







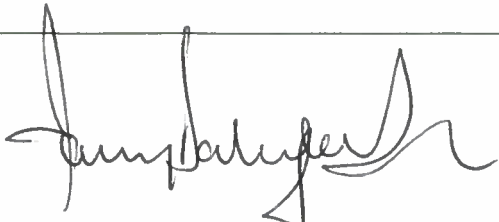



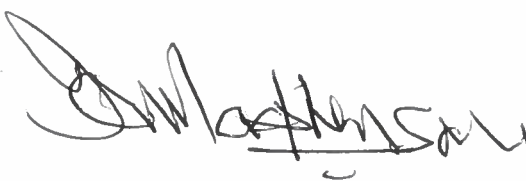
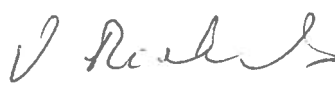






## **ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT**


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**ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT  
BETWEEN NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL,  
NORTH SOMERSET PARTNERSHIP AND THE  
ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY IN NORTH  
SOMERSET**

We the undersigned, agree to work to act together to honour the North Somerset Armed Forces Community Covenant

	<b>Royal Navy</b> Commander Tom Herman RN OBE on behalf of the Naval Regional Commander
	<b>Army</b> Lieutenant Colonel Neville Holmes MBE
	<b>Royal Air Force</b> Air Commodore Mark Sibley
	<b>North Somerset Council</b> <b>Leader of the Council</b> Councillor Nigel Ashton
	<b>North Somerset Council</b> <b>Chief Executive Officer</b> Graham Turner
	<b>MP for Weston-super-Mare</b> John Penrose
	<b>MP for North Somerset</b> Dr Liam Fox
	<b>Reserve Forces and Cadets Association</b> Brigadier Tony Dalby-Welsh

	<p><b>The Royal British Legion</b> Roger Duddridge</p>
	<p><b>Royal Air Forces Association</b> Squadron Leader Ian Macpherson</p>
	<p><b>SSAFA</b> <b>Weston-super-Mare/North Somerset Division</b> Major Vernon Richards</p>
	<p><b>Avon and Somerset Constabulary</b> Superintendent Keith McCoubrey</p>
	<p><b>South West Veterans Mental Health Service</b> Stuart Hayward</p>
	<p><b>Veterans Advisory and Pensions Committee</b> Ashley Jones</p>
	<p><b>Rural Dean- Locking Deanery</b> Reverend Richard Taylor</p>
	<p><b>Bristol Airport (North Somerset Partnership)</b> Alan Davies</p>
	<p><b>NHS North Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group (North Somerset Partnership)</b> Dr Mary Backhouse</p>

	<p><b>Alliance Homes</b>  <b>(North Somerset Partnership)</b>  Clive Bodley</p>
<p>M. Markh.</p>	<p><b>Avon Fire and Rescue Services</b>  <b>(North Somerset Partnership)</b>  ACFO Dave Salmon</p>
<p>De Richards.</p>	<p><b>Citizen's Advice Bureau</b>  <b>(North Somerset Partnership)</b>  Anne Richards</p>
<p>Angela Hicks</p>	<p><b>North Somerset Enterprise Agency</b>  <b>(North Somerset Partnership)</b>  Angela Hicks</p>
	<p><b>North Somerset Initiative</b>  <b>(North Somerset Partnership)</b>  Charles Walker</p>
	<p><b>Voluntary Action North Somerset</b>  <b>(North Somerset Partnership)</b>  Rebecca Mear</p>
	<p><b>Weston College</b>  <b>(North Somerset Partnership)</b>  Dr Paul Phillips</p>
	<p><b>Royal Artillery Association</b>  Major Kershaw Scoins</p>

## **Section 1: Participants**

This Armed Forces Community Covenant is made between:

The serving and former members of the Armed Forces and their families living and working in North Somerset, North Somerset Council and the North Somerset Partnership.

The North Somerset Partnership (NSP) is the overarching partnership for North Somerset. It brings together representatives from the public, business, voluntary and community sectors in our local authority area.

The North Somerset Partnership aims to tackle the most important issues in the community e.g. transport, education, crime, jobs and the environment, in a coordinated way - by working together the partnership aims to achieve more than can be achieved by individual organisations working alone. The Partnership's Board members are drawn from across the public sector, business community and the voluntary and community sector locally.

## **Section 2: Principles of the North Somerset Armed Forces Community Covenant**

The Armed Forces Community Covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between the North Somerset community, including public sector, private sector and voluntary and community sector organisations, and the local Armed Forces community.

