

Community Covenant

DEVON AND TORBAY

ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT

BETWEEN

DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL

TORBAY COUNCIL

AND

THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY

IN DEVON AND TORBAY

**We, the undersigned, agree to work and act together to honour the Armed Forces
Community Covenant.**

SECTION 1: PARTICIPANTS

1.1 This Armed Forces Community Covenant is made between:

The serving and former members of the Armed Forces and their families working and residing in Devon

And

Devon County Council and Torbay Council

SECTION 2: PRINCIPLES OF THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT

2.1 The Armed Forces Community Covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and its local Armed Forces Community. It is intended to complement the Armed Forces Covenant, which outlines the moral obligation between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces, at the local level.

2.2 The purpose of this Community Covenant is to encourage support for the Armed Forces Community working and residing in Devon and Torbay to recognise and remember the sacrifices made by members of this Armed Forces Community, particularly those who have given the most. This includes in-Service and ex-Service personnel their families and widow(er)s in Devon and Torbay

2.3 For partner organisations in Devon and Torbay, the Community Covenant presents an opportunity to bring their knowledge, experience and expertise to bear on the provision of help and advice to members of the Armed Forces Community. It also presents an opportunity to build upon existing good work on other initiatives such as the Welfare Pathway. Torbay's Public Sector, Charitable and Voluntary Sector will be working with Armed Forces Community in developing an Action Plan to deliver the Ambitions of the Community Covenant.

2.4 For the Armed Forces community, the Community Covenant encourages the integration of Service life into civilian life and encourages members of the Armed Forces community to help their local community.

SECTION 3: OBJECTIVES AND GENERAL INTENTIONS

Aims of the Community Covenant

3.1 The Armed Forces Community Covenant complements the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant which defines the enduring, general principles that should govern the relationship between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces community

3.2 It aims to encourage all parties within a community to offer support to the local Armed Forces community and make it easier for Service personnel, families and veterans to access the help and support available from the MOD, from statutory providers and from the Charitable and Voluntary Sector. These organisations already work together in partnership at local level.

3.3 The scheme is intended to be a two-way arrangement and the Armed Forces community are encouraged to do as much as they can to support their community and promote activity which integrates the Service community into civilian life.

SECTION 4: AMBITIONS

Ambition 1: Working Better Together

What does this mean?

Improving the ways in which agencies work together and communicate in order to better understand and meet the needs of the Armed Forces Community.

Ambition 2: Cutting the Wire

What does this mean?

Bringing the armed forces community and the civilian community together and supporting a successful transition from military to civilian life.

Ambition 3: Reaching their potential

What does this mean?

Support service children and families to develop in a positive environment.

Ambition 4: Improving Health and Wellbeing

What does this mean?

Achieve fair access to healthcare and improve support for the neurologically damaged, mentally and physically injured.

Ambition 5: Increasing Prosperity

What does this mean?

Ensuring that the AFC has a voice in our economy and that service leavers and service families have access to quality jobs.

The ambitions above have been adopted from the Devon County Council Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee Armed Forces Community Covenant Task Group, March 2012 and The Mayor and Leader of Torbay Council on 14th December 2012.

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TORBAY'S ACTION PLAN TO DELIVER THE AMBITIONS – THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY IN DEVON AND TORBAY

THEME	AMBITION	HOW?	DELIVERED BY	RISKS
Working Together	Set up or integrate with Devon County Councils (DCC) task force to take forward the Torbay Armed Forces Covenant Action plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify representatives throughout the process to ensure the group is inclusive and fully representative 	Torbay Council and DCC	Political difference between Council's on ownership and implementation
	Capturing existing organisations and lost military organisations in and involved with Torbay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop a database to hold all the organisations and ensure that it is maintained ○ Providing a membership protected web page to enable groups/individuals to keep in touch 	Torbay Council Torbay Council	Data protection issues may result in lack of complete information of local military community
	Capture the numbers of serving personnel and their families living in Torbay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify data through pupil premium and other sources to establish numbers in the Armed Forces communities 	Torbay Council/schools (60 children of serving families living in Torbay)	Data protection issues may result in lack of complete information of local military community
	Capture the number of reservists in Torbay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wessex Reservists to be approached to assist in getting data 	Torbay Council – (28 reservists employed in Torbay)	Known reservists working in Torbay – unable to assess those reservists living in Torbay but working elsewhere
	Understand the numbers and needs of the veterans as individuals and groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establish a process of capturing the numbers and categories of veteran living in Torbay 	Charities and veteran organisations	Difficulty capturing numbers – some may be not in organisations/ others may be in a number of different groups
	Bringing together Armed Forces communities and the wider community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use events like Armed Forces Day's to promote the work and contribution the Armed Forces deliver locally to benefit the wider community 	All Partners	Range of commemorations – need to ensure all are captured to avoid disappointment Difficulty in promoting to all

