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Meeting the Housing and Support Needs of Single Veterans in Great Britain

Anwen Jones, Deborah Quilgars, Lisa O'Malley, David Rhodes,
Mark Bevan and Nicholas Pleace

UNIVERSITY *of York*



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Foreword

Foreword by Tony Stables, Chairman, Forces in Mind Trust

It is well known that one of the key ingredients of a successful transition to civilian life after a period of military service is finding adequate accommodation, and there are many reasons why for a single veteran this can be particularly challenging. The single Service leaver generally walks out of good quality single living accommodation having paid substantially lower rent than for the equivalent civilian accommodation, rent which in any case is often deducted unnoticed from payslips. The single Service leaver then walks into an environment where housing is harder to find, where it will probably be less diligently maintained, and where it will almost certainly cost more. And this is likely to take place against a backdrop of an extremely difficult national housing and local government funding environment.

The Armed Forces Covenant clearly states that such a Service leaver should suffer ‘no disadvantage’. Yet as this report has found, the planning and execution required around housing do not adequately support the Nation’s undertaking. Better collaboration between relevant policy makers and service deliverers, better preparation of the individual Service leaver, better information sharing; these are all themes familiar to those of us involved in improving the transition from military to civilian life. The value of this Report is that it has generated the **evidence** to support a credible set of **recommendations**. It will be for the sector now to examine and implement these recommendations.

We at Forces in Mind Trust will have an advocacy role to play; but central and devolved governments, local authorities, the Confederation of Service Charities (Cobseo) and other charities are the ones who can really transform single veterans housing and support. My challenge to them all is to come together, and to do just that.

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- Poppy Scotland
- Scottish Government
- Scottish Veterans Housing Association
- Scottish Veterans Residences (Edinburgh)
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-
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Executive Summary

Introduction

In the summer of 2013, the Centre for Housing Policy at the University of York was commissioned by Stoll and Riverside to undertake research on the accommodation and housing related support needs of single veterans in Great Britain¹. The research was funded by Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT), a £35 million funding scheme run by the FiMT using an endowment awarded by the BIG Lottery Fund.

Background to the study

In recent years there has been a renewed interest in the duty of care the UK owes its serving personnel and veterans, including the publication of the Armed Forces Covenant in 2011 which sets out the responsibilities of the Government and the Nation to those who serve or who have served in the Armed Forces and to their families. Whilst the vast majority of individuals leaving the Armed Forces make the transition from Service to civilian life without significant difficulties, there are some who face problems in the short or longer term, including homelessness, and need additional support. Whilst some research has been conducted in the area, overall there is a paucity of knowledge about the level and nature of demand for accommodation and housing related support for veterans in England, Scotland and Wales and how best to meet these needs.

This research study sought to address this research gap and had three main aims:

- to establish the current and perceived future need for accommodation and housing related support for single veterans who are homeless/at risk of homelessness in England, Scotland and Wales and to identify gaps in knowledge about current and future levels of need
- to examine the extent and nature of provision of accommodation and housing related support for single veterans in England, Scotland and Wales with a particular focus on veterans who are either homeless or at risk of homelessness
- to make practical recommendations to Government (central and local), service commissioners, service providers and veteran organisations, regarding the effective planning and delivery of future provision.

¹ The research does not cover Northern Ireland because it was felt that the issues faced by veterans in Northern Ireland are more complicated than those faced by veterans in Great Britain and that this was a highly sensitive area of research that might be better undertaken by researchers with an in-depth understanding of the situation in Northern Ireland.

A second stage of the study will evaluate the relative effectiveness of dedicated supported housing services for (potentially) homeless single veterans, compared to mainstream services available to the general population.

The study utilised a range of quantitative and qualitative research methods:

- *A review of the available UK research studies on homelessness among single veterans* - undertaken using standard review techniques including a search of electronic databases and a review of relevant organisation and government websites.
- *Secondary analysis of existing data sources on housing and support for single veterans* - including homelessness statistics, Supporting People data, CORE and other relevant data sources.
- *An electronic survey of all local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales* – in 2013, 113 authorities completed a short online survey, a response rate of 35%.
- *A survey of dedicated single veteran service providers* - 18 of 22 identified providers participated in a survey on their provision in late 2013/ early 2014.
- *Interviews with key national stakeholders from generic and veteran organisations* - with 28 respondents from 24 organisations conducted in 2013.
- *Case studies* – undertaken in 22 local authorities (16 in England, 4 in Scotland and 2 in Wales) including 44 interviews with service providers in late 2013/ early 2014.
- *Focus groups with single veterans* - three in England and one in Scotland (with 18 participants) conducted alongside the case studies.

What do existing studies tell us about homelessness and single veterans?

The overall scope and quality of existing literature is limited. Most of the research studies on homelessness amongst single veterans over the last twenty years have been small-scale qualitative studies. There are no UK peer-reviewed studies of homelessness amongst single veterans and no UK evaluations of service provision for homeless veterans. Further, there are no UK national cohort studies of homeless single veterans or longitudinal studies that can provide insights into pathways into homelessness or long term outcomes.

Nonetheless, the review of existing studies highlighted a number of pertinent findings:

Housing related disadvantage - Low rates of home ownership and experience of the civilian housing market places many of those leaving Service, particularly among non-officer ranks, at a disadvantage in accessing housing.

Extent of homelessness – Varying, but reducing, rates of homelessness among single veterans has been recorded since the 1990s. There are some indications of higher prevalence in the most severe and enduring types of homelessness, and also in Scotland. There is very limited evidence on spatial patterns of homelessness, though some evidence that the majority of veterans return ‘home’ after discharge.

Welfare needs – Although no large scale cohort studies have been undertaken since 1993, many studies report that homeless veterans tend to be older than other homeless people, more likely to have slept rough, to suffer from physical and mental health or alcohol problems (complex needs), and/or to be homeless for long periods. They may also experience social isolation.

Explanations for homelessness - Explanations are complex and competing and there is no clear evidence that Service does, or does not, increase the risk of homelessness. There is some evidence that dedicated veteran services provide ‘fast-track’ access to support and that take-up might be greater if services can provide military ‘knowledge’ or experience.

Policy – There is a lack of research into the discharge and interpretation of local authorities’ obligations under the Armed Forces Act 2011 and homelessness legislation.

What do available statistics tell us about the extent of homelessness amongst veterans?

The absolute numbers of veterans utilising generic housing and homelessness services were relatively low and typically represented a small proportion of the services’ total users. This was particularly the case for the number of veterans accepted under the homelessness legislation in England, Scotland and Wales, for example, 58 veterans were accepted as homeless in England in 2013 because they were vulnerable due to having served in the Armed Forces (representing 0.11% of total acceptances). However, it should be emphasised that these categories are very specific and narrowly defined, so great numbers would not be expected.

Higher numbers of veterans were utilising generic accommodation and housing related services, including:

- Just over 2,500 people (most of whom were single) entering Supporting People services were veterans in 2013/14 (1.8% of all new clients).
- Just over 1,000 single veterans (with just under 500 homeless at the time) accessed new social housing lets (CORE general needs statistics) in the first three quarters of 2013/14 (less than 1% of all lets).

- According to Homeless Link's Survey of Needs and Provision (SNAP), veterans represented 2-3% of users of day centres, direct access hostels and second stage clients in 2013.
- The Combined Homeless and Information Network (CHAIN) recorded that 3% of outreach service users in London were veterans (from the UK) in 2012/13.
- The Single Persons Accommodation Centre for the Ex- Services (SPACES) service has been assisting between 1,000-1,500 veterans per year since 2000.

The data available does not allow accurate assessment of the extent to which veterans are over- or under-represented in homelessness and housing need. There is no accurate up-to-date data on the number of veterans in the general population, although estimates suggested that approximately 9-10% of the UK adult population were veterans in the mid-2000s. Considering the present focus on single people only, and the likely reduction in veteran numbers in recent years, single veterans do not appear to be substantially over-represented in the data-sets on housing need. However, it should be noted that US research has indicated that using self-reported veteran status is likely to under-estimate homelessness significantly.

What specialist accommodation provision exists for veterans?

The research identified 17 providers (separate organisations) of dedicated accommodation based services for single veterans² across Great Britain, providing a total of 910 bed spaces/units across 46 schemes, including:

- 156 direct access beds
- 377 second stage accommodation beds, and
- 377 long-term housing units³.

Available information suggested that dedicated provision for veterans is likely to increase by at least 235 bed spaces/ units for single veterans over the next few years (an increase of 26%), through planned developments including via LIBOR funding.

² There is more extensive provision for veterans with care needs and nursing needs; veterans with disabilities and for veteran families. More information can be found at: <http://www.veteransscotland.co.uk/pillars/housing/> at <http://www.veterans-uk.info/welfare/housing.html> and <http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/can-we-help/who-else-can-help>

³ *Direct access hostels* - providing emergency or short-term accommodation; including via self-referral and referral from local authority etc.; *Second stage accommodation projects* - longer term accommodation for people, accessed by referral only, clients often moving on from direct access hostels; *Dedicated long term housing for veterans* – providing settled accommodation, with or without support.

Only five floating support services (tenancy related support) for vulnerably housed veterans were identified across the UK, supporting an estimated 276 veterans at any one time. Only one future further scheme was identified of this nature, providing an additional 15 floating support places (a very modest 5% increase).

The present provision is not evenly distributed throughout Great Britain. Unsurprisingly, given the pressure on housing in London and the South East, the greatest amount of dedicated provision in England was located here. After London, Scotland had the next highest number of dedicated bed spaces for veterans. There was no provision in Wales or the East Midlands. Planned developments include some new provision in Wales, London, Scotland, the North West, North East, Yorkshire and Humberside and the South East.

Overall, the existing dedicated provision appeared to operate relatively broad eligibility criteria. For example, the existing dedicated provision was almost exclusively provided for both men and women. Most had no minimum length of Service. However the schemes appeared to be more accessible to veterans with mental health problems than veterans with substance misuse problems (only one in six schemes always accepting someone with substance misuse problems). Most schemes took referrals from a wide range of agencies, though only 43% accepted self-referrals.

Existing providers of dedicated accommodation provision for veterans were routinely turning away veterans because their services were full, however the extent to which this happened varied. Eighteen providers stated that they occasionally turned away veterans (with at least 30 veterans being turned away across 188 bed spaces) whilst seven providers frequently turned away veterans (with at least 263 veterans turned away across 212 bed spaces).

What do key stakeholders tell us about the nature of housing need amongst single veterans?

Most respondents believed that single veterans experienced housing difficulties for the same reasons as other single homeless people. However, some of the difficulties single veterans faced could be attributed to their experience of Service. For example, unfamiliarity with civilian life (e.g. housing markets, the welfare system and budgeting) made it difficult for single veterans to secure housing and to manage tenancies. Respondents cited a number of key reasons why veterans experienced housing difficulties:

- a shortage of affordable accommodation
- problems sustaining a tenancy
- substance misuse
- mental health issues

-
- relationship breakdown
 - inadequate transition planning from the Armed Forces
 - other pre-existing problems.

Overall, respondents from generic services felt there was little expressed demand from single veterans although they tended not to ask clients about any Armed Forces history (although this was beginning to change). Dedicated veteran organisations and service providers tended to report quite significant levels of demand for their services.

Rough sleeping amongst veterans was not thought to be a significant problem. However, 'hidden homelessness' and various forms of unsustainable housing arrangements were not uncommon.

A few of the case study areas reported a relatively high demand for housing and housing related support from single veterans. These were: Preston; Gateshead; Hull; Plymouth; Highland; Colchester; Rushmoor; South Ayrshire; Aberdeen, and Perth and Kinross. Many of these areas had already developed dedicated services to meet these needs (including accommodation, advice centres, outreach and drop-in centres).

Changing need?

Overall respondents found it difficult to comment on changing needs and demand because they lacked data. In London, respondents reported that they were working with fewer rough sleeping veterans and were now working with veterans whose problems were not as entrenched as in the past. Respondents from generic services and veteran services in London attributed this to improvements in services for veterans.

A few services reported working with more veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) who had served in conflicts some years ago but this was thought to be primarily because of the greater awareness of PTSD rather than an increase in the number of veterans affected. Many felt that more veterans were approaching services for help as awareness of the help available increased but also because many of the problems veterans presented with could be attributed to the recession and general economic climate, public spending cuts and the shortage of affordable housing.

Respondents were unsure whether demand from veterans would change in the next five to ten years. However there was a broad assumption that the need for services would increase following the restructuring of the Armed Services and that there would be increased demand from veterans who had served in recent conflicts.

What do key stakeholders tell us about gaps in provision and what is needed in the future?

Improvements to generic housing and support services

Many stakeholders felt that the types of services and provision required by single veterans were often the same as those needed to meet the needs of homeless and vulnerably housed people generally. These were:

- emergency and temporary accommodation
- alternative forms of permanent independent accommodation (with support provided where necessary) e.g. 'housing first' models
- affordable move on (permanent) housing
- floating support/tenancy sustainment services
- mental health and substance misuse services
- outreach services, advice centres and drop-in/day centres
- befriending and counselling services and opportunities for veterans to socialise.

In addition, respondents felt there should be far more emphasis on the prevention of homelessness amongst veterans including improved transition planning for all Service personnel.

Clear need for more dedicated support services for single veterans, alongside a more limited need for dedicated accommodation

Respondents reported a need for a range of dedicated non-accommodation based services for single veterans including floating support services, mental health and substance misuse services, outreach services, advice centres and drop-in/day centres. These services were thought to be required for a number of reasons including:

- a general shortage of housing and support services in most areas
- because some veterans were more likely to approach dedicated services for support and/or advice
- some veterans might require specialist advice and support which would be best delivered by workers with knowledge and understanding of the Armed Services, and
- outreach services, dedicated advice centres, and drop-in/day-centres were seen to have an important role in identifying and attracting veterans with unmet needs.

Generic service providers and some dedicated service providers (e.g. those providing floating support, advice, and outreach) believed that the housing and support needs of most single veterans could be met within generic services in the area where the veteran wished to settle, and that in some cases dedicated accommodation provision could hinder transition to civilian life. If necessary, these providers considered that specialist support should be delivered by dedicated veteran services working within mainstream services or in the community.

However, some service providers and veterans held dedicated supported accommodation services in high regard. They appreciated the high standard of accommodation and support provided and believed that they/ veterans fared better in dedicated accommodation where providers and other residents understood their needs and experiences. There was also some evidence of veterans with unmet complex needs who might benefit from dedicated supported accommodation. Few respondents reported having sufficient demand from single veterans to warrant the development of dedicated supported accommodation within the local area; demand was more likely to exist on a wider geographical basis.

Improved data collection

Respondents, including national level stakeholders, local authority representatives, housing specialists and dedicated service providers, recognised there was a need to collect robust data and many were planning to improve data collection. This recognition was in part in response to the introduction of the Armed Forces Covenant and the Community Covenants and the high profile of veterans in recent years. A number of organisations reported that they were reviewing their monitoring systems and data needs in order to inform service development.

Improved collaboration between key stakeholders

Most respondents, including national level stakeholders and interviewees across the case study areas, believed that there was a need for more effective collaboration and data sharing between national and local governments and the Ministry of Defence; between dedicated veteran services; and between dedicated veteran services, local authorities and generic homelessness and housing support services. Generic providers in particular thought that veteran organisations should work more closely with mainstream providers as well as with other organisations in the veteran sector.

Recommendations

There are four high level recommendations arising from the work, with a number of more detailed proposals related to each recommendation.

Recommendation 1:

Housing strategies for veterans should be developed, led by the Scottish, Welsh and UK governments in collaboration with key housing and veteran agencies, supported by a clear implementation framework.

At present, the Ministry of Defence has responsibility for transition planning (with housing as one component) and local authorities assess housing need locally. Some of the necessary tools and building blocks are in place to meet the needs of veterans, such as the Covenant, however these are not being leveraged. Whilst the evidence base is currently weak, it does highlight areas of unmet housing and related support needs amongst single veterans. However, this need is most clearly seen at a regional or sub-regional level, rather than individual local authority level. Data collection processes need significant improvement in order to adequately inform national and regional planning in this area. The strategies should be firmly linked to discharge patterns and existing knowledge of vulnerability as part of the transition process.

A: What the strategies should include:

- i. The strategies should establish a national commissioning framework/revenue funding for accommodation and support services to ensure that services are developed in a coordinated way in response to identified need.
- ii. The strategies should separately address the needs of the total ex-Service population including single veterans and families with dependants and the specific needs of each sub-group.
- iii. The strategies and funding framework should take account of housing need at a regional/ sub-regional level, alongside any unmet local authority level needs.

B: Information needed for the strategies:

- iv. The Ministry of Defence should identify vulnerable service personnel and share information about all Service leavers (including Early Service Leavers, vulnerable personnel and Service personnel who are to be made redundant) to inform the national strategy and local and regional/sub regional planning.
- v. The strategies should establish a national framework for improved data collection and recording of veterans, with specific requirements placed on local authorities and service/accommodation providers.
- vi. In order to better meet the identified needs of veterans, systems should be established to improve information flows, dialogue, and collaborative working between all relevant organisations – including the Ministry of Defence, other government departments, local authorities, veteran organisations, and housing

providers. Cobseo (The Confederation of Service Charities) should take a leading role in this process.

C: The Armed Forces Community Covenant

- vii. The Ministry of Defence and the Scottish, Welsh and UK governments should require local authorities to meet the provisions of the Community Covenant especially in relation to housing single veterans in the social housing sector to ensure that those who serve or have served in the British Armed Forces are not disadvantaged.

Recommendation 2:

The Ministry of Defence, working in collaboration with other key agencies, should improve transition planning for all Service leavers to maximise people's ability to achieve and maintain sustainable housing after Service.

Single veterans will face similar issues to other single people with low priority for housing, including a lack of affordable housing, public spending cuts and housing benefit changes. However, some veterans may face some issues including those that pre-date their Service, and physical or mental harm/damage from their experience of war. Further, Early Service Leavers may experience some or all the above issues but often only have a few weeks to plan for discharge. There is a significant opportunity to improve the transition experience of all Service leavers.

- viii. The Ministry of Defence, working with veteran and other key civilian agencies, should do more to prepare every service leaver for transition via 'in-reach' services, including planning and preparation over the longer term and a focus on housing and welfare issues and the realities of civilian life (including implementing the Ashcroft Report (2014) recommendation of providing details of subsidised and unsubsidised cost of accommodation, Council Tax and utility charges payable in the civilian sector on pay statements).
- ix. The Ministry of Defence should do more to identify and support vulnerable Service-personnel, including Early Service Leavers who leave before completion of basic training and those who are dishonourably discharged, to minimise the risk of unsuccessful transition. More generally, they should also identify Service-personnel who may be at risk of difficulties to ensure preventative support is provided.

Recommendation 3:

Strategies should support the development of coordinated services to meet the accommodation and housing related needs of veterans.

The research mapped the provision of dedicated accommodation provision for single veterans and the use of other housing and related support services by single veterans. It showed that the dedicated accommodation sector has developed on an ad hoc basis, but is increasing in terms of numbers of beds offered. There is very little preventive work such as dedicated floating support services to support single veterans in their own accommodation.

A: Support services:

- x. Within the national commissioning framework (see Recommendation 1), high priority should be placed on the development of dedicated floating support services for single veterans. This housing related support should be aligned with more general welfare support provided by veteran organisations.
- xi. The commissioning framework should also give a high priority to other preventative interventions which can also have an important role in identifying unmet need such dedicated outreach services, advice centres, drop-in centres and befriending/counselling services.
- xii. New 'in-reach' services (see Recommendation 2) should be 'joined up' with floating support type services available post-discharge.

B: Accommodation services:

- xiii. The provision of any new dedicated accommodation should be informed by needs assessment on a regional/ sub-regional basis (see Recommendation 1).

C: Information sharing:

- xiv. As recommended above, information sharing should be improved between generic providers and veteran organisations to ensure that providers are aware of services and other forms of support available to veterans and how to access these.

Recommendation 4:

There is a need for an improved evidence base on the long-term housing pathways of veterans.

Little is currently known about the housing pathways of single veterans leaving the Armed Forces. Current, and emerging, service models have also rarely been evaluated in any detail. There is also a need for a better understanding of dedicated supported veteran accommodation provision and how this differs from generic provision (which will be addressed in the second stage of this study).

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- xv. The Census should collect data on Armed Forces history.
 - xvi. More research into the levels of veterans' housing need and long-term housing pathways of veterans is needed.
 - xvii. There is also a need for independent evaluations of the effectiveness of accommodation and housing related support services for veterans and dedicated advice services such as JSHAO (Joint Service Housing Advice Office) and SPACES (Single Persons Accommodation Centre for the Ex-Services

Chapter 1: Introduction

In the summer of 2013, Stoll and Riverside commissioned the Centre for Housing Policy at the University of York, to undertake research on the accommodation and housing related support needs of single veterans in Great Britain⁴. Forces in Mind Trust funded the research.

Background

In recent years, the UK's involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan, and media attention to the personnel returning from these and other recent conflicts, have prompted a renewed interest in the duty of care the UK owes its serving personnel and veterans (The Futures Company, 2013; Dandeker et al., 2006). In 2011, the Government published the Armed Forces Covenant, which is described as 'an expression of the moral obligation that the Government and the Nation owe to those who serve, or who have served in our Armed Forces and to their families' (Wilson, 2012:1). At the same time, Armed Forces Community Covenants were introduced; these complement, at a local level, the Armed Forces Covenant.

Whilst the vast majority of individuals leaving the Armed Forces make the transition from Service to civilian life without significant difficulties there are some who face problems, often some years after leaving the Services, and will need additional support (Ashcroft, 2014; The Futures Company, 2013; Johnsen et al., 2008). Research conducted over the last twenty years found that homeless veterans tended to be more disadvantaged than other homeless people: they were older on average, more likely to have slept rough, to have suffered from physical health or alcohol problems, and/or to have been homeless for prolonged periods.

These findings led to the development of a number of services to meet the needs of single veterans but provision has been found to be patchy and the safety net that could be provided by veteran organisations and Service charities difficult to navigate (The Futures Company, 2013; Johnsen et al., 2008).

Whilst the renewed interest in the duty of care owed to veterans has been widely welcomed there is a paucity of knowledge about the level and nature of demand for accommodation and housing related support for veterans in England, Scotland and Wales and how best to meet these needs. In the absence of this knowledge it is extremely difficult to assess need and to plan effective service delivery. This research set out to add to the knowledge base

⁴ The research does not cover Northern Ireland because it was felt that the issues faced by veterans in Northern Ireland are more complicated than those faced by veterans in Great Britain and that this was a highly sensitive area of research that might be better undertaken by researchers with an in-depth understanding of the situation in Northern Ireland.

through a comprehensive review of existing qualitative and statistical data and primary quantitative and qualitative research.

Research aims and objectives

The research study has four main aims and objectives:

- to examine the extent and nature of provision of accommodation and housing related support for veterans in England, Scotland and Wales with a particular focus on veterans who are either homeless or at risk of homelessness
- to establish the current and perceived future need for accommodation and housing related support for veterans who are homeless/at risk of homelessness in England and to identify gaps in knowledge about current and future levels of need
- to evaluate the relative effectiveness of dedicated supported housing services for veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, compared to mainstream services available to the general population (to be undertaken in the next stage of the research)
- to make practical recommendations to Government (central and local), service commissioners, service providers and veterans charities, regarding the effective planning and delivery of future provision.

Research methods

In order to meet the research aims and objectives, the research comprises two stages:

The first stage examines the level and adequacy of services for single veterans in need of accommodation and housing related support, in particular, those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The first stage of the research utilised a range of quantitative and qualitative research methods:

- a review of the existing research evidence on the level and nature of demand for housing and support services from single veterans in England, Scotland and Wales (see Chapter 2)
- a review and secondary analysis of existing data on the level and nature of demand for housing and support services from single veterans in England, Scotland and Wales (see Chapter 3)
- an electronic survey of all local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales
- an electronic survey of housing and homelessness services in England, Scotland and Wales

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- a survey of dedicated single veteran accommodation providers
 - interviews with key stakeholders from generic and veteran organisations
 - case studies in 22 local authority areas and focus groups with single veterans (three in England and one in Scotland, a total of eighteen individuals).

A review of the existing research evidence

A review of the available UK evidence pertaining to homelessness among single veterans was undertaken using standard review techniques including a search of electronic databases including Scopus and Web of Science; hand searching references from relevant articles and reports and a review of relevant organisation and government websites.

Local authority survey

In summer 2013, all local authorities in England, Wales and Scotland were asked to complete a short online survey of their provision and experience of housing and support for veterans. The survey had three main aims:

- to identify services that are currently available for veterans (all ex-Armed Service personnel including reservists) who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in Great Britain
- to assess the level of current and future demand from veterans
- to determine whether there are gaps in services.

133 local authorities responded to the survey. These included eight Welsh authorities (36%), seven Scottish authorities (22%) and 118 English authorities (36%) (an overall response rate of 35%).

Survey of homelessness (generic) service providers

A short online survey was designed for generic service providers. The three umbrella organisations (Homeless Link, Cymorth Cymru and Homeless Action Scotland), who together represent homelessness/ housing and support providers across Britain, agreed to assist with survey distribution. Unfortunately this survey received a very low response rate. It was therefore decided not to report these findings.

Survey of dedicated service providers

A list of dedicated providers providing accommodation-based services for single veterans⁵ was compiled utilising the local authority survey, the Homeless UK directory, expert knowledge provided by the steering group and key representative interviewees and researcher internet searches. These services included direct access hostels, second stage accommodation and long-term housing; floating support services/tenancy sustainment services; outreach services and day centres for veterans with general needs. Thirty providers were identified but these included some leads where it was not clear as to what, if any, relevant services were provided and/or whether this was dedicated provision for single veterans. Further investigation was undertaken but where it was still unclear what services were provided by organisations and/or whether they were dedicated services, they were included in the survey in case they proved productive. A questionnaire was sent to 22 organisations by email with a Word attachment between October 2013 and spring 2014, two reminders were sent early in 2014 and in the spring. This questionnaire was quite lengthy but it was anticipated that their level of interest would be such that organisations would be willing to provide detailed information.

Eighteen organisations responded to the survey. One organisation that was known to provide dedicated veteran services did not respond and a second responded explaining that they did not provide housing or related services. However as most of the prime players in the area responded (as well as some less well-known organisations), the response is likely to reflect the vast majority of the dedicated veterans market.

Interviews with key stakeholders

In-depth interviews with national level key stakeholders representing national governments, veteran organisations and generic homelessness service/housing providers (a total of 28 respondents from 24 organisations) and interviews with The Royal British Legion regional outreach leads and regional outreach officers were conducted between October 2013 and January 2014.

Case studies and focus groups

Seventeen areas (two in Wales, four in Scotland and 11 in England – one in each of the nine English regions and two London Boroughs) were originally selected as case study areas. The areas were selected, following discussion with the steering group using information

⁵There is more extensive provision for veterans with care needs and nursing needs; veterans with disabilities and for veteran families. More information can be found at: <http://www.veteransscotland.co.uk/pillars/housing/> at <http://www.veterans-uk.info/welfare/housing.html> and <http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/can-we-help/who-else-can-help>

provided by local authorities in response to the survey. This data was supplemented with information from interviews with national level key stakeholders and existing evidence about the level of demand from veterans. Once the research team began to contact providers in the case study areas it became clear that stakeholders in some of the areas knew little about demand from veterans and or/were unable to help with the research for other reasons. Three additional areas were selected, again following discussion with the steering group and using the information provided by key stakeholders and existing evidence. In two cases, respondents reported that they worked jointly or closely with a neighbouring authority (Vale of the White Horse and South Oxfordshire and South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge). This meant that 22 local authority areas were included in the study. The case studies selected were:

- Aberdeen
- Canterbury
- Colchester
- Gateshead
- Highland
- Hull
- Islington
- Leeds
- Newark and Sherwood
- Perth and Kinross
- Plymouth
- Preston
- Redbridge
- Rushmoor
- South Ayrshire
- South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge
- South Oxfordshire and Vale of the White Horse⁶
- Stafford

⁶ Vale of the White Horse and South Oxfordshire are two separate local authorities but the work closely together on housing matters and submitted a joint response to the survey of local authorities.

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- Vale of Glamorgan
 - Wrexham.

The case study interviews were conducted between the autumn of 2013 and spring 2014. A total of 150 organisations and individuals were contacted by email or telephone. A number of these failed to respond to requests for help and, on further investigation it appeared that some of these services were no longer operational. Fifty one agencies responded by e mail and/or engaged in a short telephone interview, usually stating that they 'rarely' or 'never' worked with veterans (or did not ask service users about their Armed Forces experience). Forty-four in-depth interviews were conducted with service providers and four focus groups were conducted with veterans (18 individuals).

The structure of the report

Chapter 2 presents the findings from the review of existing evidence about veterans and homelessness in the UK. **Chapter 3** presents the findings from the review of existing statistical data and the survey findings. **Chapter 4** discusses the findings from the qualitative interviews and the case studies. **Chapter 5** presents the conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter 2: Veterans and Homelessness in Great Britain – a Review of Existing Evidence

This chapter reviews the existing evidence about single veterans and homelessness in Great Britain and seeks to identify gaps in the existing knowledge base by addressing the following questions:

- What is known about the housing status of military personnel at the point of discharge?
- What is known about the extent/prevalence of homelessness among veterans in the UK?
- What is known about the demographic characteristics of this group of homeless people?
- How is the experience of homelessness among veterans explained and understood in the UK context?
- What is known about the extent and nature of service provision for homeless veterans in the UK?
- What current policy initiatives are in place to support homeless veterans in the UK?

