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Committed to supporting the Armed Forces

Veterans, reservists, cadet force adult volunteers and military spouses bring their skills and expertise to help us, as we support our clients to achieve their goals. In return, we offer exciting careers in an inclusive and supportive environment where our armed forces community thrives.

Proud holders of the Ministry of Defence's Gold Employer Recognition Award, we have been a signatory of the Armed Forces Covenant since 2015 – and we're working to enable others on their Covenant journey.



atkinsrealis.com armedforces@atkinsrealis.com











AtkinsRéalis is a world-leading design, engineering and project management organisation. We connect people, data and technology to transform the world's infrastructure and energy systems.

AtkinsRéalis

AtkinsRéalis: committed to valuing veterans and the armed forces community

At AtkinsRéalis, we recognise that the armed forces community delivers invaluable diversity of talent to our business – and we deeply value the skills, dedication and unique perspectives that veterans, reservists, cadet force adult volunteers and military spouses bring to support our clients.

In return, we offer a rewarding second career where veterans can make a tangible, sustainable impact on the world, on exciting projects across a range of sectors including defence, government, security and transportation. Our inclusive and supportive environment ensures a workplace where everyone can thrive and contribute to our collective success. We employ around 200 members of the armed forces community across the UK, and have onboarded 80 in the past year alone.

Ranked 11th in the top 50 employers of veterans in the UK by Great British Employers of Veterans, we nurture and grow the skills and talents of those who have served their country. From recruitment processes that evaluate veteran candidates' non-traditional experiences with open minds, to our dedicated Partnering with the Armed Forces (PwAF) programme, which engages with and supports veterans and others in the armed forces community, we help ex-forces personnel transition to the next stage of their lives. Our comprehensive training and development opportunities allow individuals to drive their careers forwards and upwards.

Pledging our partnership

A signatory of the Armed Forces Covenant since 2015, AtkinsRéalis has held the Gold Award from the Ministry of Defence's Employer Recognition Scheme for nearly a decade. As a holder of the Gold Award, we give our reservists an additional ten days of paid annual leave, ensuring they can meet their minimum training commitment. We will soon be re-signing an updated version of the Covenant.

Passionate about our commitment, we are also encouraging others on their Covenant journey. Our outreach includes working with other Gold Award organisations to develop a common framework for assessing our communities' social values, assisting others to get from Silver to Gold, and working closely with the Reserve Forces and Cadets Associations around the UK.

The Partnering with the Armed Forces (PwAF) programme is one of our many equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I) networks and regularly collaborates with other communities - for example, we recently signed up to the Pride in Veterans Standard (PiVS). Our commitment to embedding ED&I across our business was recognised in February 2024, when we became the first firm in the UK engineering sector to achieve the Clear Assured Platinum Standard accreditation - this is only given to organisations that include diverse talent in every aspect of their operational performance, with leaders who proactively challenge themselves and their teams to be more inclusive.

Global reach, local opportunities

Our armed forces community's skills and experience help us to achieve our clients' goals. Our teams support Lancashire County Council and other authorities across the North West to develop transport schemes and secure funding to improve connectivity across communities. We also work for a major defence manufacturer in the region. With global capabilities and full project lifecycle experience, we lead projects and programmes at every stage of their development – engineering a better future for the planet and its people.

If you are looking for a new career challenge, want to work with our support for the Armed Forces, or need support to deliver an infrastructure project, please get in touch at https://careers.atkinsrealis.com/partnering-armed-forces.







Our services support British ex-serving personnel experiencing mental health difficulties, related to their time and experiences in the armed forces.

Wayne's story

"I was in a very bad spot before approaching the Military Veterans Service. I was suffering from anxiety and self-harm. Since completing treatment, my life has changed. I don't look down and I'm talking, chatting, laughing. I really do feel different. I would recommend the service to veterans like me, to get the help they deserve. Which we all deserve."

The Military Veterans
Service is a locally
funded community-based
psychological therapy
service for soon-to-be exforces personnel, veterans
and reservists who live in
Lancashire and Greater
Manchester. Call us on
0300 323 0707 or email
the.MVS@nhs.net

We also host the **Op COURAGE** service across the Northwest of England. Op COURAGE: The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service is a NHS service and provides specialist care and support for those due to leave the armed forces, reservists (when not mobilised), ex service personnel, families/carers. Call **0300 373 33 32** or email **OpCOURAGENORTH@cntw.nhs.uk** (open 8am – 8pm, 7 days a week).



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LSCft is proud to provide care and support to the Armed Forces community, we are a Veteran Aware organisation and we are proud to have achieved the Gold Award for our employee recognition scheme.

Our Veteran Team have initiated the following developments:

- Appropriate prioritisation for veterans at first point of contact
- A facility to record armed forces status on clinical systems
- Staff guidance and training to increase understanding of the Armed Forces community
- A health passport to support veterans accessing health services, including with the criminal justice system
- Participant of the Veteran Places, Pathways and People (VPPP) programme creating pathways into mental health services within the Trust and veteran-specific services via Op Courage
- A service directory highlighting the services available to the Armed Forces community
- An Armed Forces Champions Group, which has over 100 members
- Supporting Armed Forces community interest companies and charities with Covenant Funding Bids.

For further information about our support for veterans, please contact the MVVTeam@lscft.nhs.uk. Visit lscft.nhs.uk to find out more about the Trust and the services we offer.

ADV25613

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cumbria.ac.uk/study



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All adverts correct at time they were approved.

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has signed the Armed
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We are recognised with a Bronze Award from the Ministry of Defence Employer Recognition Scheme.



Introduction

Thank you for reading this second edition of our Lancashire Guide to the Armed Forces Covenant.



On behalf of the Armed Forces Champions from each of the county's 15 councils, and all our partners, I hope you will find it useful, whether you are looking for information about services available in Lancashire or simply want to know more about the Armed Forces Covenant.

In Lancashire, we want to make our county the best place to live, work, and thrive as a member of the Armed Forces community. We are proud of the contributions Lancashire has made throughout its long and storied history, both to the Armed Forces and to the country those forces are sworn to serve and protect.

The commitments to the Covenant made by the organisations featured in this Guide honour that duty and sacrifice and testify to our collective feeling of respect and gratitude. That's why we want to be there for those veterans and their families who come to Lancashire after their service, especially those who need some additional help and support to live the best lives they can.

In this Guide you will learn about what is available across vital areas like health, education, and employment. You will see how we are strengthening our network of help and support under the umbrella of the Lancashire Armed Forces Covenant Hub, which brings together the organisations – from the public, private and charitable sectors – united in their passion to deliver on behalf of the Armed Forces family. All these bodies are working hard together to embed national guidance and deliver on our promises to improve what we do and how we do it.

It has never been more important that we support our Armed Forces. In an uncertain world, they are on the frontline of defending our most precious freedoms and way of life. They truly deserve our best efforts and we want to be there for them, too. As we face the challenges of the years ahead, we plan on pulling together so they can get the help they need, when they need it.

We would love to hear from you if you want to get involved in supporting Lancashire's Armed Forces community. Please get in touch on LancsCovenant@uclan.ac.uk.

Once again, thank you for supporting our Guide and together we can make a real difference to the men and women of our Armed Forces family.

County Councillor Alf Clempson



Yunex Traffic

We are committed to provide new employment opportunities to Service leavers and veterans, both in the Lancashire region, and across the UK. And we are proud that members of the Armed Forces family have already chosen Yunex Traffic to develop new and exciting career paths, bringing their unique skills and experience to help us on our mission to make roads safer, air cleaner and towns and cities better places.

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Foreword

This is the second publication of the Lancashire Armed Forces Guide, highlighting the support and opportunities available to service people and employers through the Armed Forces' Covenant. This initiative is now being taken up across other regions in the UK due its utility and success. As the Commander of the newlyformed HQ North based in Catterick and Preston, I recognise the key contribution that a host of agencies within Lancashire make to the Army.

Over the last year, working closely with NWRFCA, we have seen an increase in support and engagement between businesses, society and the Armed Forces' Community. Armed Forces' Covenant signatories in Lancashire are delivering on their pledges and their mandated outputs to support us. I thank them for their continuing commitment to that promise, and recognising the unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the Armed Forces.

Organisations and businesses backing the Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) in Lancashire continue to support all members of the Defence Community including service leavers, reservists, Cadet Force Adult Volunteers, spouses and veterans. Since the last publication, it is pleasing to report that within Lancashire we have expanded our community to 82 Armed Forces' Covenant signatories, 99 ERS Bronze Award holders, 30 Silver Award holders and 21 Gold Award holders. As an example of Lancashire's influence, just one of these award winners based in Preston, the English Football League's charitable branch - EFL in the Community – has over 800k participants across the UK.

We are also seeing this great work bearing fruit as we experience increasing engagement between businesses and Cadets, with many examples of employers looking to hire Cadets as apprentices and others offering mentoring and assistance with CV writing and interview skills. This reflects the very valuable lifeskills that Cadets develop at an early stage through the training they undertake – skills such as self-confidence, problem solving, self-reliance, and team skills including followship, leadership and communications.

Looking ahead in the region, the Lancashire Cyber Partnership will see the National Cyber Force, a partnership between Defence and Intelligence, collaborate with academic institutions and industry. The move to Salmesbury in 2025 will help create jobs in the region across technology and digital supply chains that will enhance the growing North West Cyber Corridor.

I am proud that the values, standards and skills that members of the Armed Forces' Community hold in abundance are rightly sought out by employers and they remain in high demand. Lancashire is a great place for members of the Armed Forces Community to live, work and settle after their service. This guide will help all of them understand and access the support that is available to them in Lancashire.

Colonel Peter Stitt, Commander North



 ${\bf Colonel\ Peter\ Stitt,\ Commander\ North.}$



The brand new 'Headquarters North' sign outside Fulwood Barracks in Preston featuring our new badge which combines the proud military traditions of the North West and the North East





Hello from all of us involved in the Lancashire Armed Forces Covenant Hub and thanks for reading about our activities. The Hub continues to be at the centre of Armed Forces activity in Lancashire and we want to tell you about three specific developments since the last edition of the Guide.

In April 2024, we held the first Lancashire and South Cumbria Armed Forces
Covenant conference at University of
Central Lancashire's Westleigh
conference centre, just outside Preston.
The conference explored the three main functions of the Armed Forces Covenant duty: education, health, and housing. It was well attended and well received with guest speakers joining us from national, regional, and local organisations, all of whom are shaping the landscape of support services for Forces people.

The Hub has been based at University of Central Lancashire for five years and we are



UCLan student Daniel Fort sharing his PhD research

indebted to both the university and the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Graham Baldwin, for all the support provided to the wider Armed Forces community and specifically to individual Forces students who study at University of Central Lancashire. Pictured to the left is one such Forces student, Daniel Fort. Daniel is an ex-infantry soldier who served in Afghanistan and he spoke to the conference audience about his PhD research into military veterans' experiences of PTSD.

Another key speaker was our previous Regional Employer Engagement Director (REED) from the Reserve Forces and Cadet Association (RFCA), Gary Oakford. Gary highlighted the progress being made in support of the Armed Forces Covenant by public and private organisations across Lancashire and Cumbria as they continue to make Armed Forces Covenant pledges and progress through the various levels of the Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS). The RFCA play a key role in administering and supporting both the Covenant and the ERS award scheme and we are grateful for their support to our 2024 conference.



Gary Oakford, the previous Reserve Forces and Cadet Association Regional Employer Engagement Director for Lancashire and Cumbria

Conferences are inspiring and motivational activities and our speakers provided clear evidence of the services being provided to military veterans across our counties from equine therapy to housing and addiction support services. The conference also allowed public sector participants from Lancashire councils, the NHS and **Department for Work and Pensions** to network over lunch with community representatives from a wide variety of charities and Community Interest Companies. And we even managed to squeeze in a group photograph in the impressive grounds of the Westleigh centre! See below!



Shortly after our first Covenant conference we launched the first version of our public-facing Service Directory. This directory is designed to help Forces people find the services they need and was developed following consultation with our Covenant Network members, who meet monthly to discuss the health and social issues facing the Armed Forces community. They wanted a public-facing directory that would help support staff signpost Forces people to the many pathways of support.

Similarly to the Lancashire Covenant Guide the Directory sits on the Hub website at www.lancashire.gov.uk/armed-forces/the-lancashire-hub/. The directory is packed with weblinks that take the user directly to the website of a specific charity or organisation. And we've also provided telephone numbers and email addresses where they exist, to make cross referrals as easy as possible.

Whilst the e-version of the directory will always be available via our website, we know people often find it easier to flick through a printed copy of similar publications, so we're also distributing hard copies to key partners such as councils, NHS social prescribers, Job Centre work coaches and Lancashire libraries.

Ultimately, we hope that the directory will do what it says on the cover – helping you to find services for yourself or other members of the Armed Forces community.

Lancashire's Armed Forces Directory of Services

ARMED FORCES

COVENANT

Insigning gravio find services for yourself or other members of the Armed range community.

The first public-facing directory of services for the Armed Forces in Lancashire

The final development we want to share is our facilitated peer supervision group. From September 2023 to July 2024, we have run a facilitated peer supervision

group in Lancashire for community leaders who are delivering support activities for military veterans in Lancashire. We've predominately aimed this activity at those who are working in small organisations who, whilst they receive managerial supervision regarding their day-to-day activities, don't routinely receive the more clinical type of supervision which allows them to reflect on how their support duties affect them on a more human level.

And we've also extended membership to those community influencers who have no specific organisation but want to give something back – for example, by organising Armed Forces breakfast clubs.

Whilst these roles can help promote a sense of purpose, they can also be psychologically demanding. So these group supervision sessions aim to help those who support the Armed Forces community.

The monthly face-to-face sessions have been facilitated by the professionally trained and registered supervisor, Nichola Wilson, who had this to say about the sessions: "I have been honoured to have facilitated the pilot peer supervision sessions for veterans in Lancashire who have a role in the community supporting other veterans, often lone-working or without their own support or supervision. Providing this support not only provides a benefit to the individual worker or volunteer but also their service users across Lancashire."

At the end of the pilot phase we entered into an evaluation exercise and I'm pleased to report that everyone who provided feedback wanted the group to continue. As if to demonstrate the benefit of the group, there was an average 160% increase in understanding of the term reflective practice between the first and last sessions.





Nichola Wilson, a trained councellor and supervisor who has facilitated our peer supervision group

Two other specific benefits were also noted by participants; firstly, the ability to discuss and understand professional boundaries as they relate to supporting individual veterans, and secondly, the restorative process of discussing personal and professional stresses in a safe setting. We believe this positive feedback fully justifies the activity and we therefore plan to continue the group on a monthly basis.

If you operate in support of military veterans in Lancashire and would like to attend these sessions, please contact me at LancsCovenant@uclan.ac.uk

I Barber

lan Barber Project Lead Lancs Armed Forces Covenant Hub July 2024









East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust (ELHT) is proud to say our hospitals are committed to supporting the Armed Forces Family and wider community.

We strive to be an exemplar of the best care for veterans, their families and serving personnel. Patients are encouraged to inform their clinicians if they have ever served in the UK armed forces or national service, so that we can best support their care needs. ELHT is committed to learning from our patients and their families to improve quality of care.



We have now visited and supported over **2,000** Veterans in-patients across our five hospitals since April 2022. This support has ranged from a simple chat and reassurance to referrals to Op COURAGE and Op RESTORE for those veterans that have found themselves in very difficult positions also assisting with housing for the homeless veterans that have presented to our ED Department. The team has helped facilitate early discharges and in some cases prevention of admissions totalling up to 225 bed days saved so far.

ELHT has created and developed lasting links not only with local Veteran Organisations and Charities but also national organisations such as Op COURAGE to provide additional help and support beyond the patients' hospital journey.





ADV115861



As a top 10 UK University, and ranked 122nd in the QS Global league table, Lancaster is a community of communities where staff and students are supported to succeed, regardless of background or barriers.

This is why we are proud to be an Armed Forces Covenant signatory and 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.

For more information about studying or working at Lancaster University please visit our website: https://www.lancaster.ac.uk and https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/jobs/





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Lancashire Renewables Limited was established for the operation and management of the two waste treatment facilities (Thornton and Farington Waste Recovery Parks) built for the Lancashire Waste Contract. The company's key objectives are to collect, treat, transport, and dispose of contract waste in accordance with the targets and service requirements set out by its shareholders, Lancashire County Council and Blackpool County Council. The two waste facilities currently handle, processes and treat in excess of 200,000 tonnes of residual household waste per annum, diverting 95% of treated material away from landfill. Our fleet of 30 waste haulage vehicles handles approximately 500,000 tonnes of material within the Lancashire County Council network per annum.



ADV23769

Booming Brilliant Burnley

A big warm Northern welcome to the borough of Burnley and all the good things it has to offer.

After all, we weren't voted the friendliest town in Britain for nothing!

But don't let that sunny demeanour fool you, we also mean business. That means we offer everything from world-renowned cutting edge brands and solid investment opportunities, to affordable living and spectacular countryside.

Living in Burnley

The mean house price in Burnley is £103,000 which is much less than the northwest average at £217,000. Rents are much lower here too at an average of £546 per month.

Not only does your money go further when you live in Burnley, but there is a wide-range of properties at your fingertips. From quality modern newbuilds and contemporary apartments, to quaint cottages and impressive Victorian terraces, there's something for everyone's budget and taste.

Working in Burnley

Burnley is a force to be reckoned with when it comes to advanced manufacturing and advanced engineering. In total, these major sectors and all of their sub-sectors account for **7,000 jobs** in Burnley –



approximately **one** in **every five** of **jobs in our town**. Our central location in the north west means we are at the heart of the wider regional aerospace and advanced engineering cluster, the biggest of its kind in Europe, contributing £7 billion to the UK economy; a quarter of UK aerospace turnover.

Our growing status as a university town goes hand in hand with our digital jobs success. We rank second in the UK for

digital jobs growth. In 2014/15 we saw annual growth of almost 162%, compared to 2% across Great Britain and 30% across the rest of the north west.

Enjoying life in Burnley

There are plenty of impressive restaurants and bars in Burnley, as well as an array of other leisure facilities. Did you know we are home to a Michelin-starred eatery and a global award-winning spa, for instance?





Around 80% of our town is rural, providing an excellent quality of life and making it a fantastic place to visit. Whether you're into windsurfing, hiking, kayaking, cycling, sailing, golf or horse riding, you can do it all right here.

We have six major parks – all of them national award winners and each with their own identity. The best known – our "jewel in the crown" as it's been described – is the historic Towneley Park and Hall, a popular wedding venue due to its beauty and grandeur, inside and out.

There's also nearby Gawthorpe Hall, referred to as "the Downton of the North", which marks the start of the Brontë Way,

a linear walk from Burnley to Wycoller, Haworth and finally Oakworth, near Bradford.

On the moors above the town centre is the Singing Ringing Tree, officially named as one of the top 10 pieces of sound art in the world. Standing 3 metres tall, it is made of galvanised steel pipes which make both an incredible and eerie noise in the wind. You can also enjoy breath-taking views across Burnley and the surrounding Pennine countryside.

And if all that isn't enough, we also have the Forest of Burnley. One million trees were planted between 1997 and 2001, creating a 2,000-tree arboretum of 400



hectares. There's 32km of footpaths, bridleways, sculpture trails and cycle routes to explore, as well as the Leeds and Liverpool Canal which runs through our borough from Reedley Marina to Hapton Boat Yard via the historic Weavers' Triangle.

The Burnley stretch of the canal includes one of the seven wonders of the British canal system, the Straight Mile, an embankment that carries the canal 60ft above the town centre.

That makes us the perfect place to explore the outdoors. For those who prefer the indoor life we also have plenty to offer, including a range of restaurants, bars and other leisure facilities.





Studying in Burnley

Burnley is a growing university town and we are excited for the journey ahead. The University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) is committed to offering courses for 4,000 students to study in Burnley by 2025.

We are also proud to be home to Burnley College which offers a sixth-form centre, university courses, Themis apprenticeships and adult learning. You could end up making chassis for luxury cars, engines for jets or digital technology used in Oscarwinning films, to name just a few of the exciting career opportunities available right on our doorstep.

And if all this isn't enough and you fancy a change of scenery, you can hop in the car, bus or train and head out to nearby Manchester, Liverpool and Leeds, cities renowned for their culture, shops and nightlife. Or you can make the short

journey to the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales, both within an hour's drive.

We're not ones to blow our own trumpet but we like to think we've good reason to boast that Burnley has something for everyone.

