

Item 3.iii

Report to:	Trust Board of Directors	Date: 06 November 2025
Report from:	Trust Armed Forces Network Leadership Berin Krenek, Luke Bage Harvey McEnroe and David Jones	
Principal Objective/ Strategy and Title	Annual report from the Trust Armed Forces Network This relates to: National Armed Forces Covenant Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance accreditation	
Board Assurance Framework Entries	Recruitment Retention Staff Engagement	
Regulatory Requirement	N/A	
Equality Considerations	N/A	
Key Risks	N/A	
For:	Information	

Purpose/Background/Summary

Royal Papworth Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (RPH) has a long-standing commitment to supporting the Armed Forces community. In 2014, then known as Papworth Hospital, the Trust became a member of the original Community Armed Forces Covenant Scheme. That same year, the Trust was awarded Silver status under the national Defence Employer Recognition Scheme, which encourages employers to support the Armed Forces community and inspire others to do the same. This Silver status was successfully renewed in 2017 and again in 2022. A full timeline of key events is provided in *Appendix 1*.

In June 2025, the Armed Forces Network adopted a new leadership structure following the departure of the previous champion.

- Harvey McEnroe, Chief Operating Officer, now serves as Executive Sponsor
- David Jones, a veteran, serves as Non-Executive Sponsor.
- Berin Krenek, a current serving reservist, serves as the Armed Forces Champion.
- Luke Bage, Head of Resourcing, continues serving as Deputy Champion.

In 2021, RPH achieved Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance (VCHA) accreditation. This accreditation recognises the Trust’s work in identifying and sharing best practice across the NHS as an exemplar of the

highest standards of care for the Armed Forces community. It reflects our ongoing commitment to champion these standards for all members of the Armed Forces community and forms part of our obligations within the wider Integrated Care System (ICS) and the national Armed Forces Covenant, to which we are a signatory.

As part of our VCHA accreditation, this document provides the annual update to the Board, fulfilling the commitment made in our VCHA review declaration to the Board of Directors on 1 September 2022.

It also serves as an important summary of the extensive work carried out over the past year in support of our Armed Forces community.

VCHA Standards

There are eight VCHA Standards that each organisation needs to evidence against. The eight VCHA Standards are:

Standard	
1	The Trust understands and is compliant with the Armed Forces Covenant
2	The Trust has appointed Veterans and Armed Forces Champions.
3	The Trust identifies veterans and armed forces community status patients to ensure they receive appropriate care
4	Staff at the Trust are trained and educated in the needs of veterans and the armed forces community
5	The Trust has established links to appropriate nearby armed forces support services
6	The Trust will refer/handover veterans armed forces staff and patients to other services as appropriate
7	The Trust raises awareness of veterans and armed forces community
8	Supporting the Armed Forces as an employer

Revalidation with the VCHA has been successfully completed and approved by the Regional Lead. The subsequent accreditation review is scheduled for 1st July 2028.

The 'Veteran Aware Accreditation Recommendation' can be found in the Reference Pack

Trust AFC Update and events for 2025

NHS National Training and Education Programme – Raising awareness of the Armed Forces community

As part of our ongoing commitment to improving care for the Armed Forces community, the NHS has launched a new National Training and Education Programme (NTEP) to raise awareness and enhance understanding of veteran-specific needs across all NHS settings. Rolling out on November 6th, 2025, starting with the East of England Regional Trainer, this training will be incorporated on the Trust's Armed Forces intranet page, available to all staff, with strong encouragement for Board members and leaders to complete the leadership-specific modules. The programme includes different levels and formats of learning (introductory awareness, operational / clinical, and leadership modules) designed to strengthen cultural competency, communication, and service adjustments for veterans, reservists and their families. Benefits include improved patient experience, increased confidence among teams in meeting Armed Forces Covenant obligations, and progress towards enhancing our *Veteran Aware* accreditation through the Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance (VCHA). A recent case study illustrates the need for this training: an army veteran, who is deaf, attended a CT clinic appointment and, due to multiple overlapping appointment letters, miscommunication and lack of deaf-awareness adjustments, left feeling unsupported and questioning our VCHA accreditation. He raised the issue not for himself but on behalf of other veterans who may struggle to raise such concerns. Embedding and promoting this new training will help ensure staff are more aware of the needs of this community, strengthening our ability to deliver truly equitable, person-centred care

[National Training and Education Programme – Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance](#) (also in the Reference Pack)

Staff Stories and Staff engagement

Launch of official staff network. Quarterly meetings

The Armed Forces Network has now been formally launched as an official staff network within the Trust. As part of the set-up, the leadership team contacted all staff members who have self-identified on ESR as part of the Armed Forces community and invited them to join. The network will also be open to allies and supporters and will meet quarterly to identify and progress actions that strengthen how we support both our Armed Forces staff and our veteran/service family patient community. The inaugural meeting is scheduled for September 2025.