Methods

A review of the available UK evidence pertaining to homelessness among single veterans was undertaken using standard review techniques including a search of electronic databases including Scopus and Web of Science; hand searching references from relevant articles and reports and a review of relevant organisation and government websites.

The scope of the UK literature

The electronic database searches identified 446 articles, of which 370 were US based studies. Consequently the UK studies of homelessness among the veteran population that form the basis for this discussion were all identified through hand searching references from relevant articles and known reports and reviews of websites. To that extent these studies would be classified as 'grey' literature and none of them have been subject to academic peer review.

At this stage the review is reporting the state of existing knowledge in Great Britain, drawing comparisons between England, Wales and Scotland where appropriate. The small sample sizes and generally qualitative nature of the studies reviewed means that the discussion below is limited to a narrative description of the themes and issues arising from the literature.

The housing status of military personnel

An analysis of available MOD data was undertaken to identify the housing status of personnel within Service to inform understanding of possible structural factors that might explain pathways into homelessness for personnel on discharge.

Within-Service housing status

Having a permanent home to return to after Service has ended provides, perhaps, the best protection against homelessness in the first instance, yet rates of home ownership among serving personnel persistently fall below those of the civilian population. Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey (AFCAS) data reports show that rates of home ownership fall somewhat short of those in general population at 44 per cent compared with 65 per cent (EHS 2014). For officer ranks the proportion rises to 74 per cent, whilst among other ranks the proportion drops to 37 per cent. Moreover there have been negative trends in home ownership since 2007 when 40 per cent of other ranks were home owners.

In contrast to the protection offered by home ownership, single living accommodation (SLA) is perhaps the most precarious – offering relatively cheap single person accommodation, the cost of which is deducted at source and therefore somewhat removed from the reality of any tenure in the civilian housing market. In 2014 a total of 39 per cent of Service personnel were living in SLA, rising to 52 per cent for OR (non-officer rank) Marines and 49 per cent of OR Army personnel (AFCAS 2014 table B.22). Thus a significant proportion of Service personnel are reliant on Service accommodation, particularly those from other ranks.

Post-discharge housing status

Four UK studies include data about people's accommodation on discharge from Service, and in all cases there is consensus that the majority of single Service leavers included in the samples had initially stayed with friends or relatives when they were discharged (NAO 2007; Johnsen et al. 2008; Randell and Brown, 1994; Dandeker *et. al.* 2005).

The veteran population

There is no database of the location of UK veterans and the UK Census does not collect detailed data on Armed Service history. This means that attempts to count veterans can only be a best estimate based on surveys and modelling of the past, current and future military population. A survey undertaken by The Royal British Legion in 2005 of a nationally representative sample suggested there were 4.8 million veterans in the UK whilst Woodhead et al. (ONS, 2009) estimated that there were three to five million veterans living in England in 2007 (Howarth, 2011). It is expected that the veteran population will halve by 2027 mainly due to the large reductions in the number of veterans in the older age groups and the

proportion of National Service veterans reduces with time (ONS, 2009). Furthermore, the overall size of the Armed Forces has been reduced following the 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review which announced a reduction in the size of the regular Armed Forces of 17,000 posts (5,000 each from Royal Navy and RAF and 7,000 from the Army). A further reduction of 12,000 posts from the Army was announced after an internal Three Month Exercise in 2011, giving a total reduction for the Army of 19,000 (Brooke- Holland, 2013).

Analysis of outflow data (see Table 1) shows that 48.3 per cent of personnel leave the Armed Forces after less than 6 years' Service, rising to 54.5 per cent in the Army. These data suggest that the notion of the Armed Forces providing stable employment for personnel over a long period of time may be misplaced. In reality many of those serving under 6 years will not be eligible for many aspects of resettlement packages relating to housing (including support for home ownership – see section 6 below).

Table 2.1 Proportion of Service leavers from UK Armed Forces by length of service, by financial year

	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	2012/13	TOTAL
ALL SERVICES	21630	18260	18100	21360	79350
Less than 1 year	22%	29%	18%	15%	21%
1-5 years	28%	26%	31%	26%	28%
6-15 years	25%	23%	23%	28%	25%
over 15 years	25%	23%	28%	31%	27%
NAVY	4440	3720	3630	4310	16100
Less than 1 year	23%	30%	22%	10%	21%
1-5 years	28%	23%	25%	27%	26%
6-15 years	23%	20%	23%	30%	24%
over 15 years	27%	28%	30%	32%	29%
ARMY	13080	11540	11470	13190	49280
Less than 1 year	25%	30%	19%	19%	23%
1-5 years	32%	30%	37%	30%	32%
6-15 years	25%	22%	23%	27%	24%
over 15 years	18%	17%	21%	24%	20%
RAF	4120	2990	3000	3860	13970
Less than 1 year	14%	21%	8%	5%	12%
1-5 years	15%	11%	13%	12%	13%
6-15 years	27%	26%	27%	29%	27%
over 15 years	44%	41%	52%	55%	48%

Source: MOD 2013 FOI request data

Outflow data also provides information about the age and gender of those leaving the Armed Forces. Table 2 shows that in 2013/14 almost a quarter of those leaving the Armed Forces were under 25 years of age.

Table 2.2: UK regular Forces outflow by age category and sex 2013/14

	Total		Males		Females	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Total	23000		21080		1920	
Under 18	440	1.9	400	1.9	40	2.1
18-24	5470	23.8	5040	23.9	420	21.9
25-39	10670	46.4	9620	45.6	1060	55.2
40 and over	6420	27.9	6020	28.6	410	21.4

Source: MOD 2014 Table 6 p13

Available data regarding housing status and outflow suggests that some Service leavers may face disadvantages in the housing market related to the following factors:

- low rates of home ownership or experience of general housing market, particularly among non-officer ranks
- relatively high proportions of leavers under 25 years of age (least likely to be in a position to take a mortgage)
- relatively high proportion of Early Service Leavers who are least likely to receive housing advice and support prior to discharge (see section 5 below).

The prevalence of veterans amongst the homeless population

Eight UK studies report estimates of the prevalence of veterans amongst the homeless population (see Table 3 below). Of these, two are based on national-level data. The remainder have extrapolated findings from small-scale surveys to give estimates of the proportion of homeless people who are veterans.

Table 2.3: Summary of estimates of proportion of homeless people reporting a Service background

Author	Date	Location	Proportion of homeless people reporting a Service background
Randall and Brown	1994	National	25%
Gunner and Knott ⁷	1997	London	22%
Veterans Policy Unit ⁸	2004	National	5%
Glasgow Homelessness Partnership ⁹	2007	Glasgow	12%
Johnsen et al. ¹⁰	2008	London	6%
Farrell and Soll	2010	Various	6%
Johnsen and Fitzpatrick	2012	Various	11% ¹¹ (of Multiple Exclusion Homelessness)
Broadway CHAIN	2013/14	London	3% ¹²

Most estimates relate to the UK or specific parts of England (such as London), although recent reports from Scotland have suggested that Scottish veterans are 10 per cent more likely to become homeless than their English counterparts (reported on STV quoting Shelter Scotland 2013¹³). In Wales, estimates suggest similar rates of homelessness as England (Welsh Government 2011). Overall, the proportion of veterans amongst the homelessness population appears to have declined since the mid-1990s¹⁴.

There are a number of limitations surrounding the collection of reliable data relating to homelessness among veterans (see Chapter 3) but the available data suggests the following broad measures:

- The most recent estimates suggest that around 3 percent of the street-homeless population has a Service history in London.
- This may be similar in Wales but higher in Scotland (although the quality of evidence in this regard is very limited).
- Veterans have been found to be over-represented in the most severe and enduring types of homelessness (Multiple Exclusion Homelessness (MEH)).

⁷ Reported in Milroy (2001) and others but original report cannot be sourced.

⁸ Reported in Dandeker et al. (2005), section 1.5 p17. Dandeker et al. report various estimates that are not in the public domain (see Dandeker et al. 2005 p18 footnote).

⁹ Reported in Johnsen et al (2008) and others but original report cannot be sourced.

¹⁰ Data used is analysed in Rhodes et al. (2006).

¹¹ A total of 14% of those experiencing multiple exclusion homelessness had an Armed Forces background but one third of these had non-UK Forces background. 26% of migrants and 11% of non-migrants affected by MEH were veterans.

¹² Proportion of rough sleepers of UK nationality who reported having experience of Armed Forces.

¹³ Unable to find the original source for this figure which was widely reported in Scottish media in November 2013.

¹⁴ The reasons for this apparent reduction are unclear but may include the declining proportion of people with experience of national service and improved service provision for veterans over time.

Whilst much of the available UK data has a London bias, some limited data refers to the extent of homelessness among veterans in other parts of the UK.

In England, Homeless Link's 2010 Survey of Needs and Provision (SNAP) (Schertler, 2010) reports that over a third (38 per cent) of services worked with clients who have a Service background, which suggests that need may be dispersed widely. Johnsen et al.'s (2008) survey of The Royal British Legion County Managers reported the highest number of veterans affected by homelessness in Cornwall, Devon, Lancashire, Cheshire, South Wales, and Sussex. Riverside ECHG (2011 p16) analysis of resettlement figures from the Single Persons Accommodation Centre for the Ex- Services (SPACES) and the Military Correction Training Unit (MCTC) for 2010-2011 indicate high proportions of veterans living in the north (including Scotland) (35 per cent) and the south (including Wales) (44 per cent) compared with London (5 per cent).

Given the evidence on post-discharge housing that shows many people return 'home' once they leave the Armed Forces, recruitment data might also indicate aspects of potential geographic spread of need. Regional data collected by Riverside ECHG (2011, p15) for 2009/10 reports that the highest proportion of recruits comes from the North West (17 per cent) followed by Yorkshire and Humberside (11 per cent) and the West Midlands (10 per cent).

Evidence from Scotland shows that veterans tend to reside around areas with an existing military base (Barclay 2013) and homelessness data suggests that applications for housing from veterans occur in most local authority housing lists (Barclay, 2013).

In summary, the limited evidence provides little insight into spatial patterns of homelessness among ex-military personnel beyond broad indicators as follows:

- There is some evidence to suggest that Service leavers return 'home' when discharged and so recruiting data might point to possible areas of concentration.
- The North West is mentioned by two studies as a potential site for concentration.
- National data of service providers suggests that there is some need in most local authority areas.

Demographic and military-related characteristics of homeless veterans

Most of the studies identified describe the demographic characteristics of homeless veterans. Most often this is in relation to the characteristics of the study sample (and most of these are relatively small). The exception is Randell and Brown's (1994) analysis of a national sample of single homelessness from 1993 that compares characteristics of veterans and other single homeless people.

The broad demographic characteristics identified in these studies are relatively well-rehearsed within the wider literature, although no large scale cohort studies to confirm these patterns have been undertaken since 1993. The characteristics most often reported are that homeless veterans are:

- almost exclusively male
- mostly white ethnic background
- older than wider homeless population
- have an Army Service history
- compared with general homeless population they are more likely to sleep rough and be homeless for longer.

Support needs and vulnerabilities

Many of the studies also report a range of support needs or vulnerabilities associated with homeless veterans that are, for the most part, very similar in nature to those of the homeless population more generally (Johnsen et al. 2008). Only one of these studies includes a comparison group of civilian homeless people (Dandeker et al. 2005).

Those studies with no comparison group (Johnsen et al. 2008; Milroy, 2001; Randell and Brown¹⁵, 1994, Lemos and Durcacz, 2005) broadly agree that the following characteristics are prevalent or associated with homeless veterans:

- alcohol related problems
- mental health problems
- physical health problems
- social isolation.

However, Dandeker et al. (2005) only found higher rates of physical health problems among their veteran sample compared with civilian homeless people. They did not find any evidence of higher rates of alcohol use/problems or mental health problems.

There is some agreement that drug misuse is not problematic among the homeless ex-Service population (Gunner and Knott, 1997; Broadway 2012; Dandeker et al. 2005), although Milroy's (2001) study does identify 'chemical dependency' (including drugs and alcohol) as a key theme in explaining homelessness.

¹⁵ Refers to the qualitative element of their study only.

Furthermore there is some agreement that homeless veterans may experience greater complexity of need (Randell and Brown 1994, Johnsen et al. 2008; Milroy 2001; Dandeker et al. 2005).

How is the experience of homelessness among veterans explained and understood in the UK context?

The triggers to homelessness among veterans are generally similar to the civilian homeless population, with relationship breakdown (including parental relationships) most common (Johnsen et al. 2008; Lemos and Durcacz; 2005; Milroy 2001; Randall and Brown, 1994).

Consequently there are mixed explanations regarding the extent to which military experience is associated with subsequent homelessness.

Looking across the studies that have considered this issue, most authors identify at least three main themes to describe veterans who are homeless that can be broadly summarised as follows:

Homelessness is unrelated to military service: These explanations mostly focus on the delay between the end of Service and on-set of homelessness arguing that time in Service is so long ago that it cannot explain late-onset homelessness (Johnsen et al. 2008).

Homelessness is related to factors that pre-date military service: These explanations focus on those issues that might emerge (or re-emerge) once military service has ended and include the impact of disruptive family lives pre-enlistment that limit options for accommodation (such as returning 'home') when Service ends (Lemos and Durckaz 2005; Johnsen et al. 2008; Milroy 2001). Furthermore, it is argued that pre-enlistment socio-economic factors can affect post-discharge employment and housing options – for example those recruited to the Army from educationally and socially disadvantaged backgrounds might struggle on discharge (Johnsen et al. 2008).

Homelessness is related to military service: these explanations focus on the way that military life can generate problems that increase the risk of someone becoming homeless or influences the experience of homelessness (Johnsen et al. 2008), such as exposure to traumatic events and mental health problems; separation from family that generates social isolation; and alcohol problems arising from a military drinking culture (Milroy, 2001; Lemos and Durcacz, 2005; Randell and Brown, 1994). Then there are those who identify the 'survival' capacity of homeless veterans that may mean they are better equipped to endure life on the street (Lemos and Durckacz 2005; Johnsen et al. 2008). The influence of 'the institution' is also debated in terms of how far the 'dependency culture' in the Armed Forces can generate an inability to cope in civilian life (see Johnsen et al. 2008 p40-41; Lemos and Durcacz 2005) combined with pride and sense of shame that might limit a willingness among veterans to seek help (Randell and Brown, 1994; Lemos and Durcacz, 2005; Johnsen et al., 2008).

What is known about the extent and nature of service provision for homeless veterans in the UK?

Whilst many studies provide recommendations for policy and provision in relation to homeless veterans, only 3 studies provide data from service users and there are no UK evaluations of homeless provision. In addition, there are no UK evaluations of other initiatives provided through the MOD or local authorities to prevent homelessness.

Consequently, this summary should be treated with caution as the findings are based on small samples of currently homeless veterans.

Preventing homelessness in transition and resettlement

The MOD's transition and resettlement services provide limited support for preventing homelessness, relying on advice and information provided by the Joint Service Housing Advice Office (JSHAO) to manage a Referral Scheme for those personnel most at risk of homelessness to access social housing. SPACES (run by Riverside ECHG) provides an accommodation placement service (telephone based) for single Service personnel and those who have been discharged. The latter is mentioned in many of the UK studies of homeless veterans but there have been no long-term evaluations of housing outcomes for veterans referred to SPACES.

Similarly, the MOD has developed schemes to encourage greater levels of home ownership among Service personnel (for example the Forces Help to Buy Scheme launched in 2014) which could protect against future homelessness for those eligible. The New Employment Model will include a focus on housing issues throughout Service rather than focussing on transition periods when it may be too late for personnel to access home ownership (Ashcroft, 2014).

However, UK studies are consistently critical of the transition support offered by the MOD particularly in relation to Early Service Leavers who might not access any advice or support and the relatively low levels of take-up and variable quality of advice offered (Randell and Brown, 1994; Johnsen et al., 2008; NAO, 2007).

Post-discharge provision

Once discharged, veterans rely on local authority provision and a range of charity organisations for advice and support in relation to homelessness and housing. Few housing and support providers offer dedicated services for veterans and most veterans in housing need are supported by generic services. The statutory aspects of this are summarised below, but it is important to note that there have been no UK evaluations of any homelessness support for veterans. Limited evidence from UK studies of homeless veterans suggests that there may be a general lack of awareness of entitlement or services available (Johnsen et al.,

2008; Farrell and Soll, 2010); and confusion about the role of Forces charities and rules of entitlement to support (Johnsen et al., 2008).

Similarly there is little evidence regarding the use or experience of services that are specifically designed for veterans. The only recent study to consider this with respondents is Johnsen et al. (2008) who attributed the reduction in the number of homeless veterans in London in part to the effectiveness of specialist veteran support. Most notably, the 'ex-Service route' was found to provide quicker access to emergency accommodation than generic provision; the specialist accommodation was regarded as high quality; and individuals rehoused via the Ex-Service Action Group on Homelessness (ESAG) network were provided with more resources to help them set up home.

However, Johnsen et al. (2008) also found contradictory evidence of veterans' preferences for specialised provision: Whilst some veterans preferred these services because other residents and staff understood, shared and valued their Service history, others disliked this provision particularly where they had negative attitudes towards the military.

The lack of longitudinal data regarding transitions in and out of homelessness among the veteran population makes it especially difficult to identify any latent need in service provision, although Johnsen et al. (2008) identified a need for greater provision of transitional or second stage accommodation for those with medium or high support needs who find the move from hostel accommodation to independent tenancies very difficult to cope with (Johnsen et al., 2008). However, little is known about the demand for such provision or the extent and nature of housing and housing related provision such as floating support and tenancy sustainment services for veterans in other parts of Britain.

The evidence suggests there may be some basis for the provision of dedicated homelessness services for veterans based on the following indicators:

- Characteristics of the homeless population indicate aspects of particular need in relation to complexity of need; age profile of veterans; evidence of multiple exclusion homelessness.
- Geographic extent of need may require dedicated veteran services in places where homeless services may be a low local priority but a specific issue in relation to veterans, for example near to towns with military bases; in areas with known high recruitment rates (on the grounds that people tend to return home).
- More general issues around access to services that suggest there may be greater take-up of services that are able to provide ex-military 'knowledge' and/or understanding.

What current policy initiatives are in place to support homeless veterans in Great Britain

The UK

In its most recent manifestation, policy support for veterans can be traced to the 2001 launch of the Veterans Initiative (subsequently the Veterans Programme). Initially, veteran support and related policy was presented across the UK – starting with the Veteran Strategy in 2003 and culminating in the 2011 Armed Forces Act that enshrined the principles of the Military Covenant in law; and it remains the case that overall responsibility for veterans falls to the Ministry of Defence within the Westminster Government. However, on return to civilian life local service providers take on responsibility for meeting needs, and hence there are a number of devolved responsibilities that fall to jurisdictions in Wales and Scotland (see below).

Throughout this period (2003 to 2011) various government reports and inquiries have been undertaken to identify the support needs of serving and ex-military personnel (see appendix 2). The Covenant itself embraces all serving and non-serving personnel and is therefore a wide-ranging document that seeks to lay down the principles that should underpin the relationship between the state, the military and civilians.

Those two principles are:

- that members of the Armed Forces community should not face disadvantage in the provision of public and commercial services
- that special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved.

Alongside the national commitment to the Military Covenant, the Armed Forces Act 2011 also made provision for the establishment of 'Armed Forces Community Covenants' designed to encourage communities to support local Service communities (including veteran populations) across a range of policy areas including housing (although there is no obligation to do so). By 2013 it was reported that 98 per cent of local authorities had signed up to the Armed Forces Community Covenant (MOD, 2013).

Some aspects of the most obvious inequities in housing allocation policy and statutory duties of local authorities in relation to homelessness have been identified as a result of the Covenant, although the extent to which these guidelines are consistently applied remains unknown. The provisions that are included in policy guidance in England, Wales and Scotland can be summarised as follows (see DCLG 2006; Scottish Government 2005; Welsh Government 2006):

- Local connection – since 2012 local authorities in England and Wales¹⁶ have given veterans the right to establish a local connection through employment which ensures they cannot be refused social housing within the local authority where they have a Service history on these grounds.
- Court order of possession – a court order is not required by Service personnel to prove they are threatened with homelessness. Instead jurisdictions in England, Wales and Scotland will accept Services Certificate of Cessation as evidence of threatened homelessness.
- Priority need – homelessness guidance for England and Wales provides specific mention of discharge from the Armed Forces as a category of vulnerable persons eligible for priority need status¹⁷.

In addition, each jurisdiction has developed specific aspects of policy with regard to veterans who are homeless and these are summarised below.

England

In addition to the provisions required in the Armed Forces Act 2011, the Localism Act (2011) gives local authorities in England discretion when designing their social housing allocation policies. The Royal British Legion/Local Government Association (2014) guidance for local authorities on implementing Armed Forces Community Covenants describes examples where these two provisions have been used by local authorities:

- quotas for veterans (Richmond on Thames)
- additional priority for veterans who have a local connection (Birmingham)
- backdating waiting time on social housing registers to the start of military service for those leaving Service (Gateshead).

The guidance also indicates other local authority initiatives that are designed to support veterans' housing needs including: named contacts for (ex) Service personnel (Birmingham and Hertfordshire); training for housing staff about Service personnel needs (Gateshead); and Homebuy schemes for veterans (Birmingham) (RBL/LGA 2014).

These initiatives have not been subject to any evaluations, but may play a part in preventing homelessness for some veterans.

¹⁶ In Scotland, veterans cannot establish a local connection through Service employment 'by right' (Scottish Government 2005)

¹⁷ Priority need status was abolished in Scotland in 2012, since when local authorities have a statutory duty to house anyone who is unintentionally homeless

Scotland

Devolved responsibility for healthcare, social services, education and employability has meant that the Scottish Government has played a key role in the development and maintenance of services for veterans in Scotland through the Social Inclusion Division. Barclay (2013) has recently reviewed the 'housing pillar' of veteran support in Scotland and described the following progress in housing-related provision for veterans:

- Central Housing Register – single application form available through Veterans Scotland and Veterans Assist is completed for access to all housing providers signed up to the scheme (currently six).
- Service personnel can apply for social housing prior to discharge.
- Priority access to LIFT (low cost initiative for first time buyers) a shared equity scheme to increase home-ownership.

None of these initiatives have been subject to evaluation.

Wales

There is less devolved responsibility to the Welsh Government, but that has not prevented specific consideration of veteran issues. In 2011 the Welsh Government established a 'Package of Support' for veterans that include the following elements in relation to homelessness and housing:

- priority status for Service personnel and veterans in the Homebuy scheme
- commitment to preventing homelessness amongst veterans in the Welsh Government's Ten year Homelessness Plan.

The Annual Review of the Package (Welsh Government 2013) reports the following Wales-specific measures:

- provision of a directory of services for veterans at risk of homelessness
- Housing White Paper (in consultation phase) proposes prevention of homelessness initiatives including requirement that local authorities work with Service-personnel as they are preparing to leave the Forces.

Again there are no evaluations of any of these initiatives.

Key messages regarding policy developments across the UK can be summarised as follows:

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- Measures have been put in place to ensure the principles of the Community Covenant are implemented with regard to disadvantage in social housing allocation across England, Wales and Scotland.
 - There remains some potential for discretion and variability in the application of 'priority need' status for homeless veterans where a lack of consensus exists about how vulnerability as a result of Service might be determined.
 - The Central Housing Register in Scotland might provide a model for provision that simplifies processes for providers, homeless people and those offering advice and support.

Conclusion

There is a lack of robust research evidence on single veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in the UK. Significantly, there are no evaluations of service provision for single veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and no longitudinal or national cohort studies of veterans. Veterans may experience disadvantage in the housing market but there is no robust national data on the level of homelessness or housing need amongst single veterans. There is some evidence that veterans may have specific welfare and support needs that may increase their risk of homelessness but there is no clear evidence that military service in itself increases the risk of homelessness. Existing studies suggest that dedicated veteran services provide better access to support than generic services and that some veterans prefer to use dedicated services. England, Scotland and Wales have all introduced guidance for local authorities with regard to housing for veterans in line with the Armed Forces Act 2011 but the extent to which the guidance is followed in practice remains unclear.

Chapter 3: The Demand for, and Supply of, Housing and Support Services for Veterans in Great Britain

This chapter provides an overview of the research findings on the demand for, and provision of, housing and support services for veterans across Great Britain. It begins by examining what we know about the demand by veterans for housing and support services. The chapter then maps and analyses the present landscape of dedicated provision for veterans. Finally the chapter considers gaps in the provision of housing and support services for veterans (both generic and dedicated provision) across Great Britain. The chapter draws on the survey of local authorities, survey of dedicated veteran providers and analysis of key national data sources.

Demand: Veterans' applying to, and utilising, housing and support services

The study reviewed available data on the demand by veterans for housing and support services across England, Scotland and Wales¹⁸. This involved an analysis of available data on the level of presenting housing need to the currently available services for (potentially) homeless people (including some specialist veteran housing agencies). It is important to note that the data sources that are available collect information on different types of housing need, which are often related to a specific administrative purpose. They mainly collect data on the extent to which veterans are approaching and utilising homelessness or housing services, including presenting at the local authority as homeless, utilising housing support services, being allocated social housing or approaching specialist housing advice agencies. In this respect, the analysis is focused on demand or 'expressed need' (Bradshaw, 1972). Any one data source is likely to under-estimate the real scale of need as an unknown number of people will not present to services, for example, if they do not know about those services, or believe that they may not be eligible, or for other reasons such as the stigma attached to asking for help. In addition, the qualitative work and previous studies (see Chapters 2 and 4) suggests that some veterans may be reluctant to disclose their previous military service. Further, where disclosed, status is often self-reported rather than verified. At the same time, it is likely that there will also be some double-counting over any one year as one veteran might appear in more than one data-set, for example, presenting as homeless and then being allocated social housing and/ or floating support services.

¹⁸ Most data sources are publicly available on request but few are published. In most cases, the research team made specific requests to data holders to release (at least some) unpublished data on veterans.

Overall, the data available on the level of demand for housing and support services amongst veterans is weak. Most of the available data relates to England, rather than Scotland and Wales. It is not possible to arrive at a single figure for the extent of housing need experienced at any one point in time ('stock' of need) or over a year ('prevalence') across Great Britain. Better data collection is needed in this area¹⁹. Nonetheless, the data sources do provide the best available estimate of the scale of need for housing assistance amongst the veteran community.

The data sources reviewed were as follows:

- veterans applying for assistance under the homelessness legislation:
 - PIE statutory homelessness returns submitted by local authorities to DCLG, England (2003-2013)
 - HL1 data on statutory homelessness, Scotland (2007/8-2012/13)
 - WHO1 data on statutory homelessness, Wales (2008/9- 2012/13)
- veterans receiving accommodation and housing related support services:
 - Supporting People data collected by St Andrews University for England (2012/13 - 13/14)
 - Homeless Link Survey of Needs and Provision (SNAP) (2013)
- veterans being allocated social housing:
 - The COntinuous Recording of Lettings and Sales in Social Housing in England (CORE) data collected by social landlords at the point of letting tenancies, England (2012/13)
- requests for assistance to veteran housing advice services:
 - SPACES data, nationwide (2000-2014)
 - Joint Services Housing Advice Office (JSHAO), nationwide (2014).
- Veterans experiencing rough sleeping:

¹⁹ For example, the survey of local authorities showed that less than two fifths of local authorities (37%) stated that they collected data specifically about the number of veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness (over and above that required in the homelessness legislation). Authorities were also asked whether they had undertaken a needs assessment of veterans in their area, with a minority (13% of authorities; N=17) stating that they had. This was most commonly undertaken as part of a wider homelessness review or strategy.

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- CHAIN data on rough sleeping, London (2008/2009).

Veterans applying for assistance under the homelessness legislation

The P1E, HL1 and WHO1 datasets have been collected by central government in England, Scotland and Wales since the original 1977 homelessness legislation came into operation. The returns are completed quarterly by local authorities with a homelessness duty, which includes all forms of unitary authority²⁰ and the more rural areas and smaller towns and cities run by district councils²¹. To be recorded in the data in England and Wales, a household must be owed the 'main duty' under homelessness law, i.e. they have been accepted as eligible, unintentionally homeless and as in priority need. In England, the 2002 Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order introduced a priority need category of being vulnerable as a result of leaving the Armed Forces. P1E also began to record "Reason for loss of last settled home: Left HM Forces" as from the second quarter of 2005. Similarly in Wales, the 2001 Homeless Persons (Priority Need) (Wales) Order included vulnerability for those who became homeless after leaving the Armed Forces. In Scotland, priority need was recently abolished with the passing of The Homelessness (Abolition of Priority Need Test) (Scotland) Order 2012, however previously, under the 2003 Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act, people may be considered vulnerable as a result of having been discharged from a hospital, a prison or any part of the regular Armed Forces²². Data is also collected on those leaving Armed Forces accommodation. It is expected that those recorded under the homelessness legislation will be verified Armed Services personnel.

