that all education establishments across GM are aware of its availability</i>	CT	Y1	
		<i>Create a case for change that modernises Service Pupil Premium and ensures it is available to schools that support children of active reservists</i>	CT	Y1	
	Ensure that all public sector organisations are posting employment opportunities on Spouse / partner specific sites	<i>Reinvigorate LA linkages</i>	All	Y1	
	Create a Spouse / Partner Employment Portal that links all GM public sector opportunities together	<i>Working Group to deliver enduring portal and forum to ensure opportunities for AFC given widest possible circulation</i>	CT	Y3	
	Provision of a Guaranteed Interview Scheme GIS is patchy across the Public Sector and is sparse across the Private Sector	<i>Ensure that all Public Sector organisations across GM have an appropriate GIS for Service Leavers and Veterans</i>	All Public Sector Leads	Y1-2	

		<i>Create a Private Sector GIS Template and advocate for its uptake through all appropriate forums</i>	CT	Y3	
<b>Finance &amp; Debt</b>					
<b><i>Veterans and their families leave the Armed Forces with sufficient financial education, awareness, and skills to be financially self-supporting</i></b>	The niche provision of support for the AF community is not well understood by generic support providers who cater for the whole population	<i>Work in partnership with the GMCA Cost of Living Lead to detail enhanced support available to members of the Armed Forces community who have or are experiencing debt or financial issues.</i>	CT / EM	Y1	
	Priorities of Housing and Employment are key issues that need further exploration in GM as well as hubs, drop ins and breakfast clubs that provide social, emotional and practical support to Armed Forces families.	<i>Create GM Awareness Pack for all stakeholders to signpost where support is available.</i>	CT	Y2	
	Adopt a 'one stop shop' approach with access to finance/debt advice as well as education, employment and training and signposting to specialist mental health support at the Armed Forces Hubs / Drop Ins / Focal Points.	<i>Create a GM AF Focal Point network that is NW VPPP accredited</i>	CT	Y1	
		<i>Develop a clear financial support pathway for the GM AFC that is available to all</i>	CT	Y2	
<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing</b>					
<b><i>Members of the AF Community can access health services efficiently and know that they will be understood and care for</i></b>	NHS leadership on the AF Covenant in GM is intermittent and sporadic	<i>Make the AF Covenant a key priority in the NHS GM LTP</i>	NHSGM	Y1	
		<i>Nominate an individual at senior leadership level to be permanently given strategic responsibility for levelling up the Health offer for the AF community in GM</i>	NHSGM	Y1	
		<i>Promote the AF elearning for senior officers amongst senior health colleagues and create opportunities for learning events</i>	CT / NHSGM	Y1	
	Commissioning in GM should better consider the AF community	<i>The GM ICB should engage in national conversations surrounding key Health issues that are more prevalent in the AF community and seek opportunities to commission (or better market existing) services to support</i>	NHSGM	Y1-2	
	Take up of the RCGP Veteran Friendly Accreditation in GM is below national average	<i>Create a Place-driven approach to raising awareness of the benefits of Veteran Friendly Accreditation,</i>	CT / NHSGM	Y1	

		<i>Establish a peer support structure to drive over the top enhancements to GP accreditation once attained</i>		<b>Y2</b>	
		<i>Identify community of practice leadership and support development of GM GP Best Practice toolkit</i>	CT / NHSGM	<b>Y3</b>	
	Health professionals do not universally have sufficient depth of understanding of Armed Forces culture and way of life	<i>Actively promote the GM elearning training in order to raise awareness</i>	CT / NHSGM	<b>Y1</b>	
		<i>Engage strategic working groups in the NHS GM system to encourage adherence to the NHSE guidance on duty of due regard in Health delivery</i>	CT / NHSGM	<b>Y1</b>	
	Health outcomes explicit in the AF Covenant and legislation are not fully understood by the general public and the AF community	<i>Consider providing digital comms on how the NHS in GM supports the AF community and expand upon key areas of misunderstanding such as waiting lists and priority treatment</i>	NHSGM	<b>Y1-2</b>	
	The AF community is not explicitly catered for in Live Well and other programmes	<i>Map the NHS programmes that might support the AF community and engage with them to understand synergies and opportunities</i>	CT	<b>Y1</b>	
	Op COMMUNITY does not currently exist in the NW	<i>Support the establishment of Op COMMUNITY in the NW and engage the 3 x NW ICBs to consider the sustainability of the Op COMMUNITY outcomes</i>	CT	<b>Y1-2</b>	
	The lack of provision in dentistry creates issues for those who have left the AF having received outstanding dental treatment for the entirety of their service careers	<i>Understand the quantum of service leavers who cannot access NHS dentistry</i>	CT / NHSGM	<b>Y1</b>	
		<i>Scope and deliver a guaranteed dentist patient list place scheme as part of GM's commitment to supporting those who transition from service</i>	CT / NHSGM	<b>Y2</b>	
	The lack of provision in dentistry creates issues for active reservists who may be prohibited from being called up as a serving reservist due to poor dental health	<i>Scope and deliver a guaranteed dentist patient list place scheme as part of GM's commitment to its Reserve Forces</i>	CT / NHSGM	<b>Y2</b>	
Continue to ensure that GM's Gold Standard mental health provision (MVS) is actively promoted to potential service users and professionals	<i>Work alongside Pennine Care to create and promote a directory of effective mental health providers for Veterans in order to ensure safe pathways to better mental health</i>	CT / NHSGM	<b>Y1-2</b>		
	<i>Create a GM MH forum that brings together MH providers from all sectors to work cohesively</i>	CT / MVS	<b>Y1-2</b>		
Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance for NHS Trusts should be seen as a starting point	<i>Work to promote AF Covenant awareness in NHS Trusts by creating a ICB-led network of leads/champions across the NHS in GM</i>	CT / NHSGM	<b>Y2</b>		

