



This quarterly statistical release provides summary statistics on applications, payments and purchases made under the Forces Help to Buy (FHTB) scheme. In addition, bi-annual statistics are provided on the proportions of payments by region, and on the age of personnel using the scheme.

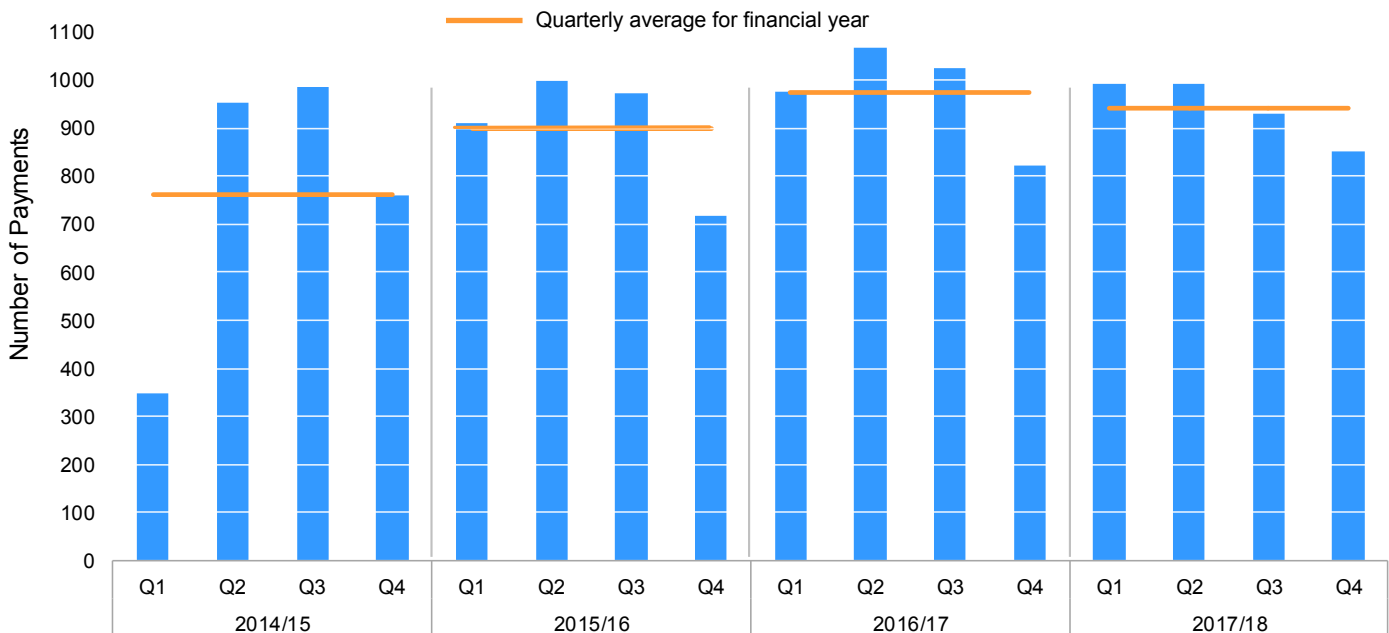
FHTB is an advance of salary scheme which was introduced in April 2014 and allows Regular Armed Forces personnel to borrow money in order to buy their first home or move to a new location.

Key Points and Trends

Since the Scheme began:

- **29,873** First Stage FHTB applications have been received.
- **17,278** of these applications have proceeded to the Second Stage.
- Payment has been made to around **14,300** applicants, totalling around **£215 million**, an average of approximately **£15,000** per claim.

Figure 3: FHTB Payments - Q1 2014/15 to Q4 2017/18



Source: DBS

In Q4 (1st January to 31st March) 2017/18:

- **2,435** First Stage applications were received.
- **1,087** Second Stage applications were received.
- **851** payments were made to Service personnel.

