

---

**ANNUAL VETERANS REPORT**

---

**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To give a progress report relating to work with veterans and the service providers that support them, including informing scrutiny of work that has taken place at a regional level.

**Summary**

2. Darlington Borough Council has made a commitment to support work that takes place in partnership to support the Armed Forces and the delivery of the Community Covenant.
3. This work takes place at a local level within Darlington where the role of Member Champion is key to engagement and work is also taking place to encourage the voluntary and community sector to ensure there is targeted work to support veterans.
4. The role of the local authority is to facilitate and support this work and to support partners to access Ministry of Defence funding where this is appropriate.

**Recommendation**

5. It is recommended that :-
  - (a) Members acknowledge the work that has been undertaken over the last year working with other local authorities
  - (b) Members are made aware of the success of funding applications that have been submitted.

**Ada Burns  
Chief Executive**

**Background Papers**

Mary Hall Extension 6053

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no specific implications for Crime and Disorder.
Health and Well Being	Supporting veterans to access help and support will improve their health and well-being. It is also important in improving the health and well-being of their families,
Carbon Impact	There is no Carbon Impact.
Diversity	The veteran community is one group but individuals may also have a variety of protected characteristics. As with all groups within Darlington it is important that they are able to access services appropriately.
Wards Affected	Faverdale Ward has the greatest number of armed forces families but veterans can also be found in all wards in Darlington.
Groups Affected	Veterans and armed forces service personnel living in Darlington.
Budget and Policy Framework	This work has increased the funding into Darlington and will also support efficient working in Partnership with other Tees Valley authorities.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	This work will support delivery of services and support in Darlington. It will increase cohesion between service families, veterans and the broader community.
Efficiency	Efficiency will be improved by working with partners across Darlington and Tees Valley.

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

6. Darlington Borough Council continues to work with other Tees Valley Authorities to understand the issues faced by veterans and a joint proposal has been submitted for a specialist worker. This worker would work across the whole of Tees Valley and help to co-ordinate activity in relation to veterans.
7. Darlington was also successful in drawing down £35,000 to support cohesion activity at West Park Academy. This money was following a successful bid for Armed Forces Community Covenant Grant.
8. The bid was to create an exciting play area and outdoor garden area which can be used by the local community. The Adventurous Play Area will be equipped to encourage children's physical development and provide opportunities to develop their personal and social skills through teambuilding events.
9. The garden, which will include a shaded area, will be used in a number of ways eg for learning, linking with the community to work with the school in creating a sensory garden where pupils and the community can find an area of peace and quiet, enabling a time for reflection and relaxation. As it will be a sensory garden, it will provide an area for those with any sensory disabilities and will have wheelchair access to enable people with mobility issues to use the garden.
10. The project will enable further links to be made between Armed Forces and civilian families through sporting events, special activities from local organisations and family days. For example the adventurous play area will encourage local schools and organisations to use the facility frequently and this will further develop the children's awareness of keeping healthy. Through links with the Army Welfare Service, the new facilities will prove invaluable for Summer School activities or Special family days throughout the year.
11. Age UK also submitted a bid for funding for a Veterans Café. On initial submission this was unsuccessful but work has continued to develop the Café which is run by veterans and to work closely with a range of organisations to improve access to services and raise awareness. The bid may be re-submitted in the near future.

### Tees Valley Armed Forces Forum

12. Darlington Borough Council continues to work closely with the other local authorities in Tees Valley to look at the needs of veterans and how to address these with stakeholders.
13. The forum is jointly chaired by the local authorities and the armed forces. Stockton currently undertakes the support to the group and a programme has been developed to look at the key issues facing veterans. This has included work to understand what support is available on employment issues, housing and health.

14. A joint bid has been submitted for funding from the Armed Forces Community Covenant Grant and the result of this should be known shortly. This bid would enable a dedicated worker for Tees Valley. Middlesbrough would be the employer but the post holder would work across all of the authorities to support work to help veteran issues to be better understood.

## **Conclusion**

15. Following a number of changes within organisations veterans work will continue but capacity to deliver on this agenda is reduced. Partnership across Tees Valley and within Darlington will be essential if our commitments are to be met.