



Lothian Armed Forces Veterans Project Evaluation 2017-2020

Draft Report March 2021, Dr Gerri Matthews-Smith



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Executive summary

Good decision making requires: a good understanding of context and operating environment; of active stakeholders and the services they deliver, both by who and to whom; and of a wide range of other factors. The better the understanding the more likely are the decisions to be ones that lead to success.

(Locke, 2017).

In September 2017, Lothian Local Authorities and their partners tasked a team of three staff employed by the City of Edinburgh Council, with a two-year project to improve the delivery of the Military Covenant. Underpinned by five key objectives the project sought to: develop a standard means to advocate the Covenant; develop a local training package to educate service staff to recognise some of the potential issues faced by transitioning or transitioned military personnel; improve co-ordination and support provided to the Armed Forces community; improve opportunities for veterans to train, gain skills and gain employment and promote the positive contribution that the Armed Forces community and veterans bring to wider society. The challenge was an ambitious one but was met with both drive and enthusiasm by the project team.

Edinburgh Napier University were asked to appraise the project to elicit views and conclusions of a purposive sample of key participants involved in an initiative to enhance the implementation of the Military Covenant. Realising the programme objectives involved using a mixed method approach involving questionnaires, focus group discussions and individual in-depth interviews. The process enabled participants to contribute their views, see and hear the perspectives of others and helped them to reach consensus. At the same time, it enabled them to recognise the shared strengths, discrepancies and challenges of this initiative and its contribution to the smooth transition of military personnel. Ethical approval was sought from Edinburgh Napier University ethics and Governance Committee and a Data Management Plan (DMP) submitted for approval to the Research Innovation office (RIO).

The evaluation used a combination of process and impact evaluation. One evaluator conducted four two-hour focus groups and seven one-hour individual interviews. To provide a balanced perspective the interview and focus group questions were designed to address all stages of the life of the project. A questionnaire devised by the original team was administered to key stakeholders to establish progress across the five key objective underlying the project.

The findings suggest that the team met the objectives of the project. The five key outcomes form the basis for discussion and impact is proposed based on significance and reach. Finally, recommendations for future projects of this nature are presented.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

Future studies should consider the type of support and communication systems available for project teams. One possible action would be to identify a small subgroup of the LAFVG to work directly with the project team both in the meetings and when necessary externally. This might promote more 'ownership' within the group to direct actions, monitor the development and support both the feedback process and action planning processes.

Recommendation 2.

Any project proposal need to identify outcomes and potential methodologies to be employed including evaluation processes if this is a key part of the expectation.it should also consider the skills of the overall team ensuring that they are qualified to conduct the type of development recommended

Recommendation 3

The transient nature of project team, the meeting opportunities of the LAFVG and the potential two year term of key military staff means that sustainability of the outcomes of the project are limited. Moreover, the networking systems set up by the team have proved to enhance teamwork and public engagement activity. The danger at this point is that if no replacement resources are forthcoming all the good work may be lost. Consideration might be given to the development of a permanent military co-ordinator post to act as a secretary to the LAFVG.

Recommendation 4

The e-learning package was met with mixed reviews with some clear recommendations made about how it might be improved, specifically around the potential negative image portrayed in some of the material. It is recommended that this might be achieved by the development and potential upload to social media of a series of small 5-minute films, which promote the positive contribution to society of military personnel. This might be made possible by working with the FE: HE education group to identify media student projects across higher education institutions.

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to set out the views and conclusions of a purposive sample of key participants involved in an initiative to enhance the implementation of the Military Covenant. The initiative originated in 2016 following among other factors the publication of 'Our Community –our Covenant'; (FiMT, 2017). The specific aim was to improve the delivery of local covenant pledges.

Edinburgh Napier University has a great deal of experience in working in partnership to review developments in the workplace. There are three main types of evaluation: process evaluation, impact evaluation and value-for money evaluation. Process evaluation tends to examine “what can be learned from how the intervention was delivered”. Impact evaluation asks “what difference has the intervention made?” Finally, value-for-money evaluation asks, “Is this intervention a good use of resources?” Due to the data available and the stage of evaluation planning, this evaluation is a combination of process and impact evaluation. The evaluation highlights the key challenges, successes and future hopes in relation to the impact of the project on practice culture, staff and veterans.

The evaluation was conducted at the end of a three-year lifetime of the initiative and is presented in four sections. Section 1 introduces the background and context; while Section 2 outlines the method employed for the evaluation including the aim, approach, data collection and analysis techniques. Section 3 discusses the outcomes of the evaluation. Finally, Section 4 provides a summary and recommendations.

Section 1: Background to the Initiative

Background

The challenge to the country in terms of its investment in service personnel is a complex one. Although certain individuals can continue in service until the age of 60, the majority of personnel will retire or move into civilian life at an earlier point. 'Transition is the term commonly used to describe the period of change around reintegration into civilian life from the Armed Forces'. (Scottish Veterans Commissioner, 2019:10). For the country, and the Ministry of Defence (MoD), managing this transition is important as it represents either a resource that can continue to give value or a burden that can incur both personal and societal costs. The military 'community' or 'family' concepts have been sorely tested since Options for Change especially by veterans and their families who were led to believe that military service represented a through-life experience that recognised their service to the country and the sacrifices (including loss of life) made by them and their families. Restoring the faith and trust of veterans and their families in the Covenant and knowing when and where to access support remains a challenge and is therefore an important and integral part of any proposed initiative

The Scottish Government has stated its aim to "make Scotland the most attractive destination for service leavers and their families, offering high living standards, great job prospects and a society that respects and values their contribution" (Scottish Veterans Commissioner, 2019). The veteran's population in Scotland is estimated to be in the region of 240,000 with an estimated additional 1,800 ex-service personnel and their families planning to settle in Scotland annually. However, despite progress, there remains a gulf in understanding between civil and military life affecting all aspects of military life from recruiting, through the challenges of service life, through to the transition back to civilian life at the end of the day.

For those personnel leaving after a long-term career this transition becomes a crucial factor, not only for the country to retain high quality personnel and knowledge, but also to address the continuing need to recruit and train high quality personnel to serve in both regular and reserve roles, and to meet the myriad of defence needs this presents. Modern warfare presents an increasingly diverse and fluid challenge and requires a level of intellectual capability and technical acumen that is difficult to define, but probably greater than in the past. The skills base of personnel has consequently undergone considerable change in recent years. This means that increasingly in the future the military will require fewer but more highly skilled personnel at every level, thus presenting many members of the Armed Forces with challenges when transiting from a military to a civilian environment (Van Staden et al 2007, Ahern et al 2015). Service people need to understand the value they bring to society, and society needs to value that contribution in practical and positive ways both during and after service.

Cole et al. (2020) provided an informative overview and analysis of The Armed Forces Covenant as part of a FiMT commissioned study on military charities in the UK. This study and a study carried out in 2019 by FiMT found that a lack of awareness was a significant barrier to organisations signing up for the Covenant particularly in smaller organisations as was the lack of awareness operationally (FiMT, 2019, Cole et al., 2020). Added to this was a perceived mismatch between expectations relating to the Covenant and the use and interpretation of the notion of “fairness” by all relevant stakeholders (Cole et al., 2020).

The Military Covenant now serves all veterans (regular, reserves and their families). It has evolved since the millennium to create awareness, support and active engagement between transitioning military personnel and their families and civilian agencies providing life access to medical and dental services, housing, education, employment and social services. This requires a multi-agency approach and communications strategy to create awareness, access and infrastructure to affect positive outcomes for veterans and their families.

This evaluation focusses on one such initiative the background of which is introduced below to provide context.

Context and Background to the project

In 2016 members of the Lothian Armed Forces and Veterans Group (LAFVG) began working collaboratively on the application for Covenant Funding for the LAFVP. Drawing on the recommendations in the Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT) ‘Our Community– Our Covenant, Improving the delivery of local Covenant pledges Report (2017). The funding was to support Lothian Councils and NHS’s aspiration to work in partnership to strengthen the delivery of the Covenant by delivering bespoke training for relevant military and public sector staff and developing a social media framework to raise awareness of and improve public service delivery to the Armed Forces Community. On confirmation of the successful application the collaborative working moved on further to the establishment of a formal Partnership to monitor and manage the Project. The Partnership comprised 7 partners; City of Edinburgh Council, Midlothian, West Lothian Council, East Lothian Council, NHS Lothian, the Armed Forces and Veterans Scotland.

The consensus of the Partnership was the need to establish a distinct Project Team to build on work to date and deliver on the agreed outcomes and milestones. Partners were keen to build upon the Inverclyde, Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire Councils model of a shared Veterans Support Advisor and considered this role when identifying the most effective way ahead in the Lothians. The project team was fully established by 11 Sept 2017 and employed directly through City of Edinburgh Council. The funding was planned and budgeted over the following 2-year period. Although based predominately in Edinburgh, the officers worked peripatetically with partners across the Lothians. The Project Team were tasked with delivering the project outcomes and co-ordinating quarterly reports to the LAFVG for endorsement before submitting to the

Ministry of Defence, Covenant Team. Six key, but far-reaching actions were proposed and are identified below along with the project aim. Interestingly, there was no indication of any evaluation process or how this might be achieved.

Project Aim and Outcomes

The overall aim of the project was to raise awareness and strengthen delivery of the Armed Forces Covenant in the Lothians; to ensure that the Armed Forces community - service personnel (regular and reserve), veterans and their dependents, who need help are known and that public sector (LA's), private sector and service related voluntary & community sector organisations give appropriate support when, where and how it is needed. This would be achieved by:

- Establishing a stronger public profile for the Covenant and promoting its values across the region through developing and maintaining training resources to raise awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant amongst front line public service and NHS staff specifically in the themes of housing, employment, education, health and social capital.
- Developing and utilising communication tools to raise awareness of the Covenant.
- Implementing a system to identify members of the Armed Forces community who present at front line services and in particular those facing disadvantage or issues which hinder their quality of life or prevent them from reaching their full potential; so that multiple issues can be addressed more directly and that identified clients are signposted to appropriate support organisations.
- Working with partners to identify, support and signpost any disadvantaged members of the Armed Forces Community when they face specific socio-economic problems such as unemployment, underachievement, lack of training or skills.
- Engaging with a wide range of stakeholders to explore opportunities to celebrating the positive contribution the Armed Forces community and veterans bring to our wider society.
- Engaging with key stakeholders including Defence Relationship Management, 51st Infantry Brigade and the Lowland RFCA Employer Support and transition teams to explore possible opportunities to assist in further raising awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant and the valuable and transferable skills of Veterans

Management

Although not required by the MoD a Partnership Agreement for the life of the Lothian Armed Forces and Veterans Project was drawn up and signed by all project partners.

It recognised the Organisational Structure of:

Lothian And Veterans Project Structure Chart

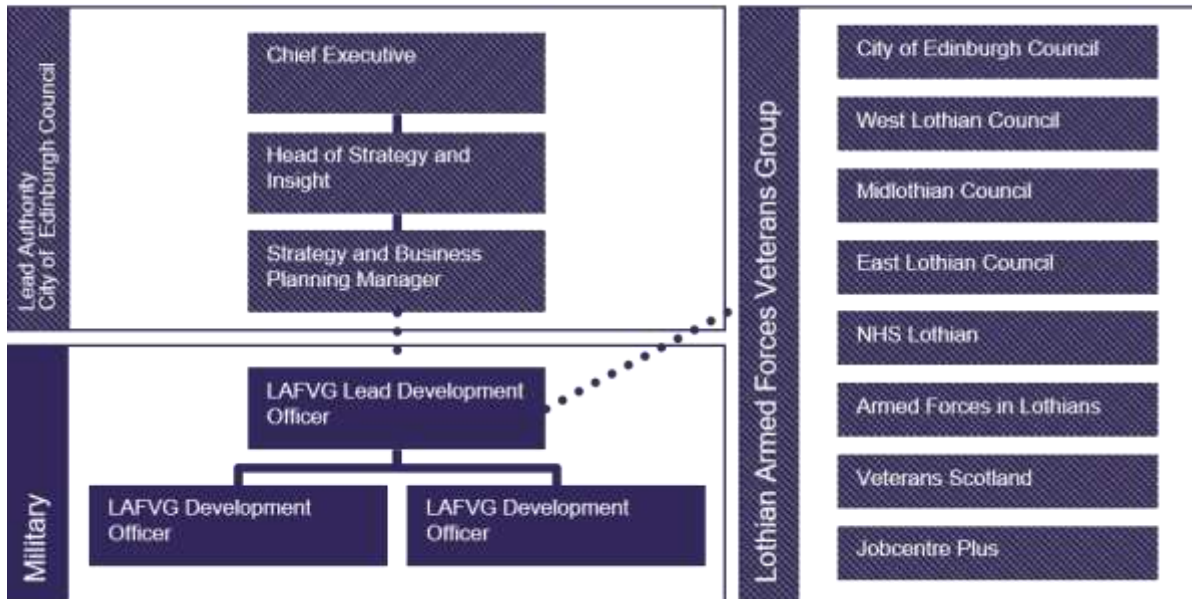


Figure 1. Lothian Armed Forces Veterans Project Group

Each partner (referenced above) in the project is a member of the LAFVG and collaborates with the LAFVP on the main themes of Health, Housing, Education and Employment, to promote the skills and contributions made by the Armed Forces Community to society

The LAFVG meet quarterly and provide insight and executive direction for the project. An effective reporting process was put in place so that the LAFVG received quarterly updates which then, in turn, contributed to the MOD six monthly report requirements

Project Delivery

The aspiration of the Project was to achieve the following outcomes-

- Lothian region to become an attractive destination of choice for veterans and military families to settle'
- The long-term sustainability of a staff position to act as a single point of contact for the Lothian Region
- Communities will have a better understanding of the Military Covenant and become better engaged and informed.
- Public service staff will have a better understanding of the Military Covenant and be more responsive to needs of the Armed Forces Community through ongoing training and customer engagement with clients.
- Citizenship- The value (knowledge, skills and time) veterans bring to their communities is celebrated and promoted

- The partnership's preventative and joined up approach to services shows to be more sustainable (and cost efficient) and helps reduce the need for any more significant interventions

The following **Outcomes** informed the programme of work for the Project Team:

Outcome 1

Advocate the Covenant and produce a standard means by which the voices and concerns of the Armed Forces Community and Veterans can be raised. Community contribution is fed back to the partnership and observations are evaluated to impact future service delivery

Outcome 2

Train public service staff to be more receptive and mindful in approach to issues faced by the Armed Forces Community and Veterans to improve the Community's quality of life; e.g. areas relating to access to housing, tax and benefits, financial literacy, childcare/family support

Outcome 3

Improve co-ordination of the support given to the Armed Forces Community and Veterans about health and wellbeing working with NHS Lothian. Provide more relevant services and social care based on the needs of the client, especially to those injured, sick, wounded or traumatised following service. Signpost to and provide opportunities which promote recovery and allow clients with health barriers to reach fuller.

