



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

# Improving access to social housing for members of the Armed Forces, Veterans, and their families

## Summary of responses to the Consultation

June 2020

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government



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# Introduction

1. The Armed Forces Covenant 2011 is a promise from the nation to those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether regular or reserve. It commits that they should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public services. It also recognises that special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given the most, such as the injured and bereaved.
2. We published a consultation on 9 January 2019 setting out proposals for new statutory guidance for local authorities on how they can assist members of the Armed Forces, Veterans, and their families to access social housing. The proposals would:
  - Bring together, update and build on existing statutory allocations guidance on the Armed Forces community issued in 2012 and 2013;
  - Make clear that local authorities are expected to disapply any local connection requirements for divorced or separated spouses or civil partners of service personnel required to move out of accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence (MOD);
  - Set out how local authorities can ensure members of the Armed Forces and Veterans are given appropriate priority for social housing when suffering from mental ill health; and
  - Set out how local authorities can identify applications from members of the Armed Forces and Veterans to ensure that they are considered appropriately.

# Overview

3. The consultation closed on 8 March 2019.
4. This document summarises the responses to the consultation paper. We received 233 responses. We heard from 127 organisations: 106 from local authority or local authority representative bodies, 8 Armed Forces charities and representative organisations, 7 housing associations, and 6 other organisations. We also heard from 106 individuals, of whom 65 identified as members of the Armed Forces or Veterans.
5. We are grateful to all those who took the time to respond. This document summarises the responses to the questions raised in the consultation and provides the Government's response. The responses have supported the development of the statutory guidance which is published alongside this summary.
6. In summarising the responses, due to rounding numbers may not add up to 100% on certain questions.

# Summary of Responses

**Question 1: Do you agree with the proposal to use statutory guidance to strongly encourage the exemption from local connection requirements of divorced or separated spouses or civil partners of Service personnel who are required to move out of accommodation that has been provided by the Ministry of Defence?**

7. There were 228 responses to this question. 198 (87%) respondents agreed with the proposal, 12 (5%) disagreed, and 18 (8%) were undecided. There were 105 responses from local authorities or local authority representative bodies, eight from Armed Forces related charities and organisations, six from housing associations and six from other organisations. Additionally, 103 private individuals responded, of whom 65 were members of the Armed Forces or Veterans.
8. 139 respondents provided further comments in response to this question. 87 were from local authorities, six were from Armed Forces charities and organisations, five were from housing associations and five were from other stakeholders. There were 36 from private individuals.

## Local Authorities and Representative Bodies

9. Of the 105 local authorities and representative bodies that responded to this question, 90 (86%) agreed, six (6%) disagreed and nine (9%) were undecided.
10. A small number of local authorities who agreed with the proposal said that they had already included this provision in their allocation scheme.
11. Some respondents said that such an exemption should only apply for the initial move from Ministry of Defence provided accommodation, while others took the view that applications should be assessed on a case by case basis. A small number of local authorities suggested that the proposal would benefit from further clarity. While some respondents asked that sufficient lead-in time should be allowed to enable them to amend their allocation policies, one suggested that the Government should go further and make it a legal requirement with appropriate funding.

## Armed Forces Charities and Organisations

12. Seven of the eight (88%) Armed Forces charities and organisations responding to the question agreed with the proposal, while one (12%) was undecided. The vast majority said that this proposal would help to ensure divorced and separated spouses or civil partners are not disadvantaged for time spent supporting their partner's service career. Some also commented about the need to ensure that separated or divorced spouses and civil partners are able to move to access support networks.

13. Some said that the proposal did not go far enough. Suggestions included extending the exemption to:

- spouses and civil partners for five years after relationship breakdown
- any partner of serving personnel
- where Service families have themselves secured private accommodation

14. The importance of monitoring and evaluating implementation of the proposal was also raised.

### **Other respondents**

15. All six (100%) of the other stakeholder organisations responding to the consultation agreed with the proposal, outlining how this proposal would assist Armed Forces families to settle into civilian life.

16. Individual responses to the consultation showed a high level of support for the proposal with 72 (88%) agreeing, three (4%) disagreeing and seven (9%) being undecided. Respondents highlighted the importance of removing disadvantage in accessing housing following relationship breakdown. Some respondents also mentioned the benefit of the proposal in limiting the impact of relationship breakdown on children by, for example, preventing the need for them to move school.

