

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 are received annually from the Defence Infrastructure Organisation. They complete standard templates for each Table using data are derived from their administrative systems. The data provide an annual "snapshot" of land holdings, and of Service family accommodation at a specific date.

The data are checked for any obvious anomalies, but DASA cannot make an authoritative independent assessment of the data or their quality.

Definitions and explanations of the terminology used are provided in the Chapter.

Contact details

Mark Towers, the Head of DASA Web and Development Services, is responsible for UKDS Chapter 6. His contact details are:

DASA WDS

Tel: 0207 807892

MOD Main Building

3.K.50

E-mail: mark.towers768@mod.uk

Whitehall

Web site: www.dasa.mod.uk

London SW1A 2HB

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

2. Relevance

The main users of these tables are those interested in the extent and stewardship of the MOD's 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 statistics are drawn from MOD administrative data systems and provided to DASA.

Following a review of the method by which the statistics on the land holdings were prepared, a new method has been adopted in 2011 using the Defence Property Gazetteer (DPG). This takes advantage of the advances that have taken place in computerised mapping to provide a more accurate representation of the extent of the Defence Estate, to reflect current estate management processes and align these statistics with others reported to Parliament such as the National Asset Register.

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.

A search of terms such as "land", "estate", "accommodation", "housing" or "land holdings" on [DASA website](#)² will bring up links to all of the Tables in chapter 6, and to further Tables that might be of interest.

The introduction to this Chapter falls into two parts: land holdings, and Service family accommodation. In the part about land holdings, there is contextual information about the size of MOD land holdings and what is included, what the land is used for, and who manages it. The change to the method of measurement (see 3. above) is explained and comparisons drawn with holdings a year earlier. Further commentary is then provided on the three Tables on land holdings, particularly focussed on the detail of changes since the previous year. Background material on the main training areas follows.

The second part of the introduction explains the background to the SFA Tables and changes since the previous publication.

The commentary throughout the Chapter draws out key points from the data and explains definitions. Within the Tables there are further notes that clarify definitions or explain changes since previous years. In the SFA Tables there is information on the criteria for occupation of SFA, and on the numbers entitled or eligible.

The statistics on land holdings are also presented as charts, as is the information on the surveyed condition of SFA. These charts provide an alternate presentation of the information for those who prefer a more visual approach.

6. Coherence and Comparability

The tables in this Chapter cover the years 2000 and 2005 to 2011, 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. This year the introduction of a new data set for land holdings has caused a break in time series, and organisational changes in the MOD have changed the distribution of holdings by TLB, but not the annual total. The effects of these changes are discussed in the Chapter.

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 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 adoption of the DPG as a new method of preparing statistics on the land holdings will allow for greater flexibility in reporting statistics and the opportunity of including different statistics in the future, as well as providing a more accurate representation of the extent of the Defence Estate.

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. However, it is difficult to identify users of Chapter 6 to invite to these meetings. Another measure of user needs is the less formal evidence from customer queries to the editor of UKDS. There were three telephone requests for information relating to this Chapter between April 2010 and October 2011.

Analysis of hit rates on the external UKDS website shows that between September 2010 and April 2011 there were typically between 200 and 300 hits per month on Chapter 6 of UKDS. This shows that there is a relatively high level of use. The fact that so few of these enquiries (less than 0.5%) resulted in a follow up query suggests that the data provided broadly meet user needs. In addition DASA actively encourages feedback from users via a link on each publication and a "pop up" survey questionnaire – very little feedback relating to UKDS Chapter 6 has been received through these mechanisms.

The adoption of the DPG as a new method of preparing statistics on the land holdings will allow for greater flexibility in reporting statistics and the opportunity of including different statistics in the future.

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

Last updated: November 2011