

# A guide to housing options in England for ex-Service personnel

**Positive steps to prevent homelessness among ex-Service personnel, and their families, and to improve access to housing**

April 2017





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# Introduction

This guide has been developed to help frontline advisers working in local authorities and the advice sector in England, to advise ex-Service personnel and their families when dealing with housing enquiries & homelessness. The guide has been developed in the context of the government's commitment to ensure Armed Forces personnel are not disadvantaged when accessing housing. This guide sets out current legislative obligations for local housing authorities and provides links to other useful sites. Links also provide details of practice developed to support service personnel in their transition to civilian life.

This guide is by no means exhaustive – it is intended as a starting point in assisting ex-Service personnel and their families in the prevention of homelessness and gives links to relevant websites with in-depth advice and information.

Local authority and voluntary sector colleagues are encouraged to develop local actions to assist in the prevention of homelessness. Other local services also have a vital role to play in meeting housing need and in alleviating homelessness. Local authorities should where possible seek to prevent homelessness for all client groups – both the statutory and the non-statutory homeless.

It is crucial that services are designed to deliver assistance to all clients, including 'irregular occupiers' (see page 12) who find themselves faced with homelessness or threatened with homelessness as a result of a relationship or marital breakdown.

This guide represents only the views of practitioners working with ex-Service personnel. Local authorities are encouraged to seek specific independent advice to satisfy themselves on any issues or questions raised.

All NHAS members, local authority frontline officers, voluntary agency members and Local Citizens Advice have access to the NHAS Consultancy Line to assist them with any advice issues relating to ex-Service personnel and their families.

For NHAS members the consultancy line number can be found on our website:

[NHAS](#)

Other useful websites:

[Shelter](#)

[DCLG](#)

[The Ministry of Defence](#)

[Cobseo](#)



# Government overview

The Department for Communities and Local Government is committed to ensuring that current and ex-Service personnel receive appropriate advice and assistance in securing the accommodation that they and their families need.

## Community covenant

The government has made a commitment to support ex-Service personnel. It is committed to ensuring that service personnel, veterans and their families have the support they need, and are treated with the dignity they deserve.

To deliver this commitment, the [Armed Forces Covenant](#) outlines the positive measures being taken by government to ensure that the Armed Forces community face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services.

The Covenant sets out the relationship between the Nation, the State and the Armed Forces. It recognises that the whole nation has a moral obligation to members of the Armed Forces and their families, and it establishes how they should expect to be treated.

It exists to redress the disadvantages that the Armed Forces community faces in comparison to other citizens, and to recognise sacrifices made. In some cases this will require special consideration, especially for those who are injured and/or bereaved.

Find out here if your local authority is signed up to a local covenant and what that means for you. You may also want to consider whether you are able to provide some additional support for ex-Service personnel as they resettle, through the community covenant, for example taking the day of joining the Armed Forces as being the date of joining the housing waiting list.

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/armed-forces-community-covenant/armed-forces-community-covenant](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/armed-forces-community-covenant/armed-forces-community-covenant)

For a copy of the Royal British Legion Best Practice Guide to Community Covenants tel 020 3207 2100 or

[www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/campaign/community-covenants](http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/campaign/community-covenants).



There is a new **Covenant Fund** which aims to financially support projects, at the local level, which strengthen the ties or the mutual understanding between members of the Armed Forces Community and the wider community in which they live. The Grant Scheme will consider applications for projects that deliver tangible results and meet the overall aims of the Community Covenant Scheme. An application for funding can be submitted by any part of the community. This might include voluntary groups, charities, and public bodies such as schools.

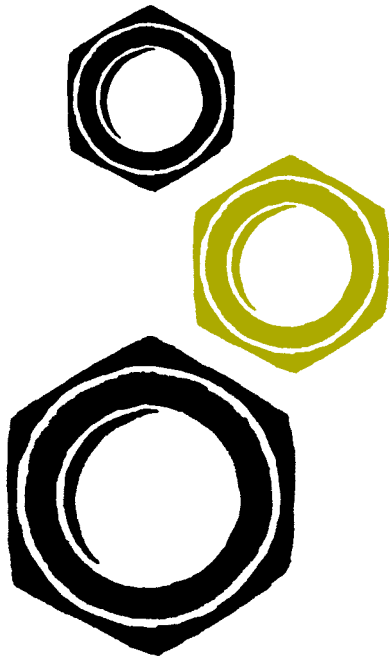
Find out about applying to the £10 million per annum Covenant Fund to support the Armed Forces community April 2017/March 2018 [www.gov.uk/government/collections/covenant-fund](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/covenant-fund).

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## Example of positive practice

**Service to Civvy Street** is a booklet to help ex-Service personnel and their families navigate healthcare, employment, housing, education and other support available in Worcestershire, produced by Worcestershire County Council and funded by the Community Covenant Grant Scheme.

Find out which businesses have signed the Armed Forces Covenant and what they are pledging to do to support the Armed Forces community [www.gov.uk/government/publications/search-for-businesses-who-have-signed-the-armed-forces-covenant](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/search-for-businesses-who-have-signed-the-armed-forces-covenant).



# Legislation and statutory guidance

## Allocation of social housing

The key legislation regulating the allocation of social housing is contained in part 6 of the Housing Act 1996.

Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 regulates the allocation of social rented housing by local authorities. Part 6 has been amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, and, with effect from 18 June 2012, the Localism Act 2011. The Localism Act gave local authorities greater power to decide which categories of person they will allocate accommodation to.

In addition, the [Allocation of Housing \(Qualification Criteria for Armed Forces\) \(England\) Regulations 2012 SI 2012/1869](#) allows service personnel (and bereaved spouses or civil partners of service personnel if the spouse/civil partner dies), to establish a 'local connection' with the area in which they are serving or have served to allow parity of treatment with civilians already living in the area with regards to accessing social housing. Prior to the introduction of these regulations, residence in an area that was not 'of choice' could preclude having a local connection with it. This puts the Armed Forces ex-Personnel on an equal footing to others when applying for social housing.

In the exercise of their functions local authorities must have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State. The current [Code of Guidance](#) on the Allocation of Accommodation was issued on 29 June 2012, with additional guidance 'providing social housing for local people' added in December 2013. The key message (at paras 23–25) in the 2013 Guidance is that serving members of the Armed Forces, their bereaved spouses and civil partners, and former serving members who have suffered serious illness or disability as a result of service should not be disadvantaged by any 'residence' criteria that a local authority may choose to adopt in its allocations policy.

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## Homelessness assistance

The key legislation regulating the provision of assistance to homeless people is contained in part 7 of the Housing Act 1996.

Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 requires local authorities to provide assistance, in the form of temporary accommodation, to applicants who are homeless, eligible, in priority need, not intentionally homeless, and who have a local connection with the area in question.

As with allocations, local authorities must have regard to the relevant Code of Guidance, in this case the [Code of Guidance on Homelessness 2006](#), when carrying out their duties under the Act.



## Priority need

Under the [Homelessness \(Priority Need for Accommodation\) \(England\) Order 2002 SI 2012/2051](#), Armed Forces personnel applying for assistance in England are in priority need if they are 'vulnerable' as a result of having been in the services. Being vulnerable has a specific legal meaning, but basically a vulnerable person is one who is 'significantly more vulnerable' than an 'ordinary' person facing homelessness and who is at higher risk of harm or other bad consequence when they are homeless than the ordinary person would be.

With regard to Armed Forces personnel and their families, the Homelessness Code of Guidance states that the following will be considered when deciding if an applicant is vulnerable as a result of having been a member of the Armed Forces:

- How long the person has been in the Armed Forces
- Type of service
- Any time spent in military hospital
- Whether the forces medical and/or welfare advisers consider the person vulnerable
- How long it has been since the person left the forces
- What support networks are available

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## Vulnerability Assessment Guide

The NHAS has produced the [Vulnerability Assessment Guide](#) for frontline advisers supporting single people making a homeless application where there may be an issue about priority need. This guidance has been developed following the [Supreme Court decision](#) in *Hotak v Southwark LBC*, *Kanu v Southwark LBC*; *Johnson v Solihull MBC* (15 May 2015).

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## Local connection

From 1 December 2008, service personnel in England (and bereaved spouses or civil partners of service personnel if the spouse/civil partner dies) can establish a 'local connection' with the area in which they are serving or have served, regardless of the fact that they may not be living there 'out of choice'.



# What happens when service comes to an end?

Six months prior to the end of a service, members of the Armed Forces are issued with a [certificate of cessation of entitlement to occupy service living accommodation](#). During this time they (and their families) should explore a range of solutions to their forthcoming housing need, which includes registering for social housing.

These certificates indicate the date on which entitlement to occupy service accommodation ends, and state that the Secretary of State considers that housing authorities should not insist upon a court order for possession to establish that entitlement to occupy has ended. **Please note** this would only apply to those in [Service Families Accommodation](#) (SFA), as those in Single Living Accommodation (SLA) have to leave their entitled accommodation on their last day of service. The NHAS has produced the [Vulnerability Assessment Guide](#) for frontline advisers supporting single people making a homeless application where there may be an issue about priority need.

Authorities should take advantage of the six-month period of notice of discharge to ensure that service personnel receive timely and comprehensive advice on the housing options available to them when they leave the Armed Forces, or, where a relationship fails, the options available to the estranged partner and the children. During this period, where an approach is made to the local housing authority for assistance, frontline officers and their teams should be proactive in assisting households to access a range of services. [These options](#) could include assisting with the private rented sector through various local initiatives, registering on the waiting list, or accessing shared-ownership schemes.

Prevention is key and housing officers should not delay assistance simply because serving personnel have more than the statutory 28 days' notice to quit. Local authorities are reminded that they should make full use of the cessation period to assist anyone who makes an approach for housing assistance or applies as homeless. Local authorities have a duty to provide advice and assistance to anyone in housing need and we recommend linking to existing networks within the Armed Forces to ensure comprehensive advice is provided and informed choices can then be made by the Armed Forces personnel or their estranged family.