Outcome 4

Improve socio-economic chances for the Armed Forces Community and Veterans: to train and gain skills, contribute their experience into enterprise and work opportunities within society, and encourage further employment opportunities for Reservists

Outcome 5

Promote the positive contribution our Armed Forces Community and Veterans bring to our wider society.

Section 2: Evaluation Method

Overall Aim

The aim of this evaluation was to explore key stakeholders perspectives of the Lothian Armed Forces Veterans Project in terms of the strengths and challenges of this new way of working and to make recommendations for future development.

Objectives

The objectives of this evaluation were to:

- Examine existing documentation, reports and plans; host initial meeting; and conduct literature review;
- Design an interview/ Focus group schedule; prepare project information sheet and address ethical issues
- Undertake data collection, transcription and analysis
- Produce a final report, which describes key findings, identifies the strengths risks and challenges of the initiative and outlines how the evaluation can inform future developments.

Evaluation Approach

Due to the data available and the stage of evaluation planning, this evaluation is a combination of process and impact evaluation Process evaluation tends to examine “what can be learned from how the intervention was delivered” while Impact evaluation asks “what difference has the intervention made?”. A mixed method of data collection was adopted using a combination of questionnaire, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. Additionally, a number of reports and documents were also provided to the evaluator to provide background detail on how the team evolved, worked together and ultimately what they believed they had achieved.

Participants

Project team members and key stakeholders from the LAFVG who had been involved in the life of the project were invited to participate in either a one-hour individual or a 90-minute focus group. These included

- **Seven Delivery Partners** –Signed up to the Partnership Agreement for the project.
- **Thirteen Lothian Armed Forces and Veterans group** –Strategically agreed to the project and evaluation
- **Many Stakeholders** – who did not know about the evaluation, but had interacted with or benefited from the project, including Local covenant Groups

Ethical Approval and Conduct

Ethical approval was sought and granted by the Edinburgh Napier University Ethical Approval Committee. Individual information letters with a consent form were then sent to the participants (see Appendix 1). At the start of each session participants were given an opportunity ask any questions about the evaluation process. Consent forms were signed and collected prior to data collection. A full Data Management Plan (DMP) was prepared and recorded on the University Worktribe system.

Data Collection considerations

Initial use of questionnaire did not yield enough response to be able to conduct a reasonable evaluation. Consequently, a set of in-depth interviews and focus group discussion were set up with key stakeholders.

Questionnaires

The first questionnaire was developed by the original team for the delivery partners (see Appendix 3) It was divided into five sections, which together outlined 31 activities. Each section related to one of the five outcomes of the Armed Forces Community and Veterans project. Each section was divided into four columns; the first provided a list of key activities related to the outcome, the second column provide details about specific activities. Participants were asked to provide detail relating to dates of activity and to add any activity not evident. The third column requested detail on achievements and impact related to the activity. Finally, the fourth column asked for views and ideas on what how the project might be progressed. Throughout space was provided for further opinion. Detailed instruction was provided with this questionnaire due to the size and detail requested. The response rate to the questionnaire was low and outcomes are presented in Appendix 5

The second questionnaire was developed for veterans and was distributed through the Councils Consultation Hub. The questionnaire was much simpler in nature and sought to gather information on: how they had engaged with the project, if the project met expectations, some detail on their experience and finally any thoughts on how the project might be developed. Possibly, because of Covid-19 the response to this questionnaire was limited and is therefore not included.

Due to the low response rate on the second questionnaire, it has not been included in the evaluation. The outcomes of Questionnaire 1 have been amalgamated into a table covering all five areas of investigation. The full table is provided in Appendix 5. The outcomes are discussed in the final section of the report when all findings are presented under the five key outcomes

Interviews and Focus group discussions

One evaluator conducted four two-hour focus groups and seven one-hour individual interviews. The research agenda covered the life of the project and asked participants to comment on aspects of the work from its inception to its completion. Evaluation covered question related to areas that worked well, those that worked less well and why; and what could be improved. Questions were also asked around how the context influenced delivery of the outcomes

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis of the transcribed interviews and focus groups was applied to the data. The relationship between the themes was identified and the narrative for the development emerged. The findings are deliberately presented in developmental stages to emphasis the experience of the project and to highlight key achievements, enablers and barriers to development, participants change in perspective and action as a result of the Initiative and finally to highlight examples of good practice. .

Section 3: Outcomes and discussion

The findings from the interviews and focus groups are reported here following the life of the project from its inception to completion. The outcomes are deliberately reported in a way to reinforce the transition, which took place throughout, identify enablers and barriers and report instances of good practice, innovation and development.

Background to the project

Participants reported their understanding of what the project was about and why it was developed. The idea stemmed from a combination of the recommendations of the Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT) 'Our Community –Our Covenant, improving the delivery of local Covenant pledges. Moreover, it was in response to another project conducted in Renfrewshire, which was an example of good practice because of the impact it had on local council service. The quote below provided detail on this.

A similar project was being done in Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, and had actually engaged with the City of Edinburgh, and other local authorities. That was pre, actually setting up of the application for funding. We had identified that this was an example of good practice, by a consortium of local authorities across in the west. We saw that it benefited, their frontline members of staff had a better understanding when they were engaging with ex-service and service personnel, as well. Because they had a better understanding, and that was one of the things that we had promoted, very early, as an example of, this is something you may wish to consider. (LAFVG)

The view of the group was that the team had an example of good practice to follow so they were not '*starting from scratch*'. Some amendment to the previous project was necessary to make some amendment because '*clearly every authority was different*'. The Armed Forces covenant fund launched an opportunity for groups to bid for funding from their Improving Local Delivery of the Covenant fund. In one of the focus groups, the council group reported that the LAFVG project was an opportunity for development and consolidation.

It was very much about consolidation, bringing people together, to actually work together in a unified way, because people were at different points. But I think, also, it was about building on work, you know, the opportunity to build on that work, and take it further, which is very much what we did, you know, what happened with the project. It was, you know, it was giving us the opportunity for all of those things, and to take it much further. (Council)

Recruitment

The participants were asked if they remembered how the team were recruited. One group reported that *the only people that applied had a military background (VS)*. However, it was interesting to note that this outcome was met with mixed reviews. For the team this was viewed as a real advantage

*We knew we wanted to represent our brothers and sisters, and we wanted to make sure that they were looked after to the best of our ability. Therefore, it was a real passion for us all, and I do not think that is something that you maybe would have got with the project, had you recruited from another pool
(Team)*

However, for other stakeholders this was not such a popular option. The two quotes below suggest that a mix of both military and non-military staff might have been a better option. This was because of the issue of hierarchy within the military and the unwillingness of lower ranking staff to disagree with a higher-ranking officer and only having a military focus was one sided in a project, which was about both military and civilian issues.

No - I do not agree with that. I think there may be something in that that which is a little bit around the hierarchies. I suspect that even if you are ex-MOD your buttons around the hierarchy are pushed whether you realise they are being pushed or not. Therefore, it was very clear to me that in my questioning, which is really questioning to explore, it was not okay (NHS)

I suppose one of the things on reflection about the veteran's project was the fact that all three staff employed by the project were Armed Forces veterans. Which on the surface seemed like a good thing. Then we actually thought we very much only had an Armed Forces perspective. It would have been better to have a mixed group (Council).

A more positive perspective is provided in the quote below.

*The recruitment panel did an amazing job in appointing three individuals who complemented each other and formed an excellent team, each playing to their strengths to add value. As they were all ex forces themselves, they could hit the ground running and obviously had their own experiences to draw on. They had existing links into service support organisations and could communicate with forces personnel easily. They therefore formed an invaluable bridge from the strategic to grassroots and from Local Authority to the Forces Service. With full time roles, they had the ability to listen, explore, respond, support and develop which Covenant Officers simply don't have the time or links to do so.
(Military)*

Team Roles and Management

The original team comprised three full time staff. One took on the role of project lead and the other two worked as part of the team. Originally, the project was to run over a period of two years. In the event one team member left quite early in the process but was not replaced. This funding was used to extend the project by another year.

In the evaluation interviews, there was evidence across the stakeholders and the team that there had not been enough planning done on how the team would work together, where they would be based, how and by whom they would be managed and ultimately who would be the overall lead

the project. Despite the clear objectives and proposed outcomes in the study proposal, in reality, there was a lack of clarity about how the project might be actioned which potentially impeded development at the beginning.

It was a little bit confusing, so the money was given into the Lothian Armed Forces and Veterans Group who then recruited us. However, in between recruiting us and us actually starting, there wasn't an awful lot of thought given to how we were actually going to operate, and that...I have to say, that did mar our beginning, because we didn't feel like we belonged to anybody. It was quite muddy, our exact home, where we were, who we were working for, who was looking after us, and so that was difficult, when none of us had ever worked for the local authorities before. (Team)

In seeking an understanding of how the team were managed questions were asked as to who as the overall manager of the team, who organise feedback to the main group. How was the project managed in terms of achieving milestones and how were these prioritised. The outcome of this part of the discussion suggested that in the event, this type of early planning was missing. This perspective was shared by not only the team, but also key stakeholders from LAFVG and some of the councils as demonstrated in the quotes below.

The arrangement was that they were managed through the Lothian Armed Forces Veterans group, a sort of a strategic board, which met quarterly. They were employed full time and worked out of one of the local authority areas. Their contract was with City of Edinburgh Council who provided them with an office. There were some IT issues in the early days as well which did not help. It was quite a struggle to get established, and I seem to remember in one of the local authorities, it was not that they weren't welcome, it was just things couldn't be made to work easily for them. (Military)

The team struggled to find the right accommodation with good internet service. They were also keen to have an overall project director to help manage the direction of the project.

I think there probably needed to be more work done between getting the funding and actually getting the people in place. I think, like everything, all the partners are very busy people, but they needed to have somebody to almost project manage it from the beginning, and that was missing, just because of the complex nature of the different partners. I think it probably would have added value to the project had that been clear at the start, (Team)

On reflection, members of the LAFVG also acknowledged that earlier intervention and support for the project team would have helped to guide clear project outcomes.

Probably, being frank about it, that was probably a failing of the steering groups in that we did not give adequate steering to the staff members when the project first set up. I think there was a lack of clarity about what actually we were looking to get as end products. Had it been clear at the start, I think the project would have been easier for the staff and for the partners running it. (LAFVG)

Breadth of the task

The project aim and objectives were aspirational with quite broad and far reaching proposed outcomes. In reality it is questionable if it was possible to achieve all outcomes in the timeframe offered. This coupled with the complexity of a new team, diverse views among the group and the timeframe presented several challenges. The team reported that they had not considered the potential complexity and layers of opinion, activity and processes they would have to address in managing the project.

I had not understood the complexity of working with such varying partners. Obviously, they all have different priorities in how we were going to get things across. Whilst I was clear, kind of thing, the plan is there, but then actually doing it on the ground was quite different to what I'd expected. (Team)

Other stakeholders were also conscious of the breadth of the task and raised concerns about the aspirational nature of some specific activities being achievable within the timeframe allocated.

In a way, they were probably aiming a little high. Simply because in my experience it takes time to establish relationships, to establish common understanding, and perhaps most important and pragmatic of all everyone is busy and money...resources are always very tight. (Military)

All of the stakeholders recognised the lack of clear direction at the start of the project as a key issue in the development of the project. Some were of the view that the initial outcomes were amended in light of feedback offered.

I think in the early days there was perhaps a lack of real clarity, there was a sense of what was intended, but my recollection is not that there was a real clarity about what kind of outcomes and outputs there were going to be. Other than a sense that if we worked together, we could do some good things. There was a stage in the project where that was looked at again and from memory, I think there was a redraft of what the project objectives were going to be. (Council)

How the project was conducted

Once the three staff were in place, the team set about conducting a 'mission analyses'. All outcomes were categorised on the team activities, engagements and achievements. In the beginning the team chose to

...establish what the partners, the four local authorities at the time, were currently offering. Because they were the ones who were there to uphold the delivery of the covenant, for example, whilst the NHS had signed the covenant, and the Armed Forces obviously are the reason the covenant's there We separated down the four local authorities that we worked with; we each had specific areas of responsibility for building those relationships in those areas. We attended all the Covenant working groups; we were kind of front and centre (Team)

A monthly update was provided to the partners

Every month we would send a report to all the partners of what we had done. This included an engagement log, and a graph of where we were hitting our targets, and all our social media statistics. We had social media presence again to reiterate the work we were doing, raising the covenant, engaging with other stakeholders, and that would be reflecting in our social media stats. I would say without fail, we would hit most of them all the time. (Team)

Feedback and Direction

One of the key issues identified by the stakeholders was the transient nature of the LAFVG. The only time they came together was at the quarterly group meetings but they were not likely to work together in other arenas. This means that the only opportunity for discussion of the project was at a meeting with a number of issues on the agenda. Moreover, some of the people attending the meeting were not actively engaged in the project. While there had been agreement in terms of submitting the bid, it was difficult to gain consensus round the activity and direction for the project. The quote below highlight these key issues

I suspect that the people who are in those meetings only come together for those meetings; they do not have another place to work together. That is because local authority individuals will work in their own individual area, other than those who are probably elected members may interact with each other in other settings. I think there is not a common space other than a group. A group that comes together around a project is probably a little bit more neutral than a group that is leading on the project; we needed to build a common purpose. Other than yes, we can all sign up to the covenant, when we try to translate that into what does that mean people have their own ideas (LAFVG)

For the project team this was their only real opportunity for discussion progress and gaining direction. The complex nature of the composition of the group and the different clusters they represented further added to the difficulty in achieving an agreed vision of what might work well across all or indeed an agreed course of action for the project team to follow the team sent regular reports but were somewhat disappointed with the feedback

Yeah, I mean mostly if we sent reports out, we would just get an email back saying thank you, you know, interesting statistics, or something like that. When XX was the head of strategy and insight in Edinburgh Council, she was always very interested in the work we were doing. She then took redundancy quite early on in the project, and that position was dropped for a while, so we were rudderless from that aspect as well, which is a shame, because actually that was nice to have that feedback from that level. (Team)

The outcome of this lack of direction pushed the project team to move on with the developments as reported on the understanding this was what the group wanted them to do. This is evidenced in the next quote.

