



Dover District Civilian Military Partnership Board

Annual Report
2024-2025



**ARMED FORCES
COVENANT**

RECOGNISE, REMEMBER, INTEGRATE, SUPPORT

FOREWORD

**Councillor Gordon Cowan
Armed Forces Champion,
Dover District Council**



As the Chair of Dover District Council's Civilian Military Partnership Board, I am delighted to present to you this wonderful annual report.

This report highlights the needs of veterans and their families within the Dover District this year as well as our input into Kent wide Civilian Military Partnerships.

Of course, there is always more for us to do, but we are really pleased with the progress that has been made despite challenging times.

The Dover District Civilian Military Partnership Board is now well established and aims to champion the Community Covenant so that partners can work together on an action plan to help support our armed forces community. We are keen to honour the covenant's pledge that "together we can acknowledge and understand that those who serve or who have served in the Armed forces, and their families, should be treated with fairness and respect in the communities, economy and society they serve with their lives".

The Partnership recognises that forces families deserve support from the community with regards to practical help concerning housing, employment, education, health, and wellbeing. It enables forces families to feel a sense of belonging within their communities and shared pride when acknowledging and remembering the sacrifices that both our serving personnel and veterans have made for their country.

Continuing to uphold the commitment as a gold award holder from the defence employer recognition scheme, which is testament to the partnership. We now, however, want to go even further to support our armed forces community and have some plans for the future. We actively welcome new partners to support the covenant. Please do get in touch and become part of something truly special.

INTRODUCTION

This report showcases the support of the Dover District Civilian Military Partnership, working together to support our armed forces community during 2024 – 2025.

The Armed Forces Covenant is a pledge that together we can acknowledge and understand that those who serve or who have served in the armed forces, and their families, should be treated with fairness and respect in the communities, economy and society they serve with their lives.

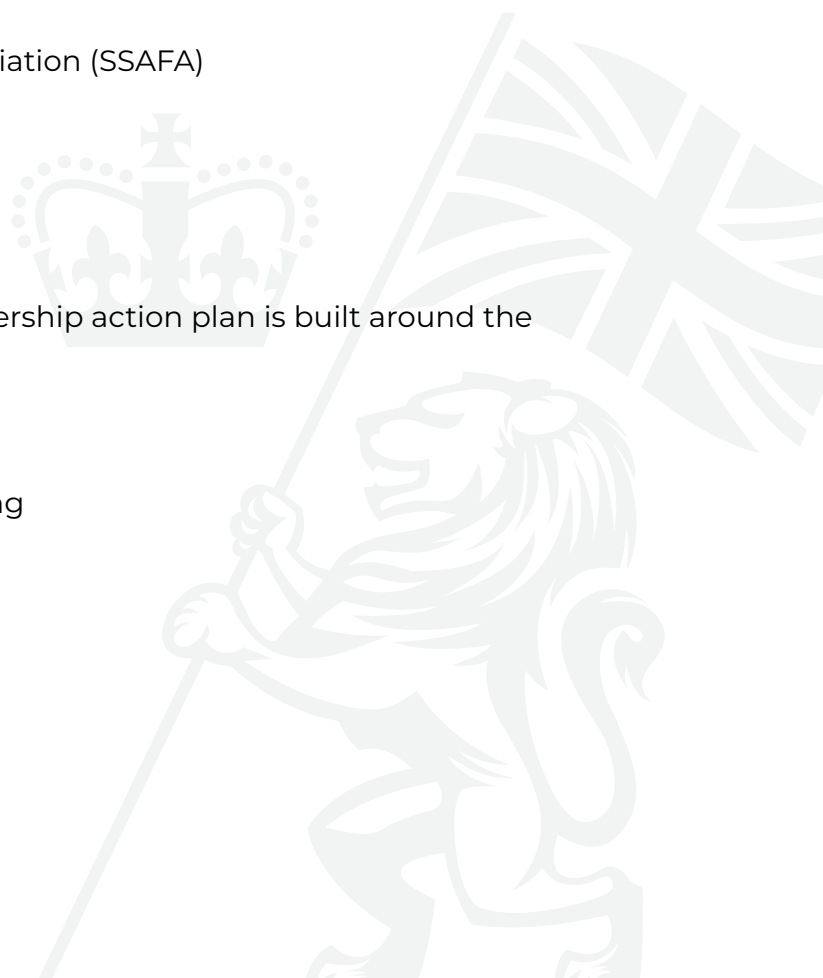
The Dover District Civilian Military Board has been re-established to further develop the current action plan, to address needs identified within the Dover district area.

