



# Ministry of Defence

## Accompanied Established Long-Term Relationships (LTR(E)) Overseas Pilot Evaluation: Evaluation Summary Report

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## **List of abbreviations**

**DPIA** Data Protection Impact Assessment

**FamSec** Families Section

**FLC** Front Line Command

**GDPR** General Data Protection Regulation

**GSR** Government Social Research(ers)

**JPA** Joint Personnel Administration

**JSP** Joint Service Publication

**LTR(E)** Established Long-Term Relationship

**MAO** Modernised Accommodation Offer

**MOD** Ministry of Defence

**PStatCat** Personal Status Category

**RAF** Royal Air Force

**RN** Royal Navy

**SFA** Service Families Accommodation

**SP** Service personnel

**ToC** Theory of Change

**Unit HR** Unit Human Resources

**VfM** Value for Money

## **Summary**

In 2024, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) launched the 'Accompanied Established Long-Term Relationship (LTR(E)) Overseas Pilot'. The pilot launched as a positive statement of intent for Service personnel (SP) in long-term relationships, showing Defence is committed to widening entitlement to Service Families Accommodation (SFA). The pilot gives SP, across all Services and ranks, in LTR(E) at selected overseas military bases, parity of treatment with SP in a marriage or civil partnership in relation to their accommodation and allowances, which they do not currently have. The pilot was launched at military bases in Cyprus and the Falkland Islands.

The pilot was created in response to the 2015 Strategic Defence Review, which committed to modernising the MOD approach to accommodation provision by seeking a fairer, more flexible accommodation offer. It also responded to recommendations from the 2023 Haythornthwaite Review that accommodation policy should expand choices for families beyond traditional models, for example, by recognising long-term partners, to attract and retain personnel in the Armed Forces.

A one-year evaluation of the pilot was commissioned by the MOD. The evaluation aimed to understand the extent to which the pilot:

A. was implemented as intended.

- B. contributed to the intended outcomes associated with improving the offer for Service personnel in established long-term relationships.
- C. contributed to any unintended outcomes.
- D. was delivered economically, efficiently, effectively and equitably to achieve value for money.

To meet each objective, a process, impact and value-for-money (VfM) evaluation was undertaken. During the evaluation period, LTR(E) SP only joined the pilot in Cyprus, therefore evaluation findings are limited to this location.

Overall, evidence indicates the pilot has been successful.

The pilot was delivered as intended, but there were some aspects of delivery that could have been improved.

There was excellent collaboration between policy and delivery teams. The evaluation found necessary governance was followed and decisions about the pilot policy and implementation were made rapidly. The pilot was easy to implement in Cyprus using existing processes. All participating SP and partners received allowances and accommodation with the same entitlement as married/civil partnered SP. Services, teams and infrastructure in Cyprus were able to support the pilot with only a minor increase in workload. No complaints against the policy were recorded. However, the pilot implementation could have been improved by training staff to use and update the tracker to monitor LTR(E) SP on the pilot, delivering an implementation plan and formal budget, confirming preserved rights policy, assessing communications to career managers, lower rank SP and LTR(E) partners and including Families Section into the policy design and implementation process.

The pilot is largely on track to meet intended long term outcomes and impacts.

Overall, there was good awareness of the pilot from SP and partners through a variety of communications channels; however, there was limited understanding about the pilot by some SP and partners.

There is some evidence to indicate the pilot had a positive effect of strengthening unit cohesion and enabling SP to volunteer overseas and fill specialist posts, which could not otherwise be filled. Many SP on the pilot agreed the ability to serve abroad with their partner influenced their decision to stay in the Armed Forces, made the Armed Forces feel like a modern employer, created an inclusive environment in Defence with a modern workforce and made them feel valued as employees. They also agreed serving accompanied overseas in a LTR(E) made them feel they were treated the same as personnel who are married or in civil partnerships. However, the data cannot provide proof the pilot will directly impact retention rates in the Armed Forces.

