
EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME GOLD ADVICE BOOKLET

RESERVE FORCES' AND
CADETS' ASSOCIATION
FOR GREATER LONDON



ARMED FORCES
COVENANT

PROUDLY
SUPPORTING
THOSE WHO
SERVE

CONTENTS

- 2. INTRODUCTION
- 3. TIMELINE
- 7. ADVICE ON YOUR SUBMISSION
- 9. CRITERIA
- 12. ADVOCACY
- 13. EXAMPLE OF ADVOCACY
- 17. CAREER TRANSITION PARTNERSHIP
- 19. FORCES FAMILIES JOBS
- 21. ARMED FORCES DAY - 13 BRIDGES
- 22. ANNOUNCEMENT COMMUNICATIONS

INTRODUCTION

"This booklet is to help you on this journey and will be –I hope– a useful reference for you during the application process. Just remember, be precise and concise with your application – the selection decision boards have many applications to read through and so clarity is the key.

"Good luck and, once again, a huge thank you from everyone in Defence.

"My team and I are here to help you succeed."

Drew Jeacock, Head of Engagement

GL RFCA

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) OPENS ON:

Unless you are already a Defence ERS Gold Award holder who is revalidating, the first step on your Gold ERS process is to submit an expression of interest (EOI) via the on line form on:



This should only take 5 minutes. Upon making an EOI you will be sent an acknowledgement by email. The receiving authority will carry out some basic checks before informing your REED or Account Manager, who will then contact you with a link to the application form.

**EOI WINDOW
CLOSES ON:**

**GOLD APPLICATIONS
CLOSE ON:**

Applications for the Gold ERS awards are final. Our REEDs (Regional Employer Engagement Directors) are on hand to help you every step of the way.

Your application must be submitted by 1159hrs on the date above via an online form sent to you by your REED following an EOI.

This also applies to Gold revalidation.

Applications sent after this deadline will not be considered.

GO TO BOARD:

After an initial desk sift by Defence Relationship Management, there will be two high-level decision boards for the consideration of Gold application, a 1-star and a 2-star board.

The second board will sit at the end of June. You will be informed of the decision on your application as soon as possible from the middle of July, bearing in mind that awards are signed off at ministerial level and can be subject to delay depending on the minister's availability. You will receive, with a formal notification a few weeks after ministerial sign-off.

Your formal notification will include guidance on when you can publicise the decision and other media and communications information for you communications campaign planning.

AWARDS CEREMONIES:

The date for the Gold ERS awards ceremony will be announced in due course and will be held in the Autumn.

REVALIDATIONS

If you are already a Defence ERS Gold award holder who needs to revalidate your award against the current criteria, you do not need to submit an EOI.

Your REED will contact you directly regarding the new procedure.

ADVICE ON YOUR SUBMISSION

You have a maximum of 500 words to provide examples of how your organisation supports defence and the Armed Forces community and how you advocate for others to do the same. Examples are in the official nomination paperwork.

Bear in mind that the decision on who will be awarded Gold ERS status is done nationally and the board members have to look at over 100 applications - so keep it punchy and clear!

Consider using headings for different sections and bullet points for supporting facts.

For example:

PARTNERSHIP WITH RESERVE UNITS

- Jointly held an open day to boost their awareness in our borough.
- Sponsor their annual dinner and awards event.

PROVIDE AN ARMED FORCES NETWORK

- We set up a network in 2020 that meets once a month in work time.
- Encourage membership across the organisation and the CEO mentions it in every podcast.

SUPPORTS AND PROMOTES ARMED FORCES DAY AND RESERVES DAY

- Enter a team for the annual “13 Bridges Challenge” in aid of SSAFA.
- Hold our own flag raising ceremony at xx location(s).

ADVOCACY THROUGH YOUR SUPPLY CHAIN

- Always highlight the importance of supporting the Armed Forces community at each one of our quarterly suppliers’ conferences.
- Encourage all suppliers and partners to sign the Armed Forces Covenant.

ENSURE YOUR ADVOCACY IS TANGIBLE AND QUANTIFIED

- These are just examples to give you ideas; they are not a guarantee of success as we do not sit on the decision-making board.