Representatives include:

- Dover District Council
- Ministry of Defence
- Royal British Legion
- Armed Forces Network
- Kent County Council
- Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen Families Association (SSAFA)
- Job Centre Plus
- Kent Police
- NHS
- Service Charities

The Dover District Civilian Military Partnership action plan is built around the key following themes:

- Employment, education, and skills
- Promotion and publicity
- Health and wellbeing, including housing
- Recognise and remember
- Integration



OUR DOVER DISTRICT CIVILIAN MILITARY PARTNERSHIP BOARD

The Dover District Civilian Military Partnership Board has been set up to champion the community covenant and develop an action plan to address needs identified.

Our board members include:

Cllr Gordon Cowan (Chair of Civilian Military Partnership Board, Dover District Council)

Shaun Taylor Community Services Manager, Dover District Council

Rebecca Dyer Community Development Manager, Dover District Council

Neil Chester Armed Forces Lead, Dover District Council

Canon Peter Bruinvels Kent County Council (KCC), Civilian-Military Liaison Adviser and Military Expert and 11th Infantry Brigade Armed Forces Champion

Tracy Evans Civil Engagement Officer, 11th Infantry Brigade South East Headquarters

Dave Body Community Liaison Officer, Kent Police

Kate Parkin Director NHS Armed Forces Community

Lt Col (Rtd) RV Rodney Gray Schools' Cadet Expansion Officer – 11 Brigade CCF's

Nick Parry NHS High Intensity Service Veterans Lead for Kent

Henry Thomas (MBE) The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment – Area Secretary

Christine Walton Dover White Cliffs, Royal British Legion

John Dickinson Dover White Cliffs, Royal British Legion

Leigh Thomas Regional Employer Engagement Director, South East RFCA

Deby Day Headteacher, Guston Church of England Primary School

Bridget King Army Welfare Service Lead

We encourage everyone to sign up to our Dover District Civilian Military Partnership Board including:

- Local Authorities
- Town and Parish Councils
- Charity or Community Groups
- Public Service Providers
- Local Businesses
- Individual members of the public

We encourage others to sign up to show their support, please visit Dover District Council/Armed Forces Support on the DDC website to sign up or alternatively contact communitycovenant@dover.gov.uk

THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT

Working together in the Dover District to support the Armed Forces Community. Dover District Council have signed the Armed Forces Covenant, showing our commitment in providing easy access to the services and support to the Armed Forces community.

What is the Armed Forces Covenant?

The Armed Forces Covenant is a pledge that together we can acknowledge and understand that those who serve or who have served in the Armed forces, and their families, should be treated with fairness and respect in the communities, economy and society they serve with their lives.

What is the Armed Forces Community Covenant?

The Armed Forces Community Covenant is a voluntary pledge of mutual support between a civilian community and its local armed forces community. It is intended to complement, at a local level, the national Armed Forces Covenant, which outlines the mutual obligations between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces.

The Armed Forces Community involves many different client groups - regular and reservist serving personnel, veterans, service leavers, dependants and carers and its level of presence varies greatly across the country.

Here in the Dover District, although official figures are difficult to come by, given the significant size of the military footprint in the area over the years, it is believed that the Armed Forces Community is likely to be large, with many veterans living and working in the area.





THE AIMS OF THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT

- Encourage local communities to support the Armed Forces Community in their areas, and to raise public understanding and awareness of issues affecting the Armed Forces Community.
- Recognise and remember the sacrifices faced by the Armed Forces Community.
- Encourage activities which help to integrate the Armed Forces Community into local life.
- Encourage the Armed Forces Community to help and support the wider community, whether through participation in events and joint projects, or other forms of engagement.

We encourage everyone to sign up including:

- Public Service Providers
- Town and Parish Councils
- Local Businesses
- Charity or Community Groups
- Individual members of the public
- Local Authorities

If you wish to sign up, please visit:

www.dover.gov.uk/armedforces



2024-2025 DOVER CIVILIAN MILITARY PARTNERSHIP ACTION PLAN

The Dover District Civilian Military Partnership Board action plan is built around the following themes, with reference to support and signposting:

1. Employment, education and skills
2. Promotion and publicity
3. Health and wellbeing including housing
4. Recognise and remember
5. Community integration

The following pages highlight key actions within the themes.

Staff training around Armed Forces community Issues

Raise awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant commitment.

Promote Defence Employer Recognition Scheme

Encourage more business to sign up to the scheme.

Continue to promote the Armed Forces covenant with the public and Armed Forces communities

Ensure all local communities feel they are supported.

Promote the Gold Award we have received at every opportunity

Demonstrate the support we offer to the Armed Forces community.

Provide a point of contact for any issues relating to the Armed Forces community

Ensure the whole Armed Forces community are aware of who to contact.





