



This quarterly statistical release provides summary statistics on applications, payments and purchases made under the Forces Help to Buy (FHTB) scheme. In addition, biannual statistics are provided on the proportions of payments by region and on the age of personnel using the scheme.

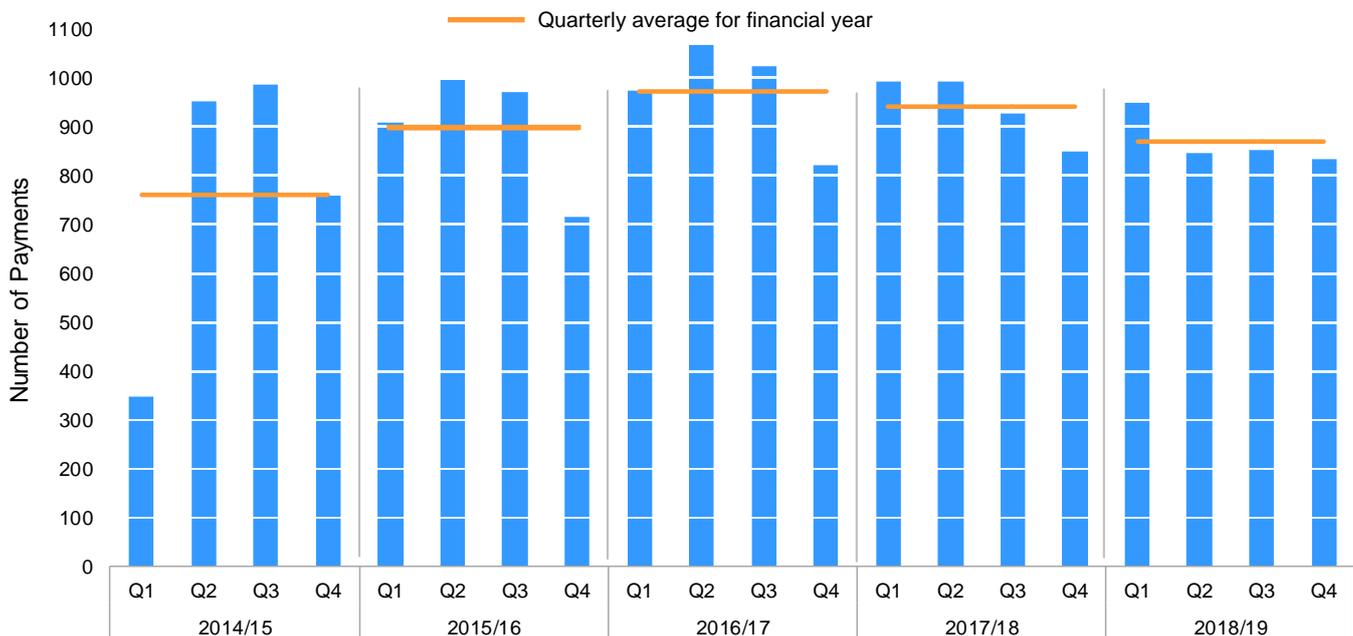
FHTB is an advance of salary scheme which was introduced in April 2014 and allows Regular Armed Forces personnel to borrow money in order to buy their first home or move to a new location.

Key Points and Trends

Since the Scheme began:

- **37,564** First Stage FHTB applications have been received.
- **21,004** of these applications have proceeded to the Second Stage.
- Payment has been made to around **17,800** applicants, totalling around **£267 million**, an average of approximately **£15,000** per claim.

Figure 1: FHTB Payments - Q1 2014/15 to Q4 2018/19



Source: DBS

In Q4 (1 January to 31 March) 2018/19:

- **2,108** First Stage applications were received.
- **850** Second Stage applications were received.
- **835** payments were made to Service personnel.

Responsible statistician: Defence Authority for Statistics Head of Branch

Tel: 0306 79 84458

Email: DefStrat-Stat-WDS-Pubs@mod.gov.uk Further information/mailling list: DefStrat-Stat-WDS-Pubs@mod.gov.uk

Background quality report: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/forces-help-to-buy-scheme-quarterly-statistics-background-quality-report>

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Supplementary tables containing all data presented in this publication can be found at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/forces-help-to-buy-scheme-quarterly-statistics-201819>

Introduction

The FHTB scheme was launched in April 2014 with the aim of supporting and encouraging home ownership amongst Service personnel whose level of home ownership has historically been lower than the rest of the UK population. Regular Service personnel can borrow up to 50% of their gross annual salary (to a maximum of £25,000) to buy their first home, move to another home or in exceptional circumstances extend an existing property.

