

# Support to Armed Forces community recognised with Gold Award

The MOD's Defence Electronics and Components Agency was one of ten Welsh businesses presented with the prestigious Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award at a ceremony in Cardiff

The joint regional event held on November 17 at HMS CAMBRIA saw 140 employers from Wales, West Midlands and Wessex recognised for the outstanding support they give to the Armed Forces Community nationally.

Representing the highest badge of honour, Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) Gold Awards are presented to businesses that employ and support those who serve, veterans and their families and this year's awardees brings the total number of Gold holders to 493.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans, Leo Docherty said:

I would like to thank all the organisations who have proven their support for the Defence community during such unprecedented and challenging times.

The vast range of those recognised this year demonstrates how employing the Armed Forces community makes a truly positive and beneficial impact for all employers, regardless of size, sector or location.

Geraint Spearing, Chief Executive Defence Electronics and Components Agency also commented saying:

I am both delighted and immensely proud that DECA has received the Gold Award recognising our support towards the Armed Forces community that contributes significant experience and value to our organisation.

To win an award, organisations must provide 10 extra paid days leave for Reservists and have supportive HR policies in place for veterans, Reserves, and Cadet Force Adult Volunteers, as well as spouses and partners of those serving in the Armed Forces. Organisations must also advocate the benefits of supporting those within the Armed Forces community by encouraging others to sign the Armed Forces Covenant and engage in the Employer Recognition Scheme.

This year, organisations include NHS trusts, educational institutions, financial services, hotels, charities, law firms, police services, football clubs and museums. Nearly 50% are a small or medium-sized enterprise and 72% are private companies, demonstrating the wide range of organisations offering

support to the military community regardless of size, sector or location.

The evening began with a performance from the Royal Marines Band in a sunset ceremony. Guests were then welcomed by the Chief Executive of the RFCA for Wales Colonel Dominic Morgan OBE who introduced the Chief of Defence People Lieutenant General James Swift OBE, who gave the opening address. The Welsh awards were presented jointly by Rear Admiral Keith Beckett CBE and Air Officer Wales, Air Commodore Adrian Williams OBE.

Mr Tony Fish, the MOD's Regional Employer Engagement Director for North Wales said:

We're delighted that so many employers in Wales have been recognised with this Gold Award. It is particularly pleasing that these employers have worked so hard to support our Armed Forces Community, during what has been an extremely difficult year.

2021 is the first year that there has not been one national award ceremony. This is due to the high number of winners (140 in total). Instead regional ceremonies have been held in Edinburgh, London and Wales, with Leeds on November 25.