The Armed Forces Guide
to homes and home ownership

Provided by Nationwide
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If you’re a member of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Royal Air Force or Army, and want to find out about your housing choices outside service accommodation, then the Armed Forces Guide is for you.

It covers everything from renting to buying your own home and letting out a property, and is relevant to you whether you live on your own, or with a partner and family. Whatever stage you might be at in your military career, the Armed Forces Guide will help you understand what your housing options are, any challenges you might face, and the unique opportunities available to you as a member of the armed forces.
Chapter 1 - Introduction

Why produce an Armed Forces Guide?

A key objective of the Your Home pillar of Nationwide’s Citizenship strategy is to help 750,000 people into a home of their own.

People in the armed forces are less likely than others to own their own home (43% of all personnel¹), and we want to help by giving you an overview of all the housing options available to you, whether renting or buying. The Armed Forces Guide will help you understand what housing opportunities are available so you can make that first step.

There has never been a better time to consider your choices. New initiatives like the Armed Forces Covenant and Forces Help to Buy scheme have been introduced to put members of the armed forces on a level playing field with the rest of the population, and give you the financial support you need to get onto the property ladder. You can read more about these – and other affordable housing schemes – in the following chapters, and how they can benefit you, whatever stage of your career.

¹ Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey 2013

This is the first time we’ve produced a guide for the armed forces, so we’d really value your feedback. You can contact us at citizenship@nationwide.co.uk
How to use this guide

You can dip in and out of the chapters that interest you most, or read the Armed Forces Guide from cover to cover.

Chapter 2 gives you an overview of your options whether you’re thinking about joining the forces, are currently serving or have recently transitioned to civilian life. The remaining chapters look at renting, buying and selling, letting, and tips for preparing for the unexpected.

You’ll find a glossary in Chapter 7, which explains the key terms used in the guide, and a useful links section to access more detailed information.
chapter 2

What are your housing options?

Introduction
As a member of the armed forces, you have several housing options available to you. In this chapter we outline the options for different stages of your military career, with some suggestions to help guide your choices.
# Chapter 2 - What are your housing options?

## Service accommodation

- One of the benefits of being in the armed forces is access to subsidised accommodation, provided by the MOD:
  - Single Living Accommodation (SLA) within barracks: available if you are single or unaccompanied, this is typically a room with ensuite, shared kitchen and living area.
  - Service Family Accommodation (SFA) if you are married, in a civil partnership or have permanent custody of children. You also need to be over 18 and have at least six months to serve. The amount of rent you pay and type of property you live in depends on several factors; including your personal circumstances, availability, status and rank.
  - If you live in an SLA, your accommodation charge is deducted from your monthly salary and covers rent (including furniture), utilities and a Contribution in Lieu of Council Tax (CILOCT) in place of usual council tax charges.
  - The costs of a TV licence, telephone, and satellite and internet connection are your liability and payable by you.
  - You can continue living in service accommodation throughout your career – and the majority of personnel do so during the working week.
  - It’s possible that you will want to move into Service Family Accommodation (SFA) at some point to live with your spouse and/or children. The amount of rent you pay and type of property you live in depends on rank and size of your family.
  - If the MOD can’t house you, they may find you Substitute Service Family Accommodation.
  - When you move into an SFA, you won’t have a tenancy agreement, but a Service Licence to Occupy agreement. Standard contents insurance policies won’t cover you for any damage to the property, so you will need insurance. See the useful links section in Chapter 7 for details of where to find relevant insurers.
  - As with an SLA, the costs of a TV licence, telephone, and satellite and internet connection have to be paid for by you.
  - As you are a tenant in SFA, you will need to seek prior written consent from your Commanding Officer and the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), before you can start a business from home or keep a pet.
  - If you live in an SFA, your accommodation charge is deducted from your monthly salary and covers rent (including furniture, if required), water and sewerage; a Contribution in Lieu of Council Tax (CILOCT) and a garage or carport (if applicable).
  - You will have to pay your own heating and electricity bills, and are required to maintain the garden and home. The MOD takes care of major repairs and renovations.
  - You are allowed to remain in your service accommodation until your last day of military pay - the length of time depends on what type of accommodation you have. You will be given notice to vacate ahead of the date and should request a Certificate of Cessation of Entitlement to Occupy. Find out why this is important in Chapter 6.
  - You should contact the Joint Service Housing Advice Office (JSHAO), to find out what your housing options are.
  - The Career Transition Partnership (CTP) runs Civilian Housing briefings for service personnel about to transfer to civilian life – you should try to attend these.

## Renting

- If you are currently renting but want to move into service accommodation on joining the military, you will need to make sure you follow the correct procedure for moving out of your rental property – see Chapter 3 for more information.
  - You can continue to rent outside barracks, but be aware you may pay more in rent and other charges – see Chapter 3 for details.
  - If you want to rent outside service accommodation, you need the permission of your Commanding Officer and will need to cover the upfront and monthly costs associated with renting – see Chapter 3 for more details.
  - You can apply for council housing through your local authority, even if you don’t have a previous connection to the area. There are some eligibility criteria and you will need to check any local variations that may apply.
  - You can also apply for housing association properties – find out more in Chapter 3.
  - Renting privately – or through a local authority or housing association – will bring new costs that you need to budget for. See Chapter 3 for details.
# Chapter 2 - What are your housing options?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Buying / selling</strong></th>
<th><strong>Letting</strong></th>
<th><strong>Other</strong></th>
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</table>
| - If you are a homeowner and want to sell up to move into service accommodation, [Chapter 4](#) can help.  
- If you want to buy a home while serving in the forces, there are some schemes to help you with the deposit and mortgage - see [Chapter 4](#) to find out whether you are eligible for these. | - If you are a homeowner and want to rent out your home to move into service accommodation or have your spouse and/or family accompany you to a different location, you will need to get ‘consent to let’ from your mortgage provider (if you have one) and may need to pay a charge. They may ask you to switch to a Buy to Let mortgage (if your mortgage provider allows this), but be aware this will come with charges. You will need to apply to your Commanding Officer and request permission to rent it out if you used either the Long Service Advance of Pay or Forces Help to Buy scheme to fund the property purchase. See [Chapter 5](#) for more details.  
- If you are a homeowner and want to rent out your property, you will need ‘consent to let’ from your mortgage provider (if you have one) and may need to pay a charge. Your mortgage provider may ask you to switch to a Buy to Let mortgage, but be aware this will come with charges. If you have used either the Long Service Advance of Pay or Forces Help to Buy scheme to fund the property purchase, you will need to apply to your Commanding Officer and request permission to rent it out too, see [Chapter 5](#). | - If you are homeless, your local authority has a legal duty to provide advice and assistance. They will run an assessment to determine if they consider you to be in priority need.  
- The MOD provides temporary housing for families of serving personnel at the Services Cotswold Centre – see [Chapter 6](#).  
- Several charities give support to members of the armed forces who find themselves homeless or in difficult circumstances – see [Chapter 6](#). |

**If you're joining the forces or thinking of enlisting**

- If you're joining the forces or thinking of enlisting

**If you're serving in the forces**

- If you're serving in the forces

**If you're leaving or have recently transitioned to civilian life**

- Former service personnel can take advantage of some of the government-approved schemes, but there is a time limit. Find out more in [Chapter 4](#).
Introduction
Renting your own home gives you increased privacy away from your permanent station and the opportunity to live with a partner or friends outside the service environment. However, be aware that it may prove more expensive and you will need to cover the cost of services previously included as part of your MOD accommodation charge (e.g. electricity and heating). You may also face some challenges unique to being in the military – although these barriers are coming down as a result of the Armed Forces Covenant and other legislative changes.