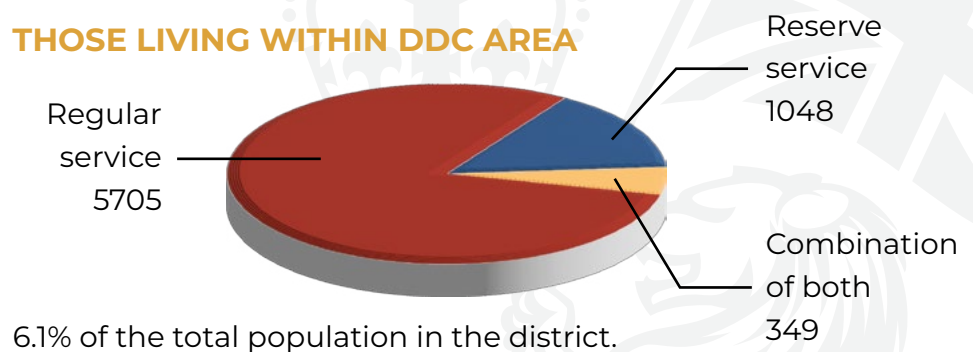
WHAT CONSTITUTES A VETERAN

A veteran by definition is anybody who has served for at least one day in His Majesty’s Armed Forces, regular or reserve, Merchant or Mariner who have participated in military operations. Although the understanding of the term “veteran” is broad and varied especially from those who have recently left the Armed Forces, in essence it categorizes someone whose commitment extends beyond mere duty; becoming a lifelong bond forged through shared experiences, camaraderie and a deep sense of purpose.

TRANSITION AND COMPLEX IDENTITIES

The transition from military to civilian life is not easy and comes with many challenges. It goes without saying that many who enter civilian life do not see themselves as “veterans”. The reason for this is unclear but one contributing factor is that it is felt the term does not fully encapsulate their experiences and/or will downplay their roles. The profound shift requires a unique set of new routines which have been alien to them. Pride can stand in the way of these challenges, resulting in missed opportunities for support through these struggling times and beyond.

THOSE LIVING WITHIN DDC AREA



THE FACTS FOR DOVER DISTRICT

The Dover District has the highest concentration of veterans for the whole of Kent. With 13.5 % living in the area this equates to a total of 7102 individuals that we can support. This figure does not include any family members, so the numbers that could be supported are far greater.

MALE POPULATION: SENTINELS OF MEMORY

Within the Dover district's boundaries, 4906 men stand tall, more than half of them have witnessed eight or more decades since signing the oath of an allegiance, forming a living bridge between eras with others seeing conflict in more recent times. These aging veterans continue to bring memories of old and laughter across the famous white cliffs of Dover. They are living chronicles of a time where they once stood proud to defend our nation.



SILENT STRENGTH: WOMEN'S RESILIENCE

Among these men, 799 women also weave their own narratives of resilience, strength and sacrifice. Many of these carry the weight of disability, their bodies marked with pain and perseverance, they too have weathered the impact of joining the Armed Forces and fighting so others can have freedom in many fronts of conflict.

THE VEIL OF ILLNESS: HIDDEN STRUGGLES UNFOLDED

Amongst those that walk between us, 1712 grapple with disabilities, both seen and un-seen. Their footsteps falter, yet their determination remains unyielding. Of these men and women 462 whisper of extreme poor health. These unsung heroes have etched in their bodies the ebb and flow of relentless illness, a far cry from when they could run fully kitted in most terrains without breaking into a sweat. They all from part of the fabric which characterises Dover District.





UNSEEN CAREGIVERS: DEVOTION BEYOND WORDS

Behind closed doors, 662 unsung heroes provide unpaid care, a quiet devotion that transcends duty. Their days blur into nights as they tend to their loved ones—their touch soothing, their presence unwavering, carrying burdens that leave no visible marks. These caregivers, often daughters, sons, or neighbours, navigate the labyrinth of need—the medications sorted, the meals prepared, the hands held in moments of fear. There are the 1,426 who stand dissatisfied with welfare support, their discontent a beacon for transformation. Their voices, though hushed, echo through the district. They yearn for more a safety net, and bridge which crosses the gaps seamlessly. These are the advocates—the ones who pen letters to officials, attend town hall meetings, and dare to question the status quo.

A BROADER PICTURE

Beyond Dover's shores, the UK cradles 4.5 million veterans and their dependent families, a constellation of resilience spanning the Isles. Among them, 2.1 million bear the scars of service, their medals gleaming reminders of sacrifice. Beside them stand 2.4 million families, their love unwavering. Together, they form a living mural, the voyagers who've sailed distant seas, marched through foreign lands, and returned with memories are both haunting and beautiful. Their shared laughter in barracks, their whispered confidences under starlit skies, they carry the weight of duty and the warmth of camaraderie.

In today's modern world, where everyone grapples with the escalating cost of living, veterans are not exempt. Now, more than ever, they require support. The figures from our district speak for themselves.







**PROUDLY SUPPORTING THE ARMED
FORCES COMMUNITY ACROSS THE
DOVER DISTRICT**

CONTACT US:

Email: communitycovenant@dover.gov.uk

Call: 07815 429755

Web: www.dover.gov.uk/armedforcesupport