

## The Somerset Armed Forces Covenant – a Briefing Note

(updated 19 August 2019)

The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise from the nation to those who serve or have served. It says we will do all we can to ensure they are treated fairly and not disadvantaged in their day-to-day lives. This includes offering injured servicemen and women and bereaved families extra support where appropriate.

The Covenant's beneficiaries are: Regulars; Reservists; Veterans; and their immediate Families.

The Somerset Armed Forces Covenant (SAFC) Partnership brings together Local Authorities, the military, other public sector organisations, businesses, communities, charities and individuals in a pledge of support between the military and civilian parts of the community in Somerset. SCC signed the Covenant on 20 February 2012.

The SAFC Partnership is chaired by Cllr Rod Williams [RodWilliams@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:RodWilliams@somerset.gov.uk). Support is by SCC's Communities team, managed by Chris Phillips [cphillips@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:cphillips@somerset.gov.uk) or phone 01823 359243 or email [communities@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:communities@somerset.gov.uk). Kirsty Conger in the Stronger Communities Team can also assist with managing queries [KConger@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:KConger@somerset.gov.uk)

Each Somerset District has an Armed Forces Champion:

- **Mendip District Council** - Cllr Damon Hooton [Cllr.Hooton@mendip.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.Hooton@mendip.gov.uk)
- **Sedgemoor District Council** - Cllr Mark Healey [MHealey@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:MHealey@somerset.gov.uk)
- **South Somerset District Council** - Cllr Andy Kendall [andy.kendall@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:andy.kendall@southsomerset.gov.uk)
- **Somerset West and Taunton Council** - Cllr. Andy Milne [cllr.A.Milne@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.A.Milne@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)

The six main areas of Armed Forces Covenant work are:

- Criminal justice – courts, prison and rehabilitation;
- Education, including allocation of school places;
- Employment;
- Health – physical and mental; access to Primary Care
- Housing – allocation for council housing and tenancy rights;
- Finance, debt and insurance.

The enquiries we receive typically concern school admissions, housing or who the respective Local Authority points of contact are. We receive enquiries from organisations wishing to submit bids to the Armed Forces Covenant Fund. For welfare issues, we work closely with Armed Forces charities, such as The Royal British Legion, SSAFA (Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association) and Help for Heroes.

The Wessex Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association (RFCA) is part of the Ministry of Defence and is responsible for Reservists and Cadets of the Royal Navy (including the Royal Marines), the Army and the RAF. Note that the Royal Marines are part of the Royal Navy. Wessex RFCA has close links with Somerset businesses, especially over employing Reservists.

The first point of contact for veterans seeking support is the Veterans Gateway <https://www.veteransgateway.org.uk/>. Guidance and support regarding topics such as Health, Housing and Education is at: <https://www.forcesconnectsouthwest.org.uk/> .

Further information about the Covenant and a 'Who's Who' Directory can be accessed via [www.somerset.gov.uk/forcescovenant](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/forcescovenant) (and via Downloads).