

Armed Forces Covenant Duty – Housing position & actions

Function	Area / Policy	Areas of due regard	Areas for improvement/ Future actions and suggestions
<p>Allocation of Social Housing Accommodation <i>(Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996)</i> <i>Housing register, applications and eligibility criteria.</i></p>	<p>West Lindsey Lettings Policy 2020</p> <p>West Lindsey Housing Strategy 2022 Lincolnshire</p> <p>Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-2027</p>	<p>All applicants are banded according to the housing needs assessment as set out in the Lettings Policy. There are 5 bands with band 1 being the highest priority. Reasonable preference is then given to certain groups as part of that banding process, this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those leaving the Armed Forces who are in housing need <p>Local connection to West Lindsey are prioritised when bidding on properties over applicants who do not have a local connection. However, there are other local connection circumstances where West Lindsey can award a local connection to the areas, these circumstances include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HM Armed Forces applicants through Section 315 of the Housing and Regeneration Act (2008) who have established a local connection with West Lindsey before they joined the services • Members of the Armed Forces, former service personnel applying within five years of discharge, bereaved spouses and civil partners of members of the Armed Forces and serving or former members of the Reserve Forces who need to move for medical reasons. <p>West Lindsey have a flexible approach for people to make contact with the Housing Register team. Should communication be preferred via e-mail, this can be accommodated along with phone calls at specific times of the day to suit serving personnel.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific information and advice available to members or ex members of the armed forces via the website. • Housing register form updated to include question “<i>Are you or your partner a serving or formally serving member of the Armed Forces?</i>” • Disregard of lump sums awarded to Armed Forces service personnel in any relevant financial or needs assessments. • All relevant front line staff to undertake new e-learning to improve awareness of the Armed Forces Duty Covenant https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/localauthorities/learning-training-resources/

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		Bids can be placed on housing on behalf of applicants should they not be able to use the system or don't have the capacity or capability to navigate the system	
<p>Housing Need</p> <p><i>(s8 Housing Act 1985 periodical review of housing needs)</i></p> <p><i>Assessing current and future need for affordable housing and demand for market housing</i></p>	<p>Central Lincolnshire Housing Needs Assessment</p>	<p>Understanding of needs for types of accommodation to ensure there is sufficient suitable accommodation for members or ex members of the armed forces is detailed within The Central Lincolnshire Housing needs assessment which has a section dedicated to Service Families and the need that arises as a consequence of having RAF bases within Central Lincolnshire.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collection of data once housing register applications have been updated to understand who is approaching for housing and of what type. • Share CLHNA with Lincolnshire Homelessness Partnership to ensure this data can be worked into actions arising from the Lincolnshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.
<p>Homelessness</p> <p><i>(Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996)</i></p> <p><i>Assistance, eligibility, duty to assess and accommodate applications, referrals to other LA's.</i></p> <p><i>(Homelessness reduction Act 2017)</i></p> <p><i>Duty to Prevent and Duty to Relief Homelessness</i></p>		<p>Housing advice is available to all Service personnel and their families, both during and after Service.</p> <p>Referrals can be made to Housing Related Support if transition into civilian life was determined as a requirement which could result in a tenancy not being maintained. It is unlikely this referral would be solely down to being a veteran and more likely to manifest as mental health capacity to maintain a tenancy.</p> <p>Change 4 Lincs deliver the Rough Sleeper Initiative on behalf of West Lindsey and 3 other Lincolnshire District Councils. They offer an outreach service which offers rough sleepers who are not in a priority need category temporary accommodation and support to relief homelessness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific information and advice available to members or ex members of the armed forces. • All relevant front line staff and Change 4 Lincs to undertake new e-learning to improve awareness of the Armed Forces Duty Covenant. https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/localauthorities/learning-training-resources/ • Change 4 Lincs to identify and monitor when rough sleepers are ex armed forces and be aware of specific signposting and support available.

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		<p>West Lindsey have a flexible approach for people to make contact with the Homelessness Prevention team. Should communication be preferred via e-mail, this can be accommodated along with phone calls at specific times of the day to suit serving personnel.</p> <p>Homelessness applications and assessments can be done over the phone and bids can be placed on housing on behalf of applicants should they not be able to use the system or don't have the capacity or capability to navigate the system and</p> <p>The Homelessness Reduction Act also requires the Secretary of State for Defence to refer members of the Regular Armed Forces in England, who may be homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days, to a local housing authority.</p>	
<p>Homelessness Strategy</p> <p><i>(S1 of the Homelessness Act 2002) Duty of local housing authority to formulate a homelessness strategy</i></p>	<p>Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy 2022-2027</p> <p>West Lindsey Lettings Policy 2022</p>	<p>The Strategy acknowledges the 2021 Armed Forces Bill that places a duty to have Due Regard to the covenant in policy and front line services.</p> <p>The strategy recognises the challenges that preventing and reducing homelessness for this cohort places on Local Authorities and acknowledges that this group can fall into multiple other group descriptors and can become homeless due to relationship breakdowns during the transition to civilian life, domestic abuse, having complex needs due to mental health issues as well as those who leave the military at short notice.</p> <p>The strategy also goes on to detail what Lincolnshire Authorities will do to help this group which includes Prevent - Respond to all referrals in a timely manner working with the referring partner and other agencies in line with protocols.</p>	

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		<p>Protect - Ensure appropriate support is available to assist in the transition to civilian life and for those experiencing Domestic Abuse.</p> <p>Place - Identify those that are eligible using the ‘think veteran’ approach and avoid temporary accommodation where possible.</p> <p>Partnership - Engage with partners to form a multi-agency approach to meet individual needs and promote assistance we can offer.</p> <p>Plan - Introduce protocols to streamline referrals and monitor any barriers in accommodating and supporting these individuals</p>	
<p>Disabled Facilities Grants</p> <p><i>(Part 1 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996)</i></p> <p><i>Provision of adaptations to disabled persons’ homes to reduce both the need for people to relocate to facilities which provide full-time care and to reduce the amount of care needed in people’s homes.</i></p>	<p>West Lindsey Housing Assistance Policy 2018-2022</p>	<p>When an application for a DFG is submitted, if the individual requires a financial means test the application requires them to declare if they receive any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - War Widows or Widowers pension -War Disablement Pension - Payments from Armed Forces Compensation Scheme - Armed Forces Independence Payments <p>Answering yes to any of these would identify armed or ex armed forces personnel.</p> <p>For serving personnel occupying Ministry of Defence accommodation, adaptations must be provided by the MoD and any referrals made where the applicant resides in MoD accommodation is signposted to them to undertake the adaptation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFG application form updated include question “<i>Are you or your partner a serving or formally serving member of the Armed Forces?</i>” • Specific information and advice available to members or ex members of the armed forces. • Include reference to the Armed Forces community in the next revision of the DFG policy to take account of the DFG guidance which states that ‘special considerations for veterans may be justified in some circumstances’ and that ‘applications might also be received from veterans of the Armed Forces. In these cases, the statutory Armed Forces Covenant Duty is likely to apply.’ • Links to armed forces charities and signposting for other support available. This could include providing specific information to armed forces charities about DFG’s

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Tenancy Strategy (S150 of the Localism Act 2011) Publication of a Tenancy Strategy (LA function)	West Lindsey Tenancy Strategy 2021	The Armed Forces Community will not be adversely affected by The West Lindsey Tenancy Strategy and are not specifically included in the Tenancy Strategy but rather as part of the general population. The Strategy focuses on how providers (not the Local Authority) should manage various types of tenancies and is not specific to certain groups. It is not deemed as necessary to include a specific section on This cohort within the strategy.	