# Advice for former members of the regular armed forces

The Chichester District Armed Forces Community Covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between the district council and its local armed forces community.

You can read more on the Council’s website:

<http://www.chichester.gov.uk/article/25748/The-Armed-Forces-Community-Covenant>

If you are a serving member of the regular armed forces the MOD is responsible for helping you and your family with accommodation. This document provides information for former members of the regular armed forces and those who are due to leave shortly.

## Serving members of the Armed Forces who are due to be discharged

If you are due to be discharged, currently accommodated by the MOD, and not sure how to find accommodation for when you leave you should seek housing advice as soon as you know your discharge date. There are some additional housing options available for those who have served in the armed forces.

## Who is a Former Member of the Regular Armed Forces?

A former serving member of the Armed Forces is someone who has served at least one day in Her Majesty’s Armed Forces, either as a regular or reserve member. You will have an armed forces service number.

## What help is available?

Once you know your discharge date you should be thinking about future housing options for you and your family. The Council can provide you with advice on securing accommodation. Options will likely include:

* privately rented accommodation
* securing lodgings
* supported housing
* specialist housing for ex-service people
* applying for the housing register (long-term option)

You may receive a termination payment on leaving the armed forces. This is often called a lump sum Resettlement Grant (RG) and is, in part, to help you adjust to civilian life. The Council recommends that you use part of this payment to help you secure accommodation.

### Private rented sector

Many members of the armed forces have never rented privately before. This is the most accessible form of accommodation. Typical costs of securing accommodation are a month’s rent in advance, a month’s rent as a damage deposit and £300 for other fees. You can search for accommodation via online platforms such as Rightmove & Zoopla or by contacting letting agents directly on the high street or through your local newspaper’s property section. You will usually need to pass credit checks and provide references. Without references from former landlords the ability to pay 6 months’ rent up-front might put you in a good position to negotiate. Otherwise you may be asked to prove that you have a household income that will allow you to afford the rent. A guarantor may be requested if you do not have a high enough earned income. The private rented sector provides you and your family with a good amount of protection from eviction unless your breach your tenancy agreement. Landlords are required to serve you with two months’ notice if they want you to leave.

### Lodgings

Seeking room rentals in shared accommodation is an easily accessible option for single people. Typically the cost of a room in a shared house might be 60% of the price of self-contained accommodation. You will likely be asked to pay a month’s rent in advance and a small damage deposit. You will have shared access to kitchen and bathroom facilities and there may be a communal living area. If you live with your landlord you will be entitled to “reasonable” notice when they want you to leave. If your landlord does not live in the property you will have the same rights as any other privately rented tenant.

### Specialist housing for ex-service people

Organisations such as Alabare Homes for Veterans and Haig Housing Trust provide support and accommodation for people who have served in the armed forces. There are options for single people and families and cover a range of different needs. Nearby housing projects are in Hampshire and Surrey.

**Alabare** - is a charity that supports vulnerable, homeless and marginalised people.

Website: [www.alabare.co.uk/](http://www.alabare.co.uk/)

Phone: 01722 322882

### The Housing Register

This is the waiting list in Chichester for social housing properties available to let through registered providers of social housing such as Hyde Housing and Clarion. There is no ‘council housing’ in Chichester. You must have a ‘local connection’ to the Chichester District to be eligible but there are armed forces exemptions for:

* members of the Armed Forces and former Service personnel, where the application is made within five years of discharge.
* bereaved spouses and civil partners of members of the Armed Forces leaving Services Family Accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner.
* serving or former members of the Reserve Forces who need to move because of serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service.

You can make an application to the housing register [on](http://www.chichester.gov.uk/affordablehousingtorent) our website.

[www.chichester.gov.uk](http://www.chichester.gov.uk)

### If you are homeless

If you have no accommodation available to you can contact local charity [Stonepillow](https://stonepillow.org.uk/) for assistance through the Hub in St Cyriacs, Chichester. Stonepillow runs hostels and supported housing projects in Chichester, Bognor Regis and Littlehampton.

The Council can also provide you with advice and you may be eligible for emergency housing if you meet certain criteria of being homeless, eligible and vulnerable as a result of your service in the armed forces.