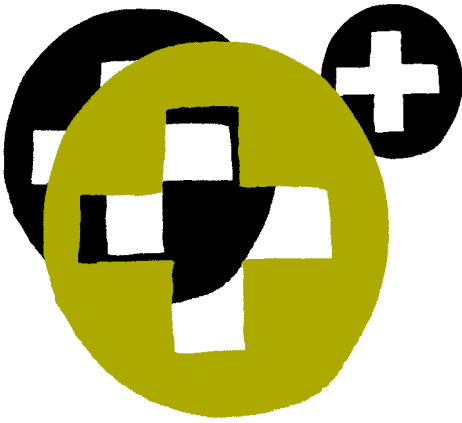


## Preventing homelessness: what can local authorities do?

Investment in local homelessness prevention services saves significant amounts of public money across statutory agencies including housing, health, criminal justice and community safety.

As with all other cases of homelessness prevention, early intervention is often key and we therefore suggest LAs review their current services to ensure Service personnel are not disadvantaged as a result of being in the forces.

Local authorities who have barracks in their area may be more likely to see greater numbers of ex-Service personnel and their families approaching with requests for advice and assistance than areas which do not, and it might be helpful, if you have not already done so, to make contact with your local MOD site. Each base has a welfare team and someone who is responsible for housing issues.



# Support from Ministry of Defence (MOD) prior to leaving services

## Joint Service Housing Advice Office (JSHAO)

The **JSHAO** is the MOD's tri-Service focal point to provide Service personnel and their dependants with civilian housing information for those wishing to move to civilian accommodation at any time in their career, and for those during resettlement to assist with the transition to civilian life.

The JSHAO delivers a generic civilian housing options brief, at various military establishments across the UK, Germany and Cyprus each year. These are open for all Service personnel and their dependants to attend at any time, and are half-day sessions. Topics include property purchase, the Govt's affordable home ownership schemes, private rental, and social housing, combined with an independent financial overview of affordability, credit ratings and the mortgage and property purchase process by a member of the **Service Insurance and Investment Advisory Panel**.

For more information about the JSHAO's briefing programme, information leaflets and other useful information can be found at **GOV.UK**.

JSHAO are happy for the local housing authority to attend these briefings. We would encourage you to do so, particularly if you are in an area with military base/s and need to be more aware of Service personnel approaching you for assistance.

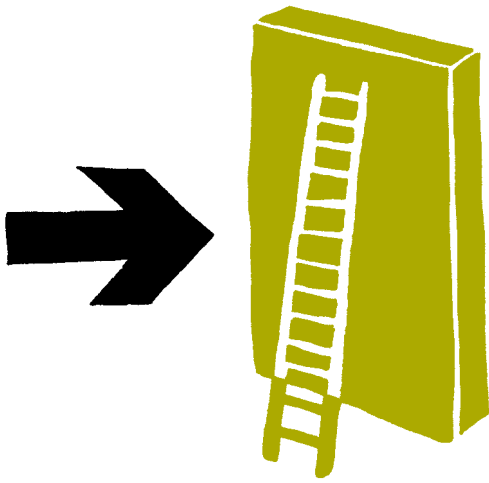
### **Joint Service Housing Advice Office**

2nd Floor Zone 2  
Montgomery House  
Queens Avenue  
Aldershot  
Hampshire  
GU11 2JN

T: **01252 787574**

E: **[RC-AWS-JSHAO-0Mailbox@mod.uk](mailto:RC-AWS-JSHAO-0Mailbox@mod.uk)**

W: **[Joint Service Housing Advice Office](#)**



# Discharge from service and notice to vacate (NTV)

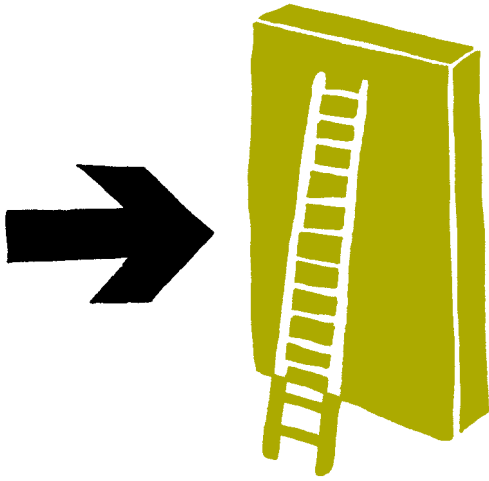
## Notice to Vacate

The Notice to Vacate (NTV) is to allow current Service personnel time to sort out future housing. There may be circumstances when Service personnel can apply for additional time to secure a future home. If this is the case, they will be required to complete a proportionality exercise assessment form which will be included in the NTV pack. It is the Service member's responsibility to ensure they and any dependants have accommodation to move into and the JSHAO can provide information on the options available if required. For those seeking social housing through the local authority (council) they should apply to the housing register as soon as they know they will need rehousing. The application should be updated as soon as they have their NTV and keep the local authority informed of any change of circumstances. Ex-Service personnel are entitled to a statutory homeless interview at the local authority housing office 28 days before the NTV expires.

The NTV letter is sent by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation, DIO and it should be accepted by the local authority housing staff as proof that entitlement to live in Service Families Accommodation SFA and Single Living Accommodation SLA will end. However, if they want further documentary evidence Service personnel can contact the DIO and they will issue a 'Certificate of Cessation of Right to Occupy Service Quarters'. This document which shows when entitlement to occupy Service accommodation will end. Government issued guidance encourages local authorities to accept these certificates as 'proof of homelessness' and they should not insist on a court order for possession before being prepared to provide any homelessness assistance.

