

# **East Lothian Armed Forces Covenant Action Plan April 2021 – March 2023**



## **Community Covenant AN ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT**

**Between**

**EAST LoTHIAN COUNCIL**

**EAST LoTHIAN COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP**

**and**

**THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY IN EAST LoTHIAN**

**We, the undersigned, agree to work and act together to honour the  
Armed Forces Community Covenant.**

Action	Description	Planned Outcome	Resources	Partners	Owner	Time Line	Status
<b>1. Partnership Working</b>							
1.A Cultivate the work of East Lothian Armed Forces Covenant Group (ELAFCG)	Ensure ELAFCG continues to meet twice yearly and that the work of the Lothian Armed Forces and Veterans Group (LAFVG) is sustained through the Covenant.	<p>1) A strategic partnership group ensures the visibility of and access to services and networks of support for East Lothian (EL) veterans, reservists and cadets.</p> <p>2) Improved Collaboration, Partnership and Leadership / Governance of our work to improve outcomes. <sup>1</sup></p>	<p>LAFVG Organisation al chart</p> <p><a href="#">East Lothian Armed Forces Covenant Terms of Reference</a></p>	See ELAFCG Members hip in <a href="#">Terms of Reference</a>	Head of Communiti es	March 2021	Ongoing
1.B Review and update the East Lothian Armed Forces Community Profile	<p>To identify East Lothian’s armed forces community and enable them to access services e.g. housing, health, employability etc. and receive due recognition and assessment for eligibility to access services.</p> <p>An evidence base for planning, delivering and evaluating services, projects and programmes target at the local armed forces community.</p> <p>Barriers to Accessing Services and Identifying Veterans. <sup>2</sup></p>	1) A profile overview of the EL armed forces community, i.e., veterans, and reservists will self-identify in full knowledge of their rights and entitlements to services. This include support for their families and children.	<p>LAFVP Good Practice and Guidance.</p> <p>Scottish Veterans Commissione r’s Health &amp; Wellbeing Report/April 2018</p>	ELAFCG	Head of Communiti es	June 2021	In Progress
1.C Work with Lothian and Borders Yeomanry in support of the COVID 19 Vaccine Roll-out	For ELAFCG members to work with the Yeomanry to support the Covid 19 Vaccine rolls where appropriate	Efficient roll out of the Covid 19 vaccination to East Lothian residents	Resource support from ELAFCG members	ELAFCG NHSL/EL IJB	L&B Yeomanry EL H&SCP	January 2021 – January 2022	In Progress

<sup>1</sup> Recommendation 2&3 Scottish Veterans Commissioner’s Health & Wellbeing Report: April 2018

<sup>2</sup> Recommendation 7 and 16 Scottish Veterans Commissioner’s Health & Wellbeing Report: April 2018

Action	Description	Planned Outcome	Resources	Partners	Owner	Time Line	Status
1.D Work with Lothian and Borders Yeomanry to support any future civic events	With the Freedom of East Lothian granted, the ELAFCG will support L&B Yeomanry to deliver future civic events that raise awareness of the historic connection of the Yeomanry in East Lothian	Increased awareness of L&B Yeomanry historic connection with East Lothian	Resource support from ELAFCG members	ELAFCG, L&B Yeomanry	L&B Yeomanry	January 2021 – ongoing	
<b>2. Communication</b>							
2.A Update EL's website with relevant Armed Forces Covenant (AFC) information	Refresh and maintain the content of ELCs website to include relevant AFC information  ELCs website is recognised as the main East Lothian hub for information for the armed forces community	Information easily available with links to Housing, Health, Education and Employment, and to wider networks of support/information. Improved access to life-long services <sup>3</sup>	Relevant information from partners on a frequent basis	ELC Web Team, ELAFCG, L&B Yeomanry, Veterans 1 <sup>st</sup> Point, NHS Lothian, VCEL	ELC Comms Team	October 2021	On going
2.B Compile an events planner with key dates for civic events and activities	An easy to access, up to date guide promoting key civic events and activities relevant to ELs armed forces community	1) ELs armed forces community know where to access up to date information and can participate in a range of civic and social local events 2) Raise the profile of the armed forces, in the community and in the media	Information gathered by ELAFCG on local civic events and activities	ELC Comms Team, ELAFCG	ELC Comms Team	March 2021	Ongoing
2.C Promote awareness of services for veterans to front line and other relevant staff and key partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to promote the eLearning module to East Lothian Council (ELC), East Lothian Partnerships (ELP) and the Health and Social Care Partnership (H&amp;SCP)</li> </ul>	1) eLearning module available 2) Strategic leaders, e.g Elected Members are briefed and knowledgeable on AFC issues 3) Front line staff are able to recognise and advise veterans appropriately	eLearning module,  ELC media, e.g Living Magazine	ELC OD Team  Partner Organisations	ELC CPI, HR & Comms teams	March 2021	Ongoing

