



COUNTY COUNCIL - THURSDAY, 18 DECEMBER 2025

Please find attached the presentation given to County Council on 18 December by the Civilian-Military Liaison Advisor, Canon Peter Bruinvels CC.

Agenda Item No

8- Armed Forces Covenant - Annual Report

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Watts', is positioned above the printed name.

Benjamin Watts
Deputy Chief Executive

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Armed Forces Covenant in Kent

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Annual Review

County Council
18 December 2025

Canon Peter Bruinvels CC
Civilian-Military Liaison Adviser – ST SPRCA
03000 412986 / peter.bruinvels@kent.gov.uk

Armed Forces Covenant in Kent

- Significant Armed Forces presence in Kent
- Parity, not positive discrimination
- Ethos – ‘Forces Friendly’ Authority
- Leading by example – KMCMPPB ‘exemplar’
- Signed 2011, re-signed with Medway 2017
- Kent & Medway Civilian-Military Partnership Board awarded **Gold (2018)**
Gold (2023)

Only UK CMPB with a Unitary



EMPLOYER
RECOGNITION
SCHEME

GOLD AWARD



The Armed Forces Act 2021

The Armed Forces Covenant was enshrined in law in November 2022 – after Statutory Guidelines passed by Parliament

Requires all **Public Bodies** including LAs, CCGs, NHS Trusts and Schools to show 'due regard' and **consistency** in the provision of following services:-

*Education

*Healthcare

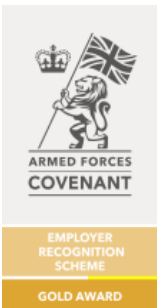
*Housing and Homelessness

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Ensures no one disadvantaged
because of their service to the Nation

Councils will need to consciously consider the Armed
Forces Community when developing policy and decisions

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ivdWNh2JRQ4>



New Armed Forces Act in 2026 to strengthen Covenant



The Armed Forces Act 2021

Housing

- Allocation of social housing
- Tenancy strategies
- Homelessness
- Disabled Facilities Grants

Education

- Admissions
- Attainment
- Wellbeing
- School Transport
- Attendance
- SEND
- Service Pupil Premium (**£350**)
- **“Arrive Late – Leave Early”**

Healthcare

Including:

- NHS Primary Care, NHS Dental, NHS optometry and public health screening
- NHS Secondary Care
- Local authority delivered healthcare incl. sexual health, drug and alcohol services

• **GP Veteran Friendly Practices**

Covering:

- Provision of services
- Planning and funding
- Co-operation between bodies and professionals



EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME

GOLD AWARD WINNER 2018

Proudly supporting those who serve.
Record number of winners.



What Kent is doing to help?

- Established KMCMPB to bring partners together to address issues – **Richard Palmer** chairs
- Gave **HMS Kent** – The Freedom of Kent
- Awareness of Service Charities with Services especially Adult Social Care – **Did you serve?**
- Relationship between Admissions and 11 Brigade over planned moves e.g. involving the **Gurkhas**
- Link to Career Transition Partnership for vacancies
- Support to **Reservists** working for Kent
- Helping to attract **Cadet Adult Volunteers**

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EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME

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Armed Forces Community in Kent

- Extremely resilient community
- Kent & Medway Research
- Specific issues that can be faced:
 - Education – School Places and Syllabus Variance -
 - Housing – Near Units and Bases
 - Health – Access to GPs and NHS Dentists / GP Veteran Friendly
 - Stable Spousal Employment – Frequent Moves = Gaps in CVs
 - Employment for Service Leavers & Reservists
 - Debt and Loneliness = **Circle of Despair**
- Task Groups
 - Recognise & Remember
 - Employment & Skills
 - Unit Welfare Officers

'Forces Connect' SE Signposting App

On MoD Defence Gateway and MODNet

Available for free to download. Search 'Forces Connect' in your app store now!

