



Defence
Infrastructure
Organisation

Combined Accommodation
Assessment System (CAAS)
Defence Infrastructure Organisation
Swales Pavilion
RAF Wyton
Cambs
PE28 2EA

SFA Address

X
X
X

<Date>

Dear Sir/Madam

THE COMBINED ACCOMMODATION ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (CAAS) – NOTIFICATION OF POLICY CHANGE THAT REVISES LOCATION CLASSIFICATION FOR YOUR SERVICE FAMILY ACCOMMODATION

1. You are receiving this letter because there will be a change to your CAAS charge, details of which are explained below. The corrective changes to your Service Family Accommodation (SFA) charge are detailed in paragraph 5 below and will be introduced on 1 October 2020. This change will not be back dated and only applies to the charges from 1 October 2020 onwards

2. The policy change being implemented makes necessary changes to the location classification factor within the Combined Accommodation Assessment System (CAAS) charging methodology. This change will bring CAAS charging in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales in line with England by introducing a location assessment based on access to local services. This methodology has been in use in England since 2016, but data for including accessibility to key amenities was not available at the time in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales and therefore was only applied across SFA in England. This change will deliver a fairer application of the UK Location Factor and means that CAAS is measured in the same way for all Service Family Accommodation across the UK. This change has been developed collaboratively with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) and is fully endorsed by single Service Housing Colonels.

3. By way of a brief reminder, your Location Assessment is based on accessibility to services using individual property postcodes. Each property's CAAS charging band is decided using four location factors:

- a. The property is classified as either:
 - (i) urban (less than 20 minutes travel to key services);
 - (ii) intermediate (between 20 and 40 minutes);
 - (iii) remote (more than 40 minutes).
- b. Accessibility to eight Key Services¹(step 2)
- c. Broadband accessibility (24 Mbit/s) (step 3)

¹ These are: (1) Food store (2) General Practitioners (3) Employment Centre (4) Primary School (5) Secondary School (6) Further Education Institution (7) Hospital (8) Town centre

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- d. and Deprivation (step 4).

These factors are used to produce an overall CAAS band for each property. Rental discounts are then applied to properties depending on how they measure against the four factors, and the property is adjusted to a lower rent category as required, with the starting level set at the urban category (no discount), and the lowest rent level capped at the remote category. Location classification is refreshed every four years (as per JSP 464 Vol 3). The next refresh will be implemented in April 2025, so April 2021 will be year one.

3. The MOD Accommodation Policy Team has been working alongside a DIO Data, Analytics & Insight team since January 2019 to produce a tool that ensures accessibility to key services is factored in, alongside refreshing all aspects of the location classification.

4. How Will This Affect Your CAAS Band?

a. **SFA at the Final Band-for-Charge.** Occupants who reside in a property which reached its final Band-for-Charge, if on a transition pathway, on the 1 April 20, will see their CAAS Band change on 1 October 2020. If an occupant sees an increase by two Bands, a new transition pathway will be introduced, so only one Band a year increase is realised. If an occupant sees a decrease in their Band-for-Charge then there will be no reimbursement for previous charges paid, as the changes only apply from 1 October 2020 onwards.

b. **SFA on a Transition Pathway.** Where an SFA is on a transition pathway for charges, any change will be applied to the final Band-for-Charge only, which may extend or reduce the length of transition. Occupants will receive their annual transition letter in March 2021 to re-confirm the transitional pathway.

5. Location Details:

a **Location classification.** This table shows your current and revised location classification.

	Current	Revised (from 1 October 20)
Rural Urban pan-UK classification	Data not originally provided	<revised classification>
Accessibility	<current accessibility>	<revised accessibility>
Broadband speed (Mbits/s)	<broadband speed>	< broadband speed>
Deprivation	<current deprivation>	<revised deprivation>
Location – overall score	<current location>	<revised location>

b **SFA classification.** As a result of your revised overall location score, the classification of your SFA will **<decrease/no change/increase>** by **<0/1/2>** CAAS band(s).

