



**DEFENCE
BUSINESS
SERVICES**
Civilian HR



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE STATEMENT OF CIVILIAN PERSONNEL POLICY

ACCOMMODATION AND UTILITIES OVERSEAS

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EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This policy has been Equality and Diversity Impact Assessed in accordance with the Department's Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment Tool against:

Part 1 Assessment Only (no diversity impact found)

ACCOMMODATION AND UTILITIES OVERSEAS

Accommodation on arrival at post

If on arrival you are unable to move directly into permanent official accommodation you may take up hotel accommodation at public expense. Initially you would be allowed subsistence allowances to cover hotel and food costs for up to 30 nights in the form of reasonable receipted actual. This can be extended at DBS Civilian HR Relocations discretion where you are still awaiting allocation of permanent official accommodation.

Alternatively, if you are overseas on a single or married unaccompanied basis you may be able to be accommodated in a local military mess pending taking up permanent official single accommodation (mainly in Germany) or private accommodation under the Overseas Rent Allowance scheme (**see below - The renting of private accommodation in the overseas location**).

Note that during any initial period when you are staying in temporary accommodation and claiming subsistence, your pay will not attract the London pay additions (unless you have been posted overseas from the London pay area) or Cost of Living Addition (COLA) (see [Pay, Expenses and Allowances, MOD Civilian Overseas - Cost of Living Addition \(COLA\) and Difficult Post allowance \(DPA\) Rates](#)).

Accommodation and Utilities

Accommodation

If you are posted to the European Support Group area (Germany (Ramstein only), Belgium, Italy, Netherlands) you should contact the in-country United Kingdom Joint Support Unit for information on what accommodation is available, as there may be constraints that you need to be aware of before accepting a posting. Contact details are at the following website address: <http://www.esg.bfgnet.de/>.

Single and Married Unaccompanied Staff

Civilian staff posted overseas come under the military housing regulations when it comes to the allocation of official accommodation, but this can sometimes vary between overseas commands. In overseas areas where Single Living Accommodation (referred to as Official Single Housing (OSH in Germany)) is available, you will be allocated such accommodation appropriate to your grade (Officers Mess, Warrant Officers and Sergeants' Mess or Other Ranks' accommodation) for the duration of your overseas tour of duty. The overseas area will determine the availability of official accommodation and/or where not available, the eligibility for Overseas Rent Allowance (ORA). In the

main, allocation of accommodation is based on grade/rank and where appropriate accompanying family size. Official accommodation normally comes with furniture and fittings to an approved military standard. Also, it should be borne in mind that the MOD cannot replicate the type of living accommodation that you enjoyed in the UK.

Accompanied Staff

If you are being posted to one of the main overseas commands such as Cyprus, Germany or Gibraltar you will normally be allocated Service Family Accommodation (SFA), which are usually located within or just outside of garrison/base areas, or somewhere within the local community. Civilian staff posted overseas come under the military housing regulations when it comes to the allocation of SFA, but this can sometimes vary between overseas commands. In the main, allocation of accommodation is based on Grade /Equivalent Military Rank (EMR) and family size. For example if you are a Band C2 (Major/Squadron Leader equivalent) you would be entitled up to Type IV SFA (See [JSP 464](#) Pt II for details). Dependent upon availability of SFA you may, in the first instance, be accommodated in rented accommodation with the option of moving at some later date to SFA. It is worth pointing out that the standard and dimensions of SFA vary from one overseas location to another. All SFA come with furniture (if required) and fittings to an approved military standard. Also, it should be borne in mind that the MOD cannot replicate the type of living accommodation that you may have enjoyed in the UK.

IMPORTANT:

You should be aware that your occupancy of SFA is governed by Service regulations. In Germany and other countries where the NATO Status of Forces Agreement applies, and other countries for different reasons, unmarried partners may not be recognised as dependents. Moreover, if you are serving elsewhere and officially accompanied by an unmarried partner you are not normally allowed to occupy SFA and may, as an alternative, occupy private rented accommodation and claim Overseas Rent Allowance (**see below - The renting of private accommodation in the overseas location**). Civil partners are, however accommodated in the same way as married personnel.

The renting of private accommodation in the overseas location

You may be posted to an overseas location where there is no Single Living Accommodation available, or you are posted to a location outside the main overseas areas where only private accommodation is available. In these circumstances you may take up private furnished accommodation under what is known as the Overseas Rent Allowance (ORA) scheme. Such schemes are normally administered locally in the overseas location and they allow you to find your own suitable and reasonably priced private accommodation in the local community. The private accommodation should be in-line with your Grade/Equivalent Military Rank. Once you have identified suitable accommodation you should seek budgetary approval to take up the private accommodation under the ORA scheme. Approval is likely to be subject to the tenancy agreement being checked out by the appropriate local authority and

local security checks. Once approval has been given and you have moved in you will be able to claim a monthly ORA, levels of which are determined locally based on local market forces. Outside the main overseas areas the ORA may be paid directly to Landlords via local Imprest Accounts.

