



## Equality impact assessment (EIA) form: evidencing paying due regard to protected characteristics

(Form updated November 2021 – for LGR use)

### Armed Forces Covenant

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যদি আপনি এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায় বা ফরমেটে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদেরকে বলুন।

如欲索取以另一語文印製或另一格式製作的資料，請與我們聯絡。

اگر آپ کو معلومات کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے پوچھئے۔

**Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are public documents. EIAs accompanying reports going to Councillors for decisions are published with the committee papers on our website and are available in hard copy at the relevant meeting. To help people to find completed EIAs it is good practice to publish them. This will help people to see for themselves how we have paid due regard in order to meet statutory requirements.**

**Please note:** The decision has been made to complete EIAs at LGR programme level, workstream level and individual project level. The EIAs must be updated throughout the process of reorganisation and transformation.

Name of proposal	Armed Forces Covenant
Lead Officer and contact details	Neil Irving - Assistant Director Policy, Partnerships and Communities (Sponsor)
Names and roles of other people involved in carrying out the EIA	Anthony Ruddy (NYCC) Deborah Hugill (NYCC) Lisa Ralston (NYCC)
How will you pay due regard? e.g. working group, individual officer	Via the EIA process and resulting actions
When did the due regard process start?	EIA Screening Initial Impact completed 06.10.22

**Section 1. Please describe briefly what this EIA is about.** (e.g. are you starting a new service, changing how you do something, stopping doing something?)

The Armed Forces Act 2021 and the new due regard duty on local councils, along with local government reorganisation in North Yorkshire, is a timely opportunity for the new council to

consolidate the work which is already undertaken within the county and set out the steps that the new council will undertake to meet the new duty going forward. A new Armed Forces Covenant Policy is being developed to take this forward. There is also the opportunity to continue to build on our work with partners, to re-establish a renewed collective commitment to our work with the Armed Forces.

**Section 2. Why is this being proposed? What are the aims? What does the authority hope to achieve by it? (e.g. to save money, meet increased demand, do things in a better way.)**

This is being proposed to ensure compliance with new statutory guidance which came into force on 22.11.22

The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise from the nation that those who serve or have served in the armed forces, and their families, are treated fairly.

The [Armed Forces Act](#) 2021 enshrines the Covenant into law to help prevent armed forces service personnel, veterans and their families from being disadvantaged when accessing key commercial and public services.

A key feature of the Act is a new statutory duty to have due regard to the principles of the [Armed Forces Covenant](#), as follows:

- the unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the armed forces;
- the principle that it is desirable to remove disadvantages arising for service people from membership, or former membership, of the armed forces; and
- the principle that special provision for service people may be justified by the effects on such people of membership, or former membership, of the armed forces.

The new statutory duty will apply to specified persons or bodies, including councils, when exercising certain housing, education or healthcare functions (excluding social care).

**Section 3. What will change? What will be different for customers and/or staff?**

North Yorkshire was one of the first areas in the UK to agree an Armed Forces Covenant. The first signatories signed the Covenant at a ceremony at Catterick Garrison on 30 June 2011. Other organisations have subsequently signed the Covenant.

This proposal will ensure statutory guidance is adhered to within the new organisation.

The work will raise awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant with staff, and we will embed this new awareness within our organisational structures. It will improve the experience of customers who access our services, and we will evidence this within our organisation. It will also strengthen relationships with the armed forces community and our wider partners; and it allows us to renew our collective commitment to Covenant in North Yorkshire.

Work is underway to have members of the armed forces community recognised as an additional protected characteristic within the new Constitution.

**Section 4. Involvement and consultation (What involvement and consultation has been done regarding the proposal and what are the results? What consultation will be needed and how will it be done?)**

A working group is in place which consists of key representatives from policy, education, health and housing to develop the draft policy. An engagement group consisting of members of the armed forces community and key stakeholders is also in place to provide feedback on the policy as it has developed. Wider engagement with services, LGR workstreams and other networks has also been undertaken.

**Section 5. What impact will this proposal have on council budgets? Will it be cost neutral, have increased cost or reduce costs?**

Please explain briefly why this will be the result.

There will be some resource required in the transition phase in order to promote the Covenant. It is proposed that the Community Covenant Network in North Yorkshire is relaunched with a planned event to promote the new duty.

<b>Section 6. How will this proposal affect people with protected characteristics?</b>	<b>No impact</b>	<b>Make things better</b>	<b>Make things worse</b>	<b>Why will it have this effect? Provide evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information etc.</b>
Age		x		The Covenant aims to ensure members of the armed forces community are not disadvantaged. This includes children accessing education and veterans There are 3,707 children from service families in North Yorkshire and 29,831 military veterans, as well as approximately 10,770 serving armed forces personnel.
Disability		x		Due to the nature of the armed forces, there may be a requirement to change bases. Any member of the armed forces community should expect to receive the same level of health care and be placed at the same point on waiting lists as they were previously. There is evidence of delays in treatment for armed forces personnel and heightened impact for high needs children and young people with disabilities.  With regards to housing, members of the armed forces community may be able to access adapted housing.
Sex		x		Service personnel are more likely to be male than female and in some parts of the county, especially in Richmondshire, there is a high proportion of men to women for this reason.
Race		x		Service personnel from minority ethnic groupings might experience a positive impact due to their ethnicity.
Gender reassignment		x		Due to the nature of the armed forces there may be a requirement to change bases. Any member of the armed forces community should expect to receive the same level of

				health care and be placed at the same point on waiting lists as they were previously.
Sexual orientation	x			
Religion or belief		x		Children of the armed forces community should be able to access education based on their religion or beliefs.
Pregnancy or maternity		x		Due to the nature of the armed forces there may be a requirement to change bases. Any member of the armed forces community should expect to receive the same level of health care and be placed at the same point on waiting lists as they were previously.
Marriage or civil partnership	x			

