



The Community Covenant e-Newsletter

Issue #1, Aug. 2012



Introduction

The Armed Forces Covenant Team

Welcome to the first edition of the quarterly Armed Forces Community Covenant e-Newsletter! Here you will find information about the work that people across the UK are doing under the Community Covenant and the partnerships that are being formed as a result. To mark our 100th signing of the Community Covenant, we have a project update from **Oxfordshire**, one of the first Communities to sign the Covenant. We also have pieces from two newer signatories, **Havering Council** and **Edinburgh Council** and an interview with **Colchester**.



The Armed Forces Covenant Team at the Ministry of Defence

One of the more exciting developments of the Armed Forces Covenant more generally is the work that is being done for children of the Armed Forces community – updating you on the MOD's work in this area is the **Directorate Children and Young People**.

Last, but not least, the date of the second **Community Covenant Conference** has been confirmed for Tuesday 6 November at the Ministry of Defence Main Building in London. We have a first class line-up and look forward to seeing you there – until then, enjoy the e-Newsletter and click on the links for more information!

We welcome your thoughts – information on how to provide feedback or join our mailing list is located at the end of this e-Newsletter.

Edinburgh Partnership on the Armed Forces Community Covenant

By Edinburgh Council

[Edinburgh's Community Covenant](#) was [signed](#) on 17 March 2012 at Edinburgh Castle. Signatories included representatives from the Armed Forces, the Edinburgh Partnership, Jobcentre Plus and Veterans Scotland.

The City of Edinburgh already has long-standing links with the Armed Forces Community and ties with local communities are strong. Colinton Primary School, for example, in the south of the City, is situated between two barracks and around 85% of pupils have a parent serving in the Armed Forces. The school and the Council's Children and Families department work closely with the families and Armed Forces colleagues. They recently secured funding from the MOD £3M Fund for Schools with Service Children for additional support.

You can read more about the fund later on in this newsletter.



For Your Diary

6 November, 2012

Event: Community Covenant Conference

MOD Main Building, Whitehall, London

28 November, 2012

MOD Grant Scheme Application Deadline

Autumn

The Royal British Legion's Best Practice Guide

Contact RBL for a copy nearer the time

In the News

[Mansfield District Council Offer Support to Armed Forces](#)

Mansfield Chad

[County Council Support for Armed Forces](#)

West Sussex Gazette

[Call for Council to Back Community Covenant](#)

The Scotsman

[MP Urges Armed Forces Backing](#)
Milngavie Herald

'I AM EXTREMELY GRATEFUL TO ALL OF OUR PARTNERS FOR THE PROACTIVE AND POSITIVE RESPONSE THEY HAVE MADE IN DEVELOPING THE COVENANT ... THE TEST WILL BE ENSURING THAT IT DELIVERS SOMETHING OF PRACTICAL VALUE TO ALL IN THE COMMUNITY, AND THAT WILL BE BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE CLOSE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WE ARE DEVELOPING AND GOOD COMMUNICATION.'

Colonel Philip Bates,
Commander Edinburgh Garrison

Following the signing of the Community Covenant, the Edinburgh Partnership is working closely with the Armed Forces Community to identify areas of support. It has established a working group to develop the Community Covenant action plan for 2012–2015, which will focus on practical support under the key themes of Health and Wellbeing, Housing, Education, Employment, Community Safety and Community Cohesion.

The Edinburgh Partnership is also working to publicise the aims of the Community Covenant and to access the MOD's Community Covenant Grant Scheme. The Edinburgh Panel has met twice and is enthusiastic about the number of positive projects coming forward.

A key priority to be taken forward over the next three years is to share information on services and good practice, as well as to enhance co-ordination between the Armed Forces, statutory organisations and the voluntary sector. The Edinburgh Partnership Community Covenant gives a renewed focus to this work.



