Forces Online CIO

Unit 5, Workshed Carriage Works
London Street, Swindon
Wiltshire, SN1 5DG.
Telephone: 0300 300 2288
Registered Charity: 1188955 (England & Wales) SC050678 (Scotland)

Forces Online

Cookie Policy

Note: This policy is a 'living document' and as such it can be reviewed, revised and amended at any time to meet any changes or amendments deemed necessary to facilitate any legislative or environmental changes, however, such changes will only take place following consultation with and authorisation by the Forces Online CIO, Scotland and Northern Ireland Senior Management team.

Cookie Policy

Forces Online
Effective Date: 07/04/2020
Last Updated: 07/04/2025

1. Introduction

1.1 About This Policy

This Cookie Policy explains how Forces Online ("we," "our," or "us") uses cookies and similar technologies on all of our websites linked to (www.forcesonline.org.uk). This policy should be read alongside our Privacy Policy and Terms and Conditions.

1.2 About Forces Online

Forces Online is a registered charity supporting Armed Forces veterans and their families across the United Kingdom.

Organisation Details:

- **Registered Charity:** Forces Online CIO Reg No. 1188955 (England & Wales) & OSCR SC050678 (Scotland) NI applied for.

- **Data Protection License:** ZB689910

- **Website:** https://www.forcesonline.org.uk and our official project websites linked to it

2. What Are Cookies?

2.1 Definition

Cookies are small text files that are downloaded and stored on your computer or mobile device when you visit a website. They allow websites to recognize your device and remember information about your visit.

2.2 How Cookies Work

- Cookies are created when your browser loads our website

- They contain information about your browsing behaviour and preferences

- Cookies are sent back to our website each time you visit

- They help us provide a better user experience and understand how our website is used

2.3 Cookie Lifespan

- **Session cookies:** Temporary cookies that are deleted when you close your browser

- **Persistent cookies:** Remain on your device for a set period or until you delete them

- **Third-party cookies:** Set by external services we use on our website

3. Types of Cookies We Use

3.1 Strictly Necessary Cookies

These cookies are essential for our website to function properly and cannot be disabled.

Purpose:

- Enable basic website functionality
- Remember your privacy preferences
- Maintain security and prevent fraud
- Support essential features like contact forms

Examples:

- Session management cookies
- Security tokens
- Load balancing cookies
- Privacy preference cookies

Legal Basis: These cookies are necessary for the legitimate interest of providing our website services.

3.2 Performance and Analytics Cookies

These cookies help us understand how visitors use our website so we can improve it.

Purpose:

- Analyse website traffic and usage patterns
- Identify popular content and pages
- Monitor website performance and errors
- Understand user journey and behaviour

Information Collected:

- Pages visited and time spent on each page
- How you arrived at our website
- Device and browser information
- General location (country/region level)
- Click patterns and navigation paths

Third-Party Services:

- **Google Analytics:** Web analytics service (anonymized IP addresses)

- **Microsoft Clarity:** User behaviour analytics

- **Hotjar:** Website heatmaps and user recordings (if used)

3.3 Functional Cookies

These cookies enable enhanced functionality and personalization.

Purpose:

- Remember your preferences and settings

- Provide personalized content

- Enable social media features

- Support accessibility features

Examples:

- Language preferences

- Text size and contrast settings

- Location preferences

- Form auto-completion

- Previous search queries

3.4 Marketing and Advertising Cookies

These cookies are used to deliver relevant advertising and measure campaign effectiveness.

Purpose:

- Display relevant advertisements

- Measure advertising campaign performance

- Prevent repeated display of the same ads

- Support fundraising and awareness campaigns

Third-Party Advertising Services:

- **Google Ads:** Advertising platform

- **Facebook Pixel:** Social media advertising (if used)

- **YouTube:** Embedded video content

- **Social Media Platforms:** Sharing buttons and embedded content

Note: As a charity, our marketing focuses on raising awareness of our services and fundraising activities rather than commercial advertising.

3.5 Social Media Cookies

These cookies are set by social media platforms when we embed their content.

Services:

- **Facebook:** Embedded posts and sharing buttons

- **Twitter/X:** Embedded tweets and sharing buttons

- **YouTube:** Embedded videos

- **LinkedIn:** Professional networking features

- **Instagram:** Embedded posts

Data Collected:

- Social media interaction data

- Sharing and engagement metrics

- Profile information (if you're logged in)

4. Third-Party Services

4.1 Analytics Services

Google Analytics

- **Purpose:** Website traffic analysis and user behaviour insights

- **Data Collected:** Anonymized usage statistics, page views, session duration

- **Privacy:** IP addresses are anonymized, personal identification is prevented

- **Opt-out:** Available through Google Analytics opt-out browser add-on

Microsoft Clarity

- **Purpose:** Understanding user experience and website usability

- **Data Collected:** Click patterns, scroll behaviour, form interactions

- **Privacy:** Personal information is filtered out automatically

4.2 Communication Tools

Contact Forms and Live Chat

- **Purpose:** Enable communication with our support team

- **Data Collected:** Messages, contact details, conversation history

- **Storage:** Data stored securely and processed according to our Privacy Policy

4.3 Content Delivery

YouTube

- **Purpose:** Hosting and displaying educational and informational videos

- **Cookies:** YouTube may set cookies for video preferences and analytics

- **Privacy:** Subject to Google's Privacy Policy

- **Word Press:** Plugin and Themes.

