

News story: Post Office and MOD agree new partnership on veterans employment

The Ministry of Defence and the Post Office have agreed a new partnership to support veterans entering employment, as the company became the 3000th organisation to sign the Armed Forces Covenant.

The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise from the nation to those who serve or who have served, and their families, that they should be treated fairly and are not disadvantaged in their day-to-day lives. As part of their pledge, the Post Office will encourage ex-service personnel to apply for vacancies, offer bespoke training and support reservists and cadet volunteers with their commitments.

The signing took place at a Service of Remembrance to mark the centenary of the end of the First World War, attended by Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson and Group CEO of the Post Office, Paula Vennells.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

The Post Office has a long and distinguished history with the Armed Forces and it is fitting they are the 3000th signatory of the Armed Forces Covenant.

Those who have served our country so courageously deserve the full support of organisations and businesses across the public and private sector.

Today, the Post Office has demonstrated the value that reservist and ex-service personnel can bring to businesses.

From today, the Post Office will work with the MOD's Career Transition Partnership (CTP) to facilitate employment for former service personnel by advertising their vacancies on the CTP's website. They will also offer a specialist training programme, commit to hiring a certain number of veterans, and offer paid leave for reservists and time off for any deployment commitments.

Alongside this, they will support the Cadet Force by granting adult volunteers five days paid leave for their annual camp and establish a new Post Office Armed Forces Network for those with links to the military.

Paula Vennells, Group CEO of Post Office, said:

It's a real honour to sign the Armed Forces Covenant on behalf of the Post Office at this very special service, recognising the value that our serving personnel, both Regular and Reservists, veterans

and military families contribute in the present to our business and our country.

We know that having a diverse workforce brings huge benefits to a business; and our ex-Armed Forces colleagues and those in the Reserves are a unique and vital asset to the Post Office. We want to thank them for their service and to ensure that we continue to create a business in which everyone can thrive and develop as part of the Post Office team.

The signing took place at St Botolph's-Without-Aldersgate Church in central London – a poignant location as inside the Church is a dedicated memorial and battle flag of the Post Office Rifles, the General Post Office's own battalion, who served with distinction, earning high praise and a prestigious place in British military history. More than 75,000 General Post Office employees left their roles to fight in the War, with 12,000 joining the Post Office Rifles.

The Armed Forces Covenant was established in 2011, is a whole of government responsibility, and includes signatories from across organisations, businesses and charities. Support is provided in a number of areas, including education, starting a new career and access to healthcare.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Tobias Ellwood added:

Our Armed Forces are one of the most professional forces in the world. Our people are brave, disciplined and natural leaders.

Organisations such as the Post Office can thrive by taking advantage of these transferable skills. I encourage more businesses to sign up.

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Press release: Minister for Europe opens the fifth Wardrop Strategic Dialogue in Georgia

Sir Alan Duncan will strengthen UK-Georgia relations this week as he visits Tbilisi (Thursday 8 November) for high-level talks, known as the Wardrop Strategic Dialogue.

This year, the Wardrop Strategic Dialogue takes place against the backdrop of two important milestones for Georgia, the 100th anniversary of Georgia's independence and the 10th anniversary of the Georgia – Russia conflict.

Relations between the governments of the UK and Georgia are at an all-time high, and the dialogue will provide an opportunity to discuss continued co-operation in a wide range of issues such as trade, defence, cultural links and the mutual values which underpin the strength of our ties.

The Minister for Europe Sir Alan Duncan said:

This year's Wardrop Strategic Dialogue will demonstrate very clearly that UK-Georgia relations are going from strength to strength, and I look forward to discussing the many areas of shared interest and co-operation with Prime Minister Mamuka Bakhtadze and Foreign Minister David Zalkaliani. We are working hard to ensure that our relationship continues to flourish in the years ahead.

In the 10 years since the war between Georgia and Russia, the UK has continued to stand with Georgia in support of its territorial integrity, sovereignty and security. Georgia plays a pivotal role in the wider security of the region against ongoing Russian aggression. After the horrific attack in Salisbury earlier this year, Georgia took immediate and resolute action in support of the UK, which we much appreciated.

Georgia is a role-model in the region for reform, democracy and human rights. We applaud Georgia's ambitious reform agenda. However, there is more to do to help Georgia deliver necessary reforms and reach its economic potential – that's why the UK uses £4m of its Good Governance Fund to support reform projects in Georgia.

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Further information

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