

Title: Armed Forces Covenant and the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme

Meeting: Cabinet

Date: 28 June 2023

Classification: Part 1

Policy Context: Armed Forces Act 2021

Key Decision: No

Report Author: Kamil Pachalko

Executive Councillor: Councillor John Lamb

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. Southend-on-Sea City Council has historically been a voluntary signatory to the Essex Armed Forces Covenant.
- 1.2. The Armed Forces Act 2021 (the Act) has put on a statutory footing the need for public bodies to have due regard to the Armed Forces Covenant (the Covenant) to help prevent service personnel and veterans being disadvantaged when accessing services like healthcare, education and housing. Statutory guidance has been produced and each local authority is expected to sign the updated the Covenant in their own right.
- 1.3. The council's Armed Forces Working Party was initiated with councillors from across the political groupings in 2022 (Terms of Reference set out in **Appendix 1**). The councillors and officers reviewed the existing policies and procedures in place to understand current practice and compliance with the Act and statutory guidance.
- 1.4. The Working Party considered the requirements of the updated Covenant and its pledges (**Appendix 2**) and expressed an ambition for the council to sign it and to join the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (**Appendix 3**) to follow best practices in employment. This will ensure our compliance with the Act, publicly show the council's commitment to working with the Armed Forces Community and help us become the employer of choice for the Armed Forces Community.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1. Agree for Southend-on-Sea City Council to sign the updated Southend Armed Forces Covenant with relevant pledges; and**
- 2.2. Agree for Southend-on-Sea City Council to sign up to the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme.**

3. Armed Forces Covenant and Defence Employer Recognition Scheme

- 3.1. The signing of the Southend-on-Sea Armed Forces Covenant and signing up to the Defence Employer Recognition scheme will contribute to the corporate priorities: A city that is strong and prosperous, A city with a good quality of life, A city delivering genuinely affordable housing.
- 3.2. The council has historically recognised the sacrifice and ongoing contributions of the Armed Forces Community in our City by promoting, contributing and taking part in local events and celebrations, preserving monuments and engaging with local groups.
- 3.3. The council has been a signatory to the voluntary Essex Armed Forces Covenant and included considerations of the Covenant in relevant policies.
- 3.4. The Act has put on a statutory footing the need for public bodies to have due regard of Armed Forces Covenant to help prevent service personnel and veterans being disadvantaged when accessing services like healthcare, education and housing. Statutory guidance has been produced and each local authority is expected to sign the updated Covenant in their own right.
- 3.5. In light of the above developments the Armed Forces Working Party was initiated with councillors from across the political groupings in 2022 to act as “the City lead for the promotion and fulfilment of its commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant”.
- 3.6. The Working Party councillors and officers reviewed the existing policies and procedures in place to understand current practice and compliance with the Act and statutory guidance. It was noted that the previous voluntary covenant was being given consideration in relevant policies but that further improvements could be made. Immediate actions have been implemented in areas of language and communication, data gathering and stakeholder engagement. Additional work is being undertaken to develop e-learning for staff. The work is taking place in partnership with the Integrated Care System health colleagues and public health who have a strong interest in ensuring their services take consideration of the members of the Armed Forces Community.

- 3.7. To understand how much of Southend's population might be in the scope of the Act, working party officers accessed relevant population data from the Office for National Statistics, Census 2021, NHS and the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust. Drawing conclusions based on available data is not straightforward, as datasets vary in time and target different parts of the Armed Forces community, with sometimes inconsistent language and definitions. However based on the available data sets we can assume 3.1% to 5% of Southend residents are serving or have served.
- 3.8. In addition, the definition of "service member", "former service member" and "relevant family member" given by the Armed Forces (Covenant) Regulations 2022 includes both current and former spouses and partners, children, relatives, dependants, and carers. As such, the proportion of Southend's population in scope of the Act and the recommendations in this paper is much higher than that suggested by the population data alone. Additional data visuals are available in **Appendix 4**.
- 3.9. The Working Party considered the requirements of the updated Covenant and its pledges and expressed an ambition for the council to sign up to the covenant as can be seen in **Appendix 5**. The Working Party also recommended that the council follow best practices in employment through the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme entering the scheme at bronze level and considering further levels as progress is being made in updating HR practices. The above will ensure our compliance with the Act, show publicly the council's commitment to working with the Armed Forces Community and help us make employer of choice for the community.

