

What is the Armed Forces Covenant?

The Covenant is a promise between the Government, the Nation and the Armed Forces. It's there to make sure that people in the Armed Forces Community aren't disadvantaged because of their Service, and that the people who have given the most like the wounded and the bereaved receive special consideration for the sacrifices they have made for the country. We use it to look out for any problems you might face because of your part in the Armed Forces Community, and then to find solutions to those problems.

What is the Annual Report?

The Secretary of State for Defence is legally required to report annually on the effects of service on armed forces personnel and their families, particularly where you are disadvantaged or where special treatment might be justified. It means the government is held to account every year on its duty to deliver the Covenant. This year's report has just been published. The report covers different groups within the Armed Forces Community, one of which is Service Personnel.

To find out more about the Covenant, the report or where to go if you need help, please see www.mod.uk/covenant.



Covenant wins for Service Personnel

- The Defence Discount Scheme was launched in October
- The Royal Mail along with BFPO have developed a new postcode. It has made it easier to access government services online and given Service people the ability to build up a credit history
- Members of the Armed Forces Community in England and Wales who are patients on NHS waiting lists have the time already accrued on a waiting list taken into account when posted elsewhere
- We have delivered improvements in mental healthcare provision, including a 24-hour helpline and a support and advice website
- We have developed a 'Troops to Teachers' scheme for Service People leaving the Armed Forces. The first 150 ring-fenced Troops to Teachers places for people leaving the Services were taken up in September 2012
- In the March 2012 budget the Government announced £100M further investment in Service accommodation for the financial year 2013/14
- We have launched a pilot Armed Forces Home Ownership Scheme which has proved a huge success and its future will be reviewed at the end of this year
- Council Tax Relief has been doubled twice since the Coalition Programme of Government, now standing at nearly £600 per Service person for a six-month deployment
- Guidance on access to mortgages and loans was issued in January 2012 to the financial industries to avoid disadvantage to Service personnel

Covenant Mythbuster

It's NOT just a piece of paper

The Armed Forces Covenant was published in May last year along with a document called 'Today and Tomorrow' which lists the nearly 100 real, tangible commitments the Government has made to the Armed Forces Community.

It IS a Government priority

A Cabinet committee has had four meetings to check Ministers are delivering what they said they would, and the Prime Minister has been to two of these meetings.

It IS having an impact on the lives of the Armed Forces Community

A huge number of positive changes have been made since May 2011, but sometimes you might not recognise them as Covenant commitments. We've twice doubled council tax relief to nearly £600 for a six-month deployment, we've introduced BFPO postcodes to make it easier to access commercial products and we've given priority access to social housing for veterans, bereaved families and Service people who need adapted homes.

It IS about local communities too

The Covenant is not just about the Government delivering commitments on a national level. More than 200 local communities have signed a Community Covenant - a voluntary statement of mutual support between civilians and the Armed Forces in their area.

It IS an obligation on the whole of society

The Covenant is an obligation on the whole of society. It includes voluntary and charitable bodies, private organisations and individuals, all of whom are asked to recognise our Armed Forces and offer respect, support and fair treatment.

Covenant in Action

Members of the Armed Forces are being placed at the top of the priority list for the Government's £500m FirstBuy scheme. HMS Ledbury Leading Chef Graeme Murdoch has used the scheme to buy his own place in Bootle with his wife Gemma who he married earlier this year. Graeme, 28, spends six months of the year away on tour with the Navy. He and Gemma have also had a new addition to the family this year with baby Caiden.

"We've been looking to buy our own property for a few years as we were sick of privately renting. We looked at a couple of sites in the area but we fell in love with this house we've got, and we got a really good deal with an upgraded kitchen and free carpets. Gemma calls our home the little Duchess!"

"The Navy really promote home ownership and I think it's great that these schemes are there to help people like me and my family. I've been recommending it to all the sailors back on ship. The process was so simple and straight forward – we moved in within two months of viewing the property. We're already saving on gas and electric bills as the house is so well insulated."

Gemma: "I've got a great circle of friends in Bootle, we all work at the same pub and have young children so we all chip in and help look after each other's kids. It's a great help when Graeme is at sea."



Useful Contacts

- This leaflet is aimed at Serving personnel, but there are two others aimed at Armed Forces Families and Veterans you may wish to read
- To read the full report on the Armed Forces Covenant and see details of what the government has committed to, go to www.mod.uk/covenant
- You can seek further advice from the Chain of Command, your nearest HIVE www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/DefenceFor/ServiceCommunity/Hive/HiveSupportDuringDeployments.htm or the Family Federations (Navy: www.nff.org.uk. Army: www.aff.org.uk, RAF: www.raf-ff.org.uk).
- Contact the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency www.veterans-uk.info or 0800 169 2277
- The Royal British Legion www.britishlegion.org.uk 08457 725 725
- Confederation of Service Charities www.cobseo.org.uk 0845 504 6630
- Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA) Forces Help www.ssafa.org.uk 0845 1300 975
- MOD Personnel SPVA – JPA Enquiry Centre 0141 224 3600 or 0800 085 3600
- MOD Personnel Bullying and Harassment Advice 0800 345 7772 or Mil: 93 345 7772
- MOD Accommodation Defence Estates Head Office 0121 311 2140
- MOD Accommodation Modern Housing Solutions 0800 707 600 Freephone Open 24 hrs
- MOD Accommodation Defence Estates Housing Information Centre 0800 169 6322 or Mil: 94 510 8000



Ministry
of Defence

The Armed Forces Covenant: Serving Personnel

