



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

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# DEFENCE ACCOMMODATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY



**DEFENCE ESTATES**  
*Delivering Estate Solutions to Defence Needs*

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## Executive Summary

1. The provision of good quality living accommodation for both married and single Service personnel continues to be a top Departmental priority. After decades of under funding, the standard of MOD's accommodation has lagged behind the expectations of our people in terms of condition, available space and amenities offered. Investment over the last seven years has begun to correct this, but there is much more to be done. The Department plans to spend some £3Bn in accommodation investment programmes over the next 10 years. Secured and planned funding levels for accommodation are at their highest levels for decades. This paper aims to set out how MOD's accommodation will be managed over the next 10 years.

2. **Policy.** The overall policy remains for MOD to provide a 'mixed economy' in accommodation: publicly provided houses and single rooms at discounted rents for those who need them; the option for personnel to serve accompanied by their families; and a wider range of options for those who wish to buy their own homes.

3. **The Requirement.** The MOD maintains some 70,000 houses and 160,000 single bed spaces worldwide. The requirement, both in location and in overall numbers, is constantly changing, as the estate is rationalised to support operational capability and as individual preferences change. Forecasting requirement is therefore a very uncertain science but by 2020 the demand is expected to have fallen to some 65,000 houses and 140,000 single rooms, driven largely by previous personnel reductions, and rationalisation of the estate onto fewer larger sites. The overall requirement for both SFA and SLA will be updated by DE every 6 months. The current assumption is that MOD will continue to provide and manage this stock; however, radical alternatives for families' accommodation, such as the Australian model of contracting an independent Housing Provider, are being actively studied. Adoption of one of these would radically change the forecast requirement for publicly owned accommodation.

5. **Living Accommodation Grading.** Property is graded for charge in 4 levels determined by: its physical **condition**; the **scale** of space and facilities; its **location** in relation to local amenities; and **environmental** factors such as noise. The methodology for assessing both the physical condition and the grade for charge of each house or bed space is currently under review. In parallel the method of capturing and managing data is also being revised. The review aims to introduce a single methodology for assessing the physical condition of both SFA and SLA, and then factoring in a revised set of scale, location and energy efficiency parameters to produce a fairer charging mechanism. The review will be complete in 2009

6. **Service Families Accommodation (SFA).** Since 2001 some 14,000 houses have been upgraded to the top standard for condition. However, the first full condition survey of houses in England and Wales, still in progress in early 2009, has revealed that there are fewer houses at that standard than previously thought. The

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very detailed information provided by the survey will help target improvement programmes. For SFA the effort is in six areas:

- A programme of major upgrades for houses in the worst condition (Standard 3 and 4), typically providing a new kitchen, bathroom, heating system and often a new roof and windows.
- A programme of condition improvement aimed principally at houses in moderate condition (Standard 2), typically providing a modernised bathroom, kitchen or heating system.
- Improved maintenance delivery through a series of initiatives being rolled out through the spring and summer of 2009
- Improved stock management with quicker and more effective preparation of houses between family moves. This will help drive down the number of 'void' properties towards the target of 10% of the total stock.
- Continued improvements to the allocation process through the Housing Information Centres, in particular providing better informed local input to the process, and providing limited 'estate agent-style' details for new occupants by the end of 2009.
- Better communication and consultation with SFA occupants about all the above initiatives.

The initial focus will be on the Standard 3 and 4 properties, with the aim of ensuring that by March 2013 very little, if any, of the occupied UK SFA estate should be below Standard 2. The outcome of the work from 2013 onwards will depend on the changing demand for SFA over the next 10 years, for example as more service personnel buy their own homes, and the availability of funding. Subject to these constraints, the aspiration for 2020 is that all occupied houses will be at Standard 1, with the exception of a few overseas, which will be at Standard 2.

7. **Single Living Accommodation (SLA).** Progress with the major investment in SLA over the last 7 years is such that we now have some 35,000 bed-spaces for trained personnel at the highest modern standard (Z Scale) out of a requirement of 95,000. A further 20,000 are at Grade 2. The strategy for continuing this investment is in four areas:

- A programme of building new accommodation blocks to full scale modern standard, typically for trained personnel in single rooms with en-suite facilities.
- Major refurbishment of some existing blocks. Sometimes this will be to full Z scale standards, but in some cases it may be appropriate to have a mix of refurbished accommodation, for example with some single rooms having to share toilets and showers.
- A programme of minor improvements to older blocks that are not due for replacement or refurbishment within the next 5 years. This will focus on facilities most needed by the occupants such as new furniture, modernised showers and toilets, improved storage space, improved heating systems and better Internet access.

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- The collection and maintenance of better data about SLA use and condition across the world.

The Department's aim is that by March 2013 about 50% of trained personnel will be in Grade 1 Z scale SLA. There is much less certainty about both demand and funding beyond that, but our intent is that by 2020 some 70% will be in Grade 1 SLA and the remainder in Grade 2. By that time, all accommodation for initial trainees should be at the appropriate scale (X or Y) and most will be at Grade 1. Transit accommodation is the lowest priority for improvement and some is likely to be at the lower grades even by 2020.

8. **Sustainability.** All the above will be carried out in the context of the Department's commitments on sustainability and energy efficiency. For example, from 2008 all new SFA will meet, as a minimum, Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Houses. Energy efficiency measures such as roof insulation are being specifically targeted over the next 5 years in areas where existing insulation does not meet modern standards. We are on track to meet our target of a 25% reduction in CO2 emissions by 2020 compared to 1990 levels.

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## Introduction

9. The two underpinning principles behind the Service Personnel Command Paper<sup>1</sup> which was published in July 2008 are to end any disadvantage that service in the Armed Forces imposes on Service personnel, their families and veterans, and how better to support and recognise those who have been wounded in the Service of their Country. The Paper goes on to state that: there should be as much lifestyle choice as any other citizen; there should be continuity of public services; there should be proper return for sacrifice; the wider Armed Forces 'constituency' should be considered when making cross-government legislation. It makes ten commitments in the area of Housing.

10. This paper responds in particular to the commitment to develop a management strategy for the substantial land and accommodation assets that MOD owns, leases, manages and maintains. The aim of the Defence Accommodation Management Strategy is to build on the principles of the Command Paper by setting out how Service accommodation will be managed over the next 10 years.