Exercise Future Leader – 10 JUL 25

On Thursday July 10th, we had two members of Royal Papworth attend a one-day military leadership exercise held at the Army Reserve Centre in Norwich. Exercise *Future Leader* was a one-day immersive military leadership development opportunity designed to introduce emerging talent within organisations to the British Army's values-based approach to leadership. Aimed at staff with no prior military background, the experience blended classroom-based leadership theory with practical outdoor command tasks, exposing delegates to the Army's Leadership Code, decision-making under pressure, teamwork and communication. The purpose of the exercise was to strengthen personal and professional

development by offering participants a unique insight into how the Army cultivates effective leaders – inspiring them to ‘do the right thing on a difficult day when no-one is watching’ – whilst reinforcing our commitment as an employer to the Reserve Forces.

Charlene- a sister on level 4 said, ‘During the leadership training day, we began with a powerful presentation on leadership in the Army, offering clear insight into military values and command ethos. The day then moved into practical, immersive activities, including a VR experience showcasing the Army’s use of modern warfare technology, and a hands-on session with decommissioned weapons. At the firing range, we learned the GRIT sequence for fire control orders, practising both instruction-giving and target shooting. Teamwork and communication were tested in a blindfolded “minefield” challenge, relying solely on agreed whistle codes to navigate successfully. The day concluded with a demanding physical training session in combat gear, simulating battlefield conditions under fire commands. The experience emphasised adaptability, leadership, teamwork, and the importance of clear communication under pressure’.

Megan- Nurse in Theatres said: I had a fantastic day and found it very useful to learn about how leadership is approached by the army and had many conversations with members of the reserve about their experiences on the ground in action during their time in the regulars.



NB: A more comprehensive report on the ‘Exercise Future Leader Training Day’ can be found in the reference pack

Reserve Forces Training Evening – 14th October 2025

Our Non-Executive representative attended a Reserve Forces Training Evening at the Army Reserve Centre, Cambridge. The event included presentations on the role, skills, and contribution of the 163 Squadron, 254 Multi-Role Medical Regiment, as well as demonstrations of pre-hospital treatment, casualty evacuation, and battlefield ambulance scenarios. Discussions highlighted opportunities for

collaboration with Papworth staff, including potential involvement in Cadets, theatre experience for reserve doctors, and promotion of Reserve roles within the Trust. The evening also provided networking opportunities with the Squadron and local Armed Forces contacts.

Patient and Public Stories

We have proactively engaged with ward managers to raise awareness of the Armed Forces Network and its role in supporting patients from the serving and veteran community. Ward teams have been trained on how to accurately record Armed Forces status at admission. Additionally, the Business Intelligence team has developed a dashboard to enable easy identification of inpatients who identify as part of the military community.

1. Cambridge Veterans Club

Three veterans from the Cambridge Veterans Club will be joining us on Tuesday, 11th November 2025, to participate in the Remembrance Service.

2. Support for Veteran Patient and Family Member

The palliative care team referred a patient's spouse who was experiencing financial and emotional difficulties following their partner's admission to Papworth. We identified a local veteran charity and facilitated communication, enabling access to support and community engagement during this challenging period.

3. Patient Needing Additional Resources at Home

A patient admitted for a procedure expressed concerns about declining mobility and the need for mobility aids, ahead of repatriation to their local district general hospital. The Armed Forces Community leads contacted the Armed Forces champions at the patient's local hospital to arrange ongoing support, ensuring continuity of care and appropriate resources for the patient.

Important dates

Key calendar dates have been embedded into the Armed Forces Network's annual plan to strengthen visibility and engagement. In June, we marked Armed Forces Day by flying the Armed Forces flag for a week and using the opportunity to introduce the new Armed Forces Network leadership team across the Trust

Looking ahead, Armistice Day will be commemorated on 11th November 2025 with a remembrance service and wreath-laying ceremony in the Atrium



Board Support – Recommendations for Action

To continue strengthening our Armed Forces offer and support the Trust's progression from Silver to Gold Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) status, we respectfully ask Board members to:

- Complete the NHS National Training and Education Programme – Armed Forces Awareness modules when available, particularly the *leadership-focused* content, and encourage your senior teams to do the same.
- Attend key Armed Forces Network events where possible (e.g. the upcoming Armistice Day remembrance service on 11 November 2025) to visibly champion the Trust's support for the Armed Forces community.
- Use internal communication channels (e.g. Message of the Week) to raise awareness of the Armed Forces Staff Network, highlight its activities, and encourage staff to proactively identify and refer Armed Forces patients who may benefit from additional support.
- Support the Poppy Appeal – poppies and donation boxes are at the main reception.