



ANNEX to
A Guide for Local Authorities:
How to deliver the Covenant in your area

WALES





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.



WALES

HEALTHCARE

The Ministry of Defence provides primary healthcare to serving members of the Armed Forces. In Wales Local Health Boards must consider the healthcare needs of military families and veterans. In the majority of cases their health needs will be the same as the rest of society, but sometimes the mobile nature of service life creates challenges that need ironing out.

We also have to remember those who have been injured as a result of their Service and may require additional help in accessing specialist medical treatment, equipment or social care; remembering that this help can still be required years after the Service person has left the military.

Therefore, the Covenant sets the following goals with respect to healthcare for families and veterans:

- Family members should maintain their relative position on any NHS waiting list, if moved around the UK due to the Service person being posted.
- Veterans should receive priority treatment (subject to the clinical needs of others) in respect of NHS hospital treatment relating to a condition resulting from their service in the Armed Forces.
- Veterans should be able to access mental health professionals who have an understanding of Armed Forces culture.

What can you do?

Ensure that the Local Health Boards in your area are aware of the difficulties members of the Armed Forces Community can face, either due to mobility issues, or because they require on-going treatment for a condition acquired in Service. Make sure you involve representatives from Public Service Boards in your discussions too.

Are your local GPs aware of the provisions offered to ex-Service personnel under the Covenant? If not, can you direct them to the appropriate information? This link may prove useful - <https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/support-and-advice/veterans/>

Do your Public Service Boards consider the Armed Forces community when assessing the well-being of their area? Further guidance is available: <http://gov.wales/topics/improving-services/public-services-boards/?lang=en>

Disabled Facilities Grants - Home adaptations, primarily funded by Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs), play a crucial role in allowing disabled veterans to live an independent life, such as stair lifts, level access showers and widened doors for wheelchairs. In Wales the Welsh Government has worked closely with Local Authorities and housing associations to deliver an enhanced adaptation system,



ENABLE - support for independent living, which will streamline the application process and ensure veterans get the support they need irrespective of age, tenure and disability.

Where to find help

In Wales the **National Health Service (Wales)** is responsible for providing health care which includes medical, dental and optical treatment. Further information is available through www.wales.nhs.uk

Veterans NHS Wales provides dedicated veteran therapists in each Health Board area and additional local access to specialist outpatient care for veterans with mental health problems such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Veterans can either self-refer or access the service through other organisations such as the Royal British Legion. Further information can be obtained from: www.veteranswales.co.uk

Delivered by veterans for veterans **Change Step** aims to support veterans seeking help for problems encountered as a result of military or operational duty, for example PTSD and a range of other psychosocial problems. The programme offers peer support, training opportunities and signposting to relevant health and welfare services. Change Step can be contacted on 0300 777 2259 or via email ask@change-step.co.uk.

Combat Stress is another avenue for consideration for veterans experiencing psychological illness. Creating integrated and individually tailored pathways to recovery to meet individual needs Combat Stress will provide specialist treatment and welfare support. For further information veterans can call their free 24-hour Helpline 0800 138 1619, or by <http://www.combatstress.org.uk>

Prosthetic Limbs - The Artificial Limb and Appliance Service <http://www.alas.wales.nhs.uk/home> offers a consistent and equitable service to people in Wales, including veterans, who have a permanent or long-term impairment. It is a specialised service which the seven Local Health Boards in Wales plan and fund through their work on the Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee.

The Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee operates a clear policy for access to prosthetics for military veterans in Wales. For those not eligible under this commissioning policy, a clinician can submit an application to the Committee through the Individual Patient Funding Request process.

Hearing aids - Welsh veterans can access funding from RBL's [Veterans Hearing Fund](#), £10 m has been provided over 5 years to enable veterans to access support with hearing loss, where that support is not otherwise available through statutory sources. There is no requirement for veterans to be in receipt of a War Disablement or Armed Forces Compensation Scheme payment to access the funds, and it is not means tested.

Infertility Treatment - Veterans who receive compensation under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme for injuries which result in infertility are entitled to appropriate infertility treatment, including IVF, within the NHS in Wales. In Wales, all eligible patients, including Armed Forces personnel, can access two free cycles of IVF treatment. Applications for additional IVF cycles may



be made as an Individual Patient Funding Request to the Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee. www.whssc.wales.nhs.uk/home

The Wales Deanery has developed a resource to help health workers in the community better understand the specific health and wellbeing issues that apply to Veterans and their families. Further information is available by following this link - <https://gpcpd.walesdeanery.org/index.php/veterans-health-wellbeing>.