4. Reasons for Decisions

- 4.1. The signing of the covenant will show the council's commitment to the Armed Forces Community by further embedding the "due regard" duty of the Act to help prevent service personnel and veterans being disadvantaged when accessing healthcare, education and housing services.
- 4.2. By joining the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme at the entry Bronze Level the council will show its commitment to the Armed Forces Community by ensuring it follows best practice in regards of the recruitment and employment of currently serving and ex-service personnel. As a benefit to the council we will be more likely to be an employer of choice for members of this community, bringing with them a variety of skills and experiences.
- 4.3. Being a signatory and member of regional networks will strengthen the council's compliance, provide us with access to additional advice and resources and help align our policies and communication with good practices listed in the pledges increasing the positive outcomes for the Armed Forces Community.

5. Other Options

- 5.1. The council has to be compliant with the Act and accompanying guidance as otherwise it runs the risk of a legal challenge.
- 5.2. Not signing up to the Covenant creates reputational risks as the council has been a signatory to the Essex Armed Forces Covenant which has been superseded by an expectation that each local authority signs their own covenant with relevant pledges.
- 5.3. Without the ongoing work of the Working Party and the council signing up to the Covenant and employment scheme, the council's compliance with the Act is at risk of not being coordinated and will not be kept up to date with developing best practices in this area.
- 5.4. Current human resources practices in regards of Armed Forces Covenant will benefit from modernising in line with the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme criteria. This will ensure members of Armed Forces Community we already employ are supported to manage their additional duties or potential impacts of having served on health and wellbeing are taken into account. Not signing up to the employment scheme will mean the council loses out on the opportunity to tap into a potential diverse and skilled workforce.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. No budgetary impacts expected at this stage. The Covenant pledges and Defence Employer Recognition Scheme has been reviewed with the relevant service areas. Considerations were given to which elements the council are already compliant with and what is achievable by adapting and streamlining practice. This can be done without additional financial resources in the context of the ongoing budget challenge while maximising the positive impact on the Armed Forces Community members. This approach ensures the public funds we operate with achieve more and we mobilise existing assets in other public bodies, local businesses and the charitable sector.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1. Signing up to the covenant will support compliance with the Act and the Armed Forces (Covenant) Regulations 2022.

8. Carbon Impact

- 8.1. None perceived.

9. Equalities

- 9.1. Equality Analysis indicates positive impact of signing the covenant and the employment scheme on all protected characteristics. Equality Analysis attached at **Appendix 5**.

10. Consultation

- 10.1. No current requirement for statutory consultation or consultation based on legitimate expectation as no negative impact expected on the members of the Armed Forces Community.
- 10.2. The Working Party councillors and officers value the lived experience of the Armed Forces Community and are undertaking stakeholder mapping and engagement with relevant bodies and groups in Southend representing the Armed Forces Community to keep them informed, involved and use their feedback to inform development of services and assets.

11. Background Papers

- 11.1. Meeting of Armed Forces Working Party 25/1/2023 Minutes

12. Appendices

- 12.1. **Appendix 1**::Southend-on-Sea City Council Armed Forces Working Party Terms of Reference
- 12.2. **Appendix 2**: Southend-on-Sea City Council Armed Forces Covenant with list of pledges agreed by the Working Party
- 12.3. **Appendix 3**: Defence Employer Recognition Scheme - entry criteria at Bronze Award
- 12.4. **Appendix 4**: Data visuals
- 12.5. **Appendix 5**: Equality Analysis

Southend-on-Sea City Council Armed Forces Working Party Terms of Reference

3.12 Armed Forces Working Party

3.12.1 Membership

8 Councillors

Substitutes: Permitted in accordance with Standing Order 31

Proportionality: By convention political proportionality shall apply

The Chair shall be the Leader, or such other Cabinet Member as the Leader shall appoint. The Vice-Chair shall be appointed by the Leader.