	and not the end point for Trusts delivering their AF Covenant pledges				
	Other providers of Health services could be better utilised to provide a wider catchment of the AF community's Health needs	<i>Understand the Wigan approach to partnering with Community Pharmacy and assess its applicability and reach across other pharmacy organisations in GM</i>	CT / LM	Y1-2	
	Gambling Harm is a prevalent problem amongst the Armed Forces community that is seldom discussed	<i>Understand the efficacy of the Beacon Counselling Trust and Forces Wellbeing Collective programmes</i>	CT	Y1	
		<i>Ensure that the AF community is wrapped into existing Gambling Harm Reduction programmes</i>	CT / JE	Y1-5	
	Suicide Prevention in the AF community is an enduring theme and project which requires constant attention	<i>GMCA to act as the focal point for raising awareness of the risk of suicide in the AF community and reinvigorate the need for the Health community in GM to consider the AF community as requiring close and special attention</i>	CT	Y1-5	
	Better awareness of the Veteran Friendly Accreditation for social care settings is required	<i>Work with Royal Star and Garter to promote and support social care providers in gaining accreditation</i>	All LA Leads	Y1-5	
<b>Making a Home in Civilian Society</b>					
	There are no DLUHC led conversations regarding the provision of housing support and homelessness prevention for the Armed Forces community	<i>Create an enduring discussion between DLUHC and GMCA and build a case for change leading to a GM AF community Homelessness Prevention trailblazer</i>	CT / JD	Y1-3	
		<i>Understand the impact of Op FORTITUDE and ensure an accurate impact assessment is returned to the Cabinet Office (OVA)</i>	CT	Y2	
	Provision of support to members of the AF community in housing need is strong but requires an audit in order to demonstrate commonality and ensure a level playing field across GM	<i>Ensure a housing access and allocation policy review is conducted in order to ensure that all elements of the Armed Forces Act statutory guidance are incorporated</i>	All LA Leads	Y1	
		<i>Create a Housing Options AF Forum / Working Group to reinforce co-design of measures to counter AF community members in housing need</i>	CT / LA Leads	Y1-2	
	There is a need to create a coherent regional housing solution for members of the AF community in GM	<i>Understand the impact of Homes at Ease NW and other programmes to build a case for change</i>	CT / LM	Y2	
		<i>Create an options paper for the GM Housing Needs Group</i>	CT / SF	Y3	

		<i>Investigate options for bespoke housing for the AF community that meets the spectrum of needs faced by individuals and families</i>			
	Provision of Disabled Facilities Grants for members of the Armed Forces community requires special consideration in certain cases	<i>Build on the work of Salford City Council and template an approach to Disabled Facilities Grants that can be adopted across GM LAs</i>	CT / JF / RH	<b>Y1-2</b>	
	Need to ensure enduring awareness of Homelessness Prevention initiatives	<i>Promote Homes at Ease, the Reducing Veterans Homelessness programme funded by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trusts in partnership with Op Fortitude</i>	CT	<b>Y1-5</b>	
	Deliver enhanced Training and Development to Housing Teams and RSLs that operate across GM	<i>Using the new elearning as a handrail, seek opportunities to engage with teams working in general population housing and homelessness prevention to demonstrate the additional support that members of the AF community can access</i>	CT	<b>Y1-5</b>	
	Develop an AF community offer under the GM Good Landlords Charter	<i>Work alongside GMCA Homelessness Prevention Team to understand how the AF community can better access good landlords on transition to civilian life and thereafter</i>	CT / JD	<b>Y1</b>	
<b>The AF Community and the Law</b>					
<b>Veterans and their families leave the Armed Forces with resilience and awareness to remain law abiding citizens</b>	Legal support for members of the AF community who are perpetrators of crime	<i>Map the legal services across GM for those who may need support in the justice system</i>	CT	<b>Y1</b>	
	Coherent directory of support for those who are victims of crime	<i>Map the provision of support for those who are victims of crime and are also members of the AF community</i>	CT	<b>Y1</b>	
	Fully mesh the Armed Forces Community Agenda in the GM Adult Offenders Management Board	<i>Collaborate to design a programme that works alongside support for the wider offender cohort</i>	AS / CT	<b>Y1</b>	
		<i>Develop relationships with the National Probation Service (High Risk Offenders and MAPPA) and Community Wellbeing Service to support veterans in the justice system.</i>	AS / CT	<b>Y2</b>	
	Work alongside Groundworks to grow and strengthen the GM 5 x VICSO network	<i>Understand barriers to better supporting Veterans in custody</i>	CT	<b>Y1</b>	
		<i>Create a pack for VICSOs supporting Veterans returning to GM post-custody</i>	CT / TM	<b>Y2</b>	
		<i>Understand the quantum of Veteran offenders to provide rehabilitation support to on an annual basis</i>	CT / AS / TM	<b>Y1-2</b>	
	Understand the needs of Veterans receiving non-custodial sentences	<i>Work with GMP HMPPS and Op NOVA to create a pathway of support</i>	CT / AS / SL	<b>Y1</b>	

