

Community Covenant

AN ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT

BETWEEN

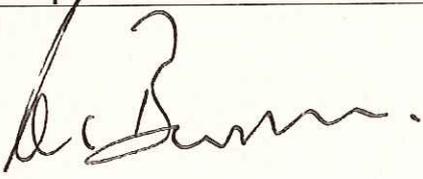
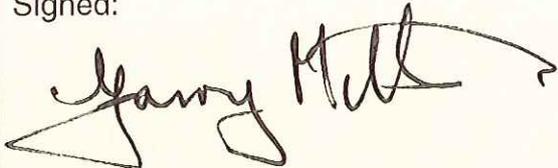
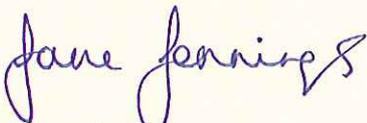
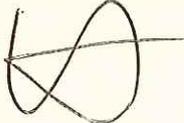
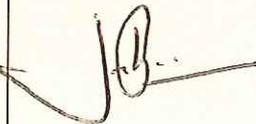
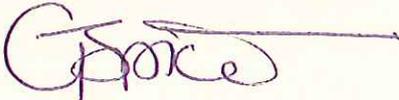
SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNCIL,
REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CHARITABLE AND VOLUNTARY SECTORS,
THE CIVILIAN COMMUNITY OF SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE

AND

THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY IN SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE

**We, the undersigned, agree to work and act together to
honour the Armed Forces Community Covenant.**

Signatories

<p>Signed:</p>  <p>Cllr John Calway Council Leader Signed on behalf of South Gloucestershire Council and the Local Strategic Partnership.</p>	<p>Signed:</p>  <p>Amanda Deeks OBE Chief Executive Signed on behalf of South Gloucestershire Council</p>
<p>Signed:</p>  <p>Andrew Brown Brigadier Signed on behalf of the Army</p>	<p>Signed:</p>  <p>Stephen Blackburn Lieutenant Commander Signed on behalf of the Royal Navy</p>
<p>Signed:</p>  <p>Simon Bollom Air Marshall Signed on behalf of the Royal Air Force</p>	<p>Signed:</p>  <p>Garry Mills County Vice Chairman, Royal British Legion Signed on behalf of the Armed Forces Charities</p>
<p>Signed:</p>  <p>Jane Jennings Signed on behalf of South West Veterans Advisory and Pensions Committee</p>	<p>Signed:</p>  <p>Helen Black South Gloucestershire CVS, Chief Executive Signed on behalf of the Community and Voluntary Sector</p>
<p>Signed:</p>  <p>Dr Jon Hayes Clinical Chair Signed on behalf of South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group</p>	<p>Signed:</p>  <p>Geoff Spicer District Commander, South Gloucestershire Signed on behalf of Avon and Somerset Police</p>

SECTION 1: PARTICIPANTS

1.1 This Armed Forces Community Covenant is made between:

The serving and former members of the Armed Forces and their families working and residing in South Gloucestershire

And

South Gloucestershire Council

And

The Charitable and Voluntary Sector

And

Other members of the civilian community

SECTION 2: PRINCIPLES OF THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT

- 2.1 The Armed Forces Community Covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and its local Armed Forces Community. It is intended to complement the Armed Forces Covenant, which outlines the moral obligation between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces, at the local level.
- 2.2 The purpose of this Community Covenant is to encourage support for the Armed Forces Community working and residing in South Gloucestershire and to recognise and remember the sacrifices made by members of this Armed Forces Community, particularly those who have given the most. This includes in-Service and ex-Service personnel their families and widow(er)s in South Gloucestershire.
- 2.3 For South Gloucestershire Council and partner organisations, the Community Covenant presents an opportunity to bring their knowledge, experience and expertise to bear on the provision of help and advice to members of the Armed Forces Community.
- 2.4 For the Armed Forces community, the Community Covenant encourages the integration of Service life into civilian life and encourages members of the Armed Forces community to help their local community.
- 2.5 For more information on the Ministry of Defence: Armed Forces Community Covenant 'Today and Tomorrow', visit www.mod.uk or click here: [Armed Forces Community Covenant](#)