Burnley and the Armed Forces

Veterans in Communities (VIC) supports former ex-service men and women who have served in any of the branches of the Royal Navy, Army, Royal Marines, Royal Air Force, the emergency services (Blue Light) and their families who have or are having difficulties with returning to 'Civvy Street' or just want to socialise with like-minded people. VIC offers a range of services and activities include walking, allotments, social trips, helping the local community with small projects, training opportunities, outreach services in local areas, art groups, craft groups, and a choir. More information at https://veteransincommunities.org/ index.html or ring 01706 833180 or email info@vic.org.uk

Royal British Legion The local Burnley and Padiham branch of the Royal British Legion plays a vital role in helping hard to reach individuals and tackling problems like loneliness and isolation.

It is based at The Market Hall in Burnley Town Centre and can be contacted on 07507 760026. Burnley FC in the Community - Veterans Department support the local veteran community in Burnley and surrounding areas. Our core timetable supports different avenues of health and wellbeing for Veterans and their family members.

Veterans who have served a minimum of 1 day are entitled to access the entire programme for free. Sessions include; Fitness, Social and Breakfast Clubs, Football Training and Eco workshops. There are also opportunities to gain sport qualifications and access routes into volunteering, employment and one-to-one interventions with the support of external services.

For more information contact Daniella Worth on 07984853407 or email daniella. worth@burnleyfc.com

Healthier Heroes CIC provides support to ex-service personnel, their families and carers who are struggling. This includes housing, education, employment, tackling isolation and health and wellbeing. Partnering with statutory and other third sector organisations we ensure our service users receive the support they need using a collaboration approach.

The UNITE INSPIRE BELIEVE programme tackles the complex needs and our HQ at Bancroft house in Burnley enables to support the Armed Forces community across the north West and to house homeless and vulnerable veterans as well as those who have left the criminal justice system providing 24 hour care. Bancroft house offers accommodation with 21 double en-suite rooms, as well as providing three move-on properties that support eight veterans helping them to transition back into the community.

We also provide community outreach support across Lancashire where our staff members will engage with members of the community, veterans and family members to help with a number of social barriers. This could include homelessness prevention, tenants management and welfare and benefits.

www.healthierheroescic.co.uk 01282 966730

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Blackpool

Blackpool needs little introduction. Loved and visited by millions, it occupies a unique place in the hearts and minds of the British people.



With a magnificent seafront, the biggest portfolio of visitor attractions outside of London, and a hugely impressive programme of shows and events all-year-round, it retains its place as the UK's most popular seaside resort with 18 million visitors a year.

The Council is committed to improving Blackpool's economy and the quality of life for local people through the delivery of its £1bn+ Growth & Prosperity Programme as part of Blackpool's economic recovery. This is led by a dedicated team who work closely with external partners and other Council teams.

Over the past decade, Blackpool has shown that we can do things differently. We have worked creatively and built partnerships locally, nationally and internationally to change things in the town for the better. Working on our own and in partnership with others, we have shown that we can make a positive difference to the town and its people. The Blackpool Pride of Place Partnership and its town prospectus are emblematic of our collective drive and commitment to make things better for the town and its residents.

You can see the difference we have made most obviously in the regeneration of the town's infrastructure and in the new homes we have built. More subtly, you can see it in the growing confidence of external investors in the town, with the new high-quality branded hotels, new entertainment and retail venues as well as attractions such as the new IMAX cinema.

You also see it in the support directly provided to children, families and adults in need of help, and in the work we do in partnership with other local services and local people to support the learning, well-being and opportunities available for all people in the town.

Armed Forces Community

In Blackpool we're proud of our historic links with the Armed Forces. Over the last ten years, we have increased our efforts to welcome and support service personnel.

In October 2011, Blackpool Council signed the Armed Forces Covenant, a commitment of support between the civilian community and the Armed Forces. This commitment was reinforced in 2024 when the council re-signed the covenant. This is Blackpool Council's way of acknowledging our historic relationship and ensuring service personnel aren't disadvantaged by their service. We have an Armed Forces Champion, Councillor





Adrian Hoyle, who works to promote and advocate for our Armed Forces community locally.

There are many organisations supporting the Armed Forces community in Blackpool. Many of these organisations come together quarterly to network and discuss opportunities in the area. This meeting is hosted by Blackpool Council to further evidence their support to making Blackpool a Forces Friendly town.

On a daily basis, there are a number of events an activities that take place across the town. Blackpool FC Community Trust are proud to host a range of Armed Forces programmes within the Community. Within their sessions, veterans have the chance to engage with other members of the Armed Forces community, providing an opportunity to rediscover the unique camaraderie of serving personnel. This includes coffee mornings, breakfast clubs, walking and running, football and the opportunity to represent Blackpool FC in veterans' competitions against other clubs in the North West. You can learn more about their offer at Armed Forces - BFCCT.

Council Services and Support

Whether you are a veteran, currently serving or are in the process of leaving the Armed Forces, you and your family may need advice and information on issues such as housing, education, employment, training and welfare.

For advice and support on housing and homelessness issues please contact the Housing Options team.

Address: Housing Options. Chapel Street, Blackpool, FY1 5AW 01253 477760 housing.options@blackpool.gov.uk www.blackpool.gov.uk/ HousingOptions

For help finding work and advice on claiming benefits, please contact Blackpool Jobcentre who have a specially trained Armed Forces support staff member.

Address: Blackpool Jobcentre, Municipal Buildings, Corporation Street, Blackpool, FY1 1EJ

Armed Forces Week

Every year, Armed Forces Week events take place to celebrate and commemorate those who have served and are still serving our country. In Blackpool, our focus over this week is about giving back to the community. This means that rather than asking for Armed Forces presence, we instead ask local businesses to offer discounts and offers for those with links to the armed forces. For information about the celebrations please visit www.visitblackpool.com.

For any other support or information please email the Armed Forces Champion at armedforceschampion@blackpool. gov.uk



Chorley

Chorley is a vibrant and welcoming town in Lancashire immersed in history, with many notable landmarks, parks, and historic buildings.

The town centre is filled with character, independent retailers and high street favourites teamed with stunning natural landscapes.

With major motorways and rail links to Manchester, Preston and Blackpool, Chorley is an attractive place to live, work and visit.

Our Vision

Our vision as a council is to make sure that we support Chorley to grow, delivering excellent services and a thriving economy to ensure that residents can succeed.

In commitment to our vision, we have four key priorities:

- · Housing where residents can live well,
- · A green and sustainable borough,
- An enterprising economy with vibrant local centres in urban and rural areas,
- Healthy, safe, and engaged communities.

Local Economy

Our aim is to continue to make Chorley a great place to be.

We have recently refurbished the iconic Astley Hall to bring the historic place back to life as a visitor attraction and have made a raft of improvements to the famous Chorley Market to make sure it can thrive in the modern-day town centre. In addition, we have enhanced the offer at the town centre's Market Walk to allow local access to incredible entertainment and leisure venues and high street shopping favourites.

We have an exciting calendar of events such as the Chorley Flower Show, Chorley 10k and the Winter Wonderland festival which attracts thousands to the borough each year and brings a much-needed boost to the local economy.

We're also supporting economic growth by delivering Strawberry Meadows Business Park which will provide space for new businesses to make Chorley their home. This complements the already successful Strawberry Fields Digital Hub and the ongoing support available from us for local businesses.

Health and Wellbeing

We are committed to ensuring the health and wellbeing of our residents. We are actively investing in local play areas and communities across the borough, continuing our investment in local leisure centres to encourage more people to focus on their wellbeing.

We are helping even more older people live independently in their own homes for longer with the development of a second state-of-the-art extra care facility in the borough which provides supported living accommodation for over 55s.

Finally, we are driving forward our Climate Change Strategy, planting trees and prioritising space for biodiversity to work towards the borough's target of Net Zero by 2030.

Supporting the Armed Forces Community

In 2023, we achieved the ERS (Defence Employer Recognition Scheme) Gold Award, in recognition of our being a shining example, advocating and sharing our support of Defence People issues to partner organisations, suppliers, and customers alike.

It also is recognised how Chorley makes the Armed Forces Community a priority, through our housing, health, and wellbeing provision.

Our policies guarantee job interviews for ex-forces personnel who meet employment criteria, and we afford Armed Forces Reservists and Cadet Adult Volunteers two weeks paid leave, plus allow extra unpaid leave to employees to attend military training courses, or annual camp.

We currently employ three veterans and one Cadet Adult Volunteer and two of our current elected members are veterans.

We recognise the Armed Forces Community including veterans as a 'Community of Interest,' who share identity and common experiences, an inherently diverse unique, isolated, and disadvantaged group, consisting of people with different genders, race, and religion as well as vulnerable individuals. This





includes serving officers and their partners or spouses, children, and veterans, who have suffered various types of physical and mental illnesses and disabilities caused by their work.

We also support the Royal British Legion's (RBL) 'Credit Their Service Campaign' to ensure that military compensation isn't means tested and is disregarded on things such as Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) and Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) assessments.

We have recently created an Armed Forces Covenant Support Group with South Ribble Borough Council and a supporting Housing and Healthcare Sub-Group that addresses the housing and healthcare themes of the 'Covenant Duty.'

This collaborative approach between the two councils is the first of its kind in Lancashire.

To this day, Chorley residents continue to engage with a variety of community projects that have a connection to the Armed Forces, past and present.

Councillor Aaron Beaver is Chorley Council's Armed Forces Champion and is also a proud veteran. He is supported in Armed Forces Covenant work, by John Hill from the council's Communities Team. Both represent Chorley Council on 'The Lancashire Armed Forces Covenant Hub'. The Hub aims to improve the delivery of the Armed Forces Covenant by working with local authorities within Lancashire, ensuring the covenant is both understood and honored.

The Hub and its partners take on a coordination role, working closely with local authority Armed Forces Champions and lead officers as well as key stakeholders from the public and charity sectors. Outputs are delivered across the following themes: education, employment, health, housing, wellbeing, and welfare support.

Chorley is home to a detachment of Army Reserves and is proud of its local Army Cadets, RAF Air Cadets and Sea Cadets and aid veterans.

There is a raft of local organisations who support our Armed Forces community such as Chorley Royal British Legion, Mawdesley Royal British Legion, Wheelton and District Royal British Legion, Chorley and District Ex-Servicemen Association and Chorley Combined Services Breakfast Club.

We support the Military Preparation College for Training (MPCT), a unique institution that provides young individuals with the opportunity to develop their fitness, vocational qualifications, and employability skills. This preparation is particularly aimed at those who are wishing to fulfil a career in The British Armed Forces.



At the council, our Housing Solutions Team gives priority on Select Move for social housing if the applicant is serving in or has formerly served in the UK regular Armed Forces within the last five years.

and District Armed Forces Community, as well as ceremonies to mark Remembrance Parades events and flag raising ceremonies at the Town Hall during Armed Forces week.



Education and Employment

We offer a range of roles within the council and working in local government can be very rewarding. Each role contributes to helping the community in different ways and we deliver exciting projects to benefit our residents.

If you would like to find out about Chorley Council and the great opportunities we can provide, visit our website: www.chorley.gov.uk.

These opportunities are also advertised via the Armed Forces 'Career Transition Partnership'.

Honouring Military Heritage

The borough enjoys the presence and activities of groups such as the Chorley Pals Memorial Trust and the Chorley





Fylde

The Borough of Fylde sits proudly on the coast, stretching inland across the Fylde plain from which it takes its name, and can rightly boast of beauty and productivity in equal measure.

Located just a short distance from the bright lights of Blackpool and Preston in glorious Lancashire, you will find pretty little villages, market towns, fantastic wide open sandy beaches, and great areas for cycling, walking or bird watching. Relax in a wide choice of tea shops, cafés, stylish restaurants, award-winning boutique hotels, spa hotels and so much more. Fylde is a golfer's paradise with renowned courses, and the area is also home to many music and cultural events throughout the year.

World-class businesses across aerospace, manufacturing, tech, retail, and hospitality have chosen Fylde to springboard their business growth. Fylde fuses a highly skilled work force, strong visitor economy, and property and land opportunities with a wealth of business support, funding, and expertise. The Fylde coast achieves a high work/life balance score, essential for attracting and retaining calibre talent to businesses. The region not only enjoys stunning natural beauty across its coastline, towns and villages but also promotes a healthy and aspirational lifestyle.

The Borough comprises three towns: St Anne's-on-the-Sea, a prime holiday resort, the old town of Lytham dating back to the



Domesday Book, and the ancient market town of Kirkham.

St Anne's is prominent for its pier, over 40 seaside hotels, and its miles of golden sands, with sand-yachting a feature year-round. It also hosts several summer events, notably an international kite festival. The Town Hall, formerly the St Anne's Hydro Hotel, can be found near the pier.

Features of Lytham include the magnificent Lytham Hall, open all year round, its

spacious green overlooking the River Ribble estuary and its ancient windmill, recalling simpler days. Lytham hosts an annual Festival of Music featuring major international stars, antique car and bus rallies, and a 1940s weekend on the Green allowing attendees to recall wartime years with costumes and equipment.

The historic town of Kirkham is well worth a visit, with numerous Grade II listed buildings, vibrant communities, and a bustling market held on the second Saturday of every month. Currently, the town is undergoing an ambitious regeneration project to revitalise Market Square, Poulton Street and Preston Street under the Kirkham Futures Programme, due for completion in 2024.

There are also many beautiful villages such as Staining, Wesham, Freckleton and Clifton where great pubs and eating houses abound. It is significant that, in recent years, Fylde has won over 30 awards from Britain in Bloom, including a Champion of Champions for Lytham.

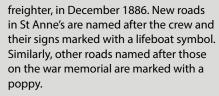






There are many local golf clubs, headed by the Royal Lytham and St Anne's Club which hosts the international Open Golf competitions and several other major events.

The RNLI host lifeboats at St Anne's and Lytham. Particularly poignant is the memorial on St Anne's Promenade to the 13 crew of the St Anne's lifeboat, all of whom were lost in attempting to rescue the crew of the SS Mexico, a foundering



Fylde has several military connections which continue to prosper. The village of Weeton contains Weeton Barracks and training area which houses regular services members and their families, recently the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment which exercised the Freedom of the Borough in recent years. Within the barracks is a primary school, small shop and families centre.

BAE is a major employer at Warton where aircraft such as the Typhoon are designed and built with several RAF members joining a work force of over 3,000.

A full-sized Spitfire replica is located at Fairhaven Lake, commemorating the many sacrifices made by air forces over the years. The Fylde Spitfire Display team is based at Blackpool Airport which shares space with our larger neighbour. Most secondary schools host Cadets, with Sea Cadets being self-contained at a Lytham base.



An annual feature is the St George's Day parade through Lytham in April with associated events that raise good sums for service and local charities. Both Lytham and St Anne's host ex-services clubs and both towns enjoy strong Royal British Legion Association branches, together with the Royal Air Force Association of South Fylde. The recent Poppy Appeal raised over £60,000 in Fylde.

Fylde is blessed with several beautiful war memorials, the one at Staining village being unveiled recently. A remembrance pathway complements the war memorial in Kirkham. In Witch Wood, a treasured beauty spot, lies a commemorative bench to local Sergeant Nigel Coupe, killed in Afghanistan in recent years, while King Edward VII school (now AKS) suffered the greatest number of officers killed of any UK public school in World War One.

Fylde Council re-signed the Armed Forces Covenant in 2022 with pledges to support





the Armed Forces Community. The Council proudly received the Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) Silver Award from the Ministry of Defence in 2024 in recognition of its support for Defence People objectives, including employing Reservists and former members (veterans) of the Armed Forces community, and demonstrating flexibility towards training and mobilisation commitments for Reservists and Cadet Force Adult Volunteers.

Cllr Frank Andrews serves as the Council's Armed Forces Champion, supported by Council employee Paul Deacon as Armed Forces Officer, both being veterans.

Further information about support to the Armed Forces Community in Fylde including contact details, can be found on the council's webpages www.fylde.gov.uk/council/armedforces-community-covenant

Or call or email: Email: listening@fylde.gov.uk Customer Service Team (general enquiries) 01253 658658



Thriving in Lancashire

Lancashire County Council is the North's biggest local authority and the fourth largest council in the UK. With approximately 500 services, we support 1.2 million residents through all stages of their lives.



Our economy, centred on world-class industries like aerospace, advanced engineering, manufacturing, and energy, boasts 55,000 businesses, generating £34 billion a year. From the Spinning Jenny to the Jet Engine, Lancashire has always risen to the challenge with ingenuity and innovation.

We're proud of our county's outstanding natural beauty, breath-taking coastlines and countryside, our historic market towns and villages, and cities both historic and modern. Lancashire's thriving tourist and retail sectors feature attractions to suit all tastes. Our blossoming cultural scene, impressive schools and universities and excellent transport connections make Lancashire a great place to create a home, raise a family, and develop a career. We are committed to celebrating our diverse communities and to building a strong sense of place we can all be proud of.

For more information on Lancashire as a destination of choice and a place to invest visit https://investinlancashire.com/why-lancashire or call 01772 426450.

Lancashire County Council and the Armed Forces

A big part of that ambition is making Lancashire the best place in the nation to live, work and thrive as a member of the Armed Forces community. Lancashire has a long and proud history of service in the Armed Forces and our monuments and museums are testament to the sacrifices Lancastrians have made in conflicts throughout history and across the world. We want to honour that living tradition, be a leader in Lancashire, and deliver on our promises under the Armed Forces Covenant.

We have introduced several projects – such as the amazing Schools Mentoring Programme – and secured substantial funding and investment to meet our Covenant commitments.

We serve our Armed Forces community as a provider of vital public services and, through the Lancashire Armed Forces Covenant Hub, we are improving how we reach out to veterans, tailoring services that work for them and their families. We are focused on health and wellbeing, employment, education, skills, and training, and partnering with the NHS, district and unitary councils, service charities, social enterprises, and other grassroots groups to support service people.

Working with our schools

In 2024, we have done more to help support service children in our schools. Currently, there are around 1,300 service children in Lancashire and this year saw a significant increase of 544 more





Lancashire County Council Armed Forces and Veterans Champion, Councillor Alf Clempson, presents the 2024 Tom Davies Trophy to Mick Nutter for his outstanding contributions to Lancashire's Armed Forces community. Mick served in the Scots Guards and has been Preston's parade marshal since 2016. He has also held various roles in the Lancashire Armed Forces Association and the Scots Guards Association. The trophy is presented at the county council's Armed Forces Day event held in June at County Hall.

service families coming to Lancashire with most of them moving to Weeton Barracks in Wyre. We are improving our school admission policies so they reflect the realities of service life, linking the council's Family Hubs to specific support for veterans and service families, and supporting schoolteachers, administrators, and governors to understand how they can best ensure a great start to life for hundreds of service children across Lancashire. Our Armed Forces and Veterans Champion, Councillor Alf Clempson (a former Scots Guardsman), is working to make it easier for service families to place their children in Lancashire schools and supports local Armed Forces groups and charities through his Champion's Fund.

We also work with training and skills experts to ensure ex-service personnel can join our workforce and grow the Lancashire economy. The county council is one of the nation's bigger employers and strongly support members of the Armed Forces community who work for us. In 2020 we received the Ministry of Defence's Employee Recognition Scheme's Gold Award in acknowledgement of our efforts to support our Defence workforce. Next year we hope to earn our re-accreditation of the gold award.

Lancashire County Council is proving its commitment to the Covenant through continued investment as the Hub's main funder and providing awareness training to frontline staff serving at councils across Lancashire. The county council continues to advise civil servants at the MOD on implementation of the new Covenant Duty, which strengthens the Covenant and ensures that councils must give due regard to service people in the delivery of public services, especially in the areas of health, housing, and education. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of Councillor Clempson and others at the council, Lancashire is making the most of the opportunities presented by the new Duty. Like his counterparts across the county, our Champion is heavily involved in helping members of the Armed Forces community, ensuring that no one suffers disadvantage because of their service, intervening in cases on their behalf, and giving everyone equal access to government support.

Councillor Clempson hosted another successful Armed Forces Day event this year, welcoming veterans and service charity representatives to County Hall. This annual recognition event is our chance to show support for the men and women who make up the Armed Forces community and it has become a fixture in the council's calendar.







possible without the unwavering support of Lancashire County Council and the ex-service personnel mentor program. Their faith in my abilities and the invaluable opportunities they provided propelled me to achieve something that I had never imagined.

The personal satisfaction and that from those around you when witnessing success in a positive change in the direction of a young person is immeasurable. This all comes from the course content and expert delivery from the professional tutors provided."



