



This is an annual publication which provides figures on Ministry of Defence (MOD) land holdings in the UK, by parent service, country, type of use and whether owned, leased or with legal rights.

This edition provides statistics for 2000 to 2020 (figures are given for 1 April each year), and updates figures released in the 2019 edition of this publication, which provided statistics up to 1 April 2019.

This publication does not provide information on the overseas Defence estate and includes land declared as surplus to defence requirements.

Main Points and Trends

- At 1 April 2020, the MOD owned **225,800** hectares of land and foreshore in the UK (either freehold or leasehold), which is about **0.9%** of the total UK land mass¹. The MOD also held rights over a further **206,700** hectares, which is a further **0.9%** of the total UK land mass¹. On 1 April 2020, the total UK land holdings for the MOD was **432,500** hectares.
- Figures from 1 April 2016 now includes Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations, and Service Family Accommodation in the total land holdings figures, this is because of data quality improvement work. Comparable figures for earlier years are not available.
- Since 1 April 2019, the total land holdings have decreased by **800** hectares. The reduction contributes towards the MOD's ongoing commitment to reduce the estate.
- England accounts for the largest portion of land owned or with rights held, at **254,200** hectares (**58.8%** of the MOD total), a decrease of **700** hectares since 2019.
- Training areas and ranges occupy the largest area at **356,000** hectares (**82.3%** of the MOD total, this includes land which is owned and that MOD has legal rights over), a decrease of **800** hectares since 2019.

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Background quality report: www.gov.uk/government/collections/mod-land-holdings-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

¹ The best recorded estimate of total UK land mass 242,495km² or 24,249,500 hectares. This figure is published by United Nations Statistics and can be found at the following link.

<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/products/dyb/documents/DYB2018/table03.pdf>

Contents

Main Points and Trends	page 1
Introduction	page 2
UK Land Holdings for Defence	page 3
By Type of Ownership	page 3
By Parent Service Area	page 4
By Country	page 5
By Type of Use	page 7
Methodology	page 8
Further Information	page 9

Other publications in this series can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/mod-land-holdings-bulletin-index>

Supplementary tables containing all data presented in this publication can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/mod-land-holdings-bulletin-index>

Introduction

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is one of the largest landowners in the country, with an estate approximately equal to 1.8% of the UK land mass. MOD sites are used for training, accommodation and provides a base from which operations can be instigated. The estate is currently managed by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), who have a remit to ensure the safety, sustainability and rationalisation of the estate. The MOD has published land holdings and building statistics since 1981.

The information in this publication, and the accompanying supplementary tables, have been taken from the Infrastructure Management System (IMS). IMS was implemented by DIO in 2014 as a mechanism to more effectively manage the defence infrastructure. Prior to the implementation of IMS, an asset verification exercise took place to capture accurately the defence estate. DIO have a clear process to ensure that IMS is updated with any changes to the estate, so the information about the defence estate is reflective of the current situation. A number of inclusions and exclusions apply to the figures in this publication. Further details of these can be found in the Methodology section of the report and Background Quality Report.

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.

UK Land Holdings for Defence

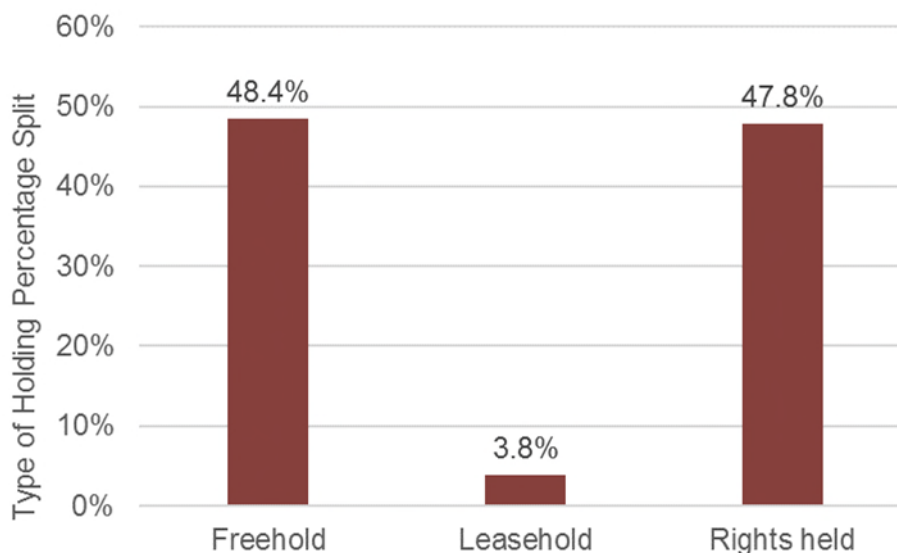
UK Land Holdings by Type of Ownership

There are several ways that land can be held by organisations, DIO manages land through the following three ways:

1. **Freehold** – land which has been bought on a permanent basis
2. **Leasehold** – land which is held by an organisation for a definitive period of time
3. **Rights Held** – land which is held on a (most usually) short term and contractual basis or through grants for a specific purpose. MOD holds a lot of land in this way because it is a more cost effective and flexible way to meet the changing operational requirements for defence.