SECTION 3: OBJECTIVES AND GENERAL INTENTIONS

Aims of the Community Covenant

- 3.1 The Armed Forces Community Covenant complements the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant which defines the enduring, general principles that should govern the relationship between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces community.
- 3.2 It aims to encourage all parties within a community to offer support to the local Armed Forces community and make it easier for Service personnel, families and veterans to access the help and support available from the MOD, from statutory providers and from the Charitable and Voluntary Sector. These organisations already work together in partnership at local level.
- 3.3 The scheme is intended to be a two-way arrangement and the Armed Forces community are encouraged to do as much as they can to support their community and promote activity which integrates the Service community into civilian life.
- 3.4 The focus of this work has been to ensure that current or former forces personnel and their families are not unfairly disadvantaged simply because of their current or previous association with the Armed Forces.
- 3.5 The covenant principles are built on 3 main themes
- The need of the covenant to draw together agencies who are currently working to support the Armed Forces community, knowingly or unknowingly
 - Capitalising on the good work that is already underway and inspiring future work based on evidence drawn so far and developing more complete ways of capturing needs analysis
 - Providing a mandate for long term, developmental work that is proactive in anticipating and mitigating problems before they manifest.
- 3.6 South Gloucestershire has a large military and civilian Armed Forces population. The Council has been supportive of its Armed Forces for many years and takes pride in recognising their contribution.
- 1,480 UK regular forces personnel
 - 500 naval service personnel
 - 460 army personnel
 - 520 royal air force personnel

MOD Personnel in South West Local Authorities as at 1 January 2012

	Military		Civilian
South Gloucestershire	1,480	South Gloucestershire	7,400
Bath and North East Somerset	190	Bath and North East Somerset	1,120
Bristol	70	Bristol	50
Cornwall	3,420	Cornwall	500
Plymouth	7,100	Plymouth	1,050
Wiltshire	15,140	Wiltshire	4,790

Source:

<http://www.dasa.mod.uk/applications/newWeb/www/apps/publications/pubViewFile.php?content=120.391&date=2012-02-16&type=html&PublishTime=09:30:00>; North Somerset has zero totals.

3.7 As of January 2012, there are 140 service children in South Gloucestershire. Of these 114 (81%) were of primary age, 21 (15%) were of secondary age (11-16yrs) and 5 (4%) were 16+ years. Of these 13 had special educational needs. The largest proportion of these (56%) live in the Emersons Green ward. The remaining population are split across 24 wards.

3.8 This covenant will support the Armed Forces community in South Gloucestershire to achieve 4 key objectives

1. Making it easier for people to get the support or information they need
2. Bring the Armed Forces Community, organisations supporting the Armed Forces Community and the South Gloucestershire residents and businesses together
3. Make sure that those serving and who have left the forces have somewhere to live and access to services such as healthcare
4. Ensure that children of Armed Forces personnel are supported through their education

SECTION 4: Measures

4.1 The table below outlines how the objectives will be achieved.

Objective 1.	
Making it easier for people to get the support or information they need	
How we will do it:	
Clear and easily accessible information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An easily accessible dedicated internet page on www.southglos.gov.uk – designed to improve access for the Armed Forces community • Make a commitment for all agencies to use plain English in all of their work • Deliver ‘South Glos News’ magazine and other community or public service information to Abbey Wood MOD office and British Legion Office in order to maximise exposure for services families to local council services and events
Understanding specific needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase training and awareness across organisational boundaries about specific needs and entitlements for the Armed Forces Community e.g. head teachers, social workers, health professional and advisers • Council to develop better links with the Bristol Abbey Wood HIVE to ensure accurate and timely information and support including looking to have an annual workshop with serving personnel. • Develop work with the SW Veterans Advisory & Pensions committee (VAPC) to promote discussion and support in local areas around the

	<p>services provided to local veterans and their families</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to improve the transition from the Armed Forces into civilian life for personnel with head conditions • Publicise the role of Occupational Health and support services that are available to staff who are reservists
Promote community based support programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the work of the Veteran Share line which will help injured veterans stay in touch with each other and share their experiences. The aim is to use the befriending scheme to help injured military rebuild their lives, combat loneliness, help their recovery and retain the friendships that are vital to them • Promote other supportive groups, websites and organisations via their internet page, for example <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/can-we-help/grants-and-loans/ • http://www.civvystreet.org/ • http://www.veterans-uk.info/other_offers/contents.html • http://www.wellaware.org.uk/ • http://www.volunteeringsouthglos.org.uk/

Objective 2.

Bring the Armed Forces Community, organisations supporting the Armed Forces Community and the South Gloucestershire residents and businesses together

How we will do it

Hold events within the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue the annual Armed Forces Day celebrations to show support for the men and women who make up the Armed Forces community, from currently serving troops to service families and from veterans to cadets • Review the possibility of Oaths of Allegiance being made as part of a civic function at Council Offices. • Continue the work within the community to bring the services and residents together, for example, talks and workshops. • Work with schools and colleges to invite the armed forces to attend workshops at year 10 and 11 to explain the many trades and courses that the forces employ and sponsor. • Publicise the need to support Cadets associations • Consider implementing a policy of offering families of fallen service personnel from the South Gloucestershire area a chance to have a street or road named after their loved one if this were the wishes of the family.
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Promote opportunities for work and volunteering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with voluntary and community groups to develop opportunities and information to enable more veterans to volunteer or mentor others • Explore opportunities to utilise mutual training between civilian and military organisations, for example, fill courses below capacity with service personnel • Communicate to businesses the value and benefits of employing reservists and forces families
Support integration within the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routinely collect data on the Armed Forces community within South Gloucestershire; for example <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools • Healthcare professionals (inform from the production of the JSNA) • Emergency services • Council services • Housing associations • Voluntary organisations
Support applications for community investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider proposals around how grant applications could be made to support the communities in this and the wider area, for example, sporting facilities, leaflets and materials, local history and library activities