THEME	AMBITION	HOW?	DELIVERED BY	RISKS
Working Together		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Celebrate and Commemorate key military dates within the wider community 		those wishing to participate
	Provide a 'Hero's Welcome' to resident and visiting service personnel and veterans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Encourage sign up to the 'Defence Discount Service' offering saving to serving personnel and veteran across the leisure, tourism and retail sectors ○ Develop 'Armed Forces Welcome Host' mark for accommodation providers 	All Partners	Lack on buy in from the private sector Raising expectations and not delivering
	Improve training and dedicated support training to agencies to better meet the needs of the Armed Forces Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop training modules to help assist agency departments to understand the needs of serving personnel and their families/ veterans 	Community Development Trust (CDT) TEDC Job Centre Plus Veterans Change Partnership	Lack of support from the training community Lack of support from the Armed Forces Unable to capture those transferring into civilian life
	Work across agencies to help veterans and their transition into civilian life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Help improve the transition from the Armed Forces to civilian life particularly for those with health conditions ○ Assist voluntary and community sector providers to come together to avoid unnecessary duplication and maximise effort ○ Work with further education providers to enable placements programmes 	TEDC Job Centre Plus Safer Communities /Channing's Prison South Devon and Torbay Clinical Commissioning Grp Veterans Change Partnership	Lack of support from partners leading to heightened expectation with little provision being available Lack of buy in from organisations to deliver Armed Forces cannot not transfer learning credits into relevant organisations Lack of facilities for start up units

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Working Together		<p>where the Armed Forces learning credits can be used to retrain for civilian jobs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop support structures to help veteran offenders and ex-offenders within the community ○ Prioritise access to start up units (Innovation Centres) for those veterans who have robust business plans for new business ventures 		
	Providing web and library based access to information which is important to serving personnel and veterans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide a dedicated web page on the council's website for Armed Forces communities providing targeted information ○ Provide social media platforms for those wishing to link through this medium 	Torbay Council	Failure to provide adequate levels of information Resources no being available for regular updating of information
Cutting the Wire	Demonstrate support for reservists in the Council and encourage businesses to acknowledge the special needs of this growing sector within the Armed Forces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure all Torbay Council employees get the support required to be reservists including signposting to the necessary policies that apply ○ Allow staff who are reservists to wear their uniforms on Armed Forces Day ○ Provide better understanding of the needs of the families who are reservists in the business community 	Torbay Council Community Development Trust (CDT)TEDC Business Community	Lack of awareness/ support from the business community Lack of understanding of the needs of reservists as these increase

THEME	AMBITION	HOW?	DELIVERED BY	RISKS
Cutting the Wire		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Encouraging more veterans to become reservists throughout the business community ○ Support Cadet Associations where required 		
	Ensure a fair protocol for accessing housing within Torbay and supporting veteran's who relocate to our area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assist those service personnel and veterans to have fair access to social/affordable housing under the regulations ○ Understand and take account of veterans needs including special disability requirements within housing provision ○ Work with the Armed Forces to promote the benefits of house purchases (explore options for lease back schemes) ○ Encourage Social Housing providers to acknowledge the needs to the Armed Forces community and address this in their policies 	Torbay Council Housing Associations	Lack of buy in from Housing Associations Public perception of those being given priority Lack of understanding of disability needs Lack of support from the Armed Forces Resettlement teams
Children reaching their potential	Ensure fair access to education opportunities for children of serving personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Policies for School Admissions to fully reflect serving personnel children ○ To ensure a choice of school is available for those entering school part way through the term/education year due to deployment of Armed Forces families 	Torbay Council Schools	Difficult to have a consistent approach due to academy schools having individual process Take up of pupil premium is poor/ not able to identify children from serving families Lack of understanding across schools

Armed Forces Community Covenant

Children Reaching Their Potential – Amendment

Under the theme 'Children reaching their potential' is an action to ***'ensure a choice of school is available for those entering school part way through the term/education year due to deployment of Armed Forces families'***.

