



Ministry
of Defence

UK Armed Forces Defence Accommodation Strategy





UK Armed Forces Defence Accommodation Strategy

Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Defence
by Command of His Majesty

October 2022



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Foreword

By the Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP,
Secretary of State for Defence,
and Sarah Atherton MP,
Minister for Defence People,
Veterans and Service Families



We recognise the importance of homes and families to the wellbeing of Service Personnel, especially when making such extraordinary sacrifices in the UK and overseas.

The Defence Accommodation Strategy acknowledges that we have not always got this right and makes a public commitment that Defence will listen to Service Personnel and their families, to understand and then act on what matters to them.

We are committed to ensuring that all our people have access to good quality accommodation, in line with modern living standards, and support that meets their varied needs, health and wellbeing. The concept of ‘family’ and ‘home’ has changed over time and we need to reflect this in the type of accommodation we offer and how it is provided.

This Strategy sets out a clear vision of how we will improve our accommodation offer, bringing together expertise from across Defence to set out key areas of focus for the short term and setting an ambitious

timeline for further work. We must do this while continuing to improve the fairness with which accommodation is allocated, its quality, environmental sustainability and value for money.

We are clear that the new standards articulated in this strategy are a baseline from which we will continue to improve the quality of our accommodation to align more closely with the aspirations of our people.

Most importantly, the strategy highlights that Defence is now acting in the understanding that accommodation is fundamentally linked to the health and wellbeing of our people and their families. Providing appropriate, high-quality homes is as much a part of supporting our people as Defence’s wider initiatives, including the Armed Forces Families Strategy and Wrap Around Childcare.

Supporting our people is both a fundamental enabler of operational capability and a moral duty to all those who serve and make sacrifices in the defence of this country.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ben Wallace', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

The Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP
Secretary of State for Defence

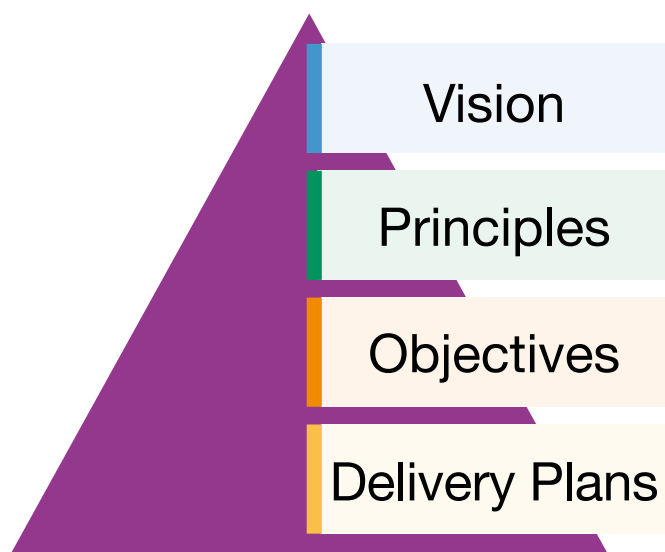
20 October 2022

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Atherton', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sarah Atherton MP
Minister for Defence People, Veterans and Service Families

20 October 2022

Executive summary



The Strategy sets out the vision for Defence accommodation, underpinned by 4 principles and 11 objectives. To deliver these objectives, the top-level budget holders (TLBs) will produce delivery plans setting their own targets and key performance indicators (KPIs). The Chief of Defence People (CDP) will act as Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) holding these TLBs to account.

The Strategy identifies and explains key issues to address ahead of its next iteration, which will follow the completion of the Haythornthwaite Review of Armed Forces Incentivisation.

What this Strategy does:

Reaffirms Defence's commitment to support its personnel with subsidised housing and help to buy a property of their own.

Commits to offering Service personnel in long-term relationships the same accommodation support as those who are married or in civil partnerships.

States that, in the future, the level of accommodation entitlement will be based primarily on need, and that seniority of rank will no longer routinely play a role in allocation of housing.

Sets a new minimum standard for Single Living Accommodation (SLA) and a roadmap for rolling it out across Defence.

Commits to increasing engagement with our Service personnel to ensure Defence's housing and accommodation offer meets modern expectations around living standards.

Acknowledges that Defence's accommodation estate is larger than it needs to be and commits to reducing excess stock.

Recognises the challenges of imperfect baseline data and commits to improving this before the next iteration of the Defence Accommodation Strategy.

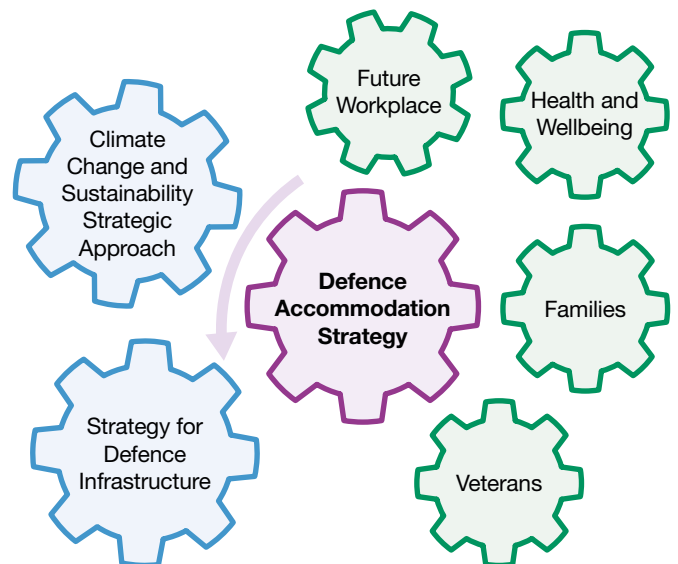
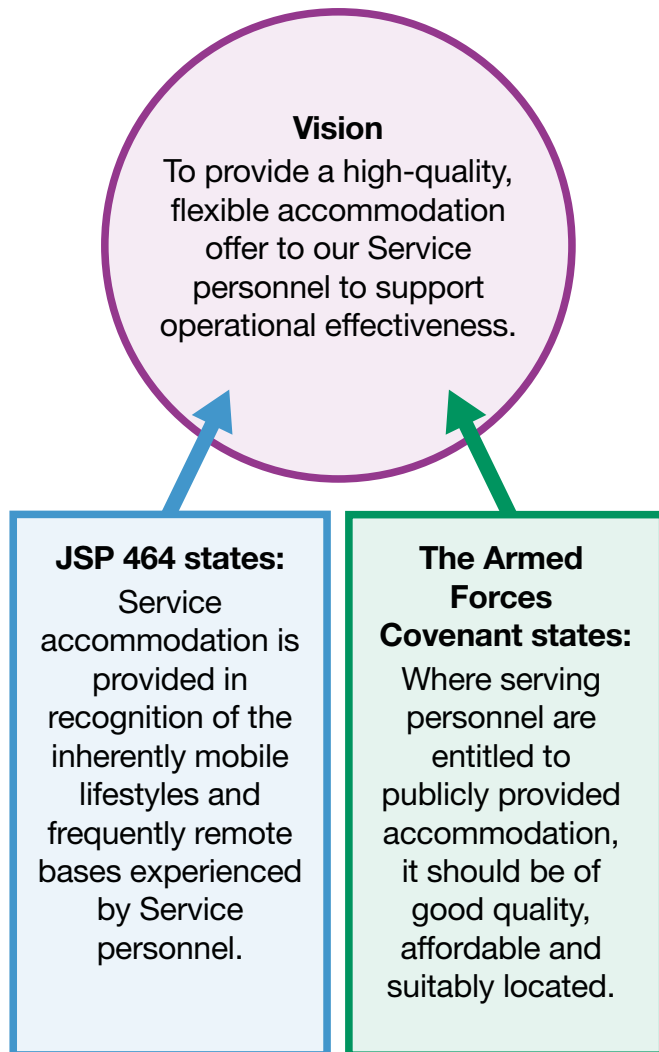
Commits to the Defence accommodation portfolio becoming more sustainable in the future.