But the impression I got was that , having secured the funding, and secured the people, then it was the project team that were effectively driving the activity, rather than the project direction that was driving it. At some stages, the project, the directing group, were slightly less aware of what needed to be done, other than what the project team told them needed to be done. Whereas, I think that the project team, because it was a team, they could talk amongst themselves, and develop their ideas. I think that, from time to time, the project team was doing more direction than the directors were. Again, I say that openly. (LAFVG)

Recommendation 1

Future studies should consider the type of support and communication systems available for project teams. One possible action would be to identify a small subgroup of the LAFVG to work directly with the project team both in the meetings and when necessary externally. This might promote more 'ownership' within the group to direct actions, monitor the development and support both the feedback process and action planning processes.

Recommendation 2

Any project proposal need to identify outcomes and potential methodologies to be employed including evaluation processes if this is a key part of the expectation.it should also consider the skills of the overall team ensuring that they are qualified to conduct the type of development recommended

Tangible and non-tangible outcomes

Three key outcomes are evident from the lifetime of the project: major networking growth, development of an e learning package and the information booklets for each council area. Participants described two forms of outcomes, those that were tangible (e-learning package, booklets) and those that were non-tangible (network growth, public engagement and outcomes). There was a consensus that the networking developed throughout the project was successful in terms of public engagement and awareness. This will be explored under the sustainability section later on in the report.

Well I think the main thing was it really helped to promote the Armed Forces Covenant, they have done a wonderful job. I follow them on Twitter, Facebook, all the social media sites and I can see the work that they are doing. (Military)

However, there was some concern raised about the type of evidence available for this activity and the measurement of potential impact on key areas such as housing or employment.

What I think we cannot see is the hard evidence. Everybody can put impressions on social media, and you can follow them on Twitter and that is

great everybody can see that, so it puts the topic on the public agenda. But I can't see any actual hard evidence of what the project has achieved in helping people to get housing, employment etc. (Third Sector)

It was unlikely that there was going to be any hard evidence as none of the outcomes referred to an evaluation process. There was evidence in the questionnaires of one survey conducted with GP practices to elicit information related to number of patients identifying as military personnel. Overall, there is little evidence of data collection for specific investigation or evaluation purposes.

Much of the data collected related specifically to activities carried out in relation to each of the five key objectives. The nature of any project is that it is difficult to judge the significance and reach of impact unless very specific measurement tools are employed prior to that activity and even then, this would depend on response rate from the particular group interactions.

Throughout there were reports of specific actions and in the main a recognition that the activity had made some difference. The outcome of the questionnaires provided in Appendix 5 provides clearer and more specific examples of both tangible and non-tangible outcomes. Below is an example of a non-tangible outcome

The other less tangible thing I think we did learn more things about what was going on in other meetings. I think that helped, sharing of information was useful. I think because the staff were more engaged in doing things on a day-to-day basis and had some objectives they wanted to achieve; I think we did get a bit more information shared about what good practices were going on in other areas (Council)

Networking

Perhaps the strongest outcome of the project was the amount of networking which took place. The team were strategic in their approach to this by dividing out the local authorities and taking a lead role they aimed to develop a stronger link with each. Likewise, they shared areas with one focussing on health, another education and the third focusing on other areas of concern. There are detailed accounts of the networks developed in the outcome of questionnaire 1 (Appendix 5). There are also a number of concerns about how this important networking activity will be maintained now that the project has completed. The quote below explains this view.

I think the networking is important, creating networks is important. It does often come down to who is driving the network, and how much does it need to be refreshed. I suspect that, without the project team, some of those networks will reduce, because there won't be a sort of expert focal point within them. It will be a number of people who are doing their normal job. So, you know, it does bring in the question of, what is the long term legacy of that three year project, or two year project. (Third sector)

There was a view that if we were to look back to 2015 that there is now a much stronger network in place focussing on Covenant needs across the Lothian Councils. For one participant it was

more about it being based in Scotland and about the need for the councils to work together on larger agenda such as housing.

It really is the structures we have in Scotland the community planning aspects to this are the ones that should, be to the fore. Health is a sort of infrastructure and an enabler in that , and we are a partner in community planning , but it's a slightly anachronistic position for us to be a major constituent part by ourselves when it comes to housing and employment and everything else (Council).

When asked if he felt that the project had an impact on the improvement in cross working activity he responded

..of course it's an association really , and would we have had that without the project I'm not really sure . It made a difference having people driving the agenda but I think much of what happened might have happened anyway but maybe it would have taken a much longer period of time to see that. So perhaps the project brought that to the fore. (Council)

A similar perspective of progress was expressed by the third sector organisation albeit there was recognition that there was still a great deal of work to be done to get to the point required. Perhaps this also supports the view that this is difficult to measure because of the difference in each group and the various stages of development. The good practice element that should be acknowledged related to the team but also to local champions and other key stakeholders when they are strongly behind the initiative.

Are the Covenant groups within each of those local authorities stronger now than they were two years ago? I think they've still got quite a lot of work to do there, although I do sense that, I know at my own local level within East Lothian, the group probably is stronger. But I'm not sure whether that's on the back of the project, or on the back of the fact that the local champion, and the local chief executive, are both very strongly behind the whole veteran piece (Third sector).

The overall success of networking

It was clear that the networking activities of the team were appreciated and there was a recognition of how they had brought a number of groups together for a common purpose. The quotes below come from two very different focus groups but together identify the strength in uniting groups. Both also recognise this is only possible when people are given the time to do it

I mean, the one thing I would say, the project has been extremely successful. You talk about the sort of wider coherence. Nevertheless, it has been very good about keeping that network of all the Lothian support agencies together. The perception I have of the Covenant support community in Lothian region, is that we all know each other now. I think the project has been really good about keeping that, and holding that together, but I think that is one of the legacies of the project, I think, that is quite positive. (Council)

I think the project actually did a lot of the partnership working for the local authorities and NHS, because they were dedicated workers, that that was their sole job. I mean, I sort of lead on this for Midlothian, but I have a hundred and one other things, and I get pulled in so many different directions. Whereas, that was their focus, and they were allowed, well, they were able to go around all the sort of, the different organisations that it would be great to speak to.

They would do a lot of that linking work for us, and have discussions with people. I would say that project was sort of quite integral in creating sort of some of the partnerships, pulling people together, and then feeding back to us, and letting us know what was going on out there, and if there was anything that we needed to sort of get involved with. (Mixed focus group of Military, Third Sector and Council).

The groups were also clear in terms of the tangible activities associated with this role.

I think that coordination is important, but I also think there are some absolute tangible tasks that we would want, that I would like to see maintained. You know, things like looking after the e learning, looking after, helping the local authorities look after their web pages that the team created, you know, updating, and review of the fantastic booklets that they produced. Having, them having the ability to be reaching out to groups, other groups, you know particularly the veterans, and feeding back into us as partners. That's a really, really welcome, and vital support, because it is where we lack the capacity to have that extended reach (Mixed focus group of Military, Third Sector and Council).

In this focus group, they went on to say that, they had not seen any new groups emerging because of the project, -

'it was already well-established groups that may have gained more momentum from the project. They may have had some new information fed into them that they may not have had previously. However, they were always proactive (Third Sector).

This is an example of many non-tangible outcomes, which is extremely hard to quantify or measure. The outcomes of the questionnaire in Appendix 5 provides numerous examples of this type of activity which had the potential to really grow the initiative but as no evaluation material exists it is difficult to directly align the project to these outcomes.

Recommendation 3

The transient nature of project team, the meeting opportunities of the LAFVG and the potential two year term of key military staff means that sustainability of the outcomes of the project are limited. Moreover, the networking systems set up by the team have proved to enhance teamwork and public engagement activity. The danger at this point is that if no replacement resources are forthcoming all the good work may be lost.

Consideration should be given to the development of a permanent military co-ordinator post to act as a secretary to the LAFVG.

E learning package

One of the key achievements of the project team was the development and delivery of an e learning package. The package comprised some learning materials, self-assessment questions and an information video. This was one of the key objectives outlined in the project bid so consequently was a required outcome. The e learning package was met with quite different perspectives and was evaluated on its mode of delivery, content, fitness for purpose and overall view it portrayed of the veteran. This conversation prompted some interesting perspectives on what is a veteran, and what veterans may or may not want from services. First, we focus on the positive and negative perspectives of the e learning package.

I think that it is absolutely clear that this has been a very successful element of the project. The only thing that I would say is that we never seem to understand how deep and far that has actually gone. You know it is great to have an independent eLearning package but if people are not doing it, it is obviously not ever going to achieve its objective. (Military)

The overall view was that the objective to develop the e learning package was achieved. Key concerns related to how and if it might be used or how it might be viewed by the potential users.

In terms of promoting, the Covenant I have no doubt that a lot of information was put out there and many veterans, and certainly a lot of our service users became aware of the Covenant as a direct result of the activity on this project. (Veterans centre).

You know I think it is excellent but we need a way of holding peoples feet to the fire (Military))

This group also offered an additional observation relating to increasing veterans understanding and use of the Covenant

There is a kind of other side to that awareness of the Covenant, which is that there is kind of an expectation now that more will be delivered

Another concern related to the mode of delivery of the e learning package. The view was that the package did not involve any form of dialogue and that e packages ended to be part of mandatory training for many staff and therefore not always welcome or engaging.

It was very clear that the kernel of this project – kernel with a k not a c – was about a Learn Pro module. The truthful answer is that in health there is really quite extraordinary Learn Pro fatigue. It is an overused tool in health. Because most people do it by themselves, they perceive it as something they have to do as part of mandatory training. It does not really engender discussion or thoughts about opportunities or anything else. We will just push something out to somebody that is like a little package of information and that will tick the box. The problem is it's back to the parable of what sort of soil do your seeds land on; if they're not landing on fertile ground and are watered et cetera you don't necessarily get anything. (LAFVG)

Some provided a mixed review of the package on the one hand acknowledging the recorded use of it, while on the other questioning how that might be evaluated. However, it is important to note the proposal outcomes do not refer to evaluation as one of the key outcomes

There is potentially some positive that could have been taken from the project. I know at one point, there was an update that said 104 people at that point had engaged with the package. It did not say whether they actually finished, because it was one of these, you drop-in, drop-out. So people had engaged with the package, but there was no evaluation of that 104 people, how many of them were actually better informed, and then subsequently went on to deal with serving an ex-service personnel in a different manner. Which I would have expected to see that, you know, some sort of evaluation, this is where we were beforehand, and this is where we were after the training package had been conducted. (Military)

For those who had been involved in providing feedback on the developing e package there was a very strong concern about the negative way in which military veterans were portrayed. They were keen to emphasise the complexity of need and to highlight that the majority of military personnel do need support and therefore would not need such interventions.

So I think one of the, some of the messages that we'd want to get across is only five per cent or so of ex-service people who may have difficulty, are a group, but they're not a homogenous group, and the difficulties they have are life's difficulties. They are often brought about by lack of preparation, and so on. But the remainder have much to offer society and should not be perceived in such a negative manner. (Military)

The perspective from support centres was somewhat different. They recognised the contribution made by the learning package and other aspects of the project but also acknowledged the complex nature of the variety of support systems available to veterans. They also had some concerns about how some veterans fall through the gaps and how these gaps should be identified.

I only see this from veterans that come to our Centre, so it is very narrow. But what I can say, without any shadow of a doubt, is that people do fall through gaps. Rightly or wrongly, and it's of their own making But they still have to be helped, There is no doubt that there is an awful lot of help out there, there's a lot of organisations helping out there, they are very silo-ed, Sometimes it's very difficult for people to access that. I think that from my point of view, and what I know of this project, it has done a lot of good work, particularly for Midlothian, in recognising a need to get hold, and to get the message across to these people.

They were keen to emphasise that communication through technology does not always reach the groups that need the support the most

Technology might help for some people, but we find that, actually, quite a lot of the veterans that we deal with are technology averse. They do not like

using it; they do not trust social media. We have many of our veterans who will not be on Facebook, and we cannot communicate through Facebook, because they do not trust it for lots of different reasons.

A slightly different perspective was provided in another group about how veterans should be identified

I think they are citizens first, and as such, the statutory organisations have their responsibility, whether it be local authorities, NHS, whatever. As such, the majority of them are picked up, and well supported. We see this with the information that as a group of people, we are constantly demanding, we need to know where the veterans are, or we do not know where they are. Well that is because they are not identifying themselves to you because they do not need any of your support. (Third Sector)

This discussion went on to suggest that all veterans are not known because they don't need or choose not to be. This section of the interviews and focus group led to some more clearly defined characteristics of veterans being suggested. This group were fully aware of the development of the learning package and made several suggestions to the project team on how they might present a more positive perspective. They had key concerns about the negative way veterans were being portrayed particularly in the video section of the e learning package.

We are, we're fully aware of the learning package, and I had attended several meetings with the group in Edinburgh when it was in its development. We did raise some concerns that the package may not have been presented in the best way. In its initial format, it had the potential to have a negative impact, and actually promote myths. We did advise them that they may wish to look at a different model that we were aware of from England, but they chose to go with a different model. We suggested they promote the fact to the local authorities that it's only a very, very small number that they are ever going to have positively engage with. (Military)

In focus group 3, the topic of engagement was explored in more detail and the question of why some veterans do not engage in services offered. The group were keen to explain that veterans were members of society first recruited from there and wanting to transition back there. They were also keen to emphasise the difficulty in identifying the true needs of a veteran.

Identifying the true needs of the service, and ex-service community, is very important, not what the perceived needs. Because people's perceptions, sometimes, are nowhere close to reality. Actually, an analysis of the facts would identify they do not know where the veterans are; let's get it in the census so we can tie them down. For some, they are never going to need to identify as a veteran, because they have no veteran, or service-related issues, or concerns. They have society, and we recruit from society, we are all members of society, first. Very few have anything that is linked to service, as a concern, and as such, what is the need for service delivery (Third Sector.).

The above quote summarises the complex, diverse and challenging nature of this area of development. This echoes the views of Wallace (2019:p18) who claimed that the 'term veteran also poses a challenge to public understanding [With Veterans] perceived as a distinct group of older individuals [while] younger ones do not feature in the minds of the public, unless as physically or mentally harmed individuals from more recent conflicts'. This report goes on to reflect the ongoing view that transition services need to be flexible, recognising the needs of the individual and consequently, 'should be output focussed and flexible' (Wallace, 2019:24)

An additional outcome to the project was the development of a series of four booklets developed both in hard copy and provided on line. The Service Leavers Guides were developed for each authority rather than a Lothian wide guide. These have been well evaluated but will require updating on a regular basis

Sustainability of the project outcomes

The challenge of running an initiative of this nature is how the impact is maintained once the resources and people are no longer involved. The outcomes were possible because of the additional resources provided by the funding. Moreover, any learning package will require regular updates to ensure it is fit for purpose and reflects the ongoing development within the covenant arena. Several references were made to a new project 'informing Scotland' being delivered by Veterans Scotland and is funded by Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT). The plan is for this to be a more interactive programme of education and development with face-to-face meetings, when the situation allows for that. So obviously, that would supplement the e-learning package. In fairness to the e learning package it has provided a means of sharing information, an opportunity to reflect on suitability, but also a chance for this approach to be evaluated and a more interactive approach employed in new developments.