**Question 2: Do you agree with the proposal to use statutory guidance to make clear the circumstances in which we would expect local authorities to apply the ‘medical and welfare’ reasonable preference category and the additional preference requirements to ensure members of the Armed Forces and Veterans suffering from mental ill health are given appropriate priority for social housing? Views are sought on the advantages and disadvantages of this proposal.**

17. There were 206 responses to this question. 182 (88%) respondents agreed with the proposal, ten (5%) disagreed, and 14 (7%) were undecided. There were 102 responses from local authorities or local authority representative bodies, eight from Armed Forces related charities and organisations, five from housing associations and five from other organisations. Additionally, 86 private individuals responded, of whom 57 were members of the Armed Forces or Veterans.

18. 135 respondents provided further comments in response to this question. 94 were from local authorities, six were from Armed Forces charities and organisations, five were from housing associations and four were from other stakeholders. There were 26 from private individuals.

### **Local Authorities and Representative Bodies**

19. Of the 102 local authorities and representative bodies that responded to this question, 87 (85%) agreed, six (6%) disagreed and nine (9%) were undecided.
20. Local authorities generally said that it was important to treat mental health in the same way as other medical conditions or disabilities under the medical and welfare reasonable preference category. Most local authorities welcomed the proposal for statutory guidance to provide clarity and assist housing officers in knowing when it was appropriate to apply the medical and welfare reasonable preference to applications from the Armed Forces community with mental health issues.
21. A small number of local authorities commented that guidance was unnecessary as they already considered mental health as falling within the medical and welfare reasonable preference criteria. Some respondents were concerned that the guidance should not be too prescriptive in order to cater for differing circumstances, suggesting that no two cases are identical. Others made the point that the proposal - that the medical and welfare reasonable preference category should apply to those suffering from mental ill health - should apply to all applicants and not just members of the Armed Forces and Veterans, and there were some concerns about the risk of legal challenge should members of the Armed Forces and Veterans be treated more favourably in this regard.
22. One respondent expressed concerns about potential additional costs arising from the need to change their allocation policy and update their ICT systems were the final guidance to be over-prescriptive. Some local authorities mentioned difficulties in obtaining relevant service records.

### **Armed Forces Charities and Organisations**

23. Seven out of the eight (88%) Armed Forces charities and organisations that responded to the question agreed with the proposal, and one (12%) was undecided.
24. There was general agreement that this proposal would support members of the Armed Forces and their families in their recovery and with their support needs.
25. Respondents queried how those with mental health conditions would be identified, and who would provide evidence in support of housing applications. One stakeholder asked whether this proposal would extend to Service personnel who suffer from mental ill health that is not attributable to their service. Others commented that Veterans may develop mental ill health later in life so that it can be hard to be definite about this being the result of their service. It was suggested that the guidance could helpfully include practical examples or a range of potential scenarios.
26. There was some concern about a lack of consistency amongst local authorities in the way they identify Service personnel, as well as regional disparities in their understanding of the mental health needs of Service personnel and Veterans. One respondent commented that the awarding of additional points or preference to Service leavers with mental health issues would not resolve this issue.

## Other respondents

27. Ten other stakeholder organisations responded to this question: nine (90%) agreed with the proposal, and one (10%) was undecided. Respondents mentioned the importance of supporting Armed Forces personnel and Veterans suffering with mental ill health, and ensuring that those in specialist accommodation are able to move on to general needs accommodation when their condition has sufficiently improved.
28. There were 86 individual responses to this question: 79 (92%) agreed, four (5%) disagreed and three (3%) were undecided.
29. There were some concerns that if the guidance were not sufficiently clear about the circumstances in which the medical and welfare reasonable preference category should be applied to mental ill health, or if the guidance were not enforceable, there was a risk that the aim of the proposal would be undermined. It was also suggested that guidance be issued on evidential requirements, as it was noted that in some cases applicants have had to provide their entire military medical records which was viewed as unnecessarily intrusive.

### **Question 3: Local authorities are invited to provide details of how their current allocation policies ensure that members of the Regular and Reserve Armed Forces, and Veterans, who are suffering from mental ill health are given appropriate priority.**

30. There were 100 responses from local authorities, four from housing associations and three from other stakeholders to this question. There were 13 from private individuals.
31. This question was directed at local authorities so that we can better understand what they are doing to support the Armed Forces community when allocating social housing. We have therefore included comments from other stakeholders where relevant in an 'additional comments' section.

