

Service Leavers' Guide to Midlothian

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Foreword

A message from Midlothian's Armed Forces Champion



I am honoured to have been appointed Armed Forces Champion by Midlothian Council and will work hard to ensure that the needs of current and former Service Personnel in Midlothian and their families are considered in future planning of council services and in our commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant.

Midlothian Council is committed to strengthening ties between those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces and the communities in which they work and live.

This guide offers practical advice including information about housing, health, education and employment for Serving Personnel, Reservists, Veterans and their families in the Midlothian area.

Midlothian welcomes all members of HM Forces who come to serve and live here and our Council, through the Covenant, aims to provide both help to, and appreciation of, our Forces citizens.

Peter Smail

Peter.Smail@midlothian.gov.uk

A message from Edinburgh Garrison Commander



Leaving the Armed Forces and returning to civilian life is a daunting step, but the Edinburgh and Lothian area is a good place to do it. You should be reassured to know that most Service Leavers and their families make a hugely successful transition, building on the skills they have acquired during their service to become well-established, valued members of their community.

I spend much of my time trying to ensure that local authorities and businesses understand the valuable skills and experience that Service Leavers can bring to them. The good news is that our local authorities are listening; the City of Edinburgh Council, Midlothian, East and West Lothian have all signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant, pledging action to ensure that Service Personnel are

not disadvantaged by their service. All the local authorities are demonstrably eager to 'do right' by the Armed Forces Community and my team is working closely with them.

The support is out there, and this guide aims to explain how you can find it, whether you have questions about employment, housing, health, education for you or your children, benefits or social and business networks. It's whole life support too, not just for the immediate period of transition from the military to civilian life.

Most Service Leavers and their families are proud of their service, but we're not good at telling people about it. If you take nothing else away from this guide, I urge you, when seeking support or assistance from your local authority (whether it's in the GP surgery, looking for employment, or trying to manage your children's schooling) to tell them that you or your partner served in the Armed Forces. We are encouraging the Edinburgh and Lothian local authorities and businesses to ask the question, and, more importantly, to know what to do when you say 'yes'. Being ex-Forces may not push you to the front of the queue, but it should ensure that you can close any gaps, whether you're aware of them or not.

And I'd like to hear your concerns and feedback on what work I still need to do to ensure that the ex-Service Community continues to have the support it deserves from society in the Edinburgh and Lothian area.

Lt Col Hugo Clark

Edinburgh Garrison Commander, 0131 310 5020

Introduction

Midlothian Council has made a pledge to support Her Majesty's Armed Forces. As part of this pledge they have signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant. Midlothian Council has chosen to produce an information booklet to help those leaving the Armed Forces settle in their area. Their aim is to make transition as easy as possible should you choose to live in the area.

The Armed Forces Community

What is the Armed Forces Community? The Armed Forces Community comprises current and former Service Personnel (Regular, Reserve – Territorial as was – and National Service) and their families, from the Royal Navy, British Army, and Royal Air Force, as well as members of the Merchant Navy who have served on board a commercial vessel in support of UK military operations. Any former member of the above may be referred to as a 'Veteran' or as 'ex-Forces'.

What is the Armed Forces Covenant?

The Armed Forces Covenant refers to a pledge made by the UK Government on behalf of the nation as a whole to ensure that Serving Personnel, Veterans and their families are not disadvantaged as the result of service. It reflects an understanding that the duties, rights and responsibilities of members of the Armed Forces are different from the rest of society, that the demands, obligations and risks of the job are unlike those in any other occupation or profession, and that in return Veterans and those currently serving should be treated fairly and supported when in need.

For more information about the Covenant go to www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk

Is this booklet for me?

If you have served at least one day in the Armed Forces you are classed as a Veteran regardless of your rank, gender, age or reason for leaving. You may have had time to plan your discharge or this may have happened suddenly. Whatever your discharge circumstances this booklet is to help you settle into your new life.

Midlothian

Midlothian is one of the 32 council areas of Scotland. It borders Edinburgh, East Lothian and the Scottish Borders council areas.

