



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

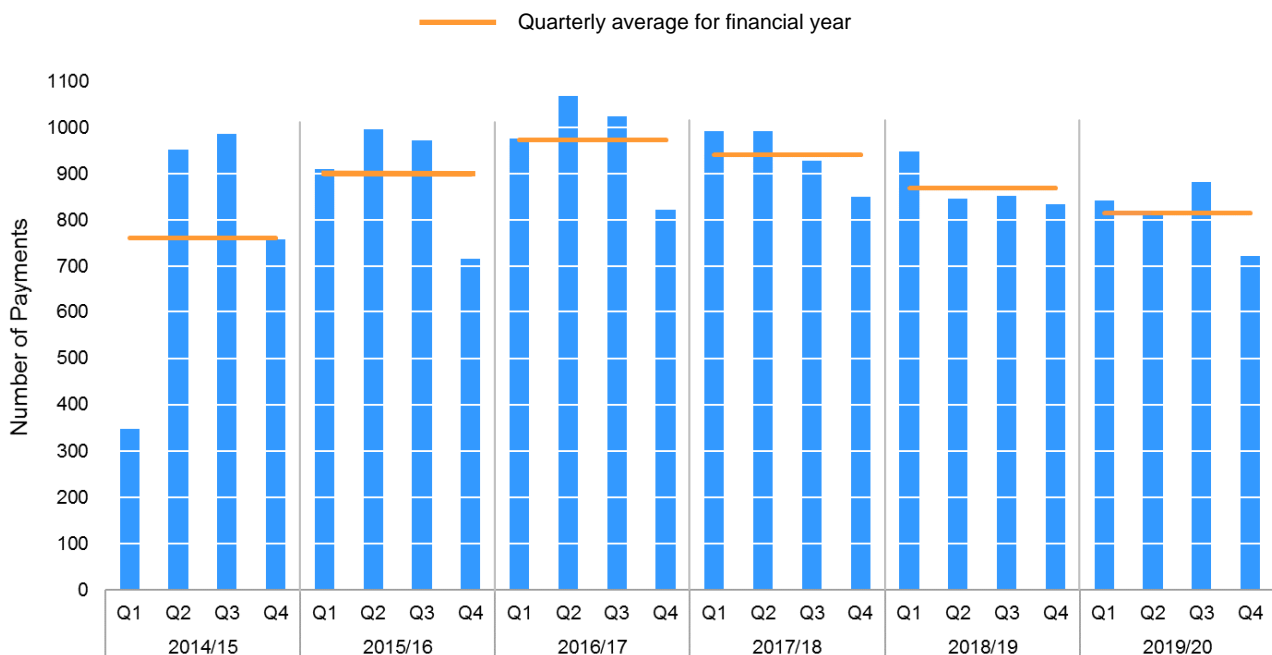
FHTB is an advance of salary scheme which was introduced in April 2014 and allows Regular Armed Forces personnel to borrow money in order to buy their first home or move to a new location.

Key Points and Trends

Since the Scheme began:

- **46,405** First Stage FHTB applications have been received.
- **24,518** of these applications have proceeded to the Second Stage.
- Payment has been made to around **21,000** applicants, totalling around **£317 million**, an average of approximately **£15,100** per claim.
- At least **95%** of payments, as at 31 March 2020, have already resulted in a purchased property or extension.

Figure 1: FHTB Payments - Q1 2014/15 to Q4 2019/20



In Q4 (1 January to 31 March) 2019/20:

Source: DBS

- **2,237** First Stage applications were received.
- **824** Second Stage applications were received.
- **722** Payments were made to Service personnel.

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Background quality report: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/forces-help-to-buy-scheme-quarterly-statistics-background-quality-report>. Would you like to be added to our **contact list**, so that we can inform you about updates to these statistics? You can subscribe to updates by emailing Analysis-Publications@mod.gov.uk

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Supplementary tables containing all data presented in this publication can be found at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/forces-help-to-buy-scheme-quarterly-statistics-201920>

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.