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<sup>1</sup> The Nation's Commitment: Cross-Government Support to our Armed Forces, their Families and Veterans

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## Chapter 1: Context

### FUNDAMENTALS

11. Stock Distribution. The MOD maintain some 70,000 families' homes, known as Service Families Accommodation (SFA), and around 160,000 single living bed spaces, known as Single Living Accommodation (SLA) across a wide and mixed range of sites in 16 different countries. An eclectic mix of types exists, owing in part to differing requirements, ages of stock and funding authorities involved in its earlier provision.

12. Stock Definitions. For the purposes of this Paper, the stock of Service accommodation can be defined as:

a. Core Stock. Core stock is defined as those properties which are required to be retained in the long term to support the continued public provision of SLA and SFA.

b. Surplus Stock. Surplus stock is defined as Service accommodation that has no identified long-term MOD requirement and is considered for disposal. SFA is normally disposed of by either returning it to Annington Homes Limited (AHL) in line with the agreement (outlined in paragraph 16 below) or, if MOD owned, sold on the open market. Surplus SLA is often used for alternative, temporary purposes (eg offices) or is demolished.

13. Accommodation Inside/Outside the Wire. In the UK the majority of SLA and over 8,500 SFA properties sit within the perimeter fence of military establishments. These are known as 'inside the wire.' It is difficult to dispose of those properties when they become surplus to requirements without costly changes to perimeter infrastructure. As a result, the MOD makes full use of stock 'inside the wire' commensurate with Service personnel policy.

14. Factors Unique to Military Accommodation. Military accommodation and SLA in particular, has specific requirements and demands that set it apart from similar private sector accommodation, such as student flats. From a fitness for purpose perspective, military utilisation of facilities demands a greater degree of robustness of materials, fittings and fixtures than is required from external comparators. Other unique factors include:

a. Counter Terrorist Measures (blast protection, special glazing and structural strengthening).

b. Crown Fire Standards (generally more stringent than Local Authority regulations).

c. Security requirements/procedures of working on military sites 'behind the wire.'



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d. Military SLA is the occupants' home and thus requires more space, fitting and fixtures than temporary accommodation. In particular, Service personnel require significant storage space to accommodate extensive personal equipment required to meet their operational roles.

15. Ownership. Most SLA in UK is owned by the Department. Overseas, some is owned directly but much is effectively leased from host Governments. As regards SFA, MOD owns most of the properties in Scotland and Northern Ireland, a few in England and Wales, and some overseas. The remainder are leased through a variety of arrangements.

16. The Agreement with Annington Homes Ltd (AHL). The largest lease is with AHL. MOD sold the majority of its SFA stock in England and Wales to AHL in 1996. The Agreement with AHL is a 'lease and leaseback' transaction. AHL acquired a 999 year leasehold interest with an automatic right to acquire the freehold as properties become surplus to MOD requirements. Simultaneously, MOD took out a 200 year leaseback for all those houses that the Department wished to retain. As part of this agreement, MOD pays a discounted rental equivalent to 42% of Open Market Rent. MOD is, however, responsible for the management, maintenance and repair of the houses it has leased back. The contract with AHL will be reviewed in 2021 at which point the rental will be renegotiated. MOD was required to hand back a certain number of houses to AHL before 2021, but this number has already been exceeded. AHL is entitled to ask for more houses to be handed back either before or after 2021, but the Department is under no obligation to meet such requests.

## STOCK MANAGEMENT

17. Allocation of Properties. Unit staffs undertake management of the allocations for SLA bed spaces. For SFA in the UK, the management of allocations is conducted through a network of seven geographically based DE Housing Information Centres (HICs). In Germany and the Permanent Joint Operating Bases (PJOBS) of Cyprus, Gibraltar and the South Atlantic, allocation is managed under local arrangements.

18. Substitute Service Accommodation. High concentrations of Service personnel, particularly in the South of England, can result in insufficient available Service-owned accommodation. Where this occurs, single Service personnel are housed in Substitute Single Living Accommodation (SSLA) and Service Families are accommodated in Substitute Service Families Accommodation (SSFA), comprising fully serviced private rented properties within their required geographic area. A specialised contractor, the HCR Group, leases appropriate accommodation as close to entitlement as is viable on behalf of the MOD. The use of substitute Service accommodation can come at a high cost to the Department and is, in principle, only used to meet a temporary requirement for a specified period, usually a single tour of duty, as a last resort.

## MAINTENANCE

19. Service Family Accommodation. In the UK DE manages the maintenance of SFA except for PFI procured stock. In England and Wales there is one contractor, Modern Housing Solutions (MHS). The MHS contract was awarded in November 2005 and rolled out across 6 geographical zones from January 2006. It was designed to ensure a consistency of approach and levels of service across the SFA Estate, and to take advantage of economies of scale. Separate contracts deliver maintenance in Scotland and Northern Ireland. In Germany, DE manages the contract on behalf of the Army through local contractors. In Cyprus, Gibraltar and the Falklands, DE manages the housing through Integrated Service Provider (ISP) contracts providing routine management and maintenance services.

a. Planned Maintenance and Improvements. In England and Wales, MHS is responsible for an element of planned maintenance as determined by available funding, but provides opportunities for planning and procuring services nationwide. Within the Regional Prime Contract (RPC), ISP and PFI arrangements, the maintenance of SFA is, like SLA, an integral part of a holistic prioritised regime. In Germany, Army funding largely governs the level of SFA maintenance. Major improvement and upgrade works for SFA are individually planned and procured, according to scope, complexity and cost, and are separately funded.

b. Response Maintenance. In England and Wales, SFA occupants report faults to MHS through one central Help Desk prior to them being cascaded down to MHS Zones and managed by local staff within pre-determined response times. Where SFA is not maintained by MHS (Scotland, Northern Ireland, Germany and the Rest of the World), the RPCs, ISPs, In-house Facilities Management and PFI providers have Help Desks within their geographic areas that orchestrate the relevant works teams, again within pre-determined response times. The introduction of Help Desks has been generally well received and has paved the way for the centralisation of significant elements of accommodation data. However, it is important to balance the centralisation of support services with good local response and problem resolution.

