



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

National Housing Pathway for Ex-Service Personnel

Audience	<p>Third sector and partner organisations involved with supporting former members of the Armed Forces, Local Authorities; Registered Social Landlords; other housing service providers; Supporting People Regional Collaborative Committees; Local Health Boards and other provider agencies.</p>
Overview	<p>This document sets out the pathway for meeting the housing needs of former members of the Armed Forces who will be resettling in Wales.</p>
Action required	<p>For practitioners and stakeholders to be aware of their responsibilities under the Armed Forces Covenant and the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. In particular, Part 2 which addresses the duties on Local Authorities to provide preventative homelessness services, and also other relevant frameworks and good practice.</p>
Additional copies	<p>This document is available from the Welsh Government website and is available bilingually.</p>
Related documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing (Wales) Act 2014 (Part 2) • Housing Act 1996 (Part 6) • Code of Guidance for Local Authorities – Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness (April 2016) • Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 • Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010 • Welsh Government Package of Support for the Armed Forces Community in Wales • The National Pathway for Homelessness Services to Children, Young People and Adults in the Secure Estate (December 2015)

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The Welsh Government is proud of the current and past contributions made by Welsh men and women to the UK Armed forces. Similarly we value what former service people bring to our communities after they have left the forces and settled in Wales.

This Housing Pathway is a response to one of the key concerns of serving personnel on leaving the Armed Forces: finding suitable accommodation and knowing where to find help. This is something that can be even more difficult when accessing services and support in an area with which you are not familiar.

Working with our Armed Forces stakeholders, we have produced this Housing Pathway to provide clarity and support for you and your families in order to help you to help yourself. This could be through either home ownership, or renting in the private or social sectors.

I am proud the Welsh Government used the Assembly's law-making powers to pass the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, a core feature of which is a duty on public bodies to work with people to find solutions to their housing problems. It means more help for more people overall, but in recognition of your service to your country, the Welsh Government has retained the priority need category for you if you find yourself homeless upon leaving the Armed Forces.

The Housing Pathway along with the Welsh Government's Package of Support outlines the support and services available, and is designed to help you chose the most suitable accommodation option for you and your family on return to civilian life.

The development of this Pathway is an opportunity to make a difference and I look forward to seeing the benefits it will bring. I would like to thank everyone involved in its development.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carl Sapan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

NATIONAL HOUSING PATHWAY FOR EX-SERVICE PERSONNEL

In recognition of their service to their country, the Welsh Government believes that every former member of the Armed Forces should have help, if needed, to find suitable accommodation, whether directly on discharge or later in life. No-one should be allowed to become homeless.

Estimates of the number of members of the Armed Forces Community living in Wales vary and could be as high as 385,000¹. This document sets out the support available in Wales to ensure that all those in need of accommodation, or a service which will help them to retain or find accommodation, can access it.

In support of the UK Government's Armed Forces Covenant, the Welsh Government has developed a Package of Support for the Armed Forces, veterans and their families in Wales. This package includes support for people in areas such as healthcare; education; and housing including priority status in the Homebuy scheme, Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) for disabled ex-servicemen, Physical Adaptation Grants (PAGs) and priority need status under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

The Welsh Government's commitment to this was established in "The Nation's Commitment: Cross-Government Support to our Armed Forces, their Families and Veterans" which was updated by the Armed Forces Covenant and the Welsh Government's response to the Covenant as set out in our "Package of Support for the Armed Forces Community in Wales".

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-nations-commitment-cross-government-support-for-our-armed-forces-their-families-and-veterans>

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/238719/7424.pdf

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-covenant-supporting-information>

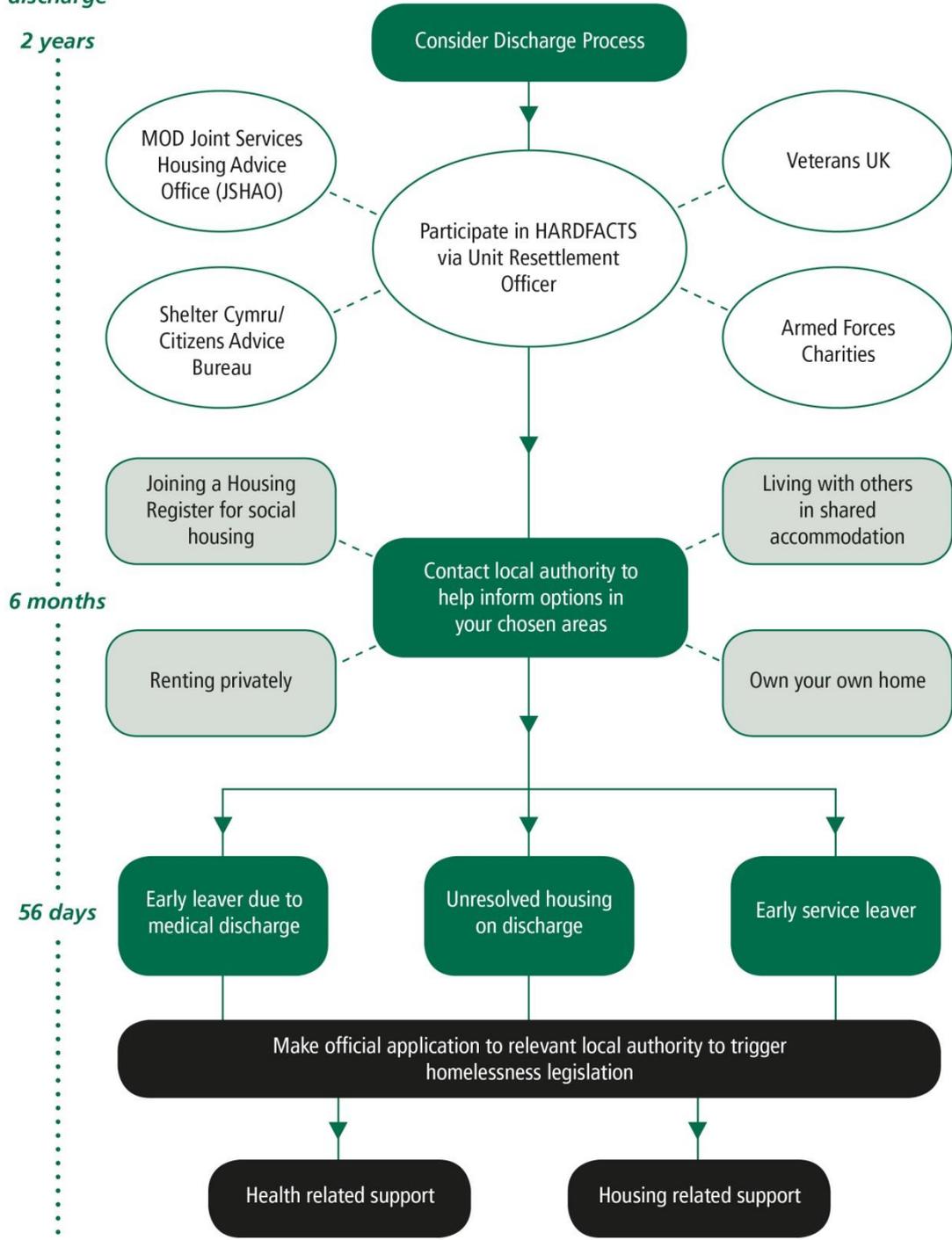
<http://gov.wales/docs/ds/jlg/policy/130625afpackagesec1.pdf>