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Background quality report: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-defence/about/statistics

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Contents

Introduction	Page 2
Applications	Pages 3 — 4
Payments and Purchases	Pages 5 — 6
Age	Page 7
Region	Pages 7 — 8
Glossary	Page 9
Further information	Pages 9 — 10

Supplementary tables containing all data presented in this publication can be found at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/forces-help-to-buy-scheme-quarterly-statistics>

Introduction

The FHTB scheme was launched in April 2014 with the aim of supporting and encouraging home ownership amongst Service Personnel, whose level of home ownership has historically been lower than the rest of the UK population. Regular Service Personnel can borrow up to 50% of their gross annual salary (to a maximum of £25,000) to buy their first home, move to another or in exceptional circumstances extend an existing property.

First Stage applications are those which pass initial eligibility checks and Second Stage applications are those which pass detailed eligibility checks.

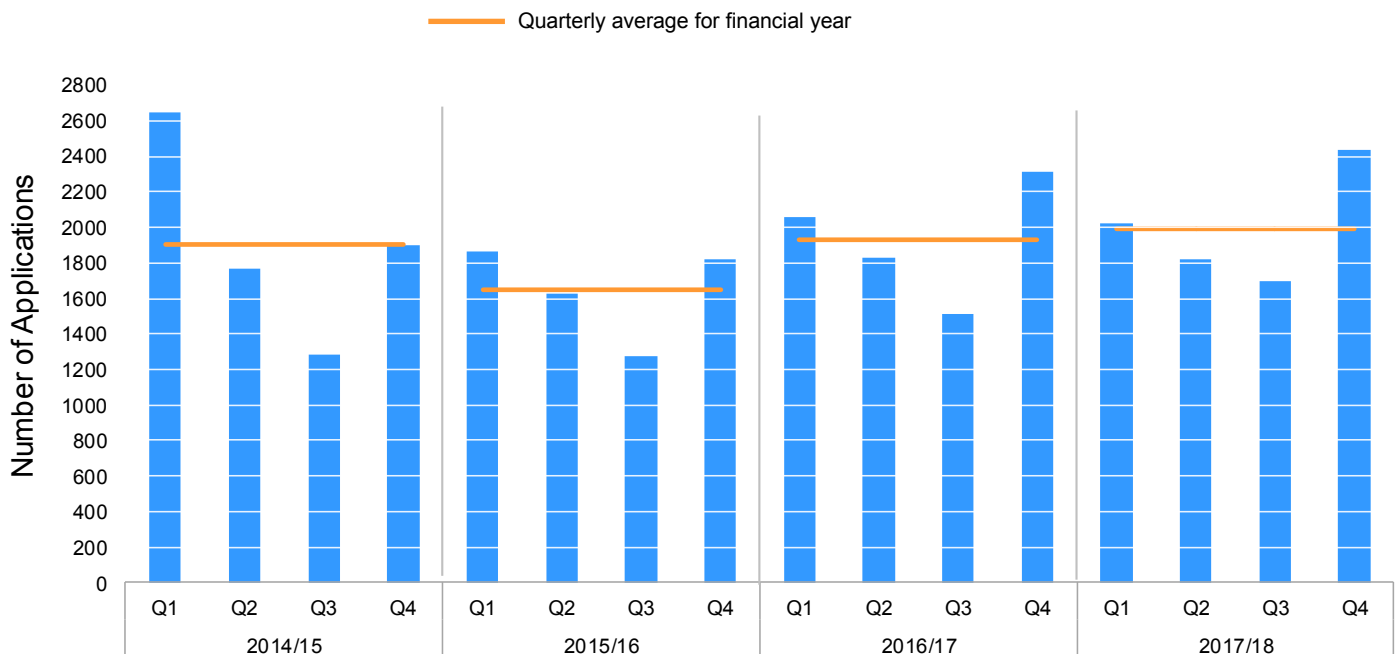
First and second stage application data and the values of FHTB payments are provided by Defence Business Services (DBS). The Service and Rank breakdowns are provided from Joint Personnel Administration (JPA). The two sets of data are 'as at' different dates in a month. DBS data is as at the end of the preceding month, and JPA data is produced according to when the last pay run for military personnel was completed. The pay run occurs in the middle of the month, and varies according to the month length.

Data on the proportion of payments that result in purchases of properties or extensions under the scheme are provided by Defence Business Services (DBS) on a quarterly basis. Some FHTB payments do not result in the purchase of a property or the extension of an existing property due, for example, to changes in personal circumstances or to the withdrawal of a party from a property chain.

