



Solent NHS Trust

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 organisation and our country.

Signed on behalf of:

Solent NHS Trust

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. J. Ham'.

Position: Chief Executive

Date: 20th 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 **Solent NHS Trust** 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 organisation and to our country. We will seek to uphold the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant, by:

- **Promoting the Armed Forces:** promoting the fact that we are an Armed Forces-friendly organisation, to our staff, patients, suppliers, contractors and wider public.
- **Standard of health services:** ensuring the armed forces communities enjoy the same standard of, and access to healthcare as that received by any other UK citizen in our area.
- **Access to health services:** working to ensure family members of serving forces personnel should retain their place on NHS waiting list, if moved around the UK due to the service person being posted.
- **Veteran and service families “aware” mental health and wellbeing services:** ensuring our services are designed by co-production with veterans, their families and service families and delivered in a way which is sensitive to and aware of the lived experience of these communities and which meets their specific needs.
- **Priority treatment:** working to ensure veterans receive priority treatment for a condition that relates to their service, subject to clinical need.
- **Understanding Armed forces culture:** Working to ensure those injured in service should be cared for in a way which reflects the nation’s moral obligation to them, by healthcare professionals who have an understanding of the Armed Forces culture.
- **Building and maintaining the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Military Mental Health Alliance:** ensuring the Alliance continues to be a voice at the table for a wide range of armed forces communities through representative charities and statutory organisations; which informs and advises on the development and delivery of health and care services to the armed forces community; provides an effective network that enables high quality and connected pathways.
- **Working in partnership:** we will work in partnership with other NHS bodies, local authorities, academic bodies, armed forces charities and other organisations to understand the needs of the armed forces community and to develop services and pathways that meet these needs.

- **Supporting the employment of veterans:** supporting the employment of veterans through participating in Career Transition Partnership and Step Into Health programmes; recognising military skills and qualifications in our recruitment and selection processes.
- **Supporting the employment of Service Spouses & Partners:** supporting the employment of Service spouses and partners through participating in Forces Family Jobs and Step Into Health programmes; providing flexibility in granting leave for Service spouses and partners before, during and after a partner's deployment.
- **Supporting the employment of Reserves:** supporting our employees who are members of the Reserve Forces; granting additional paid/unpaid leave for annual Reserve Forces training; supporting any mobilisations and deployment; actively encouraging members of staff to become Reservists.
- **Supporting Cadet Organisations:** supporting our employees who are volunteer leaders in military cadet organisations, granting additional leave to attend annual training camps and courses; actively encouraging members of staff to become volunteer leaders in cadet organisations; supporting local military cadet units; recognising the benefits of employing cadets/ex-cadets within the workforce.
- **Participating in National Events:** supporting Armed Forces Day, Reserves Day, the Poppy Appeal Day and Remembrance activities.
- **Support and encourage Armed Forces Charities:** supporting Armed Forces charities with fundraising and supporting staff who volunteer to assist; support the development of high standards of operation.

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 patients, service users and their families on how we are doing.

Solent NHS Trust is a community and mental health Trust and the lead provider of the South East of England Veterans Mental Health High Intensity Service (HIS). We are committed to delivering high quality health, mental health care and treatment for veterans of our armed forces delivered collaboratively and in partnership with our partner providers; to support veteran transitions from armed forces and integration into civilian life