



This is an annual publication which provides figures on the number of Service Family Accommodation properties in the UK, the condition of those properties, and the number of vacant properties. Accompanying this publication, there is an OpenDocument Spreadsheet (ODS) document which includes the full set of data which underlies the figures and charts discussed in this report.

This edition provides statistics for 2010 to 2020 (as at 31 March each year), with a base year of 2000, and updates figures released in the 2019 edition of this publication, which provided statistics up to 31 March 2019.

Main Points and Trends

- At 31 March 2020 there were **49,400** Service Family Accommodation (SFA) properties in the UK, which is a decrease of **300** compared to the previous year.
- **10,500** of these properties are currently vacant (**21.3%** of the total), a decrease from the **11,600** properties (**23.3%**) as reported in 2019. The general increase in the vacancy rate since 2011 (around **12.0%**) can be explained by an overall reduction in demand, partly through the success of the Forces Help to Buy scheme, and the retention of SFA to support the Army Basing Programme and the development of the Defence Estate Optimisation Programme. The implementation of the Void Reduction Plan aims to reduce the number of voids to the required 'management margin' of 10% by 2022 through a combination of selected disposals, lease terminations, demolitions, widening of entitlement to cohabitating families and veterans, and subletting.
- The number of SFA properties in England & Wales combined has increased by **100** since the previous year. Whereas, the number in Scotland and Northern Ireland has decreased by **100** and **300** respectively.
- **97.0%** of UK SFA properties for which information is available are assessed as Decent Homes (good condition or requiring minor improvements) or Decent Homes+. SFA categorised below Decent Homes Standard have not been allocated to families. This is in line with the commitment made in the Armed Forces Covenant not to allocate sub-standard properties.

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Responsible statistician: Analysis-ChiefStatsOffice@mod.gov.uk

Background quality report: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/service-family-accommodation-bulletin-index>

Would you like to be added to our contact list, so that we can inform you about updates to our statistics and consult you if we're thinking of making changes? You can subscribe to updates by emailing DIO-DAIAalytics@mod.gov.uk

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Other publications in this series can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/service-family-accommodation-bulletin-index>

Supplementary tables containing all data presented in this publication can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/service-family-accommodation-bulletin-index>

Introduction

The provision of good quality living accommodation for Service personnel and their families is managed by the MOD's Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) and should meet the aims set out in the Armed Forces Covenant¹. DIO manages these properties in the UK (and some overseas locations), including planning targeted improvement programmes and future requirements.

DIO is responsible for the maintenance of UK SFA, with the vast majority maintained through the National Housing Prime (NHP) contract, currently run by Amey Plc. The contract provides for: a comprehensive repair and maintenance service; the allocation of properties; SFA furniture; move appointments; and improvement works. The NHP contract became effective on 1 November 2014 for Scotland and Northern Ireland and UK wide locations; and on 1 December 2014 in England and Wales and for SFA furniture. PFI properties are maintained by the PFI contractors, while, for the most part, Bulk Lease Hired properties are maintained through a management company, Touchstone.

In areas where SFA housing stock is unavailable, Service families will be provided with fully-serviced privately rented properties, known as Substitute Service Family Accommodation (SSFA). This accommodation is sourced and leased on behalf of the MOD by Mears Group Limited.

For more information about Service Family accommodation, please see the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/defence-infrastructure-organisation-service-family-accommodation>

For more information about the latest Public Accounts Committee focusing on Service Family Accommodation please see the following link: <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/public-accounts-committee/inquiries/parliament-2017/inquiry24/>

¹ Armed Forces Covenant Report
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-covenant-annual-reports>

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A National Statistics publication

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act of 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics.

The continued designation of these statistics as National Statistics was confirmed in 2017 following a compliance check by the Office for Statistics Regulation. The statistics last underwent a full assessment against the Code of Practice in 2012.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

