

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (Q&As)

ASSIGNMENT FREEZE

Why was the Assignment Freeze necessary?

- The nation is currently in an unprecedented time while we all deal with the challenge of COVID-19. The Assignment Freeze was introduced as a response to Government guidance to stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives. It was a necessary measure to comply with the restrictions on non-essential travel.

GRADUATED RETURN TO ROUTINE ASSIGNMENTS

When will the Assignment Freeze be lifted?

- For most personnel in the Army, we will begin a graduated return to routine assignments from 1 Jul 20. The new movement dates have been planned in 4 phases determined by your original Report for Duty date (RDD). Some groups of people will be given the opportunity to move 15-30 Jun 20, all personnel in this group will be notified by their Career Manager week commencing 18 May 20.

What are the new movement dates?

Ser	Movement Window	Details
(a)	(b)	(c)
Phase 0	15-30 Jun 20	Early movement window
Phase 1	1-31 Jul 20	All personnel with RDD date 1-30 Apr 20
Phase 2	1-31 Aug 20	All personnel with RDD date 1-31 May 20
Phase 3	1-30 Sep 20	All personnel with RDD date 1-30 Jun 20

What is the early movement window?

- This is designed to allow early movement of personnel moving into key appointments and those who have been most effected by the assignment freeze. Personnel who were granted an exemption from the assignment freeze but are now dislocated from their family, moving into a command appointment, had an RDD in Mar 20 or personnel moving to/from a NATO appointment overseas.

Why are the new movement dates planned in phases?

- There are approximately 5,000 Army personnel who, with their families, were originally due to move between 23 March – 30 June and whose assignment movement has been affected by the Assignment Freeze. We need to move in a controlled and deliberate manner to ensure that contracted services such as Amey, Mears Gp and Agility are available for everyone and to sequence the availability of SFA.

I do not require a household move. Am I still restricted to my allotted movement window?

- You should plan to move within your allotted movement window but if your losing and gaining units are in agreement, then you should be able to move after 1 Jul 20. The Chain of Command and MS Rep will submit a Change Notification to APC.

My assignment date is after 1 Jul 20, how does this affect me?

- The assignment freeze was in effect 23 Mar-30 Jun 20. If you have an Assignment Order with an RDD after 1 Jul 20, this does not affect you and you can move as planned.

What if I am moving between basic, initial trade or subsequent trade training?

- This movement was exempt from the assignment freeze and it will remain exempt from the graduated return to routine assignments, you should continue as planned.

My next assignment is in Scotland, how does this affect me?

- Defence takes its direction from HM Government but must follow guidance from the devolved powers. If movement restrictions are stricter in the location you are due to move to, you may have to wait before you can move to your next assignment.

My next assignment is overseas, how does this affect me?

- Movement to many overseas locations may take longer than those within the UK. They are also subject to restrictions that the host nation may impose and may need to be dealt with on a case by case basis. Find out what you can from the local administrative unit and seek advice from your Career Manager where necessary.

Can we refuse the assignment due to COVID-19 circumstances?

- You cannot refuse your assignment; however, following consultation with your losing and gaining units, you could request to amend your Report for Duty date (RDD) by submitting a Change Request. If your welfare or domestic circumstances have changed since you were selected for your assignment, you should seek advice from your current CoC. If your domestic/welfare circumstances have changed sufficiently and affect your ability to move to your next assignment you could follow the process in AGAI 108 (Career Management and Supportability Checking for Army Service Personnel). Please note there is no guarantee you will be able to remain in your current position.

To avoid unnecessary travel and movement, could families already assigned overseas and due to return be offered the opportunity to be extended in post?

- If you were due to return to the UK during the assignment freeze you should already know your new movement window and new RDD. Following consultation with your losing and gaining units, you could request to amend your RDD by submitting a Change Request. If you've not received your next assignment order yet, and you think that an extension to your current assignment is appropriate, you should speak to your CoC or Career Manager to establish if an extension is possible. This may not be possible as your replacement may have already been selected and assigned.

I / member of my family are in the shielding category and I am due assignment, what shall I do?

- Personnel should speak to the CoC in their gaining unit to see how their needs can be accommodated.

HOW IT WORKS

Will I receive a new Assignment Order?

- No, you don't need a new Assignment Order. The Reporting for Duty Date (RDD) on your original Assignment Order will be used to calculate your allotted movement window (July, August or September). For example, if your original assignment date was 23 May, it will now be 23 August.

Is movement still permitted +/- 28 days from the date on my Assignment Order?

- As long as no movement happens before 1 Jul 20, then normal rules apply and personnel may be able to move up to 28 days before or after the RDD on their Assignment Order. However, this is subject to approval by their losing and gaining unit and the availability of contracted services (availability of SLA, SFA and removals (as relevant)).

What if I have a compelling reason to move before or after my allotted phase?

- There are several reasons which mean that you may wish to submit a Change Request for your movement date, possible reasons might include: operations, readiness, training, overseas location, career implications or for significant personal reasons. Full details are contained in the FragO and requests should be discussed with your CoC and MS Rep before being submitted to APC. All Change Requests will be carefully considered but limitations on the availability of SFA and removals may prevent early movement.

