

Guildhall Gainsborough  
Lincolnshire DN21 2NA  
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## AGENDA

**This meeting will be webcast live and the video archive published on our website**

**Prosperous Communities Committee  
Tuesday, 7th March, 2023 at 6.30 pm  
Council Chamber - The Guildhall**

**Members:**

- Councillor Owen Bierley (Chairman)
- Councillor John McNeill (Vice-Chairman)
- Councillor Mrs Tracey Coulson (Vice-Chairman)
- Councillor Stephen Bunney
- Councillor Liz Clews
- Councillor Christopher Darcel
- Councillor Michael Devine
- Councillor Jane Ellis
- Councillor Mrs Cordelia McCartney
- Councillor Mrs Jessie Milne
- Councillor Jaime Oliver
- Councillor Roger Patterson
- Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings
- Councillor Jim Snee
- Councillor Trevor Young

**1. Apologies for Absence**

**2. Public Participation**

Up to 15 minutes are allowed for public participation. Participants are restricted to 3 minutes each.

**3. Minutes of Previous Meetings**

i) Minutes of the Prosperous Communities Committee

To confirm and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held on 31 January 2023. (PAGES 3 - 7)

ii) Minutes of the Concurrent Meeting

To confirm and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Concurrent Meeting of the Prosperous Communities and Corporate Policy and Resources Committees held on 24 November 2022. (PAGES 8 - 15)

4. **Matters Arising Schedule**

(PAGES 16 - 17)

Setting out current position of previously agreed actions as at 27 February 2023

5. **Members' Declarations of Interest**

Members may make any declarations at this point but may also make them at any time during the course of the meeting.

6. **Public Reports**

i) Armed Forces Covenant Duty

(PAGES 18 - 105)

ii) Private Sector Housing - Options for Future Direction

(PAGES 106 - 151)

iii) Approach to Environmental Crime

(PAGES 152 - 175)

iv) Economic Recovery Plan Annual Update

(PAGES 176 - 192)

v) Workplan

(PAGES 193 - 194)

Ian Knowles  
Head of Paid Service  
The Guildhall  
Gainsborough

Monday, 27 February 2023

Prosperous Communities Committee- 31 January 2023  
Subject to Call-in. Call-in will expire at 5pm on

## WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall on 31 January 2023 commencing at 6.30 pm.

**Present:** Councillor Owen Bierley (Chairman)  
Councillor John McNeill (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Stephen Bunney  
Councillor Christopher Darcel  
Councillor Michael Devine  
Councillor Mrs Jessie Milne  
Councillor Jaime Oliver  
Councillor Roger Patterson  
Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings  
Councillor Jim Snee  
Councillor Trevor Young  
Councillor Timothy Davies  
Councillor Tom Regis

**In Attendance:**  
Sally Grindrod-Smith Director Planning, Regeneration & Communities  
Ady Selby Director - Operational & Commercial Services  
Emma Foy Director of Corporate Services and Section 151  
Sarah Elvin Homes, Health & Wellbeing Team Manager  
Sue Leversedge Business Support Team Leader  
Ele Snow Senior Democratic and Civic Officer

**Also In Attendance:** 1 Member of the Public

**Apologies:** Councillor Mrs Tracey Coulson  
Councillor Liz Clews  
Councillor Jane Ellis  
Councillor Mrs Cordelia McCartney

**Membership:** Councillor T. Davies sat as substitute for Councillor J. Ellis  
Councillor T. Regis sat as substitute for Councillor. C. McCartney

## 49 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman stated there was one public speaker, and invited Mr Chris Thomas to address the Committee.

Mr Thomas explained he was speaking as representative for residents of Welton and Dunholme in relation to their concerns regarding the review of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (CLLP). He stated that the residents of the area felt they had been ignored throughout the consultation period, and by the District Council, and that issues they had raised had not been addressed. Specifically, Mr Thomas expressed the belief that Welton would become a 'giant building site', with the site allocations within the CLLP seeing a growth rate in excess of 50% for Welton. He stated the residents' concerns regarding the lack of infrastructure, with schools and GP surgeries already struggling to provide adequate services for current residents, and questioned how the predicted developments would be supported under such circumstances.

Mr Thomas highlighted he had previously addressed the Prosperous Communities Committee in May 2022, at which point he had requested the Committee to address the residents' many concerns regarding Regulation 19 of the draft CLLP, stating that a recommendation had been put forward that the text be amended to reinstate site-specific phasing for the Welton allocated sites. He stated his belief that Members had been misled prior to their vote in May 2022, and he requested both a meeting with the Chairman of the Committee, and urgent action to correct the perceived error and reinstate phasing to the plan.

The Chairman thanked Mr Thomas for his time and comments to the Committee. He stated that the plan was still in a consultation period and as such, members of the public or organisations were still able to make representations on any of the points raised. It was explained that a response to Mr Thomas' statement would be sent in writing, and shared with the Members of the Committee, in due course.

Members of the Committee were subsequently permitted to comment, with concerns raised regarding whether there should be a public debate on the issues raised by Mr Thomas. It was explained that there was to be no debate at that time, however it was reiterated that the plan remained in a public consultation period and therefore comments and concerns could still be submitted. In response to Member comments regarding transparency of interaction with public speakers, the Chairman re-asserted that communications would be shared with all Committee Members.

Whilst Members remained unhappy with the perceived lack of open debate, the Chairman brought the item to a close, and continued with the next item of business.

## **50 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held on 6 December 2022 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

## **51 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE**

With no comments, questions or requirement for a vote, the Matters Arising schedule was **DULY NOTED**.

## **52 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest at this point in the meeting.

## **53 WEST LINDSEY DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT (DFG) POLICY 2023**

The Committee heard from the Homes, Health and Wellbeing Team Manager regarding the Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) current position and seeking to adopt the Disabled Facilities Grant Policy. It was explained that the Council had a statutory duty under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 to undertake mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants. In December 2021, the Government published their Adult Social Care reform white paper which set out a 10-year vision for adult social care and detailed a number of potential changes to DFG legislation. Details of the proposed DFG amendments were detailed within section 4.2 of the report.

Members of the Committee enquired as to the increased costs for adaptations, and whether there was any scope for further savings, for example if the Council undertook the work rather than sourcing contractors. It was explained that the costs involved would remain a focus of review, as there was no intention to overspend if it could be avoided, however there would have been no reduction in costs had the work been undertaken any differently. In response to a question regarding the £6000 savings amount that triggered means-testing for a DFG, it was confirmed that this was a government-set requirement and was intended to be amended in the upcoming white paper. It was explained that this savings limit did not preclude a person from having a DFG, only that there would need to be a means-test undertaken.

Members of the Committee enquired as to the implications of the government announcement regarding expedited discharges from hospital, specifically regarding the impact this would have on demand for DFGs, as well as whether the discretionary element of DFG funding would be recommenced to help enable hospital discharges. It was explained that the DFG process was not intended to be an emergency response service, that it was an element of assistance that was available but ran alongside multiple services that were better placed to address the requirements on discharge from hospital. A Member of the Committee highlighted the work undertaken by the Royal British Legion and it was confirmed that there was joint working, and signposting of people to, the Royal British Legion and other organisations, and that in some cases they were more appropriate than a DFG.

With regard to the cessation of the discretionary funding, it was noted that it was hoped this would be a temporary stop, however Members would be kept informed of any future changes. The Committee also recognised that the DFG was an element of support and assistance available to those requiring it, and it was requested that, in view of the all-out elections in May 2023, a quick reference flow chart could be included in the Member Welcome Pack, in order for all Councillors, but particularly those newly elected, to have a reference point as to where to direct enquiries if received from residents. Officers undertook to work on this.

Having been moved and seconded, the Chairman took the vote on the recommendation contained within the report and it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** that the West Lindsey Disabled Facilities Grant Policy 2023 be adopted.

#### **54 PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES REVENUE BASE BUDGETS 2023/24 TO 2027/28**

The Committee heard from the Business Support Team Leader regarding the Prosperous Communities Committee Draft Budget 2023/2024 and estimates to 2027/2028. It was explained that, after taking a robust approach to the estimations within the budget for the Committee, the total cost of services for 2023/2024 would be £5.131m (£5.023m 2022/2023). This had resulted in base budget increases in expenditure of £0.451m, and additional income of £0.343m, resulting in a net base budget increase of £0.108m.

Members heard that there were £0.364m of expenditure budgets which were funded from Earmarked Reserves to support one off project resources in 2023/2024 (£0.463m in 2022/2023). This was a decrease of £0.1m from 2022/2023 to 2023/2024. Services within this Committee had also contributed to Earmarked Reserves £0.104m in 2023/2024 for asset replacement programmes (£0.169m in 2022/2023). This was a reduction of £0.065m from 2022/2023 to 2023/2024. Excluding the use of earmarked reserves, there was an increase of £0.143m on the base budgets for the Committee, with the Officer highlighted that further details of which were contained within the report at section 2. The proposed budgets within the report contributed towards an overall balanced position for 2023/2024, with a small surplus being returned to the General Fund.

The Business Support Team Leader explained that salary budgets for 2022/2023 were set based on an estimated 2% pay award, however, the final pay award was based on a monetary value against each scale point for NJC Local Government staff, which equated to an average increase of 6%. The salary costs included in the report were based on an estimated 2% increase each year from 2023/2024. Ongoing pay award negotiations indicated there was a risk that the 2023/2024 pay award might be higher than the 2% applied. To mitigate this risk, a contingency budget had been set aside. The proposed Council budget for 2023/2024 also included a 2% Vacancy Factor of £0.226m, which had been applied to salary budgets for posts which were on the organisational establishment (basic pay, superannuation and national insurance).

Members thanked the Business Support Team Leader for her succinct summary. With regard to the anticipated salary costs, it was enquired as to how the potential percentage increase had been reached, with Members highlighting concerns that a pay award may be significantly higher than that anticipated. It was explained that a benchmarking exercise had been undertaken across Lincolnshire, as well as other national conversations, and it was anticipated that the pay award for 2022/23 had been a larger percentage increase than what would be agreed for 2023/24. Members were assured that, should there be any further details received in advance of the Full Council budget meeting, this would be reflected in the report to Council.

In response to a question regarding the financial details of the leisure contract, it was explained that the income line was recorded as £207k, with the net impact being £161k. It was highlighted that the figures were the contractually agreed numbers, to which there had been no amendments, and did not reflect any usage changes due to the pandemic.

With no further comments or questions, and having been moved and seconded, the

Chairman took the vote and it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** that the Prosperous Communities Budget 2023/2024 and revenue estimates to 2027/2028 be **recommended** to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee for the purpose of budget setting 2023/2024 and for inclusion in the Medium-Term Financial Plan 2023/2024 to 2027/2028 (as amended by any decisions taken on this agenda).

## 55 WORKPLAN

**Note:** Councillor T. Regis left the meeting at 7.22pm

On consideration of the Committee Work Plan, detailing items of business due at upcoming meetings, the Chairman stated the item was to be noted, unless Members had any comments or questions.

A Member of the Committee highlighted that he had requested an item to be included regarding car parking and parking enforcement actions across the district. He recognised there was due to be an all Councillor workshop held regarding this area, however expressed his disappointment that it was not included for open debate at a meeting of the Committee. It was highlighted that the Parking Strategy had been debated and resolved by the Committee in July 2022, with the queries being addressed via the workshop having been raised by Councillors outside of a Committee environment, as well as the comments at policy meetings. The Chairman expressed his support for the workshop and his expectations that all queries raised would be addressed.

Two separate areas of work were requested by other Members of the Committee, those being for the Council to look into the possibility of acquiring a mobile device to monitor air pollution, which parishes could use to monitor concerns in their areas, and a question as to whether there was a policy in place regarding the use of, or banned use of, pesticides in the district. It was confirmed that these matters would be shared with the relevant Officers, and added to the Matters Arising Schedule for future updates or work to be addressed.

Members of the Committee reiterated their previously communicated enquiries regarding parking enforcement, seeking assurance that the upcoming workshop would provide information such as the breakdown of parking tickets issued and reasons for enforcement action, this was confirmed to be the case.

With no further comments or questions, and having confirmed that the work plan discussions had been noted for relevant actions, the Chairman thanked all present for their time and involvement, and brought the meeting to a close.

The meeting concluded at 7.34 pm.

Chairman

# Agenda Item 3b

Concurrent Meeting of the Prosperous Communities and Corporate Policy and Resources Committees- 24 November 2022

## WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Concurrent Meeting of the Prosperous Communities and Corporate Policy and Resources Committees held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall on 24 November 2022 commencing at 6.30 pm.

### Present:

**Prosperous Communities Committee** Councillor Owen Bierley (Vice-Chairman) – Concurrent Committee

Councillor Stephen Bunney  
Councillor Michael Devine  
Councillor Jane Ellis  
Councillor Ian Fleetwood  
Councillor John McNeill  
Councillor Mrs Angela Lawrence  
Councillor Jaime Oliver  
Councillor Roger Patterson  
Councillor Lesley Rollings  
Councillor Jim Snee  
Councillor Trevor Young

**Corporate Policy and Resources Committee** Councillor Mrs Anne Welburn (Chairman) – Concurrent Committee

Councillor Owen Bierley  
Councillor Matthew Boles  
Councillor Stephen Bunney  
Councillor Michael Devine  
Councillor Ian Fleetwood  
Councillor John McNeill  
Councillor Peter Morris  
Councillor Mandy Snee  
Councillor Jeff Summers  
Councillor Trevor Young

### In Attendance:

Ian Knowles Chief Executive  
Sally Grindrod-Smith Director of Planning, Regeneration & Communities  
Emma Foy Director of Corporate Services and Section 151  
James Makinson-Sanders Economic Growth Team Manager  
Katie Storr Democratic Services & Elections Team Manager

### Apologies:

Councillor Liz Clews  
Councillor Mrs Tracey Coulson



Councillor Christopher Darcel  
Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan  
Councillor Mrs Cordelia McCartney  
Councillor Mrs Jessie Milne  
Councillor Robert Waller

**Membership:**

**Prosperous Communities Committee**

Councillor Angela Lawrence substituting for Councillor Tracey Coulson  
Councillor Ian Fleetwood substituting for Councillor Jessie Milne

**Corporate Policy and Resources**

Councillor Peter Morris substituting for Councillor Bob Waller

**4 MEMBERS' DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

No Declarations of Interest were made at this stage of the meeting.

**5 PROCEDURE**

The adopted Procedure by which the Concurrent Meeting would be held was **NOTED**.

**6 RURAL ENGLAND PROSPERITY FUND**

Consideration was given to a report which provided Members with information regarding opportunities for West Lindsey District Council (WLDC) in respect of the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF). The report further sought to update Members on the development of WLDCs submission to the Rural England Prosperity Fund, outlined the emerging challenges and opportunities identified through the Theory of Change and set out suggested interventions that could be funded through West Lindsey's' Rural Fund.

In support of the report the Director of Planning, Regeneration and Communities gave a short presentation to Members during which they were advised how the Rural England Prosperity Fund had been announced on 3 September 2022. The fund was a specific allocation made to "rural districts" only and West Lindsey had been notionally allocated £795,821 to be invested during the period 1 April 2023 - 31 March 2025.

The allocation of funding had taken account of an areas;

- rural population
- rural businesses and productivity
- the importance of farming in each authority area.

The allocation had to be used to address challenges that had been identified in rural areas

and which had been set out in the Government's prospectus, namely: -

- Lower productivity rates
- Poorer connectivity
- Poorer access to key services

It was noted these challenges had already been highlighted within the West Lindsey UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan (UKSPF), as important challenges for investment in 'Levelling Up' across the District

The rural fund objectives within the UKSPF investment priorities for "Community and Place" and "Supporting Local Businesses" had been used as the basis for the Council's REPF submission, given it was a requirement that the REPF must be aligned with the main UKSPF Investment Plan with two main investment areas identified.

- Supporting Rural Business
- Supporting Rural Communities

The REPF would provide 100% capital funding to:

- Support new and existing rural businesses to develop new products and facilities that would be of wider benefit to the local economy. This included farm businesses looking to diversify income streams;
- Support new and improved community infrastructure, providing essential community services and assets for local people and businesses to benefit the local economy.

In order to access the REPF an 'addendum' to the District Council's Investment Plan submission was required to be made to Government by 30 November 2022 and needed to include: -

- Local Context - demonstrating an understanding of specific challenges for rural communities and businesses.
- Interventions – selected from a list of options linked to UKSPF; and
- A delivery Plan setting out how and when interventions would be delivered.

West Lindsey's approach to the REPF was detailed in Section 3 of the report and Members noted that a "theory of change" had been developed to consider the challenges and market failures, together with the opportunities for improvement being experienced in rural communities across the District.

This had been strongly informed by the wide ranging and cross cutting engagement completed through the work on the main UKSPF as well as further engagement through this process. The approach adopted was recognised by Government as a good way of understanding the challenges and the opportunities in a local area.

Arising from this work, the identified challenges for the two priorities were detailed at Section 3.3 of the report and the opportunities for each, at Section 3.4.

Using the challenges developed through the UKSPF Investment Plan work and additional

analysis completed for the Rural Fund it was being proposed to Members that the West Lindsey investment should be focused on the following interventions from the prospectus:

### **Rural Communities**

2.1: capital grant funding for investment and support for digital infrastructure for local community facilities.

2.8 capital grant funding for impactful volunteering and social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places.

### **Rural Businesses**

1.1 capital grant funding for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas.

It had been recognised that Members were keen to support local communities and as such it was being further suggested that the allocation would be split, 60% to support local communities and 40% to support rural businesses.

Given the REPF could also only be used for capital projects, internal funding already approved to support businesses within the Feasibility Fund would be used as a revenue match funding stream for the rural business intervention.

The Feasibility Fund reserve had a balance of £150,000 which had previously been approved to support the growth of business, by offering grant funding which would facilitate the creation of new jobs and economic activity across the District. As there has been little interest/demand in the past three years, it was being proposed that the £150,000 in the reserve could be repurposed and utilised as match funding for the rural business intervention to support businesses with revenue costs.

Intervention 1.1 would be delivered as an extension to 'Project 2.1: Flagship West Lindsey Business Support Programme' in the initial UK SPF Investment Plan.

The grant stream would enable increased funding for rural businesses and farms to invest in new capital assets, innovative technologies, and infrastructure. Examples of such were set out at Section 3.7 of the report and Section 3.9 detailed the projected outcomes.

Interventions 2.1 and 2.8 would be delivered as an extension to 'Project 1.1. Flagship Community Grant Programme' in the initial UK SPF Investment Plan. This would provide a capital grant stream as part of the wider investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil societies and community groups including Capital grants for the provision of gigabyte capable digital infrastructure at rural hubs for community use e.g

- Village Halls
- Pubs
- Post Offices
- And Capital grants for investment in projects that enhance physical, cultural and social ties and amenities e.g
- Community infrastructure

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- Local green space
- Community led projects

The benefits and projected outcomes of such were detailed at Sections 3.13-3.15.

In concluding the monitoring, evaluation and next steps, if approved, as detailed at Sections 5 and 6, were outlined to the Committee.

Debate ensued and Members from across the Chamber supported the selected interventions. In responding to questions around the administration costs, the use of the reserve and whether Members would be involved in determining grant applications, the Committee were advised that the REPF, given its capital nature there was no provision for administration costs however up to 4% of the main UK shared prosperity fund could be used to support administration and a programme officer, to help with the monitoring and management across the Fund would be appointed.

In terms of the £150,00 feasibility fund previously agreed, the Scheme hadn't seen the taken up expected and the reasoning for this was outlined. It had proved very difficult for businesses to access what were arguably quite small grants. Listening to feedback from the business community and a recognition by Members that it was challenging for businesses to access grant funding, particularly capital grant funding, without some support to develop those proposals. It had therefore been considered sensible to realign the Feasibility Fund with the opportunity of this capital funding, enabling access.

Finally, it was confirmed the Community Grant element would operate in a very similar way to how the Councillor match funding grant operated at the moment with a panel of Members. Members would be able to engage through the Grant Panel in terms of monitoring. A variety of methods would be used to feedback to Members including the Members' Newsletter, as well as the financial monitoring arrangements already in place.

Whilst Members were grateful for the £700,000+ it was suggested that the Council should be lobbying for more support for rural communities given the scale of the challenge rural communities faced with accessibility, particularly in respect of limited broadband in some areas. The withdrawal of/ changes to the Government gigabyte scheme left some rural communities and rural businesses severely disadvantaged. Acknowledging this was capital funding, to ensure sustainability, it was suggested that some additional revenue funding and support would be required to ensure any schemes established worked, were useable and actually brought about the digitalisation of rural communities and to tackle isolation.

In responding Officers advised that the Prospectus and Government guidance required the Council to ensure any activities aligned with the Government's gigabyte Programme and that was something that would need to be worked through as the Business Case, which would be approved by Members, was developed. With regard to revenue support, Officers reminded Members of how it had been agreed to invest the main shared prosperity fund to support our communities, to deliver support that would maximise how the capital investment was used, twin tracking and aligning those investment streams to ensure the best use of capital, again something that would become clearer as Business Cases for each were developed.

The Chief Executive offered re-assurance and whilst acknowledging this was capital funding

It was recognised that the Council would likely need to work with, for example local parishes, as to what on-going support looked like. Referencing previous difficulties, in trying to secure additional funding for such purposes (broadband) outside of the BDUK programme, and how the Government had previously prevented this, the Chief Executive welcomed this funding and was hopeful it could be used to assist all residents in overcoming the difficulties they had experienced.

Several Members supported the comments about access to broadband in rural communities and sought assurance that funding could be wider than village halls, or that village halls, owned by churches were not disadvantaged as they had been with Covid Grants. There were also shared concerns that £800,000 over two years for such a large sparsely populated District was actually not a lot of funding. Members sought indication as to how the message would be spread and outcomes monitored, acknowledging there were numerous micro businesses, which likely had little interaction with the Council. There were concerns that some businesses were struggling to survive the next few months and as such time was of the essence and the money needed to be directly injected into businesses.

In responding, in terms of scale and how achievable the delivery was, one element that the Council would be required to undertake was monitoring and evaluation. Officers considered they hadn't been overly ambitious in the initial estimation of outputs across the programme. In some areas it would be a pilot in nature to test how the Council could intervene and what was deliverable. There were real opportunities to link into the developing monitoring evaluation framework for the levelling up programme, linking back to the Corporate Plan, and an opportunity to improve the skills of the organisation in capturing and understanding outcomes and outputs from investment.

Reassurance was offered that Officers had taken considerable time to consider the language used in the interventions within the Prospectus. The digital infrastructure intervention related specifically to local community facilities, with no definition of a village hall (very different to Covid Grant Fund guidance) and it did specifically reference places the Government considered to be "hubs" such as pubs and post offices.

Regarding business engagement, it was acknowledged this was a daily challenge faced and Officers outlined some of the current thinking, including leveraging existing contacts such as the Barclays Eagle lab at the Riseholme University, using existing relationships with organisations like the Federation of Small Businesses, as well as established networks and E-Briefings. It was considered one advantage out of the pandemic was that businesses knew more about the services that councils offered and the Council were much more on businesses' radars.

Members again welcomed the Rural funding, speaking at length of how rural communities often lost out to larger cities, regardless of need, and it also complemented the investment and funding received for Gainsborough.

In responding to comments about small business and local communities needing revenue funding, and how the reliance on local volunteers was often a barrier, Officers advised it was not envisaged the funding could be used for example to allow people to employ staff to drive businesses and projects forward, but would be about helping them to understand options around sustainability, create business cases and think through how to make those sustainable rather than parachuting in revenue funding for that purpose. It was

also stressed that investment in community buildings would be in arrangement and agreement with the organisation that owned a property. The role of, for example Parish Councils, and them having an uncapped precept, which would allow them to support local initiatives they wanted to see in local communities. Whilst the District Council might be able to put in the initial investment and a small amount of initial support to get things up and running, there would be an expectation that local Parish Councils would be best placed to support that on an ongoing basis, given their ability to raise funds, but again through agreements.

In responding to further comments, it was clarified that it was not envisaged any funding would wholly fund a project but would act as a kick start, and ensuring maximisation of funding. It was envisaged if the Council could demonstrate the outcomes and outputs achieved it would open doors for being able to apply and secure furthering funding. It was acknowledged this was not a huge amount of funding, but it did present District Councils with the opportunity to demonstrate what could be done and it was a unique type of fund given the Government's previous stance, and was possibly being used as a pilot by them to change the way District's could access funding in the future.

In responding to comments about potential cross cutting projects, and making applications as easy as possible, the Chairman reminded the Committee that such points would be addressed later into the project, should the District Council be given the "green light" to access the funds, which was the purpose of the addendum submission and the evening's meeting.

Having had lengthy and detailed debate, with all recommendations having been moved and seconded, the Prosperous Communities Committee's recommendations were put to the vote.

In accordance with the concurrent procedure, following an alphabetical roll call, with a total of 12 votes cast in favour, and with no votes against or abstentions it was

**RESOLVED** that:-

- (a) the interventions set out at 3.5 be approved as the focus for the West Lindsey Rural England Prosperity Fund.
- (b) it be **RECOMMENDED** to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee that the submission of the Rural England Fund Addendum as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

Corporate Policy and Resources Committee confirmed they were content to move straight to the vote on their respective recommendation.

Again, in accordance with the concurrent procedure, following an alphabetical roll call, with a total of 11 votes cast in favour, and with no votes against or abstentions it was

**RESOLVED** that the recommendation from the Prosperous Communities Committee **be accepted** and the Rural Fund Addendum be approved for submission by 30<sup>th</sup> November, with Delegated Authority granted to the Chief

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Executive in consultation with the Chairman of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee to make any housekeeping amendments

The meeting concluded at 7.22 pm.

Chairman

## Prosperous Communities Matters Arising Schedule

**Purpose:** To consider progress on the matters arising from previous Prosperous Communities Committee meetings.

**Recommendation:** That Members note progress on the matters arising and request corrective action if necessary.

### Matters Arising Schedule

Status	Title	Action Required	Comments	Due Date	Allocated To
Black	<b>Further Education Taskforce-Membership</b>	Extract from mins of mtg 19/7/22 the Director of Planning, Regeneration and Communities, in consultation with the Chairman of this Committee seek nominations for representatives to serve on the Further Education Taskforce, in line with the agreed terms of reference, including the appointment of Councillor Mrs L Rollings made during the meeting.	<b>Please let democratic services know in due course the confirmed membership of this Taskforce in order that records and cllrs pages can be kept up to-date. Please note the amendments that were agreed to the terms of ref (detailed in mins and shared via e-mail) Membership confirmed, with first meeting to take place Feb 2023.</b>	01/02/23	Sally Grindrod-Smith
Black	<b>Parking Strategy - Future considerations</b>	Extract from mins of meeting 19/7/22 "the Parking Strategy be refreshed within 3 years and to include detailed proposals on opportunities to "green" the Strategy". and "the Council considers opportunities to "green" its Car Parks during the next three years, and proposals be brought forward to the appropriate committee where necessary."	<b>These are much longer term proposals - logged here so not lost -</b>  <b>16/02/23: 2x outstanding matters arising closed and reallocated owing to time span of considerations.</b>	01/07/25	David Kirkup
Black	<b>Parking Strategy - Future Considerations</b>	Extract from mins of meeting 19/7/22 Motor Home and Coach Parking did not appear within the Action Plan and it was suggested that this should possibly be reconsidered, at some point in the future. Having formal coach parking, it was considered, would strengthen and encourage the Visitor Economy aspirations and again better align the offer with the future aspirations for the District. Many Members spoke in support of including Motorhome and Coach Parking provision as part of the District offer, being of the strong belief this was a fundamental part of any Visitor Economy, particularly given the rural nature of the District.	<b>Much longer term action but logged here so not lost - can be removed if more appropriate</b>  <b>16/02/23: 2x outstanding matters arising closed and reallocated owing to time span of considerations.</b>	01/07/25	Sally Grindrod-Smith
Black	<b>Review into the Use of Pesticides Across the District</b>	Response requested to the question posed at Prosperous Communities Committee (31 Jan 2023) as to whether there is, or can be, a policy that bans the use of pesticides in West Lindsey.	<b>There is no current policy that bans the use of pesticides (or herbicides) in West Lindsey. Consideration needs to be given to circumstances where pesticides / herbicides might be the only option (such as invasive plant species), however such guidance would originate from the Government / HSE / Environmental Departments. There are risk assessments and controls in place for those using such substances (for example land maintenance companies).</b>	07/03/23	Gary Reeve



<b>Black</b>	<b>Additional Information re Parking Enforcement Across the District</b>	Response required to the request received via Prosperous Communities Committee (and in reference to conversations at Corporate Policy & Resources Committee) regarding detailed breakdown of, amongst other information, parking enforcement actions, costs involved, numbers of PCNs issued, including reasons for PCN and whether paid or overturned.	<b>All Member Workshop held 2 Feb 2023 with full breakdown of details requested and supporting information shared with all Councillors the following day. Public FAQs can be found on the WLDC website via the following link: <a href="https://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/transport-visitors-leisure/transport-parking/parking/parking-frequently-asked-questions">https://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/transport-visitors-leisure/transport-parking/parking/parking-frequently-asked-questions</a></b>	28/02/23	David Kirkup
<b>Green</b>	<b>Further Education Task Force - future reporting</b>	Extract from mins of mtg 19/7/22 (b) a quarterly update report from the Further Education Taskforce be received by the Prosperous Communities Committee on a quarterly basis; and	<b>Please ensure these reports are added to the Work Plan for PC Cttee</b>  <b>First meeting of the group took place Feb 2023, updates to be scheduled accordingly</b>	30/04/23	Grant White
<b>Green</b>	<b>Preparation for Internal Audit Plan</b>	It was requested that the MO consider whether Grant Funding should be included in the Internal Audit Plan (PC cttee 6 Dec 2022)	<b>reallocated to new MO</b>	31/03/23	Jeanette McGarry
<b>Green</b>	<b>Monitoring of Air Pollution Across the District</b>	Response required to the request from Prosperous Communities Committee (31 Jan 2023) to consider purchasing a portable device to measure air pollution, to be available to loan out across the district.	<b>Officer in contact with Cllr Bunney</b>	07/03/23	Andy Gray
<b>Green</b>	<b>Flowchart re DFGs for Councillors' Induction</b>	Requested at Prosperous Communities Committee (31 Jan 2023) that the Member Induction Welcome Pack include a form of flowchart re DFGs process, for Members to have easy reference to.	<b>Please liaise with Ele Snow re Member Induction arrangements</b>	28/04/23	Sarah Elvin
<b>Green</b>	<b>Parking Strategy - Future Considerations</b>	Following discussions at PC Cttee meeting 19 July 2022, considerations for the refresh of the Parking Strategy should include details on opportunities to "green" the strategy as well as reconsidering options for motorhome and caravan parking, in relation to the visitor economy. Further details in minutes of meeting.	<b>Longer-term action</b>	01/07/25	Sally Grindrod-Smith

# Agenda Item 6a



**Prosperous Communities  
Committee**

**Tuesday, 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

**Subject: Armed Forces Covenant Duty**

Report by:

Assistant Director Homes and Communities

Contact Officer:

Sarah Elvin  
Homes, Health and Wellbeing Team Manager

sarah.elvin@west-lindsey.gov.uk

Purpose / Summary:

Summary of current position in terms of the Armed Forces Covenant Duty and adopt the action plan to ensure the duty is fully upheld.

## **RECOMMENDATION(S):**

- 1. Prosperous Communities Committee recognise the current position with regards to the Armed Forces Covenant Duty.**
- 2. Prosperous Communities Committee adopt the action plan to ensure the covenant duty can be met by West Lindsey District Council.**
- 3. That the action plan is published to the Councils website and the areas of due regard updated when actions are completed.**

## IMPLICATIONS

### **Legal:**

The Armed Forces Act 2021 places a legal duty on specified public bodies to have due regard to the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant when exercising certain statutory functions in the fields of healthcare, education and housing. The Covenant Duty came into effect on 22 November 2022. Guidance on the duty can be found at appendix 1.

**(N.B.) Where there are legal implications the report MUST be seen by the MO**

### **Financial : FIN/155/23/SJB**

None, all of the covenant duty will be covered by existing resources

**(N.B.) All committee reports MUST have a Fin Ref**

### **Staffing :**

None, all of the covenant duty will be covered by existing resources

**(N.B.) Where there are staffing implications the report MUST have a HR Ref**

### **Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :**

The duty required is set out within legislation and is in place to ensure equality for this potentially differently impacted group.

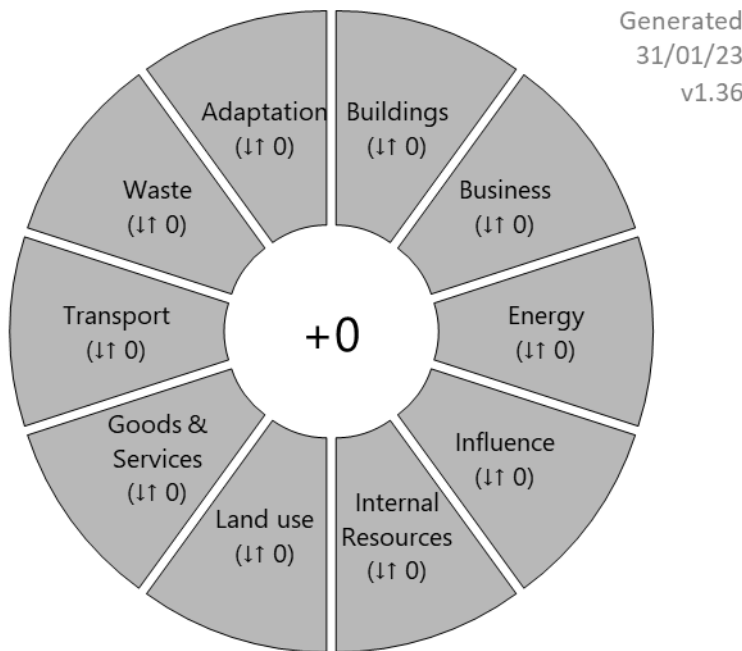
This duty sets out how through changing approaches to certain services, this cohort are not negatively impacted and makes recommendations to ensure that how services are delivered can be articulated specifically to his cohort.

As this is not a West Lindsey policy or strategy and clearly sets out through the duty how West Lindsey can ensure equality, an impact assessment is not required.

### **Data Protection Implications :**

None, no additional data will be hared as a result of this

**Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:**



West Lindsey District Council will be net zero by 2050 (26 years and 11 months away).

A climate Environment & Sustainability Impact Assessment has been carried out which has determined this action plan and new duty has no impact in the environment.

**Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations:**

None

**Health Implications:**

The Duty places a responsibility on West Lindsey to ensure that all services are accessible by service personnel, ex service personnel and their families. This will remove barriers where housing services are needed to ensure that assistance can be provided, improving health and wellbeing as a result of accessing services.

**Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report :**

Wherever possible please provide a hyperlink to the background paper/s  
If a document is confidential and not for public viewing it should not be listed.

**Risk Assessment :**

--

**Call in and Urgency:**

**Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?**

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

**Yes**

**No**

**x**

**Key Decision:**

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

**Yes**

**No**

**x**

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise by the nation that the Armed Forces Community should be treated fairly and face no disadvantage when accessing public and commercial services, with special provision made in appropriate cases for those who have sacrificed the most.
- 1.2 The Armed Forces Act 2021 places a legal duty on specified public bodies to have due regard to the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant when exercising certain statutory functions in the fields of healthcare, education and housing. The Covenant Duty came into effect on 22 November 2022. Guidance on the duty can be found at appendix 1.
- 1.3 The Duty is about informed decision-making, and means that West Lindsey should think about and place an appropriate amount of weight on the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant when considering all the factors relevant to how they carry out relevant functions.
- 1.4 The functions undertaken by West Lindsey that are referred to within the covenant duty are:
  - Allocations policy for social housing
  - Tenancy strategies (England only)
  - Homelessness
  - Disabled Facilities Grants

## **2. Armed Forces Community**

- 2.1 The Duty applies to the following members of the Armed Forces Community:
  - Members of the regular forces and the reserve forces
  - Members of British overseas territory forces who are subject to Service law
  - Former members of any of Her Majesty's forces who are ordinarily resident in the UK
  - Relevant family members of those in above 3 categories

## **3. Housing**

- 3.1 Only a small minority of the Armed Forces Community will need to access the housing services provided by West Lindsey. When members of the Armed Forces Community do need to access housing services, there are disadvantages they can experience, arising from the unique obligations and sacrifices of Service life.
- 3.2 When these disadvantages are experienced, they are most likely to be experienced by veterans, Service personnel that are about to leave Service and become veterans, and Service families.
- 3.3 These disadvantages are as follows:
  - 3.3.1 A lack of knowledge about the social housing services available in their local area, or how to access them. This might make them less likely to seek the housing services to which they are entitled.

- 3.3.2 Not building up sufficient 'local connection' in accordance with a local authority's allocation scheme, reducing their access to social housing in the area where they live.
- 3.3.3 Not being prioritised to receive suitable social housing, or experience a lack of available social housing, that meets particular housing needs caused by physical or mental injury sustained in Service.
- 3.3.4 Finding it more difficult to communicate with a housing body, while on a posting overseas, compared to the housing body's non-Service clients, who are in the UK.
- 3.3.5 A lack of knowledge about how to navigate the civilian housing sector, welfare system and budgeting, leading to difficulty gaining or maintaining a social housing tenancy or increasing their likelihood of becoming homeless.
- 3.3.6 A reluctance to seek early help to avoid homelessness, for reasons such as stigma, shame, or a belief that civilian bodies will not understand their experience, which could also increase their likelihood of becoming homeless.
- 3.3.7 Requiring adaptations to be made to their home when they move to a new area, or lacking knowledge of what grants are available, how to make applications for them, and what information is required to support their application. This could result in them spending more time in a home that does not meet their needs.

#### **4. West Lindsey position**

- 4.1 A position and actions document has been devised which can be found at appendix 3.
- 4.2 This document sets out the functions that West Lindsey currently carry out that are covered by the Armed Forces Covenant Duty, the policies and strategies which cover those functions, how those functions already have due regard to the covenant duty and then goes on to suggest future actions that can either cover off the requirements of the duty or improve the already in place requirements.
- 4.3 This document will be a working document, published on the West Lindsey website alongside a separate area dedicated to the Armed Forces Duty Covenant.
- 4.4 It is important that this document remains a live document so that once actions are completed they can be moved into the areas of due regard already given. But also, that should any of the policies and strategies detailed be amended, how those policies give due regard to the covenant duty can be updated.

#### **5. Recommendations**

- 1. Prosperous Communities Committee recognise the current position with regards to the Armed Forces Covenant Duty.**
- 2. Prosperous Communities Committee adopt the action plan to ensure the covenant duty can be met by West Lindsey District Council.**
- 3. That the action plan is published to the Councils website and the areas of due regard updated when actions are completed.**





Ministry  
of Defence



# Statutory Guidance on the Armed Forces Covenant Duty

Covering the United Kingdom

Issued under section 343AE(1) of the Armed Forces Act 2006

November 2022

**GUIDANCE**

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This Guidance has been produced by the UK Government, in consultation with the Devolved Administrations of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, local authorities across the United Kingdom, schools, colleges, the NHS, NHS Trusts and health boards, agencies and commissioning groups, Service charities and Families' Federations, subject matter experts, and members of the Armed Forces Community.

