

# News story: Defence Secretary extends housing offer to veterans

Service leavers and their families will now be able to access military accommodation for up to a year after they hang up their uniform, giving them more time to look for permanent accommodation as they transition back to civilian life.

Current [Service Family Accommodation \(SFA\) rules](#), which allow personnel who have left the Armed Forces to stay in military housing for six months, will be extended to 12 months where availability of accommodation allows.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Having a place to call home is an important part of the return to civilian life, but there can sometimes be a lot to think about when hanging up your uniform for the last time.

By extending the service family offer we hope to give families more time to make the transition that much easier. This is another example of how we continue to support the brave men and women who have served our country.

The Government already offers a comprehensive package of housing support to both veterans and service personnel transitioning back into civilian life, including:

- The Joint Service Housing Advice Office, which provides housing advice to all personnel and veterans. Veterans with concerns around housing are supported by MOD's Veterans UK agency helpline and by the Veterans Welfare Service.
- Under the Armed Forces Covenant, veterans have high priority access to social housing and a five year exemption from proving a local connection to qualify for social housing.
- The Forces Help to Buy Scheme allows Service personnel to borrow up to 50% of their gross annual salary (maximum of £25K) to buy their first home.
- Under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, MOD has a "Duty to Refer" personnel leaving the services who are at risk of homelessness to a local housing authority in the UK.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Tobias Ellwood said:

Behind every person who has served in the Armed Forces is a family, a unit that has been with them every step of the way.

We must make sure that their needs are looked after which is why I am proud to support the new family accommodation extension, which will give families more time to make the transition back to civilian life.

Today's announcement builds on the huge package of cross-government employment, healthcare and education support available to ex-service personnel to help them and their families transition to civilian life.

The MOD also sub-lets some surplus vacant houses to the general public to generate income through short term lets on the private market. The properties are rented at market rates and are available at 60 sites.