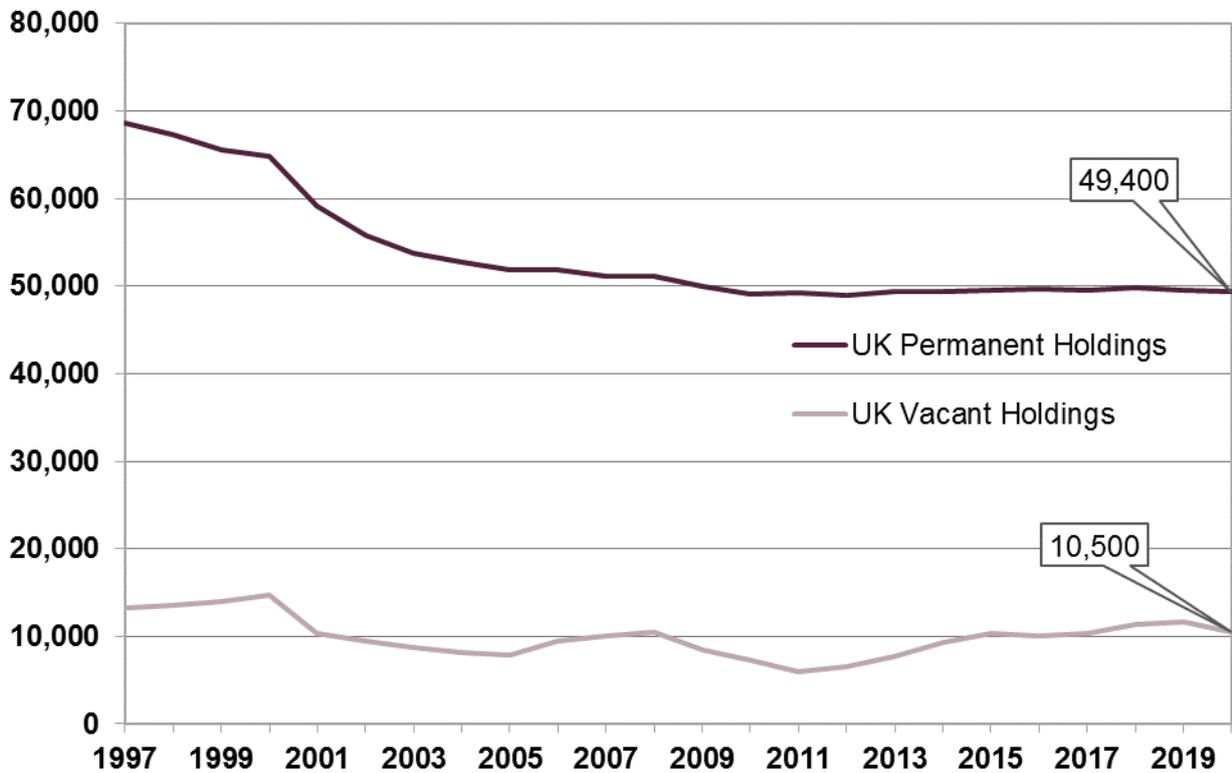
- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods; and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed. Further details about how this report has been developed since its confirmation as National Statistics can be found in the Background Quality Report.

Service Family Accommodation Dwellings in the UK

The following chart shows the number of Service Family Accommodation dwellings between 1997 and 2020 (as at 31 March each year). For each year, numbers of dwellings are rounded to the nearest hundred. Key points from the graph are shown in bullet points below.

Chart 1: Service Family Accommodation in the UK, 1997-2020 (as at 31 March each year)



Source Data: DIO (Regional Delivery Accommodation)

At 31 March 2020, the MOD's Defence Infrastructure Organisation managed 49,400 UK properties, which is a decrease of 300 compared to the same time in the previous year. The total number of dwellings has been reasonably stable over the last 15 years at around 50,000. However, there is a longer-term decreasing trend dating back to at least the mid 1990's. In 1997 there were 68,600 dwellings and since that time MOD policies have led to around a 28% decrease in the total number of UK Service Family Accommodation dwellings.

91.3% of UK Service Family Accommodation properties are located within England & Wales, 6.4% in Scotland, and 2.3% in Northern Ireland.

10,500 UK SFA properties were vacant on 31 March 2020 (21.3% of the total), an increase from the recent low of 6,000 properties in 2011 (when around 12% of the total number of dwellings were vacant).

The increase in the vacant rate since 2011 can be partly explained by:

- The help to buy scheme².
- The Army Basing Programme³ and development of the new MOD Footprint Strategy, which have resulted in some SFA being retained that were previously earmarked for disposal.

England & Wales has the lowest vacancy rate, at 20.0%, followed by Scotland (27.6%), and Northern Ireland (55.9%).

Detailed figures on UK permanent holdings and vacant accommodation rates can be found in the accompanying ODS document in Table 1, including splits by country.

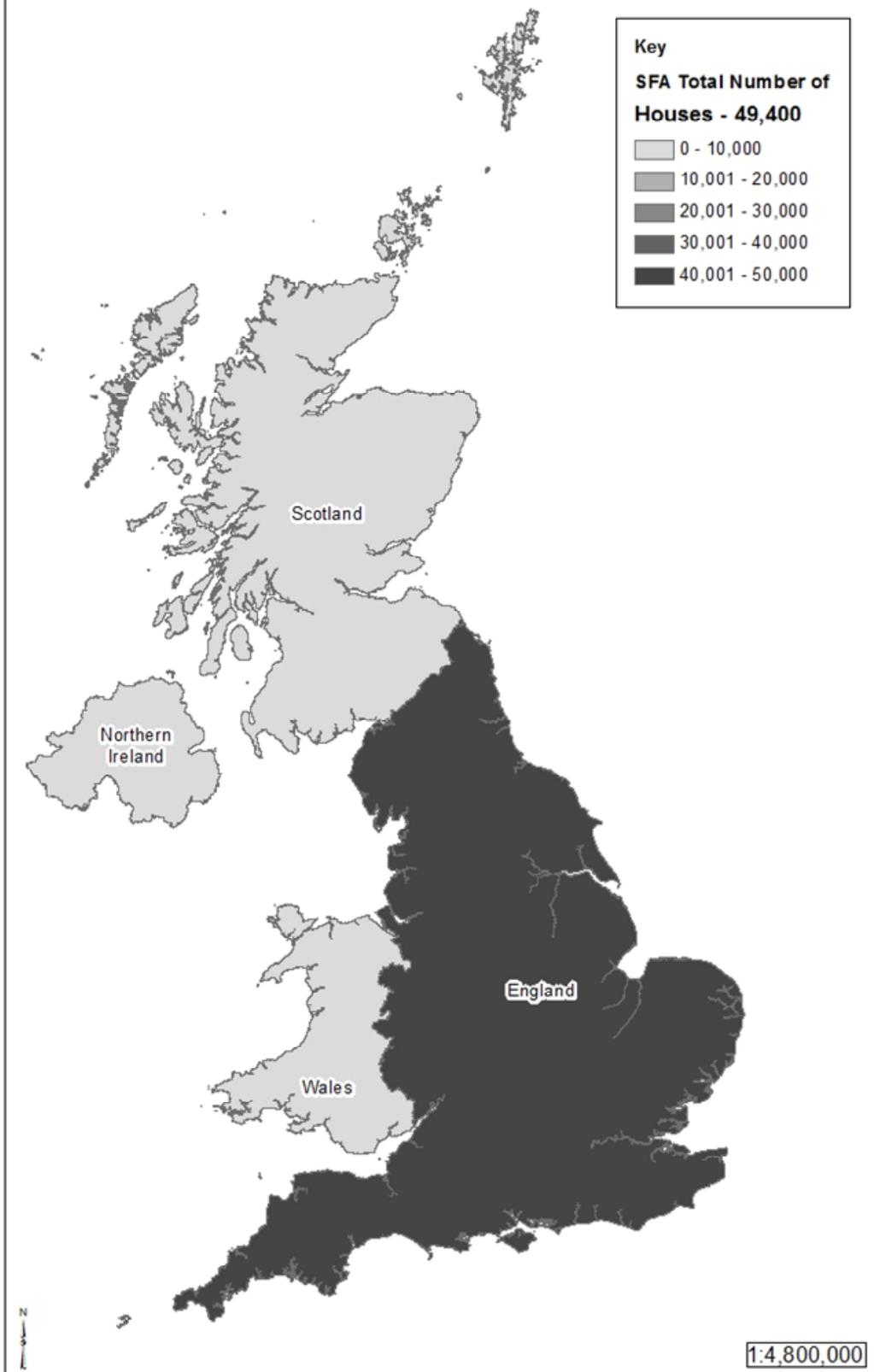
² Help to buy scheme

<https://www.helptobuy.gov.uk/>

³ Army Basing Programme

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/army-basing-programme>

UK Service Family Accommodation (SFA) Total Number of Houses



UK Service Family Accommodation (SFA) Vacant Rates by Country



Condition of Service Family Accommodation in the UK

The overall condition of Service Family Accommodation estate is kept under regular review. The method of assessing its condition changed significantly in April 2016 when the Combined Accommodation Assessment System was introduced replacing DIO's 'Standard for Condition' as the reported measure of condition. Dwellings are now assessed in accordance with the Department of Communities and Local Government 'Decent Homes Standard'⁴.

