

May 2nd, 2018

**Bronze award for South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's support for our
armed forces**

South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust has been given a bronze award in recognition of its commitment to the nation's armed forces.

The honour follows the Trust signing the Government's Armed Forces Covenant earlier this year, which represents a promise that those who serve or have served, and their families, are treated fairly.

The Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) encourages employers to support defence and inspire others to do the same. It 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 to the Armed Forces Covenant.

Bronze award-holders pledge to support the armed forces including existing or prospective employees who are members of the community and to promote being armed forces-friendly, and are open to employing reservists, armed forces veterans (including the wounded, injured and sick), cadet instructors and military spouses/partners. South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust is now working towards achievement of silver and, ultimately, gold status.

Kath Griffin, the Trust's Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development, said: "I'm very proud that South Tyneside has been given the ERS Bronze award. This latest honour demonstrates our commitment to supporting the armed forces community and being a forces-friendly employer. Employers throughout the UK can all benefit from the wide range of unique skills and experiences that reservists and veterans can bring to the workplace, coupled with the self-confidence, resourcefulness and positive attitude they gain through service in the forces."

The Trust currently has two employees who are reservists within the armed forces, as well as an adult volunteer with the RAF Air Cadets, and is already looking at initiatives that will provide work placement opportunities and guaranteed interviews, where people have skills that match a role. Medical reservists make up 13% of the overall reserves in the UK.

In signing the Armed Forces Covenant, South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust pledged to:

- Promote itself as an armed forces-friendly organisation
- Recognise that veterans are entitled to priority access to NHS hospital care for any condition as long as it is related to their service, subject to the clinical need of others
- Work in partnership with other organisations to support the employment of veterans young and old
- Guarantee a selection interview to veterans who apply for a post and meet the minimum and desirable criteria for the role
- Strive to support the employment of service spouses and partners
- Endeavour to offer a degree of flexibility in granting leave for service spouses and partners before, during and after a partner's deployment
- Support employees who choose to be members of the reserve forces or adult cadet volunteers by developing a policy to define their obligations towards employee reservists
- Offer support to cadet units in the local community, including local schools.
- Actively participate in Armed Forces Day

ENDS

Issued by **Kay Jordan**

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