These statistics were published on a monthly basis from March 2016 to November 2017.

Applications

Figure 1: FHTB First Stage Applications — Q1 2014/15 to Q4 2017/18



Source: DBS

Figure 1 shows a small year-on-year increase in the number of First Stage applications, rising **5%** from **2,310** in Q4 2016/17 to **2,435** in Q4 2017/18.

The quarterly average, which increased by **17%** between 15/16 and 16/17 financial years, has remained relatively stable for the latest financial year, rising just **3%** (see Figure 1 and Table 1). It should be noted that the average for 2014/15 is inflated by the high number of applications received when the scheme first opened.

Table 1: Quarterly average number of First Stage applications by financial year

Financial year	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Quarterly average number of First Stage applications	1,900	1,646	1,928	1,995

The number of First Stage applications shows some seasonal variation. Figure 1 reveals that, typically, lower numbers of applications are made in the third quarter (October to December) of each financial year.

Applications

Figure 2: FHTB Second Stage Applications - Q1 2014/15 to Q4 2017/18

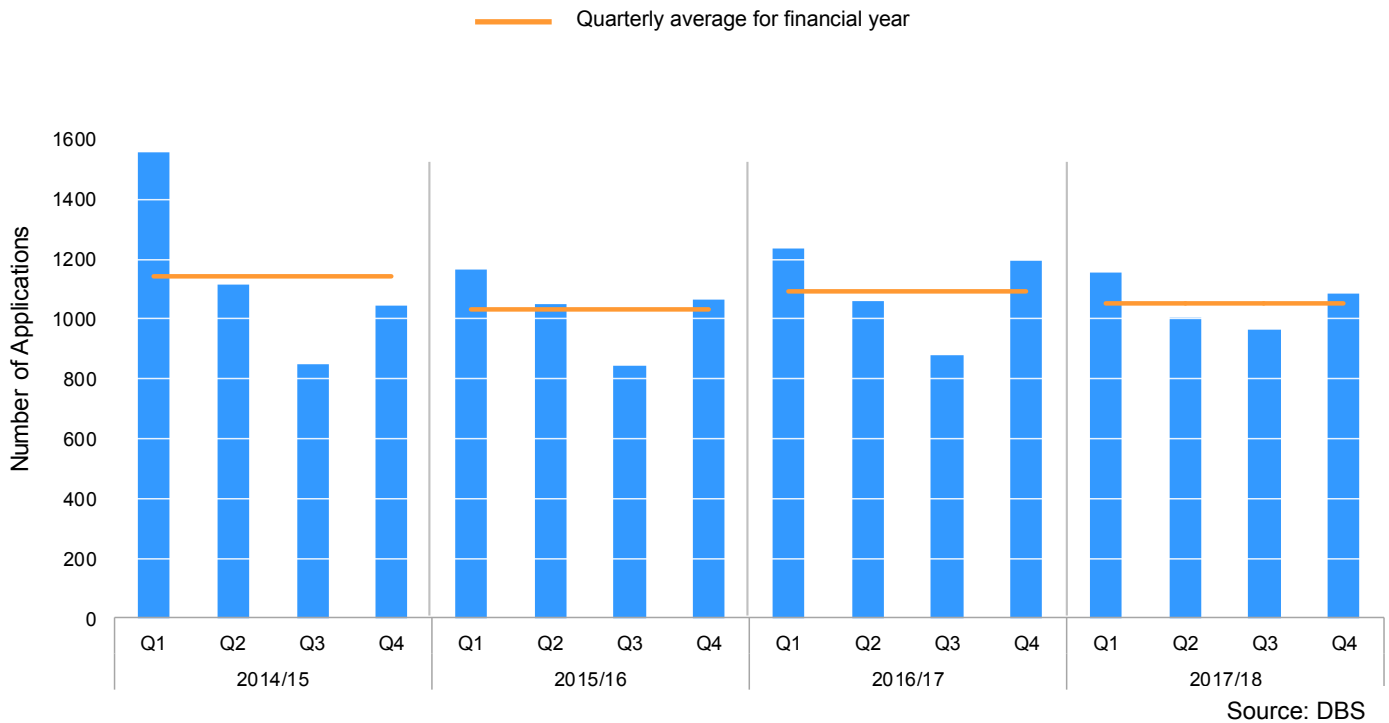


Figure 2 shows a year-on-year decrease in the number of Second Stage applications, falling **9%** from **1,198** in Q4 2017/18 to **1,087** in Q4 2017/18.