Interested Parties (to be invited in a non-voting capacity on an ad-hoc basis as appropriate to the items on the Agenda):

1 representative from Southend branch of SSAFA

1 representative from Naval and Military Association/Royal Naval Association/British Legion

1 representative from Essex Army Cadets Force Southend Detachment

Advisory Capacity:

1 representative of Essex County Council

1 representative of Essex Armed Forces Covenant – liaison officer

3.11.2 Quorum

3 Councillors

3.11.3 Terms of Reference

(a) The Working Party will act as the City lead for the promotion and fulfilment of its commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant.

(b) To further the standard of the Armed Forces Covenant response at Southend-on-Sea City Council to improve to Gold Standard, to integrate throughout the organisation the recognition of the Covenant and the obligations it places on the City Council and to encourage businesses and organisations in Southend to support the Covenant.

(c) To seek to work with and through voluntary, faith, social enterprise, community and business sector organisations to develop multi-agency,

holistic and inclusive interventions and other support to the Armed Forces Community.

(d) To assist where appropriate, external organisations in connection with Armed Forces Day events and other events as are appropriate

**Southend-on-Sea City Council Armed Forces Covenant with list of pledges
agreed by the Working Party**

Southend-on-



Sea City Council

**We commit to uphold the Armed
Forces Covenant and support the Armed Forces
Community. We recognise the contribution that Service personnel,
both regular and reservist, veterans and military
families make to our organisation, our community and to the country.**

Signed on behalf of:

Southend-on-Sea City Council

Signed:

Name:

Position:

Date:



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.

Signed on behalf of: Ministry of Defence
Signed:
Name:
Position:
Date:

Signed on behalf of: Ministry of Defence
Signed:
Name:
Position:
Date:

Section 1: Principles of The Armed Forces Covenant

1.1 We, **Organisation Name**, will endeavour to uphold the key principles of the Armed Forces Covenant:

- *Members of the Armed Forces Community should not face disadvantages arising from their service in the provision of public and commercial services.*
- *In some circumstances special provision may be justified, especially for those who have given the most, such as the injured or bereaved.*

Section 2: Demonstrating our Commitment

The following thematic areas may be covered by your pledges. Please pick from the suggested list of pledges or create your own. Delete, add or change any of the pledges to show how you can support the Armed Forces Community in ways best suited to you. Pledges may be changed at any time in the future to reflect your changing circumstances.

2.1 We recognise the contribution that Service personnel, reservists, veterans, the cadet movement and military families make to our organisation, our community and to the country. We will seek to uphold the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant by:

- **Promoting the Armed Forces:**
- **Employment support to members of the Armed Forces Community:**

Employment support to members of the Armed Forces Community:

Support Reservists and anyone mobilised by offering them additional days of annual leave (paid/unpaid) in order to carry out their duties.

Offer work placements, insight days, mentoring schemes and/or guaranteed interview schemes to Veterans seeking employment.

Support the employment of Service spouses, partners and dependants, for example by: signing up to Forces Families Jobs; offering short-notice leave to those whose partners are sent on deployment; and working with the tri-Service Families Federations.

Promote employment schemes aimed at the Armed Forces Community, such as 'A Great Place to Work' and 'Step Into Health'.

Offer additional (paid/unpaid) annual leave to Cadet Force Adult Volunteers to help them carry out their training requirement.

Offer insight days to older Cadets looking for apprenticeships and further education opportunities.

Engage with the Career Transition Partnership.

