

## APPENDIX 2



Patron Her Majesty the Queen

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To:  
Local Authority Leaders  
Local Authority Chief Executives  
Community Covenant teams

Dear Leader,

I am writing to you regarding the forthcoming changes to Council Tax support in Wales in relation to members of the Armed Forces community.

As you will be aware, the Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations were agreed by the National Assembly on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2012.

You will know that under the previous Council Tax benefit system, local authorities were required by law to disregard the first £10 of War Disablement Pension, War Widow's Pension and Armed Forces Compensation Scheme payments when means testing for Council Tax benefit. Under the previous system we believe that all local authorities in Wales, using their discretionary powers, went further by disregarding in full all such payments from the means test. This was greatly welcomed by our beneficiaries and the sector.

The Legion is now calling for all local authorities to maintain this position by applying the full disregard under their new schemes in Wales. This will recognise the fact that War Pensions are not an income support payment, but are paid as compensation for injury, illness or loss as a result of service in the Armed Forces. We were pleased that several Assembly Members from different parties called for the full disregard during the debate in the Senedd on 19<sup>th</sup> December.

In the Explanatory Memorandum to the Regulations, published on 5<sup>th</sup> December, the Minister for Local Government and Communities outlined '*areas of local discretion available under the prescribed requirements Regulations*' which included the following:

- War Disablement Pensions and War Widow's Pensions – local authorities are able to disregard more than the statutorily prescribed for £10 of the monies received in respect of these pensions when calculating income.

We believe that by maintaining this full disregard, local authorities will be demonstrating their commitment to their local Armed Forces community by ensuring they are not disadvantaged by receiving compensation for their service. Local authorities across Wales are now entering into Armed Forces Community Covenants and maintaining the full disregard will further highlight a real local commitment to supporting the Armed Forces community.

The Legion fully appreciates that new schemes must operate with a funding shortfall across Wales, which places authorities under major pressure to meet existing need. However we do not believe that those in receipt of War Pensions should be disadvantaged as a result of the changes.

This issue was one of the key priorities in our 2011 Assembly election manifesto:

<http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/media/1418871/welshassemblyelectionmanifesto.pdf>

We ask for your support on this matter and thank you for your ongoing commitment to the Armed Forces community.

Yours Sincerely,

Peter Evans – Public Affairs Manager Wales  
Phil Jones – Wales Area Manager

## **Shoulder to Shoulder with all who Serve**

Registered Charity: The Royal British Legion, Haig House, 199 Borough High Street, London, SE11AA  
Registered charity number: 219279