<b>Section 7. How will this proposal affect people with the following characteristics</b>	<b>No impact</b>	<b>Make things better</b>	<b>Make things worse</b>	<b>Why will it have this effect? Provide evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information etc.</b>
Live in a rural area		x		A proportion of the armed forces community live in rural areas. The Covenant aims to ensure they are not disadvantaged when accessing health, education and housing based on locality.
Have a low income		x		Military veterans might struggle to find employment after leaving military service and could potentially be on a lower income after their military career has ended.
Carers (unpaid family or friend)	x			
Health and wellbeing issues		x		Due to the nature of the armed forces there may be a requirement to change bases. Any member of the armed forces community should expect to receive the same level of health care and be placed at the same point on waiting lists as they were previously.

<b>Section 8. Geographic impact – Please detail where the impact will be (please tick all that apply)</b>	
North Yorkshire wide	✓
Craven district	✓
Hambleton district	✓
Harrogate district	✓
Richmondshire district	✓
Ryedale district	✓
Scarborough district	✓
Selby district	✓
<b>If you have ticked one or more districts, will specific town(s)/village(s) be particularly impacted? If so, please specify below.</b>	

The benefits of the policy will cover the armed forces community throughout all districts of North Yorkshire. Richmondshire and Harrogate have significantly higher numbers from the armed forces community and will be particularly impacted.

**Section 9. Will the proposal affect anyone more because of a combination of protected characteristics? (e.g. older women or young gay men) State what you think the effect may be and why, providing evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information etc.**

Combinations of protected characteristics will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

<b>Section 10. Next steps to address the anticipated impact. Select one of the following options and explain why this has been chosen. (Remember: we have an anticipatory duty to make reasonable adjustments so that disabled people can access services and work for us)</b>	<b>Tick option chosen</b>
<b>1. No adverse impact - no major change needed to the proposal.</b> There is no potential for discrimination or adverse impact identified.	✓
<b>2. Adverse impact - adjust the proposal -</b> The EIA identifies potential problems or missed opportunities. We will change our proposal to reduce or remove these adverse impacts, or we will achieve our aim in another way which will not make things worse for people.	
<b>3. Adverse impact - continue the proposal -</b> The EIA identifies potential problems or missed opportunities. We cannot change our proposal to reduce or remove these adverse impacts, nor can we achieve our aim in another way which will not make things worse for people. (There must be compelling reasons for continuing with proposals which will have the most adverse impacts. Get advice from Legal Services)	
<b>4. Actual or potential unlawful discrimination - stop and remove the proposal –</b> The EIA identifies actual or potential unlawful discrimination. It must be stopped.	
<b>Explanation of why option has been chosen.</b> (Include any advice given by Legal Services.)	
The purpose of the Armed Forces Covenant is to benefit those members of the armed forces community, ensuring they are not disadvantaged in accessing certain housing, education or healthcare services.	

**Section 11. If the proposal is to be implemented how will you find out how it is really affecting people? (How will you monitor and review the changes?)**

There is the option to set out an action plan to ensure implementation of the main policy objectives, which could be supported by a performance regime in order to monitor progress and review effectiveness of overall policy aims. It is proposed that the new Council will set up a system wide process to capture data on armed forces personnel, veterans and their families, when they access council services.

**Section 12. Action plan.** List any actions you need to take which have been identified in this EIA, including post implementation review to find out how the outcomes have been achieved in practice and what impacts there have actually been on people with protected characteristics.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>By when</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Monitoring arrangements</b>
Action plan development	Anthony Ruddy	June 2023	Agreed action plan	Review meeting

Performance regime	Anthony Ruddy	June 2023	Agreed measures	Review meeting

**Section 13. Summary** Summarise the findings of your EIA, including impacts, recommendation in relation to addressing impacts, including any legal advice, and next steps. This summary should be used as part of the report to the decision maker.

There are no negative impacts anticipated from the implementation of work to ensure that North Yorkshire Council applies the new statutory due regard duty required under the Armed Forces Act 2021. Impacts are expected to be positive or neutral on people with protected characteristics and with those additional characteristics adopted by the council. Next steps include development of a local delivery plan for implementing the key aims and objectives of the new Armed Forces Covenant Policy and a related performance regime for monitoring progress on key activity.

#### **Section 14. Sign off section**

This full EIA was completed by:

**Name:** Anthony Ruddy

**Job title:** Senior Strategy and Performance Officer

**Signature:** Anthony Ruddy

**Completion date:** 9 December 2022

**Authorised by relevant senior officer (signature):**

Neil Irving, Assistant Director Policy, Partnerships and Communities

**Date:** 14 December 2022