When deciding this, the Council will consider:

* how long you served in the armed forces and what role you had.
* if you spent any time in a military hospital.
* if you were released from service on medical grounds (and have a Medical History Release Form).
* if you have had accommodation since leaving service and if you have been able to obtain or maintain accommodation since you left.
* how long it has been since you left service.

In order for the Council to consider your full options you will be asked to provide:

* identification for you and your family.
* your Armed Forces service number.
* your ‘Certificate of Cessation of Entitlement to Occupy Service Accommodation’ if you are a current serving member and in Ministry of Defence accommodation.
* your tenancy agreement and any notices you have been given to leave your current accommodation.
* proof of your current income and savings (including pay slips and benefit award letters).
* the last three months’ bank statements.
* proof of any other capital you have (such as ISAs or shares).
* evidence of your Resettlement Grant when leaving the armed forces.
* your Certificate of Service if you have already left service.

Please also advise your housing advice officer if you or your partner own or have access to property or accommodation in the United Kingdom or overseas.

The Council will consider all housing options for you and advise if you are entitled to emergency accommodation. This accommodation will remain available to you until the Council discharges its duties. You should be pro-active in seeking accommodation as described above under “what help is available?”.

## Who else can help you?

There are a range of third party services available to help serving and former members of the Regular Armed Forces:

## General Advice & Support

**Veterans’ Housing Advice** – housing advice to any veteran in need of assistance to sustain or access accommodation.

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

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

Phone: 0808 801 0880 (365 days a year, 8am-8pm)

**Veterans’ Gateway** – advice for veterans across a range of support services.

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

Phone: 0808 802 1212 (24-hour helpline)

**Royal British Legion** – lifelong support for the armed forced community. Serving men, women, veterans and their families.

Website: [www.britishlegion.org.uk](http://www.britishlegion.org.uk)

Phone: 0808 802 8080 (365 days a year, 8am-8pm)

**SSAFA (The Armed Forced Charity)** – exists to relieve need, suffering and distress amongst the Armed Forces, veterans and their families in order to support their independence and dignity.

Website: [www.ssafa.org.uk](http://www.ssafa.org.uk)

Phone: 0800 731 4880 (Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm)

**Help for Heroes** – lifetime support for the armed forces community and their families.

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

Phone: 0300 303 9888 (Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm)

## Accommodation Options

**Alabare Homes for Veterans** – supported accommodation for veterans at risk of becoming homeless.

Website: [www.homesforveterans.co.uk](http://www.homesforveterans.co.uk)

**Stonepillow** – Chichester and Arun based charity providing homelessness day and hostels services to anybody affected by homelessness.

Website: [www.stonepillow.org.uk](http://www.stonepillow.org.uk)

Phone: 01243 537 934

**Stoll** – housing and helping veterans with outreach (accommodation located in London and Aldershot).

Website: [www.stoll.org.uk](http://www.stoll.org.uk)

## Mental & Physical Health Support

**Combat Stress** – veterans’ mental health charity with a free national helpline.

Website: [www.combatstress.org.uk](http://www.combatstress.org.uk)

Phone: 0800 138 1619 (24 hours)

**Help for Heroes (H4H) Hidden Wounds** – free and confident support to current and former armed forces members living with PTSD, anxiety, depression, stress anger or seeking to change their substance of alcohol habits.

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

Phone: 0808 202 0144 (Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm)

**Veterans Mental Health Programme (NHS service)** – NHS services aimed at meeting the specific needs of veterans.

Website: [www.veterans-uk.info](http://www.veterans-uk.info)

Phone: 0300 365 0300 (referrals for South Central Veterans Service)

**Walking with the Wounded** – supports pathways for vulnerable veterans to integrate back into society and sustain independence.

Website: [www.walkingwiththewounded.org.uk](http://www.walkingwiththewounded.org.uk)

**The Warrior Programme** – personal motivation and training programme to help veterans take control of their lives and increase confidence focussing on health and balanced lifestyles for those post-operations.