Midlothian has a population of approximately 90,000 and is home to Glencorse Barracks which is located just outside Penicuik.

Midlothian is easier to access than ever before thanks to the Borders Railway. The railway line travels through beautiful countryside, connecting Edinburgh to Tweedbank in the Scottish Borders with stops at the Midlothian towns of Eskbank, Newtongrange and Gorebridge.

Road links

From the South

Follow the A1 until you reach the turn off signposted A720 (Perth, Glasgow, Stirling). Follow the A720 (Edinburgh City Bypass) for 1 mile.

The next roundabout is called Sheriffhall and there are brown tourist signs directing you from here.

From the North

Once over the Forth Road Bridge, follow the signs for the Edinburgh City Bypass A720, this will bring you directly to the heart of Midlothian. From the City Bypass follow the brown tourist signs to where ever you want to go.

Midlothian is mainly a rural county with lots of small towns and villages spread over a large area it is home to many historical sites including the famous Rosslyn Chapel.

Midlothian Council also has a dedicated webpage for members of the Armed Forces Community www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/200284/your_community/545/midlothian_armed_forces_community

For any other Armed Forces Covenant queries, contact us on AFCC@midlothian.gov.uk

Housing

Finding somewhere to live can be challenging for many people when they chose to leave the Armed Forces. There are many factors to consider; this section will hopefully give you a better understanding of your options.

Renting a property

You may wish to rent a property from a private landlord or apply for housing from a social landlord, either a local council or housing association.

Social housing

Social housing homes are managed by housing associations and the council and offer a secure tenancy. You can visit Midlothian Council's housing page www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/917/housing

Here you can find out more information about applying for a council/housing association home. You will also find links to Housing support and advice. You can contact them by emailing Housing.enquiries@midlothian.gov.uk or by phoning 0131 271 3394.

Midlothian Council has the following policies for members of the Armed

Forces:

Applicants who are discharged from HM Armed Forces will be assessed under the terms of the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003. Appropriate points will be awarded three months prior to discharge. Serving members of HM Armed Forces who have lived in Midlothian Council area prior to joining the forces, or who have a spouse or partner who have lived in Midlothian Council area prior to enlistment date, or where the applicant or family have been resident in Midlothian Council area for at least 3 years while on service will receive Forces points on their application at 1 point awarded for each 2 months from the date of enlistment.

Private rent

Homes for private rent can be found online through websites such as www.rightmove.co.uk, www.citylets.co.uk and www.lettingweb.com

If you want to rent a home privately, there are steps you should follow. For

example, before you move into a property, you should sign a tenancy agreement which sets out the terms of your tenancy. You'll usually pay the first month's rent and the deposit on the day you move into the property – your deposit must then be lodged in a tenancy deposit scheme. This is a government backed service which ensures your deposit is safe. Your landlord must use one of three organisations authorised to run a deposit scheme. This means that when you leave the property your deposit will be returned in full if the property is left in good condition and all rent and bills have been paid. Further information on private rent tenancies can be found at

www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/1053/private_housing/324/private_renting_-_getting_started

Comprehensive information for tenants about private renting in Scotland can be found in the Private residential tenancies: tenant's guide at <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/private-residential-tenancies-tenants-guide/>

Buying a home

If you wish to buy a home but cannot afford the total cost, there are a number of schemes that might be able to help you.

The Forces Help to Buy Scheme enables Service Personnel to borrow up to 50% of their salary (to a maximum of £25,000) to buy their first home, or to move to another property on assignment or as their families' needs change. More information can be found at www.gov.uk/guidance/forces-help-to-buy

The Scottish Government operates shared equity schemes which can help you to buy a home that is for sale on the open market, or to buy a new build home from a housing association or local council. Support is also offered through the Help to Buy (Scotland) Scheme to purchase a new build property from a participating builder. Funding for these schemes is provided by the Scottish Government and you can find out more about them at www.mygov.scot/help-buying-home/

Further housing advice

The Armed Services Advice Project (ASAP) www.adviceasap.org.uk provides free, impartial advice to members of the Armed Forces Community.

