## Our Community, **Our Covenant** and beyond

The 2025 Armed Forces Covenant Conference

Ibrox Stadium, Glasgow











### 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



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

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

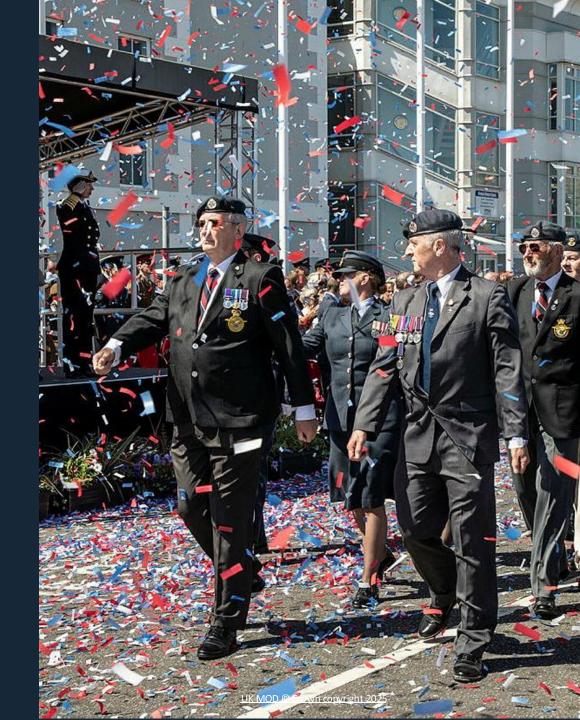
## **Evolving context for the Armed Forces Covenant**

#### **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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