If you are single/unaccompanied and decide to share privately rented accommodation with another single/unaccompanied colleague, you may rent a property of a sufficient size and configuration (e.g. 2 good sized bedrooms) for dual occupancy. However, under no circumstances should the rent should be more than what it would have cost had you each rented a single-occupancy property. As a rule of thumb, the ORA paid for a privately rented property for 2 single/unaccompanied people should be no more than 20-25% higher than the rent that would have been paid for a single occupancy flat/apartment. The same principle will apply with three (or more) colleagues choose to share accommodation – i.e. the rent should be no more than 40-50% higher than a single occupancy flat/apartment.

Furniture in Official Accommodation

Official accommodation is furnished to a certain standard including the normal fixtures and fittings. If you are taking some of your own furniture and beds with you overseas you can elect to have certain items of furniture removed from the official accommodation. This would normally be done when you are completing your accommodation application form. This would not apply in all areas, where separate arrangements may exist for official accommodation (e.g. Washington and Canberra).

Taking Over your Official Accommodation

Once you have been allocated official accommodation you will be required to undertake what is known as a “march-in”. You will be shown around the accommodation by a representative of the Housing Office to check the inventory of the accommodation and identify any damage, or repairs that may be required. At this time you will be required to sign a “Licence to Occupy”. After moving in you will be given a period of time in which you can identify damage and repairs that were not noted during the “march-in”. After this period you may be responsible for the cost of the repair of any damage to, or replacement of furniture and fittings.

IMPORTANT:

In some overseas locations SFA or an OH may not be available immediately upon arrival in the overseas location and it is possible that you may not be allocated accommodation for a number of weeks or even months. Therefore, if you are to be accompanied by your family at the overseas location you would normally be expected to commence your tour of duty on an unaccompanied basis. Your family can then join you at post once you have been allocated family accommodation.

For more information on Tri-Service Accommodation you should also refer to [**JSP 464 Part 2**](#).

Mess accommodation

If you are overseas on a single or married unaccompanied basis you may, if available, be able to be accommodated in a military mess appropriate to your grade (Officers', Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' or Other Ranks' Mess) for the duration of your overseas tour of duty.

Utilities

As well as being entitled to free accommodation overseas, you are also entitled to free utilities within reasonable limits. The method of delivery and type of utilities available vary between overseas locations. For example, in Cyprus, staff receive an electricity allowance and a local tax-free Local Utilities Allowance to cover bottled gas, bulk gas, firewood and heating oil; in Germany they operate a different system known as the X/Y scheme which covers the provision of mains gas and electricity. If your consumption exceeds the set limits then you will be billed for your excess consumption.

In other overseas areas, there will be no set consumption limits but reimbursement will be challenged where bills appear excessive.

Accommodation and Utilities – Maternity Leave

If you are on Ordinary Maternity Leave and Additional Maternity Leave you will continue to be entitled to benefit from free accommodation and utilities. This will not apply if you are specially recruited and the five year rule has already commenced (see below). If you are specially recruited it may continue in the 5 year period, but only up to the 5th Anniversary.

Cessation of Free Accommodation, Utilities and Storage – The 5 Year Rule

From 1 September 2001 the provision of free accommodation (including accommodation taken up under the Overseas Rent Allowance scheme), utilities and storage of personal effects for staff specially recruited for overseas service 5 years after taking up their appointment was withdrawn. This applies to specially recruited staff who took up post on or after 1 September 2001. Specially recruited staff in post prior to 1 September 2001, and those staff who took up post after that date, but who, accepted their appointment under the terms and conditions of service prevailing prior to that date, have reserved rights to the free provision of the above mentioned services.

Recruitment and Staff Specially Recruited for Overseas Service

If an employee is currently working overseas on specially recruited for overseas terms and applies for another MOD specially recruited post, advertised externally, and this offers free accommodation and utilities, if successful, there will be no extension to any existing 5 year entitlement period for free accommodation and utilities. Similarly, an employee who only qualifies for a 5 year entitlement period, would not be eligible for a further entitlement period through an appointment to another specially recruited post, through an internal recruitment process.

The Administrative Arrangements for Accommodation Charges

The charges

The charges for accommodation are the same as those that are applied to military personnel, as promulgated in the annual "Pay Directed Letter for Regular Personnel". Under normal circumstances the charges (inclusive of CILOCT) will be based on the type of Service Family Accommodation/Single Living Accommodation being occupied or entitlement, but see below:

- a. If you are allocated SFA/OH above your entitlement for service reasons (e.g. no SFA/OH appropriate to your entitlement available) then you should only be charged the rental charge appropriate to your normal SFA/OH entitlement. There should be some scope to allow you to move to SFA/OH of your entitlement at some future date depending on availability. If you are offered SFA/OH at your entitlement, but do not take it up, then the accommodation charge appropriate to the SFA/OH occupied will be applied.
- b. If you specifically request SFA/OH above your entitlement and the local Housing Office is able to accommodate you, then the rental charge should be appropriate to the type of accommodation occupied and not that of your normal entitlement.
- c. If you are single/unaccompanied and occupy Single Living Accommodation you will pay the appropriate rent in accordance with a. and b. above.
- d. If you occupy private accommodation under the Overseas Rent Allowance scheme (in locations such as Cyprus, Australia and the USA) you would continue to have the rent paid by the MOD but would then have the accommodation charge appropriate to your SFA/OH entitlement directly deducted from salary on a monthly basis.
- e. If you live in Single Living/ Mess Accommodation then you should pay the appropriate non-entitled mess accommodation rate

Recovery of the accommodation charges

The accommodation and CILOCT charges will be collected by direct deductions from your salary on a monthly basis. Thereafter, individuals will be personally responsible for notifying DBS Civilian HR of any changes to their deductions (e.g. as a result of a move to a different SFA/OH).