There is some evidence there may have been a decrease in pre-deployment marriage and many SP and partners considered marriage so they could be accompanied / accompany their partner overseas. There was sufficient and equal treatment and provision of housing, services and welfare between LTR(E) and

married/civil partnered SP. This was despite some delays in access to services due to proving LTR(E) status to Families Section.

There were some barriers identified to joining the pilot included a lack of partner employment, isolation from friends/family and limited childcare facilities. However, these barriers were not specific to LTR(E) SP or the pilot.

The evaluation indicates the pilot is showing good value for money.

There were no additional costs incurred beyond standard operating procedures and no financial constraints or requirements for new funding were identified. FLCs were able to absorb allowance costs, and housing was provided using existing infrastructure. There were no additional costs as administrative systems and processes for LTR(E) SP to receive housing and allowances on the pilot were part of business as usual and used existing processes and knowledge. Minor, initial increases in workload were reported but cited as manageable.

No applications were declined due to insufficient housing, and no issues were reported regarding housing allocation. SFA void margins across Cyprus remained at acceptable levels during the pilot evaluation, but there was some concern at one base due to factors beyond the control of the pilot (non-seismically compliant SFA).

Evidence indicates the pilot enhanced equality, community cohesion and LTR(E) SP felt treated the same as married/civil partnered SP. Housing was distributed fairly and there was evidence of community cohesion between married/civil partnered and LTR(E) SP and partners.

## **1. Introduction**

In January 2024, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) launched the 'Accompanied Established Long-Term Relationship (LTR(E)) Overseas Pilot' ('the pilot').

The pilot launched as a positive statement of intent for LTR(E) Service personnel (SP), showing Defence is committed to widening entitlement to Service Families Accommodation (SFA). It was created in response to:

- Commitments in the [2015 Strategic Defence Review](#) to modernising the MOD approach to accommodation provision by seeking a fairer, more flexible accommodation offer.
- Recommendations from the [2023 Haythornthwaite Review](#) suggesting accommodation policy should expand choices for families beyond traditional models, for example, by recognising long-term partners, to attract and retain personnel in the Armed Forces.
- The proposed launch of the [Modernised Accommodation Offer](#) (MAO) in March 2024, designed to provide SP in LTR(E) the same entitlement to Service Family Accommodation (SFA) as married/civil partnered colleagues in the UK. Without this pilot there could have been a disparity between the UK and Overseas Offer.

The pilot also contributes toward strategic commitments and recommendations outlined in the [2025 Strategic Defence Review](#) to widen accommodation entitlements for SP in LTR(E) in an effort to recruit and retain individuals.

Additional aims of the pilot include:

- Contributing to an adaptable and sustainable workforce
- Reducing the number of divorces in deployed cohorts
- Contributing to a more inclusive Defence environment with a diverse workforce who feel engaged and valued
- Improving parity of treatment between married/civil partnered SP and LTR(E) SP
- Improving parity of treatment between the overseas and UK Accommodation offer

### 1.1. Pilot policy and entitlements

The pilot gives SP, across all Services and ranks, in LTR(E) at selected overseas bases, parity of treatment with SP in a marriage or civil partnership when posted overseas in relation to their accommodation and allowances, which they do not currently have. SP in LTR(E) can be/have:

- Accompanied by their long-term partner overseas.
- Entitled to SFA and a bespoke allowance package to support living overseas.
- Entitlement for SP, their partner and children (if applicable) to access wider services, such as schooling and healthcare, in line with married or civil partnered SP.

An LTR(E) is [defined](#) as “*a Defence recognised relationship between two people that has continued for a long time and has the intent of permanence, but does not have the legal recognition of marriage or civil partnership*”. SP can register for LTR(E) status on Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) (MOD HR system used by Service personnel) by providing proof of their LTR(E) over a period of 365 days.