[NHS Direct Wales](#) is a telephone line providing health advice and information 24 hours a day. Veterans and their families can call the service on 0845 46 47 if they are feeling unwell, or need information on health services, or by: www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk

If a Veteran approached you with health problem as a result of their military service they may be entitled to receive priority treatment. Through its Priority Care and Treatment Policy for Veterans the Welsh Government continues to encourage those providing health care services of their obligation to offer priority treatment and care if Veterans' health problems result from their service.

Further information on health services can be found at [NHS Direct Wales](#) and [Find a NHS Dentist in Wales](#)

C.A.L.L is a free 24 hour helpline which offers emotional support to people suffering mental distress as well as their friends, carers and relatives. Anyone concerned about their own mental health or that of a relative or friend can access the service on 0800132737 or by texting 'help' and your question to 81066 or by visiting www.callhelpline.org.uk.

Veterans across Wales can access free swimming at local participating pools within each Local Authority in Wales using their Defence Privilege Card as proof of eligibility. For all queries relating to the Free Swimming Scheme please contact AFFSenquiries@WLGA.gov.uk

Veterans in Wales that require help and advice can contact the Veterans Gateway to find out about the support available. The service includes a 24/7 helpline, a dedicated website and mobile app to enable veterans and their families to access help from across the UK. <https://www.veteransgateway.org.uk/>



Good Practice in Wales

Michael Jones served for 12 years in the Royal Welsh, undertaking operational tours in Northern Ireland, Iraq and Afghanistan. Michael left the Army in 2008 and soon encountered problems readjusting to civilian life and coping with his experiences in Service. He began drinking heavily – his father stating he could often be lost for a whole weekend – and his aggressive outbursts became more frequent and worrying for his family. It was then, in 2009 that Michael's family found out about potential help that was available.

My sister found out about Veterans NHS Wales via our local GP. It has been a great support to me and my family and it's unbelievable to think about how I was back in 2009 and how I am now. I honestly think that without the support I've had, I could have ended up in prison, or in serious trouble with my drinking. I was violent, struggling to cope and it was having a really bad impact on myself and my family. The service has helped me deal with and manage my PTSD [Post Traumatic Stress Disorder] and talk about my experiences. Ten or fifteen years ago knowledge of PTSD wasn't that great, so it was more difficult to recognise or deal with it. It wasn't what you did. It's essential that veterans in Wales can access mental health support and treatment. I was lucky – I was involved in the Veterans NHS Wales service when it started. I didn't have to wait for help and I was able to see someone straight away. If I'd have had to wait five or six months, I'm not sure what would have happened."

You may also find the following examples of good practice around the UK helpful:

Our Community – Our Covenant Report – Health and wellbeing Good Practice

In **Bradford** the council is putting a new system into its assessments for adult social care whereby the public facing member of staff will have to ask if the person has ever served. NHS partners also have questions in their surveys about people's service, and a council information officer is doing work to understand the size, need and location of the Armed Forces Community locally.

One of the difficulties with this approach is achieving the right approach to ask the question. The council is therefore working with Public Health to develop the best way to do this, taking into account that it might be a sensitive question to ask of people, particularly if it is the first thing they are asked.

Veterans have priority access to social care in Bradford if their social care needs relate to their service. Where they don't meet this criteria, the council will signpost them on to other services such as the Regimental Support Service.

In **Glasgow**, the council worked with a wide range of partners to set up Helping Heroes. This was created in response to the difficulties faced by Veterans, particularly in navigating disparate services before being able to get treatment for mental health issues. Having to go to through multiple organisations or agencies before being able to access mental health services can dissuade Veterans from pursuing treatment.

The council worked with health partners in the city to enable Veterans to be referred directly into mental health services without having to see a GP. Helping Heroes can now refer Veterans with mental health issues directly into treatment without having to see a GP. Being able to circumvent the GP means that the process is quicker and smoother, and more people are likely to take up this support.