Don’t forget that renting is one of the options available to you when leaving the armed forces and returning to civilian life as well. Take a look at the end of this chapter for some short-term schemes that can help you to manage this transition and place you in initial rented accommodation. The rest of the chapter will help you to work out whether renting is the right long-term option for you, and gives you advice on how to go about it.
Chapter 3 - Renting

Can renting work for you?

Budgeting is essential if you’re responsible for paying your own rent, so make sure you plan ahead before moving out.

Before you begin your property search, you will need to request permission from your Commanding Officer that you’re allowed to live outside of service accommodation – this doesn’t apply if you’re leaving the forces and returning to civilian life. They have a duty of care to make sure you can manage your finances and sustain yourself.

How much rent can you afford?

If you’re new to renting, you’ll need to estimate how much you can afford to spend on rent each month.

The simplest way to do this is to start with the income that you can be confident of receiving each month, and subtract all of your existing monthly outgoings, remembering to include a realistic spending allowance for yourself each month as well.

Remember that not all outgoings are monthly – and it’s important that you include less frequent expenses (like holidays and birthdays) too. The simplest way of doing so is to divide any annual costs by 12 to provide a monthly budget for them (you would divide any quarterly costs by three to get the monthly cost) and then include them in your monthly outgoings. Once you have subtracted all outgoings from your monthly income, the amount that’s left over is what you have available to spend on your rent each month.

Example:

Income (take home salary)  
£1200 / month

Monthly outgoings  
£250 / month

Monthly spending allowance  
£150 / month

Quarterly outgoings (every three months)  
£450 (£150 per month)

Annual outgoings  
£2,400 (£200 per month)

Available to spend on rent  
£1200 - £250 - £150 - £150 - £200

= £450
Can renting work for you? continued

Some typical monthly outgoings
Your monthly outgoings should include all of the following that apply to you:

▪ Council tax (or ‘rates bill’ in Northern Ireland)
▪ Utilities (gas, electricity and water)
▪ Phone and/or broadband (don’t forget the cost of connection)
▪ TV licence (as well as cable or satellite TV services)
▪ Contents insurance (for the cost of your belongings)
▪ Any day-to-day costs (e.g. loan repayments, travel costs, mobile phone, food, childcare etc.)

Beware of overstretched yourself. If you fall behind on your rent, your landlord can evict you and take you to court to claim back any owed rent. This may affect the references you can get when looking to rent in the future as well.

Council tax relief
If you pay council tax and are deployed on tour, you can claim 100% council tax relief (CTR) for every day you spend abroad. At the end of your posting, take a copy of your council tax bill to the unit HR staff who will arrange the payment. This will then be paid through your salary.

Housing benefit
Around one in four private tenants use some form of housing benefit to help pay their rent. If you’re eligible, you’ll receive housing benefit along with any other benefits as one lump sum under the new system of ‘universal credit’. This will usually be paid to you, rather than the landlord, and on a monthly basis in arrears. Remember that rent is typically due in advance, so you’ll need to make sure you have enough money to cover the rent at the start of the month.

Guarantors
When they run their reference checks, landlords and letting agents will ask to see proof of your income – and they will often require that you earn a particular multiple of the monthly rent you will be paying. If your rent is £400 per month, for example, a landlord or letting agent may require you to earn 2.5 times that.

If you are young or renting for the first time privately, your landlord or letting agent may ask for a guarantor. This is somebody who will ‘guarantee’ your rent and be responsible for paying it if you fall into arrears, or will pay for any damage you cause that the deposit doesn’t cover. In many cases, a guarantor is a parent. Be aware though that if you’re living in a shared property, and you or your housemates fall behind on the rent, your guarantor could be liable for the whole amount, not just your portion.

Upfront costs
Deposit
This is the biggest cost you’ll have to allow for and it’s usually four to six weeks’ rent (although the landlord or agent can decide how much). There are schemes available to help if you are struggling to find the money for a deposit. You could also contact the Royal British Legion as they may be able to provide a deposit guarantee to the landlord instead of a traditional deposit.
Can renting work for you? continued

**Holding deposit**
A landlord or letting agent might ask for a holding deposit to ‘reserve’ a rental property. It is usually non-refundable, so if you decide not to rent the property or fail any reference or credit checks, you may not get it back.

**Rent in advance**
Rent in the private rental sector is normally paid at the start of the month, so you’ll need to pay this upfront when you take up a new tenancy.

**Letting fees**
Letting agents may charge you a range of fees under different names: a ‘reservation fee’ or ‘application fee’, for instance, to secure the property while the tenancy application is completed. Other costs you may be charged for include reference checks or fees for drafting the tenancy agreement, although these can only be charged once your tenancy is agreed. Even if you’re renewing a tenancy and not moving home, the agency may still charge you a fee for doing this. It’s illegal for agencies to charge just for looking for a property for you. In Scotland, it’s illegal for landlords or letting agencies to ask you for any fees.

**Pet deposit**
If you are allowed to keep a pet in the rental property, you will normally have to pay an additional charge for your pets to occupy accommodation with you.

**Removals**
You may be able to move your things yourself, otherwise include any estimates for removals in your financial planning.

**Furniture**
If you’re renting unfurnished, you’ll need to factor in the cost of any new furniture. If you need help with this cost, try your local council, Shelter, SSAFA Forces Help or your nearest Freecycle site to find out if anybody is giving away any old furniture.
Potential challenges to renting

One of the first things a landlord or letting agent will want to know is whether you are a suitable tenant.

A ‘suitable tenant’ usually means somebody who pays their rent on time and doesn’t cause any damage to their property or its contents. It’s why you’ll be asked for references and are likely to have some background checks run on you.

Credit checks

Being a member of the armed forces can unfortunately cause problems if your landlord or letting agent runs a credit check on you. This may be because you move around a lot (or have done so in the past); you’re not registered on the electoral roll; or you have a non-standard postcode (e.g. a British Forces Post Office (BFPO) address).

The good news is there are ways to minimise the impact of these things. If you’ve just joined the military, one option is to keep your parents’ or partner’s address as your permanent UK residence and maintain your banking to this UK address.

