

Background Quality Report

UK Defence Statistics Compendium: Chapter 6

Land Holdings and Buildings

1. Introduction

Overview

The MOD is one of the largest landowners in the country, with an estate equal to over 1% of the UK land mass. The estate, spread over approximately 4,000 sites, is critical to the effectiveness of the Armed Forces. It is used for training and accommodation and provides a base from which operations can be instigated.

Chapter 6 of UKDS consists of two groups of Tables: on MOD land holdings, and on Service Family Accommodation (SFA). Data for both are provided from administrative systems in the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO).

The statistics on land holdings are published annually and provide land holdings in thousands of hectares in turn by parent service area, country and type of use and, in each case, whether owned, leased or with legal rights. The statistics on SFA are also published annually and give counts of dwellings (permanent holdings) by country, counts and percentages of vacant dwellings, and counts by standard for condition.

DASA has published land holding and building statistics since 1992. All the Tables in this Chapter are National Statistics.

Methodology and Production

Data on Land Holdings now come from the Defence Property Gazetteer, a database maintained by Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO). This holds information on all MOD Land Holdings. Data are extracted from the DPG and collated by DIO staff to give the figures in UKDS Tables 6.1 to 6.3.

Data on Housing is provided by regional contractors to DIO who enter it into an electronic asset register (database). Data are extracted from this system by DIO and collated to produce UKDS tables 6.4 and 6.5

Contact details

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DASA welcome feedback on this Background Quality Report or any of the statistics mentioned.

2. Relevance

UKDS Chapter 6 is the primary means by which information on Land Holdings and Housing are made widely available.

The information in this chapter has a range of users including the media, politicians, academic researchers and the general public who use the information to

- gain an understanding of size and condition of the MOD estate;
- set the context for other information on Defence;
- assist in understanding the impact of initiatives and policy on MOD estate

Public accountability requires that MOD should account for its assets, and know where they are and how they are used. While internal systems may be sufficient for internal use, publication in UKDS makes this information available publicly, regularly and as a time series. The Tables include definitions and other information so that the data are set in context and can be understood by a lay audience as well as those with professional interests.

The Tables also provide evidence for the outcomes of policy initiatives, such as reductions in the percentage of vacant SFA and improvements to the surveyed condition of the stock of SFA. This is of interest generally in terms of policy effectiveness and the use of public funds, but may be of particular interest to those concerned with the welfare of the Armed Forces and their families.

3. Accuracy

The data in these tables have been extracted from a MOD database which is considered to be reliable. There are no significant concerns over the accuracy of data. In addition to being checked by DIO staff undertaking the data extraction / collation, the tables are reviewed by the DIO Board as a part of the validation process. The data in these tables have also been subjected to a "sense check" by Government Statisticians.

4. Timeliness and Punctuality

Publication dates for UKDS as a whole are agreed up to 12 months in advance and are published on the [Publication Release Dates](#)¹ section of [DASA website](#)² and on the [National Statistics Publication Hub](#)³. These statistics are published by DASA only in UKDS, and each year the tables are updated to include the latest annual data: as at 1 April of that year for land holdings and as at 31 March for SFA. The timetable for the publication of these statistics is thus driven by the timetable for UKDS as a whole. Given that assets are conventionally measured and reported at the end of a financial year, the UKDS timetable allows inclusion of the latest year's information. As this chapter is a relatively small component of UKDS and the statistics are published annually, the loss of any timeliness is thought to be outweighed by the benefits of publication in a compendium like UKDS.

5. Accessibility and Clarity

UKDS is published on [DASA website](#)². Individual Chapters are available as pdfs, with individual tables and charts also available as webpages. The data underpinning the tables are also available as an Excel file but those for the charts are not.

The introduction to this Chapter has sections on each of the groups of tables. Each section also has a more detailed introduction. The introductions assist accessibility and clarity by setting out the context of the statistics, outlining the material in the tables, identifying the key conclusions that can be drawn from the statistics, providing definitions and explanations of the terms used and giving information on methods and data quality. Some also include links to websites that provide further more detailed information.

6. Coherence and Comparability

The tables in this Chapter cover the years 2000 and 2006 to 2012, providing a seven-year time series, together with a snapshot of the beginning of the century. The introductory material explains the impact on the statistics of factors that affect coherence over time.

Further organisational changes affecting the provision of SFA are explained in the section relating to this, together with explanations of definitions. For example, the difference between total and core stock is explained, which have both been used at various times as the denominator when measuring the proportion of the stock at different levels of condition.

The statistics presented show both overall UK land holdings and the holdings for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland separately. Chapter 6 does not offer any comparisons with holdings elsewhere, and no demand for such comparisons has been identified. The form of the data allows users to make comparisons (eg. international comparisons, comparisons to other land users) themselves.

7. Trade-offs between Output Quality Components

The process for collating information requires substantial checking and includes approval by the DIO board. Although the data are requested early, it is often not finalised until close to the publication date and could not be published earlier. In 2012 delays were mainly due to resource constraints in DASA rather than late delivery by data providers, with final data being received before the end of September 2012.

8. Assessment of User Needs and Perceptions

DASA holds regular consultation meetings with both internal and external users of UKDS, which provide a forum for user feedback on their needs and perceptions. DASA also publishes a summary of proposed changes on the home page of its website before the consultation meeting which invites users to comment on the proposals by email if they cannot attend the meeting.

Between 28 September 2011 (when UKDS 2011 was published) and 31 August 2012 UKDS Chapter 6 received about 300 unique views on the DASA internet site. DASA actively encourages feedback from users. Very little feedback relating to UKDS Chapter 6 has been received.

9. Performance, Cost and Respondent Burden

The outputs are produced from the administrative data provided by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation. The benefit of DASA publishing these statistics is that these administrative data are placed in the public domain, and as National Statistics, in a way that ensures their independence from political interference and adherence to quality standards. The small burden that this places on the data suppliers is considered to be worthwhile to achieve this, and the consequent public accountability provided by their publication.

10. Confidentiality, Transparency and Security

UKDS Chapter 6 does not contain any identifiable personal data.

All staff involved in the production process have signed the Data Protection Act, and all MOD, Civil Service and data protection regulations are adhered to. All data are stored, accessed and analysed using the MOD's restricted network and IT systems.

We adhere to the principles and protocols laid out in the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#)⁴ and comply with pre-release access arrangements. The [DASA Pre-Release Access lists](#)⁵ are available on the DASA website. This Chapter is subject to the pre-release access arrangements for UKDS as a whole.

11. References

	Reference	Website Location
1	Publication Release Dates	http://www.dasa.mod.uk/applications/newWeb/www/index.php?page=68
2	DASA website	http://www.dasa.mod.uk
3	National Statistics Publication Hub	http://www.statistics.gov.uk/hub/index.html
4	Code of Practice for Official Statistics	http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/code-of-practice-for-official-statistics.pdf
5	DASA Pre-Release Access lists	DASA Pre-Release Access lists

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