



An Armed Forces Covenant

Between

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

and

The Armed Forces Community

(serving personnel, both regular and reservist, veterans and military families)

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

September 2019



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 Royal 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: PARTICIPANTS

- 1.1 This Armed Forces Covenant commitment for Windsor & Maidenhead is made between:
The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

And

The Armed Forces community in Windsor and Maidenhead (serving personnel, regulars and reserves, veterans and their families and members of the military sponsored cadet organisations).

SECTION 2: PRINCIPLES OF THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT

- 2.1 Life in the Armed Forces is different from the rest of society; Armed Forces personnel make sacrifices on behalf of the nation. They go where they are sent, when they are sent. So families will have to move, sometimes with little notice, to unfamiliar areas; or they may have to live apart for extended periods of time and they will face the stresses and challenges that arise when a loved one is deployed on operational duties.
- 2.2 This means that they can find themselves at a disadvantage in comparison with their civilian neighbours in accessing the goods and services that as citizens we should all expect. The Armed Forces Covenant aims to ensure that those who serve or have served, and their families are treated fairly and are not disadvantaged because of their Service.
- 2.3 The Armed Forces Covenant is based upon two key principles:
- no member of the Armed Forces community should face disadvantage in the provision of public and commercial services compared to any other citizen;
 - in some circumstances, special treatment may be appropriate for the injured or bereaved.
- 2.4 These principles will be taken into account when writing and implementing policies that impact upon the local populations and will be integrated into all the services, support, engagement and work within the Royal Borough.
- 2.5 For the purposes of this Covenant, the Armed Forces community includes Armed Forces personnel and members of the military sponsored cadet organisations. Armed Forces personnel include serving personnel (regulars and reserves), veterans and their families. Children of Armed Forces personnel, no matter the marital status of their parents, should be considered part of this community while still dependent.
- 2.6 The Covenant presents an opportunity for the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead to bring knowledge, experience and expertise to bear on the provision of help and advice to members of the Armed Forces community.
- 2.7 For the Armed Forces community, the Covenant encourages the integration of Service personnel, Veterans and their families into civilian life and to engage with their local community.

SECTION 3: OBJECTIVES AND GENERAL INTENTIONS

- 3.1 This Armed Forces Covenant defines the enduring, general principles that should govern the relationship between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces community.
- 3.2 The signatories to this Covenant will offer support and guidance to the local Armed Forces community and make it easier for serving personnel (regular and reserve), veterans and their families to access help and support from statutory providers.
- 3.3 The Covenant is intended to be a two-way arrangement; members of the Armed Forces community are encouraged to do as much as they can to support all aspects of their local community and promote activity which integrates serving personnel, veterans and their families into local community life.

SECTION 4: CORE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR COVENANT DELIVERY

- 4.1 The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead will have the following infrastructure in place:
 - a. **Armed Forces Champion and Lead Officer.** The Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead will appoint an Armed Forces Champion (an elected member) and a Lead Officer, empowered to effect change across the Borough. Currently Cllr Rayner is the elected member, and Vanessa Faulkner is currently the Lead Officer.
 - b. **Action Plans.** The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead will produce and publish an Action Plan to underpin the Covenant commitment; this will help to set out the overall direction and to ensure that the Borough keeps on track.
- 4.2 **Regular Stakeholder Engagement.** The Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) will periodically discuss good practice and opportunities regarding support for armed forces personnel.
- 4.4 **Communications.** The commitments made in this Covenant will be publicised so that local communities are aware of what is being done to deliver them. This will be achieved through dedicated a web-page on the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead website. Local Authority staff who deal with members of the public will be trained so that they are aware of how specific commitments impact upon local services and delivery.

SECTION 5: ACTIONS AND OUTCOMES

- 5.1 The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead are committed to the following:
- 5.2 **Armed Forces Covenant Fund.** Facilitating the best possible use of the Covenant Fund, an enduring government grant awarded to projects that will benefit the Armed Forces community.
- 5.3 **Public Health.** Investigating ways to strengthen the relationships between the armed forces and local authorities across Berkshire. The Berkshire Chief Executives are working together to explore collaborative arrangements for Civilian Military Partnership Boards.
- 5.4 **Revenue and Benefits.** Allowing for full disregard for any war widows pension/war disablement pension or armed forces compensation fund payments received by customers when applying for either Housing Benefit or Council Tax Support.