The local authority's homelessness department have a legal obligation to help. This may range from advice and assistance through to full homelessness duty. They will investigate individual circumstances and assess priority need. If ex-Service personnel are able to source and pay for their own housing the local authority may only provide advice and assistance. If they assess ex-Service personnel as being in priority need they will rehouse, but this may be in temporary accommodation for an initial period.

- In the case of marriage or civil partnership breakdown, the NTV will take effect 93 days from the day the Defence Infrastructure Organisation is notified of the change in marital status.
- In the case of a standard discharge or retirement from the Services, it is the service occupant's responsibility to inform the housing provider of the last day of service. Ninety-three days 'notice to vacate' will be given to coincide with the discharge date. An alternative occupancy agreement for eligible personnel to occupy surplus SFA may be offered by the National Housing Prime Help Desk (NHPHD). Market rents payable on the property concerned are to be negotiated by the NHPHD with the local DIO Office. Market rate is charged for the rental of the property. If there is no means to pay rent, housing benefit may be available.



- For personnel compulsorily discharged on medical grounds, 93 days 'continued use and occupancy' of the SFA will be permitted after the date of discharge, at entitled SFA charges.
- Discharge on disciplinary grounds gives only 28 days NTV.

Local authorities are advised to work with the MOD and the serving officer (and family members in cases of relationship breakdown) during their NTV period to explore a range of options which will address housing need, along with any necessary support, to avoid any period of homelessness or unnecessary periods in unsuitable accommodation.

In cases of marital or relationship breakdown and where the main carer is not the serving officer, you may be approached by both the family and the serving officer as homeless and should deal with these cases in the usual way, in the light of current legislation.



# Irregular Occupancy

Irregular Occupancy is the term that the Forces use for what we would normally call 'unlawful occupancy'

Irregular occupancy is not commonly discussed within the services unless someone finds themselves in the unfortunate situation of perhaps a marital breakdown, or just at the end of their service.

For the purposes of DFT calculation the accommodation charge applicable relates to the number of bedrooms in the property. This refers to the rent that the MOD will charge for the accommodation, and that it is based on the 'Damages for Trespass' rate, because strictly speaking the ex-Service member has become a trespasser by staying on. This rate is based on the national average LA rent according to statistics published by the Homes and Communities Agency. The charge for council tax is based on the contribution in lieu of council tax rate which is set by the Ministry of Defence and is equal to that charged to an entitled service occupant. 25% single occupancy discount is applied where appropriate. The Damage for Trespass rate also includes the charge for water and sewage which is based on the national combined average consumption rates published by OFWAT.

A Defence Infrastructure Organisation Service Delivery Accommodation (DIO SD Accn) finance team deals with collecting payments from irregular occupiers when they can no longer be deducted from salary, either because a spouse is now responsible for the quarters due to estrangement or the service person has been discharged. All letters in relation to irregular occupancy, with the exception of financial statements, will be issued by the DIO LOE Team. It is therefore important that any changes in personal circumstances are reported. Once an NTV has been issued notification of the new charges will be given at least 4 weeks prior to the notice expiring.

The letters sent out by the DIO use legal terminology and are set out in a manner required and understood by the courts and local councils. Terms such as 'Damages for Trespass' ('Violent Profits' in Scotland) can seem intimidating but they are simply legal phrases used to describe the total charges for use and occupation of quarters.

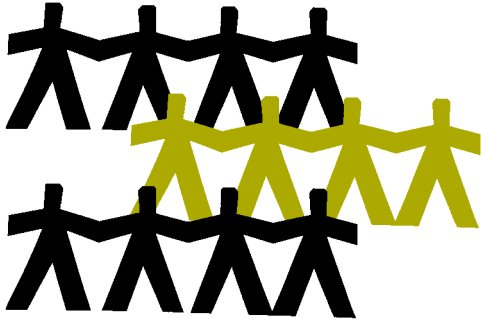
For anyone unable to find a place to live the DIO will initiate court proceedings to evict. The DIO will seek permission from the court to regain possession of the property by obtaining an Order for Possession (OfP) and approximately 4 weeks later they will apply to enforce the possession order by requesting a warrant for a bailiff to enforce removal from the property. Again, the purpose is to transfer the responsibility of housing from the MOD to the local authority.

Throughout the time that SFA is occupied, including the time as an irregular occupant, all the appropriate charges must be paid. If payments aren't made and they fall into arrears and they are evicted on the grounds of rent arrears they may be classed as making themselves intentionally homeless and therefore the local authority no longer have a legal obligation to help.



It is acknowledged that moving out of SFA is a stressful time and the process is complicated. Throughout the transition to civilian housing there are various people who can assist and provide advice, including the local HIVE staff or Unit Welfare or Community Support Officer. Alternatively, in cases of significant difficulties, the Army or Navy Welfare or SSAFA offer advice to all 3 services on welfare concerns, benefits and future housing provision. See the organisations listed towards the end of this guide. The JSHAO will also provide advice on civilian housing options.

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/joint-service-housing-advice-office-leaflet-index](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/joint-service-housing-advice-office-leaflet-index)



## Council tax relief

Service personnel on designated operational deployments can claim Council tax relief (CTR) from MOD in accordance with JSP 754 Chapter 9 Section 11. This applies to private properties in England, Scotland, Wales or NI as well as SFA. CTR is claimed direct from MOD, on return from operational deployment, and not the local authority.