Due to the MOD HR system (Joint Personnel Administration (JPA)) not currently recognising LTR(E) as a cohort who should receive overseas SFA and allowances, SP on the pilot temporarily change their Personal Status Category (PStatCat) to Category 1 (married or civil partnership). This allows SP to access entitled allowances and accommodation.

SP on the pilot could receive relocation allowance, movement and storage of personal effects, disturbance expense, insurance allowance and travel and subsistence. In addition, SP received the accompanied rate for Living Overseas Allowances, respite provision, Get You Home and further allowances outlined in [JSP464 Tri-Service Accommodation Regulations](#).

On return to the UK, SP participating in the pilot return to their original PStatCat, however they can still receive preserved rights until 31 March 2026, meaning they are entitled to SFA in the UK if assigned before this date. The deadline for preserved

rights was agreed and implemented by the MOD in September 2024. When the pilot was initially implemented in January 2024, policy did not state that any preserved rights would be in place as it was expected the Modernised Accommodation Offer would have been implemented in full and Service personnel would move onto this new policy.

The pilot is led by the MOD Overseas Accommodation Policy Team and UK Strategic Command and is funded by Front Line Commands (FLC). Overseas units are responsible for delivering the pilot at each location, for example, managing accommodation applications, allocating SFA and providing wrap around welfare support.

Further information regarding the pilot, eligibility criteria, locations and entitlements can be found in the [Joint Service Publication \(JSP\) 464, Volume 4, Part 3](#).

## **1.2. Pilot locations**

Military bases on Cyprus and the Falkland Islands were selected initially as pilot locations as they are British Overseas Territories, have limited visa complexities, provided sufficient MOD managed housing stock, and couples living together in long-term relationships are culturally accepted in these locations. Since the launch, Canada has been added as a pilot location alongside several Global Defence Network (GDN) locations.

## **1.3. Pilot population**

The total serving population (as of May 2025) in Cyprus was 2405 SP. In comparison, the total LTR(E) population on the pilot (as of May 2025) in Cyprus was 103 SP (4.3% of total serving population).

As of May 2025 in Cyprus, 41 Army personnel were on the pilot, 62 Royal Air Force personnel and zero Royal Navy.

## **2. Evaluation overview**

A one-year evaluation of the pilot was commissioned by the MOD Overseas Accommodation Policy Team and was led by Government Social Researchers (GSR) in the Accommodation Analysis Team. The evaluation sought to inform future pilot implementation and policy design. The evaluation followed best practice from the [HMT Magenta Book](#).

Key evaluation objectives were to understand the extent to which the pilot:

- A. was implemented as intended.
- B. contributed to the intended outcomes associated with improving the offer for Service personnel in established long-term relationships.
- C. contributed to any unintended outcomes.
- D. was delivered economically, efficiently, effectively and equitably to achieve value for money.

To meet each objective, a process, impact and value-for-money (VfM) evaluation were undertaken. A summary of each evaluation methodology and findings is presented in this report. The full report for the process, impact and VfM evaluation is published alongside this report on GOV.UK.

A Theory of Change (ToC) was developed in collaboration with key stakeholders from Overseas Accommodation Policy Team and UK Strategic Command stakeholders at the beginning of the pilot and revised at the end the evaluation. The Evaluation Team drafted an initial ToC based on their understanding of the pilot policy; this was then revised during a series of workshops with stakeholders. The ToC outlined how the pilot policy was expected to work, illustrating the activities and resources required, intended impacts, outputs, outcomes, and causal links and assumptions. The ToC focuses solely on the pilot policy and does not consider other aspects of Defence accommodation policy or delivery. The full pilot ToC can be seen in Annex A.

## 2.1. Data collection

The pilot evaluation was informed by research activities undertaken throughout the first year of implementation up to May 2025. Tables 1 to 5 provide a summary of each research activity. Full methodologies of research activities can be found in individual, linked reports.