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# About

## Context for this Guidance

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0.1. The Armed Forces Act 2021 amended the Armed Forces Act 2006 ('the Act') by inserting sections 343AA to 343AF. These place a legal duty (the 'Covenant Duty') on specified public persons and bodies ('specified bodies'), to have due regard to the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant when exercising certain statutory functions in the fields of healthcare, education and housing ('relevant functions'). The specified bodies and relevant functions are listed in sections 343AA to 343AD of the Act. The Covenant Duty came into effect on 22 November 2022.

0.2. This Guidance is issued under section 343AE of the Act, which states that the specified bodies must have regard to this Guidance when exercising a relevant function.

## Purpose of this Guidance

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0.3. The purpose of this Guidance is to assist the specified bodies comply with their legal obligations, by providing information about the Duty and those people within the Armed Forces Community who are beneficiaries of the Duty. It highlights the issues these people can face as a result of Service life, and illustrates good practice in the areas of healthcare, education and housing. If specified bodies have any questions about this Guidance or the Duty, they should seek legal advice and/or contact the Ministry of Defence's Armed Forces Covenant Team (see [Appendix 3](#) for contact details).

0.4. This Guidance is specifically about the statutory Covenant Duty. Information about the wider Covenant is available from the sources listed in [Appendix 3](#).

## Intended audience

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0.5. The primary audience for this Guidance is the specified bodies across the UK that are subject to the Duty. This Guidance will be of interest to staff throughout these bodies, but particularly those involved in policymaking, business planning, procurement, delivery, and governance. This Guidance is also aimed at other organisations delivering any of the relevant functions on behalf of the specified bodies. This Guidance will also be of interest to members of the Armed Forces Community, and other organisations that work with them, such as charities.

## Contents of this Guidance

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0.6. [Chapter 1](#) provides an overview of the Covenant Duty, including what it is and to whom and when it applies. It describes in detail some of the unique obligations and sacrifices of Service life, and introduces the concepts of disadvantage and special

provision. The remaining chapters describe in detail some of the disadvantages that can be experienced by members of the Armed Forces Community in the areas of healthcare ([chapter 2](#)), education ([chapter 3](#)), and housing ([chapter 4](#)). Case studies are provided throughout to illustrate ways that the Armed Forces Covenant principles may be considered and applied.

0.7. The appendices provide a list of the specified bodies that are subject to the Duty and the relevant functions to which the Duty applies ([Appendix 1](#)), information about how to become more aware of Armed Forces issues ([Appendices 2 and 3](#)), and information about how to resolve disputes ([Appendix 4](#)).

## Publication information

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0.8. This is the only Statutory Guidance on the Covenant Duty to be published by His Majesty's Government. Further advice and support on the Armed Forces Covenant and the Covenant Duty is available from the Armed Forces Covenant Team in the Ministry of Defence.

0.9. This Guidance is also available in Welsh. If there is a need for this Guidance to be provided in an alternative format and/or language, please contact the Armed Forces Covenant Team to discuss the requirement. This is the first edition of this Guidance, published in November 2022. This document remains subject to future updates. Any suggestions for content in future versions can be sent to the Armed Forces Covenant Team.

# Foreword by the Secretary of State for Defence

Service in the Armed Forces can be profoundly rewarding for those who sign up. It can offer a life of challenge and adventure; an opportunity to gain new skills and develop a resilient approach to life; and the chance to travel the world, while protecting and serving one's country.

But it is not an easy career. Members of the Armed Forces fulfil many obligations and make many sacrifices in order to do their duty and keep us all safe. The stresses and pressures of the job can be immense, and their impact can stay with a person long after they have left the Armed Forces and returned to civilian life.

Because of this, members of the Armed Forces, and their families, rarely lead what might be called 'normal' lives. This means they will often have different experiences when accessing and using day-to-day public and private services in the UK, compared to the general population. Whether it is through unfamiliarity with civilian life, or frequent moves around the country and the subsequent difficulties in maintaining support networks, for example, members of the Armed Forces can find accessing such goods and services challenging.

That is why we have the Armed Forces Covenant. The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise by the nation that those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, along with their families, should be treated fairly. It is a promise that they should not be disadvantaged because of their service. And it is a recognition of the sacrifices they make on our behalf and the responsibilities we owe them in return.

We are grateful to the thousands of organisations across the UK that have demonstrated their support to the Armed Forces and their families, by pledging to honour the Covenant, by removing disadvantages our Armed Forces Community would otherwise face as a result of their service, and, in some cases, by creating bespoke services to recognise the sacrifices of those who have given the most.

But there is further to go. Members of the Armed Forces Community continue to face disadvantage due to service life. That is why we set out our manifesto commitment to further strengthen the Covenant in law. We have created a new legal obligation on certain local public organisations, to require them to pay due regard to the Covenant and its principles, focussing on the key areas of healthcare, education and housing, which provide the basis of successful lives. I am confident this will raise awareness of the Covenant, improve understanding of the experiences of the Armed Forces and their families, and lead to better outcomes for our people. Placing the Covenant in statute in this way also ensures it lasts into the future and becomes an enduring part of British life.

This Statutory Guidance is a key tool in helping these public organisations understand the legal obligations placed upon them, the issues facing our Armed Forces and their families, and showcases many examples of good practice, demonstrating what successful Covenant delivery looks like. I would encourage you to provide my department with further examples of good practice in your area, to help further the successful delivery of the Covenant.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ben Wallace". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

The Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP  
– Secretary of State for Defence

November 2022



# Executive Summary

## The Armed Forces Covenant

0.10. The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise by the nation that the Armed Forces Community should be treated fairly and face no disadvantage when accessing public and commercial services, with special provision made in appropriate cases for those who have sacrificed the most. The Covenant was established in its current form in 2011 and since then, thousands of different organisations – including businesses, local authorities, universities, and charities – have chosen to sign a pledge to honour the Covenant and support their Armed Forces Community. As a result of this, there have been many examples around the UK of good practice to remove, mitigate, or prevent incidents of disadvantage from occurring.

## The Armed Forces Covenant Duty

0.11. Building on this good progress, the Armed Forces Act 2021 amended the Armed Forces Act 2006 to create the following legal obligation on specified bodies in all four home nations of the UK. This is the Armed Forces Covenant Duty.

When a specified body exercises a relevant function, it must have due regard to: (a) the unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the Armed Forces; (b) the principle that it is desirable to remove disadvantages arising for Service people from membership, or former membership, of the Armed Forces, and (c) the principle that special provision for Service people may be justified by the effects on such people of membership, or former membership, of the Armed Forces.

This legal obligation applies to specified bodies whether or not they have signed the Covenant pledge. It is explained further below.

## Specified bodies subject to the Covenant Duty

0.12. The specified bodies that are subject to the Covenant Duty are the bodies listed in sections 343AA(3), 343AB(3), 343AC(3) and 343AD(3) of the Act. They are bodies responsible for providing local services in the areas of healthcare, education and housing, such as local authorities, governing bodies of schools, and NHS bodies. (See [section 1C](#))

## Relevant functions in scope of the Covenant Duty

0.13. The relevant functions in scope of the Duty are functions under or by virtue of the legislative provisions listed in sections 343AA(4)-(6), 343AB(4)-(6), 343AC(4)-(6) and 343AD(4)-(6) of the Act, summarised in sub-paragraphs (a) – (c) below. (See [section 1D](#))

- a. In the settings of NHS Primary Care, NHS Secondary Care, and local authority-delivered healthcare services, the following functions: provision of services; planning and funding; and co-operation between bodies and professionals.
- b. In compulsory education settings, the following functions: admissions; educational attainment and curriculum; child wellbeing; transport; attendance; additional needs support; and, for England only, use of Service Pupil Premium funding.
- c. The following housing functions: allocations policy for social housing; tenancy strategies (England only); homelessness; and disabled facilities grants.

## Due regard

0.14. The Duty is about informed decision-making, and means that specified bodies should think about and place an appropriate amount of weight on the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant when they consider all the factors relevant to how they carry out relevant functions. It is not prescriptive about the actions specified bodies should take in order to comply with their legal obligations, and it does not mandate specific public service delivery outcomes. Bodies might wish to draw on their experience and practice in complying with similar due regard duties. (See [section 1F](#))

## Unique obligations and sacrifices

0.15. These include: danger; geographical mobility; separation; Service law and rights; unfamiliarity with civilian life; hours of work; and stress. (See [section 1G](#))

## Removing disadvantages

0.16. A disadvantage is when the level of access a member of the Armed Forces Community has to goods and services, or the support they receive, is comparatively lower than that of someone in a similar position who is not a member of the Armed Forces Community, and this difference arises from one (or more) of the unique obligations and sacrifices of Service life. (See [section 1H](#))

0.17. In healthcare, veterans and Service families might experience more challenges in accessing healthcare, or more delays in receiving treatment, compared to non-Service patients. (See [chapter 2](#))

0.18. In education, Service children might experience an interrupted education, a disrupted social experience, reduced mental wellbeing, a longer journey to school, or not being able to take holidays during normal school holiday periods. Service children with additional needs might suffer delays relating to assessments and plans. (See [chapter 3](#))

0.19. In housing, veterans, Service personnel leaving Service, and Service families might lack knowledge about housing services, not have built up sufficient 'local connection', not be prioritised to receive social housing, experience a lack of available social housing, find it more difficult to communicate with housing bodies, be reluctant to seek early help, or require adaptations to be made to their home when they re-locate. (See [chapter 4](#))

## Special provision

0.20. Special provision is the taking of actions that go beyond the support provided to reduce or remove disadvantage. Special provision may be justified by the effects of the unique obligations and sacrifices of Service life, especially for those that have sacrificed the most, such as the bereaved and the injured (whether that injury is physical or mental). (See [section 1I](#))

## Service people

0.21. The people who benefit from the Duty are defined collectively as 'Service people' in section 343B(1) of the Act, comprising: currently serving members of the UK regular and reserve forces; currently serving members of British Overseas Territories' Armed Forces who are subject to UK Service law; former members of the UK regular and reserve forces and British Overseas Territory Forces, who are ordinarily resident in the UK ('veterans'); and the 'relevant family members' of people in these groups. (See [section 1J](#))

# 1. The Armed Forces Covenant Duty

## 1A. What is the Armed Forces Covenant?

---

1.1. The [Armed Forces Covenant](#) is a promise by the nation, founded on the unique obligations and sacrifices of those who serve, or have served, in the Armed Forces, that they and their families should be treated fairly. This was designed to ensure that the sacrifices made by the Armed Forces Community in the national interest should not come at significant cost when accessing goods and services in the UK.

1.2. The Covenant has existed in its current form since 2011, and each year since then, the UK Government has been statutorily required to present to Parliament a Covenant Annual Report, covering all four home nations of the UK. Thousands of organisations from the public, private and charity sectors have committed their support to the Armed Forces Community by signing a pledge to honour the Covenant,<sup>1</sup> or making other commitments. National and local governments have collaborated with these bodies to improve the lives of members of the Armed Forces Community. This has been done by improving access to existing goods and services, and, in some cases, by creating new bespoke services or pathways as part of special provision. A [collection of resources](#) has been published to help local bodies deliver the Covenant in their area. These cover a range of policy areas, including healthcare, education, housing, and areas that are outside the scope of the Covenant Duty, including employment, remembrance and recognition, for example.

1.3. The Government recognises the valuable contributions of organisations across the UK in support of the Armed Forces Covenant – and service provision to the Armed Forces Community has significantly improved as a result. However, in certain areas of public service provision, delivery of the Covenant remains inconsistent, and some members of the Armed Forces Community can still find themselves disadvantaged as a result. From cases brought to the attention of the Ministry of Defence, Service charities, and ombudsmen, it appears a lack of awareness of issues affecting the Armed Forces Community can be a major factor in some incidents of disadvantage. This led to the creation of the Armed Forces Covenant Duty in 2021. This was achieved by using the Armed Forces Act 2021 to insert the Duty into the Armed Forces Act 2006. Therefore, references throughout this Guidance to the legislation underpinning the Duty are references to the Armed Forces Act 2006 ('the Act').

---

<sup>1</sup> [Who has signed the covenant?](#)

## 1B. What is the Armed Forces Covenant Duty?

---

1.4. The Armed Forces Covenant Duty is the following legal obligation. When a specified body exercises a relevant function, it must have due regard to:<sup>2</sup>

- a. *the unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the armed forces;*
- b. *the principle that it is desirable to remove disadvantages arising for Service people from membership, or former membership, of the armed forces; and,*
- c. *the principle that special provision for Service people may be justified by the effects on such people of membership, or former membership, of the armed forces.*

1.5. Sub-paragraphs (a) to (c) are a summary of the Armed Forces Covenant. The Duty builds on – but is distinct from – the pre-existing voluntary Covenant pledge. **This legal obligation applies to all specified bodies, when exercising relevant functions, whether or not that body has signed the Covenant pledge.**

1.6. The Covenant Duty is designed to raise awareness of the principles of the Covenant, the reasons for it, and in turn improve decision-making in respect of the Armed Forces Community. It requires that decisions about the development and delivery of specific services are made with conscious thought to the needs of those members of the Armed Forces Community within scope.

1.7. The Covenant Duty applies across the whole of the UK. However, specified bodies within the different home nations of the UK are subject to different legal frameworks and administrative procedures underpinning the relevant functions in scope of the Duty. The Duty works in accordance with the legal system where the body operates. This is reflected in the list of bodies and functions in scope in each home nation of the UK, set out later in chapter 1, at [sections 1C](#) and [1D](#). The Secretary of State's power to add to these bodies and functions is described in [section 1E](#).

1.8. This is followed by explanations of the key terms in the Duty: 'due regard' in [section 1F](#); 'unique obligations and sacrifices' in [section 1G](#); 'removing disadvantages' in [section 1H](#); 'special provision' in [section 1I](#); and 'Service people' in [section 1J](#). [Section 1K](#) describes what is not in scope of the Duty.

## 1C. Specified Bodies subject to the Covenant Duty

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1.9. The specified bodies subject to the Covenant Duty are listed in the Act<sup>3</sup> and [Appendix 1](#) of this Guidance, and summarised in Table 1 below. Many of the illustrative case studies in chapters 2-4 involved collaborative working between different bodies.

<sup>2</sup> The Armed Forces Act 2021 inserted the due regard Duty into the Armed Forces Act 2006 section 343AA(1) in relation to England, section 343AB(1) in relation to Wales, section 343AC(1) in relation to Scotland, and section 343AD(1) in relation to Northern Ireland.

<sup>3</sup> The Armed Forces Act 2021 inserted these bodies into the Armed Forces Act 2006 section 343AA(3) in relation to England, section 343AB(3) in relation to Wales, section 343AC(3) in relation to Scotland, and section 343AD(3) in relation to Northern Ireland.

1.10. The private and third sectors are not in scope (though some bodies in scope, such as academies, might have charitable status). However, when relevant functions have been contracted out to private companies or third sector organisations, the specified public body responsible for that function needs to ensure that any third parties exercising functions on their behalf are required to comply with the Covenant Duty and do so in practice. Therefore, the responsible public body might wish to reflect the Duty in the contracts it has with contractors exercising relevant functions on its behalf. This Guidance will therefore be of interest to some private and third sector bodies, particularly if they deliver any of the relevant functions on behalf of a public body.

England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local authorities</li> <li>• Governing bodies of maintained schools and further education institutions</li> <li>• Proprietors of Academies</li> <li>• Non-maintained special schools and special post-16 institutions</li> <li>• NHS England, integrated care boards, NHS Trusts and NHS Foundation Trusts</li> </ul>
Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local authorities</li> <li>• Governing bodies of maintained schools</li> <li>• Local Health Boards, Special Health Authorities, and NHS Trusts</li> </ul>
Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local authorities and local authority landlords</li> <li>• Integration authorities, Health Boards, Special Health Boards, and the Common Services Agency for the Scottish Health Service</li> <li>• Persons or bodies whose help is requested under section 23 of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004</li> </ul>
Northern Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Northern Ireland Housing Executive</li> <li>• The Education Authority and the Board of Governors of a grant-aided school</li> <li>• The Department of Health (Northern Ireland), but only when exercising the relevant healthcare functions in scope of the Duty that were exercised by the former Regional Health and Social Care Board prior to its dissolution<sup>4</sup></li> <li>• Local Commissioning Groups, and Health and Social Care Trusts</li> </ul>

Table 1. Summary of Specified Bodies subject to the Covenant Duty

<sup>4</sup> The Act makes reference to Northern Ireland's Regional Health and Social Care Board in the list of bodies specified in section 343AD(3) who are subject to the Duty. This Board was dissolved by the Health and Social Care Act (Northern Ireland) 2022, with effect from 1 April 2022, with its functions transferring to the Department of Health (Northern Ireland). Under the 2022 Act's transitional provisions, the Duty will continue to apply to the relevant functions formerly exercised by the Board as now exercised by the Department for Health (Northern Ireland).

## 1D. Relevant Functions in Scope of the Covenant Duty

1.11. The relevant functions in scope of the Covenant Duty are functions under or by virtue of the legislative provisions listed in the Act<sup>5</sup> and [Appendix 1](#) of this Guidance. They are summarised in Table 2 below. The Duty must be complied with when a specified body makes a decision relating to the matters in Table 2, such as when it develops, implements and/or reviews a relevant policy, or makes decisions on its delivery of relevant services.

1.12. Relevant functions in scope of the Duty are the listed functions within the fields of healthcare, education, and housing services. These are key areas where disadvantages to members of the Armed Forces Community have commonly arisen. The focus of the legislation is on local – and, as appropriate, regional – provision of these services.

Healthcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of services</li> <li>• Planning and funding</li> <li>• Co-operation between bodies and professionals</li> </ul> <p>These healthcare functions are within scope of the Duty in the following settings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NHS Primary Care services, including general practice, community pharmacies, NHS dental, NHS optometry services and public health screening services.</li> <li>• NHS Secondary Care services, including urgent and emergency care, hospital and community services, specialist care, mental health services, and additional needs services (as applicable).</li> <li>• Local authority-delivered healthcare services, including sexual health services and drug and alcohol misuse services.</li> </ul>
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Admissions</li> <li>• Educational attainment and curriculum</li> <li>• Child wellbeing</li> <li>• Transport</li> <li>• Attendance</li> <li>• Additional needs support</li> <li>• Use of Service Pupil Premium funding (England only)</li> </ul> <p>These education functions are within scope of the Duty in compulsory education settings, that is, primary, secondary, and, for England only, compulsory further education. The Duty does not cover nursery (early years education), higher education, or other voluntary adult education settings.</p>
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allocations policy for social housing</li> <li>• Tenancy strategies (England only)</li> <li>• Homelessness</li> <li>• Disabled Facilities Grants</li> </ul>

Table 2. Summary of Relevant Functions in Scope of the Covenant Duty

<sup>5</sup> The Armed Forces Act 2021 inserted these legislative provisions into the Armed Forces Act 2006 section 343AA(4-6) in relation to England, section 343AB(4-6) in relation to Wales, section 343AC(4-6) in relation to Scotland, and section 343AD(4-6) in relation to Northern Ireland.

## 1E. Reviewing the Operation of the Duty and Extending its Scope

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1.13. The Act gives the Secretary of State the power to extend, by regulations, the scope of the Duty to include additional bodies and functions.<sup>6</sup> This is so that the Duty can be adapted to meet the changing needs of the Armed Forces Community. The Secretary of State is required to consult the Devolved Administrations and other appropriate stakeholders before making regulations under this power.<sup>7</sup> The Ministry of Defence will keep the operation of the Duty under review and continue to work closely with its Covenant stakeholders.

## 1F. Due Regard

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1.14. The Act does not state what a body must do in order to have due regard. How a body meets the Covenant Duty, and how the Duty is reflected in relevant policies or procedures, are therefore matters for the body in question. It is about informed decision-making, and means that specified bodies should think about and place an appropriate amount of weight on the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant when they consider all the factors relevant to how they carry out relevant functions. Therefore, specified bodies should ensure that mechanisms are in place that prompt decision-makers to assess how their decision might impact on service users from the Armed Forces Community in scope of the Duty. Bodies might wish to draw on their experience and practice in complying with other similar due regard duties.

1.15. Keeping written records of how key policies and decisions have been made, and documenting the factors that were taken into account in each decision, will help bodies demonstrate that they have had due regard to the principles of the Covenant, if challenged.

## 1G. Unique Obligations and Sacrifices

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*Due regard to the unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the armed forces.*

1.16. Being part of the Armed Forces offers both challenge and adventure, providing those who serve with much in terms of skills and experience, as well as the opportunity to protect and serve their country. The majority of people leaving the Armed Forces do so empowered with skills, a strong team work ethic, and a resilient approach to life. However, to effectively meet the demands upon them, the Armed Forces Community faces unique obligations and sacrifices. Some of these are described below.

1.17. Members of the Armed Forces Community experience these obligations and sacrifices to different degrees and at different times throughout, and in some cases after, their Service career, as personal circumstances vary.

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<sup>6</sup> The Armed Forces Act 2021 inserted this power into the Armed Forces Act 2006 at section 343AF(1).

<sup>7</sup> The Armed Forces Act 2021 inserted this requirement into the Armed Forces Act 2006 at section 343AF(7).

## 1G1. Danger

1.18. Serving members of the Armed Forces can be exposed to a wide range of threats of violence, and exposure to environments that are physically unsafe for natural, manmade or political reasons, with a danger of death, or short or long-term injury to physical and/or mental health. While some injuries might be temporary, others can be career-ending or life-altering. The Service person's family can also suffer significantly in these circumstances.

## 1G2. Geographical Mobility

1.19. Serving members of the Armed Forces need to be highly geographically mobile and ready to move, depending on the Service need. Sometimes this is in response to a live military operation. Many other moves are routine, regular re-locations around the country and across the globe to ensure the effective running of the Armed Forces. In this case, family members often move with the Service person. The Service person and their family might see their lives uprooted, and a reduction in the availability of support structures, as they move away from wider family and friends. It is likely that the Service person lacks choice on timing and location, and sometimes the move is at short notice. This requirement to re-locate is likely to happen multiple times during a Service career, and the frequency of moves is often higher for Army personnel than for others.

## 1G3. Separation

1.20. Serving members of the Armed Forces might be required to spend significant periods of time away from their family, for weeks or months at a time, for example, if deployed overseas on operations. Operational requirements might mean some Service personnel (especially Naval personnel, such as submariners) cannot contact their families for months at a time, making the separation particularly tough. Or, if the Service person is required to move within the UK or is posted overseas, the family might decide to stay at home. While this helps the family to build roots and local support networks – mitigating some challenges – it also means that families can be separated long-term, or during the working week, from the Service person. The Naval Families Federation has published [more information](#) about the impact of parental absence.

## 1G4. Service Law and Rights

1.21. Members of the Armed Forces are normally expected to carry out a minimum term of Service. Furthermore, operational readiness requires personnel to achieve a high state of discipline and organisation. As such, Service personnel become subject to an additional system of law (Service law). This is fundamental to ensuring the effective operation of the Armed Forces. However, it requires personal sacrifices to be made. For example, personnel cannot simply opt out from a move that inconveniences them. As they are bound to serve certain engagement lengths, they must obtain permission to discharge early, rather than have the right to give notice. Members of the Armed Forces are also not permitted to be politically active or go on strike. These are rights available to most of the wider public, but not to serving members of the Armed Forces.



## 1G5. Unfamiliarity with Civilian Life

1.22. Due to the requirements of Service, the Armed Forces provides Service personnel with many essential services, including accommodation, healthcare, training, sports, clothing, and transport. There is also a separate Service Justice System. Therefore, having spent so much of their time in the Armed Forces environment, Service personnel – and their families who have been accompanying them – might lack knowledge or experience of civilian life. They might not know what services are available to them, or how to gain access to them, or they might have a general sense of disconnection from civilian society.

## 1G6. Hours of Work

1.23. Armed Forces Regular personnel and mobilised Reserves do not receive the full benefits of working hours legislation. They are required to be available for duty 24 hours a day and 365 days a year. They might be required to work unsociable or long hours. Further, they might not be able to take all their leave entitlement, or their booked leave might be cancelled at short notice.

## 1G7. Stress

1.24. Members of the Armed Forces Community might experience stress as a result of the other obligations and sacrifices of Service life. For Service personnel this might be exacerbated by the pressures of the work itself, including having to conduct operations in a range of unfamiliar, dangerous or distressing environments, and the importance of the work of protecting their country. Deployment abroad can be tough on family members, who might experience feelings such as loneliness or worry about the safety of loved ones deployed abroad. The Service partner might have the burden of acting as a single parent while the Service person is deployed. Families might also find themselves suddenly needing to take on additional caring responsibilities in the event of injury or bereavement. Members of the Armed Forces Community might suffer in silence and try to cope with issues alone, due to a perceived stigma of speaking up, or a belief that people outside the Armed Forces will not understand their experiences.

## 1H. Removing Disadvantages

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*Due regard to the principle that it is desirable to remove disadvantages arising for Service people from membership, or former membership, of the armed forces.*

1.25. A disadvantage is when the level of access a member of the Armed Forces Community has to goods and services, or the support they receive, is comparatively lower than that of someone in a similar position who is not a member of the Armed Forces Community, and this difference arises from one (or more) of the unique obligations and sacrifices of Service life.<sup>8</sup>

1.26. This principle is that it is desirable to remove all such disadvantages arising for all members of the Armed Forces Community within scope of the Duty (defined in [section 1J](#)).

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<sup>8</sup> Note that disadvantages do not have to be uniquely experienced by the Armed Forces to be within scope. For example, non-Service children also sometimes move school during the school year.

However, it should not be assumed that everyone associated with the Armed Forces Community experiences disadvantages because of Service life. [Research](#) commissioned by the Forces in Mind Trust and the Local Government Association included a survey of the Armed Forces Community that found that 38% of respondents felt they had been disadvantaged at least once as a result of Service life, indicating that many had not been. Some members of the Armed Forces Community are more likely to experience disadvantage than others. For example, currently serving personnel and their families, due to their greater geographical mobility, may be more likely to experience related disadvantages than veterans who may be more settled in their communities.

1.27. The following chapters describe some of the ways that disadvantage can be experienced by the Armed Forces Community in the areas of healthcare ([chapter 2](#)), education ([chapter 3](#)), and housing ([chapter 4](#)). The unique obligations and sacrifices of Service life from which each disadvantage can arise are identified. Since 2011, when the Covenant was established in its current form, there have been many examples of best practice to remove, mitigate, or prevent incidents of disadvantage from arising. Some of these case studies are described in the healthcare, education, and housing chapters. These case studies do not prescribe mandatory actions, but they have been included to provide examples and ideas of the kinds of behaviours and actions that have resulted in a better experience for the Armed Forces Community.

## 11. Special Provision

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*Due regard to the principle that special provision for Service people may be justified by the effects on such people of membership, or former membership, of the armed forces.*

1.28. Special provision is the taking of actions that go beyond the support provided to reduce or remove disadvantage. These are actions that result in the provision of something bespoke, or something not normally available to the general public and the Armed Forces Community.

1.29. Special provision may be justified in some cases by the effects of the unique obligations and sacrifices of Service life, especially for those that have sacrificed the most, such as the bereaved and the injured (whether that injury is physical or mental). This contrasts with the previous principle aimed at removing disadvantages, which is for the benefit of the Armed Forces Community as a whole. This is because the Armed Forces Covenant is not about giving members of the Armed Forces Community advantageous treatment as a matter of course (see [section 1K](#)).

1.30. There are different ways that special provision could be given, when appropriate, including the following.

- a. Implementing a bespoke solution to mitigate an identified disadvantage, for the benefit of a group or individual that has sacrificed the most, where the solution goes above and beyond what is provided for the general public and most members of the Armed Forces Community.
- b. Offering something additional to a group or individual in the Armed Forces Community that has sacrificed the most, not to directly mitigate an identified disadvantage, but more as a general recognition of particularly sacrificial Service to

the country. An example of this is the Integrated Personal Commissioning for Veterans Framework, described in [section 2C7](#).

- c. Establishing different policies or procedures, for the benefit of a group or individual in the Armed Forces Community that has sacrificed the most. An example of this is the priority treatment commitment described in [section 2C1](#).

## 1J. The Armed Forces Community

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1.31. The Duty applies to the following members of the Armed Forces Community, collectively defined in the Act as ‘Service people’:<sup>9</sup>

- a. members of the regular forces and the reserve forces;
- b. members of British overseas territory forces who are subject to Service law;
- c. former members of any of Her Majesty’s forces who are ordinarily resident in the UK; and,
- d. relevant family members [of those in (a) to (c) above].

1.32. These are therefore the groups of people that must be considered when complying with the Duty. These four groups are described below. The term ‘Armed Forces Community’ is used more commonly than ‘Service people’ in the context of the Covenant. Therefore, this Guidance uses the term ‘Armed Forces Community’, or just ‘the Community’, to mean the same four groups of people. Note that the functions carried out by specified bodies could have the potential to affect the whole of this Community, or groups or individual members within it.

### 1J1. Members of the regular forces and the reserve forces

1.33. Under the Act, the ‘regular forces’ are the Royal Navy, the Royal Marines, the regular Army and the Royal Air Force. This group therefore includes all currently serving members of these forces. Citizens of some other countries can join these forces, and they are included in this group.

1.34. This group also includes all currently serving members of one of the volunteer reserve forces (the Royal Naval Reserve, the Royal Marines Reserve, the Army Reserve and the Royal Auxiliary Air Force) or the ex-regular reserve forces (the Royal Fleet Reserve, the Regular Reserve and the Royal Air Force Reserve). The volunteer reserve forces are mainly made up of individuals who have civilian jobs and volunteer to serve as a reservist, which involves training in the evening and on weekends and annual training camps. The ex-regular reserve forces are made up of former members of the regular forces who have civilian jobs but are required to be a member of a reserve force for a set period and may have to undertake training to maintain or augment their skills. Reservists are liable to be compulsorily mobilised for set periods of full-time service, during which time they can be deployed in the same way as regulars; in practice reservists are mostly selected for mobilisation only if they agree to this in advance. Reservists do active service on operations alongside regulars, normally when they are serving under particular types of commitment or have been mobilised.

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<sup>9</sup> These four groups are collectively defined as ‘Service people’ in section 343B(1) of the Armed Forces Act 2006 for the purposes of Part 16A of that Act (Armed Forces Covenant).

1.35. This Guidance uses the terms ‘UK Armed Forces’, ‘Service person’ or ‘Service personnel’ for people in this group. Note therefore that the term ‘Service personnel’ has a different meaning to the term ‘Service people’. People in this group are in scope of the Duty wherever they are located – in the UK or abroad. This contrasts with veterans who are within scope of the Duty only if they are ordinarily resident in the UK (see [section 1J3](#)).

### 1J2. Members of British Overseas Territory Forces who are subject to Service law

1.36. A ‘British Overseas Territory Force’ is ‘any of Her Majesty’s forces that is raised under the law of a British Overseas Territory’.<sup>10</sup> This group therefore comprises the **currently serving members of the British Overseas Territories’ Armed Forces**. For example, a member of the Royal Bermuda Regiment or the Royal Montserrat Defence Force. People in this group are not members of the UK Armed Forces. They are also not to be confused with British Forces Overseas, who are members of the UK Armed Forces that have been posted to other countries.

1.37. People in this group are in scope of the Duty when they are **subject to UK Service law**. This is while they are ‘undertaking any duty with or training with a [UK] regular or reserve force’.<sup>11</sup> There are times when a member of a British Overseas Territory Force is deployed to the UK for a period, for example, to deliver training to UK Armed Forces. They might also be accompanied by their family members depending on the duration of the posting. The UK Armed Forces take care of British Overseas Territory personnel in the UK.

1.38. While it might be rare for specified bodies in the UK to encounter these personnel, specified bodies should regard the British Overseas Territory Forces who are subject to Service law as part of the Armed Forces Community in terms of the Covenant Duty.

### 1J3. Former members of any of Her Majesty’s forces who are ordinarily resident in the UK

1.39. Under the Act, ‘Her Majesty’s forces’ means the UK regular and reserve forces and the British Overseas Territories’ Armed Forces. Therefore, included in this group are: **former members of the UK regular and reserve forces**, that is, former members of the forces listed in [section 1J1](#), noting this includes those who served in the UK Armed Forces as part of Wartime Conscription and National Service; and **former members of British Overseas Territories’ Armed Forces**. A former member of any of these forces is anyone who has served for at least one day. The term ‘Her Majesty’s forces’, as it is used in the Act, does not include the Armed Forces of other Commonwealth countries or wider groups such as the Merchant Navy. Therefore, former members of these other groups are not within scope of the Duty. (Though some could still be considered under the broader Covenant, see [section 1J5](#).)

1.40. People in this group are in scope of the Duty if they are **ordinarily resident in the UK**. The Act does not provide any further definition of ‘ordinarily resident in the UK’.

1.41. These individuals are also known as ‘veterans’ or ‘ex-Service personnel’, and this Guidance uses the term ‘veterans’ for this group. A [2017 study](#) estimated that there are 2.4

<sup>10</sup> Section 343B(4) of the Armed Forces Act 2006

<sup>11</sup> Section 369 of the Armed Forces Act 2006

million veterans in Great Britain, making up an estimated 5% of household residents aged 16+,<sup>12</sup> and that veterans are estimated to be predominantly male (89%) and/or aged 65+ (60%), though both of these characteristics are changing as the veteran population becomes younger and more diverse.

1.42. There are several reasons why someone might leave the Armed Forces, such as expiration of contract, resignation, medical and compassionate reasons, and misconduct. No matter the reason for discharge, all such veterans benefit from the Covenant Duty.

#### 1J4. Relevant family members

1.43. The definition of ‘relevant family members’ for the purposes of the Duty is set out in the Armed Forces (Covenant) Regulations 2022.<sup>13</sup> Note that elsewhere in this Guidance, the term ‘Service families’ is used for ease of reference, therefore, references to Service families are references to ‘relevant family members’.

1.44. Service life primarily impacts on family members as a result of their cohabitation with, or dependency on, a member or former member of the Armed Forces. It is this connection that is therefore the basis of the definition. Functions carried out by specified bodies can affect different groups in different ways. Some functions may have the potential to affect some categories of family members more than others or not at all.

1.45. The following people are prescribed in the Regulations as relevant family members. They are family members of the people in the three other groups in scope of the Duty, and the term ‘Service members’ is used to mean all the people in these three other groups.<sup>14</sup> That is, **‘Service members’ are the current members (serving personnel) described in [section 1J1](#) and [section 1J2](#), and the former members (veterans) described in [section 1J3](#)**. References below to Service members includes references to former Service members.

- a. **Partners:** This comprises the current and former spouses and civil partners of Service members, and any person whose relationship with a Service member is or was formerly ‘akin to a relationship between spouses or civil partners’, such as a cohabiting couple in a committed relationship. It should be remembered that Service members might be required to live away from their partner on posting or deployment for a considerable period (see [section 1G](#)), but this should not be taken as affecting whether they are in such a relationship. This group includes former partners as they can continue to be impacted by Service life following a break-up from a Service member, particularly if they have children together. Including former partners ensures they can receive appropriate consideration as they become independent of the Service member, for example, to take account of the former partner’s first re-location after the end of the relationship. This Guidance uses the term ‘Service partners’ for this group.

<sup>12</sup> The Censuses in England, Wales and Scotland now ask respondents whether they had previously served in the UK Armed Forces. This data will facilitate a more accurate understanding of the size and distribution of the veteran populations in England, Wales and Scotland.

<sup>13</sup> The Armed Forces (Covenant) Regulations 2022 are made under section 343B(4) of the Armed Forces Act 2006.

<sup>14</sup> This is the collective term used for these three other groups in the Regulations and in Section 343B(4) of the Armed Forces Act 2006.

- b. **Children:** This comprises children (including adopted children) under the age of 18 who are children of Service members or Service partners, and any other children under the age of 18 that are otherwise the responsibility of Service members or Service partners. A child is the responsibility of a Service member or Service partner if the Service member or Service partner has parental responsibility for the child, if the child is wholly or mainly financially dependent on the Service member or Service partner, or if the child is someone for whom the Service member or Service partner has assumed regular and substantial caring responsibilities (such as a foster child). This Guidance uses the term ‘Service children’ for this group.

Whilst the impact of Service life on children of serving members of the Armed Forces may be more easily apparent, children of veterans are included as they can experience disadvantages arising from Service life after their parent(s) have left Service. This could be the continuation of a disadvantage first experienced while their parent(s) were in Service, or a new disadvantage experienced due to the family’s resettlement out of the Armed Forces into civilian life.

Note that, while all Service children under 18 fall within the definition of relevant family member via this ‘Children’ category, upon turning 18 they will continue to meet the definition of relevant family member as a ‘Relative’ if they meet any of that category’s three criteria (i)-(iii) (that is, if they have a dependency on the Service member or Service partner).

- c. **Relatives:** This comprises the relatives (including through adoption) of Service members or Service partners that are:
- (i) **living in the same household** as the Service member. Service members might be required to temporarily live elsewhere, either for a set period of time or during the working week, due to postings or deployments (see [section 1G](#)). In such cases, where the relative would otherwise be living with the Service member (but for the fact the Service member is away for Service reasons) they are still to be considered a member of the Service member’s household; or
  - (ii) **wholly or mainly financially dependent** on the Service member or Service partner; or
  - (iii) someone for whom the Service member or Service partner **has assumed regular and substantial caring responsibilities**, such as those with additional needs who may be otherwise unable to care for themselves.

The term ‘relative’ means:

- (a) a parent, step-parent, son, daughter, stepson, stepdaughter, grandparent, step-grandparent, great-grandparent, step-great-grandparent, grandchild, step-grandchild, great-grandchild or step-great-grandchild;
- (b) the brother, sister, uncle, great-uncle, aunt, great-aunt, niece, great-niece, nephew, great-nephew or first cousin (whether of the full blood or of the half blood or by marriage or civil partnership);
- (c) any person aged 18 or over who was the responsibility of the Service member or Service partner as a child. Being the responsibility of a Service member or Service partner has the same meaning as in the ‘Children’ category above. This ensures this group will continue to be relevant family members when they are adults where there is a level of dependency.

- d. **Bereaved family members:** When a Service member is deceased, this comprises any person who was a relevant family member under one of the above categories immediately before the Service member's death.

## 1J5. Groups not within scope of the Duty

1.46. For the purposes of the Duty, the Armed Forces Community includes only the four groups above. For Covenant issues that are not part of the Duty, the Armed Forces Community may be defined more broadly. Therefore, in the spirit of the Covenant, although not bound by the Duty to do so, specified bodies may also wish to consider the needs of individuals within these wider groups if individual circumstances merit it. Included in these wider groups are members of the Merchant Navy that have seen duty on defined military operations, and wider family members not within scope of the definition of 'relevant family members' above.

1.47. Some groups are not within scope of either the Duty or the broader Covenant. The Armed Forces of other nations, such as NATO and Commonwealth countries, are not within scope of either the Duty or the broader Covenant (the only other countries in scope are British Overseas Territories). Also, Cadets and Adult Volunteers in the Cadet Forces are not members of the UK Armed Forces, and are not within scope of either the Duty or the broader Covenant.

## 1K. The Armed Forces Covenant Duty: What it is not

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1.48. The Covenant Duty is not prescriptive about the approach a specified body should take in order to comply with their legal obligations. It also does not mandate that any particular conclusions are reached or specific public service delivery outcomes achieved as a result of that consideration. The actions and outcomes that bodies deem appropriate will vary across the country depending on local circumstances.

1.49. The Covenant Duty does not abolish or replace existing Covenant pledges and other commitments. Public and private bodies will still be encouraged to honour these. Similarly, the Covenant pledge will remain open for new bodies to sign up to, should they wish to do so, as there are matters within scope of the wider Covenant that have not been brought within the legal Duty, including the following.