5. **Your Right to Challenge Your SFA’s CAAS Band.** You have the opportunity to challenge your SFA’s CAAS Banding within 28 working days from the 1 October 2020². The policy and details specific to your SFA will be available at this point for you to check. Challenges relating to this letter and change will not be accepted after the 10 November 20. Details on how to challenge are included at Enclosure 1. This letter provides you with the notification of the change to your charge that will be introduced on 1 October 2020 and no action is required from you at this time.

² New policy implementation date.

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6. **Summary.** The addition of the CAAS Location accessibility factor means that every country in the UK will have all steps included when measuring the overall Location Factor classification which results in a more accurate and fair charge for SFA. The addition of the CAAS Location accessibility factor is endorsed by the single Service Housing Colonels.

Full detail of the policy will be available in JSP 464 Volume 3 Parts 1 and 2. These will be published 1 October 2020 and a link will be provided to access specific accessibility data. Updates on the policy will also be located on GOV.UK, Defnet and the MOD intranet DIO CAAS pages.

Yours faithfully,

CAAS Team

Enclosure:

1. Your right to challenge your SFA's location assessment.

YOUR RIGHT TO CHALLENGE YOUR SFA'S LOCATION ASSESSMENT

1. **Right to Challenge.** If you believe an error has been made in assessing the location classification of your SFA, you have the right to challenge the assessment within 28 working days from the policy implementation date when evidence for accessibility will be available for viewing.
2. **Basis of Challenge.** Location assessment data is based on accessibility to services and determined by a pan-UK classification system, using individual property postcodes. Each property will be assessed as **Urban**, **Intermediate** or **Remote** based on the following criteria:
 - a. **Initial Geographical Classification.** The three Government rural-urban area classification systems (England & Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) are used to place an SFA into an initial geographical classification of Urban, Intermediate or Remote.
 - b. **Accessibility to Key Services.** The accessibility of the SFA is assessed based on a measure of the average travel time to a maximum of eight key services by public transport/walking.
 - c. **Broadband Accessibility.** The broadband accessibility is measured for the SFA using Ofcom data for average broadband download speed.
 - d. **Deprivation.** Adverse social factors are measured for the SFA using the Government Indices of Multiple Deprivation mechanism.

When considering the basis of your challenge, you should familiarise yourself with the full details of changes including Condition, Scale and Location criteria by reading JSP464 Volume 3 Part 2. This will be available from 1 October 20 at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/jsp-464-tri-service-accommodation-regulations-tsars>.

3. **Submitting your Challenge.** All Challenges (both at Stage 1 and at Stage 2) will be processed via a single point of contact and must be submitted in writing or by email¹ to:

Address: CAAS Team – Amey, The Matchworks, Unit 4 Speke Road, Garston, L19 2PH

Email: CAASchallenges@AmeyDefenceServices.r.mil.uk

You can also access a template letter on defnet or GOV.UK here:

<http://defenceintranet.diif.r.mil.uk/Organisations/Orgs/DIO/Reference/Publications/Pages/CAAS.aspx>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/jsp-464-tri-service-accommodation-regulations-tsars>.

4. **CAAS Two Stage Challenge Process.** The two stage Challenge process is:
 - a. **Stage 1 - Challenge.** Stage 1 will be administered by Amey with DIO oversight; Amey has **three** working days to acknowledge receipt of your Challenge. Allow **28** working days for a response in full. A Challenge will have two possible outcomes:
 - (1) **Uphold the Challenge.** Where it is agreed that the assessment is incorrect (in accordance with JSP464), the Challenge will be upheld, and the assessment amended accordingly if appropriate.
 - (2) **Reject the Challenge.** If the correct assessment is apparent, the Challenge will be rejected. An Appeal to this decision can be made at Stage 2 (see below).
 - b. **Stage 2 - Right to Appeal.** You retain the right to Appeal an unsuccessful Challenge. The timescales mirror Stage 1 and the Appeal will be administered by DIO. An Appeal will have two possible outcomes mirroring those at Stage 1: **Uphold** or **Reject**. However, if the Stage 2 Appeal is not upheld any further recourse is via a formal Service Complaint detailed in JSP831.

¹ Telephone Challenges will not be accepted.