

# Advice Guide

## Advice for ex-forces personnel and their families

**There is a range of information and services available to Service leavers and veterans to assist them with accessing and maintaining suitable accommodation both on discharge and later in life.**

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## Advice and information

The principal responsibility for providing housing information and advice to Service Personnel lies with the armed forces up to the point of discharge. These services are delivered through the [Joint Service Housing Advice Office](#) and through [Veterans UK](#).

## Applying as homeless before discharge from the forces

Contact the Council's Housing Solutions service if you think you will be homeless after discharge from the services. The Council will not wait until you are made homeless before it offers you advice and assistance.

## Contacts details for Exeter City Council's Housing Solutions Service

**Online:** [Contacting us for housing advice - Exeter City Council](#)

**Address:** Civic Centre, Paris Street, Exeter EX1 1JN

**Tel:** 01392 265726

**If you are homeless outside of normal office hours (Monday-Friday 9am-5pm, excluding bank holidays) or at the weekend then please contact Exeter City Council's Out Of Hours Number:- 01392 265147 for assistance**

## What to do if you are homeless or threatened with homelessness?

If you are homeless or threatened with homelessness then it is important to seek advice at the earliest opportunity. Please contact us so that we can arrange an appointment with you to discuss your housing options.

If you have been asked to leave service accommodation then we will ask you to provide a copy of the MOD Certificate of Cessation of Entitlement to

Occupy Service Accommodation. The certificate will indicate the date on which entitlement to occupy service accommodation ends.

## Temporary Accommodation

It can be easier to get temporary accommodation if you qualify under general rules for people in priority need, for example if you have dependent children or are vulnerable. If you are vulnerable we may ask you to provide information on how a disability, mental health problem or any other issue affects your ability to secure housing for yourself compared with other people who are rendered homeless.

For further information on the priority need categories and for information on vulnerability of members of the armed forces check out the link '[Priority Need](#)',

If you do have a priority need, Exeter City Council may have a duty to provide you with Temporary Accommodation. For further guidance on accommodation duties see [Chapter 15. Section 193\(2\) of the 1996 Act](#) requires housing authorities to secure accommodation for applicants who have a priority need for accommodation and who are homeless.

## Local connection

A person has a local connection with the district of a housing authority if they have a connection with it because:

- (a) they are, or were in the past, normally resident there, and that residence was of their own choice; or,
- (b) they are employed there; or,
- (c) they have family associations living there; or,
- (d) of any special circumstances.

Former members of the armed forces can establish a local connection through residence or employment in the same way as a civilian.

There are 8 local Authority Districts that make up 'New Devon'. These are:-

- [East Devon District Council](#)
- [Exeter City Council](#)
- [Mid Devon District Council](#)
- [North Devon District Council](#)
- [South Hams District Council](#)
- [Teignbridge District Council](#)

- [Torrige District Council](#)
- [West Devon Borough Council](#)

You don't need to have a local connection to apply to go on the Council's housing register if you are serving in the armed forces or left in the last 5 years.

## Emergency Homeless Services

There are a range of services for people who find themselves homeless and on the streets, for example:

- Day centres are a useful source of practical support – they provide a warm place to stay during the day and food, clothing, laundry facilities and showers. In Exeter, St Petrocks and Co-lab offer services to people who are homeless. Ask our team for more information on 01392 265726.
- The [Royal British Legion](#) might be able to help with a rent deposit
- [SSAFA provide housing advice](#) to people currently serving in the forces and ex services personnel and their families.
- Use the [Homeless England directory](#) to find details of other day centres and hostels across the UK.

## Further housing support and advice by Veterans' Gateway

[Veterans' Gateway](#) is a service which provides clear pathways for ex-Service personnel in housing need throughout the United Kingdom to move into permanent homes. It is also the first point of contact for veterans seeking support.

Veterans' Gateway is made up of a consortium of organisations and Armed Forces charities, including The Royal British Legion, SSAFA – the Armed Forces Charity, Poppyscotland, Combat Stress and Connect Assist. Its main aim is to make accessing the services of charities easier and a team is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to put you in touch with the help you need, or direct you to the information you are looking for.

The Veterans' Gateway also provides a [Self Help service](#) to find information for yourself. This includes advice from a range of organisations covering issues from employment, finances and housing, to independent living, mental wellbeing, physical health, and families and communities.

