

Warwickshire County Council

SUPPORTING ARMED FORCES IN EMPLOYMENT POLICY

Key points:

- Warwickshire County Council recognises and values the contribution that members of the Armed Forces community can make to its workforce, and signed the Armed Forces Covenant in 2012.
- Employees need to request the prior written permission of their line manager to be Volunteer Reservists/Adult Cadet Instructors.
- Subject to business need, the Council is committed to granting to Reservist employees or Adult Cadet Instructors:
 - Up to 10 days' paid leave per year for the annual camp or other training specific to their Reserve or Adult Cadet Instructor role; and
 - Up to 10 days' unpaid leave in total within a 3-year period, and each successive 3-year period thereafter, for additional specialist training to enhance their role or for progression within the Reserve or Cadet Forces.
- The Council will release employees for mobilisation in all but exceptional circumstances and will provide support before and after mobilisation to achieve a smooth reintegration to work.
- The Council will give an interview under its Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS) where the essential criteria for a post are met by external candidates who are:
 - Serving Armed Forces personnel during the 12 weeks prior to their discharge date from the Armed Forces;
 - Ex-Armed Forces personnel within 3 years of their discharge date; or
 - Where the Armed Forces were their last long-term employer.
- The Council offers 2-4-week unpaid work experience placements for those who are leaving the Armed Forces, and welcomes interest from those who are Wounded, Injured, or Sick (WIS).

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Warwickshire County Council recognises and values the commitment made by members of the Armed Forces community. This policy sets out how the organisation supports the Armed Forces in employment.
- 1.2 The Council signed the [Armed Forces Covenant](#) in 2012 and is the lead agency for the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Armed Forces Covenant (CSW AFC) partnership.

2 Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all employees of the Council with the exception of:
- Fire and Rescue, who have their own Volunteer Reservists Force Service Order, and
 - Employees based in schools.

3 Reserve Status Notification

- 3.1 Employees are required to request the prior written permission of their line manager to be a Volunteer Reservist, in accordance with their terms and conditions of employment. Requests will be supported wherever possible and will not be unreasonably withheld or withdrawn unless, for example, it is deemed that it impacts or conflicts with employment with the Council. Employees must also inform their line manager in writing, at the earliest opportunity, if they leave the Reserve Forces. Employees who are Adult Cadet Instructors must inform their line manager of this role.
- 3.2 Reservist employees are also required to grant permission for the Ministry of Defence (MoD) to write directly to their employer to inform them that the employee is a member of the Reserve Forces and the obligations and rights that apply (known as 'Employer notification'). The MoD will send a follow-up letter each year to confirm that the information held by the Council is still accurate. Official correspondence from the MoD is from a nominated representative with a UK Defence postal address or a @MOD.gov.uk email address suffix. All correspondence should be retained on the employee's HR-ER record.

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3.3 If the Council has been notified (by the employee or the MoD) of an employee's Reserve status, the Reservist employee will not be disadvantaged as a result of their Reserve status.

4 Time off for training

4.1 The Council recognises the importance of, and where possible will support, the training undertaken by Reservists and Adult Cadet Instructors, which enables them to develop skills and abilities that are of benefit to their respective Reserve Force, the individual, and the Council.

4.2 Reservists are typically committed to 24-40 days training per year. Training tends to take place one evening per week at the local centre, over various weekends throughout the year, and one 2-week training period (known as 'annual camp').

4.3 The Council is committed to granting: -

- Up to 10 days paid leave per annum (pro rata for employees who are part-time or employed part way through an annual leave year) for employees serving in the Reserve Armed Forces or those volunteering their time as Adult Cadet Instructors, for undertaking their annual camp or other training specific to their Reserve or Adult Cadet Instructor role.
- Up to 10 days additional unpaid leave in total (pro rata for employees who are part time, or employed part way through an annual leave year) within a 3 year period, and each successive 3 year period thereafter, for those serving in the Reserve Armed Forces or volunteering their time as Adult Cadet Instructors, for undertaking additional specialist training to enhance their role or for progression within the Reserve or Cadet Forces.

4.4 Leave requests must be submitted to the line manager via Your HR using the special category under 'Other Absence'. Whilst requests will be met where possible, leave will be at the discretion of the line manager subject to business need, with ultimate discretion by the Assistant Director if the employee is not satisfied with the decision of their line manager. Permission, once given, will not be rescinded unless there are exceptional circumstances.

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- 4.5 Reservists/Adult Cadet Instructors must give as much notice as possible of training to allow appropriate absence planning and must provide evidence of training requirements. Leave must be used for training that falls on working days and cannot be used for days that the Reservist/Adult Cadet Instructor is not undertaking reservist activities (for example, to recover from the physical demands of a weekend away with the Reserve Forces). Employees who need time off for activities as reservists, beyond the leave referred to above, are expected to use normal annual leave entitlement.
- 4.6 Where unpaid leave is taken the employee may arrange to make up pension contributions for this period. – see [Additional Pension Contributions \(APCs\)](#) for how to do this for the Local Government Pension Scheme. Separate arrangements apply for the Teacher Pension Scheme.