States Defence's intention to help Service personnel to contribute to an improvement in our sustainability by maximising their own sustainable behaviours.

Vision

The vision of this Defence Accommodation Strategy is guided by current accommodation policy, as set out in JSP 464, and the Armed Forces Covenant.

This Strategy sets principles for how Defence will support Service personnel through provision of accommodation in the UK and continued support for home ownership. It brings together and sets the direction for accommodation across: Strategy for our Veterans, Armed Forces Families Strategy, People Strategy, and Health and Well-being Strategy whilst interacting with the Strategy for Defence Infrastructure, Climate Change and Sustainability Strategic Approach.



This Strategy will be implemented through delivery plans drafted by the single Services, Strategic Command, and Defence Infrastructure Organisation. These delivery plans will set out how changes to accommodation provision and support will be implemented and on what timescales.

Introduction

Defence provides Service personnel with subsidised accommodation and support to aid workforce mobility, operational readiness and capability. Service personnel change jobs frequently, sometimes at short notice and in multiple, and sometimes remote locations. To mitigate the impact of this, Defence provides subsidised high-quality housing and support to Service personnel and their families. It is a key part of our offer, as is the help we give to Service personnel who wish to buy their own properties through the Forces Help to Buy scheme. In supporting our people through the scheme, Defence gives them greater choice over their accommodation. For those Service personnel who wish to own their own properties, it can often give greater continuity of education to child dependents and help manage the transition to civilian life on completion of their service.

The cost of providing accommodation is rising and it is more important than ever that spending focuses on what matters most to our people. We need to rationalise our accommodation portfolio, improve its condition and standards, and target investment where it is most needed to modernise and take greater consideration of sustainability. Our housing offer must reflect modern lifestyles and support the wellbeing of our forces and their families in the execution of their duties and in their private lives. The accommodation offer also needs to be agile and flexible to ensure that Defence can respond to emerging priorities.

The Strategy is published at a time of significant change for Defence accommodation. The Future Accommodation Model pilots are testing wholesale changes to the accommodation offer. Widening

eligibility for surplus Service Family Accommodation (SFA) to Service personnel in established long-term relationships has enabled more partners to cohabit, and continuation of the Forces Help to Buy, pilot has supported more Service personnel into home ownership. Changes to the way people work following the Covid-19 pandemic are changing accommodation wants and needs, and the Defence Estate Optimisation Programme is gathering pace to deliver a more modern and right-sized estate. Furthermore, work on the Haythornthwaite Review of Armed Forces Incentivisation is underway and may affect the role of accommodation as part of the offer.

This first Defence Accommodation Strategy is intended to lay the foundations for accommodation into the next decade, but it will be important to regularly review its objectives to ensure coherence with the reviews and strategies to which it is linked. Dependencies between programmes and projects, as well as the business-as-usual delivery of existing accommodation, must be well managed and understood to ensure coherence and maximise effectiveness and efficiency, while still supporting the people component of operational capability.



There has been significant investment in SLA which has led to improvements on multiple sites, but this investment has not delivered all the improvements required because of legacy challenges resulting from previous under-investment and general degradation. The need for improvements is recognised across Defence, and the National Audit Office and Public Accounts Committee are pressing for improvements to be made to SLA and for a renewed commitment to improve quality and standards across the board.

Defence's Climate Change and Sustainability Strategic Approach has been agreed and, as a key part of the Defence estate, accommodation must become more sustainable. To contribute to the department's commitment to net zero, Defence must increase the efficiency of our new and existing buildings. We also need to understand how to make best use of the accommodation that we have. Defence will assess current SFA and SLA, reduce excess stock and maximise the use of the

accommodation estate. Defence will also review its approach to estate maintenance to maximise value for money across the estate.

The [Strategy for Defence Infrastructure](#) sets out the next phase of development to drive industry best-practice into estate management. This will meet the need for resilience in the changing global security environment and increase the efficiency with which the Defence infrastructure enterprise operates.

There are many moving parts in Defence accommodation which go far beyond bricks and mortar and involve a range of stakeholders. It is essential that dependencies between the programmes and projects, as well as the business-as-usual delivery of existing accommodation, are well managed and understood to ensure coherence and maximise effectiveness and efficiency while still delivering operational capability.



Principles and objectives

The Defence Accommodation Strategy has four guiding principles. Objectives flow from these and delivery plans produced by the TLBs will set out clear KPIs against which performance can be measured.

Principles

Objectives

Defence will ensure Service personnel should be supported to access the accommodation they need

Ensure Service personnel in long-term relationships are able to access the same accommodation support as their married or civil partnered colleagues.

Ensure that subsidised accommodation is allocated based primarily on the needs of Service personnel and their families, ending the use of accommodation as reward for rank.

Support Service personnel to buy their own homes.

Subsidising accommodation and supporting home ownership for our Service personnel

Service personnel should be able to access accommodation that is of good quality and in line with modern living standards

Improve the quality of accommodation provided to Service personnel to bring it in line with modern living standards.

Increase engagement with personnel and their families to ensure our approach to accommodation reflects their current and future needs and preferences.

Through a proactive approach to maintenance alongside data-led future proofing, update spaces to the modern requirements of Service personnel and their families.

Improving the quality of Defence-provided accommodation

Defence will maximise use of accommodation to ensure affordability and value for money

Reduce excess empty properties or bed spaces across the accommodation estate to ensure value for money.

Use data to facilitate accurate forecasting of accommodation need, taking into account the types and locations of accommodation, modelling on future use and changes in locality of the single Services.

Continually review the management of accommodation to achieve the right size estate while ensuring operational capability and readiness are supported.

Making best use of Defence accommodation to ensure affordability and value for money

Defence must improve sustainability across our accommodation and promote sustainable behaviours among our people to contribute to the Government's net zero carbon commitment by 2050

Reduce carbon emissions across the Defence accommodation estate.

