



## Bristol City Council

---

**The undersigned commit to honouring the Armed Forces Covenant and supporting the Armed Forces Community. We recognise the value of Serving Personnel, both Regular and Reservists, Veterans, and military Families that contribute to our businesses and our country.**

Signed on behalf of:

**Bristol City Council,**

Signed:

**Name:**

**Ministry of Defence**

Signed:

**Name:**

**Position:**

**Date:**



**Ministry  
of Defence**

# 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, and their families. They deserve our respect, 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 the most, such as the injured and the bereaved.

This obligation involves the whole of society: it includes voluntary and charitable bodies, private organisations, and individuals' actions 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 upholding this Covenant.

## Section 1: Principles of the Armed Forces Covenant

The Armed Forces Covenant is a national commitment to ensure fair treatment for individuals who serve or have served in the Armed Forces and their families. It was first introduced in 2011 as a voluntary pledge between local communities and the Armed Forces.

Bristol City Council (BCC) adopted the Armed Forces Community Covenant in 2014, collaborating with various partners to enhance support for serving personnel, veterans, and their families. With the introduction of the Armed Forces Act 2021, the Covenant has become a statutory duty for local authorities. This means that Bristol City Council has a legal obligation to consider the needs of the Armed Forces community when providing public services.

### **Purpose**

The Bristol Covenant expands on the national Covenant by ensuring that no member of the Armed Forces community faces disadvantages in accessing services. It offers additional support to those who have made significant sacrifices. The Covenant enhances collaboration among the council, NHS, charities, businesses, and the Armed Forces to improve services and acknowledge military service.

We are dedicated to supporting the Armed Forces community by recognising their unique contributions to our city.

In line with the core principles of the Armed Forces Covenant, the council will:

- **Be Fair:** We guarantee that no member of the Armed Forces community—serving personnel, veterans, or their families—is disadvantaged in accessing public services or support.
- **Provide Support** to veterans and their families to address specific challenges, particularly in housing, education, and healthcare.
- **Acknowledge Sacrifice:** We recognise and honour the sacrifices made by Armed Forces personnel and their families, ensuring their contributions are respected and valued in the Bristol community.
- **Promote Inclusion:** Foster a culture of understanding and inclusion, working collaboratively with local organisations and community groups to uphold these principles.

## Section 2: Demonstrating our Commitment.

BCC recognises the value of serving personnel, reservists, veterans, and military families to our businesses and our country.

We will uphold these principles of the Armed Forces Covenant by:

### **Raising awareness of the Armed Forces Community Covenant in Bristol**

BCC acknowledges the important contributions of the Armed Forces community and is dedicated to supporting serving personnel, veterans, and their families. We collaborate through dedicated partnerships and targeted initiatives to raise

awareness of the experiences and needs of the Armed Forces community covenant, especially during key events and commemorative occasions.

Our approach ensures that the Armed Forces community is acknowledged, respected and supported within the city.

To achieve this, we have established:

<b>Armed Forces Champions</b>	Advocates within the council in housing, education, employment support and public health actively promote the needs and contributions of the Armed Forces community in decision-making processes.
<b>Armed Forces Steering Group</b>	We collaborate with local organisations and stakeholders to ensure a coordinated approach to supporting and celebrating the Armed Forces community.
<b>Armed Forces advice clinics</b>	These are accessible, in-person opportunities for members of the Armed Forces community to seek advice, share concerns, and connect with local services.
<b>Social Media and Awareness</b>	We use our internal networks to share information, celebrate achievements, and raise awareness of the support available to the Armed Forces community.

As part of our role in supporting the work of the Armed Forces community, BCC staff and their champions will actively promote our status as an Armed Forces-friendly organisation to our staff, contractors, customers, suppliers, and the wider public, ensuring that our commitment to this cause is communicated and upheld.

BCC is committed to supporting the Armed Forces community with the Armed Forces Covenant. We recognise the unique challenges faced by serving personnel, veterans,

and their families and seek to ensure fair access to employment, housing, and local services.

Our commitments are grouped under three key areas: Employment, Housing, and Civic Recognition and Awareness.

## **1. Employment and Support for Reservists**

BCC is committed to fostering an inclusive workplace and ensuring that members of the Armed Forces community are supported in their transition to civilian employment.

**Fair Recruitment and Selection:** We adopt a fair and inclusive recruitment process and actively welcome applications from military backgrounds, recognising the value and transferability of their skills.

**Guaranteed Interview Scheme:** Any applicant from the Armed Forces community who meets our recruitment and selection criteria is guaranteed an interview.

**Support for Service Families:** We endeavour to provide flexibility in granting leave to Service spouses and partners before and after deployment, acknowledging their unique circumstances.

**Engagement with Veterans:** Our Employment and Skills teams attend the Veteran Hub to provide direct employment support to veterans and their families.

**Support for Reservists:** Employees of the Reserve Forces are eligible for up to 10 days of paid or unpaid leave (subject to approval) to support annual training, mobilisations, and deployments.

## **2. Housing and the Duty of Regard**

BCC is committed to ensuring that the Armed Forces community is treated fairly regarding housing within Bristol's banding system.

**What is the Duty of Regard?**

Under the Armed Forces Covenant and statutory guidance, the Duty of Regard requires local authorities to ensure that serving personnel, veterans, and their families are not disadvantaged due to their service. This includes ensuring fair access to housing, particularly for those without a local connection, and recognising service-related housing challenges.

### **How We Embed the Duty of Regard**

**Fair Access to Housing:** No member of the Armed Forces community will be disadvantaged when applying for housing services.

**Integration into the Housing Allocation Scheme:** The Duty of Regard is embedded within Bristol's housing banding system to ensure that former and serving personnel are assessed fairly based on their circumstances and housing needs.

**Local Connection Exemptions:** Armed Forces personnel who lack a local connection won't be disadvantaged when applying for housing in Bristol.

**Needs-Based Prioritisation:** Housing Allocation in Bristol is needs-based, but we recognise Armed Forces Personnel's unique challenges. To support this, we provide additional preference in our housing assessment process.

**Increased banding:** Applications with a force's history receive an increase in their housing priority by one band.

### **Eligibility**

- If eligible and in band 3, an applicant will move up to band 2
- If eligible and in Band 2, an applicant will move up to Band 1
- Band 4 applicants don't receive additional preference

**Compliance:** this approach aligns with the Housing Act 1996 (Additional Preference for Armed Forces) (England) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012/2989)

### **3. Civic Recognition**

BCC acknowledges the sacrifices made by the Armed Forces community and is committed to recognising their contributions through key civic events and initiatives.

**Annual Events:** We will continue participating in and supporting national and local events, including Remembrance Sunday and flag-raising ceremonies.

**Memorials and Commemorations:** We will work to preserve and promote awareness of memorials and commemorative spaces that honour the Armed Forces community.

**Public Engagement:** Our commitments will be publicised through council literature and the BCC website. We will invite feedback from the Armed Forces community and local residents to ensure we fulfil our obligations effectively.

We aim to uphold our duty to the Armed Forces community by embedding these commitments into our policies and services while ensuring fair and equitable access to employment, housing, and local recognition.

**We, the undersigned, agree to observe and honour the Armed Forces Covenant by working together to support the Armed Forces Community in Bristol.**

**Leader of the Green Party**

**Leader of the Labour Party**

**Leader of the Liberal Democratic Party**

**Leader of the Conservative Party**

**Lord Mayor of Bristol**