The evaluation not only considered whether evidence was collected/available, but also the quality of evidence produced by research activities. All research activities were methodologically robust, conducted by GSR members and subject to quality assurance. Therefore, the main factor influencing ratings was participation/response rates as this determined the strength and generalisability of evidence.

Quality of evidence produced by each research activity was rated as either:

- **High:** Evidence is based on high-quality methodology with strong participation, producing well-supported and robust findings.
- **Moderate:** Evidence is based on high-quality methodology with some limited participation, meaning findings are valuable but not fully representative.
- **Low:** Evidence is based on high-quality methodology but with insufficient participation, resulting in significant bias or limitations.

Evidence which is of low or moderate quality does not necessarily indicate there is no impact from the policy, rather it is not possible to fully identify the impact due to low participation rates.

The pilot evaluation did not fall under scope of requiring approval from the MOD Research Ethics Committee and Scientific Advisory Committees as outlined in [Defence research involving human participants \(JSP 536\) - GOV.UK](#). However, all research activities were undertaken by GSR members, strictly adhering to professional and ethical processes (including GDPR and GSR research practices). Ethical principles and quality assurances for individual research activities are outlined in linked reports, which can be found via the [Accompanied established long-term relationships overseas pilot evaluation landing page](#)

**Table 1: Summary of research activity: Implementation interviews**

<b>Summary</b>	<p>Virtual and in-person, semi-structured interviews with staff involved designing and/or delivering the pilot (e.g., processing accommodation, visas, allowances and welfare).</p> <p>Interview questions were tailored to specific roles and responsibilities of participants to understand how the policy was created and communicated, staffing, administrative systems and how/whether the pilot implemented as intended.</p>
<b>Population (Participants)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy and implementation staff (Cyprus only)</li> </ul>
<b>Population (Data collected about)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy and Implementation Teams</li> <li>• LTR(E) SP</li> <li>• LTR(E) Partners on the pilot</li> </ul>
<b>Quality of Evidence</b>	<p>High</p> <p>Methodologically strong, well-executed with clear quality assurances, giving high confidence in the validity and reliability of findings. Primary data collected directly from all key stakeholders with high knowledge and involvement in the pilot policy and delivery. Interviews conducted, analysed and quality assured by GSR members. Analysis used statistical testing of inter-rater reliability between codes and themes to add further robustness to the quality.</p>

**Table 2: Summary of research activity: Routine Monitoring Data**

<b>Summary</b>	<p>Routine monitoring data utilised existing data, collected by the Unit Human Resources (Unit HR) Teams at pilot sites. Monitoring data included number of LTR(E) SP at location, on the pilot, applications to the pilot, casework/complaints, and SFA void margins. Void margins are the percentage of vacant properties at any given site. Void margins are required to manage the estate and movement of occupants in and out of properties.</p> <p>Accuracy and quality assurance of monitoring data was only presumed. Routine monitoring data could not be independently quality assured by evaluation leads and is likely reliable but not verified, reducing overall quality rating.</p>
<b>Population (Participants)</b>	N/A
<b>Population (Data collected about)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LTR(E) SP</li> <li>• LTR(E) Partners on the pilot</li> </ul>
<b>Quality of Evidence</b>	Moderate

	<p>Monitoring data comes directly from official, credible sources (Cyprus Unit HR and JPA). However, accuracy and quality assurance is only presumed and could not be independently assured by evaluation leads. Thereby, limiting overall completeness and confidence in the data. Data can be used and is likely reliable but not verified.</p>
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**Table 3: Summary of research activity: Overseas Survey**