It is important to note that the data are a measure of the operation of the homelessness legislation, rather than a direct measure of overall levels of homelessness among veterans:

- In England and Wales, non-statutorily homeless people, i.e. homeless but not assessed as in priority need, will not have any history of contact with the Armed Services recorded by a local authority. A veteran can be homeless, but not statutorily homeless, e.g. they can be a single homeless person, and not have their homelessness recorded because they are not eligible for the main duty. Single people are generally under-represented in data on statutory homelessness as the main priority need categories are families with dependent children (or expecting a child), alongside vulnerable households (all household types) and homelessness as result of an emergency (for example, fire or flood).

²⁰ London Boroughs (e.g. Camden), Unitary councils (e.g. York) and Metropolitan districts (e.g. Leeds).

²¹ District councils are responsible for housing policy, but not for education, social care, transport etc., e.g. East Dorset.

²² This data was not available broken down by veterans for this analysis.

- In looking at reasons for loss of last settled home in England due to leaving Armed Forces, and those leaving Armed Forces accommodation in Scotland, only those becoming homeless on leaving the Forces will be included, rather than those who may experience homelessness after a move into civilian life.
- Veterans may not always have their military service recorded as a reason for acceptance. For example, a local authority may decide that someone is eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need because they have a severe mental illness or are living with dependent children. It is possible that in this context, military service would not be recorded²³. There may also be some double-counting if someone is accepted as vulnerable and records the reason for the loss of their last settled home as having left the Armed Forces.
- There is longstanding evidence that the assessment processes of local authorities can be inconsistent²⁴. In particular, the extent of pressure on remaining social housing and affordable private rented stock is so great in many areas that local authorities actively seek to manage demand, often by using strict interpretation of the law. There is also some evidence that suggests assessment processes are not always fair or rigorous²⁵ (although this has not been researched for veterans).
- There has been a seismic shift in how local authorities respond to homelessness in England and Wales, and more recently in Scotland too, with the development of preventative services/approaches to homelessness. Acceptances, i.e. households owed the main duty, have fallen significantly²⁶. As veterans, in common with all other homeless households, *may* be more likely to be assisted via preventative services than to reach the statutory system than was once the case²⁷, it is possible that their numbers are greater than the returns suggest. No data is available on the numbers of veterans utilising preventative services.

²³ This has not been directly researched.

²⁴ Anderson, I. and Morgan, J. (1997) *Social Housing for Single People? A Study of Local Policy and Practice* (Stirling: Housing Policy and Practice Unit, University of Stirling).

²⁵ Hunter, C. (2007) *Denying the Severity of Mental Health Problems to Deny Rights to the Homeless, People, Place and Policy Online* 2(1) pp.17-27; Bretherton, J., Hunter, C.M. and Johnson, S. (2013) "You can judge them on how they look...": Homelessness Officers, Medical Evidence and Decision-making, *European Journal of Homelessness* 7(1) pp.69-92.

²⁶ In 2013, households found to be owed the main duty numbered 52,910, slightly down on the 2012 figure of 53,450. Prior to the widespread use of preventative strategies, in 2003, there were 135,590 households found to be owed the main duty, 156% more than the 2013 level. Levels were above 100,000 between 1986 and 2006. In 2013, the numbers of households recorded as owed the main duty was less than the total reported in 1980.

²⁷ The experience of veterans across the preventative systems used in local authorities has not been researched in detail and may differ from that of other groups of homeless people.

England

The numbers of households accepted as owed the main duty because they contained someone who was recorded as being vulnerable due to having served in HM Forces have been consistently low. Over 2003 to 2013, 46% of local authorities making P1E returns reported no acceptances (i.e. households found to be owed the main duty) for this reason. Across England, the numbers varied from a height of 103 households in 2003 (0.08% of acceptances) to a low of 21 households in 2009 (0.05%), with 58 households accepted in 2013 (Table 3.1). As can be seen, during each year veterans were less than 1% of total acceptances recorded under the homelessness legislation²⁸.

The household type of those accepted as homeless due to being vulnerable is not known but it is likely that quite a high proportion of households are single people. This is because families with an Armed Forces background can be accepted as in priority need for having dependent children.

Table 3.1: Households found to be owed the main duty under the homelessness legislation in England as a result of having served in HM Forces 2003-2013, as percentage of all acceptances under the homelessness legislation

Year	Total acceptances	Of which found vulnerable as a result of having served in HM Forces	As percentage
2003	135,590	103	0.08%
2004	127,760	96	0.08%
2005	100,170	72	0.07%
2006	76,860	57	0.07%
2007	64,970	36	0.06%
2008	57,510	36	0.06%
2009	41,780	21	0.05%
2010	42,390	31	0.07%
2011	48,510	38	0.08%
2012	53,450	34	0.06%
2013	52,910	58	0.11%

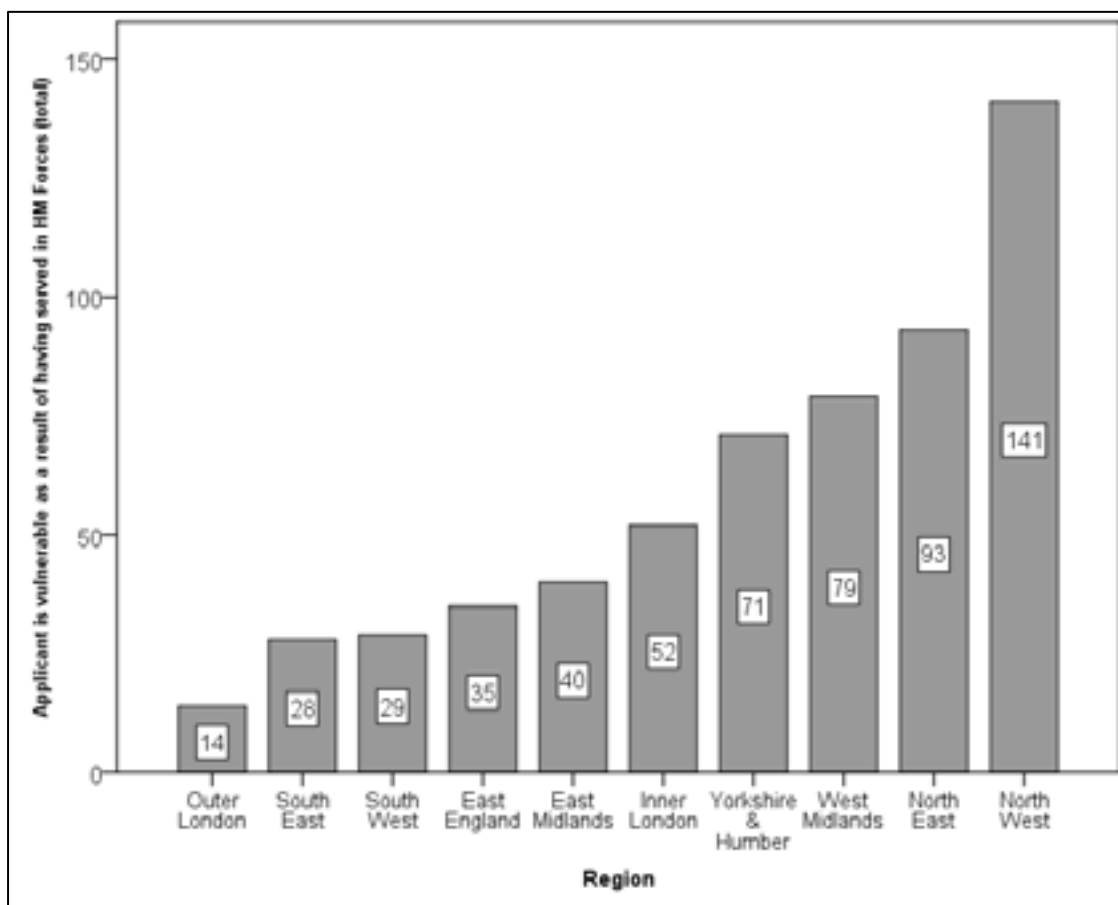
Source: Department of Communities and Local Government

Looking at these data regionally, there was a greater concentration of veterans accepted as being vulnerable due to having served in the Armed Forces in the North West (141 households from 2003 to 2013), North East (93 households), West Midlands (79 households)

²⁸ It is possible to represent these figures as a proportion of the total English population using Census mid 2012 population estimates, but given the very specific nature of what is being measured and the very low numbers involved the %s are very small and difficult to interpret. For example, there were 582 cases over the 11 years data collection period and this would represent 0.001088% of the English population (at mid-2012 estimate), with %s being even smaller if a year on year figure is calculated.

and Yorkshire and Humberside (71 households) - but numbers per any one region were low (Figure 3.1). Map 3.1 shows the incidence of homelessness amongst veterans on this measure at the lower geographical area of local authority.

Figure 3.1: All households accepted as owed the main duty under the homelessness legislation between 2003 and 2013 as a result of vulnerability due to having served in HM Forces (total numbers per region). Source: Department of Communities and Local Government



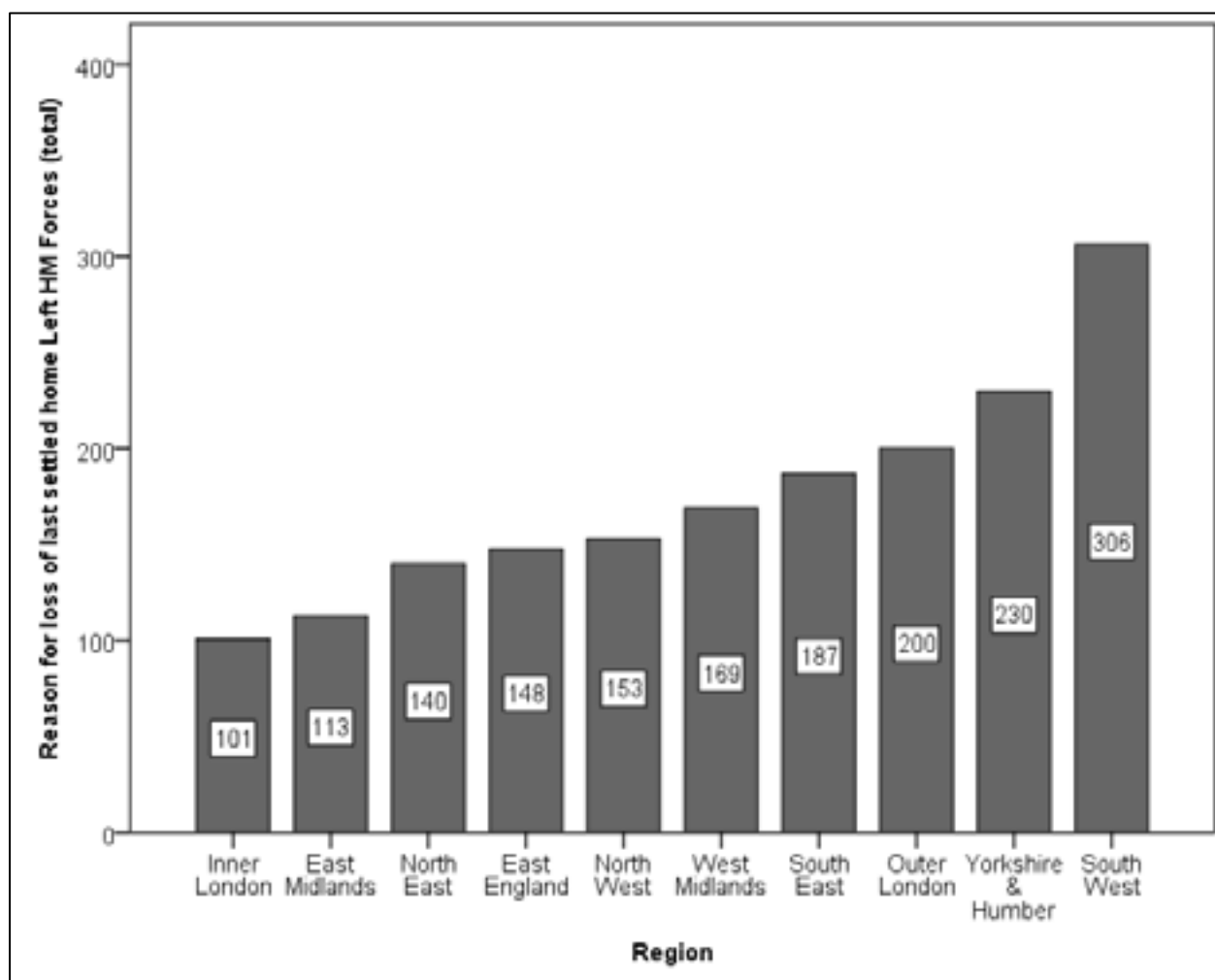
Most local authorities reported they had accepted at least some households who lost their last settled home due to leaving the Armed Services (74% of all authorities²⁹ over 2005-2013). Across England, the numbers varied from a height of 269 households in 2013 (0.51% of acceptances) to a low of 134 households in 2009 (0.32%). The household type of these people is not known, but single people are likely to be a minority as the majority of all households accepted as homeless have dependent children.

When explored by region, these data show a different pattern to that suggested by the households accepted as owed the main duty because they were vulnerable as a result of

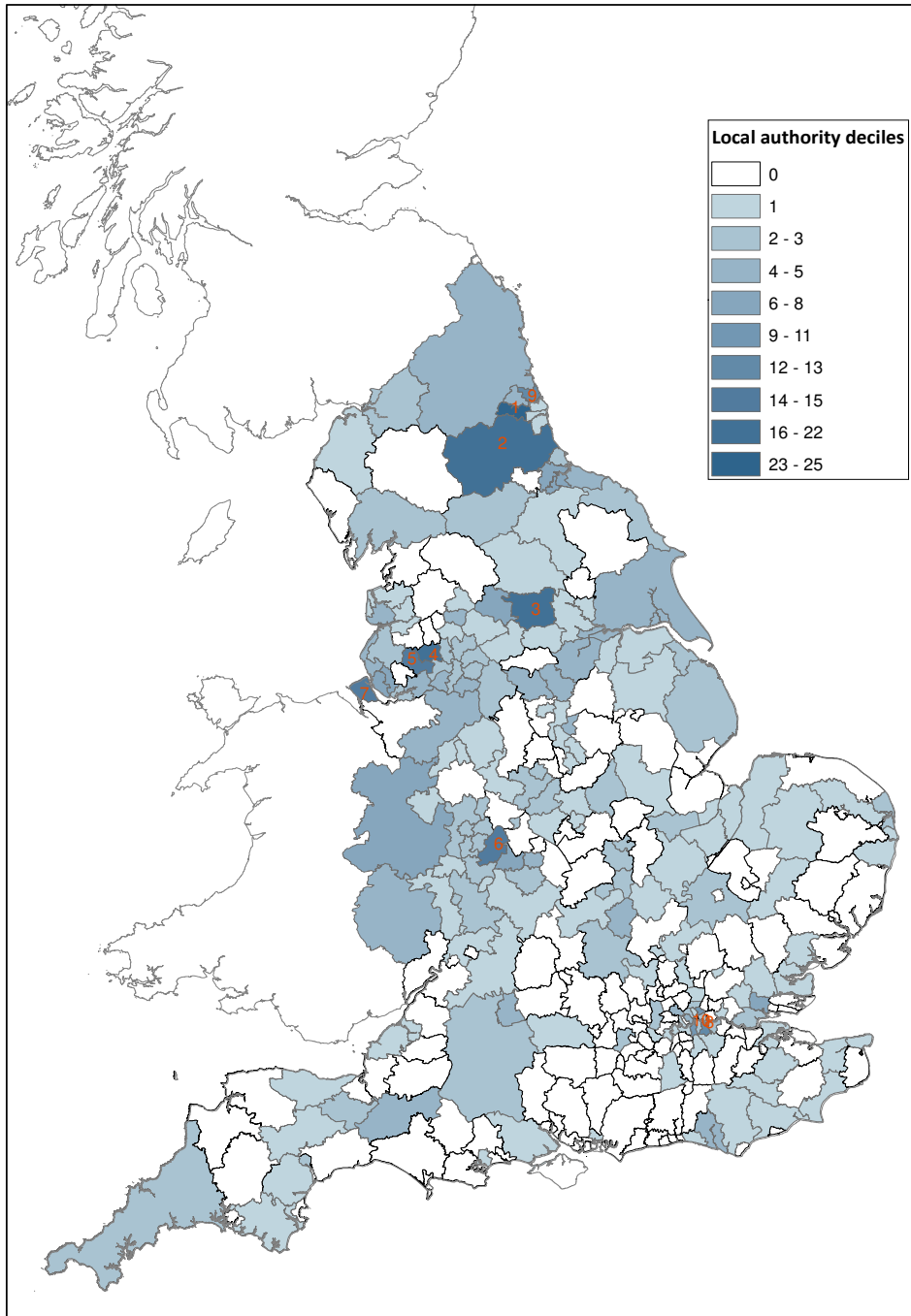
²⁹ Note that the data include some district authorities that were abolished in the 2009 local government reorganisation and data from the unitary authorities that replaced them, e.g. Northumberland.

having served in HM Forces. Here, the greatest numbers accepted were in the South West (306 households from 2005-2013), followed by Yorkshire and Humber (230 households), Outer London (200 households) and the South East (187 households) (Figure 3.2). These data show that there were differences in the extent of homelessness by vulnerability and reason for people losing their last home due to the Armed Services. This is likely to be explained by the fact that the two measures were counting different people – with those accepted due to vulnerability more likely to be single people (as they would have been accepted under a different category if they had dependent children), whereas families are likely to have been represented to a greater extent in the reasons for losing their last home were due to leaving the Armed Forces.

Figure 3.2: All households accepted as owed the main duty under the homelessness legislation who reported they lost their last home due to having left HM Forces (total numbers per region), 2005-2013. Source: Department of Communities and Local Government

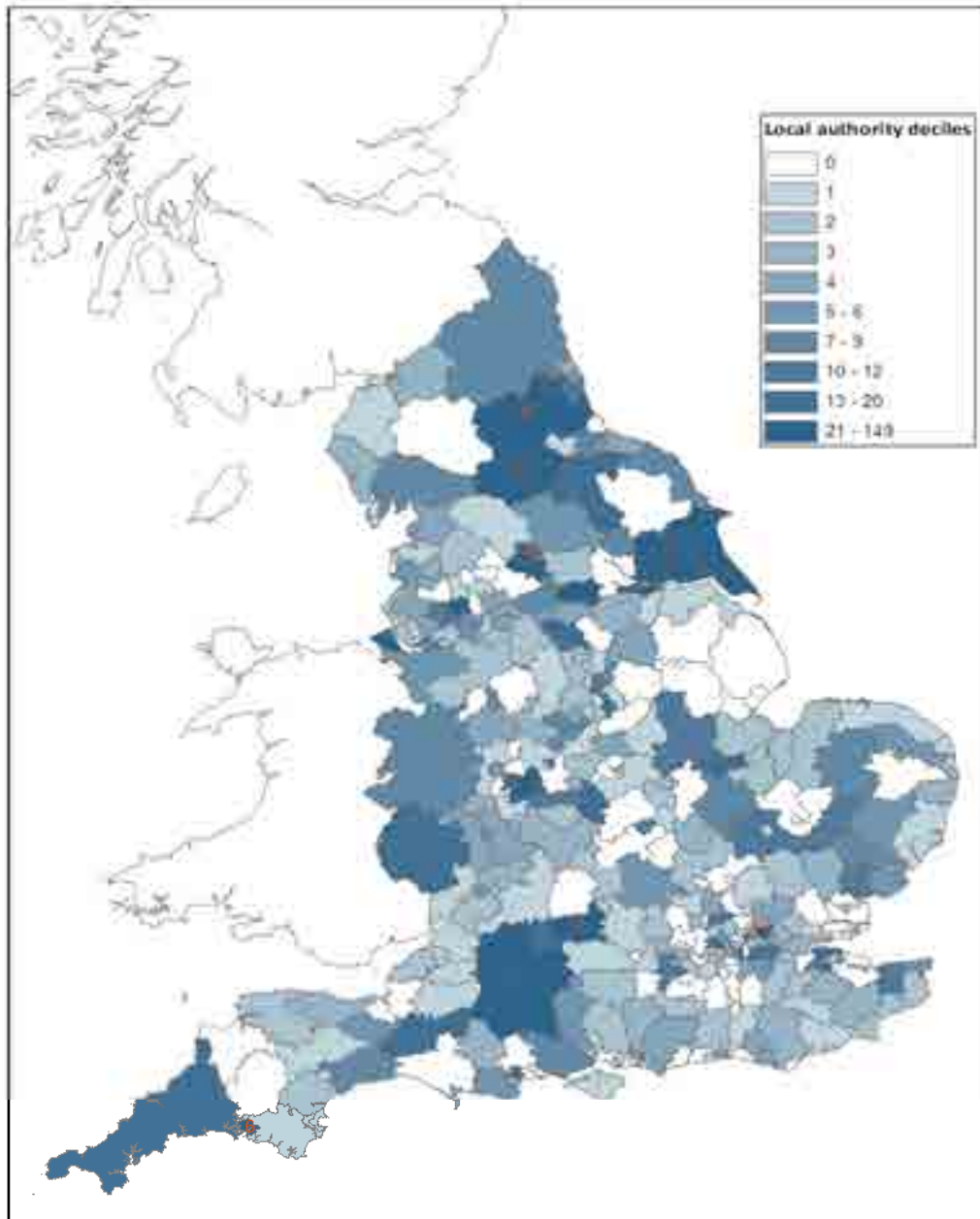


Map 3.1: Number of households recorded as vulnerable as a result of having served in HM Forces, England, 2003-2013, by local authority



Key: Gateshead (1); Durham (2); Leeds (3); Bolton (4); Wigan (5); Birmingham (6); Wirral (7); Lewisham (8); North Tyneside (9); Lambeth (10)

Map 3.2: Number of households recorded who lost their last settled home due to leaving HM Forces, England, 2005-2013, by local authority



Key: Wiltshire (1); Redbridge (2); Gateshead (3); Richmondshire (4); East Riding of Yorkshire (5); Plymouth (6); Vale of White Horse (7); Durham (8); Hackney (9); Bradford (10)

Wales

Table 3.2 shows data for 2008/9 to 2012/13, with between 25 and 40 households being accepted in any one year. This represented between 0.4% and 0.6% of all households

accepted as homeless and in priority need. This was a slightly higher proportion than was the case in England although, again, absolute numbers are low.

Data can only be provided by the Welsh Government by local authority area where 5 or more households are accepted in any one category. Specially requested data for 2012/13 recorded that one authority (Carmarthenshire) had 5 households accepted under this definition, with all other authorities having less than 5 or nil returns.

Table 3.2: Households accepted as homeless, priority need category: vulnerable after leaving the Armed Forces, Wales

	Number of households homeless as vulnerable after leaving the Armed Forces	Total households	% of total households vulnerable after leaving Armed Forces
2008/9	25	5,865	0.4%
2009/10	25	5,565	0.4%
2010/11	30	6,255	0.5%
2011/12	40	6,515	0.6%
2012/13	30	5,795	0.5%

Scotland

The number of single households (including lone parents)³⁰ applying for local authority rehousing under the homelessness legislation who had left Armed Services accommodation over the period 2007/8 to 2012/13 (main applicants who became homeless/ threatened with homelessness) reduced over the last few years from 140 applications in 2008/9 to 70 applications in 2012/13, but remained a similar proportion of total applicants at 0.2% (Table 3.3).

As with Wales, the Scottish Government could only supply data at a local authority level where there were 5 or more applicants per year. No authority had more than 20 applications in any one year over this period. Edinburgh was the one authority which had more than 10 applicants per year across the period.

³⁰ In Scotland, analysis of the data is possible by household type.

Table 3.3: Applications for assistance under Scottish homelessness legislation: single veterans (single person and single parents) who had left Armed Services accommodation as proportion of total applications

	Number of single (including lone parents) homeless households who had left Armed Services accommodation	Total households	% of total applicants who had left Armed Services accommodation
2007/8	128	57,208	0.22%
2008/9	140	57,676	0.24%
2009/10	124	57,211	0.22%
2010/11	104	55,644	0.19%
2011/12	96	45,547	0.21%
2012/13	70	39,827	0.18%

Source: Scottish Government

Veterans receiving accommodation and housing related support services

Supporting People data

The best data in England on the number of veterans receiving accommodation and housing related support is the Supporting People data-set. This was originally introduced when the Supporting People programme, designed to provide revenue funding for housing related support services, began operation in 2003. In recent years, the Supporting People programme has received little policy attention, been inconsistently applied and seen a marked reduction in funding levels³¹. However, data collection has continued, despite an end of central government support for the collection of information on the people using housing related support in England. The data set reported on here is the *client record*, which records the characteristics of people as they start to use housing related support services.

There are some limitations in the extent to which Supporting People data can be used as a measure of veteran homelessness:

- Data are restricted to those people who use housing related support services, i.e. hostels, supported housing, floating/mobile support services and who are accepted by those services. Some veterans may opt not to use such services and/or not be able to access them.

³¹ Jarrett, T. (2012) The Supporting People programme RESEARCH PAPER 12/40 London: House of Commons Library.

- Ongoing cuts to services mean that provision is constricting in some areas³², for example an apparent ‘downward trend’ in homelessness might be because there are fewer services helping and recording homeless people.
- Housing related support services are intended for people with moderate to high support needs. Homeless veterans with low, or no, support needs may not opt to approach housing related support services or may not be accepted by such services.
- It is important to note that a high proportion of Supporting People services are floating support (see later): here, services are being provided to people who may be at risk of homelessness but are currently housed with support needs.
- Housing related support services are not evenly distributed throughout England. There is a tendency for services to be concentrated where there are relatively high numbers of homeless people, meaning that services can be smaller, further apart, or altogether absent, in some rural areas and smaller towns. This spatial concentration of services may mean that the populations of homeless people, based on those using housing related support services, may look to be more ‘urbanised’ than is actually the case.
- Data quality controls are in place, but previous research shows there is the possibility that people using multiple services (for example, using a direct access hostel then moving on to supported accommodation) can be double counted in Supporting People data. There can also be errors in the data³³.

In 2012/13, Supporting People client record data recorded that 3019³⁴ households using housing related support had self-identified as ‘ex-Armed Forces personnel’³⁵ (representing 2.1% of the total number of people entering housing related support services). In 2013/14, this figure was slightly lower at 2,582 households (1.8% of all the people entering housing related support). This is clearly a much higher number than those accepted as homeless under the homelessness legislation.

Examining the most recent data for 2013/14, the vast majority of the veteran service users were single people (95%). Of the single veterans, 87% were men, compared to 50% of all Supporting People service users across England. Table 3.4 also shows that the single veterans were more likely to be older than all service users, with only 10% under the age of 25 (compared to 29% of all users) and 30% aged 65 or over (compared to 7% of all users).

³² Jarrett, T. (2012) op. cit.

³³ Quilgars, D. and Pleace, N. (2010) Meeting the Needs of Households at Risk of Domestic Violence in England: The Role of Accommodation and Housing-Related Support Services, London: Communities and Local Government.

³⁴ Data submitted by St Andrews gave a figure of 5,907, including two very high counts for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. Further investigation revealed data entering errors occurred: the figures for 2012/13 were therefore assumed to be the same as the predicted level for 13/14 (using actual figures for Nottinghamshire).

³⁵ That is unverified as ex-Armed Services personnel.

Table 3.4: Age breakdown of single veterans using housing related support services compared to all users of housing related support services (%), England, 2013/14.

Age band	Number of single veterans (%)	Number of all services users (%)
16-17	1	5
18-24	9	24
25-34	16	23
35-44	16	19
45-54	18	15
55-64	11	7
65-74	8	3
75 plus	22	4
Total	100	100

Base number = 2449 (single veterans); 143243 (all service users)

Source: Supporting People data provided by St Andrews University

Note: National Service ended in 1960 (with the last people completing National Service in 1963): this will explain the particularly high number / proportion in the 75 plus age category (and also to some extent in the 65-74 age category).

In 2013/14, 42% of single veterans were recorded as homeless at the time of referral (statutorily homeless (12%), non-statutorily homeless (10%) or defined as homeless by the provider (21%)). Others are likely to have been 'at risk' of homelessness given their need for housing related support.

Looking at the primary client group recorded by the provider, just over one quarter (28%, N=690) of single veterans were categorised as 'single homeless with support needs' (compared to 26% of all users) and 4% (N=109) as rough sleepers (compared to 2% of all users). However, in addition, a further 25% of the single veterans were classified as 'single homeless with support needs' as secondary client groups. Similarly, a further 17% were classified as 'rough sleepers' as secondary client groups.

Other key primary group categories were 'older people with support needs' (25%)³⁶, people with 'mental health problems' (10%, compared to 11% all users) and 'generic/ complex needs' (7%, compared to 11% of all users), 'alcohol misuse' (5%, compared to 3%) and 'offenders/ at risk of offending' (5%, same as all users).

Table 3.5 shows that the vast majority of single veterans were using three types of housing related support service: floating support (62%), supported housing (24%) or direct access accommodation (11%), broadly reflecting the types of services used by all service users.

³⁶ This will include sheltered schemes for older people. This type of provision was outwith the focus of this research.

