

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 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.

Suggested Format for Armed Forces Community Covenant signing Ceremony.

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 the local level.

The purpose of this Community Covenant is to encourage support for the Armed Forces Community working and residing in Bury and to recognise and remember the sacrifices made by members of this Armed Forces Community, particularly those who have given the most. This includes in-service and ex-service personnel, their families and widow(er)s in the Metropolitan Borough of Bury.

For Bury Metropolitan Borough Council and partner organisations, the Community Covenant presents an opportunity to bring their knowledge, experience and expertise to bear on the provision of help and advice to members of the Armed Forces Community. It also presents an opportunity to build upon existing good work on other initiatives such as welfare pathway.

For the Armed Forces Community, the Community Covenant encourages the integration of service life into civilian life and encourages members of the Armed Forces Community to help their Local Community.

In the Covenant before you today we have enshrined 11 specific measures that we in Bury Metropolitan Borough intend to enact. These are:

1. To establish a single community point of contact together with the Bury Metropolitan Borough Council one stop shop that leads to both a self referral welfare pathway and a welfare support pathway for serving and ex-service men and women, their dependants, families and widow(er)s.
2. Working with the Housing Associations and other agencies to provide and support on housing matters and ensure that priority for accommodation is given to Veterans.

3. To establish and maintain a close relationship with the Regular and Reserve Force Unit(s) stationed in the area. To carry out measures to ensure that they are welcomed into the Metropolitan Borough and that service personnel and their families are supported by all agencies – public, private, voluntary and charitable.
4. To establish a partnership with employers, specialist employment consultancies and agencies in Bury Metropolitan Borough that will assist Armed Forces Personnel to make the transition to civilian life.
5. To provide external support to former Armed Forces in HMP Forrest Bank and to respond to and co-ordinate any request for assistance.
6. To work together with NHS services in Bury Metropolitan Borough to ensure priority treatment to Armed Forces personnel and Veterans.
7. Co-ordinate mental health facilities both NHS and private to recognise and treat mental health conditions caused by time in service for serving and retired personnel and their families.
8. To promote awareness of the role and significance of the Armed Forces with Bury Metropolitan Borough by bringing together serving personnel, veterans, youth, schools, local charitable bodies and voluntary organisations.
9. By establishing a living heritage project to record and exhibit military experiences and increase awareness and appreciation of Armed Forces Service.
10. To run and co-ordinate events that enhance appreciation of the military ethos, enable fundraising for Service Charities, commemorate service and express gratitude for the commitment and sacrifices made by members of our Armed Forces.
11. Celebrate the freedom of the Metropolitan Borough of Bury with Royal Regiment of Fusiliers.

This two-way agreement recognises the debt that we owe to those who serve, have served and will serve in our armed forces to protect us.

(Paragraph to be stated if there is a Military Presence)

Brigadier, Commander, Squadron Leader, We will encourage our young people to carry on the tradition of service, to go into harm's way under your leadership.

When they return to us we will succour them, if broken in mind, body or spirit we will help them to recover. Those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice we will cherish and remember always.

We will help our returning warriors to find work, be housed, have their children schooled and integrate into our lovely Borough.

To those stationed amongst us we welcome you to take part in our many celebrations, fetes, carnivals and host of other activities, to walk amongst us in the Queen's uniform, become a significant part of our society. Visit our schools, enjoy our heritage.

We pledge this day to forge a bond that will last.

Leader of Bury Metropolitan Borough Council, Cllr _____, I commend this covenant and ask that you sign on behalf of the Council.

After this signing various Military (Royal Navy, Army, Royal Air Force Commanders) should be asked to sign the Covenant followed by:

The Royal British Legion.

SSAFA

Representatives from other Service/ex-Service Charitable Organisations as considered necessary.

The Police.

The Fire Service.

NHS Representative

Representatives from other organisations as seen necessary.

SECTION 1: PARTICIPANTS

This Armed Forces Community Covenant is made between:

The serving and former members of the Armed Forces and their families working and residing in Bury.

and

Bury Metropolitan Borough Council

and

The Charitable and Voluntary Sector

and

Other members of the civilian community

SECTION 2: PRINCIPLES OF THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT

- 2.1 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 the local level.
- 2.2 The purpose of this Community Covenant is to encourage support for the Armed Forces Community working and residing in Bury and to recognise and remember the sacrifices made by members of this Armed Forces Community, particularly those who have given the most. This includes in-service and ex-service personnel, their families and widow(er)s in the Metropolitan Borough of Bury.
- 2.3 For Bury Metropolitan Borough Council and partner organisations, the Community Covenant presents an opportunity to bring their knowledge, experience and expertise to bear on the provision of help and advice to members of the Armed Forces Community. It also presents an opportunity to build upon existing good work on other initiatives such as welfare pathway.
- 2.4 For the Armed Forces Community, the Community Covenant encourages the integration of service life into civilian life and encourages members of the Armed Forces Community to help their Local Community.

SECTION 3: OBJECTIVES AND GENERAL INTENTIONS

Aims of the Community Covenant

- 3.1 The Armed Forces Community Covenant compliments the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant which defines the enduring, general principles that should govern the relationship between the Nation, The Government and the Armed Forces community.

3.2 It aims to encourage all parties within a community to offer support to the local Armed Forces community and make it easier for Service personnel, families and veterans to access the help and support available from the MOD, from statutory providers and from the Charitable and Voluntary Sector. These organisations already work together in partnership at local level.

3.3 The scheme is intended to be a two-way arrangements and the Armed Forces community are encouraged to do as much as they can to support their community and promote activity which integrates the Service community into civilian life.

SECTION 4: MEASURES

4.1 The establishment of an overarching Civil-Military Partnership to co-ordinate and direct implementation of mutual support between the Armed Forces and community within Bury. A partnership group will be developed which will include representatives of all the signatory organisations.

4.2 Through the development of partnerships built around a structure of Pledges the signatories will set, and review annually, specific objectives aimed at addressing issues, work towards addressing issues which affect the members of the Armed Forces Community, including but not exclusively:-

- **Education, children and young people**
- **Skills and employment**
- **Safer communities, environment and infrastructure**
- **Health and wellbeing**

4.3 The Civil-Military Partnership will develop a communication strategy in order to ensure that key services are effectively signposted to members of the Armed Forces Community.

4.4 Encourage the recognition of the Armed Forces through such activities as Freedom of the Borough, Home Coming and Remembrance Parades and support to the annual Armed Forces Day.

4.5 Work with Bury Community to access the £30million Community Covenant Funds, in order to deliver financial support to projects at the local level which strengthen the ties or mutual understanding of the Armed Forces and Community and the wider community in which they live.