

Customer Access Review – Full Assessment

| Assessment details | |
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| Assessment area | Armed Forces Covenant Pledge |
| Date of assessment | 7 th July 2025 |
| Directorate and Service | Growth and Community |
| Manager | Caroline Hicks |
| Officer conducting assessment | Kerry Smith |
| Step 1: Scoping the assessment | |
| 1. What are the aims and objectives of the activity or proposal? | <p>The Armed Forces Covenant Duty and Pledge is about informed decision-making and means that specified bodies should think about and place an appropriate amount of weight on the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant when they consider all the factors relevant to how they carry out relevant functions. It is not prescriptive about the actions specified bodies should take in order to comply with their legal obligations, and it does not mandate specific public service delivery outcomes.</p> <p>By committing to uphold the Armed Forces Covenant and support the Armed Forces Community, we are recognising the contribution that Service personnel, both regular and reservist, veterans and military families make to our organisation, our community and to the country</p> |
| 2. Who will be affected by the activity or proposal? | Service users, staff, partners and the wider community. |
| 3. How does the activity or proposal contribute to: a) any key performance indicators? b) policies, values or objectives of Dartford Borough Council? | This activity contributes to the equality objectives in our Equality and Diversity Document Framework as well as our Corporate Plan ambition to support Safe and cohesive communities and create a safer borough in which to live, work and socialise. |

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| Step 1: Scoping the assessment | |
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| <p>4. Which aspects of the activity or proposal are dictated by legislation/regulation and where do we have discretion in how they are delivered?</p> | <p>Armed Forces Act 2021 amended the Armed Forces Act 2006 to create the following legal obligation:</p> <p>When a specified body exercises a relevant function, it must have due regard to: (a) the unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the Armed Forces; (b) the principle that it is desirable to remove disadvantages arising for Service people from membership, or former membership, of the Armed Forces, and (c) 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.</p> <p>Dartford Borough Council is a specified body subject to the Covenant Duty</p> |
| Step 2: Information collection | |
| <p>5. What do you know about the groups of people who will be affected? (i.e. demographic information in relation to the protected characteristic groups of age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, race, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership)</p> | <p>The Armed Forces Covenant pledges will have a positive impact on Service People in terms of ensuring that they are not disadvantaged in relation employment, housing, health, and education from the impact of military service. Under the Covenant, service people include regulars and reservists, spouses, partners, dependent children, dependent disabled children, older family dependents, children and young people who are in the cadet forces, veterans, and bereaved family members.</p> |
| <p>6. What consultation has taken place with affected groups? Please describe who was consulted and the key findings</p> | <p>Ministry of Defence Covenant Team states that there remains a disparity in awareness of the Covenant and the issues that the Armed Forces Community face around the country. Members of the Armed Forces Community are still facing disadvantage in accessing public goods and services.</p> <p>http://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/</p> <p>Cllr P Whapshott runs a monthly veteran's breakfast at The Bull, where servicemen and women have given their full support for DBC's commitment to uphold its Covenant Duty and Community Pledges.</p> |

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| <p>7. Are there any gaps in information? If so, what additional research and/or consultation is needed to ensure that affected groups needs and views are taken into account?</p> | <p>Whilst there is data to evidence a Kent wide profile of serving personnel, there is limited data locally to evidence veterans and families of serving personnel, reliable data for both Dartford and Kent are currently being sourced.</p> |
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Step 3: Assessing the equality impact

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| <p>8.</p> <p>The local Armed Forces Community has representation from people who share different protected characteristics, however there is no statistical data on the diversity of the local armed forces community available for equality impact assessment. The Armed Forces Covenant will support the Armed Forces Community in its diversity. The Covenant covers the following groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serving members of the UK regular and reserve forces • Serving members of British Overseas Territories' Armed Forces subject to UK Service Law • Veterans / ex-Service personnel – defined as former members of the UK regular and reserve forces and British Overseas Territory Forces, who are ordinarily resident in the UK • Relevant family members – - Service partners: the current and former spouses and civil partners of Service members, and any person whose relationship with a Service member is or was formerly 'akin to a relationship between spouses or civil partners', such as a cohabiting couple in a committed relationship. - Service children, (including through adoption), under the age of 18 that are the responsibility of Service members or Service partners. - Relatives living in the same household or who are wholly or mainly financially dependent on the Service member or Service partner; or someone for whom the Service member or Service partner has assumed regular and substantial caring responsibilities. |
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| Step 3: Assessing the equality impact | | | | |
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| PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC | POSITIVE IMPACTS | NEGATIVE IMPACTS | NO IMPACT | UNKNOWN |
| Age | | | | X |
| Disability | | | | X |
| Sex | | | | X |
| Gender reassignment | | | | X |
| Race | | | | X |
| Religion/Belief | | | | X |
| Sexual Orientation | | | | X |
| Pregnancy/Maternity | | | | X |
| Marriage and Civil Partnership* | | | | X |

* Regarding the protected characteristic of Marriage and Civil Partnership – public bodies need to comply with the first aim of the Public Sector Equality Duty and only in the context of employment.

| Step 3: Assessing the equality impact | |
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| 9. If 'no impact' or 'unknown' was selected, please explain | The local Armed Forces Community has representation from people who share different protected characteristics, however there is no statistical data on the diversity of the local armed forces community available for equality impact assessment at this time. |
| 10. If Dartford Borough Council works with partners to deliver the activity or proposal, please describe any circumstances that could give rise to positive or negative equality impacts between different groups | Authorised military activity abroad or at home could give rise to positive or negative equality impacts between difference groups. |

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| Step 3: Assessing the equality impact | |
| 11. Any other comments | |

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| Step 4: Action plan |
| 12. Based on the information in Steps 1 to 3, please list the actions that will be taken to address: a) any gaps in information and consultation b) how any negative impacts on equality will be mitigated or eradicated |

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| a) If additional information and/or consultation is required or the impact is still unclear, what actions will you put in place to gather the information you need? |
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| Information needs | Action | Intended outcome | Date for completion | How this will be monitored | Responsible officer |
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| b) If any negative impacts on equality were found, what actions will you put in place to mitigate or eradicate these impacts? |
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| Identified impacts (and who is affected) | Action | Intended outcome | Date for completion | How this will be monitored | Responsible officer |
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| Step 5: Decision making and future monitoring | |
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| 13. Which decision making process does this Customer Access Review need to go through? i.e. who does this need to be approved by? | Leadership Team |
| 14. Is the subject of the Customer Access Review going to committee? If yes, include your findings in the committee report and attach this assessment to the report | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 15. How will you continue to monitor the activity or proposal on protected characteristic groups? | Annual review of how we demonstrate our commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant and its effectiveness |
| 16. When will you review this Customer Access Review? | Annually |

| Step 6: Final steps | |
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| 17. Once this Customer Access Review has been approved, send this assessment to the Policy & Projects Officer | |
| 18. Implement the actions identified from this Customer Access Review and ensure progress is monitored and recorded | |

Reviewed by Head of Legal

Reviewed by Chief Officer and Director of Resources