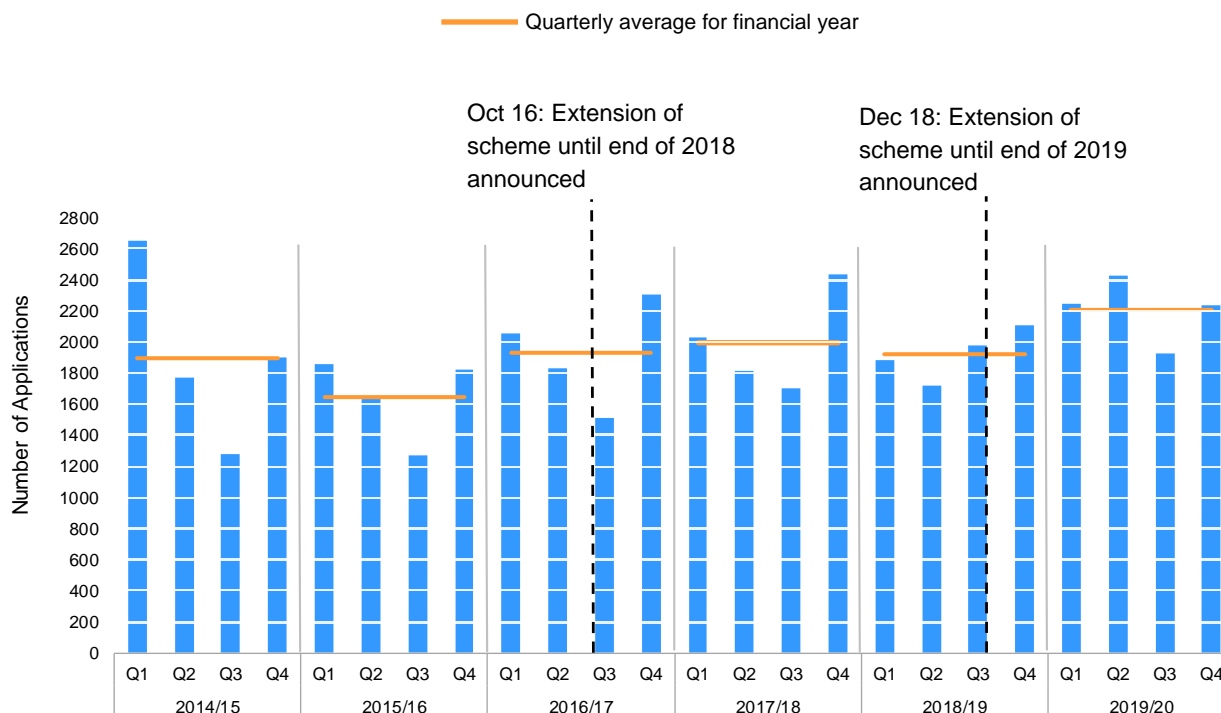
First and Second Stage application data and the values of FHTB payments are provided by Defence Business Services (DBS). The Service and Rank breakdowns are provided from Joint Personnel Administration (JPA). The two sets of data are 'as at' different dates in a month. DBS data is as at the end of the 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 before being released quarterly.

Applications

Figure 2: FHTB First Stage Applications — Q1 2014/15 to Q4 2019/20



Source: DBS

Figure 2 shows a **6% increase** in the number of First Stage applications when comparing Q4 2018/19 (**2,108** applications) and the latest Q4 2019/20 (**2,237** applications). Compared to previous years, 2019/20 Q4 First Stage application figures are the third highest Q4 figures seen to date.

2019/20 has been the first financial year since 2015/16 where Q4 First Stage application figures have not been the highest quarterly figures within the financial year.

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

Financial year	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Quarterly average number of First Stage applications	1,900	1,646	1,928	1,995	1,923	2,210

The quarterly average, which increased by **17%** between 15/16 and 16/17 financial years, remained relatively stable between financial year 16/17 and 18/19. However, the quarterly average has increased **15%** between 18/19 and 19/20 (see Figure 2 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.