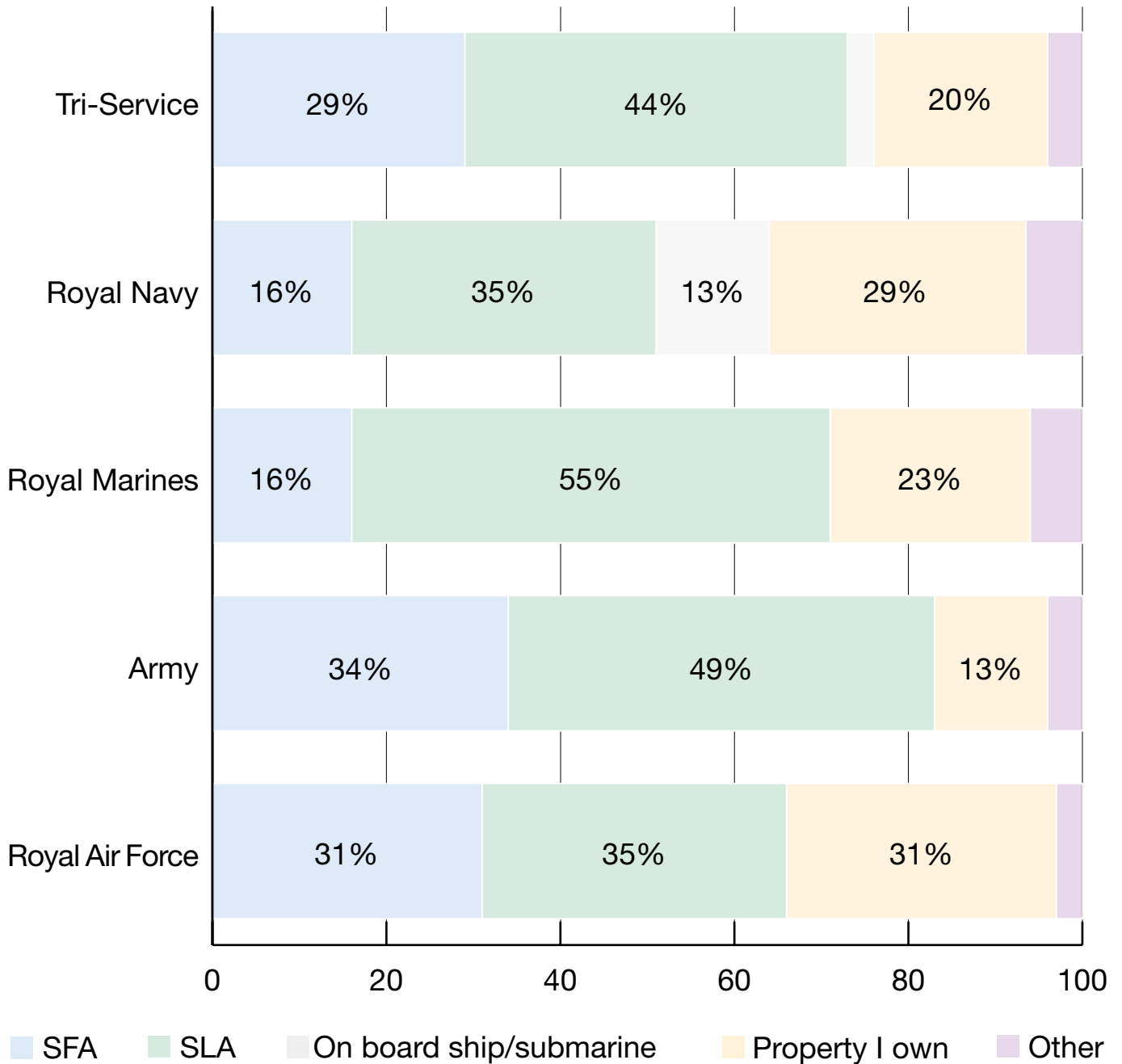
Help Service personnel to maximise the sustainability of accommodation through their own sustainable behaviours.

Improving sustainability across our accommodation and promoting sustainable behaviours among our people

To enable operational effectiveness

Overview and progress to date

According to the 2022 armed forces continuous attitude survey results, just over three-quarters of Service personnel live in Service accommodation.



Single Living Accommodation

In spring 2020, it was estimated that around 44% of the total Armed Forces were living in SLA. Some personnel used SLA as their primary residence and others during the week or on a provisional basis, living in their own homes at other times.

New SLA has been built in recent years and some blocks have been refurbished. However accommodation has had to compete with other infrastructure demands for funding. In 2018, SLA budgets were delegated to Front Line Commands (FLCs); these budgets increased by around 18%, with FLCs having developed plans to upgrade SLA through replacement and renovation. This investment is intended to improve the lived experience of our Service personnel. The differing age and geographies of the estate means there is considerable variation in the type and quality of SLA. Currently, more than one-third of personnel in SLA are living in the lowest grade for charge accommodation. However, all TLBs recognise the priority of improving SLA and are committed to increasing investment.

The complexity of the SLA estate, particularly when it comes to funding mechanisms and governance across Defence, poses challenges moving forward. To mitigate this the Single Living Accommodation Expert Group has been established as the central focal point for all work relating to SLA. It brings together key stakeholders from across Defence to identify who is best placed to tackle SLA issues. The Chief of Defence People has been appointed as senior sponsor and champion for SLA to help drive Defence's improvements in this space and co-ordinate efforts across the Services. The Accommodation Coherence Group was established in 2019 to bring together the relevant infrastructure and people functions and is already contributing to greater coherence and co-operation across the accommodation landscape.

The Royal Navy has also piloted a novel approach to temporary SLA in Portsmouth. The Flexible Rooms pilot in Portsmouth is trialling hotel-style booking of SLA, while the Hybrid Working Accommodation Trial in London is exploring the use of hotel accommodation in place of leasing flats



where SLA is unavailable. Alongside further trials in Devonport, Clyde and High Wycombe, the evaluation of these initiatives will inform how Defence thinks about the temporary use of SLA and support TLBs in making efficient use of the available estate.

To enable Defence to support net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, a reduction in infrastructure energy use is required across the Defence estate. To help ensure the SLA estate is supporting this, a pilot project has been authorised to build near zero energy buildings (NZEB) in new SLA blocks. These buildings will be of modular construction incorporating emerging NZEB technology.

In addition to piloting NZEB technology, the buildings will also aim to improve the lived experience by incorporating communal living areas as the central hubs of each floor. They include a kitchenette with dining area, a lounge, and utility and storage areas. The pilot will include questionnaires and interviews with the occupants to influence future iterations of the Building Performance Standards.

To improve the quality of SLA, Defence must improve the quality of data we have on SLA and make sure we use that data to inform effective decision making. Defence is developing a separate central SLA Management Information System (SLAMIS) to report on the location, quantity, quality and use of SLA, and a booking tool to improve allocations which is due to be introduced with a phased approach from 2022. SLAMIS has already provided useful data insights for SLA, but at full operating capability this information will improve our ability to make data driven decisions on the future of our SLA.