The quarterly averages for each financial year show that over the longer-term the number of Second Stage applications has remained broadly stable (see Figure 2 and Table 2). It should be noted that the average for 2014/15 is inflated by the high number of applications received when the scheme opened.

Table 2: Quarterly average number of Second Stage applications by financial year

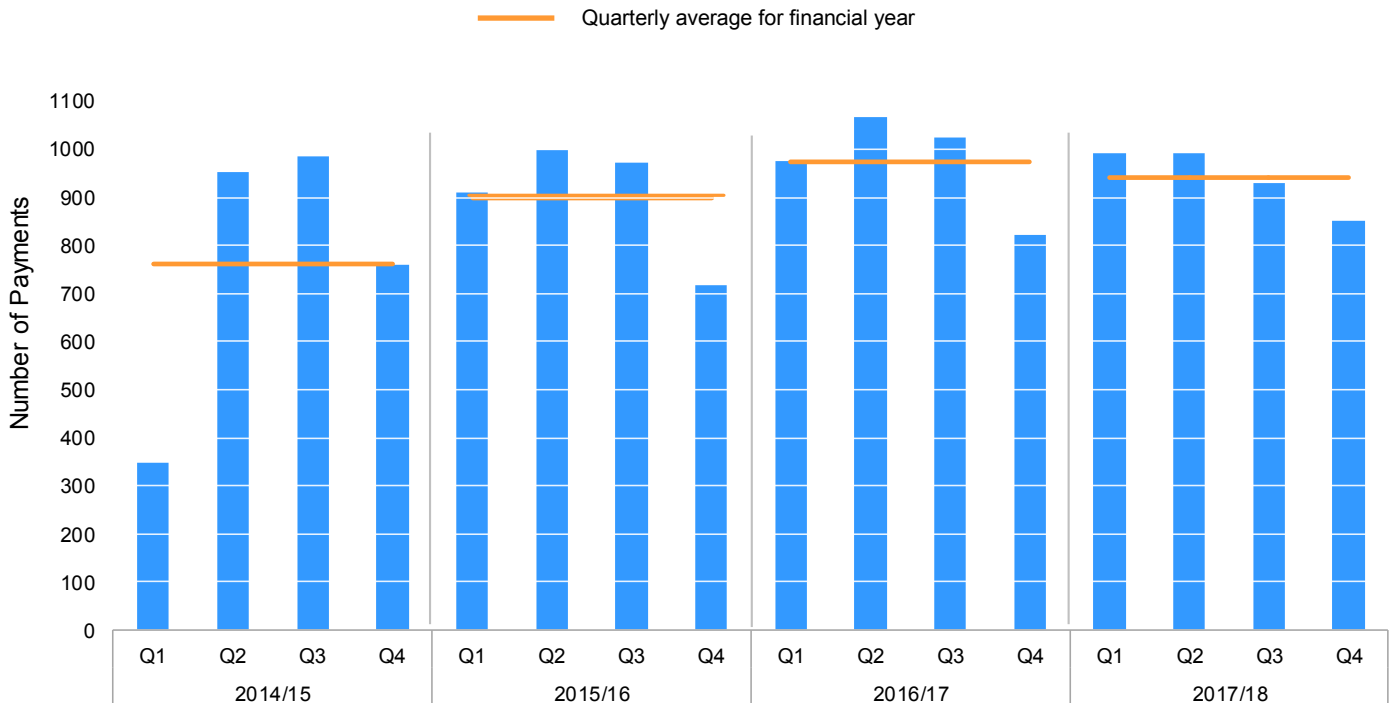
Financial year	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Quarterly average number of Second Stage applications	1,142	1,031	1,093	1,053

The number of Second Stage applications also shows some seasonal variation. Figure 1 reveals that, typically, lower numbers of applications are made in the third quarter (October to December) of each financial year.