## Local Authorities and Representative Bodies

32. The majority of respondents indicated that members of the Armed Forces suffering from mental ill health were already provided for under their existing allocation scheme in line with the reasonable preference requirements and the 2012 Armed Forces Additional Preference regulations. Methods of giving priority included increasing priority banding, and exempting lump sums for injury or disability sustained in service in the calculation of financial resources taken into account in determining housing need and priorities.



## **Additional Comments**

33. We heard from a number of housing associations that participate in choice based lettings schemes and indicated that the scheme provides additional preference to applicants who are members of the Armed Forces or Veterans.

### **Question 4: Local authorities are invited to provide details of how they are using their existing powers under the allocation legislation to support serving and former members of the Armed Forces and their families.**

34. There were 127 responses to this question. There were responses from 101 local authorities, four Armed Forces charities and organisations, four housing associations and three other stakeholders. We also heard from 15 private individuals.

35. This question was directed at local authorities so that we can better understand what local authorities are already doing to support the Armed Forces community with regard to social housing allocations. We have therefore included comments from all other stakeholders and individuals in an 'additional comments' section.

## **Local Authorities and Representative Bodies**

36. In 2012, the government changed the law so that former Service personnel and other members of the Armed Forces community with urgent housing needs must be given high priority for social housing, and so that certain members of the Armed Forces community – including those who are serving in the Armed Forces as well as those who have recently been discharged – do not lose their qualification rights because of the requirement to move from base-to-base. Statutory guidance issued in 2012 strongly encourages local authorities to take into account the needs of all serving or former Service personnel, and their families, when framing their allocation schemes. This question was seeking to understand how local authorities have implemented that guidance.

37. Most local authority respondents indicated that they take account of the legal requirements in relation to members of the Armed Forces, but did not appear to make use of the existing flexibilities within the allocation legislation to give more priority generally to members of the Armed Forces community. Where local authorities indicated they do make use of the existing flexibilities in this way, they employed a number of approaches, including:

- backdating applications to take into account the period of the applicant's military service;
- awarding additional points;
- setting aside a number of properties for former Service personnel – to be let outside the general allocation policy; and
- disapplying a local connection test for separated families.

## **Additional Comments**

38. One Armed Forces charity said that their engagement with local authorities had led to positive results, with some local authorities already having provisions in their allocations scheme for the Armed Forces community. We also heard that other local authorities had indicated that they would consider adding such provisions at the next review of their allocations policy. One individual respondent suggested that by empowering their Armed Forces champions, local authorities could make improvements in how the Armed Forces community are supported in the area

### **Question 5: Do you agree with the proposal to bring together in one standalone document guidance on the allocation of social housing to the Armed Forces community?**

39. There were 203 responses to this question. 181 (89%) respondents agreed with the proposal, ten (5%) disagreed, and 12 (6%) were undecided. There were 102 responses from local authorities or local authority representative bodies, eight from Armed Forces related charities and organisations, five from housing associations and five from other organisations. Additionally, 83 private individuals responded, of whom 54 were members of the Armed Forces or Veterans.

40. 130 respondents provided further comments in response to this question. 83 were from local authorities, six were from Armed Forces charities and organisations, five were from housing associations and five were from other stakeholders. There were 31 from private individuals.

### **Local Authorities and Representative Bodies**

41. Of the 102 local authorities and representative bodies that responded, 85 (83%) agreed, eight (8%) disagreed and nine (9%) were undecided on the proposal.

42. There was general agreement among local authorities and representative bodies that consolidating guidance in relation to the Armed Forces community was sensible, would aid with consistency, bring clarity, and improve awareness of the Armed Forces community's housing needs among frontline staff.

43. However, some local authorities differed and expressed a preference for all statutory guidance on social housing allocations to be consolidated into one document. This was particularly the case for those respondents who disagreed with the proposal.

44. It was suggested by a small number of local authorities that any consolidation of guidance on social housing allocations should be produced as an online resource, citing the Homelessness Code of Guidance as an example.

## **Armed Forces Charities and Organisations**

45. Seven out of the eight (88%) Armed Forces charities and organisations that responded to the question agreed with the proposal, and one (12%) was undecided
46. It was noted by Armed Forces charities that, as relevant guidance is currently located in a number of locations, some frontline staff may struggle to navigate the system.