## Greater Manchester Combined Authority

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We, the undersigned, commit to honour the Armed Forces Covenant and support the Armed Forces Community. We recognise the value Serving Personnel, both Regular and Reservists, Veterans and military families contribute to our business and our country.

Signed on behalf of:

Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Andy Burnham \_\_\_\_\_

Position: Mayor of Greater Manchester \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

BOLTON  
BURY

MANCHESTER  
OLDHAM

ROCHDALE  
SALFORD

STOCKPORT  
TAMESIDE

TRAFFORD  
WIGAN

# The Armed Forces Covenant

An Enduring Covenant Between

The People of the United Kingdom

Her Majesty's Government

– and –

All those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces of the Crown

And their Families

The first duty of Government is the defence of the realm. Our Armed Forces fulfil that responsibility on behalf of the Government, sacrificing some civilian freedoms, facing danger and, sometimes, suffering serious injury or death as a result of their duty. Families also play a vital role in supporting the operational effectiveness of our Armed Forces. In return, the whole nation has a moral obligation to the members of the Naval Service, the Army and the Royal Air Force, together with their families. They deserve our respect and support, and fair treatment.

Those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether Regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. Special consideration is



appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved.

This obligation involves the whole of society: it includes voluntary and charitable bodies, private organisations, and the actions of individuals in supporting the Armed Forces. Recognising those who have performed military duty unites the country and demonstrates the value of their contribution. This has no greater expression than in upholding this Covenant.

### Section 1: Principles Of The Armed Forces Covenant

1.1 We, Greater Manchester Combined Authority, will uphold the key principles of the Armed Forces Covenant, which are:

- *no member of the Armed Forces Community should face disadvantage in the provision of public and commercial services compared to any other citizen;*
- *in some circumstances special consideration may be appropriate especially for the injured or bereaved.*

## Section 2: Demonstrating our Commitment

2.1 Greater Manchester Combined Authority recognises the value serving personnel, reservists, veterans and military families bring to Greater Manchester. We will seek to uphold the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant, by:

- *continuing to work in partnership across the ten local authorities of Greater Manchester and other public and third sector organisations to create a coherent gold standard of provision for the Armed Forces community;*
- *seeking to embed the principles of the 2021 Amendment to the Armed Forces Act wherever possible, so that the duty of due regard to Service in the military is not only upheld but is a guiding principle in all we do;*
- *providing leadership, best practice and support to the transformation of the minimum guaranteed offer for the Armed Forces Community in Greater Manchester;*
- *create and adhere to a rolling 5 year roadmap, with inherent action-centred planning to ensure that our Armed Forces Community receives the utmost support when it needs it, from public sector bodies that are aware, responsive and determined to prevent disadvantage;*
- *continue to improve the Greater Manchester programme for the Armed Forces Community that delivers practical and tangible effect in delivering the Armed Forces Covenant;*
- *promoting the fact that we are an Armed Forces-friendly organisation;*

- *seeking to support the employment of veterans young and old and working with the Career Transition Partnership and other employment service providers, in order to establish a tailored employment pathway for Service Leavers;*
- *striving to support the employment of Service spouses and partners, both within the organisation and promoting their employment through the wider Armed Forces Covenant Delivery Plan;*
- *endeavouring to offer a degree of flexibility in granting leave for Service spouses and partners before, during and after a partner's deployment;*
- *seeking to support our employees who choose to be members of the Reserve forces, including by accommodating their training and deployment;*
- *offering support to our local cadet units, either in our local community or in local schools;*
- *supporting the local authorities of Greater Manchester's participation in Armed Forces Day;*

2.2 We will publicise these commitments through our literature and/or on our website, setting out how we will seek to honour them and inviting feedback from the Service community and residents of Greater Manchester on our performance.