

# NEW PLEDGES FOR THE ARMED FORCES ANNOUNCED IN THE QUEEN'S SPEECH

**The new Government's Queen's Speech prioritises both veterans and service personnel with a promise to further incorporate the Armed Forces Covenant in law.**



MOD Main Building

The Armed Forces Covenant has mitigated disadvantage arising from Service for our Armed Forces and their families since its introduction. The government's aim is to build upon this work to further incorporate the Covenant into law.

Other key commitments include:

- The introduction of a Veteran's railcard November 2020
- A guaranteed job interview for veterans for any public sector role they apply for where they possess the minimum job requirements
- Reducing the Employer's National Insurance contribution for those employing veterans

Ahead of the game, Warwickshire County Council had agreed on 9 December to implement a Guaranteed Interview Scheme for veterans who meet the 'Essential' (Minimum) criteria for all advertised posts. This is now being implemented through HR and management processes.

## INSIDE:

WELCOME BACK THE VCP!	2
VE DAY WARWICK 2020	3
BE THE BEST VERSION OF YOURSELF	4
WHAT'S GOING ON ELSEWHERE ACROSS THE PATCH?	8

# WELCOME BACK THE VCP!



Following a major refurbishment the Veterans Contact Point (VCP) in Nuneaton was formally re-opened by Lord Dannett, former Chief of the General Staff, on 9th October 2019.

The refurbishment of the VCP was a collaborative project between Balfour Beatty, Warwickshire County Council and the VCP. This includes an extension which houses a new reception, kitchen, confidential pods, improved training facilities and a new roof.



VCP Extension



VCP Confidential Pod



VCP Main Office

The VCP is now open for business and Len Hardy BEM says 'We want people from the Armed Forces and Veterans to come in for a cuppa, to see it for themselves and if we can help them at the same time, then that would be great'.

Dean Banks, CEO of Balfour Beatty, said 'What has really pleased me is that we want this to be a facility that veterans can use but also for the local community to use, it (the building) will strive to bring the community closer to the veterans.'



## WHAT'S ON AT THE VCP?

The Veterans' Contact Point in Nuneaton is open for drop ins, phone calls and email chat Monday to Friday 0900-1630.

**02476 343793**

**[www.veteranscontactpoint.org.uk](http://www.veteranscontactpoint.org.uk)**

### BREW AND BANTER

WEDNESDAYS 1400 - 1600

### VETERANS INTO WORK

FRIDAYS 1400 - 1600

### LADIES SUPPORT GROUP

SOME SATURDAYS - Call for details



# VE DAY 75 - WARWICK

As part of VE Day 75 Warwick racecourse is one of only a handful of race courses given permission to host an event. On Friday 8th May there will be an all-inclusive event to celebrate VE Day.



This will include:

- Free Street Party Tables and Seating in the centre of the course for up to 1500 people.
- Picnics Lawn with area set with Bunting, Union Jacks
- Silver Stars Parachute Display
- Fairground Rides and Traditional Side Stalls
- Display of Wartime Civilian vehicles by Jaguar/Land Rover classics
- Discounted admission

Further information:

<https://www.thejockeyclub.co.uk/warwick/events-tickets/victory-in-europe-raceday/>

## GRANT SUCCESS FOR ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY GARDEN



Elaine Butler, Cllr Hawkins and Cllr Rolf in Hillfield with the plans for the Armed Forces community garden

Solihull Council has received £20,000 from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust to create an Armed Forces community garden in Hillfield Park.

The garden will be a peaceful sanctuary for veterans and their family members, local schools and other members of the local community. The initial concept for the garden was developed through the Council's environmental initiative Love Solihull, along with support from the Royal British Legion, local veterans and serving personnel, Army medical teams and local community groups.

Councillor Alison Rolf, Cabinet Member for Safer & Stronger Communities and the Council's Armed Forces Champion, said: "This is absolutely wonderful news for the borough. Community gardens have increasingly become popular for their positive impact on wildlife and people's physical and mental health. This armed forces garden will also act as a quiet place for remembrance and reflection."



## GOING FOR GOLD

Warwickshire County Council (WCC) is targeting Gold under the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme! The Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) acknowledges employers who provide exceptional support to the Armed Forces community and defence by going above and beyond their Armed Forces Covenant pledges.

WCC recognises the contribution that Reservists and Cadet Force Adult Volunteers (CFAV) make to Defence and the wider community plus their skills and training which they bring into the workplace. All Reservists and CFAV contribute significant amounts of their own time and, previously, 2 weeks of their annual leave to attend annual camps and training. WCC has agreed to provide 2 weeks of paid leave so they can use their annual leave for time with their family, rest and recuperation.

