

Step up the housing ladder for armed forces

Ex-service personnel have been given a boost in their bid to find a new home by The City of Edinburgh Council.

Councillors have agreed that the length of time people have served in the armed forces will be equal to the amount of time others have been registered on Edinburgh's common housing register ([EdIndex](#)).

The decision was taken at yesterday's [Health, Social Care and Housing Committee](#) because many ex-service personnel find it difficult to get social housing once they leave the armed forces as they have been living abroad or in service accommodation.

Those who have served for five years will get the same consideration as someone who has been on the register for a council or housing association home for five years.

The new regulations will apply to people providing they register on EdIndex within three years of leaving the armed forces.

It was also agreed that the Council would work with the Ministry of Defence to provide specialist housing advice to armed forces personnel who were considering settling in Edinburgh.

Councillor Paul Edie, the city's housing leader, said: "I'm delighted that we will be able to help people who have left the armed forces and are struggling to find somewhere to live.

"Many of them have spent time overseas serving their country and putting their lives on the line to defend our freedom and way of life. It is only right that we do everything we can as

a Council to give them a helping hand.”

Ian Ballantyne, Chief Executive, Scottish Veterans Residences, said: “This is a very welcome initiative by the City of Edinburgh Council and a great boost for those veterans wishing to settle in Edinburgh. Veterans are not looking for a hand out but rather a hand up and this policy will certainly help achieve this and one that we would encourage all other local authorities to emulate.

“Our service men and women have contributed immeasurably to preserving our freedoms in a way that could not have been predicted and it is beholding to us all to do everything possible to support them when they leave the services.”

Edinburgh has a considerable affordable housing need with around 16,600 new homes needed over 10 years. There is an average of 138 bids for each Council and housing association home advertised on the Key to Choice website.