

North Tyneside Council Report to Cabinet Date: 12 March 2012

ITEM 7(h)

Title: Review of the Health of
the Ex-Service Community –
Update on Actions

Portfolio(s): Elected Mayor

Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Les Miller

Report from Directorate: Community Services

Report Author: Jacqui Old, Head of Adult Social Care (Tel: 643 7317)

Wards affected: All

PART 1

1.1 Purpose:

Cabinet, at its meeting on 28 July 2011, considered and agreed a report setting out an action plan in response to the report and recommendations of the Regional Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to the health and well-being of the Ex-Services Community.

The purpose of this report is for Cabinet to consider:

- (1) An update to the North Tyneside Council action plan,
- (2) The development and introduction of an Armed Forces Covenant for North Tyneside, and
- (3) The nomination of a Cabinet Member as the lead Member for the Ex-Services Community

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (1) Receive the report and note the actions and the progress that has been made in North Tyneside against the recommendations / action plan and
- (2) Agree that work be undertaken and completed on the development of an Armed Forces Covenant in North Tyneside and that authority be delegated to the Elected Mayor to agree the final terms of the Covenant and sign it on behalf of the Council and
- (3) Agree that the previously nominated lead Member (Councillor E Darke) be replaced by a Cabinet Member and that Cabinet nominate a Cabinet Member to take lead member responsibility in relation to the Armed Forces and the Ex-Services Community

1.3 Forward plan:

This report appears on the Forward Plan for the period 1 February 2011 to 31 May 2012.

1.4 Council plan and policy framework

The recommendations contained in this report are consistent with the following Council Strategic Plan 2011/15 themes:

- Our People
- Our Resources
- Our Place

1.5 Information

The North East Regional Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee produced a report in January 2011 on a review they had undertaken on the health needs of the Ex-Services Community. The Ex Services Community relates to those former members of HM Forces, their relatives, dependants and carers.

The review set out to establish the extent of the available local and regional information about the Ex Services Community in relation to the:

- Health needs and access to services compared to other groups
- Different needs of the ex services community
- Access to services in support of employment, training, drug and alcohol misuse, housing support and the criminal justice system
- Good and bad practice across the region
- Awareness of veterans and their families of the services available to them

This report contained a detailed action plan with 47 recommendations. These recommendations were across a range of different organisations and agencies. The key themes related to:

- Promoting effective communication and co-ordination across agencies, providers and the third sector
- The transition of Armed Forces personnel to NHS care following medical discharge
- Ensuring equality of access for Armed Forces families
- Veterans' mental health services

Context

The national prevalence data shows that between 1 in 12 and 1 in 20 of the population is a veteran, this is sourced from North East Mental Health Development Unit report "Fighting Fit in the North East" which was published in August 2011. For North Tyneside this would mean between 7875 and 13,125 of the adult population is a veteran.

There is further detail in the report in relation to the prevalence of those numbers with particular conditions and this is detailed in the table below:

Condition	Prevalence	Number in North Tyneside
Common mental health problem	27.2%	2678
Enduring mental health problem	8%	788
Alcohol related issues	18%	1772
Neurotic disorder	13.5%	1329
Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)	4.8%	473

These figures are based on a mid point of 1 in 16 of the population (9844)

The current active service community in North Tyneside comprises the following:

Regular staff	7
Reservists (including cadets)	395
Families in Service Family Accommodation	40
Total	442

Action Planning

An action plan was considered by a meeting of the Cabinet in July 2011. This action plan covers various areas of activity across Council Services as well as the Health and Well Being Board. Within the Health and Well Being structure in North Tyneside, the direct work in relation to the Ex Services Community lies with the Mental Health Commissioning Board.

An updated version of the action plan is appended to this report and this shows progress in a number of key areas. These are in relation to:

- The Commissioning Board structure below the Health and Well Being Board is in place now and this has good close links with the Primary Care Trust and the Clinical Commissioning Consortia. This supports the action planning and governance arrangements for the development and monitoring of progress against each of the recommendations in the action plan
- The Housing Strategy Team are linked into regional developments and work through the Homes and Communities Agency and the NE Housing Federation
- The development of an information hub (central to the development of personalisation agenda in Adult Social Care) will support the ability to have access to appropriate types and levels of information to support individuals
- The Health and Well Being Board has agreed to the development and introduction of an Armed Forces Covenant (see below) in North Tyneside

- The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment refresh will include reference to the needs of the Ex Services Community
- Links have been established with the North Tyneside Civil Integration Officer to review current provision in North Tyneside and look at opportunities for improvement

North Tyneside Council has reviewed some of its service areas and is already providing better access and inclusion for serving members of HM Armed Forces and the Ex-Services Community as part of its normal day to day business.

Examples of this include:

- North Tyneside Homes has reviewed its Choice Based Lettings policy to give better access to the Ex-Services Community. It provides for priority to be given to those occupying non-secure tenancies and legally required to vacate their home. This includes people living in supported housing or in accommodation provided as a condition of employment, such as those in Her Majesty's Forces. Previously such applicants would have been on the waiting list or presented as homeless.
- Cultural and Customer Services – An "EASE" card can be applied for to give free access to a range of Sport and Leisure and Library facilities across North Tyneside. The Armed Forces personnel member must be a serving member of HM Armed Forces or Reserves and must normally be resident in North Tyneside and on leave from active service

The EASE card will allow the cardholder and up to 10 family members free use of the gym, swimming pool and health suites at a range of venues across North Tyneside.

This also includes free hire of CD's and DVD's from any library across North Tyneside.