WCC also recognises the difficulties some Service leavers can experience in leaving the Armed Forces and adjusting to life on 'civvy street'. As part of their commitment to the Covenant WCC have developed a Guaranteed Interview Scheme for those who are in the last 3 months of Service and up to 3 years afterwards.

Both of these will contribute to WCC's application for the Defence ERS Gold Award, which will be submitted during the spring of 2020. This work follows on from the work of Nuneaton and Bedworth and North Warwickshire Borough Council's who achieved Gold in 2019.

## SIGNING UP TO THE COVENANT



Two contrasting organisations have signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant recently. The Warwick Branch of the Royal Naval Association signed the Covenant on Saturday 29th November 2019 in a ceremony in the Lord

Leycester Hospital, Warwick. This was in front of members, veterans and Sea Cadets from the Leamington-Warwick unit.

Commander Philip Stark from HMS Forward in Birmingham signed on behalf of the Armed Forces with Lt.Cdr (Ret'd) Bob Stevens (President of the Warwick RNA), Timothy Cox, Lord Lieutenant of Warwickshire in attendance.

In contrast, Cow Lees Care Home signed the Covenant on 29th October 2019. Cow Lees Care Home is a 72 bed facility in Bedworth that provides specialist nursing care for people with dementia and challenging behaviour. Some of the residents are veterans and some of the staff are veterans or spouses of currently serving personnel.

They both join over 4500 organisations who have signed the Covenant since 2011.

# BE THE BEST VERSION OF YOURSELF

**Being the best version of herself is Pte Stacey Clamp from 243 Squadron, 159 Regiment Royal Logistic Corps. It's not just a motto from the Army, but something she lives, breathes and believes in.**

After some hard knocks in adult life Stacey decided to fulfil a dream she had had since she was 15 years old; to join the Army. Not an easy decision for a single mother with a young child. Sadly, as she was over 30 she was too old (at that point in time) so chose to join the Army Reserves instead.

Born and bred in Coventry, Stacey joined 243 Squadron and hasn't looked back. Stacey explains she was quiet and shy and would only speak when spoken to. Two years after her Passing Out Parade she has a role as a Recruiter for 243 Squadron. This involves going out and doing rather a lot of speaking!



Stacey wants to be a role model to her little boy and show him that there's more to life than certain paths and life choices. She's also comfortable with the suggestion she is a role model for young women who are considering a potential career in the military.

Those of us who have been in the military know that opportunities are aplenty. We also know, you also need a positive mindset and 'drive' to take up those opportunities.

When opportunity has knocked,

Stacey has taken them up. Stacey has progressed her driving qualifications and is looking to do her Cat C and E licence test in the New Year. Cat C & E are big articulated HGV trucks with trailers! She's also passing military exams to drive Support Vehicle MAN trucks.

Stacey is definitely doing something right. She was offered a job as a Recruiter when she finished her Trade training. She received a Brigade Commendation for her work 6 months into the role. Stacey was also chosen from the 30,000+ Army Reserve to be part of a team representing the UK in a multi-national military skills competition in Estonia.

Stacey has completed training in England, Wales, Scotland and Cyprus. Next year, she hopes to tick France off her growing list of countries visited.

Stacey is determined to be the best version of herself in all dimensions of her life, not just the military, and that's what she wants to pass onto her son. She's doing that and forging a career for herself so that she can take care of her son.

If you want to be the best version of yourself, find out more at <https://en-gb.facebook.com/pg/159Regiment/about/> or <https://apply.army.mod.uk/what-we-offer/reserve-soldier>



# SOCIAL MEDIA SPOUSES



Social Media Spouses, is an online course from British Forces Broadcasting Services, the armed forces charity and media specialist. It's designed to address a real need amongst military spouses and partners to obtain the skills they need to find flexible

and interesting work that fits around military and family life. Funded by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, Social Media Spouses is the first dedicated free online course to offer military wives and partners in-depth and vocational training on how to use social media to grow their business, or to find a career in social media.

Since its launch last summer, 35 individuals have successfully completed the course, with another 35 due to complete it in the coming months. The Facebook support group has just under 1,300 members and due to its overwhelming popularity the course was able to host its first live event with representatives from Facebook speaking at the event.

The course members have already achieved so much, with many using the skills they've learned to launch their own blogs as well as applying new skills to their start-up business' social media channels. Others now have the confidence to apply for remote working roles in social media and are receiving 121 coaching support from a global broadcaster. This is all underpinned by an active online community where they can turn to each other and the course leaders for advice and support.