## **Other Respondents**

47. All ten (100%) other stakeholder organisations that responded to this question agreed with the proposal, citing the benefits of a single document in providing clarity.
48. Of the 83 individual responses, 79 (95%) agreed, two (2%) disagreed and two (2%) were undecided. Suggestions for taking this proposal forward included making the document available online and providing an easy to understand guide to the document.

## **Question 6: Do you currently include a question on your application form that asks whether the applicant is a current member of the Armed Forces, a Veteran or another member of the Armed Forces community?**

49. There were 144 responses to this question. Of these, 100 were from local authorities, four from Armed Forces charities and organisations, five from housing associations and five from other stakeholders. Additionally, there were 30 individual responses, of which four were from members of the Armed Forces and 12 were from Veterans.
50. Question six was aimed at understanding whether local authorities ask questions relating to the Armed Forces or the Armed Forces community during the housing application process. All comments from respondents that are not local authorities have been summarised in an 'additional comments' section.

## **Local Authorities**

51. There were 100 responses from local authorities or representative bodies. Of these responses 90 (90%) local authorities said that they already included a question on their application form, nine (9%) did not have such a question and one (1%) was unsure if they had a question. Further comments were given by 71 local authorities.
52. Most of those who stated they did not include a specific question on their application form highlighted that they actively sought out this information through a housing options interview.

53. Where local authorities already ask for this information we heard that the practice varied across the country, with some local authorities asking about Veterans only and others asking about both serving personnel and Veterans.
54. Most of the small number of local authorities that stated that they did not have any form of question indicated plans to include one within their next allocations review.

### **Additional Comments**

55. Five housing associations also responded to this question. Four (80%) stated that they sought to find out whether an applicant was a member of the Armed Forces community, usually as part of a choice based lettings process, and one (20%) stated that they did not know if they had a question.
56. We heard comments from other stakeholders requesting that more be done to ensure appropriate advice is provided to serving personnel and Veterans to create a clear housing pathway.

### **Question 7: Would you support the proposal to use statutory guidance to encourage local authorities to include such a question?**

57. There were 186 responses to this question: 176 (95%) agreed, four (2%) disagreed and six (3%) were undecided about the proposal. We heard from 102 local authorities or local authority representative bodies, six Armed Forces related charities and organisations, five housing associations and five other stakeholders. We also heard from 68 private individuals, of whom 44 were members of the Armed Forces or Veterans. Further comments were provided by 88 respondents.

### **Local Authorities**

58. There were 102 responses from local authorities or local authority representative bodies to this question. 95 (93%) agreed, two (2%) disagreed and five (5%) respondents were undecided on the proposal. Further comments were provided by 63 local authorities and representative bodies.
59. As well as recognising that the proposal would help to handle applications effectively, comments also highlighted that it would aid with data collection and widen understanding about how local authorities are delivering the Armed Forces Covenant.
60. A number of local authorities that supported this proposal said they would look to include a question under the next review of their allocations process. A few local authorities requested guidance on what such a question should look like, or that further guidance would be useful for identifying who other members of the Armed Forces community are that are not identified in the 2012 regulations (see paragraph 37 above).

61. A small minority of local authorities questioned the need for this to be included in statutory guidance as they considered that current guidelines are already clear. A few queried the usefulness of including such a question unless it led to specific action in support of the Armed Forces community.

### **Armed Forces Charities and Organisations**

62. Of the six Armed Forces charities and organisations that responded to this question, five (83%) agreed with the proposal and one (17%) was undecided.

63. Comments were positive about the impact that the proposal could have, but some referred to the need to have a standardised method to identify serving/former personnel in order for it to be effective. In relation to proof of status of Service personnel and Veterans, suggestions included the new Veterans ID cards and the MOD Form 90 (military id for serving personnel). One respondent suggested that the Services should already have the means and capability to provide this information.

64. However, questions were raised about how to identify other members of the Armed Forces community, particularly family members who have become separated or divorced.

### **Other Respondents**

65. All (100%) the other stakeholder organisations that responded to this question agreed with the proposal.

66. It was suggested that the guidance should address how an appropriate question should be framed.

67. We also heard from 68 individuals, of whom 13 were members of the Armed Forces and 31 were Veterans. Of these respondents, 66 (97%) agreed with and two (3%) disagreed with the proposal.