The project team were seen very much as an action arm of the group reporting in on progress and then taking action points out to be implemented with different stakeholder groups. There were a number of concerns raised as to how the outcomes of the project might be maintained. Some suggested this required another post to take a lead on the action. Recommendations about what that role should be and who should fund it varied.

*There should be at least one coordinator for the Lothian Armed Forces and Veterans group to keep that momentum, to keep the fires burning underneath the slightly slower organisations, and to keep on top of it. I think a veteran; veteran coordinator would be massively beneficial to keep the work going.
(Team).*

I think the issue here is that perhaps you can see the Lothian Armed Forces and Veterans Group is a really important melting pot, where all of those partners come together to discuss strategy, next steps, and everything else like that. That's clearly, that was there before the project came into being. You know, what the project filled then was, it became the action arm of the LAFVG,

and it was, you know, it was holding the partners to account, you know, you said that you would do this on this one. It's going to be a challenge to take the ideas of the LAFVG forward without somebody acting as the action element of that, to do that (Council).

They are the two challenges, how do we identify people and how do we ensure that people who are making that first engagement know what service is there for that person to get? A council cannot do that on their own. Health service cannot do that on their own. And that was one of the values of the project was that we shared and there were partners around the table (Military focus group).

For others there was a question of clarity of the role and who would fund it but also a need to ensure there was a clarity to the job description and a clear chain of command. They envisioned a co-ordinating role where action could be taken from the LAFVG meetings out to the other stakeholders and by the same token information, questions and potential ideas coming back to the LAFVG meetings for reflection and action.

It's almost we just need someone right at the heart of what we're doing here, that is right in the centre of it all, and I think that the team have been doing that. They would be the person that's putting this altogether and getting all the input from everybody, looking at funding that's available, looking for evidence, getting that and building it. You know, not on their own, but driving it, leading it. very much a co-ordinating role with a focus on information in and information out. Going forward, it would be something that would absolutely have to be clarified because not least and most importantly, for any person, it's really, really important that they are clear on who they're reporting to, and they're not, and being pulled in too many directions by too many different people (Mixed focus group of military, council and third sector).

Recommendation 4 –

The e-learning package was met with mixed reviews with some clear recommendations made about how it might be improved, specifically around the potential negative image portrayed in some of the material. It is recommended that this might be achieved by the development and potential upload to social media of a series of small 5-minute films, which promote the positive contribution to society of military personnel. This might be possible by working with the FE: HE education group to identify media student projects across higher education institutions.

Finally, participants were asked if they were going to support a project in the future what would it be and how might it be arranged. For most, there was a request for some form of numerical data outcomes, which would allow measurement of impact. One participant suggested.

I think if we were to design a project again it would be around a hypothesis that provided information as a way of improving engagement, with all the benefits that we might outline in the outcomes. We would have wanted to do a bit of testing of that, and we could have mocked something up that wasn't a

full-blown Learn Pro and then test it, tested that with some focus groups from staff from different constituent parts, say what works, what doesn't work, what else would you need. Because probably what I would call a sandwich approach, something that gets people's interest, then a package of information, then a follow-up, so what are you going to do, becomes a bit more meaningful (LAFVG)

While this type of information might prove useful to the team there would need to be several considerations. The first would entail the proposal itself and the need for that to reflect the need for evaluation and potentially the type of evaluation best suited already identified. The qualifications of the potential candidate and their ability to conduct evidence-based research would also have to be considered and finally, the objectives themselves would need to be much narrower to allow such an approach to be implemented or successful.

Section 4: Summary and recommendations

Discussion

This evaluation of the LAFVP highlighted the multifaceted nature of development in military transition. Throughout the qualitative findings section a variety of views of key stakeholders have been presented under headings, which represent the life journey of the project. Strengths and limitations have been identified, as have enablers and barriers to development. The discussion will draw on the outcomes of the questionnaire, interviews and focus group discussions to give a final overview of the outcomes of the evaluation, which will be presented under the five key outcomes of the project.

Measuring any impact usually relies on two key concepts-‘significance’ and ‘reach’ Significance of impact is the extent to which the project has “enriched , influenced informed or changed policies, practices, products , opportunities, or perceptions of individuals, communities or organisations”(Reed, 2018:p290). Reach is “the extent and diversity of the communities, environments, individual’s organisations or any other beneficiaries that may have been impacted” (Reed, 2018:290).

There is evidence to suggest that both activities have occurred at different levels and in a number of ways throughout the project. The outcomes of each of the five sections of Questionnaire 1 (see Appendix 5) demonstrate changes in a number of settings. Impact is highlighted in **green** while examples of potential reach are highlighted in **yellow**.it is not possible to cover all activities therefore key areas from each section are discussed but readers are encouraged to review the outcomes of the questionnaire in Appendix 5

Outcome 1

Advocate the Covenant and produce a standard means by which the voices and concerns of the Armed Forces Community and Veterans can be raised. Community contribution is fed back to the partnership and observations are evaluated to impact future service delivery

There is no doubt that the team were strong advocates of the Covenant. The data suggests they were both motivated and driven to achieve this objective. The networking activity throughout the life of the project was substantial and effective in terms of the feedback offered in questionnaire 1. There are clear examples of good practice and recognition that activity did have an impact and a number of recommendations from key stakeholders who appreciate that the networking activity made a difference. In this evaluation, the data has not allowed for any quantitative measurement. Nonetheless, there are strong examples of significant activity and changes that were observed:

- The feedback in the questionnaire suggests that there is now evidence of EL AFCG using the FiMT toolkit and this can be found in the EL AFC Action Plan

- The existing AFC web page on the MLC website have been fully refreshed and brought up to date. This has made it easier for members of the public to find and access the information on the website and there has been an increase in use of the dedicated AFC email address for queries.
- The four Local Authorities shared best practice and were supported to update webpages with pertinent information and links.
- Setting a baseline for each of the Local Authorities to employ based on the FiMT *Our Community, Our Covenant* traffic light reporting system

Specific to this objective was the development of a user guides for Service Leavers in each of the LA areas. The data from the questionnaire, focus groups and individual interviews have identified this particular activity as 'extremely valuable' 'excellent and have received positive feedback'. Moreover, Service Leaver Guide available on ELC website along with it being distributed to community centres, libraries and other veteran communal areas. The LAFVP tenure has seen a steady improvement and several Local Authorities grasp of the Covenant with CofEC, Midlothian Council and Edinburgh Napier University in particular now acting as powerful and proactive advocates for the Covenant.

In terms of 'reach', there were many examples of public engagement activities. The Team also developed an excellent relationship with BFBS radio and participated in a number of radio interviews talking about the Covenant – the target audience being the local Armed Forces community.

They set up social media platforms to highlight relevant Armed Forces Covenant information. They also contributed to an Armed Forces Facebook page. It is not really possible to provide any measurement (Apart from occasions when the number of times certain packages were accessed or information was accessed on Google). Nonetheless, it is possible to see through the comments in outcome 1 that a great deal was achieved in terms of providing an insight into the Armed Forces in Lothian, identifying some of the differences across local authorities. They worked with Napier University and other key stakeholders on an application for funds for a book to help children suffering from PTSD..

Outcome 2

Train public service staff to be more receptive and mindful in approach to issues faced by the Armed Forces Community and Veterans to improve the Community's quality of life; e.g. areas relating to access to housing, tax and benefits, financial literacy, childcare/family support

Development and delivery of a comprehensive e learning package for front line staff. The development and roll out of the e-learning package is a significant and tangible achievement. It

has been reported as a success and has contributed to raising awareness of the Covenant in the Lothians. The Team worked hard to overcome some challenges early on both technically and in seeking agreement for the final text. The module has been accessed **470** times on the Council site and 18 times on our Community site from launch. Moreover, **101** members of Midlothian staff have completed it to date and are more aware of AFC in Midlothian. The numbers identified as accessing the work package are promising and indicate it is being taken seriously. Additionally the e learning has since been forwarded by COSLA to all 32 LAs in Scotland – this is a great measure of the success of this e learning and a recognition of its value and benefit. Finally, in the questionnaires Local Authority Covenant Officers can now produce figures for how many staff have completed this to date. The last update it was around **1500**

There were some concerns expressed in the focus groups about the negative nature of some of the material in the learning package. It would be possible to work in conjunction with some of the media departments at local colleges and universities (potentially through the FE: HE education network) to gain support from student projects in the delivery of several short films depicting the positive contributions of the forces both serving and those who have transitioned. Examples included role in the support of the Covid-19 epidemic, during flooding episodes or support firefighting during the last major strike. These could be shared on Facebook, u tube and other social media sites to enhance understanding of positive contribution

In terms of reach, The Team engaged early on with the National Transitions Officer and Brigade Staff. They were appraised of the existing structures and support in place to support AF children's education and the key personalities to remain engaged with during the course of their work. They also attended Edinburgh and Midlothian Getting it Right for Forces Families meetings – enabling them to see first-hand the stakeholder engagement in place, and to draw on this when needed. Engagement with the National Transitions Officer enabled accurate and relevant references to children's education within the LA guides.

Outcome 3

Improve co-ordination of the support given to the Armed Forces Community and Veterans about health and wellbeing working with NHS Lothian. Provide more relevant services and social care based on the needs of the client, especially to those injured, sick, wounded or traumatised following service. Signpost to and provide opportunities which promote recovery and allow clients with health barriers to reach fuller.

In terms of significance, the team conducted a telephone survey of all Lothian GP practices to establish their understanding of the Veterans first point service. It has not been possible to appraise this data for this evaluation. Nonetheless, the activity will have raised awareness across GP surgeries and potentially may have affected the way in which the practice utilises the service.

In terms of reach the team Promoted the work of veterans first point at numerous events and presented a talk to NHS staff on the Military covenant.

Outcome 4

Improve socio-economic chances for the Armed Forces Community and Veterans: to train and gain skills, contribute their experience into enterprise and work opportunities within society, and encourage further employment opportunities for Reservists

Significant activity included supporting the DRM team by providing referral from companies and institutions in signing up to the Armed Forces Covenant. The team also had a role in in setting up the Midlothian Veterans Placement Project – where a small number of Veterans directly benefited from this opportunity. in terms of reach the team circulated copies of the Capitalising on Military Talent toolkit to partners and the wider network in the Lothians and ran poster campaigns in conjunction with DWP encouraging veterans /ex-forces to make themselves known to their job coach

Outcome 5

Promote the positive contribution our Armed Forces Community and Veterans bring to our wider society.

In terms of significance, there are many examples across the transcripts and within the questionnaires of how the team promoted the positive contribution of the Armed Forces Community. Specifically the work on twitter and on face book were well evaluated. Although it is not possible to quantitatively assess the impact of this activity there is enough evidence throughout this evaluation data to support that this activity was one of the key strengths of the team. Key activities identified included:

- Working with several veterans' organisations to promote Remembrance events across the Lothians.
- Running a myth busting campaign across social media platforms
- Supporting and advising several organisations to apply for covenant funding
- Supporting Armed Forces day across the region
- West Lothian Council held very successful business breakfast, hosted by 105 Artillery City of Edinburgh Council hosted breakfast in conjunction with Edinburgh chamber of commerce.

Coupled with the information booklets, the e learning packages and the networking activities this objective was well met.

What were the challenges?

1. The proposal was ambitious and potentially too broad in nature, lacked clear guidelines on potential methodologies to be employed by the team and provided no means of evaluating the outcomes of the project.
2. The team were not provided with the clear guidance at the beginning of the project. Throughout there was a degree of being left on their own to 'get on with it' consequently some decisions made were not always supported.
3. Accommodation at the start of the project and access to internet facilities were limited.
4. All the team were from a military background, which was met with a mixed reaction. This coupled with a reduction in the team after 9 months put additional pressure on the remaining team to address the outcomes of the project.
5. The team had to handle the expectations of a range of stakeholders while shaping the key aspects of the role
6. There was some expectation that there would be evaluation of the project despite this not being stipulated in the project brief.

What worked?

1. It is to the teams credit that they proved resilient and well up to the task
2. The team used their previous expertise to organise, plan and drive the project.
3. Sharing responsibility for certain areas and local authorities worked well as each became the key contact for that region.
4. Networking activity and the development of a number of on line platforms was effective in networking across a number of key stakeholder groups.
5. The development of the e learning package has now been implemented with clear evidence of use
6. The booklets have been very well evaluated and have now been circulate to a number of public areas

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

Future studies should consider the type of support and communication systems available for project teams. One possible action would be to identify a small subgroup of the LAFVG to work directly with the project team both in the meetings and when necessary externally. This might promote more 'ownership' within the group to direct actions, monitor the development and support both the feedback process and action planning processes.