It’s also important you register to vote. If you’re going to be posted abroad, you can register as a service voter, which allows you to be registered at a fixed address in the UK, even if you move around. It lasts for five years, so you don’t have to think about it too often. If you’re going to be stationed in the UK and unlikely to be changing address, you can simply register as an ordinary voter.

Debt and credit history

If you have any debts, you’ll need to factor the repayments into your monthly outgoings, as it may reduce the amount you can afford to spend on rent. And you’ll need to keep making regular repayments to avoid affecting your credit rating.

If a credit check is run on you, the landlord or letting agent will also be able to access publicly available credit information, such as whether you have any court judgments (for not paying debts), bankruptcy orders and Individual Voluntary Arrangements (an alternative to bankruptcy that lets you pay back debts over an agreed period of time). This type of credit information is kept on your report for six years.

Criminal records

If you have a criminal record you will have to declare it, if asked, for a set number of years following your conviction. Expect your landlord to ask you, because in many cases it would invalidate their insurance policy on the property if they did not.

A landlord or letting agent will definitely want to see the following information:

- The basics: name, date of birth and nationality
- Proof that you have the right to be in the country
- References from previous landlords – and potentially somebody else who knows you for a character reference (the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) will, in some cases, provide proof or references. Bear in mind, you will probably have to sign a form from the letting agent allowing the DIO to release information about you).
- Proof of current address (e.g. bank statement or utility bill)
- Details of where you have lived over the last three years
- Details of your income / employment (e.g. payslips).
Chapter 3 - Renting

How renting works

Finding a property

There are lots of places to seek out your future home:

- **Online** – websites like Primelocation.com, Rightmove.co.uk and Zoopla.co.uk
- **Social media** – sites like Facebook and Gumtree
- **Local newspapers and small ads**
- **Letting or property management agents**
- **Your local authority’s housing register** – Even if you don’t live in an area, you can apply to the council’s register if you are serving or left up to five years ago. To apply for social housing in Northern Ireland, you will need to contact the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (www.nihe.gov.uk).

When you view a property, don’t skimp on the opportunity to properly ‘vet’ it because you’ll be renting it ‘as seen’. Make sure you ask as many questions as possible, for instance:

- Exactly what’s included in your monthly rent (for example, any bills?)
- What fees will be charged if you go ahead (most landlords and letting agents charge for carrying out an inventory at the start and end of a tenancy, for example)?
- What are the council tax and utilities bills likely to be?
- Will the property be cleaned (and any repairs completed) prior to moving in?
- Are there any shared costs that might be incurred at a later date (cleaning of communal areas, for example)?

Your landlords’ responsibilities

Your landlord has legal obligations towards you as a tenant and should show you the following documents:

**Gas safety certificate**

If there are any gas appliances in the property, the landlord has to have an annual gas safety check, which is carried out by a Gas Safe registered engineer. The gas safety certificate confirms the checks have been carried out.

**Record of electrical safety inspections**

Under the law, your landlord has a duty to keep any electrics in proper working order, and to ensure that any electrical equipment supplied with the property is safe. Ask the landlord or letting agent when any checks were last carried out and if they have an Electrical Installation Condition Report, which outlines what was inspected and tested, and whether any action was required.

**Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)**

An EPC rates a property’s energy efficiency so you have an idea of how much energy it uses and your likely energy costs.

**Fire safety**

Your landlord is also responsible for managing and maintaining the fire safety systems in your home – but it’s a good idea to make your own checks as well.
How renting works, continued

Moving in

Before you move in, you’ll be asked to sign a tenancy agreement, pay your deposit and rent in advance, and conduct an inventory.

A tenancy agreement is a contract between you and your landlord that outlines the rental rights and responsibilities of both parties. Most tenancy agreements are based on an Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST) and run for six or 12 months. When the fixed term ends, you don’t have to renew the tenancy agreement but can continue on a rolling month-on-month basis (or week-on-week basis, depending on how often you pay rent). This is called a periodic tenancy.

Joint tenancies

A joint tenancy agreement means that other people you live with share the rights and responsibilities with you. You have a separate tenancy if you signed individual agreements. Your rights differ depending on which type of contract you have. If one person in a joint tenancy doesn’t pay their rent, the others will be liable to pay it for them.

Tenancy deposit protection schemes

Landlords have to register their tenants’ deposits with a government-approved tenancy deposit protection scheme within 30 days of receiving it. This ensures that you get your deposit back at the end of the tenancy – assuming you have met the terms of your tenancy agreement, not damaged the property and paid your rent and bills while living there.

The inventory

This outlines what fittings, furnishings and appliances are provided as part of the rental agreement. It should also describe how clean the property is, as you’ll be expected to leave it the same way when you move out. Your landlord or letting agent doesn’t have to supply you with an inventory (except in Northern Ireland). If they don’t, record one of your own, so that you have signed evidence of the state of the property and its belongings (make sure you send a copy of it to your landlord). Do not sign the inventory if there is something listed that’s not present in the property.

Moving out

If you want to move, you can’t just pay your last month’s rent, pack your bags and pop your keys through the door. This is called ‘abandonment’ and your landlord is within his or her rights to continue charging you rent.

If your tenancy is an AST, you’ll need to give your landlord written notice up to two months beforehand (in Northern Ireland, it’s one month) if you want to move out on the date the fixed term ends.

You should avoid using your deposit to pay your last month’s rent, especially if you’re unlikely to receive it back in full (perhaps due to any accidental damage), as your landlord could take you to court for unpaid rent. If you have an AST and your deposit has been protected, the deposit has to be given back to you within 10 days of the tenancy ending.

If you’re deployed on tour

As a tenant, you’re expected to live in the property. So you should always let your landlord or letting agent know if you’re going to be on deployment and away from the property for a long period of time. You should also continue paying rent while you’re on tour, otherwise your landlord could evict you.
Chapter 3 - Renting

Short-term rental options when returning to civilian life

Before you leave, the Joint Service Housing Advice Office (JSHAO) will provide you (and your dependants) with advice, information and in some cases, practical help to find suitable accommodation.

If you are living in service accommodation, six months before you leave you’ll be given a Certificate of Cessation of Entitlement to Occupy Service Accommodation. Make sure you hold onto this, as some landlords may ask to see it.

If you have already registered for council housing, you could try applying for housing association properties too (your local authority should be able to help). The MOD has also established a referral scheme with housing associations to help provide low-cost, rented accommodation for people coming out of the services. It’s open to single and married service leavers in their last six months of service.

You could also apply for housing through Haig Homes, a housing association that provides rented housing for people who have served in the armed forces. If you are single, you can get help from the Single Persons Accommodation Centre for the Ex Services (SPACES). Contact them within six months of leaving the armed forces to get help with finding accommodation, otherwise they can only offer you advice. There are a number of charities for ex-service people that might be able to help too – see Chapter 6.
Introduction
People in the armed forces are less likely to own a home than the rest of the population; but serving shouldn’t mean you have any less opportunity to do so, especially when there are schemes available to help you get onto the housing ladder. This chapter outlines how the home buying process works and the housing options available to you as a member of the armed forces.
Chapter 4 - Buying a home

Can buying work for you?