If you occupy private accommodation under the Overseas Rent Allowance (ORA) scheme you will continue to receive your full ORA, but the appropriate accommodation charge will be recovered directly from your salary in accordance with paragraph 4 above.

Staff on nil pay

Although, rare, there may be occasions when staff go on to nil pay (e.g. long term sickness, unpaid maternity leave etc). In such circumstances DBS Civilian HR would be unable to recover money from your salary, so recovery of accommodation charges will be undertaken locally by the Housing

Office/Authority.

Attribution of accommodation charge receipts

DIO have no responsibility for SFA/OH overseas, therefore, the accommodation receipts should go to the appropriate local overseas/parent HLB. The UIN and RAC boxes of HR Form 2712 should be annotated accordingly.

Staff Specially Recruited for Overseas Service posted to Isolated Locations – Storage Costs

Staff specially recruited for overseas service may be posted to clearly defined isolated locations, where the tours are “lifed” and where there are lower limits set for shipping. These are Belize, Brunei, and the Falkland Islands. The payment of storage charges will therefore be extended to those who have no entitlement to free accommodation and utilities after 5 years, or who would reach that point during the course of the tour for the time in the “isolated” location (e.g. Belize, Brunei, and the Falkland Islands). Thus, if you were posted to Brunei after 4 years service, and returned to Germany two years later, storage costs would be met up to the return to Germany – extending payments by a further year. Charges would commence one month after the isolated posting ended.

THE ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR UTILITY CHARGES

Cyprus

Utility charges should be paid in accordance with existing local arrangements applicable to Service personnel. Meters will be read every 4 months and Debit Vouchers will be issued accordingly. Utility bills should be settled via the Command/Garrison/Station Pay Office as appropriate.

There is also a voluntary budget scheme in operation which allows payment of a standing amount of money per month and at the end of each year an individual would either be in credit or debit, depending upon utility consumption. If in debit then a Debit Voucher for the outstanding amount will be raised.

Germany

Staff in Germany should pay for their electricity and gas consumption in accordance with the local X/Y system. Local arrangements apply.

Owner-occupiers in the Overseas Area

ORA is not payable for accommodation owned by the employee or close family member.

Other overseas locations

Staff in other overseas locations should pay utility charges in accordance with local arrangements.

Staff Specially Recruited for Overseas Service – Further Transfer

Staff specially recruited for overseas service may decide to move into private rented accommodation or decide to buy locally when the entitlement to free accommodation and utilities ceases 5 years after appointment. If they are

subsequently transferred to another overseas location, outside of reasonable daily travel of their home, a limited range of relocation assistance is offered to help with the costs of removals. This overseas relocation assistance is based on the UK First Appointment Package and is limited to a maximum of £8,000. Details follow;

Qualification

Employees Specially Recruited for Overseas Service who have moved to private rented accommodation or bought local to their current overseas permanent place of work;

Private residence is within daily travel of the current workplace (1 hour);

New permanent workplace is outside daily travel of private home (1 hour);

If eligible for help, employee would be expected to move to new dormitory area (1 hour) and make a reduction of 50% in travel time and distance;

Employees currently residing in Service Accommodation would be ineligible for this assistance;

Employees who have not purchased before transfer, could not receive assistance to purchase in new area;

The Transfer must be permanent and of at least 3 years duration;

If the transfer is less than 3 years duration, and the transfer is temporary and unaccompanied then the employee will be entitled to occupy rent-free accommodation, if they maintain dual commitment at last place of work.

The Packages

Owner-Occupier

- 1) Appropriate rate of Transfer Grant (£2,258 or £1,830);
- 2) Solicitors fees for sale and purchase;
- 3) Estate Agency/realtor fees;
- 4) Removal costs;
- 5) Temporary Storage costs;
- 6) Temporary accommodation costs at the new workplace

Renter

- 1) Appropriate rate of Transfer Grant (£2,258 or £1,830);

- 2) Legal fees associated with the lease;
- 3) Overlapping rental costs;
- 4) Estate Agency/realtor fees;
- 5) Removal costs;
- 6) Temporary storage costs; and
- 7) Temporary accommodation costs at the workplace.

Total payments would be limited to £8,000 and must be claimed by the end of the UK tax year after the year in which the change of job takes place (the "limitation day"). Removals will not be provided through the Unaccompanied Baggage contract but would have to be arranged privately and bills reimbursed.

No payments would be made towards an initial purchase or rental, nor towards the acquisition of a second home. No payments would be made towards any higher housing costs (e.g. no Additional Housing Costs Allowance or Advance of Salary).