



## Woking Borough Council

---

**We commit to uphold the Armed Forces Covenant and support the Armed Forces Community. We recognise the contribution that Service personnel, both regular and reservist, veterans and military families make to our organisation, our community and to the country.**

Signed on behalf of:

**Woking Borough Council**

**Army Training Centre (Pirbright)**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** Councillor Saj Hussain

**Position:** Mayor of Woking

**Name:** Major Thomas Wallis RLC

**Position:** Regimental Second in Command,  
Headquarter Regiment, Army Training Centre  
(Pirbright)

**Date:** 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022

**Date:** 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022



# **The Armed Forces Covenant**

An Enduring Covenant Between

The People of the United Kingdom  
Her Majesty's Government

– and –

All those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces of the Crown

And their Families

The first duty of Government is the defence of the realm. Our Armed Forces fulfil that responsibility on behalf of the Government, sacrificing some civilian freedoms, facing danger and, sometimes, suffering serious injury or death as a result of their duty. Families also play a vital role in supporting the operational effectiveness of our Armed Forces. In return, the whole nation has a moral obligation to the members of the Naval Service, the Army and the Royal Air Force, together with their families. They deserve our respect and support, and fair treatment.

Those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether Regular or Reserve, 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. Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most, such as the injured and the bereaved.

This obligation involves the whole of society: it includes voluntary and charitable bodies, private organisations, and the actions of individuals in supporting the Armed Forces. Recognising those who have performed military duty unites the country and demonstrates the value of their contribution. This has no greater expression than in upholding this Covenant.

## Section 1: Principles of The Armed Forces Covenant

1.1 We, **Woking Borough Council**, will endeavour to uphold the key principles of the Armed Forces Covenant:

- *Members of the Armed Forces Community should not face disadvantages arising from their service in the provision of public and commercial services.*
- *In some circumstances special provision may be justified, especially for those who have given the most, such as the injured or bereaved.*

## Section 2: Demonstrating our Commitment

2.1 We recognise the contribution that Service personnel, reservists, veterans, the cadet movement and military families make to our organisation, our community and to the country. We will seek to uphold the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant by:

### **Promoting the Armed Forces:**

- We ensure our staff are aware of the Armed Forces Covenant to better identify and serve members of the Armed Forces Community.
- We promote that we are a forces-friendly organisation.
- We publish information about the Armed Forces Covenant and local resources and support services, including for Ex-Service personnel and Veterans at the Woking Veterans Hub.

### **Employment support to members of the Armed Forces Community:**

- We support Reservists by offering them additional days of annual leave (unpaid) to carry out their duties, as per the Council's Reserve Forces Training and Mobilisation Policy.
- We promote employment schemes aimed at the Armed Forces Community, such as '[Step Into Health](#)' through the Veterans Hub in partnership with the NW Health Alliance and DWP representatives.
- We offer guaranteed interview schemes to veterans and spouses/partners of serving personnel who meet essential criteria.

### **Communications, engagement and outreach:**

- We have a Military Covenant Advisory Panel (MCAP) where we engage with a range of local stakeholders to monitor the pledges within this covenant and matters of local military wellbeing.
- We support and promote Armed Forces events, such as Armed Forces Day/Week, Reserves Day, the Poppy Appeal and Remembrance activities.
- We use the Covenant and Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award logo in our communications and marketing.
- We maintain our dedicated Armed Forces page on our internal and external web pages.

- We continue to appoint and work closely with an Armed Forces Champion who works closely with the Military Covenant Advisory Panel and Army Training Centre (Pirbright) Community Engagement Development Officer and partners.
- We signpost service users who are members of the Armed Forces Community to available support, in the third sector, other statutory organisations and healthcare services.
- We promote support networks for veterans and other members of the Armed Forces Community, e.g. monthly Woking Veterans Hub.

#### **Commercial:**

- We ensure the Armed Forces Community has fair access to our services and are not put at a disadvantage by their service, for example as a result of their regular relocations (postings and deployments).
- We will work to retain our Gold Standard Award for our outstanding support for the Woking Armed Forces community.

#### **Health:**

- We will continue to build on the work already undertaken to promote veteran-friendly accreditation for GP practices and the Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance.

#### **Housing:**

- We raise awareness within all housing services, internally and externally, that covenant legislation requires the local connection requirement be waived for social housing for ex-Service personnel who have left within 5 years.
- We will ensure that former Service personnel are able to access the housing option which best suits their needs including liaison with Armed Forces specialist housing and support providers, as reflected in the Council's Housing Allocation's Policy.

#### **Civic responsibilities:**

- We will continue to ensure veterans, reserve and cadet units, family members and service charities are invited to our Armed Forces week events, civic remembrance ceremonies, Royal celebration and anniversaries.
- We continue to promote and preserve local military heritage sites including the Peace Garden and Brookwood Cemetery for the benefit of local, national and international visitors.

- 2.2 We will publicise these commitments through our literature and/or on our website, setting out how we will seek to honour them and inviting feedback from the Armed Forces Community and our customers on how we are doing.