<sup>3</sup> Recommendation 8 Scottish Veterans Commissioner's Health & Wellbeing Report: April 2018

Action	Description	Planned Outcome	Resources	Partners	Owner	Time Line	Status
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All identified ELC frontline staff trained</li> <li>Ongoing monitoring of eLearning module use on a 6 monthly basis</li> </ul>		Partner employers				
2.D Promote the benefits of signing the Armed Forces Covenant to organisations across Partnerships and Businesses	<p>ELAFCG to raise awareness across local organisations and businesses of the benefits to our AF Community of signing the Armed Forces Covenant</p> <p>Establish partnerships with other organisations (via the Covenant commitment) to education and employment opportunities for armed forces leavers (see actions below for more detail), linking with local business community</p>	An increase in the number of local organisations and businesses signing the Covenant and supporting our local AF Community	ELC Website ELC AF Handbook eLearning module	ELAFCG, EL Business Gateway, VCEL, H&SCP, Connected Economy Group	East Lothian Partnership	March 2021 – March 2023	
<b>3. Routes in to Education, Volunteering and Employment</b>							
<p>3.A Work with the Carer Transition Partnership (CTP) to encourage armed forces leavers to access education and employment support in East Lothian</p> <p>3.B capitalise on the employability of local military talent by promoting the skills of the armed forces skills in the civilian workforce and community</p>	<p>Armed forces leavers are aware of and access, education and employment services in EL</p> <p>Work with the education sector, local businesses, and voluntary sector to skill match and promote education and employment opportunities in EL</p> <p>Opportunities are available to armed forces leaver to retrain to secure alternative employment</p>	<p>Pathways in place to education and employment opportunities from the CTP to EL organisations and business and being utilised by armed forces leavers</p> <p>Improved prospects of education, employment and volunteering for armed forces leavers coming to EL</p> <p>Improve recognition amongst local business and employers of transferable skills</p>	EL AF Handbook, ELC website	MOD, EL Works, CTP, Business gateway, Economic Development, Skills Development Scotland (SDS), QMU, Edinburgh	Head of Communities	October 2021 - March 2022	