68. There were some concerns that guidance might be open to interpretation. We also heard comments that families are sometimes not identified or looked after in the same way as members of the Armed Forces or Veterans.

69. Comments raised by respondents indicated a desire for front line staff to be appropriately trained to a consistent standard (see question 8 below in relation to training).

**Question 8: Local authorities are invited to provide details of how they are training their housing staff to deal with applications from serving or former members of the Armed Forces or other members of the Armed Forces community.**

70. There were 114 responses to this question: 96 from local authorities, three from Armed Forces charities and organisations, four from housing associations, three from other stakeholders and eight from private individuals.

71. Question eight was aimed at understanding how local authorities train their housing staff in handling applications from the Armed Forces or the Armed Forces community. All comments from respondents that are not local authorities have been summarised in an 'additional comments' section.

## **Local Authorities**

72. Of the 96 local authorities and representative bodies that responded to this question, 39 (41%) said that they already provide specific training in relation to applications from the Armed Forces community, while 53 (55%) said that they did not.

73. Of those who provide specific training, five said that they provide e-learning. Other aspects of training mentioned by respondents included support in interview techniques, working with Armed Forces community stakeholders to provide training, and the use of refresher training on the subject of the Armed Forces.

74. Of the 53 who said that they do not provide specific staff training in relation to the Armed Forces, 23 said that the subject is covered within their general staff training. We heard from local authorities about other positive approaches to supporting the Armed Forces community in the allocations process. Actions included the use of a dedicated Armed Forces outreach worker to aid with applications, and liaising with Armed Forces stakeholders.

## **Additional Comments**

75. Four housing associations provided responses to this question. We heard of regular training organised by one housing association for its staff that handle allocations. Another housing association told us that it has created two Armed Forces champion roles in order to take onboard and implement recommendations from the Covenant.

76. Responses to this question from other stakeholder organisations and individuals were generally positive regarding the idea of training related to the Armed Forces for front line staff. A few respondents raised concerns that some frontline staff may not be aware of the commitments in the Armed Forces Covenant.

**Question 9: Would you support the proposal to use statutory guidance to encourage local authorities to provide appropriate training for staff and managers to deal with applications from serving or former members of the Armed Forces or other members of the Armed Forces community?**

77. There were 186 responses to this question. 149 (80%) respondents agreed with the proposal, 19 (10%) disagreed, and 18 (10%) were undecided. There were 102 responses from local authorities or local authority representative bodies, five from Armed Forces charities and organisations, five from housing associations and five from other organisations. Additionally, 69 private individuals responded, of whom 44 were members of the Armed Forces or Veterans.

78. 114 respondents provided further comments in response to this question. 84 were from local authorities, four were from Armed Forces charities and organisations, five were from housing associations and four were from other stakeholders. There were 17 from private individuals.

### **Local Authorities and Representative Bodies**

79. Of the 102 local authorities and representative bodies that responded to this question, 74 (73%) agreed, 15 (15%) disagreed and 13 (13%) were undecided.

80. Those supporting the proposal said that such training would help to develop staff skills, share good practice, and ensure consistency across local authority areas.

81. Some called for standardised training or for training to be provided centrally, while others asked for further clarity on what training should look like so that proportionate and appropriate training could be drawn up by local authorities, or said that training should build on existing skills. Some said that if such training were to be a requirement, or a specialist training programme were instituted, funding should be provided. Others commented that an e-learning module could be provided, or that local authorities could be made better aware of existing support from government and stakeholders.

82. A minority of respondents questioned the need for specific training aimed at the Armed Forces on the grounds that the Armed Forces community make up a small minority of applicants. Others commented that local authorities should be able to decide how to use their limited training budgets according to local priorities, or that funding should be made available to enable local authorities to best utilise existing training material.

83. Local authority representative bodies agreed with the importance of training staff but questioned whether statutory guidance is the way to tackle this issue. They also referenced the hard work already done by many local authorities to provide training to their staff on the Armed Forces community.

### **Armed Forces Charities and Organisations**

84. Of the five Armed Forces charities and organisations that responded to this question, four (80%) agreed and one (20%) was undecided.

85. There was general agreement from respondents that this proposal would support the Armed Forces community. Some respondents signposted us to training material they considered

would be useful for local authorities in the implementation of this proposal and where appropriate we have referenced this in the final guidance.