Prior to 2016 SFA standard was measured using DIO's 'Standard for Condition'. As at 31 March 2016 99.5% of SFA was either Standard 1 or Standard 2.

A "Decent Home" is determined by the national standard and requires SFA properties to meet all of the following four criteria:

Criterion 1: SFA meets the statutory minimum standard for housing as set out in the Housing Health and Safety System;

Criterion 2: SFA is in a reasonable state of repair (assessed from the age and condition of a range of building components including walls, roofs, windows, doors, chimneys, electrics and heating systems);

Criterion 3: SFA has reasonably modern facilities and services (assessed according to the age, size and layout/location of the kitchen, bathroom and WC and any common areas for blocks of flats, and to noise insulation)

Criterion 4: SFA has a reasonable degree of thermal comfort. This is assessed using the Government's Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) for measuring energy efficiency at the following thresholds:

- (1) DH+ SAP 55 and above;
- (2) DH SAP 54 to 39;
- (3) DH- SAP 38 and below.

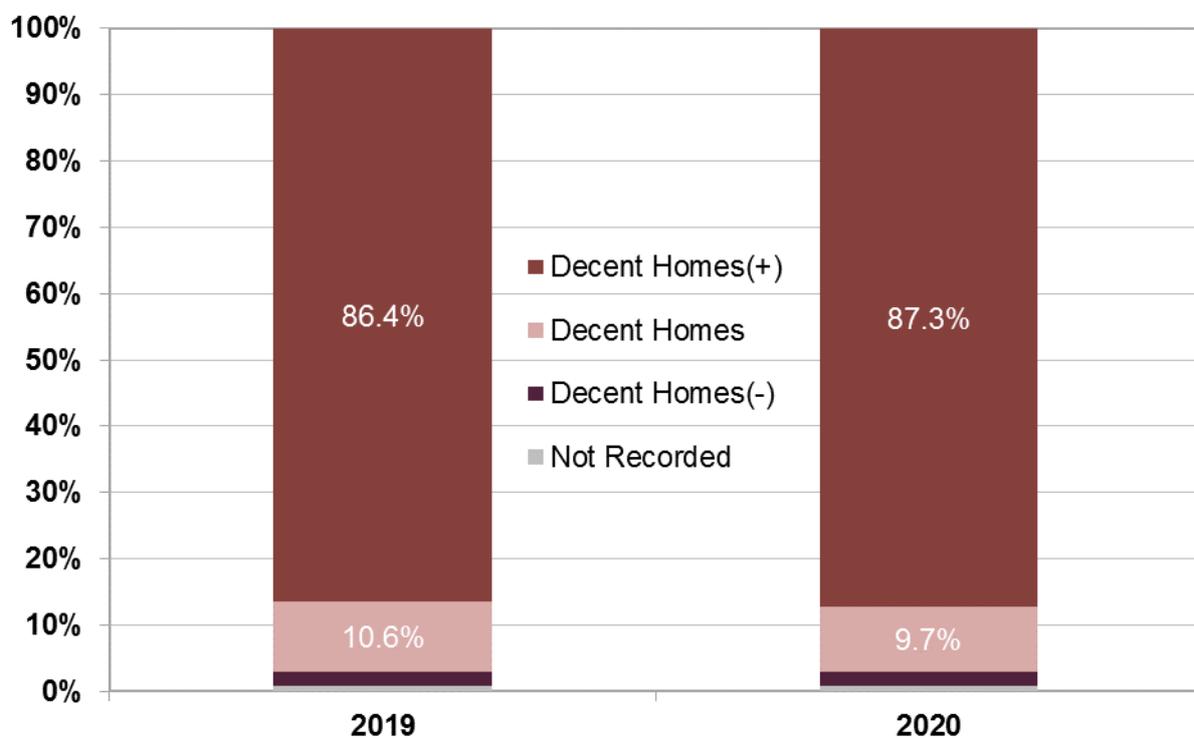
	Condition		
	Decent Homes Plus (DH+)	Decent Homes (DH)	Decent Homes Minus (DH-)
Statutory minimum standard	Pass	Pass	Fail any one of the four criteria
Reasonable state of repair	Pass	Pass	Fail any one of the four criteria
Reasonably modern facilities and services	Pass enhanced standard	Pass normal standard	Fail any one of the four criteria
Thermal comfort	Energy rating Band D or above	Energy rating Band E	Energy rating Band F or below

⁴ 'A Decent Homes: Definition and guidance for implementation. Communities and Local Government June 2006: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7812/138355.pdf

As at the 31 March 2020, Service Family Accommodation fell into the following categories (figures are rounded to the nearest hundred):

- 47,900 properties (97.0% of the total) were rated as Decent Homes or Decent Homes+:
 - 43,100 properties (87.3% of the total) were rated as Decent Homes+.
 - 4,800 properties (9.7% of the total) were rated as Decent Homes.
- 1,100 properties (2.2% of the total) were rated as Decent Homes- (or below recommended standard).
- 400 (0.9%) properties did not have a recorded condition.

