

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 veterans.

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 veterans

- We've launched the Defence Discount Service
- Plans are maturing for the Veterans' Information Service, a way of engaging with veterans 12 months after their discharge from the Forces
- In England, members of the Armed Forces Community are placed at the top of the list for the Government's £500m FirstBuy scheme
- The Scottish Government is funding specialist mental health services at around £1.2M for the next three years, and will continue to fund the Veterans First Point service (a signposting and advice centre designed to help veterans and their families)
- The Prime Minister has appointed Lord Ashcroft to be his Special Representative for Veterans' Transition
- The All Wales Veterans' Health and Wellbeing Service provides local access to specialist outpatient care and signposting to other support that might be required
- Veterans in England accessing NHS services are given priority treatment for conditions related to Service, subject to the clinical needs of others



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

Bruce Allan and Steve Law were infantry soldiers in the Army. Bruce is a recovering alcoholic and Steve has been diagnosed with PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder). Both men have used Veterans First Point in Scotland to help them with the issues they've faced since leaving the Forces.

Bruce: "I'm a recovering alcoholic and my project worker at the alcohol recovery team mentioned Veterans First Point (VIP) to me. I went along earlier this year and my first impression was how welcoming staff were towards me. There is no pre-judging from anyone. It makes such a difference being able to speak to other veterans who have similar experiences. There is a common bond between us and you can open up more easily about your problems. I've had fantastic support from staff pointing me in the right direction to get problems sorted such as help with my finances."



Steve: "I knew about Veterans First Point as I was already having therapy for post-traumatic stress disorder. It's a great service and one that is very easy to access. I found on days when I was struggling, they helped to prioritise things for me and helped me get back on track. The drop-in service was vital for me. I'd never really talked to other veterans but the relaxing environment of VIP made it possible. I'm moving forward with my life and currently doing voluntary work which I don't think I would have managed without VIP's help."



Useful Contacts

- This leaflet is aimed at Veterans, but there are two others aimed at Armed Forces Families and Serving personnel 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
- Contact the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency www.veterans-uk.info or 0800 169 2277 as a one stop shop for all Veteran needs
- Veterans Advisory & Pensions Committees (VAPCs) are regional, providing help and support to the Service and ex-Service community and making recommendations to all public bodies and the local community on the needs of veterans and their families. You can find out more here: http://www.veterans-uk.info/vets_advisory.html or telephone 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
- Direct Gov has a website linking to further information and support available to Veterans: www.direct.gov.uk/en/Pensionsandretirementplanning/Benefits/BenefitsinRetirement/DG_10027105
- MOD Personnel MOD Medal Office (JPA Enquiry Centre) 0141 224 3600
- MOD Health Gulf Veterans Helpline 0800 169 4495
- Charitable Health Ex-Services Mental Welfare Society (Combat Stress) 01372 841600



Ministry
of Defence

The Armed Forces Covenant: Veterans