As at 1 April 2020, DIO managed 432,500 hectares of land within the UK. In total, this is about 1.8% of the UK land mass. This is a decrease of 800 hectares over the past year. The reduction contributes towards the MOD's ongoing commitment to reduce the estate.

Chart 1: Type of holding, as at 1 April 2020



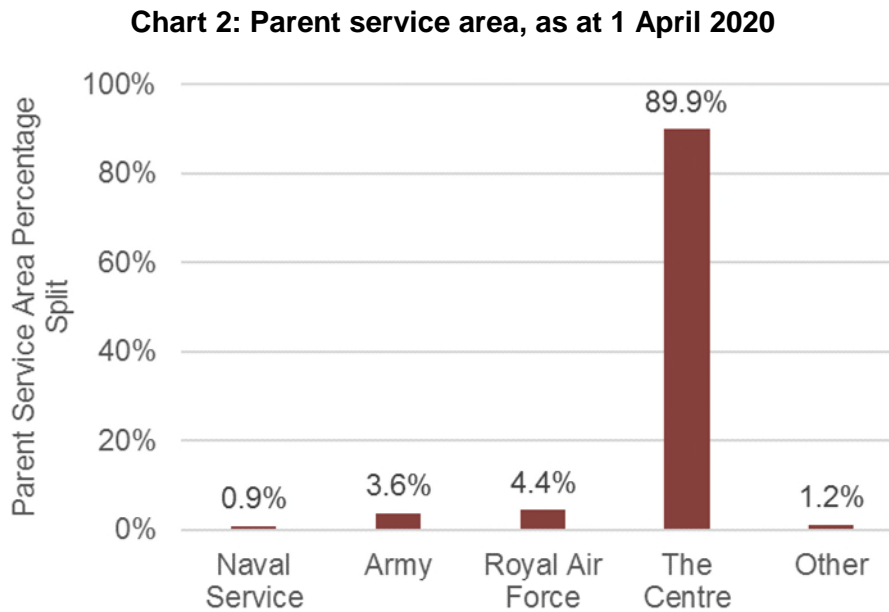
Source Data: DIO (IMS)

Chart 1 shows that just over half (225,800 hectares) of the land is owned (either freehold or leasehold), which is 100 hectares less than the figure reported at 1 April 2019.

On 1 April 2020, the MOD held a further 206,700 hectares through legal rights, which is 700 hectares less than the figure reported at 1 April 2019.

UK Land Holdings by Parent Service Area

As shown in Chart 2, the Centre² owned or had rights over the largest area, at 388,800 hectares (89.9% of the MOD total), and much of this forms the training estate (91.2% of the Centre's total). The Centre's total has decreased by 800 hectares since 1 April 2019.



Source Data: DIO (IMS)

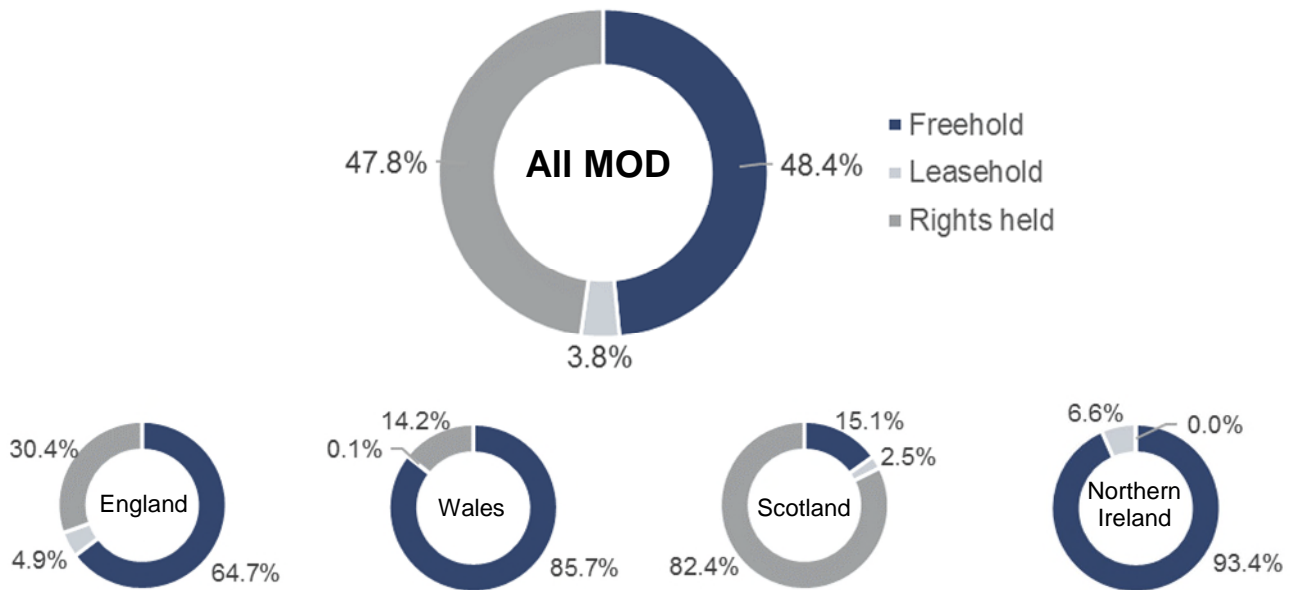
The 'Other' category in chart 2 includes Permanent Joint Headquarters and Trading Funds.

² 'The Centre' includes Defence Equipment & Support, Defence Infrastructure Organisation (including former Defence Training Estate, and Service family quarters leased from Annington Property Ltd.) and Centre Top Level Budget holders.

UK Land Holdings by Country

On 1 April 2020, the majority of land holdings were in England. The England land holdings was 254,200 hectares (58.8% of the MOD total), a decrease of 700 hectares since 2019. Scotland land holdings remained broadly the same accounting for 153,000 (35.4% of the MOD total). Wales land holdings was 23,400 hectares, a decreased of 100 hectares since 2019 (5.4% of the MOD total). Northern Ireland has remained the same, accounting for 0.4% of land holdings.

Chart 3: Type of land held by country, as at 1 April 2020



Source Data: DIO (IMS)

UK Land Holdings - Total Area

Key
UK Land Holdings
Total Area - Thousand Hectares

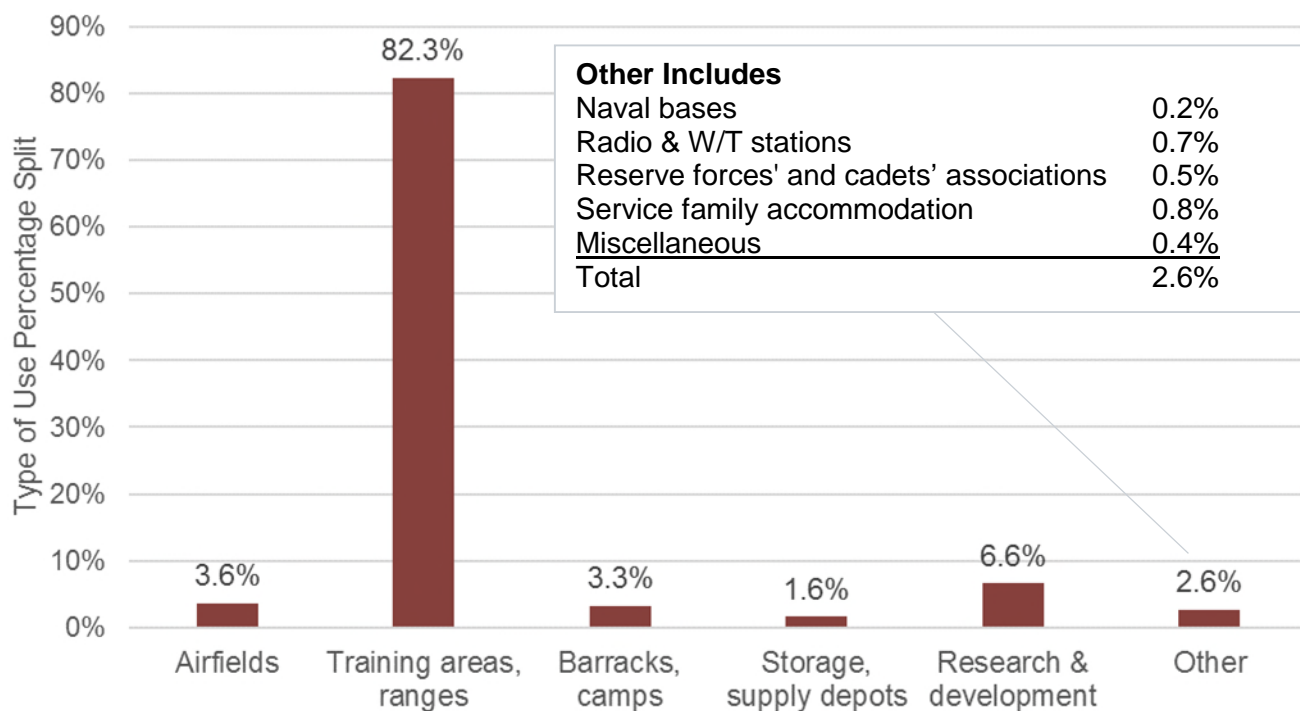
0 - 50.0
50.1 - 100.0
100.1 - 150.0
150.1 - 200.0
200.1 - 250.0
250.1 - 300.0



