

Written response to: Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel members

Resolution:

That the Homeless, Prevention and Accommodation Services Manager provide further information on the support provided for ex-service people.

Written response from:

Homeless, Prevention and Accommodation Services Manager

Response:

The Secretary of State for Defence is subject to the duty to refer in relation to the members of the regular forces; this is a requirement to refer members of the regular forces in England who are threatened with homelessness within 56 days or who are homeless to a local housing authority with the individuals consent.

The principal responsibility for providing housing information and advice to service personnel lies with the armed forces up to the point of discharge. Housing authorities have a duty to provide advisory services free of charge to people in their district. The service must be designed to meet the needs of certain groups, which include former members of the regular armed forces.

A person who is vulnerable as a direct result of having been a member of her majesty's regular armed forces (a veteran) has a priority need for accommodation. Veterans include a person who was previously a member of the regular naval, military or air forces.

In considering whether a veteran is vulnerable as a direct result of their time spent in the forces, a housing authority may take in to account:

- a) The length of time the applicant spent in the armed forces;
- b) The type of service the applicant was engaged in;
- c) Whether the applicant spent any time in a military hospital;
- d) Whether HM Forces medical and welfare advisors have judged an individual to be particularly vulnerable in their view and have issued a Medical History Release Form giving a summary of circumstances causing that vulnerability;
- e) The length of time since the applicant left the armed forces, and whether they have been able to obtain and/or maintain accommodation during that time;
- f) Whether the applicant has any existing support networks, particularly by way of family or friends.

Where service personnel are required to vacate service quarters due to taking up an option to give notice to leave the service, and in doing so are acting in compliance with their contractual engagement, they should not be considered to have become homeless intentionally.

Locally, there are several specialist organisations that Carlisle City Council work closely with to assist veterans in meeting their wider support and resettlement needs, in addition to accommodation.

2018/19 to date, the Council has assisted 11 households who stated they have served in the armed forces, 10 single males and 1 family with a dependent child.

Date:

February 2019