If I am permitted to move in a different phase, will my family move with me?

- We will try to move personnel and their families together but there may be occasions that this is not possible. The information that we have used to develop this plan has accounted for a maximum number of household moves each month. If you need to ask to move in a different phase, SFA/removals etc may not be available at the same time.

Can I delay my move until 2021?

- If you wish to consider requesting a major change to your movement date, you should discuss this with your current unit. They will then be able to discuss your unique case with the relevant career manager, noting that delays could have an impact on promotion, allowances etc.

ACCOMMODATION

I have already submitted my E1132 paperwork for my household move, do I need to re-submit it?

- No, your details have been retained by Agility and have been shared with DIO to enable contact with you to discuss your move. Amey and Agility **will have contacted all SP who have been affected by the Graduated Return to Routine Assignments and submitted their request by 30 Jun 20**. If you have not heard from them by this time, please contact them.

I haven't yet submitted my E1132 paperwork for my household move, what shall I do?

- You should submit paperwork in accordance with your allotted phase and the usual timings required to request SFA/removals etc, using the following details:

- **Date.** Use the new movement date allocated within Phases 0-3, not the original RDD on the AO.
- **Justification.** Use the free text box to add the comment: *“This move was affected by the Assignment Freeze and has been delayed as part of the Graduated Return to Routine Assignments direction.”*

I am moving into SSSA, what shall I do?

- Early moves may be available for Mears supported SSSA allocations. You should discuss submitting a Change Request with your CoC and MS Representative. If SSSA is available within your new location, you may be able to move before your allotted phase.

Will social distancing measures affect my removals?

- Agility is the Defence Contractor for removal services. Social distancing measures during the removals preparation and conduct will continue and require a modification to the normal process you are familiar with. Agility will provide you with guidance to explain the specific preparations and procedures required for your move. **A virtual survey removes the need for a surveyor to call at multiple homes in a day and meet families, therefore reducing the risk of transferring the virus.**

- **Appointment.** A precise time is agreed to complete the survey offering the Service Person (SP) a more structured appointment throughout the UK & Europe.
- **Application.** A simple application is downloaded on the SP phone or tablet, this can be deleted after the survey has been completed.
- **Virtual Survey.** A detailed survey is completed; cupboard by cupboard and room by room (shed, garages, outside furniture etc).
- **Secure Data.** GDPR compliant processes applied.
- **Communication.** The SP and surveyor can communicate throughout the process, so that the move process is understood with clarity.
- **Tested.** The virtual survey process has been tested extensively and is used daily in the domestic and corporate moving sectors.

My family and I are isolating due to COVID-19 but we are due to move, what shall we do?

- Personnel who are isolating due to COVID-19 should not move and must inform their CoC and Amey/Agility (if requiring SFA/Removals) of their situation. Their movement dates will be adjusted accordingly.

What happens if there is no SFA available to meet my *Required by Date* (RBD)?

- DIO have already been working hard with their Industry Partners, Amey and Mears, to ensure that SFA is available and to standard. If SFA is not available to meet your requirement, sourcing of substitute accommodation (SSFA) will be undertaken, utilising the Substitute Accommodation Contract (SAC). Any concerns

around allocation of your SFA should continue to be directed to OccupancyServices@AmeyDefenceServices.co.uk

What will happen on the day of the move?

- In line with the protocol provided by the British Association of Movers (BAR) and the respective Public Health Authority, the following measures will be adopted:
 - Movement crews will wear face covering and gloves – gloves may be removed depending on the item being lifted at the time.
 - When engaging with the lead member of the household, it is respectfully requested that they also wear a face cover and stay at least 2m away from the crew. A face cover does not have to be medical grade PPE.
 - Family members are not to be in the same room as the crew at any point during the move.
 - If families are unable to leave the house during the pack up, they are to remain in a single room to avoid contact with the crew.
 - The crew will not handle, even with gloves, any dirty linen or clothes.
 - Depending on the contents of the household, in general the pack up/load should take between 1-1.5 days.

FAMILY CONSIDERATIONS

My movement window is not until September, but my children need to start at a new school at a critical stage of their education. What do I do?

- This could be justification to apply for a Change Request, particularly if your children are entering key school years or have special educational requirements. You should consider submitting a Change Request to your movement window via your CoC and MS Rep. Further guidance is available at the DYCP website and advice can be sought from the Children Education Advisory Service (CEAS) via DCYP-CEAS-Enquiries@mod.gov.uk.

Is it still possible to apply to retain my SFA?

- Yes. If you are seeking to retain SFA in the UK, you should continue to apply for retention in the usual way, by submitting an application to Amey Occupancy Services via the E1132 application system or email OccupancyServices@AmeyDefenceServices.co.uk. Retention requests will be considered in line with current policy contained within JSP464 Vol 1 Part 1 Chapter 7. Overseas retention requests should be directed to the relevant housing provider.