Individuals can ask their local authority for a council tax reduction when serving overseas. However this is a matter for the local authority to consider on individual applications, and the authority may take into consideration the length of time of posting and whether the individual intends to return to live full-time in the property. For NHAS members please ring the Consultancy Line for further information on paying for council tax.



## Other support services for ex-Service personnel

This guide is a starting point, and as part of your advice and assistance to veterans you should be aware of other support services and agencies dedicated to anyone who has served in the Armed Forces. These specialist sites offer comprehensive advice and information.



**AFF**  
[aff.org.uk](http://aff.org.uk)

Army Families Federation is the voice of the army family.

It empowers, acts as an advocate and an expert witness to promote a quality of life which reflects the Armed Forces Covenant.

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**The Naval Families Federation**  
[nff.org.uk](http://nff.org.uk)

The Naval Families Federation (NFF) was established in 2003, and offer Royal Naval and Royal Marines' families an independent voice and representation. They also provide support and guidance on the issues affecting daily life that occur due to being part of a Naval Service family.

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**The Royal British Legion**  
[britishlegion.org.uk](http://britishlegion.org.uk)

National Helpline:  
**0808 802 8080**

Helps serving members of the Armed Forces, ex-Service men and women (veterans), their families and dependants.

RBL have 'Pop In' Advice and Information Centres in the following major cities in the UK:

- Aylesbury
- Belfast
- Birmingham
- Bristol
- Brighton
- Cardiff
- Colchester
- Derby
- Leeds
- Liverpool
- London
- Manchester
- Newcastle
- Plymouth
- Southampton
- Swindon

**The RAF Benevolent Fund**  
[rafbf.org](http://rafbf.org)

They carry out the following principal activities:

- To provide assistance to the RAF family, when they are in need.
- To support the morale and wellbeing of the serving RAF.

They provide a spectrum of services that range from Airplay programme supporting children growing up on RAF stations, to relationship counselling for RAF couples and respite breaks for RAF families and veterans.

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**RAF Families Federation**  
[raf-ff.org.uk](http://raf-ff.org.uk)

The RAF Families Federation provides all RAF personnel and their families – Regular and Reserve, single or married – with timely and professional support, assistance and an independent voice regarding issues or concerns that they may have.

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**The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity**  
[rnrmc.org.uk/](http://rnrmc.org.uk/)

The RNRMC is the principal charity of the Royal Navy. They exist to support sailors, marines and their families, for life. Since 2007, they have funded projects and facilities that boost morale for those who serve today.

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**SSAFA**  
**(the Armed Forces Charity)**  
[ssafa.org.uk](http://ssafa.org.uk)

Lifelong support to anyone who is currently serving or has ever served in the Royal Navy, British Army or RAF and their families.

**SPACES**  
[riverside.org.uk](http://riverside.org.uk)

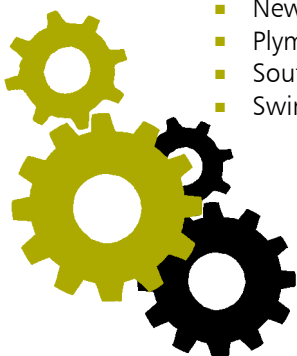
The Single Persons' Accommodation Centre for the Ex-Services, SPACES, is designed to help single ex-regulars find appropriate accommodation when they leave the services. Through this service the project reduces the likelihood of ex-service personnel becoming homeless or sleeping rough after discharge.

SPACES is a project based within The Beacon at Catterick, North Yorkshire. It provides an accommodation placement service for single personnel being discharged from all three services and is managed by Riverside ECHG, part of the Riverside group, working with the Joint Service Housing Advice Office.

The overall aims and objectives of the project are to assist single service leavers to secure appropriate accommodation as they leave the Armed Forces. Single service leavers can be vulnerable to homelessness as a result of a combination of factors: having no home to return to after service, little understanding of how to secure rented accommodation and housing rights and duties, little or no experience of budgeting and setting up home.

In addition to SPACES Riverside ECHG also manages **Mike Jackson House** which also provides supported accommodation in Aldershot for single ex-Service personnel at risk of homelessness. It provides short term housing through 25 fully furnished one bedroom flats.

Education, training and employment opportunities are also provided.  
[riverside.org.uk](http://riverside.org.uk)



## **West Midlands Veterans Housing HOME to WORK**

A transition to civilian life for vulnerable veterans in conjunction with Enable Centre of Excellence supported by the West Midlands Veterans' Mental Health Network (NHS), "Everyone has a Skill" Accommodation including welfare and employment support opportunities.

West Midlands Veteran Housing (WMVH) comprises an Advisory Board of people with experience and skills to help vulnerable veterans to tackle issues relating to housing, employment and support for ex-Service personnel in the West Midlands, many of whom are vulnerable through their poor mental health, unable to live independently or to sustain employment.