5 Permanent Mobilisation

- 5.1 Mobilisation is the process by which a Reservist is brought into full time service with the Regular Forces, in order to make them available for military operations. The maximum period of mobilisation will depend on the scale and the nature of the operation and is typically no longer than 12 months.
- 5.2 The Council will support permanent mobilisation and release the employee for Reserve service in all but exceptional circumstances. When a call-up notice is issued, the Reservist is required by law to comply with it and the Council is legally obliged to release them for mobilisation. However, a call-out notice can be appealed if the Reservist’s absence is considered to cause serious harm to the business. A decision to make any such appeal will be made by the Strategic Director.
- 5.3 The call-out papers for mobilisation, with the call-out date and the anticipated timeline, are posted by the MoD to the employer, or may be delivered in person by the Reservist to their line manager. These also include the appeal process. The Reservist must inform their line manager in writing as soon as they receive a call-out.
- 5.4 Reservists will be supported by their line manager in preparing for mobilisation, and post-mobilisation to achieve a smooth re-integration into the

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workplace/team. Arrangements should be discussed and agreed for keeping in touch during the mobilisation period.

- 5.5 The Council does not pay the employee during mobilisation, the MoD assumes responsibility for this during the period of mobilisation. There is financial assistance available to an employer from the Ministry of Defence to cover, for example, agency fees to find a temporary replacement.
- 5.6 Regardless of the length of the Reservists' period of mobilisation, they are generally entitled to return once it has ended, subject to the Reservist meeting certain notification requirements. [This right applies for 6 months after the period of service.] Return should be, where possible, to the same job. If this is not possible, the Reservist should return to a mutually acceptable role on terms and conditions which are no less favourable than if the employee had not been called up.
- 5.7 The employee will be treated, for payroll purposes, as being on a period of special unpaid leave of absence during mobilisation. The Council will continue to treat the contracts of employment of employees mobilised for Reserve Service as operable throughout the period of such service and there will be no loss of continuous service.
- 5.8 Where possible, Reservists should be encouraged to take any accrued annual leave before mobilisation. Annual leave with the Council does not accrue during mobilisation because during this time the Reservist accrues it with the MoD, and this is factored into the mobilisation period.
- 5.9 If the Reservist is a pension scheme member and chooses to remain within it, the MoD will (subject to their rules and policies that may vary from time to time) make the employer contributions for the period of mobilisation, as long as the Reservist continues to make their personal contributions. Separate arrangements apply for the Teacher Pension Scheme (TPS).
- 5.10 As part of a mobilisation and deployment an individual may experience physical or mental health injuries, which may continue or become evident after their return to work. In these circumstances the Reservist may access healthcare from Defence Medical Services, the NHS or, via the line manager, the Council's occupational health provider. Further information is available on the [Support for Volunteer Reservists and their Families](#) page of the Council's Covenant web pages.

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- 5.11 More information on managing and supporting Reservists through mobilisation, including financial assistance to employers and return to work arrangements, is available at [MoD Reservist Employers' Toolkit](#)
- 5.12 The line manager can take advice from an HR Advisor where an employee is mobilised.

6 Recruitment – Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS)

6.1 The Council recognises the contribution that members of the Armed Forces community can make to its workforce and welcomes applications from ex-service personnel. As part of its Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS) the Council will give an interview where the essential criteria for a post are met by external candidates: -

- who are serving Armed Forces personnel during the 12 weeks prior to their discharge date from the Armed Forces,
- who are ex-Armed Forces personnel within 3 years of their discharge date or: -
- where the Armed Forces were their last long-term substantive employer

6.2 Evidence will need to be provided by the external candidate to the recruiting manager that they meet one of these GIS criteria, for example official notification from the senior officer such as a Commanding Officer. The GIS does not apply to internal candidates.

6.3 Disabled applicants, including those with an Armed Force background, who meet the essential criteria for an advertised vacancy, will be offered an interview as part of the Disability Confident Scheme.

7 Work placements

7.1 The Council offers 2-4-week unpaid work experience placements for those who are leaving the Armed Forces, and welcomes interest from those who are Wounded, Injured, Sick (WIS is a military category for those medically discharged from the Armed Forces). More information can be found [HERE](#)
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8 Other support available

8.1 The following support is also available to employees who are Reservists or Adult Cadet Instructors: -

- the Council operates a flexible working approach to allow employees to work in locations where they are most effective, at the most effective times, providing the potential, subject to business need, for greater freedom to plan around personal commitments – see [Flexible working](#)
- the Council considers requests for permanent changes to, for example, working hours or days. Most of these can be considered without the need to make a formal statutory request. Where this is not possible employees can make a formal request– see [Right to Request Flexible Working](#)
- Access to a confidential, 24 hour free-of-charge helpline under the Council’s [Employee Assistance Provider](#)
- Access to the Council’s [Occupational Health Provider](#) via the line manager for medical advice where appropriate
- Wellbeing support - see [Your Wellbeing](#)
- Information on the Council’s Covenant web pages – see [Support for Employee Reservists and their families](#)

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