

DAS- Q&A

Who does this apply to?

The DAS applies to all Regular and Full Time Reserve Service (Full Commitment) personnel and their families and those undergoing training.

The DAS will also be used by officials on how to allocate and utilise Defence accommodation, and on the standards for that accommodation.

Why is accommodation provision changing?

The current accommodation offer:

- **Is inequitable** - the current model only provides subsidised accommodation for those who are married or in a civil partnership and is, in some cases, based on rank rather than need. Couples in established long term relationships will be entitled to the same accommodation options as those who are married or in civil partnerships, this will become established policy currently from October 31st, 2023.
- **Is outdated** – we want to improve the standards of Service Family Accommodation and Single Living Accommodation but also enable people the ability to use Private Rental Sector and Home Ownership if they wish.

Will my accommodation or accommodation offer change?

No changes are assured or can be confirmed until the commencement of new accommodation policy, currently 31st of October 2023.

This is dependent on your individual circumstance. Increasing entitlement will begin from Oct 2023; allocation based on need rather than rank will be subject to transitional projection and delivery against the new standards of SLA will be confirmed through FLC delivery plans with trial work continuing on how best to support hybrid workers.

Does basing accommodation on need rather than rank erode ‘the offer’?

Entitlement to accommodation will be fairer under the new policy and allocated based on need not rank, with SP in established long-term relationships entitled to accommodation in the same way as those who are married or in civil partnerships. Many SP do not live in Service accommodation and therefore do not receive any ‘reward’ from rank-based entitlements – moving to a needs-based model means all SP will be supported to meet their accommodation and Service needs, with reward for seniority and rank recognised through pay.

How do I ‘establish’ my long-term relationship (LTR(E))?

You will need to register your LTR(E) on JPA and have it verified by unit HR for it to be approved. Details of what represents a qualifying LTR(E) and evidence required can be found in [JSP 464, Volume 1, Part 1, Chapter 1](#).

I am based at a current FAM site; will I see a marked change in my accommodation choice??

The FAM pilot continues as normal on those nominated FAM Sites. For more details, please see [What you need to know about the Future Accommodation Model - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/what-you-need-to-know-about-the-future-accommodation-model)

Do the new rules regarding established long-term relationships change any other non-accommodation benefits?

Not at this time. Other work within the Defence space will be looking at this, though the DAS relates only to the accommodation offer.

Will Forces Help to Buy (FHTB) still be available when the pilot ends?

The UK Armed Forces commits to continuing the support it provides to SP who are looking at home ownership, continuing its effort to provide family stability within an inherently mobile job, while raising the home ownership statistics of the armed forces in line with national statistics.

The DAS commits to support SP in aspirations of home ownership and work is being conducted to provide an enduring solution.

How does this new strategy work with the FAM pilot?

The fairer allocation based on LTR(E), and 'Need over Rank' are already being trialled on the FAM sites. This strategy now makes this allocation process enduring beyond the pilot.

The FAM pilot is still running at 3 sites and will continue to inform our policies.

How does this affect training sites?

With regards to accommodation allocation there are no changes to the current policy.

The new standards such as the DMS and sustainability targets set within the DAS are also targets for the training estate.

Does this affect my overseas accommodation?

This iteration of the DAS only concerns UK accommodation. Overseas accommodation will be discussed in the next iteration (2024) but we are looking at what we can change now to support more choice in overseas accommodation.

- **SLA**

Why has the National Audit Office commented on the poor standard of SLA?

The differing age and geographies of the estate means there is considerable variation in the type and quality of SLA. A historic period of underinvestment and the 'listed' nature of some buildings has led to some subpar and outdated accommodation.

In 2018, SLA budgets were delegated to Front Line Commands (FLCs); these budgets increased by around 18%, with FLCs having developed plans to upgrade SLA through replacement and renovation.

There have been significant improvements in SLA and each FLC has created delivery plans that best meet their needs.

In July 2020, a Fiscal Stimulus £200 million was given to Defence to spend on Accommodation, what was spent on SLA?

£78m of this Financial Stimulus was delegated to SLA and used to create future improvements on the following sites:

- HMS Raleigh
- HMS Gannet
- HMS Yeovilton
- Palace Barracks
- Victoria Barracks
- Somme Barracks
- Weeton Barracks
- Wellington Barracks
- RAF Honnington
- RAF Braze Norton

When will I know if my SLA meets the new standard?

Single Services have already prioritised significant investment into SLA improvement plans over the next decade. Through the Annual Budgeting Cycle 2021, SLA investment plans have been updated in line with deliverability considerations and wider Defence investment decisions, including those required by the Integrated Review.