Action	Description	Planned Outcome	Resources	Partners	Owner	Time Line	Status
	Local businesses and organisations are encouraged and supported to employ armed forces leavers			College, VCEL,			
3.C Carry out a service mapping exercise to inform the above work	Review 3rd Sector Veterans and AFC networks and groups to ensure appropriate links are made with education and employment establishments	Increased awareness of available service between ELAFCG members	VCEL Website	VCEL, ELC CP&I	ELAFCG	May 2021	
3.D Continue to support the development of East Lothian Council's AFC Employee Network	<p>ELC's AFC Employee Network continues to inform the development of employment related action in this plan</p> <p>The AFC Employee Network are utilised to provide placements and peer mentoring support to new employees to ELC who have been in the armed forces</p>	<p>ELC staff who are veterans, cadets or reservist are engaged with the work of the AFC</p> <p>Armed forces leavers joining ELC are well supported to sustain their employment</p>	<p>Internal ELC Communications</p> <p>HR Policy and Practice</p>	ELC HR, CP&I	Head of Corporate Resources	March 2021 – ongoing with annual review	
3.E Employer's Recognition Scheme – East Lothian Council aspire to be a Gold standard employer	Work towards Armed Forces Covenant Gold level Employer Recognition Scheme award – requirements ( <a href="#">on the ERS website</a> )	Achievement of Gold Award	LAFVP Good Practice and Guidance	ELAFCG	Head of Corporate Resources	October 2021 - March 2023	
<b>4. Children and Young People</b>							
4.A Hold information sessions for young people on the 3 Cadet streams (Air, Sea and Army) to raise awareness of accredited volunteering opportunities that offer positive destinations.	<p>Cadets link with existing schools careers events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Raise awareness of the three cadet (Air, Sea and Army) activities and summer camps (via schools and EL Works)</li> <li>- link Cadet activities with accredited volunteer schemes (Duke of Edinburgh/ Saltire) and National 4 employability opportunities</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Young people can access a range of voluntary extracurricular learning experiences which can develop their career pathway options.</li> <li>2) Adult volunteers support the work of the Cadets</li> </ol>	Existing resources available from Cadets, <a href="#">DoE</a> and <a href="#">Saltire Award</a> scheme	SDS, EL Works, Cadets, ELC DoE, VCEL	ELC Head of Education, EL Works, Connected Communities Service Managers	January 2022 - June 2022	

Action	Description	Planned Outcome	Resources	Partners	Owner	Time Line	Status
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop a programme of cadet related activities for the Nat 4 pupils.</li> <li>- Work with the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector to attract adult volunteers to support the cadets</li> </ul>						
4.B Explore the needs of children and young people from the armed forces community.	Children and young people of the armed forces community in East Lothian know of, and can access relevant entitlements and supports. There are currently (As June 2019) 72 children in East Lothian schools	Information is available to parents and carers of children and young people re relevant entitlements and support. E.g, <a href="#">Education Support Fund</a>	MOD Website information  SEEMIS reports	MOD Education	ELC Head of Education	October 2021 - March 2022	
<b>5. Housing</b>							
5.A Veterans can access suitable housing in East Lothian	ELC to promote Veterans Housing initiatives, and allocations to new housing in Cockenzie	Veterans allocated suitable and sustainable housing	Housing supply and tenancy support (where needed)	ELC Housing Options Team	ELC Head of Housing	January 2021 – January 2022	In progress
5.B Expansion of Housing Hub Tool Kit	The National Housing Options Toolkit is an interactive and online system of housing advice covering health and social care, employability etc. it will increase access to information and improve knowledge and understanding among a wide range of staff re the rights of the armed forces community	ELC practitioners have access to the toolkit which improves access and information to the armed forces community on a range of health and social issues	Online Toolkit	ELC Housing Options Team	ELC Head of Housing	March 2021 - January 2022	Ongoing
<b>6. Health and Wellbeing</b>							
6.A Reduce health inequalities amongst the veteran population	Explore the potential to use equalities monitoring systems to identify veterans and ensure	East Lothians armed forces community can access appropriate health services as and when needed	Scottish Veterans Commissioner's Health &	Veterans 1 <sup>st</sup> Point,	Veterans 1 <sup>st</sup> Point,	March 2019 - January 2020	

Action	Description	Planned Outcome	Resources	Partners	Owner	Time Line	Status
	smooth transitions between services  Identify local health inequalities in the armed forces community and agree areas for improvement with the Health and Social Care Partnership (H&SCP) <sup>4</sup>  Veterans 1 <sup>st</sup> Funding bid for a stress and trauma project	Identifying East Lothian armed forces community in registering for health services at GPs, and at specialist provisions such as mental health services	Wellbeing Report	H&SC Clinical Director, Veterans Scotland, V1P	EL IJB/H&SCP		
6.B Work with the Health and Social Care Partnership to improve outcomes for veterans needing health and social care	Seek H&SCP's consideration of signing the AF Covenant and seeking Employer Recognition status (as per action 2.D)  Provide H&SCP GP Link workers with information on the AFC and health entitlements of the AFC (as per actions 2.c & 2.D)  NHSL to provide update on implementation of the AF Commissioners review of healthcare for the AFC/Veterans	East Lothians armed forces community can access appropriate health services as and when needed	Scottish Veterans Commissioner's Health & Wellbeing Report	ELAFCG	EL IJB/H&SCP	June 2021 – June 2022	
<b>7. Community</b>							
7.A Promote the armed forces breakfast clubs to veterans and their families	Raise awareness of breakfast clubs activity	Regular social support and support activities exist in local communities	Information from Breakfast Clubs	ELC Web, The British Legion	The British Legion	January 2021 – ongoing	
7.B Continue to promote and support	Work with partners to support and celebrate, armed forces day,	The community are aware and the profile is raised of the armed forces community in East Lothian	ELC Website,	ELC Web, MOD,	The Provost of	June 2021 - Annual Review	