## Veterans' Gateway Support

Tel: **0808 802 1212**

Lines open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## Social Housing Access

### How to Apply

All Council Housing and Registered Social Landlords Properties are [advertised through Devon Home Choice](#). Devon Home Choice is a way of looking for council and housing association homes.

Under Devon Home Choice you can:

- Choose which homes interest you
- Move within Devon

Anyone over 16 years old can register with Devon Home Choice, except for:

- Certain people from abroad with limited rights to remain in the United Kingdom. For more information please [contact the local housing team in the area of Devon you would like to live](#).
- People who are not subject to immigration control and have a right of admission to the UK but have not been habitually resident in the UK, Channel Islands, Isle of Man or the Republic of Ireland (the Common Travel Area). For more information please [contact the local housing team in the area of Devon you would like to live](#).
- People assessed by Devon local authorities as being guilty of unacceptable behaviour. For example, significant rent arrears or anti-social behaviour. For more information please see the Devon Home Choice policy on the [Useful Information page](#) or [contact the local housing team in the area of Devon you would like to live](#)

### How to register with Devon Home Choice

The easiest way to register with Devon Home Choice is by [completing the online application form](#).

It should take about 30 minutes to complete the online form. Please ensure that you make a note of your unique login reference number, password and memorable date.

Your application will be saved each time you complete a Section and click 'Next Section' or 'Previous Section'. You can return to a part-completed application by clicking 'Log In/My Account' and entering your reference number, memorable date and password.

Please note that you may be asked to provide further information once your online application form has been assessed.

Your online application must be completed within 28 days of initial registration. Any incomplete application forms will be cancelled after this time.

If you are not able to apply online [please contact the local housing team in the area of Devon you would like to live](#).

For your application to be processed and accepted you need to:

- Complete the application form fully, ensuring you answer all of the mandatory questions. These are marked with an \*
- Provide any extra information requested on the application form or by the local housing team in the area of Devon where you would like to live once they have received your application

[Please contact the local housing team in the area of Devon you would like to live](#) if you:

- Have any questions about the application form
- Would like help filling the form in
- Need the form in another language, in large print, on audio tape or in other formats
- Require further support, such as translation services to help with your application

## Members of the Armed and Reserve Forces

The following is taken from **section 3.6.3** of [Devon Home Choice Policy](#)

The local connection provision will not apply to members of the armed forces and some former service personnel etc. **Therefore if you have been discharged from the Armed Forces within the last 5 years, you will not need a Local Connection to Devon in order to apply to register with Devon home Choice.**

The Housing Act 1996 (Additional Preference for Armed Forces) (England) Regulations 2012 came into force in November 2012, requiring local authorities to provide additional preference to households who fall within one

or more of the reasonable preference categories (see above) and who have urgent housing needs, where the applicant or a resident member of their household who might reasonably be expected to reside with them satisfies one of the following categories:

- (i) s/he is serving in the regular forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to the person's service,
- (ii) s/he formerly served in the regular forces,
- (iii) s/he has recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled, to reside in accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following the death of that person's spouse or civil partner who has served in the regular forces and whose death was attributable (wholly or partly) to that service, or
- (iv) s/he is serving or has served in the reserve forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to the person's service.

The Devon local authorities have agreed to apply this legislation by placing the application of the types of person set out above in Band C, where they would otherwise have been placed in Band D. This ensures that such applicants are provided with additional preference over those applicants in Band D, who are provided with reasonable preference only.

Local authorities will not take into account any lump sum received by a member of the Armed Forces as compensation for an injury or disability sustained on active service into account when assessing whether they have sufficient resources to meet their own housing need.

## **The Hub**

### **Armed Forces Community Support**

Focus on stabilising the client's needs then helping them back into work, training or education thus helping ex-military and those still serving to become active, healthy, working citizens or move towards a meaningful occupation, reducing unemployment and re-skilling ex-military personnel.

**Find out more at:** [HUB - Armed Forces Hub South West](#)

**Contact:** Mark - 07948 034992 or Gary - 07496 269460

**E-mail:** mark@armedforceshub.org or gary@armedforceshub.org



### **Opening hours**

Mon-Thurs: 0900-1700

Friday: 0900-1300

Weekend: CLOSED

### **Other useful contacts**

- [SSAFA](#) – Tel: 0800 731 4880
- [Royal British Legion](#) – Tel: 0808 802 8080
- [Shelter](#) – 0808 1644 660
- [Combat Stress](#) – 0800 138 1619
- [Connect Assist](#) – 01443 827 600

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