Member Lead

Recommendation 20 of the action plan suggested the identification of a senior figure (Member and Officer) in the Local Authority to take a leadership role and support the progress against the action plan in each Local Authority area.

Cabinet had previously agreed on 11 July 2011 that this be Councillor E Darke as he is the Local Authority nominated representative on the North Tyneside Veterans Committee for 2011/12.

Cabinet is requested to re-consider the current representation as the Armed Forces lead for North Tyneside and it is appropriate that this is at Cabinet level. Cabinet is therefore requested to nominate a Cabinet Member to take on this responsibility from March 2012.

The Officer Lead for Ex-Services remains with Paul Gowans, Head of Cultural Services and Support.

Armed Forces Covenant

The Armed Forces Covenant Scheme was launched in May 2011 which outlined the moral obligation between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces and aims to improve support to the Armed Forces Community (which includes serving personnel, their families and veterans).

One of the key measures was the launch of a Community Covenant scheme.

The aims of the Community Covenant include:

- Encouraging local communities to support the Armed Forces Community in their areas, and vice versa;
- Promoting understanding and awareness amongst the public of issues affecting the Armed Forces Community;
- Recognising and remembering the sacrifices made by the Armed Forces Community; and
- Encouraging activities which help to integrate the Armed Forces Community into local life.

£30m of Government funding has been allocated over the next four years to support the Community Covenant scheme. The aim of the scheme is to provide financial support to projects at a local level which strengthen the ties or the mutual understanding between members of the Armed Forces community and the wider community in which they live.

Applications for sums between £100 and £250,000 can be made and applications are likely to be more successful if the non-Service element of the partnership can also commit to incurring expenditure. Organisations in the North Tyneside area can only apply for a grant under the Community Covenant Scheme if a local Covenant is in place.

A Community Services Partnership will be required to be established in North Tyneside and this Partnership can be used to oversee and support access to the grant funding and also work to progress actions from the strategic review.

The guidance from the Ministry of Defence gives a number of examples of projects that could be funded from the grant:

- Projects that increase integration of Service personnel, veterans and their families with the wider community
- Community outreach that brings veterans together with their communities
- Projects that improve the health and well being of Service personnel, veterans or their families
- Local infrastructure costs, such as a children's playground which might be used by children from both Service accommodation and the wider community
- One-off activities such as an activity camp involving the Armed Forces and local young people, in which the grant would meet the travel, subsistence costs of Service participants

A copy of background information to the Armed Forces Covenant can be found with this report on the Council's website.

The above examples show some real and tangible benefits to the people of North Tyneside. Cabinet is requested to support and endorse the development and introduction of an Armed Forces Covenant in North Tyneside.

1.6 Decision options:

The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet:

Option 1

Cabinet may accept the recommendations set out in paragraph 1.2 above.

Option 2

Cabinet may not accept the recommendations set out in paragraph 1.2 above.

Option 3

Cabinet may refer the matter back to Officers for further consideration of particular issue(s).

Option 1 is the recommended option.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Cabinet is recommended to agree with the proposals set out in section 1.2 in order that the updated actions be fed back to the North East Regional Overview and Scrutiny Committee and that the development of an Armed Forces Covenant in North Tyneside is progressed.

1.8 Appendices:

The following appendix is attached to this report:

- Appendix A – Action plan detailing progress against each of the Local Authority and Health and Well Being Board recommendations

1.9 Contact officers:

Scott Woodhouse, Strategic Commissioning Manager – Learning Disability and Mental Health – Tel 643 7082.

Alison Campbell, Finance Business Manager – Tel 643 7038

1.10 Background information:

The following background papers and research reports have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the offices of the author:

- (a) North East Regional Overview and Scrutiny Committee report of the Regional Review of the Health Needs of the Ex Services Community – January 2011
- (b) Cabinet Reports – 11 April 2011, 28 July 2011
- (c) The Armed Forces Covenant – Ministry of Defence
- (d) North East Mental Health Development Unit report “Fighting Fit in the North East” – August 2011

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

There are no financial implications on the Council from the recommendation in this report. All actions against each of the recommendations in the report will be met from within existing Council / Service budgets.

Access to the funding from the Community Covenant Scheme will not require additional funding from the Council, if it was appropriate the Council could support a specific project and provide funding from existing resources.

2.2 Legal

There are no legal implications from the recommendations in this report

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

Internal consultation has taken place with the Elected Mayor and relevant service areas in developing the updates to the action plan.

A report was also presented to the Health and Well Being Board on 9 February 2012 and this meeting supported the update on the actions / progress and the development of an Armed Forces Covenant in North Tyneside.

External Consultation

This report and action plan has been discussed with the North Tyneside Veterans Committee and they were supportive of the progress being made by the Council. Further consultation has taken place with the North Tyneside Military Civil Integration Officer on the action plan and the development of the Armed Forces Covenant.

2.4 Human rights

There are no human rights issues arising from this report.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

This report sets out the positive actions the Council and partners will be taking to ensure the needs of the Ex-Service Community are met. The actions set out in this report will be subject to Equality Impact Assessments.

2.6 Risk management

The updates identified to be taken in response to the action plan will be the subject of full risk reviews by relevant service areas. Risks are entered onto the appropriate Directorate/Corporate/Strategic Risk Register(s) and are subject to ongoing management to reduce the likelihood and impact of each risk.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder issues arising from this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

There are no environmental and sustainability issues arising from this report.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Strategic Director(s) x
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s) X
- Chief Finance Officer x
- Monitoring Officer x
- Strategic Director with responsibility for Community Engagement x

Report author: Scott Woodhouse