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Eight employers have been presented with the prestigious Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) Gold Award at a special ceremony in Cardiff.

The eight employers from across Wales were recognised for the outstanding support they give to the Armed Forces community at the awards ceremony held at HMS Cambria, Cardiff Bay, on 24 September.

The glittering awards evening began with a drinks reception with guests treated to music from Cerys Rees, regimental harpist of The Royal Welsh. Guests were also entertained by The Band of His Majesty's Royal Marines Plymouth Brass Quintet.

The compère for the evening was Sian Lloyd, with the opening address given by Neil 'Jacko' Jackson, Director Defence Relationship Management. Rear Admiral Andy Perks MBE, Director Submarines, gave the keynote address.

Recipients from Wales were:

- OLLYWOOD LTD
- Valley Veterans
- Helix Operations Limited
- Platts Group
- Powys Teaching Health Board
- R&M Williams Limited
- Powys County Council
- KLA CORPORATION UK LIMITED

The awards were presented jointly by Rear Admiral Perks, Commodore Tris Kirkwood OBE ADC, Naval Regional Commander Wales, Western England and Channel Islands, Brigadier Mark Davis CBE, Commander 160th (Welsh) Brigade, Head of the Army in Wales and Air Officer Wales, and Air Commodore Rob Woods OBE.

Awarded by the Ministry of Defence, the Employer Recognition Scheme formally recognises organisations that employ and support those who serve in the Armed Forces, veterans and their families. Across the UK, 162 organisations received the Gold award this year.

To achieve Gold, the employer must:

- provide at least 10 days' additional paid leave for Reservists
- implement HR policies for veterans and Cadet Force Adult Volunteers
- advocate for Defence across their networks and sectors
- demonstrate sustained commitment well beyond the minimum requirements

These organisations lead by example, helping to shift national attitudes and raise standards across their sectors.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/eight-welsh-organisations-strike-gold>