Lancashire continues to deliver on its pledges to the Armed Forces community. We want to build a future where veterans and their families are welcomed and supported to be the best they can be. We hope all residents and businesses in Lancashire will join us on this vital journey.

Armed Forces Mentoring in Schools Programme

Since its inception in January 2013, Lancashire County Council's Armed Forces Mentoring in Schools Programme has supported 95 veterans from all branches of the Armed Forces to mentor pupils in almost 50 secondary schools across Lancashire.

Our Mentors have a tremendous impact on pupil attendance, inclusion, and progression. The council recruits veterans between April and May every year in readiness for a September start into training and working in our schools. These veterans mentor young people in Years 9 to 11 (typically students aged 13 to 16 years of age). Our Mentors have also supported teachers by getting involved in all aspects of school life including helping with interest groups, clubs, and trips.

During their 12-month fixed-term contract, Mentors undertake training while supporting pupils, including a package of face-to-face and online learning. Our Mentors can obtain qualifications that can support a new career in education and gain experience working with young people. Many of our Mentors have successfully gone on to continue working in schools or at the council, progressed onto Teacher Training, or undertaken further training. The entire programme has received around 3,500 referrals.

The programme makes a difference to veterans who are in transition from the armed forces into civilian life. In addition, the programme provides support to progress into a career in the council not only in an education setting but also in many other job roles across the council's more than 500 services.

Feedback from Mentors

"I found solace and purpose as an ex-service personnel mentor. Little did I know that a remarkable journey awaited me, one that would reshape my path. I decided to obtain teaching qualifications, becoming a qualified computer science teacher. None of these achievements would have been

Lancaster District

Lancaster District is a combination of city, coast and countryside, linked by the Bay Gateway, with great access to the M6 and rail networks.



One of England's Heritage Cities, Lancaster is diverse, vibrant and creative, with a fascinating history including a castle, and lots to do and explore. Morecambe is set within Morecambe Bay's spectacular coastline with promenade walks and views across to the Lake District and in 2018, the Eden Project revealed its design for Eden Project Morecambe on the seafront, in partnership with the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership, Lancaster University, Lancashire County Council and Lancaster City Council.

The project is underway and due to be fully open by 2027. Building on the success of Cornwall's Eden Project, the project will include a 200,000sq ft indoor

eco-attraction, housed beneath four iconic pavilions, together with a programme of education, arts and culture.

Heysham is a ferry port, and a seaside village with beaches, woodland, and open grassland. It is home to the ruin of St Patrick's Chapel, overlooking Morecambe Bay and its stone-hewn graves that are thought to date from the 11th century.

Carnforth is a great base for walkers and cyclists who want to explore the area. It is famous for iconic train station scenes in the 1945 classic film, *Brief Encounter*, and the Carnforth Station Heritage Centre was the winner of a 2019 Tourism award.

Culture and Leisure

The Lancaster District has a fantastic voluntary and community sector, including Lancaster CVS and Bay Volunteers who are in contact with key organisations that are well-placed to link people to opportunities and support. It boasts a number of entertainment venues, including the Duke's and Grand Theatres in the heart of the city; Lancaster Arts at Lancaster University; the Platform, Alhambra and Winter Gardens in Morecambe; and a number of other theatre, live music and cinema venues. The City, Maritime and Cottage Museums and the Judges' Lodgings explore the district's rich and fascinating stories from Roman times to today, whilst Morecambe and Heysham Heritage Centres showcase their maritime history and the legacies of those who have lived and worked in the bay. There are a number of annual festivals across the district, with themes from music and art, to sport and heritage.

Wheelchair Rugby Paralympian gold medallists, Stuart Robinson and Ayaz Bhuta, both veterans, train at Lancaster City Council's Salt Ayre Leisure Centre. As part of the GB wheelchair rugby team, they beat the national American team. If someone is still serving in the Armed Forces, Salt Ayre Leisure Centre can offer them a corporate membership.







Economy and Employment

From two universities, a University Hospital, and art and brewing, to nuclear energy facilities at Heysham, the district has a diverse economy and employment opportunities. The growing digital and innovation sectors are attracting many newcomers to the area.

Education & Health

With a wealth of early years provision, primary, and secondary schools, including grammar schools, our district has Lancaster and Morecambe College situated between Lancaster and Morecambe, and the Universities of Lancaster and Cumbria (Lancaster Campus), so boasts a vibrant student population. Local GP services, Bay Medical Group and Lancaster Medical Practice are veteran-friendly practices.

Making Lancaster District your home

Lancaster District offers a range of quality housing stock from city centre pads for busy professionals and students, to roomy family homes in urban and rural locations.

The district is lively and welcoming with a range of busy bars and coffee shops;

cultural assets such as museums, theatres and galleries; and a great range of high street shops, high-quality independents and bustling markets. Its all-age vibrancy attracts discerning families and individuals looking to participate in the vast community networks of interest around the district, and to take advantage of the extensive outdoor leisure pursuits afforded by the stunning coastline and sweeping countryside surrounding the city.

The golden expanse of Morecambe's beach and its elegant Promenade are perfect for out-of-hours downtime, whilst the district's welcoming parks, including the scenic Williamson Park, offer the perfect spaces for relaxation and enjoyment. With two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty on the doorstep too, there is plenty of opportunity to take some time out to explore the natural beauty of the countryside at your leisure.



Lancaster and the Armed Forces

Lancaster City Council is a Gold Employer Recognition Scheme Award holder and is committed to the Armed Forces Covenant. It works in partnership with the Armed Forces community both internally, and within the wider district through the district's Armed Forces Covenant Partnership Group, to improve access to services, remove barriers to inclusion and promote the Covenant. The council provides time, and supports city council staff employed serving as reservists and cadet unit leaders.

From September 2022 to February 2023, The King's Own Royal Regiment Museum Trustees, with thanks to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, worked in partnership with Lancaster City Museums to bring The Hinge of Fate: Living with Uncertainty in 1942 exhibition to the Special Exhibition Gallery of The City Museum, Market Square, Lancaster. This told the story of both the soldiers of the regiment and families on the 'Home Front' in Lancaster during the darkest days of the Second World War. It ran in parallel with the King's Own Royal (Lancaster) Regiment Museum's permanent gallery in The City Museum.

Lancaster has a Military Heritage Group www.lmhg.org.uk. There is First Light

Trust, Lancaster Café Hub, that supports all those who served in the Emergency Services and Armed Forces and their families with advice and other activities www.firstlighttrust.co.uk. There are also active Royal British Legion branches in Lancaster and Morecambe.

Lancaster is the home of Alexandra Barracks Army Reserve Centre situated at Caton Road which currently has four units: Royal Logistic Corps 381 (Lancaster) Squadron RLC, 156 Supply Regiment RLC; Army Medical Services C Squadron 208 Field Hosp; University Officers' Training Corps North West Officer Training Regiment - Lancaster; and Infantry, The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment, B Company. In June 2022, the Halton Training Camp in Lancaster was officially opened as the Army's brand-new Adventurous Training facilities said to mark the start of a new era for the Joint Service Mountain Training Wing of the Army Adventurous Training Group.

Morecambe Football Club's Charity, MFC Community Sports, held its inaugural Armed Forces Veterans' Coffee Morning in December 2021 at the Mazuma Stadium. The popularity of the coffee morning has enabled them to continue to take place once a month at the stadium, with record numbers attending in August. The Football Club signed the Armed Forces Covenant in November 2021 and is a member of the

Lancaster District Armed Forces Covenant Partnership. The Club also host at least one Armed Forces Recruitment event per season at the Mazuma Stadium on the matchday closest to Remembrance Day. MFC Community Sports, in partnership with Lancaster City Council, provide Walking Football in Regent Park, Morecambe, which is free and welcomes veterans. The Charity is also working with a group of Veterans who want to become volunteers for the charity to work on community projects.

Westfield War Memorial Village is a unique, small community that offers a range of quality, affordable, rental accommodation to the Armed Forces Community, both veterans and serving, in an attractive setting. It promotes a supportive community with a collective spirit based on a shared experience of service to the Crown and where individuals in need are given advice and assistance. Respect for the village's military heritage and the service of its residents is an important part of the life of Westfield.

For more information about Lancaster District visit www.lancasterandmorecambebay. com www.lancaster.gov.uk



Pendle

Hello and a very warm welcome to Pendle!

Located in North East Lancashire and covering an area of 169 square kilometres, we are famous for our warm-hearted welcome. And this is not all we are famous for! Situated on the southern edge of the Yorkshire dales and in an area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, our stunning countryside appeals to walkers and cyclists alike.

The iconic Pendle Hill offers breathtaking views. A climb to its summit so inspired George Fox in 1652, that he set up the worldwide Quaker Movement.

Our heritage excites and fascinates our visitors. The Pendle Witches who lived here over 400 years ago were part of Britain's biggest witchcraft trial. The fascinating true story of the Pendle Witches is told in "stone" at the Pendle Sculpture Trail through ten ceramic plaques and on the Trail of the Pendle Witches - a driving trail of 45 miles from Pendle to Lancaster.

We are also a diverse area offering some of the best events in the UK, including the award-winning Colne Rhythm and Blues Festival and the Pendle Walking Festival.

Pendle's History

We have a great history, waiting to be uncovered.

During the Bronze Age, Pendle was part of a trade route between the Yorkshire coast and Ireland. Remains of burial grounds along with various artefacts have been found along the route.

In the early 18th century, woollen textiles were an important domestic industry, replaced by cotton by the end of the century, when the Leeds and Liverpool Canal – the longest canal in Britain with the famous mile tunnel - allowed easy transport of raw cotton from Liverpool. More recently, industrial diversification added engineering, including Rolls-Royce at Barnoldswick, where you can visit the

one of the last remaining working mill engines, and the manufacture of furniture, carpets, and plastics. Much of the area is rural, and agriculture plays an important role.

Famous People

Pendle's history is lit up by a number of famous people, including George Fox, whose vision on Pendle Hill inspired him to set up the Quaker Movement; Sir Jonas Moore (1617) who became a leading practical mathematician, surveyor, cartographer, Ordnance Officer, courtier and patron of astronomy, who rose from humble origins to be awarded a knighthood, gained membership of the Royal Society and won favour at the court of Charles II; Wallace Hartley, born in Colne in 1878, who was the heroic bandleader of the ill-fated Titanic; and Eric Knowles, a renowned TV antiques expert. The area has also inspired many others, including the famous Brontë sisters.





Stunning Countryside

For those that love the countryside, we are situated in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, with lots of great walking and cycling routes. These include The Pendle Way - a 45-mile circular walk split into eight distinct sections, and the Pendle Cycle Tour - a 17-mile on-road cycle route.

Great Towns and Villages

Our walking and cycling routes wend their way through a beautiful landscape dotted with lively towns and picturesque villages just waiting to be discovered, including Earby, Foulridge (highest point on the Leeds to Liverpool Canal) and Trawden, named the 'Best Place to Live' in the North West of England.

Pendle's three main towns are Nelson, Colne and Barnoldswick.

Colne is an ancient market town steeped in history - parts of the parish church date back to the 11th century. It is also the birthplace of Wallace Hartley (band master on the Titanic) and home of the world-renowned Great British R&B Festival.

Colne, along with Nelson, was at the heart of the Lancashire cotton industry and there is still much evidence in the town. Colne has many shops, and both an indoor and a lively outdoor market.

Nelson was originally two villages, Little Marsden and Great Marsden. However, the advent of the railways in the late 19th century resulted in the new town of Nelson being given its Town Charter by Queen Victoria. There was already a Marsden on the railway network in the neighbouring county of Yorkshire, so the new railway station was called the Nelson Inn, Great Marsden, after the adjacent public house and inn, the Admiral Lord Nelson Inn. The name stuck and the town of Nelson was born.

Nelson grew up as an industrial town in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, with its economy being mostly based upon the textile industry mainly cotton weaving. It was also associated with the production of confectionery, including Jelly Babies and Victory Vs.

Barnoldswick, to its credit, has been recognised and crowned in The Great British High Street national competition of the leading high streets in the country. This is due to the unique retail outlets it has to offer. It was only one of seven towns in Britain to achieve this accolade. The town, affectionately known as Barlick, is steeped



Barnoldswick © Andy Ford

in history and can trace its history back to the Vikings.

The town, like many around this part of Lancashire, got a name for textile manufacture - and there are still proud examples of the mills about - like Bancroft Mill, now a museum. The Mill is just one of the many points of interest on Barnoldswick's popular Stream and Steam Trail. The town has not rested on its laurels and is now home to many nontextile companies such as Rolls Royce and Silentnight. The shops in the town often have a more individual flavour than most, and Barnoldswick itself hosts many events throughout the year, including Bands on the Square and Barlick Beach, and lots of great family events in nearby Thornton Hall Farm.

Transforming our Industrial Heritage

Northlight in Brierfield is where Pendle's iconic past and innovative present collide to create a unique new way to experience life.

Built in 1832, this former cotton mill (Grade II listed) and local landmark has been regenerated at a cost of £32 million into one of the most exciting developments in the North of England to create a new learning, living, working, leisure and cultural destination, as well



as hundreds of new jobs. It is now home to Lancashire Adult Learning, providing learning opportunities for all adults across the region.

As part of the last Government's Levelling Up Agenda, Colne is one of only 12 places in North West England to win a share of the Government's Levelling Up Fund and received £6.5m which has been used to develop a range of projects for this historic market town.

Leisure & Cultural Activities

Pendle has a lot to offer for those active amongst you. Three swimming pools, Seedhill Athletics Track, Steven Burke Cycle & Sports Hub, football, cricket and rugby pitches, numerous parks - seven awarded Green Flag status. The Leisure Box situated at Northlight offers indoor and outdoor sports pitches, a climbing wall and a dance studio. And if you do want to take it easy, there's an amazing facility, the Inside Spa.

For theatre goers, we have the Pendle Hippodrome, the Little Theatre and The Muni, all situated in Colne, offering a range of entertainment. And not forgetting the Pendle Heritage Centre Museum and walled garden close by in Barrowford.

Supporting our Armed Forces

Pendle is committed to fulfilling the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant which we signed in 2012 and re-signed once again in 2023. The Council has three **Armed Forces Champions who support** our Armed Forces community.

The Borough Council also supports the Covenant by providing an Armed Forces Lead Officer who is responsible for focusing on our Armed Forces Covenant, supporting the Champions and the Lancashire Armed Forces Covenant Group. The Lancashire Armed Forces Covenant Hub has a website to aid all current and former servicemen and women and their families with a wide variety of issues.

Our Covenant work was recognised by the Ministry of Defence in 2020 when we were awarded the Employee Recognition Scheme Silver award.

For veterans, or any serving personal visiting Pendle, we have three groups who provide connection and support to our community.

Firstly, in Barrowford we have the Armed Forces Support Group (a community group of volunteers) who have a dedicated office and meeting room. This group meets each Wednesday and Thursday morning and also the first Saturday of the month at Holmefield House Annex, Gisburn Road, Barrowford BB9 8ND.

The group supports the Pendle Borough Council with all requests relating to HM Forces. These include Remembrance Day, Flag Raising and church services where a military presence is requested.

Regular fund-raising activities are continuous throughout the year in support of our local Armed Forces personnel, and their families, past and present.

The Group maintains a close relationship with the Duke of Lancashire Regiment and all our local Cadet Units.

In Colne we have the Armed Forces & Veterans Breakfast Club which meets at Colne Rugby Club the first Saturday of each month for catch-up, breakfast and a chat and is well supported.

And finally, covering Kelbrook, Sough, Earby and Barnoldswick, we have the West Cravens Veterans who meet regularly for various activities throughout the year to support the veteran community and for fund raising. They meet every Wednesday for breakfast alternate weeks between Humble Pie and Victoria's Tea Rooms in Barnoldswick.

Contact Details Pendle Armed Forces Champions Councillor Kevin Salter kevin.salter@pendle.gov.uk **Councillor Neil Butterworth** neil.butterworth@pendle.gov.uk **Councillor David Hartley** david.hartley@pendle.gov.uk **Armed Forces Support Group** Tel: 01282 613132 Email: afsg20241@outlook.com www: tafsg.co.uk









Cllr Kevin Salter Cllr Neil Butterworth Cllr David Hartley



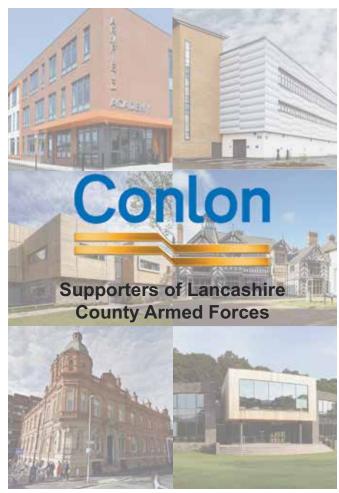


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Safran Nacelles is a worldwide leader in aircraft engine nacelle integration. We are part of a global Safran Group. Our products and services equip all aircraft types: regional, business, short, medium, and long-range commercial aircraft. Our expertise covers nacelle design, manufacturing, integration, maintenance and services. We are proud to support the official Lancashire Armed Forces Covenant Guide.







ADV276032



signatories of the Armed Forces Covenant and our specialist legal team has many years of experience helping service personnel, veterans and their families to ensure that they receive the support and compensation they deserve after an accident and we can help you too, if you or a loved one has been injured. Like any other employer, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) owes a duty of care to all service personnel.

TYPES OF CLAIMS WE UNDERTAKE

- Hearing Loss
- Climatic Injuries
- Training Accidents
- Sporting Injuries
- Armed Forces
 Compensation Scheme
- Inquest Representation

If you would like a confidential free chat then please call Clare Stevens



Clare Stevens
HEAD OF ARMED FORCES CLAIMS
D: 0345 450 9547
E: Clare.Stevens@jmw.co.uk





NORTH WESTERN INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

NWIFCA is the lead statutory regulator responsible for the protection of the marine environment and sustainable use of fisheries all along the coast of North West England and within its inshore waters.

We are dedicated in our continued support of the Armed Forces community.

www.nw-ifca.gov.uk E-mail: office@nw-ifca.gov.uk

HEAD OFFICE

1 PRESTON STREET, CARNFORTH, LANCASHIRE LA5 9BY
OFFICES AT:- WHITEHAVEN, BARROW, LIVERPOOL

Preston City Council – the Proud City where everyone matters!

Preston is a friendly, exciting city, welcoming everyone to live, work, study and invest.

Situated on the north bank of the River Ribble in Lancashire, the city is the administrative centre of the county of Lancashire and the wider City of Preston Local Government district.

Preston is extremely proud of its city status, obtained in 2002, where it became England's 50th city in the 50th year of Queen Elizabeth II's reign.

The University of Central Lancashire is situated right at the heart of the city and has a large and diverse network of over 42,000 students and staff. In the 2023 edition of the CWUR's 'Global 2000 List', the University was ranked in position 1386, within the top 6.8% of all universities worldwide and it is ranked nationally in 75th place.

Preston City Council actively applies and prioritises the principles of Community Wealth Building, or you may have heard it referred to as 'the Preston Model', wherever applicable and appropriate. Community Wealth Building is an approach which aims to ensure the economic system builds wealth and prosperity for everyone, including members of the Armed Forces Community.

Preston remains the highest performing city in the North West, for the fourth time, and scored above the UK average across a number of categories the public think are most important when it comes to economic wellbeing, including the availability of jobs, a positive work-life balance, the skills of the population and the variety of roles on offer. Preston ranked 11th overall in the 2023 Good Growth for Cities index, which measures the performance of 51 UK cities against categories including jobs, income, work-life balance, transport, skills, environment and the house price-toearnings ratio.

https://www.pwc.co.uk/industries/ government-public-sector/good-growth. html



Preston City Council is a proud supporter of the Armed Forces, working closely with the Armed Forces Covenant Hub which is situated within Preston at the University. The Local Authority signed the Armed Forces Community Covenant in 2012 and was awarded the AFC Employer Recognition Scheme Silver Award in 2022.

The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise from the nation ensuring that those who serve or who have served, and their families, are treated fairly. This commitment is made in recognition of the sacrifices they make on behalf of the country.

Preston is proud of its military connections.

Many people from the city serve in the Armed Forces and Preston is also home to Fulwood Barracks. The Barracks, Headquarters of the Army's North West operation, as well as being home to the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment, 3 Medical Regiment and the Lancashire Infantry Museum, currently remains open until 2030.