Recommendation 2

Any project proposal need to identify outcomes and potential methodologies to be employed including evaluation processes if this is a key part of the expectation.it should also consider the skills of the overall team ensuring that they are qualified to conduct the type of development recommended

Recommendation 3

The transient nature of project team, the meeting opportunities of the LAFVG and the potential two year term of key military staff means that sustainability of the outcomes of the project are limited. Moreover, the networking systems set up by the team have proved to enhance teamwork and public engagement activity. The danger at this point is that if no replacement resources are forthcoming all the good work may be lost. Consideration might be given to the development of a permanent military co-ordinator post to act as a secretary to the LAFVG. See figure 2 below

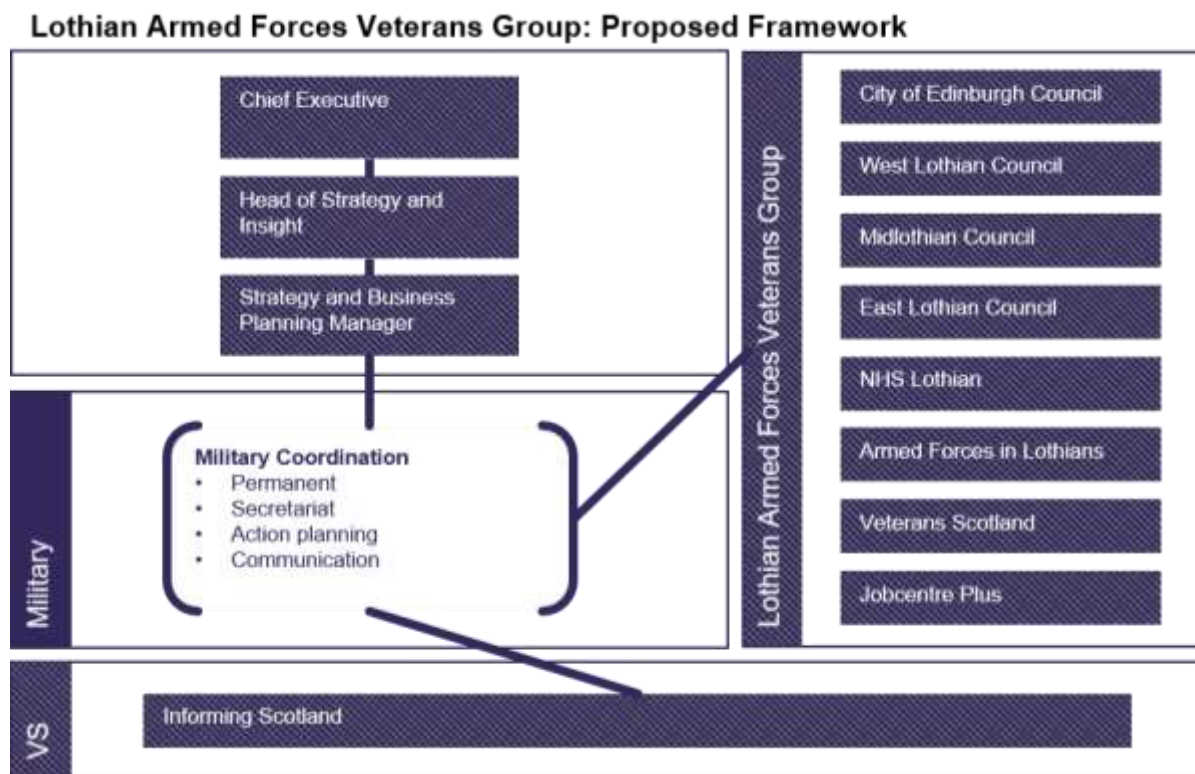


Figure 2: Lothian Armed Forces Veterans Group: Proposed Framework

Recommendation 4

The e-learning package was met with mixed reviews with some clear recommendations made about how it might be improved, specifically around the potential negative image portrayed in some of the material. It is recommended that this might be achieved by the development and potential upload to social media of a series of small 5-minute films, which promote the positive contribution to society of military personnel. This might be made possible by working with the FE: HE education group to identify media student projects across higher education institutions.

Appendix 1: Project Covering Letter



Evaluation of the Lothian Armed Forces and Veterans Project

Dear

You are invited to take part in an evaluation of the Lothian Armed forces and Veterans Project. My name is Dr Gerri Matthews-Smith, I am the lead for Military Research at Edinburgh Napier University. I have been asked to conduct the evaluation of the above project. In this pack you will find:

1. Questionnaire to complete
2. Briefing Paper
3. Participant Information Sheet
4. Consent Form

This is an opportunity to share your experience of taking part in this project. We are interested in your views about the purpose of this quality improvement scheme, what has worked well and what the challenges are particularly in terms of workload, roles of the team and delivery of the project outcomes. We are also keen to know about the challenges you faced with capacity building within an already saturated service. Your views are important to us regardless of the level of involvement you have had.

Taking part in this evaluation will involve completing the enclosed questionnaire. We may also approach you to take part in a one-to one interview or focus group where you will get the opportunity to discuss your experiences either individually

or with the others who work in the same role as you. The interviews and focus groups will last no more than 2 hours.

We would really appreciate if you would consider participating in this evaluation of the project. However, before you decide to take part it is important that you understand what the evaluation is about and what you will be asked to do. Please read **the Briefing and Participant Information Sheets** (enclosed). Feel free to contact me if anything is unclear or you want further information. My contact details are below. If you are happy to proceed please sign the consent form, complete the questionnaire and return to me at the address below or electronically to g.matthews-smith@napier.ac.uk

Your participation would be gratefully appreciated.

Thanks in anticipation,

Dr Gerri Matthews- Smith, FHEA
Associate Professor Learning Teaching and Research
University Research Lead for Military Research
Edinburgh Napier University
The Business School
Craiglockhart Campus
Room 2/40
Edinburgh
EH14 1DJ
Tel 0131 455 5615|
M 07946540501

Appendix 2: Project Information Sheet



Information Sheet

Evaluation of the Lothian Armed Forces and Veterans Project

It is likely that to complete the questionnaire you will need about 1-2 hours of your time. We appreciate the time you are giving to do this important evaluation and would ask that you provide as much detail as possible for the actions you can address. Detailed instructions are provided below on how to complete the questionnaire. It is important to note that not all of the actions may be relevant to your organization.

The questionnaire is divided into 5 Sections which together outline 34 activities

Each section relates to one of the 5 outcomes of the Armed Forces Community and Veterans Project. Each section has a table made up of four columns. In the **First** Column in the table the **ACTIVITIES** are outlined for that section. **You do not need to add anything to this section**

Each section is identified by a colour

Outcome 1	7 activities
Outcome 2	7 activities
Outcome 3	4 activities
Outcome 4	8 activities
Outcome 5	8 activities -

In the **Second** Column of each Table, there is information on how activities were undertaken, who the target audience was and finally, what was achieved. Here **we are asking you**, where possible to provide information on dates.

In the **Third** Column of each Table, we **are asking you** to provide outline feedback on the achievements and impact of this activity for your organisation. If you need more space, please write on the back of the page but be sure to identify clearly the activity to which you are referring by adding the activity number from that section.



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Finally, in the **Fourth** Column **we are seeking your views** on what are the next steps. This should include what actions that must, should or could be undertaken. Again if you need more space to add your thinking please write on the back of the page but be sure to identify clearly the activity to which you are referring by adding the activity number from that section

We appreciate you may not wish to comment on all actions in each section as they may not be relevant to your service. **In these sections please put N/A so** that we know those actions are not relevant to you

Once the data has been analysed we may wish to collect more detail around some of the points you have made. If this is the case we will invite you to participate in a one-to one interview or a focus group. There is no obligation on your part to do this as you are free t leave the evaluation at any point, but we hope you may be willing to do so.

Your participation would be gratefully appreciated.

Thanks in anticipation,

Dr Gerri Matthews- Smith, FHEA

University Lead for Military Research, Edinburgh Napier University

The Business School, Craiglockhart Campus, Room 2/40

Edinburgh , EH14 1DJ

Tel 0131 455 5615

M. 07946540501



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Appendix 3: Proposed Questionnaire

(Instructions

On front page of questionnaire but also in covering letter

Instructions for completion of the questionnaire

Please read the instructions for completing this questionnaire carefully)

1. The questionnaire is divided into 5 Sections which together outline 34 activities
2. Each section relates to one of the 5 outcomes of the Armed Forces Community and Veterans Project. Each section has a table made up of four columns. In the *First* Column in the table the **ACTIVITIES** are outlined for that section. **You do not need to add anything to this section**
3. Each section is identified by a colour

a. Outcome 1	7 activities
b. Outcome 2	7 activities
c. Outcome 3	4 activities
d. Outcome 4	8 activities
e. Outcome 5	8 activities -
4. In the *Second* Column of each Table, there is information on how activities were undertaken, who the target audience was and finally, what was achieved. Here **we are asking you**, where possible to provide information on dates.
5. In the *Third* Column of each Table, we **are asking you** to provide outline feedback on the achievements and impact of this activity for your organisation. If you need more space, please write on the back of the page but be sure to identify clearly the activity to which you are referring by adding the activity number from that section.
6. Finally, in the *Fourth* Column **we are seeking your views** on what are the next steps. This should include what actions that must, should or could be undertaken. Again if you need more space to add your thinking please write on the back of the page but be sure to identify clearly the activity to which you are referring by adding the activity number from that section
7. We appreciate you may not wish to comment on all actions in each section as they may not be relevant to your service. **In these sections please put N/A** so that we know those actions are not relevant to you

SECTION 1- Please complete sections 2,3 and 4

Outcome 1 - Advocate the Covenant and produce a standard means by which the voices and concerns of the Armed Forces Community and Veterans can be raised. Community contribution is fed back to the partnership and observations are evaluated to impact future service delivery.

1.ACTIVITY Milestones to deliver the outcomes agreed at the project outset Source: Project Application/Quarterly Reports	2. HOW How was this undertaken, who were the target audience and when was it achieved? Source: Project Team/Project Reports Partner input required	3. MEASUREMENT OF EFFECT An outline of the achievements and impact Partner input required	4. NEXT STEPS include actions that must/should/could be undertaken Partner input required
1. Engage with a wide range of stakeholders across the Lothian community to raise awareness of the Covenant and use the Forces in Mind Trust report toolkit.	Social media platforms set up - (https://www.facebook.com/LAFVP/ and @lafvp). Statistics at Appendix 3. (when)		
2. Establish an understanding of the Armed Forces Community in the Lothian's.	Comprehensive Armed Forces Covenant pages on each of the LA websites (date)		
3. Establish an understanding of local authority differences and tailor engagement in response to this.	Baseline set for each LA's to work from based on the FIMT . Our Community, Our Covenant traffic light reporting system. Appendix 2. (when)		

Outcome 1 - Advocate the Covenant and produce a standard means by which the voices and concerns of the Armed Forces Community and Veterans can be raised. Community contribution is fed back to the partnership and observations are evaluated to impact future service delivery.

1.ACTIVITY Milestones to deliver the outcomes agreed at the project outset Source: Project Application/Quarterly Reports	2. HOW How was this undertaken, who were the target audience and when was it achieved? Source: Project Team/Project Reports Partner input required	3. MEASUREMENT OF EFFECT An outline of the achievements and impact Partner input required	4. NEXT STEPS include actions that must/should/could be undertaken Partner input required
4. Establish and promote publicity/ social media (measure numbers interacting, number of posts and tweets newsletters/updates produced, feedback on preferred methods, feedback on quality of content)	LAFVP contribution to LA ERS award process (dates)		
5. Research options for web presence/best methods of communication and present a business case with options. Include a review of existing LA websites.	LAFVP input to setting up/supporting LA Covenant Groups (when)		

Outcome 1 - Advocate the Covenant and produce a standard means by which the voices and concerns of the Armed Forces Community and Veterans can be raised. Community contribution is fed back to the partnership and observations are evaluated to impact future service delivery.

1.ACTIVITY Milestones to deliver the outcomes agreed at the project outset Source: Project Application/Quarterly Reports	2. HOW How was this undertaken, who were the target audience and when was it achieved? Source: Project Team/Project Reports Partner input required	3. MEASUREMENT OF EFFECT An outline of the achievements and impact Partner input required	4. NEXT STEPS include actions that must/should/could be undertaken Partner input required
6. Work with delivery partners to raise the profile of the Covenant amongst stakeholders in their areas, establish a baseline of stakeholders engaged and identify where communication is most needed. Identify the Armed Forces baseline in the Lothians and appropriate methods to raise awareness.	LA Service Leavers Guides produced (date)		
7. Attend relevant events and activities and participate where appropriate to use these opportunities to raise awareness of the Covenant and signpost to services (measure numbers engaging with Military Covenant through activities or events)	Assisted in raising awareness of the Covenant amongst the Armed Forces community (dates) Worked with Garrison HQ to develop a communications plan (when)		

SECTION 2- Please complete sections 2,3 and 4			
. Outcome 2 - Train public service staff to be more receptive and mindful in approach to issues faced by the Armed Forces Community and Veterans to improve the Community's quality of life; e.g. areas relating to access to housing, tax and benefits, financial literacy, childcare/family support			
1.ACTIVITY	2. HOW	3. MEASUREMENT OF EFFECT	4. NEXT STEPS
Milestones to deliver the outcomes agreed at the project outset Source: Project Application/Quarterly Reports	How was this undertaken, who were the target audience and when was it achieved? Source: Project Team/Project Reports Partner input required	An outline of the achievements and impact Partner input required	include actions that must/should/could be undertaken Partner input required
8. Training manual/ materials developed and existing resources updated (measure by date) and approved for delivery to front line staff	Development and Delivery of a comprehensive eLearning package for front line staff.		Roll out of eLearning to all LAs in Scotland
9. Tailor to best meet Partner's needs.			
10. Seek input and examples of good practice from others working in similar roles, including Jane Duncan and Local Authority Champions	Work with various HR departments to update reservist policies		
11. Staff Trained on Community Covenant and Armed Forces and Veterans Issues (measure numbers of staff, and quality / satisfaction with training).	Presentations to Clinical leads and various LA housing/education partners and elected members.		

. Outcome 2 - Train public service staff to be more receptive and mindful in approach to issues faced by the Armed Forces Community and Veterans to improve the Community's quality of life; e.g. areas relating to access to housing, tax and benefits, financial literacy, childcare/family support

1.ACTIVITY Milestones to deliver the outcomes agreed at the project outset Source: Project Application/Quarterly Reports	2. HOW How was this undertaken, who were the target audience and when was it achieved? Source: Project Team/Project Reports Partner input required	3. MEASUREMENT OF EFFECT An outline of the achievements and impact Partner input required	4. NEXT STEPS include actions that must/should/could be undertaken Partner input required
12. Add value where needed to signposting to housing guidance, homelessness support, welfare & financial literacy advice (measure quality and suitability of service, service user numbers signposted). Signpost to target audiences. 13.	Communication channels established between LA housing offices and Scottish Veterans Residences		
14. Engage with National Transitions Officer, Garrison and Brigade staff to establish existing support provided to military children/families and seek to add value where needed (measure quality and suitability of service). 15.			

. Outcome 2 - Train public service staff to be more receptive and mindful in approach to issues faced by the Armed Forces Community and Veterans to improve the Community's quality of life; e.g. areas relating to access to housing, tax and benefits, financial literacy, childcare/family support

1.ACTIVITY Milestones to deliver the outcomes agreed at the project outset Source: Project Application/Quarterly Reports	2. HOW How was this undertaken, who were the target audience and when was it achieved? Source: Project Team/Project Reports Partner input required	3. MEASUREMENT OF EFFECT An outline of the achievements and impact Partner input required	4. NEXT STEPS include actions that must/should/could be undertaken Partner input required
16. Engage with Third Sector Gateway organisations delivering services to veterans to promote the Covenant (volunteer opportunities at transition identified).			

