

CABINET MEETING – 22 JUNE 2011 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I	
Title of Report: THE HEALTH OF THE EX-SERVICE COMMUNITY	
Author(s): Health & Well-Being Scrutiny Committee, Joint North East Scrutiny Committee and Chief Executive	
Purpose of Report: To set out the recommendations of the Health & Well-being Scrutiny Committee and Joint North East Scrutiny Committee following a review of the Health of the Ex-Service Community.	
Description of Decision: The Cabinet is requested to consider the Joint Regional Report and approve the recommendations contained within with the report. As this is a regional project, the report is being submitted to each of the region's local authority Executives. There are 27 recommendations aimed at local authorities, either to be implemented directly or in partnership with others. In addition there are a number of recommendations aimed at partner organisations. To assist the Cabinet in its determination of either approving or rejecting the proposed recommendations, attached as Appendix A is the proposed Action Plan.	
Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? *Yes/No	
If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework	
Suggested reason(s) for Decision: The recommendations seek to ensure that ex-service personnel and their families are not disadvantaged due to their service in the Armed Forces. The review has been consistent with national government initiatives including the publication of the Government's 2008 Command Paper ('The Nation's Commitment'), revisions to the NHS Operating Framework 2010-11, and the December 2010 publication of the final report of the Government's Task Force on the Military Covenant.	
Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected: The Health & Well-Being Scrutiny Committee endorsed the recommendations at its meeting on 9 February 2011 and would like to stress the importance of implementing positive actions that will help ex-service personnel and ensure they are receiving their entitlement to equality of access to service provision. There are no alternatives to be considered.	
Is this a "Key Decision" as defined in the Constitution? Yes/No Is it included in the Forward Plan? Yes/No	Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Health & Well-Being Scrutiny Committee

REPORT OF THE HEALTH & WELL-BEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, JOINT NORTH EAST SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE**HEALTH OF THE EX-SERVICE COMMUNITY****1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To set out the recommendations following a review of the Health of the Ex-Service Community carried out by the Joint Regional Health Committee and endorsed by the Health & Well-Being Scrutiny Committee and to seek support for those recommendations.

2. Description of Decision (Recommendations)

- 2.1 The Cabinet is requested to consider the Joint Regional Report and approve the recommendations contained within with the report.
- 2.2 As this is a regional project, the report is being submitted to each of the region's local authority Executives. There are 27 recommendations aimed at local authorities, either to be implemented directly or in partnership with others. In addition there are a number of recommendations aimed at partner organisations. To assist the Cabinet in its determination of either approving or rejecting the proposed recommendations, **(attached as Appendix A)** is the proposed Action Plan.

3. Background

- 3.1 The review is the first regional project of its type, and received enthusiastic participation from Members of all 12 NE Council's, and well-attended meetings from an impressive range of stakeholders including Co-Chair of MoD/DH Partnership Board, Commander of Catterick Garrison, senior regional NHS and local authority representation, Military-Civilian Integration Project, Career Transition Partnership, service charities (e.g. Royal British Legion) at the regional and local level, and ex-service personnel themselves.
- 3.2 The report represents the results of a substantial, pro-active scrutiny project undertaken at regional level. The ex-service personnel review was project managed by Newcastle City Council, although all Council's in the North East Region were active participants. The overall final report is based on the work and final reports of three cross-party workstreams and these were: Physical Health Needs, Mental Health Needs and Socio-Economic Wellbeing. The three separate workstream reports contain substantial detail on the issues and are available on request.