20. Single Living Accommodation. Apart from that managed under PFI arrangements, UK SLA is maintained by each of the geographically arranged RPCs, ISPs and other partnering arrangements. All SLA assets are currently being graded for physical condition using the Physical Condition Grading Methodology, with target conditions standards set through the Integrated Estate Management Plans (IEMPs) produced for each establishment. In Germany, maintenance is managed by DE and delivered through the ISP, German Construction Agency and Garrison Works Alliance. Across the estate, in addition to standard maintenance work, improvement projects have to be individually planned and separately funded.

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## Chapter 2: Policy

21. The overall policy remains for MOD to provide a “mixed economy” in accommodation: publicly provided houses and single rooms at discounted rents for those who need them; the option for personnel to serve accompanied by their families; and assistance for those who wish to buy their own homes.

22. Defence Living Accommodation Strategy. The importance of accommodation in attracting and retaining sufficient, capable and motivated personnel is recognised through the Defence Living Accommodation Strategy (DLAS) which takes wider account of personnel issues. DLAS 06 was written to address the changing needs of both the Services and individual personnel, and to respond to the growing pressures on the accommodation budget. The strategy recommended that the concept of a mixed economy should be accelerated through MOD sponsored home ownership schemes and innovative provision of public accommodation. In the first half of 2008, DLAS 06 was refreshed and DLAS 08<sup>2</sup> was produced. The paper built on the principles of the mixed economy and outlined the detailed work that needed to be undertaken to produce the DLAS Delivery Plan. A list of DLAS priorities was agreed which focused on delivering quality SFA/SLA and continuing to develop strategies to grow the mixed economy solution. Priority was also given to working with Other Government Departments (OGDs) to ensure access to Government affordable homeownership schemes taking into account future force structures and locations and implementing the Prime Minister’s commitment to help Service personnel to own a home (see para 26 below).

23. Accommodation Entitlements. Service personnel that are married, in a civil partnership or who have permanent custody of children are entitled to SFA. The type and size of property they are entitled to is determined by rank for officers and by family size for other ranks. For SFA there are five property sizes defined for officers and three for other ranks, including non-commissioned officers. There are minor differences in the entitlement of non-commissioned officers between the Services: warrant officers in the Royal Air Force are entitled to a four bedroom house regardless of family size, while those in the Royal Navy and Army are entitled to SFA according to family size. For SLA entitlement varies according to Rank, with allowance increasing with progress through the Rank structure. Entitlements are kept under constant review as social conditions and family expectations change. For example, the long term trend in UK is for family sizes to reduce. However, a growing number of service personnel have dependants from previous marriages who they wish to accommodate occasionally or permanently in their family home. It is difficult to provide houses which are large enough to cater for all possible needs, but every effort is made to keep the entitlement system fair and up to date.

24. Accompanied Service. The Services vary in the extent of their preference for Service personnel to serve ‘accompanied’ with their families. For the Army, accompanied service aids cohesion and morale, and helps it to provide support to

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<sup>2</sup> Defence Living Accommodation Strategy (DLAS) was endorsed by the Service Personnel Board in May 2008 and identified the need for a mixed economy of publicly and/or privately funded accommodation.

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families when the serving family member is deployed on operations overseas. The rate of deployment has increased markedly since 2001. In contrast, the continuous separation inherent in sea service has led the Royal Navy to develop an approach which places more emphasis on families making choices regarding living in SFA or their own homes at the location that best suits their needs. The RAF falls between the two.

25. Home Ownership. In September 2006, Service personnel were designated Key Workers Status as part of the Key Worker Living Programme by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). Eligibility has since been broadened to give Service personnel access to the full range of Key Worker Living affordable housing schemes across all regions in England. A similar priority status has been given to Service personnel in Scotland and the Welsh Assembly has made a commitment to do the same when it re-launches its affordable housing programme in mid-2009.

26. Affordable Homes. The Department has undertaken an “Affordable Homes” Study to look for further innovative commercially viable solutions to assist Service personnel on to the housing ladder and to further support seriously injured Service personnel requiring adapted housing. In March 2008, the Prime Minister announced funding of £20Million over four years commencing in 2009 for a bespoke shared equity scheme to assist Service personnel into home ownership. This scheme is being developed in partnership with DCLG. A number of options are being further considered during 2009 which, if affordable and practical, could reduce the dependence on the public provision of housing, including the use of a Service Housing Provider and/or the introduction of a Basic Housing Allowance.

27. Alternatives for SFA. The Departments of Defence in both America and Australia have faced similar challenges with their public provision of Service housing, together with an increased expectation for home ownership. The American model is based on the gradual privatisation of housing stock both inside and outside the wire, while the Australians transferred housing to an independent service provider. The current assumption is that the MOD will continue to provide and manage their stock; however, radical alternatives for SFA will continue to be kept under consideration.

## Chapter 3: The Requirement

28. MOD maintains some 70,000 houses and 160,000 single bed spaces worldwide. The requirement, both in location and in overall numbers, is constantly changing as the estate is rationalised to support operational capability and as individual preferences change. The overall direction of travel for the estate is set out in the Defence Estate Development Plan (DEDP)<sup>3</sup>. The aim is to ensure that the Department supports longer term operational needs, but it must also allow for the creation of essential 'rattle space' for geographical fluctuations and sufficient headroom for the preparation of improvement programmes.

29. Area Accommodation Management Plans. Over the next two years Area Accommodation Management Plans (AAMP) will be produced bringing all accommodation requirements within defined geographical areas under one strategic plan. They will be agreed between DE and the TLBs and contain details of:

- a. Geographic Scope
- b. Accommodation Requirements
- c. Upgrade/New Build Programmes
- d. Maintenance
- e. Voids
- f. Disposals
- g. Substitute Accommodation

30. SFA Requirements. Of MOD's SFA worldwide, some 50,000 are in the UK and 20,000 overseas. The requirement for SFA is defined by the TLBs working in partnership with DE. The stock has reduced by about 15,000 over the last 10 years. Forecasting future requirement is not a straightforward process. We need to predict future levels of home ownership, the changing dynamic of family living and the extent to which individual Services will require personnel to live 'on-base'. If one of the radical alternative approaches described in paragraph 27 is followed, SFA numbers will reduce rapidly. However, the current forecast for worldwide requirement in 2020 is in the region of 65,000. A key challenge in meeting the requirement is the likely change in demand across geographical regions. For example, the draw down from Germany will see a reduction in the requirement for SFA there, balanced by an increase in UK, while in the South of England current shortages of SFA are set to increase against available stock before new houses can be made available. Two further challenges are the establishment of a super garrison in the West Midlands and possibly one further North or East, and the establishment of the Defence Training Academy in South Wales.

