



South Gloucestershire Council

We commit to uphold the Armed Forces Covenant and support the Armed Forces Community. We recognise the contribution that Service personnel, both regular and reservist, veterans and military families make to our organisation, our community and to the country.

Signed on behalf of:

South Gloucestershire Council

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Evans'.

Name: Councillor Alison Evans

Position: Cabinet Member for Cost of Living, Equalities and Public Health.
Armed Forces Champion.

Date: 17th June 2024



The Armed Forces Covenant

An Enduring Covenant Between

The People of the United Kingdom
His 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, **South Gloucestershire Council**, will endeavour to uphold the key principles of the Armed Forces Covenant:

- *Members of the Armed Forces Community should not face disadvantages arising from their service in the provision of public and commercial services.*
- *In some circumstances special provision may be justified, especially for those who have given the most, such as the injured or bereaved.*

Section 2: Demonstrating our Commitment

2.1 We recognise the contribution that Service personnel, reservists, veterans, the cadet movement and military families make to our organisation, our community and to the country. We will seek to uphold the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant by:

- **Promoting the Armed Forces:**

Promoting our work, activities and events through our own digital and social media channels as well as working with the press.

Publishing our Covenant pledges on a dedicated Covenant section/page on our website.

Promoting the fact that we are an Armed Forces friendly organisation, to our staff, contractors, customers, suppliers and wider public.

Producing an Annual Armed Forces Covenant Report to publicly demonstrate our work and progress at the same time as raising awareness of the needs of the Armed Forces Community.

Working with partners regionally so that our combined efforts maximise the positive impacts experienced by the Armed Forces Community.

- **Employment support to members of the Armed Forces Community:**

Advertising widely in the Armed Forces community, to ensure employment opportunities are made available to veterans.

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.

Releasing our employees who are Reservists to attend Reserve Forces training events where these take place on their normal working days and granting 10 days paid leave to attend essential training courses.

Reminding our reservists that if they become ill post mobilisation, they will be covered by the council sickness arrangements.

Supporting our employees who need flexibility and / or time off due to their partner's deployment within the armed forces, where we are able to do so.

- **Communications, engagement and outreach:**

Attending events of interest to the Armed Forces Community, to engage and ensure awareness of our services.

Engaging with and providing information to local organisations and groups supporting the Armed Forces Community in order to ensure enhanced communication regarding the services we offer and support we can provide.

Ensuring that our own employees are aware of the local organisations and groups supporting the Armed Forces Community so that they can signpost to them where appropriate.

- **Health**

Ensuring that our assessments of the health needs of our population specifically consider the Armed Forces Community

Ensuring our commissioned health and care services are tailored to meet those needs.

Promoting the needs of the Armed Forces Community across the health and care system.

- **Housing:**

Ensuring that members of the Armed Forces and former service personnel are not disqualified from joining the council's housing register where they would not otherwise meet the council's qualification criteria.

Ensuring that bereaved spouses and civil partners of members of the Armed Forces leaving Services Family Accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner and serving, or former members of the Reserve Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service are not disqualified.

Ensuring our Lettings Policy gives additional preference to the following categories of people who fall within one or more of the reasonable preference categories set out in the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) and who have urgent housing needs:

- (a) former members of the Armed Forces;
- (b) serving members of the Armed Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service;
- (c) bereaved spouses and civil partners of members of the Armed Forces leaving Services Family Accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner;
- (d) serving or former members of the Reserve Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service.

Ensuring that housing advice and support is available to members of the armed forces and former service personnel, who are homeless, or threatened with homelessness.

- **Education:**

Understanding best practice approaches taken by schools for supporting the wellbeing and academic progress of Armed Forces children and young people and based on this, providing the most effective support, advice and guidance to schools and Academies across the district.

Promoting our employment and skills adult education services directly with the Armed Forces community, to ensure adult, community learning and skills opportunities are well known and accessed.

- **Civic responsibilities:**

Recognising the important civic leadership role the council has to overtly support and promote the Armed Forces Covenant across South Gloucestershire by working with partners, residents, business and staff.

2.2 We will publicise these commitments through our literature and on our website, setting out how we will seek to honour them and inviting feedback from the Armed Forces Community and our customers on how we are doing.