4. Key Points Arising from the Review

4.1 The report contains 47 recommendations (27 for local authorities), on the following themes:

- (a) promoting effective communication and co-ordination across agencies, providers and the third sector;
 - Action already taken in Sunderland includes making reference in the JSNA to the needs of the ex-service community.
- (b) improving awareness of the needs of the ex-service community among service providers (including diverse bodies from Job Centre Plus to registered social landlords, and early contact with new GP consortia);
 - Action in Sunderland will ensure that all registered landlords are made aware of the housing needs of the ex-service community.
- (c) improving awareness of available services among the ex-service community;
 - Action will include coordination of outreach services.
- (d) improving responsiveness within organisations (through the creation of central points of contact);
 - Action will include delivery planning as part of the Customer Access Strategy to consider the access needs of the ex-service community.
- (e) the transition of Armed Forces personnel to civilian services following discharge (including promotion of the Transition Protocol, registration with GPs and dentists before discharge, signposting to mental health advice, appropriate housing allocation policies and particular attention to vulnerable early service leavers);
 - Action taken by the Access to Housing Services includes identifying ex-service personnel on first contact.
- (f) ensuring equality of access for Armed Forces families (chiefly around housing and particularly low-cost housing);
 - Action in Sunderland will include a mapping exercise to assess the provision of ex-service community housing which will be shared regionally.
- (g) veterans' support services (including improved training and guidance across the NHS, self-referrals and direct referrals from ex-service charities, planning for new NHS commissioning arrangements, local authority engagement with the NHS Armed Forces forum, national accreditation of charities and local approved lists.
 - Action in Sunderland has included the establishment of a forum to bring together support organisations to coordinate resources and capacity.

5. Response from the Directorate

- 5.1 The joint scrutiny report is a welcome and timely reminder of the importance of addressing the multiple and complex needs of the ex-service community. This is an important piece of work which will require a commitment from multiple partners including local authority departments, NHS and central government. There is a significant piece of work to do to co-ordinate responses from various partners to a large number of recommendations.
- 5.2 The report will help to make greater support for service leavers a reality, and ensure that the local authority can review improvement of services through a regular reporting process, and that improvements are widely informed, consultative and transparent.
- 5.3 The report is particularly timely given the publication of the Armed Forces Covenant on 16 May 2011. The military covenant promises a duty of care to the Armed Forces and an amendment to the Armed Forces Bill will enshrine the principles in law.
- 5.4 The key objective of the joint review and of the military covenant is for the armed forces not to suffer any disadvantage as a result of their service. Policy direction should support this overall objective.

6. Reasons for the Decision

- 6.1 The recommendations seek to ensure that ex-service personnel and their families are not disadvantaged due to their service in the Armed Forces. The review has been consistent with national government initiatives including the publication of the Government's 2008 Command Paper ('The Nation's Commitment'), revisions to the NHS Operating Framework 2010-11, and the December 2010 publication of the final report of the Government's Task Force on the Military Covenant.

7. Alternative Options

- 7.1 The Health & Well-Being Scrutiny Committee endorsed the recommendations at its meeting on 9 February 2010 and would like to stress the importance of implementing positive actions that will help ex-service personnel and ensure they are receiving their entitlement to equality of access to service provision. There are no alternatives to be considered.

8. Relevant Considerations / Consultations

- 8.1 The "acknowledgements" section of the report lists those consulted during the course of this review.

9. Background Papers

Health & Well-Being Scrutiny Committee Agenda Papers 2010/11

Appendix A

Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Health of the Ex-Service Community Policy Review Recommendations 2010/2011

Local authorities

Local Actions

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

Ref	Recommendation	Action	Owner	Due Date	Progress Commentary
	<u>Recommendation 1:</u> that local authorities across the region consider what might be the costs, benefits and best methods of collecting in future information about members of the Armed Forces 'soon to leave', their likely destination and the demands that will place on localities.	To be discussed at the next regional performance group in July and also to be reviewed in the social exclusion needs assessment	Paul Allen, Performance and Information Manager, HHAS	End of July 2011	
	<u>Recommendation 5:</u> that formal information sharing protocols and arrangements are established between the armed forces and local authorities across the NE region. This will enable local authorities to properly assess and plan to meet the needs of the ex-service community as a specific group.	To be addressed under the new structures in SWOW in terms of information governance.	Paul Allen, Performance and Information Manager, HHAS Information Governance Team, Corporate Services	March 2012	
	<u>Recommendation 6:</u> local authorities in the North East should consider dedicating a chapter in their Joint Strategic Needs Assessments to vulnerable service leavers and their needs and identifying as a target population the ex service community within their strategic planning processes in relation to social exclusion, anti-poverty, homelessness and offending.	Reference will be made in the JSNA to the needs of the ex-service community. This will inform future service provision.	Paul Allen, Performance and Information Manager, HHAS	March 2012	It is proposed that that the 2011/12 JSNA update will be fundamentally reviewed and this will include work to establish the needs of the ex-service community.
	<u>Recommendation 7:</u> that local authorities across the	It is proposed that that	Paul Allen,	March 2012	

