



Walsall Council

We, the undersigned, 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.

On behalf of Walsall Council

Councillor Adam Hicken
Walsall Council Armed Forces Champion

On behalf of People of Walsall

Councillor Chris Towe
Mayor of Walsall

On behalf of the Ministry of Defence

MOD Regional Covenant Lead



Walsall Council Logo



The Armed Forces Covenant

An Enduring Covenant Between

**The People of the United Kingdom
His 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 Walsall 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

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:

- Ensuring that our front-line staff are trained to be aware of the Armed Forces Covenant to better identify and serve members of the Armed Forces Community.
- Being a forces friendly organisation and promoting this to our staff, customers, suppliers, contractors and wider public.
- Including a clause in the council's standard form goods and services contract precedent to specify that Providers must comply with the council's Armed Forces Covenant Duty.
- Engaging with and promoting the Defence Employer recognition scheme – an award which recognises positive actions taken by organisations which help to ensure that members of the Armed Forces community are not unfairly disadvantaged during recruitment and are supported in the workplace.
- Encouraging the integration of service life into civilian life and encouraging members of the Armed Forces community to help their local communities using the Councils Resilient Communities approach.
- Ensuring that the Council's template policy toolkit provides guidance on the extent to which the service personnel and their families are referenced in Council policies
- Including service personnel in Equality impact assessments
- Continuing to administer a Partnership Board with representatives of the Council's partner agencies and other relevant agencies to ensure that the pledges are consistent with pledges of partnership agencies across the borough and are delivered via a partnership action plan.

Providing employment support to members of the Armed Forces Community:

- Recognising and promote the skills of the Armed Forces Community, during engagements with local businesses and providing support in respect of self-employment and business startup.
- Recognising the considerable transferable skills that those with an Armed Forces background can bring to the delivery of Council services by offering a guaranteed interview scheme for all former UK service personnel who meet the minimum selection criteria in the employee specification.
- Supporting staff who are members of the reserve forces through the council's leave and time off policy by granting additional paid leave to attend the annual Reserve Forces summer camp and otherwise supporting additional non-continuous training, supporting any voluntary mobilisations subject to business need and accommodating compulsory deployments.
- Offering support to Cadet force adult volunteers by enabling them to offset their time through the Council's volunteering scheme
- Offering short notice leave to those whose partners are sent on short notice deployment.

Communications, engagement, and outreach:

- Using new population Census information to understand the extent and make-up of the Borough's Armed Forces Community to inform adequate, appropriate and targeted support and engagement with that community by the Council and its Partnership Board member agencies.
- Encouraging the Partnership Board member agencies to engage with a range of local stakeholders to monitor the delivery of their pledges.
- Where appropriate, using the covenant and employer recognition scheme award logo in our communications and marketing.
- Maintaining our dedicated Armed Forces webpage to inform and signpost to support networks (including coffee mornings, breakfast clubs) for veterans and other members of the Armed Forces Community and to promote the Defence Discount Service
- Ensuring that Walsall Connected service is familiar with the support available and where to direct the community to access the support.
- Working with regional and local military organisations to continue to raise awareness of the work of the covenant.
- Engaging with and supporting where appropriate, the armed forces charities locally through the Resilient Communities approach.
- Publicising these commitments through our literature and on our website as appropriate.

Commercial:

- Offering a discount to members of the Armed Forces and their families (as dependents) at the Council's leisure centres.
- Continuing to disregard War Disablement and War Widows pensions within the Council's localised Council Tax Reduction Scheme

Health:

- Recognising that whilst the provision of healthcare for service personnel is split between the MOD and the NHS each having its own statutory duties and covenant commitments, the Council has an important role to play in ensuring that the unique health needs of service personnel and their families are reflected in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Mental Health strategies and other related council policies and strategies and that this will be a consideration when those strategies are refreshed.
- Signposting those who need health and wellbeing related support to existing council services that provide prevention and rehabilitation programmes such as leisure centres and parks and countryside programmes, via the Council's Armed Forces webpage and other known networks.

Housing:

- Providing give advice and guidance from the Council's Housing and Welfare Team and local registered providers on available housing options and next steps. The advice being tailored to individual circumstances and in certain cases, having a statutory duty to assist.

Education:

- Ensuring that schools are aware of the provision in the School Admissions Code (England) regarding the allocation of school places to service children.
- Promoting resources such as the Service Children Progression Alliance' Thriving Lives Toolkit to schools [SCiP Alliance](#) which amongst other guidance, promotes tailored pastoral provision to support service children's mental health and wellbeing
- Encouraging schools to develop a clear strategy for the effective use of any dedicated funding (or example the service pupil premium in England in support of service pupils)

Civic responsibilities:

- Ensuring that the Borough's war memorials are maintained.
- Organising, facilitating, promoting and/or taking part in Armed Forces Day, Remembrance and other such ceremonial activities.