Work with relevant charities and the Career Transition Partnership to offer work opportunities to the Wounded, Injured and Sick.

Consider ways in which remote-working solutions might benefit the mobile Armed Forces Community, especially partners and spouses.

- **Communications, engagement and outreach:**

Provide and/or promote training, such as e-learning, for your staff on the Armed Forces Community.

Promote the Armed Forces Covenant, the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme and your support for the Armed Forces Community to your staff, customers/service users, supply chains and the wider public.

Support or promote Armed Forces events, such as Armed Forces Day/Week, Reserves Day, the Poppy Appeal and Remembrance activities.

Use the Covenant and Employer Recognition Scheme logos in your communications and marketing.

Create a dedicated Armed Forces page on your website.

Establish an internal Armed Forces Network within your organisation, to enable staff members with an Armed Forces connection to meet and support one another and provide feedback to you as an organisation.

Appoint an Armed Forces Champion within your organisation to act as a focal point for organising and promoting support for the Armed Forces Community.

Engage with and support local Armed Forces charities, for example by supporting their fundraising activities.

Signpost members of the Armed Forces Community to available support, for example from Cobseo, the Veterans' Gateway or statutory services in your area.

Run, facilitate or promote support networks (such as coffee mornings, breakfast clubs) for veterans and other members of the Armed Forces Community.

Engage with any local Armed Forces presence – for example, local Army units, reservist units, RAF stations and/or naval bases.

Develop relationships and work collaboratively with other organisations supporting the Covenant and the Armed Forces Community in your locality/region.

- **Health**

Take part in and/or promote awareness-raising schemes, such as veteran-friendly accreditation for GP practices and the Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance.

Ensure available dedicated healthcare services for members of the Armed Forces Community, such as Op COURAGE in England, are signposted and promoted.

Offer concessionary access to leisure centres and sports facilities for members of the Armed Forces Community.

- **Housing:**

Waive the local-connection requirement for eligibility for social housing for ex-Service personnel [statutorily, the requirement must be disapplied for those who left the Armed Forces within the last five years, but local authorities can choose to disapply it for all ex-Service personnel].

Provide for additional preference in your social housing allocation scheme for certain members of the Armed Forces Community.

Promote awareness of housing and homelessness services among the Armed Forces Community.

- **Education:**

Note, promote and/or make use of the provisions for Armed Forces families in the School Admissions Code (England), for example by allocating school places in advance of a family arriving in a local area.

Promote and/or use resources such as the Service Children Progression Alliance's Thriving Lives Toolkit.

Support and promote the wellbeing of Service children, recognising the particular experiences and challenges they may face.

Promote training and further/higher education opportunities for Service leavers, ex-Service personnel and their families.

- **Civic responsibilities:**

Ensure upkeep of war memorials and war graves (with support from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission).

Organise, facilitate, promote and/or take part in remembrance and other ceremonial activities

- **Any additional commitment the organisation wishes to make.**

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 Armed Forces Community and our customers on how we are doing.

Appendix 3

Defence Employer Recognition Scheme - entry criteria at Bronze Award

Bronze Award		Evidence
are self-nominated by employers who pledge to support the armed forces, including existing or prospective employees who are members of the community	Achievable	Currently signed to ECC pledge but now developing Southend covenant.
must have signed the Covenant https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/corporate-covenant-pledge	Achievable	Currently signed to ECC pledge but now developing Southend covenant.
promote being armed forces-friendly and are open to employing reservists, armed forces veterans (including the wounded, injured and sick), cadet instructors and military spouses/partners	Achievable	Existing Reservists Policy, to update
receive an electronic certificate and logos to display on their website, stationery and other collateral	Achievable	Logos to be displayed on website and digital promotion. Certificate can be published