First Stage applications are those which pass initial eligibility checks and Second Stage applications are those which pass detailed eligibility checks.

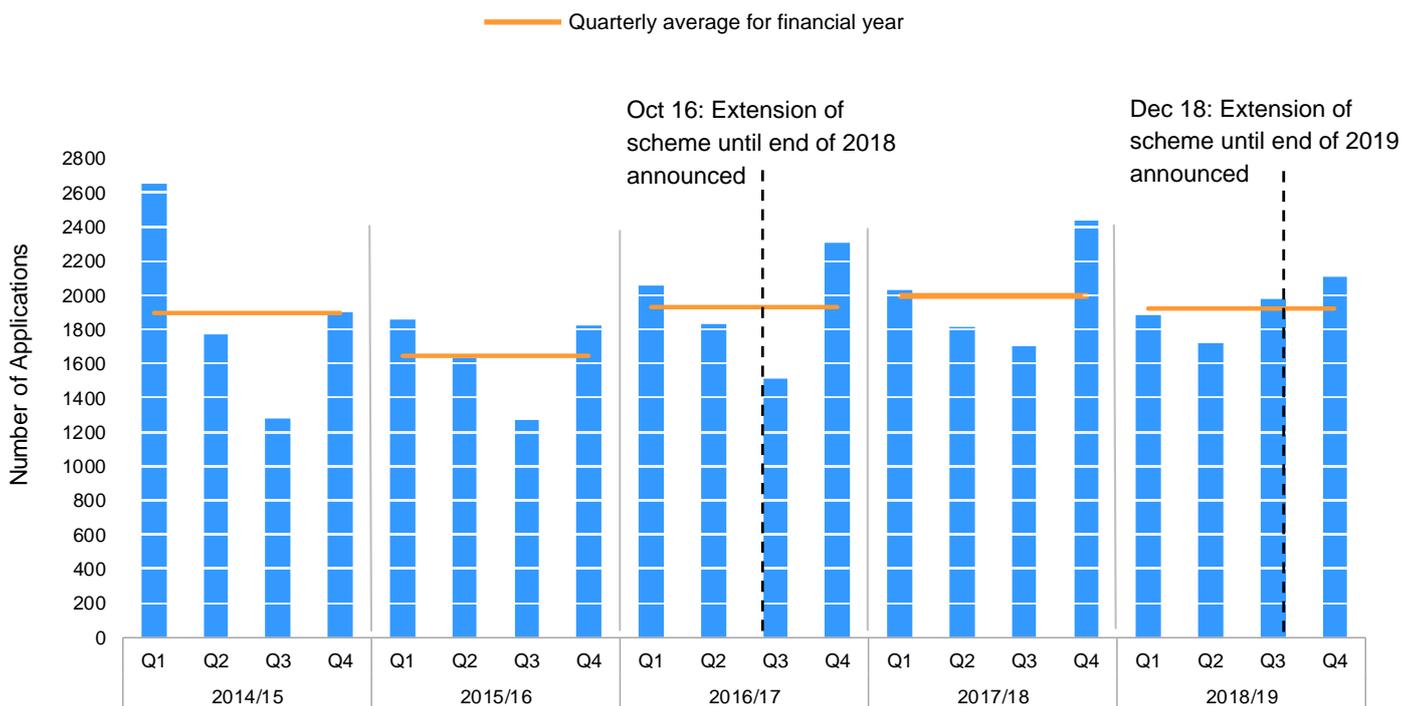
First and Second Stage application data and the values of FHTB payments are provided by Defence Business Services (DBS). The Service and Rank breakdowns are obtained from Joint Personnel Administration (JPA). The two sets of data are 'as at' different dates in a month. DBS data is as at the end of the preceding month, and JPA data is produced according to when the last pay run for military personnel was completed. The pay run occurs in the middle of the month, and varies according to the length of the month.

Data on the proportion of payments that result in purchases of properties or extensions under the scheme are provided by Defence Business Services (DBS) on a quarterly basis. Some FHTB payments do not result in the purchase of a property or the extension of an existing property due, for example, to changes in personal circumstances or to the withdrawal of a party from a property chain.

These statistics were published on a monthly basis from March 2016 to November 2017.