31. SLA Requirements. The MOD currently controls SLA stock of around 160,000<sup>4</sup>. Whilst some additional capacity will be required to address changes in force structures, there will be an overall net reduction, driven by previous reduction in

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<sup>3</sup> Defence Estate Development Plan published 30 June 2008

<sup>4</sup> All data in this section on SLA is drawn from the Worldwide SLA audit<sup>5</sup> completed in Jun 08.

the size of the armed forces, estate rationalisation and changes in the geographic footprint of the Services. For SLA, as for SFA, forecasting is an uncertain science. The current forecast of worldwide requirement in 2020 is for some 140,000 bed-spaces. Future uptake will be influenced by the future demographics of Services, social trends, the national and local economy and, not least, the standard of accommodation<sup>5</sup>. The forecast requirement is based on unit establishment figures and typical take-up rates by rank and Service. If a higher percentage of Service personnel buy their own homes, there is likely to be an increased need for SLA where personnel choose to stay in SLA during the working week. Figure 1 identifies the breakdown of the SLA requirement between trained personnel and trainees. Here again, the figures are approximate and will be used for general guidance only. The table also identifies the significant requirement, at Service establishments, for short term (transit) occupancy to meet a variety of short term demands, including surges in manpower occasioned by temporary operational requirement, e.g. the introduction of new equipment or preparation for deployment. Field training accommodation (eg hutted camps) is not included.

Figure 1: Approximate Breakdown of the SLA requirement in 2020 by type.

<b>SLA Accommodation Type</b>	<b>Bedspaces</b>	<b>%</b>
Single Rooms with en-suite facilities for Trained Personnel (Z scale)	95,000	69
4-Person Rooms for Part 2 Trainees (Y scale)	9,000	7
12-Person Rooms for Part 1 Trainees (X scale)	16,000	13
Transit Accommodation and Management Margin (see note)	20,000	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>140,000</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: Type varies according to length of occupancy and duties being undertaken. Personnel occupying accommodation for several months, eg while attached to undertake an equipment modification programme, require single en-suite rooms.

32. Estate Rationalisation and Strategic Change. Over the next 10 years there will be significant change to the Defence footprint resulting from the consolidation of the Defence Estate onto fewer larger sites. The larger rationalisation projects include: the progressive withdrawal from Germany (BORONA); the development of RAF Brize Norton (Future Brize); the rationalisation of Defence training (DTR); the co-location of the Army Headquarters at Andover (HYPERION); the relocation of Defence Medical Services to the Midlands; the development of an Army 'Super Garrison' in the West Midlands and a possible further one in the North or East; the rationalisation of MOD sites in and around London (MODEL); the rationalisation of the Defence Intelligence community (PRiDE); the creation of Naval Base centres of specialism at Portsmouth, Plymouth and Faslane under the Maritime Change Programme (MCP); and the introduction of new equipment platforms and associated changes to force structures.

<sup>5</sup> Where SLA is improved, demand increases.

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33. Updating the Requirement. In order to keep abreast of these changes, DE will revise the estimated requirement for both SFA and SLA on a six-monthly basis. Priorities for forward programmes will be re-considered at regular intervals by the Defence Estate Steering Group – a 3\* level group charged by the Defence Board with managing Estate issues.



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## Chapter 4: Living Accommodation Grading

34. All service accommodation is assessed for the “Grade for Charge” to be levied by its occupation. The overall level of charges is set annually by the Armed Forces Pay Review Body (AFPRB). Property is graded in 4 levels derived from a combination of the following factors:

- a. Condition. The physical condition of an SLA block is assessed using the “Asset Physical Condition Grading Methodology”. This considers the structure and the fabric of the building, together with the state of its mechanical and electrical installations. A separate and much more detailed system is currently used for SFA, based on a 105 point assessment of each property which encompasses both condition and scale (See below).
- b. Scale. The scale of a property is determined by its overall size, the number and size of rooms and factors such as the presence of modern electrical facilities and storage.
- c. Location. The location score considers the geographical position of the property in relation to local amenities, e.g. distance to shops, doctors, schools, public transport etc.
- d. Environment. This includes factors such as noise, proximity to electricity pylons, extremes of climate, excessive salt water spray, dust etc.

35. The system is designed so that if an occupant suffers any shortfall in any aspect of their property, points are deducted from the ideal maximum score. For a property to be in the highest grade (one) for charge, it would need to score highly in all four areas. The grade for each SLA or SFA property is determined by a Board of Officers which includes representatives from both DE and the Chain of Command. The system is designed so that any occupant who is disadvantaged by living in a property in need of renovation, or which is smaller than the appropriate scale or whose location or surrounding environment is not perfect, is compensated by paying a proportionately lower level of rent.

36. Living Accommodation Grading Review. The methodology for assessing both the physical condition and the grade for charge of each house or bed space is currently under review. In parallel, the method of capturing and managing data is also being revised. The review aims to introduce a single methodology for assessing the physical condition of both SFA and SLA, and then factoring in a revised set of scale, location and energy efficiency parameters to produce a fairer charging mechanism. The review will be complete in 2009.



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## Chapter 5: Service Family Accommodation

### BACKGROUND

37. The two principal problems affecting the SFA estate worldwide are too many empty or “void” houses, and not enough houses which have been upgraded or refurbished to the highest modern standards. A third problem, which is related to the previous two, is that changes to the geographic footprint of the armed forces over the last two decades mean we have too many houses in some areas and not enough in others.

38. SFA Voids. In 2008, the proportion of MOD maintained houses worldwide standing empty or 'void' reached 21% before dropping back to 18%. The enduring requirement for Service personnel to remain mobile results in some 20,000 UK moves into or out of SFA each year. So that personnel may be allocated the right type of property and in the right location, more properties are needed than the number of personnel requiring SFA. This is known as the 'Management Margin' and it is the principal driver for high void levels. Other factors include:

- a. Awaiting maintenance or refurbishment.
- b. Awaiting an anticipated future requirement, e.g. major unit move.
- c. Awaiting disposal.
- d. Properties that cannot be disposed of due to their location, e.g. inside the wire, security reasons.

