



## **NHS North of England Commissioning Support Unit (NECS)**

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**We commit to uphold the Armed Forces Covenant and support the Armed Forces Community. We recognise the contribution that Service personnel, both regular and reservist, veterans and military families make to our organisation, our community and to the country.**

Signed on behalf of:

**NECS**

Signed: 

**Name:** Claire Gooday

**Position:** Director of Organisational Development & Corporate Services

**Date:** 1<sup>st</sup> December 2023



# The Armed Forces Covenant

An Enduring Covenant Between

The People of the United Kingdom  
His 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, NECS, will endeavour to uphold the key principles of the Armed Forces Covenant:

- *Members of the Armed Forces Community should not face disadvantages arising from their service in the provision of public and commercial services.*
- *In some circumstances special provision may be justified, especially for those who have given the most, such as the injured or bereaved.*

## Section 2: Demonstrating our Commitment

2.1 We recognise the contribution that Service personnel, reservists, veterans, the cadet movement and military families make to our organisation, our community and to the country. We will seek to uphold the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant by:

- **Promoting the Armed Forces:** Working with our ex-Armed Forces staff to understand what national support is available and ensure that we are signposting to the correct needs of our staff and their families. Also learning from the experiences that our ex-Armed Forces staff have had and sharing their stories on our staff intranet for others to learn from and increase awareness. Creation of an 'Armed Forces at NECS' intranet page to both promote support resources and further educate all our staff around the Armed Forces and terms. We will also aim to recognise, promote, and engage with national campaigns, such as the Armed Forces Day and observe such days internally with our staff.
- **Employment support to members of the Armed Forces Community:** NECS is committed to the NHS Guaranteed Interview Scheme whereby if an applicant selects that they are ex-Armed Forces, they will be afforded a guaranteed interview status within recruitment if they meet the essential criteria to support the process in finding work. NECS recognises the valuable and transferable skills which the ex-Armed Forces community can bring to the NHS and seek to engage with organisations such as the Career Transition Partnership to support employment opportunities. We also aim to support the employment of Service spouses, partners, and dependants, by using websites such as Forces Families Jobs.
- **Communications, engagement and outreach:** Liaising with our Health and Wellbeing Champions to ensure the correct support is in place for our ex-Armed Forces members of staff and their families. This is inclusive of Reservists, Veterans and family. Continuing to listen to our staff feedback, ensuring clear communication routes are in place with regular check-ins and discussions of further work put in place to support colleagues with an affiliation to the Armed Forces. Utilisation of resources from the NHS to support veterans, service leavers and non-mobilised reservists. NHS resources are also used for information and support for families, including guides and information on charities and support groups. The NHS has also set out standards for NHS organisations to adhere to, to support the health and wellbeing of the Armed Forces Community in 'Healthcare for the Armed Forces Community: A Forward View'.

- **Reserves:** NECS is committed to supporting colleagues who are part of the Reservists by ensuring they can fulfil both their work duties and commitment to the Armed Forces. All Reservists are able to access 10 working days for Reservist time (five paid and five unpaid) to support this commitment.
- **Civic responsibilities:** NECS also wants to support the moral duty within Armed Forces to ensure there is sufficient opportunity to network with other colleagues by providing connections with people within the community at NECS. This is to encourage colleagues supporting colleagues and having the common ground when moving back into work or relating to similarities. As mentioned above, NECS also supports ex-Armed Forces colleagues within the recruitment process to ensure they receive the opportunity to attend an interview for their desired role. This is a specific perk which is available through the NHS Jobs system. We will also aim to work in partnership with other NHS organisations and our local Armed Forces establishments to provide optimal care for the Armed Forces Community.

2.2 We will publicise these commitments through our literature, on our staff intranet and on our website, setting out how we will seek to honour them and inviting feedback from the Armed Forces Community and our customers on how we are doing.