Applications

Figure 2: FHTB First Stage Applications — Q1 2014/15 to Q4 2018/19



Source: DBS

Figure 2 shows a **13% decrease** in the number of First Stage applications when comparing Q4 2017/18 (2,435 applications) and the latest Q4 2018/19 (2,108 applications).

2018/19 is the first financial year since 2015/16 where there has been a decrease in Q4 First Stage applications compared to the previous financial year's Q4 figures. This follows the highest number of Q3 applications seen to date.

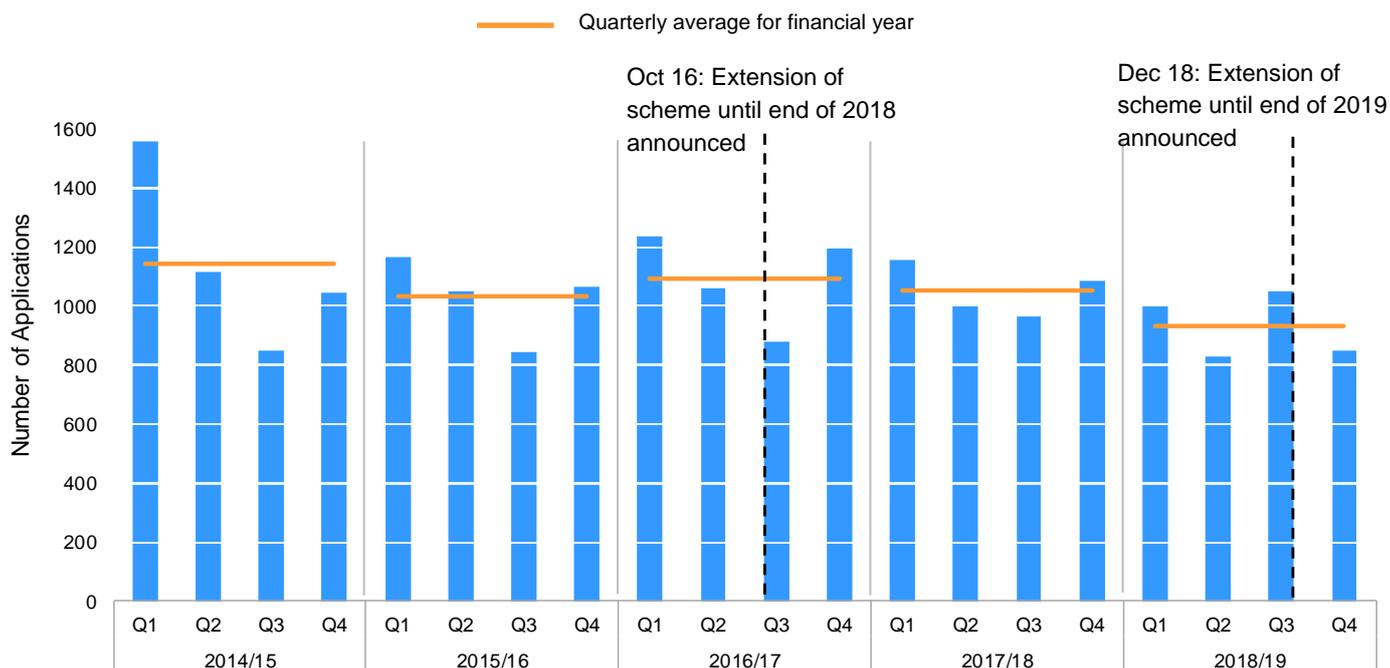
Table 1: Quarterly average number of First Stage applications by financial year

Financial year	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Quarterly average number of First Stage applications	1,900	1,646	1,928	1,995	1,923

The quarterly average, which increased by **17%** between 15/16 and 16/17 financial years, has remained relatively stable between 16/17 and the current 18/19 financial year, increasing **3%** between 16/17 and 17/18 and decreasing **4%** between 17/18 and 18/19 (see Figure 2 and Table 1). It should be noted that the average for 2014/15 is inflated by the high number of applications received when the scheme first opened.

Applications

Figure 3: FHTB Second Stage Applications - Q1 2014/15 to Q4 2018/19



Source: DBS

Figure 3 shows a **22% decrease** in the number of Second Stage applications when comparing Q4 2017/18 (**1,087** applications) and the latest Q4 2018/19 (**850** applications).