Applications

Figure 3: FHTB Second Stage Applications - Q1 2014/15 to Q4 2019/20

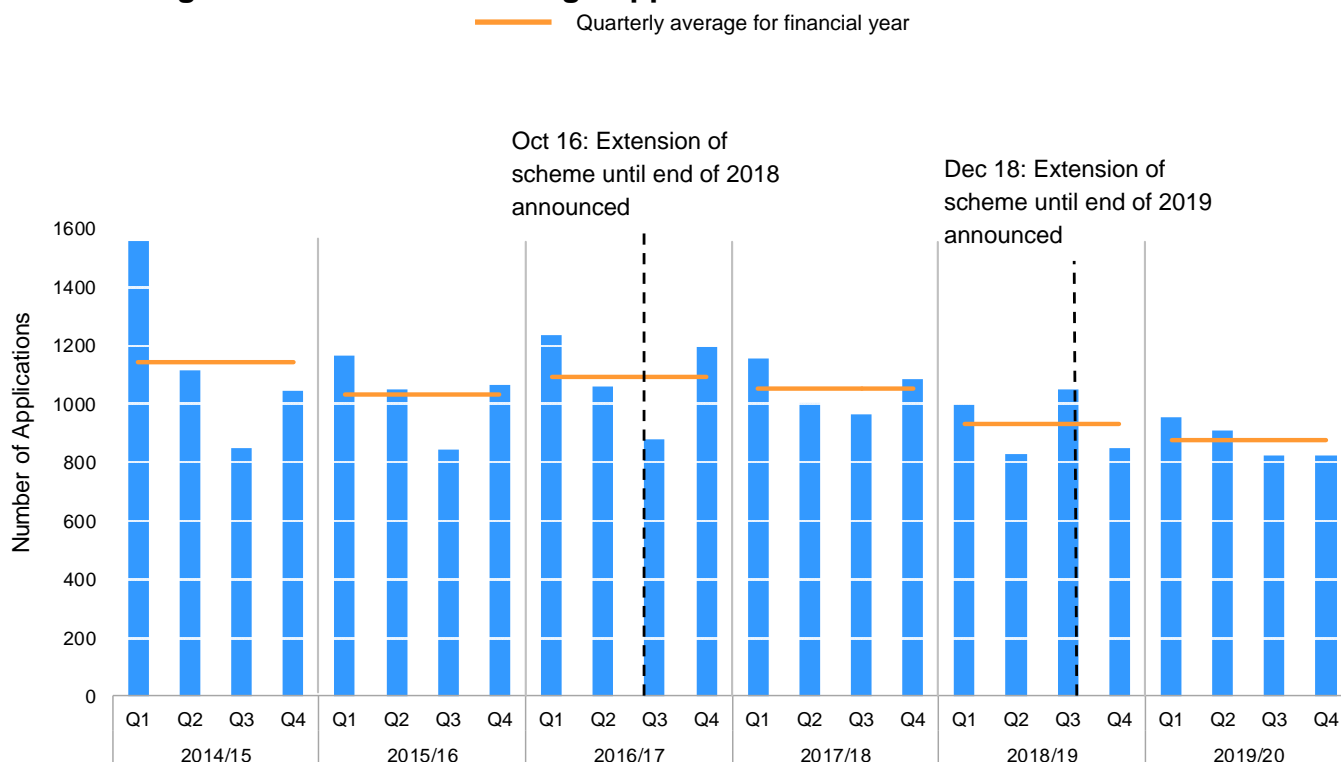


Figure 3 shows a **3% decrease** in the number of Second Stage applications when comparing Q4 2018/19 (**850** applications) and the latest Q4 2019/20 (**824** applications). This follows a general decline in Q4 second stage applications since 2016/17.

2019/20 Q4 Second Stage application figures are the lowest figures seen to date.