<http://gov.wales/docs/ds/jlg/policy/130625afpackagesec2.pdf>

¹ Royal British Legion Household Survey - 2014

Accommodation Support prior to end of Military Service

Timings prior to discharge



PRE DISCHARGE SUPPORT

The Welsh Government understands that it can be an unsettling time as you approach your discharge, particularly if you have been a member of the Armed Forces for some time and have become used to the structure it brings you.

There are established advice services that can help you find accommodation.

I AM LEAVING THE ARMED FORCES I THINK HOUSING WILL BE AN ISSUE, WHAT ARE MY OPTIONS?

As a UK citizen, a range of housing options are open to you-including, renting privately, renting a council or housing association property, or buying a property of your own.

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

As part of making the transition back to civilian life, you should engage with your Unit Resettlement Officer who will take you through the HARDFACTS personal planning process. The Accommodation questions will help both you and your resettlement officer to understand whether you will have housing on discharge and what your next steps should be.

This will form part of the resettlement process which will commence up to two years before and continue up to two years after discharge.

In addition and if available, you might wish to attend one of the Armed Forces Transition Fairs that are held in Wales to support the resettlement of those due to be discharged. The Fair would include information on possible career choices in addition to possible support for sourcing accommodation.

WHAT OTHER ADVICE CAN I GET?

When you are approaching discharge you will need timely and comprehensive advice on the housing options open to you. You should engage with your unit Resettlement Officer, but in addition, the Joint Services Housing Advice Office will be able to support you by providing information and advice on housing options well in advance of discharge and should be your starting point:

Joint Services Housing Advice Office
Floor 2 Zone 2 Montgomery House Queens Avenue Aldershot GU11 2JN
Email - RC-AWS-JSHAO-0mailbox@mod.uk
Advice line 01252 787574

If you are single, then the Single Persons Accommodation Centre for the Ex-Services ("SPACES") will be able to support you to find suitable accommodation on discharge:

SPACES
The Beacon, SPACES Office, Marne Road, Catterick Garrison, Catterick, North Yorkshire. DL9 3AU
Email - spaces@riverside.org.uk
Tel: 01748 833797/872940/830191

In addition, the Ministry of Defence's Veterans UK helpline provides assistance on many issues, including accessing benefits, housing and welfare.

Veterans UK
Ministry of Defence
Norcross
Thornton Cleveleys
FY5 3WP
Email: veterans-uk@mod.uk
Freephone (UK only): 0808 1914 2 18
Telephone (overseas): +44 1253 866 043

Should you seek alternative or additional advice, other services are available to you as well as, where appropriate, your partner/wife/husband. Additional advice services are listed on page 20.

If you are based outside Wales and looking to move or return to Wales, the local authority of the area you intend to live in will have a duty (s.60 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014) to provide you with information, advice and assistance well before you are discharged. A list of each housing options team is contained on page 21.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR HELP?

This Pathway provides advice to anyone due to leave the armed forces and their dependents, regardless of whether they are a reservist or a regular member of the Armed Forces, being discharged early or on medical grounds.

Under the terms of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, a local authority will have a duty to help anyone who is at risk of losing their accommodation or are homeless. This will also cover the ex-spouses/partners of servicemen or women and the recently bereaved spouses/partners.

However, support available may differ depending on your circumstances and status and we would urge you to contact your local authority to help understand what may be available to you.

I WILL NEED SUPPORT TO MAINTAIN A TENANCY

The Supporting People Programme is designed to help people who have housing-related support needs to secure or keep a home by offering a range of suitable support to that person.

If you think you may need support to maintain a tenancy you can also speak to the Supporting People team in your local authority to see if support is available from them. A list of each Supporting People team is contained on page 21.

I WOULD LIKE TO RENT IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Renting privately offers flexibility and possibly greater choice about where you live as well as the length of the tenancy, but does offer less security of tenure. In Wales the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2014 will provide additional security and protections for some tenants, while the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 also regulates landlords to ensure that they are not just fit and proper, but also appropriately trained.

You can access the private rented market in a number of ways. Many landlords will advertise their properties on property websites, through local newspapers or via lettings agency's who might also act on the landlords behalf. You could also approach the relevant local authority who will be able to provide advice on local lettings as well as potentially operating their own private rented access schemes.

