

Guidance

# Defence Employer Recognition Scheme

The Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) encourages employers to support defence and inspire other organisations to do the same.

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## Documents

### [ERS gold award holders - 2015 to 2025](#)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69121055bda892e068aa6452/20251103\\_ERS\\_Gold\\_Award\\_Holders.ods](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69121055bda892e068aa6452/20251103_ERS_Gold_Award_Holders.ods)

ODS, 46.5 KB

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### [ERS silver award holders - 2015 to 2025](#)

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### [ERS bronze award holders - 2015 to 2026](#)

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69b2e89659f6a12>

ODS, 195 KB

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## Details

### About the scheme

The Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) encourages employers to support defence and inspire others to do the same. The scheme encompasses Bronze, Silver and Gold awards for employer organisations that pledge, demonstrate or advocate support to defence and the armed forces community, and align their values with the [Armed Forces Covenant \(https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/\)](https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/).

The ERS is designed primarily to recognise private sector support although public sector organisations such as the emergency services, local authorities, NHS trusts and executive agencies are also eligible to be recognised.

Pledge your organisation's support via the Bronze award or express your interest in a Silver or Gold award via the links below.

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### Bronze award

Bronze award holders must have:

- Signed the AFC and registered their interest for a Bronze award (via the ERS website).
- Confirmed their understanding of the AFC and ERS and what it means to be a supporter of the Armed Forces community with the appointed DRM.
- Informed their workforce of their positive support for the Armed Forces community.

Desirable Criteria. Factors which add value to an application. Note that the description of these allows for an assessment of evidence in the context of

the scale, business model and market sector of the employer. The employer is willing to consider:

- How to develop a suitable HR framework to enable Reserve mobilisation for members of their work force.
- Provide additional leave for Reservists (i.e. Part Time Volunteer Reserves) to conduct training.
- How they would promote volunteering and support to the Cadet movement through official Cadet Force channels.
- How they ensure that Service personnel/Armed Forces community are not unfairly disadvantaged as part of their recruiting and selection processes.

[Nominate your organisation for a Bronze award](https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/ERS_Bronze/)  
([https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/ERS\\_Bronze/](https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/ERS_Bronze/))

View the ERS [Bronze award holders](#)

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defence-employer-recognition-scheme#documents>)

## Silver award

Silver award holders in addition to Bronze Criteria must have:

- ERS Bronze Award status and have held it with sufficient time to have put in place the necessary essential policies and evidence to support their application. It would be unusual for an organisation to achieve Silver status within 12 months of gaining Bronze.
- Proactively demonstrate that Service personnel and Armed Forces community are not unfairly disadvantaged as part of their recruiting and selection processes.
- Actively ensure that their workforce is aware of their positive policies towards the Armed Forces community. E.g. Internally publicised positive HR policy on Reserves in their workforce. In the case where no HR policy exists this should be demonstrated by specific references in job descriptions/organisation's website.
- Support Active Reservists (PTVRs) by:
- Having Policy in place to support mobilisations or have made a commitment evidenced by their DRM that they understand the mobilisation process and would support a mobilisation if practicable. E.g. Employers of reservists must be aware of the role of Unit Employment

Support Officers (UESO) and how they support the Reservists in their work forces.

- Demonstrated support to their training by providing at least 5 days additional annual leave (ideally paid).
- A proactive relationship with their DRM, which can be demonstrated through various interactions, including but not limited to personal contact, automated communications, and engagement with supporting products or resources.
- The employer must allow flexibility for employees who are Cadet Force Adult Volunteers to fit their working hours in with their volunteering.

Desirable Criteria. Factors which add value to an application. Note that the description of these allows for an assessment of evidence in the context of the scale, business model and market sector of the employer. The employer is willing to consider:

- Scoping opportunities to support the Cadet movement (via official Cadet Force channels) through the following example activities: sponsorship, supporting the development of cadets' wider skills to enhance their future opportunities; or providing employment advice and guidance.
- Employ at least one individual from the Armed Forces community .
- Hosting a Reserve recruiting event on their premises in partnership with a local Reserve Unit or Military Command recruiting teams.
- Have inclusive policy in place to support Strategic Reserves (those with an Ex-Regular and Callout liability).

View the 2025 ERS [Silver Award Holders](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defence-employer-recognition-scheme#documents)

[\(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defence-employer-recognition-scheme#documents>\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defence-employer-recognition-scheme#documents)

## Gold award

Gold award holders in addition to Silver Criteria must have: Hold ERS Silver Award and have held it with sufficient time to have put in place the necessary essential policies and evidence to support their application. It would be very unusual for an organisation to achieve Gold status within 12 months of gaining Silver.

- Be an exemplar within their sector, advocating for the AFC and or ERS to partner organisations, suppliers and customers with tangible positive results. E.g. demonstrate proactive steps/activity and clear success in encouraging partner organisations and their supply chain to engage with and sign the AFC, and or mentor others in progressing through the ERS.

- Actively encourage a positive workplace environment for Active Reservists (Part Time Volunteer Reserves) by ensuring that positive policies in support of Reservists within the workforce are communicated to line managers and support their training by providing at least 10 days additional paid leave annually.
- Demonstrate support to the Cadet movement by committing resources to improving the outcomes for cadets. This is to be achieved by verifying they deliver one or a combination of the following through official Cadet Force channels:
  - 1) Sponsorship (e.g. for additional resources, competitions, events and specific activities such as overseas expeditions);
  - 2) Supporting the development of cadets' wider skills to enhance their future opportunities;
  - 3) Providing employment advice and guidance.
- Promote volunteering with the Cadet Forces by having policies in place that cater to offer additional paid or unpaid leave to employees who are Cadet Force Adult Volunteers.
- Engaged with CTP to support recruitment of Service leavers and have registered with the Forces Families Jobs website.

Desirable Criteria. Factors which add value to an application. Note that the description of these allows for an assessment of evidence in the context of the scale, business model and market sector of the employer. The employer is willing to consider:

- Support to Reserve Service and the wider Armed Forces community through internal and external communications, amplifying DRM social media messaging around Armed Forces Week, Reserves Day, ERS Gold /Silver announcements etc.
- Actively finding out the numbers of Reservists employed and have a declared target for the number of Reservists within their workforce. Ideally, they will have relationships with the relevant Unit Employment Support Officers (UESO) for reserve units in their local area.
- If there are Reservists within the workforce, the employer has positively engaged with them on how the company would support their mobilisation.
- Host a Reserve recruiting event on their premises in partnership with a Reserve Unit or Military Command Recruiting Teams.
- Where scale and business models permit, the employer should actively encourage and support an internal Armed Forces community network within their organisation.

View the 2025 ERS [Gold award holders](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defence-employer-recognition-scheme#documents)  
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defence-employer-recognition-scheme#documents>)

## Nomination and award process

Employers can sign up themselves for each award.

Nominations will be validated to determine the level of defence personnel employment within the nominated organisation and to check that the organisation has signed the [Armed Forces Covenant](https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/) (<https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/>).

Once the nomination has been validated it will be considered by a selection board at national level for gold awards and regional level for silver awards. The selection boards will be a panel chaired by a senior military officer and they will consider each nomination against the award criteria. Organisations selected for gold and silver awards will be formally notified in writing and invited to the relevant award event.

### Related information:

- [Defence Relationship Management](https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/defence-relationship-management)  
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/defence-relationship-management>)

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