Veterans and current Armed Forces personnel are honoured with an annual Remembrance Sunday service at the Cenotaph on the Flag Market, enabling Preston to pay its respects to those soldiers who have died in conflict. Preston City Council also supports Armed Forces Day, with a flag-raising event and service each





year, attended by the Mayor and local regiments (4 Lancs and 3 Med), showing the city's solidarity with current serving personnel. Preston is also home to Kimberley Barracks, HQ of 4th Lancashire Battalion.

The city council are working towards ensuring that all front-line staff receive the 'One Voice' training to provide council employees with an overview of what the Armed Forces Covenant is, have deeper insight into the Armed Forces Community, where they may need support and to explore how public sector workers can help the community further.

Preston City Council employees who attend volunteer Reserve Forces Training Camp or who volunteer as Special Constables or Retained Firefighters are granted extra leave to assist them in carrying out these duties.

The city council is committed to supporting our Armed Forces personnel and families through a wide range of housing options too. Support is given to prevent homelessness when facing housing / accommodation issues after leaving the Armed Forces. Priority will be given on our housing waiting list through our choice-based letting scheme, Select Move.

Since signing the Armed Forces
Covenant in 2012, Preston City Council
has created a local Armed Forces Network
Group to promote the covenant and
share information.

The city is also home to Preston North End Football Club, a founder member

of the Football League. The PNE Forces programme is an initiative run by Preston North End Community and Education Trust which is open to anyone who currently or has previously served in the Armed Forces.

The initiative includes football and social sessions designed to allow forces members, both past and present, a way to keep active while forming new relationships with like-minded people. Preston is also home to several parks, nature reserves and open spaces across the city, many of which have national Green Flag Award status.

Avenham and Miller Parks are Grade II listed Victorian parkland located in the middle of the city centre and less than 10 minutes from Preston's rail and bus stations. The award-winning parks are set by the River Ribble with many features and historical points of interest such as Derby Walk, the Italianate Terrace and the Japanese Rock Garden.

Within Ashton Park, there is a private walled garden which is home to 'Dig In North West' where members of our Armed Forces - serving or veteran, regular or reservist or members of any Blue Light Service - are welcomed to join in with gardening, carpentry, photography, a chat, and even a brew or two.

The Preston Guild Wheel is a 21-mile walking and cycling route, encircling Preston and providing a link from the city to the countryside. You can join the route at any point along the way, which is mainly off-road and traffic free, providing a scenic

and safe cycling and walking route for anyone to use.

Preston City Council proudly celebrated the D-Day 80th Anniversary in June 2024, with two events being included in the city events programme. These included a Civic Anniversary event, with a day of reflection for those who served during the D-Day landings and centred around a symbolic beacon lighting ceremony, with a tribute from cadets and veterans. Choir performances led up to the beacon lighting, fostering a sense of unity and remembrance as we honoured the heroes of D-Day.

The second event, held on the Flag Market and in the Foyer of the Guild Hall, brought history to life through a range of events and performances paying tribute to the heroes of D-Day and celebrating 80 years of courage, sacrifice, and resilience.

Preston City Council are extremely proud to have received the AFC Employer Recognition Scheme Silver Award for 2022 and are continuing to work with the Armed Forces and veterans' groups to improve local services for people who are ex-service or still serving.

You can find out more about our support for the Armed Forces and how to access advice at the Help in Preston website https://www.helpinpreston.com/ armedforcessupport



Councillor Mel Close – Preston City Council Armed Forces Champion Email: cllr.M.Close@preston.gov.uk



Ribble Valley



Ribble Valley lies in East Lancashire but shares a long boundary with North Yorkshire and is known as "the heart of the Kingdom", being at the geographical centre of the country.





Much of the borough is designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and boasts wonderful rolling countryside, high moors, river valleys, scenic villages and the bustling market towns of Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley. Pendle Hill, Longridge Fell and the Trough of Bowland provide rugged, wild and challenging terrain for outdoor enthusiasts. The breathtaking scenery and abundance of footpaths, bridleways and quiet country lanes attracts many walkers and cyclists.

It is also home to magnificent historical buildings, including 14th Century Whalley Abbey, medieval Clitheroe Castle, Ribchester Roman Museum and beautiful Stoneyhurst College (with its connection to Lord of the Rings author JRR Tolkien) which provide an enticing glimpse into the past. Often referred to as the food heaven capital of the North, the Ribble Valley is also home to some of the best gastropubs in Britain and an abundance of charming wine bars that deliver a wide range of mouth-watering food and drink.

Over the years, the area has received accolades such as being named one of the happiest and healthiest places to live in the UK, thanks to its glorious countryside, excellent schools, community-minded locals, and a well-deserved gourmet reputation.

Ribble Valley Borough Council – Our Vision

We are committed to protecting the Ribble Valley's independence and unique characteristics whilst continuing to be an area with an exceptional environment and quality of life for all; sustained by our vital and vibrant market towns and villages acting as thriving service centres meeting the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors.

We will continue to deliver our strong track-record of efficient, high-quality services based on a strong sense of pride in the Ribble Valley.





Supporting the Armed Forces Community

The council adopted the Armed Forces Community Covenant in 2013 and then re-affirmed its commitment in 2022 by signing a renewed Armed Forces Covenant.

RVBC staff have undergone training on matters relating to the Armed Forces Community, provided by the Lancashire Armed Forces Covenant Hub. The council's Armed Forces Officer is now seeking to co-ordinate similar training for GP practice staff across the Ribble Valley.

The council holds the Bronze Award under the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) and is now working towards the Silver Award.

Each year the council arranges the Armed Forces Flag Raising Ceremony at Clitheroe Castle to mark the start of Armed Forces week. This year the Mayor also hosted a beacon lighting ceremony to mark the 80th anniversary of D-Day, in co-ordination with organisations up and down the country.

The council has a designated Armed Forces Champion, Councillor Lee Street, who himself is ex-armed forces. Cllr Street is also supported by a designated Armed Forces Officer from the Council's Democratic Services Team, and both represent the council on the Lancashire Armed Forces Covenant Hub.

Ribble Valley's Housing Allocations Policy gives priority to individuals who are currently serving or have served in the Armed Forces. Disabled Facilities Grants are also available for essential adaptations within the home to give a disabled person better freedom of movement around the house, that an Occupational Therapist has recommended. For information or support on housing services, please visit www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/housing or contact the Housing Team on 01200 425111.



Ribble Valley Borough Council has exercised its discretion to disregard all income from Military Compensation when assessing Housing Benefit and Local Council Tax Support. Visit www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/benefits-support or contact the Benefits team on 01200 425111.

In Clitheroe, the Veterans in Communities (VIC) group meet at the Trinity Methodist Church Community Hub every Tuesday at 10am for 'Coffee and Quiz'. Veterans In Communities (VIC) work across East Lancashire to support those who have served in any of the branches of the Armed Forces, Emergency Services and their families.

For further information please visit the council's website www.ribblevalley.gov.uk or contact the Armed Forces Champion Councillor Lee Street on 07397 095218.



Rossendale

Rossendale is an impressive location with its bridleways, rivers, reservoirs and stunning hilltops – just on the fringe of Manchester and the South Pennines. Its rich heritage is evident in the design of its buildings and quintessential mill town centres, which are beautifully preserved and often revered by architectural experts.

Rossendale cherishes its history and culture. There are traditional community groups, museums, and symbols, giving a nod to its past throughout the Valley, famous for shoe-making, textiles and quarrying. Whilst the past remains at the heart of Rossendale, it is continually evolving, keeping current and ahead of the times. New developments have complemented and enhanced the existing industries, historic mill towns and environment and there are plans for further expansion in the pipeline. This combination of old and new provides the perfect rural setting with the best of city living at truly affordable prices.

Economy and Employment

In 2023 there were 2,540 businesses in Rossendale, including award-winning companies such as Linemark UK Limited, Orthoplastics Ltd, JJO PLC and Slingco Limited. Rossendale's industrial sector' strengths measured by employee jobs are, in joint first place, manufacturing, and wholesale & retail trade, and in joint second place, administrative & support, and human health & social work. Unlike



other districts in Lancashire, the borough has a relatively high number of private sector jobs. Unemployment in the borough is lower than the national average. However, we work hard to ensure everyone is able to access work.

Rossendale Works is a free service that has been designed to meet the needs of local people who have been struggling to get into the workplace, including ex-service men and women. For those looking for work, help is available, including:

- Mentoring and support working with people to address what may be preventing them from employment, providing a tailored work plan to develop strengths and overcome social barriers. This may include: access to training to boost skills; access to activities and sports to help boost confidence, health and wellbeing; support with job applications.
- Access to work placements and volunteering. Working together with Rossendale Job Centre, eligible participants are matched with local employers who can offer work experience and training opportunities. There is access to free training courses that lead to a guaranteed interview on completion with some of Rossendale's top employers.





Schools and Housing

Offering a range of properties in a prime location, Rossendale has house types to suit everyone. Find homes with historic features and unique cubby holes, luxury, modern boltholes where you can escape the usual day-to-day activity, or something that will present a valuable investment opportunity in the charming villages around the Valley. Nowhere in Rossendale is more than 10 minutes' walk from open countryside.

Rossendale has an exceptional and highperforming educational offering too. It has a grammar school, schools with sixth form colleges and schools with specific specialisms. These schools are proactive with the local community and Rossendale businesses to give their students as many opportunities as possible.

Just over the hill, and easily accessed by public transport, the University of Central Lancashire has its Burnley Campus. The campus is home to a diverse community of students from around the world, studying a growing range of undergraduate, postgraduate taught, postgraduate research and degree apprenticeship courses.

Getting Around Rossendale

Travelling to Rossendale couldn't be easier. Situated in the heart of England's North West, Rossendale is centrally located for Lancashire, Yorkshire, Merseyside and Cheshire. There are excellent transport connections for both UK and international visitors with three airports just an hour away, whilst the M65, M62 and M66 bring in visitors from across the country.

Navigating the local network is also simple. The Valley has a regular (every 10 minutes) bus service connecting all four of our towns. We have a heritage steam railway, new cycle ways and bridleways that make accessing our countryside easy for people of all abilities.

History and Culture In Rossendale

Museums, including The Whitaker, Helmshore Mills Textile Museum, Bacup's Natural History Museum and the Whitworth Historical Society Museum, exhibit the Valley's industrial, cultural and historical heritage. You can explore the area's industrial heritage and colourful history. One of the more popular and traditional events takes place in Rossendale every August Bank Holiday – the Gravy Wrestling Championships at the Rose & Bowl, Stackstead!

Theatre is a prominent part of Valley life – the Boo is a cultural hub for creative works in Waterfoot. Bacup's Royal Court Theatre has been standing for over 125 years' and has an impressive selection of artists, comedians and pantomimes performing weekly.

The combination of history, culture and dramatic landscapes makes Rossendale Valley a haven for photography. The beautiful landscapes, flora and fauna and traditional industrial heritage provide a host of opportunities for even the most demanding of photographers.





Shopping & Markets In Rossendale

Rawtenstall, Haslingden and Bacup offer a wide range of shops, cafés, markets and services, providing an opportunity to sample both alternative and traditional experiences.

With independent shops offering locally hand-crafted goods and good public transport, there is easy access to a wide range of great facilities.

Aside from chain stores, each of the Valley's towns are filled with local family businesses. The markets host butchers, bakers, local producers, household goods, clothes and gifts.

Each town centre has a high street with an eclectic range of traditional and contemporary shops, cafés and services. All three Rossendale markets have a friendly vibe and sense of community.

Rawtenstall Market, and the social enterprise behind it, recently won a number of awards. The flourishing artisan market has become the hub of Rawtenstall's community thanks to its ever-growing selection of fresh produce, butchers, fishmongers, delis, general trade, food & drink stalls, artisan makers, bakers and creators.

Rossendale and the Armed Forces

Veterans in Communities (VIC) is based at 12, Bury Road, Haslingden, and is celebrating its 10th year in Rossendale. VIC supports former ex-service men and women who have served in any of the branches of the Royal Navy, Army, Royal Marines, Royal Air Force, the emergency services (Blue Light) and their families who have or are having difficulties with returning to 'Civvy Street' or just want to socialise with like-minded people. VIC offers a range of services and activities include; walking, allotments, social trips, helping the local community with small projects, training opportunities, outreach services in local areas, art groups, craft groups, and a choir.

More information at https://veteransincommunities.org/index.html or ring 01706 833180

The Rossendale Armed Forces and Veterans Breakfast Club meets on the second Saturday of the month from 10:00 at Bumbles Café, Haslingden Community Link, Bury Road, Haslingden, Rossendale, BB4 5PG NHS Military Veterans Service (MVS) is a specialist psychological therapies service, for British Armed Forces veterans across Greater Manchester and Lancashire. This is a locally commissioned service hosted by Pennine Care.

The team is overseen by a consultant clinical psychologist and includes: clinical psychologists, cognitive behavioural therapists, eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) practitioners, cognitive analytic therapy therapists (CAT), psychological wellbeing practitioners, a substance misuse worker and employment placement support workers.

MVS has a number of staff who are veterans themselves, or have family members in the forces.

MVS can be contacted on 0300 323 0707 or the.mvs@nhs.net



South Ribble

South Ribble is a scenic borough in Lancashire immersed in history, with many notable towns and villages.

110,000 people call the borough home. You may know us as the 'Garden of Lancashire' with a wealth of open spaces and award-winning parks such as the brilliant Worden Park, Hurst Grange Park, and Longton Brickcroft Nature Reserve – all of which are recipients of the coveted Green Flag Award.

In 2023, Withy Grove Park received its first ever Green Flag Award following the £2million+ Bamber Bridge Sports Hub investment, boasting state-of-the-art facilities.

With tremendous town centres filled with character, independent retailers and high street favourites teamed with stunning natural landscapes, South Ribble really is a great place to live, work and play.

Our Vision

Our vision as a council is for South Ribble to be a healthy and happy community, flourishing together in a safer and fairer borough, led by a council recognised for being innovative, financially sustainable and accountable.

In commitment to our vision, we have four key priorities:

- To be an exemplary council
- To have thriving communities
- To have a fair local economy that works for everyone
- To have good homes, green spaces, and healthy places.

Local Economy

Our aim is to continue to make South Ribble a great place to live, work and visit.

We're delivering key transformational regeneration projects including the Leyland Town Deal, which will see a multimillion investment in the town centre and the historic Leyland Market, and we've invested over £1 million in the borough's local play areas so that more residents and visitors can get outside using state-of-theart facilities to stay active locally.

We have developed much-needed energy efficient affordable homes in the borough – the first the council has built in 25 years – and started development on our flagship extra care facility for over 55s to ensure that people have access to quality affordable housing.

We are always looking for ways to improve and create spaces for community and commercial benefit. Most notably, we have recently completed the £2.8 million Worden Hall project which has transformed the local heritage building into a flexible event and community-use space.

We also have recently refurbished and re-opened the historic Hurst Grange Coach House, offering a lovely venue for the community to use.

We have a dedicated tourism brand, Discover South Ribble, which lets you know about everything South Ribble has to offer. Visit www.discoversouthribble. co.uk to find out more.





Leyland Leisure Centre

Supporting the Armed Forces Community

We are a proud supporter of the Armed Forces Community and first signed the Armed Forces Covenant in 2021.

The Covenant is a national responsibility involving government, businesses, local authorities, charities and the public. It is a promise that together we 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.

We recognise the unique obligations and sacrifices made by the wider Armed Forces family which includes serving personnel and their families, reservists, veterans, uniformed youth organisations and cadet forces adult volunteers.

We support the South Ribble Armed Forces community in several ways. We have a committed Armed Forces Champion, Councillor Matthew Farnworth, who is well supported by the council's Community Development Officer, Joanne Lloyd.

Health and Wellbeing

We're committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of our residents and ensuring South Ribble is a place where people can thrive and have access to high quality facilities.

We've recently made the borough's leisure centres more energy efficient and have more improvements on the way, ensuring that all residents have easy and affordable access to high-standard leisure facilities.

As part of our commitment to helping residents, we offer a 'Leisure Card' which gives discounts on the use of our leisure centres and their facilities.

The South Ribble Leisure Card entitles you to 50% off a wide range of leisure activities including discounted swimming sessions, use of gym facilities, and badminton, squash and tennis courts.

Simply visit any of the South Ribble Leisure Centres and bring your proof of identification and eligibility. Anybody serving or a veteran in the Armed Forces is eligible for the Leisure Card.

We have also recently opened Bamber Bridge Sports Hub, in Bamber Bridge next to Withy Grove Park which is home to state-of-the-art 3G multiple-use pitches and a brand-new pavilion.



Together the Armed Forces Champion and Community Development Officer represent the council on the Lancashire Armed Forces Covenant Hub. The Hub brings together local authorities, statutory organisations, veterans, and cadet groups, as well as supporting organisations across Lancashire.

Our Armed Forces Champion recently campaigned for the council to meet the Royal British Legion's 'Credit Their Service' requirements, in which council unanimously voted to remove Armed Forces compensation received by veterans and their families, from means tested benefits.

In spring 2024, we joined forces with Chorley Council to create the Chorley and South Ribble Armed Forces Covenant Support Group. This group focuses on issues and needs specifically related to veterans, charities and residents living in both boroughs.

The support group regularly shares news on services and provides wellbeing support and signposting pertinent to the Armed Forces community. Some of the issues discussed relate to education, employment, healthcare and housing, of which a subgroup has also been set up by attendees.

Our Housing Solutions team at the council gives priority on Select Move for social housing if the applicant is serving in or has served in the UK Regular Armed Forces within the last five years.

Across the borough there is a thriving Armed Forces community. We have many uniformed youth organisations with RAF Air cadet units in Bamber Bridge and Leyland and Army cadets in Leyland and Lostock Hall.

Leyland boasts a successful Veterans Café which has grown continuously over the past few years and now has a community of over 100 veterans of all ages, visiting on the first and third Saturday of each month.

ARMID FORCES DAY
CHOW YOUR SUPPORT



South Ribble Armed Forces leads are often in attendance, and have forged strong links by providing help, support, and signposting to services alongside the council's dedicated Social Prescribing Team.

There are several Royal British Legion branches across the borough who work alongside the council and the RBL Lancashire Riders Branch have supported parades and events in the borough.

Each year we hold a flag raising ceremony for Armed Forces Week, and there are several parades across the borough on Remembrance Sunday. In 2024 we honored our D-Day veterans with a Beacon Lighting ceremony in Lostock Hall.

Over the past few years, we have organised the Battle of Bamber Bridge Commemoration event, in partnership with UCLAN and Preston Black History Group. This commemorates an important

piece of local history, involving black American GIs and the locals who stood alongside them in 1943.

In a spectacular tribute to South Ribble's First World War heroes, the borough has a stunning memorial that remembers the 686 men who died serving their country. Opened during the 100th anniversary of WWI, the war memorial stands 40ft tall near the Stanifield Lane roundabout in Leyland and is a poignant reminder of the sacrifice those men made for our freedom.

In August 2024, South Ribble Borough Council was proudly awarded the Gold Award under the Ministry of Defence Employer Recognition Scheme for its commitment to the Armed Forces.

Contact details: info@southribble.gov.uk 01772 625 625

joanne.lloyd@southribble.gov.uk Community Development Officer (Armed Forces)

Matthew.farnworth@southribble. gov.uk Member Champion for Armed Forces





Lostock Hall First World War Memorial

West Lancashire

West Lancashire is a very diverse place with bustling towns and big industry, as well as small, picturesque villages.

It is a mostly rural borough with three major settlements in Skelmersdale, Ormskirk and Burscough, as well as smaller villages and towns such as Tarleton, Rufford, Parbold and Hesketh Bank. The Borough has excellent transport links to other parts of the region, sitting between Manchester and Liverpool and very close to the M58 and M6 motorways, making trips to Manchester, Liverpool, the Lake District and beyond simple and convenient. And there's always something to do with miles of canals and green spaces to enjoy for free, as well as major attractions like the WWT Martin Mere wetland centre, the National Trust's Rufford Old Hall and Farmer Ted's Farm Park.

Our major towns

Ormskirk is a historic market town steeped in history and character. It offers excellent shopping with a mix of high street and independent retailers and a wide range of restaurants, cafés and pubs all within walking distance in a compact town centre. There has been a market here since 1286 and today it takes place every Thursday and Saturday in the heart of the town centre. The 12th century Ormskirk Parish Church is one of only three churches in England to have both a tower and spire, and the only one to have them both at the same end of the church. Edge Hill University sits just on the outskirts of the town and was recently named Modern University of the Year in The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide. The train station provides direct links to Liverpool and Preston.