- 5.5 **Town Centres.** Supporting Military displays and events in the Maidenhead and Windsor town centres.
- 5.6 **Education.** The council is committed to the following:
- a. Ensuring that schools are aware of the Service Pupil Premium and are claiming all that they are entitled to. Determine ways in which Pupil Premium is spent and identify and share areas of good practice.
 - b. Work with schools and early years providers to identify where Service personnel's children might require additional support to help them deal with a parent being away from home for long periods of time, often in conflict situations. Children in some Service families may be considered more vulnerable than the general population because of the pressures they face, including PTSD.
 - c. Ensure that policies enable a smooth transition for children from Forces families, alleviating any issues that may be experienced finding a school place mid-term, when a serving parent has been transferred to a new area of the UK; assist when issues arise at any other time relating to finding a school place for a dependent child.
- 5.7 **Housing.** Maintain Forces covenant in the Housing Allocations policy and homelessness legislation.
- 5.8 **Social Isolation and sense of community.** The council is committed to the following:
- a. Promoting best practice engagement in communities across Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead, including support to those experiencing social isolation.
 - b. Supporting the development of projects as identified by local communities, making use of the Covenant Fund as appropriate.
- 5.9 **Transition.** The Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead will:
- a. Raise awareness of the issues experienced by the Armed Forces community, including the challenge of career change, and offer support and information on issues arising during transition into civilian life.
 - b. Raise awareness during transition, and offer support, signposting and information to get involved in volunteering and community action as a pathway to health and wellbeing, developing personal interests, helping others and increasing employability.
 - c. Ensure that injured Service persons transitioning to the civilian world are able to access supported housing or support to enable their existing home to be modified to meet their needs and that they are quickly and compassionately assessed on their level of care requirements.
- 5.10 **Employment**
- a. Promote mutually beneficial relationships by advocating the transferable skills and attributes that Armed Forces personnel bring to the civilian workplace as an economic asset.
 - b. Promote the Armed Forces Covenant for business, encouraging employers

within the borough of Windsor and Maidenhead to sign the Covenant in order to pledge commitments to support defence personnel by:

- **Promoting the Armed Forces:** promoting the fact that we are an Armed Forces-friendly organisation to our staff, customers, suppliers, contractors and wider public;
- **Veterans:** supporting the employment of veterans, recognising military skills and qualifications in our recruitment and selection process. Working with the Career Transition Partnership (CTP) in order to establish a tailored employment pathway for Service leavers;
- **Service spouses, partners and children:** supporting the employment of Service spouses, partners and children; working with and advertising vacancies with the Military Families Federations and other agencies. Providing flexibility in granting leave for Service spouses, partners and children before, during and after a partner's deployment;
- **Reserves:** supporting our employees who are members of the Reserve Forces: recognising the need to be flexible with regard to leave for annual Reserve Forces training; supporting any mobilisations and deployment. Actively encouraging members of staff to become Reservists;
- **Cadet Organisations:** supporting our employees who are volunteer leaders in military cadet organisations, recognising the need to be flexible with regard to leave for annual training camps and courses. Actively encouraging members of staff to become volunteer leaders in cadet organisations. Supporting local military cadet units;
- **Armed Forces Charities:** supporting Armed Forces charities with fundraising and supporting staff who volunteer to assist.

5.11 **Remembrance and Recognition.** Promote participation in and support for events and functions to celebrate and remember the sacrifices of our Armed Forces Personnel, both past and present. This will include: the Poppy Appeal, Remembrance Sunday, Armistice Day, Armed Forces Day and Reserves Day.

5.12 **Information sharing**

- a. Raise awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant throughout the Borough and through development of resources and discussion.
- b. Identify good practice within communities which promote greater visibility of the Armed Forces, their contribution and needs.
- c. Promote the Armed Forces Covenant Fund to community groups and Forces personnel.



Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

Signed:

Name: Cllr Samantha Rayner

Position: Armed Forces Covenant Champion for Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

Deputy Leader of The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Council

Councillor for Eton and Castle Ward

Cabinet Member for Windsor

Cabinet Member for HR, Legal and ICT

Signed:

Name: Duncan Sharkey

Position: Managing Director, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead