**Audit Tool: Local Housing Authority**

This audit tool is for Local Authorities to complete to understand how well their housing services are meeting the needs of Veterans.

The audit tool is split into 4 clear sections linked to the different role a Local Authority has in relation to housing. For non-stock-holding Local Authorities not all sections may be relevant, however in their strategic role Local Authorities may wish to work with the relevant registered provider and/or commissioned provider of services to understand how well the housing needs of Veterans are being met.

The completion of this self-audit tool will provide you with a baseline position. By using the associated toolkit you will be able to ensure that you have a clear plan on how your services can be developed to better meet the housing needs of Veterans.

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| **Strategic Approach** | |
| **Armed Forces Covenant** | See **Section 4** of the toolkit |
| * **Is the Armed Forces Covenant in place?** * **Has this been signed?** * **Does it reference anything about housing?** * **How clear are those housing statements/pledges?** * **Are there mechanisms to review it?** * **Are housing staff aware of it?** * **Is there an Armed Forces Champion?** | |
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| **Homelessness Review and Strategy** | See **Section 5** of the toolkit |
| **What does the Homelessness Review identify in relation to Veterans and their families? Are Veterans mentioned?** | |
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| **Has the Local Authority worked closely with relevant partners (e.g., Veterans charities/Brigade) to ascertain likely levels of need among veterans and designed services accordingly?** | |
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| **What does the Homelessness Strategy say in relation to Veterans? Are there any specific actions?** | |
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| **What does the Housing Strategy say in relation to Veterans?** | |
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| **Housing Options, Prevention & Homelessness** | |
| * **How are Veterans and their families identified?** * **Do you ask all customers if they or a family member are a Veteran?** * **Does the form identify whether any member of the household is a an (ex)partner/widow(er) of a Veteran?** * **Do you ask if the customer or a member of the household is a reservist?** | See **Section 3** of the toolkit |
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| **When assessing priority need, are there any guidance questions that officers ask in determining priority need due to vulnerability having served in HM’s Armed Forces, i.e., length of service, type of service, discharge reason, etc.?** | See **Section 8.2** of the toolkit |
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| **What bespoke information is contained within the PHPs for veterans and their families?** | See **Section 8.1** of the toolkit |
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| **Are there any bespoke factsheets/leaflets for Veterans?** | See **Section 6.2** of the toolkit |
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| **What information is available on the website for Veterans in relation to housing options and homelessness?** | See **Section 6.2** of the toolkit |
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| **What local services/charities are available to support Veterans? How well does the Local Authority work with these organisations? Do staff know about them? How well do they work in partnership?** | See **Section 6.2** of the toolkit |
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| **How effectively is the duty to refer with the Ministry of Defence working? How many referrals are being received?** | See **Section 7.1** of the toolkit |
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| * **Does the service work with Service personnel from the point that they receive their certificate of cessation of entitlement to occupy service accommodation 6 months before discharge?** * **Is this 6-month period used to help clients find accommodation? Or are clients only worked with 56 days prior to homelessness?** * **Do the procedures reflect this?** | See **Section 7.1** of the toolkit |
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| * **Are staff aware where Service personnel are required to vacate service quarters as a result of leaving the service they should not be considered to be intentionally homeless?** * **Is this referenced in any local policies/procedures?** | See **Section 8.2** of the toolkit |
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| * **Are staff aware that armed forces personnel have the need to prove a local connection waived for five years?** * **Is this referenced in any local policies/procedures?** | See **Section 8.2** of the toolkit |
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| **Allocations & Lettings** | |
| * **Allocation Policy – is it legally compliant in relation to Veterans?** * **Does it give reasonable preference to Veterans/reservists/widows?** * **Are Veterans exempt from the Local Connection Regulations as detailed in The Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Armed Forces) (England) 2012?** | See **Section 9** of the toolkit |
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| **Does the Housing Register form ask key questions to identify Veterans/reservists/widows?** | See **Section 3** of the toolkit |
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| **Are there any nomination arrangements in place to allocate properties to veterans?** | See **Section 9.4** of the toolkit |
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| **Do you allocate a set percentage of social housing vacancies to veterans?** | See **Section 9.4** of the toolkit |
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| **Do the waiting lists for affordable/low-cost home ownership afford any additional priority to veterans and their families?** | See **Section 9.5** of the toolkit |
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| **Housing Management** | |
| **Do you identify if any new tenant or a member of their household is a Veteran at sign up?** | See **Section 3 & 9.7** of the toolkit |
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| **Does any of your pre-tenancy work address the specific needs of Veterans?** | See **Section 9.7** of the toolkit |
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| **Do your development plans take the specific needs of Veterans into account? (e.g., building/spaces that do not reinforce trauma, accessible properties, etc.)** | See **Section 9.6** of the toolkit |
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| **Staff Knowledge & Awareness** | |
| * **Do staff know how to identify veterans?** * **How knowledgeable are staff about veterans? (In terms of who qualifies as a Veteran, what the Housing Law says? What support agencies/charities are available? Support needs of veterans?)** | See **Section 3, 8 and 9** of the toolkit |
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| **Do staff know about the Veterans Gateway?** | See **Section 6.2** of the toolkit |
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| **Have any staff had any specific veteran training/briefings (e.g., the Armed Forces Covenant Training)?** | See **Section 11** of the toolkit |
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| **Is there a Housing Options officer who specialises/leads on working with veterans?** | See **Section 11** of the toolkit |
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