

Press release: James Brokenshire prioritises social houses for former servicemen and women with PTSD

- New measures could help councils ensure that members of the Armed Forces and veterans suffering from mental ill health are given the right priority for social housing.
- Divorced partners of Armed Forces personnel will also benefit for the first time.

Former service personnel suffering from PTSD or other mental illnesses will be prioritised for social housing under proposals published for consultation by Communities Secretary Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP.

Today's measures (9 January 2019) will also help people who divorce or separate from their partners in the Armed Forces by exempting them from rules requiring them to be a local resident before being given a property.

While the majority of military personnel transition successfully into civilian life, an overhaul of the system will also mean all applicants for social housing will be asked if they have served in the Forces at the outset of the process to ensure veterans get the help they are entitled to.

Council staff will also get extra training so they can give current and former Armed Forces personnel the housing support they need.

Since 2012, current and former service personnel have not had to be 'resident' in an area to get access to a social home for their families, as part of our commitment to the [Armed Forces Covenant](#).

Communities Secretary Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

We have a duty to ensure our heroic military personnel get the support they need when applying for a social home.

We want to see that applying for social property should not be a challenge in the transition from military service to civilian life.

These new measures are part of our continuing commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant.

An 8-week [consultation](#) on the new rules starts today.

Under the proposals, those with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and other mental illnesses could be treated in the same way as those with physical injuries, and get the priority they deserve.

People who split from their partner in the Forces are made to move out of military accommodation and can be denied social housing because they have “not been resident in the area for long enough”.

They may not be willing or able to settle in the district where their military spouse or partner is stationed, particularly if they have been the victim of domestic abuse.

Some councils already support people in this situation but government is consulting on publishing new guidance which will encourage councils to waive the residency rules.

The government introduced protections in 2012 to ensure that members of the Armed Forces community are not disadvantaged in accessing social housing because of the requirements of military life.

The law was changed so that seriously injured and disabled service personnel, and former members of the Armed Forces, with urgent housing needs are always given high priority for social housing.

At the same time we introduced regulations to ensure that serving personnel and those who are recently discharged do not lose their qualification rights because of the necessity to move from base to base.

The government’s ambitious and targeted £9 billion affordable homes programme will deliver 250,000 homes by March 2022, including homes for social rent.