

APPENDIX 1

Veterans' Hubs and Clubs

Adding value to existing services and resources.

This is an initiative arising from an idea at the Civilian Military Partnership Board at Buckinghamshire Council.

A Task and Finish group from the Board, chaired by Cllr Mimi Harker, proposed and then implemented Veterans' Hubs and Clubs (VHC) in 2021 that contributed to Buckinghamshire Council being awarded Gold status in the Armed Forces Covenant.

The VHC draws on existing veteran links, eg Breakfast Clubs, by providing specialist services to Veterans using Fire Stations as a facility.

The idea is straightforward, that by using the existing networks and partnerships more efficiently, that more veterans can be given personalised and relevant support.

Background.

There is recognition by the public sector that veterans and their well-being are important.

There is recognition that veterans are intrinsically reticent to be pro-active in seeking support, tending to rely on trusted people over time.

There is a close link between the Fire and Rescue Service and veterans.

Fire stations are seen as a safe space for veterans.

Fire stations have facilities to host a regular session, they have canteen facilities and space.

How it works.

A fire station hosts a VHC on a set date and time with a monthly frequency.

Veterans are invited to attend the fire station where they enjoy refreshments and socialise.

Experience has shown there are underlying concerns that veterans have which they are usually reluctant to share.

When veterans share their concerns, referrals are made to appropriate council officers to attend a future VHC and resolve.

The veteran meets the officer at a subsequent VHC and resolves their concern.

Why it works.

It works because the fire station is seen as a safe space and the hosting firefighters are trusted and valued.

The VHC is an efficient process as officers only attend when required and are fully briefed before attending.

It's an uncomplicated idea that uses existing partnerships and resources.

The VHC concept can be applied to any local authority area.

Outcomes

Data is being collected which shows a range of successful outcomes which are directly attributable to the HVC project.

Strengthened community link with Fire stations and improved wellbeing for involved firefighters.

Better use of public sector assets, both buildings and local authority officer time.