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

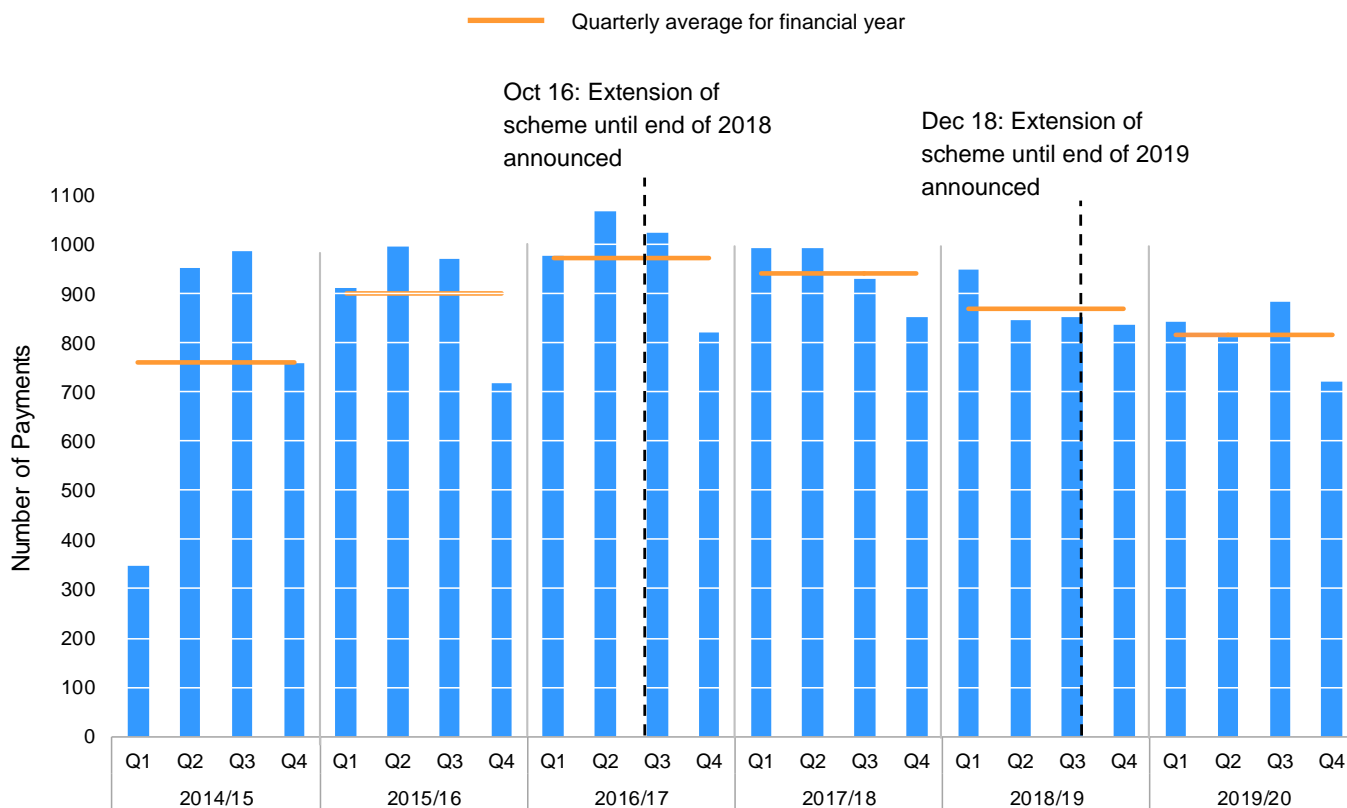
Financial year	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Quarterly average number of Second Stage applications	1,142	1,031	1,093	1,053	932	879

Although remaining broadly stable between 2015/16 and 2017/18, the quarterly average for the number of Second Stage applications has decreased **11%** between 2017/18 and 2018/19 and further decreased **6%** between 2018/19 and 2019/20 (see Figure 3 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 first opened.

Payments and Purchases

A total of **21,039** payments have been made under the FHTB scheme since it was introduced in April 2014.¹ With an average claim of approximately **£15,100**, this has resulted in expenditure of around **£317 million**.

Figure 4:² FHTB Payments - Q1 2014/15 to Q4 2019/20



Source: DBS

Figure 4 shows a **14% decrease** between the number of payments for Q4 2018/19 (**835** payments) and the latest Q4 2019/20 (**722** payments). 2019/20 is the second financial year since 2015/16 where there has been a decrease in Q4 payments compared to the previous financial year.

2019/20 Q4 payment figures are the second lowest Q4 figures seen to date. The number of payments made show some seasonal variation, with lower numbers of payments typically made in the fourth quarter (January to March) of each financial year (Figure 4).

Table 3: Quarterly average number of payments

Financial year	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Quarterly average number of payments	762	899	973	941	871	815

The quarterly average for the number of payments increased **18%** between 14/15 and 15/16. Averages increased to a peak in 2016/17 (973) but have decreased (between 3% and 7%) each financial year since then. Please note that the average for 2014/15 is reduced by the low number of payments made when the scheme opened.

¹As at 31 March 2020.

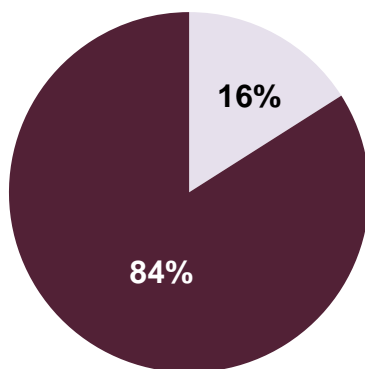
²A copy of Figure 1 with additional extension announcement reference points.