Table 3.5: Single veterans using different types of housing related support services, compared to all users of housing related support services (%), England, 2013/14

Type of service ³⁷	Number of single veterans (%)	Number of all services users (%)
Supported housing	24	26
Supported lodgings ³⁸	<1	1
Women's refuge	<1	3
Foyer ³⁹	1	1
Teenage parent accommodation	<1	<1
Direct access	11	6
Floating support	62	57
Outreach service	2	4
Resettlement service	1	1
Total	100	100

Base number: 2,450 (single veterans); 143,937 (all service users)

Source: Supporting People data provided by St Andrews University

Across 2012/13 and 2013/14, the greatest numbers of single veterans were recorded in the South East (769 households), followed by Yorkshire and Humber (741 households), North West (679 households), East Midlands (523 households) and the South West (496 households) (Table 3.6). It should be noted this will in part reflect where services are located across the country.

³⁷ Definitions for these service types can be found in: https://supportingpeople.st-andrews.ac.uk/documents/crf/ClientRecordGuidance2014_15.pdf

³⁸ Supported Lodgings – accommodation where a private individual or family provide varying levels of support in their own home to one or more people living with them, usually young people.

³⁹ Foyer – a service for young people where work training and employment skills training are provided together with accommodation.

Table 3.6: Total numbers of single veterans using housing related support services in 2012/13 and 2013/14 in England, by region

Region	Number of single clients reported as 'ex-Armed Forces personnel', 2012/13	Number of single clients reported as 'ex-Armed Forces personnel', 2013/14	Total, 2012/13 and 2013/14
South East	404	486	890
Yorkshire & Humber	432	425	857
North West	422	369	791
East Midlands	359	230	589
South West	284	288	572
West Midlands	192	160	352
East England	162	177	339
North East	111	118	229
Outer London	99	126	225
Inner London	78	71	149
Total	2543	2450	4993

Source: St Andrews University. Some own re-calculations in East Midlands.

Homeless Link SNAP (Survey of Needs and Provision)

The Homeless Link SNAP involves an annual telephone survey using a random stratified sample of 500 accommodation projects and day centres (from a total of approximately 1515 in 2013)⁴⁰. One of the 2013 findings was that homelessness services appear to be offering increasingly generic support. In the case of veterans, it appeared that very few or no projects were explicitly 'targeting' veterans, compared to 3% of projects in 2012 and 6% of projects in 2011.

The sample also collects the client background by project type⁴¹. In 2013, the survey recorded that 3% of day centre clients were veterans, 3% of direct access hostel clients, and 2% of second stage clients. This proportion of veterans utilising homelessness services chimes with the Supporting People data which recorded approximately 2% of users as veterans. It should be noted that many, if not most, of the homelessness providers taking part in the SNAP survey will also take part in the monitoring for Supporting People.

⁴⁰ This included 70 day centres (16,304 using the service over the past month), 81 direct access hostels (2,961 using the service over the past month) and 349 second stage projects (with 12,468 clients using these over the past month).

⁴¹ Asking for the proportion of clients over the past month they estimated came from a range of client groups.

Veterans allocated social housing

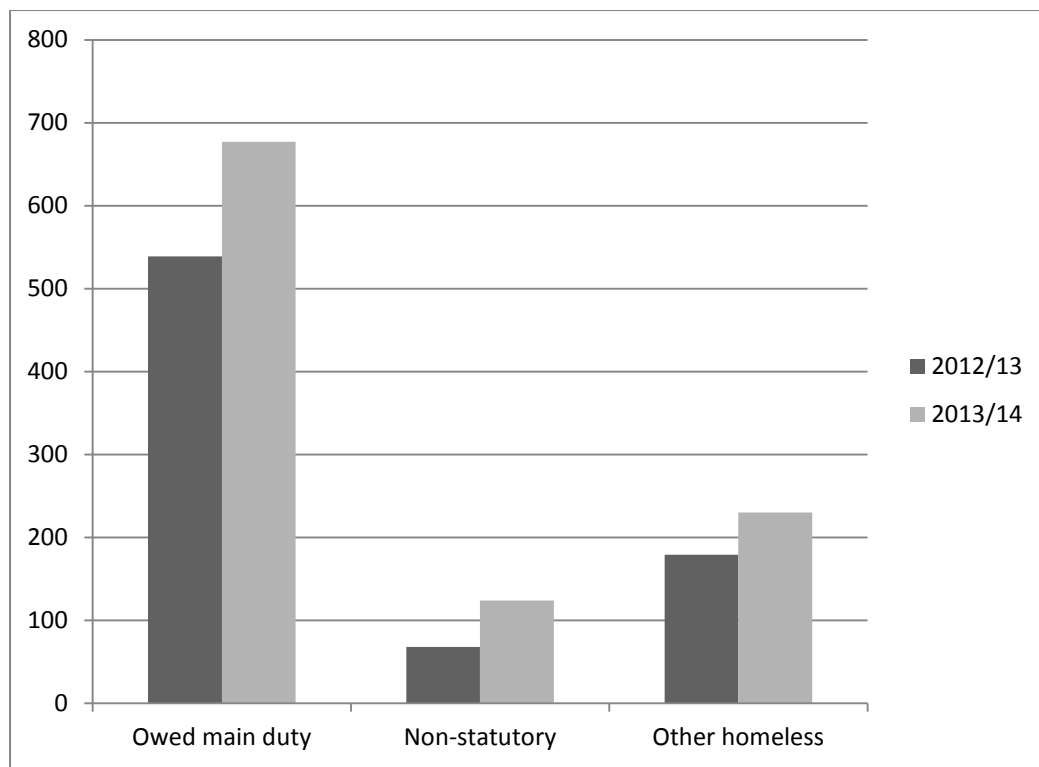
The CORE (COntinuous Recording of Lettings and Sales in Social Housing in England) data cover lets made in social housing (general needs) in England and include most of the social landlords in the country. Full data on the letting of general needs housing were available for the year 2012/13 and for the first three quarters of 13/14 at the time of writing. It is important to note that:

- CORE is a measure of which types of household moved into social housing (general needs), rather than a direct measure of housing need. The effective need for social housing, particularly in areas of high housing stress such as London and the Home Counties, is generally much higher than the number of lets made by social landlords in any given year.
- Data recorded in CORE refer to “ever” having served in the Armed Forces, which means the data include some people whose military service has recently ended, but also people who may have been out of the Forces for many years. It cannot be assumed, because of the way the question is asked in CORE, that there is necessarily a relationship between military service and what was recorded as being homelessness by the CORE system, *unlike* the P1E data on statutory homelessness which report where statutory homeless is associated with, or caused by, military service.
- CORE collects self-reported information on Armed Forces status i.e., their status is not verified.

In total, 4,959 households who reported ever serving in the Armed Services moved into social housing (general needs) in 2012/13 (representing just over 2% of all social lets in England during that period). A substantial increase in numbers of veterans (and to lesser extent, proportion of veterans) occurred in first three quarters of 2013/14: 7,194 households containing veterans were housed by English social landlords (2.7% of total general needs lets).

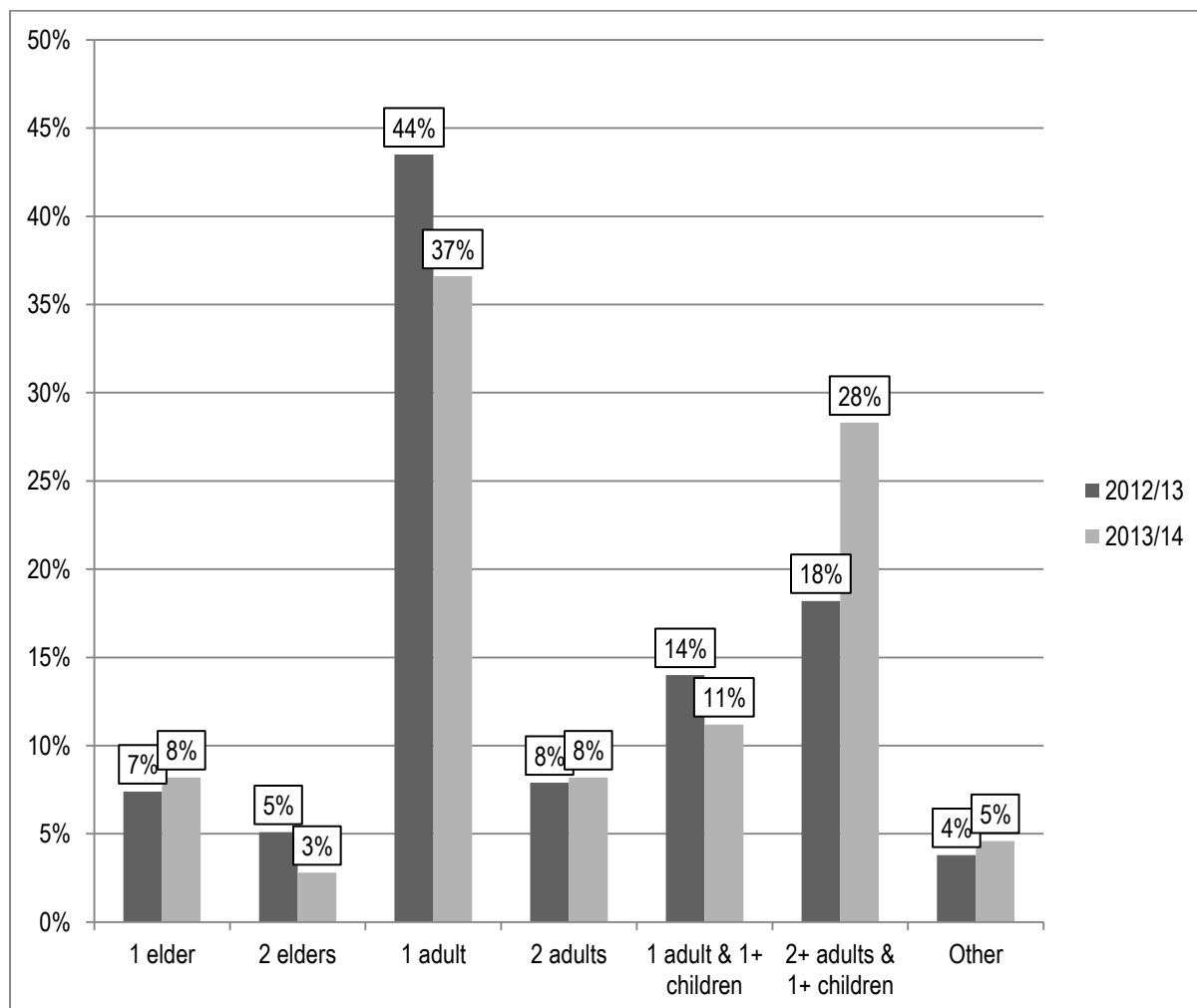
In 2012/13, 786 of the 4,959 households were recorded as being homeless (including statutorily homeless, non-statutorily homeless or homeless as assessed by the social landlord) (Figure 3.3). This number was higher for the first three quarters of 2013/14 at 1,031 homeless veteran households. Social landlords made a small proportion of their total lets to homeless households containing veterans, equivalent to 0.37% of lets in 2012/13 and 0.41% of lets during the first three quarters of 2013/14.

Figure 3.3: Homeless households containing veterans receiving social lettings (general needs) in England during 2012/13 and quarters 1-3 of 2013/14. Source: CORE



As can be seen, the largest groups of homeless veterans recorded in CORE were lone adults (44% in 2012/13 and 37% in 2013/14) (Figure 3.4), but there was representation of families (32% of lets to homeless households containing veterans in 2012/13 and 39% in quarters 1-3 of 2013/14) as well as elder households (single and couples).

Figure 3.4: Social lettings (general needs) made to homeless households containing veterans in England during 2012/13 and quarters 1-3 of 2013/14 by household type Source: CORE



There was little evidence to suggest veteran homelessness was concentrated in particular regions (Table 3.7a and 3.7b). There was a general increase in lets to homeless households across most regions between 2012/13 and quarters 1-3 of 2013/14. However, as noted, the CORE data are a record of social lettings in England and should not be read as an indicator of housing need. It is possible that this could reflect a change to allocation policies for veterans as a result of recent legislation and the introduction of Armed Forces Community Covenants⁴². Social landlords housed no more than 30 homeless veterans (all household types) in any one local authority area in both years.

⁴² A clear majority (67%) of authorities who were signed up to the Community Covenant stated that they had already made commitments around housing and support for veterans. Commitments were most frequently around awarding additional/ high priority to veterans in their existing housing systems, particularly allocations of social housing. Other examples included: full access to rent deposit schemes for PRS; no residence qualifications/ local connection for veterans; quota of lettings to veterans (e.g. 10%); liaison officer / dedicated

Map 3.3 shows the number of single veterans, by local authority area, who moved into social housing in 2012/13. Map 3.4 shows this data expressed as a proportion of total social housing (general needs) let made over 2012/13.

Table 3.7a: Homeless households containing veterans (all household types) receiving social lettings (general needs) in England during 2012/13 and quarters 1-3 of 2013/14, by Government Office of the Regions

Government Office Region	2012/13	2013/14	Increase
North East	47	58	+23%
North West	126	130	+3%
Yorkshire & Humber	129	155	+20%
East Midlands	80	112	+40%
West Midlands	105	140	+33%
East of England	70	133	+90%
London	68	78	+15%
South East	89	118	+33%
South West	72	107	+49%
Total	786	1,031	+31%

Source: CORE. Percentages are rounded.

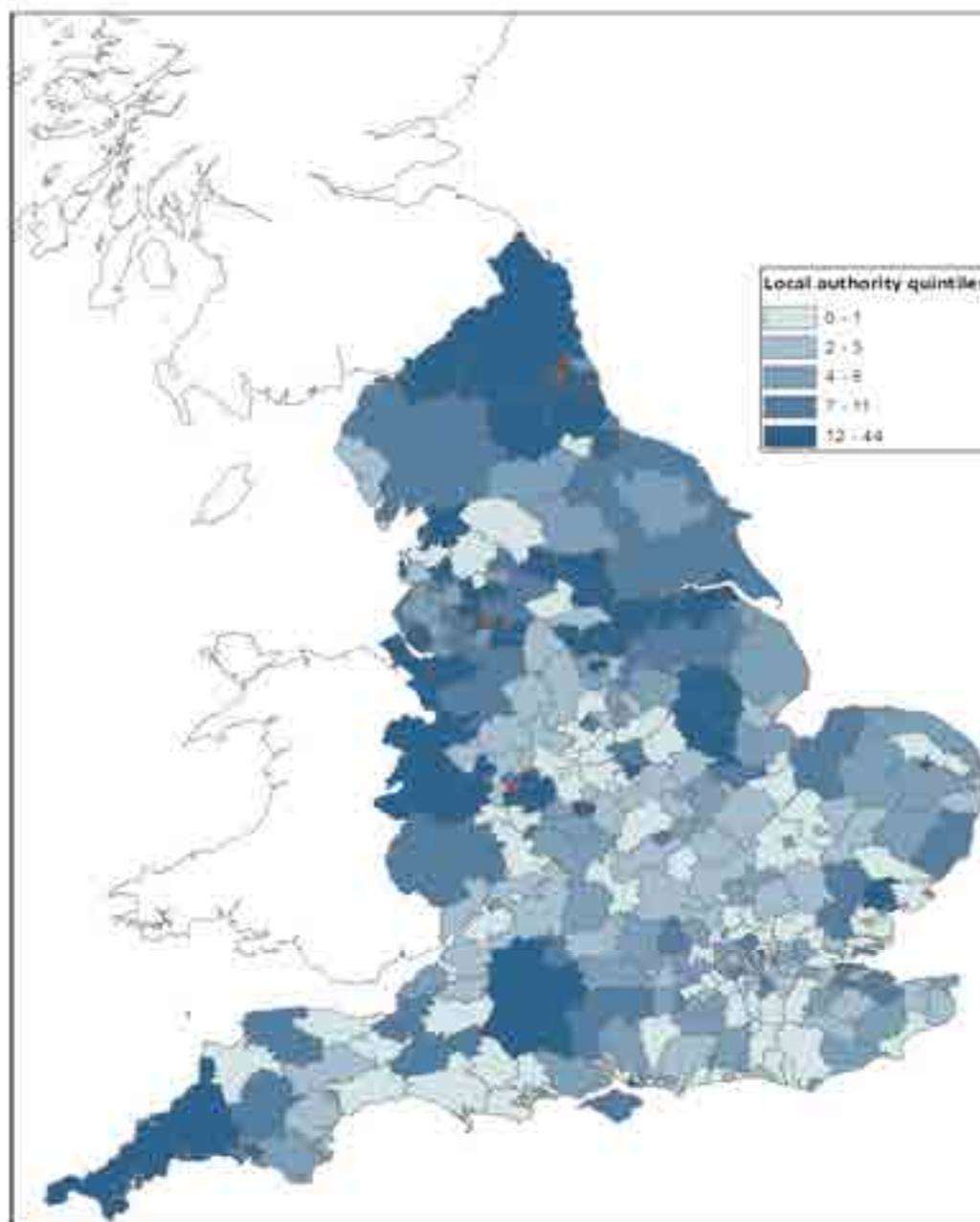
Table 3.7b: Homeless households containing veterans (single people) receiving social lettings (general needs) in England during 2012/13 and quarters 1-3 of 2013/14, by Government Office of the Regions

Government Office Region	2012/13	2013/14	+/-
North East	29	29	+0%
North West	90	70	-22%
Yorkshire & Humber	55	66	+20%
East Midlands	33	49	+48%
West Midlands	41	66	+61%
East of England	33	48	+45%
London	35	36	+3%
South East	37	50	+35%
South West	28	38	+36%
Total	382	452	+18%

Source: CORE. Percentages are rounded.

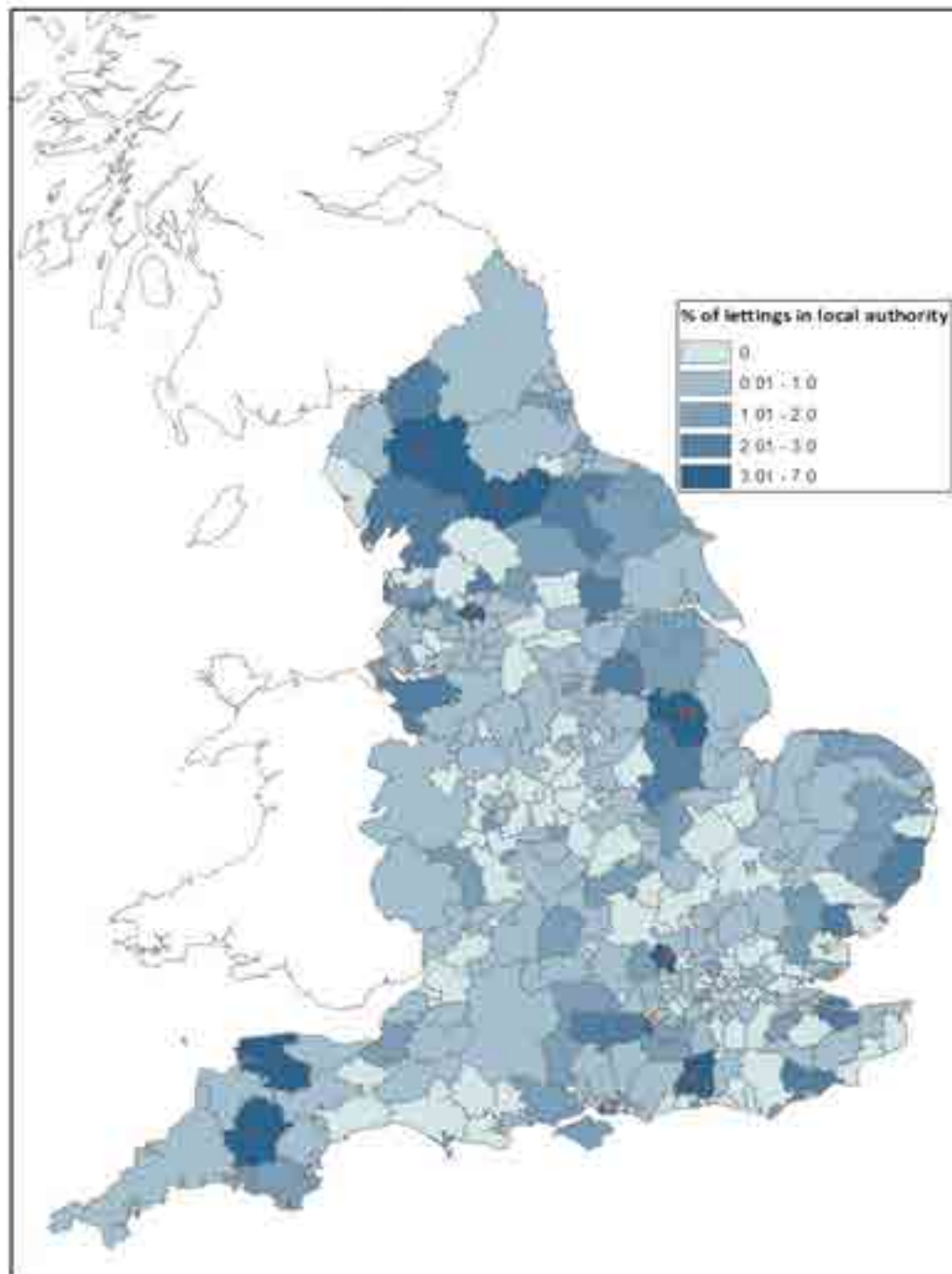
housing officer appointed; housing and advice services; priority on affordable homeownership schemes; better information.

Map 3.3: Single people who ever served in the Armed Services moving into social housing, England, 2012/13 (as recorded in CORE)



Key: Bradford (1); County Durham (2); Manchester (3); Dudley (4); Sunderland (5); Salford (6); Cheshire West and Chester (7); Newcastle upon Tyne (8); Coventry(9); Gateshead (10); Walsall (11).

Map 3.4: Single people who served in the Armed Services moving into social housing, England, 2012/13 as % of all lettings made in local authority areas (as recorded in CORE)



Key: West Devon (1); Rushmoor (2); Gosport (3); Chiltern (4); Richmondshire (5); Eden (6); North Devon (7); Horsham (8); Rossendale (9); North Kesteven (10)

Requests for assistance to veteran housing advice services:

SPACES data

SPACES (Single Persons Accommodation Centre for the Ex Services) provided data on all their applications received since 2000 (12,009 applications in total). The database provides details of the person's Armed Service record, home town, areas requested for housing and support needs⁴³. It represents a unique database as the service works with single veterans nationwide, seeking to assist with housing in any part of England, Wales or Scotland (and further afield where possible). It is important to note that:

- The database is a working administrative document for the SPACES service, it is not intended to measure the extent of homelessness or housing need amongst veterans; nonetheless it provides a good indication of the nature of demand for accommodation for this client group.
- The service often re-opens cases (about 15% of cases) – information recorded is for the last contact with the service.
- The nature of housing need is not recorded in any detail – the service is operated by telephone and it is not possible to assess housing need to the same extent as in Supporting People or homelessness assessments.
- About 16% of the data on location of accommodation requested is missing or unclear.
- It is believed that Armed Forces status is verified.

There has been an increase in the number of referrals to SPACES over time. In 2001 (the first full year of operation), 460 referrals were taken, with referrals varying between 500 and 700 over 2002-2008. The number of referrals increased significantly in 2009 when 1,343 people contacted SPACES. Since this date, the service has managed over 1,100 referrals per year: 1,152 (in 2010), 1,577 (in 2011), 1,459 (2012) and 1,297 (2013)⁴⁴.

Requests for assistance with finding accommodation were nationwide. However, the greatest number of requests for accommodation was in the North West (11% of SPACES users over 2000-2014, rounded up), South East (11%), Yorkshire and Humberside (11%), followed by Greater London (9%), Scotland (8%) and the West Midlands (7%) (Table 3.8). Map 3.5 shows the areas requested by local authority areas across Great Britain.

⁴³ The data complies with the Data Protection Act.

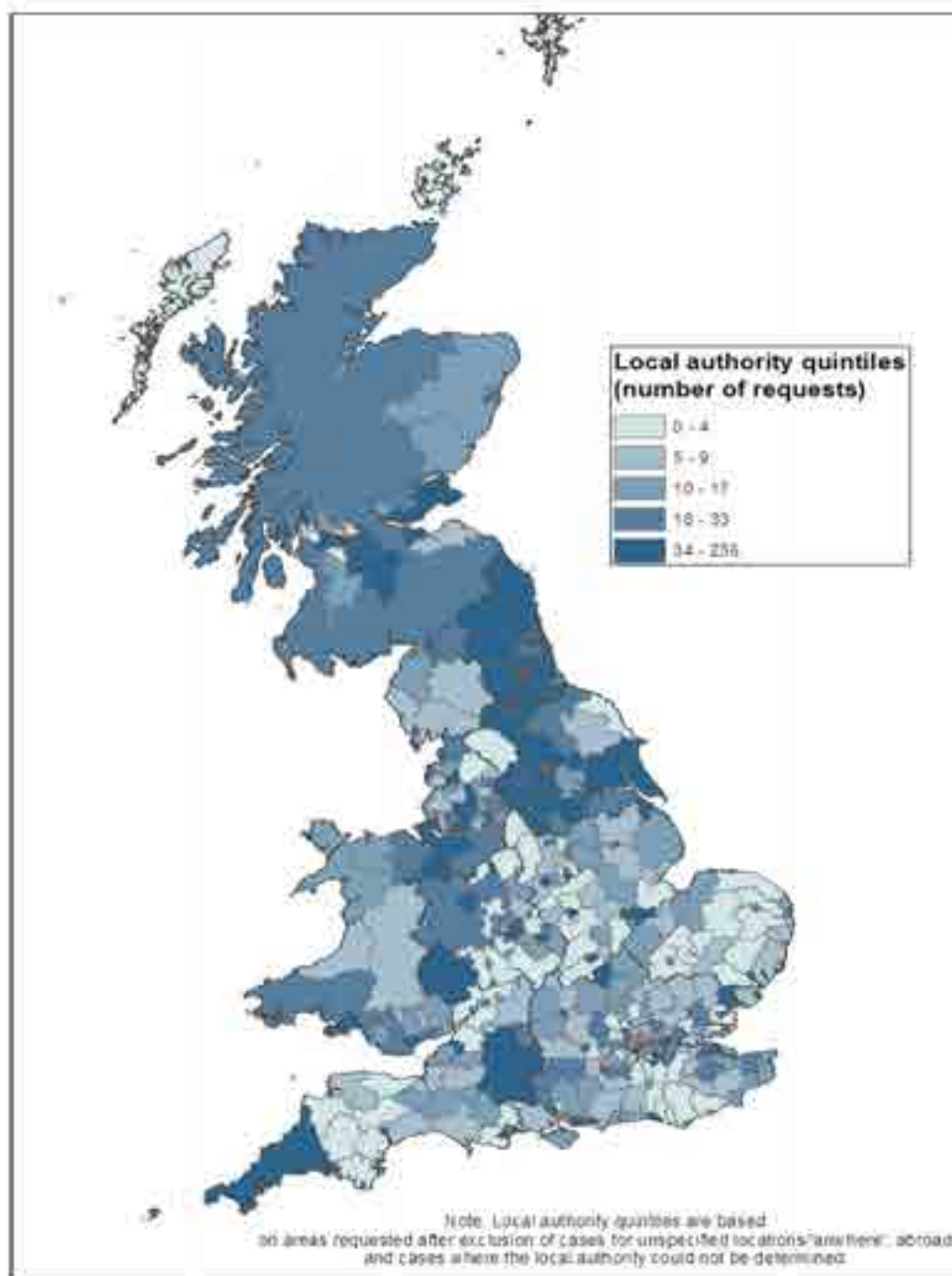
⁴⁴ It is unclear the extent to which this represents increased demand and/or increased capacity of the service, alongside possibility of the service becoming better known amongst veterans and referral agencies.

Table 3.8: SPACES data: Region/ country requested for accommodation, 2000-2014

Region/country	%
Location unclear	1
No location specified	7
Abroad	<1%
'Anywhere' specified	7
North East	7
North West	11
Yorkshire and Humberside	11
East Midlands	5
West Midlands	7
East of England	5
South East	11
South West	6
Greater London	9
Wales	4
Scotland	8
Ireland	1
Total	100
Number	12,008

Source: SPACES data. Analysed by CHP.

Map 3.5: SPACES data, 2000-2014, area of accommodation requested



Key: Manchester (1); Rushmoor (2); Birmingham (3); Leeds (4); Newcastle upon Tyne (5); Glasgow (6); Liverpool (7); Richmondshire (8); Richmond upon Thames (9); County Durham (10).

Joint Services Housing Advice Office (JSHAO), MOD

The Joint Services Housing Advice Office (JSHAO) assists Service personnel with finding housing when they are in their last six months of service or remain in Service accommodation. However, single Service personnel lose their right to Service accommodation on their last day of service (unlike families for whom there are different regulations). Via a Freedom of Information request, the Ministry of Defence provided data from their referral database for live cases for single Service personnel⁴⁵. This included 73 cases. This data provides information on the current location of single Service personnel (verified status) and their geographical preference for accommodation (County and Area). Table 3.9 details these preferences highlighting London as the first preference for half of the single Service personnel (with only 14 of the 73 personnel currently based in London). Otherwise, the data indicates a preference for housing across England, Scotland and Wales.

Table 3.9: Preferences (for County/ Unitary or Country) by single Service personnel registered with the JSHAO, June 2014.

