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SUPPORTING SERVICE CHILDREN
IN EDUCATION WALES

CYNORTHWYO PLANT MILWYR
YN YSGOLION CYMRU

Armed Forces Covenant Duty

Local authority and school briefing



Armed Forces Act 2021

The Armed Forces Act 2021 amended the Armed Forces Act 2006 ('the Act') by inserting sections 343AA to 343AF. These place a legal duty (the 'Covenant Duty') on specified public persons and bodies ('specified bodies'), to have due regard to the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant when exercising certain statutory functions in the fields of healthcare, education and housing ('relevant functions'). The specified bodies and relevant functions are listed in sections 343AA to 343AD of the Act.

The Covenant Duty came into effect on 22 November 2022.

The Covenant Duty

A **statutory duty** on specific bodies in the areas of **Healthcare, Housing and Education** to **pay due regard** to the **principles** of the Armed Forces Covenant.

For example: in **healthcare**, bodies such as the **National Health Service** dealing with **healthcare waiting list policies**.

For example: in **housing**, bodies such as **Local Authorities** dealing with the **allocation of social housing**.

For example: in **education**, bodies such as **schools and academies** dealing with the **school's admissions criteria**.

The bodies subject to the Duty are **expected to consciously consider** the Covenant when **developing, delivering and reviewing policies and decisions** which may impact the **Armed Forces Community** and help improve their access to public services.

www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk

Armed Forces Covenant: Principles

The [Armed Forces Covenant](#) seeks to ensure that those who serve, or have served in the armed forces, and their families are treated fairly and are not disadvantaged in accessing services. The three principles of the Covenant are:

1. the unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the armed forces.

2. the principle that it is desirable to remove disadvantages arising for Service people from membership, or former membership, of the armed forces.

3. the principle that special provision for Service people may be justified by the effects of membership, or former membership, of the armed forces.

Armed Forces Act 2021: Aims

To increase awareness of the unique obligations facing the Armed Forces Community, and how these obligations can affect their requirements of public services and ability to access them.

To embed this understanding in public sector decision-making and delivery of public services.

To encourage greater consideration for the Armed Forces Community in providing services, where this is appropriate and possible.

Statutory Guidance

Statutory Guidance has been published which explains the principles of the Covenant, the unique obligation and sacrifices members of the armed forces community, and how they may experience disadvantage.

Examples are loss of life or limb, family separation, mobility, emotional stress and unfamiliarity with civilian life. Disadvantages may include relocations at short notice that put families outside the normal admissions round for school places, interrupted education, being unable to take holidays with parents during normal school holiday periods, delays relating to support for Service children with additional needs.

Due regard principles

The duty is about informed decision making and placing an appropriate amount of weight to the principles of the AFC in developing or reviewing policies, and in providing services. The Duty is not prescriptive about the actions schools should take in order to comply, and it does not mandate specific outcomes or advantageous treatment of Service children.

Considerations for schools

Key areas of concern for Armed Forces families are:

Transport
to and from
school

Attendance

Student
wellbeing

Educational
attainment
and
curriculum

School
admissions

Additional
needs
support

How to respond to the Act...

Local authorities

Work with the SSCE Cymru Regional School Liaison Officers (RSLOs) to give due regard to recommendations within the Local Authority Action Plan, implement activities where appropriate and embed good practice.

Schools

Work with the SSCE Cymru Regional School Liaison Officers (RSLOs) to give due regard to all recommendations within the SSCE Cymru School Checklist, implement activities where appropriate and embed good practice.

With a goal of achieving Armed Forces Friendly Schools Cymru Bronze/Silver/Gold status.

Further information and contacts

Further information

[Armed Forces Covenant Duty Statutory Guidance](#)

[New legal powers to support Armed Forces families and Veterans](#)

Contacts

Regional Schools Liaison Officers:

North Wales	Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Isle of Anglesey, Wrexham	CaraLloyd-Roberts@ynysmon.gov.uk
East Wales	Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport, Torfaen, Powys	Emilee.Kinsey@newport.gov.uk
South Wales	Bridgend, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhonda Cynon Taf, the Vale of Glamorgan	Emilee.Kinsey@newport.gov.uk
West Wales	Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire, Swansea	SSCECymru@wlga.gov.uk

Armed Forces Covenant Liaison Officers:

Blaenau-Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport, Torfaen	Lisa Rawlings	rawlil@caerphilly.gov.uk
Isle of Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Wrexham	Stephen Townley	Stephen.Townley@wrexham.gov.uk
Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan	Abi Warburton	awarburton@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk
Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf	Jamie Ireland	Jamie.L.Ireland@rctcbc.gov.uk
Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot, Swansea	Bethan Denedy	b.denedy@npt.gov.uk
Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, Ceredigion	Hayley Edwards	HREdwards@carmarthenshire.gov.uk
Powys	Andy Jones	andy.jones@powys.gov.uk