Skelmersdale is a vibrant 'new town' and has real community spirit. It boasts the beautiful Beacon Country Park among its many green spaces, as well as a brand-new shopping complex. It is also a great place to work, with companies such as PepsiCo, Kammac, Hotter Shoes, DHL, ASDA, Victorian Plumbing and the Coop Bank.

Burscough is a thriving community which lies alongside the major arterial road, the A59. The Leeds and Liverpool canal passes through the parish, along with the Southport to Wigan and the Preston to Liverpool rail lines. The town centre is home to a number of shops, pubs and the Burscough Wharf development. The Wharf offers an array of independent retail and leisure outlets and eateries. Burscough has a great agricultural tradition and this sector forms an important part of West Lancashire's economy with more farms, farmed land and agricultural employment than any of its neighbouring districts.

West Lancashire and the Armed Forces

The West Lancashire Armed Forces Covenant

West Lancashire Borough Council adopted the West Lancashire Community Covenant at its meeting on 16 October 2013 and the signing ceremony was held on 14 November 2013.

Via this Covenant, we aim to encourage communities, charities, businesses, local government and health care providers to take part in the covenant to support all our Armed Forces living locally. This not only includes supporting personnel, but also their families and veterans, particularly where they have been injured or bereaved. By doing this we recognise what our Armed Forces have done for us and continue to do on a daily basis.





West Lancashire's Armed Forces Covenant Working Group

The working group has identified three priority areas which have become the main work strands. These are:

- Education, Skills and Employment
- · Health & Wellbeing
- Families and Housing

Each of the organisations look at what they are currently doing and what they can do for veterans in these priority areas. Organisations signed up to the West Lancs Covenant include: Chamber of Commerce (regional); Job Centre DWP (regional); Royal British Legion (regional); Age UK Lancashire; Lancashire Care NHS; Lancashire West CAB; West Lancashire Borough Council; SSAFA (regional); West Lancas ARK; West Lancashire Partnership; West Lancashire Community Leisure; Edge Hill University; West Lancashire College and all parish councils.

West Lancs Ark

West Lancs ARK was set up in 2012 to offer services to ex-offenders, the unemployed, the homeless and those with addictions. They also have separate provision for ex-Forces to assist with training, voluntary work, housing and claiming benefits. The team at West Lancs Ark were nominated for the Armed Forces Hero category in the Best of Lancashire 2022 awards, in recognition of the incredible work the organisation has undertaken to help veterans.

Armed Forces Champion for West Lancashire: Councillor Paul Hennessey

In his role as Armed Forces Champion, Councillor Hennessey:

- Assists the Leader by advising on issues which support and improve access to services for ex-service men and women in the Borough.
- Acts as a Spokesperson to promote the positive aspects of the Council's work with the Armed Forces.
- Forges and maintains links locally with Armed Forces networks.
- Represents the Council on the West Lancashire Community Covenant Working Group

West Lancashire has a long association with the Armed Forces

The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment 1st Battalion once again exercised their right to march through the Borough in May 2022 after being first gifted the Freedom of the Borough in 2011. The Regiment paraded around the town with 'flags flying, drums beating, and bayonets fixed' as they did back in 2011. The ceremonial parade was due to take place in 2021 but had to be postponed due to the pandemic. Many residents of West Lancashire welcomed the battalion and celebrated the unique spectacle and experience. The 1st Battalion is based in Chester and generally recruits from West Lancashire and the surrounding areas, emphasising the special connection it has to the Borough.

Showing our appreciation

The Borough also observes Armed Forces Day each year, and Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day are always important events in the calendar.

The Armed Forces command great respect within our communities. Up Holland Parish Council recently chose to spend some of its available funds to commission some stunning bespoke benches in honour of those who fell in the First and Second World Wars, close to the village's War Memorial.

West Lancashire Borough Council: westlancs.gov.uk

West Lancs ARK: westlancsark@hotmail.co.uk

Birchwood Centre: birchwoodcentre.co.uk/contactus

Skelmersdale Veterans association: alanmooresvasecretary@outlook.com

West Lancashire Borough Council has achieved the Silver Award from the Ministry of Defence's Employer Recognition Scheme, recognising our commitment to supporting the Armed Forces.





Wyre – coast, countryside and a thriving community

Discover Wyre – home to 16km of beautiful coastline and stunning countryside to explore. The picturesque towns of Fleetwood, Thornton-Cleveleys, Poulton-le-Fylde, and Garstang, as well as pretty rural villages, make up the borough, named after the 48 mile-long River Wyre.



Less than half an hour's drive from the M6 and a stone's throw away from Blackpool, it's easy to get here and get about. Poulton has its own train station, plus there's a tramway system along the coast and good bus routes throughout.

On one side of Wyre you'll find stunning award-winning beaches with unspoilt coastlines, and on the other, unforgettable landscapes in the Forest of Bowland, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. We're proud to boast of mouth-watering local food, traditional markets, family attractions, great leisure facilities, theatres, parks, shopping and more.

Wyre has a thriving cultural calendar with events throughout the year including Great Eccleston Show, Tram Sunday, the Fylde Coast Food and Drink Festival and Garstang Walking Festival, to name a few. There's also a great range of regular health and wellbeing activities available across Wyre, as well as a calendar of sporting events including Fleetwood Triathlon, Fleetwood Half Marathon and a weekly Parkrun along the coast. A range of disability friendly sports and activities, including a unique Beach Wheelchair group are also available.

Councillor Peter Le Marinel, a veteran himself, is Wyre's lead member for the Armed Forces, and comments: "We are proud to affirm our commitment to support the Armed Forces community. Since we originally signed the Covenant back in 2012, Wyre Council has achieved Bronze and Silver Defence Employer





Recognition Scheme awards. We have Armed Forces Veterans working for the council, a nominated council Armed Forces Officer and staff currently serving in the Reserves. We acknowledge not only the outstanding contribution they make to us as a council, but also to their country.

The Covenant demonstrates our commitment to staff as an employer, and to the Armed Forces Community who access our services. We thank serving personnel and veterans, and pledge to work with our partners to do everything we can to ensure they are not disadvantaged due to their service in any way."

There are a number of Armed Forces Community groups across the borough and the Fylde Coast, with breakfast clubs and coffee mornings meeting regularly. These provide veterans, members of the Armed Forces and their families with the chance to get together and chat, enjoy guest speakers and special events.

A Facebook group dedicated to the Fylde Coast Armed Forces Community has over 800 members, highlighting events and interests; as you would expect, there is some interservice rivalry and banter too!

The borough is fortunate to be able to provide the services of Armed Forces outreach project workers, who offer face-to-face advocacy and signposting to an appropriate support service. These outreach workers are veterans who organise walks and other outdoor activities for the Veterans Community, including their families. There is also a room at the Civic Centre in Poulton dedicated to providing 1-2-1 therapy sessions. For more information contact the lead member for the Armed Forces at Wyre council: Peter.lemarinel@wyre.gov.uk

For more information about Wyre, and support for the Armed Forces Community, go to:

https://www.wyre.gov.uk www.discoverwyre.co.uk

https://www.wyre.gov.uk/council/ support-advice-veterans-servingmembers-majestys-forces/1

To contact the councils Armed Forces Officer call: 01253 887236





X-Forces Enterprise (XFE)

X-Forces Enterprise (XFE) supports business aspiration in the military community. Veterans, service leavers, spouses, family members, cadets, and reservists are all eligible for free to-access services.

Since the organisation was founded in 2013, XFE has helped over 10,000 people to consider, start, and scale their businesses; delivered thousands of hours of enterprise training; and facilitated access to tens of millions in seed funding. Its unique package of services provides knowledge and support to the Armed Forces community, enabling informed decisions about business and fostering connections within a family of like-minded business owners.

Training

If you are contemplating self-employment but are unsure whether the enterprise route is right for you and your family, you can sign up for XFE's free one-day Self-Employment Discovery workshop and learn the pros and cons of starting your own business. You'll get to know your own red lines, increase your understanding of the commercial world, and make an informed decision about starting your own business.

If you choose to go ahead, the two-day Start Up Skills workshop will consider the details of your business plan including marketing, finance, law, and sustainability.

All XFE events are only open to the Armed Forces community, so attendees can feel reassured they're among like-minded individuals and network with others going on a similar journey. Additionally, XFE has designed bespoke self-employment training programmes exclusive to military spouses and partners, and exclusive by service.



XFE and beneficiaries at 10 Downing Street

10th anniversary at London Stock Exchange

The team can advise on the most appropriate training for you; please just get in touch: x-forces.com/events

Funding

If you're considering starting a business, it's likely you will need funding at some point. Provided your business has yet to start or you've been trading for less than three years, you are eligible to apply for support via the government-funded Start Up Loans programme, for which XFE is the appointed Armed Forces Community Delivery Partner.

Business advisers will guide you through the process and support you to prepare a robust business plan and cashflow forecast. Unsecured personal loans for business purposes of up to £25,000 are available, and XFE provides 12 months' post-loan mentoring by a dedicated business adviser. Learn more at x-forces.com/funding

Already Trading?

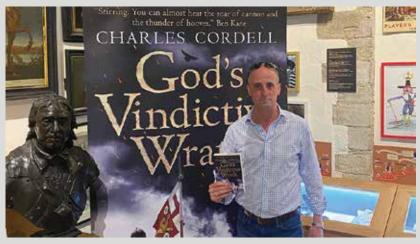
XFE has a bespoke range of Business Masterclass workshops to support current business owners, with topics ranging from e-commerce and customer profiling to bookkeeping and cyber security. These half-day sessions take a deep dive into one aspect that business owners will encounter, and attendees come away with practical tips and tools to progress their plans.

Places are limited to a small group, so early booking is recommended.

Mentoring and Networking

Whatever stage of the business journey you're at, if you're looking to connect with like-minded people, XFE holds regular Military in Business® Networking events, hosted by regional ambassadors, who are established business owners and have come through the XFE journey. Networking events are held online during the evenings and feature special keynote speakers who are experts in their fields, as well as guests from a variety of organisations that support enterprise.

Peer-to-peer support and mentoring are at the core of all XFE services and their Knowledge Exchange Hub features a growing army of 'business captains' – experts from across society and sectors, waiting to connect and support you in a confidential and secure environment.



XFE helped Charles Cordell to realise his dreams of becoming an author

Users can search the Hub to find fellow Military In Business® owners in their sector or region and make valuable connections that often lead to business relationships. Additionally, the free-to-use digital XFE Hub includes a vast library of articles on the topics that matter most to both aspiring and experienced entrepreneurs.

Discover the Hub at x-forces.com/xfe-hub

We invite you to join thousands of people on a similar journey with XFE and access all the resources and support available. The website is the first step to find out more and you're welcome to get in touch; the team at XFE are always ready to help.

For advice and support, contact info@x-forces.com www.x-forces.com



Invictus Games Foundation

We change lives and save lives through the power of the Invictus Spirit.

Serious injury or illness can significantly affect a person physically, psychologically and socially.

For those who have served, these injuries or illnesses, whether sustained during conflict or otherwise, can have the additional impact of dramatic and sudden changes to their chosen career or lifestyle, placing pressure on their family or home life.

The Invictus Games Foundation is the only global charity using sports and adventurous challenge as a recovery pathway for an international community of wounded, injured and sick servicemen and women (WIS). This pathway provides opportunities for post-traumatic growth: enabling those involved to reclaim their purpose, identity and future, beyond injury.

We use the Invictus Games and adaptive sports to inspire recovery and showcase the resilience of the Invictus community. Sports recovery is proven to accelerate and reinforce rehabilitation, and participation in an Invictus Games is transformative for competitors and their friends and family.

Beyond the Games, we further help improve lives beyond injury by offering access to international opportunities for sports, esports and adventurous challenge, and building a supportive digital community.

Through sharing best practice and fostering international collaboration, we influence the development of research and knowledge around trauma recovery, rehabilitation, and the power of sport.

The Invictus Games Foundation is a force for good; influencing progress towards a better future. We change lives and save lives, while shifting people's attitudes towards disability and mental health along the way.

"They are ordinary people doing extraordinary things. That is something we can all aspire to. You do not have to be a veteran who has fought back from injury to be inspired by the Invictus Spirit."

The Duke of Sussex,
Patron of the Invictus Games Foundation.

Invictus Games further info:

Returning from deployment in Afghanistan, Prince Harry, The Duke of

Sussex, watched as the coffin of a Danish Soldier was loaded aboard for repatriation, alongside three injured British soldiers. That moment had a profound impact on him and, following a visit to the US Warrior Games in 2013 and witnessing the power of sport, he was inspired to create the international Invictus Games to celebrate the unconquered human spirit, and shine a spotlight on these men and women who served.

The Invictus Games is a biennial multinational adaptive sporting competition now involving 23 nations, and 500 competitors. With a focus on participation rather than the medal table, the Invictus Games celebrate personal bests and making it to the start line.

"You could see with the public that not only the people who won the race were cheered. The ones who did not medal but did not quit were cheered. This is the Invictus Spirit."

Laurentiu Serban, Team Romania.

We Are Invictus further info

The 'We Are Invictus' platform is a free platform for any international wounded, injured and sick (WIS) Armed Forces personnel, serving or veteran, providing a safe and secure space for the community. The platform provides opportunities for recovery through sports beyond the Games alongside a peer-to-peer support network.

Activities range from sports, esports, adventurous challenge, employment, volunteering, speaking opportunities and more. We Are Invictus can be downloaded as an app or accessed via www.weareinvictus.co.uk

Beyond the Games further info

We run a grant-giving programme to support the ambitions of international wounded, injured and sick (WIS) Armed Forces personnel, serving or veteran to undertake adventurous challenge in their recovery, or establish regular access to sporting recovery opportunities. Invictus Challenges and Invictus Adventures are all available via the We Are Invictus app.





Heart of Invictus

Head to Netflix to watch our series following international competitors for the Invictus Games The Hague 2020, Heart of Invictus.

"Heart of Invictus is the incredible story of competitors brought together through service, who are now united through sport." Prince Harry, The Duke of Sussex

We need your support

Your donation helps us reach more wounded, injured and sick service personnel and veterans to recover through sport. Providing opportunities via the Invictus Games and beyond the Games, for year-round support. Head to www.invictusgamesfoundation.org and click donate!





Forces Employment Charity

The Forces Employment Charity exists to provide life-long, life-changing support, job opportunities, and training to Service leavers, veterans, reservists and their families, irrespective of circumstances, rank, length of service, or reason for leaving.

Founded in 1885 and operating across the UK, we have the specialist knowledge and understanding to bridge the gap between military life and civilian employment. We work in partnership with other organisations and employers who, like us, respect and value the unique qualities and abilities of all those who have served.

We understand the challenges faced when transitioning into civilian employment. We provide life-long support to ex-Forces personnel including Early Service Leavers through to older veterans who have spent the majority of their working life in the military.

With a stunning track record, the Forces Employment Charity is uniquely

positioned to offer long-standing expertise with a modern approach to recruitment. We also increasingly work with families, veterans in the justice system, wounded, injured and sick Service leavers and more, through an unrivalled range of programmes and practical tools, all tailored to each individual. We offer a unique experience bespoke to the specific requirements of our clients. Find out more below about the range of support we provide.

Supporting veterans into employment

We provide veterans with life-long career advice and support sourcing job opportunities from employers who

understand the true value of ex-military recruitment.

Using regional advisors, many of whom have served and all of whom have mental health first aid training, we can provide expert knowledge on regional job markets as well as a personalised service. Our advisors offer honest and considered guidance and advice that is tailored specifically to each individual and the pathway that they wish to take.

Whether advice is needed in the early stages of transitioning into civilian life or each time you take the next step in your career, we stand by all veterans and will always be there to support you.





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Support for military partners and families

As a charity with the military community at its heart, we understand the importance of supporting the whole family unit.

The programme supports veterans, military partners and their children aged 16 – 24 years old. By offering advice, guidance and one-to-one support, our expert employment advisors (who are often from the military community themselves) help clients to uncover their strengths and aspirations to help them find their dream career.

We understand that young people in Service families face a particularly unique set of challenges, from disruptions to education and social networks to being young carers. So we offer military children extra expert support in education, training and employment choices.

Whether clients have a dream career in mind or haven't the first idea what they want to do (yet) we can help. From creating CVs and interview coaching, to linking with mentors and employers, our team is here to support the whole family unit.

Supporting veterans in the justice system

Through Op NOVA, a service funded by NHS England, we offer help to veterans who are in contact with the justice system by providing emotional and practical support, enabling veterans to access specialist support in areas such as health, housing and employment. The support is available pre and post-custody across all of England.

We have also now received funding from the Veterans' Foundation to provide this service in Scotland through our own brand of NOVA Scotland.

We support veterans who have selfreferred or been referred by specialist police teams or other statutory organisations.

Employment Pathway events

Under the banner of Op PROSPER, we also offer a number of 'Pathways into...' events, allowing the whole Armed Forces community to attend sector specific exploration days in the following sectors:

- Data and digital
- Defence and security
- Construction
- Energy and renewables
- Finance and professional services
- Health and social care
- Logistics
- Manufacturing (including maritime and aerospace)

All are fully funded and offer live stream facilities for those unable to join in person.

Find out more about how we can help you at www.forcesemployment.org.uk
Call us on 0121 262 3058 or email info@forcesemployment.org.uk or follow us on social media
Twitter: @ForcesEmploy
Facebook:
Forces Employment Charity
LinkedIn:
Forces Employment Charity
YouTube:
Forces Employment Charity
Instagram:
forcesemploymentcharity



Soldiers' Sailors' Air Force & Families Association (SSAFA) - Lancashire

Established nearly 140 years ago, SSAFA stands for the Soldiers' Sailors' and Airmen Families Association.



Back in 1885, Major James Gildea wrote a letter to *The Times* newspaper appealing for money and volunteers to help the military families left behind at home in times of conflict. A fund was set up to provide allowances and this is how our charity was born. We are the oldest tri-service charity, and we support all our forces, the Army, Navy and the Royal Air Force.

We are a trusted source of support for serving personnel (regular or reserve), veterans and their families in their time of need. Support from SSAFA is there for people at any stage in their military career; from the newest recruit to the oldest veteran – no one's service is ever forgotten.

Since 1885 we have provided welfare and wellbeing assistance that is tailored to our

Armed Forces community. The needs of those we help are constantly changing so we offer personalised, practical, emotional and financial support to be able provide the right help at the right time.

SSAFA nationally helped almost 60,000 people in 2022 and this is because of our extensive network across the UK. We have 89 branches in towns and cities across the UK as well as a presence on 59 military bases. SSAFA is the charity most likely to be found 'behind the wire' supporting our troops.

SSAFA employs around 300 members of staff who are supported by an army of over 2,500 volunteers.



These are some of the services provided by SSAFA across the UK

- Additional Needs and Disability support

 Giving advice, support and respite
 for military families through our Forces

 Additional Needs and Disability Forum

 (FANDF) and Short Breaks holidays for families.
- Forcesline Free, confidential helpline, email and webchat service for those currently serving (regulars or reserves), veterans and their families.
- Glasgow's Helping Heroes In partnership with Glasgow City Council, supporting the Forces community.
- Gurkha Services Tailored support for Gurkha veterans and their families who have settled in the UK.
- Mentoring Providing personalised mentoring support for service leavers and their families, up to two years after they join 'civvy street'.
- Veterans in the Criminal Justice System (VCJS) – Supporting veterans in prison, custody or on remand, as well as their families, when they need our help most.
- Stepping Stone Home, Gildea House Providing safe accommodation for wives and children, whose relationships have broken down.
- Support Groups Providing facilitated support for those within the service community, including those affected by bereavement.
- Veteran community projects Improving the lives of veterans through a range of initiatives based on current needs.
- Welfare and wellbeing support Volunteer-led network offering practical, emotional and financial support across the UK and overseas.



What makes SSAFA unique locally in the Lancashire area is our trained volunteer network, delivering personalised face-to-face support to those in need.

We work with each individual to find out exactly what they need. Once we've assessed what is required, we'll help the individual or family access the required welfare and wellbeing assistance. Working with more than 120 different military organisations, regimental associations and many other foundations enabling us to help so many in need.

In 2023 SSAFA caseworkers in Lancashire helped over 72 individual cases providing financial support in such areas as Household Goods, Mobility, Funeral costs & Debt. We aim to provide support to both regulars, reserves, and families of anyone who has completed at least one day's service in the any of the armed services or merchant fleet.

Throughout the year with the help of our volunteers, the Lancashire branch attends

numerous events and works in partnership with local organisations to highlight the work of SSAFA both nationally and especially in the Lancashire area.