Although following a similar trend between Q4 16/17 and 17/18 (9% decrease), there has been a greater decrease in 2018/19 Q4 Second Stage applications compared to 2017/18 Q4 figures. This follows the highest number of Q3 applications seen to date.

Table 2: Quarterly average number of Second Stage applications by financial year

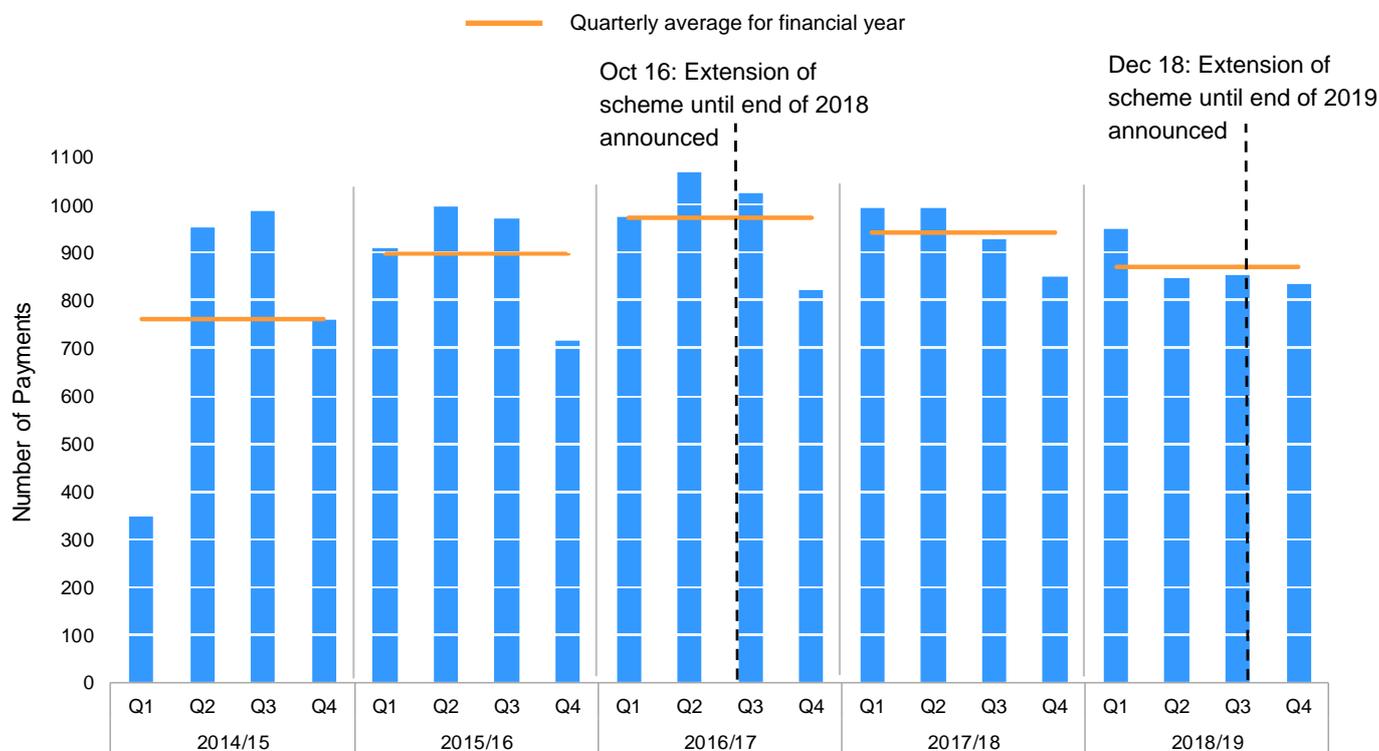
Financial year	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Quarterly average number of Second Stage applications	1,142	1,031	1,093	1,053	932

Although remaining broadly stable between 2015/16 and 2017/18, the quarterly average for the number of Second Stage applications has decreased **11%** between 2017/18 and 2018/19 (see Figure 3 and Table 2). It should be noted that the average for 2014/15 is inflated by the high number of applications received when the scheme first opened.

Payments and Purchases

A total of **17,780** payments have been made under the FHTB scheme since it was introduced in April 2014.¹ With an average claim of approximately **£15,000**, this has resulted in expenditure of around **£267 million**.

Figure 4:² FHTB Payments - Q1 2014/15 to Q4 2018/19



Source: DBS

Figure 4 shows that the number of payments has remained relatively stable between Q4 2017/18 (**851** payments) and the latest Q4 2018/19 (**835** payments).