You can also visit Housing Options Scotland and download their military matters

booklet www.housingoptionsscotland.org.uk or visit the East of Scotland Housing Hub www.eastscotlandhousingoptions.co.uk

Alternatively, you can also go to www.mygov.scot/veteran-housing/ and download the Scottish Government's Housing Guide. This guide also has links to charity organisation that can offer support and advice.

Education

Schools and nurseries

You can visit www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/878/schools where you will find out what schools are in your catchment area and how to apply with these schools. There is also information on applying for schools outside your catchment area.

You can also visit www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/879/school_places/31/find_a_school where you can find further information about the schools in Midlothian as well as nurseries and childcare, community centres and adult education amongst other things.

Early years learning and childcare

Funded early learning and childcare is free to parents but funded by the Scottish Government.

If your child is 3 or 4, you can get up to 600 hours a year (the equivalent of 16 hours a week if taken in term time). This will be increasing to 1140 hours a year by August 2020. You can claim your funded early learning and childcare place by visiting the local council's website. More information is available at www.mygov.scot/childcare-costs-help/when-funded-earlylearning-and-childcare-can-start/

Depending on whether you are eligible for certain benefits, you may also be entitled to funding for early learning and childcare if your child has turned 2. You can find more on entitlement and eligibility to childcare for children aged between 2 and 3 years old at www.mygov.scot/childcare-costs-help/fundedearly-learning-and-childcare/

Once your child qualifies for early learning and childcare, they will stay qualified.

School age and stages

There are differences in the ages children start school across the UK, and children might start school later in Scotland than they would in England. Children start in Primary 1 and move up to the next class each year through to Primary 7. All children in Primaries 1– 3 receive free school meals.

Children move up to secondary school automatically after primary school (aged 11 or 12 depending on when they started school). The secondary school curriculum has two phases – completion of the broad general education (S1– S3) and the senior phase (S4–S6).

The school year

Term time

The school year is broken into three terms which will include public holidays and may include a mid-term break (schools will be closed for one or two weeks).

- * Autumn term begins in August and usually ends in December.
- * Spring term begins in January and will usually end in March/April.
- * Summer term begins in April and will usually end in June/early July.

Term dates will vary depending on the local authority area. You can find term dates at www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/878/schools/2/school_term_dates_and_holidays

My child needs extra support

Additional support for learning in Scotland is different to special educational needs in England.

In Scotland we understand that children from Service families may need additional support to overcome barriers to learning which may arise because of the nature of their parent’s work. An additional support need can be of short or long-term duration and can arise for any reason. We have a Scottish advice service for additional support for learning, where you will find useful information about when your child might be entitled to extra support. This can be found at www.enquire.org.uk/

Contact the local authority as early as possible if your child has significant or complex learning needs. Educators will want to begin communication with the family and child before a school move, if possible.

Additional information can be located on the Forces Children’s Education website www.forceschildrenseducation.scot. This is a dedicated site for Armed Forces families that provides information about schools and communities and has links to local authority sites.

Adult Education

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)

The Scottish Qualifications Framework helps people of all ages and circumstances to access the education and training that is appropriate to them over their lifetime. It can help you plan your learning and develop progression routes to follow, whatever your situation may be.

SCQF has recently undertaken a project to map the qualifications of Veterans to the SCQF (Scotland's Lifelong Learning Framework) – initially focusing on infantry soldiers.

Some of the qualifications you gained while serving may be recognised on the SCQF or may be English qualifications and therefore you may be concerned whether they will be recognised and accepted in Scotland by employers or by educational institutions.

