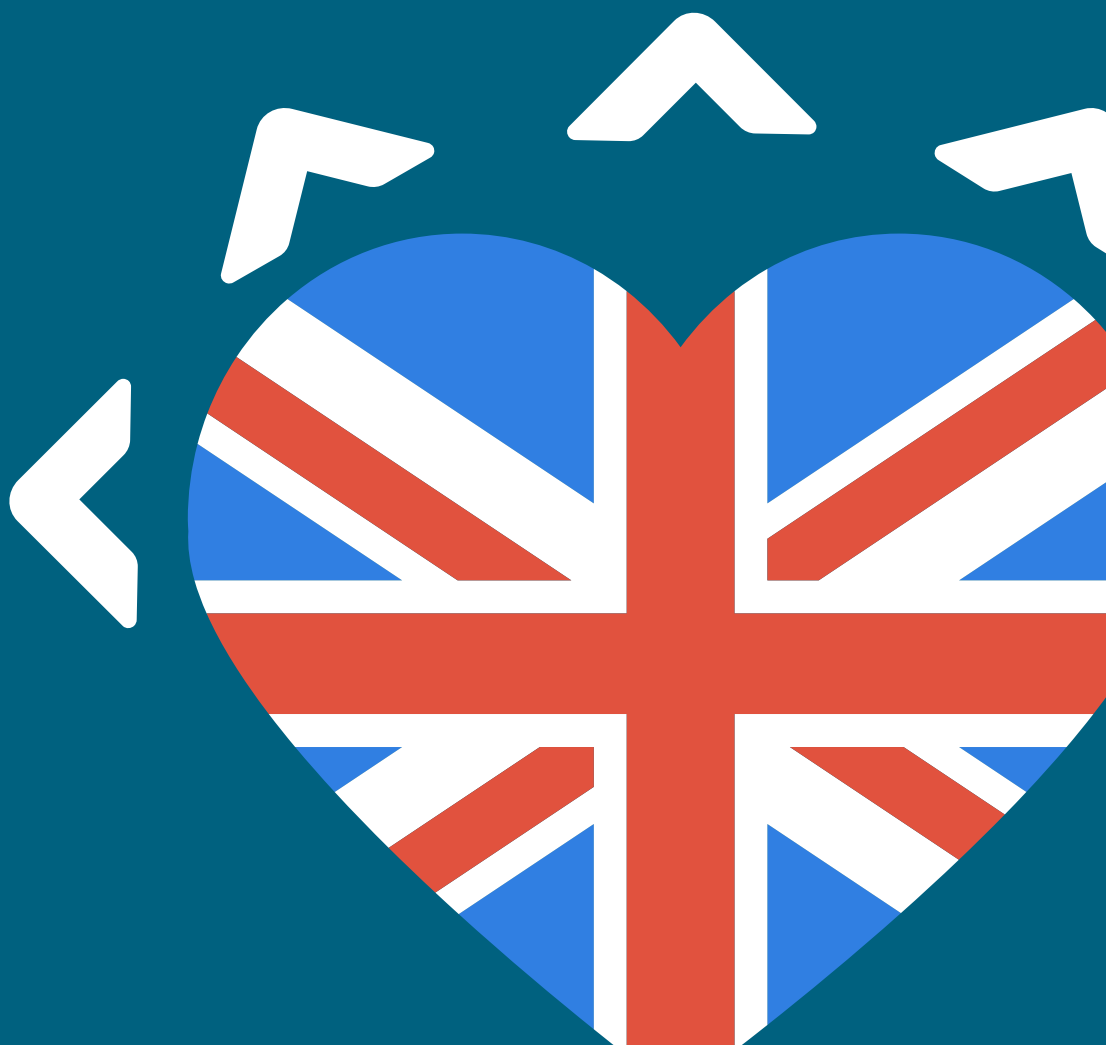


Sanctuary

# Supporting Veterans

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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 have continued to develop our approach to supporting the Armed Forces community.