- a. The Duty only applies to specific functions in healthcare, education, and housing. Other functions in these three areas, and functions in other, unrelated areas, are not within the scope of the Duty, though may still be relevant to the wider Covenant.
- b. The Duty only applies to specified bodies. Many organisations that have signed the wider Covenant pledge are therefore not within scope of the legal Duty at all.
- c. The Duty applies to specific groups in the Armed Forces Community. Other groups in the Community may be included within the purposes of the wider Covenant.

1.50. Some issues affecting the Armed Forces Community are not covered by the Covenant so cannot be within scope of the Duty. The Covenant's purpose is to address the negative experiences of the Armed Forces Community, arising from Service life, in the provision of public and commercial services. Many matters affecting the Armed Forces Community do not fall within this category.

1.51. The Covenant Duty does not supersede or replace any other statutory requirement. Those subject to the Duty must balance the requirements of the Duty with the need to deliver services more generally and the need to satisfy other statutory requirements, such as the Public Sector Equality Duty in England, Scotland and Wales, or the statutory duty on public authorities regarding equality of opportunity in s.75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

1.52. Advantageous treatment as a matter of course is not within scope of the Duty, such as offering discounts to all through the Defence Discount Service, or to a broad group through the Veterans Railcard. However, bodies are still free to implement such schemes as part of their support to the Armed Forces Community. Similarly, the Duty does not give an individual any automatic right to the best house, best school, or to jump a queue. However, special provision can sometimes be justified (see [section 11](#)).



## 2. Healthcare

### Summary

2.1. The provision of healthcare to full-time Service personnel is split between the Ministry of Defence and the NHS. Reservists, veterans, and Service families normally receive healthcare via the NHS, while veterans also have access to some dedicated and bespoke support services ([section 2A](#)). People in the Armed Forces Community mostly have similar levels of health to the general population, though some veterans have particular healthcare needs arising from Service. Healthcare disadvantages arising from the unique obligations and sacrifices of Service life are most likely to be experienced by Service families and veterans. They include the following.

- a. **Challenges in accessing healthcare, or the right kind of healthcare.** Service families and veterans might find it harder than non-Service patients to gain access to the healthcare they need, if:
  - (1) healthcare bodies lack awareness of the composition of their local Armed Forces Community and their healthcare needs ([section 2B1](#));
  - (2) healthcare professionals do not know which of their patients are veterans ([section 2B2](#));
  - (3) healthcare professionals do not fully understand, or have experience of treating, health conditions arising from Service ([section 2B3](#));
  - (4) healthcare professionals are unaware of the healthcare services provided for veterans by the NHS, local authorities and third sector ([section 2B3](#));
  - (5) Service families re-locate for Service reasons and lose access to services they received in their previous location ([section 2C5](#));
  - (6) Service families re-locate for Service reasons and lack knowledge of the healthcare and support services available to them in their new local area ([section 2C5](#)); or
  - (7) Service families re-locate for Service reasons and lose access to healthcare professionals with whom they have an established relationship, and who have experience of treating them and understand their individual healthcare needs ([section 2C6](#)).
  
- b. **Delays in receiving treatment.** Service families might have to wait significantly longer for treatment if they are required to re-locate for Service reasons, and:
  - (1) having already spent time on a waiting list in their previous location, they are placed at the back of the waiting list in their new location ([section 2C2](#));
  - (2) they have to join a waiting list to resume treatment that had begun at their previous location ([section 2C3](#));
  - (3) health professionals in the new location decide to conduct a reassessment ([section 2C4](#));
  - (4) there are delays relating to support for Service children with additional needs ([sections 2C4](#) and [3H](#));
  - (5) there is a lack of clarity as to which funding arrangements apply after a re-location ([section 2D](#)); or
  - (6) insufficient information is passed between health systems and healthcare staff, or there are delays in passing on information ([section 2E](#)).

## 2A. The Armed Forces Community and public healthcare services

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2.2. Responsibility for the healthcare of **full-time Service personnel** is split between the Ministry of Defence and the NHS. MOD's Defence Medical Services provides a range of healthcare services for Service personnel in the UK and overseas, including primary care and mental health care. Secondary care, such as specialist referrals, hospital admissions and emergency care, is normally provided by the NHS.<sup>15</sup>

2.3. **Veterans** primarily receive their healthcare from the NHS, while also having access to some dedicated and bespoke support services. Most veterans have similar levels of health to the general population, but a small minority require ongoing care due to the effects of their Service. Veterans might have healthcare requirements resulting from Service, or they might have pre-existing issues exacerbated by Service.

2.4. **Reservists** that are mobilised into a period of full-time Service receive occupational health advice and care from Defence Medical Services. When not deployed on full-time Service, their healthcare needs are primarily the responsibility of the NHS.

2.5. **Service families** normally receive their healthcare via the NHS in the same way as non-Service families, though they can sometimes receive care from Defence Medical Services. Therefore, Service families living and moving with the Service person are usually required to register with an NHS GP, and access treatment from a dentist, in each location.

2.6. The following sections describe some of the ways that disadvantage can be experienced by the Armed Forces Community in different areas of healthcare. The issues described are not exhaustive as other issues might arise for a variety of reasons.

2.7. Case studies in text boxes have been included as helpful illustrations of some of the ways that bodies have helped to mitigate these disadvantages or, where appropriate, made special provision. **These case studies do not prescribe mandatory actions**, but they have been included to provide examples and ideas of the kinds of behaviours and actions that have resulted in a better experience for the Armed Forces Community, and which bodies might wish to consider when complying with the Duty.

## 2B. Understanding the healthcare needs of the local Armed Forces Community

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2.8. Healthcare bodies and professionals will need to understand the healthcare needs of the local Armed Forces Community. Without this, the Armed Forces Community might experience **challenges in accessing healthcare, or the right kind of healthcare**.

### 2B1. Understanding local need in order to plan the provision of healthcare services

2.9. Healthcare bodies with a planning or commissioning role are heavily dependent on having a detailed understanding of local population demographics. Members of the Armed Forces Community can be present anywhere in the country. Healthcare bodies should

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<sup>15</sup> For more information, see [Healthcare for the Armed Forces community: a forward view](#)

therefore have a good awareness of the composition of their local Armed Forces Community and their healthcare needs. This can include local authorities when undertaking their role in producing Joint Strategic Needs Assessments or Population Needs Assessments, which look at current and future health and care needs of local populations.

### Re-assessment of Local Needs

- Following the closure of RAF Cottesmore and the establishment of Kendrew Barracks (an Army base), Rutland County Council identified the need to reassess its health offer to the new Armed Forces Community. The Council's Armed Forces Officer and Public Health team worked with local units to conduct a health needs assessment to understand the different needs of an RAF station vs an Army base, how those needs differ to the local civilian population, and whether military and civilian health services could meet the new demand. It established the local population and their health needs – particularly those impacted by Service life. It used literature reviews for health conditions, policy reviews, primary qualitative data collection (in the form of interviews and focus groups) and quantitative analysis. National data, as well as local data, was used. A [report](#) was published, and a Health & Wellbeing Board was dedicated to the health needs of the Armed Forces Community. The report informed the Council's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.
- Concerns were raised by the local Armed Forces Community in West Norfolk that there was insufficient dental service provision near the local base, RAF Marham. The views of families, supported by research from Healthwatch Norfolk into local health provision and user needs, were fed into the Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, ensuring the commissioning process reflected local, as well as regional, needs. Led and negotiated by the Norfolk Armed Forces Covenant Board, partner organisations then collaborated to find a solution to meet those needs. NHS England worked closely with RAF Marham and the Defence Infrastructure Organisation to address the gap by opening the first NHS dental practice based on an MOD site.

### Conducting Research to Understand Local Armed Forces Healthcare Needs

- Harborough Locality Integrated Leadership Team has representatives from public and third sector organisations working to enhance individuals' health and wellbeing experiences through collaborative working. A Local Authority and HealthWatch survey of Armed Forces Community members found that many respondents had mental (22%) and physical (29%) health issues directly related to Service, but felt they had a lack of support, access, and understanding from their public service providers. The Locality Integrated Leadership Team responded to the survey findings and reached out to the NHS to improve this experience. They worked with Armed Forces officers and case workers providing healthcare support to members of the Armed Forces Community. The result was an online training workshop to improve health practitioners' awareness of Service life and related health concerns. Anecdotal evidence showed increased engagement with Armed Forces Community clients and referrals to specialist providers.

- Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant Board worked with Healthwatch Hertfordshire to undertake to conduct a survey, interviews, and focus groups with 100 local veterans, as well as NHS professionals, funded by Hertfordshire Public Health. This led to an action plan, including action to increase understanding of Service life and the Armed Forces Covenant among secondary care practitioners, promotion of Veteran Aware to local hospitals, and the Royal College of General Practitioners' Veteran Friendly GP Practice scheme to local surgeries.
- Rutland County Council led tri-Council work (with Harborough and South Kesteven District Councils) to commission HealthWatch to create a user-friendly survey of the military community online and on paper over a four-month period. The Rutland Armed Forces Officer worked closely with HealthWatch to construct the survey and promote completion across the community. Supported by a communications strategy (social media, radio, posters, and visiting bases), this led to 700 verified responses and a [report](#) that assisted in policy changes.
- In 2020, research by the Veterans' Gateway found that, out of all issues facing the veteran community, at least 23.27% of searches on its online portal were for mental health services, and at least 6.75% of searches were for physical health issues. In order of highest number of searches, veterans were most concerned about: accessing support; support groups; treatment; drug, alcohol, and rehab services; bereavement; home and physical mobility aids; GPs; blindness; limb loss; and end of life care.
- Reports are also available from wider experts and Armed Forces advocates that identify issues for veterans and families, and make recommendations over how public bodies can respond. For example, the Scottish Veterans Commissioner's reports [Veteran's Health & Wellbeing A Distinctive Scottish Approach](#) and [Are We Getting It Right?](#)

## 2B2. Identifying service users from the Armed Forces Community

2.10. An awareness by the specified bodies of those using their healthcare services who are members of the Armed Forces Community will help to improve the way in which their needs are met. While many veterans are forthcoming about their Service history and the issues they faced, making it simpler for healthcare professionals to recommend treatment pathways, this is not always the case. Some veterans may be less likely to seek out support services and can be reluctant to reveal their prior life in Service, and less forthcoming about the nature of their injuries. This could be because:

- a. They feel a stigma in accessing support, either because it is perceived that accessing support could bring shame on them or the unit they served in, or they believe they are not entitled to the support they require.
- b. They believe that civilian healthcare providers will not understand or support them.
- c. They lack awareness of the support available to which they are entitled.
- d. They might not regard themselves as a veteran, for example if they served a very short amount of time, or if they view their time in Service as a job that was in the past, and not something that affects their current life.
- e. There might be issues in their local area which make it difficult to access support. For example, veterans in parts of Northern Ireland might be particularly unwilling to

come forward and access dedicated support, for fear of stigma and/or recrimination.

Therefore, healthcare professionals might not know which of their patients are veterans, making it less likely that they will be provided with the right kind of healthcare.

### Improving Identification of Veterans on NHS Systems

- In 2018, in response to data highlighting the veterans' code was applied to veteran patients in only 7.9% of cases, Prof. Alan Finnegan created a [study](#) to find ways to motivate veterans to notify primary care staff of their veteran status or register with a GP, and to improve primary care staff's understanding of veterans' health issues. The study found that, after a 6-week intervention period centred on an advertising campaign, the number of patients with a veteran code increased by 200% (180 to 537 in Lancashire).
- Gateshead Armed Forces Network identified that there were very low numbers of veterans registered and coded at GP practices in Gateshead, and Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) agreed to carry out a project to increase this. From 2014-15, the project involved the CCG including veteran identification as one of its Quality Indicators that practices could choose to focus on. During 2016-17, veteran identification was also added to the CCG's master templates installed on all practice clinical systems. At the start of the project there were only 368 veterans registered, identified and coded in Gateshead. By February 2019 this had increased to over 7000. As a result of this, GP practices in Gateshead can now better identify veterans with long-term conditions which might be due to Service. This means veterans can then be sent to appropriate NHS services, which could be veteran-specific. The CCG has also been working to further share and extend this best practice across Newcastle, and across the North East Armed Forces Forum (covering 12 local authority areas).

## **2B3. Healthcare professionals' knowledge of healthcare issues relevant to the Armed Forces Community**

2.11. The unique obligations and sacrifices of *danger* and *stress*<sup>16</sup> can result in members of the Armed Forces Community (including veterans and Service families) requiring treatment for physical or mental injuries arising from Service, or for pre-existing issues exacerbated by Service. Service in the Armed Forces may result in a number of conditions, including:

- a. Sensory disorders (such as hearing loss).
- b. Musculoskeletal injuries such as fractures, dislocations, and other conditions.
- c. Amputations, wounds, scarring and non-freezing cold injury (NFCI).
- d. Mental disorders (such as stress, anxiety and depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), or moral injury). Some veterans might suffer from Dual Diagnosis, consisting of mental disorder related to Service caused by trauma experienced during active Service, and substance self-medication to manage this.

<sup>16</sup> The unique obligations and sacrifices in *italics* throughout this chapter are explained in [section 1G](#).

2.12. Healthcare professionals might not fully understand the health conditions that can arise from Service, or they might not have experience of treating them. Healthcare professionals might also be unaware of the services provided for the Armed Forces Community by the NHS, local authorities and third sector. These issues can result in members of the Armed Forces Community not being able to access healthcare, or the right kind of healthcare. Ensuring healthcare staff have an awareness of the healthcare services available, and that they and their establishments signpost the Armed Forces Community to these services, can lead to improved health outcomes.

### Improving GPs' Awareness of their Local Veteran Healthcare Needs

- In response to concerns identified by the Armed Forces Community and associated groups, the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) and the UK Government conducted research into ways to better equip GPs with the knowledge to serve the veteran community and their families in their local area. Research identified that it was difficult to identify and manage veterans and their families, which prevented them identifying health issues and signposting them to relevant support as required. It also identified that, in some cases, more awareness of the support services, both within the NHS and externally, was required. The RCGP and UK Government created the veteran-friendly accreditation. This is a voluntary initiative. Accreditation is currently open to GP practices in England, though the RCGP is working with the Devolved Administrations to extend the programme. Accreditation lasts for three years and requires GP practices to do the following.
  - Ask patients registering with the surgery if they have ever served in the British Armed Forces.
  - Code it on the GP computer system.
  - Have a clinical lead for veterans in the surgery, to undertake dedicated training, stay up-to-date with the latest research and innovations, ensure that the practice is meeting the health commitments of the Armed Forces Covenant, and provide advice to colleagues, as well as possibly seeing veterans themselves.
  - Practices should have a Care Quality Commission 'good' rating or higher.
- Westfield Surgery in Leominster, Herefordshire, is accredited as veteran-friendly. By going through the accreditation process, it has been able to support Armed Forces patients in a way it would not otherwise have done. It has a nominated clinical lead for veteran health. It has supported a number of patients through fast-tracking treatment for a military-related injury, and has been able to put lonely veterans in touch with appropriate social contacts. It has established links with local military charities and support agencies. It has successfully encouraged veterans to identify as such on the surgery's systems, for example the telephone messaging asks patients that are veterans to make the surgery aware. Through ongoing training of its staff, it continues to improve its awareness of the specific needs of the Armed Forces Community, enabling correct support or care pathways to be followed.

### Creating a Toolkit for GPs to Improve Services for Veterans

- The RCGP worked in partnership with NHS England and NHS Improvement, consulting the Ministry of Defence and other stakeholders, to conduct and collate

research into the healthcare needs of veterans and their families. The RCGP published its findings in the form of a [toolkit](#) that could be used by GPs to help meet veterans' healthcare needs. The toolkit includes the following.

- Information on the Armed Forces Covenant and NHS Constitution.
- A list of dedicated services for veterans and contact information, both inside and outside the NHS.
- Information on the nature of veteran-sustained physical and mental health injuries.
- Information on requesting a veteran's medical records from the Armed Forces.
- Learning resources, such as webinars, podcasts, and videos.

### Training of Healthcare Staff about Armed Forces Issues

- NHS Education for Scotland identified a lack of awareness in frontline health practitioners of how Service life impacts members of the Armed Forces Community. It approached NHS Highland and the Department for Community Mental Health to develop and trial a 4-hour, online training session on the Armed Forces Community for final-year trainee GPs. Training covered the journey of a Service person through the Defence and NHS medical systems, the barriers and challenges potentially facing veterans and Service families, and introduced the Armed Forces Covenant. It was supported by Q&A sessions. Training also included a GPs' toolkit, links to research hubs and papers on Armed Forces Community healthcare issues, such as non-freezing cold injury. Feedback was positive, with trainees noting it had not been covered in medical school or GP training.
- York St John University has delivered training courses to public service workers in local authorities and health services, who had identified a lack of awareness and understanding of Service life. Participants received resources and training from the University and BLESMA (Military Charity for Limbless Veterans) to better support veterans and their families. The training benefitted those in occupational therapy, physiotherapy, counselling, and psychology.
- The Sussex, Kent & Medway (NHS) Armed Forces Network runs its award-winning, CPD-accredited, [Service Champions Training](#), for attendees from the NHS and other organisations such as local authorities. There are about 50 attendees per month. It is delivered in partnership with local reservists, veterans, and military charities. It is designed for people interested in the services they offer becoming more focussed on the Armed Forces. Through the training, a support network of Service champions is formed to help further develop knowledge and skills across different organisations.
- Some health bodies use internal communication methods to promote Armed Forces Community issues and the Armed Forces Covenant among their staff. In Wales, this has been realised, in part, by the [Welsh Health Circular](#) – a detailed instruction to all health boards and staff in Wales which outlines key information on topics such as identification of veterans, the Covenant, mental health, the Veterans' gateway, limb loss and adaptations.

- NHS Highland also developed an internal, bi-annual newsletter about healthcare and the Armed Forces Community, providing definitions (e.g. what is a veteran), a directory of useful contacts, and upcoming events. It also developed an intranet site with a repository for resources, tools, and information.

### Sharing Good Practice Between Healthcare Providers

- In 2014, [The Chavasse Report](#) analysed care provided to the Armed Forces and veterans to find ways to improve care while raising NHS standards. One of its recommendations was to create a support network of hospitals. This led to the creation of the Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance and their Veteran Aware accreditation programme, and the eight manifesto standards that healthcare providers use to aim to improve the healthcare that veterans, and the wider Community, receive from the NHS. The Alliance works closely with NHS Improvement, NHS England, Service charities and the Ministry of Defence. The Alliance seeks to showcase high quality veterans' healthcare, and support NHS Trusts to learn from each other by sharing good practice. This includes committing to the Armed Forces Covenant, raising awareness among staff of veterans' healthcare needs, and establishing clear links with Service charities and local support providers.

## 2C. Provision of services

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### 2C1. Priority treatment

2.13. Members of the Armed Forces Community might suffer physical or mental injuries caused by the unique obligations and sacrifices of *danger* and *stress*. The prioritisation of their care by healthcare providers is always subject to clinical need and will be clinically determined. Members of the Armed Forces Community are not entitled to jump the queue ahead of someone with a higher clinical need. However, there is a commitment that veterans in Great Britain may be considered for priority access to NHS services providing focused treatment for conditions arising from their Service, compared to non-Service patients with the same level of clinical need. This is a clinical decision made by the relevant physician. More information about prioritisation, and veteran-specific services through the NHS, is available for [England](#), [Wales](#) and [Scotland](#).

### 2C2. Waiting lists to start treatment

2.14. Due to the unique obligation and sacrifice of *geographical mobility*, Service families on a waiting list for treatment, or other health services, in one area might be required to move to another area before they are treated. If they are placed at the back of their new waiting list, the Service family might experience **delays in receiving treatment**, and they might have to wait significantly longer for treatment compared to non-Service families who are able to stay in one place. If these waits are further exacerbated by subsequent moves, the Service family could wait years for treatment.



2.15. While the fundamental NHS principle of treatment on the basis of clinical need remains paramount, healthcare staff should be aware that patients from the Armed Forces Community might have already waited a considerable time for treatment in another locality and that their re-location might not have been made by choice. As such, healthcare staff may wish to consider total time spent on waiting lists, both inside and outside the local area, and ensure that the Service family keeps its relative place on the waiting list in their new area, when possible.

2.16. Specified bodies will also find it useful to consider if transfers between providers' waiting lists can be requested to ensure that relative places on waiting lists are maintained. Failing this, the sharing of appointment letters and making specific requests to retain places on waiting lists might also help significantly.

2.17. If a decision on waiting lists can only be made with information provided by the previous clinician, then providing information on the length of time the patient has already waited can help the patient's new clinician in the prioritisation process.

#### Accounting for Time Spent on Previous Waiting Lists

- One Service child had had his orthodontic treatment delayed multiple times due to the family being required to move. Each re-location was after he had moved close to the top of a waiting list in their current area. NHS England investigated the family's concerns, and agreed to liaise with the local NHS primary care service to ensure that the Service child's new treatment time reflected time already waited.

### 2C3. Waiting lists to resume treatment

2.18. Some health conditions or treatments are of long duration, and the Service family might have to re-locate while in the middle of receiving the course of treatment, or other health services. In this case, the treatment could be interrupted if they have to join a waiting list to resume the treatment in their new location. Healthcare bodies will find it useful to consider how treatment plans can continue with minimal disruption, and continuity of care can be maintained, after re-locations.

### 2C4. Reassessments

2.19. If a Service family re-locates to a new area due to the unique obligation and sacrifice of *geographical mobility*, the health professionals in the new location might decide to conduct a reassessment of a family member's condition. Health professionals should be aware that the family member might have already experienced a prolonged wait time for treatment, and so any decision to conduct a new assessment, or 'go back to square one', could **add additional delays to their treatment, or cause them additional stress**. In some cases, the Service family member might subsequently be required to move again before treatment can commence or resume.

2.20. This can be a particular concern for those Service children with additional needs. Delays to assessments or reassessments associated with the authorisation of statutory plans can see Service children with such needs suffer a **delay in the provision of support** (see [section 3H](#)).

## 2C5. Local variability in healthcare services

2.21. The provision of healthcare services varies locally and across the different home nations of the UK, to reflect different local approaches to healthcare, and different needs and priorities. Therefore, when members of the Community are required to re-locate, they could move to an area with different healthcare services or access criteria. This could lead to a **lack of access to special services**, such as Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, that were being provided to the Service family in their previous location.

2.22. The local variability in services, along with the possibility of *unfamiliarity with civilian life*, could also lead to a **lack of knowledge** amongst the Armed Forces Community of the healthcare and support services available to them in their new local area, thereby affecting their ability to access local healthcare services.

### Signposting of Services

- [Forces Connect](#) is a free mobile app that signposts veterans, Armed Forces personnel, Reservists and their families to support and advice on a range of important issues including health, housing and education in their local area. It was developed by [Forces Connect South East](#), a cross-border partnership comprising local authorities in the south east region, local Armed Forces representation, Service charities, and the local NHS Armed Forces Networks, with initial funding from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust. Evaluation has shown that the app, which is currently used by over 11,000 people including the Armed Forces, increased staff confidence and their ability to help the Armed Forces Community.
- Identifying a local lack of awareness of available health services among the Armed Forces Community and health professionals, the Suffolk Covenant Group created a [webpage](#) on their Suffolk Military Covenant website that provides a list of health services available to the Armed Forces Community in the NHS and charity sectors. Both mainstream (Samaritans, NHS) and bespoke, exclusive services (Op COURAGE) are listed with clear explanations and links.
- Rutland County Council and Harborough District Council share a dedicated 'Armed Forces Officer' whose role is to support the local Armed Forces Community. The officer can help with access to healthcare, as well as education and school placements, employment and training opportunities, and access to housing and accommodation.
- The Armed Forces Network and NHS providers in Kent and Sussex have also identified a need to make information accessible to those in the Armed Forces Community with knowledge or language barriers, and has created a public service [toolkit](#) for the Gurkha community.

## 2C6. Relationship with healthcare professionals

2.23. Due to the unique obligation and sacrifice of *geographical mobility*, Service families might have to leave a location where they have an established relationship with

their local healthcare professionals. While Service families could continue to see the same healthcare professionals after they move, in practice this can be unrealistic, and they will usually need to receive care from new healthcare staff, and register with a new GP practice. Where that is the case, although medical records are transferred between healthcare providers, the Service family can **lose access to healthcare professionals with whom they have an established relationship, and who have experience of treating them and understand their individual healthcare needs**. Should they subsequently return to the area, they might find they are unable to re-register with their original GP if the register is full.

## 2C7. Provision of tailored services

2.24. Sometimes, bespoke healthcare services or care pathways may be justified to meet the distinct needs of the Armed Forces Community. Alternatively, it may be beneficial to tailor health advice to members of the Armed Forces Community to take account of the unique obligations and sacrifices of Service life.

### Provision of Bespoke NHS Health Services

- [Op COURAGE](#) is NHS England's bespoke mental health treatment pathway for veterans. This comprises the Mental Health Transition and Liaison Service, High Intensity Service and Complex Treatment Service. Op COURAGE is a national scheme that sees NHS staff working with those in the Service charity sector to deliver therapy, rehabilitation services and, in extreme cases, inpatient care, to hundreds of veterans each year. Those needing urgent help receive same-day referrals. Working with charities helps NHS staff understand the experiences and issues faced by veterans. It also provides a clear pathway for veterans to access and helps to integrate veterans with mental ill health back into everyday life.
- NHS England's Veterans Trauma Network supports veterans with Service-related injury and illness to access appropriate care. The Network works alongside Op COURAGE. The Network provides personalised treatment within the NHS, staffed by military and civilian clinicians who understand the military environment and specialise in military healthcare, and assists families and carers of veterans with physical health problems to access appropriate support services. NHS Wales also operates a Veterans Trauma Network.
- The [Veterans NHS Wales](#) service is a specialised, priority service for veterans in Wales experiencing mental health difficulties resulting from their Service in the Armed Forces. The service was formed in response to the specific and evolving needs of veterans. Not only does the service tackle the disadvantage resulting from their time in the Armed Forces, it also provides specific treatment pathways for unique conditions. [Veterans First Point](#) provides a similar service for veterans living in Scotland.

### Provision of Bespoke Services in the Community

- The Integrated Personal Commissioning for Veterans Framework (IPC4V) is a personalised care approach for a very small number of veterans with complex and enduring physical, neurological and mental health conditions resulting from injury

whilst in Service. The bespoke care they receive ensures they are effectively supported as they transition to civilian life and beyond.

- In Tameside, an allotment project provides veterans with mental health issues, addictions, or isolation, a place to engage in physical activity while having a network of support. In Rhondda Cynon Taff and Vale of Glamorgan, a free movie night was set up for veterans and their families to support those with PTSD who were triggered by local fireworks. Both councils also secured external funding to enable veterans suffering from loneliness, who were prevented from attending their weekly meetup support groups during Covid-19, to purchase computer tablets. Training to use the tablets was provided, and the tablets were linked to a live events calendar.
- Veterans First Point drop-in services are available in six health areas in Scotland, developed by veterans and clinicians for veterans. This offers a 'one stop shop' for help and assistance to veterans and their families, no matter what that need might be, not just for physical or mental health issues, but for housing, socialising, education, employment, and other issues. Veterans can access support centres and in some cases are assigned a peer support worker who can recommend therapies, make referrals, navigate veteran support services or assist with practical steps to get veterans back on their feet.
- Surrey Fire and Rescue Service worked with partners to set up a monthly hub at the Surrey Fire Service. The hub provides a safe place for members of the Armed Forces Community to come together, share stories, make friends and access relevant support (particularly around health and welfare). The hub plays a significant role in establishing a network of likeminded veterans who have not only benefitted from the regular camaraderie and friendly interaction, but on several occasions received life-saving support, a new job and help to find housing.

## 2D. Planning and funding

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2.25. Due to the unique obligation and sacrifice of *geographical mobility*, Service families might be posted abroad. If local service provision abroad is inadequate, overseas Service families might have their healthcare delivered by the Ministry of Defence, through the Defence Medical Services. If local service provision is adequate, international agreements might be in place for free or discounted healthcare services to be provided to the Armed Forces and their families.

2.26. When Service families overseas are then posted back to the UK, they might experience **delays in receiving treatment, or a refusal of treatment**, if it is not clear which funding arrangements should apply to them. The rules for what services are available, and who is eligible for them, might also differ within different areas, and between the four nations of the UK.

### Mid-treatment Patient Returning from Overseas

- A Service child had been undergoing orthodontic treatment while living in Saudi Arabia. When she returned to the UK, five more treatments were still required until the work was completed. As the original moulds were lost, it could not be ascertained whether she would have met the NHS Index of Orthodontic Treatment Need criteria for treatment. Without this proof, the NHS Business Services Authority refused approval for NHS treatment. Defence Primary Healthcare could also not offer any solution. The family approached two orthodontic practices who both said that she did not meet NHS treatment criteria, which was to be expected because she had already been having treatment. The Army Families Federation worked with NHS England and the NHS Improvement Armed Forces Commissioning team and dental commissioners, where it was agreed that the orthodontic work could be completed under NHS funding.

## **2E. Co-operation between bodies and professionals**

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2.27. If, when Service families are required to re-locate, insufficient information is passed between health systems and healthcare staff, or if there are delays in passing on information, this can cause distress, impact continuity of care, and cause **delays in receiving treatment**, or the Service family might even have to start again.

2.28. For personnel transitioning out of Service, Defence Medical Service's integrated digital platform 'CORTISONE', currently being developed, will enable medical records to be safely transferred from Defence Medical Services to the NHS. This will assist practitioners to deliver a consistent and effective standard of care, ensure that assessments better reflect patient histories, and reduce possible disruption to medical care access when leaving the Armed Forces.

2.29. In Scotland, under section 23 of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004, education authorities can request help from other agencies in their exercise of functions under that Act. Health Boards in Scotland might be called upon to support education authorities in this way. More information is given in [section 3H](#).

## 3. Education

### Summary

3.1. Service children are normally educated in state-funded schools in the same way as non-Service children. Service personnel, and almost all veterans and Reservists, do not normally themselves engage with the state-funded education sector, unless as the parent of a child in a state-funded school ([section 3A](#)). Many Service children thrive, but the following education-related disadvantages can arise for Service children.

- a. **An interrupted education** can arise if a Service family is required by the Armed Forces to re-locate, and moves between schools are not well managed ([section 3C](#)), or if the child is placed in a new school that uses different curriculums or different exam boards, or if they experience multiple moves at important stages in their education. A child's educational attainment can also be affected if they have to help care for other family members while a serving parent is deployed, and if their mental wellbeing is affected (see below). ([Section 3D](#))
- b. **A disrupted social experience** can arise if a Service family is required by the Armed Forces to re-locate, and the child has to make new friendships in a new school. If the child is not able to be placed in a school inside their local community, they might find it harder to develop out-of-school friendships, or access extra-curricular activities at school. ([Section 3E](#))
- c. **Mental wellbeing can be affected** by a disrupted social experience and the other disadvantages, by losing access to support structures such as friends and teachers, due to a re-location, or if they are unable to be placed in the same new school as their siblings. The separation from a serving parent, and worry for their safety, also affects wellbeing. ([Section 3E](#))
- d. **A longer journey time to school, or a more difficult journey**, can result if a Service family is required to re-locate outside the normal admissions round, and the child cannot be placed in a school close to their new home. ([Section 3F](#))
- e. **Being unable to take holidays with parents during normal school holiday periods** if the serving parent can only return home during term-time ([Section 3G](#))
- f. **Delays relating to support for Service children with additional needs.** ([Sections 2C4](#) and [3H](#))

3.2. A Service partner might have to **take on burdens** such as transporting the child to school, and they might consequently suffer disadvantages such as finding it harder to continue their own employment. ([Section 3F](#))

3.3. Knowledge of which of the children in their school(s) are Service children will underpin successful responses to these issues by the specified education bodies ([section 3B](#)). In England, the Service Pupil Premium is also available to help ([section 3I](#)).

### 3A. The Armed Forces Community and state-funded education services

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3.4. Most **full-time Service personnel, Reservists and veterans** do not normally themselves engage with the state-funded education sector, unless as a parent of a child in a state-funded school. Though, as eligibility to join the Reserve Services begins at 15 years and 9 months,<sup>17</sup> some Reservists may be in state education. Also, in England, where there is a statutory duty to participate in education or training until one's 18th birthday, veterans might also require state-funded education should they be released from Service before they are 18.

3.5. **Service children** are normally educated in state-funded schools in the same way as non-Service children. Many thrive, but they can suffer a range of educational disadvantages as a result of Service life. Service children might have to move school a number of times, as they accompany their serving parent(s). Statistics indicate that on average Service children move schools much more frequently than their non-Service peers during their educational career. School moves might happen in the middle of an academic year, outside the normal admissions round. While non-Service families might face similar issues when moving, Service families are likely to move more frequently, and as a result of a mandatory requirement in Service to their country.

3.6. The following sections describe some of the ways that disadvantage can be experienced by the Armed Forces Community in different areas of education. The issues described are not exhaustive as other issues might arise for a variety of reasons. It should also be noted that Service children can face a number of these disadvantages at the same time. For example, difficulties with admissions to a new school after a re-location could affect both the child's educational attainment and wellbeing. **In this chapter, the word 'school' means all the different types of education institution within scope of the Duty, as listed in [section 1C](#).**

3.7. Case studies in text boxes have been included as helpful illustrations of some of the ways that bodies have helped to mitigate these disadvantages or, where appropriate, made special provision. **These case studies do not prescribe mandatory actions**, but they have been included to provide examples and ideas of the kinds of behaviours and actions that have resulted in a better experience for the Armed Forces Community, and which bodies might wish to consider when complying with the Duty.

### 3B. Identifying Service Children

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3.8. Specified bodies should have an awareness of which children in their school(s), or due to move to their school(s), are Service children. Local authorities should have an awareness of which children in their care are Service children. This will help to improve the way these children's needs are met. As explained in [section 1J4](#), it is not only children of currently serving personnel that are Service children within scope of the Duty, but also children of veterans.

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<sup>17</sup> The RAF Reserve can be joined from 15 years and 9 months old, the Royal Naval Reserve from 16 years old, and the Army Reserve from 18.

### Asking Families

- Highland Council has a dedicated group, the Military Liaison Group (Education), which is a partnership of local Armed Forces representatives and specialist providers and experts, who have built a strong, proactive and committed relationship, and work to an Action Improvement Plan. The Group has made changes to Enrolment Forms, Guidance to Head Teachers, and School Handbooks, to encourage identification of Service children. Enrolment Forms now prompt families to identify whether they are part of the Armed Forces, which Service they are from, and whether Serving, Reservist or veteran, with a link (or hardcopy) to a leaflet ‘Why do we want to know?’. This data helps to ensure that the right targeted support can be given to the child or young person at the right time. Identification is gradually increasing, creating a wider understanding of need.

### Conducting Research

- In 2015, the [SSCE Cymru](#) project commissioned a study into the numbers of Service children in each local authority in Wales, based on 2011 census data. The study also included a survey of schools to capture information on the schools’ awareness of the issues and current practice in supporting Service children. In a subsequent data collection exercise, SSCE Cymru worked with the local authorities and independent schools in Wales to provide a snapshot of the number of schools with Service children, and the number of Service children, in each local authority in Wales as of March 2021.

## 3C. Admissions

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3.9. Due to the unique obligation and sacrifice of *geographical mobility*,<sup>18</sup> Service children might have to move school a number of times. They might experience **an interrupted education** if moves between schools are not well managed. The effectiveness of a pupil’s transfer is affected by the speed with which they are assigned to a new school, the time taken for records to be transferred, and the quality of the information included. Timely transfer of school records (including information on curriculum areas covered and outcomes achieved) means the receiving school has access to vital information about the child and their progress, and avoids delays in the provision of appropriately differentiated teaching and learning, or in any necessary support being made available. Moves between schools in different home nations of the UK can be more complicated than moves between schools in the same home nation, due to differences in the educational systems. This can lead to a less timely transfer of information, and delays in the provision of appropriate teaching or support.

3.10. A number of disadvantages around child wellbeing ([section 3E](#)) and transport to school ([section 3F](#)) could be mitigated if children are able to be placed in a school close to where they live, and if Service children siblings can be placed in the same school, depending on other factors such as their ages, whether primary or secondary, and whether there are places available. Disadvantages around educational attainment ([section 3D](#)) can

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<sup>18</sup> The unique obligations and sacrifices in *italics* throughout this chapter are explained in [section 1G](#).



be mitigated if children can be placed in a school that uses similar curriculums to their previous school.

3.11. The School Admissions Codes for [England](#) and [Wales](#) both include requirements relating to children of Service personnel. The Code for England requires local authorities to ensure that ‘arrangements in their area support the Government’s commitment to removing disadvantage for service children’. Both Codes require admission authorities to allocate a school place to a Service child in advance of the family moving to the area (as long as one is available), provided the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares a re-location date. Where requested by the parent, admission authorities are able to use a unit or quartering address (or, in England, a private address) as the child’s home address when considering an application. The Code for England allows priority in oversubscription criteria to be given to children eligible for the Service Pupil Premium, and both Codes allow exceptions to infant class size limits for children of Service personnel admitted outside the normal admissions round.

3.12. In Scotland, local authorities are responsible for the setting of school admissions policy. This includes the procedures for dealing with requests for places both from parents who live within the school catchment area and those from other areas. The local authority’s admissions policy provides details of any priority arrangements. Parents in Scotland have a right to express a preference when choosing which school they wish their children to attend.<sup>19</sup> Local authorities make every effort to meet that request wherever possible. However, the size of the school, the current roll, and number of children who already live in the catchment area, and other factors, affect the local authority’s ability to grant a placing request.

### Admissions Support

- In response to Service family concerns, Gloucestershire County Council allows Service families to apply two terms in advance of the date the school place is required.
- Service families posted to Gloucestershire are permitted to use the garrison or military base as an address for school applications until a quartering address has been obtained.
- When appealing to an oversubscribed school for an in-year placement, Gloucestershire County Council reviews every Service family case to see if the school’s admission limits can be exceeded. This ensures Service children have the same access to better schools when moving location.

### Provision of Information

- The Association of Directors of Education in Scotland identified a need for a bespoke website to provide information and resources specifically for Service families moving into, around and away from Scottish schools. The significant assortment of information available on various Scottish websites proved overwhelming for families to negotiate as part of their transition process. Mobile

<sup>19</sup> [Choosing a school: a guide for parents, revised November 2016](#)

families who had experienced numerous and frequent moves requested a dedicated portal linking to local authorities and related sources of information and support, initially aligned with locations of postings, accommodation, communities, and local schools. The [Forces Children's Education website](#) was therefore established, providing a gateway to this information, and a first point of contact for Service families. It links directly to local authorities and provides information specific to each.

### 3D. Educational attainment and curriculum

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3.13. As Service families re-locate for Service reasons, Service children might have to move school a number of times. While the educational attainment of Service children as a group is largely on a par with that of non-Service children, their **educational attainment may be affected** if they are placed in a school that uses different curriculums or different exam boards, or if they experience multiple moves at important stages in their education. They might experience gaps in learning or repeat topics already covered in previous schools. The number of moves a Service child might have to make could lead to a greater cumulative effect on their education than would typically be experienced by a non-Service child. If the child's educational attainment is affected, this could in turn affect their progression to their next level of education.

3.14. Due to the unique obligation and sacrifice of *separation*, Service children might have to spend weeks or months, or the working week, away from their serving parent. The impact on their emotional wellbeing might in turn cause their educational attainment to suffer. The separation from the serving parent might also mean that children have to help care for their younger siblings or non-serving parent when the serving parent is away, meaning they have less time to devote to their schoolwork, also causing their educational attainment to suffer.

