

Armed Forces Covenant – Cambridge City Council action plan

The Armed Forces Covenant sets out the relationship between the nation, the government and our Armed Forces. It recognises that the whole nation has a moral obligation to members of the Armed Forces and their families, and it establishes how they should expect to be treated. The principles are that:

- The Armed Forces community should not face 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

The corporate covenant is a public pledge from businesses and other organisations who wish to demonstrate their support for the Armed Forces community. Businesses are asked to pledge their support for the two key principles of the covenant and to select from a range of other commitments they may feel able to make.

This action plan outlines the ways in which Cambridge City Council will support the principles of the covenant.

Service area	Action
Housing	<p>1. Veterans’ Housing worker for Cambridgeshire The County Council will be employing a Veterans Housing Worker. We intend to work with the County in supporting this role and having some input into its responsibilities.</p> <p>We will aim to have greater focus on promoting the benefits that our Lettings Policy offers i.e, around the local connection waiver and the additional priority offered to members of the armed forces. Even though our housing application form asks the question about service in the armed forces (and needs to do so for statutory reasons) a lot of veterans won’t disclose that they have served. So whilst housing register numbers are very low this probably doesn’t reflect the true picture.</p> <p>2. Personalised Housing Plans Under the homelessness legislation we have a duty to produce personalised housing plans (PHPs) for households that are homeless or threatened with homelessness. These PHPS should focus on the housing and support needs of the household.</p> <p>We will review the information available to Housing Advisors about support services on offer to members/former members of the armed forces and update our resources accordingly.</p> <p>We will then create a tailored PHP template for members of the armed forces which, as well as asking the question about support needs, will provide contact information for support agencies.</p>

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Corporate	<p>3. Being a responsible employer We will seek to understand who within our organisation is a former or current member of the armed forces (including reservists). This is an important starting point in ensuring that we are following the covenant aims internally as a responsible employer, especially if we are going to be promoting what we do externally.</p> <p>4. Improve visibility of our commitment We will revamp our Armed Forces Covenant webpage to better symbolise our commitment and to provide better signposting information</p> <p>5. Armed Forces Day June 29th We will issue a press release in the lead up week (w/c 24th June) highlighting our aspiration to achieve bronze standard and implement our action plan</p> <p>6. Achieve bronze level in the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme We will apply to be assessed for this award by the end of June 2019</p> <p>7. Hold a managers briefing to promote our commitment to the covenant We will ask those relevant backgrounds (including reservists) to share their experiences and wider learning to widen understanding of our commitment to the covenant.</p>
Community	<p>8. Supporting armed forces families We wish to see how we can support armed forces families living within the city, with children attending local schools and the unique challenges faced by these families as they are often moving home and area, and children struggling to make social links when new to an area. We will seek to understand what the level of need actually is and also how we may best promote the work of ChYpPS as an opportunity to forces families to build links and friendships via our open access play sessions and the PlayDaze summer offer.</p>
Property	<p>9. Supporting new commercial tenants (i.e. not housing) We will ask tenants whether they have a connection to the armed forces so we can see how we can best support or signpost them</p> <p>10. Supporting potentially new commercial tenants When dealing with potential tenants who have a background in the Armed Forces, we will see if there can be more flexibility in terms of credit checks, references, amount of rent deposit etc. This is not to give them preferential treatment but to remove any problem they may have in satisfying our requirements due to their former employment in the Armed Forces.</p>

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Customers	<p>11. Better signposting and support for customers who have a connection to the Armed Forces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will look at ways in which we can ask the question: <i>Are you, or have you served in the Armed Forces? Are you a spouse/Partner or child of someone who is or has served in the Armed Forces?</i> • We will highlight our commitment to the covenant and prompt signposting by having specially designed posters in our customer service centre area and in the window display • We will raise awareness amongst the volunteer digital champions who provide support across the city; also discuss with them the common digital issues that ex-service personnel face • We will improve and raise awareness of our customer portals, web pages and train/deploy digital champions • We will create an online resource for the Armed Forces Covenant that council sections can use as a central information point • We will consider use of the Advice Hub, and offer to facilitate a military or ex-military expert from one of the supporting organisations in the Advice hub one day a week, or as appropriate • We will support reservists by ensuring benefit officers and CSC advisors are aware of additional earnings disregard for reservists in receipt of benefit
Recruitment	<p>12. Better promote recruitment opportunities to members of the Armed Forces.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will advertise roles on FFJ (Forces, Families, Jobs) website • We will add an excerpt into our recruitment job packs to indicate our commitment to armed forces family members and also attracting ex-military personnel to the organisation. • We will circulate our job opportunities/ potential work experience opportunities to other charities/ support agencies who are able to identify military candidates (e.g. Career Transition Partnership, Forces Employment Charity, Salute My Job) • We will identify future opportunities to attend events and jobs fairs (including online) in order to interact with military job seekers/ their families etc