



EMPLOYER
RECOGNITION
SCHEME

GOLD AWARD 2020

Barnsley Armed Forces Covenant Board
Monday 28 April 2025, 2-4pm
Westgate Boardroom/Microsoft Teams

MINUTES

Attendees		
Name	Position	Organisation
Cllr Joe Hayward (Chair) (Cllr JH)	Armed Forces Champion and Elected Council Member	BMBC
Anne Asquith (AA)	Service Manager, Healthier Communities, and Armed Forces Lead	BMBC
Stevie White (SW)	Communications and Marketing Officer	BMBC
Luke Lancaster (LL)	Public Affairs and Campaign Officer - North	British Legion
Chloe Allott (CA)	Lettings Manager	Berneslai Homes
Paul Carpenter (PC)	Armed Forces Community Covenant SPOC <i>(via teams)</i>	SYP
Major Adrian Hunt DL (AH)	Branch Secretary <i>(via teams)</i>	SSAFA
Janet Glover (JG)	HR Advisor	BMBC
Neil Halsey (NH)	Armed Forces Champion, South Yorkshire <i>(via teams)</i>	DWP
Pauline King (PK)	Regional Employer Engagement Director	RFCA Yorkshire and Humber
Lucy Naylor (LN)	Group Leader, Commercial Services	BMBC
Zarah Khan (ZK)	Senior Employment Advisor <i>(via teams)</i>	NHS Talking Therapies
Ian Bailey (IB)	South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit/Barnsley MBC Partnership Manager	SYMCA
Kristian Jowett (KJ)	Team Leader, Prevention and Support	BMBC

Tracey Standerline (TS)	Assistant Director Transformation & Delivery–Barnsley <i>(via teams)</i>	ICB
Megan Coupland (MC)	Business Support Officer, Resilient Communities <i>(minutes)</i>	BMBC
Helen Ibbotson (HI)	Project and Contracts Officer, Resilient Communities <i>(Presenting)</i>	BMBC
Emily Freeman (EF)	Project and Contracts Officer, Resilient Communities <i>(Presenting)</i>	BMBC
Rachel Jackson (RJ)	Advanced Practitioner, Safeguarding and QA <i>(observing – via teams)</i>	BMBC
Jez Mitchell (JM)	Head of Service, Resilient Communities <i>(observing)</i>	BMBC

Apologies		
Name	Position / Organisation	Deputy
Michelle Kaye (MK)	Group Leader, Housing and Welfare BMBC	Kristian Jowett (above)
Jamie Wike (JW)	Deputy Place Director	Tracey Standerline (above)
Karen Hallam (KH)	Senior HR Business Partner	Janet Glover (above)
David Andy (DA)	Operational Manager, Citizens Advice Bureau	n/a
Roya Pourali (RP)	Inclusion and Wellbeing Lead, BHNFT	n/a
Steve Lowe (SL)	Regional Lead Forces Employment	n/a
Abbie Lister (AL)	Senior Mental Health Practitioner, Op Courage	n/a
Danella Senior (DS)	Clinical Team Manager, OpCourage Core	n/a
Lucy Bramwell (LB)	Employment Consultant, The Poppy Factory	n/a
Susan Womack (SW)	Head Of Strategic Partnerships and Operations	n/a
Elaine Mason (EM)	Op Nova Case Worker	n/a
Chrstine Bradley (CB)	Development Manager	n/a

Agreed Actions From The Meeting 28.04.2025				
Action		Owner	Deadline	Progress
3.1	A report confirming the full and final numbers of GP surgeries signed up to the GP accreditation scheme to be brought to a future meeting.	Jamie Wike / Tracey Standerline	TBC	Complete
5.1	Explore the opportunity to invite Cllr Leach to a future meeting as Mayor of Barnsley.	Cllr Hayward / Anne Asquith	TBC	Ongoing