3.15. If nationals of other countries (such as Gurkhas from Nepal) join the Armed Forces and have family join them in the UK, this can create additional educational attainment issues for Service children if English is an Additional Language (EAL).

#### Forums

- Rutland County Council found a significant proportion of pupils in its area were Service children. Engagement across the council, partner agencies, Rutland Health Watch, local military unit welfare teams, and Service charities, identified concerns that some Service children were underachieving in education, some rates of SEND were higher than the national average, and there was a confused picture of available support. The council co-ordinated a meeting of concerned parties to discuss ways to improve, leading to the creation of a Forces Family Forum. This meets five times per year with attendees from these organisations to provide updates on concerns, as well as guest speakers who provide targeted information and new support connections.

### English as an Additional Language

- A school in South Cerney identified that while Service pupils were achieving normal Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar scores, the group lacked depth in English vocabulary. A large proportion of the Service children were from Nepal, and although they were fluent in English, they lacked technical and colloquial expertise in the language. The school met with the parents via the military base's Welfare Officer, to discuss the issue of English as an Additional Language (EAL). Many parents had not identified their child as having an EAL requirement, believing their child had an effective command of the language – myths were dispelled, and parents were reassured that EAL children would be supported more, not that less would be expected of them. The school agreed to focus on vocabulary with EAL pupils to ensure they could achieve their full potential.

## 3E. Child wellbeing

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### 3E1. Wellbeing

3.16. If Service children are required to move school, they might experience a **disrupted social experience**, and have to make new friendships. If a move happens outside the normal admissions round, and a child is not able to be placed in a school inside their local community, they might find it harder to socialise with their school friends outside of school hours, form friendships in the area in which they live, or access extra-curricular activities at school, such as after school clubs, impacting their social experience.

3.17. A Service child's **mental wellbeing can be affected** if the requirement to re-locate results in the child losing access to support structures such as friends and teachers. If Service families have more than one child, there can be difficulties finding schools that will take all the children, resulting in the separation of the child from their sibling(s), and additional stress. If Service children are required to spend weeks or months, or the working week, away from their serving parent, the separation, and their worry for the safety of a parent deployed abroad, can also significantly affect the child's mental wellbeing. The disrupted social experience, and the other disadvantages in this chapter, such as a longer journey to school, can also affect mental wellbeing.

3.18. In Wales, the [SSCE Cymru](#) project, funded by Welsh Government, works with schools, children and young people, local authorities, education professionals, Armed Forces families and support organisations to gather their views and experiences, build networks across Wales and raise awareness and understanding of the experiences of Service children.

3.19. In Scotland, the [GIRFEC](#) (Getting It Right For Every Child) approach has been used since 2010. It is child-centred and based on an understanding of the child's current situation, including wider influences on them when thinking about their wellbeing. This includes consideration of the impact of transitions, mobility and deployments which affect Service families and children. It requires joined-up working, so services supporting children work in a co-ordinated way to meet their specific needs and improve their wellbeing.

3.20. In Northern Ireland, the Department of Education recently published the [Children & Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing in Education Framework](#), which promotes an ethos in education settings that provides early support for those children and young people showing signs of needing extra help to cope with emotional difficulties that may arise.

#### Friendship Nurture Groups

- Teachers at Walbottle Village Primary School near Newcastle, concerned with ensuring Service children integrated into a new educational environment, worked with a Service child in Year 2 to create an environment where Service children could foster new friendships with children already at the school, to aid their wellbeing and create new support structures. The result was the creation of a 'friendship nurture group' which has allowed Service children to create friendships lasting for years.

#### Service Pupils' Champions

- Service Pupils' Champion is a role created by North Yorkshire County Council to provide extra support to its large numbers of Service children. There are two Champions in North Yorkshire working to support the emotional wellbeing and social development of children and young people aged 5-18, especially during periods of active deployment, and at times of transition. The Champions aim to strengthen the pupil voice by promoting and developing the work of Military Kids Club Heroes currently established in many of the schools in North Yorkshire. The Champions provide one-to-one support, anxiety workshops, emotional first aid and support for serving parents, events, information outreach to serving parents with children with additional educational needs, and liaison between bases and schools (for example, advanced warning of incoming Service families).

#### Additional After School Clubs

- A school in South Cerney identified that Service pupils were not accessing after school clubs, as the bus timetable did not enable Service children, commuting from the local military base, to stay beyond the school day. The school liaised with the local base and set up an after-school club (with a third-party sports provider) on base using its facilities. Recognising this was an issue for other local schools with Service children, any spare spaces were offered to those other schools. This supported the community, maximised use of facilities, and brought Service children together. The club expanded to liaise with serving parents, and to include members of the community to improve civilian-military relations.

#### Consulting Service Children on their Needs

- Oxfordshire County Council organised a conference for Service children to share their experiences of life in a Forces family, and how schools could support them. The Service children raised a number of difficulties, and said they wanted headteachers to:
  - Listen to every Service child, provide someone to talk to, and create a Service pupils' council which meets with the headteacher.

- Ease transitions between school and enable introductions with teachers.
- Provide a buddy system for new school joiners.
- Provide a space for Service children to think and work through feelings.
- Set up a school club for Service children for activities and sharing feelings.
- Have a teacher who is a Service Pupils Champion.
- Find ways to share what Service life is like with non-Service pupils and staff.
- Have days where the school celebrates the Armed Forces.

Oxfordshire County Council responded to the feedback and created the [Service Pupil Promise](#) on how they would action the feedback received.

### Providing a Forum for Service Children

- In Autumn 2017, Royal Caledonian Education Trust (now known as Forces Children Scotland) held a series of ‘Teen Talks’ student conferences across Scotland, giving young people from Service families an opportunity to come together and discuss issues important to them. There was an overwhelming view from participants that their views are often overlooked in decisions affecting them. In response, the Trust established and now manages and delivers a Youth Participation Programme which works closely with the Ministry of Defence, community workers and schools, supported by external funding. The programme has seven local forums and a national forum. Groups are led by young people for young people, and increase youth confidence, skills, networking, and opportunities to have a say on policies and services. The programme led to the development of the ‘[Your Mind Matters](#)’ project to assist Service children with their mental health, the ‘[Our Forces Life](#)’ project to raise awareness of Service life among civilian peers, and the ‘[Manifesto for Service children](#)’ published ahead of the Scottish Parliament elections in 2021.

### Providing Information

- Highland Council has a dedicated group, the Military Liaison Group (Education), which is a partnership of local Armed Forces representatives and specialist providers and experts. The Group works with children, young people, and their families, listening and acting on their views. The Group has a dedicated [Armed Forces website](#) providing information, resources, support and training opportunities for families, children and schools. The Group issues a regular newsletter with information updates, links, and resources for families, schools and the Armed Forces Community, which has both a local and national reach.

### Thriving Lives Toolkit for Schools

- The Service Children’s Progression Alliance is a partnership of organisations focused on improving outcomes for Service children, hosted by the University of Winchester and supported by the Ministry of Defence. The Alliance undertook extensive, targeted research, working in collaboration with schools and other partners across the UK to establish a [toolkit](#). This toolkit helps schools ensure they provide effective support to Service children. It provides detailed resources including the evidence base, what schools can do to support their Service children, who can help, and a range of case studies. The toolkit provides a framework of 7

principles through which schools can reflect on their practice and a 3-tier set of CPD resources. The principles are as follows.

1. Clarity of approach – Leaders’ understanding and approach ensure resources and policies improve Service children’s outcomes.
2. Wellbeing is supported – Tailored pastoral provision supports Service children’s mental health and wellbeing.
3. Achievement is maximised – Teaching, assessment and support ensure the continuity of Service children’s learning and progression.
4. Transition is effective – Systems and support ensure seamless transitions for Service children arriving at and leaving school.
5. Children are heard – Service children’s diverse voices are heard and inform the support they receive.
6. Parents are engaged – Strong home-school partnerships help Service families feel valued as part of the school community.
7. Staff are well-informed – Supportive training and networks ensure all staff understand and support each Service child.

Further examples relating to the improvement of Service child wellbeing can be found in [section 3I](#).

## 3E2. Safeguarding

3.21. If Service children move frequently between schools, it will be especially important that any child protection/safeguarding information is shared between schools. This is the responsibility of the safeguarding lead, as set out for England in the statutory guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), and for Wales, the designated safeguarding person as set out in [Keeping Learners Safe](#). Knowledge of the wellbeing issues described above may support school staff when considering how best to safeguard a Service child. The statutory guidance for England on [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#), and for Scotland, the [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021](#), include sections on Service children. For Wales, [Working Together to Safeguard People: Information sharing to safeguard children](#), and its accompanying resources, provide non-statutory advice on information-sharing to safeguard children.

## 3F. Transport

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3.22. If a Service child is required to move schools outside the normal admissions round, the local authority might not be able to place them in a school close to their new home, resulting in them experiencing **a longer journey time to school, or a more difficult journey**.

3.23. This might be mitigated through the normal application of the free school transport policy – the Service child might meet the eligibility criteria for free school transport in [England](#), [Wales](#), [Scotland](#), and [N Ireland](#).

3.24. If a Service child, who is eligible for free home to school transport, is required to move home within a local area, but able to remain at the same school, they might find they no longer qualify for free transport to that school. In 2015, the (then-named) Local

Government Ombudsman [upheld a complaint](#) about a council in England discontinuing school transport for a Service child after the family was required to move elsewhere in the area for Service reasons. One of the Ombudsman's findings was that the council had not properly considered the Armed Forces Covenant. It recommended that the council remedy the situation by putting in place home to school transport for the child as soon as possible, and by paying the family £2,000 to reimburse the costs they had incurred and acknowledge the stress they were caused as a result of the council's faults.

3.25. Bodies responsible for home to school transport may wish to consider using their discretionary powers to provide free or subsidised transport to Service children who do not meet the eligibility criteria. In England, this could include 16–17-year-old Service children attending school or further education as part of their statutory duty to participate in education or training until their 18th birthday, as the level of support provided to them is for local authorities to decide, and the arrangements do not have to include free or subsidised travel.

3.26. When the Service child is not entitled to free school transport, the Service person might not be available to assist with transporting the child to school, due to the unique obligations and sacrifices of *separation* and *hours of work*. Other support structures such as grandparents might also not be available, and this can place **a significant burden on the Service partner**. This can be worse if siblings are placed in separate schools some distance apart, due to lack of school places, as it means juggling different transport arrangements. The need to manage school transport arrangements might mean the Service partner finds it harder to continue their own employment, as it could affect the hours they can work. These challenges may be more difficult for Service families with children who have additional needs.

#### Mitigating Action

- Upon moving to a new area, two sibling Service children were placed in different schools. Their mother described the challenges faced in getting both children to school on time. They were provided with a free taxi service for one child, allowing her to walk the other child to school. The schools also offered free after school care until she could collect one child and until she was at home for the taxi to drop off the other child.

#### Amending the School Transport Policy

- In response to the 2015 decision by the (then-named) Local Government Ombudsman described above, the council committed to improving its practice by:
  - making sure officers and panels identify at an early stage if the Covenant is relevant to an application;
  - amending its school transport policy to stress that the list of examples it provides (of exceptional circumstances in which it will consider exercising its discretion to provide transport) is not intended as a definitive list, and to clearly invite parents to identify if their circumstances are similar to the circumstances listed;
  - amending its school transport appeal forms to ask parents to highlight any reasons why they may not be able to maintain any arrangements they have put in place for the child to get to school.

### Adapting to Local Circumstances

- When transport is provided for pupils in Northern Ireland, they are, in most cases, transported directly from the military base to the school. Northern Ireland's Department of Education liaises with the Armed Forces' designated Family Officer to ensure the Education Authority and the taxi drivers complete the correct compliance checks for access to the military base.

## **3G. Attendance**

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3.27. Due to the unique obligation and sacrifice of *separation*, Service families might be **unable to take holidays, or spend time together, during normal school holiday periods**. Service children might find they have limited time to spend with their serving parent(s) if the parent can only return home during term-time. The unique obligation and sacrifice of *hours of work* might mean that, even if the Service person remains on their UK base location, their duties prevent them taking leave during normal school holiday periods. The Service family might therefore ask the school for permission to take a holiday during term-time.

3.28. As with all children, the decision on whether to authorise term-time holidays for Service children sits solely with the head teacher of the school. While the educational needs of the Service child will always be a critical factor in determining whether term-time absence should be granted, the wider family impacts on Service children should also be considered. It can be difficult for serving parents to obtain permission to take their child out of school during term-time if the school's attendance policy and decision-making fails to take account of the nature of Service life.

3.29. It is for Service families to apply to the school in advance, presenting evidence of how operational needs of the Armed Forces have legitimately prevented a Service family from taking holiday during normal school holiday periods.

3.30. In the past, head teachers have sought advice on applications for school absence from Unit Commanding Officers and their Welfare staff, who are able to provide advice, verification and endorsement as required. The Ministry of Defence has produced [Guidance](#) that provides advice to head teachers regarding school term-time absence for Service children. It includes contact details that can be used if head teachers are unsure how to make contact with the relevant Armed Forces unit.

### Attendance Code

- Northern Ireland's Department of Education has created a specific pupil attendance code referred to as Code J (Extended Leave), that schools can apply in circumstances where time away from school is required to address a range of domestic and family-related issues. Usage of the code does not adversely affect the pupil's attendance record.



### 3H. Additional needs support

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3.31. 'Additional needs' is the term used here to describe children who require further support. This is referred to as Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in England, Additional Learning Needs (ALN) in Wales, Additional Support for Learning (ASL) in Scotland, and Special Educational Needs (SEN) in Northern Ireland.

3.32. The challenges that all Service children experience as a result of being required to move schools can be felt even more profoundly by Service children with additional needs. If a statutory plan is already in place, it may take some time for the new authority to make similar arrangements as were in place in the previous location. This can be mitigated if the originating authority is able to provide all necessary child records to the new authority in a timely manner. Some Service families have reported that their children have spent time out of school, or receive inappropriate provision (such as being placed in Pupil Referral Units), due to local authority difficulties securing a school placement that could offer the relevant provision.

3.33. Service children might be required to move between the home nations of the UK or to overseas locations, where local provision and processes to acquire the appropriate support are different to that to which children and families were previously accustomed. Management of additional needs plans can be difficult for Service families who are posted from their home nation to elsewhere in the UK or overseas – when they return, they might need to go through a new assessment process.

3.34. Delays in accessing specialist support and provision for Service children can cause additional challenge for Service families. In addition, over the course of a number of re-locations, the potential disruption to services may impact on the Service child's progress and wellbeing.

3.35. In England, the [SEND code of practice](#), which has statutory force in England, includes guidance relating to Service children and families.

3.36. In Wales, chapter 18 of the [ALN Code for Wales](#) includes guidance relating to educational provision for Service children with ALN. The ALN Code also sets out specific duties for maintained schools, colleges and local authorities when deciding upon ALN and when preparing or reviewing an individual development plan for a Service child or young person.

3.37. In Scotland, the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 requires local authorities to identify and address any barriers to learning a child or young person experiences. These barriers can occur for any reason and can be short or long-term in duration. This would include, for example, the anxiety a child may have when a parent is deployed or the impact of interrupted learning due to frequent moves. The statutory guidance in the Code of Practice which accompanies the 2004 Act also provides support in this process, and makes specific reference to Armed Forces families and to transitions. The Scottish Government funds a range of services which seek to support families to access advice and support on ASL. This includes [Enquire](#), the national advice and information service for parents on ASL, and [My Rights, My Say](#), which provides support to children who are seeking to exercise their rights under the 2004 Act.

3.38. Statutory plans are not transferrable to Northern Ireland, so if a Service child with additional needs re-locates to Northern Ireland, to obtain a Statement of SEN they would have to undergo the formal process for Statutory Assessment from the beginning.

#### Agreement of Principles by Multiple Local Authorities in England

- The [Ministry of Defence Local Authority Partnership](#) (MODLAP) is a partnership between the MOD and local authorities in England that have committed to work together to improve the experience and outcomes of Service children with SEND. The MODLAP established a set of principles to provide a framework for the effective management of transfers of Service children with SEND. The principles build on the [SEND code of practice](#).

### **3I. Use of Service Pupil Premium funding (England only)**

3.39. In England, extra funding to schools with enrolled Service children is available through the Service Pupil Premium (SPP). It can therefore help remove disadvantage. Schools should be aware of best practice in the use of these funds and communicate to concerned parents how funds are being spent. The SPP is only available in England.

3.40. In response to parents' concerns over the use of the SPP, the UK Government worked with schools to establish the best ways schools have used SPP funding. The UK Government published these [findings](#) for the benefit of all schools.

3.41. Examples of good uses of SPP include:

- a. Monitoring Service child progress against other children
- b. Development of intervention strategies
- c. Provision of trained teaching assistants and pastoral support mentors
- d. School trips to increase awareness of the Armed Forces
- e. Membership of Military Kids Club Heroes – a network for Service children in education
- f. Extra-curricular activities
- g. Liaising regularly with Service parents
- h. Building links to local Armed Forces bases

3.42. The template that schools are required to complete and publish, setting out their overall Pupil Premium strategy, now includes an optional field on how the SPP was spent in the previous academic year, and what impact this had on eligible pupils.

3.43. In Wales, Service children are supported by the [Supporting Service Children in Education Cymru Programme](#), funded by the Welsh Government, which includes targeted funding to support individual schools and local authorities.

3.44. Whilst Scotland does not have a direct equivalent of the SPP, all children in Scotland with an additional support need are eligible for support. This includes needs arising from a parent's mobility and deployment in the Armed Forces.

### SPP Resource Directory

- The [West Yorkshire Service Pupil Premium Resource Directory](#) has been produced as part of the West Yorkshire Armed Forces Covenant Project. The Directory pulls together information from the Department for Education, Ministry of Defence, Service Children in State Schools, and the Service Children's Progression Alliance. It has been created to support schools develop their understanding of the Armed Forces Covenant, the Armed Forces Community, and the Service Pupil Premium.
- Shropshire Council has a [portal](#) for Armed Forces support for use by both the Armed Forces Community and public services. One section provides clarity over the purpose of the SPP and recommended uses, pointing to official government advice.

### Sharing Best Practice

- Local schools in Gloucestershire worked together to set up a network for sharing resources, training and ideas around helping Service children to succeed in education. A strong sharing culture was created and a better understanding of approaches and how to nurture Service pupils grew across the cluster. This particularly benefitted smaller schools with less funding and fewer Service children.

# 4. Housing

## Summary

4.1. Only a small minority of the Armed Forces Community will need to access the housing services provided by the housing bodies subject to the Duty ([section 4A](#)). When members of the Armed Forces Community do need to access housing services, the disadvantages they can experience, arising from the unique obligations and sacrifices of Service life, include the following. When these disadvantages are experienced, they are most likely to be experienced by veterans, Service personnel that are about to leave Service and become veterans, and Service families.

- a. **A lack of knowledge about the social housing services available in their local area, or how to access them.** This might make them less likely to seek the housing services to which they are entitled. ([Section 4C1](#))
- b. **Not building up sufficient 'local connection'** in accordance with a local authority's allocation scheme, reducing their access to social housing in the area where they live. ([Section 4C2](#))
- c. **Not being prioritised to receive suitable social housing, or experience a lack of available social housing**, that meets particular housing needs caused by physical or mental injury sustained in Service. ([Section 4C3](#))
- d. **Finding it more difficult to communicate with a housing body**, while on a posting overseas, compared to the housing body's non-Service clients, who are in the UK. ([Section 4C4](#))
- e. **A lack of knowledge about how to navigate the civilian housing sector, welfare system and budgeting**, leading to difficulty gaining or maintaining a social housing tenancy ([section 4D](#)) or increasing their likelihood of becoming homeless ([section 4E](#)).
- f. **A reluctance to seek early help to avoid homelessness**, for reasons such as stigma, shame, or a belief that civilian bodies will not understand their experience, which could also increase their likelihood of becoming homeless. ([Section 4E](#))
- g. **Requiring adaptations to be made to their home when they move to a new area, or lacking knowledge of what grants are available**, how to make applications for them, and what information is required to support their application. This could result in them spending more time in a home that does not meet their needs. ([Section 4F](#))

4.2. Knowledge of which of the people that use their services are members of the Armed Forces Community will underpin successful responses to these issues by the specified housing bodies. ([Section 4B](#))

## 4A. The Armed Forces Community and public housing services

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4.3. Some **full-time Service personnel** live in their own privately owned, or privately rented, housing. If Service personnel are unaccompanied on a posting (either because they are single or because their family stays living elsewhere), the Armed Forces offers them Single Living Accommodation, normally by means of a mess or accommodation block, or suitable substitute accommodation. If Service personnel are accompanied by their family to a posting, the Armed Forces offers them dedicated Service Family Accommodation, or suitable substitute accommodation. Therefore, Service personnel do not themselves normally require social housing.

4.4. However, if **families** of Service personnel do not accompany them on their posting, they might remain living in social housing away from the Service person, and receive more limited support from the Armed Forces. **Reservists** might also live with their family in social housing.

4.5. The majority of **veterans** make a smooth transition from military to civilian life. Only a small minority of veterans struggle to settle down and maintain housing. Veterans might require housing services in terms of social housing, tenancies, and adaptations (as explained below).

4.6. The following sections describe some of the ways that disadvantage can be experienced by the Armed Forces Community in different areas of housing. The issues described are not exhaustive as other issues might arise for a variety of reasons.

4.7. Case studies in text boxes have been included as helpful illustrations of some of the ways that bodies have helped to mitigate these disadvantages or, where appropriate, made special provision. **These case studies do not prescribe mandatory actions**, but they have been included to provide examples and ideas of the kinds of behaviours and actions that have resulted in a better experience for the Armed Forces Community, and which bodies might wish to consider when complying with the Duty.

## 4B. Identifying Service Users from the Armed Forces Community

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4.8. An awareness by the specified bodies of those using their housing services who are members of the Armed Forces Community will help to improve the way in which their needs are met.

4.9. In June 2020, [statutory guidance](#) was published for local authorities in England, titled 'Improving access to social housing for members of the Armed Forces'. This includes a section on how local authorities in England can identify applications from members of the Armed Forces Community, to ensure that they are considered appropriately.

### Better Identification of Members of the Armed Forces Community

- Application forms to Wigan and Leigh Housing now include the question, 'If you or your partner are serving or have formerly served in the Armed Forces, please provide details of your service number'. This is to assist with identification of

members of the Armed Forces Community, to improve the way their needs are met.

- The Cobseo Housing Cluster’s [No Homeless Veterans Campaign](#) aims to ensure veterans are identified at the point of need, and signposted to the enhanced support services available. It encourages public bodies to ‘Think Veteran’ by:
  - Identification – routinely asking every person who applies for housing whether they are a veteran, record and maintain the data, and label veteran-specific information on their website.
  - Support – consider whether they can meet housing needs and any unique needs arising from Service, refer them to the Veterans’ Gateway when all routes are exhausted, and appoint an accountable champion to ensure commitments are met.

[Stories of support](#) provided to veterans and their families are available.

## 4C. Allocations policy for social housing

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### 4C1. Access to housing services

4.10. Due to the unique obligation and sacrifice of *unfamiliarity with civilian life*,<sup>20</sup> veterans and Service families might **lack knowledge about the social housing services available in their local area, or how to access them**. This might make them less likely to seek the housing services to which they are entitled.

4.11. Due to the unique obligation and sacrifice of *danger*, veterans and Service families might experience mental health issues which exacerbate their challenges in accessing services from which they could benefit.

#### Employment of Outreach Officers

- In 2012, Gateshead Council identified a lack of members of the Armed Forces Community accessing local authority housing services. A dedicated Armed Forces Outreach officer was funded to connect the council with the local Armed Forces Community, leading to a 25% increase in members of the Armed Forces Community approaching Gateshead Council for housing advice. In 2020/21, as part of a larger regional Armed Forces Outreach Service including Newcastle, Durham and Northumberland local authorities and Believe Housing, the regional service offered support to 424 members of the Community, raised £61,979 to pay rent arrears, assigned correct social housing priority to 93 members, and assisted 76 members to move into social housing.
- In Glasgow, the city’s veterans’ hub Helping Heroes has a housing expert post, funded by Glasgow Housing Association, the city’s largest registered social landlord. Those interviewed in Glasgow identified that having a professional directly employed by the city’s largest registered social landlord means that the

<sup>20</sup> The unique obligations and sacrifices in *italics* throughout this chapter are explained in [section 1G](#).

steps which many in the Community have to go through in order to get to the right advice are significantly reduced.

- Councils in the Vale of Glamorgan, Cardiff, Rhondda Cynon Taff and Merthyr Tydfil have identified a gap in the provision of tailored advice and information. Posts have been created to provide direct help and advice to the Armed Forces Community on all subjects, including housing, and simple signposting to ensure the Armed Forces Community can access the right public and third sector services for them. The officers are present in the community and organise coffee mornings and other events. This is supported by a website, telephone, and email service. Face-to-face appointments can be booked at the council or at home. Since this Veteran Advice Service launched in 2017 in Cardiff, and 2018 in Vale of Glamorgan, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil, over 4,000 enquiries have been received across the four authorities.

### Signposting of Services

- Recognising that many in the Armed Forces Community have never applied for social housing before, Hull City Council created a dedicated [webpage](#), setting out, in clear terms, how to apply for social housing, criteria (including local connection), prioritisation of applications, and details about statutory rights and requirements.
- In Wigan, the council employs a key worker for veterans and their families, who can help them navigate the public services landscape. They have also mapped all the charities in the borough. This means that they can respond to need effectively and quickly so that if, for example, housing is provided without furniture, the key worker can refer to the Charities Map to understand how they could arrange for some furniture to be provided.

### Managing Tenancies

- A veteran had been medically discharged from the Army after suffering a brain haemorrhage. The veteran lived independently, until stress and depression led to trouble with neighbours, and he went to live with his mother. During this time, he received support from his GP to manage his depression. As his mother suffered from dementia, he began the process of having her tenancy agreement transferred to him. However, his brain injury led to him forgetting to submit the application. The tenancy was not transferred, and he was facing legal proceedings to evict him. The council and the Royal British Legion worked with the Registered Social Landlord to allow him to stay until he secured a new tenancy.

## 4C2. Local connection

4.12. Due to the unique obligation and sacrifice of *geographical mobility*, veterans or Service families might find they have **not built up sufficient 'local connection'** in accordance with a local authority's allocation scheme, reducing their access to social housing in the area where they live. This could prevent them accessing waiting lists for social housing once they leave the Armed Forces and are no longer eligible for Service accommodation.

4.13. [Regulations](#), first introduced in 2012, set out criteria under which members of the Armed Forces Community in England cannot be disqualified from social housing because of a local connection requirement. The June 2020 [statutory guidance](#) for local authorities in England makes clear that local authorities in England are expected to disapply any local connection requirement from divorced or separated spouses or civil partners of Service personnel who are required to move out of accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence.

4.14. Exemptions to local connection criteria also exist in Wales, provided that the applicant can evidence that they were posted to an area in Wales during their time in the Armed Forces. These exemptions are explained in the Welsh Government's [guidance](#).

4.15. In response to the Scottish Veterans' Commissioner's recommendations, the Scottish Government published a [Practice Guide](#) for social landlords on allocations for people leaving the Armed Forces. It includes guidance on giving priority to Service leavers and on ensuring that veterans are not at a disadvantage when applying for social housing due to Service time spent outside an area. Following consultation, the Scottish Government published a [ministerial statement](#), in March 2021, which sets out the circumstances and general criteria which would act as the reference for exercising the power to modify local connection.

#### Exemption from Residency Criteria

- Central Bedfordshire Council has a housing allocations policy that includes an exemption to residency and employment criteria to all currently serving and former Regular personnel. Ordinarily, applicants must have lived in the area for three years or worked in the area for six months. However, current and former Regular personnel are exempted, and also there is not a five-year time limit on ex-serving personnel making an application.

### **4C3. Availability of suitable social housing**

4.16. Due to the unique obligation and sacrifice of *danger*, veterans might have particular social housing needs caused by physical or mental injury arising from their time in Service. For example, supported housing, or a home which allows wheelchair access. Other members of the Armed Forces Community, such as Service families, might also have urgent social housing needs. However, they might find they are **not prioritised to receive suitable social housing, or experience a lack of available social housing**.

4.17. [Statutory guidance](#) on allocation of accommodation in England, first published in June 2012, and [statutory guidance](#) on allocation of accommodation in Wales, first published in March 2016, both ensure that 'additional preference' – high priority – for social housing is given to certain groups in the Armed Forces Community. Also, the June 2020 [statutory guidance](#) sets out how local authorities in England can ensure that members of the Armed Forces Community suffering from mental ill health (wholly or partly attributable to Service) are given appropriate priority for social housing. It should be noted that a mental health issue as a result of Service can continue or start years after the person has left the Armed Forces.



4.18. The Scottish Government published new and refreshed guidance to improve awareness of the Armed Forces Community's housing needs. The refreshed [Local Housing Strategy guidance](#) encourages local authorities to consider fully the housing requirements of the Armed Forces Community. It was also strengthened to encourage appropriate engagement with relevant organisations, such as Veterans Scotland, to understand better the needs of this Community when developing the Strategies.

4.19. A variety of other reports are available, such as the Scottish Veterans Commissioner's report [Getting Transition Right in Scotland](#), FiMT's report [Working Together to Meet the Housing Needs of Ex-Service Personnel](#), and Riverside and Stoll's [Accommodation for Single Veterans](#).

### Prioritisation

- Veterans in Wigan with medical need related to Service are given priority on the housing waiting list, and spouses going through divorce will also be given priority.
- In Welwyn Hatfield, the waiting list for social housing is around three years. Those not in the Armed Forces Community are able to apply for social housing with this in mind, knowing it will take roughly three years to access housing, however veterans may not be able to do so, as the Armed Forces might have moved them to the area (when they were still in Service) only recently. Welwyn Hatfield Council changed its social housing policy. The banding for Service leavers via giving notice (one of the routes of discharge) was modified to take into account the shorter time frame veterans face when leaving via this route.
- When South Lanarkshire Council's housing allocation policy was introduced in 2009, Service applicants were awarded the highest single award of points available under the policy. The aim being that this would enable an offer of housing to be made when the applicant was discharged. However, in 2010, it was identified that the points awarded to Service applicants were sometimes insufficient to enable an offer of housing to be made. An amendment to the allocation policy was made, to allow Service applicants who meet certain criteria to be awarded the highest priority for housing, and be queued on the Urgent Housing Need list, along with homeless applicants and those with an urgent medical need. In 2019, further amendments to the eligibility criteria were made in relation to Service applicants, to allow connection to the area through previous kinship care arrangements, and to extend the timescale within which priority for housing can be awarded after date of discharge, from six weeks to up to six months.

### Provision of Supported Housing

- A council became aware of an 82-year-old veteran and his wife who were soon to become homeless from their static caravan which was situated for some time on a touring site, not a residential site. The wife had dementia and Alzheimer's and, in accordance with local Armed Forces housing policy, they were fast-tracked to supported housing. A homeless accommodation house was provided, entitlement for benefits was assessed, and the council worked with local groups and the Royal British Legion to fully furnish the home with discounted blinds, furniture and white

goods, while the wife was placed in a care home for two days. The couple believe that the help and kindness they were given extended their time together.

### Dedicated Housing Stock

- Herefordshire has a significant shortage of available housing stock to meet the demand. Herefordshire Council identified and gifted some land in Leominster for a ground-breaking veteran self-build project, partnering with Stonewater Housing (a social housing provider), local builders Harpers, and Alabare charity. Ground was broken at the end of 2018, and the project was completed at the end of 2020. Nine veterans, of whom six were classed as homeless with a range of complex needs, took part, building their own homes whilst also gaining experience, training, and construction qualifications. It had a positive and significant impact on their lives. A total of 19 homes were built, reducing social housing waiting times in the county. Herefordshire Council is now seeking other sites where this can be replicated.
- To help single male veterans, some with a criminal record, and other single males with a non-priority status under homelessness legislation, the Watling Street Project was set up by North Warwickshire Borough Council and Veterans Contact Point with funding from Warwickshire Council. It worked with Cornerstone Partnership (a local housing social enterprise) to lease a 5-bed property to accommodate single males. Four veterans and nine civilians have used the home, and the charity also supports them for up to 12 months after they leave.
- [East Lothian Council](#) created some brand-new properties specially for veterans, comprising six 2-bedroom flats, three of which are fully wheelchair-accessible units on the ground floor. These are council tenancies set aside for the express use of veterans, who were identified and nominated by Veterans Housing Scotland. All six properties have been allocated. These tenancies have all been sustained and the residents have integrated well into their local community.

## 4C4. Communication with Service families

4.20. Due to the unique obligation and sacrifice of *geographical mobility*, Service families who are clients of a housing body might be overseas. They might **find it more difficult to communicate with a housing body than the housing body's non-Service clients**, who are in the UK. For example, they might not be able to access online forms due to military operational requirements preventing access to the Internet, or they might have difficulty phoning the housing body's helplines during normal UK office hours due to time differences.

### Adopting a Flexible Approach

- The Armed Forces Outreach Service based in the North East of England supported a Service person, based in Germany, who was about to discharge from the Armed Forces, and wanted to move back to the North East after his discharge. A flexible, tailored approach was taken. Council offices were used as a contact address, as the computer system had not been designed to register addresses overseas. Once a suitable property was identified, a virtual viewing of the property

was provided, and photos and videos were sent. A family member also viewed the property on his behalf before he accepted the offer of the property. The property sign-up was done via email, and keys were in a lock box for him to collect upon his return. Some of these practices have now been adopted into mainstream working practice for those applying for housing whilst being based overseas, significantly benefitting the Armed Forces Community applying for housing in these circumstances.

## 4D. Tenancy strategies (England only)

4.21. Local housing authorities in England are required to publish a strategy setting out the matters to which the registered providers of social housing in its district are to have regard. Public bodies might wish to consult private or third sector housing strategies that address the Armed Forces Community, such as [Riverside's Strategy for Veterans](#).

4.22. Due to the unique obligation and sacrifice of *unfamiliarity with civilian life*, veterans and Service families might have **a lack of knowledge about the civilian housing sector, welfare system and budgeting**, leading to difficulty gaining or maintaining a social housing tenancy, or they might possess a general sense of disconnection from civilian society and need supported housing.

4.23. Veterans and Service families can have diverse needs from social housing tenancies. Some members, such as vulnerable tenants, require short-term, supported, transitional accommodation with flexible tenancies of less than five years, while others may benefit from long-term secure, or even lifetime, tenancies.

### Lifetime Tenancies

- Dover Council's Tenancy Strategy 2012-16 states that former members of the Armed Forces who qualify for social housing should be offered lifetime tenancies.

### Offering a Variety of Tenancies

- Ealing Council Tenancy Strategy (Draft) 2021 identifies that vulnerable veterans might require short-term supported, transitional accommodation, requiring flexible tenancies of less than five years. It also requires landlords to provide tenancy sustainment support.

### Improving Understanding of Issues

- A not-for-profit housing association in the North of England, Johnnie Johnson Housing, identified a need to improve housing for veterans and awareness of Armed Forces issues. Along with other housing providers, local authorities, and Service charities, they seek to identify areas for service improvement, share best practice, and hear from local and national speakers on Armed Forces issues. The group also employs a network of champions who meet and share best practice which is then shared across their organisations. Key initiatives include the following.

- Creating e-learning projects to improve staff awareness of Armed Forces issues.
- Creating a local online portal to signpost key services that veterans can access.
- Dedicating five new-build properties for veterans who meet specified criteria.
- Making veterans a high-level priority needs category for social housing.

## 4E. Homelessness

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4.24. Due to the unique obligation and sacrifice of *unfamiliarity with civilian life*, veterans might **lack knowledge about how to navigate the civilian housing sector**, which could increase their likelihood of becoming homeless at some point in their future. Veterans who are homeless might be less aware of their entitlements or the services available to them. Alternatively, they might be **reluctant to seek early help to avoid homelessness** for reasons such as stigma, shame, or a belief that civilian bodies will not understand their experience, which could increase their likelihood of becoming homeless.

4.25. The majority of veterans make a smooth transition from military to civilian life. Less than 1% of households in England that are owed a homelessness duty have a support need as a result of serving in the Armed Forces.<sup>21</sup> Also, a [Royal British Legion study](#) found that 'There is little evidence to support the notion that military life... is a cause of veterans' homelessness'.<sup>22</sup> However, the unique obligations and sacrifices of *geographical mobility* and *unfamiliarity with civilian life* might reduce a veteran's general ability to cope in civilian life, and exacerbate a vulnerable individual's situation. Service personnel are required to vacate their living quarters after leaving Service, so those who do become homeless should not be considered as having become homeless intentionally.

4.26. Service personnel receive a high level of support to plan and prepare for their discharge from the Armed Forces, and are able to access a number of support services available to veterans who are, or are at risk of becoming, homeless. Service personnel must usually give a 12-month notice period prior to the end of their Service, which includes dedicated periods for resettlement to allow them to prepare for civilian life, including sourcing private accommodation. Service personnel receive three months' notice to vacate their accommodation, with the end of the notice period being their last day of Service, and, in some cases, those requiring further time may be granted it. In most cases of short notice discharge, three months' notice to vacate will still be given even if this goes past the discharge date, the exception to this is in cases of discharge on disciplinary grounds or misconduct, where a minimum of 28 days' notice is given. Housing advice is available to all Service personnel and their families, both during and after Service.

4.27. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 requires the Secretary of State for Defence to refer members of the Regular Armed Forces in England, who may be homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days, to a local housing authority.

<sup>21</sup> [Live tables on homelessness](#), Table A3 – Number of households owed a homelessness duty by support needs of household.

<sup>22</sup> Page 1 of the linked Royal British Legion study.

4.28. Working with Armed Forces stakeholders, the Welsh Government has developed a [National housing pathway for veterans of the Armed Forces](#) to provide clarity and support for veterans and their families into either home ownership, or renting in the private or social sectors.

4.29. In Scotland, a person should be treated as homeless, even if they have accommodation, if it would not be reasonable for them to continue to stay in it. Local authorities have a legal duty to help people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

#### Research into Homelessness and the Armed Forces

- Riverside charity is conducting [research](#) alongside the University of York to explore current provision and effectiveness of housing-related information, and advice provided to the Armed Forces Community, with the aim of creating an action plan which addresses veterans' homelessness. Riverside will conduct an international literature review, conduct fieldwork with serving personnel and veterans, and consult with key stakeholders, to identify and map impacts. This will map the journey from someone joining the Armed Forces through to their experiences of homelessness, enabling a view of the right type of interventions to make and when to make them.

#### Signposting of Services about Homelessness

- Rugby Borough Council has a [webpage](#) that provides advice to the Armed Forces Community who are at risk of becoming homeless or who are homeless. It provides clear advice, explaining entitlements, additional preference, advice on how to interact with their services, and other help available from third parties.

## 4F. Disabled Facilities Grants

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4.30. Due to the unique obligation and sacrifice of *danger*, members of the Armed Forces might suffer injuries which require significant adaptations to be made to their homes when they leave Service.

4.31. Family members who are disabled might also require adaptations to be made to their home when they move to a new area, during the Service person's time in Service. While this can also be an issue for non-Service families, Service families can move often due to the unique obligation and sacrifice of *geographical mobility*. This could result in them **spending more time in a home that does not meet their needs**.

4.32. Due to the unique obligation and sacrifice of *unfamiliarity with civilian life*, veterans and Service families might **lack knowledge of what grants are available** for themselves or family members, how to make applications for them, and what information is required to support their application.