For more information contact:  
[anthony.goldsmith@sky.com](mailto:anthony.goldsmith@sky.com)

## **Employment:**

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### **The Career Transition Partnership**

The Career Transition Partnership (CTP) is the MOD's official provider of resettlement services for leavers of the Armed Forces. A Housing Resettlement Guide can be found on their [website](#) containing a number of useful links to further information. The website also contains an Emigration guide for those Service leavers considering moving abroad.

### **Poppy Factory [poppyfactory.org.uk](http://poppyfactory.org.uk)**

The Poppy Factory places wounded, injured and sick ex-military personnel of all ages and from a variety of Armed Forces backgrounds into mainstream employment all around the UK. The Poppy Factory finds and matches employers with clients, and in many cases, part-funds their clients' first year's salary, to allow for training in their new role.

### **Remploy [remploy.co.uk/veterans](http://remploy.co.uk/veterans)**

Provides a specially designed range of services to help to adapt skills and abilities for civilian employment, find a new career and stay in a specific role. From branches and offices across England, Scotland and Wales, Armed Forces champions provide specialist expertise in supporting serving and ex-serving personnel and reservists to adapt their skills for civilian employment.

### **RFEA – Regular Forces Employment Agency [rfea.org.uk](http://rfea.org.uk)**

**0118 957 3178**

Part of the Career Transition Partnership. To help men and women of all ranks leaving the Armed Forces to find and remain in employment throughout their working lives.

### **Walking with the Wounded [walkingwiththewounded.org.uk](http://walkingwiththewounded.org.uk) **01263 863900****

Home Straight – Home Straight provides wounded, injured and sick veterans who are homeless and in temporary accommodation the support and training they need in order to move back into sustainable employment and regain their independence.

## **Mental Health:**

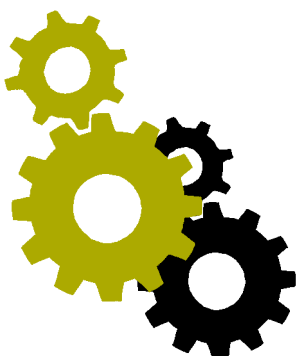
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### **Big White Wall [bigwhitewall.com](http://bigwhitewall.com)**

The Big White Wall offers an online early intervention service for people in psychological distress.

### **Combat Stress [combatstress.org.uk](http://combatstress.org.uk) **0800 138 1619****

Combat Stress is a veterans' mental health charity. Their treatment and support services are free of charge. Their free national helpline provides round-the-clock support for veterans and their families seeking expert advice on mental health, housing and employment advice. In addition, veterans can access mental health support and advice via text, email and their website.



#### **H4H HIDDEN WOUNDS** [helpforheroes.org.uk](http://helpforheroes.org.uk)

**0808 2020 144**

(9am to 5pm Mon-Fri) –  
free from UK landlines hidden.

[wounds@helpforheroes.org.uk](mailto:wounds@helpforheroes.org.uk)

H4H's Hidden Wounds service provides free and confidential support to ex-Service Personnel, their families and the families of those still serving, who are living with anxiety, depression, stress, anger or who wish to change their drinking habits. Those in need of support for children under 18 or for support for complex issues, such as PTSD symptoms, should also get in touch and the team will help them find an organisation that can help.

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#### **Veterans Mental Health Programme (NHS)** [veterans-uk.info](http://veterans-uk.info)

The NHS and other partners have services across England and Wales that are specifically aimed at helping Veterans:

- **Yorkshire and the Humber**

The Veterans' Outreach Service supports veterans and their families. All enquiries should be made to: [HNF-TR.VeteransOutreachService@nhs.net](mailto:HNF-TR.VeteransOutreachService@nhs.net) or via Veterans' Outreach Service, c/o Single Point of Access Service, Moranda House, Gladstone Street, Hull, HU3 2RT or **01482 617 594**. More details can be found at: [humber.nhs.uk](http://humber.nhs.uk).

- **East Midlands**

The region's 5 mental health trusts are working in partnership with Combat Stress. Individuals can access services by contacting their GP or call Combat Stress directly on **01952 822 753** for an assessment of their needs. More details can be found at: [lpft.nhs.uk](http://lpft.nhs.uk).

- **West Midlands**

The West Midlands Regional Veterans' Service and South Staffordshire and Shropshire Veterans' Mental Health Services can be accessed at **0800 500 3113** (or via **01785 258 041** for mobiles), [veterans.support@sssf.nhs.uk](mailto:veterans.support@sssf.nhs.uk) and St George's Hospital, Stafford, ST16 3SR.

- **North East**

The Veterans' Wellbeing Assessment and Liaison Service is a mental health and wellbeing service supporting veterans and their families in the NE. Individuals can access services by contacting the following: **0191 441 5794**, [vwals@nhs.net](mailto:vwals@nhs.net). More details can be found at: [tevv.nhs.uk](http://tevv.nhs.uk).

- **London**

The London Veterans' Assessment and Treatment Service can be accessed via: **0203 317 3820**, [veterans@candi.nhs.uk](mailto:veterans@candi.nhs.uk) and 4th Floor West Wing, St Pancras Hospital, 4 St Pancras Way, London, NW1 0PE

- **North Essex**

Veterans can self-refer, be referred by any professional supporting them, or attend 2 support groups run monthly in Colchester and Chelmsford. Contact details: **01206 228 759** Veterans First CMHT, The Lakes MHU, Turner Road, Colchester, CO4 5JL. More details can be found at: [nep.nhs.uk](http://nep.nhs.uk).