However 18% is still much too high. The Department has set out a target for voids as 10% of total stock. This will be extremely challenging to meet but DE is driving hard to get down to this level by 2012. It will require some difficult decisions to be made by the three Services to release empty houses for disposal, some of which they may have been holding onto in case future requirements change.

39. SFA Condition. There has been uncertainty for some time about the actual condition of MOD houses. Data had been gathered in a piecemeal fashion rather than through comprehensive surveys. Accordingly, it was made part of the MHS maintenance contract that a full condition survey should be undertaken for all MHS-maintained properties in England and Wales. The survey began in 2007 and was 90% complete by March 2009. It will be completed later this Financial Year. Although the condition of housing in Scotland, Northern Ireland and overseas is better recorded, full surveys will also be carried out in those areas in due course. The results of the MHS survey showed that about 90% of houses are in the top two standards (Standards 1 and 2 for Condition), leaving 10% in the lower two standards (Standards 3 and 4 for Condition). The greatest change from previous assumptions was that the proportions in the top two Standards had reversed – there are some 33% at Standard 1 and 57% at Standard 2 rather than the other way round. This

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much more closely reflects the perception of the Estate's condition held by occupants and by the Families' Federations. The condition of housing overseas is mixed. In Germany, Gibraltar and the Falkland Islands it is generally better than in UK; in Cyprus it is generally less good.

## PROGRESS SO FAR

40. Since 2001 the Department has upgraded some 14,000 properties to Standard 1 for Condition (S1FC). During Financial Year 2008/2009, funding for the UK SFA Upgrade Programme increased from £18M to £38M. That together with programmes in Germany and Cyprus has enabled delivery of more than 1,000 further S1FC houses in 2008/09. Meanwhile smaller scale refurbishments have brought individual items such as new heating systems, new windows or new roofs to 2,000 or more houses each year.

## FUTURE STRATEGY

41. Using the more accurate information we now have on the condition of our SFA, especially in England and Wales, the major physical improvement programme is now being better targeted. Furthermore, drawing on DE's own reviews, the very thorough NAO report on Service housing published in March 2009, and on inputs from SFA occupants and Families' Federations, a number of other initiatives are underway to improve the management and allocation of SFA. The overall strategy consists of six distinct but closely related strands.

42. SFA Major Upgrade Programme. Funding available for major upgrades for those houses in the worst condition (Standard 3 and 4), will increase to £48M per annum from 1 April 2009. These will typically provide a new kitchen, bathroom, heating system and often a new roof and windows. This together with existing programmes in Germany and Cyprus will produce about 1,000 major upgrades per annum over the next few years. As part of the major upgrade programme, a number of new build projects have been identified and are currently in the planning phase e.g. RAF Brize Norton, St Athan in South Wales and in the garrisons around Salisbury Plain. The aim is to reach a point by 2012 when we do not have to house any family in a house which is at Standard 3 or 4 for condition, though at that point there may still be some houses in those two standards empty awaiting upgrade or disposal.

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### **Case Study 1 - Upgraded SFA - Dale Barracks**



When the 1st Battalion the Royal Welsh returned from a two and a half year tour of Cyprus to Dale Barracks in Chester, families moved into newly refurbished and modernised homes. The £10m project to renovate and modernise 175 SFA was carefully co-ordinated as part of the wider Housing Upgrade Programme and included the installation

of new kitchens, bathrooms, roofing, insulation, rewiring, comprehensive re-plastering and improvements to the surrounding area. The work has been undertaken by MHS, purpose-built joint venture company, made up from Carillion plc and Enterprise plc, which is responsible for the maintenance, upgrade and improvement of Service family homes in England and Wales.

### **Case Study 2 - New Build SFA - Lee-on-the-Solent**

On the site of the former naval airbase, HMS Daedalus, at Lee-on-the-Solent, 148 houses were built by Tricomm Housing, in close partnership with Defence Estates, under a private finance initiative (PFI) named project Daedalus. The project was finished in early 2007, two months ahead of schedule.



The four bedroom houses are for Royal Navy ratings and officers with larger families, based in the Portsmouth and Gosport area. Every house has a utility room, en-suite bathroom to the master bedroom, and a garage. The houses have been built to the latest standards, with a high level of insulation.

Tricomm is responsible for ongoing maintenance and repairs, grounds maintenance and estate management.

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43. Condition Improvement Programme. A programme of condition improvement, has been put in place aimed principally at houses in moderate condition (Standard 2). The Improvement Programme is already delivering tangible improvements including: the replacement of a substantial number of boilers, heating systems, replacement roofs, bathrooms, kitchens and house re-wiring, as well as energy efficiency measures, improved ground maintenance and community play parks.

44. Improving Maintenance Delivery. Following a difficult start to the MHS contract in 2006, performance measurement results show there has been a marked improvement in the maintenance of SFA in England and Wales. While the focus to improve service delivery is essential and recent efforts continue to make steady progress, DE is not complacent and accepts there is much more to be done. As part of this process, a number of initiatives to improve service delivery and occupant confidence are being implemented through the Spring and Summer of 2009. Examples include: 'Right First Time' to reduce house visits; better joint ways of working between MHS and DE staffs; a joint Strategic Communication Strategy; a simplified common complaints regime; and coherent management of strategic improvement plans. The benefits from these initiatives will be translated to housing arrangements in Scotland, Northern Ireland and our overseas bases. Other related initiatives include:

- Assurance and Compliance. The re-grouping and centralisation of the Housing Compliance Teams will improve their ability to undertake extensive audits under a wider governance regime. This will provide occupants with the reassurance that existing contract delivery is being robustly managed while monitoring customer satisfaction.
- Information Systems. To help improve housing stock management, a project to simplify Information Systems commenced in December 2008. Additionally, the introduction of Hand Held Devices by MHS across supply chain operatives will provide tangible supply chain efficiencies, improved ordering facilities, tracking and the delivery of individual jobs. Trials for this latest equipment were successfully undertaken in late 2008 and are currently being rolled-out across England and Wales as part of a wider comprehensive MHS Delivery Improvement Programme.
- Service Appreciation Training. For the benefit of occupants and to assist Housing teams, contract operatives are to undergo Service Appreciation Training to gain a better understanding of life in the military environment. This initiative has been welcomed by both military commanders and families groups.