Payments and Purchases

A total of **14,298** payments have been made under the FHTB scheme since it was introduced in April 2014.¹ With an average claim of approximately **£15,000**, this has resulted in expenditure of around **£215 million**.

Figure 3: FHTB Payments - Q1 2014/15 to Q4 2017/18



Source: DBS

The latest figures show that the number of payments has risen slightly year-on-year. Figure 3 shows an increase of **4%**, from **822** in Q4 16/17 to **851** in Q4 17/18.

By contrast, the average number of payments each quarter was slightly lower in 2017/18 than in 2016/17 (see Figure 3 and Table 3), a change from the increases seen in previous years. However, it should be noted that the average for 2014/15 is reduced by the low number of payments made when the scheme opened.

Table 3: Quarterly average number of payments

Financial year	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Quarterly average number of payments	762	899	973	941

Like the numbers of applications, payments also show some seasonal variation, with lower numbers of payments typically made in the fourth quarter (January to March) of each financial year. (Figure 3)

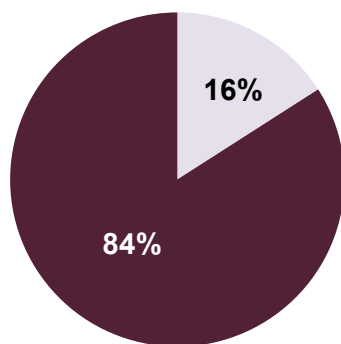
¹As at 31st March 2018

Payments and Purchases

In Q4 2017/18, **16%** of payments were made to Officers compared to **84%** of payments made to Other Ranks.¹ This reflects the proportions of Officers (18%) and Other Ranks (82%) that make up the Regular Full-time trained strength population.²

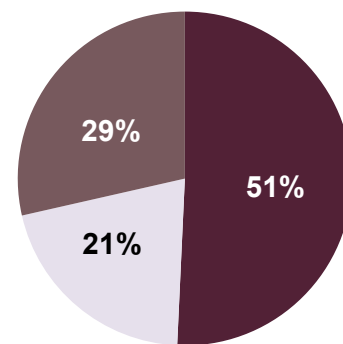
Around half (**51%**) of the payments in Q4 2017/18 were made to Army personnel, with **29%** of payments made to RN/RM personnel and **21%** made to RAF personnel.¹ By comparison, Army personnel make up 56% of the Regular Full-time trained strength population, RN/RM personnel 22% and RAF 23%.²

Figure 4: Payments by Rank
- Q4 2017/18



■ Officers ■ Other Ranks

Figure 5: Payments by Service
- Q4 2017/18



■ Army ■ RAF ■ Royal Navy / Royal Marines

Source: JPA¹

It is estimated that at least **95%** of payments, as at 31 March 2018, have already resulted in a purchased property or extension. There is a small lag between payments and loan repayments once a property has been purchased or extended. Some FHTB payments do not result in the purchase of a property or the extension of an existing property, due, for example, to changes in personal circumstance or to withdrawal of a party from a property chain.

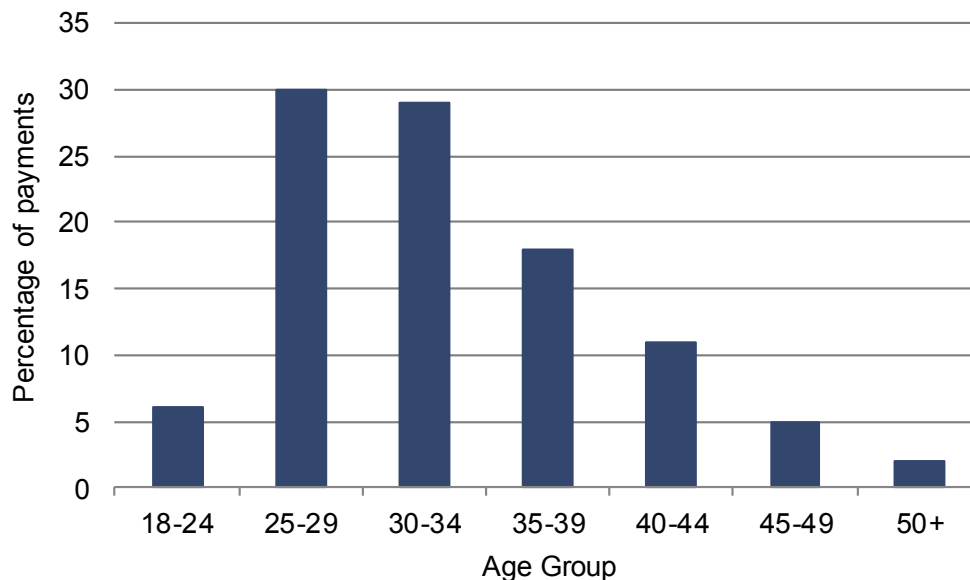
¹JPA data is produced according to when the last pay run for military personnel was completed. The pay run occurs in the middle of the month, which varies according to the month length. Therefore the Officer / Rank and Service breakdowns represent the number of payments recorded between the pay runs in that month and the preceding month.