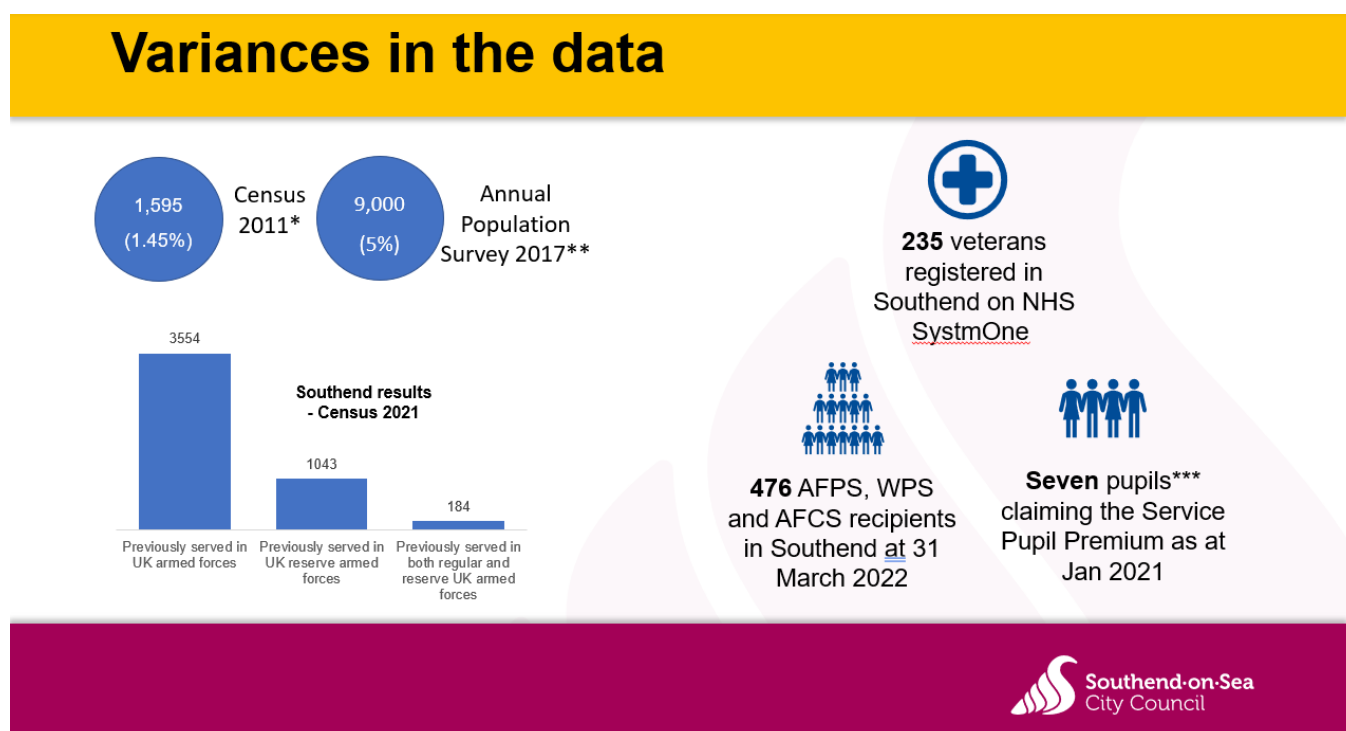
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defence-employer-recognition-scheme/defence-employer-recognition-scheme>

Armed Forces Data Graphics

Previously and currently serving personal distribution in Southend

<https://southend.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/sidebar/index.html?appid=f3ea3e84656b4555a8d6e39e7fe152f9>