Full details can be found at <https://scqf.org.uk/support/support-for-learnersparents/support-for-veterans/>

Further education

If you are interested in starting a college or university course, there are many options in Lothian areas:

Edinburgh College www.edinburghcollege.ac.uk

Midlothian Campus

46 Dalhousie Road Dalkeith
EH22 3FR

Sighthill Campus

Bankhead Avenue
Edinburgh EH11 4DE

Granton Campus

350 West Granton Road Edinburgh
EH5 1QE

Milton Road Campus

24 Milton Road East Edinburgh

EH15 2PP **West Lothian College**
www.west-lothian.ac.uk

Almondvale Crescent Livingston
EH54 7EP

Edinburgh Napier University
www.napier.ac.uk

Craiglockhart Campus
219 Colinton Road
Edinburgh EH14 1DJ

Merchiston Campus
10 Colinton Road
Edinburgh EH10 5DT

Sighthill Campus
9 Sighthill Court
Edinburgh EH11 4BN

The University of Edinburgh www.ed.ac.uk

Old College
South Bridge
Edinburgh EH8 9YL

Heriot-Watt University
www.hw.ac.uk

Edinburgh Campus
Edinburgh EH14 4AS

Queen Margaret University
www.qmu.ac.uk

Queen Margaret Drive
Musselburgh EH21 6UU

These are just some of the colleges and universities in the area. You can find out more information on each of them by visiting their websites. All of the organisations mentioned have shown support for our Armed Forces

Community and some have admission routes specifically aimed at ex-Service
Personnel.

Healthcare

Access to healthcare

Members of the UK Armed Forces and family members should have any previous NHS waiting times taken into account when moving to a new location, including to Scotland. The expectation is that treatment in your new location will be met within the waiting time standards, treatment time guarantee and according to clinical need.

Registering with your local GP

When settled in a place of residence in Scotland your family should register with a local doctor – a general practitioner (GP). Your GP will be able to care for your health conditions and provide treatment if you become unwell. Any prescriptions prescribed by your GP are free of charge. You can find more information at www.nhsinform.scot/care-support-and-rights/nhs-services/doctors/registering-with-a-gp-practice

Registering with a dentist

Your family can get care, advice and treatment from NHS Scotland to keep your mouth, teeth and gums healthy. Scotland also provides free dental checks. You can find a dentist near you using the links at www.nhsinform.scot/care-support-and-rights/nhs-services/dental/receiving-nhs-dental-treatment-in-scotland **Registering for your Baby Box**

Every baby born and living in Scotland is entitled to a Baby Box. This is an opt-in scheme, and expectant parents register to receive their box via their midwife, at approximately 20 weeks.

Further information on Scotland's Baby Box can be found via the Scottish Government's ParentClub website at www.parentclub.scot/baby-box or via your health professional.

In an emergency

NHS 24 is Scotland's telephone service providing health advice 24 hours a day.

The telephone service allows people who feel unwell or those caring for them to obtain health advice if it is not possible to wait until they can visit their GP when

the practice is next open. You can call them on 111 if you are ill or need any

health services. Alternatively, you can access their website at www.nhs24.scot

The advice line is not intended as a substitute for obtaining an emergency ambulance service. For all life threatening emergencies you should still call 999.

NHS Lothian Main Hospitals in the area:

Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh

51 Little France Crescent Edinburgh
EH16 4SA

Western General Hospital

Crew Road South
Edinburgh EH4 2XU

St John's Hospital Livingston

Howden Road West, Howden
Livingston EH54 6PP

There are other NHS services in the area and these can be found online at www.nhsinform.scot

Mental health

NHS Scotland provides mental health services that offer a range of treatments and self-help advice for those experiencing mild, moderate or more complex mental health problems. The first point of call for accessing NHS care is usually your GP. You can discuss any issue with your GP, who can also arrange referral to more specialist services if that is necessary. You can find more details regarding support and services at www.nhsinform.scot/illnessesand-conditions/mental-health. There is also a free and confidential 24-hour helpline available for you to talk about mental health, which family members or carers can use too. You can access this through Combat Stress at www.combatstress.org.uk/helpline

Veterans First Point (V1P)

V1P Lothian is made up of Veteran peer support workers, clinicians, therapists and an administration team. They provide:

- * Peer support worker led caseload management of welfare issues
- * Mental health assessment and treatment with both psychiatry and psychology
- * Self-referral through afternoon drop-in, phone and email (we also accept referrals through GPs and other agencies)
- * Peer support worker led activities including fly fishing, city walks, music groups, archery, etc
- * In-house clinics from Citizen's Advice Bureau, Veterans UK and Edinburgh Housing Advice Project (EHAP)

www.veteransfirstpoint.org.uk

Lothian Veterans Centre

The Lothian Veteran Centre is a charity that was designed to meet the need for a Veterans drop-in centre with no appointment necessary allowing complex needs to be catered for in an environment which is familiar and friendly.

