



# 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 **Thames Travel** 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 **Thames Travel** 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;**
  - *promoting our work, activities and events through our own digital & social media channels as well as working with the press*
  - *publishing our Covenant pledge on our website [www.thames-travel.co.uk](http://www.thames-travel.co.uk) and in our offices*
  - *displaying the Covenant logo to show that members of the Armed Forces Community are welcome customers*
- **seeking to support the employment of veterans young and old:**
  - *working with and advertising vacancies through the Career Transition Partnership (CTP), [www.ctp.org.uk](http://www.ctp.org.uk) to ensure that employment opportunities are made available to veterans welcoming applications from Veterans who meet the criteria in the job specification*
  - *holding regular Insight Days for interested service leavers to find out more about bus driving as a career and to allow them to meet with existing ex-forces colleagues and other members of the team*
  - *offering interviews to Service Leavers and Veterans where essential selection criteria are met*
  - *recognising military skills and qualifications in our recruitment and selection process*
  - *providing a network of ex-forces buddies to any service leaver who joins Thames Travel*
- **striving to support the employment of Service spouses and partners;**
  - *advertising vacancies widely in the Armed Forces Community*
  - *welcoming applications from spouses/partners and offering interviews where essential selection criteria is met*
  - *committing to assist in finding alternative employment across the Go Ahead Group if a colleague is required to move due to the partner's Armed Forces posting*

- **endeavouring to offer a degree of flexibility in granting leave for Service spouses and partners before, during and after a partner's deployment;**
  - *sympathetically review requests for holiday where they impact on family life surrounding deployments*
  - *consider special leave for colleagues who are bereave or whose partner is injured*
  
- **seeking to support those colleagues who choose to be members of the Reserve forces, including accommodating their training and deployment where possible;**
  - *providing 5 days of unpaid leave to help them fulfil their training duties*
  - *working with colleagues to accommodate shift changes to accommodate training, where possible*
  - *developing a suitable policy providing details to colleague who chose to be members of the Reserve forces*
  
- **aiming to actively participate in Armed Forces Day;**
  - *following Armed Forces Day on social media and posting messages of support*
  - *provide free bus travel for uniformed military personnel for National Armed Forces Day*
  
- **additional commitments:**
  - *encourage and support employee fundraising for Service Charities*
  - *reviewing our commitments on a regular basis, no longer than 3 year intervals*
  - *offer support to our local cadet units*
  - *offer free bus travel to volunteers on Remembrance Sunday*

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.