4.33. When an entitled Service family needing adaptations lives in Ministry of Defence accommodation, the Ministry of Defence ensures that suitable accommodation is provided, in line with its policies. Also, on occasions, the Ministry of Defence may fund adaptations to private accommodation for wounded, injured and sick personnel transiting out of Service.

4.34. Local housing authorities in England and Wales have a statutory duty to provide home adaptations for people of all ages and tenures eligible for a Disabled Facilities Grant, subject to a needs assessment, eligibility criteria and a means test. This can include Armed Forces personnel or their families living in their own accommodation, and veterans.

4.35. Local housing authorities in England and Wales can also publish a local housing assistance policy under powers of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (RRO) to use Government funding for Disabled Facilities Grants more flexibly to best meet local need, including the provision of home adaptations assistance to specific groups. In putting together local policies, local authorities should consider how to address the particular needs of Armed Forces personnel or their families living in their own accommodation, as well as veterans.

4.36. [Guidance](#) has been published for local authorities in England on the effective delivery of the Disabled Facilities Grant. It includes a section on the Armed Forces Community.

4.37. In Scotland, this is called the Scheme of Assistance. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 (Scheme of Assistance) Regulations 2008 state that where adaptations required are essential to the disabled person's needs and the required work is structural (or involves permanent changes to the house) the applicant must also be awarded a mandatory grant.

# Appendix 1: Bodies and functions in scope of the Covenant Duty

A1.1. The **specified bodies** who are subject to the Covenant Duty are listed in the Armed Forces Act 2006 at section 343AA(3) in relation to England, section 343AB(3) in relation to Wales, section 343AC(3) in relation to Scotland, and section 343AD(3) in relation to Northern Ireland. They are listed in the table below, grouped by healthcare, education and housing.

A1.2. The **relevant functions** in scope of the Covenant Duty are those functions exercised under or by virtue of the legislative provisions listed in the Armed Forces Act 2006 at section 343AA(4-6) in relation to England, section 343AB(4-6) in relation to Wales, section 343AC(4-6) in relation to Scotland, and section 343AD(4-6) in relation to Northern Ireland. These functions in the fields of healthcare, education and housing are listed in the table below.

A1.3. When terms relating to the specified bodies and relevant functions are further defined in sections 343AA to 343AD of the Act, those definitions have also been included in the table below for ease of reference.

Country	Specified bodies	Relevant functions are functions under or by virtue of the following legislative provisions
<b>Healthcare</b>		
England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NHS England</li> <li>Integrated care boards, which means a body established under section 14Z25 of the National Health Service Act 2006.</li> <li>NHS Foundation Trusts</li> <li>NHS Trusts</li> <li>Local Authorities, which means a county council in England, a district council, a London borough council, the Common Council of the City of London, or the Council of the Isles of Scilly.<sup>23</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The National Health Service Act 2006</li> <li>Any provision of Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 (children and young people in England with special educational needs or disabilities), so far as it deals with health care provision. 'Health care provision' is to be interpreted as in Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 (see section 21 of that Act).</li> </ul>

<sup>23</sup> Unitary authorities are not explicitly listed in the definition of 'local authority in England' in section 343AA(8) of the Armed Forces Act 2006, and therefore not explicitly listed in this table, as legally they remain either a county council or district council, so are brought within scope of the Duty by the inclusion of these terms.

Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Local Health Board established under section 11 of the National Health Service (Wales) Act 2006</li> <li>• A Special Health Authority established under section 22 of the National Health Service (Wales) Act 2006, other than a cross-border Special Health Authority. 'Cross-border Special Health Authority' means a Special Health Authority which is established under the National Health Service Act 2006 and the National Health Service (Wales) Act 2006 by virtue of (a) paragraph 1(2) of Schedule 2 to the National Health Service (Consequential Provisions) Act 2006, or (b) the power under section 28 of the National Health Service Act 2006 and the power under section 22 of the National Health Service (Wales) Act 2006 being exercised together.</li> <li>• A National Health Service Trust in Wales.</li> <li>• A local authority in Wales, which means the council of a county or county borough in Wales.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The National Health Service (Wales) Act 2006</li> </ul>
Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An integration authority (within the meaning of section 59 of the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 (asp 9))</li> <li>• A Health Board constituted under section 2 of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978</li> <li>• A Special Health Board constituted under section 2 of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978.</li> <li>• The Common Services Agency for the Scottish Health Service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978</li> </ul>
Northern Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Department of Health (Northern Ireland), but only when exercising the relevant healthcare functions in scope of the Duty that were exercised by the former</li> </ul>	<p>Functions under or by virtue of any of the following, so far as the function relates to health care, where 'health care' means all forms of health care provided for individuals, whether relating to physical or mental health:</p>



	<p>Regional Health and Social Care Board prior to its dissolution.<sup>24</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Local Commissioning Group appointed under section 9 of the Health and Social Care (Reform) Act (Northern Ireland) 2009)</li> <li>• A Health and Social Care trust established by virtue of Article 10 of the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 (S.I. 1991/194 (N.I. 1)), other than the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Health and Social Care Trust.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1972 (S.I. 1972/1265 (N.I. 14))</li> <li>• The Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 (S.I. 1991/194 (N.I. 1))</li> <li>• The Health and Social Care (Reform) Act (Northern Ireland) 2009 (c.1 (N.I.)).</li> </ul>
<b>Education</b>		
England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Authorities, which means a county council in England, a district council, a London borough council, the Common Council of the City of London, or the Council of the Isles of Scilly.<sup>25</sup></li> <li>• Governing bodies of maintained schools, where ‘maintained school’ has the same meaning as in the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (see section 20 of that Act)</li> <li>• Proprietors of Academies, where ‘Academy’ has the same meaning as in the Education Act 1996 (see section 579(1) of that Act), and ‘proprietor’, in relation to an Academy, has the meaning given by section 579(1) of the Education Act 1996.</li> <li>• Non-maintained special schools, which means a school which is approved under section 342 of the Education Act 1996.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Education Act 1996</li> <li>• Part 3 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (school admissions)</li> <li>• s175 of the Education Act 2002 (duties of local authorities and governing bodies in relation to welfare of children)</li> <li>• Any provision of Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, so far as it deals with special educational provision. ‘Special educational provision’ is to be interpreted as in Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 (see section 21 of that Act).</li> </ul>

<sup>24</sup> The Act makes reference to Northern Ireland’s Regional Health and Social Care Board in the list of bodies specified in section 343AD(3) who are subject to the Duty. This Board was dissolved by the Health and Social Care Act (Northern Ireland) 2022, with effect from 1 April 2022, with its functions transferring to the Department of Health (Northern Ireland). Under the 2022 Act’s transitional provisions, the Duty will continue to apply to the relevant functions formerly exercised by the Board as now exercised by the Department for Health (Northern Ireland).

<sup>25</sup> Unitary authorities are not explicitly listed in the definition of ‘local authority in England’ in section 343AA(8) of the Armed Forces Act 2006, and therefore not explicitly listed in this table, as legally they remain either a county council or district council, so are brought within scope of the Duty by the inclusion of these terms.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governing bodies of institutions within the further education sector, where ‘governing body’ here has the meaning given by section 90 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, and ‘institution within the further education sector’ is to be interpreted in accordance with section 91(3) of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992.</li> <li>• Special post-16 institutions – this term has the same meaning as in the Children and Families Act 2014 (see section 83 of that Act).</li> </ul>	
Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A local authority in Wales, which means the council of a county or county borough in Wales.</li> <li>• The governing body of a maintained school in Wales, where ‘maintained school’ has the same meaning as in the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (see section 20 of that Act).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Education Act 1996</li> <li>• Part 3 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (school admissions)</li> <li>• Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 (duties of local authorities and governing bodies in relation to welfare of children)</li> <li>• Sections 2 to 7 and 9 of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008</li> <li>• Chapters 2 (individual development plans) and 3 (supplementary functions) of Part 2 of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018.</li> </ul>
Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A local authority in Scotland, which means a council constituted under section 2 of the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994.</li> <li>• A Health Board constituted under section 2 of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978</li> <li>• A person or body in their capacity as an appropriate agency for the purposes of section 23 of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (asp 4)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Part 2 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 (rights and duties of parents and functions of education authorities in relation to individual pupils), sections 28A, 28B, 42 and 51</li> <li>• Sections 1 and 2 of the Standards in Scotland’s Schools etc. Act 2000 (asp 6) (provision of school education: right of child and duty of education authority)</li> <li>• The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (asp 4), except sections 15 to 21 of, and Schedule 1 to, that Act</li> <li>• Parts 3 (children’s services planning) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (asp 8).</li> </ul>
Northern Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Education Authority established under section 1(1) of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Article 52 (school transport) of the Education and Libraries (Northern</li> </ul>

	<p>the Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 (c. 12 (N.I.))</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Board of Governors of a grant-aided school in Northern Ireland, where ‘grant-aided school’ means a grant-aided school within the meaning of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986.</li> <li>• The Regional Health and Social Care Board established under section 7 of the Health and Social Care (Reform) Act (Northern Ireland) 2009 (c.1 (N.I.))</li> <li>• A Health and Social Care trust established by virtue of Article 10 of the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 (S.I. 1991/194 (N.I. 1)), other than the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Health and Social Care Trust.</li> </ul>	<p>Ireland) Order 1986 (S.I. 1986/594 (N.I. 3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Part 2 (special educational needs) of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (S.I. 1996/274 (N.I. 1)), Articles 6 to 16 and 19 to 20A</li> <li>• Article 16(4) and (5) (admission criteria) of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 (S.I. 1997/866 (N.I. 5))</li> <li>• Articles 17 (duty on boards of governors to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils) and 22 (admission to special schools of children resident outside Northern Ireland) of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 (S.I. 2003/424 (N.I. 12)).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Housing</b></p>		
<p>England</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Authorities, which means a county council in England, a district council, a London borough council, the Common Council of the City of London, or the Council of the Isles of Scilly.<sup>26</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 (allocation of housing accommodation)</li> <li>• Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (homelessness: England)</li> <li>• Part 1 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (grants, etc for renewal of private sector housing)</li> <li>• Section 1 of the Homelessness Act 2002 (duty of local housing authority in England to formulate a homelessness strategy)</li> <li>• Section 150 of the Localism Act 2011 (tenancy strategies)</li> <li>• Regulation 3 of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (S.I. 2002/1860) (power of local housing authorities to provide assistance), so far as that regulation deals with the provision of</li> </ul>

<sup>26</sup> Unitary authorities are not explicitly listed in the definition of ‘local authority in England’ in section 343AA(8) of the Armed Forces Act 2006, and therefore not explicitly listed in this table, as legally they remain either a county council or district council, so are brought within scope of the Duty by the inclusion of these terms.

		financial assistance for a purpose corresponding to any purpose specified in s23 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (disabled facilities grants: purposes).
Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A local authority in Wales, which means the council of a county or county borough in Wales.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 (allocation of housing accommodation)</li> <li>• Part 1 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (grants, etc for renewal of private sector housing)</li> <li>• Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 (anaw 7)</li> <li>• Regulation 3 of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (S.I. 2002/1860) (power of local housing authorities to provide assistance), so far as that regulation deals with the provision of financial assistance for a purpose corresponding to any purpose specified in section 23 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (disabled facilities grants: purposes).</li> </ul>
Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A local authority in Scotland, which means a council constituted under section 2 of the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994.</li> <li>• A local authority landlord – this term has the same meaning as in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 (asp 10) (see section 11(3) of that Act).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sections 19 to 21 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (housing lists etc)</li> <li>• Part 2 of that Act (homeless persons)</li> <li>• Sections 1 and 2 (homelessness: strategies and advice) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 (asp 10)</li> <li>• Section 71(2)(e) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 (asp 1) (adaptation of a house for a disabled person).</li> </ul>
Northern Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Northern Ireland Housing Executive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articles 22 (house allocation scheme) and 22A (allocation only to eligible persons) of the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1981 (S.I. 1981/156 (N.I. 3))</li> <li>• Part 2 (housing the homeless) of the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1988 (S.I. 1988/1990 (N.I. 23)), except article 15</li> <li>• Chapter 2 of Part 3 of the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 (S.I. 2003/412 (N.I. 2)), so far as that</li> </ul>

		Chapter relates to disabled facilities grants. 'Disabled facilities grant' has the meaning given by Article 35(4) of the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 2003.
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# Appendix 2: How bodies can raise awareness of Armed Forces issues

A2.1. While the Duty is not prescriptive about the actions bodies should take in order to promote awareness of the Duty and the issues faced by the Armed Forces Community, the type of actions that they might wish to consider adopting have been included below. These are based on the existing good practice of those bodies already working to deliver the Armed Forces Covenant in their local area.

## Appointing individuals

- Local authorities can appoint an elected member champion.
- Appointing a dedicated officer, staff group, or other lead person, who can advise on and co-ordinate Armed Forces issues across the whole organisation.
- Promoting a single point of contact within the organisation that members of the Armed Forces Community can contact if they require assistance or advice.

## Communication and Engagement

- Organising and/or attending regular meetings with Armed Forces representatives, charities, public sector representatives, the local Armed Forces presence, Armed Forces Covenant networks, and/or organisation champion(s).
- Establishing and/or attending local partnership boards to collaborate with other similar organisations, sharing best practice and information.
- Providing a web page or material with key information and links for members of the Armed Forces Community (such as examples [1](#) [2](#) [3](#)), including details on complaints procedures and signposting relevant organisations such as ombudsmen.
- A clear statement of what members of the Armed Forces Community can expect from the organisation in terms of support (such as this [example](#)).
- A mechanism for reporting actions and achievements.
- A mechanism for prompting further research.
- Training frontline staff.

## Collaboration

- Sharing awareness, data and good practice on the Armed Forces Community within the organisation and other similar organisations.
- Requesting more information from organisations who have dealt with the Armed Forces Community before.

## Research

- Understanding the make-up of the Armed Forces Community in the local area.
- Identifying gaps in knowledge.
- Consulting online information and tools, such as the Veterans' Gateway or the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust's Knowledge Network.

- Conducting a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment on the needs of the local Armed Forces Community and, where possible, anticipate the needs of those moving into the local area.
- Undertaking primary evidence capturing exercises, such as a CHAIN style report to capture homeless veterans.
- Collecting and analysing data on the local Armed Forces Community, including by asking service users about their Armed Forces status.
- Consulting national data sources such as the census, and statistics on the locations of Armed Forces pension and compensation recipients and recipients of Service Pupil Premium.
- Consulting research and best-practice guides, such as the Forces in Mind Trust's '[Our Community Our Covenant](#)' report.
- Engaging regularly with service end-users who are members of the Armed Forces Community.

### **Vision**

- Having an action plan that is regularly monitored and reviewed.
- Conducting regular policy reviews.

# Appendix 3: Further information

A3.1. This publication, and other resources related to the Armed Forces Covenant, are available from the Covenant website: [www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk](http://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk). The website contains a freely available learning platform with training tools, advice and wider guidance aimed at (and populated by) service providers, to ensure that they have easy access to the information they require to comply with the Armed Forces Covenant Duty, and more. More guidance can also be found at [The Armed Forces Covenant](#).

A3.2. For advice, information, or guidance on Covenant issues, the Ministry of Defence's Covenant Team can be contacted at: [COVENANT-MAILBOX@mod.gov.uk](mailto:COVENANT-MAILBOX@mod.gov.uk).

## Other Useful Sources

### Statutory Frameworks, Policies and Guidance

Healthcare:

- [Healthcare for the Armed Forces Community \(NHS\)](#)
- [NHS 111 Wales](#)
- [Scotland's Health on the Web](#)
- [Health and Social Care Northern Ireland](#)

Education:

- [School Admissions Code and Fair Access Protocols \(England\)](#)
- [School Transport: A Guide for Parents \(England\)](#)
- [School admissions \(Wales\)](#)
- [Additional Learning Needs Code \(Wales\)](#)
- [Attendance – Included, engaged and involved \(Scotland\) Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#)
- [Getting it Right for Every Child \(Scotland\)](#)
- [Admissions \(Northern Ireland\)](#)

Housing:

- [Guidance on Allocations](#)
- [Improving Access to Social Housing for the Armed Forces](#)
- [Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities](#)
- [Armed Forces and ex-Service Personnel – A Scottish Housing Guide](#)
- [Welsh Government's Code of Guidance for Local Authorities on the Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness](#)
- [Welsh Government's National housing pathway for veterans of the Armed Forces](#)

Other:

- [Scotland Armed Forces and Veterans Community](#)
- [Veterans Wales](#)
- [Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's Armed Forces Covenant guidance to councils](#)

### Documents and Research

- [Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report and other useful publications](#)
- [Armed Forces Covenant Local Authority Guide](#) and [other useful resources](#)
- [Armed Forces Families Strategy](#)
- [Duty and Care: Armed Forces Family Mobility and Health Care Report](#)



- [The Emotional Cycle of Deployment](#)
- [Forces Additional Needs and Disability Forum 30th Anniversary Report](#)
- [Forces In Mind Trust 'Our Community Our Covenant' Report](#)
- [Living in our shoes: Understanding the needs of UK Armed Forces families](#)
- [Greater Manchester Armed Forces Covenant Guide](#)
- [Relocating to Scotland](#)
- [Reserve Forces Review 2030](#)
- [Voice of Schools Survey](#)

### **Contacts, Stakeholders and Training**

- [ABF The Soldiers' Charity](#)
- [Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust](#)
- [Army Families Federation](#)
- [Association of Directors of Education in Scotland \(ADES\)](#)
- [ADES Forces Children's Education](#)
- [BLESMA: The Military Charity for Limbless Veterans](#)
- [Children's Education Advisory Service CEAS \(MOD\)](#)
- [Confederation of Service Charities \(COBSEO\)](#)
- [Defence Medical Welfare Service](#)
- [Forces Children Scotland](#)
- [Forces in Mind Trust](#)
- [Housing e-Learning for Frontline Workers \(Greater Manchester Housing Partnership\)](#)
- [Joint Services Housing Advice Office](#)
- [The Military Human: Understanding Military Culture and Transition \(York St John University\)](#)
- [Naval Families Federation](#)
- [National and Regional Schools Commissioners \(England\)](#)
- [Northern Ireland Housing Executive](#)
- [Northern Ireland Veterans Commissioner's Office](#)
- [Northern Ireland Veterans' Support Office](#)
- [RAF Benevolent Fund](#)
- [RAF Families Federation](#)
- [Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations](#)
- [Royal British Legion](#)
- [Royal Naval Benevolent Trust](#)
- [Scottish Veterans Commissioner](#)
- [Service Children's Progression Alliance](#) and [SCiP Alliance Map](#) of Service children
- [Service Children in State Schools](#)
- [SSAFA The Armed Forces Charity](#)
- [Supporting Service Children in Education Cymru](#)
- [Veterans Advisory and Pensions Committees \(VAPCs\)](#)
- [Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance](#)
- [Veterans' Gateway](#)
- [Veterans UK](#)
- [War Widows Association](#)

# Appendix 4: Resolving disputes

## Complaints Process

A4.1. The Armed Forces Covenant Duty does not introduce any new enforcement mechanism.

A4.2. In the instance of a dispute over whether a body has complied with the Covenant Duty, this should be raised with the body concerned, following that body's standard complaints process. Public bodies should clearly advertise their complaints procedures to make the process easy to access. In many cases, communicating clearly and proactively with the complainant throughout about the decision taken and reasons why should help to alleviate concerns.

## Unresolved Complaints

A4.3. Should the body's standard complaints process fail to achieve an adequate resolution, complainants may be able to engage in a mediation, appeal, or tribunal process, or to refer the matter to the relevant ombudsman where appropriate. Bodies should clearly signpost these further means of redress to make the process easy to access.

A4.4. Ombudsmen:

- **England:** In England, there are different ombudsman services for different public services. If you have a complaint about the following you may wish to go to:
  - Homelessness, School Transport, School Admissions or SEND: [Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#)
  - Housing: [Housing Ombudsman](#)
  - Healthcare: [Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman](#)
- **Wales:** [Public Service Ombudsman for Wales](#)
- **Scotland:** [Scottish Public Services Ombudsman](#)
- **Northern Ireland:** [Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman](#)
- **Service Complaints:** [Service Complaints Ombudsman for the Armed Forces](#)

A4.5. Complainants and bodies are encouraged to engage with the Armed Forces Covenant Team in the Ministry of Defence to make them aware of an issue. The Ministry of Defence has no formal powers to adjudicate disputes. However, it has substantial experience of dealing with Covenant issues, and by working with complainants, bodies in scope, and other stakeholders such as local Armed Forces Champions, it has been able to resolve many Covenant-related disputes or mediate a solution.

Further advice:

- [Armed Forces Covenant Team \(UK\)](#)
- [Office for Veterans' Affairs \(UK\)](#)
- [Armed Forces Expert Group \(Wales\)](#)
- [Scottish Veterans Commissioner](#)
- [Northern Ireland Veterans Commissioner's Office](#)
- [Northern Ireland Veterans' Support Office](#)

## Unresolved Complaints: Judicial Review

A4.6. It might be possible to seek to challenge any alleged non-compliance with the Covenant Duty by making an application to judicially review a body's actions or omissions. Time limits apply for judicial review and, therefore, legal advice should be sought early. Rules and procedures can differ across the different home nations of the UK. Further guidance on the judicial review process is available at the following sources:

- [‘Judge Over Your Shoulder’ Guide](#)
- [Guide for England & Wales](#)
- [Guide for Scotland](#)
- [Guide for Northern Ireland](#)

# Armed Forces Covenant Duty – Housing position & actions

Function	Area / Policy	Areas of due regard	Areas for improvement/ Future actions and suggestions
<p><b>Allocation of Social Housing Accommodation</b> <i>(Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996)</i> <i>Housing register, applications and eligibility criteria.</i></p>	<p><b>West Lindsey Lettings Policy 2020</b></p> <p><b>West Lindsey Housing Strategy 2022 Lincolnshire</b></p> <p><b>Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-2027</b></p>	<p>All applicants are banded according to the housing needs assessment as set out in the Lettings Policy. There are 5 bands with band 1 being the highest priority. Reasonable preference is then given to certain groups as part of that banding process, this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those leaving the Armed Forces who are in housing need</li> </ul> <p>Local connection to West Lindsey are prioritised when bidding on properties over applicants who do not have a local connection. However, there are other local connection circumstances where West Lindsey can award a local connection to the areas, these circumstances include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HM Armed Forces applicants through Section 315 of the Housing and Regeneration Act (2008) who have established a local connection with West Lindsey before they joined the services</li> <li>Members of the Armed Forces, former service personnel applying within five years of discharge, bereaved spouses and civil partners of members of the Armed Forces and serving or former members of the Reserve Forces who need to move for medical reasons.</li> </ul> <p>West Lindsey have a flexible approach for people to make contact with the Housing Register team. Should communication be preferred via e-mail, this can be accommodated along with phone calls at specific times of the day to suit serving personnel.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specific information and advice available to members or ex members of the armed forces via the website.</li> <li>Housing register form updated to include question "Are you or your partner a serving or formally serving member of the Armed Forces?"</li> <li>Disregard of lump sums awarded to Armed Forces service personnel in any relevant financial or needs assessments.</li> <li>All relevant front line staff to undertake new e-learning to improve awareness of the Armed Forces Duty Covenant <a href="https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/localauthorities/learning-training-resources/">https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/localauthorities/learning-training-resources/</a></li> </ul>

Function	Area / Policy	Areas of due regard	Areas for improvement/ Future actions and suggestions
		Bids can be placed on housing on behalf of applicants should they not be able to use the system or don't have the capacity or capability to navigate the system	
<p><b>Housing Need</b></p> <p><i>(s8 Housing Act 1985 periodical review of housing needs)</i></p> <p><i>Assessing current and future need for affordable housing and demand for market housing</i></p>	<p><b>Central Lincolnshire Housing Needs Assessment</b></p>	<p>Understanding of needs for types of accommodation to ensure there is sufficient suitable accommodation for members or ex members of the armed forces is detailed within The Central Lincolnshire Housing needs assessment which has a section dedicated to Service Families and the need that arises as a consequence of having RAF bases within Central Lincolnshire.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collection of data once housing register applications have been updated to understand who is approaching for housing and of what type.</li> <li>• Share CLHNA with Lincolnshire Homelessness Partnership to ensure this data can be worked into actions arising from the Lincolnshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Homelessness</b></p> <p><i>(Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996)</i></p> <p><i>Assistance, eligibility, duty to assess and accommodate applications, referrals to other LA's.</i></p> <p><i>(Homelessness reduction Act 2017 )</i></p> <p><i>Duty to Prevent and Duty to Relief Homelessness</i></p>		<p>Housing advice is available to all Service personnel and their families, both during and after Service.</p> <p>Referrals can be made to Housing Related Support if transition into civilian life was determined as a requirement which could result in a tenancy not being maintained. It is unlikely this referral would be solely down to being a veteran and more likely to manifest as mental health capacity to maintain a tenancy.</p> <p>Change 4 Lincs deliver the Rough Sleeper Initiative on behalf of West Lindsey and 3 other Lincolnshire District Councils. They offer an outreach service which offers rough sleepers who are not in a priority need category temporary accommodation and support to relief homelessness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific information and advice available to members or ex members of the armed forces.</li> <li>• All relevant front line staff and Change 4 Lincs to undertake new e-learning to improve awareness of the Armed Forces Duty Covenant. <a href="https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/localauthorities/learning-training-resources/">https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/localauthorities/learning-training-resources/</a></li> <li>• Change 4 Lincs to identify and monitor when rough sleepers are ex armed forces and be aware of specific signposting and support available.</li> </ul>

Function	Area / Policy	Areas of due regard	Areas for improvement/ Future actions and suggestions
		<p>West Lindsey have a flexible approach for people to make contact with the Homelessness Prevention team. Should communication be preferred via e-mail, this can be accommodated along with phone calls at specific times of the day to suit serving personnel.</p> <p>Homelessness applications and assessments can be done over the phone and bids can be placed on housing on behalf of applicants should they not be able to use the system or don't have the capacity or capability to navigate the system and</p> <p>The Homelessness Reduction Act also requires the Secretary of State for Defence to refer members of the Regular Armed Forces in England, who may be homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days, to a local housing authority.</p>	
<p><b>Homelessness Strategy</b></p> <p><i>(S1 of the Homelessness Act 2002) Duty of local housing authority to formulate a homelessness strategy</i></p>	<p><b>Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy 2022-2027</b></p> <p><b>West Lindsey Lettings Policy 2022</b></p>	<p>The Strategy acknowledges the 2021 Armed Forces Bill that places a duty to have Due Regard to the covenant in policy and front line services.</p> <p>The strategy recognises the challenges that preventing and reducing homelessness for this cohort places on Local Authorities and acknowledges that this group can fall into multiple other group descriptors and can become homeless due to relationship breakdowns during the transition to civilian life, domestic abuse, having complex needs due to mental health issues as well as those who leave the military at short notice.</p> <p>The strategy also goes on to detail what Lincolnshire Authorities will do to help this group which includes <b>Prevent</b> - Respond to all referrals in a timely manner working with the referring partner and other agencies in line with protocols.</p>	

Function	Area / Policy	Areas of due regard	Areas for improvement/ Future actions and suggestions
		<p><b>Protect</b> - Ensure appropriate support is available to assist in the transition to civilian life and for those experiencing Domestic Abuse.</p> <p><b>Place</b> - Identify those that are eligible using the ‘think veteran’ approach and avoid temporary accommodation where possible.</p> <p><b>Partnership</b> - Engage with partners to form a multi-agency approach to meet individual needs and promote assistance we can offer.</p> <p><b>Plan</b> - Introduce protocols to streamline referrals and monitor any barriers in accommodating and supporting these individuals</p>	
<p><b>Disabled Facilities Grants</b></p> <p><i>(Part 1 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996)</i></p> <p><i>Provision of adaptations to disabled persons’ homes to reduce both the need for people to relocate to facilities which provide full-time care and to reduce the amount of care needed in people’s homes.</i></p>	<p><b>West Lindsey Housing Assistance Policy 2018-2022</b></p>	<p>When an application for a DFG is submitted, if the individual requires a financial means test the application requires them to declare if they receive any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- War Widows or Widowers pension</li> <li>-War Disablement Pension</li> <li>- Payments from Armed Forces Compensation Scheme</li> <li>- Armed Forces Independence Payments</li> </ul> <p>Answering yes to any of these would identify armed or ex armed forces personnel.</p> <p>For serving personnel occupying Ministry of Defence accommodation, adaptations must be provided by the MoD and any referrals made where the applicant resides in MoD accommodation is signposted to them to undertake the adaptation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DFG application form updated include question “<i>Are you or your partner a serving or formally serving member of the Armed Forces?</i>”</li> <li>• Specific information and advice available to members or ex members of the armed forces.</li> <li>• Include reference to the Armed Forces community in the next revision of the DFG policy to take account of the DFG guidance which states that ‘special considerations for veterans may be justified in some circumstances’ and that ‘applications might also be received from veterans of the Armed Forces. In these cases, the statutory Armed Forces Covenant Duty is likely to apply.’</li> <li>• Links to armed forces charities and signposting for other support available. This could include providing specific information to armed forces charities about DFG’s</li> </ul>



Function	Area / Policy	Areas of due regard	Areas for improvement/ Future actions and suggestions
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All relevant front line staff to undertake new e-learning to improve awareness of the Armed Forces Duty Covenant  <a href="https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/localauthorities/learning-training-resources/">https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/localauthorities/learning-training-resources/</a></li> </ul>
<b>Tenancy Strategy</b>  <b>(S150 of the Localism Act 2011) Publication of a Tenancy Strategy (LA function)</b>	West Lindsey Tenancy Strategy 2021	The Armed Forces Community will not be adversely affected by The West Lindsey Tenancy Strategy and are not specifically included in the Tenancy Strategy but rather as part of the general population. The Strategy focuses on how providers (not the Local Authority) should manage various types of tenancies and is not specific to certain groups. It is not deemed as necessary to include a specific section on This cohort within the strategy.	

# Agenda Item 6b



**Prosperous Communities  
Committee**

**7<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

**Subject: Private Sector Housing - Options for Future Direction**

Report by:

Director of Change Management, ICT &  
Regulatory Services

Contact Officer:

Andy Gray  
Housing and Enforcement Manager

andy.gray@west-lindsey.gov.uk

Purpose / Summary:

To set out proposed options and approaches for  
future work within the Private Rented Sector.

## **RECOMMENDATION(S):**

Committee are asked to:

- a) Approve that the policy position in regards to selective licensing is "Option D" as set out in the options table and that the timeframe for revisiting selective licensing is scheduled to be between 12 and 24 months.
- b) Approve that a further report be brought back to Prosperous Communities Committee within 6 months to outline the proposed future approach for delivery.

## IMPLICATIONS

**Legal:**

The approaches set out fall under the scope of the Housing Act 2004, which is a piece of legislation that the Council are familiar with and utilise regularly. Certain approaches may require specific legal advice, which will be sought should it be required.

**Financial : FIN/151/23/SSc**

No financial implications arising from this report.

**Staffing :**

There are no direct staffing implications from this report.

**Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :**

The approaches set out are intended to improve the quality of life of residents and to ensure that the regulations specific to certain aspects of their human rights are upheld.

**Data Protection Implications:**

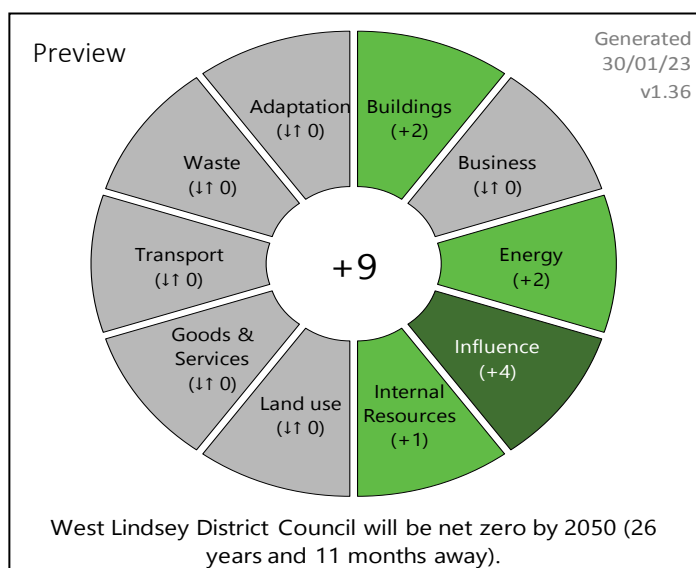
There are no data protection implications.

### Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:

The improvement of housing standards has a direct impact in regards to carbon reductions and helping to minimise energy usage for persons living in any properties.

Specific regulations such as MEES (Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards) focus directly on improving the energy performance ratings of homes and are regulations that the Council currently enforces.

A CESIA wheel has been completed for this report below, outlining the areas where it can have a positive environmental impact. It should be noted that this wheel does not reflect all the proposed interventions as a more detailed assessment will need to occur when the required report for these is produced.



### Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations:

The evidence available to the Council suggests broadly that where there is a greater level of PRS properties, there is a greater level of anti-social behaviour. The only Housing Act power that can deal with ASB more directly and in a broader manner relates to "Selective Licensing". In order to address it specifically, the Council has other relevant powers it can consider utilising.

### Health Implications:

Poor quality housing can have a significant impact on an individual's health and wellbeing. This is well documented and evidenced and forms the basis for the Housing Act powers that are used by the Council.

The inspections undertaken by the Council seek to identify and remove serious hazards from properties to ensure that they are safe for the occupants to live in.

Further information on this impact can be found here :

<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9414/>

**Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

Item 15 – Prosperous Communities Committee, July 2022 - <https://democracy.west-lindsey.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=176&MId=3175&Ver=4>

**Risk Assessment :**

There are pros and cons to any approach approved by Committee in relation to the PRS. The main risks are identified below:

Doing nothing: the data available suggests that there is considerable work to be undertaken to improve the PRS. This can be mitigated by the selection of the appropriate option for intervention.

Scale of intervention: The data in relation to the PRS is very clear and outlines the scale of the challenge that the sector faces. The Council must be aware that any intervention that it implements, other than selective licensing, will need to be at a scale where it can have an impact and also be financed. This risk can be mitigated by having a clear plan of action in the short term to increase the scale of any intervention and by committing to revisiting selective licensing at a future date.

Planned Government Reform: whilst the planned reforms in the PRS are outlined, there are no current implementation dates for the key aspects, such as abolition of Section 21 (no fault eviction), the Landlord Portal or the Ombudsman for the PRS. In the short term, any interventions introduce help to mitigate this issue until further detail is known.

Ability to deliver status quo: there is sufficient capacity to deliver the status quo activities as set out in the report within the existing establishment allocated.

**Call in and Urgency:**

**Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?**

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

No

**Key Decision:**

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

No

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. In July 2022 Prosperous Communities Committee made a number of recommendations to enable the Council to review its approach to improving the Private Rented Sector (PRS). As a result, a small working group of Councillors was set up to consider this subject and oversee the delivery of workshops to Councillors aimed identifying what the priorities were for the PRS and the approaches that would be preferred to tackle these.
- 1.2. The working group is made up of 5 Councillors and chaired by the Vice-Chair of the Prosperous Communities Committee. Councillors Young, Bunney, Howitt-Cowan and Regis make up the remainder of the working group. The commitment and contribution of the working group is noted as key in ensuring that this piece of work developed and evolved over the period of time that they have met. They also played a key role in reviewing and amending the format of the Councillor workshops in December.

## **2. Context**

- 2.1. In seeking to identify future approaches and priorities, the working group and the workshops are responding to the decision made at Full Council in March 2022 to cease the consultation on a proposed Selective Licensing (SL) scheme that would have covered around 5000 properties in the PRS.
- 2.2. Identifying alternative of future approaches formed the basis for the workshops, which provided Councillors with a space to provide their feedback on some of the challenges that face the PRS in the district, as well as providing an opportunity to consider what approaches may be preferred in the future.
- 2.3. This report seeks to summarise the feedback from the workshops and then sets out a proposal for how the Council may choose to approach the matter based on this feedback, along with feedback from the working group. The working group do not have a remit to continue any further work beyond this committee meeting.

## **3. Councillor Workshops**

- 3.1. Workshops took place on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of December 2022 and all Councillors were invited. One meeting was face to face at the Guildhall and the other was held via MS Teams. 15 Councillors attended across the two sessions. The full notes from the workshops are attached as appendix 1. The slides used for the workshop are also attached at appendix 2.
- 3.2. The workshops identified a number of key priorities along with preferred approaches. In summary:

- Concern about the scale of the challenge faced and the resources that may be needed to address them.
- It was evident that there is not broad support for any further SL proposals based on the workshops.
- There is a clear view that impact of scheduled reforms (i.e. Landlord portal) needs to be understood.
- It was clear that more support is requested for tenants and landlords (further clarity needed on expectations regarding this).
- Targeted MEES or Rogue Landlord projects preferred, with additional resources to increase the scale.

#### 4. The Scale of the Challenge

4.1. There are currently around 9,000 properties in the PRS across West Lindsey, which make up roughly a quarter of the overall housing stock. The table below summarises what we know about the PRS on a ward by ward basis. The key points are as follows:

- Out of 20 wards, 6 have a PRS % that is above the National Average.
- The average across the whole district is also above the national average.
- 19 out of 20 wards have a %age of Cat. 1 Hazards that is above the national average.
- There is estimated to be 2,413 properties in the PRS with at least one Cat. 1 Hazard
- The district average for Cat. 1 Hazards is 23.1% (against a national average of 13%).

Levels of PRS (WLDC Metastreet Report 2021)						
Wards	% PRS 2021	No. of PRS	Number of PRS with cat 1 hazards	% Cat 1 hazards 2021	Housing complaints	Rate of housing complaints / 1000 dwellings
<b>National average</b>	>19%			>13%		
Bardney	16.90%	214	35	16.40%	21	98
Caistor and Yarborough	18.20%	494	115	23.30%	37	75
Cherry Willingham	14.20%	508	72	14.20%	7	14
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Gainsborough North	30.20%	1058	310	29.30%	148	140
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Hemswell	31.70%	389	127	32.60%	21	54
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Lea	11.10%	111	15	13.50%	8	72
Market Rasen	20.90%	861	198	23.00%	89	103
Nettleham	11.50%	247	41	16.60%	10	40
Saxilby	16.30%	465	71	15.30%	9	19
Scampton	33.00%	410	44	10.70%	13	32
Scotter and Blyton	13.70%	464	106	22.80%	37	80
Stow	13.30%	144	29	20.10%	8	56
Sudbrooke	9.80%	114	20	17.50%	1	9
Torksey	11.80%	163	40	24.50%	10	61
Waddingham and Spital	15.90%	182	55	30.20%	10	55
Wold View	27.40%	332	124	37.30%	21	63
<b>Council total</b>	<b>19.62%</b>	<b>9,049</b>	<b>2413</b>	<b>23.1%</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>78</b>

## **5. Selective Licensing**

5.1. The table of options in section 6 shows broadly the approaches that can be taken. Key to any approach is the policy position that the Council takes in relation to selective licensing.

5.2. The reason that this decision is key, is due to impact that it will have on the ability to deliver other approaches. For example, if the committee wish to proceed with a selective licensing scheme, the officer resource required would be focussed on doing just this, leaving no capacity for exploration and delivery of other options. Likewise, removing selective licensing as an option means that alternatives can be explored and potentially delivered subject to resources and the relevant committee approvals. The decision in regards to selective licensing, influences the way any future activities can be taken forward.

## **6. Potential Approaches**

6.1. The table of options shown below sets out the broad approaches available. It is recognised that a combination of approaches may be needed in order to deal with the scale of the challenge faced by the Council. Any approach is likely to require additional resources, generated by the approach itself or from within the Council's existing budgets.