Payments and Purchases

In Q4 2019/20, **16%** of payments were made to Officers compared to **84%** of payments made to Other Ranks.¹ For comparative purposes, 19% of Officers and 81% of Other Ranks make up the Regular Full-time trained strength population.²

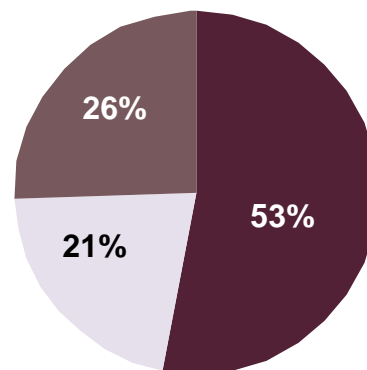
53% of the payments in Q4 2019/20 were made to Army personnel, with **26%** of payments made to Royal Navy/Royal Marines personnel and **21%** to RAF personnel.¹ For comparative purposes, 55% of Army personnel, 22% of RN/RM and 23% of RAF personnel make up the Regular Full-time trained Armed Forces strength population.²

Figure 5: Payments by Rank
- Q4 2019/20



■ Officers ■ Other Ranks

Figure 6: Payments by Service
- Q4 2019/20



■ Army ■ RAF ■ Royal Navy / Royal Marines

It is estimated that at least **95%** of payments, as at 31 March 2020, 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 the withdrawal of a party from a property chain.

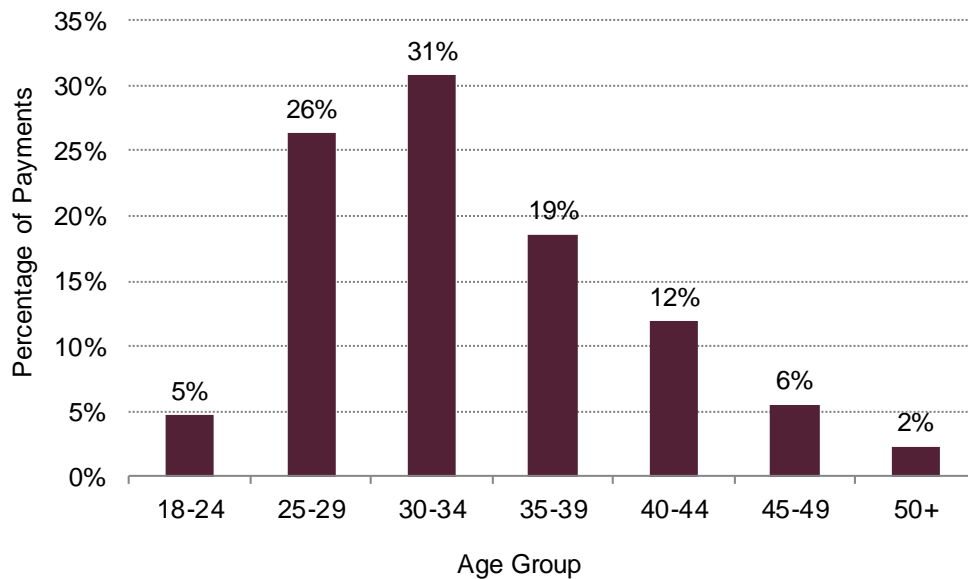
¹JPA data is produced according to when the last pay run for military personnel was completed. The pay run occurs in the middle of the month, which varies according to the month length. Therefore the Officer / Rank and Service breakdowns represent the number of payments recorded between the pay runs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

²Based on figures as at 1 January 2020 taken from the Defence Statistics [Quarterly-service-personnel-statistics-2020](#) Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100%.

Payments by Age

The largest shares of payments have been made to personnel in the 30-34 (**31%**) and 25-29 (**26%**) age groups. For comparison, personnel in these age groups make up 19% and 21% of the Regular Service population respectively. Service personnel aged between 18-24 account for 22% of the Service population and received 5% of the payments. Receipt of FHTB payments among the remaining age groups are broadly in line with their representation in the Service population¹.