7.1	Anne Asquith and Lucy Naylor to discuss the option of using carparking spaces in DMC2 to support care home residents attending Armed Forces day.	Anne Asquith / Lucy Naylor	n/a	Complete
8.1	Pauline King to resend the ERS Gold Revalidation document to Anne Asquith to allow the submission of forms/documents.	Pauline King	n/a	Completed.
8.2	Pauline King to send contact details of Kirklees and North East Lincolnshire counterparts to Anne Asquith to support more regional working relationships.	Pauline King	n/a	Complete
10.1	Anne Asquith to bring an update on the electoral services tick boxes on forms agenda item when progress is made.	Anne Asquith	n/a	Ongoing
11.1	Partners to contact Maddison Brown maddisonbrown@barnsley.gov.uk with any events taking place between/around 2 nd -8 th June where Love Where You Live can feature.	All partners	Before June 2025	Complete
11.2	Anne Asquith and Maddison Brown to meet and discuss sea cadets to inform the Cadets Together event.	Anne Asquith / Maddison Brown	Before June 2025	Complete

Minutes				
1	Welcome, introductions and apologies – Chair			
	The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, introductions and apologies noted as above. The previous minutes were accepted as an accurate record.			
2	Discussion of outstanding actions from previous meeting held on [DATE] – Chair			
	Actions and decisions	Owner	Deadline	Progress
	A simplified graphic to be included on the Armed Forces Barnsley website to outline what Berneslai Homes' revised lettings policy means for members of the AFC when applying for social housing. Update to be given at the May 2025 meeting. UPDATE 28.04.25: Unsure on the request for a simplified graphic. But CA confirmed the Berneslai Homes website has been updated to reflect the recent changes in relation to social housing. Agreed action now complete.	Chloe Allott	n/a	Agreed complete within the meeting.

	<p>Explore the idea of a list of accredited GP surgeries being added to the Armed Forces Barnsley.</p> <p>UPDATE 28.04.25: Work ongoing, currently approximately 96% of GP's are accredited. Work behind the scenes needed on the impact of this.</p>	Anne Asquith / Helen Ibbotson	n/a	Agreed complete within the meeting, but to keep this work on the forward plan for future updates.
	<p>Anne Asquith to discuss the ICB signing the Armed Forces Covenant with Jamie Wike.</p> <p>UPDATE 28.04.25: AA unable to have this conversation prior to the meeting, will complete this as soon as possible.</p>	Anne Asquith	n/a	Ongoing
3	GP practice veteran friendly accreditation update - TS			
	<p>Tracey Standerline gave an update on the GP practice accreditation scheme rolled out through the 2024/25 financial year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice delivery agreement, where GP's provide a free support programme to patients. Patients are asked if they have ever served in the military and their answers are included in their patient records. GP surgeries are expected to stay up to date with policies specific to the armed forces community. GP practices receive financial incentives to become accredited. Progress as of Q4 of the 2024/25 financial year – 29 out of 31 GP practices signed up. A report to include the total amount can be brought to a future meeting, as final analysis has not been completed post 17.04.25. JM - asked for clarification if GP practices are definitely incentivised. TS – Practice delivery agreements are usual incentivised, believes this one is the same. The agreement is in place for one year, and each year there will be a different agreement which is topical for Barnsley. PDA's may be rolled over if there is not substantive progress, however seen as this agreement has worked well in Barnsley it will most likely not be rolled over. The GP surgeries that are not signed up do not get the incentive payment. 			
4	Dedicated Armed Forces Facebook page update – AA			
	<p>Anne Asquith gave a brief update on the idea of a dedicated Armed Forces Facebook page.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The answer from the BMBC marketing and communications team was no to this idea. On reflection, this is the right decision, due to the amount of time it would take to moderate/monitor it and the comms team having no capacity to do this. The Armed Forces breakfast clubs Facebook pages which already exist occasionally veer into political 'chit chat' and inappropriate things may be commented/posted. All Armed Forces news/events/updates will be post on BMBC social media pages and share across other organisations that already have pages. Being posted on BMBC pages means the content is carefully monitored. 			