²Based on figures as at 1 January 2018 taken from the Defence Statistics [Quarterly Service Personnel Statistics publication](#) Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100%.

Payments by Age

The largest shares of payments have been made to personnel in the 25-29 (**30%**) and 30-34 (**29%**) age groups. For comparison, personnel in these age groups make up 24% and 19% of the Regular Service population respectively. Service personnel aged 18-24 account for 22% of the population and have received 6% of the payments. Receipt of FHTB payment among the remaining age groups is roughly in-line with their representation in the Service population.

Figure 6: Proportion of payments by age, April 2014 – March 2018



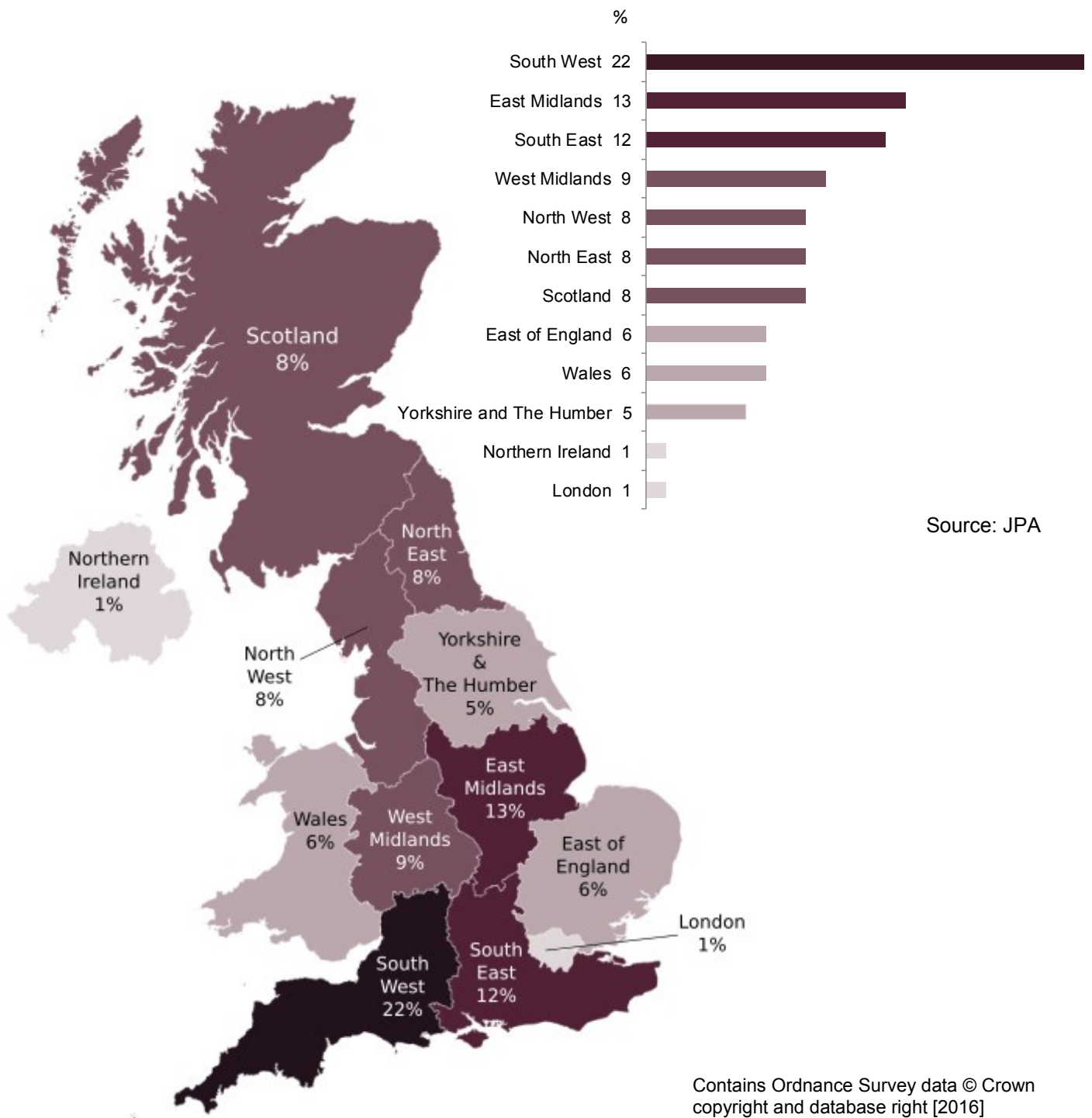
Age data is reported using [ONS Harmonised Standard 4 age bandings](#).