www.lothiansveteranscentre.org.uk

Armed Forces and Veterans Breakfast Clubs

To help tackle isolation and loneliness, there are a number of breakfast clubs. For more information please see www.afvbc.net/

Employment

There are a number of ways to find work in Midlothian and below is a list of the support services that we provide to help you in securing employment.

Jobcentre Plus

Jobcentre Plus is committed to supporting Veterans, Service Leavers, Serving Personnel, their partners and families. It provides a number of programmes and services to help jobseekers, unemployed people, those with disabilities and others who may need extra help in finding work.

Jobcentre Plus works closely with the Ministry of Defence and other partners to provide support to Service Leavers, including resettlement advice, job searches or training. They work closely with a range of partners, including Veterans First Point, Glasgow Help for Heroes, Poppy Scotland, and Right Management. The organisation has Armed Forces Champions based in each Jobcentre Plus district. Job search support and advice for those who have left the service is available in all job centres, and specialist advisers can assist Service Leavers and their families in overcoming more complex barriers to employment.

Visit your nearest Jobcentre Plus for help with finding a job and information on any benefits you and your family might be entitled to, or visit the website at www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/entitlement

You can find further information surrounding the support services available at www.mygov.scot/working-jobs/ **Skills Development Scotland (SDS)**

SDS provides careers information, advice and guidance, as well as workbased training programmes aimed at building career management skills. They support a wide range of pathways into work, including Modern Apprenticeships (further information below). There are SDS Careers Centres based in each local authority area which you can visit to access support, more information on these can be found at www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk

There is also an online service, My World of Work (www.myworldofwork.co.uk), which can assist you through every stage of your working life. Anyone can access information on a wide range of subjects, including choosing a career, learning and training, applying for jobs and making a career change. You will find information on researching careers to building

your CV. You can also access specific information and assistance for veterans and early service leavers through the dedicated page at www.myworldofwork.co.uk/supportarmed-forces-leavers-and-veterans

StartScotland

StartScotland will work with you to give you all the tools you need to help you get ready for work. You will work with your dedicated personal adviser who will be with you every step of the way – working through your barriers and challenges to help identify what support you need to help you make the transition back into the workplace.

You will get:

- * a personalised employment action plan to help you meet your goals while giving you access to a wide range of specialist support if required such as health and wellbeing, basic skills, personal development and lots more
- * the opportunity to gain accredited and vocational qualifications such as Level 1 City and Guilds in ICT, customer services and much more
- * support to help you build on your existing skills and attributes to develop a professionally formatted CV
- * help with searching and applying for jobs
- * help with preparing for an interview such as interview coaching and conducting mock interviews
- * the chance to take part in suitable work placements, work trials or volunteering opportunities
- * the self-confidence you need to progress in work

To find out more information call 0800 049 7061 or visit www.startscotland.scot/your-journey **Working in your local area**

A wide range of jobs in the public and third sector are advertised on the My Job Scotland website. To search, view and apply for jobs in your local area **visit** www.myjobscotland.gov.uk

Regular Forces Employment Association (RFEA)

REFA exist to provide life-long, life changing support, jobs and training opportunities to Service Leavers and Veterans, irrespective of circumstances, rank, length of service, or reason for leaving. Founded in 1885 and operating

across the UK, they have the specialist knowledge and understanding to bridge the gap between military life and civilian employment.

For more information check their website www.rfea.org.uk/

Other Sources of Support

Benefits and social care

Midlothian Council have welfare rights advisers who can help you with problems surrounding benefits or your eligibility www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/612/benefits_and_grants/516/benefits_advice. Citizens Advice Scotland can help you find information on benefits and other issues like housing, debt and employment www.cas.org.uk/bureaux

Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)

The DWP is responsible for most welfare, pensions and child maintenance policy. They deal with the administration of a range of working age, disability and ill-health benefits.

