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of Defence

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17 Dec 13

RECORD OF DECISIONS OF THE ACCOMMODATION STEERING GROUP (ASG) HELD IN MAIN BUILDING ON 5 DEC 13

Present:		Pers Trg-SVW-Accom NEM&Pol DHd	Chair
		DACOS W&S (Desig)	
		DACOS W&S	
		DIO SD Accn-PR	
		DACOS Community Support	
		Army PersSvcs-PS4-CtySp-SO1	
		JFC-J1-Pol-SO1	
		Pers Trg-SVW-Accom Pol 1	
		Pers-Trg-SVW-Accom Pol 4	
		Pers Trg-SVW-Accom Pol 3	Secretary
Apologies:		Pers Trg-SVW-Accom Pol 2	

<u>Item 1 – Introduction</u>	Actions
<p>1. The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting and in particular DACOS W&S (Designate) to his first meeting of the ASG.</p> <p><u>Item 2 – Minutes of the Last Meeting & Matters Arising</u></p> <p>2. The minutes of the last meeting in Jun 13 were accepted.</p> <p>3. Customer Satisfaction Survey. There had been no significant changes to the trends reported at the ADF, but higher levels of dissatisfaction had been recorded against SFA allocation. DIO had developed a set of sub-questions to explore the issues further. The NGEN should better allow the contractor to be 'held to account'. However, the effects of the new contract on existing staffs had yet to be determined. A lack of resources could inhibit improvements to customer service and supporting governance mechanisms. The situation should be closely monitored.</p> <p>4. Second Offers. The impact of the new process had been low and the process was reported to be working well. JSP 464 had been updated Nov 13. There was concern that some SP may have found ways to circumvent the system by terminating an application (after an offer had been made) and restarting the application process. The APWG would monitor the position and look to 'close loopholes' if evidence of incorrect behaviour became more prevalent. Item Closed (to APWG).</p>	<p>DIO SD Accn</p>

<p>5. Non-entitled Occupation of SFA. Only a small number of NTV had been issued as a result of the review. Most were issued to civilian occupants, with ‘SP issues’ generally resolved through the Chain of Command. No specific trends had been identified. The HASC’s ‘rolling reviews’ should keep these in check in future. The Army Housing Colonel (HC) highlighted casework whereby non-entitled SP had continued to occupy Substitute Accommodation on change of circumstance. This was not a policy matter but one of process. DIO should conduct regular checks and, when issues occurred, should notify the relevant HC.</p>	<p>DIO SD Accn</p>
<p>6. Crown Exemption. The impact of [Crown Exemption] removal on the discounted MAR needed to be understood and reflected in the MAR paper, though lack of security of tenure was one of a number of discount factors under consideration.</p>	
<p>[Post meeting note: Further investigation of this AFPRB discount factor confirmed that their use of ‘security of tenure’ applied at the back end, ie the SP had no rights to SFA on leaving the Services, and not in the context of security to the SFA in the first 6 months of tenure which was what the removal of the Exemption was looking to address. Action Closed]</p>	
<p>7. Short Notice Posting Protocol. The APWG had approved a flow chart, which DIO would incorporate into its 1132 process guide (1). DIO had sent a copy of the chart to single-Service HC staffs to disseminate to Manning Authorities ASAP (2). The HASC had recently seen an increase in short notice postings, primarily from the Army, which had caused allocation difficulties in high occupancy areas. DIO should provide the Army HC with evidence to support reference (email) of an “influx of Army short notice postings approx every 12 weeks”, in order that he may investigate further (3). Moreover, DIO should regularly monitor the position across all 3 Services and highlight issues, with supporting evidence, to HC so that remedial action could be taken (4).</p>	<p>(1) DIO SD Accn (2) All HC (3) DIO/Army HC (4) DIO SD Accn</p>
<p>8. SLA IMS. HCs attended a SLA IMS Project Board 6 Dec 13 at which a full update was given.</p>	
<p><u>Item 3 – FTRS Waivers</u></p>	
<p>9. Authority to consider exceptional cases for FTRS (HC/LC/ADC) to pay entitled rates for SLA had been delegated to TLBs. However, to ensure consistent application in a Tri-Service environment, JFC undertook to meet with the Army, RAF and RN HC teams (or other relevant POC). JFC requested sight of single-Service lists of those currently serving on grandfather rights. HC were content to facilitate and JFC would initiate contact in the New Year.</p>	<p>JFC SO1 J1 Pol</p>
<p>10. Granting exceptional authority was thought to generate a benefit in kind tax liability. Work was underway with SPVA to confirm the tax position with HMRC and to identify the process by which payment should be made. Direction would be issued to HC on completion of this work (1). In the meantime, HC were reminded of the need to maintain robust records of the numbers and locations of non-entitled FTRS personnel occupying SLA at entitled rates, as directed in D SP Pol’s letter (2).</p>	<p>(1) Accom Pol 1 (2) All HC</p>
<p><u>Item 4 – Entitlement to SSSA</u></p>	
<p>11. There was a requirement to amend the current policy in JSP 464, Part 3, with reference to entitlement to SLA/SSSA where married personnel/civil partners were both serving members of the Armed Forces. This was in light of a recent judgement by an Employment Tribunal, which found that MoD’s policy was discriminatory due to the protected characteristic of marriage. A paper would be circulated shortly to key stakeholders for comment.</p>	<p>Accom Pol 2</p>

<p><u>Item 5 – Three Stage Complaints Process</u></p> <p>12. Accom Pol 2 was gathering information from stakeholders and benchmarking against external organisations. A number of key themes had been identified: a lack of resources; difficulty in managing SP expectations; a need for effective communication; and unrealistic timelines in the current process. Initial assessment was that the system was not broken, but could be more efficient. Work on the review continued.</p> <p>13. It was generally thought that most complaints could be ‘nipped in the bud’ by being dealt with effectively at the lowest level when they first occurred. Concern was raised over the ability of SP to also initiate a Service Complaint (SC) on completion of the complaints process. The RN HC requested that the review consider whether this could be prevented.</p>	<p>Accom Pol 2</p> <p>Accom Pol 2</p>
<p><u>Item 6 – AOB</u></p> <p>14. JFC undertook to engage with each of the single-Services to clarify roles and responsibilities across a range of J1-9 functions. HC were content to facilitate and JFC would make contact with relevant staffs in due course.</p> <p>15. The Army advised that the ‘reserves’ issue was likely to become more prominent and that anomalies in TACOS made for a complex picture. The Chair confirmed that work to establish the ‘look and feel’ of reserves TACOS under NEM was underway. The ‘whole package’ would need to be considered; separate work on accommodation would not be undertaken until this initial work had been completed.</p> <p>16. Valedictory. The Chair thanked [REDACTED], on behalf of the Steering Group, for his valued contribution to the ASG and wished him well in his new post and for the future.</p> <p><u>Item 7 – Arrangements for the Next Meeting</u></p> <p>17. The date of the next meeting will be confirmed in due course, and was likely to be held on the same day as the SWSG in Jun 14.</p>	<p>JFC SO1 J1 Pol</p>

Prepared by:

Approved by:

{Signed on Original}

{Signed on Original}

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Distribution:

Action:

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Army Pers Svcs (AD PS4 (A))*
HQ Air Command (DACOS CS)*
JFC (Hd Infra/SO1 J1 Policy)*
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