

ARMED FORCES CORPORATE COVENANTS



When deciding on your unique pledges, you may wish to consider how you can support the wider Armed Forces family, including the spouses/partners of our Serving Personnel, Reservists and Veterans.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE SPOUSES/PARTNERS - the challenges they face can include:

- A disjointed employment history, which often reflects the demands of mobility, or the lack of employment opportunities in more remote areas or on overseas postings, rather than any other reason.
- Further professional training and career development opportunities. These can be difficult to access or complete, due to the demands of mobility. However, most Service spouses/partners will show a high level of commitment to a company, when they are given the opportunity.
- Putting their own careers on hold, even though they are frequently highly qualified/experienced individuals in their own right.

Therefore you may wish to consider the following:

- Offering opportunities for work experience / internships.
- Assistance with CV writing and interview techniques.
- Guaranteed interview schemes, provided applicants meet the eligibility criteria.
- Support for requests to transfer or find alternative roles within your company, if employees need to accompany their spouse/partner when they are posted to another location, where practicable.
- Flexibility in working patterns. For example:
 - term-time working
 - flexible hours during periods of deployment/separation
 - part-time working or job-sharing
 - opportunities to work during core school hours
 - home-based working
- A degree of flexibility in granting leave before, during and after a partner's deployment. It would be hugely appreciated if there was some understanding that, due to operational changes, spouses/partners may occasionally have to request time off at short notice.
- Open dialogue between your managers and their Service family employees about issues that may impact on their employment, such as leave requests or relocation.

ACCOMMODATION - many Armed Forces families live, or aspire to live, in their own homes but this can create a unique set of issues, especially when they are posted around the country or overseas.

You may wish to offer support by:

- Reviewing your current policies to see whether they might disadvantage Armed Forces families. If you offer mortgages, could you perhaps update your consent-to-let criteria to allow personnel posted overseas, or to a different unit/base more than 50 miles away, to rent out their property for the duration of their posting, without incurring additional financial penalties?
- Promoting and endorsing the [Forces Help to Buy Scheme](#), to help more personnel into their own home.

OVERSEAS POSTINGS - Armed Forces families can be posted overseas, and whilst this can be a great opportunity, it can also create unique problems for them during and after their posting.

You can help families to overcome these challenges by determining whether your current systems are set up to:

- Recognise and consider any gaps in an individual's credit history by dealing with them in person or by creating an on-line application process specifically for Armed Forces families.
- Consider whether there are any exceptional circumstances that could be taken into account when a family member applies to open a new bank account or applies for credit upon their return to the UK? This is particularly pertinent to those who have lived outside of the UK for the previous 3 years due to a military posting.
- Recognise British Forces Post Office (BFPO) addresses and use the BFPO shadow post codes to ensure applications or on-line orders can be completed and processed.
- Acknowledge that families living overseas cannot call 0800 / 0845 telephone numbers and offer an alternative so that they can communicate with you.
- Be able to freeze contracts, such as mobile phones, whilst the Service person is deployed on operations or authorise the early termination of contracts at no, or minimal, cost if the Service family member is posted overseas.
- Be able to deal with a client remotely, if they are posted overseas, rather than insisting that they come into the branch or office.

Also, could you have designated members of staff to deal with Armed Forces families? If there was a named Armed Forces Champion in your organisation, who has an awareness of the types of issues listed above and could liaise with military families, this would be an enormous step forward.

As a final thought...

We would love you to promote the fantastic work you are doing on your company website. Engagement with us will also allow further advertising through our communication networks to ensure Armed Forces Families are fully aware of your commitment to them.

For further information, please visit our websites or contact us directly: -

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