Buying your own home gives you somewhere to call your own and the freedom to keep it the way you like; you’re not answerable to a landlord or a Commanding Officer.

However, it is a big financial commitment – probably the biggest you’ll ever make in your life – so it’s important to do your research first and know what your options are.

How much can you afford?

Before you can start your property hunt, you need to know how much you can afford to spend. Unless you’re buying a property outright, buying a home will incur upfront costs (such as a deposit, stamp duty and solicitor fees) and regular ongoing costs (like mortgage payments and insurance).

If you haven’t had to calculate a budget before, now is the time to look at what your incomings and outgoings are on a monthly basis – see Chapter 7 for where to find some budgeting advice.

Deposit

You usually need a deposit of at least 5% of the total value. Generally, the larger the deposit you have, the lower the interest rate you’ll pay on your mortgage, so try to save as much as you can before you start.

Forces Help to Buy scheme

In April 2014, the Government introduced the Forces Help to Buy (FHTB) scheme. This allows service men and women to borrow an interest-free advance of up to 50% of their salary (to a limit of £25,000), which they can use towards their deposit. This is then paid back over ten years through their monthly salary.

The scheme is running for three years, and is intended to help more serving men and women buy their first home or buy a new home if they are assigned elsewhere. The FHTB amount is also available for extending existing homes due to a change in circumstances. Any serving member of the regular Armed Forces is eligible for FHTB providing they meet certain criteria. Royal Navy or Royal Marines personnel must have been accepted onto trained strength. Army and RAF personnel must have completed two years’ service from the date of enlistment and be on the trained strength, and have at least six months left to serve.

How many members of the armed forces own their own home?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Navy</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Marines</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Air Force</td>
<td>55%</td>
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Source: Moneyforce
Can buying work for you?, continued

The scheme isn’t open to those who, within the last 12 months, have owned a home that was within 50 miles of the home they plan to buy, unless there are extenuating medical and family circumstances. It also can’t be used to pay off an existing mortgage, and if you use the scheme, you’ll be expected to live in your new home unless you’re assigned elsewhere.

If you have already taken part in the Long Service Advance of Pay (LSAP) scheme – giving you a tax-free advance of up to £8,500 to help you onto the property ladder – you can apply to extend the amount to the FHTB limit if you are moving home and are eligible under the new rules. If you do this, the outstanding amount on your LSAP advance will be consolidated into the FHTB scheme. LSAP has been suspended to new applicants while the FHTB scheme is in operation.

Mortgage

The remainder of your home purchase is covered by a mortgage: this is a loan of money towards the price of the property. A mortgage has two parts – the amount borrowed (the ‘capital’) and the ‘interest’ that is charged until the full amount is paid back. You have a fixed period of time to pay the mortgage back. This can be up to 40 years, but is usually around 25 years. It’s a legal agreement, so if you can’t keep up with the agreed repayments, your home could be repossessed (taken) by the mortgage lender.

Most mortgages are repayment (capital and interest), which means that each month you pay off part of the ‘capital’ (amount borrowed), as well as interest, so that everything has been fully paid off by the end of the agreed term. On an interest-only mortgage, you only pay the interest on what you have borrowed each month, but this means that at the end of the agreed ‘mortgage term’ you still owe the whole amount that you borrowed. Be aware though, that the availability of interest-only mortgages is now quite limited.

The interest on your mortgage can be calculated in one of several ways. With fixed-rate mortgages, the rate of interest is fixed until a set date (such as five years), so your monthly payments stay the same during this period. On a variable rate mortgage, the amount of interest that you pay can move up or down if your lender changes their interest rates. A tracker mortgage is similar, but the rate is always a set amount more or less than the rate set by the Bank of England. When the Bank of England changes its base rate, your interest rate changes too.

When choosing a mortgage, don’t just look at the interest rate. Also consider the reputation, stability and security of the lender as well as the mortgage features, and all other mortgage costs (including fees) that you pay upfront. These fees may affect which mortgage represents the best value for you.

You can get advice or help in finding a mortgage from a mortgage adviser, broker, lender or Independent Financial Adviser (IFA).

How much can you borrow?

It depends on your personal circumstances and the lender. They’ll decide how much they are willing to lend by looking at your income – or a joint income if you are buying with someone else – and your outgoings, to assess how much you can borrow.

Your credit score

Lenders will carry out an assessment called ‘credit scoring’ to decide whether to lend you money or not. This will be similar to the credit checks a landlord or letting agent might use. Most financial services companies will look for three years’ UK address history when performing credit checks. As mentioned in Chapter 3, there are ways to maintain a UK address and make sure you have done everything else that you can to improve your credit worthiness, for example by registering to vote.
Other costs to consider

Buying a home will incur some additional one-off costs, so make sure you have put aside some extra money for these:

- Land Registry fees: the amount will vary depending on the value of the property
- Solicitors’ fees: a solicitor is needed to assist in the legal aspects of moving home, such as transferring the legal title of a property from one person to another (this is known as 'conveyancing'). Always ask for a quote before agreeing to work with them
- Searches: relating to the property you’re buying and usually carried out by your solicitor
- Valuation costs: this is a charge by the lender to carry out an inspection on the property to make sure it’s suitable for what they are lending you
- Survey: this is an inspection of the property that is more detailed than the valuation. The cost depends on how detailed you want the Surveyor’s Report to be – always ask for a quote and shop around
- Stamp duty: this is a tax from the Government on houses worth over £125,000 and can be anything from 1% to 15%, depending on the value of the property
- Mortgage arrangement or booking fee: this is a charge you pay the lender for setting up the agreement, or arranging the mortgage
- Removals costs – shop around for a quote or do it yourself
- Furnishing your property if it’s your first home.

Choosing a property

Think carefully about where to buy and what you plan to do with the property (e.g. live in it or rent it out) because your military career may move you around the country, or even the world. It could also affect what mortgage you can get and any affordable housing schemes you can use.

When you’ve decided on these crucial factors, there are lots of places to seek out your home:

- Estate agents
- Online property sites, such as www.rightmove.co.uk, www.primelocation.com or www.zoopla.co.uk
- ‘FOR SALE’ boards in the area you are interested in
- House building companies building in the area
- Auctions.

Remember to check if the property is freehold or leasehold. Freehold means that the sale includes the property and the land on which the property is built. Leasehold means that the sale does not include the land; instead you pay ground rent to the owner of the land (the freeholder) and you might also have to pay a service charge (for maintaining communal areas, such as hallways and gardens, for example). If you’re in Scotland, the vast majority of houses are freehold.
Help with home ownership

There are a number of affordable home ownership schemes that members of the forces (or ex-members) can access. Depending where you live, your local authority might give you priority status as a member of the forces in applying for these.

