

CHALLENGING ARMED FORCES DAY

Armed Forces Day is coming up once again on 27th June 2026. Events will be taking place across the country, sanitising and glorifying the armed forces and armed force itself.

We have been campaigning against this celebration of militarism since its inception in 2009. It was introduced by the UK government to increase support for war, and improve falling recruitment rates, in the wake of the horrors of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Each year, individuals and groups around the country peacefully resist Armed Forces Day events in their local area, and we aim to support and amplify their actions. Last year in particular we were reminded by the residents of York of [the power of local action](#), which included letter-writing.

Inspired by this initiative, this year we've generated a template letter to encourage all our supporters to voice their opposition to Armed Forces Day and try to force a reconsideration of future events.

The letter below covers how Armed Forces Day events normalise war, how they can act as a recruitment tool for the armed forces, and how they gloss over the views and experiences of many local people. Also included are points about military displays, activities in schools, and sponsorship by arms companies, all of which may or may not apply to your particular local Armed Forces Day event.

You are welcome to use this template letter as a guide and edit it as much as you like, as follows:

1. **Check details of your local Armed Forces Day events:** It's really important to check what is happening locally and modify the bold text in the letter to ensure that everything in the letter is accurate. You can gather information from www.armedforcesday.org.uk and your council's website and social media pages.
2. **Personalise:** You may wish to edit the wording to put it more into your own voice or add arguments from the Armed Forces Day briefing document that particularly resonate with you, or are important to your local context. Personalised letters may be given greater weight.
3. **Send or email the letter:** You could send the letter to your councillors, council leader or mayor, and your MP. Try to find individual email addresses if you can.

Thank you for making a really valuable addition to efforts to force a reconsideration of future Armed Forces Day events in your local area.

**From Peace Pledge Union, ForcesWatch & Quakers in Britain
June 2026**

Dear **[add name]**,

I'm writing to you to express my concerns about the Council's plans for Armed Forces Day **later this month [change to exact dates if preferred]**.

It is alarming that events focused on armed force are promoted as family fun - war should never be presented as family entertainment. The tone of **the event [change to a detailed description of your local event if preferred]** risks minimising the devastating costs of war for service personnel and communities, at home and abroad.

I also note the emphasis given to military displays and demonstrations of weaponry as part of the events [delete or edit appropriate]. Exposing children to weapons and military vehicles designed for use on the battlefield only serves to desensitise and normalise war and conflict. It disregards the devastating effect these armaments have on communities elsewhere and on children impacted by conflict. Having children interact with weapons of war as some sort of play activity is an inappropriate activity for the Council to be involved in at any time, especially when everyone's attention is on the horrors of war that we're seeing in the news. **[This paragraph may need significant editing, or deleting, if military weapons or vehicles will not feature during events, whether these be parades, displays, demonstrations or stalls.]**

I have serious concerns that Armed Forces Day events present only one side of the picture. They risk normalising military responses to conflict and encouraging an uncritical acceptance of war and its inevitability. I also have concerns about the nature of the particular events being offered this year, which include **recruitment activities and the association of military force with entertainment [edit as appropriate N.B. recruitment activities may take place at stalls or displays - look for mention of this]**.

Direct and indirect recruitment activities in this context exploit the interest young people may have in what are represented as exciting activities, and do not acknowledge the terrible impact of war on service personnel. Young people must be able to make informed choices based on facts about the reality of military life, and public bodies such as councils and schools should endeavor to fulfil their duty of care in this respect.

This also applies to careers in the arms industry, which is particularly pertinent as sponsorship of the event by [name of arms company] is also being heavily promoted [only include if you know arms companies are sponsoring your local event].

In representing a diverse/minority/faith community, [edit or delete as appropriate] I am also concerned that many in the community will feel the tone and scale of this celebration of the armed forces is inappropriate and that it will not feel inclusive, especially for those who may have experienced first-hand the impacts of war elsewhere. It is important that Armed Forces Day plans consider the views of the whole community.

Lastly, what is the Council doing to build peace in the community and local schools at a time of global instability, and to champion peace and a culture of international cooperation?

I would be grateful for a response outlining how the Council will address the concerns I've raised.

Additionally, I would be particularly keen to hear how the Council will be safeguarding children and young people in relation to handling weapons at the planned events. This is not just about safety at events but a longer-term issue of creating a dangerous appeal around weapons that has societal consequences, and which councils should be directly addressing [edit or delete as appropriate].

Yours Sincerely,

[Name]