



Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

We, the undersigned, commit to honour the Armed Forces Covenant and support the Armed Forces Community. We recognise the value Serving Personnel, both Regular and Reservists, Veterans and military families contribute to our business and our country.

Signed on behalf of:
Ministry of Defence

Signed on behalf of:
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

Signed:

Name: *Major Matthew Lindow*

Position:

OC 237 RLC REGT

Signed:

Name: *JAN BRITTON*

Position:

Chief Executive of SMBC

Date: 25th June 2016

Date: 25th June 2106



Ministry
of Defence



Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

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.

Section 1: Principles Of The Armed Forces Covenant

1.1 We Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council will endeavour in our business dealings to uphold the key principles of the Armed Forces Covenant, which are:

- *no member of the Armed Forces Community should face disadvantage in the provision of public and commercial services compared to any other citizen*
- *in some circumstances special treatment may be appropriate especially for the injured or bereaved.*

Section 2: Demonstrating our Commitment

2.1 Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council recognises the value serving personnel, reservists, veterans and military families bring to our business. We will seek to uphold the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant, by:

- *bringing our 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 the Welfare Pathway.*
- *encouraging the integration of Service life into civilian life and encouraging members of the Armed Forces community to help their local community*
- *Establish a Partnership Board, which will be chaired by the Mayor of Sandwell. The Partnership board will meet every 3 months to ensure that the Board's intent is being implemented. An action plan will look at capturing all the information from the relevant partners.*
- *recognise the specific needs of service personnel and their families; of the members of the regular armed forces for whom Sandwell is their home; of the members of the reserve forces who serve within the boundaries of Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, including the Cadet Forces, and of those who have served in her Majesty's Armed Forces and service widows and who now form part of the veteran community.*

- *The signatories to this Covenant recognise in particular those members of the Armed Forces who have suffered injury as a result of their service, and will seek to improve their access and facilities throughout the Borough of Sandwell.*
- *Specific measures will include:*
 - *additional priority within the Housing Allocations Policy for those requiring social housing on leaving the forces;*
 - *assistance for disabled servicemen to identify new housing,*
 - *access to the Home Improvement Service for injured veterans,*
 - *investigating and identifying what further housing options can be provided.*
 - *arranging for the Volunteer Centre Sandwell to broker volunteering opportunities for service personnel and ex-personnel.*
 - *mandating the Sandwell Council of Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) to build links with the Forces in Mind Trust to ensure Sandwell's voluntary and community sector can contribute to providing long-term support and advocacy for service personnel and veterans to make a successful transition to civilian life.*
 - *assisting ex-services personnel to access appropriate employment and training by creating a single point of access to training and employment, working in collaboration with other services within the borough to create a coordinated, seamless and supportive service, and by providing a vital Information, advice and guidance service to help ex – services personnel make appropriate decisions about their future, including learning and work options; by providing an environment that caters for and understands both socially and economically the specific needs of ex-service personnel in order to offer one to one support; skills training; individually focussed service; training advice and employment advice.*
- *carrying out a common assessment of the needs of service families to provide support if required, including the allocation of school places*
- *providing a range of services that can be made available to the children of veterans if required*
- *mandating Leisure Services to target veterans to support volunteering opportunities.*

- *Offering those working for the Armed Forces a discounted leisure pass to leisure centres, managed by Sandwell Leisure Trust, to the value of corporate membership on a pay as you go basis.*
- *investigating the possibility of free access to the Borough's leisure centres, managed by Sandwell Leisure Trust, for armed forces personnel.*

2.2 We will publicise these commitments through our literature and/or on our website, setting out how we will seek to honour them and inviting feedback from the Service community and our customers on how we are doing.