Section 3 Please complete sections 2,3 and 4

Outcome 3 - Improve co-ordination of the support given to the Armed Forces Community and Veterans about health and wellbeing working with NHS Lothian. Provide relevant services and social care based on the needs of the client, especially to those injured, sick, wounded or traumatised following service. Signpost to and provide opportunities which promote recovery and allow clients with health barriers to reach fuller potential.

1.ACTIVITY Milestones to deliver the outcomes agreed at the project outset Source: Project Application/Quarterly Reports	2. HOW How was this undertaken, who were the target audience and when was it achieved? Source: Project Team/Project Reports Partner input required	3. MEASUREMENT OF EFFECT An outline of the achievements and impact Partner input required	4. NEXT STEPS include actions that must/should/could be undertaken Partner input required
15. Partners deliver workshops to Military Community on wellbeing and NHS Services (measure number delivered, feedback on quality)	Telephone survey of GP's surgery to gain ascertain if they were aware of V1P.		Roll out of eLearning to all LAs in Scotland
16. Promote wellbeing campaign and use social media (measure number interacting, level of understanding message).	Promoted the work of V1P at various events and across various forums		
17. Signpost clients to relevant health professionals/GP's /therapists/ clinicians (where possible measure numbers of service referrals, numbers of GP's and NHS professionals aware).	Supported V1P in their endeavours to reach out to the veteran community.		
18. Ensure clients can receive better mental health support and counselling, and physical recovery support (where possible measure number of referrals, benefit to client, numbers of therapists and drug and alcohol support staff made aware).	Presentation on the Armed Forces Covenant to NHS staff. Made e learning accessible to NHS staff.		

Section 4 Please complete sections 2,3 and 4

Outcome 4 - Improve socio-economic chances for the Armed Forces Community and Veterans: to train and gain skills, contribute their experience into enterprise and work opportunities within society, and encourage further employment opportunities for Reservists.

1.ACTIVITY Milestones to deliver the outcomes agreed at the project outset Source: Project Application/Quarterly Reports	2. HOW How was this undertaken, who were the target audience and when was it achieved? Source: Project Team/Project Reports Partner input required	3. MEASUREMENT OF EFFECT An outline of the achievements and impact Partner input required	4. NEXT STEPS include actions that must/should/could be undertaken Partner input required
19. Engage with Defence Relationship Management (DRM) and HQ 51st Infantry brigade to add value to raising awareness amongst employers of the key skills of the Armed Forces & Veterans Community (measure number of employers engaged, level of involvement), using the Capitalising on Military Talent toolkit to help promote key skills	Referrals made to DRM from companies and institutions who expressed interest in signing up to the Armed Forces Covenant		Roll out of eLearning to all LAs in Scotland
20. Encourage employers in the Lothians to sign up to the Covenant in Business and refer those interested to DRM.	Poster campaign in conjunction DWP encouraging veterans/ex-forces to make themselves known to job coaches.		

Outcome 4 - Improve socio-economic chances for the Armed Forces Community and Veterans: to train and gain skills, contribute their experience into enterprise and work opportunities within society, and encourage further employment opportunities for Reservists

1.ACTIVITY Milestones to deliver the outcomes agreed at the project outset Source: Project Application/Quarterly Reports	2. HOW How was this undertaken, who were the target audience and when was it achieved? Source: Project Team/Project Reports Partner input required	3. MEASUREMENT OF EFFECT An outline of the achievements and impact Partner input required	4. NEXT STEPS include actions that must/should/could be undertaken Partner input required
21. Review this throughout the project to measure growth	Support to various Jobcentres during their Armed Forces Weeks by providing literature and a team presence at these events.		
22. Help signpost Veterans to employability, enterprise and training services offered by partners (measure number of clients engaging).			
23. Identify what services Partners offer			
24. Engage with DWP to add value to their work in support of the Armed Forces community			

Outcome 4 - Improve socio-economic chances for the Armed Forces Community and Veterans: to train and gain skills, contribute their experience into enterprise and work opportunities within society, and encourage further employment opportunities for Reservists			
1.ACTIVITY Milestones to deliver the outcomes agreed at the project outset Source: Project Application/Quarterly Reports	2. HOW How was this undertaken, who were the target audience and when was it achieved? Source: Project Team/Project Reports Partner input required	3. MEASUREMENT OF EFFECT An outline of the achievements and impact Partner input required	4. NEXT STEPS include actions that must/should/could be undertaken Partner input required
25. Raise awareness of the Covenant and key skills of Armed Forces and Veterans Community in the Further and Higher Education Sector in the Lothians and seek to secure better access to education and courses (measure institutions involved, level of support).	Work with Napier university, Edinburgh College, West Lothian College to promote the opportunities for service personnel to enter into further education. Support to LAs in ERS application process		
26. Employers and organisations employing veterans, reservists, and their spouses/ partners (including Council & NHS) understand the value of their work and skills contribution (measure staff numbers identified, level of development support.			

Section 5 Please complete sections 2,3 and 4			
Outcome 5 - Promote the positive contribution our Armed Forces Community and Veterans bring to our wider society.			
1.ACTIVITY Milestones to deliver the outcomes agreed at the project outset Source: Project Application/Quarterly Reports	2. HOW How was this undertaken, who were the target audience and when was it achieved? Source: Project Team/Project Reports Partner input required	3. MEASUREMENT OF EFFECT An outline of the achievements and impact Partner input required	4. NEXT STEPS include actions that must/should/could be undertaken Partner input required
27. Engage with Defence Relationship Management (DRM) and HQ 51st Infantry brigade to add value to raising awareness amongst employers of the key skills of the Armed Forces & Veterans Community (measure number of employers engaged, level of involvement), using the Capitalising on Military Talent toolkit to help promote key skills	Work with several veterans' organisation to promote Remembrance events across the Lothians Work with Poppy Scotland sharing their social media and supporting the annual Poppy Appeal		Roll out of eLearning to all LAs in Scotland
28. Encourage employers in the Lothians to sign up to the Covenant in Business and refer those interested to DRM 29.	Myth busting campaign run across LAFVP social media platforms.		

Outcome 5 - Promote the positive contribution our Armed Forces Community and Veterans bring to our wider society

1.ACTIVITY Milestones to deliver the outcomes agreed at the project outset Source: Project Application/Quarterly Reports	2. HOW How was this undertaken, who were the target audience and when was it achieved? Source: Project Team/Project Reports Partner input required	3. MEASUREMENT OF EFFECT An outline of the achievements and impact Partner input required	4. NEXT STEPS include actions that must/should/could be undertaken Partner input required
30. Review this throughout the project to measure growth.	Advised serval organisations on applying for Covenant funding.		
31. Help signpost Veterans to employability, enterprise and training services offered by partners (measure number of clients engaging).	Support for the Veterans Volunteer project Midlothian		
32. Identify what services Partners offer			

Outcome 5 - Promote the positive contribution our Armed Forces Community and Veterans bring to our wider society

1.ACTIVITY Milestones to deliver the outcomes agreed at the project outset Source: Project Application/Quarterly Reports	2. HOW How was this undertaken, who were the target audience and when was it achieved? Source: Project Team/Project Reports Partner input required	3. MEASUREMENT OF EFFECT An outline of the achievements and impact Partner input required	4. NEXT STEPS include actions that must/should/could be undertaken Partner input required
33. Engage with DWP to add value to their work in support of the Armed Forces community.	Support to a range of Armed Forces Day events across the region		
34. Raise awareness of the Covenant and key skills of Armed Forces and Veterans Community in the Further and Higher Education Sector in the Lothians and seek to secure better access to education and courses (measure institutions involved, level of support)	Support to a number of Business Breakfasts		

Outcome 5 - Promote the positive contribution our Armed Forces Community and Veterans bring to our wider society			
1. ACTIVITY Milestones to deliver the outcomes agreed at the project outset Source: Project Application/Quarterly Reports	2. HOW How was this undertaken, who were the target audience and when was it achieved? Source: Project Team/Project Reports Partner input required	3. MEASUREMENT OF EFFECT An outline of the achievements and impact Partner input required	4. NEXT STEPS include actions that must/should/could be undertaken Partner input required
35. Employers and organisations employing veterans, reservists, and their spouses/ partners (including Council & NHS) understand the value of their work and skills contribution (measure staff numbers identified, level of development support)	Reported to the Cross-Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on The Armed Forces and Veterans Community Meeting 10 Sep 2019.		

End of questionnaire

Appendix 4: Project Participant Consent Form



Participant Consent Form

Evaluation of the Lothian Armed Forces and Veterans Project

- I have read and understood the participant information sheet and this consent form.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions about my participation.
- I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in this study.
- I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this study at any stage without giving any reason.
- I agree to participate in this study.
- I am happy to be contacted to take part in an interview/Focus Group**

Name of participant: _____

Signature of participant: _____

Signature of researcher: _____

Date: _____

Contact details of the researcher

Dr Gerri Matthews- Smith, FHEA
University Lead for Military Research
Edinburgh Napier University, The Business School
Craiglockhart Campus ,Room 2/40
Edinburgh
EH14 1DJ

Tel 0131 455 5615
M 07946540501



Appendix 5: Questionnaire and Outcomes

Appendix – Questionnaire 1 and outcomes 1


Impact is highlighted in green examples of potential reach are highlighted in yellow

Outcome 1 - Advocate the Covenant and produce a standard means by which the voices and concerns of the Armed Forces Community and Veterans can be raised. Community contribution is fed back to the partnership and observations are evaluated to impact future service delivery.			
1. ACTIVITY - Milestones agreed at project outset Source: Project Application / Quarterly Reports	2. HOW - Undertaken, who target audience and when achieved? Source: Project Team / Project Reports	3. MEASUREMENT OF EFFECT - Outline of achievements and impact Source : Questionnaire 1	4. NEXT STEPS - Actions that must/should/could be undertaken Source : Questionnaire 1
<p>1. Engage with a wide range of stakeholders across the Lothian community to raise awareness of the Covenant and use the Forces in Mind Trust report toolkit.</p>	<p>'Social media platforms set up - (https://www.facebook.com/LAFVP/ and @lafvp)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twitter set up in Sept 2017 Facebook Oct 2017 	<p>Evidence of EL AFCG using the FiM toolkit can be found in the EL AFC Action Plan. In terms of achievements, many actions have been met in the plan and the plan will be further reviewed/ developed by the end of 2020.</p> <p>1. Social media stats reported on a monthly basis via the Engagement Log</p> <p>The team produced regular updates on social media reach as part of their reporting. During Covid social media has become more important in supporting people</p> <p>There has been no shortage of energy and engagement. LAFVP representatives have engaged widely on almost all forums that link the AF Community to civil society in Lothian. These include Community Covenant Partnerships; Garrison welfare meetings; individual office calls with stakeholders; Garrison school 'cluster' meetings.</p>	<p>Each LA should review their AF Action Plan (and communication plans) Bi-Annually</p> <p>A set of clear messages about the Covenant that can be developed and used by the LAFVG and Covenant Partners would be helpful going forward. This will be useful in maintaining consistent awareness and messaging on the Covenant.</p> <p>Should the accounts be wound up, or offered stewardship under a name change to another group?</p> <p>Cover the loss of Social media presence. @lafvp has been important for feedback and will cease on 31/10/20. May be scope for Garrison to progress this as part of its outward facing social media platform. How do we communicate</p>

			<p>the change to veterans and their families?</p> <p>The cessation of the LAFVP puts the onus on the LAFVG as the regional focus for the Covenant.</p> <p>LAFVG will need to develop a mechanism for assessing and articulating Covenant priorities. A key output from each LAFVG conference should be a 'state of the Covenant' which articulates this for each LA.</p> <p>In the absence of the LAFVP, consideration should be given to including Lowland RFCA (as DRM) representation in the LAFVG.</p>
<p>2.Establish an understanding of the Armed Forces Community in the Lothian's</p>	<p>2. Comprehensive Armed Forces Covenant pages on each of the LA websites(2018)</p>	<p>https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/homepage/10426/armed_forces_community</p> <p>From 01.09.19 to 31.08.20, there were 384 views of this page, from 146 total sessions. In case, it is useful: 75% of that traffic came from Google – the rest came direct or from Bing, duckduckgo, the ELC intranet, LinkedIn and Inform.</p> <p>The existing AFC web page on the MLC website was fully refreshed and brought up to date. It has been easier for members of the public to find and access the information on the website and there has been an increase in use of the dedicated AFC email address for queries.</p> <p>2' The Project Team worked with Edinburgh Garrison to establish the AF footprint in the Lothians. This was then shared with all of the Covenant Partnerships.</p> <p>2.Each LA Covenant officer should be able to provide figures for the number of page hits</p>	<p>Each LA should review their web pages and content Annually</p> <p>(Establish an understanding of the Armed Forces Community in the Lothian's) This will need to be kept up to date. Previously relied on LAFVP to send links, which made it easy to update. Potentially use information sent from Veterans Scotland to update web page accordingly</p> <p>2.Pages to be regularly reviewed by the Covenant Officers</p>

		<p>2. The 4 LAs shared best practice and were supported to update webpages with pertinent information and links. Edinburgh's offer improved, and the Covenant Group were involved in providing information and proof reading</p>	<p>2. Delivery Partners should review at least annually collectively, then update individually via Covenant Groups</p>
<p>3. Establish an understanding of local authority differences and tailor engagement in response to this</p>	<p>Baseline set for each LA's to work from based on the FiMT Our Community, Our Covenant traffic light reporting system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First issued in April 2018 	<p>3. Feedback at each EL AF CG meeting from the LAFVP team on ELs progress against the traffic light system and updates sent regularly.</p> <p>3a. We compiled an AF Community Profile (needs updated) for East Lothian to inform engagement with the AF Community and relevant partner organisations.</p> <p>3. Midlothian were working from a very good baseline but the impact of the tool meant it was very easy to see what areas of work still needed to be addressed and the quarterly update highlighted what had been achieved.</p> <p>3. Improvement of the performance of each LA logged on the master spreadsheet</p> <p>3. The traffic light system was a visual prompt to areas needing input, and the updated picture identified progress.</p>	<p>Complete (no further action as end of project)</p> <p>3a. should be updated annually</p> <p>Establish an understanding of local authority differences and tailor engagement in response to this). Be aware of any changes e.g. Legislation of AFC and implement accordingly</p> <p>3. Potentially the LAFVG could take responsibility to follow up on this on an annual basis and ensure the each LA is maintaining performance</p> <p>3. The LAFVG may want to devise a further traffic light system to focus ongoing work</p>
<p>4. Establish and promote publicity/ social media (measure numbers interacting, number of posts and tweets newsletters/updates produced, feedback on preferred methods,</p>	<p>LAFVP contribution to LA ERS award process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4. ELC achieved the Bronze ERS award in 2018 and Silver in 2019:- https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/news/article/13100/east_lothian_council_receives_mod_seal_of_approval • We worked closely with the LAFVP team to complete the silver application form and they added this quote to the application. "Our project aims to raise awareness of the Covenant and improve support to the Armed Forces Community, as well as promoting a stronger public profile for 	<p>4. Each LA (and/ or delivery partner) should consider bi-annually working towards the next level award</p> <p>Establish and promote publicity/ social media (measure numbers interacting, number of posts and tweets newsletters/updates produced, feedback on preferred</p>