<b>Summary</b>	<p>A survey was distributed between January and April 2025 to capture the views and experiences of LTR(E) SP and partners applying for/on the pilot and LTR(E) SP at pilot sites who did not join the pilot.</p> <p>Survey questions were cognitively tested and designed in collaboration with policy stakeholders/leads. Survey question themes were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demographic Questions</li> <li>• Preparation and Awareness of the Pilot</li> <li>• Life Overseas</li> <li>• Consequences of the Pilot</li> <li>• Further Comments</li> </ul> <p>Very low responses rates (less than 10 partners) from partners and LTR(E) SP who did not join the pilot, limits overall confidence of survey results for these populations.</p>
<b>Population (Participants)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LTR(E) SP applying for/on the pilot</li> <li>• LTR(E) Partners on the pilot</li> <li>• LTR(E) SP at the pilot sites who did not join the pilot</li> </ul>
<b>Population (Data collected about)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LTR(E) SP applying for/on the pilot</li> <li>• LTR(E) Partners on the pilot</li> <li>• LTR(E) SP who did not join the pilot</li> </ul>
<b>Quality of Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High for SP applying for/on the pilot</li> </ul> <p>Good response rates for SP (39%) from a variety of ranks, allowing the research to be confident in results and supporting generalisability to wider LTR(E) pilot population in Cyprus. Survey was designed, analysed and quality assured by GSR members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low for LTR(E) Partners on the pilot and LTR(E) SP who did not join the pilot.</li> </ul>

	<p>Very low response rate. Less than 10 responses from partners and SP who were eligible for the pilot but had opted not to join the pilot. This makes the findings non-representative, vulnerable to biases and unlikely to be generalisable to wider populations. While quality assurance, analysis and design were all conducted by GSR members, the sample size limits confidence in the results.</p> <p>Insights can be used illustratively but are not enough for broader conclusions. Further data and research on these populations is required.</p>
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**Table 4: Summary of research activity: Chain of Command Focus Groups**

<b>Summary</b>	<p>In person focus groups with Chain of Command at the following bases were undertaken in March 2024:  Akrotiri (7 participants)  Dhekelia (3 participants)  Ayios Nikolaos (4 participants)  Episkopi (8 participants)</p> <p>Chain of Command provided perspectives about the implementation, operation and impact of the pilot on unit cohesion, morale and operational effectiveness. In addition, Chain of Command focus groups collected insights on nuanced issues/feedback from LTR(E) SP within their chain, regarding the pilot.</p>
<b>Population (Participants)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chain of Command members to manage/oversee LTR(E) SP and pilot processes.</li> </ul>
<b>Population (Data collected about)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LTR(E) SP applying for/on the pilot</li> <li>LTR(E) Partners on the pilot</li> <li>LTR(E) SP who did not join the pilot</li> <li>Implementation Teams</li> <li>Contractors, agencies and other support units/staff</li> </ul>
<b>Quality of Evidence</b>	<p>High</p> <p>Methodologically strong, well-executed with clear quality assurances, giving high confidence in the validity and reliability of findings. Primary data collected directly from high numbers of chain of command (22 total), from 4 Cyprus bases, with knowledge of pilot policy and first-hand experience of supporting LTR(E) SP. Focus groups conducted, analysed and quality assured by GSR members using statistical testing of inter-rater reliability to add further robustness to the quality.</p>

**Table 5: Summary of research activity: LTR(E) SP Interviews**

<p><b>Summary</b></p>	<p>Virtual and in-person, semi-structured interviews with LTR(E) SP who did not join the pilot to understand potential barriers and reasons preventing individuals from accessing the pilot scheme.</p> <p>7 LTR(E) SP took part in interviews, of which only 4 were eligible (i.e., LTR(E) SP not on the pilot). Given the small number of interviews, the evaluation cannot be confident all perspectives, barriers and experiences have been captured. Data from interviews have been used to compliment and support results from other rather than standalone and generalisable findings.</p>
<p><b>Population (Participants)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LTR(E) SP who did not join the pilot</li> <li>• Some LTR(E) SP on the pilot attended interviews.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Population (Data collected about)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LTR(E) SP who did not join the pilot</li> <li>• LTR(E) Partners on the pilot</li> <li>• Policy and Implementation Teams</li> <li>• Contractors, agencies and other support units/staff</li> </ul>
<p><b>Quality of Evidence</b></p>	<p>Moderate</p> <p>Methodologically strong, well-executed with clear quality assurances, giving high confidence in the validity and reliability of findings. Interviews conducted, analysed and quality assured by GSR members using statistical testing of inter-rater reliability to add further robustness to the quality. Evidence is valid and credible but due to limited sample, thematic saturation and generalisability may be affected.</p> <p>A total of 7 LTR(E) SP took part in interviews, of which only 4 were eligible (i.e., LTR(E) SP not on the pilot). This did not meet the target number of interviews (12). While there was good saturation of most themes, this was not reached for all themes and the low number of participants may mean some perspectives are missing.</p>