86. Suggestions from Armed Forces charities to this proposal included making local authorities aware of the range of support available to them from Government and stakeholders to help train staff. One respondent suggested that this proposal should go further by making training mandatory under the commitments of the Armed Forces Covenant, and monitored through key performance indicators. Another recommended that local authorities be resourced to ensure that staff can be appropriately trained on policies affecting the Armed Forces community.

## **Other Respondents**

87. We also heard from other stakeholder organisations, who overall had a very positive response to the proposal. Comments included supporting the use of e-learning and the need for consistency in approaches to training.

88. From the 69 individuals that responded to the consultation we heard the benefit that training could bring to the experience of those engaging with local authorities. A small number of respondents suggested that local authorities should join up with Armed Forces charities to facilitate training. One respondent proposed that training could be delivered regionally, with funding shared between local authorities and central government.

## **Other themes raised in consultation responses.**

89. Some respondents made comments that were beyond the scope of the consultation, or which while relevant to social housing did not directly respond to the questions in the consultation. These are captured in summary below:

- The shortage of social housing stock could undermine delivery of the proposals;
- Some Veterans suffering from PTSD needed to have a separate bedroom and this was not always taken into account;
- Accommodation in hostels and shared accommodation was said to be not always appropriate – and concerns were expressed that if it was rejected as ‘unsuitable’ this could potentially lead to the local authority considering that it had discharged its homelessness duty;
- The Veterans Strategy should include a commitment to ensure that every service leaver be asked what their housing plans are for after the end of service;
- Local authorities should be given sufficient notice when someone is required to leave services accommodation, so that housing officers can process and progress



applications sufficiently in time for the departure from accommodation;<sup>1</sup>

- H-CLIC (the new Homelessness Case Level Information Collection system) should include a question on Veterans so that local authorities are proactively trying to identify Veterans<sup>2</sup>; and
- Tackling loneliness and social isolation amongst Veterans should be a priority.<sup>3</sup>

## Government Response

90. In drafting the final statutory guidance we have sought to take on board suggestions and comments made by those who responded to this consultation, wherever possible. In particular, the final guidance:

- encourages local authorities to consider more broadly the impact of the qualification criteria they have adopted and whether they are likely to disadvantage members of the Armed forces, for example by disregarding compensation received for an injury or disability sustained on active service when taking account of any financial criteria;
- reminds local authorities, when considering whether applicants qualify, that they retain a discretion to deal with individual cases where there are exceptional circumstances which may arise in relation to the wider Armed Forces community;
- encourages local authorities, when considering applications from those suffering from mental ill health, to be sensitive to their particular circumstances by not imposing over onerous evidence requirements, and in the case of Veterans to recognise that some conditions may be exacerbated by the transition to civilian life or surface many years after discharge;
- reminds local authorities of the importance of providing appropriate priority to enable those in specialist accommodation to move on into general needs accommodation when they are ready; and encourages local authorities to develop links with organisations that provide specialised mental health care, support and training.

91. The guidance also builds on the responses to consultation to:

- provide practical examples of how local authorities can use the flexibilities in the allocation legislation to ensure that Service personnel and their families are given appropriate priority; and

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<sup>1</sup> MOD issues a Certificate of Cessation of Entitlement to Occupy Service Accommodation 6 months before discharge. The Homelessness Reduction Act Duty to Refer requires the Secretary of State for Defence to refer members of the regular forces, who may be considered to be homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days, to a local housing authority of their choice, with the individual's consent.

<sup>2</sup> H-CLIC records where a household requires support for having been in HM Armed Forces and where the household is assessed as having a priority need for having served in HM Armed Forces. Information is also collected on the number of households whose current accommodation or last settled accommodation is Armed Forces accommodation, and the number of referrals from the Armed Forces/veteran support services.

<sup>3</sup> The consultation on the Veterans Strategy sought to explore how existing loneliness initiatives can be inclusive of Veterans:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/755933/Strategy\\_for\\_our\\_Veterans\\_UK\\_Gov\\_Consultation\\_FINAL\\_12.11.18\\_web.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/755933/Strategy_for_our_Veterans_UK_Gov_Consultation_FINAL_12.11.18_web.pdf). We expect to publish a government response later in the year.

- provide advice on how local authorities can identify members of the Armed Forces community and support them in relation to their housing applications, including through the provision of specialist training for front line staff, for example drawing on the e-learning training modules available on the Armed Forces Covenant website.