Supporting the Armed Forces community is vital for the wellbeing of the nation, the individuals who serve and have served, and the values they uphold. At SSAFA we believe it is a collective responsibility to recognise, appreciate and assist those who have dedicated their lives to protecting us all.

Referrals to SSAFA Lancashire can be made as follows:

Calling our Helpline number: 020 4566 9146

The Helpline is manned Monday -Friday 9:30 -17:00 and you can leave a message out of hours which will be picked up the next day.

Email -

lancashire.branch@ssafa.org.uk

Facebook.com/SSAFALancashire

SSAFA website - ssafa.org.uk/ lancashire - there is a webform which can be completed and will be actioned by the regional hub.

SSAFA VCJS - Veterans in the Criminal Justice System Martin Stevenson VCJS Lead Lancashire - martin.stevenson@lancashire. ssafa.org.uk



The Royal British Legion

The Royal British Legion is here to help members of the Royal Navy, British Army, Royal Air Force, veterans and their families.



D-Day 80

This year, the Royal British Legion, in partnership with the Ministry of Defence, led the UK's commemorations to mark the 80th anniversary of D-Day. This involved a series of events in the UK and Normandy.

Five years ago, the RBL took 255 Normandy veterans to France on a specially chartered ship as part of a fully-funded week-long trip to mark D-Day 75 – this time the RBL escorted just 21 veterans. A further 21 attended the RBL service at the National Memorial Arboretum.

Seven welfare staff from the RBL's care homes were among the team looking after the veterans and escorting them throughout the commemorations. Nurses, carers, independent living advisors and support staff were dedicated to the care of the veterans and their companions 24hrs a day for the duration of the visit.

The veterans received a door-to-door service alongside their chosen companion, from home to Normandy and back again. All travel, meals, events and visits were supported by this team of welfare staff, ensuring that veterans could participate in as much or as little of the packed programme as they felt able.

Invictus Games

In partnership with the MOD, the RBL has proudly revealed a 64-strong team, who are all wounded, injured and sick serving personnel and veterans, to represent Team UK at the Invictus Games in Canada in 2025 – the first Games to include winter sports.

The team have been preparing at the RBL's Battle Back Centre in Lilleshall. With challenging physical and mental injuries sustained while serving the UK either at home or abroad, the multi-generational team includes participants from all services who have been selected based on the benefit that the Games will contribute towards their recovery.

Louise Assioun, RBL's Team UK Manager said: "Being part of a team again, representing their country and being around others who are all on their individual recovery pathway is what makes Team UK's journey to the Invictus Games unique. The Royal British Legion is proud to support them every step of the way."

The Invictus Games Vancouver Whistler 2025 will take place from 8-16 February. The Games utilise the power of sport to inspire recovery and support rehabilitation, showcase the fortitude and resilience of military personnel and their families,





improve respect and understanding for those with disabilities, and those who serve or have served their country.

Our support

The RBL supports serving and ex-serving personnel all year round, every day of the week. Our support starts after one day of service and continues through life, long after service is over.

We provide lifelong support to serving and ex-serving personnel and their families. We've been here since 1921 and we'll be here as long as they need us.

We're dedicated to supporting not only serving and ex-serving personnel but the whole of the Armed Forces community, including dependants and carers. We can also provide support for Commonwealth citizens who are residents in the UK as well as past and present members of the Brigade of Gurkhas and their families.

Membership

Wherever you are in Lancashire, and whatever you like to do, there's a branch for you.

All our members play a vital role in supporting the Royal British Legion. Members build relationships. They share experiences with like-minded people and have a say in the way we run the RBL by voting through our branch network. But most importantly, they help us provide support to the Armed Forces community and their families. From being at the end of a phone line and visiting veterans in their local area, to holding Remembrance and community events across the UK, our members help us reach those who need us most.

Remembrance

We remember those who lost their lives on active service in all conflicts, from the beginning of the First World War right up to the present day. We also remember all those who have served and their families. Remembrance honours those who serve to defend our democratic freedoms and way of life. We unite across faiths, cultures and backgrounds to remember the service and sacrifice of the Armed Forces community from Britain and the Commonwealth.

This year, as well as D-Day 80, we remember the 80th anniversaries of the Battles of Kohima and Imphal, in northeast India. Troops of the Fourteenth Army, 85% of whom hailed from pre-partition India, courageously held off repeated attacks by Japanese forces for months, but at great cost.

The eventual defeat of Japanese forces was a turning point in the war in the east, and the springboard for the eventual liberation of Burma.



The Poppy Appeal

The Royal British Legion's Poppy Appeal 2024 takes place from Thursday 24 October until Remembrance Sunday on 10 November. Every year the RBL leads the nation in Remembrance activities across the UK to honour the contribution of our Armed Forces community, past and present.

Wearing a poppy is never compulsory but is greatly appreciated by those who it is intended to support. When and how you choose to wear a poppy is a reflection of your individual experiences and personal memories.

Your support during the Poppy Appeal allows us to continue to support our Armed Forces community.

Contact details:
0808 802 8080, our lines are open
daily, 8am – 8pm
https://www.facebook.com/
OfficialPoppyLegion
https://www.instagram.com/
royalbritishlegion/?hl=en
https://www.britishlegion.org.uk





RMA - The Royal Marines Charity

From the day you join the Royal Marines, you become a member of our family for life. That means we're here to support you, no matter what.



Being a Royal Marine is a way of life and whilst that comes with a sense of pride and honour, we know that it sometimes comes with challenges too. Our mission is to provide support, advice and lifelong camaraderie for serving and retired Marines and their families.

Remember – seeking support isn't a sign of weakness – it's what cements our comradeship with one another. Whether you need a listening ear or financial support, RMA – The Royal Marines Charity is here to serve you just as you've served us.

We are passionate about the support we provide to the whole Corps Family. We offer a range of assistance aimed at serving and former Royal Marines and their dependents. This includes finding belonging through our membership, and support from our health and wellbeing team, including respite breaks, grants to help with financial difficulty and guidance through our transition team.

More than just camping equipment

Serving in the Royal Marines is among the most demanding roles in the Armed Forces, with deployments in conflict zones like Iraq and Afghanistan leaving lasting impacts on many. One senior NCO, with nearly 25 years of service, is a testament to the challenges faced by those still serving.

Despite dealing with complex mental health issues, he has made significant progress, thanks to the dedicated support of military medical teams. The pressures of his service were compounded by personal hardships, including a marriage breakdown and separation from his children.

Transitioning from a full-time father and husband to a divorced parent without custody of his daughters was emotionally devastating. After years of struggle and significant financial sacrifice, he finally achieved shared parental care of his two girls.

Well on his way to recovery, he found it difficult to rebuild the close bond with his daughters without compromising his newfound resilience. Realising he needed additional support, he contacted the charity, who assessed what could be done to best help him long-term. He could cope with the rough and tumble of family life in an outdoor environment and he was keen to share adventures with his girls. The charity offered him a grant towards some basic camping equipment which would enable him to take his girls on holiday, not only for their happiness together but also for his own mental health and wellbeing.

He said: "Thanks to the help from you guys, the children have had an amazing first camping experience. The camping equipment the grant helped us buy will go a long way to bridging the gap to our little family for more future adventures to come.

We spent four nights in the tent on a really lovely safe, friendly camp site where the children explored and made new friends, their confidence grew and grew as they explored and found their way around and they developed their own independence. By day three they no longer wanted me ruining their street cred!

It all went far too quickly but we are already looking forward to the next opportunity to get away again. It was a resounding success for us. We are all extremely grateful."



Straight out of the horse's mouth

In 2023, we supported six former Royal Marines to attend HorseBack UK's three-



week development course. One RM who has benefited from this lifechanging course is Mike, who had suffered a traumatic brain injury, and is still undertaking rehabilitation.

A former Royal Marines Commando, Mike thought he was progressing well, but this couldn't have been further from the truth. He was diagnosed with severe depression by his GP, and it had become clear he was not coping. Mike recalls, "I had become isolated from my family and friends and had lost all confidence in the ability to look after my young daughter."

Mike found himself turning to alcohol. During these episodes he would contact anyone who would listen, and by 2023, a former RM friend reached out, referring him to RMA—The Royal Marines Charity. Our Health & Wellbeing Team assessed the best way forward and arranged for Mike to attend a development course offered by HorseBack UK in Scotland.

It proved to be a pivotal step on the road to recovery, not just for Mike, but also for his family. Mike said, "As I drove there, I was very anxious, but my scepticism regarding horses soon went, and I started to feel more relaxed than I had been for a long time. I managed to smile and laugh; I was even able to hold down a conversation, something I had been avoiding for so long."

Upon returning home from the first half of the course, Mike found that he had a new outlook on life. His family had not

seen him that happy in a long time, and he couldn't wait to go back and finish the life-changing programme, providing him not only with the tools to deal with the here-and-now but also how to embrace his future. If you or anyone you know is in need of our help and support, reach out and lift the lid.

This year marks 360 years of the Royal Marines. Join us and celebrate the anniversary by participating in the 360 for 360 campaign, where fundraisers have included a paddle from Leicester to London, Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu 30-miler walk across Dartmoor, and running marathons, to name a few. You can even join one of our fundraising events, be creative and get involved.

For more information Raise £360 for 360 years - RMA - The Royal Marines Charity (rma-trmc.org)

£360
for 360
Raise £360 to
celebrate 360 years
of the Royal Marines

Website: rma-trmc.org Facebook: /TheRMcharity Instagram: @thermcharity Twitter: @theRMcharity



Lancashire Armed Forces Association: Sailors, Soldiers, Aviators, Veterans, Cadets, Heritage Lancashire's Proud Military Family

Originally formed in 1947 as Preston and District Ex-Servicemen's' Association and, following a couple of iterations in response to changing times, the organisation was renamed Lancashire Armed Forces Association in 2024.

The country has indeed become a different place! Military establishments are becoming very thin on the ground, dedicated military meeting places have all but disappeared, and fellowship/camaraderie for those with shared experiences of having served in the Country's Armed Forces is no longer so easily found. In addition, the run-down and closure of Fulwood Barracks means there is a danger that the Lancashire Infantry Museum will find itself without a home soon and a wider danger that the general public and its military will become strangers in a County that has such a long, proud and varied history of defending the Realm.

In our first year of 'joining the dots' between sailors, soldiers, aviators, veterans, cadets and heritage, we have had considerable success. In conjunction with the Royal Air Force Historical Society, BAE Systems and the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan), we staged a presentation night for Lancashire's Air Cadets with experts explaining the



complexities of the Battle of Britain, followed by a parade and concert on Preston Flag Market organised by Preston City Council, complete with a Spitfire courtesy of Spitfire Visitor Centre, Hangar 42 at Blackpool Airport. Hangar 42 was constructed for the Air Ministry in May 1939, and became a key airfield for Aircrew Training. RAF and Polish Aircrews provided Night Fighter operations from Hangar 42 throughout the War.

In April we officially opened the Sandbag Café in St George's Church meeting rooms in Preston, in partnership with Veterans in Communities (VIC). Veterans and family members from all three services now meet every Tuesday morning to socialise and catch up with other local members of the Armed Forces community. They share stories of their military service and share knowledge of services designed to help the Forces community. Numbers continue to grow and new members are always welcome.





The Lancashire WW2 veterans depart for D-Day 80. They have agreed to become Ambassadors for our Association and will 'fight our corner' on the important issues.

Once again partnering with BAE Systems, we organised the attendance of five Lancashire WW2 veterans to the D-Day 80th anniversary commemoration in Normandy on the 6 June with considerable media coverage. We held a presentation night for Sea, Army and Air Cadets at UCLan with BAE Systems and military experts to explain the complexities of 'Operation Overlord', the D-Day Landings, and with the Lancashire Royal Engineers Association, we staged a Black-tie Ball at the Dunkenhalgh Hotel attended by the Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire and other high-profile guests.







But it's not all new - what has remained a constant is organising and staging Remembrance Parades and other important civic/military occasions in the County town of Preston and we continue with ongoing attendance at veterans' funerals. Having blazers, medals and standards and playing The Last Post makes a huge difference to grieving families; we should never underestimate the effect we are having on families when the service given by their loved ones is recognised.

Learning from history, the words of General Bill Slim who commanded the 14th Army in Burma are as true today as they were in 1945: "If ever a Force fought in a just cause, we did. We coveted no man's country; we wished to impose no form of government on any nation. We fought for the clean, the decent, the free things of life, for the right to live our lives in our own way, as others could live theirs, to worship God in what faith we chose, to be free in body and mind and for our children to be free. We fought only because the powers of evil had attacked these things."

Looking forward, the vision is to work closely with the Lancashire Armed Forces Covenant Hub in order to create a multifunctional, tri-service Military Centre which will preserve Lancashire's military heritage, provide a Drop-In café and meeting place and, through the sensible co-location of functions and agencies, safeguard the welfare and well-being of serving sailors, soldiers, aviators, and veterans, and their families. The key to success is collaboration; co-operating with all the other veterans' groups, with our Armed Forces Champions and with our Members of Parliament ensuring 'the sum of the whole is greater than the parts' and "Difficulties Be Damned!"

Homes at Ease North West

Homes at Ease offer support for members of the Armed Forces community who are currently, or at risk of becoming, homeless. This is delivered across Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Lancashire.

Homes at Ease is a collaborative project spearheaded by Armed Forces Community HQ (AFCHQ) acting as lead delivery partner, providing place-based support using Housing First principles across the Northwest. Jigsaw Homes and Wigan BC are partners to the arrangement funded through the Reducing Veteran Homelessness Trust Fund for two years.

After less than 12 months of operation, we have already exceeded our total two-year project target. This reflects the sheer scale of housing and homelessness demand and unmet need across the region. We are particularly pleased to report that a number of people have now graduated from the project, sustaining a tenancy successfully for a minimum period of 6 months and feel they can now live independently. The service adopts a housing first approach

and therefore graduations occur at a slower pace than traditional time limited offers and sometime after tenancies have been secured and established.

The service prides itself on a 100% acceptance rate, with no-one rejected on the basis of risk and an 88% engagement rate year to date. Non-engagement is discussed at the weekly multidisciplinary team meetings to address engagement barriers, agree active re-engagement methods, and manage emerging welfare concerns. Tenancy sustainment figures are strong (97%) and continued support is not contingent on the success of a tenancy.

All beneficiaries referred to Homes at Ease have free access to psychotherapy and this is also delivered on a community outreach basis; effectively, the therapy is taken to the beneficiary.

Homes at Ease benefits from the support of volunteer peer mentors, building upon our strong engagement rates and focusing efforts on the key principles of Housing First - voice of lived experience and forming relationships of trust. Volunteers complement service delivery and co-work with our experienced community-based housing support workers.

In addition, the AFCHQ Veteran Maintenance Service (VMS) has now sourced increased storage space in response to increasing tenancy rates, helping us to establish 'homes' on Day One through provision of furnishings, equipment/ removals. The service also offers end- to- end property management services, to include gardening, low level repairs and DIY. Such work is commissioned on a fee basis (heavily





discounted to the community, veterans, and members alike), but offered free of charge to those without means. Any profits made are reinvested into providing VMS welfare support, to those in need.

Homes at Ease can offer rental deposit and rent in advance and guarantor. In exceptional circumstances where assistance from the Local Authority is not available, we also offer funds to access emergency accommodation (where in crisis).

We provide this through AFCHQ welfare funds raised via fundraising activities across our community, donations made and social enterprise. We also support this venture through funds accessed via our supporters such as Regimental Associations, SSAFA, Children in Need, local authority welfare provision and RBL, to name a few.

We are also working hard to develop a Private Landlord Armed Forces Charter. This will become a community of practice, encouraging the support of landlords in this sector, sharing best practice and advice whilst also attracting new landlords to this space, ensuring we have a steady supply of homes from reputable landlords, supportive of the Armed Forces community, who are able to access this offer, subject to affordability.





Homes at Ease is also actively pursuing capital investment opportunities to expand its housing portfolio across the North West. This is a major opportunity to build a legacy, adding permanent homes to the housing system as all homes will be let with a secure form of tenancy issued. We will then be able to leave a secure heritage long after the programme has ended. We are planning a consultation event about our legacy offers in Autumn 2024.

Professional or self-referrals will be accepted via the Single Point of Contact (SPOC). Each person will go through a trauma-informed triage process and an initial care plan developed with the service user.

If you wish to get in touch with us at the Armed Forces Community HQ, please contact our reception on 01942 821293 or email us at info@armedforceshq.org.uk. Our team will endeavour to answer your query as soon as possible.

Facebook - https://www.facebook.com/armedforcescommunityhqcic

Website -

https://armedforceshq.org.uk/

Email - spoc@armedforceshq.org.uk



Testimonial

A client I support alongside AFCHQ Homes at Ease service, was due to move into a new tenancy at short notice last week. The veteran is 79 years old and struggles with vascular dementia, alongside several other mobility barriers. The client has also been living in temporary accommodation for the past 7 months.

Last week, we were informed that the client had been offered permanent accommodation, although it was at the last minute and a move needed to be arranged imminently.

I urgently contacted AFCHQ who resolved the problem immediately via the AFCHQ Veteran Maintenance Service, who arranged for a Van and Driver on the day and for removal to take place.

Seb, who works with AFCHQ as a 'Homes at Ease' visiting support officer, kept in touch on the day of the move, despite being on leave. Such support was invaluable. Without the practical support offered from the AFCHQ Homes at Ease service, we would have been completely stuck and without options.

Seb's ability to support my client throughtout his journey, including visiting him on a 1-2-1 basis in his own home and the patience and expertise he has shown in finding permanent accommodation, is absolutely to be praised.

This offer from the Homes at Ease service, together with the level of wraparound support provided, to address all areas of housing need and the ability to provide access to free psychotherapy (provided by the service too) has been invaluable to the client. Support via Homes at Ease, will continue for as long as is needed.

The client has since emailed me stating: "The heroes of 7th March will long be remembered in history. You will all be mentioned in Dispatches. Seb's Army rode gallantly to the rescue in the nick of time. Seb himself (What a comrade in arms!), was determined not to leave me wounded on the "battlefield".

Defence Relationship Management and the NW RCA employer engagement team

DRM is the Ministry of Defence's easily accessible interface between British employers and Defence.

DRM provides support on employing Reservists, veterans, Cadet Force Adult Volunteers and military spouses and improving fairness for the Armed Forces community in the consumer market. They offer advice and support on employing members of the Armed Forces Community, and enable organisations to develop a mutually beneficial working relationship with the Ministry of Defence (MOD).

They are keen to establish strategic relationships with employers, tailoring partnering opportunities to mutual needs and business goals.

The ways we offer support include:

- employment of reservists and support through flexible HR policies
- employment of regular service personnel at the end of their engagements, in collaboration with the Career Transition Partnership (CTP)

The Career Transition Partnership (CTP) is the Ministry of Defence working with Right Management. They are proud to be the official provider of resettlement and have supported leavers of the Armed Forces for over 20 years, as they transition

from the military into civilian life. There are huge benefits from registering and accessing the wealth of support CTP offer, from career transition guidance, skills workshops, vocational training and routes to employment.

- employment opportunities for service leavers with more challenging transitions including the wounded, injured and sick
- employment of spouses/civil partners of service personnel
- joint development of skills in areas such as engineering, medical, communications and cyber security
- career opportunities and support for Cadet Force Adult Volunteers.
- tackling disadvantages faced by service personnel in the consumer market

This is managed across the Northwest region through the NW RFCA and its Regional Employer Engagement Team. The team comprises four members covering Lancashire and Cumbria, Merseyside and IOM, Greater Manchester and Cheshire.



The Regional Employer Engagement Director (REED) for Lancashire and Cumbria is Kerryanne Wilde. Kerryanne joined in July 2024.

Kerryanne Wilde MBA MIOD MIOL Regional Employer Engagement Director (REED) – Cumbria & Lancashire

Email: Kerryanne Wilde nw-lan-reed@rfca.mod.uk

www.nwrfca.org.uk

Visit the Armed Forces Covenant website:

https://www.armedforcescovenant.

https://www.facebook.com/ NorthWestRFCA

https://www.linkedin.com/ company/north-west-reserveforces-and-cadets-association/





RAF Benevolent Fund

"The Fund has helped me get to where I am now, representing Team GB at the Paralympics".

When Corporal Stuart Robinson was seriously injured in an IED explosion in Afghanistan in 2013, he knew the road to recovery would be a tough one. Despite such a difficult journey, Stuart's determination, passion for sport, and support from the RAF Benevolent Fund has led him to represent Team GB Wheelchair Rugby at the Paris 2024 Paralympics.

