



Swindon Borough Council

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:
Swindon Borough Council

Signed: 

Position: Leader

Date: 9th July 2021



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 Swindon Borough Council 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 We recognise the value serving personnel, reservists, veterans and military families bring to our business and to our country. We will seek to uphold the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant, by:

- **Supporting servicemen and ex-servicemen to secure suitable accommodation**
 - The Council will offer suitable advice to Armed Forces applicants who present in Swindon so they are able to access affordable housing in the Borough
 - Accepting the UK Armed Forces Veteran ID Cards as proof of a Veteran.
 - The Council will offer preference for those requiring social housing who are currently in the Armed Forces or leaving the forces.
 - The Council will allocate a proportion of stock through local lettings plans for Armed Forces applicants.
- **Assisting with requests for adapted homes for wounded soldiers.**
 - Those living in a Swindon's Social Housing can be direct matched to a suitable property where there is a medical need.
 - The Council will offer relevant advice and support to injured veterans to help them access home improvements.
- **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 a dedicated Covenant section/page on our web site
- **seeking to support the employment of veterans young and old:**
 - welcoming applications from, and guaranteeing interviews with, Veterans who meet the criteria in the job specification
 - recognising military skills and qualifications in our recruitment and selection process
- **striving to support the employment of Service spouses and partners;**
 - welcoming applications from spouses/partners who meet the criteria in the job specification
 - endeavouring to offer a degree of flexibility in granting leave for Service spouses and partners before, during and after a partner's deployment.
- **seeking to support our employees who choose to be members of the Reserve forces, including accommodating their training and deployment where possible;**
 - up to 2 weeks per year of special paid leave is available to attend annual training camps
 - fully supporting and accommodating mobilised deployment of Reservist employees if required

- **offering support to our local cadet units, either in our local community or in local schools, where possible;**
 - up to 2 weeks per year of special paid leave may be available to attend annual training camps and courses
 - accommodation of Cadet training commitments where possible
 - considering sponsorship bids to support worthwhile Cadet projects
- **aiming to actively participate in Armed Forces Day;**
 - by becoming an AFD partner and:
 - in advance; promoting through the web, social media, membership and other networks
 - during; encouraging employees to take part in Reserve Forces Day, Uniform to Work Day and any Flag Raising Ceremonies; assisting with case studies and stories and working with the Wessex RFCA to get them to press
 - post; publishing stories on the web, social media, through our own membership and other networks as well as working with the RFCA Communications lead & the press
- **offering a discount to members of the Armed Forces Community;**
 - registering with Defence Discount Service
 - offering bespoke continuing and/or limited time offers to Defence personnel
- **additional commitments:**
 - encourage and support employee fundraising for Service Charities
 - provide support and assistance to Service Families requiring school placements for their children

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.