### **Case Study 3 – Upgraded SFA - Blandford Camp**



Under the Defence Estate Development Plan, published in June 2008, it was officially confirmed that Blandford Camp would be retained for the Armed Forces, after the Headquarters Defence College of Communications and Information Systems and the Royal Wales.

Under the Housing Prime Contract with MHS, Defence Estates is soon to complete the £7.8m programme to upgrade 170 family quarters at Blandford Camp. The comprehensive refurbishment, work includes new kitchens and bathrooms, re-roofing and rewiring.

45. Improved Stock Management. An extensive review of voids across the Housing Estate is underway as part of a wider Housing Stock Review. This work, known as the Void Preparation Surge Programme, is already delivering much improved stock management with quicker and more effective preparation of houses between family moves. It is also reviewing all aspects of void management, stock control and housing allocation functions. Prioritisation is being targeted to those sites, particularly in the South of England, where high volume demands result in SFA shortages and the continued use of Substitute SFA. The aim is to reduce the number of void properties to meet Departmental targets of 10% of total stock by 2012 or earlier. It is important to maintain a management margin of about this level in order to cope with the very high level of house moves each year (some 20,000), to leave flexibility for refurbishment programmes and to cope with future major unit moves.

46. As void management programmes take effect and TLBs further develop strategic programmes, SFA forecasting will improve to provide increased clarity on stock (specifically location and numbers). In parallel, the updated Condition Review will provide DE with better information to assist with the management of SFA improvement plans on a site by site basis. Accordingly, DE will be better placed to continue making progress with void management, stock control, and the rationalisation and disposal of SFA. The overall objective is to reduce the amount of money spent on maintaining empty properties and focus resources on core stock.

47. Improved Allocation Process. To counter earlier criticism to the effect that military chains of command no longer considered themselves empowered to engage on housing matters following the transfer of responsibility and funding to DE, there has been a concerted effort to re-engage with all stakeholders. In July 2008 DE

commissioned a review of the UK Housing Information Centre (HIC) operation, including stakeholder communication, with representation from the TLBs and the Service Families Federations. This 'Learning from Experience' review has led to the introduction of improvements to the allocation process, with greater emphasis on working collaboratively with local commanders. Military liaison officers are being used to good effect in some HICs. Moreover, on-going work to better co-ordinate communication with occupants and individual units, known as the 'Enhanced Service Delivery Review', aims to provide a coherent approach to the management of the Housing Estate between contractors and DE housing teams on the ground. Finally, to improve move-in standards, an initiative is underway across several geographic regions to manage local stock more effectively prior to allocation. Specifically, properties will be formally handed back from the contractor at least 48 hrs prior to occupancy. Rightly, the focus is on 'first time' delivery and has the full support of the Housing community. Ultimately this will have the benefits of ensuring a property is both available and ready prior to family move-in.

48. Communication with SFA Occupants. A common criticism from NAO and other reports is that DE and contractor staff do not give sufficient advance warning to SFA occupants that programmes of work are about to take place or when changes to the programme occur. This failure has on occasions turned a housing upgrade project from a 'good news story' into a source of frustration and complaint. DE is determined to improve the flow of information to SFA occupants and the chain of command. Details of the housing upgrade programme looking up to two years ahead will be published on the MOD internet website. Occupants of all affected areas will be written to well in advance. Details of the Improvement Programme will also be promulgated well in advance. DE staff will make every effort to inform occupants when, as very often happens, plans change.

49. Consultation with SFA Occupants. There are a variety of consultation or discussion groups across the estate which bring together SFA occupants, DE staff and chain of command personnel. These have grown up in different ways to suit different local circumstances. It is not intended to impose a 'one-size-fits-all' template for these groups across the UK and overseas. However, advice will be sought from Families' Federations to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place in each location.

## WHAT WE EXPECT TO ACHIEVE

50. Our challenge is to raise the number of SFA in the UK at the highest condition<sup>6</sup> as soon as practicably possible. Our strategy is to remove the lowest standard properties<sup>7</sup> and to provide additional and improved facilities for the majority. In parallel, a further challenge will be to ensure that houses currently at the highest standard do not deteriorate. A 3-year plan aims to address the greatest in need first

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<sup>6</sup> The highest standard for condition is Standard 1 for Condition (S1fC), which provides an up-to-date range of facilities against scaled entitlements, compliance with latest building requirements and recently upgraded internal and external facilities, eg Modern Kitchens, and Bathrooms with showers.

<sup>7</sup> The lowest standards are S3fC and S4fC.



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by removing a large number of S3fC and S4fC properties whilst carrying out major refurbishments and a variety of smaller, but necessary, improvements. Our intent is that work will be undertaken on over 4,000 properties in each of the 3 years with some 800 of these reaching S1fC each year. So by March 2013 very little, if any, of the occupied UK SFA estate should be below S2fC.

51. From 2013 onwards we will switch the focus to bringing the S2FC houses up to S1FC. The intent is that all SFA will have modern showers, that loft insulation will conform to current Government requirements and that further energy measures will have been undertaken in order to meet the Government's 2020 housing targets. Moreover, all SFA should have modern electrical wiring that conforms to current requirements and is no older than 30 years, to enable replacement of or significant improvements to kitchens and bathrooms. Our aspiration is that kitchens and bathrooms should be no older than 15 years since installation. The outcome of this work will depend on the changing demand for SFA over the next 10 years, for example as more service personnel buy their own homes, and the availability of funding, but our aim is that by 2020 100% of occupied SFA in UK is likely to be at S1FC. Overseas, the condition of housing in Germany, Gibraltar and the Falkland Islands will remain higher than, or broadly the same as that in UK. In Cyprus, we estimate that around 50% of occupied SFA should be at S1FC by 2020 with the remainder at S2FC.

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## Chapter 6: Single Living Accommodation (SLA)

### BACKGROUND

52. Accommodation scales are laid down for the size of the rooms, the amount of storage space and other facilities. The scales for SLA have evolved through the years to acknowledge the latest requirements of modern day living. The most significant recent change in 1998 was the move to accommodate trained service men and women in single rooms with en-suite toilets and showers. At that time the great majority of SLA did not meet the new standard, thus major updating was required.

