



Ministry
of Defence



2014 Annual Report Update



Armed Forces
Covenant

The **Armed Forces Covenant** is an agreement between the Government, the Nation and the Armed Forces which this Government has enshrined in law. It commits to supporting the entire Armed Forces Community and ensuring that Service personnel and their families are not disadvantaged by the sacrifices they make to keep the nation safe.

This year has seen our Armed Forces playing a vital role in keeping us safe through their work providing humanitarian and military support internationally and in the UK helping to protect communities from this year's floods. It has also been an important year for this Government delivering on its Covenant commitment:

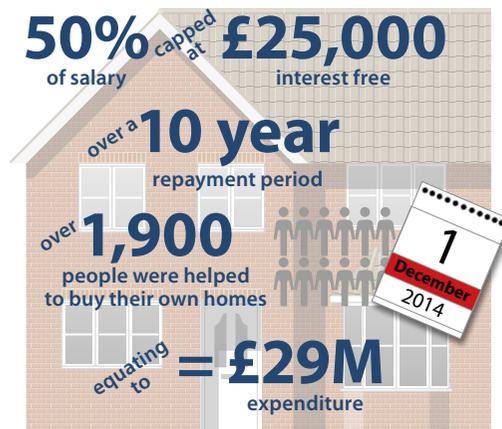
- The Government has awarded a further £40m from bank fines to Covenant projects bringing the total this Government has made available to £140m to support the Armed Forces Covenant.
- All Local Authorities in Great Britain have now signed up to the Community Covenant so wherever you live in the country, whether serving or retired, they must take into account your needs when delivering their services – from schools to housing.
- More than 370 companies have now signed the Corporate Covenant making a range of commitments from guaranteeing job interviews for those leaving the Forces to making it easier for staff to become Reservists.



What does it mean for me?

Getting a Home

The Forces Help to Buy Scheme has made £200m available to help serving personnel on to the housing ladder. They can borrow up to £25,000 interest free over 10 years to help them get a deposit for their first home. It has already given more than £29m to over 1,900 families to help them put down roots. Forces Help to Buy recently helped Sergeant Nicholas Brett and his family purchase a three-bed detached house in Tidworth. Sgt Brett said that “without it [Forces Help to Buy] I wouldn’t have been able to purchase a property at this moment in time.”



Education for Forces Children

Travelling around the country to follow a Forces parent’s career and changing schools regularly can disrupt a child’s education. This year we introduced the Pupil Information Profile (PIP) to make a child’s learning as seamless as possible when Service children move. Detailed information about the child can be transferred between schools in the UK to help them settle in quickly and ensure continuity of learning. In the last financial year the Department for Education allocated £17.4m to support the needs of 57,940 service pupils.

Childcare

The nature of setting up Military units means that many around the country and the world have evolved without the same standard of purpose-built childcare facilities that civilian families can expect. That’s why we have made £20m available to update existing childcare and provide new purpose-built buildings to ensure that your children get the best start in life. For example almost £3m will be spent on a childcare project at the RAF base in Akrotiri, Cyprus.

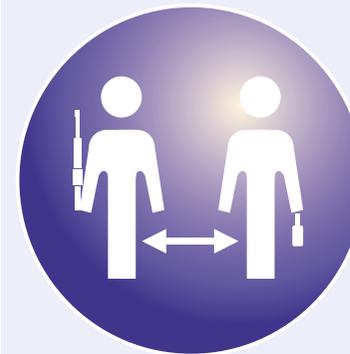
Your Health

Serving in the Forces is a physically demanding job and access to top quality healthcare is essential for personnel. That’s why we offer all Service Personnel enhanced occupational healthcare to include dental and hearing assessment and eye tests – all delivered by the new Defence Primary Healthcare which caters solely for the health of our Forces. We have also started work on the new Defence and National Rehabilitation Centre in Loughborough to make sure that if you are injured in service you will receive world-leading care tailored to the unique needs of Service personnel.



Reserves

As our Reserve Forces grow to around 35,000 in the coming years we know that the Government has to do more to support Reservists and their employers. Reservists are now entitled to paid annual leave for the time that they are training or called up, and small-and medium-sized employers can now claim an additional payment when Reserve employees are mobilised to help with any additional costs. The Forces railcard has also been extended to all Reservists this year giving a third off all rail fares in mainland UK and putting them on an equal footing with Regular service personnel.



£1.8bn
to be invested
into Reserves
over the next
10 years

Veterans

The Government’s commitment to the Forces continues beyond your service. This year £40m has been awarded to Veterans accommodation projects which will help 16 organisations to provide specially adapted accommodation to adjust to civilian life after serving. The Royal British Legion Industries will be using £1.95m of this to build 20 homes at its village in Kent to help Service Personnel transitioning from the Forces to civilian life to get the help they need to do this.

But there's still more to be done

In the next 12 months the government will:

- Introduce a new Service Complaints Ombudsman with increased powers so that if you feel a complaint hasn't been handled properly there is a new, strengthened system in place to address it.
- Open up the Armed Forces Pension Scheme to Reservists.
- Launch a new £10m annual fund to continue delivering Armed Forces Covenant commitments.

Find out more

To find out more about the Armed Forces Covenant and what it means for you visit:

www.gov.uk/the-armed-forces-covenant

If you think you have suffered from a disadvantage because of your service we want to hear about it. Contact either your Service Families Federation or the MOD Covenant team by emailing:

covenant-mailbox@mod.uk

To find out whether Forces Help to Buy could help you to buy your first home visit:

www.gov.uk/forces-help-to-buy

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