Service Families Accommodation

Defence has access to approximately 48,000 properties in the UK. Of these, around 9,500 (19%) are vacant. Some void properties are deliberately kept to create a management margin to support bulk moves of Service personnel or to facilitate repairs and maintenance.

Currently the minimum standard set for Defence housing is 'Decent Homes'. The department has ensured that 97% of occupied SFA meets this standard and 83% exceeds it, with a target that Defence terms 'Decent Homes Plus'. **This high standard has meant that in recent years, there has been an increase in levels of overall customer satisfaction (survey results show a 6% increase since 2017), a reduction in the number of vacant properties (from a high of around 25%), a reduction in complaints (around 20% between 2018 and 2021), and less reliance on substitute accommodation where no suitable housing stock exists.**

However, recent years have also seen challenges for Defence in delivering and maintaining the quality of properties for Service personnel. Across the financial years 2020/21 and 2021/22 there has been an additional £122 million of fiscal stimulus funding in addition to the annual budget which will help Defence start to address the challenges around SFA accommodation. Previous historic low funding levels have driven a 'fix-on-fail' responsive maintenance regime, and it has been established that a preventative life cycle replacement programme would offer better long-term value. The new contracts within the Future Defence Infrastructure Services, which commenced spring 2022, will implement this approach moving forward. While the majority of our SFA meets and exceeds the



SFA minimum standard, Defence estimates that there is a significant current maintenance backlog with an estimated value of around £960 million as a legacy of our historical approach.

In April 2019, Defence introduced a new cohabitation policy in the UK allowing couples in established, evidenced long-term relationships to cohabit in surplus SFA where the estate could support it. The Service person initially needed to have served for four years to qualify for this, but this was reviewed and reduced to one year from 1 February 2020, enabling more Service personnel to benefit. To date, over

2,600 families have been housed in surplus SFA under this policy.

Annington Property Limited remains the majority supplier of Defence SFA, providing 37,000 of the current 48,000 homes. Void rates in Annington properties have continued to reduce slowly, and progress has been made in renegotiating our commercial terms with the conclusion of the site rent review in December 2021. In some areas, continuing with Annington-provided property will represent the best value for Defence. In other areas, it may be that other options, such as private rental under the Future Accommodation Model, represent

better value. Targets and holding to account will be a feature of delivery plans for void rate reductions.

Defence is developing its SFA accommodation portfolio to meet the Government's net zero carbon targets and has now completed significant planning and baselining of the current SFA estate. The 2017 baseline of CO2 emissions for the SFA estate totalled between 150,000 and 170,000 tonnes per year. In 2019/20, the effect of additional works services and upgrade works on the 49,000 SFA reduced

this by 70 tonnes (0.04%). While progress has been slow, the current replacement of one typical four-bed Annington house with a new build to A/A+ EPC rating will save four tonnes of CO2 emissions per year, and as Defence continues to modernise its estate there will be significant improvements to sustainability. There have also been significant advances in the technology available for SFA to retrofit.



Forces Help to Buy (FHTB)

In recognition of historically lower levels of home ownership than the rest of the UK population, since 2014, Defence has supported Service personnel in their aspirations for home ownership through the Forces Help to Buy pilot. The scheme enables regular Service personnel to be advanced up to 50% of their gross annual salary (to a maximum of £25,000), interest-free, to buy their first home, move to another or, in exceptional circumstances, extend an existing property.

Owning a home can positively impact on partner employability, stable education for children, and also provide stability and continuity as Service personnel transition

out of active service. However, the requirement to remain mobile can mean the Service person needs to live in SLA accommodation during the working week when assigned away from their home. The support offered, via the waiving of SLA charges, is currently linked to marital status and, for some, age. Following the completion of the Future Accommodation Model Pilot, a new package supporting the cost of SLA will begin to be offered to all maintaining a home elsewhere, irrespective of their relationship status and age.

The scheme is very popular, with around 27,000 Service personnel participating since the launch in 2014. This has provided around £413 million of funding.



Subsidising accommodation and supporting home ownership for our Service personnel

Principle: Service personnel should be supported to access the accommodation they need.

Objectives

- Ensure Service personnel in long-term relationships are able to access the same accommodation support as their married or civil partnered colleagues.
- Ensure that subsidised accommodation is allocated based primarily on the needs of Service personnel and their families, ending the use of accommodation as reward for rank.
- Support Service personnel to buy their own homes.

Defence recognises that the military will be called upon to make personal sacrifices, and that in some cases that will be the ultimate

sacrifice in the service of our nation. In putting the needs of the nation before their own, Service personnel forgo some of the rights enjoyed by those outside the Armed Forces. In return for this, Service personnel must be able to expect fair treatment, to be valued and respected as individuals, and that they and their families will be sustained and rewarded by commensurate terms and conditions of service.

The Future Accommodation Model (FAM) is currently in the pilot phase, and is being tested at three sites (Aldershot Garrison, RAF Wittering, and HMNB Clyde). FAM is looking to introduce changes to both entitlement and the type of accommodation offered.



FAM will update Defence's accommodation offer to reflect modern family structures, including long-term relationships. FAM is also looking into moving away from the current rank-based entitlement, with a view to providing accommodation based primarily on the Service person's need – be that number of dependents, access needs or a need arising from the job the Service person is in.

FAM will introduce changes to Defence's housing offer with a mix of Defence owned, Defence leased, the private rental sector and support to home ownership. A final decision on what this offer will look like has not yet been made, but it is expected to be the mechanism through which many of the changes to entitlement set out in this strategy will be implemented. The options available to Service personnel will differ based on their personal circumstances and the housing available at their assigned location, but the aim is to give flexibility for Service personnel whilst keeping the accommodation model affordable for Defence.

Alongside Forces Help to Buy, the pilot is also looking at how to support home ownership by offering a subsidy to Service personnel who maintain their own home.

Changes to rank-based allocation in SLA will not be introduced under the Future Accommodation Model, but work on future requirements for SLA should be guided by the objective set out here that subsidised accommodation be allocated based primarily on the needs of Service personnel. This principle does not necessarily extend to social and dining arrangements for those in SLA which sit outside the scope of this Strategy.

Defence commits to support all Service personnel in their aspirations to secure home ownership. Currently around 20% of Service personnel own their own homes and over 27,000 of these have been supported by Forces Help to Buy.



Improving the quality of Defence-provided accommodation

Principle: Service personnel should be able to access accommodation that is of a good quality and in line with modern living standards.

Objectives:

- Improve the quality of accommodation provided to Service personnel to bring it in line with modern living standards.
- Increase engagement with personnel and their families to ensure our approach to accommodation reflects their current and future needs and preferences.
- Through a proactive approach to maintenance alongside data-led future proofing, update spaces to the modern requirements of Service personnel and their families.