It sits alongside the HM Government Armed Forces Covenant, which outlines the moral obligation between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces to ensure that serving personnel, their families and veterans are not disadvantaged as a result of serving their Country. The North Somerset Armed Forces Community Covenant compliments the National Covenant, and explains how the North Somerset Community intends to honour the commitments made by Government.

The purpose of the Armed Forces Community Covenant is to encourage support for the Armed Forces working and living in North Somerset, recognising the sacrifices they have made on behalf of the Nation. The Covenant enables local organisations under the banner of the North Somerset Partnership to re-affirm their commitment, and to explore with wider partners the opportunities for broadening the support provided.

The Armed Forces Community Covenant sets out how the members of the North Somerset Partnership intend to utilise their knowledge, resources and influence to support members of the Armed Forces Community locally, and to build upon the steps taken to date, such as North Somerset Council's decision, in 2007, to introduce free access to Council-run leisure services for the immediate families of military personnel who are on active service.

### **Section 3: Objectives**

#### Aims of the Armed Forces Community Covenant

The North Somerset Armed Forces Community Covenant complements and builds upon the aims and objectives of the Armed Forces Covenant, which defines the expectations of the Government in terms of the relationship between the Nation and the Armed Forces Community.

The North Somerset Armed Forces Community Covenant aims to encourage all sections of the community to offer support to the local Armed Forces community and make it easier for Service personnel, families and veterans to access the support they need from local service providers, ensuring they are not disadvantaged by virtue of their service.

The Covenant is intended to be a two-way commitment, and the Armed Forces community is encouraged to do as much as it can to support and promote activity which assists in integrating the Service community into civilian life in North Somerset.

### **Section 4: Research Findings and Key Areas of Focus**

Detailed measures and planned actions are set out in Appendix 2 of this report. The delivery of these actions will be overseen by the North Somerset Partnership. A Sub-group will be convened twice a year on behalf of the Partnership to monitor progress.

In advance of drawing up the North Somerset Community Covenant, North Somerset Council conducted some research in May 2012 on behalf of the North Somerset Partnership, to help determine the areas of focus for the Community Covenant.

The key issues identified following the research were:

- Specific support for younger/recent veterans
- better signposting and support in accessing public services

- registration/appointment issues relating especially to primary healthcare and school admissions.
- Improved links between local public service providers and base welfare officers
- Develop the Leisure Key discount scheme
- To build a better understanding of the issues affecting reservists

# **Appendix 1**

## **The Armed Forces Covenant**

### **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.



## Appendix 2

### North Somerset Community Covenant Action Plan

Action No.	What	Why?	By when	Resources	Lead partner
1.	Set up a single point of access for veterans, serving Armed Forces and their families on key issues	Raised as the single most beneficial step that local service providers could take through focus group research and questionnaires	April 2013	TBD, likely to be an annual financial cost to resource	North Somerset Council
2.	Raise awareness of the issues facing the families of serving Armed Forces with the local business community	Issue identified by North Somerset Armed Forces Steering Group	June 2013	N/A	North Somerset enterprise Agency
3.	Build a stronger understanding of the needs of Reservists based in North Somerset	Issue identified by North Somerset Armed Forces Steering Group	April 2013	£1,000 for initial research	Reserve Forces and Cadets Association
4.	Strengthen the relationship between Base Welfare Offices and local public services to ensure a smoother handover process	Issue identified by North Somerset Armed Forces Steering Group	April 2013	Staff time	North Somerset Council
5.	Consider opportunities to better use the Pupil Premium	Raised as a specific concern through focus group research	June 2013	N/A	Strategic Schools Forum
6.	Consider opportunities for building upon the 'Armed Forces Leisure Key' scheme	Recognised by families as a significant and valuable local scheme and benefit	June 2013	Possibly significant depending upon the service and level of discount	North Somerset Partnership
7.	Raise awareness of the contribution made by our Armed Forces locally through supporting the North Somerset Armed Forces Day	Concern raised through focus groups of the lack of understanding of the sacrifices made by our Armed Forces and their families	Feb. 2013	To be determined	North Somerset Partnership
8.	Continue to develop links between affiliated military units and communities within North Somerset	In order to foster mutual understanding and build communities support	On-going	N/A	Affiliated military units and councils
9.	Set up a North Somerset Community Covenant Review Group	monitor the implementation of the Covenant and Action Plan locally	April 2013	Participants time	North Somerset Council
10.	NSP partners to review how each organisation aims to work to the spirit of the covenant		April 2014		North Somerset Partnership