



Veterans With Dogs

We, the undersigned, commit to honour the Armed Forces Covenant and support the Armed Forces Community. We recognise the value Serving Personnel, both Regular and Reservists, Veterans and military families contribute to our business and our country.

Signed on behalf of:
VETERANS WITH DOGS

Signed: C.R. MacLellan

Name: Craig MacLellan

Position: CEO

Date: 19/2/18



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 Veterans With Dogs will endeavour in our business dealings to uphold the key principles of the Armed Forces Covenant, which are:

- *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 especially for the injured or bereaved.*

Section 2: Demonstrating our Commitment

2.1 Veterans With Dogs recognises the value serving personnel, reservists, veterans and military families bring to our business. We will seek to uphold the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant, by:

- promoting the fact that we are an Armed Forces-friendly organisation with charitable aims;
 - promoting our work, activities, events, programmes and fundraising activities through our own digital and social media channels as well as working with the press;
 - publishing our Covenant pledge on a dedicated Covenant page on our website and in the media.
- seeking to support the employment and volunteer opportunities of service members, veterans and their family members young and old;
 - welcoming application from Veterans and/or their family members who meet the criteria in the job specification;
 - recognising military skills and qualifications in our recruitment and selection process for employed and volunteering opportunities;
 - ensuring training is tailored to allow for continuing professional development and additional training if required;
 - offering a degree of flexibility in granting leave for service spouses, partners and family members before, during and after deployment.

- aiming to support our employees and volunteers who choose to be members of the Reserve forces, including by accommodating their training and deployment where possible:
 - providing full support and encouragement to those employees and volunteers who show an interest and wish to enrol as a Reservist;
 - fully supporting and accommodating mobilised deployment of Reservist employees and volunteers if required.
- aiming to actively participate in Armed Forces Day:
 - by becoming an Armed Forces Day partner;
 - publishing the event and our involvement through the internet, social media, our website, local press and any other events to raise awareness and support;
- Promoting the Armed Forces Covenant logo on our website;
 - including a dedicated and clear area on our website showing our support and partnership with the Covenant;
 - publishing the Covenant logo on social media and on our marketing advertising and fundraising publications.
- To preserve and protect the health of current and former service personnel of the British Armed Forces and their families, in particular but not exclusively those with trauma related mental health conditions resulting from military service:
 - By ensuring risk assessments are current and relevant;
 - To identify mental health difficulties and referral current and former personnel to relevant services, and to act as liaisons where appropriate;
 - By ensuring signposting opportunities are kept current and expanded upon;
- Providing training of assistance dogs for current and former service personnel of the British Armed Forces with mental health disabilities by:
 - Ensuring there is a sufficient ratio of trainer to veteran duos;
 - Providing continuing professional development for the trainers;
 - Ensuring training days are readily available to both trainers and veterans;
 - To ensure regular reviews of the relationship and development of the training with the placed dog and their veteran.

- Providing training, education and support services for the relief of mental health disabilities with the partnership of dogs for clients of Veterans With Dogs, specifically current and former service personnel of the British Armed Forces:
 - Ensuring employees and volunteers have access and undertake mental health first aid training;
 - Ensuring our mental health practitioners have recognised qualifications and have continuous professional development, providing current advice and support;
 - Providing open and regular support with an open door policy for veterans, employees and volunteers where additional training, education and support services may be suggested and required.

- Aiming now and in the future to improve the quality of life of current and former service personnel to achieve greater independence by increasing confidence and self-esteem, bringing companionship, a sense of security and increased opportunities for social interaction:
 - By ensuring active involvement by participants in the Partner Animal Life Skills Programme (PALS);
 - By hosting exclusive veterans activities;
 - Providing a safe environment for veterans and their families aiming to develop a self sustaining and independent environment;
 - Providing personalised training for the veterans and their dog to enable integration in the social community;
 - Facilitating behavioural reactivation for improved wellbeing.

- Implement fundraising and educational initiatives in support of Veterans With Dogs objectives and operations to support the employees, volunteers and current and former service personnel of the British Armed Forces:
 - By engaging with schools regarding the stigma of mental health to encourage children to develop the ability to discuss individual difficulties;
 - To ensure that children are aware of how to seek help if necessary;
 - To involve Veterans, their families, employees, volunteers and the wider public in fundraising activities.

- Ensure services provided by Veterans With Dogs are available to all employees, volunteers, current and former British Armed Forces community and their families through meet and greets at periodical times throughout the year to provide community commitment and social interaction:
 - By providing by monthly meet and greets to share the work of the charity and provide an overview of the programme;
 - To manage individual expectations of the programme.

- Assisting to reduce social isolation through residential respite and peer support in a safe environment for current and serving members of the British Armed Forces and their families, along with their dogs:
 - By providing occupational therapy activities;
 - By providing socialisation and helping develop coping strategies for veterans and their families;
 - By providing emotional support within a mixed ability environment without judgment, for veterans, their families, their placed dog, employees and volunteers in a safe environment.

- Ensure the provision of one to one training for the dogs and their veterans along with support for any mental health needs through regular assessment to ensure the preservation of the safety and security of the veterans, their dogs, our employees and volunteers:
 - By enabling regular continuous professional development of the mental health practitioners, volunteers and trainers;
 - Ensuring risk assessments are complied with and updated regularly;
 - Ensuring each veteran has an individual safeguarding person for wellbeing, and a personal trainer for each dog so that they have a pathway to personal support from Veterans With Dogs;
 - Ensuring appropriate welfare processes to withdraw a dog from a placement if the health and safety of the dog, or Veteran, is at risk, providing correct signposting and referrals necessary to other sources of mental health welfare and support, depending on the circumstances.

- Offering a dedicated area on the Veterans With Dogs website to identify where additional services can be obtained with the aim of expanding the signposting opportunities to provide an all round approach of support to the British Armed Forces and their families:
 - By providing a clear and concise website where Veterans and supporters of the charity can easily be directed and signposted;
 - Providing clear contact information and a dedicated area where Veterans and supporters of the charity can contact us for guidance with signposting.

- Working collaboratively with partner charities to deliver additional support to more members of the Armed Forces and their families:
 - By continuing to ensure current links are maintained, and to encourage those charities and businesses who are not part of the Covenant to join in partnership;
 - To continue to develop links with charities, support networks and businesses to provide more signposting opportunities and support more veterans and their families.

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 Service community and our customers on how we are doing.