Defence has made significant investment in both SLA and SFA over the last five years, including an additional £122 million of fiscal stimulus funding across financial years 2020/21 and 2021/22. This must continue if we are to improve the quality of accommodation offered to Service personnel and their families. Defence will ensure that all our homes are safe and compliant with nationally recognised standards, and that they support our people to live in healthy environments that benefit their physical and mental well-being and, in turn, the execution of their duties.

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, more Service personnel are working from home with greater frequency, enjoying the benefits this offers. To support this, Defence will ensure that, in future, all accommodation

provided on our estate is served by high-quality broadband connections. Defence will also endeavour to ensure that, where our estate allows, those who may need to work from home on the SLA estate have space to do so.

To help inform SLA policy decisions, including a future target standard that goes beyond the minimum standard, an exploration of the lived experience within SLA was launched in April 2022, with results due autumn 2022. The survey seeks to gather the views of Service personnel on SLA, including their use of SLA and their wants, needs and priorities for SLA now and into the future. The department aims to repeat the survey annually to keep this data up to date and understand how expectations may change over time.



The National Audit Office report, and subsequent Public Accounts Committee hearing, on improving SLA made recommendations on how to deliver the changes required, including through setting a minimum standard. Detailed standards have been developed to meet the high level statement below. Following the publication of this Strategy, all SLA will be assessed against a new minimum standard before necessary improvements are incorporated into phased works programmes from the financial year 2024/25. Alongside these

new standards for SLA, a review into the grading for charge system will be carried out to simplify and improve the charges for SLA for inclusion in the next iteration of this Strategy. Accepting the differences of the Services' current SLA estates, TLBs will set out timescales in their delivery plans for reaching the minimum standard. In the meantime, TLBs will consider how improved shared spaces in SLA blocks might best support Service personnel, particularly those for whom it is their principal home.

SLA minimum standard (Defence Minimum Standards)

SLA provides accommodation for a range of Service personnel with varying needs and expectations. SLA must provide a living environment with consideration to the Service person's individual wellbeing, including their emotional, physical and mental health needs, supporting the Service person who calls it their home, as well as those that use it as a bed for the night. SLA must be safe and secure with spaces that allow privacy, stability and quiet, as well as communal spaces that meet modern societal norms and promote team cohesion.

“To meet the Defence Minimum Standards, the Single Living Accommodation (SLA) building must achieve a Facilities Condition Management (FCM) condition rating of 3 (Fair) and the bed space must achieve a pass in all statements of the living standards assessment.”

As a minimum, and in addition to mandatory safety and legal compliance measure, SLA must offer individuals: appropriately private, quiet, secure, dry, appropriately ventilated and heated space with access to hot water. Over time we will develop further targets to reflect societal norms and the expectations of our people. Detailed functional standards will sit underneath these high-level statements to ensure consistency of application across the estate.

The DMS is focused on the core needs of the Service personnel across eight themes: safety and compliance, lighting, security, water supply and drainage, windows and ventilation, thermal comfort, ablutions and sleeping provision. All these themes as listed constitute the minimum standard and must be met according to the technical statements specified. Supplementary guidance in the form of technical standards will be provided to assessors to ensure parity and efficiency for assessment.

Where this standard is not met, and the failure cannot be rectified within an appropriate timeframe, additional measures must be taken, specific to local contract. These measures must allow the accommodation to meet the standard temporarily whilst repair or adjustments are made, otherwise alternative accommodation must be provided to the SP. This accommodation cannot be transit accommodation and must meet the DMS.

SFA standard

Defence has an existing agreed minimum standard for SFA. This is the nationally recognised Decent Homes standard which is defined by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), who are also currently reviewing this standard. Defence has taken the opportunity to participate in the DLUHC review of the Decent Homes standard. This has allowed Defence to ascertain how this potential new standard relates to the SFA estate and to investigate if Defence can deliver a higher standard for the families who occupy these homes.

Historic focus for Defence has been primarily on the condition of the homes and the age of the components that make up the properties. The revised proposal will seek to address in addition to the three current criteria:

- the lived environment
- standards of work
- sustainability

The design and use of the built and natural environments, including green infrastructure, are major determinants of health and well-being. Planning and health need to be considered together in two ways: in terms of creating environments that support and encourage healthy lifestyles, and in terms of identifying and securing the facilities needed for primary, secondary and tertiary care, and the wider health and care system.

Following the completion of the Decent Homes review, Defence will review target standards that go above and beyond that minimum.

The target standard for SFA is defined as Decent Homes Plus and seeks to expand the minimum requirement of Decent Homes to consider factors such as modernity, thermal comfort, and condition.

Defence is committed to ensuring that the target standard for SFA remains in step with the requirements for modern family living. As such, Defence commits to continuous engagement with those who live in SFA housing to make sure that the target standard is regularly reviewed and will review this aspirational standard upon conclusion of DLUHC Decent Homes review.

To make significant improvements, Defence will transition the current stock from a fix-on-fail approach to a more efficient, planned preventative maintenance approach. This

backlog will require investment over many years and is not exclusive to the works that are necessary to improve the sustainability performance of Defence's existing stock.

Defence is also committed to improving our approach to building maintenance. The Future Defence Infrastructure Services contract, which commenced spring 2022, was based on extensive market comparisons and benchmarking. It was designed against current best industry practice and has broadly set the level of service customers should expect for the duration of the contract. The contract period is seven years plus three one-year extension options. The level of service from the contract offers significant enhancements over the national housing prime contract it replaced.

Making best use of Defence accommodation to ensure affordability and value for money

Principle: Defence will maximise use of accommodation to ensure affordability and value for money.

Objectives:

- Reduce excess empty properties or bed spaces across the accommodation estate to ensure value for money.
- Use data to facilitate accurate forecasting of accommodation need, taking into account the types and locations of accommodation, modelling on future use and changes in locality of the single Services.
- Continually review the management of accommodation to achieve the right size estate while ensuring operational capability and readiness are supported.

Defence currently holds more accommodation than it needs across both SLA and SFA, but it is not always in the locations where it is required. Improving our use of existing accommodation and planning for the future is imperative to increasing



efficiency, as is ensuring that Defence builds resilience and flexibility into these plans.

We need to accurately assess our current and future requirements for accommodation, taking into account the composition of our workforce and their personal accommodation preferences and ways of working. Only by investing in robust planning will Defence ensure there is the right amount of different types of accommodation in the right locations to support our people and, in turn, our operational effectiveness.

Defence will develop infrastructure management plans to support the Strategy for Defence Infrastructure and the Defence Infrastructure Organisation and TLBs will own specific delivery plans to support the Defence Accommodation Strategy.

Each Service faces different challenges with its SLA accommodation and keeping a level of excess SLA is important to support mobility, allow flexibility and support training.