The number of payments made show some seasonal variation, with lower numbers of payments typically made in the fourth quarter (January to March) of each financial year (Figure 4).

Table 3: Quarterly average number of payments

Financial year	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Quarterly average number of payments	762	899	973	941	871

The quarterly average for the number of payments has decreased **7%** between 17/18 and 18/19. Averages increased to a peak in 2016/17 (973) but have since decreased each financial year. Please note that the average for 2014/15 is reduced by the low number of payments made when the scheme opened.

¹As at 31 March 2019

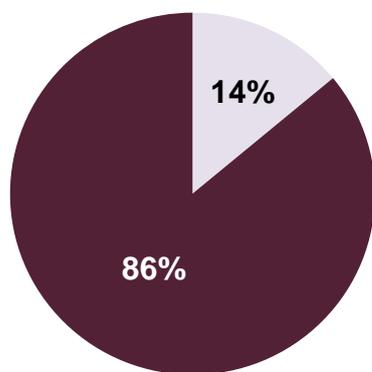
²A copy of Figure 1 with additional extension announcement reference points

Payments and Purchases

In Q4 2018/19, **14%** of payments were made to Officers compared to **86%** of payments made to Other Ranks.¹ For comparative purposes, 18% of Officers and 82% of Other Ranks make up the Regular Full-time trained strength population.²

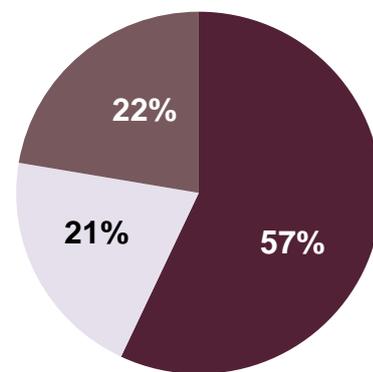
57% of the payments in Q4 2018/19 were made to Army personnel, with **22%** of payments made to Royal Navy/Royal Marines personnel and **21%** to RAF personnel.¹ This broadly reflects the proportion of Army (55%), RN/RM (22%) and RAF personnel (23%) that make up the Regular Full-time trained Armed Forces strength population.²

Figure 5: Payments by Rank
- Q4 2018/19



■ Officers ■ Other Ranks

Figure 6: Payments by Service
- Q4 2018/19



■ Army ■ RAF ■ Royal Navy / Royal Marines

Source: JPA¹

It is estimated that at least **95%** of payments, as at 31 March 2019, have already resulted in a purchased property or extension. There is a small lag between payments and loan repayments once a property has been purchased or extended. Some FHTB payments do not result in the purchase of a property or the extension of an existing property, due, for example, to changes in personal circumstance or to the withdrawal of a party from a property chain.

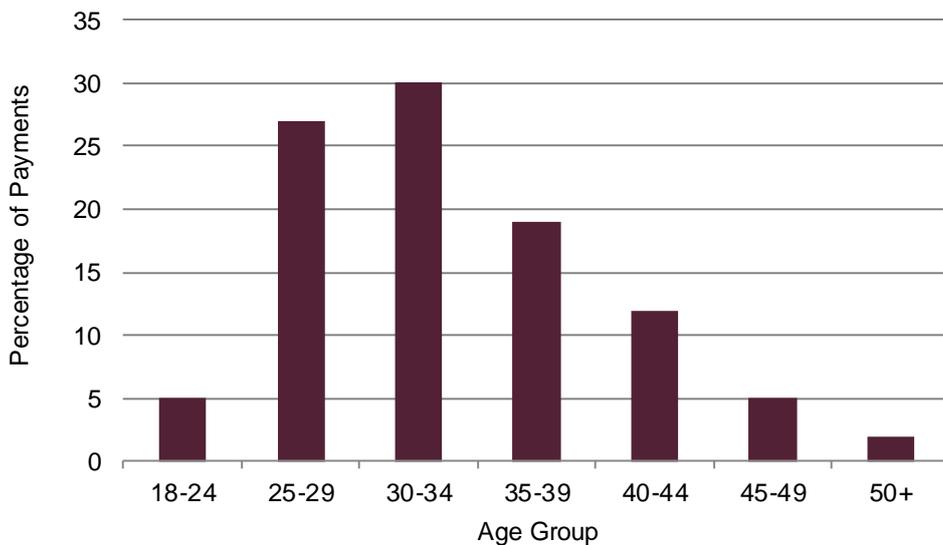
¹JPA data is produced according to when the last pay run for military personnel was completed. The pay run occurs in the middle of the month, which varies according to the month length. Therefore the Officer / Rank and Service breakdowns represent the number of payments recorded between the pay runs in that month and the preceding month.