Now, for the first time, 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 >>

Head of Housing **Katie Poole** 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](mailto: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.

## Sustainability



- › We continue to build a sustainable business model for our people and our customers.
- › We deliver services ourselves wherever possible.

## Quality



- › We focus on delivering positive outcomes for our customers.
- › We have high standards; providing efficient and effective services.

**Our mission**  
Building **affordable homes and sustainable communities** where people choose to live

## Ambition



- › We invest in and care for our people and communities.
- › We seek opportunities to grow our business.

## Diversity



- › We respect and value the diversity of our people.
- › We are committed to embedding an inclusive environment for our people and our customers.



## Integrity

- › We act with honesty and integrity in all that we do.
- › We'll do the right thing, even if it's not the easy thing.

## Who is Sanctuary aiming to support?

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

- › Residents and potential residents
- › 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 more than 105,000 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 almost 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**



**High-quality employment and training**



**Employee volunteering**

# AFFORDABLE housing



Sanctuary has more than 80,000 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 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

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:

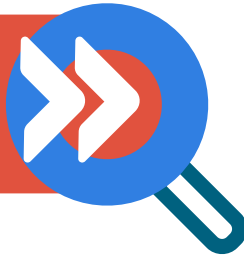
- › competitive pay
- › a range of company paid and voluntary employee benefits
- › wellbeing support and tools
- › a contributory pension scheme
- › employee recognition schemes

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 Technician

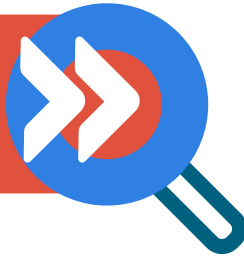
“I spent nine years in the Royal Air Force dealing with Logistics, Helicopter Support and Forward Hot Refuelling. When I left the Armed Forces, I was unsure which way to take my civilian career and also had some demons to deal with. After bouncing from job to job I realised I had to deal with my demons (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 Technician.”



“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



### Out on the open road doing different things every day

#### Darren Carter – Multi-Trade Operative

“I was formally a colour sergeant in the British Army. When I was at school I knew where my life would begin and that was only ever going to be an infantry man in the army. All the way through school I kept myself fit to prepare myself for what I was going to pursue when I left school. I grew up with it too due to my old man also being the same, so it was the most obvious way for me to follow.

“I served for many years ending up as a second in command of an infantry sniper platoon and my only qualification was what I was good at which was hidden behind a rifle. I guess I used my best asset at the time, so I was successful. I was also a small arms instructor at both junior and senior level which led me to teach new recruits to become soldiers.

“As a frontline soldier the only qualification we have is war and weapons so to pursue a career in civvy street after being shot at or saving so many lives, it’s disheartening to know we will struggle to become anything else other than a grunt (military term for infantry man). This makes it much harder for us than soldiers who also have a civil qualification like a mechanic or an electrician in the Royal Electrical & Mechanical Engineers, or a carpenter in the Royal Engineers... but I can certainly promise there is light at the end of the tunnel.

“When I was at school I knew where my life would begin and that was only ever going to be an **infantry man in the army**”





“My advice to any servicemen and women finding it difficult as I did would be, **don’t give up** and you will eventually find what you’re looking for - **it does get better**”

“With all that being said I knew this would all come to an end so I needed to get used to the idea of becoming a civilian. I found it so hard coming out of the army - it almost destroyed me. But I pursued a course in college before I came out. I completed this with the qualification to become a carpenter. I was lucky enough to start work as soon as I left but I still found it very hard to come to terms with. From my perspective, I was now being ordered around by minors and spoken to like dirt - this was the hardest thing for me to accept this was now my reality.

“I swear I hated feeling like this but again I pushed myself to succeed and not give up. After working at a few other companies, I found Sanctuary. I’ve got to say I feel better than I ever have in years. I now have a great boss who’s more like a friend and he’s always committed to follow the rules and actually listen if a problem arises. Because of this I feel I have a part of my life back and it feels great. Leaving the army in 2008 was the hardest part of my life but as the years have gone by I’ve finally found what I was looking for as a civilian.