EDUCATION

As Service families move around the country they may face challenges in finding school places for their children, sometimes outside normal admission periods or at short notice. Service families may also seek flexibility in arranging leave during term time in order to coincide with the Service person's operational deployments and pre- and post-tour leave. The Covenant set the following goals with respect to Education:

- Children of members of the Armed Forces should have the same standard of, and access to, education (including early years services) as any other citizen in the area where they live.
- There should be special arrangements to support access to schools if a place is required part way through an academic year as a result of a family having to move for Service reasons. In Wales the School Admissions Code makes provision for children to be admitted to an infant class mid-term even if it means the class will breach the infant class size limit.

To meet these goals the WLGA working in partnership with the Welsh Government has taken the following steps:

In Wales, the Service Children in Education Guidance is a toolkit and guidance which is available to help schools in Wales support Service children and overcome any challenges they may face. If you would like information on the guidance please contact: <http://www.sscecymru.co.uk/home/>

In Wales financial support is available for those wishing to gain further educational qualifications and pursue another career. The Enhanced learning Credit Scheme and Further and Higher Education Commitment Scheme provides financial support for service leavers to undertake further and higher education. The financial support offered to Service leavers has been extended to more people by reducing the qualifying period of service from six to four years and abolishing the qualifying period for personnel who are medically discharged. The financial support will cover the total cost of tuition fees in Wales. The Schemes are administered by the Ministry of Defence who claim funding from the Welsh Government. www.enhancedlearningcredits.com

Student Finance Wales – Eligible students may also apply for student support from Student Finance Wales: www.studentfinancewales.co.uk

Our Community – Our Covenant Report - Top Tips

- In every school, but particularly those with a high number of serving parents, members of staff are aware of the stresses children might be under and can recognise and respond to signs children might be having difficulty coping.



- If there is more than one child of a serving parent in a school, creating links between these children will mean they will benefit from being around other children who understand their situation.

What can you do?

The MOD Directorate of Children and Young People (DCYP) has written to all Head Teachers offering further guidance about Service Families who may wish to take their children out of school during term time, explaining when the operational needs of the Armed Forces may legitimately prevent Service families from taking leave during School holidays.

Below you will find an example of good practice in Wales and from around the UK:

Our Community – Our Covenant Report - Children’s Services Good Practice

In Wales veterans wishing to pursue a change of career can access financial support through the Further and Higher Education Commitment Scheme. Gareth spent 13 years in the Armed Forces. In 2013 he made the decision that he needed a new path to challenge him.

“I had always regretted not going onto University and so I looked into the potential for me to do a degree. As a qualified Crime Scene Investigator I figured that choosing a degree in an area that I am both interested in and have a history was a wise choice.

Returning to education after a long time was a worry, and I admit I was concerned about how I would keep up with workload. My fears turned out to be unfounded; my time in the forces had certainly taught me how to manage my time and abilities, as well as knowing where and when it was appropriate to seek help, something I have noticed other students are less inclined to do.

I can definitely say that coming to University was a good decision. I’m very happy here and love the course. The practical sessions are great, and I enjoy studying science in such depth. As someone who has been out of education for a while, it’s extremely satisfying when you do the work and get good marks.”

In 2015 the **Supporting Service Children in Education Cymru (SSCE)** project was established by the Welsh Local Government Association, funded by the MOD Education Support Fund. The purpose of the project was to establish information regarding the number of Service Children in Wales and find out which schools were already working with the Armed Forces Community. One of the schools the SSCE project engaged with was Mount Street Infants, Brecon. Brecon has a growing Nepalese community that is living and settling in Wales as part of the Ghurka regiment. The school actively engages with the community, inviting all mums in the school to come and try Nepalese food, try on traditional Nepalese dress and learn Nepalese phrases. As well as celebrating Christmas, Mount Street also celebrates Chinese New Year and ‘Dashain’ a big Nepalese celebration. In school, the children take part in dancing, tasting Nepalese food and making cards and decorations. The school has actively sought to appoint Nepali speaking Learning



Support Assistants to support the pupils in their learning. This has been made possible by the Ministry of Defence funding.

There are times when young people may find themselves in difficult circumstances, and may require extra support to help them overcome adversity and achieve their full potential. Through its accredited learning programme the **John Egging Trust** helps young people to re-engage with education and make informed choices about their futures. Established in North Wales in 2013 it works closely with RAF Valley and young people in delivering its Blue Skies programme www.joneggingtrust.org.uk/north-wales

Wiltshire has an active relationship between the council and bases which has enabled a more joined up approach to the delivery of the Covenant. Bases make Wiltshire council aware of possible future admissions so that schools can make sufficient preparation. This has been vital in the Army rebasing programme where 4,000 Army personnel and their families (a further 3,200 people) will be redeployed from Germany to Wiltshire by 2020. Wiltshire has plans to implement a pen pal programme for children in Germany who will be moving to Wiltshire with the aim to make their transition smoother.

