

Signed on behalf of:

**Ministry of Defence**

**Signed:**

**Name:**

**Position:**

**Date:**

# The Royal British Legion

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**We, the undersigned, commit to honour the Armed**

**Forces Covenant and support the Armed Forces**

Signed on behalf of:

**Ministry of Defence**

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**Date:**

**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:

# The Royal British Legion

Signed: 

Position: Director General

Date: 1st December 2020

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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.

### Section 1: Principles of The Armed Forces Covenant

* 1. We The Royal British Legion (RBL), 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 As the largest charity supporting the Armed Forces community, RBL recognises the contribution of serving personnel, reservists, veterans and military families. We were instrumental in campaigning for the Armed Forces Covenant to be enshrined in legislation 2011, and we continue to support the development of the Covenant and ensure that is honoured across society. We will therefore uphold the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant, by

* *Being at the heart of a national network that supports our Armed Forces community through thick and thin – ensuring their unique contribution is never forgotten. We’ve been here since 1921 and we’ll be here as long as they need us.*
* *Bringing together the nation, communities, and individuals to create better futures for our armed forces and their families through remembrance, commemorative events, and our ongoing welfare and support services after one day of service, through life, long after service is over.*
* *Promoting the fact that we are an armed forces-friendly organisation through our breadth of work as the largest Armed Forces Charity. Our Charter set out these objectives and powers, and details how the organisation is structured, organised and managed.*
* *Working collaboratively with partner charities through Veterans’ Gateway to deliver support to the armed forces community. The Veterans’ Gateway is a consortium of Armed Forces charities (Royal British Legion, SSAFA, Combat Stress and Poppy Scotland) making finding the right support quicker and easier.*
* *Supporting the employment of veterans by working in partnership and by advertising vacancies across Forces Families Jobs, Career Transition Partnership (CTP), Cobseo and the Officers Association in order to establish a tailored employment pathway for Service Leavers and the Armed Forces community (Spouses and partners).*
* *Supporting employees who are compulsorily mobilised for service in the Armed Forces. The Legion will continue to offer life insurance and will treat the contract of employment of employees mobilised as ongoing throughout the period of such service and there will be no loss of continuous service or service related benefits such as occupational sick pay and redundancy. After mobilisation, if an employee has been unable to take any accrued annual leave, the Legion will allow the employee to carry over this leave into the new leave year.*
* *Fully supportive of those who are existing members or wish to join the Reserve Forces or Cadet Force as an adult volunteer and recognise that many of the skills that Reservists and Volunteers gain during their training are transferable to the workplace.*
* *Supporting our employees who choose to be members of the Reserve forces, including by accommodating their training and deployment by granting an additional paid leave of 5 days per year and public duty leave (maximum of 14 days).*
* *Granting leave for Service spouses and partners before, during and after a partner’s deployment.*
* *Actively participating in Armed Forces Day nationally and regionally through events, parades, celebrations (concerts, hospitality) and via digital platforms.*
* *Campaigning to advance the welfare and interests of the Armed Forces community, bringing about positive policy change where possible, including securing additional funding for initiatives that positively support the wellbeing of serving personnel, veterans and their families.*
* *Engaging with politicians and officials at all levels of government to hold them to account on their Covenant commitments. We do this by ensuring that the government and public bodies live up to their Covenant   commitments, we   maintain   relationships   with   key decision makers  at  all  levels.  We also commission and  undertake  detailed  research  and  policy  analysis  to  inform  service providers and evidence our campaign messages. We  additionally  regularly  engage  with  partners  across  the  third  sector,  as  well  as  academics,  to  ensure  that  we  have  an  in depth  awareness  of  any  issues  the  Armed  Forces  community face and the impact that Service might have had on their lives. In recent years, we have successfully campaigned to ensure that all veterans diagnosed with Mesothelioma as a result of Service now have the choice between receiving a traditional War Pension, or a lump sum in compensation, regardless of age at diagnosis; and we held the government to account over military compensation being included in means tests for adult social care. As a result of our Insult to Injury campaign, the injured veterans in England, Scotland and Wales will no longer have to surrender most of their military compensation to pay for their social care.*
* *Contributing to the Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report and other means of Covenant oversight, including government boards such as the Covenant Reference Group. In 2007 the Legion was the only organisation to campaign for the Covenant to be enshrined in legislation and after a hard fought and protracted campaign, the twin principles of the Armed Forces Covenant were enshrined in the Armed Forces Act 2011. As the largest charity supporting the Armed Forces community we are a key part of the Covenant oversight framework, playing an active part as one of the external partner organisations on the Covenant Reference Group, with our observations on progress against the Covenant formally included in each year’s annual report, and we contribute to setting the annual priorities for the Covenant Fund. Additionally, we work closely all year round with the MOD and other government departments to ensure Covenant commitments are progressed, and regularly highlighting issues brought to our attention by the Armed Forces community – a recent example being the fees faced by non-UK personnel wishing to settle in the country they have served.*
* *Researching and monitoring the profile, size and needs of the Armed Forces community, ensuring that statutory and voluntary service providers have access to information that enables them to understand the community they support and target resources effectively.*
* *Serving members of the UK Armed Forces, regular or reserve can register to our Military Member mailing list for free.*
* *Act as the national champion of Remembrance in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, with Royal British Legion Scotland recognised in this role in Scotland.*
* *Ensure that Remembrance is understood and available to all and to pass it on to the next generation.*
* *The Royal British Legion works to ensure that the people of the United Kingdom remember all those who have lost their lives on active service to the Crown, in all conflicts from the beginning of First World War to the present day. It also honours the service of the Armed Forces and veterans, and the contribution of their families – our beneficiary community.*
* *Ensure service and sacrifice is represented by the red poppy of The Royal British Legion and Royal British Legion (Scotland), held by these charities and the Nation to be the symbol of Remembrance and hope for a peaceful future.*

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.