However, because of poor historical data, it is difficult to know how all SLA is being used and whether that is full-time or on a temporary basis. The SLAMIS programme will give the Services greater certainty about how much SLA they have available, where that SLA is located, what condition it is in and whether it is occupied or not. This will enable them to reduce the SLA estate, knowing they have the data to inform which SLA blocks should be demolished or repurposed.

Alongside improving the data, innovative approaches are being trialled to make more efficient use of the available SLA in areas of high demand where increases in hybrid working may mean personnel only need a room for a few nights each week. The Flexi-rooms and other similar pilots will also inform how Defence thinks about our temporary use SLA and the outcomes from that are informing TLBs how best to use their SLA. Current results show a positive trend of Service personnel using this new



style of accommodation, reducing the pressure on SLA.

All TLBs will need to reduce their excess SLA and TLBs will be asked to outline measurable targets as part of the next iteration of the Defence Accommodation Strategy.

Defence will set an appropriate quantity of SFA stock to be held at each location to meet the differing needs of the single Services and Defence as a whole in line with FAM. Defence will develop an acquisition and disposal plan to reach these levels and a five-year investment plan to move to a preventative maintenance regime on this core stock. These plans will be developed in

line with next year's financial planning cycle, with any substantive changes quantified in the following year.

Defence recognises the need to have flexibility built into the SFA model to take differing requirements and maintenance schedules into account, as well as resilience planning. SFA currently has 19% vacant properties and Defence is committed to reducing this to 10% by September 2023. Defence will be seeking to achieve this through an occupancy-led strategy, or a disposal-led strategy if necessary. Defence will continue to challenge itself and consider whether setting an even more stretching target in the next iteration of this Strategy would be appropriate.

Improving sustainability across our accommodation and promoting sustainable behaviours among our people

Principle: Defence must improve sustainability across our accommodation and promote sustainable behaviours among our people to contribute to the government's net zero carbon commitment by 2050.

Objectives:

- Reduce carbon emissions across the Defence accommodation estate.
- Help Service personnel to maximise the sustainability of accommodation through their own sustainable behaviours.

Defence is committed to leading the charge in meeting the government's ambitions for

greater sustainability. In the Climate Change and Sustainability Strategic Approach, Defence sets out its 2050 ambition which includes the following statement.

'Defence has reduced its emissions and increased its sustainability activity and as a department is contributing to the achievement of the UK legal commitment to reach net zero emissions by 2050.'



The Ministry of Defence Sustainability Strategy for the Built Estate will set the direction on net zero and broader sustainability ambitions, including SFA and SLA, as highlighted on page 8. However, we already know we must explore innovative approaches to design and emerging technologies to improve sustainability.

For new-build properties Defence has an absolute commitment to net zero build standards with construction being as sustainable as possible and consideration given to achieving net zero across the life cycle of the building. In line with this, Defence will produce a policy on standards for new builds to meet operational net zero with an associated uplift in funding.

Defence needs to consider options to refurbish existing buildings to make sure they have the highest level of energy performance that can be achieved while remaining cost effective over the lifetime of the building components. This will include:

- performance of the building envelope (insulation to control heat loss and ensure summer comfort) and air tightness
- ventilation (air quality and moisture management)
- energy efficient and optimised equipment with a high level of automation and control
- local and embedded low-carbon energy generation

Defence will look at how to support Service personnel in their own behaviours and lifestyles to support sustainability.

Annington Homes represents the largest sector of the portfolio. Annington properties are typically 70 to 80 years old, come with a liability to return them in good order and are typically expensive to retrofit to improve the suitability performance to a level that will contribute to Defence's net zero carbon ambitions. Over time, Defence will reduce its reliance on Annington properties, replacing them with more modern, more efficient and lower-carbon alternatives.



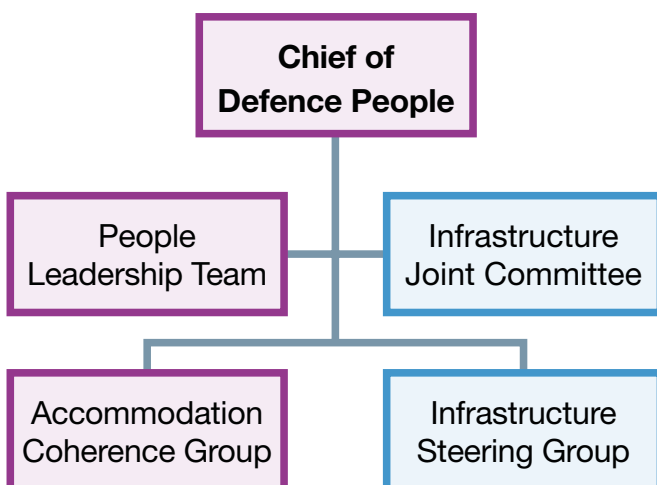
Governance and accountability

The Defence Accommodation Coherence Group (ACG) owns and is accountable for the successful delivery of this Strategy. Membership of the ACG includes workstream leaders from across Defence. The ACG will report through the Chief of Defence People's governance chain and the Chief of Defence People will be Senior Responsible Officer for the Strategy.

In parallel with this, the same reporting will be shared with the infrastructure governance chain through the Infrastructure Steering Group (ISG).

The ACG and ISG will be given quarterly updates on progress against the TLBs' delivery plans through workstream reports. Biannual updates will be provided to the CDP through the People Committee.

To ensure public accountability, progress against this Strategy will be published in the Armed Forces Covenant annual report. The annual report is scrutinised by the external members of the Covenant Reference Group (the Families Federations and Service Charities) and the House of Commons Defence Select Committee.



Communicating progress

The changes and improvements brought about in this Strategy will be communicated to stakeholders on publication of the Armed Forces Covenant annual report.

The TLBs will take a proactive approach to communicating with Service personnel and their families, sharing information across TLBs, and using a variety of networks such as the single Service-HiVE information services, British Forces Broadcasting Services, the Families Federations, Defence Directorate of Communications and social media to inform and empower families, ensuring they remain engaged and are able to appropriately influence future iterations of this Strategy.

Reviewing the Strategy

The Strategy will be reviewed following the conclusion of the Haytorntwaite Review of Armed Forces Incentivisation in 2023, then subject to future validation exercises at no more than five-year intervals. This will include an assessment of the principles and objectives as well as the governance arrangements, to make sure they continue to support successful implementation of the overarching vision statement.

Working across Defence

Successful delivery of this Strategy will require close working across Defence, with direction and leadership from the Chief of Defence People and Financial Military Capacity and implementation and consultation with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation, Strategic Command, Army, Navy and Air. This collaboration will mainly be driven through the individual TLBs, with co-ordination led by the accommodation policy team.

Considerations ahead of the next iteration of the Defence Accommodation Strategy

The following considerations have been identified in the drafting of the Strategy. These challenges should be addressed in the next iteration.

Housing provision

FAM will change the way Defence provides accommodation for its people, increasing the range of options available to Service personnel across different locations and allowing them to influence the type of accommodation they will occupy by stating a preference.