I WOULD LIKE TO RENT IN THE SOCIAL HOUSING SECTOR

To access social housing you will need to make a housing application. The form will differ from area to area or housing association to housing association, but some local authorities do operate common housing register schemes which mean that you will only be required to complete one form.

Once you have completed the form, the housing association or council will use your application to decide your level of priority before you are added to the housing list.

Local authorities in England and Wales have the power to give additional preference to particular people who fall within the reasonable preference categories and who have urgent housing needs. People needing accommodation as a result of leaving the Armed Forces is a category of people to whom a Local Authority should consider giving additional preference within their allocation scheme.

To accompany your housing application, you should also provide a copy of your Certificate of Cessation of Entitlement to Occupy Service Accommodation. The Ministry of Defence issue this up to six months before you leave the armed forces.

WHAT IF I HAVE BEEN INJURED OR DISABLED WHILE IN SERVICE?

The Welsh Government believes that it is important that Service Personnel who have been seriously injured or disabled in Service and who have an urgent need for social housing should be given high priority within local authorities' allocation schemes in recognition of their service.

In addition, you will be able to access additional sources of support to help adapt a prospective property to meet your needs. This could mean you are entitled to a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) from your local authority.

Also you could seek support from the Enable - Support for Independent Living scheme, which identifies the most suitable way for people to obtain adaptations to remain in their home independently. This will improve people's independence and quality of life, help to prevent emergency or unplanned admissions to hospital or residential care and can also facilitate earlier discharge from hospital.

If you feel that you need support to manage your care and support needs to help you to live more independently, you have a right to request an assessment from your local authority under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. The local authority will support you to meet any identified care and support needs through the provision of information, advice and assistance, community or preventative services, a care and support plan or through other means.

While you may not have been physically injured or disabled in service, your mental health, may have been impacted by your time in the forces. If you feel that this might be

the case, you should take steps to confirm a diagnosis as soon as possible. Assessment and care-management within the Armed Forces for serving personnel experiencing mental health problems is available at three levels:

- Via your Medical Officer (MO);
- Referral to the Defence community mental health service via your MO; and
- In-patient services via a local NHS hospital under the MoD contract.

You are encouraged to request a mental health assessment prior to discharge, if you believe you have a service related mental health problem.

I'M NOT SURE I WILL BE ABLE TO COPE WITH LIFE OUTSIDE THE FORCES?

Depending on the length of your service, the transition back to civilian life can be difficult and could put strain on your mental health, which in turn could impact on your relationships with family and friends. Alternatively, you may feel you have an issue with drugs and/or alcohol which you may not be able to control outside of your current environment.

Veterans NHS Wales can help support you if you are experiencing mental health difficulties. This service, funded by the Welsh Government, provides veterans' therapists in each Local Health Board (contact details attached) and offers evidence-based treatment for clients, who are able to self refer or access the service via referral from a GP, charity or family member.

In Wales DAN 24/7 is the bilingual all-Wales drug and alcohol helpline – 0800 808 2234.

It is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and calls from UK landlines are free (some mobile phone networks may charge). Information is also available via the website - dan247.org.uk

WHAT IF I AM RECEIVING TREATMENT FOR A MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION?

If you are already receiving treatment for a mental health condition, your care and treatment will continue after discharged via a care pathway between the MoD and NHS.

Ongoing treatment will be managed by Veterans' NHS Wales via an experienced Veteran Therapist based in each Local Health Board in Wales. Appointment will be arranged as close to the veteran's home as possible in a suitable venue.

<http://www.veteranswales.co.uk/>

Alternatively advice can be obtained from the following 24/7 help lines:

- CALL - 0800 132 737
- Rethink - 0800 138 1619

HOW LONG WILL I NEED TO WAIT FOR ACCOMMODATION?

Your length of time on the waiting list will depend on the area you wish to live in and the type and size of house you require as well as any additional preferences you may have. In some areas there are not enough houses to meet demand, while others might have a

surplus. The housing provider will be able to give you advice on the possible waiting time as well as confirm whether you have been given additional preference. Information on Local Authority housing options can be found by accessing the following:

<http://www.waleshousing.org/>

WILL I BE ASKED FOR A DEPOSIT OR RENT IN ADVANCE?

In most cases, a landlord will require a bond or rent advance before they will accept you as a tenant. Additionally, you might need to pay for new furniture and white goods. Your local authority will be able to provide advice on whether there are any bond schemes in their area, whilst they might also be able to make an application on your behalf for a Discretionary Assistance Fund (DAF) to help you furnish your property.

If your Local Authority has been unsuccessful in obtaining any financial assistance, depending on your eligibility, the Royal British Legion or other charitable organisations may be able to help to meet the costs.

It is recommended you start saving for these types of expenses in advance of being discharged, for example, using a savings provider such as a Credit Union account. The earlier you start this, the more you will have saved when you come to be discharged.

A Tenancy Deposit Loan Scheme is also available to members of the Armed Forces. There are conditions to this scheme, which will include repayment within twelve months. You should speak to your transitional officer about accessing it.

I WANT TO BUY MY OWN PROPERTY. IS THERE ANY HELP FOR ME TO DO SO?

The Welsh Government operates a 'Help to Buy' scheme in Wales designed to provide financial support to those who might otherwise not be able to afford to purchase a property.

<http://helptobuywales.co.uk/?lang=en>

In addition, the Ministry of Defence operate a Forces' Help to Buy scheme which enables servicemen and servicewomen to borrow up to 50% of their salary, interest free, to buy their first home or move to another property on assignment or as their families' needs change. You must, however, have at least six months left to serve to qualify for the assistance.

