

Signing the Armed Forces Covenant – Example Pledges

The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise by the nation that those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, should be treated fairly and should not face disadvantages when seeking to access public or private goods and services in the UK. The Covenant also provides for special provision to be made for those who have given the most, where this is justified.

Signing the Covenant is voluntary. Organisations may choose to sign up in order to demonstrate their support for the Armed Forces Community and for the principles of the Covenant. All organisations – public, private or voluntary and small, medium or large – are welcome to sign the Covenant.

The Covenant is a flexible tool. While all signatories pledge to uphold and act in accordance with the basic principles of the Covenant, organisations are free to tailor their specific pledges to suit their circumstances. In other words, organisations are free to specify – with as much or as little detail as they think necessary – how exactly they plan to support and uphold the Covenant.

The team at Defence Relationship Management will help prospective signatories to develop their individualised Covenants. All prospective signatories begin with the basic Covenant template, but they can then choose what, if any, additional pledges they wish to add to this.

Listed below are some suggestions for pledges that prospective signatories may wish to consider. These can be edited or re-worded as appropriate. The suggestions are grouped thematically – each theme may be more or less relevant to particular organisations, depending on what that organisation does (for example, 'housing' may be especially relevant to certain local authorities, while private-sector businesses are likely to be particularly interested in pledges around 'employment').

Theme 1: Employment

- Support **Reservists** by offering them additional days of annual leave (paid/unpaid) in order to carry out their duties.
- Offer work placements, insight days, mentoring schemes and/or guaranteed interview schemes to **Veterans** seeking employment.
- Support the employment of Service **spouses, partners and dependants**, for example by: signing up to [Forces Families Jobs](#); offering short-notice leave to those whose partners are sent on deployment; and working with the tri-Service Families Federations.
- Promote **employment schemes** aimed at the Armed Forces Community, such as '[A Great Place to Work](#)' and '[Step Into Health](#)'.
- Offer additional (paid/unpaid) annual leave to **Cadet Force Adult Volunteers** to help them carry out their training requirement.
- Offer insight days to older **Cadets** looking for apprenticeships and further education opportunities.
- Engage with the [Career Transition Partnership](#).
- Work with relevant charities and the Career Transition Partnership to offer work opportunities to the **Wounded, Injured and Sick**.
- Consider ways in which **remote-working solutions** might benefit the mobile Armed Forces Community, especially partners and spouses.

Theme 2: Communications, engagement and outreach

- Provide and/or promote **training**, such as e-learning, for your staff on the Armed Forces Community.
- Promote the Armed Forces Covenant, the [Defence Employer Recognition Scheme](#) and your support for the Armed Forces Community to your staff, customers/service users, supply chains and the wider public.
- Support or promote **Armed Forces events**, such as Armed Forces Day/Week, Reserves Day, the Poppy Appeal and Remembrance activities.
- Use the **Covenant and Employer Recognition Scheme logos** in your communications and marketing.
- Create a dedicated Armed Forces page on your **website**.
- Establish an internal **Armed Forces Network** within your organisation, to enable staff members with an Armed Forces connection to meet and support one another and provide feedback to you as an organisation.
- Appoint an **Armed Forces Champion** within your organisation to act as a focal point for organising and promoting support for the Armed Forces Community.
- Engage with and support **local Armed Forces charities**, for example by supporting their fundraising activities.
- **Signpost** members of the Armed Forces Community to available support, for example from [Cobseo](#), the [Veterans' Gateway](#) or statutory services in your area.
- Run, facilitate or promote **support networks** (such as coffee mornings, breakfast clubs) for veterans and other members of the Armed Forces Community.

- Engage with any **local Armed Forces presence** – for example, local Army units, reservist units, RAF stations and/or naval bases.
- Develop relationships and **work collaboratively with other organisations supporting the Covenant** and the Armed Forces Community in your locality/region.

Theme 3: Commercial

- Offer and/or promote **commercial discounts** for members of the Armed Forces Community via the [Defence Discount Service](#).
- Waive **cancellation fees** for utility and other contracts for those posted overseas or to areas outside the service provision.
- Ensure the Armed Forces Community has **fair access** to your services and is not put at a disadvantage by their service, for example as a result of their high mobility.

Theme 4: Health and healthcare

- Take part in and/or promote **awareness-raising schemes**, such as veteran-friendly [accreditation for GP practices](#) and the [Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance](#).
- Ensure available **dedicated healthcare services** for members of the Armed Forces Community, such as [Op COURAGE](#) in England, are signposted and promoted.
- Offer **concessionary access** to leisure centres and sports facilities for members of the Armed Forces Community.

Theme 5: Housing

- Waive the **local-connection requirement** for eligibility for social housing for ex-Service personnel [statutorily, the requirement must be disapplied for those who left the Armed Forces within the last five years, but local authorities can choose to disapply it for all ex-Service personnel].
- Provide for **additional preference** in your social housing allocation scheme for certain members of the Armed Forces Community.
- Promote **awareness** of housing and homelessness services among the Armed Forces Community.

Theme 6: Education

- Note, promote and/or make use of the provisions for Armed Forces families in the **School Admissions Code** (England), for example by allocating school places in advance of a family arriving in a local area.

- Promote and/or use resources such as the **Service Children Progression Alliance's [Thriving Lives Toolkit](#)**.
- [For schools with Service children among their pupils] Develop a clear strategy for the effective use of any **dedicated funding** (for example the [Service Pupil Premium](#) in England) in support of Service pupils.
- Support and promote the **wellbeing of Service children**, recognising the particular experiences and challenges they may face.
- Promote **training and further/higher education opportunities** for Service leavers, ex-Service personnel and their families.

Theme 7: Civic responsibilities

- [If you are a local council] Ensure upkeep of **war memorials and war graves** (with support from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission).
- Organise, facilitate, promote and/or take part in **remembrance and other ceremonial activities**.