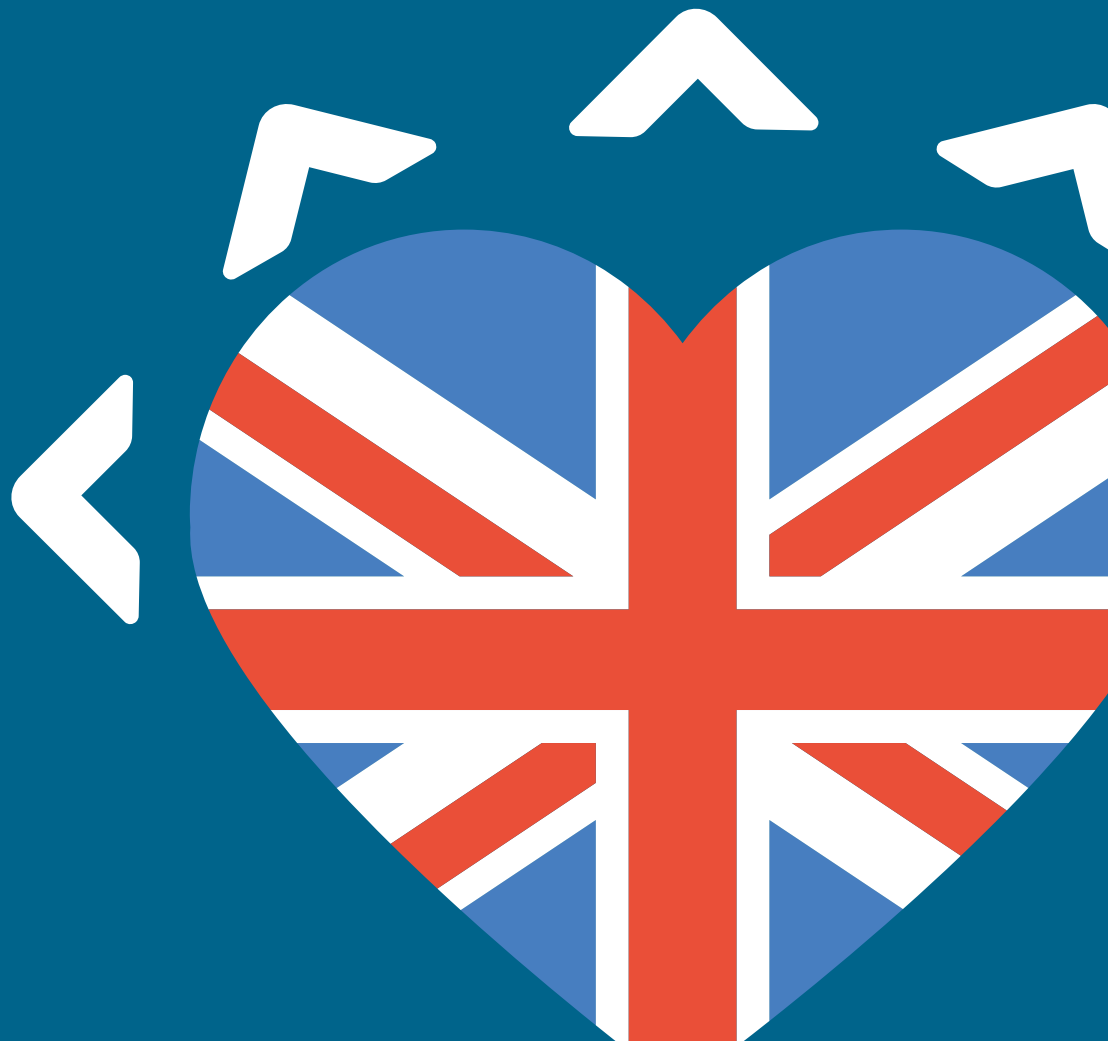


Sanctuary

Supporting Veterans and
the Armed Forces community





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Bill Parker,
Sanctuary Care
resident

FOREWORD BY

Craig Moule, Group Chief Executive



Sanctuary has a long history of supporting veterans. Over the past 20 years we have offered a range of support to those who have served in the Armed Forces, primarily through our housing service. We signed the Armed Forces Covenant in 2017 and are proud to have recently been awarded Silver status under the Defence Employers Scheme.