<https://www.gov.uk/forces-help-to-buy>

Local Authorities and Housing Associations should also prioritise (for Low Cost Home Ownership) the partners of service personnel whose housing problems resulted from service, this includes widows and widowers of personnel who have been killed in service.

I AM WORRIED THAT I WON'T BE ABLE TO AFFORD MY RENT OR MORTGAGE?

Affordability can be a real issue for some ex Servicemen or women and their families, especially managing the finances of the household.

If you are being supported by a local authority under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, they might ask that you undertake training on financial management and the Welsh Government considers this a suitable and reasonable request.

If, however, you feel that you cannot afford the home that an authority has helped to source for you, you must raise this with your housing options worker within the authority. The legal definition of 'suitable accommodation' requires that it is affordable.

It is also important that you maximise your income by ensuring that you have access to the state benefits that you are entitled to. More information on benefits, including how to apply can be obtained from your local authority, but can also be found:

<https://www.gov.uk/>

CAN I SHARE?

Shared accommodation is an area you may need to explore based on what you can and cannot afford. This may be more prevalent if you require Housing Benefit on discharge, given Housing Benefit may not cover the full cost of your rent if you are under the age of 35.

You should speak to your local authority to understand what shared options may be available to you.

WHAT DOES LOCAL CONNECTION MEAN FOR ME?

Some local authorities have decided to give more priority to people who have a 'local connection' so that people who live or work in the area or who have close family connections have a greater chance of being rehoused than other applicants in need.

A 'local connection' can be established for social housing purposes through residency (excluding those who reside in an area as a result of a prison sentence), employment or a family association. This means that serving members of the Armed Forces, and other persons who normally live with them as part of their household, establish a 'local connection' with an area by virtue of serving, or having served there while in the Armed Forces.

Someone can have a 'local connection' with more than one area, but you should be aware that your housing options might be impacted where you look to live in an area where you have no connection.

WHEN SHOULD I GET IN TOUCH WITH MY LOCAL AUTHORITY?

While the transition process effectively commences from the moment you start in the Armed Forces, approximately six months prior to discharge you should:

Make yourself known to relevant local authority. This is two fold, you can discuss your social and private housing options as well as make yourself (and your discharge date) known within the housing options team.

Consider how you will afford your bond or rent deposit and if necessary begin saving or access a tenancy deposit scheme.

MY DISCHARGE IS FAST APPROACHING AND I AM STILL WITHOUT SOMEWHERE TO STAY.

If you have been unable to secure housing on discharge you will likely be eligible for support from a Welsh local authority to help you find suitable accommodation under the provisions of Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

If you are 56 days away from discharge and you have yet to source accommodation, a local authority will have a duty help you to find suitable accommodation under the duties of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

You should consider contacting the relevant local authority's housing options team to discuss the options available to you. If you have been speaking to Veterans UK or the Joint Services Housing Advice Officer, they will be able to provide you with advice on when to trigger an application.

Where a local authority owes you a duty to support, this will need to be undertaken in partnership, with you taking responsibility for some actions. Page 19 contains more details on the types of activities you might be asked to complete.

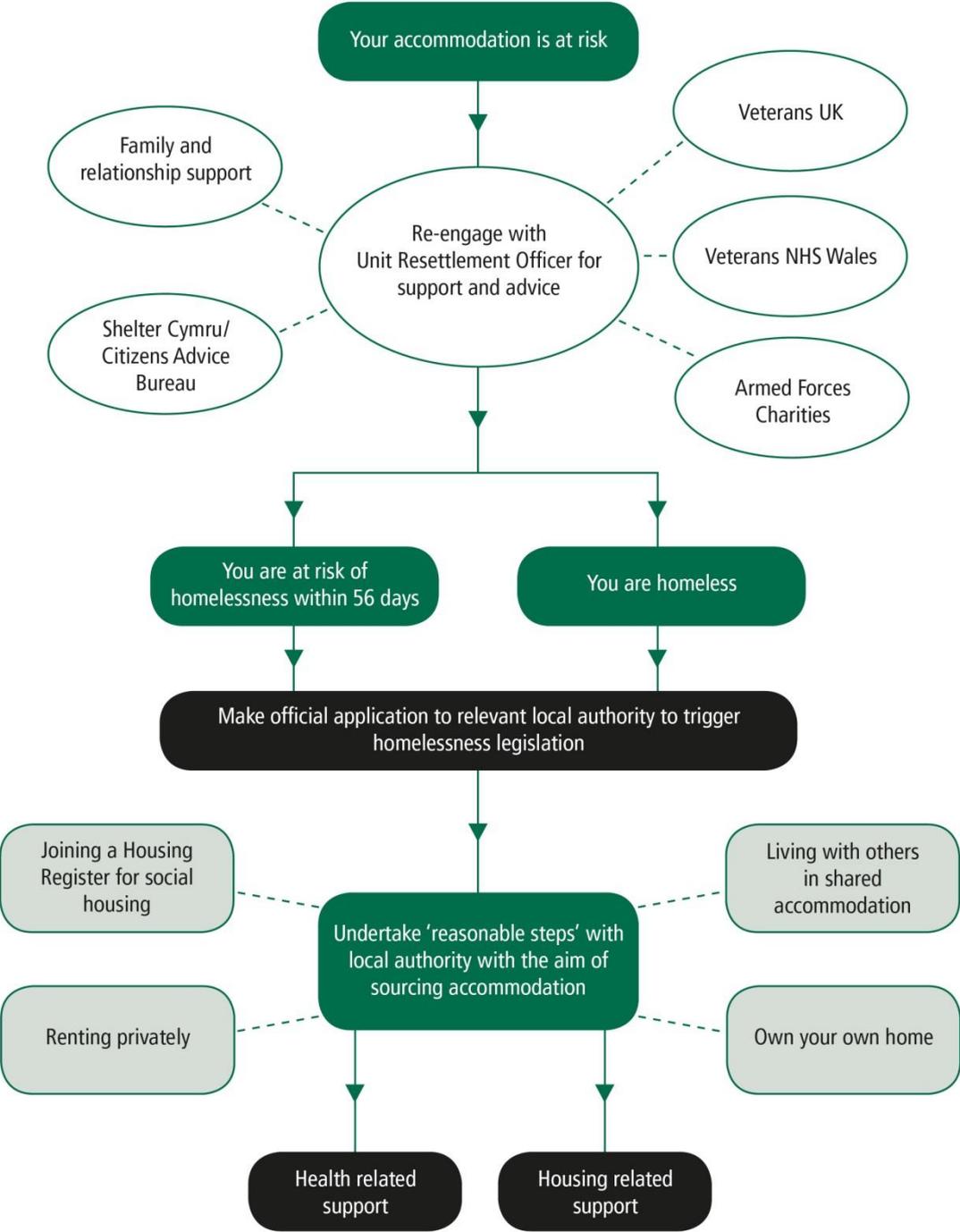
It is vital that you engage with the local authority and fully participate in the 'reasonable steps'. Failure to do so might result in the local authority ending their support to you.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I STILL HAVE NOWHERE TO STAY WHEN I AM DISCHARGED?

