

HOUSING RECOVERY PLAN – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Now that the three month freeze on assignments has been lifted, we understand that many Service personnel and their families will be keen to progress their house moves. We are working closely with the Single services, Agility and our Industry Partners, and in line with UK Government guidance and that of the devolved administrations, to reactivate housing services in a phased and orderly way. The safety of SFA occupants, DIO and Industry Partner personnel remains our key priority as we work to recover housing services. We will continue to keep you fully informed of developments and would welcome your assistance in passing details to Service families as we progress.

DIO Accommodation has developed a Housing Recovery Plan that we are keen to share with you which focuses on three key areas of service delivery:

- The regeneration of house moves from 15 June;
- The recovery of outstanding Statutory and Mandatory safety testing; and
- The reactivation of housing project works and minor works, together with the delivery of a full response maintenance service.

We have updated our Covid-19 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to cover each activity.

The Regeneration of House Moves from 15 June

What is happening to Service Family Accommodation (SFA) moves from 15 June?

Following the recent single Service announcements on the regeneration of Service personnel assignments, SFA moves will restart, on a phased basis, from 15 June. Assignment Orders received prior to lockdown will remain valid, albeit deferred by 3 months. SFA Moves will be carried out in 4 Phases:

- Ph 0: Early moves taking advantage of supplier capacity and single Service priorities.
15 June – 30 June 20
- Ph 1: Moves which in the main would have originally been scheduled for March.
1 July – 31 July 20
- Ph 2: Moves which in the main would have originally been scheduled for April.
1 August – 31 August 20
- Ph 3: Moves which in the main would have originally been scheduled for May.
1 September – 16 October 20

All questions in relation to assignment dates should be directed to the Service Manning Authorities in the first instance.

What is DIO Accommodation doing to support these SFA moves?

DIO Accommodation is working closely with the single Services, our Industry Partners Amey and Mears, and Agility Removals Service, to ensure that our service delivery fully supports Defence's requirements. In particular, the allocation of SFA has recommenced on a phased basis, together with the booking of Move-In/Out appointments. Amey/Mears and Agility are working closely together to ensure that Move In/Out and Removal dates align. Service families may therefore be contacted by

either agency to book suitable dates; they should do so at the earliest opportunity. Flexibility will be key to ensuring that Amey/Mears and Agility's combined services can be harnessed fully for the benefit of all Service families.

Who will be given priority when dealing with SFA applications?

Due to the backlog of moves, the initial priority will be to meet Defence's requirement for entitled service family moves; this includes the call forward of families where Service personnel have moved ahead unaccompanied. Amey and Mears will make contact with entitled Service personnel to discuss their move.

We understand that this is a stressful time for Service families, and they will be keen to know where they will live, and to arrange Move In/Out and Removal appointments. However, DIO Accommodation asks for your support in encouraging Service personnel whose assignments have been deferred until August or September to submit their application in the normal way (mainly by e1132) and then wait until they are contacted by the Amey/Mears Helpdesks. This will allow Helpdesk staff to focus on initial moves planned for June and July.

What about families returning/moving Overseas?

To support Service personnel returning from overseas, DIO Accommodation will aim to provide access to the allocated UK SFA to allow the requisite 14-day quarantine period (effective from 8 June) to be conducted in the new home, noting that this will rely on the delivery in advance of furniture and personal effects. Arrangements will be made for both the Move-In and Removals to be accepted by a proxy.

For families moving overseas who are required to undergo quarantine (depending on the location), SFA will remain available until the move has taken place. We will use a virtual move out process to support this requirement.

It is acknowledged that these arrangements may not suit every family and anyone who has concerns is encouraged to contact OccupancyServices@AmeyDefenceServices.co.uk in the first instance to discuss their situation in order that a solution can be identified. Families moving overseas should contact the relevant housing provider.

What about other SFA applications?

All other applications for SFA, such as betterment moves, or those from cohabitating couples, will be prioritised once the main allocations for entitled personnel between mid-June and mid-October have been met; this will allow the surplus SFA position to be fully understood. However, DIO Accommodation will consider Chain of Command supported SFA applications from eligible personnel on a case by case basis at any stage.

What about retaining SFA in the UK and Overseas?

If you are seeking to retain SFA in the UK, you should apply for retention in the usual way, by submitting an application to Amey Occupancy Services via the e1132 application system or email: OccupancyServices@AmeyDefenceServices.co.uk. Retention requests will be considered in line with current policy contained within JSP464 Vol 1 Part 1 Chapter 7. Overseas retention requests should be directed to the relevant housing provider.

How will Amey manage the regeneration of House Moves resulting from the Assignment Freeze and 'Business as Usual' moves?

The Amey Occupancy Services Team has been reorganised to allow one team to concentrate on the backlog of moves arising from the assignment freeze, while the other focuses on upcoming moves, including unit moves planned for November. In addition, as the Amey OS Team reaches full strength, it is planned that they will reintroduce a full telephony service from 15 June. Digital channels will remain available for use should applicants wish; confirmation of these arrangements will be provided in due course.