²Based on figures as at 1 January 2019 taken from the Defence Statistics [Quarterly Service Personnel Statistics publication](#) Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100%.

Payments by Age

The largest shares of payments have been made to personnel in the 30-34 (**30%**) and 25-29 (**27%**) age groups. For comparison, personnel in these age groups make up 19% and 23% of the Regular Service population respectively. Service personnel aged between 18-24 account for 22% of the Service population and received 5% of the payments. Receipt of FHTB payments among the remaining age groups are broadly in line with their representation in the Service population¹.

Figure 7: Proportion of Payments by Age, April 2014 – April 2019



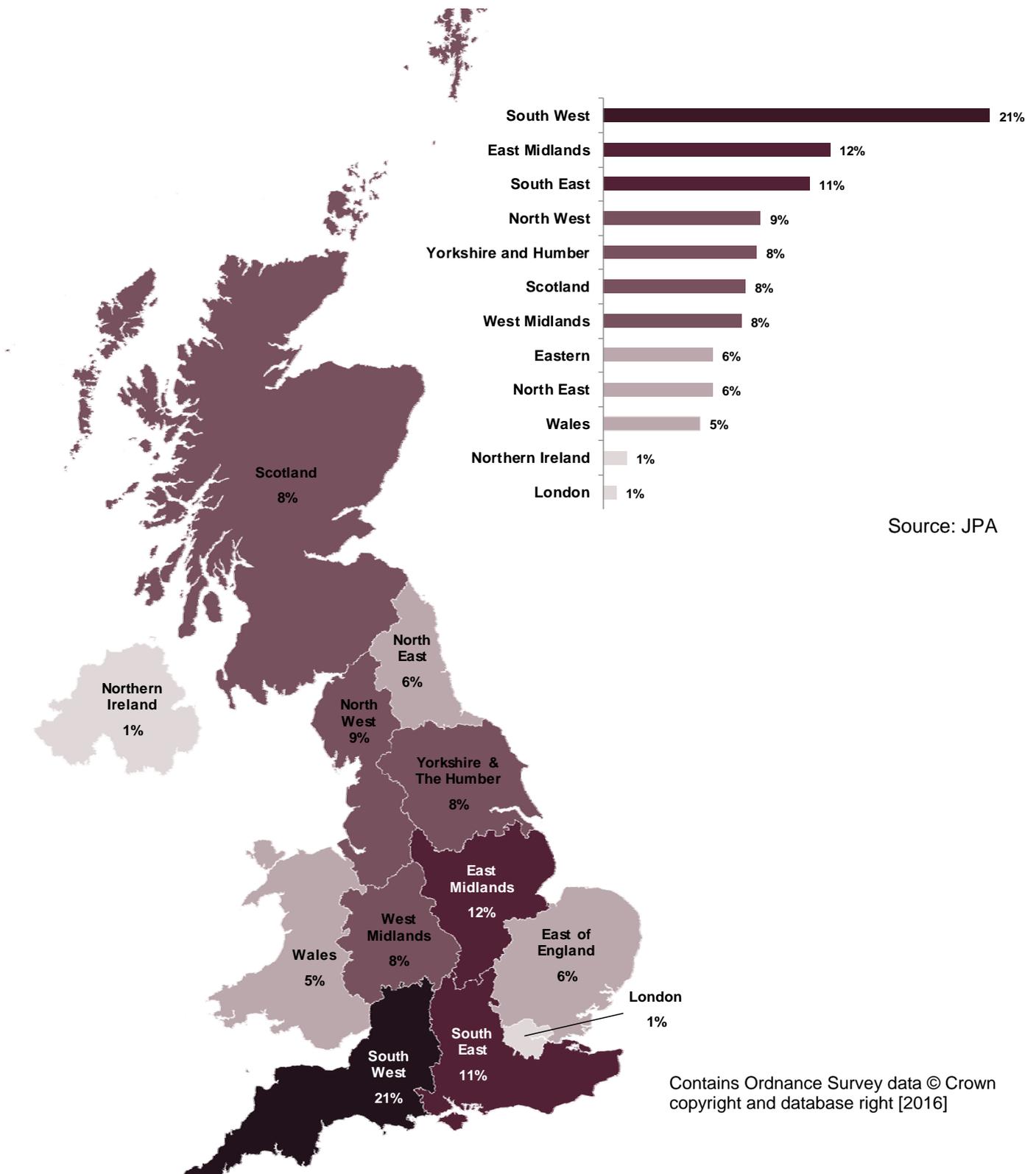
Age data is reported using [ONS Harmonised Standard 4 age bandings](#).