<sup>4</sup> Recommendation 7, 15 and 16, Scottish Veterans Commissioner's Health & Wellbeing Report: April 2018

Action	Description	Planned Outcome	Resources	Partners	Owner	Time Line	Status
Armed Forces Week and Reservists Day	armed forces week and reservist day with civic activities		<a href="#">Armed Forces Day Webpage</a>		East Lothian		
<b>8. Maximising Funding (as needed)</b>							
8.A Promote the Armed Forces Covenant Fund across the East Lothian Community	To raise awareness amongst East Lothians community groups of the local armed forces population and funding that can be utilised for the armed forces community	Community groups know how to access Armed Forces Covenant funds  Explore projects for future bids	Armed Forces Covenant website <sup>5</sup>	Veterans Scotland, ELCs C'nnected Communities	ELAFCG	March 2021 – ongoing	
8.B Promote the Ministry of Defence Education Support Fund Re-introduction	Promote access to the MOD funding that offers £300 per pupil (under the given eligibly criteria) to schools to provide extra support for armed forces community pupils	Education services are aware of the fund and take a coordinated approach to accessing it for pupils from the armed forces community	MOD website <sup>6</sup>	MOD Education services	Head of Education	March 2021 – Annual Review	
8.C To explore opportunities with partners to increase access to external funding to enhance the work of ELAFCG	Seek the views of the AFC in relation to local needs and initiatives which could form the basis of projects for which external funding is sources; working in collaboration with Veterans 1st Project	Funding bids sought as and when needed	VCELS Funding updates	VCEL	ELAFCG	March 2021 - ongoing	

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/covenant-fund>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mod-support-fund-for-schools-with-service-children-grant-application-pack>



## Appendix 1: East Lothian Armed Forces Covenant: Completed Actions from 2018 – 2021

Achievements of the East Lothian Armed Forces Covenant Group to date include:

- ☑ Bronze and Silver Employer Award Achievements
- ☑ Lothian and Borders Yeomanry – Grated the Freedom of East Lothian and presented with a scroll at a well-attended event in Dunbar in summer 2019.
- ☑ Good up take of the AF Covenant Module –module devised by LAFVC Project team, and available for staff and community groups to complete
- ☑ HR – updated Reservist Policy including 15 days paid leave for training
- ☑ Briefing held for ELC Elected Members and senior staff
- ☑ Housing Allocation policy updated with extra points awarded to veterans
- ☑ Affordable Homes in Cockenzie for veterans
- ☑ Health & Wellbeing working with NHS – telephone surveys carried out with GPs to identify veterans, follow up work undertaken.
- ☑ Completed Housing Needs Assessment
- ☑ EL Armed Forces Employee Network set up
- ☑ Consistent communications about the work of the Armed Forces Covenant and the Armed Forces community to the wider community