Visit: <https://sms.ssvc.com>



## THE LATEST RE THE NEW VETERANS ID CARD

**From 8 January 2020, any personnel who have left the military since December 2018 will automatically be given one of the new ID cards, which will allow them to maintain a tangible link to their career in the forces.**

The cards allow veterans to easily verify their service to the NHS, their local authority, and charities, helping them to access support and services where needed.

All other veterans will be able to apply for a new ID card to mark their time in the armed forces. Further details will be released later in the year.

# BACK ON THE RIGHT FOOT: VETERANS MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

## 6 FREE WEEKLY SESSIONS at the VCP

Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust Ex-Armed Forces Service, in partnership with the Recovery and Wellbeing Academy, The Veteran Contact Point and Ubique Partnership have joined with Warwickshire Veterans to create a brand-new recovery based course especially for veterans and their families (The Armed Forces Community).

This course aims to equip veterans and their families to understand and improve their skills to enable integration and general awareness of mental wellbeing in a friendly non-clinical way.

### Learning outcomes:

- Learn ways to improve your health and mental wellbeing.
- Understanding addiction and the support available to help.
- Understanding how being a veteran can affect relationships.
- Adjusting to Civvy Street – to include Benefits & Accommodation.
- Dealing with the stigma of being a veteran.
- Understanding what support networks are available and how to use them more effectively.
- Improving your employability.

**Aimed at:** Veterans or the families of Veterans, who want to understand the impact of being a former member of the UK's Armed Forces.

**Course tutors:** Professionals from CWPT, Ubique Partnership and the Veterans Contact Point in partnership with Veteran Volunteers.

**Duration:** These sessions vary in length and will be delivered over 6 consecutive weeks.

**Start Date:** 21st April 2020

**Duration:** 10:00am to 2:00pm

**Where:** Veterans Contact Point, Armed Forces Centre 31 Bentley Rd, Nuneaton, CV11 5LR

**Cost:** FREE

To Enrol register at:

<https://recoveryandwellbeing.covwarkpt.nhs.uk/>

or call 0300 303 2626



# SPOUSES: SIGN UP!

Forces  
Families  
Jobs

Forces Families Jobs (FFJ) is an initiative from the 3 Families Federations to address the issue of spousal employment. This recognises the barriers to employment Service spouses face and focuses on making employers aware of their flexibility, determination, talents and resilience.

FFJ was launched in the House of Lords and is a website designed to link Service spouses and partners with employment and training organisations. This allows companies and organisations to recruit directly from Service spouses. A comprehensive awareness raising programme for spouses and employers by all 3 Families Federations is continuing into 2020. As at 18 December 2019, 349 employers had signed up from organisations such as Barclays, Vodafone, Amazon, Hilton Hotels and a number of Local Authorities. Over 700 spouses have signed up and put in 450+ applications for the 3000+ jobs regularly available.

Forces  
Families  
Jobs

[forcesfamiliesjobs.co.uk](https://forcesfamiliesjobs.co.uk)

Forces Families Jobs, an employment and training platform for spouses, partners and family members of serving and Reserve UK military personnel.

Search and apply for jobs with employers who have signed the Armed Forces Covenant and pledged to support the military community. Find out about training as well as career events and insight days. Set up job alerts to ensure you get your ideal job sent directly to your inbox.



For jobs.  
For training.  
For success.

Naval Families  
Federation

aff army  
families  
Federation

Royal  
Air Force  
Families  
Federation

Forces Families Jobs is delivered by a tri-Service partnership between the Naval Families Federation (NFF), Army Families Federation (AFF) and Royal Air Force Families Federation (RAF-FF). Forces Families Jobs is a product of the Army Families Federation (AFF). AFF is a charitable incorporated organisation registered in England and Wales with registered charity number 106393 and a charity registered in Scotland with registered charity number SC042932 having its principal office at ED, 414, Floor 1, Zone 6, Ramblers Building, Marlborough Lines, Morriston Road, Andover SP7 8HJ

If you are a Service spouse or partner and are interested in finding a job or registering a career change visit <https://www.forcesfamiliesjobs.co.uk/>

## NWBC LEISURE SERVICES DISCOUNTS FOR THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY

## DEFENCE TRANSITION SERVICE LAUNCHED



Ministry  
of Defence

As part of the Defence Holistic Transition Policy, Defence Transition Services (DTS) has been created to provide a full range of transition support for Service Leavers and their families. The DTS team will work to support those responsible within the single Services (Army, Royal Navy and RAF) for transition and work directly with Service Leavers to provide advice and support to encourage Service Personnel and their families to plan early and leave well.

