



Armed Forces Covenant Myth Buster

It's NOT just a piece of paper

The Armed Forces Covenant was published in May last year along with a document called 'Today and Tomorrow' which lists the nearly 100 real, tangible commitments the Government has made to the Armed Forces Community.

It IS a Government priority

A Cabinet committee has had four meetings to check Ministers are delivering what they said they would, and the Prime Minister has been to two of these meetings.

It IS about fair treatment

The Covenant exists to make sure Service people, veterans and their families are on an equal footing with ordinary citizens when it comes to accessing public and commercial services. For example, if you and your family are posted somewhere new, you shouldn't struggle to get your child into a local school. We've made sure that doesn't happen by letting schools go over their maximum class size to fit in a service child.

It's NOT about extra-special treatment for all the Forces

For most of the Armed Forces Community, the Covenant is about removing disadvantage so that you get the same outcome as the civilian community. It's not about getting special treatment that ordinary citizens wouldn't receive, or getting a better result.

It IS about special consideration in some cases

For those who have given the most, such as the injured and the bereaved, we do make an exception. For example we've made sure that Service people with genital injuries are guaranteed three cycles of IVF on the NHS, and we've established a scholarship fund for bereaved service children.

It's NOT a legal document

The Armed Forces Covenant itself is not a legal document, but it is referenced in the Armed Forces Act 2011 and the Secretary of State for Defence is legally required to report to Parliament on its progress once a year.

It IS having an impact on the lives of the Armed Forces Community

A huge number of positive changes have been made since May 2011, but sometimes you might not recognise them as Covenant commitments. We've twice doubled council tax relief to nearly £600 for a six-month deployment, we've introduced BFPO postcodes to make it easier to access commercial products and we've given priority access to social housing for veterans, bereaved families and Service people who need adapted homes.

It IS about local communities too

The Covenant is not just about the Government delivering commitments on a national level. More than 100 local communities have signed a Community Covenant. It is a voluntary statement of mutual support between civilians and the Armed Forces in their area to encourage mutual understanding and to bring the two communities together. Alongside it we run the Community Covenant Grant Scheme, set up to fund projects that support its aims.

It IS an obligation on the whole of society

The Covenant is an obligation on the whole of society. It includes voluntary and charitable bodies, private organisations and individuals, all of whom are asked to recognise our Armed Forces and offer respect, support and fair treatment.

For more information on anything you've read here, go to www.mod.uk/covenant