Website: [www.warriorprogramme.org.uk](http://www.warriorprogramme.org.uk)

[enquiries@warriorprogramme.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@warriorprogramme.org.uk)

Phone: 0808 801 0898

**The Reserves Mental Health Programme (RMHP)** – assessments and support for reservists who have concerns about their mental health due to service

Website: [www.gov.uk/guidance/support-for-war-veterans](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/support-for-war-veterans)

**Samaritans** – emotional support to anyone in emotional distress, struggling to cope or at risk of suicide.

Website: [www.samaritans.org.uk](http://www.samaritans.org.uk)

Phone: 0845 790 9090 (24 hours)

**Time To Talk** – talking therapy services for people who are struggling with stress, anxiety, depression, PTSD, panic attacks, bereavement and other mental health issues. Usually accessible through your GP in West Sussex.

Website: <https://www.sussexcommunity.nhs.uk/services/servicedetails.htm?DirectoryID=16358>

Phone: 01273 265 967 (Chichester area self-referrals)

## Further Support Services

**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.

Telephone: 020 8590 1124

Website: [www.blesma.org](http://www.blesma.org)

**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.

Phone: 0207 723 5021

Website: [www.blindveterans.org.uk](http://www.blindveterans.org.uk)

**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 the nearest centre to Chichester being the Prosthetic Rehabilitation Department at Portsmouth Hospitals NHS trust.

**Action on Hearing Loss** - Action on Hearing Loss is the largest UK charity helping people who are confronting deafness, tinnitus and hearing loss.

Phone: 0808 808 0123

Textphone: 0808 808 9000

Website:[www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk](http://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk)

**Change Grow Live (CGL) -** CGL provide help and support to adults, children, young people and families. Their services cover a wide variety of areas including health and wellbeing, substance use, mental health, criminal justice, domestic abuse and homelessness.

Phone:0300 303 8677

Website: [Westsussex.contact@cgl.org.uk](mailto:Westsussex.contact@cgl.org.uk)

**Army Families Federation (AFF) -** 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.

Website: [www.aff.org.uk](http://www.aff.org.uk)

**The Naval Families Federation -** 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.

Website: [www.nff.org.uk](http://www.nff.org.uk)

**The RAF Benevolent Fund -** 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.

Website: [www.rafbf.org](http://www.rafbf.org)

**The RAF Families Federation**

Website: [www.raf-ff.org.uk](http://www.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.

**The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity** - 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.

Website: [www.rnrmc.org.uk](http://www.rnrmc.org.uk)

## **Support for Families and Carers**

**The Maria Hanson Foundation -** Based in Derby, the Maria Hanson Foundation provide holidays for adults and children facing life threatening and life shortening conditions and military members with serious psychological and physical injuries in their two holiday homes which are based in Mablethorpe, Lincolnshire.

Phone: 01332 297 011

Website: [www.meanddee.co.uk](http://www.meanddee.co.uk)

**Military Kids Club (MKC)** - MKC Heroes is a unique pupil voice group formed in the City of Plymouth, but now has gone national, for the support of Service children and young people. This group works, actively, in harmony, to ensure that every member has a voice and is able to use it for the benefit of all. Members of MKC Heroes are their areas ambassadors and young advocates for Service families. Most importantly, they are friends for each other, especially in times of need.

Website: [www.mkcheroes.co.uk](http://www.mkcheroes.co.uk)

**Sussex Carers** - With more than 19,000 carers currently registered with the charity, Sussex Carers run support groups, a carer response line, help carers access equipment to assist them in their caring role or provide funds so that carers can do something for themselves.  We can also help carers access counselling and call back services, wellbeing support and have teams in all the of the major hospitals in West Sussex, as well as East Surrey Hospital in Redhill.

Phone: 0300 028 8888 (9.00 to 17.00 Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 9.00 to 19.00 on Wednesday, 10.00 to 12.00 on Saturday).

Website: [www.carerssupport.org.uk](http://www.carerssupport.org.uk)

**The Ripple Pond** - The Ripple Pond was set up by two mothers of seriously wounded servicemen who recognised that no similar service existed purely for adult family members, and who found **strength and comfort by sharing and supporting each other** through such a unique challenge.

Phone: 01252 913 012 (9.30 to 14.30 Monday to Friday)

Website: [www.theripplepond.org](http://www.theripplepond.org)