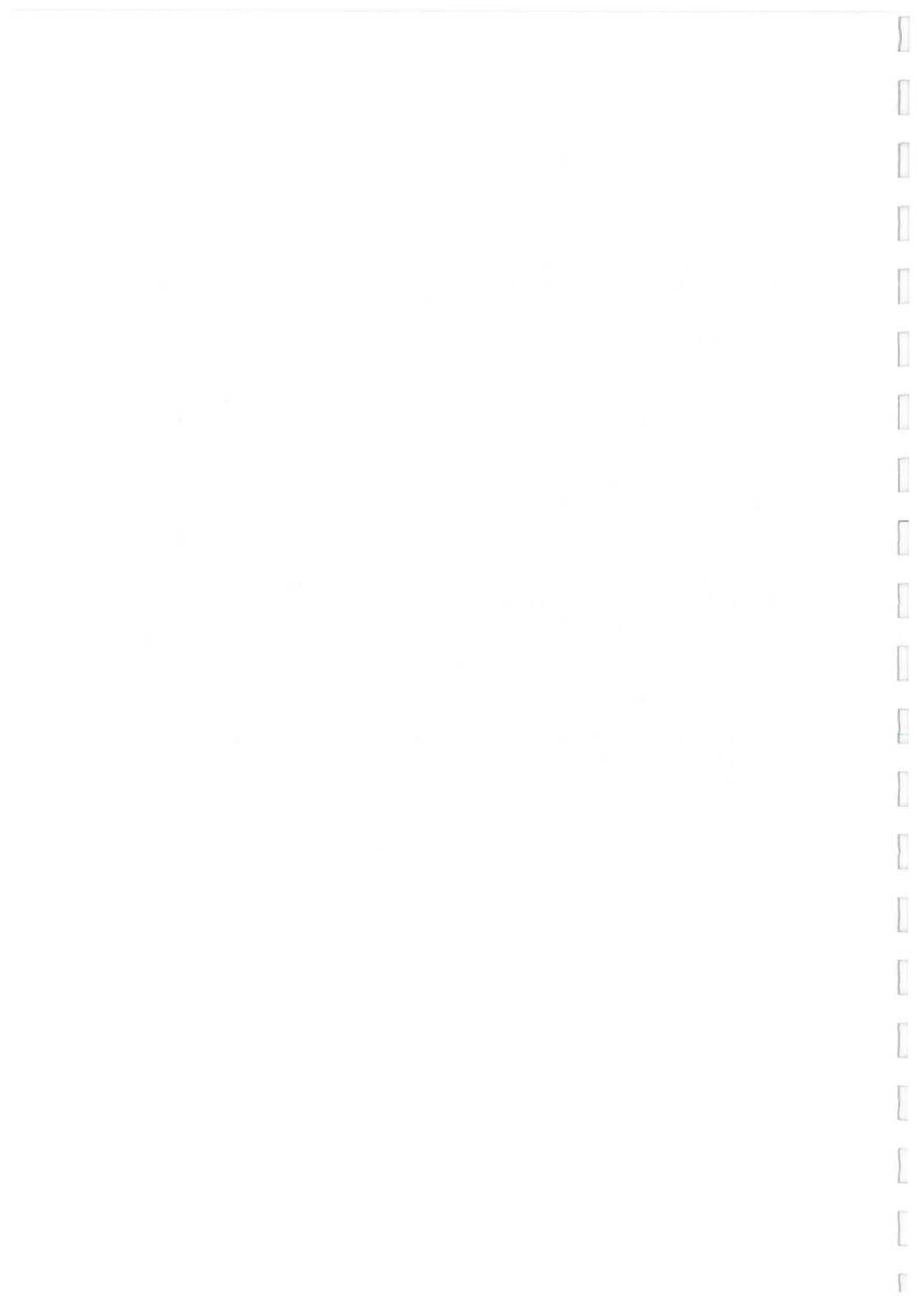
Please note there is no choice of school but places will be provided where schools are not at full capacity.

