

Our Community, Our Covenant *and beyond*

The 2025 Armed Forces Covenant Conference

Ibrox Stadium, Glasgow



EUROPE



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Introduction



Research objectives



Characterise the **evolving environment** for delivery of the Armed Forces Covenant and wider support for the Armed Forces Community



Improve understanding of **how the Covenant is delivered** at a regional level to address disadvantages in the Armed Forces Community



Examine **how local and national partners work with statutory authorities** to support the delivery of the Covenant



Characterise **how different local delivery models shape the implementation of the Covenant** and wider support to the Armed Forces Community

August 2023

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July 2025

Research approach



Exploration phase

- Scoping interviews with 10 stakeholders
- Regional engagement in eight local authorities
- Interviews with 21 statutory and non-statutory actors working at the national or country level



Evaluation phase

- Survey with 54 local authorities, including comparison with previous OCOC surveys to assess progress, enablers and barriers
- Five local authority case studies



Synthesis, finalisation & impact

- Cross-cutting analysis
- Stakeholder workshops
- Final deliverables
- Dissemination, including launch event

Evolving context for the Armed Forces Covenant

The Covenant Duty:

- Renewed awareness and momentum
- Promoting continuity of service provision
- A source of accountability
- Empowerment of the Armed Forces Community

Other key factors:

- The structuring and resourcing of local authorities
- Public perceptions of the Armed Forces Community
- Local and national elections
- The 'cost-of-living crisis'
- The prolonged effects of COVID-19



Progress in Covenant Delivery



Areas of progress: Outcomes and outputs

Consideration of the AFC and potential areas of disadvantage by local authority staff, and corresponding amendment of policies and processes.

- AFC members are identified at first point of access to a service.
- Areas and sources of potential disadvantage for the AFC are identified.
- Local authority staff have access to information on the characteristics/needs of the AFC.

Optimisation of Covenant delivery, including awareness of the Covenant among local authority staff and service providers, effective partnership working, and understanding of Covenant-related priorities in a local authority area.

- Members of the AFC can be referred or understand how and where to access AFC-specific support services.
- AFC have access to services that take into account potential unique areas of disadvantage or additional regard.
- Members of the AFC have an awareness and understanding of the Covenant.

Delivery of effective support to the AFC, including their awareness of the Covenant.

- Awareness of the Covenant among local authority staff and those delivering local services is increased.
- Local authorities have access to communication channels and platforms to share information and coordinate with other statutory actors, local military representatives, and non-statutory partners.

Enablers and barriers



Key Covenant enablers include:

Accountability
mechanisms (e.g.,
the Legal Duty)

Partnership working
& economies of
scale

Dedicated human
resource and
expertise

Historic funding

Staff as Armed
Forces Community
Members

Key Covenant barriers include:

Resource and staffing
constraints

Competing priorities

Constraints on data
and monitoring
progress

Limited scope of the
Covenant Legal Duty

Limited guidance and
inconsistent Covenant
integration in national
government

Structures and mechanisms for delivery:



Localised Delivery of the Armed Forces Covenant

Several notable approaches in how local authorities and partners are delivering the Covenant:

Single-level (unitary) authorities (England, Scotland and Wales)

Two-tier authorities (England)

Clusters and cross-authority collaboration (England, Scotland, and Wales)

Combined, county combined, and strategic authority coordination (England)

Core infrastructure for Covenant delivery

Key aspects of delivery and their ties to good practice:

Collaboration mechanisms between local councils and relevant partners (e.g., Covenant forums and Armed Forces Community hubs).

Key individuals, particularly Armed Forces Champions and Covenant Coordinators.

Communication and delivery of training within a local authority in relation to the Covenant.

Planning and development of a 'vision' for Covenant delivery (e.g., through needs assessments, action plans, and road maps).

Mechanisms and principles for effective Covenant delivery

Mainstreaming the
Covenant

Peer-led learning and
delivery

Flagship partner
selection

Cultures of
accountability and
improvement

Positive Covenant
communication

Recruiting local
authority staff who
are themselves
members of the AFC

Dedicated Covenant
training resources

Targeted engagement
with the vulnerable
AFC populations

Thematic Covenant
meeting agendas

Closing remarks & further information

- Launch of the new Armed Forces Covenant Toolkit
- Publication of *'Our Community, Our Covenant and beyond'* this Autumn
- Break-out session tomorrow on frameworks for Covenant delivery



Thank you for your time. For more information, please reach out to our research team during the Conference or through one of the emails below:

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