5	Adult Social Care & Veterans update - and Armed Forces Walkway Memorial Bench Sales – AA
	<p>Anne Asquith gave an update on adult social care and Veterans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real focus area of work in Resilient Communities, and the RBL action plan also includes a lot of focus on this work. • Aims include; to provide support to residential homes and nursing homes where veterans are living, to support them to become veteran friendly and accredited, identify in the community where Barnsley’s veterans are, to understand the current adult social care practices/processes to understand where links can be made into other support, and to ensure there is a process in place for If a veteran dies in a residential/care home. While ever there is a veteran alive in a residential/care home, there needs to be a support offer to give. • Currently 1 care home fully accredited as veteran friendly and 1 more going through the accreditation process. Deangate Residential Home - fully accredited and has 6 veterans (1 on end of the life care, 4 with advanced dementia). Recently held a breakfast club on the go. Trying to demystify what it means to go into residential care and preparing them for that change. • One veteran at Deangate has dementia and also PTSD, his behaviour has come unpredictable and aggressive. If they were not aware of his veteran status by his family they would not have had all the necessary information to provide him with the right support/care. • If a veteran dies in a residential/care home currently, what is put in place for their funeral arrangements depends on their family or who they know. If they do not have direct family, the local authority want to be able to step in and assist the home in organising a regimental presence at their funeral. • Holly Tree Lodge Residential Home - undergoing the Veteran friendly accreditation process. • AA confirmed the AFCB forward plan will be revised to include this. • LN – Events like Deangate’s coffee afternoon shows how well you can integrate veterans from care homes into the community. • AA confirmed the accreditation the residential homes are achieving is the VCHA accreditation, which is different to the GP practice accreditation. PK – Important to ensure no confusion that the care homes think they are signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant through this. Still need to encourage them to do this separately. Supporting them in this would work well towards BMBC’s advocacy elements towards the Gold revalidation status. • Cllr JH – Cllr Dave Leach will be Barnsley’s next Mayor, he will visit all the care homes and breakfast clubs. The AFCB will be relying on Cllr Leach to use his mayorship to promote veterans. Explore inviting Cllr Leach to a AFCB meeting when he is Mayor. • CH – Great example of partnership working, treating care homes almost as community hubs. AA - Want care homes to be a place of choice, not a last resort. • CH – Regarding veteran friendly funerals, do the homes have links with funeral directors? AA – Unfortunately things such as “very little family, can anyone make it to XXX’s funeral” are often seen on social media when a veteran passes away. Feels cobbled together and last minute. Want to create a ‘one stop shop’ system for the care homes where if a veteran