	region take research forward as part of the development of Joint Strategic Needs Assessments across the region, and that the North East Public Health Observatory should also consider what data and research support it can provide.	the 2011/12 JSNA update will be fundamentally reviewed and this will include work to establish the needs of the ex-service community.	Performance and Information Manager, HHAS		
	<u>Recommendation 38:</u> Joint Strategic Needs Assessments should specifically identify the mental health needs of the ex-service community including families and dependants.	It is proposed that that the 2011/12 JSNA update will be fundamentally reviewed and this will be included. It will also be addressed in the Mental Health Needs Assessment.	Paul Allen, Performance and Information Manager, HHAS	March 2012	
	<u>Recommendation 2:</u> that local authority services should actively ask the question of those they provide services for: 'have you served in the UK Armed Forces?'	Through Access to Housing Services the question will be asked and included on any new forms.	Peter J Smith, Housing Advice Manager, HHAS	December 2011	This has been progressed within the development of the new Sub Regional Choice Based Lettings scheme and the question has been included in the proposed new application form.
	<u>Recommendation 14:</u> As some sections of the ex-service community are vulnerable and hard to reach it is recommended that local authorities work with third sector bodies which provide an outreach service (such as ex-service charities and Norcare) to raise awareness and improve access to available support mechanisms.	Work will be carried out with all Registered Providers and supported housing providers to ensure that outreach services are coordinated and that the identified needs of ex-service personnel	City Services, TBC Stephanie Downey, Team Manager, HHAS, TBC Ann Dingwall, Assistant Strategic Commissioning Manager, HHAS		

Due to the complexity and volume of the recommendations arising from the Policy Review, further work will be undertaken following Cabinet's consideration of the Action Plan to finalise the delivery mechanisms and appropriate timescales for recommendations.

		are met.			
	<u>Recommendation 15:</u> that all agencies should make use of and promote local directories of services provided by the voluntary and community sector and statutory provision for those seeking help and for those making referrals, such as the web-based directory provided by Veterans North-East and Finchale College Durham.		City Services, TBC Chris Foreman, Web Analyst, ICT, Chief Executives		
	<u>Recommendation 24:</u> that the Homes and Communities Agency is requested on behalf of local authorities across the region to consider how it may broker assistance and ensure better co-ordination of work across the region to ensure that services are being directed at the right people, including the ex-service community, and how it might assist with sharing examples of best practice as part of its enabling role and within the local investment planning process undertaken with local authorities.		Paul Allen, Performance and Information Manager, HHAS	March 2012	
	<u>Recommendation 32:</u> local authorities should encourage Strategic Housing Authorities and registered social landlords, where possible, to adopt allocation policies which recognise the needs of the ex-service community.	The Council in the commissioning of its refreshed Housing Market and Needs Assessment will consider the needs of the ex-service community and respond accordingly in terms of its Strategic Tenancy Policy.	Peter J Smith, Housing Advice Manager, HHAS Ann Dingwall, Assistant Strategic Commissioning Manager, HHAS		
	<u>Recommendation 41:</u> Local authorities should be actively engaged in the NHS Armed Forces Network		TBC		

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	and consider how they can take on a leadership role in relation to veterans mental health issues – perhaps linked to the formation of the new Health and Wellbeing Boards.				
	<u>Recommendation 42:</u> Consideration should be given by central government to the need for some form of accreditation to be available to ex-service charities (particularly the newly emerging charities). How this might best be taken forward should be considered in the light of the Government's response to the Task Force on the Military Covenant. Local authorities should consider drawing up approved lists of service providers.		TBC		
	<u>Recommendation 16:</u> that North East local authorities examine opportunities for using digital media to improve communication with the ex-service community and raise awareness of available support mechanisms.		Chris Foreman, Web Analyst, ICT, Chief Executives		
	<p><u>Recommendation 20:</u> that local authorities and other key partner organisations across the region should consider identifying a senior figure who can act as a champion for the ex-service community and establishing a central point of contact in each local authority area or sub - region to assist when members of the community experience difficulties. Examples of possible approaches include:</p> <p>i) Within local authorities, a Member Armed Forces Champion to drive improvements in services for service veterans.</p> <p>ii) Within local authorities, a named senior officer to assist the ex-service community and act as a facilitator</p>		To be agreed		

