

18<sup>th</sup> November 2019

**Becoming an Armed Forces Friendly Employer: MCA adoption of the Armed Forces Covenant**

**Purpose of Report**

The Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) is asked to sign up to the Armed Forces Covenant and, in doing so, agrees its intention to adapt its employment and equal opportunities practices to reflect the commitments made in signing up to the Covenant.

**Thematic Priority**

Cross cutting - Governance

**Freedom of Information and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972**

The paper will be available under the Combined Authority Publication Scheme.

**Recommendations**

That the MCA:

1. signs up to the Armed Forces Covenant.
2. agrees its intention to adapt its employment and equal opportunities practices reflecting the commitments made in signing up to the Covenant.

**1 Introduction**

- 1.1** MCAs, Combined Authorities, local authorities, voluntary organisations, and charities across the country are increasingly committing to inclusive employment practices.
- 1.2** By signing up to the Armed Forces Covenant, the MCA will be demonstrating its commitment to tackling inequalities through actively supporting the employment of members of the Armed Forces, veterans, and their families.
- 1.3** The Armed Forces Covenant is a national pledge led by the Ministry of Defence to ensure that together we acknowledge that those who serve or who have served in the armed forces, and their families, should be treated fairly in the economy and society.
- 1.4** Although each of the MCA constituent members have individually signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant, the MCA is being asked as an employing body to signal its commitment to ensuring that members of the Armed Forces, veterans, and their families are supported in the workplace.
- 1.5** There are two key principles of the Armed Forces Covenant:
  1. The Armed Forces Community should not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services, and that

2. Special consideration is appropriate in some cases especially for those who have given the most.

**1.6** The adoption of the Armed Forces Covenant will send a powerful message to the city region's communities that the MCA is committed to inclusive employment practices.

## **2 Proposal and justification**

**2.1** As an employing body, the MCA may wish to:

1. Promote the fact that we are an armed forces-friendly organisation
2. Support the employment of veterans and service leavers
3. Offer flexibility in leave for service spouses and partners before, during and after deployment
4. Support reservist employees, allowing leave for training and deployment

**2.2** Signing up the Armed Forces Covenant will require a full review of all MCA HR policies and practices, but may include:

- Amendments to the Recruitment & Selection Policy to include military organisations
- Amendments to the Annual Leave and Special Leave policies to accommodate for any additional leave required by employees who are members of the Armed Forces, veterans or their families.

**2.3** The MCA will also have the opportunity to be recognised by the Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) award, if it wishes.

**2.4** Becoming an Armed Forces friendly employer will allow the MCA to benefit from a wide range of unique skills and experiences that those who have served can bring to the organisation.

## **3 Consideration of alternative approaches**

**3.1** None. While there is no statutory requirement to do so, the adoption of the Armed Forces Covenant will strengthen the MCA's commitment to inclusive employment practices.

## **4 Implications**

### **4.1 Financial**

Signing up to the Armed Forces Covenant would support employees in the Armed Forces, veterans and their families with special leave for training and deployment. For the Army Reserves, this may be an additional 19 days a year after annual leave allocations.

### **4.2 Legal**

The adoption of the definition would be non-legally binding.

### **4.3 Risk Management**

None

### **4.4 Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion**

This proposal clearly supports wider equality, diversity and social inclusion agendas.

## **5 Communications**

**5.1** By signing up to the Armed Forces Covenant, the MCA will be sending a powerful message of its clear commitment to inclusive employment practices.

**5.2** The MCA may wish to promote that it is an Armed Forces-friendly employer and, upon signing the Armed Forces Covenant, the MCA will also be eligible to use the Covenant and, if it chooses to sign up, the Employment Recognition Scheme logos in compliance with branding guidelines.

**5.3** The MCA decision will be communicated via the usual channels.

## **6 Appendices/Annexes**

**6.1** None

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Background papers used in the preparation of this report are available for inspection at: 11 Broad Street West, Sheffield S1 2BQ

Other sources and references: