



Armed Forces Veterans Information Booklet



How does the Council help Armed Forces Veterans?

The Council is committed to ensuring members of the Armed Forces community do not suffer any disadvantage as a result of their military service. The Council also recognises the sacrifice that members of the Armed Forces community make.

We provide a range of services to residents of Bedford Borough and this leaflet highlights how members of the Armed Forces community can benefit from these services. We also want to highlight what additional services are available to members of the Armed Forces community.

What services does the Council provide?

The Council provides a wide range of services both directly and through key partners, that may be of interest to members of the Armed Forces community.

Housing

The Council provides a wide range of advice and assistance in relation to housing. This includes advice on homelessness, access to social housing, private sector housing and low cost home ownership.

As a member of the Armed Forces community, you may be entitled to additional priority for social housing if you have an urgent housing need. This may mean you are able to secure settled accommodation more quickly than people with similar circumstances to you but who are not members of the Armed Forces community. We can assist you with applying for settled accommodation through the Council's Choice Based Lettings system.

If you are homeless, have a mental health issue or a substance dependency, then the Council may be able to assist you through our supported hostels. If you meet the criteria, we will place you in a Supported Hostel which will help you to work towards independent living. As a member of the Armed Forces community, we can also engage with specialist services to further support you in becoming more independent.

To find out more, or if you wish to get some immediate advice about the accommodation options available to you, contact the Housing Options Team on **01234 718058** or visit the Council's Customer Service Centre.

Benefits

For members of the Armed Forces community, and in particular Veterans, there are a range of benefits to which you may be entitled. Some of these are claimed through the Council and some are claimed through the Job Centre.

We will provide you with advice on benefits that we administer at the Council such as Local Housing Allowance and the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. As well as providing advice, we have given members of the Armed Forces community additional priority in accessing discretionary welfare benefits that we administer.

For further advice on benefits and what is available to members of the Armed Forces community, call the Customer Services Team on **01234 718097** or visit the Customer Service Centre.

For advice on other types of benefits go to gov.uk where there is also access to Universal Jobmatch for people to look for job vacancies and share their CVs.

Transport

The Council has responsibility for co-ordinating public transport in and around the Borough. The Transport Operations Team can provide advice and support on a range of transport related topics including;

- Public transport information e.g. timetables, concessionary schemes
- Individual journey planning
- Information on community transport schemes
- Information on concessionary travel and discounted schemes
- Specialist vehicle hire

The team can be contacted on **01234 228157** or via email at businfo@bedford.gov.uk

Disabled Facilities Grants

If you have been injured or suffer a physical disability due to your service in the Armed Forces, the Council may be able to assist you to live at home by providing aids and adaptations to your property through a Disabled Facilities Grant. This can provide a grant of up to £30,000 to make necessary adjustments to your home to enable you to live safely and as independently as possible.

For more information on aids and adaptations, contact the Occupational Therapy Duty Desk on **01234 276665**.

Adult Services

As a Council we are responsible for providing care services to people who qualify under our eligibility criteria. The role of Bedford Borough Council Adult Services is to advise and support vulnerable people aged 18 years and over who are in need of social care services and risk losing their independence. Where we cannot provide services we can often provide advice and information on alternative services in the community.

A wide range of information leaflets are available from Bedford Borough Council on the care services available. They can be obtained by contacting Bedford Borough Council on the details provided at the end of this leaflet or by visiting the Bedford Borough Council web site: Click on Health and Social Care, then on 'Help for Adults', then on 'Adult Services Leaflets'.

Armed Forces Social Worker

Bedford Borough Council has identified a nominated Social Worker for Armed Forces Veterans.

To contact the Adult Social Care Team call **01234 267422** - or **0300 300 8123** in an emergency and out of hours. Alternatively you can contact the team via e-mail: care@bedford.gov.uk

Available leaflets:

Disabilities

- Help for people with a physical disability
- Specialist assistance for people with physical disabilities
- Help for people who are deaf or hard of hearing
- Help for people with a visual impairment
- Bedford Independent Living Team
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Help for Older People
- Your guide to Bedford Borough Council's Re-enablement Team
- Returning you home safely
- Shared Lives Bedfordshire

Funding Care

- A guide to who qualifies for Adult Services
- Direct Payments
- Paying for Care - Non residential care services
- Paying for Care
- Paying for Care - residential and nursing care deferred payment scheme
- A Guide to Self - Funding
- Personalisation - It's All About Me

Support for Carers

- Support for Carers
- Shared Lives Bedfordshire - a guide for Shared Lives Carers

Bedfordshire Care Directory

The directory provides information on how to get help and support from Adult Social Services for yourself, a family member or friend.

Full details are available on www.bedford.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/help-for-adults/residential-and-nursing-homes/bedfordshire-care-directory.aspx

Safeguarding

- Safeguarding adults from abuse
- Safeguarding adults

Travel

- Disabled persons car parking and toilet facilities in and around Bedford
- Blue Badges

General Information

- Your right to see your record
- Comment, Compliment, Complaint

Discount Schemes

Bedford Borough Council has recently linked with 'Rewards for Forces' to encourage local services to offer a discount to members of the Armed Forces and Veterans. Some local businesses have joined the scheme and 'Rewards for Forces' already provide a range of national discounts and benefits for members of the Armed Forces and Veterans.

For more information, and to join the scheme, go to www.rewardsforforces.co.uk

If you, or someone that you know, provides a local public service and could offer a discount to members of the Armed Forces and Veterans, we would like to invite you/them to take part in the scheme.

Simply e-mail business details and details of the discount/offer to feedback@rewardsforforces.co.uk or telephone **01604 647770**.

There are a number of national discount schemes that members of the Armed Forces community are able to access. These include Ministry of Defence and Forces Discount schemes which allow members of the Armed Forces, their families and Veterans to make savings both online and on the high street. The following are links to the websites for each service.

www.defencediscountservice.co.uk

www.forcesdiscount.com

www.forcesfinancial.com

www.ticketsfortroops.org.uk

www.rewardsforforces.co.uk

www.britishforcesdiscounts.co.uk

Health

All Armed Forces Veterans are entitled to priority access to NHS hospital care for any condition as long as it's related to their service, regardless of whether or not they receive a war pension.

People leaving the Armed Forces are given a summary of their medical records, which they are advised to give to their new GP when they register. Veterans are encouraged to tell their GP about their Veteran status in order to benefit from priority treatment.

A minority of people leaving the Armed Forces need access to mental health services, while others might require it later in civilian life. Detailed information on priority services and mental health services can be found by talking with your GP or on the NHS website; www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Militaryhealthcare/Veteranshealthcare/Pages/veterans.aspx

Forces Information

The Council works closely with local and national Armed Forces charities to ensure that members of the Armed Forces community are given the support they need. The following services are provided mainly by volunteers and can help to provide information, advice and contact details to other appropriate services:

Army Welfare Service

The Army Welfare Service (AWS), is a professional and confidential welfare support service for servicemen and women and their families, wherever they are located. The service gives confidential support on relationship difficulties, bereavement, parenting skills, special needs, housing, post divorce, CSA concerns, child care, benefits information and medical concerns.

AWS can be contacted at:

Tel: **01980 615975** or **0800 032 6443**

Email: AWS-Welfareinformationservice@mod.uk

Website: www.army.mod.uk/welfare-support

Big White Wall

Big White Wall is a free online, early intervention service for those serving personnel, Veterans and their families in psychological distress.

They can be contacted at:

Tel: **020 7060 1677**

General enquiries: theteam@bigwhitewall.com

Website: www.bigwhitewall.com

Blind Veterans UK

Blind Veterans UK is a national charity which provides support for blind and vision impaired Armed Forces and National Service Veterans. Support is lifelong and includes welfare support, rehabilitation, training, residential and respite care.

They can be contacted at:

Blind Veterans UK

Tel: **0800 389 7979**

Website: www.blindveterans.org.uk

Bold Moves

Bold Moves works with Veterans in prison and on Community Orders with the Probation Service or who are leaving custody. They help individuals access a range of services including accommodation, employment, managing physical and mental health, accessing funds for training opportunities and family support, specifically where access to children is difficult after divorce and separation.

Bold Moves recognises that the most vulnerable time for anyone leaving custody is the time immediately after release and therefore supports Veterans on release and into the community license period.

They provide support through 1-1 or group mentoring, support with appointments, accessing counselling, help with identifying employment options, support with engaging with mental health professionals and

exploring why those accessing the service have entered the Justice System in Prison or on Probation.

Further information can be found at:

Website: www.boldmoves.co.uk/family-justice-services

Combat Stress

Combat Stress is the UK's leading charity that specialises in the treatment and support of British Armed Forces Veterans who have mental health problems. Their treatment and support services are always free of charge.

They can be contacted at:

Regional Operations Manager – South

Tel: **01372 587006**

Website: www.combatstress.org.uk

Eastern Veterans Advisory and Pensions Committee

The Service Personnel & Veterans Agency (SPVA) provides pay, pension and support services to both military personnel and the Veteran community.

They can be contacted at:

Call free on the Veterans-UK Helpline **0800 169 2277**

Website: www.veterans-uk.info

Royal British Legion (RBL)

The Royal British Legion is the UK's leading service charity. They provide practical care, advice and support to serving members of the Armed Forces, Veterans of all ages and their families.

For more information please contact:

Membership Support Officer Bedfordshire

Tel: **07789 653901**

E-mail: sturton@britishlegion.org.uk

Twitter: [@PoppyLegion](https://twitter.com/PoppyLegion)

Facebook: Poppy Legion

Website: www.britishlegion.org.uk

RBL Contact Centre:

Tel: **0808 802 8080** (freephone)

Open 8am to 8pm, 7 days a week

Royal Signals Benevolent Fund

The Royal Signals Benevolent Fund provides comfort and relief to Retired, Regular and Reserve Signallers and their dependants, who are in need or experiencing hardship or distress. They foster comradeship and morale within the Corps family serving and retired.

All Retired, Regular and Reserve of the Corps and past members of the A.T.S and WRAC attached to the Corps are eligible to become Life Members of the Association.

For more information go to <http://royalsignals.org/rsbf/welfare-support>

SSAFA, The Armed Forces Charity

SSAFA provides lifelong help to military and ex-military personnel and their dependent family members whenever they need assistance of any kind. Eligibility for SSAFA help begins after one day's service and continues for the rest of their lives. All forms of service create eligibility for SSAFA help, including National Service and the Reserve, although the latter may have a different qualifying period. The lifetime eligibility for assistance continues for widows and widowers, divorcees who have not remarried, those separated from established partnerships and for dependent children.

SSAFA's Bedfordshire Branch is keen to help anyone in need and can be contacted at:

Tel: **0800 500 3063**

Email: Bedfordshire@ssafa.org.uk

Post: PO Box 390, Hitchin, SG5 9ER

Twitter: @SSAFA

Facebook: facebook.com/ssafafb

Website: www.ssafa.org.uk

The Veterans Charity

The Veterans Charity provides support to anyone who has served within a British military unit for at least one day. They focus on providing 'modest provisions' such as clothing, furniture, household goods and even food. Their aims are to give Veterans of all generations a 'red-tape free' process to be able to obtain the simple items that can often take so long to get.

They can be contacted at:

St Peter's House, 6-8 High Street, Iver, Bucks, SL0 5NG

Tel: 08447 365265

Email: info@veteranscharity.org.uk

Twitter: @veteranscharity

Facebook: www.facebook.com/theveteranscharity

Website: www.veteranscharity.org.uk

The Veterans Gateway

A first point of contact for Veterans and their families to access information, advice and support on a range of issues including healthcare, housing, finance and employment.

A team of advisors, many of whom are Veterans themselves, work with people on a one-to-one basis, connecting them with the right support as soon as possible. They are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Alternatively, the Self-Help service enables people to find information for themselves. This includes advice from a range of organisations covering issues from employment, finances and housing, to independent living, mental wellbeing, physical health, and families and communities.

For more information go to: www.veteransgateway.org.uk
or call 0808 802 1212

Veterans UK

Veterans UK helps ex-service personnel get appropriate support from government, local authorities, independent bodies and the charity sector. It administers the Armed Forces pension schemes and compensation payments for those injured or bereaved through service, and it also provides welfare support for Veterans through a national Veterans Welfare Service and veterans helpline facility.