Working Party presentation data slide



- *Southend resident veterans of working age (16-64) (93% male)
- ** based on the Annual Population Survey 2017 – which only goes down to county level, so this 5% proportion translates to 76k in Essex, with 9k of those in Southend
- ***in our maintained schools and PRUs
 - AFPS** - Armed Forces Pension Scheme: Pension available to members of the Regular UK Armed Forces who have served for a minimum of two years.
 - AFCS** - Armed Forces Compensation Scheme: Compensation scheme for all members of the regular and reserve forces. It provides compensation for all injuries, ill-health and death attributable to Service where the cause occurred on or after 6 April 2005.
 - WPS** - War Pension Scheme: No fault compensation scheme for all members of the regular and reserve force. It provides compensation for all injuries, ill-health and death caused or made worse by Service from WW1 in 1914 to 5 April 2005. Ex-Service personnel are only eligible to claim once they have left the Services

Equality Analysis

To be completed following the initial screening sheet

Name of policy, service function, or restructure requiring an Equality Analysis	Armed Forces Covenant
Department	Strategy and Change
Service Area	Corporate Strategy Group
Date Equality Analysis Undertaken	20 th April 2023
To be reviewed every:	Year

1. Names and roles of staff carrying out this Equality Analysis (EA):

	Name	Role	Service Area
	Stephen Meah-Sims	Executive Director - Strategy, Change & Governance	Strategy & Change
2.	Suzanne Newman	Head of Corporate Strategy (Interim)	Strategy & Change
	Kamil Pachalko	Engagement and Participation Manager	Strategy & Change
	Lucie Babbington	Community Capacity Advisor	Strategy & Change

Evidence Base

2.1 Sources of information

Please list the sources of information, including data, and results of consultation exercises, that could or will inform the EA.

Table 1

Source of information	Reason for using (e.g., likely impact on a particular group).
Census Latest Southend-on-Sea census data published – Southend-on-Sea City Council	Data to understand local statistics
Healthwatch Report - Healthwatch Report - Veterans-F_V-dan.pdf	Understanding the needs of the armed forces community
FiMT Report - A-Decade-of-the-Covenant-Digital.pdf (pcdn.co)	Understanding the needs of the armed forces community
NHS SystemOne	Local statistics
Armed Forces Covenant legislation - Armed Forces Covenant Duty Statutory Guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)	Guidance on how to demonstrate due regard in council policies
Armed Forces Needs Assessment (ECC) - Armed Forces Needs Assessment 2022 Essex Open Data	Understanding the needs of the armed forces community

Please Note: reports/data/evidence can be added as appendices to the EA.

2.2 Gaps in information or data

Are there any information gaps and data? Do the gaps relate to any protected characteristics?

Describe the gap(s) and the impact this has on your ability to complete the EA.

To understand how much of Southend's population might be in the scope of the Act, working party officers accessed relevant population data from the Office for National Statistics, Census 2021, NHS and the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust. Drawing conclusions based on available data is not straightforward, as datasets vary in time and target different parts of the Armed Forces community, with sometimes inconsistent language and definitions. The Annual Population Survey 2017, when extrapolated to

Southend, indicated that around 9,000 or 5% of residents could have been serving or ex-service personnel. The 2011 Census showed 1.45% of Southend residents being veterans of working age (16-64). Contemporary data from the 2021 Census suggests that 2.4% of Southend's residents had previously served in the UK regular armed forces and 0.7% had previously served in the UK reserve armed forces.

An issue arises when considering possible underrepresentation of the Armed Forces community in the available data. In the 2021 Census, 19% of Southend-resident respondents selected "not applicable" as their answer to the armed forces veteran status question, rather than selecting "I have not previously served in any of the UK armed forces"; the working party hypothesizes that this group could contain ex-service personnel that did not want to disclose their status as veterans, but also did not want to select an inaccurate option. In addition, the definition of "service member", "former service member" and "relevant family member" given by the Armed Forces (Covenant) Regulations 2022 includes both current and former spouses and partners, children, relatives, dependants and carers. As such, the proportion of Southend's population in scope of the Act and the recommendations in this paper is much higher than that suggested by the population data alone. Additional data visuals are available in Appendix 4.