Schemes available across the UK

Help to Buy: mortgage guarantee

This scheme is open to both first-time buyers and home movers, and can be used for purchasing new builds or older homes. The government gives a guarantee to your mortgage provider for the loan, so you don’t need a large deposit. The property must be worth £600,000 or less, and mustn’t be a shared ownership or shared equity purchase, or rented out afterwards.

Schemes in England

Help to Buy: equity loans

This scheme helps you to buy a new-build home worth up to £600,000, whether you’re a first-time buyer or already own a home. You need to have a minimum deposit of 5% of the property price, and the government will give you an ‘equity loan’ up to a further 20% of the price. You’ll need a mortgage to pay for the remainder of the purchase.

The ‘equity loan’ is delivered on behalf of the Government through the Homes and Communities Agency, and is only available from house builders registered to offer the scheme. You will have to be assessed and approved for the scheme through your local HomeBuy agent – see Chapter 7 for how to find your nearest agent.

After you have owned the home for six years, you’ll start to pay loan fees in addition to your payments on the mortgage. These start at 1.75% of the loan’s value. If you want to repay the equity loan, you can make a part repayment (a minimum of 10%) or pay it back in full. Otherwise you pay it back when you sell the property or your mortgage term ends, and it’ll always be for the same percentage (e.g. 20%), regardless of whether the property’s value has gone up or down.

Shared ownership schemes

Shared ownership schemes are provided through housing associations. You buy a share of your home (between 25% and 75% of the home’s value) and

As of October 2013, 780 military households had either bought or reserved a new home through FirstBuy and its successor Help to Buy: equity loan².

Help with home ownership, continued

can use a mortgage to help. You then pay rent on the remaining share. You need to be a first-time buyer and currently renting a council or housing association property to buy a home with these schemes, and you can’t have an annual household income of more than £60,000. Once you’re in your home, you can increase the share you own – this is called ‘staircasing’ – but the cost will depend on how much your property’s worth at that time.

**Intermediate Rent**

This scheme enables you to buy a new-build property at 80% (or less) of current market rents, through a number of housing associations. Under some circumstances, there is the option to buy a share of the property through another HomeBuy scheme at a later date. Your local Help to Buy Agent can give details on this scheme and the three below – see Chapter 7.

**Rent to HomeBuy**

Under this scheme, commonly referred to as ‘try before you buy’, you rent a new build home provided by a housing association at a rate that is normally 80% of the current market rate. Depending on the development, you may then have the option to convert the rental agreement into shared ownership.

**Social HomeBuy**

If you’re living in social housing, this scheme helps you buy your current home at a discount either outright or on a part-buy/part-rent basis. You can only take part if your landlord is in the scheme.

**NewBuy**

This scheme enables you to buy a new build, worth £500,000 or less, with a deposit of only 5% of the purchase price. It needs to be your main home and can’t be used as part of a shared ownership scheme.

**Schemes in Wales**

**Help to Buy: shared equity loan**

The Welsh Government runs a similar scheme to the English equivalent, outlined above. The main differences are that the property price must be £300,000 or less, and the equity loan is funded by the Welsh Government and delivered by Help to Buy (Wales) Limited.
Chapter 4 - Buying a home

Help with home ownership, continued

Homebuy
This is an affordable housing scheme run by the Welsh Government that offers support to families who would otherwise need social housing. Typically, the government provides a loan (30% to 50%) to help purchase the property, and the loan can be repaid at any time.

Homes Within Reach scheme
This is a shared equity scheme for first-time buyers, which is operated by some housing associations in South Wales. The housing association provides a loan for a percentage of the property price and you can increase your equity share at any point.

Schemes in Scotland

Help to Buy (Scotland) scheme
This is similar to the English Help to Buy scheme, with the government taking an equity stake of up to 20% of the value of the property. It must be a new build home, worth no more than £400,000, and you need to have a deposit of at least 5% and use a mortgage for the remainder. As with the English scheme, it has to be your only home and you can’t let out the property (or a previous home to purchase this one). The equity stake can be repaid at any time.

Low cost initiative for first-time buyers (LIFT)
If you are currently serving or have left the armed forces within the past 24 months, you may be able to get priority access to the shared equity schemes for first-time buyers. In each instance, the Scottish Government owns a minority portion of the property, and you use a mortgage to fund the portion you own:

- New Supply Shared Equity scheme is for purchasing a new build property from a housing association or developer
- New Supply Shared Equity with Developers scheme is for purchasing a new build property from a developer
- Open Market Shared Equity scheme is for purchasing a property on the open market.

Shared ownership
This scheme is available to anybody and priority may be given to members of the forces or those who left within the past two years. The scheme allows you to buy a 25%, 50% or 75% share in a house or flat owned by a housing association. You’ll also need to pay an occupancy charge to the housing association on the amount (this isn’t the case with LIFT schemes).

MI New Home scheme
This is a private sector scheme for anyone wanting to buy a home with a deposit of less than 10%. The Scottish Government provides a guarantee to lenders for a new build home, up to the value of £250,000.

Schemes in Northern Ireland

Co-ownership
This is a government scheme that allows buyers to take a ‘share’ in a property, between 50 and 90%, depending on what they can afford. There is a cap on the value of the properties qualifying for the scheme (this changes every year), and you can increase the amount you own at any time.

- New Supply Shared Equity scheme is for purchasing new build properties from a housing association or developer
- New Supply Shared Equity with Developers scheme is for purchasing a new build property from a developer
- Open Market Shared Equity scheme is for purchasing a property on the open market.

Shared ownership
This scheme is available to anybody and priority may be given to members of the forces or those who left within the past two years. The scheme allows you to buy a 25%, 50% or 75% share in a house or flat owned by a housing association. You’ll also need to pay an occupancy charge to the housing association on the amount (this isn’t the case with LIFT schemes).

MI New Home scheme
This is a private sector scheme for anyone wanting to buy a home with a deposit of less than 10%. The Scottish Government provides a guarantee to lenders for a new build home, up to the value of £250,000.

Be aware that eligibility for some home ownership schemes may not be possible in conjunction with the Forces Help to Buy scheme (see page 18), so always check first.
Chapter 4 - Buying a home

The home-buying process in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Putting in an offer

Once you’ve found a home you like, it’s time to put in an offer to the seller or estate agent. If you’re a first-time buyer, they may ask for proof that you can get a mortgage (you can get an ‘agreement in principle’ from your mortgage provider). Then when your offer is accepted, the home-buying process begins...

The paperwork

You’ll need to find a solicitor who deals in home purchases – shop around for quotes and recommendations – and they’ll liaise with the seller’s solicitor to get all the paperwork in order. Depending on the property, this can be quite a time-consuming process (allow four to six weeks minimum).

You’ll also need to put in your main application for the mortgage at this point. Your mortgage provider will want to carry out a valuation on the property to check it is worth the asking price. You may also need to arrange a survey, depending on the age and condition of the property. If it’s a new build, it will have a National House Building Council (NHBC) certificate and a 10-year guarantee. There are different types of survey – from the basic homebuyers’ report to a full structural survey – but the aim is to find out if any faults or problems are likely to occur with the property.
Chapter 4 - Buying a home

The home-buying process, continued

Exchange and completion
When you have your mortgage offer in place and your solicitor has all the reports, then it’s time to sign the contract. Once the seller has signed theirs too, the solicitors will swap or ‘exchange’ them. You’ll need to transfer your deposit over to your solicitor at this point (or before, if you’re completing on the same day) and they’ll transfer it to the seller’s solicitor ahead of completion. Completion happens when all monies are transferred to the seller’s solicitor (mortgage and deposit), and you’ll be able to pick up the keys to your new home at this point.

Insurance
You’ll need buildings insurance in place from the day you exchange contracts, as the property then becomes your responsibility.

The home-buying process in Scotland
The property market in Scotland works differently to elsewhere in the UK. If you want to buy a house here, it is necessary to use a Scottish solicitor. Many are estate agents as well, so you may find a property through one too.
The home-buying process, continued

Selling your home

If you are joining the armed forces and own a home, you may decide to sell your property and live in service accommodation. If you are thinking of renting out your home instead, see Chapter 5.

To sell your house, you need to get it valued and decide how you want to sell it. Most people sell their property through an estate agent, but you can also use online selling sites or sell direct to somebody you know (this will save you estate agent fees, which can be anything from 0.5% upwards of the agreed sale price). You’ll need to have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) for the property, if you don’t have one that’s less than 10 years old.

Depending on market demand and your timescales, you don’t need to accept the first offer on your home. When you do accept an offer, you’ll need to appoint a solicitor to manage the sale. One of the things your solicitor will do is contact your mortgage provider (if you have one) to find out the balance that you owe on the mortgage. This will be repaid when you complete.

Selling fees to consider:

- Estate agent fees (if you use one)
- Solicitor costs
- Any removal or storage costs for your furniture
- Early redemption charges if you’re repaying your mortgage early.

Note: The process works slightly differently in Scotland. See page 25 for the key differences.

Read more detailed guidance on home buying in our First-time Buyers’ Guide (it also has a handy budget template):

http://www.nationwide.co.uk/guides/buying-and-owning-a-property/first-time-buyers/understanding-mortgages-the-basics

Not a first-time buyer?
Read our Home Buyers’ Guide:

http://www.nationwide.co.uk/guides/buying-and-owning-a-property/home-buyers-guide

For selling tips, read our Home Selling Guide:

http://www.nationwide.co.uk/guides/buying-and-owning-a-property/home-selling-guide
Introduction

Whether you become a landlord out of choice or circumstance, you should be aware of what it involves. Anybody can explore supplementing their income through letting out a property – and this may make sense for you if you own a home and are posted elsewhere – but being a landlord brings with it certain risks and responsibilities. This chapter explains what these are and how letting works. It also covers what to do if you’re a landlord already and want to move back into a home you’ve been renting out while relocated elsewhere.
Can you rent out your property?

If you’re a homeowner and want to let out your home while you’re posted to a different location, you can usually do so, provided you follow the necessary steps.

If you have a mortgage, the first thing you should do is contact your mortgage provider to tell them about the change in your circumstances. They may allow you to stay on your current mortgage deal if your relocation is temporary; or request you switch to a Buy to Let mortgage if your plans are long term. If you move to a Buy to Let mortgage, you may have to pay some charges – although some providers waive these for members of the armed forces.

In both instances, your mortgage provider will probably want you to sign a ‘consent to let’ or ‘permission to let’ form and return this to them. If you fail to tell your mortgage provider about the change in circumstances, you could be in breach of your mortgage conditions. You will also need to get permission from your Commanding Officer if the property was purchased using either the Long Service Advance of Pay (LSAP) or Forces Help to Buy (FHTB) scheme.

You can’t use the Forces Help to Buy (FHTB) scheme to buy a rental property (you should also check the small print on some of the affordable housing schemes to see if the same restrictions apply). But you can buy your home via a FHTB loan and then subsequently let it out if posted elsewhere.

Buy to Let mortgages

A Buy to Let mortgage is a loan from a financial provider to cover the price of a property. However, there are some key differences to a mortgage you take out on your own home:

- You must let the property out (although you don’t need to have tenants before securing the mortgage)
- Your affordability is based on the rent that the property can realistically earn, not your income, with allowances made for ‘void periods’ (when you don’t have any tenants).

As with any mortgage, make sure you shop around for a Buy to Let mortgage that meets your requirements. You can speak to a financial provider direct, a specialist Buy to Let mortgage broker or an independent financial adviser (IFA).
What to consider if you become a landlord

If you rent out your home, you will be able to earn money from any rental income you receive and potentially capital growth from the value of your property increasing over time (particularly if you are on a repayment mortgage).

The type of tenant you are likely to attract will depend on the type of property you have. For instance, large four bedroom detached properties are likely to attract families, while two bedroom apartments in urban locations are likely to attract singles and couples.

But letting can be risky: you could encounter problem tenants, unplanned void periods, rising mortgage interest rates, rents that go up and down, and a fall in the value of your property. For potentially the first time, you will also have a tax bill to pay on the money that you earn from your home too.

Your responsibilities – and potential costs

As a landlord, you have certain obligations and responsibilities towards your tenants, mostly regarding their health and safety. Some of these will incur additional costs, so be aware of this:

- You will need to have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) before you can rent out a property
- You should give your tenants a tenancy agreement and there is a legal requirement to protect their deposit – this might involve a solicitor’s or letting agent’s services
- You will probably want to take out landlords’ home insurance. If you have a mortgage on the property, most lenders insist you have buildings insurance
- You’ll need to have a gas safety check carried out by a Gas Safe registered engineer and provide the tenants with the gas safety certificate
- You’ll have to make sure the electrics and any appliances you provide are safe; that any fittings or furnishings meet fire regulations, and provide tenants with a working smoke alarm.
- You’ll be required to maintain the property and carry out any repairs for your tenants
- You may have letting agent fees to consider if you arrange for a letting agent to manage the property.

It’s a good idea to make sure you put aside some regular savings to cover any void periods or major repair bills.
Chapter 5 - Becoming a landlord

What to consider if you become a landlord, continued

Taxation

As a landlord, you may incur tax on any earnings you make from your rental income (income tax), and on any profit you make from the eventual sale of the property (capital gains tax).

Taxation of rental income: You only pay income tax on any profit you make from your rental income, so this is after you’ve paid for things like insurance, cleaning, letting agent fees and even your mortgage interest. If you are posted abroad for more than six months, you may be able to reduce the amount of tax you owe due to rental income by using the Non-Resident Landlord (NRL) scheme.

