

REPORT TO:	NHS SOMERSET INTEGRATED CARE BOARD ICB Board Part A	ENCLOSURE: E
DATE OF MEETING:	30 January 2025	
REPORT TITLE:	Armed Forces – A Collaborative Approach	
REPORT AUTHOR:	Teri Underwood – Armed Forces Community Lead	
EXECUTIVE SPONSOR:	Shelagh Meldrum – Chief Nursing Officer and Director of Operations	
PRESENTED BY:	Teri Underwood – Armed Forces Community Lead	

PURPOSE	DESCRIPTION	SELECT
Approve	To formally receive a report and approve its recommendations, (authorising body/committee for the final decision)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Endorse	To support the recommendation (not the authorising body/committee for the final decision)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discuss	To discuss, in depth, a report noting its implications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Note	To note, without the need for discussion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Assurance	To assure the Board/Committee that systems and processes are in place, or to advise of a gap along with mitigations	<input type="checkbox"/>

LINKS TO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES
(Please select any which are impacted on / relevant to this paper)

- Objective 1: Improve the health and wellbeing of the population
- Objective 2: Reduce inequalities
- Objective 3: Provide the best care and support to children and adults
- Objective 4: Strengthen care and support in local communities
- Objective 5: Respond well to complex needs
- Objective 6: Enable broader social and economic development
- Objective 7: Enhance productivity and value for money

PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION / ENGAGEMENT

Armed Forces patient, public and professional engagement across Somerset.

REPORT TO COMMITTEE / BOARD

The Armed Forces work is determined by the recently written and published Engagement Report, regular liaison with the Armed Forces community and in response to feedback we receive. We also ensure compliance with the Armed Forces Covenant statutory legislation and the 9 Commitments within the document Healthcare for the Armed Forces: A Forward View. We have had considerable success working with our Primary Care colleagues and currently have 100% of our GP Practices accredited as Veteran/Armed Forces Friendly and have provided bespoke training to 40 of these practices with more booked in. We have also been supporting GP practices to increase the number of Veterans who are coded on their IT systems, using the correct SNOMED Codes.

The Single Point of Contact that has been created has led to increased contact by both professionals and individuals alike and with the opening of the two Armed Forces Hubs and the

provision of Armed Forces Link Workers (funded by NHS Somerset on a 3-year contract) we have made considerable impact on the work of the Armed Forces community locally. You can view a short film of this here: [How NHS Somerset supports their armed forces community](#)

We work closely with colleagues from the two military bases within Somerset: 40 Commando Royal Marines, Taunton and RNAS Yeovilton. We run a quarterly Armed Forces Strategic Forum with over 40 different professionals attending from a wide variety of agencies. Our collaboration and support of each other has enabled us to work more closely together, avoid duplication and join up services. We also work closely with colleagues at Somerset Council, for example jointly running the Armed Forces Covenant Conference. We have had notable success which has been recognised by NHS England and we were able to showcase our work to Amanda Pritchard CEO when she visited one of our Armed Forces Hubs. Our collaborative approach is fundamental to our work and the belief that if we work together, we have a much better impact than working in silos. We have had notable success working with military colleague at the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Service to facilitate the discharge, care and planning for an injured serviceman leaving the Army.

Whilst we work across the whole of the County, we have good links to each of the regions within it. We regularly attend AF groups within the community and our engagement work built excellent links with a range of agencies and individuals. We continue to work with GP Practices and have their voices and understanding of their particular geographical and demographic needs and are therefore ideally placed to support and develop neighbourhood working. We understand that social isolation is a real barrier to accessing services and coupled with inadequate access to transport, this can lead to poorer health and wellbeing outcomes. We have therefore developed the Armed Forces Outreach Service (AFOS) which initially started in Bridgwater and Yeovil and has now expanded to Wells and Highbridge, with Minehead and Chard to follow soon. These monthly drop-in sessions have been well attended and have had excellent success in achieving social inclusion and delivering targeted intervention and support.

We have only been able to deliver the real benefits and have the impact we have so far, by our collaboration with agencies within the VCFSE sector. At a time of financial insecurity for many organisations, if we work together, we can achieve so much more. This reflects the ethos of the MOU which was jointly signed by the ICS last year. By having our support, some of these VCFSE organisations have been able to successfully bid for other financial support. Together we truly are so much stronger for our community.

In 2023 we signed the Armed Forces Covenant and achieved the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Bronze Award, in 2024 we achieved the Silver Award and we have just submitted the evidence for the Gold Award. This will be judged later this year, but demonstrates our ongoing commitment as an employer and support of the Armed Forces community. We continue to develop the Armed Forces programme, and we are delighted that our work has been recognised nationally as well as being valued locally. I believe we provide a unique model of service delivery, which is pioneering and most importantly successful and shows how progressive and innovative NHS Somerset has been. We already have thoughts on how we might be able to develop the service and to link these into the ICB key aims and the NHS long term plan.

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS – KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED
(please enter 'N/A' where not applicable)

Reducing Inequalities/Equality & Diversity

The Armed Forces is an identified inequalities group and there can be considerable disadvantage to this cohort of the population due to the mobile nature of their roles and the impact of their service. An

	EQIA is in place for much of the Armed Forces work and we encourage other service providers to consider this cohort in their EQIAs.
Quality	The quality of service has increased significantly and we have reduced overlap and unnecessary replication.
Safeguarding	Safeguarding is taken very seriously and whenever a service is developed, all safeguarding protocols are followed.
Financial/Resource/ Value for Money	We have achieved a significant amount in a relatively short time period which would represent significant value for money.
Sustainability	We have given due regard to sustainability in all the services we have delivered.
Governance/Legal/ Privacy	N/A
Confidentiality	N/A
Risk Description	We have one risk linked to mental health provision for serving personnel, which is currently being addressed.