It is important that you do everything you possibly can to secure housing before you are discharged. Ideally you will make contact with your local authority around six months prior to departure; however this may not always be possible if you are an early leaver. However, if you are discharged without accommodation, the local authority will have a duty to secure suitable accommodation for you immediately. This may not be in the area you wish to live and is likely to be temporary accommodation. You need to be aware that this will only be the case if you have fully engaged with the 'reasonable steps' process outlined above. You cannot sit out 'reasonable steps' and wait for the authority to have a duty to provide accommodation. This route might also include a brief stay in temporary accommodation while more suitable accommodation is being found.

The accommodation that the Local Authority must provide could be in either the private or social sector and must be expected to last for at least six months. If it ends before the six months is up, through no fault of your own, then you will likely be entitled to further support from the Local Authority.

Accommodation Support available in the Community



POST DISCHARGE SUPPORT

A small percentage of ex Servicemen or women struggle to adjust back to civilian life. This might be the result of the changes of routine or might even be the result of physical or mental health issues that don't manifest themselves until weeks, months or years after discharge.

I AM AT THREAT OF LOSING MY HOME. WHAT HELP CAN I GET?

In addition to the advice services listed above, if you and/or your dependents are threatened with homelessness within 56 days your local authority will have a duty to help you to prevent your homelessness. This will be via the 'reasonable steps' process so you will be expected to undertake some actions while the authority will deliver others. Details of the possible 'reasonable steps' are contained at page 19.

It is vital that you engage with the local authority and fully participate in the 'reasonable steps'. Failure to do so might result in the local authority ending their support to you.

I AM HOMELESS. WHAT HELP CAN I GET?

First of all, do not wait until you become homeless to ask for help. The more time that both you and your local authority have to resolve the issue, the more likely a positive outcome can be achieved, including staying in your current home.

If you are already homeless then you should present to your local authority immediately (a list of contact numbers are attached at page 21). You will likely be eligible for support under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, including the possibility of being eligible to receive immediate temporary accommodation from the local authority.

When making an application to a local authority, you will find it useful to go equipped with the following information:

- Personal details - including date of birth, national insurance number, telephone numbers, and service number if known;
- Brief housing history - including type of accommodation (ie, flat or house), the name of the landlord (and their relationship to the applicant), reason for leaving and length of stay at the property;
- Medical details – including any current health issues, details of current medication, if any, and name of GP if known or whether treatment is being provided via Veterans Wales NHS; and
- Support needs – details of existing support being received including contact details for providers and reason for support being provided.

However, an authority may not have a duty to provide you with temporary accommodation, so you need to consider what friends and family you might be able to reside with while the Authority works with you to source alternative accommodation.

Where a local authority owes you a duty to support, this will need to be undertaken in partnership, with you taking responsibility for some actions. Page 19 contains more details on the types of activities you might be asked to complete.

It is vital that you engage with the local authority and fully participate in the 'reasonable steps'. Failure to do so might result in the local authority ending their support to you.

Dedicated accommodation for former members of the armed forces might be available. However, this will be dependent on availability of accommodation at the time, as well as your specific needs.

There might also be a range of hostels you could access temporarily. The Local Authority will be able to provide you with options.

In addition, there are a range of third sector organisations that might be able to help you such as the Royal British Legion, Haig Housing, First Choice Housing Association, Alabaré, CAIS and Blind Veterans. Contact details for them are at page 20.

I LEFT THE ARMED FORCES SOME TIME AGO. WHAT ARE MY HOUSING OPTIONS NOW?

If you left within the past two years, you will still be able to engage with the transitional process so you should, in the first instance, get back in touch with your unit Resettlement Officer to help understand what support is available.

Even if your discharge was more than two years ago, the unit Resettlement Officer may still help you, so you should contact them in the first instance. However, you should also get in touch with your local authority who will be able to support you either with advice and assistance or with a duty to help you prevent or relieve your homelessness. Contact lists are on page 21.

Regardless of your discharge date, support could also be provided by Veterans UK, (contact details on page 7) contact their Freephone line and explain your circumstances. In addition, you can access support from organisations which provide advice and services to help ex Servicemen and women. Each local authority will have details of what services are available locally.

I AM IN PRISON AND I'VE NO WHERE TO STAY ON RELEASE?

If you are in custody and due for release, there is an existing Pathway designed to support the resettlement for all of those due to leave custody - [The National Pathway for Homelessness Services to Children, Young People and Adults in the Secure Estate](#).

Key to getting the full support included in this Pathway will be your agreement to participate in the resettlement support available from the Community Rehabilitation Company which commences approximately 12 weeks prior to release. Failure to do so might result in a local authority not being aware of your release and might hinder chances of you finding somewhere to stay.