Payments by Region

Figure 8 shows the estimated proportions of payments used to purchase or extend properties in each UK region under the scheme since it began. As at 31 March 2019, just over a fifth (**21%**) of payments were used to purchase or extend properties in the South West of England – the largest share of any region. The regions with the lowest share of payments were Northern Ireland (**1%**) and London (**1%**). These proportions have remained stable since they were first reported in the FHTB September 2016 edition.

¹Taken from Defence Statistics publication [UK Armed Forces Biannual Diversity Statistics](#)

Figure 8: Proportion of Payments¹ by UK region of property, April 2014 – April 2019



Source: JPA

Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right [2016]

For comparison, as at 1 April 2018², over half of Service personnel were located in the South West (27%) and South East (27%). By contrast, very few were located in the North East (1%), North West (1%) or Northern Ireland (1%).

Regional data is reported using the [Nomenclature of Units for Territorial Statistics Level 1](#) Regions.

¹Excludes missing or invalid postcodes < 4%.

²Taken from Defence Statistics publication '[Quarterly Location Statistics](#)' .

Glossary

- Forces Help to Buy (FHTB): FHTB is an advance of salary scheme which was introduced in April 2014 and allows Regular Armed Forces personnel to borrow money in order to buy their first home or move to a new location.
- Regular Armed Forces Personnel: Full time Service personnel excluding Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) personnel
- First Stage applications: Applications which pass initial eligibility checks.
- Second Stage applications: Applications which pass detailed eligibility checks.
- Defence Business Services (DBS): Organisation which provides corporate services, such as recruitment and payroll, across the Ministry of Defence.
- Joint Personnel Administration (JPA): The system used by the Armed Forces to deal with matters of pay, leave and other personnel administrative tasks. JPA replaced a number of single Service IT systems and was implemented in April 2006 for RAF, November 2006 for Naval Service and April 2007 for Army.

Rounding

Payment figures in this publication have been rounded to the nearest £1 and the average payment rounded to nearest £100. Percentages are calculated from unrounded data and rounded to the nearest whole number, therefore may not sum to 100%.

Statistics quoted in the narrative may be rounded for clarity, with more precise figures available in the [accompanying tables](#).

Further Information

Revisions

Corrections to the published statistics will be made if errors are found, or if figures change as a result of improvements to methodology or changes to definitions. When making corrections, we will follow the Ministry of Defence [Statistics Revisions and Corrections Policy](#). All corrected figures will be identified by the symbol “r”, and an explanation will be given of the reason for and size of the revision. Corrections which would have a significant impact on the utility of the statistics will be corrected as soon as possible, by reissuing the publication. Minor errors will also be corrected, but for convenience these corrections may be timed to coincide with the next release of the publication.

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Defence Statistics

Telephone: 0306 79 84458

Email: DefStrat-Stat-WDS-pubs@mod.gov.uk

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Other contact points within Defence Statistics are:

Defence Expenditure Analysis	030 6793 4531	DefStrat-Econ-ESES-DEA-Hd@mod.gov.uk
Price Indices	030 6793 2100	DefStrat-Econ-ESES-PI-Hd@mod.gov.uk
Naval Service Manpower	023 9254 7426	DefStrat-Stat-Navy-Hd@mod.gov.uk
Army Manpower	01264 886175	DefStrat-Stat-Army-Hd@mod.gov.uk
RAF Manpower	01494 496822	DefStrat-Stat-Air-Hd@mod.gov.uk
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Civilian Manpower	020 7218 1359	DefStrat-Stat-Civ-Hd@mod.gov.uk
Health Information	030 6798 4423	DefStrat-Stat-Health-Hd@mod.gov.uk

If you wish to correspond by mail, our postal address is:

Defence Statistics (WDS)
Ministry of Defence, Main Building
Floor 3 Zone M
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2HB

For general MOD enquiries, please call: 020 7218 9000