Stuart, 42, was on a routine patrol near Camp Bastion with 15 Squadron, RAF Regiment, when his vehicle hit the IED – the force was so strong that he was thrown 30 feet from the vehicle and the explosion left him with life changing injuries including the loss of his lower left leg and severe damage to his right leg and arm. While recovering in hospital he took the difficult decision to have his shattered right leg amputated.

Following intense rehabilitation at Headley Court, Stuart, who is from Morecambe in





Lancashire, saw a poster advertising the Invictus Games. He said: "Initially I had planned on getting a job once I had left the RAF, but then I found wheelchair rugby. I actually watched some of the 2012 Paralympic Games wheelchair rugby before I went out to Afghanistan. I was amazed watching these players wheeling round and smashing into each other. I joined a training camp and the rest is history!"

Since then, Stuart has been an integral part of the Great Britain Wheelchair Rugby team taking part in the Tokyo Paralympics 2020. With a score of 54-49 including 14 tries from Stuart, the final earned Stuart and the team a well-deserved first ever Gold medal for Great Britain in the Wheelchair Rugby.

Stuart explained "Wheelchair rugby has benefitted me in so many ways. I remember waking up in hospital and realised my time in the RAF was over. I needed a new outlook on life and something to put my energy into, and the sport has done just that. It keeps me healthy and is an avenue to really utilise my disability."

The RAF Benevolent Fund, the RAF's leading welfare charity, has been there for Stuart throughout his journey. The Fund bought Stuart a trike to help improve his quality of life at home during his rehabilitation, which enabled him to play with his son George outdoors. The Fund also funded a sports wheelchair which Stuart used representing Team GB in the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics Wheelchair Rugby, and a new one for the Paris 2024 Paralympics.

Stuart, who is now an ambassador for the Fund, said: "The Fund has been there 100% of the way throughout my journey. They helped me get to where I am now. I can't wait to represent Team GB in this year's Paralympics and have my family and friends there to support."

The RAF Benevolent Fund provides financial, emotional, and practical assistance to serving and retired RAF personnel and their families. This includes grants to help with financial difficulty, mental health support, Airplay youth clubs, and more. For more information visit rafbf.org.uk



North West Area Sea Cadets – forging new partnerships through the Armed Forces Covenant

As proud signatories of the Armed Forces Covenant, North West Area Sea Cadets is delighted to be part of a network of organisations who are committed to supporting our armed forces, veterans and cadets.

Equipping cadets for fun and adventure

Since returning to full activity, postpandemic, we've received a range of assistance from Covenant co-signatories, including the recruitment of a unit chair and commanding officer in Manchester, support with bursaries in Liverpool, and assistance with security issues from a local police force.

Direct support for cadet experiences has also been greatly appreciated, with Trafford Unit's cadets able to complete an unforgettable DofE expedition in the Lake District thanks to the loan of a bus from No Duff UK – a veterans' mental health charity. In Whitehaven, our unit's boating activities were transformed by the donation of a powerboat from North Western Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority.

Bolton Council providing vital support for Sea Cadets

We're also grateful to the local authorities who are increasing their cadet engagement. The Mayor of Bolton recently reinstated the position of Mayor's Cadet for the first time in over 20 years, appointing Cadet Corporal Murphy of Bolton Sea Cadets. The role is already providing great exposure for the unit, with Murphy's first duty being to light the D-Day 80th anniversary beacon on top of Bolton Parish Church.

The Mayor is always the guest of honour at the unit's annual Trafalgar Night fundraising dinner, where local councillors help to generate donations and grants for cadets. Such support has been invaluable in promoting the unit's fundraising for a vital new heating system – leading to offers of help from local businesses. Meanwhile, a cadet will benefit from a week's work



experience in the Mayor's Office – building skills and confidence while strengthening this fantastic partnership.

How your organisation could get involved:

- Financial support for uniforms, equipment, facilities, or the bursaries that offer disadvantaged young people life-changing experiences – with opportunities to promote your company's name or logo.
- Apprenticeships and work placements for cadets – utilising our talented, adaptable and motivated young people.
- Volunteering at Sea Cadets units building transferable skills for your employees.
- Being part of our spectacular parades and competitions – boosting your community profile.

To discuss how your partnership with North West Area Sea Cadets could enhance your organisation while delivering lasting impact for local young people, please contact the Area Officer, Cdr Charles Bagot Jewitt DL RN via: cbagot-jewitt@ms-sc.org or 07850 659656.



Blind Veterans UK

Blind Veterans UK is the national charity that supports ex-Service men and women who have experienced severe sight loss. Founded in 1915 as St Dunstan's, we have assisted tens of thousands of Armed Forces and National Service veterans in rebuilding their lives after sight loss. It doesn't matter how or when a veteran lost their sight, we can help.

How we help veterans

We teach blind veterans the vital life skills they need after sight loss and provide them with tools so they can be safe and independent in their own homes. We offer bespoke support tailored to help them live independently based on their individual wants and needs. Our services also extend to carers and family members, offering information, advice, and respite.

Equipment, rehabilitation, and training

We provide a range of free specialist equipment and also support veterans in discovering new hobbies like cooking, art, and sports. Our rehabilitation and training programmes are designed to help veterans adapt to their sight loss and lead fulfilling lives. These services are delivered both in our dedicated centres and within local communities.



In the community

Our community support teams operate across the UK, delivering rehabilitation and training close to where veterans live and in their homes. We organise activities and events, fostering a sense of community among veterans with a shared experience.

Our wellbeing centres

We operate two wellbeing centres in Llandudno in North Wales and Rustington



on the south coast of England, providing essential rehabilitation, training, and respite care. These centres promote independence and wellbeing, offering a supportive environment where veterans can regain their confidence and skills.

Do you know a blind veteran?

We currently support over 3,500 blind veterans but know there are many more out there that need our help. If you know someone who served in the Armed Forces and is struggling with sight loss, please get in touch with us. You can use our simple online eligibility checker on our website, which takes just 20 seconds, to see if they are eligible for our services, at blindveterans.org.uk/check

Support us

Your support can make a significant difference to the lives of blind veterans. You can help by making a donation, fundraising, or volunteering. Donations can support essential services like rehabilitation and training programmes. Fundraising events, such as sponsored runs or community activities, help raise awareness and funds. Volunteering your time can provide companionship and support to veterans in need.



Together, we can rebuild lives after sight loss. Find out more at blindveterans.org.uk



Healthier Heroes: Serving Our Communities

Overcoming social isolation, homelessness and improving mental health and wellbeing in the Veteran community.

Unite Inspire Belive.

Healthier Heroes was established in 2018 by husband and wife team, Andrew and Rio Powell. Andrew is an ex Colour Sergeant and served for 16 years in Duke of Lancaster's Regiment. Healthier Heroes have won many awards for services within the community, successfully ran leadership development programmes and Military Resilience Programmes in schools, colleges and businesses across the North West.

Our Mission

Healthier Heroes CIC is committed to aiding ex-service personnel, their families and carers, as well as members of the NHS and other blue light services facing various challenges. Our support spans housing, education, employment, tackling isolation, and promoting health and wellbeing.

UNITE as one, INSPIRE one another, BELIEVE anything is possible provides supported living accommodation in Bancroft House, rehabilitating and reconnecting veterans and their families, regardless of when they left the Armed Forces.





We also support veterans who have left, or are still in the criminal justice system. Using a peer mentoring programme, we help them to rebuild their lives and find jobs. With our combined lived experience and our person-led approach we are striving to help veterans and their families overcome barriers that restrict aspects of their lives.

Our approach, co-designed in consultation with beneficiaries, aims to stop the cycle of reoffending and provide 24-hour care. Bancroft House, with 21 double ensuite rooms, supports 29 veterans, including three move-on properties.

Health and Wellbeing for Veterans

We prioritise the health and wellbeing of all veterans accessing our services at Bancroft House. We offer a variety of wellbeing activities, both indoors and outdoors, as well as holistic wellbeing services. Holistic wellbeing plays a crucial role in aiding our residents' recovery, helping them to regain independence and reintegrate into their communities.

New Partner

We are delighted to introduce our amazing new partners, The Mailing Room who have generously supported us over the years. This year, they've made a huge commitment to ensuring that our Forces community across Lancashire has the support they need. For the next three years, they are funding a community outreach worker who will provide health and wellbeing support, welfare and benefits, housing, and more. This commitment will make a huge difference to the work we do at Healthier Heroes.

We couldn't be prouder to have The Mailing Room's support. Thank you for your commitment to our community!



www.healthierheroescic.co.uk Facebook: @healthierheroescic X: @heroescic Linked in: https://www.linkedin. com/feed/ Tel: 01282 966730



Bay Veterans Association

Bay Veterans Association (BVA) are a North West Lancashire-based Armed Forces organisation formed in 2023 to support those who have served in the Armed Forces or Emergency Services in the Morecambe, Carnforth and Lancaster area. The 2021 census states that there are 5000 veterans in the region.

Our services support those who have served in any of the branches of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Army, Royal Air Force and Emergency Services, as well as their families and the wider community who maybe struggling or having difficulty settling into their local community. Our aim is to help bring about social cohesion and assist in the development of integrated communities in our local area.

Founded by ex-Royal Marine Gary Kniveton, the BVA currently has a membership of over 300 and that grows weekly. We operate a drop-in centre out of our hub in Euston Road, Morecambe, opposite the Travel Lodge. The Hub is a friendly, warm and safe environment for veterans to find a hot drink and snacks and rub shoulders with like-minded people. This helps to combat social isolation and loneliness. The hub is equipped with a



pool table, darts, Boccia, dominos etc and offers a similar service to a NAAFI.

We offer a Breakfast Club on Wednesday mornings at The Hub in Morecambe, where other veteran-related organisations come and promote their services. There are two Breakfast Clubs every month in Carnforth - one at the Fire Station and one at the Ex Servicemen's Club. We also run a Breakfast Club at Lancaster FC every month.

We run trips and days out as well as signposting veterans to various local and country-wide support services and organisations.



Contact details:

www.bayvets.org 01524 737787 @bayveteransassociation gary@bayvets.org



Dig In

Dig In opened in April 2013 as a CiC, offering gardening activities from our walled garden in Ashton Park, Preston. In 2015, some of our veterans attended a basic woodworking course, sparking a strong interest that led to the establishment of a small woodworking workshop in a modest garden shed.

The popularity of woodworking prompted a move to a larger shipping container in 2016, and by the end of 2017, a donated 18ft x 60ft building became our new, fully equipped workshop.

In 2018, we were successful in becoming a registered charity. In 2022, we secured funding to transform a derelict area of our site into a dedicated growing space with a large polytunnel and raised beds, providing more accessible gardening opportunities. This area also houses our new woodturning shed. Our facilities and activities continue to evolve, supporting veterans through peer support and therapeutic activities.

Dig In is staffed by four veterans and a veteran's wife, supported by volunteers handling gardening, admin, and site maintenance. Our team's lived experience allows us to offer unparalleled understanding and support. Beneficiaries come to us via NHS services, other military charities, and self-referrals. As part of a large network of statutory and third sector organisations, we operate a two-way referral system to address veterans' complex issues.

We support veterans undergoing clinical interventions, provide ongoing support

TO YOU IT MAY ONLY BE A SHED BUT TO MEIT'S A SANCTUARY



post-treatment, and sometimes offer enough assistance to prevent the need for clinical interventions. Our network connections enable us to refer veterans for support in mental health, housing, financial and benefits assistance, food insecurity, and cost of living issues, ensuring all their needs are met.

Our Services:

We offer organised courses and workshops in woodworking and horticulture, as well as a drop-in facility for personal projects. We also undertake community projects to create and improve outdoor spaces, including outdoor classrooms, forest schools, playground equipment, and park furniture. Service users are encouraged to participate, aiding their transition to civilian life.

Dependent on fundraising and donations, we strive to generate income by producing bespoke wooden items and selling gardengrown plants. In 2023-2024, nearly 20% of our income came from these sales. We

also host open days, social events, and gatherings and always welcome visitors for a chat and a brew.

Contact Details:
Walled Garden, Ashton Park
Preston, PR2 1HR
Tel: 07933616312 / 07546642583
Email: info@diginnorthwest.org
Website: www.diginpreston.org
Registered Charity 1178322



Veterans in Communities

The beginning

Founded in 2012, Veterans in Communities (VIC) does what it says on the tin. Our aim is to enable ex-services and emergency services personnel and families to return, belong and prosper within and as a part of their local community.

Helping break down barriers between the military and civilian worlds, all of our activities and projects are open to members of the local communities. It's not about being separate to the community, but sharing skills, experiences and knowledge, working towards shared goals of building resilience and wellbeing for all.

How we help

Those in need are identified through outreach drop-in services across our area of benefit, as well as working in partnership with statutory services and other specialist organisations from the third sector. Partnerships are crucial to working with VIC, as we don't believe in duplicating services or providing support that is best provided by others.

Service users become members of VIC, working with a volunteer or staff member to identify particular issues they are facing, then formulate solutions.

VIC provides a safe, sharing and understanding environment for members. The camaraderie for which the Armed Forces is so famous, is always present. Volunteers design, develop and deliver our activities, which are overseen by a small staff team.

Our services

Utilising our veteran-to-veteran peer support pathway where help and support is given to veterans by veterans, VIC offer:-

- · Social coffee mornings/afternoons
- Art/craft groups
- Veterans in Production and allotment projects
- VIC Choir
- · Volunteering, training and learning
- · A programme of walks and trips
- Outdoor activities
- Involvement in community projects.
- The VIC Centre is available for drop-in, peer support, a chat, information and guidance

VIC does not seek to provide therapy, but instead offers services, activities and support that are therapeutic to those participating. Our offer aims to:-

- reduce social isolation,
- improve self-confidence and self-esteem,
- support improved mental and physical well-being,
- develop new or existing skills and social and peer networks.
- promote team building, peer support and a sense of belonging.

The Impact

Independent research carried out by Anglian Ruskin University identified numerous ways in which the activities and groups facilitated by VIC benefited our members.

The research concluded that "the combined impacts around learning, wellbeing and community can result in transformative effects for VIC members. These transformations included new friends and support networks, a renewed sense of purpose and enjoyment in life, and a transformation in sense of self-outlook and behaviour, which then improve relationships outside VIC."

Veterans in Communities 01706 833180 https://www.veteransincommunities. org info@vic.org.uk









The Royal Air Force Air Cadets

The Royal Air Force Air Cadets is a premium youth organisation, supported by the Royal Air Force, which offers challenge, excitement and adventure for 12 to 20 year olds. With over 1,000 Squadrons across the UK, there are exciting opportunities to be sought and activities to get involved in.



The 43,000 Air Cadets are supported by over 10,000 members of volunteer staff to foster the spirit of adventure and to build upon their citizenship and confidence as they transition into adulthood.

In order to provide the best Cadet experience, and the opportunities we have to offer, we need even more volunteers. Whether you have previous military experience, have been a Cadet yourself or are just interested in enriching the lives of the young people across your area, this is the organisation for you.

Each Squadron is staffed by our Cadet Force Adult Volunteer (CFAV), who provide training and experiences to each of our Cadets. No matter your level of experience, there is always a place for you - whether that be as a member of our Civilian Welfare Committee managing Squadron fundraising and spending, a uniformed CFAV or a Civilian Instructor. Civilian Instructors and uniformed CFAVs teach and develop skills, run activities, and provide encouragement and moral support to our Cadets. We can offer lots of opportunities for you to help our cadets

and gain your own skills and experiences too; if you have specialist skills we can use them and if you want to learn new skills like first aid, rock climbing or gliding, we can train you.

Are you interested? To become volunteer staff, you must be at least 20 years of age and have lived in the UK for a minimum of three years. The time commitment of an adult volunteer is around 12 hours per month. We understand that our volunteers may have families, jobs and other hobbies so your commitment can be flexible. All we expect in return is clear communication, good organisation and enthusiasm for the Cadets' experience.

If you would like to get involved or to find out more, please visit the Royal Air Force Air Cadets website www.raf.mod.uk/aircadets





Army HIVE Information Service

www.army.mod.uk/hives

Army HIVE is an MOD organisation, delivering information support for the whole Service community on a wide variety of topics affecting everyday Service and personal life, including relocation, accommodation, health and wellbeing, education, employment, finance, deployment, resettlement, and the local area.



The service is free, easily accessible to all customers, and available worldwide. HIVE staff can research information and are also able to provide confidential signposting to further sources of support.

HIVE Information Provision: HIVE provides information relevant to the whole Service community on its Blogs and social media. A weekly email round-up of the main posts can be signed up for on the HIVE Blog. Providing answers to individual enquiries: HIVEs can answer questions from the Service community on a wide range of topics, including more complex matters requiring research and liaising with other agencies.

Welfare information, signposting and referrals: HIVEs provide information in confidence, on the most appropriate sources of advice and support for those with specific welfare issues.

HIVE support for Service leavers, veterans, and their families: HIVE works closely with other organisations and regularly posts information relating to employment fairs, job opportunities and the wider support available to Service leavers, veterans and their family members.

Housing Information: HIVEs hold information on all aspects of Service and civilian accommodation and can provide information on military accommodation worldwide, plus also provide Service leavers and veterans with guidance on civilian housing options and sources of Service-specific housing support.

Healthcare & Wellbeing Information: HIVEs can provide information on military medical and dental care for those serving, plus local NHS providers including those that are accredited as 'veteran friendly'.

HIVE support for Non-UK Nationals: Army HIVE has a team of staff who can assist with information on family visas and Citizenship applications, and regularising of immigration status on discharge from Service.

HIVE support to Reservists: The HIVE service is equally available to Reserve units, and to Reservist personnel and their families.

Find out more:



Tri-Service HIVE Support

RAF HIVE



Contact details: https://www.raf.mod.uk/servingfamilies/hive-finder/ Connect with RAF HIVE: www.facebook.com/RAFHIVE www.twitter.com/RAFHIVE www.instagram.com/ rafhiveinformationservice

Royal Navy Family & People Support (formerly Royal Navy HIVE)



Contact details: https://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/families-and-veterans/local-support-offices

Connect with Royal Navy FPS: www.facebook.com/RoyalNavyFPS www.twitter.com/RoyalNavyFPS

The HIVE covering the Lancashire area is Preston & Weeton HIVE: 01772 260025

RC-Pers-HIVE-Preston-0Mailbox@mod.gov.uk

Shuttleworth Centre (Bldg 8), Fulwood Bks, Watling Street Road, Preston PR2 8AB

Or contact Army HIVE Headquarters on: RC-Pers-HIVEComms-0Mailbox@mod.gov.uk

Non-UK National enquiries: RC-Pers-HIVE-NonUKNat-Omailbox@mod.gov.uk

The Royal Air Forces Association: help for the RAF Community

If you or your spouse served in the RAF, either full time or as a reservist, for at least one day, then the RAF Association is here to help you.

Connections for Life

The RAF Association Connections for Life service aims to ease loneliness and isolation among older members of the RAF community by building telephone friendships between volunteers and isolated individuals.

Among those benefiting from the project is Marie Findlay, whose RAF veteran husband died shortly after they moved house in 2018.

Marie (71) said: "Brian's death was a real shock, and, not having any local friends, I could have easily ended up alone if I hadn't heard about Connections for Life."

Within a month of contacting the RAF Association, Marie was getting regular phone calls from volunteer Mal Hodgson, a retired RAF Chief Technician.

Mal (74) said: "Volunteering keeps me busy and helps me to make a real difference to people's lives."

RAF Association volunteers come from all kinds of backgrounds and, while an RAF connection can be helpful, it isn't necessary for working with us.

Connections for Life Manager Sam Squire said: "The main thing is that our volunteers are happy to chat about a range of topics, and use their conversations to brighten people's day."

Our volunteers are asked to give a regular commitment of at least a couple of hours per month, and online training is provided.

Please get in touch with the RAF Association if you'd like to find out more about volunteering, or you feel you could benefit from a regular chat with someone like Mal.

Casework support

We all face challenging situations from time to time, and occasionally we

need a little extra help or advice from a professional. The RAF Association's casework team can assist with anything from applying for an emergency grant to sourcing and understanding specialist information needed to help solve a problem.

If you think we could help you, please drop us a line.

Staying connected

As a membership organisation, we keep more than 70,000 members of the RAF family connected with each other and with the RAF through our local branch activities and the publication of Air Mail magazine.

Although subscribing to the Association brings some additional benefits, membership is not required in order to access our services. So, if we can help you in any way – or you would like to help others by volunteering with us – please get in touch.