6.2. The Committee should focus on its decision in relation to selective licensing and from this, consider the approach that they may wish to take for any other activities. The options can potentially be mixed across the activities where resources will allow. The pros and cons of these various approaches can be seen within the workshop slides that have been distributed to all Councillors (appendix 2).



**Private Rented Sector Options Table**

**Note: Private Rented Sector “Renters Reform Bill”**

The proposed reforms relating to “abolition of S. 21 notice, new Decent Homes Standards, Landlord Portal and PRS Housing Ombudsman are yet to be implemented. The resource impact of these is also unknown at this stage.

	<b>Options</b>				
<b>Activities</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Status Quo</b>
<b>Selective Licensing</b>	Choose not to proceed with selective licensing.	Choose to proceed with previous SL proposals.	Choose to proceed with revised SL proposals (likely to be smaller)	Choose to revisit SL at a future date (TBA) with new data and new proposals.	Only deal with mandatory licensing requirements (e.g. HMOs)
<b>Note: A decision on the policy position for selective licensing as an activity sets the framework for other activities and must be determined before other options can be developed.</b>					
<b>Targeted Enforcement</b>	Develop specific “Rogue Landlords Project” (Using MEES and stock data).	Undeliverable due to resource constraints relating to SL proposals.	Will depend on size and scale of any SL scheme.	Could be developed prior to any new SL proposals.	Schedule proactive and targeted work alongside (but not at expense of) usual case load.
<b>Landlord and Tenant Support</b>	Develop landlord and tenant support initiatives (i.e. a forum, increased comms, specific tenancy support workers)	Engage via the SL proposals and develop support as part of this process.	Engage via the SL proposals and develop support as part of this process?	Develop landlord and tenant support initiatives (i.e. a forum, increased comms, specific tenancy support workers)	Introduce twice yearly landlord forum and enhance comms on obligations and accreditation for landlords and tenants.
<b>Landlord Accreditation</b>	Enhanced comms in relation to benefits of landlord accreditation.	Enhanced comms in relation to benefits of landlord accreditation.	Enhanced comms in relation to benefits of landlord accreditation.	Enhanced comms in relation to benefits of landlord accreditation.	Enhanced comms in relation to benefits of landlord accreditation.

### *6.3. The Status Quo*

6.3.1. As the Council has a statutory obligation to deal with certain types of hazards within the PRS the existing resources within the work area will remain focussed on doing this. No consideration has been given in regards to diverting the existing officer resource to the type of work that will not require them to go “over the threshold” and inspect properties. Whilst some additional communications and engagement can be offered within the existing resources, the focus will be on responding to complaints and doing some proactive intelligence led work (where resource allows).

### *6.4. Selective Licensing*

6.4.1. Clear direction is required as to whether SL will be part of any approach. Any proposals would need to be based on the evidence base that has already been produced or on a new evidence base, depending on when any proposals may come forward. Proposals will need broad political support to ensure they are deliverable and are implemented.

6.4.2. Whilst there is not broad support for any selective licensing proposals, there is recognition that as a tool it can be effective in bringing about change at a larger scale given its mandatory nature. There is also recognition that this approach is largely self-funding and can enable additional resources to tackle the challenges in the PRS within the specifically designated areas, of which there were 5 wards in the previous proposals covering circa 5000 properties. Given the scale of the challenge facing the Council in terms of the PRS, removing selective licensing as an option completely is not deemed to be an appropriate option.

6.4.3. There is clear evidence from the previous proposals that a scheme could be justified in certain wards within the District. The consultation report completed for the period that the consultation was undertaken between January and March 22, also showed support overall for a scheme to be introduced.

### *6.5. Targeted Enforcement Approach*

6.5.1. The Council’s existing resources can currently be focussed proactively, however this is not done in a targeted and specific way, and not at the expense of other statutory inspections that the Council are required to do. The proactive MEES project, was funded by an external grant of £55,000, which enabled additional resource to be deployed to focus specifically on this.

6.5.2. The Council has sufficient data in regards to its stock and its geography to enable a targeted piece of enforcement work to be developed. The project would need to be fully scoped, but would be likely to focus on the areas with the highest numbers of category 1

hazards. The volume of inspections would be determined by the resources available.

#### *6.6. Landlord and Tenant Support*

6.6.1. Should a new programme of work to provide this support be desired, additional resources will be required to deliver it. The existing resources can deliver some additional activities, but it will not be the focus of their work.

6.6.2. Should any form of SL scheme be progressed, this will provide opportunities for engagement and consultation and would be built into the scheme as per the previous proposals.

#### 6.7. Landlord Accreditation

6.7.1. There are no proposals to deliver a specific landlord accreditation scheme within the Council. The Council already offers an accreditation scheme for landlords via DASH, which is free of charge to join. There are also a number of reputable national schemes, which landlords could join independently.

### **7. Preferred Approach**

7.1. The working group met on the 13<sup>th</sup> January 2023 (see notes in appendix 3) to consider what it believed would be the most appropriate approach moving forward. Its view was that option D should be selected in regards to selective licensing, which is to “revisit selective licensing at a future date with new data and new proposals”. It was suggested that this future date be cited as between 12 and 24 months.

7.2. The basis for this view was that it would provide time to explore some specific targeted enforcement projects in the PRS and to also allow the planned reforms for the sector to come into effect and potentially have an impact.

7.3. The approach will focus on addressing housing standards and be targeted based on data and evidence. It will also make provision for additional approaches relating to landlord and tenant support.

7.4. Based on the above it is proposed that a report be brought back to Prosperous Communities Committee within the next 6 months to outline the proposed approach and to identify any resources required to deliver it, which in turn will need to be considered by Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.

**END**

Appendix 1 – Notes from Workshop

Appendix 2 – Slides from Workshop

Appendix 3 – Notes from Working Group

## **Private Rented Sector Workshop Notes**

### **Wednesday 7th December 5pm – Face to Face**

Present: Cllr Bunney, Cllr Clews, Cllr Young, Cllr Boles, Cllr Bierley, Cllr Howitt-Cowan, Cllr Devine

Apologies: Cllr M Snee, Cllr J Snee, Cllr Ellis

#### **“Having seen the data and proposals for reform what do you believe the Council’s priorities to address are?”**

- Support for tenants to improve tenant behaviour and reduce ASB.
- Ensuring that homes are as economical as possible for tenants.
- Communication to landlords around responsibilities as some won’t know.
- Improvement of the E-rated properties.
- Some additional feedback on this was that a targeted approach to a particular area could move the problem from one area to another rather than solve it.
- Standards are clearly an issue throughout the district, they should be the focus.
- Affordability issues, how we can we help tenants to address these?
- Also need to think about home owners and the standards within their properties.
- This is a key statutory obligation and should be resourced so that standards can be addressed.

#### **“What 1 thing do you think we could do differently to improve our approach in the PRS?”**

- Targeted inspections in rural areas to find out more data.
- Provide additional advice and support to landlords and tenants to educate
- Carry out more inspections.

#### **“What would be your preferred approach or approaches?”**

- Enforcing landlord obligations.
- MEES approach for E rated properties.
- Targeted rogue landlord scheme.
- Utilising existing tools available on a greater scale.
- Wait to see the impact that the Renters Reform Bill has.
- Increased presence and levels of inspections.
- Deal better with tenancy management and ASB.
- Work to make quality of life better, housing has a key role to play in this.
- Have to focus on the worst properties.
- Don’t believe that SL is workable given the constraints that the scheme have.

## Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2022 via MS Teams

Present: Cllr Bunney, Cllr White, Cllr Welburn, Cllr Regis , Cllr Milne, Cllr McNeill, Cllr Young, Cllr Fleetwood, Cllr Rainsforth,

Apologies: Cllr Lawrence, Cllr Summers, Cllr Grimble, Cllr Rodgers, Cllr Morris, Cllr Coulson.

**The workshops posed three questions for feedback and a summary of those responses is below:**

**“Having seen the data and proposals for reform what do you believe the Council’s priorities to address are?”**

- Are there any incentive to carry out improvements to the property, incentives to keep properties in good condition? Need incentives, not to be punitive.
- Felt that selective licensing is a sledge hammer for landlords. Impossible to get to an A/B graded EPC. Also recognised issues with access to properties for landlords and that landlords can be feel as though they are seen as the enemy.
- A feeling that the council vision is looking at it from a perspective that Landlords are the villains.
- Feel that we need to reiterate and revisit why was SL implemented in the first place? i.e. deprivation, improvement of PRS standards and improvement of ASB.
- Also, a feeling that Landlords should be held to account for standards, which a scheme like SL does.
- Concerns that trying to make improvements to standards may have a knock-on impact to price people out of the market, tenants shouldn’t get these costs added to them
- If there is a license scheme, suggestion that £250 would be a more suitable fee (suggested that this is the fee in Nottingham). If we are looking at SL then it needs to be reasonable costing for landlords and tenants.
- A serious look at the pricing structure is needed if any scheme is going to work. It needs to be an equitable system for tenants and landlords.
- Priority needs to be how tenants can make an impact at their own property, concerns that if tenants keep pressing onto landlords re works, fear of eviction. Need to support tenants so that they feel safe to report these things.
- LLs should be held to account and tenants need support on how to feedback and escalate to LLs without fear of increased rent and eviction.
- Concern about role letting agents play in regards to escalation of issues and resolving them.
- Landlords who have management agents, there’s a lack of communication between the two.
- Think about ways we can identify the problems and support landlords and tenants.
- Opportunities re the renter’s reform bill, increase in homelessness presentation in neighbouring districts.
- How can we make the PRS as good as we can so that we can discharge duties around homelessness?
- If tenants are priced out of rural areas what do we do with not having enough properties, concerns there may be limited access to the PRS.
- More support needed for tenants
- Licence fee could cause properties to become unaffordable for tenants, increasing risk of homelessness

- Questions asked about available financial assistance for Landlords to improve their properties
- Stated that there are more concerns with the people rather than the properties.

**“What 1 thing do you think we could do differently to improve our approach in the PRS?”**

- Not about standard, it's about tenant management. Tenants are the problem in these properties.
- How Landlords are communicated with, user friendly to Landlords, hopefully LL will be more selective with tenants. Council need to not be seen to be banging an enforcement drum
- Engage with landlords and reduce the “us and them” need a forum or portal etc. Cannot see SL working in areas like Market Rasen or rural areas. More resources need to go into existing rogue landlords' approaches.
- Should be more of lighter approach to addressing issues, not being heavy handed.
- There are landlords who want to do good, tenants who don't allow this
- Licence fee could be reduced for multiple properties

**“What would be your preferred approach or approaches?”**

- Targeted schemes, the last SL scheme proposal needs to be a different format as the last geographical proposal. Not Keen on SL overall
- Licensing in some areas and not others would be complicated and problematic
- Think SL can be a good tool, discount over several licences for landlords. Needs to be an incentive for landlords to do it.
- Will not be supporting SL, can agree on Rogue landlords and MEES project.
- Need more opportunities to engage with landlords.
- SL has not worked, won't be supporting it. Do not feel safe within my own area.
- Selective Licensing wouldn't be supported by a number of members no matter the area or cost.

# Private Rented Sector Workshop - Councillors

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Nova Roberts: Director – Change Management, ICT and Regulatory Services  
Andy Gray: Housing and Environmental Enforcement Manager  
Sarah Elvin: Homes, Health and Wellbeing Team Manager  
Rebecca Ward: Senior Housing Standards and Enforcement Officer

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# Purpose and Context of the workshop

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On the 7<sup>th</sup> March 2022 at Full Council, a motion was passed to halt the consultation being undertaken on a larger Selective Licensing scheme, covering around 5000 properties within the PRS.

As a result, a small working group of Councillors was set up to look at the future approaches that could be taken by the Council within the PRS and to explore these accordingly.

A key element of this process is to engage with existing Councillors to understand what their aspirations are for the sector alongside seeking direction on any specific approaches or interventions that they wish to be explored.

**Therefore the aims of this session are to:**

- **provide you with a basic data set outlining the current picture within the PRS in West Lindsey**
- **provide an overview of the national strategy position for improving the PRS**
- **understand what you think are the key challenges the Council needs to focus on**
- **seek a clear direction from you on the areas which you believe require further exploration and development moving forward**



# Terminology

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- **Cat. 1 Hazard** – a hazard identified under the HHSRS which is serious
- **HHSRS** – Housing, Health and Safety Rating System. The system which is used by Council's to assess hazards in properties.
- **HMO** – House in Multiple Occupation
- **MEES** – Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards
- **PRS** – Private Rented Sector
- **Selective Licensing** - a licensing regime for private landlords that applies to a specified area designated by the relevant local housing authority
- **SoS** – Secretary of State

# Ground Rules

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- Focus on the bigger picture
- This is about the Private Rented Sector, please stick to that tenure.
- If you have specific questions on the slides or data included, please e mail them to Andy Gray.
- Be mindful of time and of others
- Use the chat function to ask any questions or make any comments
- The meeting will be recorded (on MS Teams) for future reference and to be made available to any Cllrs that cannot attend.
- If you have any cases that you wish for the team to look at, please raise those separately with officers.

# A Fairer Private Rented Sector (June 2022)



This document sets out the Government's ambitions for the private rented sector, of which there are 5.

## Our ambition

We are committed to delivering a fairer, more secure, and higher quality Private Rented Sector. We believe:

1. All tenants should have access to a good quality, safe and secure home.
2. All tenants should be able to treat their house as their home and be empowered to challenge poor practice.
3. All landlords should have information on how to comply with their responsibilities and be able to repossess their properties when necessary.
4. Landlords and tenants should be supported by a system that enables effective resolution of issues.
5. Local councils should have strong and effective enforcement tools to crack down on poor practice.

# A Fairer Private Rented Sector (June 2022) cont.

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The document also included a 12 point action plan, which covers the following areas;

- A new Decent Homes Standard for the PRS
- A focus on areas that need it most (most deprived)
- Abolishing “no fault” section 21 evictions
- Easier possession proceedings for landlords
- Limit rent increases to once a year
- Introducing a single Ombudsman for the tenant
- Addressing Court delays
- **Introduce a new property information portal (Landlord Register)**
- Strengthening local enforcement powers
- Make illegal, the banning families or those on benefits from tenancies
- Introduce a right to request a pet in a property
- Look at innovative solutions for tenancy deposits

**These reforms are progressing at different speeds and will be enshrined within the “Renters Reform Bill”.**

# Council Position

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Through its Corporate Plan and its Housing Strategy the Council has set out its intentions in relation to the PRS.

## **Corporate Plan**

Our People > Improve homes and transform places > Improved quality of and access to housing

Our Place > To improve housing standards and take appropriate enforcement action where necessary

## **Housing Strategy Refresh 2022 – 2024: Theme 2 – Improving Homes and Transforming Places**

- Acknowledges the challenges with the existing housing across the districts, with improvements to all housing stock a key priority.
- Demonstrates success of previous Selective Licensing Scheme and looks at how a broader scheme could have a wider impact.
- Welcomes additional regulation within the sector, alongside the need for increased advice and support for landlords.

## **Homes for Independence Blueprint (Adopted in 2021)**



Objective – Make best use of enforcement powers available across different organisations to target criminal landlords.



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# Our Place: Housing Profile



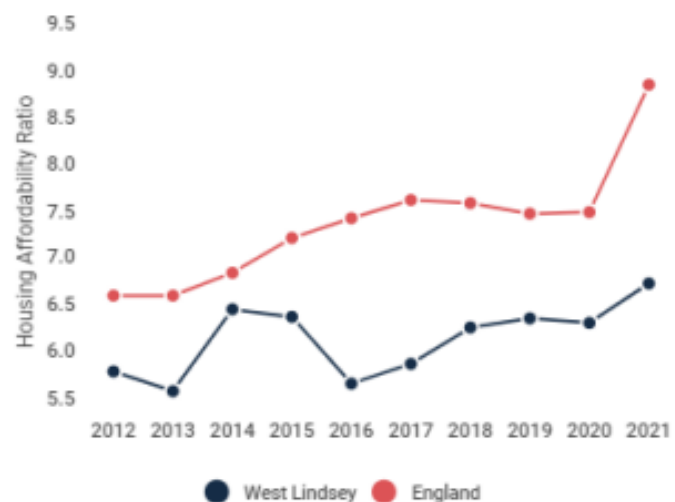
 There are 43,732 dwellings in the district, an increase of 532 on the previous year. Of these, 4,832 are private registered providers and 38,709 are privately owned.



 As of March 2021, West has a deliverable housing supply of 4,184 dwellings.



 As of March 2021, 485 additional dwellings were completed against the Local Plan annual target of 1,540 per year. Of those completed, 20 were affordable dwellings.

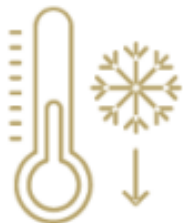


Average house prices have risen 13% to £210,000 in 2021. This is below the national average of £285,000



Housing has become less affordable in West Lindsey, in line with the national trend where wage increases have not kept up with the rise in house prices.

# Our Place: Housing Stock Condition



## Excess cold is an issue in rural areas

10% of homes are in excess cold, double the national average. This is particularly an issue in rural areas, with the highest concentration in Waddingham and Spital, Hemswell and Wold View.

Social housing stock is more thermally efficient than private rented stock due to more stringent conditions placed on social housing providers.



## The number of off-grid homes is high

9,941 homes, or 23% of all homes in the district, are not in receipt of mains gas. This is mostly concentrated in a band running from the Thonock and Blyton areas and down to Welton, taking in Waddingham and Hemswell.

Being off grid increases the risk of fuel poverty. Heating oil, for example, is not subject to the same price cap as gas and electricity.



**20% of homes contain a hazard (8,000 homes)**



**9% of homes (3,914) are a fall hazard risk**



**5% of homes (1,947) are in a state of disrepair**

# The Private Rented Sector in West Lindsey

Levels of PRS (WLDC Metastreet Report 2021)						
Wards	% PRS 2021	No. of PRS	Number of PRS with cat 1 hazards	% Cat 1 hazards 2021	Housing complaints	Rate of housing complaints / 1000 dwellings
National average	>19%			>13%		
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Waddingham and Spital	15.90%	182	55	30.20%	10	55
Wold View	27.40%	332	124	37.30%	21	63
Council total	19.62%	9,049	2413	23.1%	52	78

## Key Statistics:

- There are over 9000 properties estimated to be in the PRS.
- Out of 20 wards, 6 have a PRS % that is above the National Average.
- The average across the whole district is also above the national average.
- 19 out of 20 wards have a %age of Cat. 1 Hazards that is above the national average.
- There is estimated to be 2413 properties in the PRS with at least one Cat. 1 Hazard
- The district average for Cat. 1 Hazards is 23.1%

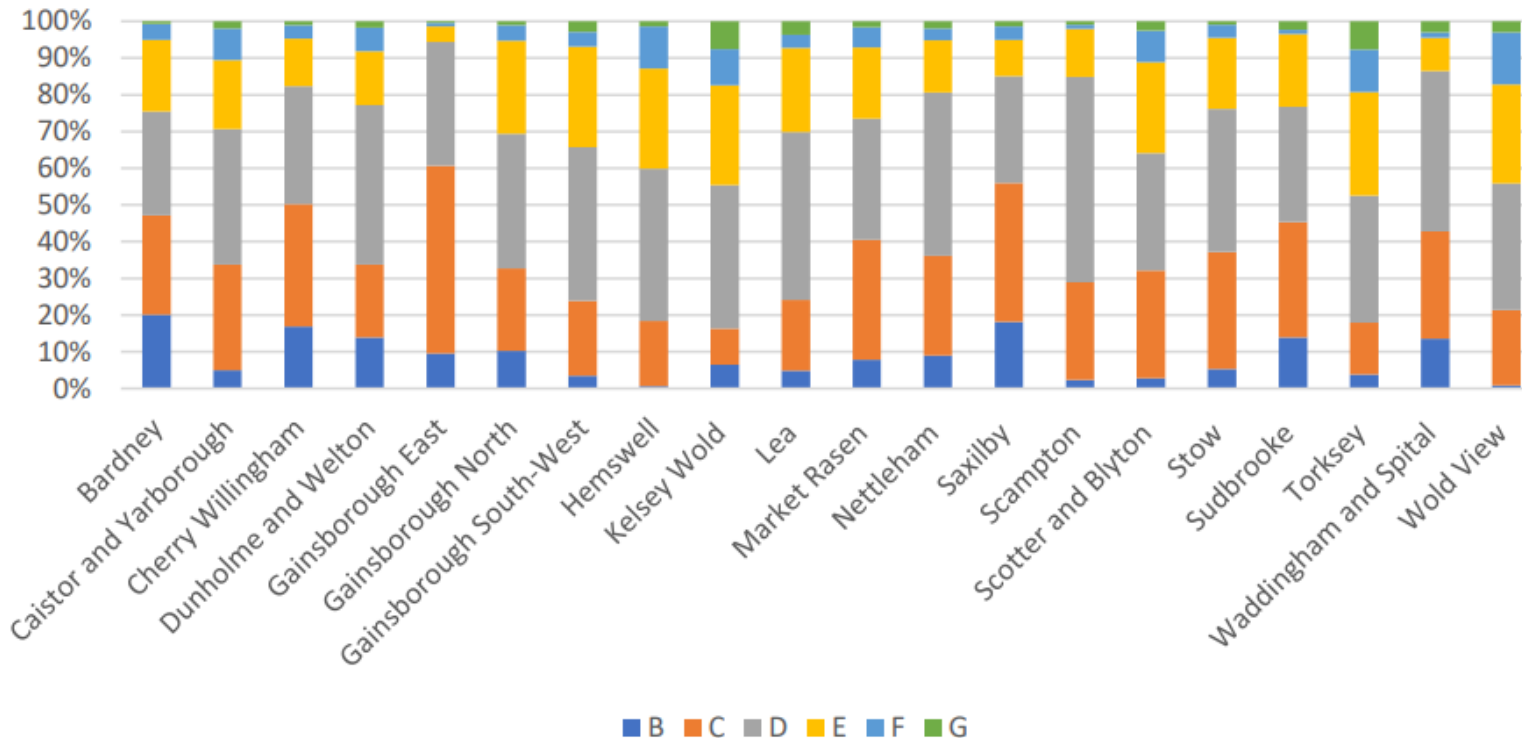
\*17% is the threshold outside of London



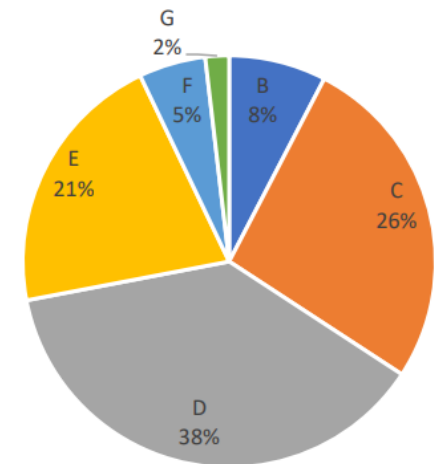
# The Private Rented Sector in West Lindsey

The energy efficiency of the stock is reflected below.

- Under the MEES requirements, properties must legally have an EPC rating of E and above to be compliant.
- The Council received grant funding to focus a specific project on properties not meeting this requirement and carried out 120 inspections as part of this work. There are not any known F or G rated PRS properties currently.
- Generally, where properties did not meet the required EPC standard, they contained other Cat 1. or Cat. 2 Hazards that were then addressed (see focussed MEES work slide).
- The properties inspected were generally in rural areas.



**\*\*Minimum EPC rating likely to increase for the PRS in the coming years\*\***



# Examples of MEEES work

## Rural Case example

### Deficiencies

No fixed heating

Single glazed windows

Out of date electrical installation (1 plug socket upstairs)

Hand rail on stairs inadequate

EPC – Graded G

### Hazards

Category 1

Fire, excess cold, falls on stairs

Category 2

Damp and mould

Food safety

### Action taken

Improvement notice S.11 & S.12

Notice requesting EICR

Remedial notice

Further formal action pending

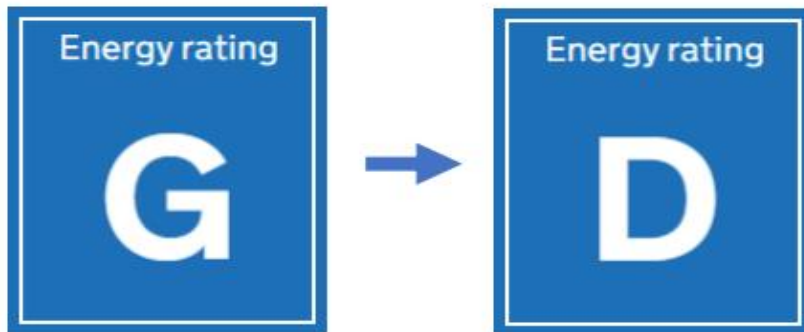
6 known properties in district



# Examples of MEEES work

## Property improvements:

- Central heating system fitted into property
- Single glazed windows replaced with double glazed fittings
- Property rewired and electrical installation brought up to standard
- EPC improved from G - D

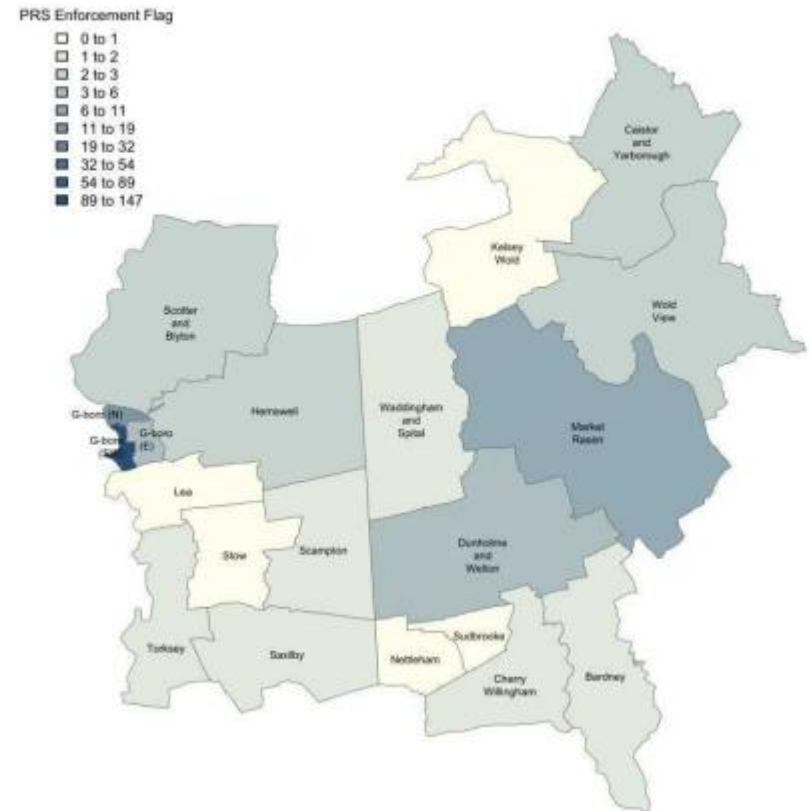
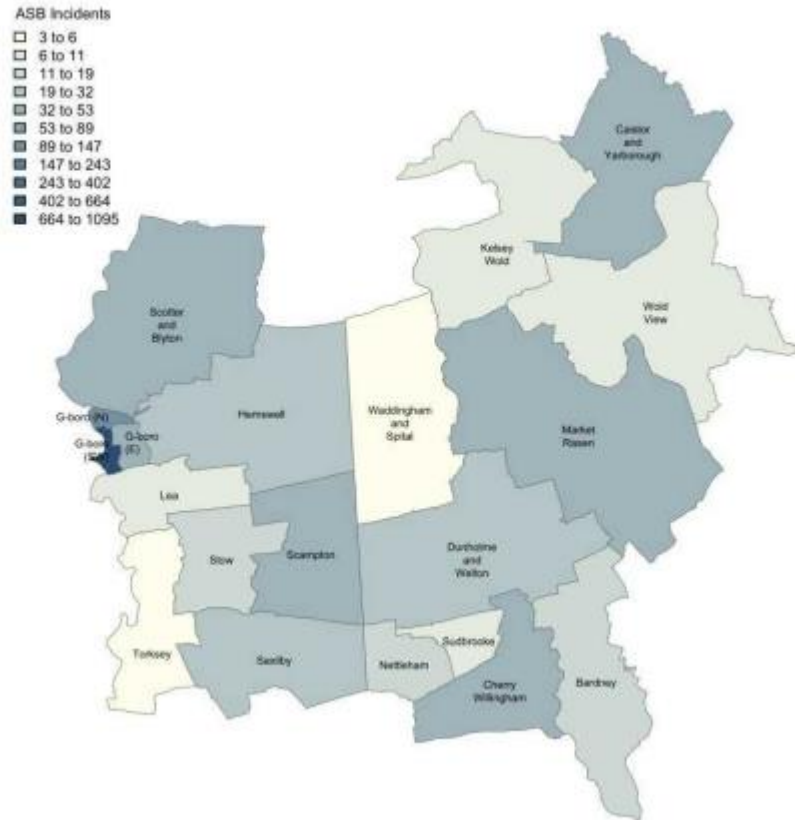


# The Private Rented Sector in West Lindsey

Other points to note are:

- There is a correlation between the level of ASB and the areas where the PRS is greatest.
- There has generally also been more formal enforcement action taken in these areas.

PRS properties subject to one or more ASB investigations across West Lindsey are shown in Map 5. **Figure 14. Housing and public health notices served on PRS properties by ward (Source: Ti 2022).**



# Councillor Feedback - 1

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“Having seen the data and proposals for reform what do you believe the Council’s priorities to address are?”

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# What are the Council required to do?

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“The Council has a statutory duty to take action to remove Category 1 Hazards as per the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and housing conditions that fall under the definition of a statutory nuisance. The Council must also run a licensing scheme for certain types of high risk houses in multiple occupation (HMO).The Council also has an obligation to take action where they have grounds to believe a landlord is in breach of their duties in respect of electrical safety.”

---

# WLDC Enforcement Challenges

A headline report on local authority enforcement in the PRS was published in June 2022. This was informed via a survey to all English local authorities, combined with secondary and qualitative data. The report identified a number of key drivers of enforcement, which were not evidenced to be found in all local authority areas. These drivers were as follows:

- Capacity of local enforcement teams
- The experience and expertise of enforcement teams
- Political will, strategic commitment and related support of legal teams
- Issues relating to the legal framework
- Difficulties gathering evidence to support enforcement

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-enforcement-in-the-private-rented-sector-headline-report/local-authority-enforcement-in-the-private-rented-sector-headline-report>

# Councillor Feedback - 2

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“What 1 thing do you think we could do differently to improve our approach in the PRS?”

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# Potential Approaches

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On the next few slides are some options for future approaches that could be delivered to address some of the challenges in the sector. The list is not exhaustive and a combination of options could be the way forward. Please note that:

- The status quo is an option. The Council can continue to respond as it currently does to housing disrepair complaints.
  - Approaches can be combined and tailored. Many authorities have more than one approach in place to tackle different issues (e.g. selective licensing or rogue landlord projects in areas where needed, alongside landlord accreditation type schemes )
  - How we engage with landlords, tenants and letting agents will need to be considered and developed within any approach.
  - Any approach would need to align with the existing work being undertaken to improve and develop communities.
-

# Overview of Options

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**Rogue Landlord Project** – a regime of inspections targeted on rogue landlords (those that are operating illegally, not meeting their obligations and causing most harm). Properties and landlords identified using intelligence available and a specific resource set aside to deal solely with this work.

**Targeted MEES project** – a regime of inspections targeted solely on properties with the lowest EPC ratings in the PRS. Specific resources would be set aside to solely focus on this work.

**Selective Licensing** – the mandatory licensing of all PRS properties (regardless of condition) within a designated geographic area. Areas must meet specific criteria (i.e. poor housing conditions, ASB and deprivation). All properties subject to a licence fee and inspection regime. Previously delivered in a small part of Gainsborough South West Ward. Requires consultation and potentially SoS approval.

**Trusted/Accredited Landlord Scheme** – voluntary scheme which landlords can sign up to in order to demonstrate that they meet and continue to meet particular standards and conditions.

---

# Rogue Landlord Project

## Pros

Targeted based on intelligence  
In line with current approach (e.g. MEES project)  
Can be tailored in terms of its scale and scope  
Could work alongside other approaches (i.e. selective licensing or accreditation)  
Could focus on urban and/or rural  
Could be a short term intervention

## Cons

No guaranteed income  
May not be a long term intervention  
Unlikely to cover large volumes of properties  
Would require significant additional resources to be effective (above and beyond what is already delivered)

# Targeted MEES Project

## Pros

Targeted based on intelligence  
Established method of delivering  
Can be tailored in terms of its scale and scope  
Could work alongside other approaches (i.e. selective licensing or accreditation)

## Cons

No guaranteed income  
Needs to be a long term commitment  
Circa 1800 properties currently E EPC rated  
No legislative requirement to be better than an “E” currently

## Key considerations:

- A very specific and targeted scheme can be delivered.
- Lends itself to the climate and sustainability agenda

# Selective Licensing

---

## Pros

Self financing  
Focussed at certain geographic areas based on specific data  
Provides additional regulatory powers  
Provides access to all PRS properties in the designated areas  
Sets standards for the management and condition of homes  
Widely used tool across the country

## Key considerations:

- There has to be broad political commitment to a selective licensing scheme.
- Scheme proposals are unlikely to ever be unanimously supported by all stakeholders.

## Cons

Blanket approach to the sector  
Every PRS property in scope pays the fee  
Requires extensive consultation  
Can require SoS approval (depending on scheme size)  
You cannot pick and choose where to deliver selective licensing, it must be data driven.  
Presents an initial financial risk.

# Trusted/Accredited Landlord Scheme

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## Pros

- Easy to identify landlords meeting certain requirements.
- Can provide access to additional training, advice and support.
- Could work alongside other approaches.

## Cons

- Free scheme already available for Lincolnshire Councils via DASH (minimal membership)
- A number of well known organisations offer this already (NRLA, EMPO, UNIPOL, DASH).
- Unlikely to attract landlords of a poor standard.
- Unlikely to achieve high volumes without an incentive.

Key considerations: will this type of scheme help to address the worst properties and the worst landlords? What incentives could be offered to ensure a scheme like this is successful?

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# Other Approaches and Examples

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Derby City Council – “Private Sector Landlords Charter” which sets out to help existing landlords to understand their responsibilities <https://www.derby.gov.uk/trading-standards-environmental-health/environmental-health/housing-standards/derby-city-council-landlords-charter/>

Hartlepool Borough Council – commissioned a neighbourhood strategy for a particular area of regeneration where over 50% of the stock was in the PRS

Lincoln City Council Trusted Landlord Scheme - to improve standards of accommodation, management of tenants and neighbourhood relations <https://www.lincoln.gov.uk/landlords/advice-new-landlords/4#:~:text=Trusted%20Landlord%20Scheme,-Due%20to%20the&text=The%20purpose%20of%20the%20scheme,who%20participate%20in%20the%20scheme>

Hull City Council – amended enforcement policy to be zero tolerance, but to give some leeway to landlords that were accredited

Rogue Landlord and Selective Licensing Schemes – there are numerous example of these types of scheme from up and down the country

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# Councillor Feedback - 3

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“What would be your preferred approach or approaches?”