- **North West**

Military Veterans' Service is an NHS psychological therapy service offering support to veterans in Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Merseyside. Individuals should contact **0300 323 0707** for support. [penninecare.nhs.uk](http://penninecare.nhs.uk)

- **Wales**

Veterans NHS Wales, Monmouth House, University Hospital of Wales, Heath Park, Cardiff, CF14 4XW **029 2074 2062** [neil.kitchiner@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:neil.kitchiner@wales.nhs.uk), [claire.morgan@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:claire.morgan@wales.nhs.uk)

- **South of England**

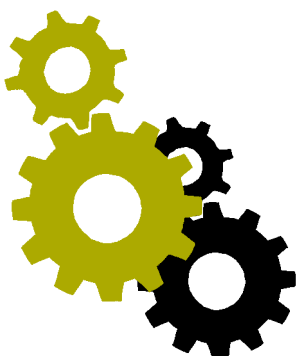
The South Central Veterans' Service is funded by NHS England and supports veterans in Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Hampshire (including Portsmouth and Southampton) and the Isle of Wight. All referrals should be made at: **0300 365 0300** or [Bks-tr.referralhub@nhs.net](mailto:Bks-tr.referralhub@nhs.net). More details can be found at: [berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk](http://berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk).

- **South West**

Veterans' Mental Health Service is provided by Avon and Wiltshire Partnership NHS Trust (AWP) but covers the whole of the SW region. Contact details: [awp.swveterans@nhs.net](http://awp.swveterans@nhs.net) and **0300 555 0112**. More details can be found at: [swveterans.org.uk](http://swveterans.org.uk).

- **Cornwall**

Cornwall Community Veterans' Service, Trevillis House, Lodge Hill, Liskeard, Cornwall, PL14 4NE **01579 373 737** [cpn-tr.veteranassistance@nhs.net](mailto:cpn-tr.veteranassistance@nhs.net)



**The Reserves Mental Health Programme**  
0800 032 6258

[Information for patients and health professionals](#)

[army.mod.uk](http://army.mod.uk)

The Reserves Mental Health Programme (RHMP) provides mental health assessments for **reservists** who have concerns about their mental health as a result of service. If appropriate, a consultant psychiatrist will conduct a full mental health assessment, and where applicable, will offer out-patient treatment at their local DCMH.

**Samaritans**  
[samaritans.org](http://samaritans.org)  
0845 7909090

The Samaritans is a charity which is available 24 hours a day to provide confidential emotional support for people who are experiencing feelings of distress, despair or suicidal thoughts.

**Physical Health:**

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**BLESMA**  
[blesma.org](http://blesma.org)  
020 8590 1124

BLESMA (British Limbless Ex Service Men's Association) is a national charity for limbless serving and ex-Service men and women, their dependants and widows. The charity supports wounded Service personnel who have lost limbs, the use of limbs or their eyesight in the service of their country, from World War veterans to current day Service personnel.

BLESMA provides life-long support, campaigns for the interests of wounded Servicemen and women and provides counselling, grants and advice to amputees wounded in the line of duty.

**Blind Veterans UK**  
[blindveterans.org.uk](http://blindveterans.org.uk)  
0207 723 5021

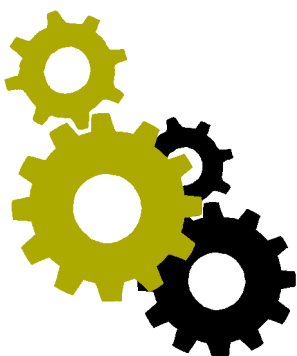
Blind Veterans UK, previously known as St Dunstan's, is a charity that supports blind or visually impaired ex-Servicemen and women throughout the UK. Their mission is to give all blind veterans access to the finest quality of services to help them discover life beyond sight loss.

This includes providing lifelong welfare support, rehabilitation, training, long-term nursing, residential and respite care. It is their belief that no one who has served in the UK Armed Forces should have to battle blindness alone. Blind Veterans UK currently have three centres in England and Wales; on the South Coast, in the North of England and in North Wales. Each centre is a place for recreation, training and rehabilitation for blind veterans and their families.

**Prosthetic Rehabilitation Units**

Veterans who have lost limbs whilst on operations are eligible for state of the art prosthetics via Murrison funding. Nine prosthetic rehab units have been set up within existing prosthetics centres as follows:

- **Bristol – [Disablement Services Centre](#)**, North Bristol NHS Trust
- **Leicester – [Specialist Mobility Centre](#)**, provided by Blatchford Clinical Services on behalf of the NHS
- **Sheffield – [Mobility and Specialised Rehabilitation Centre](#)**, Northern General Hospital
- **Carlisle – [Disablement Services Centre](#)**, Cumberland Infirmary, North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust
- **Preston – [Specialist Mobility & Rehabilitation Centre](#)**, Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- **Stanmore – [Prosthetic Rehabilitation Unit](#)**, Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Trust
- **Portsmouth – [Prosthetic Regional Rehabilitation Department](#)**, Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust
- **Birmingham – [West Midlands Rehabilitation Centre](#)**, Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Trust
- **Cambridge – [Addenbrooke's Rehabilitation Clinic](#)**, Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust



## Welfare

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### **ABF The Soldiers' Charity** [soldierscharity.org](http://soldierscharity.org) **0207 901 8900**

ABF The Soldiers' Charity are for soldiers, for life. They provide financial assistance to all soldiers and their families when in need. Half of their money is given direct to individuals to help in areas such as debt relief, mobility assistance, education bursaries, care home fees and respite breaks. The other half is given as grants to other charities.