Taxation of property sale: Capital gains tax is a tax charged on any profit you make when you sell your rental property. It only applies if a profit is made on the sale. You can also claim an exemption from capital gains tax – known as Private Residence Relief – if the property has been your main residence and has been let for less than three years.

Find out more at www.hmrc.gov.uk and remember, it is always a good idea to seek independent tax advice on your own circumstances.
Being a landlord while serving in the forces

Your tenants will need to have somebody they can contact in the event of any problems or emergencies.

If you have relocated to another part of the country (or worldwide), you should appoint somebody nearby to be your tenant’s day-to-day contact. This could be somebody you know – a family member, for example – or you can hire a letting agent to take care of it for you.

There are lots of different types of letting agents covering everything from sourcing tenants and collecting rent, to handling day-to-day property concerns and giving tenants notice. So shop around for one that suits your requirements, compare fees and contract terms, and seek out good recommendations.

You can expect to pay a fee of 10% to 20% of your rental income for a letting agent.
Moving back into a property you have previously rented

If you are returning from a posting or leaving the armed forces and wish to move into your previous home permanently, you need to follow some set procedures.

The first thing to do is speak to your mortgage provider. It isn’t illegal to move back into your rental property, but you may be in breach of your mortgage terms, especially if you have switched to a Buy to Let mortgage. Be aware of any early repayment charges that you may incur from switching your mortgage before the end of its term (although some lenders may waive these for members of the military).

If you have tenants, you will have to go through the proper steps to serve notice. Your letting agent – if you have one – will be able to do this for you, but essentially you need to serve notice as outlined in your tenancy agreement and return your tenants’ deposit(s) in the correct time period.
Selling your rental property

If you want to sell a property you’ve been renting out and have an interest-only Buy to Let mortgage, you will need to make sure that the mortgage is repaid from the sale price. Otherwise you will be liable for the difference.

If you choose to sell up when the property is vacant, this will widen its appeal. But it may mean you have a void period in-between the tenant(s) moving out and completion of the property sale, so you’ll need to budget for this.

The main thing to remember when you sell a rental property is that you will have to pay capital gains tax on any profit you make on the sale (unless you can claim Private Residence Relief, see page 30). As with any property sale, there are also other costs to consider, like solicitor costs and estate agent fees.

For more detailed information on being a landlord, read The Landlords’ Guide: [www.nationwide.co.uk/guides/buying-and-owning-a-property/becoming-a-landlord/landlord-options](http://www.nationwide.co.uk/guides/buying-and-owning-a-property/becoming-a-landlord/landlord-options)
Preparing for the unexpected

Introduction
Life can take unexpected twists and turns, but there are some things you can do to prepare for whatever may come your way. This chapter has tips for pre-empting any problems you may encounter during your military career or on entering civilian life. You’ll also find some useful information on housing organisations that you can turn to for support and assistance at any difficult stage.
Chapter 6 - Preparing for the unexpected

Housing options on leaving the armed forces

Whatever your stage of military career, when you make the transition to civilian life you’ll discover welfare and housing support is still available to you, if you need it.

If you are returning from overseas, you can request to spend your last six months of service within the UK, so that you can start looking for somewhere to live before you leave the forces.

You should make every effort to attend any housing briefings available to you as part of your end of service or retirement package, as these offer useful information. You should also consult the Joint Service Housing Advice Office (JSHAO), as they will give advice and, where possible, assist in placing you (and any dependants) into suitable accommodation prior to the end of your service.

If you are living in service accommodation, you will usually be given 93 days’ notice to leave. Make sure you are given your Certificate of Cessation of Entitlement to Occupy, which explains that your time living in service accommodation will be coming to an end. You will need this to show your council if you require help with housing. If you stay beyond this date, you will have to pay additional charges – more aligned to market rental prices – and may eventually be evicted by the Defence Estates if you don’t leave.

If you haven’t found anywhere to live immediately before your final day, you may be eligible to take up temporary housing at the Services Cotswold Centre. There is a small daily charge for the accommodation.

If you need help in finding rental accommodation, find out your options in Chapter 3. If you are going to use any of your retirement package to buy a property, see Chapter 4 for affordable housing schemes available to ex-military.

1Find out more at [http://england.shelter.org.uk/get_advice/armed_forces_and_ex-services/services_accommodation](http://england.shelter.org.uk/get_advice/armed_forces_and_ex-services/services_accommodation)

If you are made redundant

The level of support and compensation package you receive will depend on your length of service and terms of employment, but your housing options will be similar to those leaving the forces at the end of service. So you can stay in service accommodation for 93 days and have the same rights in accessing council housing or affordable housing schemes, for example.
Support in managing mortgage payments

It’s good practice to put aside some savings each month to help pre-empt any problems with paying your mortgage or other bills in the future.

Should you start falling behind on payments, one of the worst things you can do is ignore the problem. You should talk to your lender straight away, as they may be able to help you get on top of payments by:

- Giving you a payment holiday
- Accepting reduced payments from you in the short term
- Agreeing to change or lengthen the term of your loan
- Allowing you to add arrears to the total mortgage debt
- Converting a repayment mortgages to an interest-only mortgage (see page 19).

Make sure you know how each of these options will influence your future payments, the length of your loan and the overall amount it will cost. Deferring a payment can lead to incurring additional interest, for example.
Support during relationship problems

If you’re married or in a civil partnership and having relationship difficulties while living in Service Family Accommodation (SFA), you may be allowed to move into single living accommodation temporarily for a ‘cooling off period’ and may not be charged for it.

If your relationship eventually breaks down, your partner will have 93 days to leave the family accommodation. If the relationship breaks down due to violence, support and assistance is available from organisations, such as Women’s Aid and Mens Advice Line. See the useful links in Chapter 7 for more information.
Chapter 6 - Preparing for the unexpected

Housing support if you die in service

Should the worst happen and you die in service, there is housing support available for your partner and family.

If you are married or in a civil partnership and living in Service Family Accommodation (SFA), they will be allowed to stay living there for two years (sometimes longer), after which they will have a 93-day notice to vacate period. They may also be entitled to housing benefit to help cover the rental costs, and they will be entitled to some help with relocation or removals costs if they decide to move out within this period, or if they do so during the 93-day notice to vacate period.
**Support in facing homelessness**

If you find yourself without a home, your local authority has a legal duty to provide advice and assistance.