Figure 7: Proportion of Payments by Age², April 2014 – March 2020



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

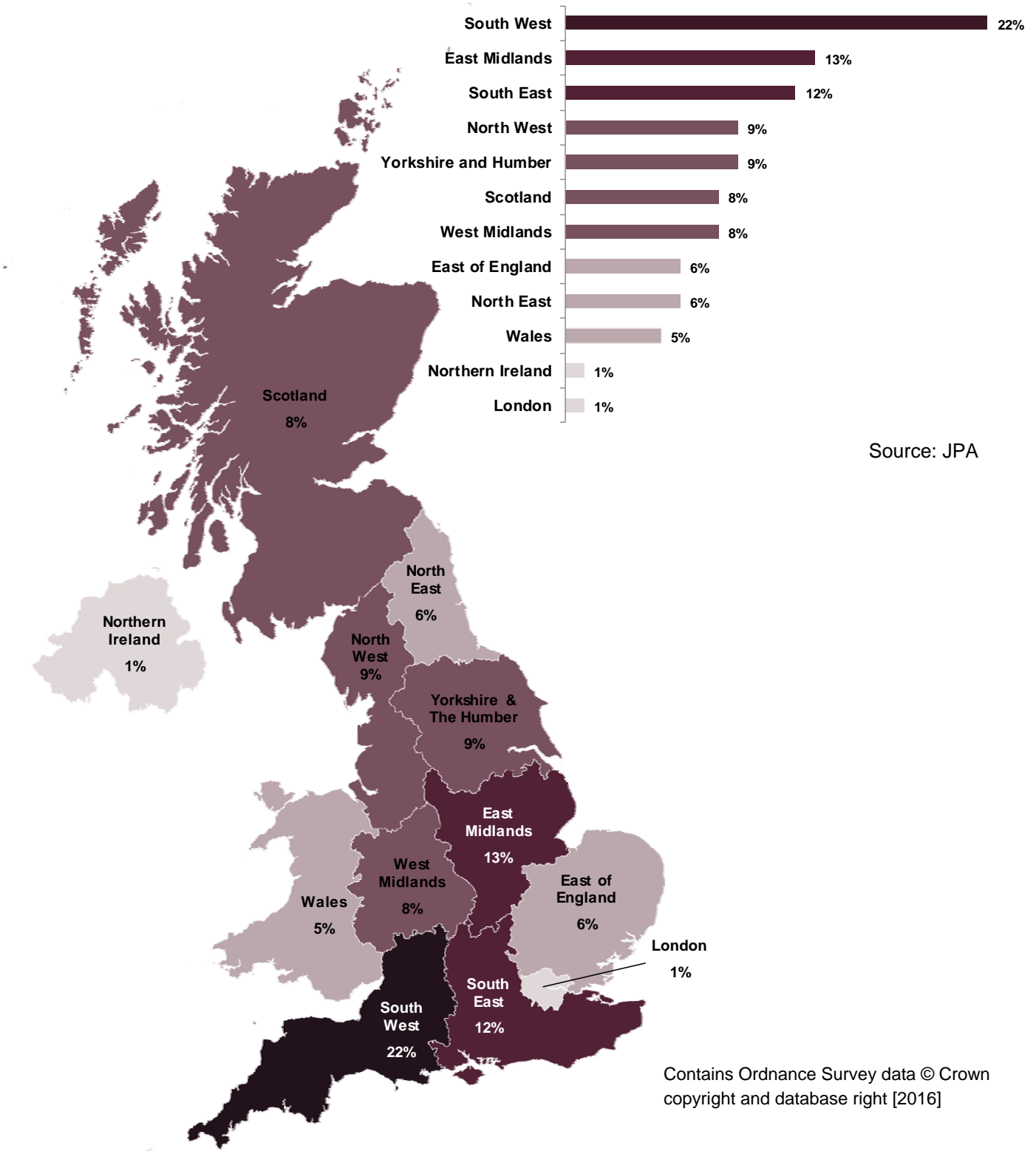
Payments by Region

Figure 8 shows the estimated proportions of payments used to purchase or extend properties in each UK region under the scheme since it began. As at 31 March 2020, 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 they were first reported in the FHTB September 2016 edition.

¹Taken from Defence Statistics publication [UK Armed Forces Biannual Diversity Statistics](#)

² Estimated totals are calculated by multiplying the total number of payments (source: DBS) by the percentage by age group (source: JPA). Totals are rounded to the nearest 10. Totals are rounded separately and so may not equal the sums of their rounded parts.

Figure 8: Proportion of Payments¹ by UK region of property, April 2014 – March 2020



For comparison, as at 1 April 2019², over half of Service personnel were located in the South East (28%) and South West (26%). 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.

¹Excludes missing or invalid postcodes 1%.

²Taken 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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