We continue to develop our approach to supporting the Armed Forces community. As part of this, we've worked closely with leading military charity Walking with the Wounded (WWTW) towards our shared goals of supporting and empowering veterans and their families. You can find out more about this work in this brochure.

In this document, we bring together our offer to veterans into one place. It sets out our commitments, our approach and our future ambitions. We want to ensure that, as one of the largest not-for-profit housing and care providers in the UK, we play our part in respecting this group of brave men and women.

We recognise that a strategic approach to veterans support is required, and we are working with a number of partner charities and organisations to whom we are grateful for their expertise and knowledge.

As well as employing and housing veterans and reservists, Sanctuary is proud to have a culture of remembrance throughout its organisation, with key moments in the year marked and honoured.

While we recognise there is more we can and should do, this document demonstrates the seriousness of our intent in helping recognise the huge role that veterans play in society, and how we can honour their service.



Craig Moule
Group Chief Executive

Building connections >>

Katie Poole, Regional Director, is Sanctuary's Veterans Champion.

If you are interested in working with us on our approach to veterans' support, please email veterans@sanctuary.co.uk.



OUR APPROACH to supporting veterans



Sanctuary's mission and values are at the heart of everything we do. Our mission and values demonstrate who we are as an organisation and the integrity of our intent. It is this foundation that enables and compels us to want to do more for the veterans' community.



Who is Sanctuary aiming to support?

Sanctuary aims to support any service leaver, veteran or member of the Armed Forces Community including:

- Customers and potential customers
- Employees and potential employees
- Reservists
- Partners, local authorities and charities

The UK Government defines a veteran as someone who has served for at least one day in the UK Armed Forces (as a Regular or Reservist). The term 'Service Leaver' describes someone in transition from the Armed Forces, or whose service has already ended up to two years post-service.

When someone leaves the Armed Forces, a resettlement phase helps them prepare for discharge. During this period, service leavers receive support with finding employment, training, and education.

A reservist is a person who is a member of a military reserve force.

What strengths does Sanctuary have to enable us to support veterans?

- **Size** – with around 125,000 homes in England and Scotland and working with more than 250 local authorities, we are a large landlord with access to a wide choice of affordable housing.
- **Diversity of activity** – we provide a range of housing and care services from residential care homes to student accommodation, supported housing to social housing, new social housing to affordable shared ownership new homes.
- **Housing expertise** – we have more than 50 years' experience of providing social housing and run hundreds of specialist accommodation services in England and Scotland.
- **Range of roles** – with around 14,000 employees, we have a range of roles which offer strong career progression opportunities with great terms and conditions to successful candidates.
- **Culture which promotes positive messages around mental health** – we have a culture of speaking out on mental health. With more than 800 trained Mental Health First Aiders around the organisation and embedded programmes of support for individuals and teams we are proud to be smashing the stigma of mental health.

Beverley Brissett, Housing Officer



Our approach

There are three strands to our veterans' offer:



AFFORDABLE housing



Sanctuary has almost 100,000 social housing properties to let across England and Scotland. The vast majority of properties are let through choice-based lettings schemes run by local authorities, but around a quarter are let through direct lets, which is where the person applies to us directly. On average we let around 9,000 homes a year and the sad reality is that there isn't enough social housing for everyone who needs it.



The Armed Forces Covenant sets out that those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether in regular service or the reserves, those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. It also states that special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and bereaved.

We recognise that social and affordable housing is a key part of making a success of civilian life, being able to put down roots and be part of a community. We provide support for veterans and service leavers to ensure they are able to apply for housing in their local area.

We offer:

- Signposting to **local authorities** for support with housing applications and, where requested, one-to-one sessions with veterans and service leavers to enable them to apply for housing in their chosen locations
- Links with **charity partners** to enable veterans and service leavers to access housing, if one of our homes is suitable
- Signposts to appropriate **aids and adaptations support**, if required

HIGH-QUALITY employment and training



We recognise that there are an estimated one million working age veterans in the UK and that unemployment rates for working age veterans are higher than for civilians. Through Sanctuary's role as a major employer, we seek to offer veterans and reservists a wide range of opportunities to build a civilian career.



Veteran Alan Hughes, Senior Learning and Development Manager, delivering a training session

Supporting individuals who want to work for us

As part of our commitment to making Sanctuary a great place to work and being an employer of choice, we have developed an attractive employment package which veterans can benefit from.