53. In 2001 an SLA Modernisation (SLAM) programme was announced by the then Secretary of State for Defence. Some £1Bn would be spent over 10 years to deliver 18,500 bed-spaces in UK by 2013. A series of other projects, including some large PFIs, were initiated in parallel with the SLAM programme; they are often referred to as the 'parallel projects'.

### PROGRESS SO FAR

54. Between 1 Apr 03 and 31 Mar 09, the SLAM programme and 'parallel' projects brought the number of SLA bed-spaces which are at the highest standard for facilities, space, fixtures and fittings (i.e. are at Grade 1) up to about 35,000. Examples include major projects for the Army at Alexander Barracks, Pirbright (1,500 beds) and Catterick (2,800 beds), the Navy at Lympstone (1,050 beds) and the RAF at Coningsby (550 beds). As regards the 'parallel' projects, the Colchester Garrison PFI (Project Armada) has delivered 2,000 bed spaces and Allenby/Connaught PFI a further 1,200 beds from a programme of 10,000 at Aldershot and Tidworth. The Devonport Dockyard PFI has also delivered 1,500 beds and Project Neptune in Faslane 1,750 beds. Overseas, Project PUMA has delivered 2,200 modernised bed spaces in Germany, and in Cyprus, 650 bed-spaces will be delivered at Episkopi and Akrotiri in 2009 and 2010. This is good progress and the reaction from Service personnel to the newly modernised accommodation has been very positive. However, of the accommodation for trained personnel, this leaves around 20,000 beds at Grade 2, that is just below the top standard, and a further 40,000<sup>8</sup> in the lower two grades. Of the 25,000 beds required for trainees, most are at the required scale (that is, 12-person rooms for Phase 1 trainees and 4-person rooms for Phase 2 trainees) however only 29% are at the top two grades. The remaining 20,000 SLA beds across the world are used mainly for transit accommodation and as management margin. Their condition is variable but the priority for improving them is lower as personnel rarely stay in them for long periods.

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<sup>8</sup> Includes requirement for personnel on longer career course away from their home bases/stations.



## **New-build Single Living Accommodation**

### **Case Study 4 - Catterick Garrison**

When the 6,000-strong 4th Mechanized Brigade returned from Germany during the summer of 2008, 1,800 of its single soldiers moved straight into new en-suite bed spaces, built by Project SLAM under a £330 million programme to develop Catterick Garrison. Some 2,800 new bed spaces have been delivered at Catterick since 2002. The MOD is also building a physiotherapy centre, dining facilities, a sport and leisure centre and swimming pools, as well as redeveloping Catterick town centre under a major PFI contract.



Catterick Garrison is the UK's largest Army base accommodates 7,500 regular soldiers, 1,900 recruits, and 1,550 civilian and contract staff. It has been demarcated as a core defence site, and has the potential to expand in the future. It is being redeveloped as a Supergarrison, in which resident units will be permanently based, bringing greater stability to personnel in their military careers, and enabling families to put down roots in a community.



The development of new facilities and the regeneration of the town centre are intended to improve quality of life for military personnel and forge closer links with the civilian community.

### Case Study 5 - Pirbright

In early 2008, Army recruits at Alexander Barracks in Pirbright in Pirbright, Surrey, moved into the last of seven brand new accommodation blocks built at the Regional Army Training Centre. The 144 bedspaces, developed under Project SLAM, are arranged in 12-man dormitory-style rooms.



Completion of the Project brought the total number of new bed spaces at Pirbright up to 1,496. In addition to 1,274 Phase 1 bed spaces, Project SLAM has also delivered 78 en-suite bed spaces in eight-man flats for junior ranks, and 144 en suite bed spaces for trainee instructors and permanent staff. Work is underway to deliver en-suite accommodation for a further 72 officers and 60 senior no-commissioned officers.

55. Building on Past Performance. The current PFI programmes and the flagship SLAM programme will take us through to the half-way stage of this 20 year undertaking. Our procurement strategies have provided a secure, stable and low risk environment in which to invest, and this has encouraged the fiscal dedication made by the Government. As we go forward we face tighter financial constraints, suppressed property prices, and developments of greater complexity and financial challenge. However, we are already assessing how new strategies will ease our passage into the second decade of our programme. Our strict adherence to uniform standards of SLA across the three Services has stood us in good stead allowing us to drive efficiencies through off-site construction and standard building designs. We will continue with this approach while promoting flexibility wherever deviation from standards provides the optimal cost effective solution. These may be dictated by evolving personnel requirements, by lasting operational or training requirements of individual Services, or by the layout of sites and the form of existing buildings.

56. Construction Strategy. Thus far our SLA improvement programme has largely entailed replacing our worst buildings with new (eg at Tidworth, Catterick and Colchester Garrisons), while re-using our very best and most adaptable buildings (eg at Devonport and the 'Hitler' blocks in Germany). This has led to accommodation in our Naval bases, major UK Garrisons, RAF Brize Norton and Northolt, and key training establishments being comprehensively renewed. Elsewhere though, there is an extensive patch-work of new buildings among older, out of date but adequate or poor barrack blocks. Progressively, we will be addressing RAF sites which in the 1980s and 90s had the best standard SLA, and smaller (generally RM and Army) sites where some blocks may be re-usable or, being historic, must be re-used. This new phase calls for a greater variety of approaches to improving our accommodation that are likely to comprise both new build and refurbishment.

57. Programme Strategy. The strategy for continuing the good progress on modernising MOD's SLA is based around the progressive rationalisation of the estate into fewer, larger sites, often centred in or near "super-garrison" or major bases. Bed-space provision will be more closely matched to establishments' requirements using trend analysis of occupancy levels to provide more accurate assessments of SLA uptake. In the context of encouraging greater home ownership<sup>9</sup> we regularly review how much SLA we will need in future, mindful that if more personnel work away from their permanent homes we may need to provide more single accommodation. There are three distinct strands of the physical modernisation programme:

- **The New Build SLA Programme** will continue producing units to the highest modern standards. The SLAM programme will deliver an average of some 1,500 bed-spaces per year for the foreseeable future. Parallel projects aim to deliver a further 2,500 or more bed-spaces per year for the next few years.
- **A Major Refurbishment Programme** of those existing blocks which can be readily and cost-effectively adapted to modern standards. A mixed approach is being considered, with the full involvement of the Services. Some bed-spaces will be created which meet the top standards, but elsewhere the aim will be to raise the grade of SLA (ie Grade 4 or 3 up to Grade 2). Some trade-offs may be necessary between the new build SLAM programme and the refurbishment programme
- **A Minor Improvement Programme** for older blocks which are not scheduled for replacement or major refurbishment in the next 5 years. This will focus on facilities most needed by the occupants such as new furniture, modernised showers and toilets, improved storage space, better internet access and improved heating systems.