The Signatories of the Edinburgh Community Covenant on Edinburgh Castle

Collaboration in Colchester

Interview with Major Ed Rankin and Councillor Nigel Offen

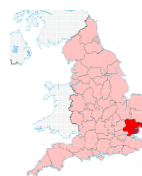
MOD: What challenges did you face when implementing the Community Covenant in Colchester?

Major Rankin: We found the documentation provided was clear and a good framework existed – this helped. The first challenge was figuring out how to take this relationship forward.

Councillor Offen: So we set up a joint Working Group. It was important to set up a wide representation that included the voluntary services. It's important that the whole community signs up.

"THERE IS SO MUCH GOOD WILL OUT THERE ... [THE COVENANT] IS ABOUT HARNESSING THIS."

Major Ed Rankin,
Colchester Garrison



Maj. Rankin



Councillor Offen

MOD: What resources were useful for you?

Maj Rankin: In addition to what is available online, the Community Covenant Conference was particularly useful and provided some great guidelines. I would definitely recommend attending.

MOD: What changes have you implemented from Colchester's Covenant?

Maj Rankin: Although it is still very early, one project is a cycling initiative to be launched later this month, to encourage around 500 Armed Forces and civilian families to get cycling. Additional information and support will be provided to a further 1000 families.

Councillor Offen: We're expanding on an existing programme enormously so that – in addition to including more people – it involves families from the garrison as well as civilian families. The intention is to get more people cycling but also to foster friendships – often long-lasting ones – between garrison and civilian families. It also provides an opportunity for us to show garrison families around Colchester and share what we have to offer, bringing the two communities closer together.

MOD: Do you have advice for Councils new to the Covenant?

Councillor Offen: Come up with schemes that are more about people than just buildings. Buildings and equipment help, but try and concentrate on schemes that bring the Armed Forces and local populations together. Also, don't be daunted by the application process!

Covenant Updates

[Revamped website!](#)

100th Community Covenant

We've passed [this milestone](#) with your support.

£4M in Grants Released

We are please to announce a total of £4M has been committed to new projects.

Play Day with the Oxfordshire Forces

By Martin Gillett, [Oxfordshire Play Association](#)



Oxfordshire Play Association is a charity founded in 1974. In September 2011 we submitted an application to the Community Covenant Grant Scheme to run a Play Day event at each of the six Armed Forces bases across Oxfordshire for £15,000. The aim was to provide a free event for Service personnel, their families and their local communities so as to promote greater mutual integration and understanding between both communities. The planned events would not only offer activities for children and young people but also provide advice, information and guidance for parents and carers in a welcoming, family-friendly space that allows for networking opportunities.



A happy attendee!

Our bid was successful and we received very strong additional support from Councils, Housing Associations, Schools and the Emergency Services. Outside funding was also secured, allowing for expansion of the project. The events all took place in Spring 2012 on the actual bases wherever security allowed.

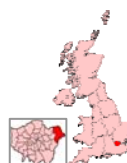
In total 7000 guests attended the six events. Outcomes were measured by interviewing attendees for feedback and we found that not only were the events enjoyable; local communities now have a greater knowledge and understanding of their local Armed Forces base. Furthermore, Armed Forces Personnel and their families have reported that they now know more about their local child-caring groups, services and activities!

[Click here](#) for information on applying to the Community Covenant Grant Scheme.

A Report from Havering Council

By Councillor Michael White, [Havering Council](#)

Our Community Covenant reflects all the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant and strives to create a greater bond between Havering and our own local members of the Armed Forces.



The Covenant was signed by the Mayor of Havering and myself, and on behalf of the military Colonel Hugh Bodington, the Chief of Staff of the London District. I was delighted that Kim Guest from Havering Association of Volunteer and Community Organisations, Alexander Armstrong from the Havering Chamber of Commerce and Industry, David Bedford from the North East London NHS Foundation Trust, Frances Pennell-Buck from the North East London and the City Trust and also the many [Royal British Legion](#) branches that we have here in this borough could sign this Covenant.