The new DMS will develop a new baseline to direct future investment decisions and delivery plans. Following publication of the DAS, the Defence estate will be assessed against the new baseline so that FLCs can develop their delivery plans to get the rest of the estate up to this standard. These will be published in due course.

How does this relate to my grade for charge for accommodation?

SLA that meets the DMS will continue to be graded and charged against the existing 4 Tier Grading criteria. This will continue to ensure that the variance in SLA quality above the DMS and related factors, such as distance from base, are reflected in the accommodation charge paid by SP.

From 1 Apr 24 if your room does not meet the DMS, your room must be repaired to meet the DMS, other remedial actions applied, or you will be relocated to alternative accommodation which meets the DMS.

I currently have a permanent SLA allocation, but live elsewhere at the weekend etc. Will I lose my entitlement or my permanent room?

Not at this time. In the future, as we manage our SLA portfolio more proactively, depending on your working pattern you may be allocated temporary SLA (more like staying in an hotel for a few days) if you only need a room a few nights a week, but those for whom SLA is their primary home will still be able to choose to occupy SLA full time. Work is ongoing in the Defence People Accommodation policy space to ensure that SP are provided accommodation appropriate to their needs. This work is part of the Future Workplace Strategy ensuring that the accommodation provision fully supports all SP and the large spectrum of working practices undertaken by SP in line with JSP 750.

Currently policy is being drafted and trialled regarding the difference between temporary and permanent use SLA and the introduction of hybrid working. In the future you may be allocated temporary SLA as we manage our SLA portfolio more proactively.

Currently SLA Entitlement is not based on need. Work is ongoing to define 'need' in the SLA space and in the future, Entitlement and Eligibility may be linked to this. What is important to note here is that the standard of accommodation will be the same no matter the entitlement, only if entitlement is on a temporary or permanent basis.

I own my own property, but far from where I am assigned? Am I entitled to SLA on weekdays? Is the cost of this waived?

Whilst there may be individual nuances that affect a Service Person's entitlement, homeowners as a cohort may continue to benefit from MOD owned subsidised accommodation, both SLA & SFA. Current entitlements are set out within JSP 464 Vol 1 & 2.

From 31 October 2023 aspects of your accommodation offer will change as we implement the findings from the Future Accommodation Model (FAM) to modernise the accommodation offer, in particular the use of the SLA waiver and to whom it applies.

Where SP have utilised Forces Help To Buy to enable property ownership, there are specific eligibilities for the continued use of SLA/SFA. For further information, please refer to JSP Vol 4 Chapter 12.

- **SFA**

What is the standard of SFA?

SFA is measured against the Decent Home Standard, which is also used for civilian accommodation. 97.2% of SFA meets or exceeds this standard. Accommodation that does not meet this standard is not allocated.

The Decent Home Standard is set by central government and is primarily aimed at social housing providers. As such Defence has set an enhanced target, called Decent Homes Plus, and 90.5% of SFA achieve or exceed this standard.

As government is currently reviewing the Decent Homes Standard, Defence will also undertake a similar review with a view to enhancing the Decent Homes Plus target standard.

What do I do if I believe my SFA does not meet the Decent Home Standard?

If you believe your SFA does not meet Decent Home Standard, then you can challenge this with your FDIS contractor. The process is covered in JSP 464, Vol 3 and includes an example template letter.

I am currently eligible to surplus SFA but not entitled due to my long-term relationship. When does this change?

The changes in the DAS come into effect at the following the completion of the FAM pilot and the roll out of new accommodation policy, currently 31st October 2022.

It should be noted that this will take effect on your next assignment after the FAM roll out.

It is advised to register your relationship as soon as you are able and begin to collect the required proofs.

The DAS commits to provide the Defence estate with high-quality broadband connections. When will that concur?

This is a new project which Defence Digital will deliver. Timelines and costs are currently being scoped and consultation is taking place with other government departments.

When will Defence seek Service Personnel's views on their accommodation? How will this occur?

A survey on the use of SLA was published in September. Following that further exploration of the 'Lived Experience,' in Defence accommodation will be conducted. Once baselines are in place this will be renewed annually to allow Defence to guide future use based on SP accommodation views and needs.

When will the quality of current stock be improved?

The FLC's will be creating delivery plans, scheduling and budgeting the improvement works guided by the DAS with a phased investment approach from 2023/4

Governance

What is different about this? How do we know change will come?

This strategy is written with ministerial approval and sets targets for TLBs to meet. Chief of Defence People (CDP) is the direct sponsor and there will be quarterly reports ensuring that the changes are delivered across the estate in accordance with FLC plans.

UPDATE to FAQ 07 Nov 2022:

How are SP and families being consulted on future accommodation policy?