Contacting the RAF Association Email: enquiries@rafa.org
Tel: 0800 018 2361
Website: rafa.org.uk
X: https://twitter.com/
RAFAssociation
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/RAFAssociation



Mal Hodgson is an RAF Association Connections for Life volunteer



Combat Stress

Combat Stress is the UK's leading charity for veterans' mental health. We provide specialist treatment and support for veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety and depression, focusing on those with complex mental health issues related to their military service. Our work is life-changing and often lifesaving; no other organisation does what we do.



appointments and community services including peer support, and treatment on a residential basis.

Combat Stress' message to struggling veterans

Please know that you are not alone. Help is available.

Our Helpline (0800 138 1619) is here for you 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, for confidential advice and support. If you feel like you are struggling, we strongly encourage you to call us.

You can find a range of extensive free mental health resources on our website, which you might find useful: https://selfhelp.combatstress.org.

History of Combat Stress

We have been helping veterans for over a century. During the First World War, our founders saw how servicemen returning home with shell shock received no sympathy. Struggling with what we now call PTSD, veterans were either locked away in mental war hospitals or struggled in silence.

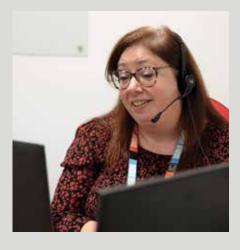
Our founders believed that with the right support, veterans could be helped to lead fulfilling lives despite their trauma. On 12 May 1919, Combat Stress was founded. Taking a stand against the contempt and misunderstanding around mental health at the time, we began fundraising to introduce recuperative homes for veterans.

Present day treatment and support

We provide proven treatment for veterans from every service and conflict, focusing on those with complex mental health issues. We estimate that last year nearly 12,500 veterans benefited from our help.

Demand for our services remains constant. On average it takes 13 years after leaving the military for veterans to contact us for help, by which time their condition is often highly complex.

Our specialist treatment and support are available online and in-person. The vast majority of our services are provided online (as it removes geographical and logistical barriers to receiving treatment). Where required, our online provision is complemented by in-person outpatient



Combat Stress' message to the public

We provide the most comprehensive veteran mental health treatment service in the UK, but we could not continue to do so without the public's generosity.

If you would like to find out more about supporting us, please visit https://combatstress.org.uk/ and click on 'Support Us'.



Help for Heroes

No matter where, when or for how long you served, we're here to support you and your family.

Life isn't always straightforward after you leave the Armed Forces, which is why we provide personalised support in local communities.

We help veterans, their relatives, serving personnel, reservists, and people who worked alongside the U.K. military to make a success of life in the civilian world. You don't have to have served in a conflict. and it's never too late to ask for support.

We help with physical and mental health, welfare and social needs. Here's an overview of the services we provide:

Physical Health

Many of our nurses and occupational therapists are veterans themselves. They can help you get the support you need including physical therapies and equipment. They can also help you navigate the NHS and make sense of medical terminology.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, loneliness, or anger are not easy to deal with alone, so we offer clinical support through our therapy service, Hidden Wounds. The team provides help to effectively manage and address mental health concerns.

Sports and Social Activities

We host free activities and events across the U.K., bringing our Armed Forces community together in person and online. These events help you connect with other veterans and find activities to enjoy in your community. You can find out what's happening here: https://www.facebook. com/HelpforHeroesNorth

Online Courses and Self-**Help Guides**

Our Recovery College offers free online courses and self-help guides designed to help you make positive changes. Topics include managing health and wellbeing, nutrition, sleep, anger, anxiety, depression, and pain. There's also a course on financial wellbeing.

Welfare

If you're having trouble managing money, applying for benefits, or need help with employment or housing, our case managers can provide information, guidance and support.

Grants and Financial Assistance

We provide financial assistance to cover costs related to injuries or illnesses that

it difficult to pay for food or to heat your home, we might be able to provide an

Come and find out more

We host regular drop-in coffee mornings where you can meet other veterans and learn more about our services. Find your local event at https://www.helpforheroes. org.uk/get-help/sports-social-activities/ community-taster-sessions/

There's also lots of information on our website: https://www.helpforheroes.org. uk/get-help/

To get support or just find out more, please contact us: Web: https://www.helpforheroes. org.uk/get-help/ Facebook: https://www.facebook. com/HelpforHeroesNorth Email: saf@helpforheroes.org.uk Helpline: 0300 303 9888







The Not Forgotten



The Not Forgotten is a 104-year-old charity supporting over 10,000 sick and injured veterans and serving personnel every year, across the Navy, Army, RAF and Merchant Navy.

We have been restoring dignity, confidence and independence to veterans and injured serving personnel of all ages, genders, ranks, backgrounds and disabilities since 1920.

What do we do?

We run a varied year-round programme of social, respite and challenge events – completely free of charge.

For those who through physical or mental injury illness have lost their military career, direction, confidence, or sense of 'belonging', these events and the community they foster are vital in improving physical and mental health, combatting isolation and loneliness, and encouraging camaraderie, support, and refreshed self-belief.





"The Not Forgotten has changed my life beyond recognition...people have seen a complete change in me. You have given me back my confidence and turned my world upside down in the best possible way".

Steve D.

Bringing 'comfort, cheer and entertainment'

The Not Forgotten was founded in 1920 by Marta Cunningham CBE, an American opera singer who was shocked to discover hundreds of WW1 veterans languishing forgotten in Britain's military hospitals. Marta made it her life's work to organise tea parties, outings and concerts to bring "comfort, cheer and entertainment to the war wounded".

We continue this mission across the UK to this day, facilitating afternoon teas, fun days, concerts, Christmas lunches, performances in care homes, outings to Twickenham, Wimbledon and Lords, days out on a heritage steam railway, and beekeeping experiences. Recent events in Lancashire have included a 'Fun Fest' in Fleetwood, a Christmas party in Preston and a variety show at the Grand Theatre, Blackpool.

We take veterans on life-changing challenge breaks where they master fishing, ski-ing, sailing, cycling, kayaking and driving sports cars around Brands Hatch racetrack.

We also run respite breaks to France, Majorca and Devon, transporting veterans from the challenges of their day-to-day life to a safe, non-judgmental space where they can open up and find support.

"This whole experience has changed both our lives. My husband has a purpose here on this trip, and he feels safe. It has been a real honour to see the confidence grow in people. We have made lifelong friends."

Debbie M.



With HRH Princess Anne as Patron, we hold annual parties at St James's Palace and Buckingham Palace, providing once-in-a-lifetime experiences to those who have given so much to their country.

And for the most isolated - those unable to leave home - The Not Forgotten also provides TVs, laptops and tablets, enabling them to connect with the world virtually.

"I truly believe The Not Forgotten was my turning point in the darkness. I have met people I now consider family and, although I still have many dark times, they are my guardian angels and The Not Forgotten is my light." Dale M.

Website www.thenotforgotten.org Facebook https://www.facebook. com/TheNotForgotten Instagram https://www.instagram. com/the.not.forgotten/ Linked In https://www.linkedin.com/ company/thenotforgotten/ X https://twitter.com/ thenotforgotten

EFL in the Community

EFL in the Community is the charitable arm of the EFL and uses the power of football to improve people's lives with the vision to create stronger, healthier, more active communities.



EFL in the Community serves the network of EFL Club Community Organisations - the charities linked to each EFL Club. Focusing on improving health and wellbeing, raising aspirations and building stronger, more cohesive communities, the network engages with over 840,000 participants each year and generates a total of £865million of social value across the full range of community initiatives and programmes.

Ahead of Armed Forces Day last year, the EFL and EFL in the Community signed the Armed Forces Covenant, pledging to support the armed forces community and their families.

In signing the covenant, EFL in the Community look to uphold the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant, recognising the value serving personnel, reservists, veterans and military families bring and pledging ongoing support to them within the organisation and community.

Many EFL Clubs across the country support veterans and their families with regular events. This year, at the EFL Awards, Morecambe Football Club became this year's League Two Project of the Season award winner for its commitment to a Veterans' project which started out as a regular coffee morning for ex-servicemen and women and has developed considerably into a lifeline for veterans aged 19 - 90. Over 150 veterans signed up to the project, with a record number of 72 attendees at an end-of-year-event. The session provides a bacon butty, unlimited brews and a safe space for veterans aged from 19 to 90 to socialise with likeminded people.

"We are incredibly proud of the Veterans Project and all of those who work tirelessly behind the scenes to make such a positive impact in the community," said Stuart Glover, CEO, Morecambe FC Community Sports.

EFL in the Community has also been honoured with a prestigious award for its support to the Armed Forces community, achieving the Ministry of Defence Silver Award under the Employer Recognition Scheme, thanks to its work since signing the Covenant with the wider Armed Forces community.

Debbie Cook, EFL's Director of Community said: "Members of the Armed Forces make a significant contribution to the communities of our country and we aim to understand the many issues that veterans and their family members face.



EFL in the Community Head of Stronger Communities, Dominik Stingas-Paczko with Stuart Glover (Chief Executive Officer at Morecambe FC Community Sports) and Mark Ward (Military Cross recipient and Stockport County Community Trust's Armed Forces Liaison Officer), at the Trooping The Colour King's Birthday Parade.

"We are proud to make a continued commitment to share opportunities with the Armed Forces family, using football to bring people together for the greater good, and in an environment where they are treated fairly and equally and with an opportunity to thrive."

www.x.com/efl_community @EFL_ community

www.facebook.com/ eflcommunity @EFLCommunity

www.instagram.com/ eficommunity @EFLCommunity

LinkedIn page: https://www.linkedin.com/ company/972059/admin/feed/ posts/



Morecambe Football Club Community Sports hosts monthly Armed Forces Veterans Coffee Morning sessions at the Mazuma Stadium

Become an Army Cadet Force Adult Volunteer

Are you passionate about mentoring and shaping the leaders of tomorrow?





As a Cadet Force Adult Volunteer, you'll have the unique opportunity to inspire and guide young cadets, helping them develop essential skills such as leadership, teamwork, and resilience. Whether you're a seasoned professional or looking to give back to your community, your life experiences and enthusiasm can make a profound impact. Embrace the challenge, gain new experiences, and become part of a dedicated team committed to youth development. Step up, serve with pride, and join us in making a difference. Your journey as a Cadet Force Adult Volunteer starts now!

A Cadet Force Adult Volunteer plays a crucial role in the development of young cadets, offering guidance, mentorship, and instruction in various skills and disciplines. They lead training sessions on topics such as outdoor survival, first aid, navigation, and leadership. Volunteers also organize and supervise adventurous activities, camps, and community service projects, fostering a spirit of camaraderie and civic responsibility. By providing a supportive and structured environment, our dedicated volunteers help cadets build confidence,

discipline, and teamwork, preparing them for future challenges and opportunities. Their commitment not only shapes the cadets' futures but also strengthens the community as a whole.

To get involved visit our website armycadets.com/county/lancashire-acf/

Socials
Facebook: LancashireACF
Instagram: Lancashire Army Cadet
Force (@lancashire_armycadets)



The Army Benevolent Fund

The Army Benevolent Fund was founded 80 years ago, in 1944, and our vision remains unchanged: that all soldiers, veterans and their immediate families should have the opportunity to avoid hardship and enjoy independence and dignity.

Last year we spent over £9m, supporting over 75,000 members of the Army family in 51 countries around the world. Our youngest beneficiary was one day old; our oldest was 104 years old. We genuinely are here for soldiers, for life.

How we help

Our grants programme provides a comprehensive package of support to serving and former members of the British Army and their immediate families. Our priority is our individual grants programme, which last year funded some 3,800 cases, supporting individuals and family members.

We are also one of the biggest providers of grants to other charities and organisations in the military charity sector. Last year, we funded 86 other charities and organisations, with grants ranging from

larger ones such as £275k to Combat Stress and £270k to the Forces Employment Charity, to smaller grants to local charities such as Dig In, which supports soldiers and veterans in Lancashire.

The overall scale, breadth and variety of our support is vast. We help very young serving families cope with sudden bereavement or traumatic loss. We provide wide-ranging support to wounded, injured and sick soldiers, many of whom will need increasing financial assistance for decades to come.

We provide help with housing, as well as education and training for employment for soldiers of all ages who have sometimes had to leave the Army prematurely through no fault of their own. And we are there for those older former soldiers and their widows or widowers who may find themselves isolated and lonely.



Sergeant James Nugent and his daughter Elsie have been supported by the Army Benevolent Fund

Taking on a skydive in support of the charity



We are never judgemental and, crucially, we act with speed. When we are alerted that a person or family is in need of help, we aim to make the relevant individual grant within 48 hours.

In all of this, we are very clear there is a value in service and that those who serve in the Army gain values and skills from their service which means they are in most cases net contributors to society. Our role is to help those relatively few who fall into need - often, our assistance enables them to move forward with their lives and thrive.

Find out more at armybenevolentfund.org

BLESMA - the Limbless Veterans' Charity

BLESMA was established over 90 years ago and is dedicated to assisting serving and ex-Service men and women who have suffered life-changing limb loss or the use of a limb, an eye or loss of sight.



We support our members with fellowship,

compensation schemes, provide finances grants for essential needs and advice on

prosthetics and mobility aid provision.

We aim to be relevant to every limbless

advocate on behalf of Members and retain

our position as the expert Armed Forces

charity on living with limb loss or loss of

veteran and their family, be a strong

use of limb.

advice on access to benefits and

In the North West:

We run regional outreach activities which in the North West have included, zip-lining, member breakfasts, day trips and family days out to mention only a few.

In the North West we support approx. 250 members and widows, which includes over 80 in the Lancashire region alone.

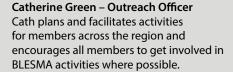




The two staff members for the North West are as follows:

Amanda Brownlie - BLESMA Support Officer, bsonw@blesma.org

Amanda supports members with their welfare needs and processes grants, supports with benefit claims, advocates on members behalf and makes home visits to members and widows throughout the vear.



We would encourage any veteran who may be eligible to become a member – you do not need to have lost a limb during service - to apply for membership via our website www.blesma.org

https://www.facebook.com/blesma https://x.com/blesma?mx=2 https://www.youtube.com/user/ BLESMA1932 https://www.instagram.com/blesma/





NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB)

NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB) was formed in 2022, replacing eight Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) across the region. The ICB is responsible for planning local NHS services, developing plans to meet the population's health needs and managing the regional NHS budget.

We are committed to fulfilling our statutory duty under the Armed Forces Act and are making strong progress. Our focus is two-fold, both as an employer of over 900 people across the region, and as a planner and commissioner of NHS services.

The ICB will sign the Armed Forces Covenant in November 2024 and is on track to secure the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Bronze award in 2025, to demonstrate our support to the Armed Forces community and align our values with the Armed Forces Covenant.

To ensure the ICB is an Armed Forces friendly employer, we are reviewing our workforce policies for veterans, reservists and those with serving spouses or partners and looking at how we can make it easier to transition into a career within the NHS.

Of the 1.8 million people living in Lancashire and South Cumbria, approximately 65,500 are veterans, who are significantly more likely to have a long-term illness, disability or suffer with poor mental health, when compared to the general adult population.

A recent survey of veterans found that more than half found it difficult to speak up about mental health issues. Specialist mental health support commissioned by the ICB is available, in addition to national physical and mental health services



designed specifically for those due to leave the military, reservists, armed forces veterans and their families. Find out more about healthcare for the armed forces community on the NHS website (www.nhs.uk).

Veterans are often unsure how to access this help and for many, the first step is speaking to their local GP, who will see on average, one veteran per day, though they may not be aware of it. To support our GPs, we have developed an information and signposting resource and are encouraging Armed Forces Veteran Friendly Accreditation, which assists practices to better identify, treat and refer veterans to dedicated NHS services. In the past 18 months, the number of accredited practices has risen from 31 per cent to more than 60 per cent today.

Find out more about Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB, or get in touch if you have any questions:

www.lancashireandsouthcumbria.icb.nhs.uk

0300 373 3550

lscicb.contactus@nhs.net



Kevin Lavery, Chief Executive









Lancashire Constabulary

Lancashire Constabulary bolster their force with veterans.



Lancashire Constabulary already has a thriving community of veterans, reservists and military spouses working together to prevent and fight crime, and to keep the people and communities of Lancashire safe. There is a continued effort to develop this legacy with applications encouraged from all veterans and those looking to leave the armed forces.

Veterans are using the skills and experience they have gained in the military in a diverse range of front-line and supporting roles across Lancashire, not just as Police Officers but also Police Community Support Officers, Control Room Operators, Custody Detention Officers and a whole host of other professional careers that are required to keep an organisation of over 6,000 employees running smoothly.

We have been granted the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award. The Defence Employer Recognition Scheme is run by the Ministry of Defence to honour those organisations who support those who serve or who have served in the Armed Forces. There is an ever-growing Armed Forces
Staff Support Network which provides
support to veterans, reservists, and
spouses, offering time and support for
reservist commitments and for spouses
whose partners are deployed overseas.
Annually, the force celebrates Armed
Forces Week with a flag raising ceremony at
force headquarters to recognise service of
members of the Armed Forces community
of Lancashire.

If you want to find out more about careers at Lancashire Constabulary after your military service, visit joinus.lancashire.police.uk/military-to-civilian/





DOWNLOAD THE FREE TOGETHER WE STAY CONNECTED FORCES COVENANT TOGE

If you or a family member has served, or if you support members of the Armed Forces community, the Forces Connect app can signpost you to a broad range of support and advice.







ARMED FORCES ACTIVITIES

for current and ex forces personnel and their families



GARDENING CLUB

First Tuesday of the month (April - November) 11:30 - 12:30

Fylde Memorial Arboretum & Community Woodland, FY2 0LZ

Help maintain the memorial space dedicated to Blackpool FC players who lost their lives during WW1,

VETERANS BREAKFAST CLUB

First Tuesday of the month 10:00 - 11:00 @ The Grange, Bathurst Avenue, FY3 7RW

Bringing veterans together to share stories whilst enjoying a hot sandwich and a brew.



NAAFI BREAK

Wednesday 10:30 - 12:00 The Corner Flag, Bloomfield Road, FY1 6JJ

Meet up with veterans, share stories, enjoy a brew and a bacon or sausage sandwich (vegetarian option available) £2 per sandwich, must order Monday before.

VETERANS WALK & TALK

Thursday

13:30 - 15:30

Blackpool Cricket Club, West Park Drive, FY3 98

Enjoy walking gentle routes around the scenic grounds of Stanley Park with other veterans, followed by a brew and a chat at our wellbeing hub in Blackpool Cricket Club.



FORCES FOOTBALL

Thursday 18:00 - 19:30

Aspire Sports Hub, Garstang Road West, FY3 7JH

Play 7-a-side football with current and ex-forces personnel, followed by a brew and a chat at our wellbeing hub. There are also opportunities to represent Blackpool FC Community Trust at fixtures and events against other forces teams.











pendle leisure trust
Committed to your
health & wellbeing

OUR MEMBERS
GET MORE!





Public Services

a LMC

Lancaster & Morecambe College are proud to support our Armed Services and to train the next generation of recruits.



ADV652244 ADV246548



Lancashire Forces Online Directory

The Lancashire Armed Forces Covenant Hub are proud to be supporting this directory of support organisations, charities and supporting businesses. The aim is to have a central database to help the forces veterans have easy access to key organisations across the Lancashire region, as part of the commitment of the Lancashire Armed Forces Covenant Hub.

The directory works on all devices with a browser including mobile, tablets, PC, Laptop, Smart TV, Xbox and PlayStation. Simply visit the website www.lancsforcesdirectory.com on any device to view the businesses and organisations listed for support. This will be continuously updated and added to.

There is no download or app to install. Simply visit the website and save this to your home screen for future use. Or you can scan the QR code to link to the website.

If you're a business selling products or services that will support veterans, a charitable organisation or health organisation in the Lancashire region, you can add your details directly, free of cost, by clicking on the add business/organisation button in the top menu. It will take around 48 hours to go live.





www.lancsforcesdirectory.com

My Business Client Ltd is proud to be working with the Lancashire Armed Forces Covenant Hub to help deliver the Forces Guide and Directory for Lancashire.

BAE SYSTEMS

Committed to the Armed Forces Covenant

We have a long and proud history of supporting our armed forces - it lies at the very heart of what we do.

We value the unique relationship we have with both serving members of the Armed Forces and Veterans, and recognise the contribution that serving personnel, Reservists, Military families and Cadets Force Adult Volunteers bring to our business.

In 2013 we were the first defence company to sign the UK Armed Forces Covenant and since 2014 have been proud to maintain our Gold Award status from the Ministry of Defence's Employer Recognition Scheme.

baesystems.com/armedforces



GOLD AWARD