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	<p>and conduit in dealings with Councils and beyond.</p> <p>iii) Within Primary Care Trusts, named senior staff to act as Case officers/co-ordinators in PCTs to act on behalf of the ex-service community whilst assistance is required, and to consider how best to pass these responsibilities forward to GP consortia and local Health and Wellbeing Boards.</p>				
	<p><u>Recommendation 23</u></p> <p>We strongly recommend that local authorities across the region should explore options for establishing and publicising a central point of contact telephone number - to increase the chances of people getting the help they need and to provide a consistent standard of contact across the region. Ex-service charities, Citizens Advice Bureau operating in the region, the Career Transition Partnership and Job Centre Plus have all indicated that this would be likely to prove beneficial. The model adopted by Hampshire County Council, in which telephone enquiries from the ex-service community are channelled to a specific staff member, is particularly worth consideration.</p>	<p>The Council in the development of its refreshed Customer Access Strategy will consider the access needs of the ex-service community and respond accordingly in terms of its delivery plans.</p>	<p>Liz St Louis, Head of Customer Service & Development, City Services</p>		
	<p><u>Recommendation 9:</u> that the North East Housing Federation works closely with NE local authorities to help plan future provision.</p>		<p>Ann Dingwall, Assistant Strategic Commissioning Manager, HHAS</p>		
	<p><u>Recommendation 40:</u> Local authorities and GP Consortia should be actively engaged in joint planning and commissioning of services with the NHS.</p>		<p>Ann Dingwall, Assistant Strategic Commissioning Manager, HHAS</p>		

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	<u>Recommendation 35</u> : that local authorities across the region examine the scope to provide housing related support for ex - service tenants once a property has been identified.		Ann Dingwall, Assistant Strategic Commissioning Manager, HHAS		
	<u>Recommendation 22</u> : that local authorities should consider how to bring together voluntary organisations large and small with a specific interest in the welfare of the ex-service community, in the light of the Government's response to the Task Force on the Military Covenant.		City Services, TBC		

Regional Actions

Employment and Training

Ref:	Recommendation	Action	Owner	Due Date	Progress Commentary
	<u>Recommendation 10</u> : that the armed forces and the Career Transition Partnership work more closely with local authorities across the region and provide them with an assessment of the likely level of demand and need for employment and skills related services in order to inform future economic and financial inclusion strategies and future provision.	The Council will be working closely with providers of employability services operating across the city, with a view to ensuring all Sunderland residents are given the opportunity to access suitable employment support services to meet their individual needs. Ex-service personnel are one such group, often with very specific/ unique needs to resolve before they can confidently apply for and secure sustainable employment.	Karen Alexander, Employment and Training Manager, Chief Executives		

Housing

Due to the complexity and volume of the recommendations arising from the Policy Review, further work will be undertaken following Cabinet's consideration of the Action Plan to finalise the delivery mechanisms and appropriate timescales for recommendations.

	<u>Recommendation 26:</u> Local authorities within the North East should consider the developing a regional veterans charter to establish uniform good practice across the region, possibly through existing regional structures such as the Association of North East Councils (ANEC).		Alan Caddick, Head of Strategic Housing, HHAS		
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Local & Regional Actions

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

Ref	Recommendation	Action	Owner	Due Date	Progress Commentary
	<u>Recommendation 8:</u> that local authorities across the North East request the NE National Housing Federation to carry out a mapping exercise to quantify current provision of ex - service community housing provided by their members and analyse best practice both nationally and within the North East.	All Registered Providers will be contacted to seek information on ex-service community housing as part of a mapping exercise that will then be shared regionally.	Paul Allen, Performance and Information Manager, HHAS Ann Dingwall, Assistant Strategic Commissioning Manager, HHAS		
<u>Cross Cutting across other areas</u>					
	<u>Recommendation 17:</u> that the North East National Housing Federation is requested on behalf of local authorities across the region to carry out work with Registered Social Landlords to raise awareness of the housing needs of the ex-service community.	The Local Authority will ensure that all Registered Providers are made aware of the housing needs of the ex-service community.	Peter J Smith, Housing Advice Manager, HHAS Ann Dingwall, Assistant Strategic Commissioning Manager, HHAS		

Due to the complexity and volume of the recommendations arising from the Policy Review, further work will be undertaken following Cabinet's consideration of the Action Plan to finalise the delivery mechanisms and appropriate timescales for recommendations.