County or Country	Number of single personnel expressing preference for this housing location
Scotland	1
Wales	4
Northern Ireland	1
London	35
Surrey	1
Wiltshire	4
Manchester	2
Kent	2
Bedfordshire	1
Nottinghamshire	2
Devon	1
Coventry	1
Leicestershire	1
Oxfordshire	1
Staffordshire	2
Hampshire	2
Merseyside	1
Newcastle	1
Buckinghamshire	1
Essex	2
Somerset	1
Gloucestershire	1
Lincolnshire	1
Hertfordshire	1
Suffolk	1
Birmingham	1
Anywhere	1
Total	73

Source: JSHAO, provided by MOD via Freedom of Information request. Analysis by CHP.

⁴⁵ MOD cannot provide historic data as the details are not kept for data protection reasons (letter to researchers from MOD, Army Secretariat, 13 June 2014).

Rough sleeping

CHAIN data

The most reliable data on the number of veterans affected by rough sleeping is found in CHAIN (Combined Homelessness And Information Network) data, which is collected by outreach teams working with people sleeping rough in London, coordinated by St Mungo's Broadway. However, there are three key caveats to using this information. Firstly, the data only applies to London. Secondly, it is known that there is a higher incidence of people sleeping rough in Central London as this is where services for people sleeping rough tend to be located. The data therefore may reflect service provision rather than areas that homeless veterans would like to be settled in. Thirdly, CHAIN collects data on self-reported military status (not verified status).

The CHAIN monitoring recorded that the number of people with Armed Forces experience seen rough sleeping by outreach teams in London increased from 149 people in 2008/9 to 526 people in 2012/2013 (Table 3.10). Most of this increase was amongst people with a non-UK nationality (56 to 373 people), representing a rise from 38% to 71% of veteran rough sleepers. However an increase in the numbers of veterans sleeping rough was also seen for UK people from 87 people in 2008/9 to 151 people in 2012/13. This represented approximately 3% of all people seen rough sleeping in London in 2012/13 (rising to 10% if all nationalities are included) (Broadway, 2013).

Table 3.10: Number of people with Armed Forces experience seen rough sleeping by outreach teams in London, 2008/9-2012/13

Nationality	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013
UK	87 (58%)	68 (46%)	53 (34%)	130 (33%)	151 (29%)
Non-UK	56 (38%)	75 (51%)	98 (63%)	261 (66%)	373 (71%)
Not known	6 (4%)	4 (3%)	5 (3%)	2 (<1%)	2 (<1%)
Total	149 (100%)	147 (100%)	156 (100%)	393 (100%)	526 (100%)

There were five boroughs in London where more than 10 people rough sleeping with Armed Service experience and UK nationality were recorded in 2012/13: Westminster (65 people); Camden (18 people); Lambeth (15 people); Tower Hamlets (11 people) and Islington (11 people).

Supply: Provision of dedicated accommodation and support services for veterans

This second section of the chapter examines what is known about the scale and nature of dedicated accommodation and support services for veterans.

A range of sources of information were used to identify providers of dedicated services for veterans, including the local authority survey⁴⁶, interviews with key national level experts and internet searches (see Chapter 1 for more information). The identified providers were asked to complete a survey about their provision. In the case of non-responses, any known basic information was included in the mapping of provision.

This exercise identified 17 providers (separate organisations) of dedicated accommodation based services for veterans across Great Britain⁴⁷. Providers were asked to categorise their provision into one of three types⁴⁸:

- *Direct access hostels* - providing emergency or short-term accommodation; including via self-referral and referral from local authority etc.
- *Second stage accommodation projects* - longer term accommodation for people, accessed by referral only, clients often moving on from direct access hostels
- *Dedicated long term housing for veterans* – providing settled accommodation, with or without support.

Table 3.11 shows that a total of 910 bed spaces/ units were identified in Great Britain, across 46 schemes⁴⁹. This included a relatively small number of direct access bed spaces (Number of beds=156; across 6 schemes), with the majority of bed spaces being split between second stage accommodation (Number of beds=377; 24 schemes) and long-term housing (Number of beds=377; 16 schemes). As can be seen, the provision was not evenly distributed across Great Britain – the greatest amount of provision was in London (Number of beds=367 bed spaces/ units), followed by Scotland (Number of beds=182) and the South East (Number of beds=100). Wales and the East Midlands had no dedicated accommodation for veterans in housing need. Only London and the South East had some direct access, second stage

⁴⁶ Just under a fifth (19%) of local authorities responding to the survey identified at least one service in their area, with 25 authorities noting one service only, three authorities reporting two services and one authority reporting three and four services, respectively. Ten authorities (8%) reported the provision of long term housing for veterans, whilst 5% of authorities stated that floating support or outreach services were available for veterans. Just a few authorities mentioned the availability of dedicated day centres, emergency accommodation or second stage accommodation. It should be noted that the long term housing for veterans was most commonly general needs housing for all family types or specifically for older people. The outreach/ floating support services were also usually broad outreach services provided by veteran organisations which provided assistance with all types of enquiries not just housing (support) related ones.

⁴⁷ 16 of the 17 providers returned a questionnaire. One additional questionnaire was received from a floating support provider.

⁴⁸ It is possible that different providers interpreted these categories differently.

⁴⁹ In this study, a 'scheme' is counted as any one type of accommodation provided in any one local authority area. It should be noted that two services provided both emergency and second stage accommodation – for the mapping exercise, they have been separated into their two functions as they are delivered as one scheme (in order to enumerate the different types of beds available). In another two cases, one service was provided across two local authority areas – here they have been counted as separate schemes for the mapping exercise.

accommodation and long term housing for veterans. Map 3.6 shows the location of these services by local authority area level.

Table 3.11: Types of dedicated accommodation provision for veterans, Great Britain

Region	Direct access hostel (number of beds)	Second stage accommodation (number of beds/ units)	Long term housing (number of beds/ units)	Total number of beds/ units
North East	1 (0.5 scheme)	16 (0.5 scheme)	-	17 (1 scheme)
North West	34 (1 scheme)	26 (4 schemes)	-	60 (5 schemes)
Yorkshire & Humber	35 (2 scheme)	-	-	35 (2 schemes)
East Midlands	-	-	-	-
West Midlands	-	41 (3 schemes)	-	41 (3 schemes)
East of England	-	-	46 (3 schemes)	46 (3 schemes)
London	55 (1 scheme)	36 (3 schemes)	276 (7 schemes)	367 (11 schemes)
South East	31 (1.5 scheme)	54 (4.5 schemes)	15 (2 schemes)	100 (8 schemes)
South West	-	48 (6 schemes)	14 (2 schemes)	62 (8 schemes)
Wales	-	-	-	-
Scotland	-	156 (3 schemes)	26 (2 schemes)	182 (5 schemes)
Total	156 (6 schemes)	377 (24 schemes)	377 (16 schemes)	910 (46 schemes)

Source: Survey of dedicated providers; internet searches; other information from key contacts.

The survey of dedicated veteran providers also asked providers to give details of three other types of services which were exclusively or mainly for formerly or potentially homeless single veterans:

- *Floating support services/ tenancy sustainment services* – defined as being delivered by visiting workers to people in their own homes to help people maintain their settled accommodation. (Note: this did not include resettlement support for those moving on from the accommodation based services).
- *Outreach services* - defined as usually working with people who are sleeping rough or in temporary accommodation to help them access more settled accommodation and any support needs. (Note: this does not include specialist outreach services provided for veterans and their families more generally in the community).
- *Day centres* – defined as providing activities and support to homeless and vulnerably housed people.

The survey recorded five floating support services for veterans: one service in London, three services in the North East and one in Scotland (Table 3.12). These services supported an estimated 276 vulnerably housed veterans at any one time (and an estimated 507 people across four of the services over 2012/13). One outreach services was recorded in the East of England providing 30 places and supporting 163 veterans over 2012/13. In addition, five day

centres or drop-in facilities were identified: one in the South East, one in Yorkshire and Humberside, two in the North East and one in London (supporting approximately 205 people across three of the services in any one year). Again, it should be stressed that these services were all delivered for veterans in housing need. The survey did not attempt to capture the extensive provision of outreach and support work undertaken by veteran organisations more generally for veterans and their families.

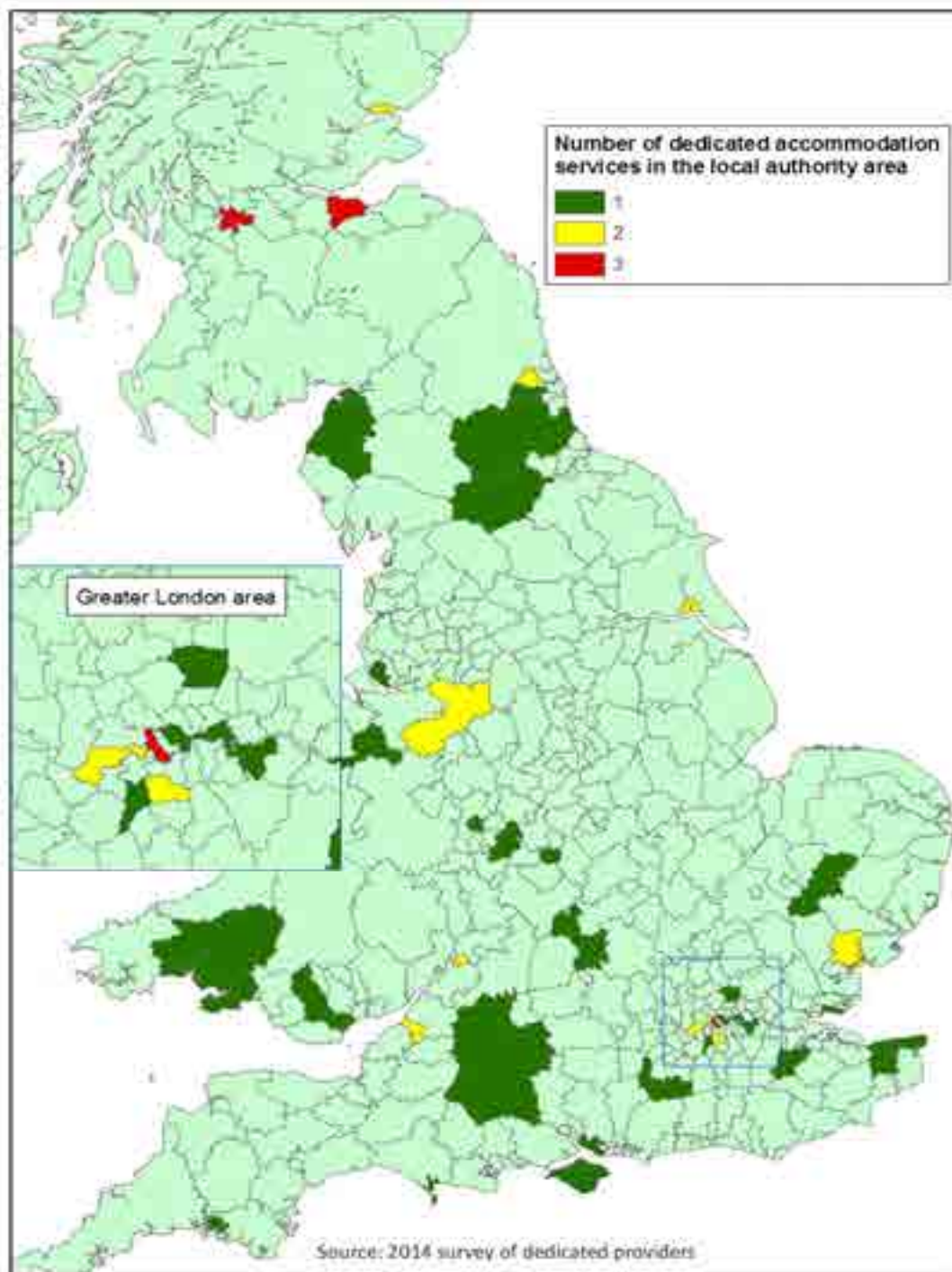
Table 3.12: Provision of dedicated floating support, outreach support and day centres for veterans (spaces), Great Britain

Region	Floating support spaces (estimate of number of veterans supported at any one time)	Outreach support spaces (estimate of number of veterans supported at any one time)	Day centre spaces (estimate of number of veterans supported at any one time)
North East	41 (3 schemes)	-	30 (2 schemes)
North West	-	-	-
Yorkshire & Humber	-	-	10 (1 scheme)
East Midlands	-	-	-
West Midlands	-	-	-
East of England	-	30 (1 scheme)	-
London	35 (1 scheme)	-	30 (1 scheme)
South East	-	-	18 (1 scheme)
South West	-	-	-
Wales	-	-	-
Scotland	200 (1 scheme)	-	-
Total	276 (5 schemes)	30 (1 scheme)	68 (5 schemes)

Source: Survey of dedicated providers; internet searches; other information from key contacts.

The rest of this section describes the nature of the accommodation based provision.

Map 3.6: Local authorities containing dedicated accommodation services



Accessibility of schemes

The provision for homeless veterans was almost exclusively provided for both men and women – only three of the accommodation schemes⁵⁰ were for men only; all others were mixed provision. Similarly, most schemes were aimed at a broad age range, usually from 18 to over 50 or no upper limit.

In terms of military service, over half of the schemes (25) had no minimum length of service (or stated one day only). Eight schemes required 7 days paid service. Ten schemes (all long term housing) required four years of military service to qualify for the accommodation. Only one of the schemes required a local connection to the area.

Most schemes took referrals from a wide range of agencies including local authority housing option team (75% of schemes), housing associations (61%), social services (48%), MOD (66%), prisons (50%), health agencies (50%), (other) veteran organisations (75%) and other voluntary sector providers (95%). Forty three per cent of schemes accepted self-referrals.

The accommodation appeared to be more accessible to veterans with serious mental health problems than veterans with substance misuse problems. Over a third of schemes (36%) 'always' accepted a veteran with a serious mental health problem (and only 9% of schemes 'never' accepted someone), but only one in six schemes (16%) 'always' accepted someone with a substance misuse problem (whilst 27% of schemes 'never' accepted' a veteran in these circumstances).

Ten schemes (23%) were fully wheelchair accessible and 20 schemes (46%) had at least one wheelchair accessible unit. Fourteen schemes were available for people with a hearing impairment, and thirteen schemes were accessible for people with a visual impairment.

Type of support provided

Table 3.13 lists the range of different types of support being provided by the veteran accommodation schemes. All schemes (100%) were providing assistance with welfare benefits and the vast majority were also providing debt/money advice (89%). Three quarters of schemes were providing assistance with education, employment and training advice. A majority were supporting people with finding /retaining private rented housing (73%) and setting up a new home (73%), although fewer with finding/ retaining social rented housing (43%) or applying to the local authority as homeless (48%). A high proportion (70%) offered individual counselling and/or emotional support and social activities (68%), with about half of schemes providing group counselling or support groups. Only a quarter of schemes (25%) provided legal advice and only two schemes were able to provide a pet fostering service.

⁵⁰ Detailed information was available on 44 out of the 46 accommodation schemes.

Table 3.13: Types of support provided in veteran accommodation schemes (%)

	%
Support with welfare benefits	100
Legal advice	25
Debt/ money advice	89
Support with health issues	61
Support with substance misuse issues	68
Education/ employment/ training services	75
Individual counselling/ emotional support	70
Group counselling/support group	52
Social activities	68
Pet fostering service	5
Support with applying to the local authority as homeless	48
Support with finding other temporary accommodation	66
Support with accessing/ retaining social rented housing	43
Support with finding/retaining private rented housing	73
Support with accessing/retaining home ownership	45
Support with setting up new home (e.g. Social Fund/ Community Care Grant application; liaising with furniture store etc.)	73
Practical help with moving	59
Other support	36

Base number = 44 dedicated schemes.

Source: Survey of dedicated providers.

Three quarters (73%) provided a key/ named worker for people whilst they were staying in the accommodation. Twenty five schemes (57%) provided follow-on support to former residents after they had left their services. The majority of the long term housing schemes was unable to provide this level of support.

Effectiveness of services

The vast majority of providers assessed that their services were able to meet the support needs of resident veterans either 'very well' (57%) or 'quite well' (16%). No schemes were considered to be meeting the needs of veterans poorly. This finding must be treated with some caution as provider organisations are possibly unlikely to be critical of their own ability to meet the needs of their clientele.

Gaps in provision

This final section explores the adequacy of present service provision for veterans including dedicated services, homelessness services and access to mainstream housing options. It also considers the future demand and likely changes to services in this area.

Adequacy of dedicated services for veterans

It is difficult to measure the adequacy of the level of any services accurately as the level of demand will be influenced by many factors including whether potential service users had adequate information to access the schemes and believe that a service is likely to help them. The surveys looked at three main indicators:

- the extent to which dedicated services presently turn veterans away
- waiting list data (dedicated services)
- provider and local authority views of adequacy of service provision.

Dedicated service providers were asked whether they had frequently or occasionally turned away households from the accommodation schemes because they did not have the capacity to accommodate them. Seven providers stated that they frequently turned away veterans, with five of these services being long term housing. One long term housing provider turned away approximately 200 veterans in 2012/13 for their 157 spaces in London. Another turned away approximately 50 veterans for 24 spaces in Edinburgh. Two supported accommodation providers had turned away 13 people for 31 possible places. Eighteen providers stated that they occasionally turned away veterans, these were all supported accommodation providers (direct access and/or second stage) with 30 veterans being turned away across 188 spaces.

Only 14 schemes were able to provide data from waiting lists. Here, 36 veterans were waiting for 177 bed spaces across 13 direct access/ second stage schemes (across a number of regions of England and Scotland), and approximately 60 veterans were waiting for 157 units of long-term housing (in one scheme in London). Numbers reported are relatively low though this must be set in the context of services that have a primary function of responding to housing need at a point of crisis, rather than housing where households might put their name down and wait for a place to become available.

In addition to the above 14 schemes, Haig Housing Trust also provided their application data for analysis. It is important to note that this data represents expressed demand for existing stock and is not able to represent where applicants would ideally wish to live. (Haig has begun to collect this data recently). Applicants need to have at least 4 years of service (unless there are special or medical reasons). Haig mainly provides family housing; our analysis focused on the demand for 1 bed units which would be suitable for a single person (although also for a couple household).

Table 3.14 shows the 1st (and 2nd/ 3rd) choices of applicants for housing for the Haig 1 bed units currently provided. Only nine areas provided 1 bed units (77 units in total), with provision located in the South East/ West and London (and one scheme in the Midlands). A

healthy demand was recorded in all areas and particular over-demand in Woolwich and Morden. 235 households put down the one bedroomed properties as first choice (with a further 513 households putting them down as 2nd or 3rd choice). The data suggests that an expansion of one bed units would be supported.

Table 3.14: Haig Housing Trust application data: Number of applicants

Local authority	Provision of 1 bed units	1st choice	2nd and 3rd choice	Combined choices
Midlands				
Cheltenham	8	12	24	36
South East/ West				
Bury St Edmunds	8	15	28	43
Southend on Sea	12	14	33	47
Bristol	6	12	27	39
Waverley	11	18	39	57
Isle of Wight	4	7	14	21
London/ M25				
Enfield	8	23	82	105
Merton	5	79	161	240
Greenwich	14	55	105	160
Total	77	235	513	748

Source: Haig housing application data.

Adequacy of homelessness services and mainstream housing options

The dedicated veteran provider survey asked providers the extent to which they encountered problems in housing veterans in the areas that they worked (Table 3.15). The largest problem experienced was around social housing, in terms of long waits for access, an overall shortage and a shortage of suitable properties in the sector. Fewer providers reported frequently experiencing problems in finding private sector housing than social rented housing, but also reported on the shortage of suitable private sector housing to the same extent as for social housing. Fewer problems were reported in accessing housing advice and in finding housing in suitable locations.

Table 3.15: Extent to which providers encounter problems in housing veterans in the areas that they work

	Number of providers reporting problems 'Frequently'	Number of providers reporting problems 'Sometimes'	Number of providers reporting problems 'Rarely or never'
Lack of housing advice available locally	1	7	4
Long waits accessing social housing	7	6	-
Too few housing offers allowed by local authority	5	5	2
Shortage of social rented sector stock	9	3	-
Shortage of private rented sector housing	4	5	3
Shortage of <i>suitable</i> social rented housing	7	6	1
Shortage of <i>suitable</i> private rented sector housing	7	5	1
Difficulties in getting housing in suitable location (e.g. proximity to family)	3	7	1

Source: Dedicated veteran provider survey; Base= 14 providers.

The survey of local authorities also collected information on whether authorities assessed that there were sufficient and appropriate homelessness services in their area, as well as long-term social rented and private rented housing for veterans.

A majority (57%) of authorities assessed that there were sufficient and appropriate services for veterans who were homeless or at risk of homelessness⁵¹ (Table 3.16). A combination of three main reasons were given by authorities to explain this: firstly, that they were seeing relatively low numbers of homeless veterans and/or, the generic homelessness services available were able to meet the demand from veterans, and/or the policies/ assistance available for veterans was good (including priority for rehousing, assistance from veteran organisations and so on). Sixteen percent of authorities (21 areas) considered that there was a need for further homelessness services. A range of services appeared to be needed across these areas, with some authorities identifying a need for emergency provision only (3 areas), long-term housing only (3 areas), floating support/outreach services only (4 areas) or a combination of most types of services (5 areas).

There appeared to be a particular need for increases in independent accommodation, particularly social housing (48% of authorities) and also private rented sector housing (37% of authorities).

⁵¹ It should be noted that only a small number of authorities had undertaken specific needs assessment in this area. The proportion of local authorities that considered veterans in needs assessments more generally was not known.

Table 3.16: Local authorities reporting whether services /housing were sufficient or not (%)

	If sufficient services for (potentially) homeless veterans (%)	If sufficient long-term social rented housing (%)	If sufficient long-term private rented housing (%)
Yes	57	37	38
No	16	48	37
Don't know	27	16	24
Total	100	100	100

Source: Survey of local authorities. Base: 128 local authorities.

Table 3.17 shows the Government Office Region for the local authorities identifying a need for more (appropriate) services for veterans. Overall, there appeared few differences between regions (when compared to the number of local authorities responding to the survey). However, a lower proportion of local authorities in the North West mentioned problems relative to their number in the survey. This would be consistent with a less constrained housing market. In addition, a higher proportion of authorities in the East of England mentioned problems, especially insufficient homelessness services (along with Wales).

Table 3.17: Local authorities reporting insufficient services, by region

Government Office Region	Insufficient homelessness services	Insufficient social rented housing	Insufficient private-rented housing	Number of LAs in survey
North East	-	-	-	3 (2%)
North West	2 (10%)	2 (3%)	3 (7%)	21 (16%)
Yorkshire & Humber	1 (5%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	7 (5%)
East Midlands	4 (19%)	12 (21%)	9 (20%)	20 (15%)
West Midlands	2 (10%)	6 (10%)	7 (15%)	10 (8%)
East of England	5 (24%)	8 (14%)	7 (15%)	15 (11%)
London	1 (5%)	3 (5%)	4 (9%)	9 (7%)
South East	1 (5%)	15 (26%)	9 (20%)	24 (18%)
South West	1 (5%)	3 (5%)	2 (4%)	8 (6%)
Wales	3 (14%)	5 (9%)	3 (7%)	8 (6%)
Scotland	1 (5%)	3 (5%)	1 (2%)	8 (6%)
Total	21 (100%)	58 (100%)	46 (100%)	133 (100%)

Source: Survey of local authorities.

Overall authorities considered that they were supporting veterans in housing need quite (60%) or very well (12%) (Table 3.18). Whilst a quarter (27%) of authorities were unsure of

the extent to which they were meeting needs, only 2% of authorities considered they were poorly serving veterans in this area.

Table 3.18: How well or poorly the local authority is able to support the needs of homeless or at risk veterans overall

How well or poorly	%
Very well	12
Quite well	60
Neither well nor poorly	27
Quite poorly	2
Very poorly	0
Total	100

Source: Survey of local authorities. Base number=129.

Dedicated providers' assessment of the extent to which accommodation and support needs of veterans were currently being met was less positive (Table 3.19)

Table 3.19: Providers' assessment of the extent to which accommodation and support needs of veterans are met in the local authority areas that they work

	Number of areas (%)
Very well	6
Quite well	7
Mixed success	6
Not very well	5
Not at all well	4

Source: Dedicated veteran provider survey; Base= 14 providers

Changing demand and provision in the future

Both dedicated providers and local authorities were asked for their assessment of the likely demand for future accommodation and support services for veterans.

Table 3.20 shows that dedicated providers felt that demand was likely to increase in almost all of the areas that they were currently working: in 16 areas, it was considered that demand would increase significantly and, in nine areas, it was considered that demand would increase slightly.

Table 3.20: Providers assessment of whether demand from veterans for accommodation and support services will increase or decrease in the local authority areas that they work over the next five years

	Number of areas where providers consider demand will change or stay the same
Increase significantly	16
Increase slightly	9
Stay about the same	2
Decrease slightly	-
Decrease significantly	-

Source: Dedicated veteran provider survey; Base= 14 providers.

Local authorities that collected information on veteran homelessness⁵² were also asked whether the number of veterans needing local authority assistance due to housing and support needs was expected to change over the next two years. Authorities were less likely to predict an increase in demand in the next few years than providers⁵³, but were more likely to predict increases than decreases in veteran housing need. Nine authorities (of the 45 collecting data) expected an increase in the number of veterans being homeless/ at risk of homelessness over the next two years (Table 3.21). Most authorities either expected no real change or were unsure if there would be a change. None expected a decrease in presentations. The main reason for expecting an increase in numbers of veterans in the next two years was growing demand following redundancies and cutbacks (including closure of barracks in one area, and closure of a base abroad in another) in the Armed Forces. Five of the nine authorities had a military base located in their area (compared to 24% of whole sample). One authority also mentioned increases following the implementation of new legislation (on allocations of social housing for veterans), and another that all forms of homelessness presentations were increasing.

⁵² 37% responding to the survey stated that they collected data specifically about the number of veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

⁵³ The different time scale for the two questions may explain some of these differences.

Table 3.21: Whether local authority expects the number of veterans to change in the next two years

Whether expects a change	Number
Increase	9
No real change	20
Decrease	0
Unsure	16
N. local authorities	45
Note 1: This question was asked of local authorities which indicated that they collected data on the number of homeless or at risk veterans Note 2: Nine authorities expecting increase in numbers: Those with military base: Canterbury, Maidstone, North Dorset, Stafford, Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire. Those without a military base: Basingstoke and Deane, Liverpool, Monmouthshire, Wrexham	

Dedicated veteran accommodation providers were asked to report on any development plans for new services in the near future. Twelve of the 17 providers reported that they had undertaken needs assessment work that had identified the need for further service remodelling or developments for veterans in housing need. Accommodation development plans included:

- conversion of one scheme in Edinburgh to create an additional 5 en-suite rooms (SVHA)
- new project in Glasgow focused on transitional support (SVHA)
- 6 studio flats for single Service leavers in Merton (HAIG)
- accommodation scheme for veterans with low/medium support needs providing 10 one-bed and 3 two-bed flats, Allerdale (Home Group Ltd)
- floating support to further 15 properties in Durham (SHAID)
- 52 apartment block in Liverpool (Armed Forces and Veterans Launchpad)
- 72 bed spaces across 15 houses in Pontypridd and Cardiff, Carmarthen and Swansea, and Wrexham (exploring further provision in North West and South West) (Alabare)
- veterans single accommodation in Hull (Hull Veterans Support Centre)
- mobile facility to spread awareness of needs of homeless veterans, probably based from Canterbury, Kent (Future for Heroes)
- increase housing from 15 to 40 beds, Cheshire East (LOL Foundation).

In addition, at the time of writing, the first successful veteran accommodation fund projects⁵⁴ had just been announced. These included two projects that would provide (some) accommodation or housing related support for single veterans:

- expansion of accommodation provision in south London (83 units in Merton) and Edinburgh (15 units) to assist a further 416 veterans and their families per year⁵⁵ (Haig Housing Trust).

This information would suggest that dedicated provision for single veterans is likely to increase by at least 235 bed spaces/ units⁵⁶ over the next few years. This would represent an increase of 26% compared to the existing 910 bed spaces. This change in provision is shown graphically in Map 3.7.

At least a further 15 floating support places⁵⁷ are also likely to be available. This would only represent a 5% increase on the present number of floating support places (276).

At the same time, it is likely that generic homelessness services will continue to reduce in scale given cuts in welfare budgets across Great Britain. The potential impact of welfare reform on veteran (and other) accommodation and support services was a concern of both providers and local authorities (in the surveys) and is considered in more detail in the next chapter.

Conclusion

As reported, the data on the demand for housing and support services by veterans is weak overall, although it has improved in recent years with Supporting People and CORE both now collecting information on veteran status in their respective databases.

Figure 3.5 provides a summary of the key information from each database for 2012/13 (where available) showing the number of veterans and the proportion of veterans in the respective database populations. It is not possible to add up these numbers as the different databases are measuring different types of housing need, there is overlap in some cases (see above), and also significant limitations in the data (for example, only rough sleeping figures are available for London). Nonetheless, it provides an indication of the present scale of housing need amongst veterans in the UK (particularly England where data is more

⁵⁴ This one-off fund closed on 27 June 2014. A decision panel comprised of MOD representatives, the Treasury, devolved administrations, advisers from the Cobseo Housing cluster, The Royal British Legion and the Families Federations.