Currently we don't have adequate data to categorically confirm that the members of the Armed Forces Community are a group facing inequality at a significant level and would warrant inclusion as a specific category in the EA. Anecdotal evidence suggests many adults experiencing homelessness have a military background and there might be an incidence of PTSD and other mental health conditions as a result of service. Further analysis will be undertaken once the Census 2021 releases further data sets which will enable cross – tabulation of data points.

In the meantime we base our considerations on local research. Our research indicates some members of the Armed Forces Community will be veterans in the older age category ie. WW2 veterans (476 receiving benefits related to service in the army). A large part of the community will fall in the working age category. In addition, some of the veterans and ex-service personal will have experience injuries and disabilities as a result of their occupational activity. The covenant covers consideration of spouses and carers as well.

Strengthening compliance with the Armed Force act 2021 by signing up to the covenant and its pledges, signing up to the employment scheme and acting on the commitments has a chance of increasing awareness around availability of services and how these services identify and support the AFC members resulting in better take up of services and overall impact on wellbeing and socio-economic situation. Spouses and carers of currently serving and ex service personal will also benefit as a result of these changes.

3. Carrying out your analysis

3.1 Impact assessment

You should now undertake an analysis of the impact of the policy, service function or restructure on the protected characteristic groups and additional groups, using the table below to record your conclusions. A checklist of the protected characteristics is available [here](#) for ease of reference.

Table 2

	Impact - Please tick				
	Yes			No	Unclear
	Positive	Negative	Neutral		
Age (including looked after children)	X				
Disability	X				
Gender reassignment	X				

Marriage and civil partnership	X				
Pregnancy and maternity	X				
Race	X				
Religion or belief	X				
Sex	X				
Sexual orientation	X				
Carers	X				
Socio-economic	X Homeless ness Benefits				

	Employment				
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3.2 Results of your analysis

Where an impact has been identified above, outline what the impact of the policy, service function or restructure is on members of the protected characteristics groups using the table below:

Overarching impact of the Covenant – Positive for all protected characteristics

The Covenant aims to have an overall positive impact on members of the armed forces community.

The Act has put on a statutory footing the need for public bodies to have due regard of Armed Forces Covenant to help prevent service personnel and veterans being disadvantaged when accessing services like healthcare, education and housing. Statutory guidance has been produced and each local authority is expected to sign the updated Covenant in their own right.

The signing of the covenant will show the council’s commitment to the Armed Forces Community by further embedding the “due regard” duty of the Act to help prevent service personnel and veterans being disadvantaged when accessing healthcare, education and housing services.

By joining the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme at the entry Bronze Level the council will show its commitment to the Armed Forces Community by ensuring it follows best practice in regards of the recruitment and employment of currently serving and ex-service personnel.

Current human resources practices in regards of Armed Forces Covenant will benefit from modernising in line with the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme criteria. This will ensure members of Armed Forces Community we already employ are supported to manage their additional duties or potential impacts of having served on health and wellbeing are taken into account.

Table 3

	Potential Impact
Age	<p>Intended positive impact</p> <p>The definition of those covered by the Covenant is “The Armed Forces community in Southend-on-Sea includes anyone currently serving, or who has previously served for at least one day, in the regular or reserve UK forces (i.e., the Royal Navy, the Royal Marines, the regular Army and the Royal Air Force) and who is ordinarily resident in the UK;</p>