“I’m extremely happy now as at present I’m a multi skilled operative with Sanctuary and I really enjoy this. Being out on the open road doing different things every day, it couldn’t be better and is satisfying.

“At present I’m now looking to pursue a new career as a maintenance surveyor within Sanctuary. There are thousands of job opportunities within the company and I’m committed to stay and progress with Sanctuary because I now feel I have found my way as a civilian. To me that’s the perfect beginning even though it took a while to get there.

“My advice to any servicemen and women finding it difficult as I did would be, don’t give up and you will eventually find what you’re looking for - it does get better.”

## 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 Reserve.



# EMPLOYEE volunteering



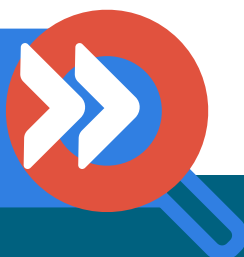
## Employee volunteering

Sanctuary has a long-established employee volunteering scheme where employees can take up to two days paid leave 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](mailto:employeevolunteering@sanctuary.co.uk).

employee  
volunteering

## CASE STUDY



Jenny Harris, Head of Building Safety

### Volunteering at the D-Day commemorations

Jenny Harris, Head of Building Safety, used her employee volunteering days for an experience she would never forget: volunteering at the D-Day 75th anniversary commemorations in Normandy.

Jenny, who worked for the Royal British Legion before Sanctuary, volunteered on the MV Boudicca to support more than 250 veterans of D-Day.

The week long voyage saw Jenny attend and participate in memorial ceremonies in England and France, where Her Majesty the Queen and other Heads of State honoured those who fought and those who fell.

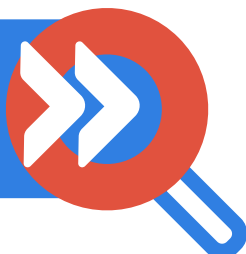
Jenny said: "All the events were a fitting tribute to the sacrifices made 75 years ago. It was an emotional experience for the returning veterans, for many of whom this was the first time they have made the journey to pay their respects."

## 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.

### CASE STUDY



We were approached by veterans charity Stepway that works in the Midlands. We were keen to support in any way we could, so we attended an event hosted by Stepway in Birmingham in October 2021, as a way of opening career opportunities to veterans in the local area. We also had staff there to offer advice on housing options.

### Colleen Eccles, Head of Place Shaping, attended the event on behalf of Sanctuary:

"The Stepway event in Birmingham was an excellent opportunity to connect with veterans and the very many support agencies that have unique contributions to make in supporting them and their families.

It brought home to me, just how many aspects of life the support agencies offer help with, and the many different ways they do this in order to reach as many veterans and their families as possible. We learnt a great deal that day from participating."

Stepway is now part of our community partner network and we are exploring further opportunities to work together.



Colleen Eccles, Head of Place Shaping alongside Lord Mayor of Birmingham Councillor Muhammad Afzal and Dani Brill, Assistant Sales Manager

# FUTURE ambitions

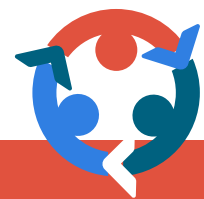


**We want to go further in supporting veterans. We hold several future ambitions, which we will work on internally and with specialist partners to make happen:**



## 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.

## Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme – Bronze Award

Sanctuary is a bronze level employer in the Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme. This scheme encourages employers to support defence people and inspire others to do the same. The scheme encompasses awards for employer organisations that pledge, demonstrate or advocate support to defence and the Armed Forces community, and align their values with the Armed Forces Covenant.

## 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.



EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME

BRONZE AWARD

Proudly supporting those who serve.

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## 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.co.uk**.

# Sanctuary

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