	<p>passes away, they can contact the BMBC Armed Forces email address and we can support, facilitate, and connect them with everyone they need.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr JH reflected on a personal example of people coming together and gifting money to allow a former veteran a good military send off. <p>Armed Forces Walkway Memorial Bench Sales:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently 35 tiles on the Armed Forces Walkway commemorating individuals and regiments. This is an important space for many people in Barnsley. • Memorial benches will be for sale at £2000 each. There is space for 5 of them on the walkway. BMBC sells lots of benches in parks to commemorate loved ones, expecting a similar appetite for these ones. • Ask of the AFCB members is to agree to the suggested terms of the naming convention which will be attached to the sale of benches. Terms would include; can only be purchased for an individual who is serving as a celebration or has served as a commemoration, an individual service or regiment, or an organisation whose purpose is to support the AFC. Inscriptions to be limited to the name/rank/service or an appropriate non offensive nick name. Plaques could be inscribed with anything the purchaser requests as long as it is not offensive to another person/service and is directly link to the Armed Forces. • Concern is that without a naming convention, people would buy them for their companies promotional purposes without connection to the AFC and the Walkway would lose it's focus. • All members fully endorsed the naming convention as explained to them. Sales of the Armed Forces Walkway benches can proceed.
6	<p>Armed Forces Walkway progress update – EF</p> <p>Emily Freeman gave an update on improvements to the Armed Forces Walkway.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing an archway to make more of an entrance onto the walkway at the top of stairs. Potential supplier is Lightmain, currently exploring positioning and quotes. • Stones have been the trickiest element as this includes trying to look after what is already there and looking to add more. A few maintenance issues with chips and cracks, want to ensure the existing stones are preserved. Looking locally for a new provider, this is proving difficult as there is only the need for 5/6 stone a year on average. Small numbers makes it expensive. • Explored the idea of offering half flag stones to reduce price points for purchasers, but this would limit the amount of wording on the stone and create possible problem with the design of where half stones fit. • Focus on making the walkway smoke free. Suggestion BMBC staff may smoke there. More muted signage incorporating the AFCB logo and red, white and blue colours whilst remaining respectful will be visible. This message will be include in Let's Talk emails to address BMBC staff. Introduction of an archway may also help deter people from smoking on the walkway. • Hanging baskets will be visible through summer and autumn, maintained free of charge by supplier.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flagpole – currently taking advice from the planning teams and exploring implications. • Explored having a planter but decision has been made to not have one. No ideal place to put it where it would be safe, identified as a potential climbing hazard.
7	Armed Forces Day 2025 preparations update – HI
	<p>Helen Ibbotson gave an update on the preparations for Armed Forces Day 2025.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Armed Forces Day 2025 is Saturday 14th June in Barnsley town centre. All areas of the day now fully booked. Formal itinerary will be shared closed to the day. • 8.30am veterans breakfast hosted by the mayor. 10.10am will be the veterans parade which will start outside the old Wilkinsons entrance. Growing involvement for the parade, it was just Barnsley breakfast clubs last year, all 3 are attending this year. Linked with in with Deangate care home are attending and partaking. Air cadets, sea cadets, RBL Churchfields branch, scouts, girl guides, will all be marching as well as Mayor Leach marching with his mayoral chain. Currently looking for a local bugler. • 11am veterans bar outside Falco Lounge. Bigger than last year to incorporate all breakfast clubs. Also at 11am, tea and cake on top floor of the Lightbox. Put in place more for the care homes, more relaxed atmosphere. Novel voices choir booked for this. • All information stalls for the event are full, actually overspilled on these and positioned some in the lightbox as extras due to lots of interest. • Activities in place, using these to showcase the Lightbox. Face painting, craft activities, climbing wall, military band, and 3 areas of activities run by Grass Roots sports academy including a disability sports area. • Lots of promotion, 3 adverts going out in Barnsley Chronicle, schools bulletin, and social media campaign linked with comms. Important for people to see this as a family day out. • The Deangate care home veterans being involved in the march will get such a strong response. The residents are seeing Armed Forces day as the highlight of their year. Really strong links have been made. • LN – Highlighted that the lower seam carpark closes shortly before the event and the potential issues that might raise bringing the care home residents in. Offered to discuss options to save spaces in specific locations or assign a specific carparking area for them such as DMC2. AA and LN to meet to discuss this.
8	BMBC's ERS Gold Award Revalidation – PK