We are being posted overseas – what actions should I take about schooling for my children?

- It will be important for all involved in planning (case by case) assignments overseas to understand the requirement to comply with current policy for the MOD Assessment of Supportability (MASO) process and adjust timelines to enable this (see JSP 770). The MASO process is likely to be slower than normal given the backlog of submissions and likely slower response times from sending and receiving schools. Families (and sending/receiving units) must ensure that the clearance

process begins as early as possible. Parents with children planned to attend an MOD School should approach the school directly; those going to locations not served by MOD Schools should contact CEAS (DCYP-CEAS-Enquiries@mod.gov.uk).

Will families needing to return to the UK (to return children to boarding school, for medical treatment, to return from posting) need to self-isolate for 14 days?

- Defence Advisory Note 18 – Annex A addresses this issue in detail. It is difficult to provide direction for all as each case is unique. The guidance states that the self-isolation period lasts 14 days or until the international traveller departs the UK, making it possible for short visits to accompany children. Please contact DCYP-CEAS-Enquiries@mod.gov.uk if you need more information. A [Directed Letter](#) issued on 4 June 2020 refers to any applicable allowances.

If there are no schools open where families are assigned overseas, can the assignment go ahead if family have school aged children accompanying them?

- This varies by location. Some schools overseas are not providing remote educational support, there are also risks that some schools overseas may not survive due to financial concerns. Overseas locations need to be viewed on a case by case basis as guidance may not mirror that in the UK. Families should speak to the overseas CoC in the first instance, if circumstances have changed since being assigned, individuals should seek advice from their Career Manager.

OVERSEAS

Why are we being posted overseas as a family, when the world is in a middle of a pandemic and the FCO advice is not to travel overseas?

- Our locations overseas still require staffing in order to meet Defence outputs. All overseas locations are different and may need to be dealt with on a case by case basis. All personnel due assignment overseas must contact the CoC in the host nation for the latest guidance.

I have been assigned overseas but am worried that medical support will now be inadequate, what shall I do?

- As a result of COVID-19 it is necessary for the Global Medical Supportability Cell (GMSC) to adjust to a lower threshold of medical risk in relation to medical supportability decisions. Factors affecting supportability include movement restrictions, Host Nation (HN) screening/quarantine requirements, public health vulnerability criteria and reduced capacity to HN hospitals overseas. Please be assured the supportability situation will continue to be assessed and re-evaluated. Speak to your Medical Centre if concerned or email SGDPHC-O-GMSC-GroupMailbox@mod.gov.uk

- GMSC are therefore currently unable to recommend supportability for persons who will require return visits to UK for intermittent consultant reviews or collection of specialist medications.

- The risks associated with reduced capacity of HN hospitals means the GMSC may be unable to recommend supportability to any person with a health condition that requires on-going Secondary Health Care input in the destination country.
- Furthermore, it will be necessary to carry out further review for those whom have previously received a medical supportability recommendation and are now in-country or whom have delayed travel due to the Pandemic.
- As a result of the lower threshold for medical supportability it's anticipated there will be an increased number of associated sS appeals.

If a family chooses to delay travel overseas due to COVID-19, can SFA in the UK be retained? Will the MOD order the SP to travel unaccompanied?

- If you are seeking to retain SFA in the UK, you should continue to apply for retention in the usual way, by submitting an application to Amey Occupancy Services via the E1132 application system or email OccupancyServices@AmeyDefenceServices.co.uk. Retention requests will be considered in line with current policy contained within JSP 464 Vol 1 (Part 1 Ch7). Overseas retention requests should be directed to the relevant housing provider.

I was serving accompanied overseas in Kenya or Nepal and have been temporarily repatriated to the UK. What about my accommodation?

- DIO RD Accommodation provided Service Family Accommodation (SFA) to a number of families on repatriation. Should you need to consider a period of retention of this UK-based SFA, please follow the current process to submit a retention request, in line with guidance contained with JSP 464, Part 1, Volume 1, Chapter 7. All individuals due to be assigned to either organisation in the future should contact their gaining unit for advice immediately.

For families evacuated from Kenya or Nepal to Larkhill, should these families continue with remote learning from their overseas schools or be enrolling at primary school in Larkhill?

- The Chain of Command in BATUK and BPST(A) are engaged with Field Army to resolve all issues, effected individuals will be notified directly of all changes. All individuals due to be assigned to either organisation in the future should contact their gaining unit for advice immediately.

Useful Open Source Internet Links

- [AFF Website](#) – AFF COVID-19 advice
- [DCYP Website](#) – Directorate of Children and Young People COVID-19 page
- [Defence Advisory Note 18](#) – COVID-19 Health Measures at the Border and Effects on Delivering Defence Tasks
- [DIO Website](#) – Guidance on SFA applications
- [HIVE Blog](#) – The official portal for all Army communications to families
- [JSP 752 Tri-Service Regulations for Expenses and Allowances](#) – Contains COVID-19 updates as they are added
- MS Web (via Defence Gateway) – COVID-19 Career Implications FAQs