UK Land Holdings by Type of Use

Chart 4 below shows that on 1 April 2020 training areas and ranges occupy the largest area, at 356,000 hectares (82.3% of the MOD total), this has decreased by 800 hectares since 2019. Training areas and ranges also make up 99.7% of the land MOD holds legal rights to (206,100 out of 206,700 hectares). Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations³ (RFCA) occupy 2,200 hectares (0.5% of the MOD total), this has increased by 300 hectares since 2019. This could be due to an improvement in data quality for RFCA. Other areas have stayed broadly the same.

Chart 4: Type of use, as at 1 April 2020



Source Data: DIO (IMS)

Detailed figures on the MOD's UK land holdings at 1 April each year since 2000 can be found in Table 1 (by parent Service), Table 2 (by country) and Table 3 (by type of use):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/mod-land-holdings-bulletin-index>

³ Figures from 1 April 2016 now includes Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations (RFCA), and Service Family Accommodation (SFA) in the total land holdings figures, this is because of data quality improvement work. Comparable figures for earlier years are not available.

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>

Data Sources and Quality

The land holding figures are derived from the DIO Infrastructure Management System (IMS) which contains information on all non-sensitive property assets that are owned, occupied or over which the MOD hold rights. The figures in the publication do have notable inclusions and exclusions which are as follows (these caveats apply to all figures from 2011):

- The figures presented include land occupied by all MOD TLB holders (including United States Visiting Forces (USVF) occupied sites); all Trading Funds and Agencies (including Defence Support Group, Defence Science & Technology Laboratory (DSTL) and the Hydrographic Office).
- Civil estate (for example offices) owned by MOD but could be leased to other Government Departments is included in the figures.
- However, Civil estate which is owned by MOD, but is currently being used by another Government Department (and not at all by MOD) is excluded.
- The reserve (or volunteer) estate is now included from 2016, this is due to a data quality improvement. Comparable figures for earlier years are not available.
- The Rights figures for England & Scotland include those agreements where Training on Private Land (ToPL) has been formalised with the landowner through a legal Agreement.
- Information on PFI, dockyard, and AWE assets are currently being reviewed, any updates will be reflected in later publications.
- In Wales significant amounts of ToPL occurs on an informal agreement basis so these figures are not included. As most of the land held under Rights agreements is used for training which is driven by operational requirements, the extent of Rights held can vary significantly from year to year.
- Changes to the estate which have not been captured on IMS by the time the data is extracted for this bulletin are not included.
- Due to the way the data is held in the IMS, it is no longer possible to show the extent of foreshore held by the MOD. Therefore, separate figures for this are no longer shown but are included in the totals provided.

Data quality improvements to the IMS were reinforced as a result of recommendations from the National Audit Office 2010 report: [‘A Defence Estate of the Right Size to meet Operational Needs’](#). Further information about these improvements and other aspects of data quality 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

Within this publication, all figures have been rounded to the nearest hundred hectares or to one decimal place for percentages. 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

The 2019 figures have been revised to include updates that were not available at the time of the 2019 publication.

Figures from 2016 now includes Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations (RFCA), and Service Family Accommodation (SFA) in the total Land Holdings figures, this is because of data quality improvement work. Comparable figures for earlier years are not available.

A small amendment has been made to 2017 Freehold figures in Miscellaneous due to a rounding error (located in table 3).

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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Please note that these email addresses may change later in the year.

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