Chart 2: Condition of UK Service Family Accommodation, 2019 and 2020 (as at 31 March each year)



Source Data: DIO (Regional Delivery Accommodation)

Detailed figures on UK permanent holdings by surveyed condition can be found in Table 2.

Methodology

The Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) is the estate expert for defence, supporting the armed forces to enable military capability by planning, building, maintaining, and servicing infrastructure. We are responsible for enabling defence people to live, work, train and deploy at home and overseas. Our vision is to equip defence with a significantly smaller, more efficient, better quality estate.

For more information, visit the Defence Infrastructure Organisation website at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/defence-infrastructure-organisation>

DIO is responsible for managing all the Service Family Accommodation (SFA) for the Royal Navy and Marines, the Army, and the Royal Air Force in the UK. DIO Accommodation manages the operations of SFA and the Head of Accommodation reports to the DIO Director, Regional Delivery.

DIO Accommodation provides SFA for entitled Service personnel in accordance with Tri-Service Accommodation Regulations, as well as for other entitled/eligible personnel, and for core welfare purposes. SFA can also be utilised for other Defence purposes such as Single Living Accommodation.

DIO Accommodation also reports on the number of Substitute Service Family Accommodation (SSFA) properties occupied by entitled Service personnel, i.e. those who would otherwise occupy SFA were it available when and where required. As SSFA is private property, it is not part of DIO housing stock, and is provided under short term contract.

On behalf of the DIO, a private company, Amey Plc, delivers a comprehensive maintenance service in the UK. The contract became effective on 1 November 2014 for Scotland and Northern Ireland and UK wide allocations; and on 1 December 2014 in England and Wales and for SFA furniture.

In November 1996, most of the MOD's housing stock in England and Wales was sold to a private company, Annington Homes Limited (AHL). The homes required for Service families were then leased back on a 200-year lease, with the condition that the MOD can hand surplus properties back to AHL.

For more information on SFA, please see:

<https://www.gov.uk/defence-infrastructure-organisation-service-family-accommodation>

For a National Audit Office report into SFA, dated March 2009, please see:

<http://www.nao.org.uk/report/ministry-of-defence-service-families-accommodation>

Data Sources and Quality

Data on housing is provided by regional contractors to DIO, who enter it into an electronic asset register (database). Each year, data as at 31 March is extracted from this system by DIO and collated to produce the tables.

The data in these tables have been extracted from a MOD database which is considered to be reliable and there are no significant concerns over the accuracy of data. In addition to validation by DIO, the data in these tables have been subjected to a sense check by Government Statisticians.

Further information can be found in the Background Quality Report.

Further Information

Symbols

- || discontinuity in time series
- * not applicable
- .. not available
- Zero or rounded to zero

Italic figures are used for percentages and other rates.

Rounding

In this publication, figures are given to the nearest hundred and percentages to one decimal place. Where rounding has been used, totals and sub-totals have been rounded separately and so may not equal the sums of their rounded parts.

Revisions

There are no regular planned revisions of this publication.

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 annual release of the publication.

Further Information (cont.)

Contact Us

This publication has been produced by the Data, Analytics and Insight team in the Defence Infrastructure Organisation.

We welcome feedback on our statistical products. If you have any comments or questions about this publication or about our statistics in general, you can contact us as follows:

Data, Analytics and Insight team (DIO) Email: DIO-DAIAalytics@mod.gov.uk

If you require information which is not available within this or other available publications, you may wish to submit a Request for Information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to the Ministry of Defence. For more information, see:

<https://www.gov.uk/make-a-freedom-of-information-request/the-freedom-of-information-act>

Other contact points within Defence Statistics are:

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Civilian Manpower	020 7218 1359	Analysis-Surveys-Civilian-Hd@mod.gov.uk
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Please note that these email addresses may change later in the year.

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