Plymouth is a Navy city with an estimated 7-9 per cent of school children having a Serving parent. Plymouth has created an innovative programme called MKC Heroes (Military Kids Club – formerly known as HMS Heroes). This is a national support group led by children of Serving personnel and Veterans, that can be joined by any school or setting. In each member school or setting, children of Serving personnel/Veterans can attend a discussion group to share their experiences (sometimes difficult ones) with their peers, who understand and are likely sharing similar concerns or experiences. It is also a chance for these children to get to know other children of all ages in a similar position to them.

Across **Plymouth** there are approximately 3000 children from Service families enrolled, along with a significant number of Veterans children across pre-schools, primary schools and secondary schools. Plymouth facilitates a termly meeting of MKC delegate young people (x 6 yearly) for the sharing of good practice and comradeship. MKC Heroes has now been exported to across the United Kingdom and overseas with 130 schools and settings participating, currently. The success of MKC Heroes highlights the importance of listening to and involving children and young people. MKC Heroes is represented on Plymouth's Community Covenant board and within the Plymouth Youth Council. The Community Covenant also supports the MKC Heroes Military Kids Choir. Getting to know issues that children are experiencing themselves is a good way to understand the issues which they and their families may be facing.

What the MOD is doing

The MOD offers the following advice and guidance to Service personnel and their families on education issues:



Children's Education Advisory Services - this MOD team provide information and support to Service families on all aspects of the education of their children in the UK and overseas. They have Parent Support Officers in key locations around the country, who may be able to act as an intermediary between families and local authorities

Further information on the Covenant in Wales is available here: <http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/safety/armedforces/package-of-support/?lang=en>

ACCOMMODATION

Due to the mobile nature of Service life, some families may find that they have to move around the country as the Serviceperson in their lives is posted to different roles. Some Service families will not own their own home and may therefore need assistance finding accommodation on leaving the Services. The Armed Forces Covenant therefore has set the following goals with respect to Housing:

- Members of the Armed Forces community should have the same access to social housing and other housing schemes as any other citizen, and not be disadvantaged by the requirement for mobility while in Service.
- Those injured in Service should have preferential access to appropriate housing schemes, as well as assistance with necessary adaptations to private housing or Service accommodation while serving.
- Where Serving Personnel are entitled to publicly-provided accommodation, it should be of good quality, affordable and suitably located.
- Service Personnel should have priority status in applying for government sponsored affordable housing schemes and Service leavers should retain this status for a period after discharge.

What can you do?

The Welsh Government has retained priority need status for Ex-Armed Forces personnel who are either homeless at the point of discharge or have failed to acquire settled accommodation since discharge. **The National Housing Pathway for Ex-Service Personnel** sets out the help and support available to Ex-Service personnel along with their families and dependants across Wales. The pathway provides details of the priority status of veterans on exit from service, and how they can access support through the social housing and private housing routes.

<http://gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/161108-national-housing-pathway-for-ex-service-personnel-en.pdf>



The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 sets out the duty on public bodies such as local authorities to work with people to find solutions to their housing problems using a 'Reasonable steps' process. This means when a local authority, following an assessment, deems an applicant to be threatened with homelessness within 56 days it is obliged to help them from becoming homeless by assisting them in one or more of the following ways

- To remain in their current accommodation;
- To delay a need to move out of current accommodation in order to allow a planned move into alternative accommodation;
- To find alternative accommodation; and/or
- To sustain independent living

As well as taking Reasonable Steps a local authority can give priority status to/for;

- Pregnant women
- Households with dependent children
- People who are vulnerable due to special reason (ie old age, disability, etc)
- People who need assistance as a result of an emergency (ie fire, flood, etc)
- People subject to Domestic Abuse
- 16 or 17 year old young people
- Under 21 year olds at risk of exploitation
- Under 21 year olds who are care leavers
- Regular armed forces leaver homeless since leaving the forces
- People who are vulnerable as a result of served in prison

Local Connection:

Some Local Authorities have decided to give more priority to people who have a 'local connection' so that people who live or work in the area or who have close family connections have a greater chance of being rehoused than other applicants in need.