We are actively consulting Service personnel, their families and representatives to understand their accommodation preferences as the FAM pilot progresses. We are using this feedback from the pilot to agree the best way forward. A decision on FAM's Full Business Case is expected in early 2023 and a comprehensive change and communications plan will support the end of the FAM Pilot and the introduction of the new accommodation offer which is expected to launch from autumn 2023.

Where will the additional housing come from? Currently severe shortage of SFA in many key housing areas.

The widening of entitlement is linked to the Future Accommodation Model which, subject to the approvals process, is planned to be implemented in October 2023. A decision on FAM's Full Business Case is expected in early 2023 and a comprehensive change and communications plan will support the end of the FAM Pilot and the introduction of the new accommodation offer which is expected to launch from autumn 2023.

What does "needs" mean – is this family size?

Defence will ensure Service personnel should be supported to access the accommodation they need. Subsidised accommodation will be allocated based primarily on the needs of Service personnel and their families, ending the use of accommodation based on rank.

If based on family size, who is defined as part of the family? Will it include children over 18 not in NEETS and “boomerang” children returning home due to high rents etc?

A decision on FAM's Full Business Case is expected in early 2023 and a comprehensive change and communications plan will support the end of the FAM Pilot and the introduction of the new accommodation offer which is expected to launch from autumn 2023.

Some perception that Lt Cols and above are exempt from this (not just command appointments/tied house but anyone OF4 and above, regardless of role).

That is not true. Defence will ensure Service personnel should be supported to access the accommodation they need. Subsidised accommodation will be allocated based primarily on the needs of Service personnel and their families, ending the use of accommodation based on rank.

How will the housing charges work? Will ORs taking large former OF houses pay significantly higher rent? Will houses have a set charge regardless of occupant rank/number of people living there?

Under a needs-based model, SP will pay the appropriate charge for the property they occupy, and this will not differ by rank.

Is SFA entitlement not part of TACOS and therefore cannot be downgraded?

No. Entitlement to SFA does not form part of Conditions of Service. Conditions of Service (JSP 750) references levels of reward ie. pay, pension etc and life support ie. accommodation, messing, medical care etc, to retain and ensure the long-term commitment and mobility of SP. The accommodation requirements for Service personnel is based on personal circumstances and/or the requirements of specific Command appointments. Direction & Guidance in relation to SFA entitlement can be found in JSP 464.

Will the policy be applied equally for all 3 Services? RAF are currently not allowed to be housed in a below entitlement house but Army can be, if not how will Tri-Service locations works?

Accommodation is a Tri Service Policy. Defence will ensure Service personnel should be supported to access the accommodation they need.

Are all ranks covered by the ‘Service person’s need’ as the main consideration? Will Senior officers, where job role is irrelevant, be offered the same housing options as a junior Service personnel with the same family size/dynamic?

Subsidised accommodation will be allocated based primarily on the needs of Service personnel and their families, ending the use of accommodation based on rank. Tied housing will remain as appropriate.

How will it work for SP who employ au pairs?

We are actively consulting Service personnel, their families and representatives to understand their accommodation preferences as the FAM pilot progresses. We are using this feedback from the pilot to agree the best way forward. A decision on FAM's Full Business Case is expected in early 2023 and a comprehensive change and communications plan will support the end of the FAM Pilot and the introduction of the new accommodation offer which is expected to launch from autumn 2023.

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I have other questions about the DAS. Who can I ask?

The sS points of contact for the DAS are:

- Air - Murty, Dawn Gp Capt (Air-COSPers-Del Com Spt DACOS)
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- Army - Drummond, Leigh Col (Army Pers-Pol-PersSvcs-AH)
Leigh.Drummond457@mod.gov.uk
- Strat-Com - Pottinger, Eppie Lt Col (UKStratCom-HR-Corp-StratPol SO1)
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- Navy - Murray, Al Cdr (NAVY PEOPLE-PS CRM SO1)
<Al.Murray928@mod.gov.uk>

3- Additional background information

- Currently, the MOD provides Service personnel and their families with subsidised accommodation to enable their mobility in support of Defence capability. Service accommodation is allocated according to relationship status and Service rank or family size. Across the UK and overseas the Department provides and maintains around 56,000 properties for personnel accompanied by their families, and around 136,000 single bed spaces for personnel who serve unaccompanied.
- While the current offer is attractive for some, for many it is not: many Service personnel are essentially unable to choose how, where or with whom they live within Service accommodation. Our current system means we often cannot account for Service personnel's increasingly varied accommodation needs and preferences; the benefit of the current offer is unevenly spread among the Service personnel population as a result. This inflexibility forces some Service personnel

to opt out of subsidised accommodation, while others are forced to compromise on family life because we cannot support their preferences.