You should ensure your CRC Resettlement Officer from within the prison is aware of your case and can make an application to the relevant Local Authority with the support of your Offender Manager in the Community. Alternatively, you can ask a friend or family member to approach the Local Authority on your behalf.

In addition, as a former member of the armed services you will be eligible for support from SToMP (Supporting Transition of Military Personnel) Prison Liaison Officers and Ex Armed Services prison officer Champions. They can signpost you to specialist

services to help you within custody and prepare for your resettlement post release. Identify yourself as ex armed services personnel to a member of prison staff who will be able to provide you with more information.

I FEAR MY HEALTH IS BEING AFFECTED.

Whilst rare, the stress of working in the Armed Forces can affect Service personnel and their families, and can manifest sometime later with family break-up occurring.

The Welsh Government's Veterans NHS Wales can help in these instances. You can access this service by: www.veteranswales.co.uk.

The Welsh Government is also supportive of improving access to psychological therapies. The funding will support the delivery of therapies - such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and mindfulness - for people of all ages, and will include psychological therapies for veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.

CAN I GET A SOCIAL SERVICES ASSESSMENT?

If you think you need care and support then you should consider asking for an assessment under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. As well as ensuring those who need care and support receive support, the Act also places the individual at the centre of their care to ensure their voice is heard in decision making.

In addition, the legislation also ensures carers, which might include spouses/partners of former members of the forces, have an equal right to an assessment.

To request an assessment, you must contact your relevant local authority (contact details are at page 21).

The assessment will be completed in partnership with you and your family, and the professional working with you. A conversation will take place to establish what matters to you and what you need to achieve well-being. This will consider your strengths, and the resources and options available to you- including any support the local authority may provide.

WHAT IF I AM RECEIVING TREATMENT FOR A MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION?

If you are already receiving treatment for a mental health condition, your care and treatment should be managed by Veterans' NHS Wales via an experienced Veteran Therapist based in each Local Health Board in Wales. Appointment will be arranged as close to the veteran's home as possible in a suitable venue.

If this is not the case, you will need to identify yourself as a former member of the armed forces to ensure your treatment is transferred to the appropriate Veteran Therapist.

<http://www.veteranswales.co.uk/>

Alternatively advice can be obtained from the following 24/7 help lines:

- CALL - 0800 132 737
- Rethink - 0800 138 1619

I WILL NEED SUPPORT TO MAINTAIN THE TENANCY I NOW HAVE

The Supporting People Programme is designed to help people who have housing-related support needs to secure or keep a home by offering a range of suitable support to that person as needed.

If you think you may need support to maintain a tenancy you can also speak to the Supporting People team in your local authority to see if support is available from them. A list of each Supporting People team is contained on page 21.

CAN I GET HELP FOR MY ADDICTIONS?

In Wales DAN 24/7 is the bilingual all-Wales drug and alcohol helpline – 0800 808 2234.

It is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and calls from UK landlines are free (some mobile phone networks may charge). Information is also available via the website - dan247.org.uk

Depending on your local authority area, housing-related support may also be available via the Supporting People Programme. You should ensure your local authority homelessness adviser is aware of your addiction as you work together to resolve your homelessness.

I AM NOT SATISFIED WITH THE LEVEL OF SERVICE I HAVE RECEIVED?

If you feel that your local authority has not fulfilled their duties under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, then you can challenge them.

Shelter Cymru will be able to provide you with independent advice on the details of your case and advise whether a challenge should be made. You can get in touch by ringing the national helpline - 0345 075 5005. Regional officers will be able to support you with your case if there are grounds for a challenge.

GUIDE FOR PRACTITIONERS

This section is aimed at providing additional information for those organisations, both statutory and voluntary, who support former members of the Armed Forces and their dependents who are homeless.

Identification:

Some entrenched rough sleepers can be reluctant to engage with services as a result of poor past experiences and in some cases mental health issues. Some former members of the Armed Forces may also be reluctant to identify themselves for a variety of reasons.

Given the additional support available as a result of the Armed Forces Covenant, it is important that veterans are encouraged to identify themselves and are informed of the benefits of engaging with the new homelessness services as a result of the change in homelessness legislation which means anyone sleeping rough may be eligible for support to find accommodation from the local authority.

Making an Application for Homelessness Services:

The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 allows for an application for homelessness support to be made to a local authority by the individual concerned as well as by anyone acting on behalf of the individual.

When making an application on behalf of a former member of the Armed Forces, it is important that you gather the following information:

- Personal details - including if known date of birth, national insurance number, telephone numbers, and indication this person is a former member of the Armed Forces (including service number if known);
- Brief housing history - including type of accommodation (ie, flat or house), the name of the landlord (and their relationship to the applicant), reason for leaving and length of stay at the property;
- Medical details – including any current health issues, details of current medication, if any, and name of GP if known or whether treatment is being provided via Veterans Wales NHS; and
- Support needs – details of existing support being received including contact details for providers and reason for support being provided.

The local authority may also have a duty to provide temporary accommodation depending on whether they have 'reason to believe' that the applicant fits into one of the ten priority need categories. The priority need category covering Armed Forces leavers does not automatically give priority need to every Armed Forces veteran – it only covers those who are homeless immediately upon leaving the forces. However, priority need could be established under any of the other nine categories.

Further homelessness advice:

Shelter Cymru will be able to provide you with independent advice on your case. You can get in touch by ringing the national helpline – 0345 075 5005.