A 'local connection' can be established for social housing purposes through residency (excluding those who reside in an area as a result of a prison sentence), employment or a family association. This means that serving members of the Armed Forces, and other persons who normally live with them as part of their household, establish a 'local connection' with an area by virtue of serving, or having served there while in the Armed Forces.

Someone can have a 'local connection' with more than one area, but they should be aware that their housing options might be impacted when they look to live in an area where they have no connection.

In respect of assistance under the homelessness provisions contained with Housing (Wales) Act 2014, local connection criteria may apply in terms of which Local Authority is responsible for the fulfilment of duties. The Code of Guidance for Local Authorities on the Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness 2016 does recognise that ex service personnel may wish to remain in the area that they have served. Chapter 18:11 of the Code of Guidance states the following:



For the purposes of the 2014 Act, serving members of the Armed Forces, and other persons who normally live with them as part of their household, do establish a local connection with an area by virtue of serving, or having served, there while in the Forces.

Help to Buy – Wales is an initiative that provides shared equity loan assistance to home buyers from Help to Buy (Wales) Limited (HtBW) with funding provided by the Welsh Government. For more information contact: <http://helptobuywales.co.uk/how-it-works/?skip=1&lang=en>

Rent First is a Welsh Government scheme which provides rented housing at intermediate rents and gives tenants an opportunity to buy their property outright. Local Councils can allocate funding for the scheme through their Social Housing Grant allocation.

Veterans in Wales have priority status in the Welsh Government **Homebuy Scheme**. Widows and widowers of personnel who have been killed in service are also eligible for the scheme. <http://gov.wales/topics/housing-and-regeneration/housing-supply/buying-and-selling/help-for-buying/homebuy/?lang=en>

Alabare's 'Wales Home for Veterans' offer housing and support for those homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. All residents must have served in the British Armed Forces. Emphasis is given to independent living and they will be taught valuable life skills such as budgeting, healthy eating and shopping.

Our Community – Our Covenant Report – Housing Top Tips

- In Wales Local Authorities can develop a single shared approach to reflecting the Covenant in their policies and to the provision of help and advice to members of the Armed Forces Community.
- Local Authorities can work with the Social Landlords in their area to agree a shared protocol on how to meet the needs of families leaving the Armed Forces and Veterans.

Examples of good practice in Wales

Recognising the importance of preventing veteran homelessness Wrexham Local Authority, in partnership with First Choice Housing Association and additional partners worked together to develop 12-bed supported housing for veterans returning to civilian life.

'Ty Dewr' meaning 'Brave House' is a development specifically for vulnerable veterans that include a mix of high and low level support accommodation. To encourage community integration the grounds include an outdoor gymnasium for use by the residents and the local community.

In Conwy Grwp Cynefin's aim is to provide high quality homes, excellent services and develop sustainable communities where people wish to live. Working in partnership with Alabare Grwp Cynefin provides accommodation and support for up to 9 veterans in Glan Conwy.

The scheme opened in December, and is the first dedicated facility for veterans in Conwy County. The first few months have been successful, with residents settling in well, and a positive relationship has been established with the local community.



Our Community – Our Covenant Report – Housing Good Practice

In **Plymouth** ex-Armed Forces personnel with medical conditions caused by their service are automatically given priority. The council is keen to promote and strengthen its ties with the Armed Forces Community in the city and is involved in a cross sector self-build project. Twenty-four affordable homes will be built as part of the Nelson project on the former site of a day centre, with twelve designated for ex Armed Forces. Armed Forces charities were approached early on in the project to try and identify vulnerable ex-Service personnel who might need housing.

In **Glasgow** where the city no longer owns any social housing the city's Veterans' hub Helping Heroes has a housing expert post which is funded by Glasgow Housing Association, the city's largest RSL. Those we interviewed in Glasgow identified housing as the greatest pressure on the Armed Forces Community in Glasgow and having a professional directly employed by the city's largest RSL means that the steps which many have to go through in order to get to the right advice are significantly reduced. More detail on Helping Heroes can be found in the 'Other Support for Veterans' section.

In **Wigan** where the council employs a key worker for ex-Service personnel and their families the key worker is able to navigate a public services landscape which can be overwhelming for ex-Service personnel who are not used to a sometimes confusing landscape of public services. Veterans in Wigan with medical need related to service are given priority on the housing waiting list and spouses going through divorce will also be given priority.