<u>Objective 3.</u>	
Make sure that those service and those who have left the forces have somewhere to live and access to services such as healthcare	
How we will do it	
Support ex service personnel to get a home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of the Home Choice policy service personnel who have served beyond training will be awarded Band A status (most housing need) for twelve months following discharge, and to investigate whether this period could be lengthened in the future. This policy will shortly be updated to meet recently issued statutory instruments. • This is in exception to the following 3 instances, where ex-services applicants will be assessed as a registered applicant (formerly Band C) (of those who want to live in area, but do not have a particular housing need) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) those who are financially restricted; b) those who own or have a right to occupy another suitable property and; c) as the Council is not proposing to restrict access to the housing register on local connection grounds, applicants who do not have a local connection with this district

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Authority will not disqualify members of the Armed Forces on residency grounds for five years following discharge, i.e. that they be considered for local connection established during their period of service • Priority card awarded under a category of 'additional preference' that sits above 'reasonable preference' for ex-services applicants where they also have an urgent housing need • Work with the voluntary and community sector to develop a solution to the problems around accommodation faced by parents who are in the military and do not have sole custody of the child, when their child comes to visit
<p>Maintain awareness of service personnel's health needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness among primary healthcare professionals about; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of identification of ex-service personnel and their families; • Veteran's right to priority NHS treatment for conditions sustained during service; • The right to maintain a place on NHS waiting list regardless of moving area • Ensure that throughout the changes to the NHS and public health structures, there is a commitment to service user led design to ensure that the health care needs of veterans are recognised and met, including mental health issues.

Objective 4.

Ensure that children of Armed Forces personnel are supporting through their education

How we will do it

A school's admissions policy to recognise needs of service families

- The council's current admission's policy recognises the particular needs of service families through;
 - All written correspondence communicated electronically or via fax if required regarding admissions and admissions appeals;
 - Allocating up to a term in advance of a child's arrival in an area, a school place in response to an application accompanied by an official government letter declaring a relocation date and intended address if the child would meet the criteria on relocation;
 - Accepting a unit postal address or if appropriate, a quartering area address (the address of the closest house in the quartering area where confirmation is received that the family is to be housed in that area) for applications from service personnel in the absence of a new specific home postal address;
 - Accepting a late application from UK service personnel as 'on time' where a notification of posting has been received after the closing date and before the date of exchange of information with other admission authorities;
 - Considering an application on the criterion of 'local sibling' where another child in the family has been offered a place at the preferred school and the unit postal address or quartering address is such that the sibling would qualify as a 'local sibling';
 - Wherever possible, children of UK service personnel will be offered a place at the preferred local school even where the admission number has been reached. Where limits on infant class size apply, children of UK service personnel can be admitted over the infant class size of 30. Any child(ren) admitted over the infant class size of 30 will remain an 'excepted pupil' for the time they are in an infant class or until the class numbers fall back to the current infant class size limit. However, it may not be possible to admit to the preferred school(s) where admission over number would negatively impact upon the education of children already on roll at the school and would prejudice the provision of efficient education and efficient use of resources. Parents and carers refused a place at the preferred school(s) would have the right of appeal to an independent appeal panel.

<p>Encourage schools to apply for available supportive funds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the full entitlement to the pupil premium fund attributed to the children of Armed Forces personnel is passed onto the appropriate schools based on the annual school census • Encourage and direct those schools with children of Armed Forces personnel to apply for additional MOD support fund grant to mitigate the impact of regular pupil movements • Ask central government to consider criteria through which families in crisis are identified and whether this reflects the needs of the Armed Forces community.
<p>Ensure there is support and consideration provided for the children of service personnel</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a local solution to continue the process of assessing children with special educational needs regardless of the local authority boundary when families move to one boundary or another • Work with head teachers to enable increased consideration and awareness of forces children • Explore with MOD and, or central government the need to automatically align qualifications gained in service with civilian qualifications • Ensure the learning development partnership service level agreement includes service children as a priority group for counselling support around certain life events.

In addition to the measures above, we will maintain awareness of the [Government's commitments](#) to the community covenant and ensure that any relevant actions once launched are supported or incorporated to the objectives here.

CONTACT PERSONNEL AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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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.