

Notice of Motion (Full Council)

Title of Motion: **Going for Gold: Sandwell's Commitment to the Armed Forces Community**

Date of Council meeting the motion is to be submitted to: 17 March 2026

Proposer: **Councillor Keith Allcock**

Seconder: **Councillor TBC**

Motion:

“Council notes that Sandwell Council is a proud signatory of the Armed Forces Covenant and recognises the immense contribution made by serving personnel, veterans, reservists and military families. The Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS), operated by the Ministry of Defence, encourages employers to support defence and inspire others to do the same. Gold Award status represents the highest level of recognition under the scheme, demonstrating a sustained and proactive commitment to the Armed Forces community, including advocacy, employment practices, and leadership.

Council further notes that veterans bring exceptional skills to the workforce including leadership, resilience, discipline, project management, technical expertise and teamwork - qualities that align strongly with public service values and the needs of Sandwell's communities. Sandwell is home to a significant Armed Forces community, including veterans, reservists, cadet force adult volunteers and military families, who should not face disadvantage in accessing employment or services.

Council recognises that achieving Gold status would enhance Sandwell's reputation as an employer of choice and demonstrate civic leadership across the West Midlands. Proactively recruiting and supporting members of the Armed Forces community strengthens the Council's workforce, supports local economic growth, and contributes to reducing unemployment among veterans. Dedicated partnership working is required to maximise support for the Armed Forces community, including signposting services, employment pathways, health and wellbeing support, and collaboration with local businesses. Establishing a dedicated Armed Forces Covenant Partnership Officer role would provide clear accountability, strategic coordination and measurable outcomes across the borough.

Council therefore resolves to call on the Leader and Cabinet to -

1. Commit formally to working towards achieving Gold Award status under the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme within an agreed timeframe.
2. Undertake a review of current employment policies, recruitment practices and HR processes to ensure they meet or exceed Gold Award criteria, including the potential for:
 - Guaranteed interviews for suitably qualified veterans.
 - Enhanced support for reservists, including additional leave for training.
 - Support for military spouses and partners seeking employment.
3. Develop a clear Armed Forces Employment and Engagement Strategy for Sandwell Council.
4. Establish and fund a dedicated Armed Forces Covenant Partnership Officer post to:
 - Coordinate delivery of Covenant commitments across council departments.
 - Act as a single point of contact for the Armed Forces community.
 - Build partnerships with local employers, the voluntary sector and defence networks.
 - Promote Sandwell as a Gold standard Armed Forces friendly borough.
5. Provide an update report to Cabinet and Full Council within six months outlining progress, resource implications and a roadmap to achieving Gold status.
6. Task Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board to have oversight of support for the armed forces community and to conduct an annual review, making recommendations to support continuous improvement.”