Wigan and Leigh Housing is an arm's length management organisation which owns the majority of social housing in the borough. Application forms now include the question, "If you or your partner are serving or have formerly served in the Armed Forces, please provide details of your service number". Housing officers were also being made aware of issues for those in the Armed Forces and the Armed Forces Key Worker maintained a direct relationship with many public facing housing officers, though knowledge about the Covenant and Armed Forces issues could be patchy because of staff turnover.

Wigan have also mapped all of the charities in the borough according to organisation, branch and then skillset or capacity of each charity and branch. Combined with a well networked Armed Forces Key Worker, this means that though they often respond to need in an ad hoc way, this is done effectively and quickly so that if for instance housing is provided without furniture the Armed Forces Key Worker can refer to his charities map to understand where he might be able to arrange for some furniture.

Wakefield has an effective system in place which offers a joined up approach to housing. Senior management from Wakefield District Housing (WDH), the main housing association in the district, sits on Covenant board which is an effective communication method between WDH and the council. Information from these meetings gets filtered down to the appropriate team in WDH. Mechanisms are in place for information to be fed upwards from ground level, as public facing staff are aware of the Covenant. This is also a place where their links with the military and military



charities are strengthened – the military know who to get in touch with in WDH, as do military charities and vice versa. This is especially useful if the member of the Armed Forces Community is facing other challenges as well. It is a system which works well due to their collective positivity and commitment to working together.

What the MOD is doing

Service personnel are offered Service accommodation according to their needs and over £65 million has been spent on improving and upgrading Service Families Accommodation in the UK.

The following advice and schemes are also available to help them find accommodation that's right for them:

The [Joint Service Housing Advice Office](#) is an MOD team providing specialist advice to Service personnel and their families on their civilian housing options. They also give advice on organisations that could help ex-Service personnel accessing housing.

The [Forces Help to Buy Scheme](#) allows Service personnel to borrow up to 50% of their annual salary (to a maximum of £25,000) to help buy a home.

The [MOD Tenancy Deposit Scheme](#) allows defence personnel to apply for an advance of salary loan to help meet the cost of a deposit for a rental property.

EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND SUPPORT

While the majority of Service leavers go on to have productive and successful lives in the civilian world, the period of transition can be a challenging one and personnel may require some support identifying their transferrable skills, aligning Armed Forces qualifications with their civilian equivalents and breaking into the Civilian job market. Under the Armed Forces Covenant therefore we aim to ensure that:

- Service personnel should expect to receive appropriate training for both personal and professional development.

What the MOD is doing

The Ministry of Defence offers resettlement packages to all personnel who are leaving the Services. MOD Career Transition Partnership is the official scheme offering resettlement and employment advice. Those leaving the Armed Forces regardless of how long they have served will be able to use this service. Eligible partners and spouses may also receive employment support through the Partner Employment Programme.



What can you do?

Veterans can bring a wealth of experience and skills to the workplace. Leadership, decision making and communication competencies are assets any employer would be proud of and increasingly we are hearing about employers actively recruiting veterans. There are a variety of employment opportunities available following their exit from the Services. These include:

Business Start Up - Upon leaving the Forces veterans may be interested in starting up their own business. Whether they want to work for themselves or start a business with growth potential a wide range of support tailored to business needs is available through the **Business Support Programme**. For information about the support available please contact www.business.wales.gov.uk or 03000 603000.

Ex Soldier turns entrepreneur

UK Textiles Bank is run by former soldier Neil Jones. He set up UK Textiles Bank to raise funds for Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA) – which provides lifelong support to the British Armed Forces and their families. Initially Neil contacted Business Wales, the Welsh Government’s business support service, in June 2014 for start up help. Neil says the support provided was essential to him being able to start up the business.

“My business adviser has been fantastic. He understood my business right from the very beginning. He helped me with business planning, cash flow, marketing, branding, legal issues, cost saving, you name it he’s assisted with just about everything you could need as a small start-up business,” said Neil. The clothing recycling business currently donates £250 per tonne from its supermarket textile banks to SSAFA.

The [Business in the Community toolkit](#) provides useful information for both members of the Armed Forces Community and those employing them.

Careers Wales –Young Service leavers looking for a new career path can contact Careers Wales www.careerswales.com or call 0800 100 900 for more information and support about apprenticeships and career pathways.