⁵⁵ Note: the split between one-bed and larger units is unknown at the time of writing.

⁵⁶ This includes all accommodation schemes where the number of units/ bed spaces is known. This does not include the following schemes: veterans single accommodation in Hull (Hull Veterans Support Centre); new project focussed on transitional support (SVHA); the new provision by HAIG in Merton/ Edinburgh.

⁵⁷ This includes provision where number of spaces is known. It does not include the following schemes: Future for Heroes mobile provision.

plentiful). The numbers (and proportions) of veterans experiencing homelessness are low, although all caveats discussed above should be noted including the relative paucity of data in this area. The numbers utilising housing and support services for people in housing need are greater, but remain a relatively small proportion of total services users.

Map 3.7 Local authorities containing dedicated accommodation services including schemes presently in development

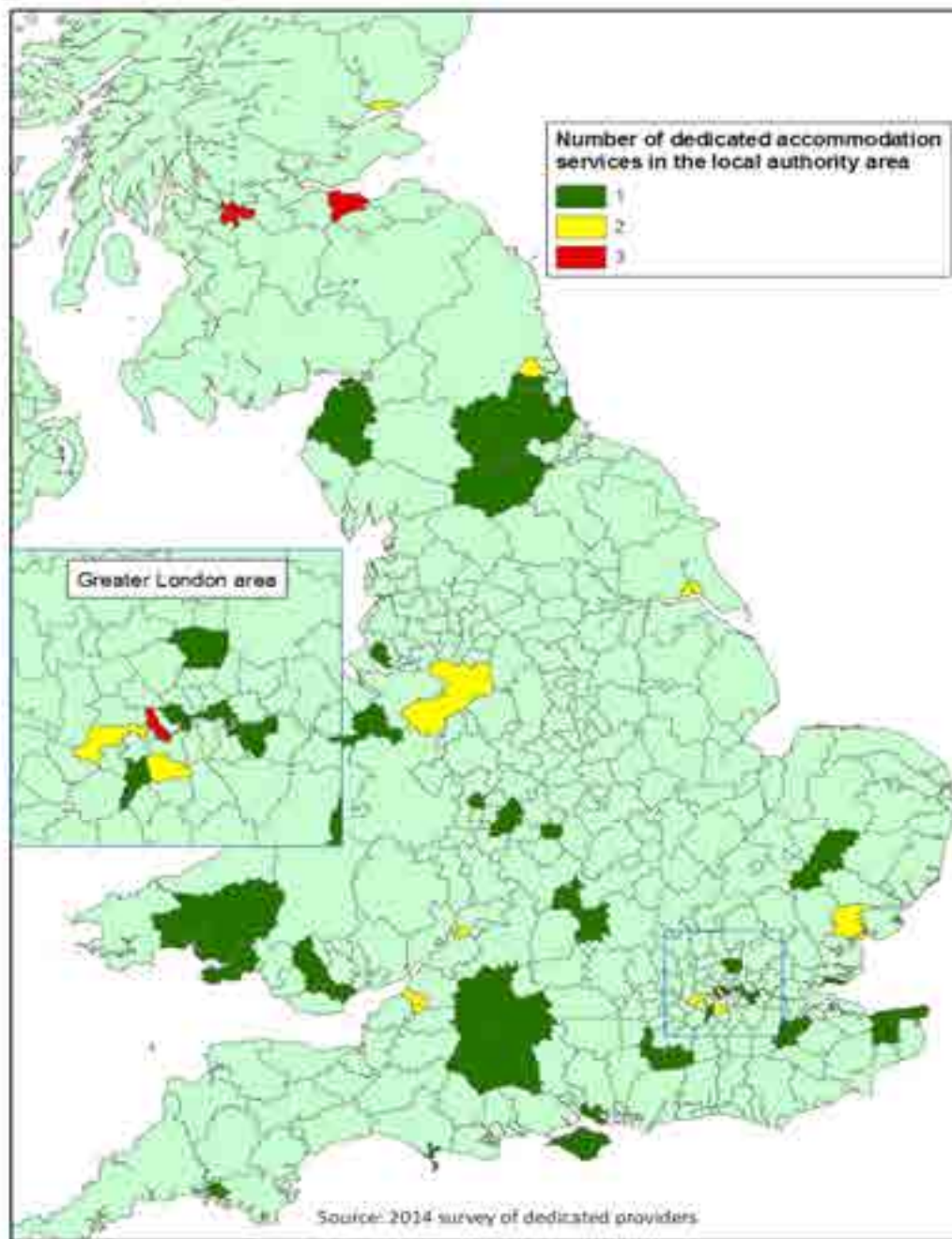


Figure 3.5: Number of veterans utilising different housing and support services

Data source	Number of veterans	Proportion of database population
PIE homelessness statistics (England): Households accepted as homeless due to vulnerability due to having served in the Armed Forces Households who lost their last settled home due to leaving HM Forces	58 households containing a veteran (2013) 269 households containing a veteran (2013)	0.11% of total acceptances 0.51% of total acceptances
WHO homelessness statistics (Wales): Households accepted as vulnerable after leaving Armed Forces	30 households (2012/13)	0.5% of total acceptances
HL1 homelessness statistics (Scotland) Single veterans (single persons and single parents) who had left Armed Services accommodation	70 households (2012/13)	0.18% of total applicants
Supporting People data Households self-identifying as 'ex-Armed Forces personnel' using Supporting People services	2,582 households (2013/14) (vast majority single people)	1.8% of all households entering housing related services
Homeless Link Survey of Needs and Provision (SNAP) Number of veterans using homelessness services in the past month (day centres, direct access hostels, second stage accommodation)	Sample survey Total numbers in sample: 16,304 day centre clients (approx. 489 veterans); 2,961 direct access hostel clients (approx. 88 veterans); 12,468 second stage accommodation users (approx. 249 veterans)	3% of day centre clients 3% of direct access hostel clients 2% of second stage clients
CORE (COntinuous Recording of Lettings and Sales in Social Housing), England Number of households containing person with Armed Forces status	4,959 households (2012/13) (including 786 single people) 7,194 households (first three quarters of 2013/14), including, 1031 single people	2% of all social lets (general needs) (less than 1% for single people) 2.7% of social lets (general needs) (less than 1% for single people)
SPACES (Single Persons Accommodation Centre for the Ex Services) database All applications to SPACES service (all single people)	1,459 single veterans (2012); 1,297 (2013)	100% (Veteran only service)
Joint Services Housing Advice Office (JSHAO), MOD Single Service personnel registered with service (have to be in last six months or service or remaining in Service accommodation)	73 single veterans	100% (Veteran only service)
CHAIN data Number of people with Armed Forces experience seen rough sleeping by outreach teams in London	151 people (2012/13)	3% of all service users

The data available does not allow us to accurately assess the extent to which veterans are over- or under-represented in homelessness and housing need. Firstly, as outlined in Chapter 2, there is no accurate up-to-date data on the number of veterans in the general population. Howarth (2011) suggested that the proportion of veterans in the UK population was about 10% based on The Royal British Legion 2005 survey, and 9% of the English population based on Woodhead et al's (2007) study. However this estimate includes all types of households, whereas this study is concerned with single households only. As single households represented approximately 30% of all households in the 2011 Census⁵⁸, and assuming the household composition of veterans is the same as for all households⁵⁹, then we might expect single veterans to constitute 2.7-3% of the population. Further, it was expected that the veteran population would halve by 2027 (ONS, 2009) thus population estimates are likely to be on the high side for 2012/13. This might lead us to expect that single veterans might constitute between 2-3% of the current UK/ English population. Whilst this assessment is imprecise, when comparing this to our available data on housing need, it would suggest that single veterans are not significantly over-represented amongst households in housing need (for example, representing about 2% Supporting People new clients), and may sometimes be under-represented, especially under the homelessness legislation (the latter may reflect strict criteria rather than an absence of housing need per se).

The research identified 17 providers (separate organisations) of dedicated accommodation based services for veterans across Great Britain, providing a total of 910 bed spaces/ units across 46 schemes. This included 156 direct access beds, 377 second stage accommodation beds and 377 long-term housing units. Available information suggested that dedicated provision for veterans is likely to increase by at least 235 bed spaces/units for single veterans over the next few years (an increase of 26%).

Only five floating support services for vulnerably housed veterans were identified across the UK, supporting an estimated 276 veterans at any one time. Only one future further scheme was identified of this nature, providing an additional 15 floating support places (a very modest 5% increase).

The available dedicated schemes appeared relatively easy to access for veterans of different genders, ages, disability and health problems, but less so for veterans with substances misuse problems.

Existing providers of dedicated accommodation provision for veterans were routinely turning away veterans because their services were full, however the extent to which this

⁵⁸ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcn%3A77-286262>: Table KS105EW: 2011 Census: Household composition, local authorities in England and Wales.

⁵⁹ This is unknown.

happened varied. Eighteen providers stated that they occasionally turned away veterans (with at least 30 veterans being turned away across 188 bed spaces) whilst seven providers frequently turned away veterans (with at least 263 veterans turned away across 212 bed spaces). A slight majority (57%) of local authorities considered there were sufficient and appropriate services for veterans who were homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Dedicated providers and local authorities both concurred that there was a significant problem in accessing longer term housing for veterans, particularly in social housing but also private rented housing to a lesser extent.

The vast majority of dedicated veteran providers predicted an increase in the demand from veterans for accommodation and support services in the next five years, with a minority of local authorities also identifying a likely increase in the next two years.

Chapter 4: The Accommodation and Housing Related Support Needs of Single Veterans in Great Britain – Findings from the Qualitative Interviews and Case Studies

This chapter presents findings from the case studies and interviews with key stakeholders. The first part of the chapter discusses the level and nature of demand for housing and support services from single veterans; the reasons veterans experience difficulties; and, whether needs and demand have changed in recent years and/or are expected to change in the future. The chapter then goes on to discuss respondents' views on how well the needs of veterans are being met; gaps in provision; the types of services required; and, what more could be done to meet the needs of veterans.

Demand for housing and support from veterans

One of the most striking findings from the qualitative interviews was the paucity of data about the level and nature of demand from veterans both nationally and locally. As will be seen, the need for far more comprehensive and robust data was recognised and was beginning to be addressed. However, at the time of the interviews, much of the evidence provided by respondents was anecdotal. Nevertheless, most respondents said they were confident that few veterans made homelessness applications or approached housing options for help. However, as noted in the previous chapter, people approaching statutory agencies for help in England and Wales would not necessarily be asked if they had a Service history or, if they were, this would not necessarily be recorded unless it was the main reason for their homelessness.

Few respondents reported a significant demand for housing and housing related support from single veterans in their area. Providers of generic housing and support services including day centres and advice centres; emergency/first stage accommodation; second stage accommodation and floating support, in most areas reported that they had worked with very few or no veterans in recent years. However, many service providers also explained that people were not usually asked whether they had served in the Armed Forces. Service providers said that they often only knew about a client's Service history because it came up in conversation. In some areas it was the recognition that a significant proportion of generic service users were veterans which led to the development of dedicated services. Where this question was asked it was thought that that some veterans might be reluctant to reveal that they had a Service history – possibly because they were embarrassed about their

situation. Similarly it was felt that veterans might be unwilling to seek help and that there might be a level of unexpressed demand.

Even less was known about veterans who might be sleeping rough, or 'hidden homeless', for example, sofa surfing and staying with family and those that did not, for whatever reason, approach statutory agencies. Overall, service providers did not believe that rough sleeping was a significant problem, however, many respondents – including those working with veterans – suggested that 'hidden homelessness' and various forms of unsustainable housing arrangements, were not uncommon.

A few areas reported a relatively high demand for housing and housing related support from veterans. These were: Preston; Gateshead; Hull; Plymouth; Highland; Colchester; Rushmoor; South Ayrshire; Aberdeen, and Perth and Kinross. Many of these areas had already developed dedicated services to meet these needs (including accommodation, advice centres, outreach work and drop-in centres). These dedicated services tended to collect better data and, unsurprisingly, respondents from these services also reported seeing higher numbers of single veterans than respondents in other areas which had no dedicated services and/or where little data was collected about veterans. Services in those areas which had identified unmet need and had developed veteran specific services supported significant numbers of veterans.

One service based in Hull, run in partnership with The Royal British Legion, worked with an average of one homeless veteran a week and around 1000 veterans – predominantly single – across Hull and the East Riding of Yorkshire, whilst a drop-in service in Preston reported having worked with around 360 veterans in the last eighteen months, 90 per cent of whom were single. In Colchester, between eight and nine per cent of night shelter users and around 10 per cent of drop-in centre users were reported to be single veterans. Two outreach services in Gateshead (one funded by Gateshead council and the other by The Royal British Legion) between them worked with 45–55 veterans at any one time. Respondents in these areas reported that they were seeing increasing numbers of veterans as their service became established and more people became aware of the help available.

Respondents in other areas were concerned that some vulnerable veterans may have been facing serious difficulties in relation to housing and housing related support but few believed the problem to be a significant one. In some areas generic providers reported having seen only 'a handful' of veterans over a number of years and, in their experience, found it relatively easy to support them into accommodation.

Whilst I can't say I never work with veterans, the incidences of ex-Service personnel amongst the homeless are overestimated. I rarely see any ex-Services, and those that I do are very quickly off the streets and into accommodation (Generic homelessness service provider)

Some national level stakeholders and respondents in a number of case study areas felt that the problems veterans experience and the numbers affected were exaggerated. Respondents, including some from veteran organisations, felt that veterans currently have a high public profile because of the recent conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq and media coverage of combat operations and repatriation. As a result, the veteran community has a great deal of support and sympathy from the general public who tend to perceive veterans as people who have engaged in armed conflicts and have been physically or mentally damaged as a result. They felt that this perception was one perpetuated by some policy makers and politicians who also tend to exaggerate the scale of need.

The problem with veterans is not so much the problem of veterans. It's the politics and profile of veterans as a needs group and...the leverage that the label veteran has on policymaking and politicians. That is understandable. Politicians have the right to champion any cause they like. Veterans after all do wonderful work serving the country... but the perception among those policy makers is there's a problem of scale and complexity that is far in excess of what it is in reality. So the number of veterans rough sleeping we know is a very small proportion of rough sleepers (Local authority representative)

Other respondents did not necessarily believe that the extent of need amongst veterans was exaggerated but were concerned that new services were being developed in various locations without any evidence of need. A few suggested that these developments were driven by the availability of funding for veteran specific services rather than any demonstrable need.

[there are] Housing Associations who exaggerate the numbers....projects are built in areas where they are not needed and they are poor value for money and they can't fill them... [name of provider and area] – it is empty – so they are telling people that there is a big problem and then asking us to send them people (Dedicated service provider)

We haven't identified a need and obviously one of the questions I asked my team member to ask was, what evidence have you got that this is needed? Just because it would feed into our planning process then as well for Supporting People. They haven't got any data to show there is a need [here] yet. To me, I would have thought that would have underpinned them getting the finance for it (Local authority representative)

Although many respondents felt that the level and nature of demand from veterans had been exaggerated (particularly rough sleeping and the incidence of PTSD) respondents felt there was likely to be significant unexpressed demand from veterans with low to medium support needs living in the community. If appropriate services were available then veterans would seek help. As one respondent put it 'if you build it, they will come'. This view was supported by evidence from respondents in areas where dedicated veteran services had been developed in recent years. These services were seeing an increasing number of veterans as the service became established and well known in the local area.

Basically, Preston City Council signed an Armed Forces Covenant in April of last year and they needed – or saw a necessity for there to be - a one-stop shop for veterans in the Preston area. So, it was identified by Preston council who then approached a local veteran organisation and we were swamped from then. Originally it was just volunteers but there's two paid staff here now, myself and the liaison officer (Dedicated service provider)

The reasons veterans experience housing difficulties

Respondents across the case study felt that veterans experienced a range of problems, often interrelated, which put them at risk of homelessness and that it was rare for a veteran to present with just one problem. Most also felt that veterans, apart from those with a Service related injury or mental illness, experienced similar problems to other homeless or vulnerable people and were no more likely than any other group to experience homelessness.

Many though not all, of the problems faced by single veterans were thought to be similar to those experienced by other groups. Some of these problems were thought to be related to veterans' experience of Service but others were felt to be long-standing and/or had nothing to do with having served in the Armed Forces. These problems or barriers included: a shortage of affordable housing; problems sustaining a tenancy (because of poor money management, unfamiliarity with civilian life, debt and a lack of life skills); substance misuse; mental health problems; relationship breakdown; inadequate or ineffective transition planning and a lack of knowledge about where to seek help and advice; and, an unwillingness to seek help.

...they have usually been out of the Forces for a considerable length of time and then fall into difficulty it is mainly for the same reasons that everybody else becomes homeless too – job losses, relationship problems, drug and alcohol issues, not paying their rent and etc. (Generic homelessness service provider)

A shortage of affordable accommodation

The shortage of affordable accommodation was reported as the most pressing issue across the case study areas. The situation was said to have worsened in recent years as a consequence of changes in the housing market and increasing demand for private rented sector accommodation. The problems securing accommodation had been exacerbated by welfare changes, in particular, the extension of the shared accommodation rate to under-35s and the introduction of the 'bedroom tax' which meant that there was less single person accommodation available. It was becoming increasingly difficult for veterans to access decent and affordable accommodation in the private rented sector and almost impossible to secure general needs social housing unless their circumstances were exceptional, without a sometimes lengthy wait on the housing register.

Some areas had introduced measures to help veterans to access social housing as part of their Armed Forces Community Covenant⁶⁰. In Gateshead, for example, the local authority were seen to be very supportive of veterans who were awarded an 'urgent housing' status up to five years after their discharge and backdated applications to the date they joined the Armed Forces. Gateshead also had strategies in place to support veterans who had been dishonourably discharged and who were therefore excluded from the urgent housing award, through the provision of housing with obligatory support. A number of respondents commented on the successful Veteran Nomination Schemes run by Stoll in partnership with The Royal British Legion in London and the South East, the North West and Midlands whilst other areas such as Stafford, had recently introduced a quota scheme for veterans leaving the Services.

Other respondents felt that while the local authority and housing providers might have agreed that veterans should be given priority for social housing, front line local housing options and housing association staff had not been trained or were unaware of the provisions of the Armed Forces Community Covenant.

⁶⁰Armed Forces Community Covenants complement, at a local level, the Armed Forces Covenant, which outlines the moral obligation between the nation, the government and the Armed Forces. The aim of the community covenant is to encourage local communities to support the Armed Forces community in their area and promote understanding and awareness among the public of issues affecting the Armed Forces community.

Accessing social housing through the council's obligation to veterans in their housing allocations schemes...this does not work well because firstly, many councils don't appear to have adjusted their schemes to incorporate this as yet, secondly, where they have, they rarely give sufficient priority that will make such a difference that they qualify for an offer, and, thirdly, this rule actually only applies to veterans who have left in the last five years anyway...(National level stakeholder)

It appeared that some veterans and a few providers felt that, under the terms of the Armed Forces Community Covenant, all veterans should be eligible for social housing immediately. It was evident that there was a degree of misunderstanding amongst some service providers and veterans, not only of the terms of the Armed Forces Community Covenant but also of the operation of the homelessness legislation and this caused frustration and disappointment.

We want priority treatment for this veteran under the covenant. Yes, he gets his extra five points, that's it. While you're then waiting for them to come up with the property that's suitable for a single male or single female... what can we do? So then we go into the private sector and we've found them accommodation and set them up before they've even come up with a suggestion from the local authority (Dedicated service provider)

I came out of the Parachute Regiment in 2008. I just struggled getting housing...I was just knocked back every time I went to the housing office...I told them I was in the Services and asked 'does that help?' and they were just 'no, it doesn't mean a thing'...Then they were just trying to put me in crappy hostels and that...(Veteran)

Similarly, some veterans and service providers were frustrated by the application of local connection policies as they felt that all veterans should be eligible for social housing wherever they wished to settle, however long it was since they had been discharged.

I think...to be told after doing seven years' service and then being out from 2007 until 2013 – which is what, six years – you don't expect to be told that your veterans status is only eligible for so long...if you are out for more than five years you have to go back to your home area...you can't just go anywhere. Anybody... should be able to live where they want I think... (Veteran)

Whilst there did appear to be some misunderstanding of the provisions of the Armed Forces Community Covenant it was also evident that some serving personnel and veterans simply did not realise that there was a shortage of social housing and/or appreciate how difficult it would be to secure decent affordable accommodation. Other respondents acknowledged that it was difficult for housing providers to prioritise veterans when there was such a high

demand from other groups but feared that the Armed Forces Covenant and Community Covenants had raised expectations about entitlements to social housing for veterans.

We have two main [types of] applicants...those who've had their heads buried in the sand say, 'Well. I've done 15 years in the Forces, of course I'll get a council house'; and then those who turn round and say, 'Well, I won't think about that until I leave. I'll get a job first and then see where I want to live...(Housing advice service)

We've had the raised expectations, we had people turning up saying, 'I am entitled to' - we've been, 'Hang on a minute, there isn't an entitlement. We'll do an assessment and see if there's a need' (Dedicated service provider)

Problems sustaining a tenancy

Whilst it was widely acknowledged that many veterans found it difficult to secure decent, affordable housing, respondents working with veterans suggested that, as for other homeless people, housing alone was not a solution. Respondents working with veterans believed that there were many housed veterans who were likely to be experiencing difficulties sustaining tenancies and were, therefore, at risk of homelessness. A number of respondents explained that they were able to help veterans to secure private rented housing by providing rent deposits but that this was not always a sustainable solution if rents were unaffordable.

Again something we've learnt is that we get people coming and saying, 'Oh, you can help us with a bond and a rent on a private sector accommodation'. When we do that assessment, actually they can't afford to sustain that tenancy so there's no point in setting them up to fail. That is something that has been done historically. They've been put into accommodation, they've been supported with bonds and rent; three months later they're homeless again because they could not sustain that tenancy and that's not helping (Dedicated service provider)

Aside from affordability, tenancy sustainment problems were related to a range of factors, some of which respondents believed might be related to people's time in Service and, in many cases, inadequate preparation for civilian life (see Transition planning below). One issue which almost all respondents with experience of working with veterans mentioned was a lack of life skills which included poor money management. This was usually attributed to their not having had to budget and pay bills when they were in the Armed Forces. Although most respondents believed this was more of a problem for younger veterans, others felt that the longer someone had served, the more difficult it was for them to adjust. Many generic providers explained that these sorts of problems were similar to those experienced by young people leaving care and others who had no experience of living

independently as well as people leaving other institutions including e.g. ex-offenders. However, other respondents felt that the problems were somewhat different to those experienced by care leavers and ex-offenders. Single veterans were used to living in heavily subsidised Armed Services accommodation *and* to having relatively high disposable incomes which added to the difficulties they had managing their money as they had to become accustomed both to budgeting and managing on a much reduced income.

...institutionalisation. I think it's whether it be a veteran, somebody leaving long stay hospital care, prison, it's that level of institutionalisation (Generic homelessness service provider)

...the average squaddie gets paid and spends it on enjoying themselves because everything else is already paid for, your food, your accommodation... that was one of my big struggles when I first came out, managing my money, and obviously there was no training. Well, there's not so much training you can get to manage your money, but I don't know, but it does become an issue after a while (Veteran).

Substance misuse

Many respondents felt that substance misuse was an important reason why some veterans, like many other people, faced difficulties securing and/or sustaining accommodation. There was a great deal of disagreement over whether substance misuse amongst veterans was any more prevalent than amongst other groups and whether the problem was related to their service in the Armed Forces. Whilst some respondents believed that there was still a strong drinking culture in the Forces, others felt that this was no longer the case and/or that the drinking culture among Armed Forces personnel was no different to that among other groups, for example, students or the police. Similarly, whilst some respondents reported seeing more young veterans who were using drugs or drugs and alcohol, it was unclear whether the extent or nature of drug use and poly-use amongst veterans was any different to that amongst young people in general.

For the most part, the relationship between substance misuse, Service history and other life events such as a history of care, relationship breakdown or redundancy were complicated and inter-related. Sometimes substance misuse was described as a coping mechanism but equally was also the cause of other problems.

The people we tend to see here [homelessness service] are older clients in their 40s who served some time ago, often rough sleepers or in the night shelter...and often at that age they have a full range of circumstances that have made them what they are...possibly offending, there can be a history of some sort of broken relationship, unemployment, and they'll probably have an element of drug or alcohol dependence as well...(Generic homelessness provider)

Drugs and alcohol...I am no psychologist but I think that is the way they cover up some of the experiences they've had...(Dedicated service provider)

Mental health issues

Respondents reported that the veterans they worked with often had undiagnosed mental health problems, some of these were thought to be longstanding (pre-service), some related to service and some due to their experiences post-discharge.

Mental illness was not always well understood by providers and there was a tendency for some to conflate all forms of mental illness including depression and stress into PTSD, whilst other respondents felt that the extent of PTSD was exaggerated.

...it's very easy to say it is all PTSD but you know, whilst I am not a mental health expert...what I would say is that the mental health issues are various. I've had clients with a whole range of problems from being paranoid schizophrenic, bi-polar...PTSD, severe depression, anxiety, a whole host – it is not necessarily always PTSD (Dedicated service provider)

As noted above, there was disagreement about the extent of PTSD but many respondents working with veterans believed that there were many undiagnosed cases both of PTSD and other forms of mental illness. They spoke about service users who had only recently been diagnosed with PTSD, many years after their experience of combat operations. They also believed that there were probably many more veterans with undiagnosed mental health problems, including PTSD, who used drugs and/or alcohol to 'self-medicate' which in turn led to problems e.g. rent arrears, anti-social behaviour and homelessness.

...a guy at the moment, he's in shared accommodation. He ended up homeless first of all, came to us and we got him accommodation...but he's been on the brink of losing that flat because of his PTSD, because other tenants are concerned about his levels of drinking, his nightmares, he's shouting in the night, he's sleep walking – so it affects not only him but everyone around him...(Dedicated service provider)

...Hull and the little bit of East Riding that's been involved in it [a mental health service for veterans], Hull itself is seeing 40 per cent of the amount of that service across the whole of Yorkshire. If you look at that based on population, it's not saying to me that actually the levels are low; it's saying to me that there isn't awareness. There are lots of people out there in the rest of the county that are still... not visible to us (Dedicated service provider)

In other cases, as noted above, mental ill health was thought to be a consequence of problems experienced following discharge including a loss of status, unemployment and housing difficulties.

...clients may not have been in an operational theatre and have come out and basically they've developed a mental health problem because of the situation they're in. So, because of a lack of housing, a lack of employment and then they've got into this malaise and so then spiralled out of control...(Dedicated service provider)

Respondents reported that behaviours associated with mental health problems could also be attributed to anger management problems or alcohol misuse so that conditions such as PTSD or other mental health problems went undiagnosed, sometimes for many years.

...the soldier's discharged and he has a mental health problem. To everyone else it's an anger management problem. He's a very angry person who is not very polite...we get a lot of that, where GPs have just said 'you've got an anger management problem' When they're diagnosed by a specialist – they've got PTSD. So a large part of it is mental health, whether it is to do with separation from a partner or the partner has had them removed from the house because of domestic violence...(Generic homelessness service)

A few veterans and service providers working with veterans reported the experiences of dishonourably discharged veterans and those who chose to take their own discharge having served fewer than four years. These respondents felt that some of the mental health problems experienced by these veterans and/or their misuse of alcohol and/or drugs could be attributed to a lack of support in Service and the manner of their discharge. One dedicated service provider described the experiences of a veteran who was sleeping rough and sofa-surfing and awaiting a mental health assessment at the time of the research. The veteran had been traumatized by events in Iran which, he said, still haunted him today. He started to 'self-medicate' with alcohol and cocaine whilst still in the Army and had continued to do so since.

...he left the Army, as he tested positive for cocaine, as did some of his colleagues, they were marched in front of the whole regiment, about 300 guys, and whoever the commanding officer was, 'Look, this is what happens when you get caught taking cocaine.' You know, it was like something out of the 1940s. It was awful...He was out in 10 days with no wages and no support (Dedicated service provider)

I was self-medicating with prescription drugs and that's how I got found out, but they were sort of messing me about saying I could stay in and then I couldn't stay in and then yes you're approved and I've gone through a hard time because my mum wasn't very well. I don't like to use that as an excuse but looking back on it now it was a major factor in my behaviour at the time...I just got barely shown the door. It was just like hand your kit in, showed me out the gate and I had no contact with anybody else (Veteran)

Relationship breakdown

Again, as with other single homeless people, veterans housing difficulties and homelessness were often a result of relationship breakdown. This was sometimes related to Service and complicated by a range of problems such as mental ill health, substance misuse and difficulty in readjusting to civilian life and to living at home with a partner after long periods living apart. Relationship breakdown could occur at any time after leaving the Services and many respondents felt that in many cases this was less to do with people's experience of service and more to do with other unrelated problems, for example, friends or families being unwilling to accommodate veterans following discharge. In some cases it was thought that mental health problems or substance misuse, whether or not related to Service, could be a contributing factor to relationship breakdown (with family, friends or partners). However, again, the relationship between people's Service history, relationship breakdown and other problems was complex and, understandably, not always well understood.