As part of the Armed Forces Covenant, the DWP has initiatives that help current and former members of the Armed Forces and their families access Jobcentre Plus services. This includes having an Armed Forces Champion in every Jobcentre Plus district who ensures that the DWP provides support that meets the needs of the Armed Forces Community. See more information on the DWP and the Armed Forces at www.gov.uk/government/publications/jobcentre-plus-services-for-the-armed-forces-and-their-families

Veterans Welfare Service

The Veterans Welfare Service (VWS) are tri-service and part of the MOD. VWS provide support to enable the seamless transition from service to civilian life, assist bereaved families or respond to life events that present welfare needs. They achieve this by facilitating access to all appropriate services.

VWS provide one to one welfare advice to Veterans and their families.

Contact for Scotland: 0141 224 2709 or email Veterans-UK-VWS-Scot-NI@mod.uk

Other useful information

We have a great network of organisations in Scotland which can help and support the Armed Forces Community. For example:

Legion Scotland

New Haig House
Logie Green Road
Edinburgh EH7 4HQ
0131 550 1583
www.legionscotland.org.uk

Poppyscotland

New Haig House
Logie Green Road
Edinburgh EH7 4HQ
0131 557 2782
www.poppyscotland.org.uk

SSAFA The Armed Forces Charity

New Haig House
Logie Green Road
Edinburgh EH7 4HR
0131 557 1697
www.ssafa.org.uk

Veterans First Point

Argyle House
Floor K
3 Lady Lawson Street
Edinburgh EH3 9DR
0131 220 9920
www.veteransfirstpoint.org.uk

Veterans Scotland

www.veteransscotland.co.uk
www.veterans-assist.org/

Veterans Gateway

0808 802 1212
www.veteransgateway.org.uk

Armed Forces Covenant

armedforcescovenant.gov.uk

Veterans UK

gov.uk/government/organisations/veterans-uk

Support in Mind Scotland

0131 662 4359
supportinmindscotland.org.uk

Armed Service Advice Project (ASAP)

0808 800 1007
www.adviceasap.org.uk

Shelter Scotland

0808 800 4444
<https://scotland.shelter.org.uk>

Lothian Veterans Centre

11 Eskdale Court
Dalkeith EH22 1AG
0131 660 5537
www.lothiansveteranscentre.org.uk

Naval Families Federation

023 9265 4374
<https://nff.org.uk>

Combat Stress

Call: 0800 138 1619
Text: 07537 404 719
www.combatstress.org.uk

Army Families Federation

01264 382324

<https://aff.org.uk>

RAF Families Federation

01780 781650

www.raf-ff.org.uk

COMMUNICATING CLEARLY

We are happy to translate on request and provide information and publications in other formats, including Braille, tape or large print.

如有需要我們樂意提供翻譯本，和其他版本的資訊與刊物，包括盲人點字、錄音帶或大字體。

Zapewnimy tłumaczenie na żądanie oraz dostarczymy informacje i publikacje w innych formatach, w tym Braillem, na kasecie magnetofonowej lub dużym drukiem.

ਅਸੀਂ ਮੰਗ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਨਾਲ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਅਤੇ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਾਂਗੇ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਰੇਲ, ਟੇਪ ਜਾਂ ਵੱਡੀ ਛਪਾਈ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹਨ।

Körler için kabartma yazılar, kaset ve büyük nüshalar da dahil olmak üzere, istenilen bilgileri sağlamak ve tercüme etmekten memnuniyet duyuyoruz.

اگر آپ چاہیں تو ہم خوشی سے آپ کو ترجمہ فراہم کر سکتے ہیں اور معلومات اور دستاویزات دیگر شکلوں میں مثلاً بریل (تاریخہ افراد کے لیے) سمجھنے والے سب سے بڑے حروف کی کھدائی (میں) ٹیپ پر یا بڑے حروف کی کھدائی میں فراہم کر سکتے ہیں۔

Contact 0131 270 7500 or email: enquiries@midlothian.gov.uk