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### **Help for Heroes** [helpforheroes.org.uk](http://helpforheroes.org.uk) **01980 844280**

**Band of Brothers**  
[helpforheroes.org.uk](http://helpforheroes.org.uk)  
The Help for Heroes Band of Brothers offers lifelong support and opportunities to men and women, both serving and non-serving, who have suffered career limiting or career ending injury or illness attributable to service.

**Band of Sisters**  
[helpforheroes.org.uk](http://helpforheroes.org.uk)  
The Help for Heroes Band of Sisters is open to loved ones, both male and female, who care for those who have suffered a career limiting/career ending injury or illness attributable to service.

Members have the chance to get in touch with other people who understand what it is like to care for their nearest and dearest, giving individuals the opportunity to support each other through the days ahead. Members of the Band of Sisters receive the same financial and welfare support that Help for Heroes offers through the Quick Reaction Fund.

## Quick Reaction Fund

[helpforheroes.org.uk](http://helpforheroes.org.uk)

H4H's Quick Reaction Fund (QRF) helps by giving swift financial support (within 72 hours in urgent cases) to those with life-changing injuries, life-changing illnesses and their families.

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### **The Royal British Legion** [britishlegion.org.uk](http://britishlegion.org.uk) National Helpline: **0808 802 8080**

### **Debt and Money Advice Service** [britishlegion.org.uk](http://britishlegion.org.uk)

TRBL Benefits & Money Advisors offer discreet, impartial and non-judgmental advice on benefits and managing debt. Can also advise on: War Pensions, AFCS, Disability Claims, Tribunals.

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### **Veterans UK** [veterans-uk.info](http://veterans-uk.info) **0808 1914218**

Veterans UK's Veterans' Welfare Service's free help and advice helpline:

- 07.30-18.30  
Monday – Thursday,
- 07.30-17.00 Friday.

They provide advice on claiming AFCS, Armed Forces Independence Payment, Medical Discharges and Pension Forecast Requests.

## Others

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### **Money Advice Service** [moneyadviceservice.org.uk](http://moneyadviceservice.org.uk) **0300 500 5000**

A free service set up by the Government to help people manage and make the most of their money. They also work with partners to make debt advice easier and quicker to access. Their web pages include tools and resources.



# Veterans' Housing Advice, the Veterans' Gateway and Cobseo Directory of Housing

## Veterans' Housing Advice

**0808 801 0880**

The Veterans' Housing Advice service will provide housing advice by telephone from 8-8 seven days a week to any Veteran in housing need or having problems with their accommodation.

It is also an online resource available 365 days a year bringing the Cobseo Housing Cluster group of charities into a single easy to use search. It is delivered by The Royal British Legion, Shelter and Connect Assist on behalf of the Cobseo Housing Cluster.

[veteranshousingadvice.org.uk](http://veteranshousingadvice.org.uk)

[info@veteranshousingadvice.org.uk](mailto:info@veteranshousingadvice.org.uk)



## Cobseo

The Housing Cluster of the Confederation of Service charities (Cobseo) includes the main providers of general needs and supported housing for the ex-Service community in its Directory of Dedicated Services for Veterans. These organisations provide a range of:

- Supported Accommodation
- General Needs Housing
- Sheltered Housing
- Floating and Outreach Support
- Day Centres
- Placement Services

The Directory lists these organisations, where in the UK they operate, support provided, application criteria and contact details

[cobseo.org.uk](http://cobseo.org.uk)



## Veterans' Gateway

**0808 802 1212**

With a vast network of charities supporting the Forces community, finding the right one can take some navigating. Veterans' Gateway aims to make this easier and quicker by being the first point of contact for you – wherever and whenever you need support.

As the gateway to a network of partners, we can connect you with the right support quickly and easily, by assessing needs at your first point of contact.

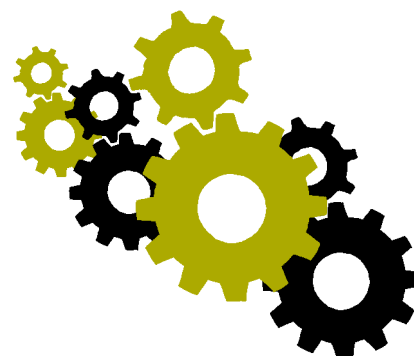
Our partners range from military support services to organisations specialising in housing, employment, finance and other areas.

Contact us from anywhere in the UK or abroad  
24 hour phone number: **0808 802 1212**

[veteransgateway.org.uk](http://veteransgateway.org.uk)



Veterans' Gateway is a consortium made up of The Royal British Legion, Poppyscotland, SSAFA - the Armed Forces charity, Combat Stress and Connect Assist.





This guide has been developed by NHAS working in collaboration with Cobseo.



Cobseo  
The Confederation  
of Service Charities

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Shelter