The package recognises the contribution of our employees, supports their physical, mental and financial health, and gives them flexibility to tailor their employee benefits. It provides:

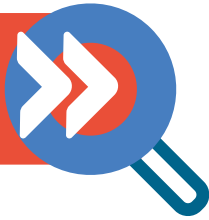
- › competitive pay
- › a range of company paid and voluntary employee benefits
- › wellbeing support and tools
- › a contributory pension scheme
- › employee recognition schemes

We fund an employee advice service which offers face-to-face, telephone and online counselling as well as advice and support on issues around:

- › family matters and relationships
- › financial, legal and consumer advice
- › health, wellbeing, medical, and fitness



CASE STUDY



A career path in an environment that feels right

Brian Daley, Fire Safety Advisor

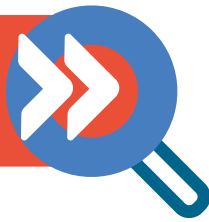
“I spent nine years in the Royal Air Force dealing with Logistics, Helicopter Support and Forward Hot Refuelling. When I left the Armed Forces, I was unsure which way to take my civilian career and also had some demons to deal with. After bouncing from job to job I realised I had to deal with my demons (PTSD) and find a career path in an environment that felt right.

“Eventually I found my home within Sanctuary who actively promote mental health wellbeing. I found that the skills that I learned while serving for example a can-do attitude, planning, communication, leadership and teamworking were easily transferred to my role within Sanctuary. Despite many people writing me off since leaving the RAF I am happy to say that I have progressed and I am now working as a Fire Safety Advisor.”



“Since being at Sanctuary I have **recruited veterans into my teams** who have found like me that Sanctuary is a good environment to work in and that our **skills can be transferred into civilian life**”

CASE STUDY



Working with a purpose and doing different things every day

Chris Bennett – Regional Customer Service Manager

“In 2013 I found myself with a dilemma - to stay in the Army or leave as part of the downscaling of the armed forces and take redundancy.

“So, after 16 years of service as an Artillery Observer and Adventure Training instructor, serving in Bosnia, Kosovo Iraq, Cyprus and two frontline tours of Afghanistan, I felt like it was my time to start a new chapter.

“Whilst I was leaving the forces I retrained as a Fibre Optic and Copper Network Engineer using my enhanced learning credits, but soon realised this was not for me.

“I found work straight away, but it was not the dream job I was hoping for. It was scraping barnacles off the bottom of sailing boats, but I felt that this was how my life was going to be from now on - in dead-end jobs with no purpose and no prospects.

“At this point I was feeling pretty low and that I had made a massive mistake in leaving the force. I felt I had lost a family, a lifestyle and, more importantly, my purpose.

“After jumping to another few jobs I was given the opportunity to work for Sanctuary Property Services as a Trade Supervisor in the reactive and day-to-day team.



“So, after 16 years of service as an Artillery Observer and Adventure Training instructor, serving in Bosnia, Kosovo Iraq, Cyprus and two frontline tours of Afghanistan, **I felt like it was my time to start a new chapter.**”



“This was the best opportunity I could have hoped for. It provided me with work that is constantly evolving, the ability to make instant decisions, and most of all a purpose - to provide safe, secure and good-quality social housing.”



“This was the best opportunity I could have hoped for. It provided me with work that is constantly evolving, the ability to make instant decisions, and most of all a purpose - to provide safe, secure and good-quality social housing.

“Working for Sanctuary has given me more time within my family, and the ability to plan holidays and a future without the risk of these being cancelled for any number of operational reasons.

“There is good camaraderie within Sanctuary as there are at least five ex-serving members in our region, which ensures there is always good banter in a coffee break, and a friendly ear if you ever need one.

“I have now been with Sanctuary for five and a half years, and after applying for a manager’s position I am now a Regional Customer Service Manager with the Housing team.

“This role will bring a new range of challenges and learning opportunities, but with the experience I have gained through my military career and my time spent with Sanctuary I will be giving 100 per cent to my new role, with a bright future ahead.”

Employing reservists

Sanctuary is proud to employ reservists. We have a reservist-friendly employee policy which enables and encourages anyone who wishes to serve in a volunteer capacity to do so without impacting their employment. We provide five days paid leave for anyone who is undertaking training as part of being a reservist.



SUPPORT and partnerships



Supporting local and national groups and charities

We recognise that we are not experts in supporting veterans and that partners and charities are often best placed to set up events, activities or programmes.