For further information about DTS, how support is provided and the protocol to refer into DTS please go to:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/help-and-support-for-service-leavers-and-their-families>

# BLESMA: HELPING LIMBLESS VETERANS TO LIVE INDEPENDENT AND FULFILLING LIVES SINCE 1932

Blesma, the military charity for limbless veterans is dedicated to assisting serving and ex-Service men and women who have suffered life-changing limb loss or the use of a limb, an eye or loss of sight in the service of our country. Since 1932, Blesma has worked tirelessly to provide practical, emotional and financial support to injured veterans and their families for life.

Providing expert advice on the NHS and benefits, delivering activities, grants and giving opportunities for Members to share experiences and enjoy regained camaraderie are just some of the ways Blesma helps injured veterans to live independent and fulfilling lives.

An example of this is former Infantry Major Philip Bailey. "When I lost my legs, Blesma's help and advice filled a void. The Association gave me the ability to try things I wouldn't have done otherwise. Blesma got me back to living my life." Philip has been part of a Blesma crew sailing a tall ship.

For more information on what the charity does or how to support them, please visit [www.blesma.org](http://www.blesma.org) or call 020 8548 7080.



Major Philip Bailey on a Blesma sailing trip



## Life after traumatic injury can be challenging

Blesma is here for all serving and ex-Service men and women who have experienced loss of limb, use of limbs, hearing, sight or speech, either during or after Service

Get in touch to find out how we can support you and your family

Tel: 020 8548 7080

Email: [membersupport@blesma.org](mailto:membersupport@blesma.org)

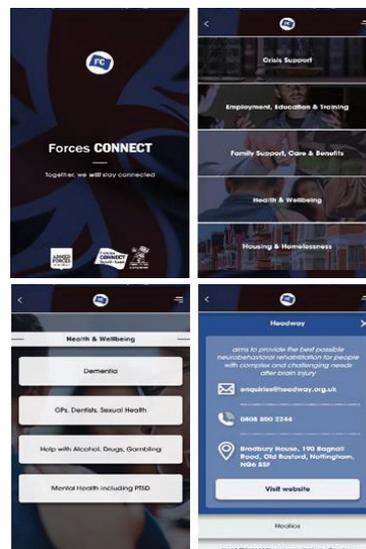
Find out more: [www.blesma.org](http://www.blesma.org)



## FORCES CONNECT SIGNPOSTING APP

Available for free to download. Search 'Forces Connect' in your app store now!

Signposting and connecting the entire Armed Forces Community as well as public sector/not-for-profit practitioners to the right services for support and advice.



Commissioned by Forces Connect South East and developed by Kent County Council and the Wow Factory, this is now being rolled out across the country.

Search for 'Warwickshire' in the app.



# WHAT'S GOING ON ELSEWHERE ACROSS THE PATCH?

## VETERANS *cafe*

Relax in a friendly place for a chat over coffee and cake.  
Open to all veterans.

**1st Tuesday of every month**

**1000 - 1200 (drop in)**

**FREE**

at Royal Regiment of Fusiliers museum



Fusilier Museum, St John's House,  
Warwick, CV34 4NF  
For further details Tel. 01926 491653

In partnership with  
WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL

**VETERANS HUB, NEW ARLEY**  
Every first Wednesday 1300 - 1600

**VETERANS HUB, ATHERSTONE**  
Every first Thursday 1030 - 1230

**VETERANS HUB, COLESHILL**  
Every first Thursday 1030 - 1230



**Armed Forces Coffee Morning**

Serving Personnel, Veterans, Dependants, Carers are very welcome

Lloyds (Wetherspoons), Market Square, Warwick

Every Wednesday 1000 - 1200 hours

All those local & visiting with a military connection are welcome to join us for chat, support and banter (compulsory).

Contact Dean on 07730277967

## NAAFI TEA BREAK

at Langar House, Coventry: Tuesdays at 1000



## afvbc | ARMED FORCES & VETERANS BREAKFAST CLUBS

### White Lion, Bulkington

Every first Saturday of the month from 0930 onwards

**Contact:** Chris on 07923 932049

### Coundon Social Club, Coventry

Every first Saturday of the month from 1000 onwards

**Contact:** Mick on 07772 291048

### The Walsgrave Stonehouse, Coventry

Every third Monday of the month from 1000 onwards

**Contact:** Michael on 02476 442157

### Middlemarch Farm Inn, Nuneaton

Every second Saturday of the month from 0930 onwards

**Contact:** Ron on 07768 369780

### Stratford Oaks Golf Club, Snitterfield, Stratford-upon-Avon

Every second and fourth Monday and the third Saturday of the month from 1100 onwards

**Contact:** Ed on 07557 523834

