

Help for you if you are an ARMED FORCES VETERAN



What is this factsheet about?

This factsheet provides information to British Armed Forces Veterans who are seeking housing advice from Cambridge City Council. It contains information on support that is available to you, and ideas for finding somewhere to live.

Veterans' Housing Advice

Veterans' Housing Advice is a national telephone helpline, which is open 7 days a week, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. The service aims to make it easier for forces veterans to access the services of specialist organisations. They can help you with:

- Finding temporary accommodation with support;
- Finding settled accommodation, with or without support;
- Targeted help if you are unable to buy or rent property on the open market;
- 'Floating support' – to help you keep settled accommodation that you might otherwise be at risk of losing.

The direct number to speak to an advisor is **0808 801 0880**.

Getting on the housing register (Home-Link)

Affordable housing is in very short supply in Cambridge. However, we do accept applications onto the Home-Link scheme from anyone who is eligible, and who can demonstrate a local connection to the city. We will consider you have a connection if you are a serving member of the Armed Forces, or have been discharged from the Forces within the last 5 years. You will also qualify if you are a bereaved spouse leaving services Family Accommodation, or are a former or serving member of the reserve Forces who needs to move because of injury or illness sustained as a result of service.

We provide additional priority for you, if you can prove your Armed or Reserve Forces service history, or if you are a bereaved partner of a member of the Armed Forces, who is leaving Services Family Accommodation.

We give additional priority by backdating your 'date in band' by the total cumulative period of your (or your partner's) length of military service. This will have the effect of raising your priority above applicants in similar circumstances, who have not undertaken military service.

If you are still serving, and can provide evidence of when your military service will end, you can ask for this priority to be added to your application, up to six months prior to your end date.

The details are contained within section 2.4 of the Council's Lettings Policy (see <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/sites/default/files/lettings-policy.pdf>).

Project Nova

Project Nova specifically provides support to those ex-service personnel who have an offending history, or who are at risk of offending, perhaps because of alcohol or drugs, or difficulty in finding

work and adjusting to civilian life. Project Nova works in the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire areas. Call them on **0800 917 7299** or email **info.nst@projectnova.org.uk**.

Threatened with homelessness?

If you are think you will be made homeless in the next 56 days, and you cannot find your own alternative accommodation, you can approach any local authority in England, and ask for assistance. Provided you are eligible, the council will assess your needs, and draw up a plan to help you resolve your housing problem.

This plan will include the steps that you and the council will take to find a solution. This might involve, for example, negotiating with your landlord, securing debt advice, providing interest-free loans, maximising benefits, or getting help with training or work.

Cambridge City Council also has a number of specific 'homelessness prevention' schemes that may be appropriate for you, including these:

- Our *Access Scheme* provides deposit guarantees for renting in the private sector;
- Our *Single Homeless Service* helps single people with low support needs into shared houses;
- Our *HB+* scheme provides rent top-ups, if there is a shortfall in housing benefit for renting a private sector property. The top-ups last for up to 2 years, while we help you improve your employment situation, so that you don't need this financial help any more.

Already homeless?

If we are satisfied that you are eligible, and do not have accommodation anywhere that you have a right to occupy, and can gain access to, we will try to help you resolve your homelessness. If we have reason to believe you are in a priority need group, we will provide you with temporary accommodation, while we try and help you to find a more permanent solution. When assessing if you are in priority need, we will consider whether you are vulnerable, and will take into account your experiences in the forces and the effect they have had on you.

Whether you are in priority need or not, we will try and relieve your homelessness for a period of 56 days. If we are unable to help you find a home during this 'relief period', and you are in priority need (and have co-operated with us), we may then make you a direct offer of housing.

If you need to contact us

Visit:

Customer Services Centre,
Mandela House,
4 Regent Street,
CB2 1BY

Email to: housing.advice@cambridge.gov.uk,
or

Post to:
PO Box 700,
Cambridge
CB1 0JH.