The Future Workplace Strategy may have an impact on people's housing requirements. Potentially changing people's requirements for a 'resident at work' address as well as changing the definition of a hybrid worker, impacting on travel times and altering home requirements. There may need to be a revision in standards, for example, to take home working into account.

Standards and quality

Unlike SFA, where a clear aspirational target standard can be identified, there is only limited data specific to SLA to inform future planning and investment. This Strategy has outlined the SLA minimum standard. Further work will be conducted to confirm the delivery of the minimum standard and timescales for TLBs to eradicate SLA below that standard. Outcomes from this will inform further development of SLA standards and targets

for the Services to reach will be included in delivery plans.

Use of estate

The scale, nature and location of SLA needs to be better aligned to the size and composition of the Armed Forces, today and in the future. While the Armed Forces have reduced in size, changes to accommodation have not kept pace. Striking the right balance between the need to consolidate onto a smaller estate while retaining flexibility and resilience for future capability is a key consideration for infrastructure planning.

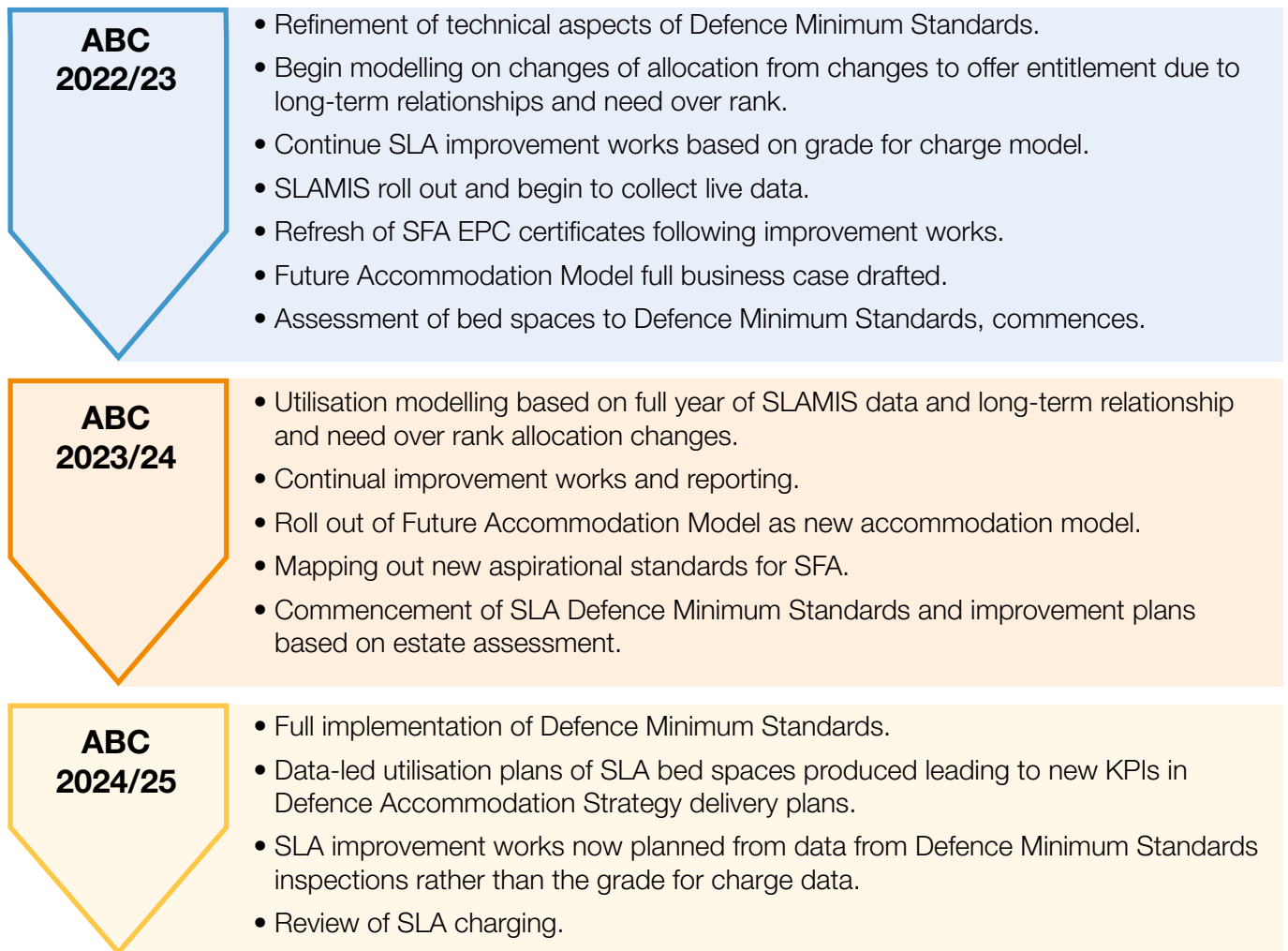
There is currently limited data specific to SLA to inform future planning and utilisation. The data Defence has on SLA has improved greatly over the last five years. The roll-out of SLAMIS will give Defence live data on the use of SLA, but we will need a full annual cycle to accurately understand the use and needs of the estate. Changes of entitlement to SFA and the implementation of minimum standards will change the current picture of SLA use with a clearer picture of future needs apparent in 2023. Until this point TLBs will continue to deliver their current SLA improvement plans, allowing for flexibility when new data becomes available.

Overseas

This iteration does not give consideration to the departments overseas accommodation footprint.

Overseas accommodation faces different logistics, challenges and usage than its UK counterparts. This should be considered as part of a future or supplementary iteration of this Strategy.

Next steps timeline



Glossary

Defence Estates Optimisation Programme (DEOP)	DEOP is a long-term investment to modernise the Defence estate. It is an ambitious 25-year portfolio of construction activity, unit and personnel moves, and site disposals that will deliver a better structured, more economical and modern estate that more effectively supports military capability.
Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO)	This organisation is the estate expert adviser for Defence, supporting Armed Forces military capability by planning, building, maintaining, and servicing infrastructure. It is an enabling organisation of the Ministry of Defence.
Future Defence Infrastructure Services (FDIS)	A Defence programme board that covers both the National Accommodation Management Services and Regional Accommodation Maintenance Services which provide maintenance for Defence accommodation.
Future Accommodation Model (FAM) pilot	A pilot programme to assess how personnel will choose to live in the future and provide flexibility in the provision of living accommodation to Service personnel and their families.
Near zero energy buildings (NZEBs)	NZEBs have very high energy performance. The low amount of energy that these buildings require comes mostly from renewable sources.
Planned preventative maintenance (PPM)	The maintenance of assets and equipment including building fabric inspections and testing that is undertaken at regular intervals by specially trained personnel to prevent the potential for breakdown, confirm safety, and ensure it is efficient in operation.
Strategy for Defence Infrastructure (SDI)	Provides long-term strategic direction on how the Ministry of Defence will manage and develop its infrastructure as an enabler of military capability and Defence outputs.
Service Family Accommodation (SFA)	Subsidised living accommodation provided to entitled and eligible Service personnel and their families. The provision of good quality living accommodation for service personnel and their families is an important priority for Defence. The Defence Infrastructure Organisation manages around 50,000 properties in the UK.
Single Living Accommodation (SLA)	Subsidised living accommodation provided to single and unaccompanied Service personnel. Generally within barracks at duty stations.