4.4 Fundraising and Donations

Payment Processors

- **Purpose:** Secure processing of donations and payments

- **Providers:** Stripe, PayPal, JustGiving

- **Security:** All payment data is processed securely and not stored on our servers

5. Managing Your Cookie Preferences

5.1 Cookie Consent

When you first visit our website, we'll ask for your consent to use cookies that are not strictly necessary. You can:

- Accept all cookies

- Accept only necessary cookies

- Customize your preferences

- Change your settings at any time

5.2 Browser Settings

You can control cookies through your browser settings:

Google Chrome:

1. Click "Settings" → "Privacy and security" → "Cookies and other site data"

2. Choose your preferred cookie settings

3. Manage exceptions for specific websites

Mozilla Firefox:

1. Click "Settings" → "Privacy & Security"

2. Choose "Custom" under Enhanced Tracking Protection

3. Configure cookie and tracking preferences

Safari:

1. Click "Preferences" → "Privacy"

2. Choose your cookie preferences

3. Manage website data

Microsoft Edge:

1. Click "Settings" → "Cookies and site permissions"

2. Choose your cookie settings

3. Manage permissions for specific sites

5.3 Opt-Out Tools

Google Analytics Opt-out: Install the Google Analytics opt-out browser add-on: https://tools.google.com/dlpage/gaoptout

Advertising Opt-out:

- Your Online Choices: http://www.youronlinechoices.com/uk/

- Network Advertising Initiative: http://optout.networkadvertising.org/

- Digital Advertising Alliance: http://optout.aboutads.info/

5.4 Mobile Device Settings

On mobile devices, you can control tracking through:

- iOS: Settings → Privacy & Security → Tracking

- Android: Settings → Google → Ads → Opt out of Ads Personalization

6. Impact of Disabling Cookies

6.1 Essential Functionality

Disabling strictly necessary cookies may affect:

- Website navigation and functionality

- Security features

- Contact form submission

- Access to secure areas

6.2 User Experience

Disabling other cookies may result in:

- Less personalised content

- Repeated display of information banners

- Inability to remember preferences

- Reduced social media integration

- Less relevant content recommendations

6.3 Analytics and Improvements

Disabling analytics cookies means:

- We cannot track how you use our website
- It may be harder for us to identify and fix problems
- We have less insight into what content is most helpful
- Website improvements may be less targeted

7. Data Protection and Privacy

7.1 Personal Data

- Cookies may contain personal data as defined by UK GDPR
- We process cookie data according to our Privacy Policy
- Data is stored securely, and access is restricted
- We comply with data protection laws and regulations

7.2 Data Retention

- Session cookies are deleted when you close your browser
- Persistent cookies are kept for specific periods based on their purpose
- Analytics data is typically retained for 26 months
- You can delete cookies at any time through your browser settings

7.3 International Transfers

Some third-party services may transfer data internationally:

- Transfers are made with appropriate safeguards
- We ensure adequate protection for your data
- You can opt-out of services that transfer data internationally

8. Children's Privacy

8.1 Age Restrictions

- Our website is primarily intended for adults
- We do not knowingly collect data from children under 13
- If we become aware of child data collection, we take immediate action
- Parents can contact us to request removal of child data

8.2 Family Services

When providing support to military families:

- We may collect limited data about children for family support services

- This is always done with appropriate parental consent

- Children's privacy is protected with additional safeguards

9. Updates and Changes

9.1 Policy Changes

We may update this Cookie Policy to reflect:

- Changes in our website functionality

- New third-party services

- Legal or regulatory requirements

- Technology developments

9.2 Notification

We will notify you of significant changes by:

- Updating the "Last Updated" date at the top of this policy

- Displaying notices on our website

- Requesting new consent where required

- Email notification for substantial changes

9.3 Reviewing Consent

- We may occasionally ask you to review your cookie preferences

- This ensures your choices remain current and valid

- You can update your preferences at any time

10. Contact Information

10.1 Cookie Questions

If you have questions about our use of cookies or this policy:

Forces Online CIO
Len Chappell
Email: len.chappell@forcesonline.org.uk
Phone: 0300 300 2288

10.2 Data Protection

For data protection enquiries:

- See our Privacy Policy for full contact details

- Contact our Data Protection Officer who is Len Chappell

- Refer to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) if needed

10.3 Technical Issues

For technical problems with cookie settings:

- Contact our website support team – webmanagers@forcesonline.org.uk

- Check browser help documentation

- Try clearing your browser cache and cookies

11. Additional Resources

11.1 Further Information

Learn more about cookies:

- **All About Cookies:** https://www.allaboutcookies.org/

- **ICO Cookie Guidance:** https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-pecr/cookies-and-similar-technologies/

- **Your Online Choices:** http://www.youronlinechoices.com/uk/

11.2 Accessibility

If you need this policy in an alternative format:

- Large print versions available on request

- Screen reader compatible versions

- Translation services for non-English speakers

- Contact us using the details above

11.3 Complaints

If you're not satisfied with how we handle cookies:

- Contact us directly to resolve the issue

- Refer to the ICO for data protection concerns

- Use our formal complaints procedure.

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Forces Online CIO - Supporting Veterans and Their Families Across the UK
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Change Record

Date of Change:	Changed By:	Comments:
07/04/2000	LC/ME	Authorised by Trustees.
07/04/2021	LC/ME	Policy Check
07/04/2022	LC/PE	Policy Check
07/04/2023	LC/PE	Policy Check
07/04/2024	LC/PE	Policy Check
07/04/2025	LC/GD	Policy Check
01/09/2025	LC/RM	Format changed to PDF