<p>feedback on quality of content)</p>		<p><i>the Armed Forces and Veterans by highlighting the positive contribution they bring to our wider society. We have been privileged to work with East Lothian Council and the local Armed Forces to establish an active working group to ensure that the Covenant is delivered effectively and with commitment. The enthusiasm that we have seen from the council has been extremely positive and we have confidence that this will bode well for the work of the group and relationship between the Local Authorities and Armed Forces Community.”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press coverage and internal communications again highlighted the AFC to the wider community and how MLC are supporting it. • 4’ Effective social media platforms were set up early on in the Project and have been a valuable communication tool. Quarterly stats show that there has been engagement via these platforms. • Aileen nominated Edinburgh for an award and was instrumental in collecting the information for and liaising with Colin Voote on Edinburgh’s successful submission. She attended the presentation ceremony. • Networks are strong, and there is a coherence of understanding across the Covenant Partners, with the LAFVP acting as an important focal point. • 	<p>methods, feedback on quality of content Sustainability, ensure we continue to deliver on all aspects of AFC.</p> <p>A solution for an ongoing social media presence for reaching out to Veterans in particular is needed going forward. A part time post to maintain and manage this along with some other clearly defined tasks would be one solution.</p> <p>4. City of Edinburgh Council will need to regularly review that pledges are being fulfilled</p>
<p>5. Research options for web presence/best methods of communication and present a business case with options. Include a review of existing LA websites.</p>	<p>LAFVP input to setting up/supporting LA Covenant Groups</p> <p>Ongoing throughout the project Sept 2017 to Oct 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5. Five Meetings have been held to date with representation at each from the LAFVP team. Minutes and agendas available on request. • ‘5’ It was established early on in the Project that it was not viable for the Team to create a new bespoke website – and that instead the Team would work with LAs to create bespoke Covenant pages on their websites. This has been done (excellent pages have been developed) and there is consistency across all LAs – providing a wealth of information for the AF community. The Team also produced user guides for Service Leavers in each of the LA areas – these are excellent and have received positive feedback. <p>5/6.All LA’s now have established functioning Covenant groups who meet on a regular basis LAFVP attend meeting where and when possible</p>	<p>5.Complete in terms of involvement of LAFVP</p> <p>5.Edinburgh Garrison plans to finalise the communication Plan in the next few months and link this to the establishment of a suitable social media platform for the Garrison. This will be used to periodically help raise awareness of the Covenant amongst the AF community going forward</p> <p>5/6.Going forward the Armed Forces Champion and Covenant Officers should ensure that these meetings continue and ensure that they remain an effective way of keeping</p>

			abreast of veterans' issues within their LA. This should be monitored through the LAFVG
<p>6. Work with delivery partners to raise the profile of the Covenant amongst stakeholders in their areas, establish a baseline of stakeholders engaged and identify where communication is needed the most. Identify the Armed Forces baseline in the Lothians and appropriate methods to raise awareness</p>	<p>LA Service Leavers Guides produced Dec 2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Service Leaver Guide available on ELC website. Paper copies not yet distributed as all local sites still have limited access to them due to Covid (i.e. community centres, libraries etc.). Guide is available to download on Council website and hard copies have been distributed across the LA. 6,500 copies of the guides were printed and distributed  <p>Service Leavers Guide Edinburgh.pdf Service Leavers Guide East Lothian.pdf Service Leavers Guide West Lothian.pdf</p> <p>Service Leavers Guide Midlothian.pdf</p> <p>6. The Service Leavers Guides are a great resource. LAFVG decided one for each LA area rather than a Lothian wide guide was preferred. Natalie ensured the guides were progressed and liaised with officers and officials, and print services. The Guide is also available electronically on the Council's website. All Lothian LAs are SILVER (2) or GOLD (2) ERS award holders, with the LAFVP providing key support to this. Our perception of the LAFVP tenure has seen a steady improvement in our LAs' grasp of the Covenant with CofEC, Midlothian Council and Edinburgh Napier University in particular now acting as powerful and proactive advocates for the Covenant.</p>	<p>6. Bi-annual update should be completed</p> <p>6.All 4 Covenant Officers now hold the master electronic copy and are responsible for updating it on a regular basis to keep the information current</p> <p>6. The Guides need to be disseminated to local venues and across frontline services and support groups, etc to make the best impact. Each LA has ownership of their original for updating</p>
<p>7.Attend relevant events and activities and participate where appropriate to use these opportunities to raise awareness of the Covenant and signpost to services (measure numbers</p>	<p>Assisted in raising awareness of the Covenant amongst the Armed Forces community (Ongoing throughout the project Sept 2017 to Oct 2020)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7.The EL Armed Forces Champion, EL AFCG Chair and Supporting Officer have attended a range of meetings supporting the work of the Armed Forces Covenant. These include: Meeting with the LAFVP team on a regular basis to help develop and deliver actions contained within our local action plan. Meeting with other Lothian AFC supporting officers to share ideas and develop work. 	<p>7. LAs should continue to Attend relevant events and activities and participate where appropriate.</p>

<p>engaging with Military Covenant through activities or events</p>	<p>Worked with Garrison HQ to develop a communications plan</p> <p>'7' Assisted in raising awareness of the Covenant amongst the Armed Forces community (dates)</p> <p>'7' Worked with Garrison HQ to develop a communications plan (when)</p> <p>'7' Reported to the Cross-Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on The Armed Forces and Veterans Community Meeting 10 Sep 2019. (when)</p> <p>'7' Advised several organisations on applying for Covenant funding (dates)</p>	<p>Lothian Armed Forces and Veterans Group (LAFVG) meetings. This included a visit to the Personnel Recovery Unit (PRU) on the 16th January 2020.</p> <p>Attendance at the Lothian Armed Forces and Veterans Delivery Partners meetings.</p> <p>EL Armed Forces Champion, EL AFCG Chair and Supporting Officer have attended a range of events supporting the work of the Armed Forces Covenant. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Armed Forces Covenant Conference on the 30th April 2019. This was a National event at held at Newcastle FC Stadium. - Voices of Veterans consultation event in Bathgate on the 13th June 2019. - The "Informing Scotland – Armed Forces and Veterans Champions Gathering" on the 1st October 2018. - Attendance at the "Battles Over – A Nations Tribute" Piper tribute at 6am on the 11th November 2018. We asked a number of Pipers to play in key location across East Lothian to support this event. • EL AFCG worked very closely with L&B Yeomanry to hold a parade in Dunbar in July 2019. Part of this work involved granting the Yeomanry "The Freedom of East Lothian". More information on this can be found here: https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/news/article/13006/historic_army_regiment_to_receive_freedom_of_east_lothian • The Yeomanry were presented with a scroll to commemorate this. The Parade was well attended by the public. • '7' The Team worked with Edinburgh Garrison to appraise current communication methods and to develop a communication plan that would also be a vehicle for raising awareness of the Covenant within the Garrison AF community. The Team provided an excellent template to work from, good progress was made but finalisation of the plan was not feasible due to COVID-19. • '7' The Team gave presentations on the Covenant at a number of Garrison meetings – raising awareness of the Covenant and the Covenant Fund and making themselves 	<p>Edinburgh Garrison plans to finalise the communication Plan in the next few months and link this to the establishment of a suitable social</p>
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		<p>available for unit briefings. They also visited a number of units and coffee mornings. Whilst this went some way to raising awareness of the Covenant the likelihood is that many of the personnel they engaged with will have now moved on and there remains a need for ongoing awareness raising.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7' The Team also developed an excellent relationship with BFBS radio and participated in a number of radio interviews talking about the Covenant – the target audience being the local AF community. • The Team were very proactive in keeping partners and stakeholders updated on current Covenant Fund programmes. They also provided some advice and guidance to applicants. They worked with Napier University and other key stakeholders on an application for funds for a book to help children suffering from PTSD. Although not successful, the concept was good, and well thought through. • Covenant advocacy conducted at the Garrison Welfare forums, through individual unit visits and BFBS. Confident that unit civil engagement and welfare reps understand the Covenant. There is still more work to do. • Covenant Communications Plan drafted by Garrison but stalled due to COVID 19. 	<p>media platform for the Garrison. This will be used to periodically help raise awareness of the Covenant amongst the AF community going forward.</p>
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Outcome 2 - Train public service staff to be more receptive and mindful in approach to issues faced by the Armed Forces Community and Veterans to improve the Community's quality of life; e.g. areas relating to access to housing, tax and benefits, financial literacy, childcare/family support			
<p>1. ACTIVITY - Milestones agreed at project outset Source: Project Application / Quarterly Reports</p>	<p>2. HOW - Undertaken, who target audience and when achieved? Source: Project Team / Project Reports</p>	<p>3. MEASUREMENT OF EFFECT - Outline of achievements and impact Source : Questionnaire 1</p>	<p>4. NEXT STEPS - Actions that must/should/could be undertaken Source : Questionnaire 1</p>
<p>8. Training manual/ materials developed and existing resources updated (measure by date) and approved for delivery to front line staff</p>		<p>Our understanding is that this has been a significant success. The only concern is that there appears to be no mechanism for assuring how many people have carried it out and in what departments.</p>	<p>Roll out of eLearning to all LAs in Scotland Recommend the following action plan for the LAFVG:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce quarterly stats on training.

		<p>8. The team investigated the changes needed to recast the original material to be suitable for Scotland. They worked with the original developer and media personnel in CEC, ran a trial and adapted. The final version was uploaded to CEC elearning portal and marked as essential learning. Uptake has been disappointing. Through Natalie's contacts the Scottish Government has recently agreed to send out to all Local Authorities in Scotland which is a real accolade for the project</p> <p>8. The module has been accessed 470 times on the Council site and 18 times on our Community site from launch.</p> <p>8. 101 members of Midlothian staff have completed it to date and are more aware of AFC in Midlothian</p> <p>'8' The development and roll out of the e-learning package is a significant and tangible achievement. It has been a great success and has contributed to raising awareness of the Covenant in the Lothians. The Team worked hard to overcome some challenges early on both technically and in seeking agreement for the final text.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual review of currency of eLearning vs national practice. • Seek reassurance that CofEC will continue technical support. • Engage other public-facing organisations that would benefit from eLearning (e.g. Police Scotland; DWP; SFRS etc). <p>8. A more targeted roll out of the learning to all front line staff in the Council as well as encouraging Senior Managers to highlight need to undertake it is required</p> <p>Roll out of eLearning to all LAs in Scotland</p> <p>Promote completion of module with all Midlothian Council staff and offer it to Third Sector</p> <p>The LAFVG has undertaken to review the e learning annually to ensure currency and accuracy. This will be essential going forward.</p> <p>The LAFVG should also seek to monitor the uptake of front line staff undertaking the e learning and encourage momentum.</p> <p>The LAFVG should also seek to review the e-Learning relevance alongside future development of any other awareness raising resources across Scotland.</p>
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9. Tailor to meet Partner's needs.			
10. Seek input and examples of good practice from others working in similar roles, including Jane Duncan and Local Authority Champions		<p>Edinburgh Garrison is not able to assess the impact of this</p> <p>10. Reservist policy has been updated and promoted and link on HR orb pages.</p> <p>10. ELC HR Department updated the Reservist Policy in December 2019. Copy attached to return email.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council recognises the training commitments of Reservists and particularly the importance of the Annual Training period. The Council will grant special leave for up to fifteen working days to enable an employee to attend Annual Training. Line managers are asked to make this policy known to staff who may not be able to routinely access the intranet. ELC have recently set up an email address (hrarmedforces@eastlothian.gov.uk) for employees to contact the HR and Armed Forces lead directly. This has allowed staff to self-identify as either veterans, or reservists and work around this is ongoing. A social work student on placement recently got in touch to say they were ex forces and really impressed with ELC commitment to support veterans. 	<p>10. Review as needed and continue to engage with staff work force to promote policy and opportunities to engage with staff who are members of the Armed Forces community via a Staff Network.</p>
11. Staff Trained on Community Covenant and Armed Forces and Veterans Issues (measure		<p>Edinburgh Garrison is not able to assess the impact of this.</p> <p>11. Familiarisation session held with Covenant Group</p> <p>11. The LAFVP team provided a brief to ELC Councillors about the project in November 2018. There were 6 attendees.</p>	

<p>numbers of staff, and quality / satisfaction with training).</p>		<p>11. The LAFVP team provided a brief to Service Managers about the project on 28th October 2019. This lead to Senior Managers having more knowledge of the AFC and eLearning module.</p> <p>11. The LAFVP Team held an event at the Royal Infirmary (in partnership with Veterans 1st) in February 2019. https://www.veteransfirstpoint.org.uk/events/scottish-veterans-commissioner-and-lothians-armed-forces-and-veterans-project-presentation.</p> <p>11 - Buy in from elected members and support for the AFC. Better understanding of the covenant and who is classed as a Veteran.</p>	<p>11. Briefings should be undertaken biannually.</p> <p>11 – Continue to keep elected members briefed with any new developments. The Provost as Armed Forces Champion has a role in this.</p>
<p>12. Add value where needed to signposting to housing guidance, homelessness support, welfare & financial literacy advice (measure quality and suitability of service, service user numbers signposted). Signpost to target audiences.</p>		<p>Edinburgh Garrison is not able to assess the impact of this</p> <p>12. This was a substantive subject of an Edinburgh Covenant Group. The wish for a single register was raised. Webpages include housing advice and service links</p> <p>12. East Lothian Housing Allocation Policy updated in April 2019 and reflective of additional housing points for veterans (p19)</p> <p>12.ELC built affordable homes in Cockenzie for Veterans in partnership with the Scottish Veterans Garden City Association. See: https://www.eastlothiancourier.com/news/17824955.new-affordable-homes-cockenzie-armed-forces-veterans/</p>	<p>12. CEC Housing Officer tasked to look into a single register, report back to next Covenant Group</p> <p>12. Reviewed as needed.</p>
<p>13.Engage with National Transitions Officer, Garrison and Brigade staff to establish existing support provided to military children/families and seek to add value where needed (measure</p>		<p>Has engaged with NTO from the outside (Specialist expertise lies with Defence).</p> <p>Successful, in that, when faced with questions, the LAFVP/NTO relationship was established and knew where to seek advice.</p> <p>LAFVP was an active participant in the Getting it Right for Forces Families (GIRFF) network – the forum for schools serving Edinburgh Garrison. Has also engaged directly with local schools.</p>	<p>Edinburgh Garrison should take this forward as the lead, working through the LAFVG.</p> <p>Further work needed to identify where dispersed serviced families (and indeed veterans) tend to</p>