Action	Description	Planned Outcome	Resources	Partners	Owner
<b>Partnership Working</b>					
Establish EL Partnership Covenant Group	A Covenant Forum or co-ordinating group that meets at least twice a year. It includes the following: military representatives; military charities; public sector representatives; effective council members (senior elected members on cabinet); and the officer champion.	1) A strategic partnership group ensures the visibility of and access to services and networks of support for EL veterans, reservists and cadets.  2) Improved Collaboration, Partnership and Leadership / Governance of our work to improve outcomes. (Recommendation 2&3 Scottish Veterans Commissioner’s Health & Wellbeing Report/April 2018)	<a href="#">LAFVG</a> <a href="#">Organisational chart</a>  <a href="#">East Lothian Armed Forces Covenant</a> <a href="#">Terms of Reference</a>	Housing, Education, CLD, Health & Social Care, Employment Service, LAFVG Rep, Firmbase Rep, STRiVE Rep, Armed Forces, Charities Rep, Elected Member Champion, Provost (Civic) Rep.	Head of Communities & Partnerships: Sharon

Action	Description	Planned Outcome	Resources	Partners	Owner
Work with Lothian Armed Forces and Veterans Group (LAFVG) to develop joint working across the Lothians where appropriate	<p>Work with Lothian Councils and other partners to agree Lothian level role and share best practice.</p> <p>Help steer the work of the Lothian Armed Forces and Veterans Project to support best practice across the Lothian's</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Establish the East Lothian Armed Forces Covenant Group (ELAFCG)</li> <li>2) Progression of the Employers Recognition Scheme (silver) Award</li> <li>3) Established communication and media presence</li> </ol>	<p>ELC, Lothian Partners, Veterans Project and local steering group members.</p> <p>LAFVG is a partnership of the four Lothian Councils and Lothian wide services such as NHS, V1P, MOD, Veterans Scotland, JC+ and others.</p>	<p>ELAFCG</p> <p>NHS Lothian</p> <p>Veterans 1<sup>st</sup> Point</p>	Head of Communities & Partnerships and LAFVG
<b>Communication</b>					
Develop and improve advice and support for veterans, reservists and service personnel	<p>ELCs website is recognised as the main East Lothian hub for information for the armed forces community.</p> <p>Promote website to veterans, reservists, service personnel and their families</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The armed forces community can easily access relevant information in relation to entitlements, advice and support available in East Lothian</li> <li>2) Produce a "Local Authority" guide for those leaving the armed forces</li> </ol>	ELC Website and relevant information from partners	LAFVP, Veterans 1 <sup>st</sup> Point, MHS Lothian, ELC Housing	Head of Communities & Partnerships, LAFVP, Comms Team
Promote awareness of services for veterans to front line and other relevant staff and key partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop eLearning module for frontline staff.</li> <li>• Promote and implement eLearning module to East Lothian Council (ELC) and East Lothian Partnerships (ELP) and the Community Justice Partnership</li> <li>• All identified ELC frontline staff trained.</li> <li>• Ongoing monitoring of eLearning module use on a 6 monthly basis</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) eLearning module available</li> <li>2) Strategic leaders, e.g Elected Members are briefed and knowledgeable</li> <li>3) Front line staff are able to recognise and advise veterans appropriately.</li> </ol>	<p>eLearning module,</p> <p>ELC media, e.g Living</p>	LAFVP, ELC Occupational Development team	<p>ELC CPI Team,</p> <p>LAFVP,</p> <p>ELC HR</p>

Action	Description	Planned Outcome	Resources	Partners	Owner
LAFVP brief ELC Councillors and Service Managers on the work of the LAFVP and eLearning module	The LAFVP team will provide a 30min brief to all Councillors and Service Managers about the project	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Enhance Councillor's knowledge of the AFC and eLearning module</li> <li>2) Enhance Senior Managers knowledge of the AFC and eLearning module</li> </ol>	LAFVP Good Practice and Guidance  <a href="#">Local Authority Guide</a>  <a href="#">LA Guide for Scotland</a>	LAFVP Team	Head of Communities & Partnerships  LAFVP
<b>Employment</b>					
Employer's Recognition Scheme – East Lothian Council aspire to be a Gold standard employer.	Work towards Armed Forces Covenant Bronze level Employer Recognition Scheme award –requirements ( <a href="#">on the ERS website</a> )  Work towards Armed Forces Covenant Silver level Employer Recognition Scheme award –requirements ( <a href="#">on the ERS website</a> )	Achievement of Bronze Award in 2018  Achievement of Silver Award in 2019	LAFVP Good Practice and Guidance	ELC HR Service; Health & Social Care Partnership; East Lothian Works	Head of Communities & Partnerships LAFVP
Redraft East Lothian Council's Reservist Employment Policy	Use the <a href="#">MOD Reservist HR Policy</a> as a template to refresh current ELC employment policy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Reservists are aware of Council employment policy and HR department and recruiting staff implement it effectively.</li> <li>2) Promote ELC employment opportunities to AF Carers Transition Partnership (CTP)</li> </ol>	HR policy  LAFVP Good Practice and Guidance	ELC HR  AF CTP	Head of Corporate Resources:  HR Dept
<b>Housing</b>					
Support the development of housing for veterans in East Lothian	6 new build units for veterans in Cockenzie	The local armed forces community have priority access to designated armed forces housing.	Housing units in East Lothian	ELC Housing  <a href="#">The Scottish Veterans Garden City</a>	ELC Housing:

Action	Description	Planned Outcome	Resources	Partners	Owner
Review of ELCs Housing Allocation Policy to incorporate ELAFCG commitments	Revised policy recognises the work of the Covenant	The armed forces community gain appropriate housing advice and eligibility points.	ELC Housing Allocations Policy	ELC Website,  ELC Housing Options Team	ELC Housing
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>					
Promote <a href="#">Age Scotland's Veterans Project</a>	Work with Age Scotland to promote the project with a view to further partnership work once we have established the size of our older veteran population	Older members of the armed forces community living in East Lothian have access to appropriate support and advice networks.	<a href="#">Age Scotland Veterans Projects</a> resources  Scottish Veterans Commissioner's Health & Wellbeing Report	NHS Lothian,  ELC Older Peoples Services	Age Scotland, Unforgotten Forces, H&SCP,  Older Peoples Service Manager
<b>Community</b>					
Promoting and raising awareness of the history of the armed forces community in East Lothian.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Add as items on the Area Partnership agendas and ensure copies of briefings are sent to community groups such as Community Councils, TRA.s etc.</li> <li>- Link with Lothian and Borders Yeomanry activities to raise awareness of the culture, heritage and civic pride of the armed forces community locally.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Information in ELCs website</li> <li>2) Granting L&amp;B Yeomanry the Freedom of East Lothian</li> <li>3) Museum artefacts display</li> </ol>	Web content L&B  Yeomanry Artefacts	ELC Web Team,  L&B Yeomanry  ELC Museums service	ELC Communities & Partnerships

### Examples of Communication and Media Presence

1. A [press release](#) issued to media regarding the signing of the covenant, outlining what this meant to the council and its communities. This was also issued via the council's own website, Facebook and twitter channels.
2. A [profile](#) of a member of staff within the housing team who is also a veteran, promoted through the council's internal staff newsletter (INFORM) and its facebook and twitter channels.
3. Information via the council's [INFORM](#) staff newsletter on the covenant and ahead of [reserves' day](#).
4. Support for events and occasions relating to the Armed Services community – [East Lothian's Festival of Remembrance](#) and [Armed Forces Day](#).
5. Sharing information from stakeholders – through [the website](#) or on [social media channels](#)
6. Extensive promotion of the granting of the Freedom of East Lothian to the Lothians and Border Yeomanry Regiment. This included a [press release when the decision was made](#) at council, posters and [social media posts](#) in advance of the Freedom and parade, [photocall and diary notices](#) to media and a [release on the day](#).
7. An article appeared in Living, the council's own publication delivered to around 40,000 households in the county making it East Lothian's highest circulating publication. [Summer 2019](#) raised awareness of the Covenant and arrangements regarding the granting of the Freedom. It also highlighted the Veterans' Breakfast Club that exists within the county with contact information for interested parties.

## Appendix 2 – Completion of the Armed Forces ELearning Module

Date	Number Completed	ELC and Community Use
January 2019	32	Internal Staff
Feb 2020	338	335 people accessed the module on Council side and 3 on Community side
August 2020		264 passes on this module on the Council site and 11 passes on our Community site