	<p>Pauline King provided an update on the Gold Award Revalidation process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BMBC granted the gold award in 2020, this is now due for revalidation by September 2025. PK will resend the paper document and offered to upload on BMBC's behalf.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmed no policy changes within the revalidation. Must show evidence of supporting cadet force volunteers which Barnsley has lots of. Must demonstrate internal understanding of defence personnel such as numbers within the organisation, and be able to demonstrate workforce policies such as a guaranteed interview scheme of the armed forces community. Staff induction packs, internal comms, and newsletters can all be types of evidence. Mobilisation policy has been in place since BMBC received the silver award, the gold award board will look whether that policy has come to life in anyway, for example evidence of smooth transitions back into the work place for armed forces community members. Special things in the community which is specific to Barnsley goes a long way towards the revalidation. Armed Forces Walkway is a great example, Armed Forces Day activities, advocacy and being an ambassador for the community, and nurturing others through their awards journey. The work with care homes will be evidence of this, ensure this is documented. Cllr JH – Enquired whether there would ever be a platinum to work towards. PK confirmed this has been discussed previously however the gold award is already hard enough to work towards and is labour intensive. South Yorkshire armed forces officers getting together periodically has helped improve things regionally. AA – Has regular contact with South Yorkshire region counterparts but as Barnsley also borders other areas as closely looking to expand contact in other areas. Have made contact with Wakefield, meeting up about their business expo. PK will share contact information for counterparts in Kirklees.
9	Housing Regulations update and confirmation of social housing definition – AA
	<p>Anne Asquith gave a brief update on gaining clarity on the confirmation of social housing definitions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governments definition of social housing still unclear, continuing to chase this up, the question is how broad it is. Some of the terminology in the document published is misleading, interchanges ‘council’ and social housing’. Barnsley has other social housing providers that are not council. Need clarification if the regulation applies to all social housing. No firm clarification yet. CA – Convinced it will apply to all.
10	Progress with benefits team/electoral services (to include Armed Forces tick boxes on forms) – AA
	<p>Anne Asquith gave a brief update on progress to get tick boxes onto benefits and electoral services documents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discovered we do not disregard military payments consistently across different areas of the council. Speaking with finance to ensure we work towards a consistent disregard for military payments, needs to be one approach. Some of the disregards are arranged in different places, HI has completed a piece of work across council services to find what disregards are in place. Now liaising with each section, to ensure military payments and pensions are treated fairly. Not much progress with electoral services, conversations are ongoing. Currently an ongoing consultation about how electoral processes work so this request is not gaining much traction. Can bring to a future meeting when more substantial progress is made.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CH - Would make sense to include this change while electoral services are making other changes. AA is unsure whether these forms are a legal requirement that need to remain fixed.
11	AOB
	<p>Love Where You Live project - MB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MB gave an overview of the projects 4 key themes which include; visibly improving local areas, improving community intelligence and how we communicate with residents, improving social connections for people from different backgrounds, and encouraging volunteering. MB also extended the opportunity to meet privately with anyone after the meeting to discuss further. Launch week is 2nd-8th June. Ask of members is to inform MB of any events happening within/around the launch week which Love Where You Live can be involved. Would send the comms toolkit, support with promoting the event, bring BMBC staff to support as part of their volunteering days. Ask to share any intelligence to support mapping communities, in particular where are the pockets of people with protected characteristics. <p>Education and training opportunities linked to the armed forces community - AA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AA – Looking at where we could create some more education and training options. Already some training on POD, the resilient communities team will be completing this and then looking to expand the offer and roll it out wider. <p>Upcoming events, Veterans Together and Cadets Together - AA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Veterans together, like to be twice a year. Veterans want some kind of event but with no strict agenda. Working with Shaw Lane Rugby Club as they want to be known as a veteran friendly establishment. The event will be on Saturday 31st May, all veterans are welcome, and this will be advertised through the AFC breakfast clubs. Will include breakfast and hot drinks paid for, a chance to look at the extensive facilities around shaw lane and will open the space up as a veterans space. Looking to include pathways to work within the event. PK to provide AA with North East Lincolnshire pathways to work project initiatives, been very successful. LN suggested targeting Smithies as there is a high number of veterans working there. The no strict agenda, relaxed atmosphere and mixture of facilities will appear to them, they do not want rigid formal meetings. Could be promoted via Let's Talk closer to the event and will share promotional materials at Smithies. Early stage conversations about Cadets Together event. This needs to be more structured and separate from the veterans event. Early conversations with Seamaid about having something there. AA and MB will meet separately to discuss this event, MB has personal sea cadet experience which could be of value.

	<p>RBL caseworker guide - LL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support resource for councillors to assist their ward constituents from the AFC. Lots of councillors have reported they don't know how to navigate the support available for them. Web link shared in the meeting chat and will be shared post meeting with the full membership. Attending the next South Yorkshire Officers meeting to talk about the RBL action plan. <p>Pathways to work update – SS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding and commissioning of the employee ability support and has been influenced by the Armed Forces Covenant boards request for support for different cohorts. This includes ex forces personnel. • Very Good buy in to this. The successful bidders have been notified and more details are to follow. Thank the group for raising this and informing the specifications. Hopefully moving the agenda forward now more specifically on the group.
	<p>Next Meeting: Thursday 31st July – 10-12pm.</p>