...marital breakdown's a contributory factor, particularly if they've had some trauma or some mental health issues to deal with...family breakdown because sometimes they will be at home for a while and that's when the problems begin to creep in...it can be relationship breakdown with their parents, especially if someone has been away for quite a few years...(Local authority representative)

I had a girlfriend at the time but obviously because of the state my life was in at that moment in time that wasn't sustainable. No, I didn't really put much thought to it. I went back to family but because of the state my life was in they couldn't put up with me and I ended up on the streets (Veteran)

Transition planning

Almost all respondents who had experience of working with serving personnel and veterans agreed that there was a lack of appropriate and effective transition planning and that the MoD should do far more to prepare every Service leaver for transition. Early Service Leavers⁶¹ (ESLs) and those who were dishonourably discharged were thought to be the most disadvantaged in terms of transition planning and thought most likely to have long standing issues which would place them at risk of homelessness following discharge.

[area] is...a very working class area and, you know, people will join the Forces to get away and then they come back and...their problems are still there. Some service users that are in the category we are talking about might have disciplinary problems which is a big issue, they've left the Forces early, they've been discharged – services no longer required – I mean, that would indicate that they've not had a very productive career and they've obviously got into trouble, maybe it's drink, drugs, fighting and they've been discharged early...[they] will have problems when they come out... (Dedicated service provider)

Few respondents were aware of the MoD's *Future Horizons Programme*⁶², but those who were welcomed the development although it was too early for them to comment on the impact the initiative had had.

⁶¹ Early Service Leavers comprise of two distinct groups: those that are compulsorily discharged from the Services, trained or untrained, and lose entitlements because of the nature of their discharge and those who choose to take their own discharge having served less than four years. Thus, anyone who has served a day or more could qualify as an Early Service Leaver.

⁶²The Future Horizons Programme is an employment support scheme developed by the MoD to improve resettlement provision to Early Service Leavers which, following a successful pilot, has been rolled out to cover Service personnel across all service, who are discharged or choose to leave the Services before completing four years.

...Early Service Leavers, your younger cohort...I think they will experience difficulties. Many of them have joined the Army to escape where they've come from and they've been unsuccessful...[but] Future Horizons...it's really to, I suppose, slightly ameliorate... some of the issues around Early Service Leavers and the fact that they have very little provision (Dedicated outreach service provider)

However, many respondents, including service providers, key stakeholders and veterans themselves, whilst they acknowledged some of the difficulties faced by ESLs and those who were dishonourably discharged, also felt that Service-personnel had to take some responsibility for planning. Even where transition advice and resettlement programmes and packages were available, some Service-personnel chose not to take advantage of these.

They've known they were getting out; it doesn't matter whether you'd served three years, six years, up to twenty two years. They'd have known – not everyone knows because obviously there are your quick discharges but that majority would have known but they've done Jack about anything... (Dedicated veterans service)

...if you say to them, 'Well, what did you do with your resettlement' and their words will be, 'Couldn't be arsed with it'. I say, 'But why not? You've given a package away that's actually worth quite a lot of money'. 'I couldn't be bothered; I just wanted to get out'. That's it because they'd come to a point in their service career where they've done a tour and they haven't particularly liked it, not because it's been a rough tour. It's just that they've decided that this isn't for them and, 'I'm going before I get another one'. They're literally running out the gate so to actually sit and do something, it's just not in their mind set at that time (Dedicated veterans service).

One reason given for this lack of interest in resettlement and transition planning, as noted earlier, was that service personnel had unrealistic perceptions of life outside the Armed Services. They tended to misunderstand their entitlement to housing and/or were over optimistic about finding employment and housing and did not see the need to plan for transition. In the case of ESLs this was partly attributed to their age and their desire to leave the service as quickly as possible. However, some veterans said they had found their resettlement training unhelpful and confusing and, as a result, did not understand where or how to seek help and advice once they had been discharged.

They send you to a lady at Wattisham which is an Army base now. You go there for half a day and she fills you with information. And it goes out your head by the time you get back to camp. They give you piles and piles of papers, and you don't know what to do with them and they just send you away. If you're not good with paperwork you don't know where to get in contact with, and you've got to have a computer at home to get anywhere. (Veteran)

If you are a young soldier and you've done five years or something like that and you've had enough, you are not actually interested in planning. You just want to get out and I don't believe there's any point...in giving people packs of information because they are just going to put it straight in the bin...(Veterans organisation)

A number of service providers agreed that people were given too much information and, in some cases incorrect information. For example, providers in Scotland explained that veterans who had been based in England had been given information about Home Buy schemes in England but not about the similar scheme (LIFT) in Scotland where they intended to settle following discharge. Similarly, they were given information about the homelessness legislation in England, which is very different to the Scottish legislation. A few respondents also remarked that resettlement training focused on employment rather than housing and welfare issues.

Pre-existing problems

Respondents from veteran organisations and generic services alike believed that many veterans experienced problems both in Service and following discharge that were related to their early lives such as experiences of care and/or abuse, family breakdown, low levels of educational achievement and offending. These recruits were often vulnerable individuals who were seeking a route out of poverty and/or dysfunctional family lives. This led some respondents to question the MoD's recruitment procedures and criteria.

Also you only have to look at where they MoD recruit from – it is no surprise that you see problems. They may well come out and get involved in offending behaviour because they have been in that environment before ... If you recruit from dysfunctional and deprived areas, why are you surprised that when their services are no longer required that there are these problems? It is politically sensitive. I think actually that some of them – they can't even get through training well how thorough is the recruitment process? What do you do when you recruit? (Veterans organisation)

I've served with people who were abused, come from broken homes, who were adopted...and so on and so forth, and that's going to take its toll on an individual's sanity to be honest. You have got to question whether the military is right for them (Dedicated service provider)

Changing needs and demand

Changing needs and demand over recent years

Respondents were asked whether the level and nature of demand from veterans had changed in recent years. Only a few respondents were able to answer this question. In the case of dedicated services this was mainly because they had not been operating for very long and could not make comparisons. They also felt that their client base might well have become more diverse as the service became established and reached more members of the veteran community with different needs. For example, one provider explained that the service used to work mainly with older veterans living in the community but was now working with more young and homeless veterans and veterans with mental health problems but suggested that this was more to do with the development of new services and expansion of existing services rather than any real increase in demand.

In London, respondents reported that there were fewer veterans sleeping rough than in the past, in the main due to improved provision, so that they tended to work with veterans whose problems were not as entrenched as in the past. As noted earlier, generic services tended not to collect specific data about veterans and/or had not worked with enough veterans to draw comparisons. A few service providers said they were seeing more veterans with PTSD who had served in conflicts some time ago e.g. in Northern Ireland, Kosovo, the Falklands and the first Gulf War as well as more recent conflicts but this was thought to be because of the greater awareness of PTSD rather than an increase in the number of veterans affected. Other dedicated service providers said they were working with younger veterans, again, mostly men, with drug and alcohol problems but overall it was difficult to ascertain whether their substance misuse was the main reason they needed support.

Many respondents – from veteran organisations, dedicated services and generic services alike – believed that more veterans were approaching services for help as awareness of the help available increased but also that many of the problems veterans presented with could be attributed to the recession and the general economic climate, i.e., public spending cuts, benefit changes, unemployment and the shortage of social housing and affordable private rented sector accommodation, which affected many other people in society.

Changing needs and demand over the next five to ten years

Again, many respondents struggled to answer this question but there was a broad assumption that the need for services was likely to increase. Many mentioned an expected increase in demand as the result of the restructuring of the Armed Forces and a few respondents reported having discussions with personnel from local service bases, MoD transition officers, and the Joint Services Housing Advice Office (JSHAO) about the likely impact of redundancies but, overall, few respondents had any idea of the expected scale of

redundancies and/or how this would impact on demand locally and some explained that they simply did not have the data they required to assess future need and plan services.

With the redundancies...well they are going to have a huge impact because people are kind of having their career...their plans, their life long plans cut short unexpectedly...we've been given some estimates...in theory it was about 1,000 people (Dedicated service provider)

Some respondents felt that there might be an increase in demand from veterans who had served in recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan but again, were unsure about the expected level and nature of demand or when these demands would begin to have an impact.

Well, I would imagine the recent wars and things that we've been involved in, there's the possibility that there's going to be a lot more people with PTSD but then again I would have expected quite a lot of presentations if that was the case up to now...(Local authority representative)

Normally you find that about ten years down the line you hit a problem, so ten years after a conflict. I think it's documented that the problems arise in relationships etc., relationships breakdown and things like that and that's when they come into services like ours. (Dedicated service provider)

Most respondents were more concerned about meeting the needs of the population more generally as public spending cuts, housing shortages and welfare reforms would continue to cause difficulties for individuals (including veterans) and adversely affect providers' ability to meet increasing demand.

Homelessness will increase – not just for veterans – because of welfare reform and a lack of accommodation...(Generic homelessness service provider)

In a number of cases, respondents explained that they would welcome any additional resources in their area specifically for veterans as this would reduce pressure on mainstream services and housing.

There will be greater pressure in the future to do more with less, now about 96% of our funding comes from the local authority. As this gets cut back we will have to look for external funding. Anything that funds veterans – they are not separate but they need support, and may need more of a priority because of their circumstances in certain instances – would help to meet a growing need amongst the population as a whole (Generic homelessness service provider)

How well are the needs of veterans being met?

Respondents were asked a series of questions about how well the needs of veterans were being met in their area; about any gaps in provision and the need for additional or new forms of provision including dedicated veteran services. As noted earlier, none of the case study areas collected robust data on the housing and housing related support needs of veterans across their area (although some were planning to do so or were in the process of setting up systems to do so) and much of the evidence of need reported was anecdotal or piecemeal as some services in an area recorded service history whilst others did not.

Respondents in areas where there was existing provision for veterans tended, unsurprisingly, to know more about the level and nature of need from veterans.

Representatives from national and local governments, and non-statutory services in some areas, recognised that they had to make an assessment of need in order to plan future services and without any evidence it would be impossible to provide appropriate services. However, in other areas, respondents reported that they did not work with many veterans or that veterans were not regarded as a group facing particular problems and that they were able to meet their needs quite well (that is as well as they were able to meet the needs of any individual facing similar problems).

Respondents in the London Boroughs of Islington and Redbridge remarked that they did not work with many veterans but when they did, it was far easier to access support for veterans than for other client groups as dedicated veteran provision was relatively plentiful in the capital. Respondents in other areas, who were aware of the various veteran organisations, Armed Forces benevolent funds and financial assistance from regimental funds, also said that veterans had far better access to services and resources than other homeless people.

I always tell them...I say...'Yes, you may have done your bit. You've been to Afghanistan, Iraq, or even...the Falklands, but you imagine if you didn't have that military connection, how hard it is for ordinary members of the public out there that are homeless...So in that respect they are lucky...(Dedicated veterans outreach service)

In some areas respondents felt the provisions of the Community Covenant would be sufficient to ensure the needs of any veterans in the area were met. Respondents reported that the Community Covenant had provided the impetus for local authorities and relevant agencies to think about the needs of veterans and to develop strategies to ensure these needs were met. Respondents talked about the role of local Armed Forces Champions and the importance of having individuals who were committed to ensuring that the provisions of the Community Covenant were met. In other areas there were concerns that some local authorities did little to meet the provisions of the Community Covenant.

I think because of the covenant signing on paper, yes, veterans' needs are being met. If you've got a local authority where one of your councillors is a veteran themselves then you've got a better support network for veterans who are homeless. [local authority] it's a good example, the guy there is ex Forces, he's very aware of what the covenant meant, he'll challenge the council. He won't hardly ever involve us because he knows what that veteran is allowed under the covenant. Whereas, you get covenant signing in somewhere like [local authority] and it means very little (Dedicated service provider)

As noted earlier, a number of areas had introduced allocation policies which gave veterans some priority and this was often a commitment made following the adoption of the Community Covenant. In other areas, respondents simply did not see the need to undertake a needs assessment or to make any special provision for veterans. Specifically, interviewees from services in South Oxfordshire and Vale of the White Horse, Redbridge, Islington, Canterbury, Leeds, Stafford, Newark and Sherwood/Nottinghamshire reported they did not experience particular demand from veterans. However, many respondents explained that even where there was some demand from veterans that they were not in a position to focus on veterans as they struggled to meet the needs of the general population in the context of a shortage of affordable housing, welfare reform and housing benefit changes (in particular the shared accommodation rate and the 'bedroom tax').

[we recognise that] veterans do have some vulnerabilities but we are not in a position to focus on them as we need to develop services for as many people as possible... (Local authority representative)

Views on whether veterans' needs were being met were mixed. Respondents from organisations and services working exclusively with veterans tended to say needs were not being met well enough although there were exceptions, notably in London. In general, providers of generic services felt the housing and support needs of veterans were being met quite well given the constraints mentioned above. To some degree, this appeared to be related to whether respondents believed that veterans were particularly vulnerable and/or more deserving than other people in housing need. It appeared that generic service providers felt veterans, unless they had a combat related physical or mental health problem (including PTSD), were no different to other vulnerable groups and their needs could be met through existing generic services. However, as noted earlier, whether demand from veterans was significant or not, respondents in a number of areas said they would welcome any additional resources that might be provided by veteran organisations as this would relieve pressure on existing services.

What types of services and provision are required?

Respondents who had experience of working with veterans (and who were more aware of the level and nature of demand currently and, though to a much lesser degree, over the next few years), felt the types of services and provision required were the same as those needed to meet the needs of homeless people and people in housing need generally. There was widespread agreement about the need for specialist dedicated provision, however, there was some disagreement about how these services and support should be delivered (see below).

The main gaps in provision identified were:

- emergency and temporary accommodation
- alternative accommodation provision
- affordable move on housing (permanent housing)
- floating support services
- mental health and substance misuse services
- outreach services, advice centres and drop-in/day centres
- befriending and counselling services and opportunities for veterans to socialise.

Emergency and temporary accommodation

The need for emergency (direct access, night shelters and first stage supported accommodation) and temporary accommodation was particularly acute in areas where there was little generic provision or where local authorities operated a strict local connections policy. However, it should be noted that even where spaces were available in generic services, some veterans and dedicated service providers did not think this mainstream homelessness services were appropriate for veterans.

Respondents in a few areas said that they had 'crash pads' for emergencies or had contacts with 'friendly' landlords who would provide temporary accommodation for veterans, and there was a small number of bed spaces provided by dedicated veteran services e.g. in Hull. Service providers could refer veterans to SPACES or Veterans Scotland or approach dedicated accommodation providers directly in an attempt to find emergency accommodation, however, these services were often full. If services were able to secure a place for clients in dedicated accommodation, this too often meant that veterans had to move away from the area they wished to stay in and sometimes away from support networks. In one case a veteran explained that he had to move hundreds of miles from his home area to the north of England because he had no local connection (having left the Armed Forces some years ago); whilst he appreciated the accommodation and support, he

would have preferred to remain close to his family, to establish a local connection and begin to look for permanent accommodation and employment. Providers in many areas felt it was important to provide temporary accommodation in the area the veteran wished to settle for similar reasons and because this would allow time to assess need thoroughly and to ensure that the necessary support was in place.

Few providers felt there was sufficient demand from veterans in their local area to warrant the development of new dedicated supported accommodation but would find it helpful to have somewhere to place veterans temporarily.

...I would like [to be able] to send someone somewhere for a short period of time whilst we can do a proper needs assessment. It is hard to do a needs assessment when someone is on the street...(Dedicated outreach service provider)

Alternative accommodation provision

Respondents suggested a number of alternative accommodation solutions to meet the needs of single veterans. These included the provision of temporary accommodation and/or a rent deposit scheme so that veterans could secure private rented sector accommodation whilst their needs were being assessed without the need to move away from the area or to stay in hostel/shared accommodation when this was not necessary. This was not always seen as an appropriate or sustainable option if, for example, the veteran had mental health issues or had been evicted for rent arrears. However, this type of 'housing first' model could be a viable option if appropriate support was available e.g. from mental health services, drug and alcohol services, and tenancy sustainment services. Respondents, including veterans, generic service providers and dedicated service providers, suggested that temporary independent housing with support would be sufficient for many veterans with low to medium support needs and could be an option for those with more complex needs – again, as long as the necessary support was available.

I think there's quite a lot been done around veterans' accommodation but it's tended to be in regional areas.... The unfortunate part, as we said before, is that doesn't link them into the local housing network so there needs to be more diversity in the local provision, I think. So rather than, I suppose, funding big projects there is definitely a need for funding smaller providers on a more localised level (Dedicated service provider).

There has been discussion...about whether it would be useful to open a hostel just for veterans but the numbers are not there to justify it and I am not sure what would be gained above and beyond somebody going into one of the supported housing projects...the links we have with say The Royal British Legion and others and getting assistance from them and other organisations (Local authority representative)

Move on accommodation - permanent affordable housing

As noted earlier, the main gap in provision across the case study areas was affordable housing; whatever other problems individuals faced, access to decent affordable and sustainable housing was seen as key if people were to be helped to move on successfully, to establish support networks and secure employment. Respondents reported a shortage of single person accommodation due to the introduction of the 'bed room tax' and a general shortage of decent private and social rented housing. The housing situation was not expected to improve and was, in some areas, such as Aberdeen, expected to worsen considerably as the local economy continues to grow and attract new workers to the area. A couple of dedicated service providers felt that the provision of affordable permanent housing for veterans should be the responsibility of government and local authorities and not the responsibility of charitable organisations. However, but for the most part, service providers felt the housing situation was unlikely to improve in the near future and would welcome any developments which relieved pressure on the local housing market (but see discussion of need for dedicated provision below).

Floating support

As noted earlier, veterans who managed to secure housing often experienced problems sustaining their tenancies and some respondents felt that a shortage of floating support services, and the lack of funding for these services, was a major gap in provision for all homeless and vulnerably housed people and they would welcome additional services/funding. Whilst generic floating support would be suitable for many veterans, some respondents believed that dedicated floating support services would be more appropriate for others. They also felt that veterans would benefit from having specialist support delivered to them in their own independent accommodation as this would help them make the transition to civilian life. A number of respondents suggested that there was too much emphasis on providing supported accommodation rather than support for housed veterans.

A lot of conversation that I've heard around people providing housing is that if you're a housing provider and you want to get funding, that's great because there's LIBOR funding coming, all the rest of it. But what if you're an organisation that provides support to those homeless people but you can't get funded to support them in the housing? So there's a disconnect between the support and the housing... (Dedicated service provider)

Mental health services and substance misuse services

Perhaps surprisingly given that respondents often cited substance misuse as a cause of problems for veterans, few respondents in the case study areas said there was a need for more mental health services or substance misuse services. Of those that did, most said there was a need for more dedicated provision and far quicker access to services. Those that felt there was a need for more specialist provision tended to refer to PTSD but also thought it would be beneficial to have specialist workers who had some experience or understanding of the Armed Forces delivering mental health, drug and alcohol services,.

I think detox is a big thing ...this one guy, he is a PTSD sufferer and at some point he will have to go to Combat Stress [but they] won't touch him whilst he is self-medicating and that makes sense...He needs to go through detox first (Dedicated veteran outreach service)

We have Combat Stress which is for support and counselling. At least that is delivered by someone who has actually been in the Armed Forces...I think when they go into mainstream psychiatry, it's textbook, whereas I think it is more structured, more personal, more understanding if it's delivered by another person who has actually been in the Armed Forces...(Local authority representative)

Advice centres, drop-in centres and outreach services

Most respondents felt that veterans were not always aware of the support available to them. As noted earlier, although many veterans received some resettlement support and were often given a good deal of information about housing, benefits and where to seek advice, before discharge, many did not retain this information. As veterans were unfamiliar with civilian services, and/or might be unwilling to approach generic advice services for help, respondents felt that dedicated advice centres – similar to those being developed and/or provided by The Royal British Legion, Poppy Scotland and the Veterans First Point services (VIP) - would be beneficial.

A number of areas, Preston, Hull, Aberdeen and Highland had already developed dedicated advice service. These were sometimes located within generic services such as CABx or

generic one stop shops but these appeared to be successful as long as it was clear that a dedicated service was available e.g. if a familiar logo such as The Royal British Legion/Poppy Scotland logo was clearly visible.

As noted earlier, such services reported seeing increasing numbers of veterans as they became established. The need for dedicated advice centres and drop-in centres was specifically raised by respondents in Rushmoor (Aldershot), Colchester and Plymouth. A small number of respondents felt that in more rural areas where the veteran population would be dispersed over a very wide area e.g., in Northumberland, outreach services or mobile advice centres might be more appropriate and effective in reaching veterans.

Befriending and counselling services and opportunities for veterans to socialise

Veterans could often be isolated and many respondents felt they missed the camaraderie of the Armed Forces community once they settled in the community. A few respondents felt there was a need for counselling and befriending services possibly provided by peers, and more opportunities for veterans to meet and socialise. They suggested that traditional ex-Forces clubs were not always appropriate for younger veterans or those with alcohol problems but that the need for companionship could be met through day centres, drop-in centres, social activities and sporting events, outings and so on.

The need for dedicated accommodation for veterans

While respondents generally agreed that there was a need for dedicated services as discussed above, there was far less support for the provision of dedicated supported accommodation or clusters of dedicated temporary or permanent accommodation.

As noted above, respondents from dedicated veteran services and generic services felt that dedicated services had an important role to play in supporting some veterans but most generalist providers, and a few dedicated service providers, believed that the housing and support needs of veterans could and should be met within generic services in the area where the veteran wished to settle. If necessary, specialist support should be delivered by dedicated veteran services and specialist support workers who had some understanding of veterans and the Armed Forces, working with generic services either in mainstream supported accommodation or in the community. This was seen as the most appropriate and effective way to help veterans make the transition to civilian life.

Most respondents spoke highly of the services provided by established dedicated supported accommodation services for veterans (most were unsure about the newer entrants to the sector), but did not believe that dedicated accommodation for veterans was the best option for everyone. One concern was that veterans living in dedicated veterans' accommodation,

particularly if this was situated in or near a service base, would continue to mix with, use the same facilities as and socialise with, serving personnel and that this would not help them to make the transition to civilian life.

I just find that anybody in [in accommodation near a garrison] it's not getting them out of the military, it's that environment where it's a garrison, a very big garrison...it's just every corner you turn, there'll be someone in uniform, and if you're in the mind set of wanting to move into civilian life when you've got that on your doorstep every day, I think the transition is quite hard as you are still in this sort of comfort bubble within the military (Dedicated service provider)

Other respondents, including veterans, said they preferred dedicated supported accommodation and supported the development of similar services partly because they felt that generic homelessness provision was unsuitable. These respondents described the chaotic nature of generic hostels and single homeless people who were thought to have high support needs and high levels of substance misuse. Conversely, veterans and service providers acknowledged that veterans sometimes had high support needs and could be chaotic and that their support needs were no different to other single homeless people (with the exception of service related problems such as PTSD). However, there was a notion, which many dedicated service providers and some other respondents expressed, that veterans fared better in dedicated provision where their needs and experiences were better understood.

...if they go into a place like that [generic homeless hostel] if they've got PTSD, they're in with other people who have got drink and alcohol problems – it could push the veteran off the scale...(Local authority representative)

We found that these guys [veterans]...got their lives back on track quicker when they were in a house that was predominantly for veterans only. They felt they were able to overcome the barrier of stigma...They were fearful around hostels; they didn't like being with other people who didn't understand them. They didn't like being with people who perhaps had drug issues that didn't understand them [Dedicated service provider]

Again, many respondents felt that whilst dedicated accommodation provided a valuable service, by categorising or pigeon holing people, dedicated supported services and clustered accommodation⁶³ could prolong the transition to civilian life. These respondents suggested that the need for comradeship might be better met through social activities, peer support

⁶³ This could be any type of accommodation, temporary or permanent, e.g. shared houses, blocks of flats or blocks of housing specifically for veterans.

and sporting events in the community rather than through the development of more dedicated supported accommodation or clustered permanent accommodation which segregated veterans from the rest of the community.

I'm sure there are things like PTSD that require interventions...we're not keen in our sector, on pigeon holing people depending on their need. They are someone in need and you wrap services around that individual, so whether they are a rough sleeper or an ex-offender, you build the service a round what their aspirations are and what barriers they need to overcome...there might be particular things [veterans] need that require some specialist intervention...that's not saying a whole new service has to be set up, it might just be that you have a supported housing service where specialist organisations go in to work with someone around their PTSD (Generic homelessness organisation)

Veterans living in dedicated supported accommodation tended to say that there was a need for more of this type of accommodation. They appreciated the high standard of the accommodation and compared this to the accommodation available in the private rented and social housing sector. Most welcomed the support they received, however, they did not all feel they required the level of support offered and those with low – or no support needs – felt that they were capable of independent living had they been able to secure decent affordable housing. Some appreciated being in the company of veterans but a few who were living or had lived close to a service base did not think that this was always appropriate.

It's the same sort of crack because lads have been in - there was this one who'd been in before. Even in the [dedicated veterans accommodation) there were some who were actually in the same regiment as me and saw some of the same things as me. Although I think the familiarity can be a hindrance to some people. It probably helps a lot of people but it can be a hindrance as well. One of the things about where the (dedicated veterans' accommodation) is situated is that it's in a military garrison and you're constantly reminded all the time. I think that's one of the reasons why I left. I'm not reminded of it all the time when I'm here (Veteran focus group)

A number of veterans also felt that they could not move on with their lives whilst living in supported accommodation, this was particularly the case for those with low or no support needs and whose main need was for affordable accommodation. Those with children said it was difficult to maintain contact as they lived so far away (although a couple were grateful that their accommodation provided 'family units' where visiting relatives could stay for a few days). Others said they would like to find employment but could not afford to do so whilst living in supported accommodation.

Although many dedicated providers were still developing different models of dedicated provision such as shared houses (with and without support) and blocks of accommodation

for veterans only, many other respondents felt that such developments hindered reintegration and that veterans' needs would be best met within mainstream accommodation where they could begin to mix with other non-service households.

We looked at...with the two single-bedroom flats, the first lot was 'oh, we'll get a house and divide it into two single bedrooms'. Then we thought 'well, actually, that is not the right way to go about reintegrating somebody'. What we need is them to be in a slightly bigger building where there are other flats full of people who are leading their normal lives. They can fit into that community...rather than generating another place where it's all about ex-Services and not giving them that opportunity to integrate with non-veterans...(Dedicated service provider)

A few respondents in a number of areas explained that they would welcome any dedicated veteran provision in their area including direct access supported accommodation, second stage supported accommodation, permanent housing and floating support. This was not always because they believed there was a particular need for dedicated services or even a significant demand from veterans or that these were the best way of delivering services, but because any new services would relieve pressure on existing services which were struggling to meet the needs of the general population.

There is a political desire to have something [here] ...I think we would find it quite difficult to justify it on the needs data that we've got, but our thinking is if we have something here, it will relieve pressure on, say the night shelter who are picking up, albeit small numbers. It would relieve pressure on them to pick up our major pressure, which is single homeless people who haven't been in the Armed Forces (Local authority representative)

What else can be done to improve the delivery of housing and support services for veterans?

The need for improved data collection on levels of demand and types of need amongst veterans was stressed by many as was the need for more effective collaboration between the key players at a national and local level.

Improved data collection on the level of demand and nature of need

As noted earlier, respondents, including national level stakeholders, local authority representatives, housing specialists and dedicated veterans service providers recognised that there was a need to collect robust data and were planning to improve data collection. This recognition was in part in response to the introduction of the Armed Forces Covenant and Armed Forces Community Covenants and the high profile of veterans in recent years. A number of organisations reported that they were beginning to ask people approaching

services for assistance, or were planning to do so (some in response to the research), whether they or a member of their household had a history of being in the Armed Forces. In Kent a housing strategy sub-group was set up when it was realised that very little was known about the needs of veterans in the area, the group concluded that a first step was to ask people whether they had ever served in the Armed Forces.

...one of the areas that we were challenged on [in developing the housing strategy] was service personnel housing so we set up this sub-group, invited people, both housing colleagues, but also people that work more directly with service people and started from there...we don't know and we are not asking the question when people apply to housing needs registers if they have a link to the Services, and so we worked that into the development of the online application process [for social housing]... it came from, you know we don't know anything, how would we go about finding out? Of course, if you don't ask, you won't know (Key stakeholder).

In other areas, for example, Wrexham, the local authority and local agencies involved in the Armed Forces group, also recognised the need to assess and measure demand from veterans in order to inform service development and had secured funding to undertake a needs assessment. In Aberdeen, the Cyrenians (a generic homelessness service) had been working with SSAFA and as a result had recently started to ask their service users about any Armed Forces history. In south Wales, plans were being made to develop a regional housing related floating support service that would work with veterans settling in the area, working around tenancy sustainment, budgeting, debt advice and signposting to specialist services where required, and through that process, start gathering evidence and information for future service planning. In Vale of Glamorgan, the council had introduced a new policy of asking customers whether they have an Armed Forces connection in order to ensure that the service community – including veterans - receives all the services they are entitled. The council had also developed an online database of support available with external partners. The need for robust data had also been recognised by the Welsh Government which had allocated 2 million pounds funding for services for veterans. However, as little was known about the level and nature of demand from veterans or even where veterans were living in Wales, the Welsh Government made the decision to first review data needs and sources of information.