And Online: www.ForcesConnect.co.uk

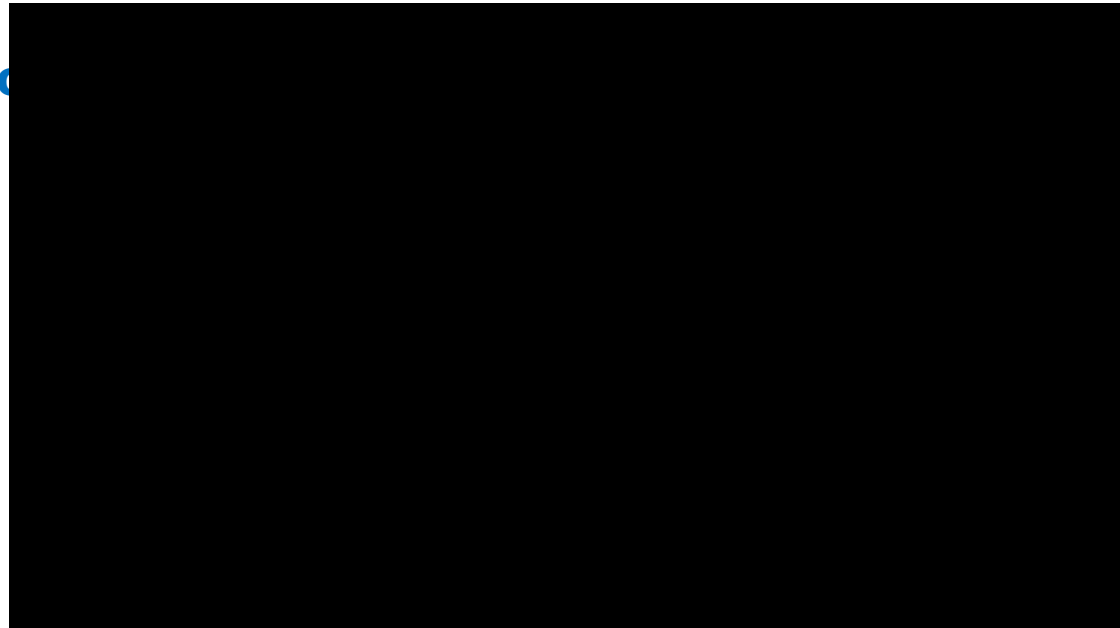
Signposting and connecting the entire Armed Forces Community as well as public sector/not-for-profit practitioners to the right
• services for support and advice.

Using data from the NHS Armed Forces Networks Referral Pathways.

Commissioned by Forces Connect South-East and developed by **Kent County Council**, the Wow Factory – now Folio3.

And Online: www.ForcesConnect.co.uk

For more information contact: FCSE@surreycc.gov.uk



What We Have Achieved

- School Admissions
- Housing Eligibility & Partnership with Health
- Developed a network of trained champions
- Regular Chatham House UW Officer Meetings
- Brunei rebasing - 2RGR/**1RGR** Swap in 2025
- **Veterans Hubs** and Kent Sheds
- Annual **11th** Kent & Medway Covenant Conference 2025 (**140** in person)

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EMPLOYER
RECOGNITION
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Work Within Kent County Council

- E-learning training module – **1215** passed
- Peer Support Group Network
- Kent County Council Reservist HR Policy
- Cementing KCCs Links with **The Brigade of Gurkhas**
- Reserves Day planned – **24 February 2026**
- Increasing support of celebratory and commemorative events – **VE Day 80** and **VJ Day 80** – **Lord-Lt diary**
- Supporting and growing Covenants Bids – **£25k Forces Connect Training**

Moving Forward

- Continuous improvement
- Military Friendly employer: **Gold** since 2018
- Even closer working with Armed Forces, Cadets, Charities, Wider VCS and Partners
- Work with Kent Businesses and Kent Ambassadors
- Embedding good practice business as usual
- Contact the team... **@KentArmedForces**



ArmedForces@kent.gov.uk



www.kent.gov.uk/armedforces



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