EXAMPLES OF REASONABLE STEPS

- Engaging with services to resolve disputes between different parties, such as mediation and conciliation;
- Financial payments from a homelessness prevention fund;
- Engaging with specialist advice on welfare/benefit rights and debt/money advice;
- Independent housing advice;
- Joint working between local authorities and Registered Social Landlords to prevent homelessness;
- Joint approaches with other services such as Social Care and Health;
- Engage with domestic abuse services;
- Crisis intervention;
- Referral to a statutory Intensive Family Support Team;
- Applying for Discretionary Housing Payments;
- Employment and training options advice;
- Housing related support;
- Action to resolve anti-social behaviour;
- Options to facilitate access to the Private Rented Sector;
- Action to intervene with mortgage arrears;
- Action to support disabled applicants;
- Access to supported housing;
- Arranging accommodation with relatives and friends;
- Options for the accommodation of vulnerable people;
- Shared housing and/or houses of multiple occupation; or
- Supported lodgings.

ADVICE CONTACT LISTS

Alabaré: http://www.alabare.co.uk Tel: 01722 322 882 Email: enquiries@alabare.co.uk	Blind Veterans: www.blindveterans.org.uk Tel: 0800 389 7979
CAIS: www.cais.co.uk/ Tel: 0345 06 121 12	Citizens Advice Cymru: Advice line – 0344 477 2020
Combat Stress: Tel: 0800 138 1619	DAN 24/7: Drug/alcohol helpline – 0800 808 2234.
First Choice Housing Association: http://www.fcha.org.uk/ Tel: 029 2070 3758	Haig Housing: http://www.haighousing.org.uk/ Tel: 020 8685 5777
Help for Heroes: www.helpforheroes.org.uk Tel: 0808 2020 144 Email: hidden.wounds@helpforheroes.org.uk	Homes for Heroes: National number – 0207 237 6363
Joint Services Housing Advice Office: Email - RC-AWS-JSHAO-0mailbox@mod.uk Advice line 01252 787574	Mind Infoline: Tel: 0300 123 3393
Poppy Factory: https://www.poppyfactory.org/ Email: admin@poppyfactory.org	The Royal British Legion: 18/19 High Street, Cardiff, CF10 1PT Tel: 0808 802 8080
Samaritans: Tel: Free phone: 116 123	Shelter Cymru: Shelter Cymru Live: 0345 075 5005
SPACES: Email - spaces@riverside.org.uk Tel: 01748 833797/872940/830191	SSAFA: National number – 0800 731 4880
Veterans NHS Wales: http://www.veteranswales.co.uk/ CALL - 0800 132 737 Rethink - 0800 138 1619	Veterans UK: Email: veterans-uk@mod.uk Freephone (UK only): 0808 1914 2 18 Telephone (overseas): +44 1253 866 043

DIRECTORY OF WELSH LOCAL AUTHORITIES HOMELESSNESS SERVICES & SUPPORTING PEOPLE TEAMS

Local Authority area	Homelessness	Supporting People
Blaenau Gwent	01495 354 600	Supporting.people@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk 01495 354 685
Bridgend	01656 643 540	Supporting.people@bridgend.gov.uk 01656 643 540 or 01656 643 522
Caerphilly	01495 873 552	supportingpeople@caerphilly.gov.uk 01443 864 548
Cardiff	02920 537 342	supportingpeople@cardiff.gov.uk 029 20537 290
Carmarthenshire	01554 899 259	supportingpeople@carmarthenshire.gov.uk 01267 234 567
Ceredigion	01970 633 396	dss.supportingpeople@ceredigion.gov.uk 01545 574 082
Conwy	01492 576 264	debbie.lambe@conwy.gov.uk 01492 574 229
Denbighshire	01824 712 372	Katie.newe@denbighshire.gov.uk
Flintshire	01352 701 400	admin.supporting.people@flintshire.gov.uk 01352 703 522
Gwynedd	01286 682 608	UnedCefnogiPobl@gwynedd.gov.uk 01286 682 603
Merthyr Tydfil	01685 725 475	Lowri.rees@merthyr.gov.uk
Monmouthshire	01495 742 437	ChrisRobinson@monmouthshire.gov.uk 01633 644 934
Neath Port Talbot	01639 685 219	supportingpeople@npt.gov.uk 01639 685 209
Newport	01633 210 826	supporting.people@newport.gov.uk 01633 414 850
Pembrokeshire	01437 764 551	supporting.people@pembrokeshire.gov.uk , 01437 776675.
Powys	01597 827 464	Adrian.2.jones@powys.gov.uk
Rhondda Cynon Taf	01443 425 005	SupportingPeopleTeam@rhondda-cynon-taff.gov.uk
Swansea	01792 774 320	Supporting.people@swansea.gov.uk 01752 533 700
Torfaen	01495 742 437	supporting.people@torfaen.gov.uk 01495 766 949
Vale of Glamorgan	01446 709 302	supportingpeople@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk 01446 709 793
Ynys Môn/Isle of Anglesey	01248 752 200	supportingpeople@anglesey.gov.uk 01248 750 274
Wrexham	01978 298 993	supportingpeople@wrexham.gov.uk 01978 292 000

DEFINITIONS OF LANGUAGE USED

- “**Domestic abuse**” – refers to the definition of domestic abuse and abuse as outlined in s.58 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014;
- “**Homeless**” refers to the definitions outlined in s.55 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.
- “**Housing Association**” and “**Association**” mean a Registered Social Landlord or Registered Provider of Social Housing which provides social housing in Wales;
- “**Local Authority**” means a Welsh County, or County Borough Council;
- “**Priority need**” refers to the categories listed in section 70 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 which is relevant to duties under section 68 and 75 of the Housing (Wales) Act. Priority need arises where a person formerly serving in the regular Armed Forces of the Crown has been homeless since leaving those forces. Persons included in this definition mean the Royal Navy, the regular forces as defined by S.225 of the Army Act 1955, the regular Air Force as defined by S. 223 of the Air Forces act 1955 and Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service;
- “**Reasonable steps**” refers to the support offered by a Local Authority as per section 65 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014;
- “**Supporting People**” refers to support offered by the Welsh Government funded, Local Authority managed, Supporting People Programme Grant;
- “**Threatened with homeless**” refer to the definitions outlined in s.55 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014;
- “**Vulnerable**” or “**vulnerability**” refers to the specific priority need category as per section 70 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Armed Forces Community Covenant