\*Please write it in the chat also\*

---

# Additional Information



# Where are we aiming to get to?

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The workshop is aimed at setting direction and to understand what Councillors want to achieve as priorities. This will enable officers to then work up approaches that will seek to meet those outcomes. A visual illustration of this is below as an example:

## Desired Outcomes:

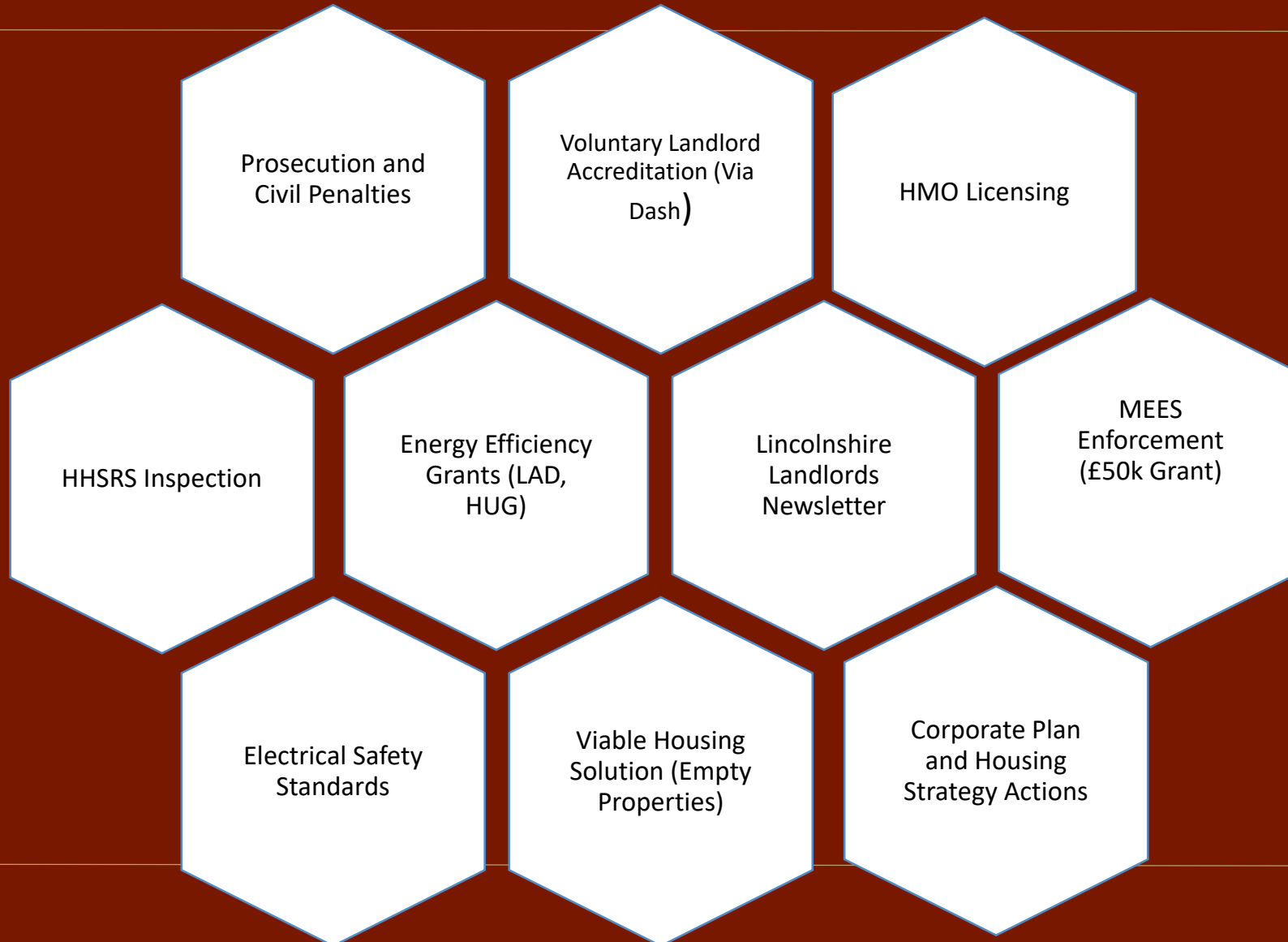
- Improving property conditions
- Improved relationships with landlords
- A more targeted approach to enforcement (using the data)
- Direct focus on rogue landlords
- Improved tenant accountability
- Improved support for tenants to sustain tenancies
- **Improved landlord accountability**
- Reduction in anti-social behaviour
- **Additional support and advice for landlords**
- Improved relationships with letting agents
- Additional support and advice for letting agents
- A specific focus on rural areas
- A specific focus on urban areas
- Empty properties

## Approach

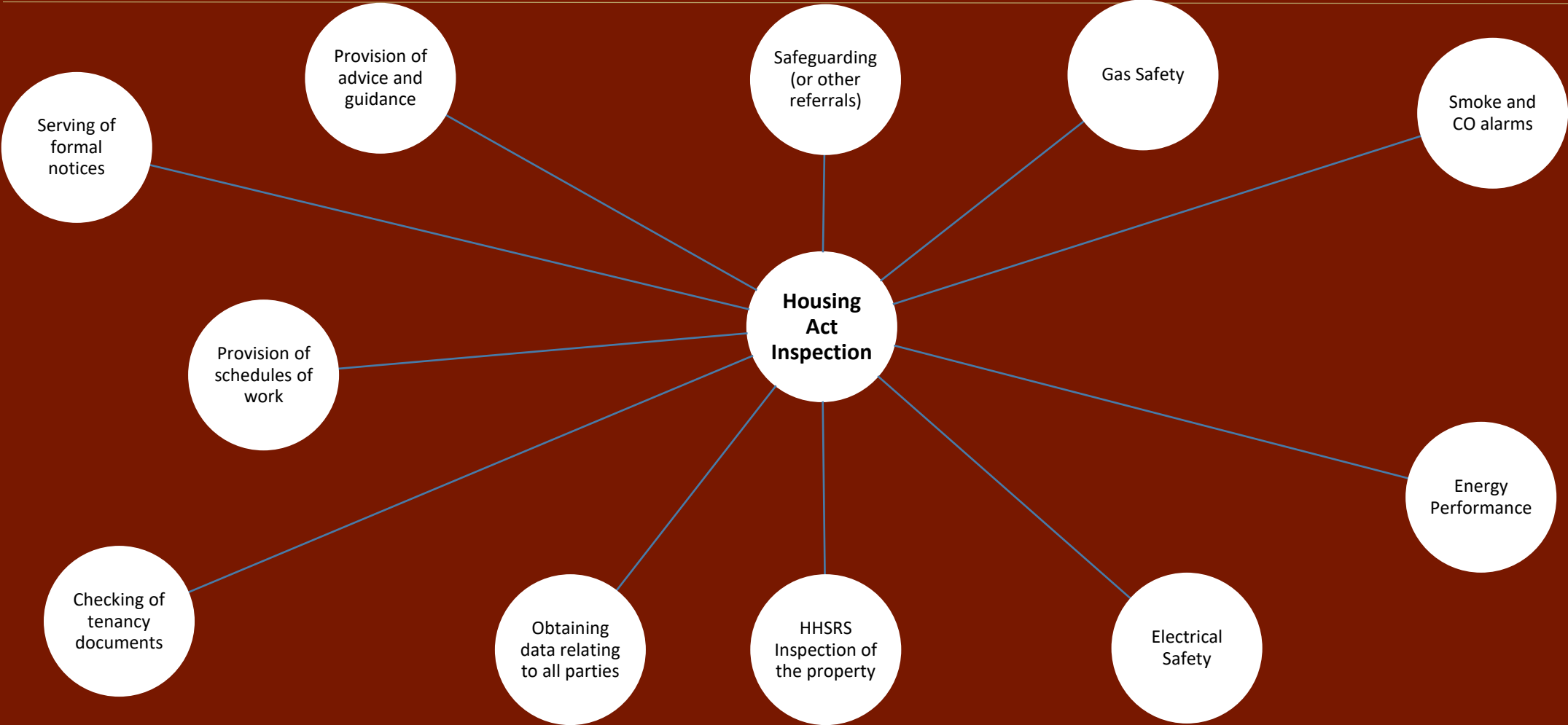


**An options appraisal (inc. resources and finance) would be conducted across all preferred options.**

# What else are we doing?



# What does a standard inspection involve?



# WLDC Enforcement Challenges

A headline report on local authority enforcement in the PRS was published in June 2022. This was informed via a survey to all English local authorities, combined with secondary and qualitative data. The report identified a number of key drivers of enforcement, which were not evidenced to be found in all local authority areas. These drivers were as follows:

- Capacity of local enforcement teams : more proactive work was carried out by those local authorities that had the largest teams. **There is little benchmarking available to compare team size across the board, however it is clear that the more resources you have, the more issues you can tackle.**
- The experience and expertise of enforcement teams : multi-disciplinary teams with highly qualified and experienced staff were the most proactive. **There is not believed to be an issue within West Lindsey's staffing cohort in regards to this.**
- Political will, strategic commitment and related support of legal teams : clear correlation between local authorities with strategic or political commitment to improving PRS through enforcement action and those being proactive in doing so. Upsetting local landlords or being seen to be punitive were hindering efforts. **West Lindsey are seeking to work through these challenges to come to an agreed consensus across all political parties.**
- Issues relating to the legal framework : various aspects of the legal framework were found to present challenges to local authorities in their efforts to enforce against poor standards. **This is evident in the white paper and in previous Government research. Officers seek to utilise the powers available in the best way possible.**
- Difficulties gathering evidence to support enforcement : reluctance of tenants to report, evidential proof, resources required to gather evidence and establishing the identity of landlords were all cited as issues. **These are also believed to be issues within West Lindsey to a certain extent.**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-enforcement-in-the-private-rented-sector-headline-report/local-authority-enforcement-in-the-private-rented-sector-headline-report>

## **Private Rented Sector Working Group**

### **Notes – 13<sup>th</sup> January 2023 – 1pm via MS Teams (recorded)**

#### **Present:**

- Councillor John McNeill (Chair) (JM)
- Councillor Tracey Coulson (TC)
- Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan (PHC)
- Councillor Stephen Bunney (SB) (arrived at 13.44 due to internet issues)

#### **In Attendance:**

- Nova Roberts: Director, Change Management, ICT and Regulatory Services(NR)
- Andy Gray: Housing and Environmental Enforcement Manager (AG)
- Rebecca Ward: Senior Housing Standards and Enforcement Officer (RW)

#### **Apologies:**

- Councillor Tom Regis (TR)
- Councillor Trevor Young (TY)

### **1. Welcome and Introduction**

The meeting was recorded on MS Teams and sent to those Councillors not present for information.

Cllr McNeill (JM) opened the working group meeting and welcomed all attendees. The format of the discussion was set out with a guiding steer towards the focus of the meeting being on the policy position that the Council should consider for selective licensing.

Ideally a consensus on the preferred approach or approaches is needed so that the recommendation can be prepared for Prosperous Communities Committee with clarity. It was also reiterated that the working groups recommendations will also be considered, developed and informed by the Chairs of Committee prior to the meeting in March.

### **2. Discussion on Preferred Recommendations**

Councillors were asked to consider the information shown within appendix 1 (Private Sector Housing Options Table) and to provide a response to two questions:

- a) What is your preferred way forward for Selective Licensing that should be built into the proposed recommendations to PCC?
- b) Depending on your position for question a) what are your preferred options laid out in the table for the way forward generally for the PRS?

JM invited members of the group to put forward their views in relation to the two questions.

Cllr Howitt-Cowan (PHC) felt that he did not wish to pursue selective licensing in any form at this point in time. His preference was to focus on the status quo and maximise use of the powers that are currently available.

Cllr Coulson (TC) requested clarity on the resources in relation to the options table. AG clarified that the status quo resources are in place and that any additional projects or targeted work will require further approval from the Council's Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.

TC also identified that the theme of housing is key within the Corporate Plan that is being revised and is a key priority for the Council moving forward, therefore would not want to take any options fully off the table. It was recognised however that any scheme may need tweaking based on the feedback on the proposals that were brought to a halt.

TC suggested that there has to be priority given to making resources available for housing related work as it aligns and contributes to so many broader objectives. It was suggested that the UKSPF should be considered as an option.

Generally, TC was happy to consider something more targeted, which may include selective licensing at some point.

In addition, PHC felt that raising revenue should not be the priority, if the matter was that important it should be funded appropriately via the general fund and not by landlords, many of which he felt didn't require the intervention. PHC also did not feel selective licensing would be appropriate, even if the cost was offset.

A discussion was then undertaken as to the variances between enforcement within the PRS and within social housing and whether there was any scope to ensure that the Council could do more with this. The consensus here was that this work is focussing on the PRS, but that there may be some further work to be done in relation to social housing standards.

JM fed back on his conversation with Cllr Regis (TR), who was reported to be not totally opposed to a selective licensing scheme, but was against the previous proposals in terms of their scale and geography.

JM then set out to summarise the position in terms of whether a selective licensing scheme would be better to be kept on the table given the timeline relating to the up and coming local elections and the potential general election that could happen in 2024 or at the latest 2025. JM also suggested that we should consider a way to enhance the status quo and in turn add interventions in between any potential review and revisit of selective licensing. It was clear that focus has to be on addressing some of the challenges in relation to sector and in particular the standards within the stock.

JM also requested a steer in regards to the speed of any PRS reforms that were set out in the white paper. AG advised that there does not appear to be a timeline for these as yet, but that the key elements relating to the abolition of Section 21 notices and the introduction of a landlord portal type scheme are due in 2023 at some point.

TC provided a view on how the Council need to be realistic in regards to what any interventions can achieve, for example, the expectation that any intervention can control individual people's behaviour is unrealistic from a housing perspective.

A conversation between all participants considered whether option D in relation to selective licensing (revisit it at a further point in time) would be appropriate. JM suggested that 24 months may be a good timeframe for this to be considered as it would provide time to then consider other interventions.

Cllr Bunney (SB) joined the meeting at 13.44pm. JM provided an overview of the discussions that had taken place so far to inform SB. On that basis SB was happy that option D be endorsed. SB is also keen to see the tenancy support aspect of the options given further consideration as part of any proposals.

### **3. Summary**

The overall discussion led the working group to agree that option D should be taken forward for selective licensing. The working group also believed that other targeted interventions and projects should be developed in the meantime, alongside continuing to deliver the status quo.

The following matters were requested to be covered within the committee report:

- An overview of the work that the working group has covered.
- Reference to the future need for any PRS working group, given that this is scheduled to be the last meeting of the group.
- A timeline to be included to set out how the work will now progress.

JM also requested that contact be made with TR and Cllr Young outlining the summary position that the working group has reached to seek their approval on this. AG has been tasked to do this.

NR thanked the working group for their ongoing commitment to the process and for their engagement and feedback during the working group meetings.

### **4. Any other business**

None noted

**END**

# Agenda Item 6c



**Prosperous Communities  
Committee**

**Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

**Subject: Approach to Environmental Crime**

Report by:	Director of Change Management, ICT & Regulatory Services
Contact Officer:	Andy Gray Housing and Enforcement Manager  andy.gray@west-lindsey.gov.uk
Purpose / Summary:	To seek approval for the new Environmental Crime Policy and the Environmental Crime Commitment.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

Committee are asked to:

- a) Approve the Environmental Crime Policy as shown in appendix 1.
- b) Approve the Environmental Crime Commitment as shown in appendix 2.
- c) Approve that minor amendments to the policy can be made in line with the scheme of delegation by the Director – ICT, Change Management and Regulatory Services with the agreement of the Chair of the Committee.



## IMPLICATIONS

### **Legal:**

The Council has a variety of statutory powers in relation to environmental crime for the matters covered within this policy.

The policy sets out the Council's position on these matters and sits underneath the Council's broader Corporate Enforcement Policy for these specific work areas.

### **Financial : FIN/152/23/SSC**

There are no financial implications within this report. The Environmental Crime Commitment sets out projects that will be explored in the future and these may have financial implications that will be set out and considered accordingly when those projects are developed and approval is sought for them.

There may be financial implications contained within elements of future work within the Environmental Crime Commitment, however the majority of the work is operational and can be financed from within the existing revenue budgets.

### **Staffing :**

The additional initiatives shown within the Environmental Crime Commitment can be resourced via the existing establishment.

### **Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :**

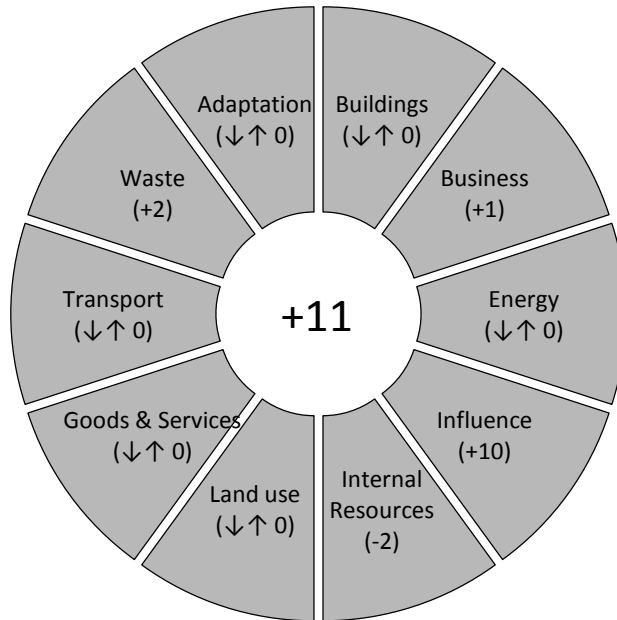
The Council's approach to enforcement is set out within its Corporate Enforcement Policy. This policy and commitment seek to ensure that the Council's position on these matters is clear and documented. There is not believed to be any adverse impact in relation to equality and diversity.

### **Data Protection Implications:**

None noted

**Climate Related Risks and Opportunities :**

A CESIA has been completed for this policy and is shown below:



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West Lindsey District Council will be net zero by 2050 (26 years and 11 months away).

The policy and commitment will contribute to the Council’s net zero carbon initiative mainly through the influence it will have. The raising of awareness on specific initiatives and successful enforcement work will help to spread the right message for the commitment that the Council has for dealing with these issues and in turn, help to actively reduce these.

**Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations :**

The Council has regulatory powers across the majority of the work areas and legislation covered within this policy. It will seek to use these in line with the Corporate Enforcement Policy and apply these as required and appropriate.

Where there is broader criminal activity associated with environmental crime the Council will liaise with the relevant partners to ensure that a joined-up approach is taken to tackle the issue.

**Health Implications:**

Tackling environmental crime can have a positive impact on health and wellbeing for the district's residents and businesses. Ensuring that the district is clean and that waste is disposed of appropriately are key objectives for the Council.

Seeking to raise awareness in regards to the impact of environmental crime is aimed at reducing the instances in which it occurs and in turn improving the look and feel of the district, particularly in some of its more deprived areas.

**Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

**Risk Assessment:**

**Call in and Urgency:**

**Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?**

*i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)*

**Yes**

**No**

**Key Decision:**

*A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications*

**Yes**

**No**

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. This report aims to seek approval for the Environmental Crime Policy (Appendix 1) and the accompanying Environmental Crime Commitment (Appendix 2).
- 1.2. The Council has not previously had a formal policy relating to its environmental crime work and this will sit alongside other service-based policies and be informed by the broader Corporate Enforcement Policy.

## **2. Context**

- 2.1. Environmental crime continues to be a high-profile area of work for the Council. This has been identified by residents and Councillors in various forums over the previous 12 to 18 months. The Council's approach to environmental crime is seen as a key issue and was also specifically identified within the Corporate Enforcement Policy workshops for Councillors that were held in August 2022.
- 2.2. The proposed policy aligns with the overall strategic aim within the Corporate Plan which is to "Create a safer, cleaner and greener district in which to live, work and socialise". It also seeks to outline the key work areas that the Council is responsible for and to compliment and work alongside the objectives of the Lincolnshire Environmental Crime Partnership.
- 2.3. The Environmental Crime Commitment seeks to outline the work that the Council are doing currently to tackle this issue and at the same time set out what it wishes to achieve in the coming 18 to 24 months. This document is proposed to be the public facing element of the policy that can be used to raised awareness of environmental crime and its impacts.

## **3. Approach to Environmental Crime**

- 3.1. The Council puts a significant amount of resource into dealing with environmental crime and this resource is spread across a number of work areas on a daily basis. On this basis, it is essential that the Council uses its resources effectively and seeks to limit the impact that this issue has on these.
- 3.2. The proposed Environmental Crime Policy sets out the Council's position across the following work areas:
  - Abandoned vehicle removal
  - Abandoned shopping trolleys
  - Dog fouling and Littering
  - Early presentation of waste and commercial waste
  - Fly-tipping
  - Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs)

- 3.3. The Council also works collaboratively with partners such as the Police and the Environment Agency to deal with cross cutting issues and ensure that the full range of legislative powers can be utilised to deal with any specific challenges.
- 3.4. The approach proposed within the policy takes into consideration the work that has been undertaken by the Council as part of its T24 review service and incorporates the use of improved technology as appropriate.

#### **4. Environmental Crime Commitment**

- 4.1. This document will act as the front facing aspects of the Council's Environmental Crime work and seeks to set out what the Council is doing to tackle the issue, alongside what it is committed to do moving forward.
- 4.2. The future actions have been informed by work that has been undertaken over the past 12 to 18 months and informed by feedback from Councillors in a variety of forums and any post pandemic impacts. The annual budget consultation also identified elements of enforcement that could be considered in the future, therefore these have been addressed also.
- 4.3. It is intended to keep this document live during the period of its operation and to bring back a review of the Council's progress and a revised commitment towards the end of 2024.

#### **5. Examples**

- 5.1. The links below show some of the proactive communications work that has occurred in the last 12 months in relation to fly-tipping and environmental crime.
- <https://thelincolnite.co.uk/2022/08/west-lindsey-district-council-use-stickers-in-proactive-approach-to-fly-tipping/>
  - <https://www.lincolnshirelive.co.uk/news/local-news/novel-approach-tackling-fly-tipping-7460274>
  - <https://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/council-news/2022/11/stark-warning-residents-illegal-fly-tipper-served-ps400-fixed-penalty-notice>

END



# Environmental Crime Policy

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Council recognises the severe impact and blight that environmental crime can have on its communities, individual residents and its visitors. The Council has a clear commitment within its Corporate Plan 2023 to 2027 to “Create a safer, cleaner and greener district in which to live, work and socialise”.
- 1.2. This policy sets out the approach that the Council will take in dealing with environmental crime and helps to inform the development of future actions and initiatives that can be taken to reduce the harm caused by it.
- 1.3. This policy sits underneath the Council’s Corporate Enforcement Policy and alongside other service-based policies.
- 1.4. The Policy also seeks to compliment and work alongside the objectives of the Lincolnshire Environmental Crime Partnership, which the Council is a partner in. This partnership also contains a broader membership of agencies such as the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Lincolnshire Police, the Environment Agency, Internal Drainage Boards, Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue and the Forestry Commission.

## 2. Aims and Objectives

- 2.1. The overall strategic aim of this policy is to “Create a safer, cleaner and greener district in which to live, work and socialise.

The policy also seeks to deliver the following outcomes:

- A reduction in environmental related crime as set out within this policy;
- An increase in enforcement activity in relation to environmental crime;
- Raise awareness of the harmful impact the environmental crime has on the district.

- 2.2. The objective of this document is to detail the decision framework which the Council will apply in deciding what, if any, of its enforcement powers to exercise in enforcing the provisions of the Acts.

- 2.3. The Council will have regard to the Human Rights Act, Article 8 and the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2010 (as amended) (RIPA), to ensure that any monitoring or surveillance work, in the investigation of complaints, should not compromise an individual’s right to “privacy, a family life and correspondence”. In any situation where it is thought that “directed” or “intrusive” surveillance is required to investigate a complaint, then authorisation will be applied for, from one of West Lindsey District Council’s authorised Officers.

- 2.4. The following work areas are included within this policy;

- Abandoned vehicle removal
- Abandoned shopping trolleys
- Dog fouling and Littering
- Early presentation of waste and commercial waste



- Fly-tipping
- Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs)

2.5. The policy does not deal with issues relating to statutory nuisance (noise, smoke, odour or accumulation of waste) or anti-social behaviour. Other policies and legislative powers deal with these matters and are used where appropriate to assist with any broader issues that environmental crime is causing.

### 3. Policy Context

#### 3.1. Fly – Tipping

3.1.1. The National Fly-Tipping Prevention Group estimates fly-tipping costs between £86m-£186 million every year to investigate and clear up. This cost falls on taxpayers and private landowners . For the 2020/21-year, local authorities in England dealt with 1.13 million fly-tipping incidents, an increase of 16% from the 980,000 reported in 2019/20. (source: <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN05672/SN05672.pdf> )

3.1.2. Locally, the number of fly-tips within West Lindsey is shown below. It is estimated that the cost to West Lindsey to remove fly-tips in 21/22 was £140k. Between April and November 22, the Council attended 143 fly-tips that required investigation.

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Total (Fly Tips per year)	674	1056	1475	991	803	1197	957	2925
% increase/decrease year on year		57%	40%	33%	-19%	49%	-20%	206%
								144% (vs18/19)

#### 3.2. Dog Fouling

3.2.1. There is limited statistical data available in relation to dog fouling and the level of reporting of this issue is sporadic. Agencies that have completed Freedom of Information requests to Local Authorities recently state that (across 70 LA's) there were nearly 90,000 reports of dog fouling across England, Scotland and Wales between 2017 and 2021. This number is likely to be significantly more given that there will certainly be under reporting of this issue and if it included other LA data from those that did not respond.

#### 3.3. Littering

3.3.1. Like dog fouling, littering is likely to be a largely under reported issue, but is a problem that is prevalent across the whole of the United Kingdom. It is estimated that it costs every household £28 to keep the streets clean per annum and that only 30% of people perceive litter as a problem. Source : <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/litter-and-littering-in-england-data-dashboard/litter-and-littering-in-england-2017-to-2018>

#### 3.4. Abandoned Shopping Trolleys

- 3.4.1. Since 2018 the Council has adopted legislation (Schedule 4 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990) to deal with abandoned shopping trolleys from supermarkets in Gainsborough.
- 3.4.2. This approach is helping to ensure that the Council remove trolleys in a timely fashion and also to recover the costs associated with their removal and storage via a charge to the business which owns the trolley. A total of 721 trolleys were collected during 2022.
- 3.4.3. This scheme will be reviewed from time to time and will be utilised until such time that abandoned shopping trolleys are no longer a concern.

### *3.5. Early Presentation of Waste and Commercial Waste*

- 3.5.1. The Council's still has some areas where waste and recycling sacks are presented on a weekly basis. The early presentation of waste is a particular issue in these areas. Street cleaning services ensure that waste is cleared regularly within these areas.
- 3.5.2. From April to October 2022 there have been 142 cases opened for investigation relating to early presentation of waste in areas where waste is presented in sacks for collection. The figure for 21/22 was 267 and 20/21 was 78 (note the impact of Covid during this period).
- 3.5.3. All Commercial businesses, under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, have a legal obligation to ensure that the waste they produce, store, transport and dispose of does not harm the environment. They also have an obligation under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to have a duty of care to ensure that their waste is only transferred to an authorised waste carrier. Waste transfer notes are issued to demonstrate that this requirement has been met,
- 3.5.4. The Council has a specific policy relating to waste collection which can be found here [Waste Services policies | West Lindsey District Council \(west-lindsey.gov.uk\)](https://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/waste-services-policies)
- 3.5.5. Enforcement Officers will deal with early presentation of waste within these areas as set out within the waste services policy via a fixed penalty notice as per Section 46 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

## **4. Prevention and Education**

- 4.1. The Council will seek to take a preventative and educational approach to how it deals with environmental crime in its broadest sense. We will focus on seeking to advise residents, communities, businesses and visitors of expected behaviours relating to environmental crime.
- 4.2. Where it is possible, the Council will seek to carry out more targeted educational and preventative campaigns to deal with specific issues. For example, if a particular area is subject to persistent dog fouling or is a fly-tipping hotspot.

- 4.3. The Council will utilise technology, including its own CCTV to assist in addressing environmental matters in a preventative way.
- 4.4. Where an environmental crime offence has been committed and is clearly evidenced, the Council will always seek to deal with the matter formally through an enforcement route. Any offender would have an opportunity to put forward any mitigation as part of this process.

## **5. Abandoned Vehicle Removal**

- 5.1. Abandoned vehicles can have a detrimental impact on the environment, particularly if they are in a poor state of repair or unroadworthy. The Refuse Disposal (Amenity Act) 1978 made it a criminal offence to abandon a motor vehicle, or any part of a motor vehicle, on any land in the open air or on any other land forming part of a highway.
- 5.2. The Council has a specific procedure in place to deal with issues of abandonment, which sets out the definition of “abandoned” and the exceptions that apply. In reality the Council removes a very small number of vehicles that are abandoned as they are often claimed as part of the abandonment process. In 2022 only 3 were fully removed.
- 5.3. Where a vehicle is reported as abandoned the Council will seek to determine its status and decide as to whether it is abandoned. If deemed abandoned, the registered keeper is given 14 days to remove the vehicle. If after 14 days it is not removed, it will be removed by the relevant removal company.

## **6. Abandoned Shopping Trolleys**

- 6.1. Abandoned shopping trolleys will be seized by the Council and the owner notified where it is identifiable. The Council will then return the trolley to the owner once the relevant fee has been paid.
- 6.2. Where a trolley is unclaimed the Council will store it for a 6-week period then arranges for its disposal.
- 6.3. The Council will continue to engage with supermarkets if requested to provide advice and guidance on how the scale of the issue can be reduced.

## **7. Dog Fouling and Littering**

- 7.1. Dog fouling and littering are the most under reported types of environmental crime and are known to be a concern amongst residents across large parts of the district.
- 7.2. It is extremely difficult to evidence a dog fouling offence and the Council has in place a PSPO for the whole district which requires individuals to clean up after their dogs and to carry a suitable receptacle to do this. Littering offences are dealt with using the Clean Neighbourhoods Act 2005.
- 7.3. The Council’s approach to dog fouling and littering is largely to be preventative and focus on hotspot areas informed by reports from

members of the public. Enforcement officers will deal with any fouling offences if they are evidenced when they are on patrol, however there is no specific operational resource solely dedicated to either of these issues.

7.4. Signage for dog fouling will be utilised in hotspot areas and is provided free of charge by the Council. Parish and Town Councils are also encouraged to erect their own signage if they believe there is a specific concern within their area.

## **8. Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs)**

8.1. PSPOs can be utilised to address certain environmental crime concerns and are already in use within the district to deal with matters such as dog fouling. PSPOs are a power made available to the Council within the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

8.2. The introduction of a PSPO has specific legal requirements and must be based on evidence. Where the Council believes there is justification for a PSPO to be implemented, due consideration will be given to the request and if necessary a decision made by the Council's Regulatory Committee as to whether to proceed.

8.3. In considering the implementation of any PSPO the Council will explore all preventative and other options to resolve the issue prior to proceeding with any formal consultation.

## **9. Fly-Tipping**

9.1. The Council will seek to investigate all fly-tips which provide evidence as to the offender and undertake broader investigations where the operation is more organised or is having a greater impact. Fixed penalties will be issued in most instances to deal with fly-tipping offences. A multi-agency and disruptive approach is taken at hotspot areas or locations where fly-tipping is part of a broader environmental or regulatory issue.

9.2. The Council will endeavour to clear fly-tips as soon as possible, however this may not always be possible due to the need for any evidence within it to be assessed and investigated.

9.3. Where fly-tips are on private land the Council will liaise with the landowner to ensure that it is addressed and may utilise other regulatory powers to deal with this if the matter is not dealt with.

9.4. The Council will utilise technology where possible to address the issue of fly-tipping in the form of CCTV and fixed cameras and will ensure that it is simple and easy for persons to report these types of offences to us.

## **10. Early Presentation of Waste and Commercial Waste**

10.1. The Council will work in line with its waste enforcement policies to address this issue. In areas where sacked waste is presented the Council will take a formal approach and where evidence is available issue warnings followed by a fixed penalty notice for frequent offenders.

- 10.2. The Council will seek to proactively check that businesses have commercial waste arrangements in place and where this is not the case will utilise the relevant legislation to address it. The businesses duty of care will also be considered and any supporting documentation relating to this assessed.
- 10.3. From time to time the Council will carry out proactive operations such as the stopping and searching of waste carrying vehicles with support from the other relevant enforcement agencies.

**END**

# Environmental Crime Commitment

2023-2024

## Introduction

Through its Corporate Plan, West Lindsey District Council has made it a clear priority to improve health and wellbeing across the district, and to ensure our local communities are clean, green and safe for all. A number of Council services have an important role to play in delivering these priorities and we are committed to playing our part by working to reduce levels of environmental crime across the district.

In tackling environmental crime, this commitment sets out where we are now, where we want to get to over the next 18 months, how we plan to get there, and how we will monitor our progress in four key areas: dog fouling, littering, early presentation of waste and fly-tipping.



# Dog Fouling

## What do we currently do?

- Proactive patrols for dog fouling based on local intelligence - This makes best use of our resources to catch offenders who do not pick up after their dog. Patrols ensure we are visible and present within communities where dog fouling is taking place.
- Provision of signage in areas where dog fouling has been a concern - This reinforces to the public that dog fouling is against the law, should be picked up, and that there is a potential penalty for not doing so.
- Monitoring and enforcing a district wide Public Space Protection Order, requiring dog owners to pick up after them and carry a receptacle to do this - This gives the Council a legal framework to help ensure we can deal with any offenders who do not pick up after their dog.

## Where do we want to get to?

- Increased public awareness of the environmental, health and social impacts of dog fouling.
- Additional resources on the ground to tackle dog fouling through an intelligence based, civil enforcement approach.

## How do we plan to get there?

- Launch a public awareness campaign that highlights the impact of dog fouling, with campaign material targeted particularly at properties in the vicinity of hotspot areas.
- Consider ways to increase the level of resources on the ground dedicated to tackling dog fouling.
- Improve intelligence gathering to ensure more offenders are issued with fixed penalties.

## How will we know we are making progress?

In the long-term, successfully reducing dog fouling should contribute to wider outcomes related to improved health and wellbeing, an increased sense of pride in place and a reduction in levels of deprivation. In the short-term, we should expect to see the following by way of progress:

- An increase in the number of dog-fouling incidents reported to the Council.
- An increase in the number of fixed penalty notices issued if additional resources are in place. (this should reduce longer-term).
- High levels of engagement with the public information campaign.





# Littering

## What do we currently do?

- Proactive patrols of key locations where littering is an issue - This means being visible and present within communities where littering is taking place and maximising available resources to catch any offenders who drop litter.
- Regularly litter pick key areas across the district - This ensures the district is clean and tidy and that the environmental impact of litter is reduced.

## Where do we want to get to?

- Increased public awareness of the environmental, health and social impacts of littering.
- Additional resources on the ground to tackle littering through an intelligence led, civil enforcement approach.

## How do we plan to get there?

- Launch a public awareness campaign that highlights the impact of littering and is targeted at hotspot areas.
- Consider ways of to increase the level of resources on the ground dedicated to tackling littering.
- Improve intelligence gathering to ensure more offenders are issued with fixed penalties.

## How will we know we are making progress?

In the long-term, successfully reducing littering should contribute to wider outcomes related to improved health and wellbeing, an increased sense of pride in place and a reduction in levels of deprivation. In the short-term, we should expect to see the following by way of progress:

- An increase in the number of fixed penalty notices issued (this should reduce longer-term).
- High levels of engagement with the public information campaign.



# Early Presentation of Waste and Commercial Waste

## What do we currently do?

- Regularly patrol areas where waste is presented in sacks for weekly collection - This contributes to a cleaner and well managed public environment for residents in areas where waste is presented in sacks.
- Use our enforcement powers to deal with offences relating to early presentation of commercial waste - This results in increased compliance with waste regulations and reduces associated street cleaning costs.
- Offer a commercial waste service to businesses - This provides a commercial solution to businesses that also generates income for the Council.

## Where do we want to get to?

- Enhanced public awareness in specific areas on waste collection requirements.
- Increased compliance with commercial waste requirements and to identify those premises that do not have sufficient arrangements in place.

## How do we plan to get there?

- Increase awareness through targeted communication.
- Proactively checking that commercial businesses have the appropriate waste collection arrangements in place.

## How will we know we are making progress?

- A reduction in the early presentation of waste.
- A reduction in non-compliance with commercial waste requirements.
- Additional customers for West Lindsey Commercial Waste Services.

# Fly-Tipping

## What do we currently do?

- Investigate fly-tipping incidents and use formal powers against offenders - This ensures enforcement action can be taken against offenders in the form of a fixed penalty notice or prosecution. It also sends a message to offenders that it will not be tolerated within the district.
- Deploy signage in fly-tipping hotspot areas - This raises awareness to fly-tippers and the public that we actively deal with the issue and know where the hotspot areas are.
- Utilise “fly-tipping under investigation” tape - This assures the public that the Council is investigating a fly-tip when it is in situ prior to being cleared.
- Joint fly-tipping patrols with Lincolnshire Police - This helps to identify potential fly-tippers and those persons carrying waste without the necessary legal requirements in place.
- Actively promoting the “SCRAP Fly-Tipping” campaign and raising awareness of fly-tipping and its impact across the district - The raising of public awareness in regards to fly-tipping and reminding the public of their duty of care when disposing of waste.

## Where do we want to get to?

- Better use of technology to tackle fly-tipping and increase the number of offenders that we catch.
- Enhanced public awareness of waste collection requirements in specific areas.
- Increased public awareness in regards to duty of care to reduce the instances that lead to fly-tipping.
- A reduction in fly-tipping levels across the district.

## How do we plan to get there?

- Delivering a 12-month trial of mobile CCTV cameras specifically targeting fly-tipping in hotspot areas.
- A public awareness campaign regarding people’s “duty of care” when disposing of waste.

## How will we know we are making progress?

In the long-term, successfully reducing fly-tipping should contribute to wider outcomes related to improved health and wellbeing, an increased sense of pride in place and a reduction in levels of deprivation. In the short-term, we should expect to see the following by way of progress:

- An increase in the number of incidents of fly-tipping that are reported to the Council (this will reduce in the long-term).
- An increase in prosecutions or fixed penalty notices related to fly-tipping.
- High levels of engagement with the public awareness campaign

Longer-term, as public awareness is raised and compliance increases, we would expect to see:

- A reduction in incidences of fly-tipping



## Get In Touch:

[www.west-lindsey.gov.uk](http://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk)  
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# Agenda Item 6d



**Prosperous Communities  
Committee**

**Tuesday 7th March 2023**

**Subject: Economic Recovery Plan Annual Update**

Report by:

Director of Planning, Regeneration & Communities

Contact Officer:

Sally Grindrod-Smith  
Director Planning, Regeneration & Communities

sally.grindrod-smith@west-lindsey.gov.uk

Purpose / Summary:

To provide the annual update on progress with delivery of the Economic Recovery Plan.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

- 1. Prosperous Communities Committee note and support the progress with delivery of the Economic Recovery Plan.**
- 2. Prosperous Communities Committee agree to receive the final update on progress with delivery of the Economic Recovery Plan as part of the Economic Growth Strategy due by March 2024.**



## IMPLICATIONS

**Legal:**

**There are no legal implications from this report.**

**(N.B.) Where there are legal implications the report MUST be seen by the MO**

**Financial : FIN/164/23/JA**

**There are no financial implications from this report.**

**(N.B.) All committee reports MUST have a Fin Ref**

**Staffing :**

**There are no staffing implications from this report**

**(N.B.) Where there are staffing implications the report MUST have a HR Ref**

**Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :**

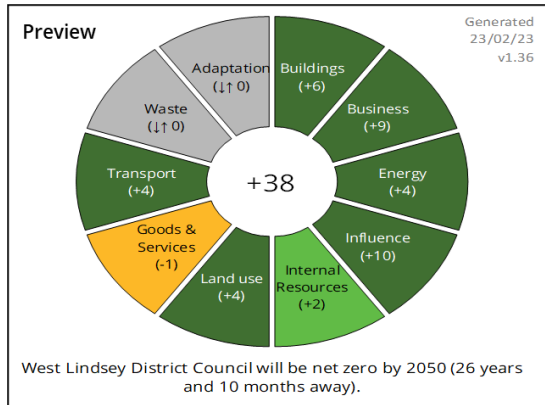
*The delivery of the Economic Recovery Plan considers how to promote equality, diversity and inclusive growth through the delivery of the actions contained within the action plan. Ultimately the purpose of the Plan is to create the spocio-economic conditions in which our communities and businesses can become more productive and resilient and relate to the Levelling Up agenda where everyone can benefit and contribute to improved prosperity.*

**Data Protection Implications :**

None arising from this report

## Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:

As part of the Economy Recovery Annual Update, the Climate Environment and Sustainability Impact Assessment Tool has been used to consider the environmental impact of the Economic Recovery Plan Programme to date.



For the purpose of this Review, the CESIA has been undertaken as a high level assessment, recognizing that a number of actions and projects within the original Plan have now been completed. The infographic is therefore an overall assessment of the collective economic recovery and revival work that is currently being delivered across the organisation either represented by a single project or collectively as part of a wider programme of work under the LUF or UKSPF banner. In this instance where practicable CESIAs will be undertaken for each intervention separately.

Over the last year the Recovery Plan has proved to positively and consistently support green recovery and sustainability opportunities across the district and has been shown to influence and help deliver the Climate, Environment and Sustainability Action Plan.

## Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations :

**No direct implications from this report however** public realm projects that include improvements to empty buildings and high streets, or regeneration of areas with poor quality built environments, will significantly contribute to the creation of welcoming and safer public spaces that are liveable and pleasant to use for both businesses and residents.

## Health Implications:

**None directly arising from this report however** health and wellbeing are strongly linked and interwoven into the aims of the Economic Recovery Plan and are seen as co-benefits of a more inclusive and sustainable way of living.

## Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Wherever possible please provide a hyperlink to the background paper/s  
If a document is confidential and not for public viewing it should not be listed.

There is no specific risk assessment required as a result of this report. The ongoing risk to delivery of the outcomes of the Economic Recovery Plan are managed through the Growth Team and link to the Council's Strategic Risk Management Framework where the wider economic risks are considered.

**Call in and Urgency:**

**Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?**

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

No

**Key Decision:**

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

No

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 In December 2021 Prosperous Communities Committee approved the West Lindsey Economic Recovery Plan and Action Plan. It was recommended that members receive an annual update on progress and performance against the agreed action plan.
- 1.2 Attached to the report at Appendix 1 is the progress against each of the actions contained within the action plan. In addition, an infographic is included at Appendix 2 which summarises progress to date.

## **2. Progress to date**

- 2.1 The Economic Recovery Plan set out the overarching strategic framework for action including the following key areas and aims.
  - Green Recovery – our aim is to support the ‘Green Business’ strand of the Climate Change, Sustainability and Environment Strategy.
  - Business Environment – our aim is to diversify and strengthen the economic base, create more jobs, skills and training to serve our businesses.
  - Regeneration and Levelling Up – our aim is to improve the economic performance of Gainsborough, Market Rasen and Caistor
  - Housing Growth – our first aim is to deliver housing led economic growth and infrastructure. Our second aim is to drive housing growth and meet need and demand, using private sector solutions where appropriate.
  - Key Sector Development – our first aim is to position our economy to maximise its economic integration into the region and align to the Local Industrial Strategy. Our second aim is developing a vibrant visitor economy.
  - Infrastructure – our aim is to deliver housing led growth and infrastructure
  - Supporting People and Skills – our first aim is to improve access to training and employment for residents. Our second aim is to support local schools to improve attainment levels and employment prospects for young people.
- 2.2 Appendix 1 provides members with an update on progress as at December 2022 against all of the actions within the Economic Recovery Action Plan and a status position for each action.
- 2.3 Progress can be broadly categorised into ongoing, complete, superseded and deferred. Where an action has been superseded or

deferred the reasons are provided. The progress update should provide members of the committee with the assurance that progress is being made against the each of the priority areas within the Economic Recovery Plan.