Jobs Growth Wales – For the unemployed aged 16-24 Jobs Growth Wales can help to find paid work experience for a 6-month period. Funded by the Welsh Government with the support of the European Social Fund £25 million of European funding has been agreed to support the continuation of Jobs Growth Wales over the next 3 years.

www.business.wales.gov.uk/skillsgateway/jobsgrowthwales.

Other Employment Support - There are a range of other organisations that will be able to offer support for those wishing to return to civilian life:



The Princes Trust is a UK wide charity that helps change young lives. <https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/>

Help is also available from Jobcentre Plus www.gov.uk/jobsearch

CivvyStreet aims to provide support and mentoring for all those who have recently left the Armed Forces, or are about to leave the Forces and are looking for employment opportunities and a chance to redeploy the skills learned while Serving- www.civvystreet.org

Those with a disability or health condition who need extra help to do their job should contact Access to work www.gov.uk/access-to-work

Career Transition Partnership is the Ministry of Defence programme which provides career transition advice and training opportunities. www.ctp.org.uk

Service leavers may wish to speak with either the Regular Forces Employment Association www.rfea.org.uk/ or Force Select www.forceselect.com

Welsh Government recruitment - The Welsh Government welcomes applications from veterans, their spouses, partners and families. www.gov.wales/about/recruitment/?lang=en.

In addition hundreds of business organisations have signed Armed Forces Covenants which may include flexible employment arrangements for members of the Armed Forces Community – check who has signed and what they have pledged to do here – <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-force-corporate-covenant-signed-pledges>.

Our Community – Our Covenant Report - Employment Top Tips

- Military, Local Authorities and businesses to work together to help equip Veterans and spouses with skills that are in short supply.

You may also find the following examples of good practice around the UK helpful:

Our Community – Our Covenant Report - Employment Good Practice

Wrexham works with Remploy, a UK wide employment service for people with specific needs. They work with Veterans on an individual basis to help them recognise their skills and experience and how this can be transferred to a civilian job.

Plymouth holds an employment fair which is attended by businesses, charities, the council and other local organisations as well as members of the Armed Forces Community. This enables those members of the Armed Forces Community who are looking for employment, including those facing employment difficulties to get a job by talking to employers looking to recruit.



Alternatively, it is a chance to boost awareness on how to get a job, and offers opportunities such as job shadowing, CV writing, and mock interviews. Charities such as the Royal British Legion and Combat Stress attend to offer further support to those who might need help in other areas.

Plymouth also has a Corporate Covenant Group which is fed into the Community Covenant Group. This is a chance to get local businesses together to talk about the disadvantages that members of the Armed Forces Community, including Veterans are facing in their area and work towards addressing those disadvantages identified.

Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council jointly manage an initiative called Higher Futures, which was developed by the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP) with involvement of the military. This seeks to equip Veterans and Reservists with the necessary higher level skills (NVQ Level 4, HND/Degree and above) in business sectors which currently experience shortages in qualified employees. This will support military leavers and military spouses to find jobs that are commensurate with their skills and abilities. Delivery is flexible by both meeting the needs of employers and providing training to prospective employees in skills that are in short supply.

Glasgow has a Veterans Employment Programme which helps Veterans resettling in Glasgow in finding employment and integrating into local communities. It supports businesses and creates new jobs for unemployed Veterans in Glasgow. This is part of the holistic support for Veterans that Glasgow offers through its Helping Heroes organisation. This is an incentivised scheme fully funded by Glasgow City Council.

Other Initiatives to be aware of:

[University of Wolverhampton – Supporting the Unsung Hero](#) This scheme is designed to help AF family members start up their own businesses by providing free training, advice and support before, during and for a period of time after they set up their own companies.

[RBL LifeWorks](#) offers courses and support services with the aim of helping veterans gain employment and [RBL LifeWorks for Families](#) which offers courses and support services with the aim of helping Service family members gain employment.

[The British Forces Resettlement Service](#) is a not-for-profit scheme created to help members of the Armed Forces community with employment aspects of their transition to civilian life.

[Department of Work and Pensions “JobCentre Plus” Armed Forces Champions](#) – the Department for Work and Pensions has made commitments to support the Armed Forces community.

The University of South Wales has published a useful page – [here](#) – providing access to self-assessment forms and information about the **Enhanced Learning Credits Scheme**.