However, the level of support you receive will depend on whether you are considered to be in priority need – and local variations apply. Several charities also give support to members of the armed forces who face homelessness:

- **The Sir Oswald Stoll Foundation** provides housing and support for vulnerable, disabled and homeless ex-Service personnel.
- **Veterans Aid** helps service personnel who find themselves homeless or are likely to become homeless.
- **The British Legion** has short stay accommodation available for single service leavers, which you can use for up to three years.
- **Scottish Veterans Residences** is Scotland’s oldest ex-service charity and works with Scottish Veterans’ Housing Association to support independent living for ex-service men and women and their spouses.
- **SSAFA**, the national armed forces charity, offers homes and housing advice for serving and ex-military personnel.
- **Veterans’ UK** has a helpline number (0808 1914 218) to provide advice on many topics, including housing.
- **The Single Persons Accommodation Centre for the Ex Services (SPACES)** can help single ex-service personnel without a home find accommodation for up to six months after leaving the forces.
- **Housing Options Scotland’s Military Matters** service offers housing advice and support for disabled ex-service personnel and veterans with a disabled family member in Scotland.
chapter 7

Glossary and useful links
Chapter 7 - Glossary and useful links

Glossary

**Buy to Let mortgage**
A mortgage specifically for properties that will be rented out.

**Capital gains tax**
Tax paid on profit from the sale of an asset – in this case, a rental property you own.

**Council tax relief**
The council tax you can claim back while deployed on tour.

**Deposit**
The lump sum you pay upfront for renting or buying a property.

**Energy performance certificate (EPC)**
This rates a property’s energy efficiency.

**Forces Help to Buy scheme**
A scheme introduced in April 2014 that allows service personnel to borrow an interest-free loan of up to 50% of their salary (to a limit of £25,000).

**Freehold**
In a freehold property, the owner has complete ownership of the land and all buildings on that land.

**Gas safety certificate**
A document that confirms gas appliances have been checked in a property.

**Guarantor**
Somebody who will ‘guarantee’ your rent (or mortgage) in the event you can’t make payments or cause any damage to the property (in the case of renting).

**Help to Buy: mortgage guarantee**
A nationwide scheme, available to first time buyers and home movers, for purchasing new builds or older homes. The government gives a guarantee to your mortgage provider for the loan, so you don’t need to have a large deposit.

**Housing benefit**
A payment made out by the government to help with your housing costs. You will need to meet certain criteria to be eligible for this and, if successful, your housing benefit will be rolled into a lump sum with any other benefits you receive under the new system of ‘universal credit’.

**Inventory**
A document outlining what fittings, furnishings and appliances are provided as part of the rental agreement.

**Leasehold**
The owner owns their building (this most commonly applies to a flat) but the common ways, external structure and grounds are owned by a freeholder, and the leaseholder must pay ground rent and service charges towards their maintenance.

**Letting agent**
Somebody who lets the property on your behalf in return for a fee based on a percentage of your rental income. They may simply find tenants for you or deliver a range of property management services.
Glossary, continued

**Long Service Advance of Pay**
This scheme has been suspended for three years (as of April 2014) with the introduction of the Forces Help to Buy scheme.

**Mortgage**
A loan of money towards the price of a property.

**Single Living Accommodation (SLA)**
Accommodation in barracks for single serving personnel.

**Service Family Accommodation (SFA)**
Accommodation for serving personnel who are married, in a civil partnership or have permanent custody of children.

**Staircasing**
This is the name given to the process of increasing the share of a property bought through a shared ownership scheme.

**Stamp duty**
A tax from the Government on houses worth over £125,000 that buyers pay. It can be anything from 1% to 15% of the property price.

**Tenancy agreement**
A contract between a tenant and landlord that outlines the rental rights and responsibilities of both parties.

**Tenancy deposit protection scheme**
The name given to the scheme that protects tenants’ deposits. Landlords must pay a tenant’s deposit into a tenancy deposit protection scheme within 30 days.
Chapter 7 - Glossary and useful links

Useful links

Chapter 2
Details of insurers offering cover for personnel living in Service Family Accommodation (SFA):
http://siiap.org

Budgeting advice while living in service accommodation:
https://www.moneyforce.org.uk/Your-career/Before-you-join-the-Services/What-you-will-have-to-pay-for

Joint Service Housing Advice Office (JSHAO):
https://www.gov.uk/housing-for-service-personnel-and-families

Career Transition Partnership (CTP):
https://www.ctp.org.uk/

Chapter 3
Budget planner:
https://www.moneyforce.org.uk/Budget-Planner

Royal British Legion:
http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/can-we-help/financial-assistance

Check your rights as a tenant:
https://www.gov.uk/private-renting

Chapter 4
If you want to find out how much your monthly payments might be, use Nationwide's mortgage payments calculator:
www.nationwide.co.uk/products/mortgages/our-mortgages/tools-and-calculators#xtab:mortgage-payment-calculator

Forces Help to Buy scheme:
https://www.gov.uk/forces-help-to-buy

Chapter 5
The Association of Residential Letting Agents:
www.arla.co.uk

National Approved Letting Scheme:
http://www.nalscheme.co.uk

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors:
www.rics.org/uk

Shelter has a useful sample inventory form if your landlord doesn't supply one:
http://england.shelter.org.uk/get_advice/paying_for_a_home/tenancy_deposits/making_an_inventory

To register to vote, download a form from:
www.aboutmyvote.co.uk

Haig Housing:
www.haighhousing.org.uk

Advice on benefits (including Council Tax Relief) for members of the forces:
http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/wales/benefits_w/benefits_armed_forces_and_veterans_ew/benefits_and_concessions_for_the_armed_forces_veterans_and_their_families.htm

Find a Help to Buy agent:
http://www.helptobuy.org.uk/equity-loan/find-helptopay-agent

Find an Independent Financial Adviser (IFA):
http://www.unbiased.co.uk

Find a solicitor in England and Wales:
http://solicitors.lawsociety.org.uk

Find a solicitor in Scotland:
http://www.lawscot.org.uk/wcm/lssservices/find_a_solicitor/Core/directory.aspx

Find a solicitor in Northern Ireland:
http://www.lawsoc-ni.org/solicitors-directory/
Chapter 7 - Glossary and useful links

Useful links, continued

National Landlords Association:
http://www.landlords.org.uk

Residential Landlords Association:
http://www.rla.org.uk

Find a Gas Safe engineer:
http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk

Find out about taxation:
www.hmrc.gov.uk

Chapter 6

Advice on homelessness:
http://www.crisis.org.uk

Advice on relationship breakdown in service families:
www.raf-ff.org.uk/family-marriagebreakdown.asp

SSAFA Stepping Stone Homes:
http://www.ssafa.org.uk/how-we-help/housing/stepping-stone-homes/

Women’s Aid:
www.womensaid.org.uk

Men’s Advice Line:
http://mensadvicecentre.org.uk/

Veterans’ Aid:
http://www.veterans-aid.net/

Sir Oswald Stoll Foundation:
http://stoll.org.uk

The British Legion:
http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/

Scottish Veterans Residences:
http://www.syronline.org/

Veterans Scotland:
www.veteransscotland.co.uk

Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA):
http://www.ssafa.org.uk

Housing Options Scotland’s Military Matters service:
www.housingoptionsscotland.org.uk

SPACES:
http://www.spaces.org.uk/spaces/spaces/