	<p><u>Recommendation 24:</u> that the Homes and Communities Agency is requested on behalf of local authorities across the region to consider how it may broker assistance and ensure better co-ordination of work across the region to ensure that services are being directed at the right people, including the ex-service community, and how it might assist with sharing examples of best practice as part of its enabling role and within the local investment planning process undertaken with local authorities.</p>		<p>Paul Allen, Performance and Information Manager, HHAS</p>		
	<p><u>Recommendation 29:</u> that the armed forces and the Career Transition Partnership work more closely with local authorities and third sector organisations such as ex service charities, Norcare and Mental Health North East with a view to developing a formal process for referring vulnerable service leavers into specific services.</p>		<p>City Services, TBC Peter J Smith, Housing Advice Manager, HHAS Ann Dingwall, Assistant Strategic Commissioning Manager, HHAS</p>		
<u>Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)/Commissioning</u>					
	<p><u>Recommendation 34:</u> that the Homes and Communities Agency is requested to examine on behalf of local authorities across the region identifying take-up of low-cost housing products by the ex-service community and whether providers are assisting the ex-service community as well as other parts of the community.</p>		<p>Paul Allen, Performance and Information Manager, HHAS Ann Dingwall, Assistant Strategic Commissioning Manager, HHAS</p>		

Due to the complexity and volume of the recommendations arising from the Policy Review, further work will be undertaken following Cabinet's consideration of the Action Plan to finalise the delivery mechanisms and appropriate timescales for recommendations.

Local Health and Wellbeing Boards (when established)

Local Actions

Ref	Recommendation	Action	Owner	Due Date	Progress Commentary
<u>Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)</u>					
	<u>Recommendation 6:</u> local authorities in the North East should consider dedicating a chapter in their Joint Strategic Needs Assessments to vulnerable service leavers and their needs and identifying as a target population the ex service community within their strategic planning processes in relation to social exclusion, anti-poverty, homelessness and offending.		Paul Allen, Performance and Information Manager, HHAS		It is proposed that that the 2011/12 JSNA update will be fundamentally reviewed and this will be included.
	<u>Recommendation 7:</u> that local authorities across the region take research forward as part of the development of Joint Strategic Needs Assessments across the region, and that the North East Public Health Observatory should also consider what data and research support it can provide.		Paul Allen, Performance and Information Manager, HHAS		It is proposed that that the 2011/12 JSNA update will be fundamentally reviewed and this will include specific reference and research into the needs of ex-services members.
	<u>Recommendation 38:</u> Joint Strategic Needs		Paul Allen,		It is proposed

Due to the complexity and volume of the recommendations arising from the Policy Review, further work will be undertaken following Cabinet's consideration of the Action Plan to finalise the delivery mechanisms and appropriate timescales for recommendations.

	Assessments should specifically identify the mental health needs of the ex-service community including families and dependants.		Performance and Information Manager, HHAS		that that the 2011/12 JSNA update will be fundamentally reviewed and this will be included.
<u>Cross Cutting across other areas</u>					
	<u>Recommendation 36:</u> that the new Health and Wellbeing Boards prioritise veterans' mental health issues, taking a lead in ensuring that on day 1 of discharge into civilian life that services are in place to meet the needs of the ex-service community in relation to both NHS and social care provision.		Ann Dingwall, Assistant Strategic Commissioning Manager, HHAS Stephanie Downey, Team Manager, HHAS, TBC		
<u>Commissioning</u>					
	<u>Recommendation 40:</u> Local authorities and GP Consortia should be actively engaged in joint planning and commissioning of services with the NHS.		Ann Dingwall, Assistant Strategic Commissioning Manager, HHAS		

Due to the complexity and volume of the recommendations arising from the Policy Review, further work will be undertaken following Cabinet's consideration of the Action Plan to finalise the delivery mechanisms and appropriate timescales for recommendations.

