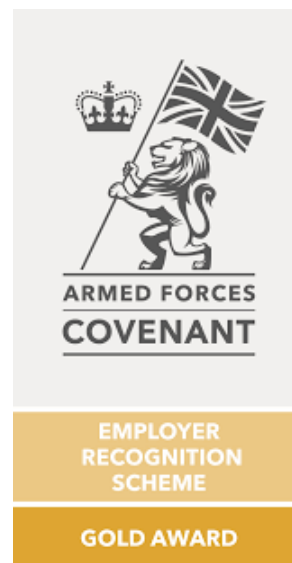


Appendix 6 – The Armed Forces Covenant

The Service is an active supporter of the Armed Forces Covenant; there are a range of workstreams across the County which support past, present and future members of the Armed Forces.

In June 2022, the Service was presented with the Gold Award in the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme for 2022. This scheme recognises UK employers that demonstrate a commitment to defence, by proactively supporting the Armed Forces community and inspiring others to do the same. This award should be widely celebrated, not least as it was achieved two years after first signing up to the scheme.



Recruitment

Recruitment for both Operational and Support roles has allowed the Service to develop links with the Armed Forces community. Job adverts have been shared through the Careers Transition Partnership (CTP) and the Civvy Street magazine. Informal support is provided to applicants through 1:1 meetings to discuss the recruitment process and to answer questions about a career in the Fire Service. Where possible, reasonable adjustments are put in place to support applicants through the recruitment process. This can include, but are not limited to, providing flexibility for assessment dates, locations and times, providing additional support regarding notice periods and start dates.

This year arrangements have been made for Army and RAF cadets aged between 13 and 17 to attend Aylesbury Fire Station on a monthly basis, with volunteer crews teaching participants teamwork and communication skills with different drills taking place quarterly. This activity supports young people working towards their Duke of Edinburgh Award and has been well received in the community and the sessions have been attended by several Councillors from the Fire Authority.



A Volunteer Reserve Forces guidance note was produced and approved by Business Transformation Board in July 2022. The Service has pledged its support for members of, or those wishing to join the Reserve Forces and acknowledges experience gained through training (and mobilisation) brings essential skills into the workplace, such as leadership, team working and organisational ability. This document formalises

support for training allowances, mobilisation actions, pay and other related terms and conditions of employment which may be affected.

Support

The Service offers building facilities to a range of charities and Armed Forces support services. This includes facilitating monthly walk-in centres at Marlow, Aylesbury at West Ashland as part of “Op Courage”. Facilities at Marlow and West Ashland have been utilised to complete clinical appointments where other facilities have not been available, this supports access to mental health support for the Armed Forces community.

Our facilities and meeting rooms are made available for Blind Veterans UK and the Royal British Legion, providing a valuable meeting point free of charge.

The Service has representatives attending this year’s Veterans Community Network (VCN) Conference, promoting the Service in a broader Armed Forces environment.

The Service actively supports events in the Armed Forces calendar, this includes Armed Forces Day and Armistice Day. The Service has a long tradition of attending Armistice Day events, laying wreaths of remembrance and displaying our support through a range of social media channels.



The Services Ceremonial Team support a range of functions throughout the year on a voluntary basis. There is an Annual trip to Ypres, Belgium where employees attend a Service of remembrance at the Menin Gate, visit allied cemeteries, and learn more about the role of the British Armed Forces in the First and Second World Wars. This is an excellent opportunity for employees who are Armed Forces veterans to pay their respects and share experiences with like-minded colleagues.

Outcomes

Positive consequences of our relationship with the Armed Forces are Service employees attending an Army Leadership Challenge Day, engaging with serving personnel, providing both groups the opportunity to learn more about each other. The Service have been offered 6-8 places free of charge, to attend an Armed Forces mental health course.

It is important the Service continues to maintain and develop existing relationships with the Armed Forces and work proactively to identify further opportunities for collaboration. This will strengthen our relationship within Armed Forces communities and help to maintain our status with the Defence Employers Recognition Scheme.