How will the removal process work whilst restrictions are still in place?

Agility has advised that if Service families are unable to vacate their SFA during the pack up, they should remain in a single room to avoid contact with the removal crew. Whilst this precaution is necessary for the safety of both Service families and removals operatives, it is recognised it will complicate the removals process. If necessary, and where possible, the Chain of Command is encouraged to make local contact houses available for families to use while packing is taking place.

What is the position for those who have lost their entitlement to SFA?

In line with earlier Government guidance, all Loss of Entitlement (LOE) actions have been temporarily placed on hold until further notice. This means no new Notice to Vacates (NTVs) are being issued until such time as the Government guidance changes. DIO Accommodation is monitoring the situation closely and will re-start LOE processes as soon as we are able to. This means occupants whose entitlement to SFA has ceased can remain in SFA until such time as the NTV is issued; at this point, occupants will have a further 93-days entitlement to remain in the SFA. They will not be liable for increased accommodation charges until the NTV expires - dates and charges will be confirmed within the NTV pack, once issued. If occupants require any further help or guidance, they should contact the LOE Team (DIORDAccn-LOETeam@mod.gov.uk).

The Recovery of Statutory & Mandatory Safety Testing

Will scheduled gas and electrical safety testing continue?

It is vital that, at all times, we provide you with a safe, compliant and well-maintained home. Therefore, in line with Government and Health and Safety Executive advice, Amey will continue to carry out pre-planned gas and electrical safety testing on the SFA estate.

Why are these important?

An annual Gas Safety check is a legal requirement for all landlords, and the MOD is no different in this respect; the check is an essential safety requirement to ensure that your home is gas-safe and to reduce the potential for a carbon monoxide incident. In addition, keeping electrical systems in good condition is extremely important for the safety and smooth functioning of your home, and reduces the potential for electrical fires.

What steps will be taken to protect the health and safety of SFA occupants?

We understand and share the concerns of Service families at this difficult time; the safety of both occupants and operatives remains our key priority. Therefore, in carrying out their work, Amey staff

and their supply chain will follow Government guidelines [*“Working safely during COVID-19 in other people’s homes”*](#) and protect your health and safety by:

- confirming in advance whether anyone at the property is self-isolating or social distancing
- washing hands for 20+ seconds using soap and warm water at the nearest available hand wash basin on arrival and before departure
- using anti-bacterial alcohol-based hand gel where there are no hand washing facilities
- wearing an ID card in a visible position
- remaining more than 2 metres from other people
- asking occupants to move to another room/area while the work is carried out
- cleaning tools and equipment using sanitisation spray or wipes.

In line with the Government guidance, produced in conjunction with the HSE, there is no requirement for Amey or Mears personnel to wear facemasks, unless they are unable to maintain the required 2 metres social distance.

The Reactivation of Housing Project Works, together with the full delivery of Response Maintenance Orders

When will Housing Project Works Restart?

Several Housing Project Works aimed at improving SFA had to stop because of the unavailability of materials due to Covid-19 restrictions. Sites were therefore closed and left in a safe condition. As restrictions have begun to ease, the availability of materials has increased. Consequently, we have restarted Housing Project Works on a phased basis. 83 projects were stopped in early March, and almost 50 have restarted. It is planned that the remainder will be underway again by July. In line with agreed arrangements, occupants of affected SFA are being advised when their property is rescheduled for improvement works.

During the lock down period, we were pleased to continue void preparation works, including new kitchens, bathrooms, carpets and redecoration if required to ensure that properties are ready for occupation as soon as the freeze on assignments was lifted. As SFA Move-Outs begin again in mid-June, the Void Improvement Programme will be maintained to provide improved accommodation for incoming Service families.

What about Response Maintenance?

During the period of restriction, Amey continued to deliver the full range of response maintenance tasks for the National Housing Prime contract, including responding to emergency and critical maintenance calls. However, the reduction in the availability of materials meant that some routine tasks took longer to complete than usual. As most materials are now readily available, Amey will resume delivery against contracted timelines for all response maintenance tasks.

What if an Occupant is Self-Isolating?

In line with Government guidance, we shall continue to follow health and safety measures. Where occupants are self-isolating, operatives will not enter a property to undertake improvement works, planned or non-critical reactive maintenance for a period of 17 days or until such time as it is confirmed that there is no longer any risk.

What precautions will be taken by Amey/Mears personnel?

We fully understand the concerns of Service families at this difficult time and the steps necessary to protect the health and safety of Service families, Amey/Mears and supply chain personnel. All works will be undertaken in accordance with Government guidelines set out above.

Useful links

[Agility](#)

[Latest combined stakeholder \(MOD and single Services\) message for managing the impact to postings and household moves](#)