	<p>their relevant family members (as defined by Section 3 of the Armed Forces (Covenant) Regulations 2022); and their carer/s". Therefore there will be a wide range of age groups that may benefit from awareness of the covenant and services available, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School-age children entitled to Pupil Premium Service - Elderly veterans - Working age veterans and serving personnel - Family members and carers of all ages
Disability	<p>Intended Positive Impact</p> <p>Under the due regard aspect of the covenant, those individuals entitled to adaptation grants will be referred accordingly. Individuals will also be able to access forces-friendly GP services and therefore able to be referred to relevant NHS services, including OpCourage for mental health support.</p> <p>Colleagues in the public health team and the wider health system have also prioritised work to understand the health inequalities affecting the Armed Forces community.</p>
Gender reassignment	<p>Intended Positive Impact</p> <p>Any member of the armed forces community, including those undergoing or completing gender reassignment, will have access to the same promotion and delivery of services available.</p>
Marriage and civil partnership	<p>Intended Positive Impact</p> <p>Spouses and wider family are covered by the Covenant.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	<p>Intended Positive Impact</p> <p>Wider family is covered by the Covenant. The aspect of due regard covers key aspects including health, so therefore pregnant family members would be included.</p>
Race	<p>Intended Positive Impact</p> <p>Members of the armed forces community that may have faced disadvantages due to race, may find that under the Covenant they have more access to services and support.</p>
Religion or belief	<p>Intended Positive Impact</p> <p>Members of the armed forces community that may have faced disadvantages due to religion or belief, may find that</p>

	under the Covenant they have more access to services and support
Sex	Intended Positive Impact Spouses and wider family members are covered by the Covenant. There is anecdotal evidence that female members of the armed forces community are less likely to be identified by frontline services. The covenant will help to ensure that promotion and delivery of services addresses sex inequalities and discrimination.
Sexual orientation	Intended Positive Impact Members of the armed forces community that may have faced disadvantages due to sexual orientation, may find that under the Covenant they have more access to services and support
Carers	Intended Positive Impact The Covenant covers carers, thereby offering potential to access additional services/support
Socio-economic	Intended Positive Impact Strengthening compliance with the Armed Forces Act 2021 by signing up to the covenant and its pledges, signing up to the employment scheme and acting on the commitments has a chance of increasing awareness around availability of services and how these services identify and support the AFC members resulting in better take-up of services and overall impact on wellbeing and socio-economic situation. Spouses and carers of currently serving and ex-service personal will also benefit as a result of these changes.

4. Community Impact

You may also need to undertake an analysis of the potential direct or indirect impact on the wider community when introducing a new/revised policy, service function or restructure. The template is [here](#).

No negative community impacts anticipated based on analysis.

5. Equality Analysis Action Plan

Use the below table to set out what action will be taken to:

- Ensure a full analysis of the impact of the policy, service function or restructure is undertaken.
- Mitigate/address identified negative impacts or unlawful prohibited conduct.

- Promote improved equality of opportunity and to foster good relations.

Also describe how the action plan will be monitored and at what intervals.

The action plan will form part of the core infrastructure and will be monitored by the Working Party/Steering Group

Table 4

Planned action	Objective	Who	When	How will this be monitored (e.g., via team/service plans)
Armed Forces Needs Assessment	Identify the issues and needs of the armed forces community locally. Attempt to address data gaps as described in section 2.2	CSG Engagement & Participation Team	2023	Consultation with published findings
Annual self-assessment	Ensure policies and procedures remain up-to-date	CSG Engagement & Participation Team and Policy Team	Yearly	Team meetings/Working Party meetings
Implement Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (DERS)	Ensure SCC allows fair opportunity for the armed forces community to apply for jobs and be treated fairly if recruited	HR	Yearly	Team meetings/Working Party meetings
Comms Plan	Relevant services, events and information is promoted widely	Comms Team	Yearly	Team meetings/Working Party meetings

	and in a timely manner			
Accessibility	Ensuring that communication with the armed forces community is accessible	Comms Team	Yearly	Team meetings/Working Party meetings
Training for staff	To ensure due regard is demonstrated across council services	Learning and Development	Yearly	Team meetings/Working Party meetings

The conclusions of this Equality Assessment will be embedded in future decision making

Signed (lead officer): Kamil Pachalko

Signed (Head of Service): Suzanne Newman

Once signed, please send a copy of the completed EA (and, if applicable, CCIA) to Angela Dress Angeladress@southend.gov.uk.

All Equality Analyses are recorded on Pentana and reported to CMT and DMT's on a quarterly basis.