



Welcome to DIO's monthly newsletter designed to provide families living in SFA with useful updates and information on their homes.

Included in this issue of Families First:

- A Message from DIO Head of Accommodation, Air Commodore Leah Griffin
- DIO SFA Townhall sessions
- Summer Move Ins
- UK SFA Customer Satisfaction Surveys

A Message from DIO Head of Accommodation, Air Commodore Leah Griffin

Dear Families,

I am delighted to have taken up appointment as Head of Accommodation, replacing Air Commodore James Savage who left the DIO in March 2024 to prepare for retirement. Under James' tenure, he oversaw a significant uplift to investment in SFA and steered the team through the implementation of the new accommodation contracts, leading the organisation through one of the most challenging periods that DIO Accommodation has ever faced.

Whilst we recognise there is still more to do, the position with the new accommodation contracts is beginning to show green shoots of improvement. However, the current financial position is more challenging than ever which is resulting in some difficult choices being made. This means that to ensure the safety and compliance of the estate, DIO is currently prioritising emergency and urgent repairs which means that requests for non-urgent repairs and home improvements are not currently affordable and, unfortunately, will need to be deferred. This position will be reassessed once the budget for 24/25 has been finalised.

This will be disappointing to many of you who, understandably, might have been expecting an improved position at the start of the new financial year. We too are disappointed. Be assured that we are working hard behind the scenes to challenge the budgetary settlement and to make the case for investing in Service family housing because it's the right thing to do and will enable our Service personnel to continue to focus on delivering for Defence.

In the meantime, we are focused on ensuring that every penny of funding invested in the estate is spent wisely and are exploring all options to drive down the costs of delivering services, including scoping efficiencies when preparing a house for Move In. Whilst tough decisions are being made, the safety of Service personnel and their families is our top priority, so please continue to raise tasks via Pinnacle in the usual way for triage.

In my first weeks in post, I have visited housing across the UK and have seen both the best and the worst of accommodation and my priority is to level up by ensuring that all houses reach the Decent Homes Plus (DH+) standard. We are also watching the social housing sector closely, ensuring that our target standard for SFA is regularly reviewed and have recently developed an Enhanced Target Standard that seeks to revolutionise the lived experience in the future with homes more reflective of modern living. Given the age of the estate, exacerbated by chronic underinvestment over many years, we have a very challenging remit to provide an estate that meets the needs of Service families.

It is an exciting time to have joined the DIO and there is lots for us to do to make your lives easier. I am looking forward to meeting with many of you as we begin our town halls across the UK for which the dates and locations have been announced below.



Air Commodore, Leah Griffin
DIO Head of Accommodation

Sign up to an SFA Townhall Event near you!

ATTEND AN SFA TOWN HALL NEAR YOU

DIO and our suppliers are hosting a series of accommodation town halls across the SFA estate. We are inviting service personnel and your families to attend a local town hall to talk to senior representatives from DIO, Amey, VIVO and Pinnacle. We want to share updates about our work in homes across the estate and hear about your experiences of living in SFA.

Sign up to your local event and find out more here:



Catterick - 13/06/24
Waddington - 16/07/24
Portsmouth - 03/09/24
Tidworth - October TBC
Aldershot - November TBC
Leuchars - December TBC



VIVO

Amey

Working with



Planning for Move-in, Move-out and Removals this Summer

Summer is always the busiest period of the year for housing allocations and removals activity. The last week in July and first week in August are particularly popular dates and are usually fully booked several months in advance. Whilst our suppliers will always attempt to meet families' preferred Move-in, Move-out and removals dates, it may not always be possible to achieve this against the significant volume of requests received. This is due to the removals industry experiencing staff shortages.

To help us manage this particularly busy time and to ensure families' needs are met:

- We would be grateful if families only request services during this period if they are unable to move at any other time.
- Where circumstances allow, please could accompanied personnel without children avoid planning for a move within the school summer holiday window.
- Please ensure removals are planned as soon as Assignment Orders via the [Agility portal](#) are received. Families do not need a confirmed delivery address to start this process but knowing the location will allow Agility to plan for the summer moves.
- Once families have been allocated SFA, please confirm availability for removals **before** booking a move in and out appointments.

If families have any questions or concerns, then please contact Agility directly: [Agility GRMS](#).

UK SFA Customer Satisfaction Surveys – we want to hear your views

Each month a telephone survey of randomly selected SFA families is conducted by Opinion Research Service (ORS) on behalf of the MOD. We are keen for families to engage with the survey as this research will help MOD better understand the views of service personnel and families living in UK SFA and substitute SFA (SSFA).

Further information on this survey can be found [here](#).

Although families do not have to take part, if you are contacted, we do encourage you to respond to the surveys. Your opinions are important and will be used to measure how DIO and our industry partners are performing and will identify ways of making further improvements to housing services that matter to you. Answers are treated in the strictest confidence and only used for research purposes.



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Useful Links

[Contact Pinnacle](#)

[Make a request for compensation](#)

[Reporting damp and mould](#)

[Join the SFA Defence Connect page](#)

[Forces Help to Buy is here to stay](#)