<p>quality and suitability of service</p>		<p>13. Schools rep part of Covenant Group, nursery and school Covenant Fund project bids supported</p> <p>'13' The Team engaged early on with the National Transitions Officer and Brigade Staff. They were appraised of the existing structures and support in place to support AF children's education and the key personalities to remain engaged with during the course of their work. They also attended Edinburgh and Midlothian Getting it Right for Forces Families meetings – enabling them to see first hand the stakeholder engagement in place, and to draw on this when needed. Engagement with the National Transitions Officer enabled accurate and relevant references to children's education within the LA guides.</p>	<p>concentrate within Edinburgh and Lothian.</p> <p>13. Ongoing support of Covenant Fund applications through Covenant Officers and Garrison staff, and key partners</p>
<p>14. Engage with Third Sector Gateway organisations delivering services to veterans to promote the Covenant (volunteer opportunities at transition identified).</p>	<p>Ongoing throughout the project Sept 2017 to Oct 2020</p>	<p>I have come to regard the LAFVP as the focal point for our 3rd sector veteran support agencies and the gap is a concern as the project ceases. Having said that, the networks are now built, largely thanks to the LAFVP.</p> <p>14. 3rd Sector on Covenant Group. Bid for Covenant Fund with Volunteer Edinburgh considered. Lord Provost's Commission has considered training and employment</p> <p>'14' It is clear from dialogue with the Team, some of the 3rd sector organisations and the quarterly reports that the Team engaged effectively and widely with a range of 3rd sector Gateway organisations.</p>	<p>The LAFVG is the hub of the network. Garrison, working closely with Vets Scotland will need to play a more prominent role in assessing the vets 'situation' and feeding into the LAFVG. There will need to be closer engagement between Garrison and the key 3rd Sector agencies (Vets Scotland; Vets UK; V1P; ASAP; LVC)</p> <p>14. Careers Transition Service to be focus of next Commission meeting</p>

Outcome 3 - Improve co-ordination of the support given to the Armed Forces Community and Veterans about health and wellbeing working with NHS Lothian. Provide relevant services and social care based on the needs of the client, especially to those injured, sick, wounded or traumatised following service. Signpost to and provide opportunities which promote recovery and allow clients with health barriers to reach fuller potential.			
1.ACTIVITY - Milestones agreed at project outset Source: Project Application / Quarterly Reports	2. HOW - Undertaken, who target audience and when achieved? Source: Project Team / Project Reports	3. MEASUREMENT OF EFFECT - Outline of achievements and impact Source : Questionnaire 1	4. NEXT STEPS - Actions that must/should/could be undertaken Source : Questionnaire 1
15. Partners deliver workshops to Military Community on wellbeing and NHS Services (measure number delivered, feedback on quality)		<p>Edinburgh Garrison is not well placed to answer some of these questions – in many cases, I simply do not know.</p> <p>LAFVP and V1P clearly working in very close partnership.</p> <p>15.Survey results informed local Covenant Group and LAFVG</p> <p>15. This was a significant piece of work for the Team and provided a useful update on those GP surgeries that were aware of V1P, and to raise awareness amongst those who were not.</p>	<p>Roll out of eLearning to all LAs in Scotland</p> <p>Difficult to replicate this link in future – as already stated places more emphasis on the LAFVG as a focal point going forward.</p> <p>Recommended Action Plan (for LAFVG to take forward):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage further promotion of eLearning within NHS Lothian. (NHS Lothian) • Develop an assurance mechanism for eLearning completion. (LAFVG) • Promote Covenant and V1P to AF Community and families. (Garrison HQ) <p>15.Health and Wellbeing is of greater concern because of Covid, a concerted and co-ordinated partner response would be beneficial</p> <p>Any methods to continue raising awareness of the AF community and V1P would be positive going forward.</p>

		15. LAFVP have detail on the number of GPs contacted in EL.	
16. Promote wellbeing campaign and use social media (measure number interacting, level of understanding message).			
17. Signpost clients to relevant health professionals/GP's /therapists/ clinicians (where possible measure numbers of service referrals, numbers of GP's and NHS professionals aware).		17. Our AF Community Profile holds some detail on who is accessing services. 17. ELC Strategic Housing Needs Assessment 2017 contains a section on the housing needs of veterans (p96).	17. All LAs to consider compiling a AF Community Profile to inform the work of their AF Covenant using Housing and Health data.
18. Ensure clients can receive better mental health support and counselling, and physical recovery support (where possible measure number of referrals, benefit to client, numbers of therapists and drug and alcohol support staff made aware).		18. See NHS event detailed in section 2. 18. TBC re NHS access to module	

Outcome 4 - Improve socio-economic chances for the Armed Forces Community and Veterans: to train and gain skills, contribute their experience into enterprise and work opportunities within society, and encourage further employment opportunities for Reservists.

1. ACTIVITY - Milestones agreed at project outset Source: Project Application / Quarterly Reports	2. HOW - Undertaken, who target audience and when achieved? Source: Project Team / Project Reports	3. MEASUREMENT OF EFFECT - Outline of achievements and impact Source : Questionnaire 1	4. NEXT STEPS - Actions that must/should/could be undertaken Source : Questionnaire 1
<p>19. Engage with Defence Relationship Management (DRM) and HQ 51st Infantry brigade to add value to raising awareness amongst employers of the key skills of the Armed Forces & Veterans Community (measure number of employers engaged, level of involvement), using the Capitalising on Military Talent toolkit to help promote key skills</p>	<p>19' Referrals made to DRM from companies and institutions who expressed interest in signing up to the Armed Forces Covenant Ongoing throughout the project Sept 2017 to Oct 2020</p>	<p>19. Business Breakfasts, Chambers of Commerce, ERS</p> <p>Several events held at various DWP offices across the Lothians</p> <p>19. Council agreed to resign the Armed Forces Covenant as a standalone from the original Community Covenant, which the Edinburgh Partnership signed up to. This was celebrated in internal Orb and Website articles.</p> <p>Clear that LAFVP and Lowland RFCA engaging.</p> <p>Supported Edinburgh Napier University in developing a SCQF framework for service personnel; important work that we make use of.</p> <p>19' The Team engaged early with DRM and HQ 51st Infantry Brigade. They also circulated copies of the Capitalising on Military Talent toolkit to partners and the wider network in the Lothians.</p> <p>'19' The Team assisted the Garrison HQ at the end of 2019 with planning for 2 Lothian business breakfasts to raise awareness of the Covenant and the key skills of the Armed Forces and Veterans communities. Although the impact of COVID has meant this cannot be progressed until 2021, the input from the Team was invaluable and will endure during future planning.</p> <p>'19' The Team had a central role in setting up the Midlothian Veterans Placement Project – where a small number of Veterans directly benefited from this opportunity.</p>	<p>Roll out of eLearning to all LAs in Scotland</p> <p>19. HR could review use and understanding of Capitalising on Military Talent toolkit in policies</p> <p>Roll out of eLearning to all LAs in Scotland</p> <p>ERS Gold implies advocacy. I am confident that our Gold award holders are committed to support this after the LAFVP ceases</p> <p>Links between Partners and DRM should be maintained going forward.</p> <p>Suggest inviting DRM to deliver a presentation on the Covenant in Business to the LAFVG and to attend a meeting once a year.</p>

<p>20. Encourage employers in the Lothians to sign up to the Covenant in Business and refer those interested to DRM.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> '20' Poster campaign in conjunction DWP encouraging veterans/ex-forces to make themselves known to job coaches. June 2018 	<p>20. Business Breakfast held with help of Chamber of Commerce and hosted by Lord Provost to encourage businesses to sign the Armed Forces Covenant 20. LAFVP has been key to a series of successful Business Breakfasts – these were successful; the challenge is that the employers who do turn up at these events are often those who have bought into the Covenant already.</p> <p>'20' The awareness of the Covenant in Businesses was raised by the Team through their engagement with a number of employers in the Lothians and attendance at employer events. The signing of the Covenant by Bright Green Business was as a direct result of their engagement.</p>	<p>Consider encouraging businesses to sign up again post Covid. Council at risk of losing Gold status if pledges aren't enacted and kept up to date</p> <p>Garrison (working closely with DRM) could take forward the programme of business breakfasts, on an annual basis, across Lothian, but will need support from LAFVG partners to reach and incentivise a wider pool of employers. The Garrison HQ intention is to hold 2 Lothian business breakfasts per year in consultation and collaboration with Partners and the Chambers of Commerce. Whilst work will press on to deliver these, the loss of the Team to support these events will be keenly felt. This is an area that would benefit from a level of ongoing support moving forward.</p> <p>Suggest that the LAFVG should establish and maintain links with the DRM.</p>
<p>21. Help signpost Veterans to employability, enterprise and training services offered by partners (measure number of clients engaging).</p>	<p>21' Support to various Jobcentres during their Armed Forces Weeks by providing literature and a team presence at these events. June 2018, June 2019</p>	<p>22. Armed Forces Job Events have tended to be online in recent years. There is good representation and commitment from DWP on Covenant Group and LAFVG</p> <p>22. eLearning, webpages and Service Guides highlight services offered by partners</p>	<p>22. 23. Consider how best to keep pages up to date. One suggestion is for a six-monthly review of any changes needed to pages at LAFVG to ensure everyone is up to date.</p> <p>Garrison has only ever been able to focus on the initial period of transition (i.e. up to a year after leaving). There is a something of a void when it comes to veterans</p>

		Midlothian Corporate Management Team approved this scheme. As part of this project, it was also agreed to have future MLC jobs advertised with guaranteed interviews for Veterans within set criteria.	'upskilling' and education in Lothian. Is this for LAs to take forward, linking into work the Garrison is doing?
22. Identify what services Partners offer		23. eLearning, wepages and Service Guides highlight services offered by partners	
23. Engage with DWP to add value to their work in support of the Armed Forces community		23. DWP representation valued on Covenant Group and LAFVG. CEC HR promote jobs on the Forces Jos portal. 24. My understanding is that DWP is a partner in the LAFVG	24. Continue to promote jobs widely 24. Need to use Covenant Partnerships and LAFVG to engage with DWP, supporting initiatives where resources. 24. Confirm that DWP has access to eLearning.
24. Raise awareness of the Covenant and key skills of Armed Forces and Veterans Community in the Further and Higher Education Sector in the Lothians and seek to secure better access to education and courses (measure institutions involved, level of support).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> '25' Work with Napier University, Edinburgh College, West Lothian College to promote the opportunities for service personnel to enter into further education. Feb 2018 to Nov 2018 '25' Support to LAs in ERS application 	25. Edinburgh Gold Application Jan to Mar 2018, successful Aug 2018 Midlothian Gold Application Jan to Mar 2018, successful Aug 2018 East Lothian Silver Application Jun 2019, Successful 2019 West Lothian Gold Application Jan to Mar 2020, Unsuccessful Aug 2020 25. Covenant Group has considered skills transfer. Edinburgh Napier University who are on the Covenant Group have been instrumental in working with SQA to assess and grade service qualifications and fit them into the SQA framework. Soft skills are not as easy to quantify. 25. Lord Provost's Commission has considered training and employment	25. LAFVG to follow up on SQA alignment and soft skills realisation to inform recruitment services within partner organisations 25. Recommendations of Commission to be enacted

		'25' The Team played a valuable and key role in supporting the LAs in reaching their ERS standards (Gold in 2 cases).	More work to do with Edinburgh Napier University, Edinburgh College and West Lothian College to facilitate and promote HE and FE opportunities for Service personnel and families.
25. Employers and organisations employing veterans, reservists, and their spouses/ partners (including Council & NHS) understand the value of their work and skills contribution (measure staff numbers identified, level of development support.		26. Trying to establish a Forces Family Network at CEC to provide mutual support and inform policy etc.	26. Follow up article to encourage sign up 26. Continue business breakfasts to promote ERS, but reaching employers who are not yet familiar with AF or Covenant. (Garrison HQ can support these, but LAFVG to give focus).

Outcome 5 - Promote the positive contribution our Armed Forces Community and Veterans bring to our wider society.			
1. ACTIVITY - Milestones agreed at project outset Source: Project Application / Quarterly Reports	2. HOW - Undertaken, who target audience and when achieved? Source: Project Team / Project Reports	3. MEASUREMENT OF EFFECT - Outline of achievements and impact Source : Questionnaire 1	4. NEXT STEPS - Actions that must/should/could be undertaken Source : Questionnaire 1
26. Help raise public awareness of Veterans capacity and contribution to society (measure community, public sector staff and veteran's perception). (Link to 4.5).		27. Orb item highlighting team	27. LAFVG to review what more can be done within existing resources
27. Engage with HQ 51 Infantry Brigade and Lowland RFCA to help raise awareness of Cadets and their contribution to society		28. Lord Provost engages with cadets and makes a number vice lord lieutenants	28, 29. Lord Provost's civic role and Armed Forces and Veterans Champion will continue
28. Engage with relevant stakeholders (including HQ 51X Engagement Team) to help raise awareness of Remembrance and Commemoration events (measure wider community response, ideas of how people can participate, Armed Forces & Veterans response).	'29, 30' Support to a range of Armed Forces Day events across the region	29. Support to Lord Provost's office engaged in all remembrance events	
29. Keep abreast of Remembrance and Commemoration events and share this information with the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30' Work with several veterans' organisation to promote Remembrance events across the Lothians 	30. Team has engaged with veterans' organisations for remembrance and commemorative events. Lord Provost's office is up to date and work closely with Veterans'	30. Civic team and relevant officers manage arrangements for engagement and Armed Forces Day, including media releases and articles

<p>group and on social media</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> '30' Work with Poppy Scotland sharing their social media and supporting the annual Poppy Appeal 		
<p>30. Engage with National Transitions Officer, Garrison Staff and Local Authority Schools Officers to discuss and agree ways that the project can help to raise awareness of the Covenant in Schools (link to 13)</p>			

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