CRITERIA

- Organisations must have signed the Armed Forces Covenant (AFC).
- Employers must have an existing relationship with their Account Manager/REED/appropriate Defence representative.
- The employer must have already demonstrated their support by holding a valid ERS Award at the Silver Level. Employers that do not hold a valid ERS Award at the Silver Level cannot progress to the Gold Level.
- The employer must proactively demonstrate their Forces-friendly credentials as part of their recruiting and selection processes.
- The employer must actively ensure that their workforce is aware of their positive policies towards Defence People issues. In the case where no HR policy exists this should be demonstrated by specific references in job descriptions or on the organisation's website.

CRITERIA

- **The employer must be an exemplar within their market sector, advocating support to Defence People issues to partner organisations, suppliers, and customers with tangible positive results. For example, demonstrate proactive steps/activity and clear success in encouraging partner organisations and their supply chain to sign the AFC.**
- **Where possible, they should be engaged with Career Training Partnership in the recruitment of service leavers and have registered with the Forces Families Jobs website.**
- **Within the context of Reserves, the employer must have demonstrated support to mobilisations or have a framework in place.**
- **The employer must provide at least 10 days' additional paid leave for Reserve training.**
- **The employer must not have been the subject of any negative PR or media activity that could cause embarrassment to Defence.**

DESIRABLE CRITERIA

An employer can be nominated for **advocating** and **demonstrating** support to Defence personnel issues across the breadth of the Armed Forces Covenant (AFC) including Reserves, Veterans (including Wounded Injured and Sick), Cadet Force Adult Volunteers (CFAV), the Cadet Movement, Spouses/Partners and employment of Service Leavers through the Career Transition Partnership (CTP).

- Employers should employ at least one individual from the AFC category that the nomination emphasises. For example, an employer nominated for support to the Reserves must employ at least one Reservist. In exceptional circumstances where there is outstanding support for the employer the organisation can be considered for the award where they do not employ someone from the AFC category.
- They should promote their support to Defence People issues through their full range of external communications. Although, in exceptional circumstances, an award is possible for support of a single Defence People issue, such as Reserves, a nomination will be strengthened if support extends across the range of Defence People issues as outlined above.

DESIRABLE CRITERIA

- They should have a declared target for the number of Reservists within their workforce. (e.g. 1-5,5-10, etc..)
- They will have hosted a Reserve recruiting event on their premises in partnership with a local Reserve Unit or Single Service Recruiting Team.
- Other than in exceptional circumstances, they should not have appealed a mobilisation.
- The employer should promote volunteering with the cadet forces by providing at least five days additional leave (ideally paid) for employees who are CFAVs.
- The employer should allow flexibility for employees who are CFAVs to fit their working hours in with their volunteering, and provide additional unpaid leave where appropriate.
- The employer should be an exemplar in demonstrating support to the cadet movement. This could, for example, be through mentoring cadets in key employment skills, by providing guaranteed interviews for cadets, by direct investment in equipment and infrastructure for a local cadet unit, or by funding and sponsoring competitions, events and specific activities for cadets.

ADVOCACY

This is the criterion that differentiates Silver and Gold awards. Unlike most other ERS criteria, what constitutes ‘good’ is relatively subjective and it is here that the ‘art’ of assessment outweighs the ‘science’.

Advocacy is considered relative to the size, resources and profile of an organisation. In other words, a FTSE 100 company has the means to do a great deal more to publicise the Defence People agenda than a small local business and is thus looked at in relation to its size and resources.

Advocacy should be considered in two ways, internal and external:

ADVOCACY

Internal Advocacy is more pertinent to larger businesses, and includes activities such as:

- **Creating military networks**
- **Publicising reservist/veteran/spousal stories on internal communications channels**
- **Encouraging staff to join the reserve forces by hosting local units for recruitment events and so on.**
- **Support from the executive team.**

ADVOCACY

External Advocacy is relevant to all types and sizes of organisation. It involves advocating for the Defence People agenda. External advocacy can take the form of:

- Sharing posts on LinkedIn and Twitter about AFC, ERS, good news stories, case studies, showcasing employees that are Reservists, veterans, Cadet Instructors, Military Spouses.
- Using the AFC and ERS logos on your marketing materials
- Encouraging partner organisations and suppliers to sign the AFC and engage with ERS, with tangible results – this is pure gold!
- Hosting events that promote the Armed Forces Covenant.

EXAMPLE OF ADVOCACY



Ex- Military Careers hosts events and webinars for its military veterans in its workforce and for its customers, designed to advise, inspire and bring together those interested in hearing from panel speakers and members of the armed forces community.

Key insights included:

- Developing a positive mind set
- Tackling Identity Crises
- Stress Management
- Ex-Military personnel possess sought-after, transferable, core skills
- How to do more to help veterans leave the military smoothly

To read more about their advocacy, scan the QR code below:



CAREER TRANSITION PARTNERSHIP (CTP)

CTP has been the official provider of Armed Forces resettlement for 25 years.

- **It is a partnering agreement between the Ministry of Defence and Right Management Ltd, the global career and talent development expert within ManpowerGroup.**
- **It provides resettlement services for those leaving the Royal Navy, Army, Royal Air Force, and Royal Marines regardless of time served. It also operates as an intermediary service for employers wishing to hire from the service leavers and veterans pool of talent. These relationships open up routes to employment which leavers access through their job site, CTP RightJob, and a range of online and in-person employer events.**

CAREER TRANSITION PARTNERSHIP (CTP)

Employers – what the CTP can do for you:

Coming from a highly skilled and professional career in the military, service leavers make highly skilled, committed and capable employees offering a wide range of transferrable skills and experience. Not surprisingly, they're in big demand by many organisations – and the good news is that CTP makes it easy for you to locate and employ the right talent for your organisation.

For more details, have a look at their dedicated Employer page, which will explain all the advantages of hiring from the Armed Forces.

Scan the QR code below:



FORCES FAMILIES JOBS

Forces Families Jobs is an employment and training platform for spouses, partners and family members of serving and Reserve UK military personnel.

For employers, this site is a great opportunity for you to promote your organisation and showcase your commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant.

You can advertise your jobs free of charge and access a diverse and highly skilled candidate database of Armed Forces family members looking for work or training.

FORCES FAMILIES JOBS

- Always consider offering an interview to spouses/partners if they meet the selection criteria.
- Supporting training and development.
- Looking sympathetically at requests for leave before, during, or after a partner's deployment.
- Granting paid leave for employees who are bereaved or whose loved ones are injured.
- Encouraging employees to apply for other suitable positions within the same company on relocation if appropriate. Offer flexible, part-time, job share, or working-from-home roles.

SCAN THE QR CODE TO KNOW MORE:



SSAFA 13 BRIDGES

Advocate your support for Defence and show that you are a #forcesfriendly employer by getting involved with Armed Forces Day, Sunday 25th June 2023.

Armed Forces Day is a chance to show your support for the men and women who make up the Armed Forces community: from currently serving troops to Service families, veterans and cadets. There are many ways for people, communities and organisations across the country to show their support and get involved.

SSAFA's 13 Bridges Walk is London's premier event for Armed Forces Day and an opportunity for companies and individuals to show their support for the Armed Forces while raising funds for SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity.

The walk started in 2019, went virtual in 2020, but returned to its physical format in 2021 raising over £76,000. Returning in 2022, the route started at London Bridge and finished in Eel Brooke Common, Fulham.

ANNOUNCEMENT COMMUNICATIONS

Securing your ERS Gold award is something to shout about, to continue your advocacy for your support to Defence.

What we will provide:

Shortly after you are informed of your company's success in achieving the Gold ERS Award, our communications team will provide you with a Gold ERS 2023 logo lockup as well as announcement information on the national award. We will also produce a short video on LinkedIn which we encourage winning accounts to share and engage with.

You will also receive the 2023 Gold ERS logo should you want to create your own announcement material.

What you can do:

Let us know when you will be announcing your achievement online and our communications team are on hand to assist with any questions you may have.

A checklist for an announcement post

- **Share your story**
- **Link to news published on company website**
- **Tag @UK Ministry of Defence and @Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association for Greater London**
- **Include the hashtag #GoldERS23**



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