



Between
Blaby District Council
And
The Armed Forces Community in Leicestershire

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.



Signatories

Signed 

Name: Terry Richardson

Position: Leader, Blaby District Council

Signed: 

Name: Jane Toman

Position: Chief Executive, Blaby District Council

Signed: 

Name: Alberto Costa MP

Position: Member of Parliament for South Leicestershire

Signed: 

Name: Bill Brown

Position: County Chairman of Leicestershire & Rutland Royal British Legion

Date: 9th November 2018

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 Armed Forces Community Covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and its local Armed Forces Community. It is intended to complement the Armed Forces Covenant, which outlines the moral obligation between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces, at a local level.

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

The Commitment of Blaby District Council

1.1 We **Blaby District 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

We will seek to uphold the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant with the following actions and outcomes.

2.1 Armed Forces Champion

- An Elected member will be identified to serve as Armed Force Champion.

2.2 Lead Officer

- We have a Lead Officer, empowered to effect change across the Council.

2.3 Action Plan

- We have produced an Action Plan to ensure the Council delivers the Covenant commitments, the plan will be reviewed annually.

2.4 Stakeholder Engagement

- A Council representative will attend meetings of the Leicestershire & Rutland Armed Forces Covenant Civil Military Partnership Board; where emerging challenges are discussed and good practice shared.

2.5 Website and Communications

- The Council has an area on its website for the Armed Forces Community; this includes the Covenant, Action Plan, local Armed Forces groups, events, funding opportunities and latest news.

2.6 Health Services

- We will signpost Veterans to appropriate health services and interventions.
- Relay to the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) any difficulties faced by members of the Armed Forces community in accessing health care provision.

2.7 Housing

- Ensure that Council staff are mindful and remain aware of the particular issues faced by Service personnel and their families. This includes identifying best practice in solving the most challenging of circumstances where a service family or household is settling in our District.
- Raise awareness of housing issues and develop solutions and support systems to solve or prevent issues such as homelessness by Veterans.
- Ensure the Armed Forces community works closely with Council and other housing teams to provide advice and support to households leaving the Armed Forces or being re-located within the UK.

2.8 Benefits

- The whole amount of any War Disablement Pension, War Widows Pension or War Widower's Pension will be disregarded when assessing entitlement to receive Housing Benefit or local Council Tax Support in Blaby District. The nationally agreed disregarded figure is £10 per week. This authority has chosen to disregard the full value of these incomes (*although some of the elements within a pension amount do not attract the disregard*) to recognise the value and contribution to our country. This disregard applies to both working age and pension age claimants (*and is paid from the Councils own reserves*).

2.9 Employment

As an employer, the Council recognises the value that serving personnel, reservists, veterans and military families bring as employees and will;

- Promote that the Council is an Armed Forces-friendly organisation.
- Display the Bronze Award for the Employer Recognition Scheme and look to achieve Silver and Gold in the future.
- Support the employment of veterans and work with the Career Transition Partnership (CTP).

- As a Disability Confident employer the Council will make the most of the talents disabled people can make to the workplace. Reasonable adjustments will be made to support disabled staff to be able to successfully perform their role.
- Support where possible the employment of Service spouses and partners; including the flexibility to grant leave before, during and after a partner's deployment.
- Support employees where possible who are members of the Reserve Forces, including granting leave for training and supporting deployment.
- Support employees who are volunteer leaders in military cadet organisations and support local cadet units.
- The Council guarantee to interview Armed Forces staff, if they meet the selection criteria laid out in the job advert.
- Promote an e-learning module which explains the Councils commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant to help staff to understand and apply the principles of the Covenant in their service area.

2.10 Memorial Garden

- The Council have created a memorial garden which will be a lasting memorial to those that have lost their lives in conflicts and an area of peaceful reflection.

2.11 Armed Forces Charities

- The Council encourages armed forces charities operating within the district to apply to the Council's communities' grants fund and attend the Blaby District Community Network Events.

Section 3.0: Remembrance Events

Remember and honour those who 'gave their tomorrows for our todays'.

3.1 Armistice Day

- The Council will recognise the importance of Armistice Day through a two minute silence at the Council Offices. This event enables staff, members and the public the opportunity to observe the armistice in silence and private reflection.

3.2 Fly a Flag for Armed Forces Day

- The Council will support the national initiative to fly a flag for Armed Forces Day. The raising and flying of the flag provides an opportunity to raise awareness of the role our Armed Forces and their families continue to play.

3.3 Remembrance Day

- The Council will support community arrangements for the marking of Remembrance Sunday. The Chairman may attend remembrance services around the District.