The signing of the Havering Covenant

The signing of the Covenant was just the beginning. One of the provisions of the Covenant for Havering was to establish an information page on our Council website where we could signpost all relevant services for the local Armed Forces community and put interesting archive material on there as well. I am also keen for us to have one central list of all the Service personnel from Havering who have fallen during conflict.



For guidance on starting a Community Covenant, [click here](#).

Havering has only recently signed their Community Covenant and so we look forward to seeing their progress in the future!

“WATCHING THE SIGNING CEREMONY I WITNESSED A BOROUGH WITH A FIRM COMMITMENT TO SUPPORTING THE ARMED SERVICES TAKE THE VERY IMPORTANT STEP OF LAUNCHING THEIR COVENANT.”

**Colonel Mark Bryant,
Deputy Lieutenant**

“THE NHS IS THERE FOR EVERYONE INCLUDING OUR ARMED SERVICES. I VERY MUCH ENJOYED ATTENDING THE SIGNING CEREMONY AND REAFFIRMING OUR COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT OUR SERVICE PERSONNEL”.

**Frances Pennell-Buck,
NHS North East London and City**

The Second Community Covenant Conference

John Shivas, MOD Covenant Team

We are pleased to announce that the Second Annual Community Covenant Conference is set for Tuesday the 6 November 2012. We hope to build on the success of the previous conference and provide a forum for the communication of best practice about the Community Covenant. The Conference will be held in the Ministry of Defence Main Building and will include sessions on:

- The impact of Community Covenants
- What makes a successful Grant Scheme project
- Issues currently faced by serving personnel, reservists, veterans and military families
- The implementation challenges of Armed Forces Covenant 'themes' such housing, education and health.



The MOD Main Building in Whitehall, London

Sessions will include workshops, seminars and speeches. The Conference will also provide delegates an opportunity to meet the MOD Community Covenant team, other Local Authorities, representatives from Devolved Authorities, charities and members of the Armed Forces. Further information (including registration details) are on [our website](#) or COVENANT-MAILBOX@MOD.UK



Children and the Community Covenant

Bridget Dawson and Ian Thornton, [DCYP](#)

The MOD established the Directorate Children and Young People (DCYP) to champion the needs of Service children and young people.

In 2010 the Department for Education (DfE) [announced](#) the Service Pupil Premium for schools in England with Service children within their population. This recognises the additional support that some schools may need to provide to Service children to mitigate the effect of separation from a deployed parent and also to help them settle in and cope with their new environment. By September 2012, this will rise from £200 to £250 per child.

In addition to the Service Pupil Premium, the Government [introduced a fund of £3M per annum](#) from 2011/12 to 2014/15 to support publicly-funded schools, academies and free schools catering for Service children. Click [here](#) for application terms & conditions.

The MOD is aware that when Service families move they sometimes encounter difficulties enrolling their child into a school of their choice. We have advised the DfE on this and the Schools Admissions Code [has been changed](#) to allow for case-by-case exceptions on maximum class size for Service children in Key Stage 1.

Over the next few months we plan to monitor the effect on Service families of new legislation under The Academies Act 2010. We will also advise DfE on their forthcoming Children & Families' Bill with particular regards to special educational needs for Service children. More information on DCYP's work and future strategy can be found [here](#).

When it comes to delivering services, however, it is you rather than us who are on the front line so we want to thank you for the invaluable work you are doing.



Achievements

£3M per year to support **state schools** in catering for Service children

A **Service Pupil Premium** of £250 per child per year (England only)

Scope for schools to exceptionally and on a case-by-case basis **exceed maximum admissions** numbers for Service children in Key Stage 1

Bereaved Scholarship Fund to fund further education scholarships for the children of Service personnel who died on active duty since 1990

To be added to the distribution list or to submit feedback or article proposals, please contact us at COVENANT-MAILBOX@MOD.UK