They can be contacted at:

Freephone: 0808 1914 218

7:30 am to 6:30 pm Monday to Thursday 7:30 am to 5:00 pm Friday

Email: veterans-uk@mod.uk

Twitter: [@Veterans UK_MOD](https://twitter.com/Veterans_UK_MOD)

Website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/veterans-uk

General Services / Support for Bedford Borough Residents

The Council works closely in partnership with a number of charitable and not for profit organisations in Bedford Borough. Although these are not Armed Forces specific organisations, they do provide a range of services that members of the Armed Forces community may find useful.

Amicus Trust (formerly Bedfordshire Housing Link)

A locally based charity providing accommodation, support, education and employment services, including accommodation and housing related support to single homeless Veterans.

Amicus Trust's dedicated Veterans Project provides individual rooms and communal areas for up to 12 to 24 months. Additional support includes development in life skills, overcoming personal barriers and education and employment services. If you are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, contact:

Amicus Trust Ltd

31A Prebend Street, Bedford, MK40 1QN

Tel: **01234 358478**

E-mail: info@amicustrust.org

Website: www.amicustrust.org/support/veteran-housing

Bedford Food Bank

Bedford Foodbank's volunteers work with referral partners to provide a minimum of three days emergency food and support to people experiencing crisis.

They can be contacted at:

Brickhill Church Centre, 79 Brickhill Drive, Bedford, MK41 7QF

Tel: **07837 654441**

Email: info@bedford.foodbank.org.uk

Website: www.bedford.foodbank.org.uk

In an emergency you can contact 01234 268569

Bedfordshire Wellbeing Service

The Bedfordshire Wellbeing Service is for residents of Bedfordshire (excluding Luton who have a separate service) who experience depression, anxiety, sadness, anger, extreme shyness, obsessive behaviour, phobias, relationship difficulties or other psychological issues which are holding them back in their lives.

They can be contacted at:

Tel: **01582 393144**

Website: www.eastlondon.nhs.uk/service/20/Bedfordshire-Wellbeing-Service

Referral via email: Elt-tr.BedfordshireWellbeingService@nhs.net

Carers in Bedfordshire

Carers in Bedfordshire provide information, advice, support, advocacy and training to all carers in Bedfordshire.

They can be contacted at:

Tel: **0300 111 1919**

Twitter: [@carersinbeds](#)

Facebook: Carers in Bedfordshire

Website: www.carersinbeds.org.uk

Citizens Advice Bedford

Citizens Advice Bedford provide an advice service which is free, independent, impartial and confidential. Information and help is provided on a range of subjects including benefits, consumer rights, debt problems, family and relationship problems, immigration and nationality, housing and employment, and much more.

They can be contacted at:

7a St Paul's Square, Bedford MK40 1SQ.

Drop-in Monday to Thursday 09.30 to 15.00, Friday 09.30hrs to 12.00hrs

Telephone advice: 01234 867944, Monday – Thursday 09.45hrs-13.00hrs

Self - Help available from www.bedfordcab.org.uk

Website: www.bedfordcab.org.uk

Webchat: Available through CAB website www.bedfordcab.org.uk

Home visiting service: Available, subject to circumstances for people who are unable to access CAB's services.

Furniture Link (Bedford)

Furniture Link is a registered charity, which aims to provide good quality low cost furniture to local residents.

They can be contacted at:

1a, Gadsby Street, Bedford, Bedfordshire, MK40 3HP

Tel: **01234 353578**

Fusion - Bedford Leisure

Fusion are proud to offer free access to the gyms, swimming pools and fitness classes at 5 local leisure centres, operated together with Bedford Borough Council, to active serving members of the Armed Forces who are resident in Bedford Borough.

Visit www.BedfordLeisure.com for details of your local leisure centre.

Jobcentre Plus

Jobcentre Plus provides resources to enable job-searchers to find work through Jobpoints (touch-screen computer terminals), Jobseeker Direct (telephone service) and the Jobcentre Plus website. They also administer claims for benefits such as Income Support, Incapacity Benefit and Jobseeker's Allowance.

They can be contacted at:

Wyvern House, Bromham Rd Bedford MK40 2EH

Tel: **0845 604 3719**

The Jobs Hub

A team of advisers and delivery partners provide free, impartial and independent information, advice and guidance to Bedford Borough residents who are unemployed, looking for new skills, have entrepreneurial aspirations or looking for a career change.

For more information visit:

15 Greyfriars, Bedford MK40 1HJ

Tel: **01234 223510**

Text: **07968 843533**

Email: thejobshub@bedford.gov.uk

Website: www.bedfordjobshub.co.uk

MIND

The Bedford Wellbeing Centre offers someone to talk to, referral pathways to other organisations and information leaflets on issues affecting wellbeing.

They can be contacted at:

Tel: **0300 3300649**

Email: bwc@mind-blmk.org.uk

Website: www.mind-blmk.org.uk

Path to Recovery (P2R) Drug and Alcohol Service

P2R is a one stop service which provides advice, treatment and support to people whose lives are affected by drug or alcohol use, including affected others. They provide an integrated service with a range of expertise available in one place.

They can be contacted at:

P2R Drug and Alcohol Service

21 the Crescent, Bedford, MK40 2RT

Tel: **01234 352220** Mob: **07817 825814**

Open Monday to Friday from 9.00am-5.30pm and until 8.00pm on Thursday

SMART Prebend Centre

A centre for the vulnerably housed and homeless men and women aged 18+.

The centre specialises in offering advice, advocacy and pathway referrals onto other specialist organisations, agencies and services in the local area.

They can be contacted at:

The SMART Prebend Centre, 12 Prebend Street,
Bedford, Bedfordshire, MK40 1QW

Tel: **01234 365955**

Website: www.prebendcentre.org.uk

Preen

Membership of the Preen discount scheme for low income customers will give a cost reduction in furniture and appliances, plus additional support. Preen can also provide three day food parcels (more if required) to help local people in severe financial hardship or coping with an emergency.

They can be contacted at:

Unit 2 Shortmead Industrial Estate, Sun Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0BP

Tel: **0844 99 34 99**

Email: info@preencic.org

Facebook: facebook.com/preencic

Website: www.reusematters.com

Relate Beds and Luton

Relate offers free relationship and family counselling including sex therapy. Their work is aimed at strengthening relationships. They operate the following programmes:

Army: National Relate contract

RAF and Benevolent Fund - available to all serving personnel

They can be contacted at:

6 St Paul's Square, Bedford, MK40 1SQ

Tel: **01234 356350**

Email: appointments@relatebedsandluton.org.uk

Website: www.relatebedsandluton.org.uk

The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army has a long history of working with people who are vulnerable and marginalised across the world and offer practical help, unconditional assistance and support regardless of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation.

They can be contacted at:

Commercial Road, Bedford, MK40 1QS

Tel: **01234 329 200** / **07726 580034**

Website: www.salvationarmy.org.uk

WE'RE READY ARE YOU?

**LOGISTICS,
OFFICER,
SOLDIER**

201 (BEDFORD) SQUADRON IS NOW RECRUITING

Ready for adventure?

Looking for a challenge?

Want to develop yourself and
learn new skills?

EARN AS YOU LEARN in your
spare time?

Aged 17 to 50?

If you have any questions call or
visit every Tuesday 1930hrs

**Army Reserve Centre, Bedford
Road, Kempston BEDFORD
MK42 8AJ**



[www.facebook.com/
158RegimentRLC](http://www.facebook.com/158RegimentRLC)



01234 350517



ARMY
BE THE BEST
REGULAR & RESERVE
LOGISTICS & SUPPORT

Additional Information

If you don't have access to a computer, please visit the Bedford Library to use their facilities:

Bedford Library
Harpur Street
Bedford
MK40 1PG
Tel: 01234 718178

If you would like a copy of this leaflet, a large print copy or information about Bedford Borough Council and our services, please contact us on the details provided below.

Për Informacion

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Za Informacije

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Informacija

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Per Informazione

General Enquiries



01234 267422



Bedford Borough Council
Borough Hall
Cauldwell Street
Bedford
MK42 9AP



CustomerServices@bedford.gov.uk