We take the opportunity to support veterans' groups and charities according to their needs, wherever we can.

A great example of this is our work with leading Armed Forces charity Walking With The Wounded (WWTW). WWTW operates on the principle that those who served, deserve. It provides employment, mental health, care coordination and volunteering support to veterans who are struggling since leaving the military, and to their families.

We've also recently worked with the Armed Forces Network to introduce the Forces Connect app within our organisation.

In just a couple of clicks, colleagues can obtain details and also signpost our customers for local support with money matters, training, wellbeing, education, employment, crisis and peer support and more.

Katie Poole, our Veterans Champion, said: "We're always keen to do more and are delighted to be working with like-minded networks and organisations across the country to achieve positive outcomes for those in need."

Cumbrian Challenge for WWTW

In May 2023 four of our colleagues – Lee Carter, Head of Ops - Property – North and North West; Ian Calver, National Head of Property Services Hub; Alan Hughes - Senior L and D Manager - Affordable Housing; and Darryl Watton - Director of Property Services – took on the Cumbrian Challenge to raise much-needed funds for Walking with the Wounded (WWTW).

The challenge is an annual fundraising event for teams to show their support and experience a memorable team-building weekend in the Lake District alongside WWTW beneficiaries.

Alan and Ian both served themselves, and all four were keen to do their part to support the cause.

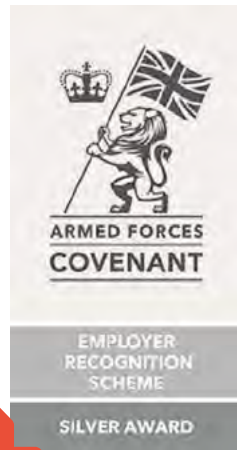
The team (pictured) raised a fantastic total of more than £1,500.



Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme - Silver Award

Sanctuary is a silver level employer in the Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS). This scheme encourages employers to support defence people and inspire others to do the same. It also recognises employer organisations that pledge, demonstrate or advocate support to defence and the Armed Forces community, and align their values with the Armed Forces Covenant.

We were proud and privileged to be formally presented with our Silver ERS award in September 2023.



Employee volunteering

Sanctuary has a long-established employee volunteering scheme where employees can take up to two days paid leave each year to volunteer for a charity or cause.

We are keen to develop the range of employee volunteering opportunities we offer our teams, working with veterans' charities. If you have an opportunity you would like us to consider please email employeevolunteering@sanctuary.co.uk.

employee volunteering

FUTURE ambitions



We want to go further in supporting veterans. We hold several future ambitions, which we continue to work on internally and with specialist partners to make happen:



Expand employment and training opportunities

We want to build on our early successes with employment and training and expand the employment and training opportunities we offer. With the support of partners, we will build our knowledge of what works and how we can best support veterans.



Employee interest group for veterans

We will explore appetite for establishing a veterans community of interest as part of our framework of networks and interest groups. We will seek to support it in any way we can.



Data

As part of our Group-wide data strategy, we will explore ways we can harness our data to enable us to more effectively analyse how we are support service leavers, veterans and reservists both in our colleague and resident populations to enable us to better target support.



Communications

We will more effectively communicate our veterans' offer to customers and colleagues to ensure greater awareness and reach to the groups we are seeking to work with.

ACCREDITATIONS and partners



Armed Forces Covenant

Sanctuary signed the Armed Forces Covenant in 2017, a national commitment coordinated by the Government. In signing the covenant, it demonstrates that we are committed to supporting the Armed Forces community.

Career Transition Partnership

Sanctuary is registered with the Career Transition Partnership (CTP). CTP is a recruitment service delivered by Right Management Ltd, in partnership with the Ministry of Defence. The CTP provides resettlement services for those leaving the Royal Navy, Army, Royal Air Force and Marines. Regardless of time served, all members of the Armed Forces can benefit from CTP support when leaving service.

Forces Families Jobs

Sanctuary is registered with the Forces Families Jobs recruitment site for training, employment and volunteer roles for family members of currently serving UK military personnel.

RFEA, the Forces' Employment Charity

Sanctuary is registered with RFEA, the Forces' Employment Charity, to share job opportunities with a wide range of service leavers.

Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme – Silver Award

Sanctuary is a silver level employer in the Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS).



Accessibility

We want this document to be accessible to all. If you would like it in a different format, call **01905 334000** or email pr@sanctuary-housing.co.uk.

Sanctuary

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