- 2.3 The Recovery Plan recognised at the point of adoption that it would be required to be an ever-evolving document and this has certainly proven to be the case. Since the plan was adopted the national policy environment has continued to evolve and the Council have developed and adopted a full Investment Plan in response to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. This has changed and shaped how we deliver against a number of the actions within the recovery plan and provides a huge opportunity for the Council to continue to deliver against its economic aims.

### **3. Next Steps**

- 3.1 The Economic Recovery Plan was approved by the Prosperous Communities in 2021 as West Lindsey's response to the Covid 19 pandemic with the aligned purpose of informing the next iteration of the Economic Growth Strategy (EGS) due by 2024. It has also informed and shaped the emerging Corporate Plan.
- 3.2 The Growth Team are beginning to work on the development of the new EGS and it is proposed that the final Economic Recovery Plan progress update is provided as part of the EGS evidence base review and presented to Committee within the report to consider the new EGS (by March 2024).

**The Economic Recovery Plan 2021 – 2024**

**Progress against actions as at Dec 2022 / Jan 2023:**

**Green Recovery – Our aim is to support the ‘Green Business’ strand of the Climate Change, Sustainability and Environment Strategy**

Actions currently being delivered and proposed	Timeline when Action Plan published	Progress as at December 2022	Status – Position now
Develop and adopt robust policies within the revised Local Plan to support the transition to a net zero carbon Central Lincolnshire.	Adoption of the revision of Local Plan early 2022	Local Plan now at Independent Examination stage (Regulation 24). Hearing commenced 15 <sup>th</sup> November 2022 and scheduled to run to mid December 2022.  Proposed policies S6 to NS18 seek to achieve this. Structured around five key themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing energy consumption</li> <li>• Increasing renewable energy generation</li> <li>• Protecting carbon sinks</li> <li>• Facilitating transition to net -zero carbon lifestyles</li> <li>• Adapting to a changing climate</li> </ul>	<b>Ongoing now at examination in public</b>
Develop an appropriate resourcing and delivery plan for large scale solar projects	March 2022	As at December 2022 four proposed solar projects within West Lindsey.  Obligations under NSIPs have been met. Joint working / resourcing explored with neighbouring authorities.  Appointed Atkins as technical support consultants in preparation for detailed work required by WLDC in 2023  Lobbying letter to Minister developed and sent September 2022 on back of motion to Full Council.  Consultation / engagement opportunities promoted for Elected Members and Public.  Web resource established and published bringing together all progress updates and responses. <a href="https://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/planning-building-control/solar-development-proposals-west-lindsey">https://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/planning-building-control/solar-development-proposals-west-lindsey</a>	<b>Complete further monitoring of action not required</b>
Investigate the development of renewable energy and energy storage for localised energy schemes	2022/2023	As well as promoting this through policies in the CLLP, WLDC are collaborating with LCC and the Energy Catapult to produce a Local Energy Asset Representation study.  The intention is to help planners and businesses deploy zero carbon innovations by mapping local energy assets, buildings, geography and social factors like fuel poverty. Further details of the study can be found <a href="https://es.catapult.org.uk/what-we-do/">https://es.catapult.org.uk/what-we-do/</a>  WLDC are also part of the Greater Lincolnshire Energy Options Appraisal which aims to identify energy constraints and solutions, promote solutions linked to key development areas which are to be linked on GIS mapping, and develop a collaborative energy approach to the sites which have been picked.	<b>Ongoing - CLLP is currently under examination, the LEAR study is due to be published in Q1 2023</b>
Explore the opportunity to develop a Rural Pathfinder Project with associated Toolkit that would help assess current challenges on rural mobility and sustainable transport	December 2022	This action has now been integrated within a more localised strategic approach explored via a range of mechanisms including Neighbourhood Plans, HSTF and other opportunities in collaboration with other stakeholders.	<b>Superseded by other activities further monitoring of action not required</b>

		UKSPF Intervention 1.5 seeks to fund and support WLDC led feasibility fund to develop delivery plans (from concept to deliverable schemes) for walking and cycling interventions to support creation of new foot paths and cycle paths and upgrade existing foot paths and cycle paths, particularly in areas of health need.	
Agree key walking and cycling routes that require investment to support rural connectivity	December 2022	Gainsborough Transport Strategy published May 2022 identifies key enhancements to cycling and walking network within Gainsborough.  UKSPF intervention 1.5 to support with feasibility fund to develop delivery plans (from concept to deliverable schemes) for walking and cycling interventions to support creation of new foot paths and cycle paths and to upgrade existing foot paths and cycle paths, particularly in areas of health need.	<b>Superseded by other activities further monitoring of action not required</b>
Stimulate and support the digital economy to improve digital connectivity across West Lindsey	Ongoing	Ongoing programme of activities including partnership working with RSN as part of the Revitalising Rural campaign (lobbying for rural digital connectivity). Broadband in Lincolnshire - LCC contract with Quickline Communications aims to provide every county home / business with superfast broadband via its 'OnLincolnshire' project. Ultrafast Broadband rolled out to Lissington in Feb 2022.  'Digital Lincolnshire' supplier directory under creation as part of an initiative linked to Government's Create Growth Programme supporting creative / digital businesses across 6 regions of UK including Lincolnshire. DCMS supported programme including £7m Innovate UK Finance Fund.  Training sessions provided for businesses focussed on ecommerce and social media marketing via Growth Hub and Lincolnshire Chamber of Commerce.	<b>Ongoing – BAU activity</b>
Support businesses to access funds and expertise to develop or invest in new environmentally-friendly products or energy-efficient technologies that will drive the transition to a low carbon economy	Ongoing	Dedicated expert available via Lincolnshire Growth Hub platform.  Zellar carbon calculator tool available to Lincolnshire based SME businesses (free of charge).  First steps to net-zero webinar held. Sustainability podcast produced.  UKSPF Intervention 2.1 seeks to support carbon footprint reduction via a grant scheme that supports implementation of business led sustainability and climate change driven improvements.	<b>Superseded by other activities further monitoring of action not required as will form part of UKSPF reporting</b>
Educate and support businesses to reduce, recycle and reuse materials as part of sustainable circular economy	Ongoing	The LEP is currently developing, in partnership with WLDC and other Greater Lincolnshire Local Authorities and wider stakeholders, a Circular Economy Strategy.	<b>Ongoing – BAU activity</b>
Support communities to develop Low Carbon Neighbourhood Plans which contribute to green and sustainable growth	Ongoing	This is ongoing as part of the role of the Senior Neighbourhood Planning Officer and relevant officers supporting localised socio-economic work as advocates of low carbon and sustainable inclusive growth.  Latest revised Local Plan policies reinforce focus and address key themes around net-zero, renewable energies and energy use reduction.	<b>Ongoing – BAU activity</b>
Use the council's procurement processes to ensure the local authority supply chain is minimising carbon emissions, including through circular procurement	Ongoing	Currently, no baseline exists to record carbon emissions from procurement decisions. Officers are preparing a business case to commission an external firm (CO2 analysis) to undertake combined piece of work for Lincolnshire authorities to map and examine ways to reduce carbon emissions from goods and services, whilst also delivering financial savings. Officers are also reviewing the latest guidance from the LGA and Local Partnerships in this area.	<b>Adopted as a live project in the Lincolnshire Sustainability Officers Climate Change Action Plan. Progress reports to Lincs CX Group issued quarterly. Further monitoring under this action plan is therefore not required</b>

Creation of a Green Tourism Toolkit containing step by step actions that businesses in the tourism and hospitality sector can take to reduce their carbon emissions	March 2022	Toolkit launched in May 2022. Further Hospitable Green programme to run in 2023 - A programme of support for hospitality and tourism sector (4 x 2hr online sessions, optional certification and ambassador add-ons also offered).	<b>COMPLETE</b>
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**Business Environment – Our aim is to diversify and strengthen the economic base, create more jobs and skills and training to serve our businesses.**

Actions currently being delivered and proposed	Timeline when Action Plan published	Progress as at December 2022	Status
Delivery of Business Revival Grant to support businesses to recover, diversify and grow in response to the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic	May 2021 – March 2022	Awards made to 213 businesses with a total of grant value of £681,452 awarded.	<b>COMPLETE</b>
Provision of specialist Retail Business Adviser to offer 121 advisory sessions and a suite of online support package	May 2020 – March 2022	Completed as planned. 121 sessions supported by series of webinars / videos via retail champion Clare Bailey.  Further package of 121 support launched in Summer 2022 again offering 121 advisory sessions and supported by new digital content and local network events. 20 individual businesses received 12hrs of 121 support.  UKSPF intervention 2.1 seeks to further extend programme of advice linked to local retail centres through 2023 to 2025.	<b>Superseded by other activities further monitoring of action not required as will form part of UKSPF reporting</b>
Issue of Ebrief / digital newsletters to regularly inform the business community of any support programme or initiative that may be available to them.	Ongoing	Issued monthly. Subscription now at 3,561 email addresses (11% increase vs start of the financial year). Open rate which is consistently above 40% (local government average is circa 29%).	<b>Ongoing – BAU activity</b>
Creation of an online platform to promote and support businesses – Think Local Campaign	Ongoing	Development of Think Local campaign, dedicated web page, social media campaign, case studies and news articles from local businesses. Think Local campaign launched in 2021, focussed on business directory, continuing in 2022 with Case Studies, Behind the Business articles and news stories.  Discover Gainsborough and Love Lincolnshire Wolds brands developed.	<b>Ongoing – BAU activity</b>
Development of a social media platform to support visitor economy and retail businesses	November 2021 – March 2022	Maybe platform businesses engaged through restrictions period. Functionality limited use as a long-term business tool.	<b>Complete</b>
Delivery of a Market Traders Grant for Gainsborough, Market Rasen and Caistor designed to support those traders who have regularly attended local markets throughout the crisis, and that would also encourage growth for more localised shopping	March 2022	£27,541.06 in grant monies paid to total of 46 traders (32 Gainsborough / 8 Market Rasen / 6 Caistor).	<b>Complete</b>
Continue to work in partnership with FSB / Lincolnshire Chamber of Commerce to promote events and support available	Ongoing	Discounted FSB membership funded by WLDC. 26 businesses funded to date running at circa 70% renewal rate.  Business Ebrief features events and support available.  October 2022 WLDC shortlisted for FSB award for business support services.	<b>Ongoing – BAU activity</b>
Plan and organise a WLDC business showcase event to highlight Council's current programme of work and present WLDC commercial opportunities available to businesses	March 2022	Activity deferred to Spring 2023 Event will focus on LUF delivery and UKSPF opportunities.	<b>Deferred</b>
Work in partnership with the Lincolnshire Growth Hub to ensure our businesses continue to have access to the wider Business Support Programmes	Ongoing	Dedicated West Lindsey advisor within Growth Hub. UKSPF intervention 2.1 seeks to continue support to core Growth Hub centralised offer.	<b>Ongoing – BAU activity</b>
Continue to support small and micro businesses with their path to recovery and growth potential	Ongoing	Through a range of activities including ebrief, Growth Hub, NBV, tailored support and training.	<b>Ongoing – BAU activity</b>
Develop and strengthen our Business Engagement programme in order to gather economic intelligence and	September 2022	A number of active public and private sector partnerships in place to ensure ongoing engagement across key sectors. The various forums allow for sharing of intelligence and emerging trends.	<b>Ongoing – BAU activity</b>



trends that would help shape a responsive and relevant Recovery Action Plan			
Continue the Data collection programme including Town Centre Vacancies index and footfall data monitoring	Ongoing	Vacancy report issued to Members 2022. Footfall data monitoring incl event analysis (where relevant) in place.  Economic land monitoring – latest AMR issued to CLJPU in Sept 2022.	<b>Ongoing – BAU activity</b>
Explore the implementation of new Government Procurement Policy PPN11/20 to allow local suppliers to access Council contracts to support local jobs	June 2022	Policy adopted. Where possible WLDC will invite local suppliers to tender for opportunities.	<b>Complete</b>

### Regeneration and Levelling Up – Our aim is to improve the economic performance of Gainsborough, Market Rasen and Caistor Town Centres

Actions currently being delivered and proposed	Timeline when Action Plan published	Progress as at December 2022	Status
West Lindsey Place Plan	Longer term project to commence in 2022	The UKSPF investment Plan has completed this item. Next key work stream will be development of Economic Plan for 2024 and beyond.	<b>Complete</b>
Continue to work with the Rural Services Network and adjoining members in pushing the Levelling Up agenda for rural areas (Revitalising Rural Campaign)	Ongoing  Developed West Lindsey submission to the Rural England Prosperity Fund	Local Authority membership in place.  Officer(s) and Member attendance at annual conference, briefings and formal meetings.  RSN reports contribute to the evidence base for various WLDC services and work streams.	<b>Ongoing – BAU activity</b>
Utilise Re-opening High Street Safely / Welcome Back Fund to support businesses across the three market towns and main retail areas including a package of public realm improvements	Complete by March 2022	All Welcome Back Fund allocation used, total grant discharged £169,169.00 across staffing, communications, business campaigns, Public realm changes and events.  UKSPF intervention 1.2 seeks to replicate grant ethos to smaller retail centres within the district. With capital and revenue grants for physical improvements and events to drive activity / footfall to retail centres.	<b>Complete</b>
Deliver Thriving Gainsborough 2024	Outcome of Levelling Up Funding Bid expected end October 2021 – programme will depend upon external funds	Full value of bid awarded at £10m.  Works now underway across a number of interventions.  Project delivery monitored by specific Programme Board and upwards reporting at Land, Property and Growth.  Key milestones achieved to date include, Lindsey Centre demolition preparations and installation of Wayfinding Strategy.	<b>Work in progress, monitored via relevant Programme Board and Committee reporting.</b>
Redevelop the former Lindsey Centre	Confirmed plan by 2022	Part of Thriving Gainsborough 2024 programme.  Demolition planned for end of calendar year 2022 to allow for Cinema and associated commercial units and parking to be developed.  GBM Demolition appointed to lead the demolition of the former Lindsey Centre. Demolition work officially started on Monday 19 December 2022.	<b>Complete (plan in place, works ongoing).</b>
Deliver the Gainsborough Townscape Heritage programme	Underway with programme completion in 2024	To date, 1 completed project (27 – 29 Lord Street) 2 further in full construction phase (grant approved) and 4 with appointed architects and 4 in process of appointing.	<b>Work in progress, monitored via relevant Programme Board and Grant reporting to BEIS / NLHF.</b>
Regeneration and redevelopment of 5-7 Market Place, Gainsborough	April 2022	Regeneration works underway, due to be completed February 2023 with ground floor commercial and residential above. TH/LUF and LOTS grants approved.	<b>Project underway and nearing completion.</b>
Market Rasen Historic Building Grants	March 2023	Working with 6 owners to develop grant assisted refurbishment schemes. 3 have appointed architect, 1 of which now has statutory permissions and about to appoint a contractor and 3 in early stages of developing schemes.	<b>Work in progress, monitored via relevant Programme Board and Grant reporting to BEIS / NLHF.</b>

Delivery Shop Front Improvement Scheme across Caistor, Market Rasen and Gainsborough	Ongoing (subject to budgetary implications)	The scheme is now focussed on Caistor and MR as LUF funding available for Gainsborough town centre.  Currently working with 6 owners in Market Rasen to develop schemes.	<b>Work in progress, monitored via relevant Programme Board and grant reporting to BEIS / NLHF.</b>
Redevelopment of South Dale Caistor as 'Gateway to the Town'	Feasibility underway to complete by March 2022 and then agree next steps.	Feasibility study concluded that without motivated NHS partner there was no viable redevelopment possible. WLDC to continue to work with Caistor Town Council to develop possible options for this key site.	<b>Ongoing</b>
Develop a business and masterplan for the redevelopment and regeneration of the site in partnership with the Community and future owner of RAF Scampton	Disposal scheduled for December 2022 – Masterplan to be in place prior to planning approval for redevelopment.	EPIMS submission made.  Site based conditions worked through and committee decision made on basis that acquisition is possible.  Decision remains subject to conclusion of tender exercise which remains live. Further committee decision to consider outcome of tender exercise due Feb 2023.  Revised Local Plan containing policy for future of RAF Scampton has been heard at Examination in Public.	<b>Ongoing - Committee decision in Dec 22 confirmed WLDC commitment to acquire site subject to securing a development partner. RAF still in process of site closedown.</b>
Delivery of the Living Over the Shops Scheme	March 2022	LUF scheme is now working with 7 properties to deliver 22 units of residential accommodation focussed on Lord Street and Silver Street.	<b>Work in progress, monitored via relevant Programme Board and LUF reporting to BEIS</b>

### Housing Growth – Our first aim is to deliver housing led economic growth and infrastructure

Actions currently being delivered and proposed	Timeline when Action Plan published	Progress as at December 2022	Status
Adoption of revised Central Lincolnshire Local Plan	Early 2022	Local Plan now at Independent Examination stage (Regulation 24). Hearing commenced 15th November 2022 and scheduled to run to mid December 2022.	<b>Ongoing now at examination</b>
Completion of Phase 1 Warren Wood including securing recycled grant funds for re-investment.	Monitor delivery – anticipated to be at between 35 and 40 dwellings per year.	46 x DS3s executed April 2022, releasing the charge on 46 completed homes.  Commercial Centre to begin construction on site January 2023.	<b>Work in progress, monitored via relevant Programme Board and reporting to Homes England.</b>
Master planning and planning submission for phase 2 Warren Wood	June 2023	Worked closely with Thonock and Somerby Estate and Savilles to market phase 2 and secure a purchaser. The housebuilder is working to refine site access details and will complete purchase once planning is in place.	<b>On track.</b>
Thonock Park phase 1 to secure housebuilder and commence delivery	Reserved matters application anticipated mid 2022	Reserved matters application received June 2022 (145066) Persimmon Homes.	<b>Ongoing – Application under consideration as at January 2023</b>
Monitor and maintain 5-year land supply to ensure housing growth is plan led	Annual 5-year land supply statement – working with Central Lincolnshire	The Central Lincolnshire Five Year Land Supply Report for 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2027 was published in October 2022 which evidences that central Lincolnshire has a robust 5 year land supply.	<b>Complete</b>

### Housing Growth – Our second aim is to drive housing growth and meet need and demand, using private sector solutions where appropriate

Actions currently being delivered and proposed	Timeline when Action Plan published	Progress as at December 2022	Info Graphic Content
Delivery of the updated Housing Strategy	April 2022	Refreshed Strategy published in May 2022.	<b>Complete</b>
Continue to engage with registered Providers to bring forward affordable housing schemes that can offer a range of property types and tenures to meet identified housing need within the District	Ongoing	Work with RP and developers is on-going along with liaising with Homes England to ensure that where market failure is being identified we can continue to understand how affordable housing can continue to be delivered.	<b>Ongoing – BAU activity</b>

		235 new affordable homes have been granted planning permission since 2020 with 138 of those being fully affordable housing schemes.  First Homes Early Delivery Programme is being supported in the district with over 50 homes receiving grant funding from Homes England.	
Work with LCC colleagues, developers and RP's to deliver specialist housing to meet the identified needs across the district. To include: working age adults with disabilities, older people, care leavers	Ongoing	Extra care scheme planning application submitted with secured LCC and Homes England funding alongside WLDC S106 off-site contribution funding. The scheme is going to deliver 62 units of extra care and 10 shared ownership bungalows to meet the identified need for older persons accommodation within the district.	<b>Ongoing – BAU activity</b>
Secure policy compliant affordable housing contributions from housing development	Annual Monitoring Report to review position and progress	Headline information provided within AMR published October 2022.  Full information within Infrastructure funding statement last published for period 2020 to 2021.	<b>Ongoing – BAU activity</b>
Delivery of Viable Housing Solutions project	Long term project	P3 appointed and Business Plan developed 2020 with property acquisition beginning Autumn 2020.  Over 30 properties now owned by P3 with over 20 more in the pipeline.	<b>Ongoing – BAU activity reporting to relevant Programme Board</b>
Support delivery of affordable housing being delivered through S106 off-site contributions	All five projects currently in the pipeline to be in Grant Funding Agreements by March 2022	8 projects are now underway or in the pipeline delivering 232 units of affordable housing in total for all projects.	<b>Complete</b>

**Key Sector Development – Our first aim is to position our economy to maximise its economic integration into the region and align to the Local Industrial Strategy.**

<b>Actions currently being delivered and proposed</b>	<b>Timeline when Action Plan published</b>	<b>Progress as at December 2022</b>	<b>Status</b>
Take full advantage of West Lindsey's geographical location at the heart of several important economic geographies and promote the district's offer to areas where existing economic linkages are low; for example, Sheffield City Region and Nottinghamshire	Ongoing	As part of the Local Industrial Strategy and Levelling Up programme the Council continues to work with the GLLEP and other local and sub-regional partners to develop a placed based offer that capitalises on the strengths off the area.	<b>Ongoing – BAU activity</b>
Review our approach to inward investment and the account management of companies within key sectors e.g agri food, manufacturing, visitor economy and renewable technologies	New approach to be in place by December 2022	Currently building on our business portfolio to support the council's inward investment and business aftercare programme.  Key and emerging sector research/mapping programme initiated in Q4 2022, full review (and plan for) multi-team approach to supporting commercial investment in West Lindsey planned for FY 23/24	<b>Ongoing</b>
Continue to work with Team Lincolnshire and the Foreign Direct Investment Group (FDI) to promote the GLLEP Sector Propositions Offer and the business aftercare programme	Ongoing	Quarterly meetings are held with the GLLEP Inward Investment Team to promote investment opportunities and support the business engagement programme.	<b>Ongoing – BAU activity</b>
Understand and maximise the benefits and opportunities of Humber Freeport and the UK Food Valley Programme to the district's economy	Work with LEP ongoing	Launch of a new AgriZone taken place in Nov 22 at the GLLEP conference to support investment opportunities along the A15 growth corridor. WLDC being one of the partners together with the UoL, Bishop Burton College, LAS, Barclays Eagle Lab and LCC.	<b>Ongoing – BAU activity</b>
Secure delivery of Hemswell Cliff Food Enterprise Zone and associated socio-economic benefits for the wider settlement (residential area and existing business park)	Key milestone includes supporting business to submit planning application by March 2022.	Pre-application received January 2023.	<b>Discussions continue with active support through pre – app process.</b>
Develop further the business case for investment in Somerby Park Employment Growth site	June 2022	Meditrade permission granted will develop approx. 5ha of the site. Extant permissions equate to 5.6ha of the wider site area of 11.6ha	<b>Ongoing</b>

**Key sector development - Our second aim is to develop a vibrant Visitor economy.**

Actions currently being delivered and proposed	Timeline when Action Plan published	Progress as at December 2022	Status
Refreshed and adopted Visitor Economy Strategy with aligned and coordinated cultural offer	March 2022	Visitor Economy Strategy published in May 2022.	<b>Complete</b>
Enhanced visitor profiling research	September 2022	Being developed with Destination Lincolnshire – expected to be available 2023.	<b>Ongoing</b>
Continuation of dedicated business support for visitor economy / retail / town centres sector via Clare Bailey or similar supplier including support in e-commerce and on-line functionality and search engine optimisation	March 2023	Package of 121 support sessions supported by series of webinars / videos via retail champion Clare Bailey launched in Summer 2022. 20 businesses received 12 hrs of 121 support.  UKSPF intervention 2.1 seeks to further extend programme of advice linked to local retail centres.	<b>Ongoing via UKSPF</b>
Development of itineraries for West Lindsey Area and promoting to Group Travel Operators	March 2023	Action not progressed was considered under ARG as a potential project.	<b>Action not progressed</b>
Development of new cycle routes for West Lindsey and promotion locally / regionally / nationally / internationally	March 2023	2 new routes being developed as part of Cycle Lincolnshire project. Routes will be marketed via by Destination Lincolnshire.  Cycle Friendly workshops offered to businesses in Autumn 2022.	<b>Ongoing via Cycle Lincolnshire project.</b>
Development of food related digital campaigns and across West Lindsey	March 2023	Digital campaigns enacted had a wider focus – Summer 2022 Gainsborough is Great and Autumn 2022 Lincolnshire Wolds. Range of social media and traditional marketing used.	<b>Ongoing – BAU activity</b>
Review Mayflower 400 project and understand potential for legacy	March 2022	Illuminate developed as legacy event. Events held November 2021 and 2022 with yr on yr increase in attendance (2021 @ 2,000 and 2022@ 2500).	<b>Complete</b>
Deliver Townscape Heritage Activity offer	September 2024	Ongoing programme in delivery, 2022 activities include Treasure Hunt Trail leaflet, Merrye Market held in August and Big Draw event held in October 2022. Heritage skills event and week of demonstrations / workshops planned for 2023.	<b>Ongoing</b>
Cultural offer – investment in Trinity Arts Centre and hub and spoke model	Bid for National Lottery Funding to be submitted by March 2022	Funding proposal to Committee July 2021 – Story House project. Tom Fleming Consultancy engaged to deliver WLDC Cultural Strategy expected April 2023 – this will inform next steps for TAC Story House Project.	<b>Work in progress, now linked to Cultural Strategy development.</b>
Secure sustainable future for West Lindsey Markets	Final proposal to Prosperous Communities Committee in December 2021	Proposal to Prosperous Communities Committee 25 January 2022. Including 3 yr plan to regenerate markets across West Lindsey.  Towns Manager position match funded with UKSPF now appointed and to join WLDC in Jan 2023. Action plan in place and being delivered.  Weekly markets held, supported by programme of farmers markets and events.	<b>Complete</b>

**Infrastructure – Our aim is to deliver housing led growth and infrastructure**

Actions currently being delivered and proposed	Timeline when Action Plan published	Progress as at December 2022	Status
Develop the Strategic Case and options for improving the A15 in partnership with Lincolnshire County Council, North Lincolnshire Council, LEP and Midlands Connect	In line with external deadline for call for projects – estimated as early 2022	Jointly with NLC, LCC and Greater Lincolnshire LEP WLDC have commissioned an initial feasibility study to understand the issues and options with the A15 from M180 to Lincoln. The study will report in Feb / March 2023.  UKSPF intervention 2.3 seeks to support development of A15 growth corridor.	<b>Feasibility to conclude early 2023</b>

Gainsborough Bridge Road Improvements	Secure position with Gainsborough Transport Strategy and work with LCC on scheme details	Gainsborough Transport Strategy published May 2022 includes aims to improve the operation of several key junctions to improve the flow of traffic, this includes developing proposals and undertaking targeted improvements to the Flood Road, A156 Lea Road and Bridge Road signalised junction.	<b>Complete</b>
Gainsborough Green Grid development	Refresh outline business case linking with climate change action plan – March 2022	Green Grid concept informed Gainsborough Neighbourhood Plan.  Secured Levelling Up Parks Funding to kick start improvements to Scouts Hill, identified as key area for work in Green Grid study (£85k).  This work will be taken forward through the UKSPF intervention including funds for resourcing and project development.	<b>Superseded by other activity</b>
Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) representative of local priorities	For adoption by November 2021	WLDC promoted public transport issues into the Lincolnshire BSIP which was published in October 2021 but not taken forward by Government. Therefore, this will continue to be an area for collaboration with LCC.	<b>Action Complete but continues to be an area for collaboration with LCC</b>
Develop walking and cycling priority plan for rural West Lindsey	Secure resources and develop delivery plan by December 2022	UKSPF intervention 1.5 seeks to fund and support this activity.	<b>Superseded by other UKSPF activity</b>
Play an active role in the development of the South Humber Rail Link business case	Submission of strategic outline business case to DfT November 2022	The Strategic Outline Business Case was submitted in November 2021.	<b>Awaiting update on outcome from DfT</b>

### Supporting People and Skills – Our first aim is to improve access to training and employment for residents.

Actions currently being delivered and proposed	Timeline when Action Plan published	Progress as at December 2022	Status
<p>Gainsborough Local Access Programme (GLAP) – Enterprise Development support spanning 4 year period. Networking, workshops and business support will be offered to VCSE organisations in Gainsborough.</p> <p>Development support grants will be available ranging from £250 to £20k.</p> <p>Focus on supporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business planning</li> <li>• Strategic planning</li> <li>• Product development</li> <li>• Market testing</li> <li>• Engagement</li> <li>• Financial support</li> <li>• Legal support</li> <li>• HR support</li> <li>• Architectural support</li> </ul>	Possible launch Jan-Mar 2022. Will begin sooner subject to draw down of funding.	Gainsborough Local Access Programme (GLAP) established and being delivered. Plans being created by the GLAP Board for a 2023 launch event to identify and support more social economy projects. On-going review work taking place by the GLAP Board following the Local Access national conference in November 2022. Agreement with the GLAP Board and WLDC to ensure UKSPF funding links to the Local Access funding. Further exploration on how this works will take place in early 2023.	<b>Ongoing - Gainsborough Local Access Programme (GLAP) established and being delivered. Activity reporting to relevant Programme Board.</b>
Townscape Heritage Student Support Programme	September 2024	Impacted by Lincoln College Group withdrawal from Gainsborough site.	<b>Ongoing</b>
Kickstart - programme delivery across West Lindsey, supporting 16-24 year olds with a 6 months employment. Engagement with employers and gateway organisations. WLDC to offer 6-10 placements.	Programme extended – March 2022 Scheme ends – September 2022	5 placements at WLDC, including Trinity Arts Centre, Surestaff, Lea Fields and Customer Services – all placements have gone on to secure employment or further training.	<b>Complete</b>
Made In Gainsborough – Engineering Apprenticeship Scheme run from Gainsborough College.	Deliver full cohorts for 2021/22 and 2022/23	The project was extended from Sept 2021 – June 2022 and delivered a final cohort of 15 apprentices in Gainsborough. This brings the total	<b>Complete</b>

Target = 20 x Apprenticeships per year 1 x full time study programme.  Original target = 75 Apprenticeships over 3 years (achieved)  Extended target = to deliver 100 engineering apprenticeships over 5 years.		apprenticeships delivered under this programme to 90. In July 2022 the Made in Gainsborough programme was relocated to Lincoln where it's still accessible. However, it's evident that both employers and learners have not engaged with recruitment for the academic year 2022-23 leaving the programme's viability less likely in the future without local intervention or funding.	
Jobs Fair – Gainsborough  Target = 10 local businesses with job vacancies Attendance = 70 job seekers	W/c 22 <sup>nd</sup> November 2021	Jobs fair held October 2022 – Exhibitors included a range of employers, training providers and recruitment agents. Event was attended by over 140 delegates with 22 confirmed job interviews arranged on the day.	<b>Complete</b>
Sector Based Work Academies (SWAPS) – recruitment programme to assist larger employers with significant job opportunities.  Task = 1 x SWAP for Caldero Lounge, Gainsborough (Hospitality & Catering) Target = 10 jobs	November 2021	The Caldero Lounge SWAPS activity completed with 12 attendees on the pre- employment training and 7 job offers made to those that attended the academy. Completed in Dec 2021. One delegate from the programme, with no experience in catering has successfully trained to become a Sous Chef in less than a year.	<b>Complete</b>

**Supporting People and skills - Our second aim is to support local schools to improve attainment levels and employment prospects for young people.**

Actions currently being delivered and proposed	Timeline when Action Plan published	Progress as at December 2022	Status
Careers Hub and Enterprise Adviser Network All WL secondary & special schools to have 1 x Enterprise Adviser  Careers Fair – Gainsborough Academy. Target = All Pupils to attend	Mar 2022  Feb 2022	As at Dec 2022 there are seven out of eight schools in West Lindsey working with an Enterprise Adviser this includes Aegir Specialist Academy. Riseholme FE College also has an Enterprise Adviser. The schools are due to meet collectively in December 2022 as a WL Schools Cluster.  In the West Lindsey District Council area, the average number of Gatsby Benchmarks schools are fully achieving is 5.5 (out of 8) the average nationally is 4.6 The National Average is based on over 3000 schools completing Compass.  The Council has supported the Gainsborough Academy with careers activity this year which includes:  10 x Employer Assemblies through June 2022 – all pupils 1 x Careers Fair – end June 2022 – all pupils 1 x Employability Workshop – CV's – July 2022 – Yr 11 1 x Employability Workshop – Job applications – July 2022 – Yr 11 1 x College Enrolment Day – Year 11 – Dec 2022	<b>Ongoing – BAU activity</b>
Mentoring – Benjamin Adlard WLDC to provide 5 x mentors	Nov 2021 – July 2022	Mentoring programme in place from end of 2021, Covid protocols adopted by school prevented actual physical attendance at school until Spring 2022 – 2 mentors actively now delivering a range of activities working 1 on 1 with selected year 5 children. As at November 2022 school working with WLDC to establish book club following refurbishment of library and to extend mentoring programme to 4 mentors working with 8 children.	<b>Ongoing – BAU activity</b>

**Governance, Monitoring and Review**

The Recovery Plan seeks endorsement by the Prosperous Communities Committee and represents the programme of actions to support the economy of the district and its businesses to recover from the impacts of the pandemic. The plan will be overseen by the Land Property and Growth Board, with a clear link to the Homes and Communities Board where our people focused actions will be monitored. An annual update on progress and performance against the agreed action plan to be received by Members.

# The Economic Recovery Plan 2021-2024

Our Progress so far...

Revised Central Lincolnshire Local Plan includes **policies** to support the transition to Net Zero



Growth Hub delivered **workshops** and digital resources to support SME's in their journey towards low carbon



Ultrafast broadband with download speeds of up to **900mbs** was rolled out to residents of Lissington in Feb 2022



Green tourism **toolkit** was launched to assist visitor economy businesses become more sustainable

26 businesses signed up for a discounted FSB membership with **70%** of them renewing



20 businesses across West Lindsey received **one-to-one** support from a specialist Retail Business Adviser

Our monthly business e-brief now has **3,561** subscribers, an increase of 11% versus 2021



We delivered the Market Traders Grant to **46 traders** in total from across the district

We launched the **Think Local** campaign in 2021 to promote and support local businesses

Hillcrest Rural Enterprise Park in Caistor is fully occupied and home to **11 businesses** and over 40 employees



Living Over The Shops scheme enabling the delivery of **22 units** of residential accommodation



Welcome Back Fund of **£169,000** used for business campaigns, events and public realm improvements



UKSPF and REPF investment plans which set out how we will spend the **£3.5million** UKSPF and REPF allocation

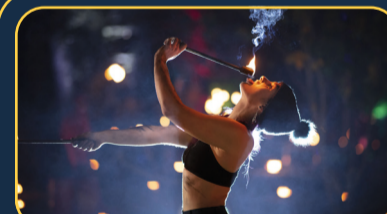
The Gainsborough THI scheme is **active** with projects in construction and one fully completed

Now working with **6 owners** as part of the Market Rasen Historic Building Grants programme

In Dec 2022 **demolition** of the former Lindsey Centre began

In Dec 2022, we installed **wayfinding** signage as part of the Thriving Gainsborough 2024 project

In May 2022, Meditrade UK announces that a new **distribution** centre will be built at Somerby Park



Mayflower Legacy Events held in Nov 2021 and 2022 had a year-on-year **25% increase** in attendance



Towns Manager appointed to deliver action plan for the sustainable future of **markets** in West Lindsey



Viable Housing Solution property acquisition now at **30 properties** in the ownership of P3 and 20 further underway

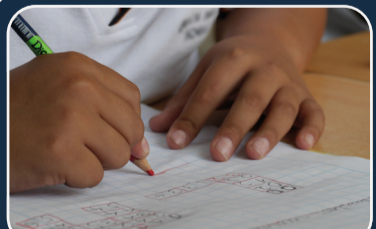
Summer 2022 saw the completion of circa **50 homes** on Phase 1 of the SSUE (Warren Wood)

In 2022, THI delivered **activities** including a Treasure Hunt, the Merrye Market and the Big Draw event



Planning permission has been granted to build **235** new affordable homes since 2020

Secured Levelling Up Parks Funding of **£85,000** to kickstart improvements to Scouts Hill, Gainsborough



There were 5 **successful** Kickstart placements hosted at WLDC in 2022

Made in Gainsborough engineering apprenticeship scheme had final cohort of **15 apprentices** with a total of 90 delivered



The Sector Based Work Academy programme resulted in job offers for **7 people** at Caldero Lounge

As of Dec 2022, **7 schools** in West Lindsey that are working with an Enterprise Adviser

Over 140 delegates attended a **jobs fair** with 22 interviews being arranged at the event

I'd just like to say how fantastic it's been getting all the help over these past couple of years. I don't know where I would be now without it, it's made such a big difference in helping navigate through difficult times and has meant that relaunching my business has been positive.

The team has been very helpful and have been great with sharing their knowledge with me.

Stitch Witch, Market Rasen



Without the support Clare gave us we would not have had the confidence to do some of the things we did, that sounding board and mentoring was invaluable.

Now we are thriving, and I firmly believe that is certainly in part as a result of the support given by Destination Lincolnshire, WLDC and the high street champion scheme.

Nice & Naughty Bistro, Market Rasen



Clare and her team were super helpful in identifying the best ways to increase the visibility for my website.

Being a small business with just 2 years of trading experience, the expertise and insights that Clare's team brought to my business as part of the Destination Lincolnshire project was invaluable.

Indian Curry Pot, Market Rasen



The advice given to me was clearly laid out and presented in such a way that it was extremely easy to follow.

I feel much more confident in what I am going to achieve through my marketing activities this year and am enjoying putting things together with much more focus than before.

Otby House, Walesby



My business was lucky enough to receive some support from The Retail Champion team via Destination Lincolnshire.

After less than a month of using the content, I have already seen a lot more engagement with our social media posts and it is making a huge difference in our marketing and advertising efforts. Huge thanks from myself and the team!

Little Box of Hygge





## Prosperous Communities Committee Work Plan (as at 27 February 2023)

### Purpose:

This report provides a summary of items due at upcoming meetings.

### Recommendation:

1. That Members note the contents of this report.

Date	Title	Lead Officer	Purpose of the report	Date First Published
<b>7 MARCH 2023</b>				
7 Mar 2023	Private Sector Housing - Options for Future Direction	Andy Gray, Housing & Environmental Enforcement Manager	To provide committee with options for future direction relating to the PRS following on from the work undertaken by the Selective Licensing Working Group.	24 October 2022
Mar 2023	Approach to Environmental Crime	Andy Gray, Housing & Environmental Enforcement Manager	To seek approval for an Environmental Crime policy and associated actions for delivery.	23 January 2023
7 Mar 2023	Economic Recovery Plan Annual Update	Sally Grindrod-Smith, Director Planning, Regeneration & Communities	Annual update on progress with delivery of the Economic Recovery Plan	
7 Mar 2023	Armed Forces Covenant Duty	Sarah Elvin, Homes, Health & Wellbeing Team Manager	Summary of Armed Forces Covenant Duty and West Lindsey's position	
<b>FUTURE MEETINGS</b>				
	District Health and Wellbeing Strategy	Diane Krochmal, Assistant Director - Homes & Communities	To present a District Health and Wellbeing Strategy for approval	23 January 2023
	Local Enforcement Plan (Planning Enforcement)	Andy Gray, Housing &	To seek approval for the updated Local	18 January

and Customer Charter

Environmental  
Enforcement Manager

Enforcement Plan (Planning  
Enforcement) and Customer Charter

2021

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Parish Charter Review

Grant White, Enterprising  
Communities Manager

To review the Parish Charter and  
approve any amendments.

05 September  
2022

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