Payments by Region

Since the scheme began in April 2014, a total of 14,298 payments have been made to Service personnel. Figure 6 shows the estimated proportions of payments used to purchase or extend properties in each UK region under the scheme since it began. At 31 March 2018, just over a fifth (**22%**) of payments were used to purchase or extend properties in the South West of England – the largest share of any region. The regions with the lowest share of payments were Northern Ireland (**1%**) and London (**1%**). These proportions have remained stable since September 2016

³Taken from Defence Statistics publication '[UK Armed Forces Biannual Diversity Statistics](#)'

Figure 7: Proportion of payments⁴, by UK region of property, April 2014 – March 2018



For comparison, as at 1 October 2017⁵, just over half of Service personnel were located in the South East (27%) or South West (27%). By contrast, very few were located in the North East (1%), North West (1%) or Northern Ireland (1%).

Regional data is reported using the [Nomenclature of Units for Territorial Statistics Level 1](#) Regions.

⁴Excludes missing or invalid postcodes ~1%

⁵Taken from Defence Statistics publication '[Quarterly Location Statistics](#)'.

Glossary

- Forces Help to Buy (FHTB): FHTB is an advance of salary scheme which was introduced in April 2014 and allows Regular Armed Forces personnel to borrow money in order to buy their first home or move to a new location.
- Regular Armed Forces Personnel: Full time Service personnel excluding Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) personnel
- First Stage applications: Applications which pass initial eligibility checks.
- Second Stage applications: Applications which pass detailed eligibility checks.
- Defence Business Services (DBS): Organisation which provides corporate services, such as recruitment and payroll, across the Ministry of Defence.
- Joint Personnel Administration (JPA): The system used by the Armed Forces to deal with matters of pay, leave and other personnel administrative tasks. JPA replaced a number of single-Service IT systems and was implemented in April 2006 for RAF, November 2006 for Naval Service and April 2007 for Army.

Rounding

Payment figures in this publication have been rounded to the nearest £1 and the average payment rounded to nearest £100. Percentages are calculated from unrounded data and rounded to the nearest whole number, therefore may not sum to 100%.

Statistics quoted in the narrative may be rounded for clarity, with more precise figures available in the [accompanying tables](#).

Further Information

Revisions

Corrections to the published statistics will be made if errors are found, or if figures change as a result of improvements to methodology or changes to definitions. When making corrections, we will follow the Ministry of Defence [Statistics Revisions and Corrections Policy](#). All corrected figures will be identified by the symbol “r”, and an explanation will be given of the reason for and size of the revision. Corrections which would have a significant impact on the utility of the statistics will be corrected as soon as possible, by reissuing the publication. Minor errors will also be corrected, but for convenience these corrections may be timed to coincide with the next release of the publication.

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