1. The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise made by the UK Government to ensure that people serving in the Armed Forces do not face disadvantage as a result of their Service. It recognises the whole nation has a moral obligation to members of the Armed Forces and their families. The Armed Forces Act 2011 sets out a statutory requirement for the Secretary of State for Defence to present an annual Armed Forces Covenant Report detailing progress made on the delivery of commitments of the Covenant and new identified commitments.
2. The Welsh Government has developed strong relationships with its key partners, nurturing and promoting the Covenant in Wales. All 22 Local Authorities in Wales have signed a Community Covenant showing their commitment to the Armed Forces community in Wales, offering targeted support and services.

Housing (Wales) Act 2014

3. The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 reflects the Welsh Government commitment to reinforce the prevention of homelessness as set out in its Ten Year Homelessness Plan. It introduces new homelessness legislation, which came into force on 27th April 2015. Key features of the new legislation include:
 - Introducing a new corporate duty for local authorities to take reasonable steps to help people prevent homelessness;
 - Extend the definition of 'threatened with homelessness' from 28 to 56 days;
 - A power rather than a duty to apply the intentionality test;
 - New powers allowing local authorities to discharge their homelessness duty through an offer of suitable private rented sector housing; and
 - Stronger duties on Housing Associations to support local authorities in carrying out their homelessness duties.
4. Where a local authority accepts a duty is owed, they will have to take 'reasonable steps' to support them to return to or find suitable accommodation before they become homeless. The [Code of Guidance for Local Authorities Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness 2016](#) provides detail on how this should be undertaken.
5. The result will be more help for more people either at risk of becoming homeless, or homelessness, while also retaining the safety net for those vulnerable people who need the additional support.
6. Section 70 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 recognises those people who have formerly served in the regular Armed Forces of the Crown and who have been homeless since leaving those forces as being in priority need. However, Veterans may also experience difficulties post-discharge, in adjusting to civilian life. This may include, late onset of trauma, mental health difficulties, problems associated with physical injury and substance misuse. These issues may then result in difficulties in adapting to their new life and in some cases involvement with the criminal justice system. Priority need might not be applicable for these

individuals, the legislation ensures that they will receive support to help them find or retain accommodation.

7. While the early stages of a Local Authority's support is blind to local connection, to be eligible for the section 75 duty to secure accommodation, a local authority might consider someone's local connection to their area. Section 81 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 sets out the legal basis for establishing a local connection to an area. Factors that should give someone a local connection would include whether someone has been a normal resident in a particular area in the past, been employed there or has a family association there.
8. The Act also provides additional support for those leaving the Armed Forces. Section 52 (Homelessness strategies) ensure that each local authority must consider ex-Servicemen and women when developing their homelessness strategies, while section 60 ensures that the advice and assistance service that each authority must have in place, is tailored to meet the needs of those who once served in the Armed Forces, amongst other groups.
9. In order to meet the requirements under section 52 and 60, local authorities are urged to develop fact sheets that can be provided to service personnel who enquire with the authority both before and after discharge. These fact sheets should also include the services available locally both via the covenant and other housing-related funding programmes.

Housing Act 1996

10. While the homelessness legislation contained in the Housing Act 1996 is no longer relevant to Wales, Part 6 (as amended in 2002) is still in place in Wales and provides the legislation covering the allocation of social housing.
11. Section 167(2) of the Housing Act 1996 gives local authorities the power to frame their allocation schemes so as to give additional preference to particular descriptions of people who fall within the reasonable preference categories and who have urgent housing needs.
12. All Local Authorities must consider, in the light of local circumstances, the need to give effect to this provision. People needing accommodation as a result of leaving the Armed Forces is a category of people to whom a Local Authority should consider giving additional preference within their allocation scheme.

Supporting People Programme Grant

13. The Supporting People Programme plays a significant part in helping to prevent homelessness and in helping people to deal with the consequences of it. The Programme helps people to find and keep accommodation and helps others to avoid becoming homeless and to live as independently as possible.
14. As a result, it can make a significant contribution to the support available to those leaving the Armed Forces who have an identified support needs.
15. Funding is allocated via local authorities and is deployed according to local needs and priorities.

Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014

16. The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 came into force in Wales in April 2016. While former Service personnel do not have priority access under the legislation, the whole Act is focused on promoting people's opportunity for wellbeing and optimising an appropriate level of independence.
17. Under the Act a local authority must offer an assessment to any adult where it appears to that authority that the adult may have needs for care and support. The assessment will be conducted through a respectful conversation whereby the individual can determine their own personal outcomes and take full part in discussions about how they can be supported to best achieve them.
18. Housing staff should know about the changes under the Act, and to the new national eligibility criteria that applies in Wales, and ensure that any ex-Service personnel seeking housing support are made aware of how they can be assessed if they have any care and support needs.
19. Further details about the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 is available at: <http://www.ccwales.org.uk/the-act/>

Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010

20. The Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010 came into effect in 2012 and includes the provision of Local Primary Mental Health Services which enable better access to services for initial assessment, advice, information and treatment at a primary care level. The Measure also ensures all those receiving secondary mental health services have a holistic care and treatment plan which considers the eight areas of life, one of which is a person's accommodation needs.
21. In October 2012, the Welsh Government launched its new Strategy for Mental Health and Wellbeing in Wales, 'Together for Mental Health'. This strategy has a comprehensive cross sector approach which addresses the range of needs which impact on mental health, including housing.

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/health/publications/health/reports/report-2013/?lang=en>