...the group is going to cover not just how do we know where our veterans are? It's also going to cover how we measure whether we're meeting their needs. So it's going to be about performance indicators as well as just data, so one of the things we're going to start talking about I think is how many of the local authorities in Wales ask somebody at first point of contact whether they're a veteran so that they start collecting that data... (National level stakeholder)

Improved collaboration between key stakeholders

Most respondents, including national level stakeholders and interviewees across the case study areas believed there was a need for more effective collaboration and, as noted above, data sharing, between national level government, local government and the MoD; between dedicated veteran services; and, between dedicated veteran services, local authorities and generic homelessness and housing support services. Generic providers in particular thought that veteran organisations should work more closely with mainstream providers as well as with other organisations in the veterans sector. Although many believed that generic services were more aware of the resources and services available to veterans than in the past, there was still work to be done in promoting what was available.

I suppose other services being aware of veteran services and the resources available – I had no idea when I worked in the homelessness sector about all these veterans charities...I think that is changing...there is a lot more sharing of information...(National level stakeholder)

As noted earlier (and see below), there was some concern that the veterans sector (and particularly some of the many newer entrants in the sector) had an interest in exaggerating the level and nature of demand from veterans. In some cases, respondents felt, there had been an overemphasis on the needs of seriously injured veterans which detracted from the need for general housing related support for the majority of veterans who, whilst not injured, were in need of support. More collaborative work, data sharing and generally better communications between the veteran organisations and other key players might go some way to reduce these perceptions.

Actually there is something in that [veterans] sector... about a) the understanding of the issues and how they should enforce what they can best do, but all organisations are competitive... I'm competitive, but I think they're more grown up in the homelessness sector than the veterans sector... It has those elements which have a vested interest in portraying the problem unrealistically and all of that... (Local authority representative)

There was some concern that a lack of collaboration, planning and effective needs assessments combined with the high profile of veterans and heightened public sympathy in recent years – as well as the availability of funding - had resulted in a proliferation of new veteran organisations and charities. There were a number of concerns about this development. First, as noted earlier, services had been developed without evidence of need and some new services were reported to be struggling to find veterans to support when, respondents felt, the money might have been put to better use where there was some evidence of need. The other concern was that, whilst most of the newer charities had probably been set up with the best intentions, these services duplicated – or in some cases undermined – the work of more established services. The concern here was that staff and/or volunteers were unlikely to have the knowledge and expertise necessary to assess veterans’ needs fully or to advise them correctly and direct them to the specialist support they required.

...they've been misinformed, I think they've taken on more than they can chew and it's the case of if you came to us with issues around alcohol, debt, mental health - whatever it is - I'm not going to now sit and counsel you. I wouldn't know where to start. I can sit and I can let you offload to me and I can make some notes for when I refer you to somebody. But I can't sit and counsel you. You can't do everything; that's why there are specialists out there and I think they maybe think... go and have a cup of tea and have a chat and it'll be all right (Dedicated service provider)

Conclusion

There is a paucity of data about the level and nature of demand from single veterans both nationally and locally. The need for more comprehensive and robust data was recognised by some respondents at both the local and national level and was beginning to be addressed but overall there was no strategic approach to data collection. Overall, respondents from generic services felt there was little demand from single veterans whilst dedicated veteran organisations and service providers tended to report quite significant levels of demand for their services and many believed there was likely to be a good deal of un-expressed need. Most respondents believed that veterans experienced housing difficulties for the same reasons as other single homeless people. Nevertheless, many respondents attributed some of these difficulties to their experiences of Service life, their unfamiliarity with civilian life and inadequate or non-existent transition planning. Overall respondents were not able to comment on changing needs and demand over the past few years and in coming years because they lacked data. However, a few suggested that demand would increase as the Services underwent restructuring whilst others believed there might be an increase in demand from veterans who had served in recent conflicts. For the most part respondents found it difficult to comment on how well the needs of veterans were being met and on

what the main gaps in provision were, again because of the lack of data. However, those who had experience of working with veterans felt that the types of services and provision required were the same as those needed to meet the needs of homeless and vulnerably housed people generally although there was some support for dedicated veteran services. There is a need for improved data collection of the level of demand and the nature of need as well as improved collaboration between key stakeholders if services for veterans are to be planned effectively.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

This final chapter draws together the findings from the literature review, the secondary analysis of existing quantitative data and the primary quantitative and qualitative findings in order to address the three main aims and objectives of the research, which were:

- to examine the extent and nature of provision of accommodation and housing related support for veterans in England, Scotland and Wales with a particular focus on veterans who are either homeless or at risk of homelessness
- to establish the current and perceived future need for accommodation and housing related support for veterans who are homeless/at risk of homelessness in England, Scotland and Wales and to identify gaps in knowledge about current and future levels of need
- to make practical recommendations to Government (central and local), service commissioners, service providers and Veterans charities, regarding the effective planning and delivery of future provision.

The extent and nature of provision of accommodation and housing related support for single veterans

The research identified 17 providers (separate organisations) of dedicated accommodation based services for single veterans across Great Britain, providing a total of 910 bed spaces/ units across 46 schemes. This included 156 direct access beds, 377 second stage accommodation beds and 377 long-term housing units. Available information suggested that dedicated provision for veterans is likely to increase by at least 235 bed spaces/ units for single veterans over the next few years (an increase of 26%).

Only five floating support services for vulnerably housed single veterans were identified across the UK, supporting an estimated 276 veterans at any one time. Only one future scheme was identified of this nature, providing an additional 15 floating support places (a very modest 5% increase), through planned developments including via LIBOR funding.

The present provision is not evenly distributed throughout Great Britain. Unsurprisingly given the pressure on housing in London and the South East, the greatest amount of dedicated provision in England was located here. After London, Scotland had the next highest number of dedicated bed spaces for veterans. There was no provision in Wales or the East Midlands. The planned developments include some schemes in Wales, with others located in London, Scotland, the North West, North East, Yorkshire and Humberside and the South East.

Overall, the existing dedicated provision appeared to have relatively broad eligibility criteria. For example, the existing dedicated provision was almost exclusively provided for both men and women. Most had no minimum length of military service. However the schemes appeared to be more accessible to veterans with mental health problems than veterans with substance misuse problems (with only one in six schemes always accepting someone with substance misuse problems). Most schemes took referrals from a wide range of agencies, though only 43% accepted self-referrals.

Existing providers of dedicated accommodation provision for veterans were routinely turning away veterans because their services were full, however the extent to which this happened varied. Eighteen providers stated that they occasionally turned away veterans in 2012/13 (with at least 30 veterans being turned away across 188 bed spaces) whilst seven providers frequently turned away veterans (with at least 263 veterans turned away across 212 bed spaces).

The absolute numbers of veterans utilising generic housing and homelessness services were relatively low and typically represented a small proportion of the services' total users. This was particularly the case for the number of veterans accepted under the homelessness legislation in England, Scotland and Wales, for example, 58 veterans were accepted as homeless in England in 2013 because they were vulnerable due to having served in the Armed Forces (representing 0.11% of total acceptances). However, it should be emphasised that these categories are very specific and narrowly defined, so great numbers would not be expected.

Higher numbers of veterans were utilising generic accommodation and housing related services. For example, just over 2,500 people (most of whom were single) entering Supporting People services were veterans in 2013/14 (1.8% of all new clients). Just over 1,000 single veterans (with about half being homeless) accessed new social housing lets (general needs) in the first three quarters of 2013/14 (less than 1% of all lets). According to SNAP, veterans represented 2-3% of users of day centres, direct access hostels and second stage clients, and CHAIN recorded that 3% of outreach service users in London were veterans (from the UK). The SPACES service has been assisting between 1,000-1,500 veterans per year since 2000.

The data available does not allow us to accurately assess the extent to which veterans are over- or under-represented in homelessness and housing need. There is no accurate up-to-date data on the number of veterans in the general population, although estimates suggested that approximately 9-10% of the UK adult population were veterans in the mid-2000s. Considering single people only, and the likely reduction in veteran numbers in recent years, we might expect single veterans to constitute around 2-3% of the population. Whilst this assessment is imprecise, when comparing this to our available data on housing need, it

would suggest that single veterans are not significantly over-represented in the data-sets on housing need, and may sometimes be under-represented, especially under the homelessness legislation. This may reflect strict criteria rather than an absence of housing need per se.

The current and future need for accommodation and housing related support for veterans

The most significant finding from this study is that there is still a paucity of robust research evidence and statistical data about the current level and nature of demand for accommodation and housing related support from single veterans both nationally and locally. This is improving, partly as a result of the introduction of the Armed Forces Covenant and the Community Covenants and changes to the homelessness legislation and guidance. A greater awareness of the needs of veterans has resulted in some local authorities and other generic services collecting information about experience of Armed Service from all clients approaching services. In addition there is the data collected by CORE, Supporting People, CHAIN and SPACES. However, the collection of data on single homeless veterans remains patchy and fragmented. Knowledge about future demand amongst many respondents was almost non-existent. Although this study goes some way to address the gap in knowledge it is clear that there is a need for more comprehensive data collection across local and national governments and service providers, including veteran organisations.

Although data was patchy across the case study areas, some areas collected better data than others and a few areas reported a relatively high demand for housing and housing related support from single veterans. These were: Preston; Gateshead; Hull; Plymouth; Highland; Colchester; Rushmoor; South Ayrshire; Aberdeen, and Perth and Kinross. Many of these areas had already developed dedicated services to meet these needs (including accommodation, advice centres, outreach services, and drop-in centres). These dedicated services tended to collect better data and, unsurprisingly, respondents from these services also reported seeing higher numbers of single veterans than respondents in other areas which had no dedicated services and/or where little data was collected about veterans. Services in those areas which had identified unmet need and had developed veteran specific services reported working with increasing numbers of veterans as the service became established. This and the data on waiting lists for dedicated accommodation suggest that there is likely to be a significant level of unmet need in other areas.

For the most part, providers of mainstream or generic services and some dedicated veteran service providers (particularly in areas where dedicated provision was relatively plentiful such as Edinburgh and London) felt that there were sufficient and appropriate homelessness services for veterans. Three main reasons were given for this:

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- demand from veterans was low and/or
 - generic homelessness services were able to meet the needs of veterans (whose problems and support needs were generally perceived as no different to other single homeless people) and/or
 - the assistance available for veterans was sufficient (e.g. priority for rehousing and assistance from veteran organisations).

Most respondents believed that veterans experienced housing difficulties for the same reason as other single homeless people and that they required similar support services. However, many attributed some of these difficulties to people's experience of service, in particular unfamiliarity with civilian life (e.g. housing markets, the benefit system and budgeting) and inadequate transition planning which could increase the risk of homelessness amongst some veterans, especially Early Service Leavers (ESLs) and those with pre-existing problems which had not been addressed in Service.

There was broad agreement about the types of additional provision and changes required across the three countries and case study areas, these included:

- more emphasis on homelessness prevention
- improved transition planning and support for all Service leavers
- emergency and temporary accommodation
- alternative forms of permanent independent accommodation (with support where necessary) e.g. 'housing first' models
- more affordable permanent housing (including private rented sector housing and social housing)
- floating support services
- mental health and substance misuse services
- outreach services, advice centres and drop-in/day centres
- befriending and counselling services and opportunities for veterans to socialise
- improved information sharing between generic providers and veteran organisations so that providers are aware of services and other forms of support available to veterans and how to access these.

The need for dedicated accommodation for veterans

Service providers and veterans held dedicated supported accommodation services in high regard and appreciated the high standard of accommodation and support provided and

many believed that veterans fared better in dedicated accommodation where providers and other residents understood their needs and experiences.

There was some evidence of veterans with complex unmet support needs who might benefit from dedicated supported accommodation. However, few respondents reported having sufficient demand from single veterans to warrant the development of dedicated supported accommodation within the local area. There may be a case, however, for developing supported accommodation in areas with high recruitment levels where single veterans and ESLs appear to be most likely to return (e.g. the North East, the North West, and the South West).

There was a view that dedicated supported accommodation or any type of dedicated accommodation that clustered veterans together might hinder transition. Where possible, and appropriate, services should be delivered to veterans in their own homes or in generic provision in the area they wish to settle.

There is clearly a shortage of specialist non-accommodation support. Respondents reported a need for a range of dedicated services for veterans including floating support services, mental health and substance misuse services, outreach services, advice centres and drop-in/day centres.

In part these services were required because there was a general shortage of housing and support services in most areas but there were also two other important reasons for the provision of dedicated support:

- Veterans who were reluctant to use mainstream services would be more likely to approach dedicated services for support and/or advice.
- Some veterans might require specialist advice and support which would be best delivered by workers with knowledge and understanding of the Armed Services.

Outreach services, dedicated advice centres, and drop-in/day-centres were seen to have an important role in identifying and attracting veterans with unmet needs. Areas that already provided such services were working with increasing numbers of veterans which strongly suggests that there is a significant number of veterans with unmet support needs who could be at risk of homelessness.

Recommendations

There are four high level recommendations arising from the work, with a number of more detailed proposals related to each recommendation.

Recommendation 1:

National housing strategies for veterans should be developed, led by the Scottish, Welsh and UK governments in collaboration with key housing and Veteran agencies, supported by a clear implementation framework

At present, the MoD has responsibility for transition planning (with housing as one component) and local authorities assess housing need locally. Some of the necessary tools and building blocks are in place to meet the needs of veterans, such as the Covenant, these are not being leveraged. Whilst the evidence base is currently weak, it does highlight areas of unmet housing and related support needs amongst single veterans. However, this need is most clearly seen at a regional or sub-regional level, rather than individual local authority level. Data collection processes need significant improvement in order to adequately inform national and regional planning in this area. The strategy should be firmly linked to discharge patterns and existing knowledge of vulnerability as part of the transition process.

A: What the strategy should include

- i. The strategies should establish a national commissioning framework/revenue funding for accommodation and support services to ensure that services are developed in a coordinated way in response to identified need.
- ii. The national strategies should separately address the needs of the total ex-Service population including single Veterans and families with dependants and the specific needs of each sub-group
- iii. The strategies and funding framework should take account of housing need at a regional/ sub-regional level, alongside any unmet local authority level needs.

B: Information needed for the strategy

- iv. The MoD should identify vulnerable service personnel and share information about all Service leavers (including Early Service Leavers, vulnerable personnel and Service personnel who are to be made redundant) to inform the national strategy and local and regional/sub regional planning.
- v. The strategies should establish a national framework for improved data collection and recording of Veterans, with specific requirements placed on LAs and service/accommodation providers.
- vi. In order to better meet the identified needs of veterans, systems should be established to improve information flows, dialogue, and collaborative working between all relevant organisations – including the MoD, other government departments, local authorities, veteran organisations, and housing providers. Cobseo should take a leading role in this process.

C: The Armed Forces Community Covenant

- vii. The MoD and the Scottish, Welsh and UK governments should require local authorities to meet the provisions of the Community Covenant especially in relation to housing single veterans in the social housing sector to ensure that those who serve or have served in the British Armed Forces are not disadvantaged.

Recommendation 2:

The MoD, working in collaboration with other key agencies, should improve transition planning for all Service leavers to maximise people's ability to achieve and maintain sustainable housing after Service.

Single veterans will face similar issues to other single people with low priority for housing, including a lack of affordable housing, public spending cuts and housing benefit changes. However, some veterans may face some issues including those that pre-date their Service, and physical or mental harm/damage from their experience of war. Further, Early Service Leavers may experience some or all the above issues but often only have a few weeks to plan for discharge. There is a significant opportunity to improve the transition experience of all Service leavers.

- viii. The MoD, working with veteran and other key civilian agencies, should do more to prepare every service leaver for transition via 'in-reach' services, including planning and preparation over the longer term and a focus on housing and welfare issues and the realities of civilian life (including implementing the Ashcroft Report (2014) recommendation of providing details of subsidised and unsubsidised cost of accommodation, Council Tax and utility charges payable in the civilian sector on pay statements).
- ix. The MoD should do more to identify and support vulnerable Service-personnel, including ESLs who leave before completion of basic training and those who are dishonourably discharged, to minimise the risk of unsuccessful transition. More generally, they should also identify Service-personnel who may at risk of difficulties to ensure preventative support is provided.

Recommendation 3:

National strategies should support the development of coordinated services to meet the accommodation and housing related needs of veterans.

The research mapped the provision of dedicated accommodation provision for single veterans and the use of other housing and related support services by single veterans. It showed that the dedicated accommodation sector has developed on an ad hoc basis, but is

increasing in terms of numbers of beds offered. There is very little preventive work such as dedicated floating support services to support single veterans in their own accommodation.

A: Recommendations for support services

- x. Within the national commissioning framework (see Recommendation 1), high priority should be placed on the development of dedicated floating support services for single veterans. This housing related support should be aligned with more general welfare support provided by veteran organisations.
- xi. The national commissioning framework should also give a high priority to other preventative interventions which can also have an important role in identifying unmet need such dedicated outreach services, advice centres, drop-in centres and befriending/counselling services.
- xii. New 'in-reach' services (see Recommendation 2) should be 'joined up' with floating support type services post-discharge.

B: Accommodation services

- xiii. The provision of any new dedicated accommodation should be informed by needs assessment on a regional/ sub-regional basis (see Recommendation 1).

C: Information sharing

- xiv. As recommended above, information sharing should be improved between generic providers and veteran organisations to ensure that providers are aware of services and other forms of support available to veterans and how to access these.

Recommendation 4:

There is a need for an improved evidence base on the long-term housing pathways of veterans

Little is currently known about the housing pathways of single veterans leaving the Armed Forces. Current, and emerging, service models have also rarely been evaluated in any detail. There is also a need for a better understanding of dedicated supported veteran accommodation provision and how this differs from generic provision (which will be addressed in the second stage of this study).

- xv. The Census should collect data on Armed Forces history.
- xvi. More research into the levels of veterans' housing need and long-term housing pathways of veterans is needed.
- xvii. There is also a need for independent evaluations of the effectiveness of accommodation and housing related support services for veterans and dedicated advice services such as JSHAO and SPACES.

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Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

Armed Forces Community Covenants: Armed Forces Community Covenants complement, at a local level, the Armed Forces Covenant, which outlines the moral obligation between the nation, the government and the Armed Forces. The aim of the Armed Forces Community Covenant is to encourage local communities to support the Armed Forces community in their area and promote understanding and awareness among the public of issues affecting the Armed Forces community.

'Bedroom Tax' (under-occupancy rules/removal of spare room subsidy): Since the start of April 2013, new rules for people claiming housing benefit for their council or housing association homes mean that there is a limit on the number of bedrooms housing benefit will help pay for.

Cobseo: the Confederation of Service Charities

CHAIN: the Combined Homelessness and Information Network is a multi-agency database recording information about rough sleepers and the wider street population in London. The system, which is commissioned and funded by the Mayor of London and managed by St Mungo's Broadway, represents the UK's most detailed and comprehensive source of information about rough sleeping.

Dedicated service: any accommodation or related support service provided solely for veterans (e.g. hostels, supported accommodation, drop-in centres, advice centres, long term housing and outreach services).

Early Service Leavers: Early Service Leavers comprise of two distinct groups: those that are compulsorily discharged from the Services, trained or untrained, and those who choose to take their own discharge having served less than four years.

Ex-Service Action Group on Homelessness (ESAG): ESAG was set up in 1997 to help homeless veterans in London.

Homelessness: Broadly speaking, somebody is statutorily homeless if they do not have accommodation that they have a legal right to occupy, which is accessible and physically available to them (and their household) and which it would be reasonable for them to continue to live in. It would not be reasonable for someone to continue to live in their home,

for example, if that was likely to lead to violence against them (or a member of their family)⁶⁴.

Housing First: There are different Housing First models but, in essence, Housing First is an approach to ending homelessness that centres on providing people experiencing homelessness with housing as quickly as possible – and then providing services as needed.

Joint Service Housing Advice Office: JSHAO provides housing information and advice for members of the Armed Forces and their families. JSHAO gives civilian housing options advice to members of the Armed Forces while they are serving and when they are about to return to civilian life. JSHAO also provides help and information to veterans who are still in Service Families' Accommodation.

Local connection: local authorities may also consider whether applicants have a local connection with the local district, or with another district.

Main duty: The main duty of local authorities under the homelessness legislation in England and Wales is that they must provide temporary accommodation until settled housing becomes available. In Scotland local authorities must provide settled accommodation for all qualifying households.

Non-statutory homeless: people who are 'homeless' under the terms of the homelessness legislation but who are not in priority need and do not qualify for the 'main duty'.

Priority need: In England and Wales, households must be in priority need under the terms of the legislation. Priority categories of homeless households who are owed the main homelessness duty are slightly different in England and Wales. Single people, or couples under State retirement age without children and who are not considered vulnerable, do not normally fit the criteria of those in 'priority need' in England. This is the same in Wales except for those who have not been able to secure stable accommodation since leaving the Services and have a local Welsh connection.

⁶⁴ Communities and Local Government, (2006) Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities London: Communities and Local Government. Available at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/homelessnesscode>

Priority need groups in England and Wales⁶⁵

England	Wales
Households with dependent children	Households with dependent children
Households with a pregnant woman	Households with a pregnant woman
Other people who are particularly vulnerable ⁶⁶	Other people who are particularly vulnerable
People at risk of violence, harassment	People feeling domestic violence or threatened with domestic violence
16 and 17 year olds	16 and 17 year olds
Certain care leavers	Care leavers or person at particular risk of sexual or financial exploitation, 18 or over but under the age of 21
People who are vulnerable as a result of having spent time in custody and people who are vulnerable as the result of having been a member of HM Regular Forces	People who are homeless following release from custody and people who have been homeless since leaving the Regular Armed Forces

SPACES: The Single Persons Accommodation Centre for the Ex- Services is an accommodation placement service run by Riverside ECHG.

Statutory homeless: households/individuals who are accepted by a local authority as unintentionally homeless and in priority need (in England and Wales) and

Veteran: – anyone who has served for at least one day in HM Armed Forces as a regular or reservist, including individuals who did not complete basic training.

⁶⁵ Priority need categories were abolished in Scotland in 2012

⁶⁶ The key test for vulnerability is set out in *R v Camden LBC ex parte Pereira* [1998] 30 HLR 317 – ‘Whether the applicant when homeless is less likely to fend for himself than an ordinary homeless person so that injury or detriment to him will result when a less vulnerable person would be able to cope without harmful effect’.

Appendix 2: Timeline of strategy and policy related papers and reports for veterans in the UK

(Adapted from Klein and Alexander, 2012 p26)

Year	Title/source	Jurisdiction covered
2001	Launch of Veterans Initiative Minister for Veterans appointed	UK
2003	Strategy for veterans (MOD)	UK
2003	Improving the Delivery of Departmental Support and Services for Veterans (Dandeker et al.	UK
2008	Report of Inquiry into National Recognition of our Armed Forces (Report to the PM)	UK
2008	Scotland's Veterans and Forces' Communities: Meeting their Well-being and Welfare Needs (Scottish Government Consultation Paper)	Scot
2008	The Nation's Commitment: Cross-government Support to our Armed Forces, their Families and Veterans (Command Paper 7424)	UK
	Scotland's Veterans and Forces' Communities: Meeting our Commitment (Scottish Government)	Scot
	The Government's Response to the Report of Inquiry into National Recognition of our Armed Forces	UK
2009	The Nation's Commitment to the Armed Forces Community: Consistent and Enduring Support (MoD Consultation Paper Cm7674)	UK
	The Nation's Commitment. Cross-Government Support to our Armed Forces, their Families and Veterans (First Annual Report) (UK Government)	UK
	Annual Report on Scottish Government Support for our Armed Forces and Veterans Community (Scottish Government)	Scot
	The Armed Forces Welfare Pathway (MOD)	UK
2010	Report of the Task Force on the Military Covenant (Strachan et al.)	UK
2011	Armed Forces Act incorporated Military Covenant principles in law	UK
	Welsh Government's Package of Support for the Armed Forces Community in Wales	Wales
2012	Our Commitments. Scottish Government Support for the Armed Forces Community in Scotland (Scottish Government)	Scot
	The Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report (First Annual Report (MoD)	UK
	The Welsh Government Package of Support for the Armed Forces in Wales Annual Report 2012	Wales
2013	Support for Armed Forces Veterans in Wales (HoC Welsh Affairs Report)	Wales
	The Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report (Second Annual Report (MOD)	UK

Appendix 3: Statistical tables on single veterans and housing need: 'top 20' local authorities

Table A1: Households found to be owed the main duty under the homelessness legislation in England as a result of vulnerability due to having served in the Armed Forces 2003-2013

Local authority (Map 3.1 key)	Region	Number vulnerable due to having served in the Armed Forces
Gateshead (1)	North East	25
Durham (2)	North East	22
Leeds (3)	Yorkshire & Humber	21
Bolton (4)	North West	18
Wigan (5)	North West	15
Birmingham (6)	West Midlands	14
Wirral (7)	North West	14
Lewisham (8)	Greater London	13
North Tyneside (9)	North East	12
Lambeth (10)	Greater London	11
Hackney	Greater London	10
Basildon	East of England	8
Bradford	Yorkshire & Humber	8
Knowsley	North West	8
Liverpool	North West	8
Solihull	West Midlands	8
Middlesbrough	North East	7
Shropshire	West Midlands	7
Stockton on Tees	North East	6
Burnley	North West	5
Coventry	West Midlands	5
East Riding of Yorkshire	Yorkshire & Humber	5
Newcastle upon Tyne	North East	5
Redcar and Cleveland	North East	5
Sheffield	Yorkshire & Humber	5
South Somerset	South West	5

Source: analysis of PIE data.

Table A2: Households found to be owed the main duty under the homelessness legislation in England who reported losing their last home due to leaving the Armed Services 2005-2013

Local authority (Map 3.2 key)	Region	Number lost last settled home due to leaving Armed Services
Wiltshire (1)	South West	149
Redbridge (2)	Greater London	128
Gateshead (3)	North East	58
Richmondshire (4)	Yorkshire & Humber	54
East Riding of Yorkshire (5)	Yorkshire & Humber	34
Plymouth (6)	South West	33
Vale of White Horse (7)	South East	32
Durham (8)	North East	28
Hackney (9)	Greater London	27
Bradford (10)	Yorkshire & Humber	26
Kingston upon Hull	Yorkshire & Humber	24
Wirral	North West	24
Bolton	North West	23
Birmingham	West Midlands	22
Lambeth	Greater London	22
Wakefield	Yorkshire & Humber	21
Swindon	South West	20
Ealing	Greater London	18
Herefordshire	West Midlands	18
Cornwall	South West	17
Lewisham	Greater London	17
Sandwell	West Midlands	17

Source: analysis of P1E data

Table A3: CORE data: Top authorities 2012/13 of single people ever serving in the Armed Forces moving into social housing

Authority (Map 3.3 key)	Region	Number of single people
Bradford (1)	Yorkshire & Humber	44
County Durham (2)	North East	44
Manchester (3)	North West	36
Dudley (4)	West Midlands	35
Sunderland (5)	North East	33
Salford (6)	North West	32
Cheshire West and Chester (7)	North West	31
Newcastle upon Tyne (8)	North East	31
Coventry(9)	West Midlands	30
Gateshead (10)	North East	30
Walsall (11)	West Midlands	30
Kingston upon Hull	Yorkshire & Humber	27
Sheffield	Yorkshire & Humber	27
Sandwell	West Midlands	25
Wakefield	Yorkshire & Humber	25
Birmingham	West Midlands	23
Gosport	South East	22
Liverpool	North West	22
Chesterfield	East Midlands	20
Doncaster	Yorkshire & Humber	20

Source: CORE data-set, 2012/13

Table A4: CORE 2012/13: Single people ever serving in the armed services moving into social housing as a proportion of the lettings made in the local authority area

Local authority (Map 3.4 Key)	Region	Single people moving into social housing as a proportion of all lettings (%)
West Devon (1)	South West	6.9
Rushmoor (2)	South East	5.2
Gosport (3)	South East	4.9
Chiltern (4)	South East	4.9
Richmondshire (5)	Yorkshire & Humber	4.0
Eden (6)	North West	3.9
North Devon (7)	South West	3.9
Horsham (8)	South East	3.8
Rossendale (9)	North West	3.6
North Kesteven (10)	East Midlands	3.5
South Lakeland	North West	3.5
Barrow-in-Furness	North West	3.4
Pendle	North West	3.4
Rother	South East	3.2
South Ribble	North West	3.2
Swale	South East	3.1
Carlisle	North West	3.1
Cheshire West and Chester	North West	3.0
Selby	Yorkshire & Humber	2.9
Blackpool	North West	2.9

Source: CORE data-set, 2012/13

Table A5: SPACES data 2000-2014 local authority area requested for accommodation

Local authority (Map 3.5 Key)	Region	Number requested local authority
Manchester (1)	North West	236
Rushmoor (2)	South East	228
Birmingham (3)	West Midlands	227
Leeds (4)	Yorkshire & Humber	169
Newcastle upon Tyne (5)	North East	166
Glasgow (6)	Scotland	164
Liverpool (7)	North West	159
Richmondshire (8)	Yorkshire & Humber	156
Richmond upon Thames (9)	Greater London	148
County Durham (10)	North East	144
Portsmouth	South East	115
Wiltshire	South West	114
Nottingham	East Midlands	110
Bradford	Yorkshire & Humber	103
Sheffield	Yorkshire & Humber	99
Plymouth	South West	98
Sunderland	North East	93
Bristol	South West	91
Fife	Scotland	90
Kingston upon Hull	Yorkshire & Humber	87

Source: analysis of SPACES data 2000-2014

Notes



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