



**ARMED FORCES
COVENANT**

The Diocese of Portsmouth

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 organisation and our country.

Signed:

The Right Revd Christopher Foster
The Bishop of Portsmouth

Signed:

Nigel Atkinson Esq
Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire

Signed:

Vice Admiral Jonathan Woodcock OBE
On behalf of the Royal Navy

Signed:

Air Commodore Alan Opie
On behalf of the Royal Air Force

Signed:

The Revd Father Ian Stevenson CF
On behalf of the Army

28th November 2017



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, the Diocese of Portsmouth, will endeavour in our business and charitable 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 The Diocese of Portsmouth recognises the value serving personnel, reservists, veterans and military families bring to our organisation. We will seek to uphold the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant, by:

- *seeking to support the employment of veterans (young and old) in our own recruitment practices by advertising all vacancies through the Career Transition Partnership (CTP) website and guaranteeing an interview for those veterans who have Service related injuries, providing they meet the essential criteria for the job;*
- *looking favourably upon employee requests for leave and flexible working by spouses with partners on deployment, and compassionate leave for any bereaved spouse including for attendance at an inquest;*
- *affirming the important work of Regular and Reserve military chaplaincy and facilitating the transition to and from civilian and military ministry by recognising the transferability of skills and experiences of those engaged in military chaplaincy;*
- *seeking to support our employees who choose to be members of the Reserve forces, for instance, by seeking as far as possible to accommodate their training and deployment;*
- *supporting all who engage as Officiating Chaplains to the Military, by accommodating as far as possible their duties with the military;*
- *offering support to our local cadet units, either in our local community or in local schools, where possible;*
- *recognising and remembering the sacrifices made by others by marking Remembrance Sunday, and other such occasions, through the production and distribution of appropriate liturgical material for use across the Diocese of Portsmouth.*
- *aiming actively to participate in Armed Forces Day;*
- *ensuring that wherever possible our buildings and facilities are accessible to all in the Armed Forces Community, especially veterans with disabilities;*
- *setting up a dedicated page on the Diocesan website to alert those who work in relevant areas of Church ministry to the specific needs of the Armed Forces Community;*
- *asking all church schools to adopt admissions policies which make it easier for children of Service families to get places.*

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