The strategy is informed by the Service Personnel Board's endorsed priorities for new build and major refurbishment, identified in Figure 4 below:

Priority	Metric
1	Shared rooms for trained personnel with more than 4 bed-spaces
2	Shared rooms of 2,3 or 4 bed-spaces and >40% shortfall in bed-space area, and having a shortfall against scale of washing and WC facilities
3	Shared rooms of 2,3 or 4 bed-spaces with 25% to 39% reduced bed-space area, and having a shortfall against scale of washing and WC facilities
4	Single rooms 40% or more below scale area and having a shortfall against scale of washing and WC facilities

58. Improved Data. The information on which we base our programme for the delivery of future SLA new build and other improvement works is approximate. It has always proved difficult to collect accurate information on the condition and scale of SLA across the world, and on the use to which it is put. It is even more difficult to keep such information up to date regularly. The use and occupancy levels of SLA

<sup>9</sup> The Defence Living Accommodation Strategy promotes increasing home ownership and occupation.

units constantly change. Reporting these changes on a regular basis has proved time-consuming and costly. However, determined efforts are now being made by a new team in DE, the Living Accommodation Planning Team (LAPT) to gather data from across all the commands, store it on the Estate Planning Tool and keep it up to date. This will greatly assist the planning of future upgrade and improvement works.

## WHAT WE EXPECT TO ACHIEVE

59. Our intent is to have about 50% of bed-spaces for trained personnel at Grade 1 by the end of March 2013. By 2020, we aim to reach a further major milestone with all our trained personnel occupying good standard SLA (i.e. Grades 1 and 2) at their home base/station. The proportion of each will depend on changes in overall demand, and the availability of funding, but the intent is that about 70% will be at Grade 1 and 30% at Grade 2. Most of the latter will be single rooms but probably under-size and without en-suite facilities. The target is for all bed-spaces for trainees to be at the appropriate scale and the highest grade by that date. However some super-numary personnel at establishments and many in transit are likely still to be accommodated in below standard (Grade 3 and 4) SLA. Some accommodation 'black spots' are likely to remain, especially as we rebase units and personnel to meet operational imperatives.

### **Case Study 6 - SLA Refurbishment - Hounslow**



Cavalry Barracks opened in 1793 and is the oldest barracks still in use on the MOD estate. Many of the original buildings still stand today. With 14 Grade Two Listed Buildings, the barracks is a Conservation Zone. It is now home to some 600 military personnel in the 2nd Battalion Royal Regiment Fusiliers. With a shortage of single living accommodation, the original plan was to provide temporary accommodation units. But after cost options had been investigated, it was decided to refurbish "Building 16," a former barrack block which had been damaged by fire twenty years ago. Refurbishment began in April 2008 and was completed just ten months later.

### **Case Study 7 – New Build SLA - Headley Court**

Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, have increased the demand for rehabilitation services which, combined with the movement of the Services Mild Brain Injury Centre to Headley Court, increased pressure on facilities at the Surrey-based Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre.

To meet the increase in demand for living accommodation, Defence Estates recently built a £3.75m living accommodation block. The two-storey development provides 58 en-suite bedspaces, of which six have been designed for disabled patients.



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## Chapter 7: Sustainability

60. All the above will be carried out in the context of the Department's commitments on sustainability. The Government launched the *Sustainable Operations on the Government Estate* (SOGE) targets in June 2006, which include targets on energy, travel, waste and recycling, biodiversity and water. Significant steps have been taken towards making the defence estate more sustainable and deliver the SOGE targets. For example we have reduced estate carbon emissions by over 10% compared to baseline year levels; reduced water use across the estate by over 20%; delivered well our commitments on our Sites of Special Scientific Interest; and are undertaking environmental assessments on all our new builds and major refurbishments.

61. We will continue to work to embed sustainable development into our normal business to deliver a sustainable estate, that is one which has modern, resource efficient, low energy buildings; well conserved and managed land; and efficient use of space and ways of working. Future sustainable targets for Governments operations are currently under consideration, with many deadlines on current targets expiring in the next two to three years. We will continue to be fully engaged cross Government in revising targets and commitments to ensure that these reflect leading practise on sustainability.

62. Sustainable Construction. In June 08 the Department for Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform (BERR) published the Strategy for Sustainable Construction, which provides the lead reference document for sustainable construction in UK. It includes a commitment from the industry to work towards sustainability by reducing its carbon footprint and its consumption of natural resources. It lays out specific actions by industry and by Government which will contribute to the achievement of overarching targets in each of the main areas covered by the sustainability agenda, accounting for existing targets; to achieve a 50% reduction in waste to landfill by 2012 on 2008 levels, reducing CO2 emissions by 26% by 2020 on 1990 levels and all house building to be zero carbon by 2016. The Strategy also aims to provide greater clarity about the range of Government commitments and targets that are relevant to the delivery of a sustainable construction industry. These targets and the Code are applicable to capital accommodation projects.

63. Sustainable Homes. MOD has made a Ministerial commitment that from 2008 all new Service Families Accommodation in the UK will meet, as a minimum, Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes, which measures the sustainability of a new home against nine categories of sustainable design, rating the 'whole home' as a complete package. A level three (3 star) home must be 25% more energy efficient than one built to current building regulation standards. As part of existing plans, boiler replacements have been undertaken to give A-rated energy efficiency of 95% [typically an A-rated boiler according to SEDBUK ratings then it is a high efficiency condensing boiler] and projected to lower CO2 emissions by 25%. Roof insulation is being specifically targeted over the next 5 to 6 years in areas where this does not

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meet modern standards. A rolling programme to upgrade loft insulation to SFA properties in Scotland is due to start in 2009/10, initially aiming to insulate 200 properties in the first year. A similar programme is already underway in Northern Ireland. The overall objectives are:

- To make MOD accommodation more energy efficient and therefore not only more comfortable for occupants but also cheaper to run.
- To reduce MOD's carbon consumption and help the Department meet its sustainability targets.