We can ensure that a school place is available, but not that there is a choice of school:

- We cannot make academies admit above their planned admission number in any year group.
- We have no power to direct them and it would not be appropriate to approach the Secretary of State in these circumstances.
- Many of our schools are already admitting above their planned admission number in full year groups because of the demand for places but there is a point when there would be an adverse impact on the education of other children if they were to admit an additional child.
- If a school has a high number of SEN children they may feel they cannot take any children beyond their planned admission number.
- Where a school has a waiting list they have to allocate places strictly according to the admission criteria for the school. Whilst they might be prepared to admit a child of UK service personnel above their planned admission number if they are at the top of the waiting list, they would be unlikely to do this if there were other children who took greater priority according to the admission criteria.

We do have a commitment to asking schools to admit above their planned admission number where a child of UK service personnel is at the top of the waiting list, but that is as far as we are able to go.

This was amended – Wednesday 28th August 2013



THEME	AMBITION	HOW?	DELIVERED BY	RISKS
Children reaching their potential		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure schools are aware of the needs and provide support to children of serving personnel including the need for special arrangements – i.e. holidays in school time ○ Promote the pupil premium to schools and make sure they take this up for children of the Armed Forces families 		
	Understanding the needs of families and children who need additional support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify those families who have special needs – i.e. those whose parent maybe abroad and the partner is left to deal with all the child care ○ Develop support service opportunities through the voluntary and third sector i.e. drop in centres/ after school clubs like HMS Hero's ○ Develop an understanding of children who have complex needs due to being from a Armed Forces family 	Torbay Council Schools Community Development Trust (CDT)	Not identifying those families from the serving community Resources not available to support complex needs Lack of support from the third sector
Improving Health and Wellbeing	Ensuring Armed Forces families and veterans are not disadvantaged in accessing their health needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Acknowledging through the inclusion in the JSNA the needs of the Armed Forces community specifically ○ Raising awareness with primary and secondary health care providers of the needs of the Armed Forces community 	NHS/ South Devon and Torbay Clinical Commissioning Grp Torbay Council	Health not identifying serving and veteran families Lack of support from health providers Lack of resources and funding to deliver

THEME	AMBITION	HOW?	DELIVERED BY	RISKS
Improving Health and Wellbeing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop greater understanding around veteran's mental health issues ○ Ensure that health colleagues develop systems to identify ex service personnel and their families locally ○ Improve the priority of veterans access to NHS treatment including understanding the transient nature of the Armed Forces i.e. positions on waiting lists if moving to another area/ access to NHS dental services ○ Consider special disability needs of veterans and try where possible to accommodate these 		
	Access to sports and leisure provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Encourage sports and leisure providers to prioritise access to facilities to serving personnel and veterans ○ To provide short term access to leisure facilities i.e. gym memberships ○ Encourage the provision of special access to leisure facilities and attractions for serving personnel and their families on holiday in Torbay 	Torbay Council Leisure Providers	Lack of buy in from private and third sector providers Financial assistance for free use not being available Visitor service and veteran families not being identified by providers

THEME	AMBITION	HOW?	DELIVERED BY	RISKS
Increasing Prosperity	Armed Forces consideration in local economic issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Explore options with DCC for Armed Forces to be represented on the LEP ○ Explore the option of a joint task force reflecting the Heart of the South West authorities combined 	DCC to lead	Expectations raised but unable to deliver outcomes
Increasing Prosperity	Smooth transition for Armed Forces to civilian employment locally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work with Career Transition Partnership to access those likely to be transferring into the local community to ensure their training and employment opportunities are maximised ○ Explore options for apprenticeship schemes that enable veterans to match their skills to civilian jobs ○ Work with Job Centre Plus to develop career paths including matching skills with competencies of ex service personnel ○ Develop placement schemes within the agencies including the Council 	TEDC Community Development Trust (CDT) Job Centre Plus Veteran's Change Partnership	Lack of placements for apprentices and alternative employment Expectations raised with transferring veterans with no delivery Armed Forces Learning credits not being used for job training locally
	Helping businesses to support Armed Forces families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Supporting the role of partners of Armed Forces personnel when accessing jobs (there are issues with employer not wanting to employ partners if they are likely to be relocated at short 	Job Centre Plus TEDC	Not identifying service families Employers not considering service personnel partners due to short term placements Affordable Childcare not

THEME	AMBITION	HOW?	DELIVERED BY	RISKS
		notice) ○ Understanding child care needs of partners of serving Armed Forces personnel		being available locally
	Support reservists in employment	○ Communicate with businesses the values and benefits of employing reservists in their organisations	Torbay Council TEDC	Lack of support from local employers