Substitute Single Person Service Accommodation (SSSA)

SSSA is rented from the private sector and assigned to Service personnel in lieu of SLA.

Tied Accommodation

Tied Accommodation is SFA that is occupied as a virtue of the Service person's appointment. It is assigned to that person whether they would normally be entitled to that size accommodation or not.

Top level budget-holder (TLB)

TLBs are responsible for implementing local corporate governance arrangements within their top-level budgets, including risk management and assurance procedures throughout their organisations, in line with broader departmental policies and guidance. There are currently five TLBs, the four military commands and the Defence Nuclear Organisation.



Annex: Defence Minimum Standard (DMS) for the Defence Accommodation Strategy (DAS)

SLA provides accommodation for a range of Service personnel with varying needs and expectations. SLA must provide a living environment with consideration to the Service person's individual wellbeing, including their emotional, physical, and mental health needs, supporting the Service person who calls it their home, as well as those that use it as a bed for the night. SLA must be safe and secure with spaces that allow privacy, stability and quiet, as well as communal spaces that meet modern societal norms and promote team cohesion.

“To meet the Defence Minimum Standards, the SLA building must achieve an FCM condition rating of 3 (Fair) and the bed space must achieve a pass in all statements of the living standards assessment.”

As a minimum and in addition to mandatory safety and legal compliance measures, SLA must offer individuals: appropriately private, quiet, secure, dry, appropriately ventilated and heated space with access to hot water. Over time we will develop further targets to reflect societal norms and the expectations of our people. Detailed functional standards will sit underneath these high-level statements to ensure consistency of application across the estate.

The DMS is focused on the core needs of the SP across eight themes: safety and compliance, lighting, security, water supply and drainage, windows and ventilation, thermal comfort, ablutions and sleeping provision. All these themes as listed constitute the minimum standard and must be met according to the technical statements as specified below¹. Where this standard is not met, and the failure cannot be rectified within an appropriate timeframe, additional measures must be taken, specific to local contract. These measures must allow the accommodation to meet the standard temporarily whilst repair or adjustments are made, otherwise alternative accommodation must be provided to the SP. This accommodation cannot be transit accommodation and must meet the DMS.

Following assessment of the estate, additional themes will be added to become an aspirational target standard. Additionally, it is likely that the extant eight themes may also be enhanced to DMS+. This target standard may initially be developed as a traffic light approach and depending upon the estate assessment, it could be applied only to new builds if it proves undeliverable or affordable on legacy parts of the estate.

¹ Supplementary guidance in the form of technical standards will be provided to assessors to ensure parity and efficiency for assessment.

Mandatory Standards (Themes and Areas)	Technical Statements
1 Any one failure will result in a deadline to rectify the problem before the SLA is deemed to be below the DMS and uninhabitable. ²	
1.a Safety and compliance ³	As set in law. All statutory standards must be met across all themes.
1.b Adequate lighting	<p>(Assessment must consider all living areas as well as accommodation access/egress points).</p> <p>Lighting must be appropriate and functional. All bedrooms must have an external window as well as having sufficient artificial light including that appropriate for a desk/ workstation. All other living areas must have adequate artificial lighting as minimum.</p> <p>Security lighting must be provided both to facilitate routine movement to and from access/egress points. All external entrance and exits to accommodation must be lit.</p>
1.c Security	<p>(Assessment must consider the security of the accommodation building, individual rooms and any allocated storage areas).</p> <p>The accommodation building must be protected from access from unauthorised persons. Individual rooms must have the ability to be locked and secured by occupant(s).</p> <p>Reasonable protection must be provided for occupants' personal and work possessions, kit and equipment, including the ability to individually secure possessions when accommodated in a multi-occupancy room or when allocated storage is provided outside of the bedroom.</p>
1.d Water supply and drainage	<p>(Assessment to consider hot and cold water and associated drainage systems).</p> <p>All occupants must be provided with access to hot water for washing and cold water for drinking. This should be within the accommodation building unless provision is temporary due to repairs in progress or awaited within the maintenance contract. Water supplies should be tested at regular intervals to confirm and ensure potability. Systems for both foul and surface water drainage must be functional.</p>

2 In line with associated contract but NLT 48 hrs and noting that some issues may make the SLA immediately unsafe for occupation whereas others may be rectified through management temporary levers while work to rectify the failure is completed.

3 Including consideration and adherence to the following areas: fire, gas, electrical, asbestos, manufactured mineral fibres, biocides, carbon monoxide/fuel combustion products, lead, radiation, uncombusted fuel gas, volatile organic compounds and pests.

Mandatory Standards (Themes and Areas)	Technical Statements
1.e Windows and Ventilation	<p>(Assessment must consider all living areas and communal rooms, including ablutions).</p> <p>All residential and other accommodation provided is appropriately ventilated naturally or mechanically. Upper floor windows must have appropriate safety features, with ground floor windows having appropriate security features.</p> <p>Bedrooms must have natural light. Ablutions must have sufficient ventilation. Where snack preparation areas are provided, sufficient ventilation must be provided. All living areas must be free from damp and mould.</p>
1.f Thermal Comfort	<p>(Assessment to consider all living areas including communal rooms).</p> <p>Rooms should be adequately heated to meet minimum Health & Safety requirements all year round. Heating should be reliable and repaired within a reasonable timeframe as specified in the relevant facilities management contract, with at least temporary replacements being provided within 24 hrs.</p>
1.g Ablutions (washing facilities)	<p>(Assessment to include all baths, showers, WCs and hand washing provision whether provided as an en-suite or in a communal manner to support occupants).</p> <p>A shower, toilet and handbasin should be provided as part of the living accommodation as an en-suite. Where en-suite provision is not available, facilities must be within reasonable proximity to the living accommodation. Baths (where provided) and showers must allow privacy for a person. WCs and washing facilities must provide privacy. Separate toilet facilities by gender, unless designed to be gender neutral, are to be provided unless each WC is provided in a separate room intended for use by one person at a time, the door to which is capable of being secured from the inside. Suitable hand washing facilities must be provided to support the WCs.</p>
1.h Sleeping Provision (to consider bed, curtains/blinds, noise)	<p>(Assessment specific to the bedroom or bed area in the case of a multi-occupancy room).</p> <p>Different genders must be accommodated in separate bedrooms. Bedrooms or bed areas must provide each person with a functional bed, wardrobe, and drawers as a minimum. Functional curtains or blinds must be provided to block out external light for sleeping and to ensure privacy.</p>