### 3. Findings

This section presents a summary of the findings from the process, impact and VfM evaluation.

During the evaluation period, LTR(E) SP only joined the pilot in Cyprus, therefore research activities and findings are limited to this location and comparisons between pilot sites cannot be made.

### **3.1. Findings: Process Evaluation**

The process evaluation primarily addressed evaluation objective A: ‘to understand the extent to which the pilot was implemented as intended’. Primary research questions for the process evaluation were:

1. To what extent has the pilot been delivered as intended?
2. What aspects of the pilot implementation have worked well?
3. What aspects of the pilot implementation could be improved?
4. How, if at all, did the above vary by location?

The process evaluation examined the inputs, resources and activities involved in the pilot’s implementation and the pathways by which the policy was delivered (as outlined in the ToC). The process evaluation was primarily informed by implementation interviews and complemented by additional mixed-methods research activities undertaken during the first year of the evaluation up to May 2025.

In this section, ‘Overseas Bases/Units’ refers to evidence from housing officers, welfare officers and unit leads at overseas locations, and ‘Head Office/Policy’ refers to evidence from accommodation policy, UK Strategic Command and remuneration policy leads who took part in interviews.

#### **3.1.1. Research Question 1: To what extent has the pilot been delivered as intended?**

Overall, evidence indicates the pilot was successfully communicated to implementation teams and was delivered, as intended, with sufficient staffing and housing. Costs were largely contained; however, a formal budget and estimates are required to fully assess VfM of the pilot. Communication of the pilot may benefit from further research and focus on lower rank SP and LTR(E) partners.

**Policy and staffing:** The pilot was implemented using existing resources, processes and knowledge, the policy was well communicated to stakeholders and Overseas Bases, and interviewees felt there were sufficient, appropriately trained staff to implement the pilot effectively.

**Housing and welfare:** All SP were successfully housed in SFA. Most implementation staff felt there was sufficient housing. However, there were some concerns about future void margins.

**Cost and Scalability:** Cost remained contained due to the use of existing housing, welfare and allowance costs being absorbed by Front Line Commands (FLC). However, a lack of formal budget and difficulties obtaining estimates of costs prevents the evaluation from robustly assessing the pilot’s financial scalability.

**Communication:** There were mixed opinions regarding the effectiveness of communications and communication channels. Some implementation staff cited positives and felt communications were effectively distributed and received, and that eligible personnel were aware of the pilot. Other interviewees felt communications were missing details or were misunderstood by SP regarding eligibility, applications, PStatCat and pilot applications. Evidence from surveys, focus groups and LTR(E) SP not on the pilot also suggest further evaluation is needed to assess SP and partner's understanding of communications. Career managers may also benefit from further training about the pilot.

### **3.1.2. Research Question 2: What aspects of the pilot implementation worked well?**

Several strengths emerged during implementation interviews, complemented by data from focus groups and the overseas survey. These included excellent collaboration between overseas and policy implementation teams, no noted complaints, sufficient and well-trained staff and parity in treatment, housing and allowances between LTR(E) SP and married/civil partnered SP.

**Collaboration and governance:** All participants in implementation interviews reported positive and effective collaboration across teams. Participants noted governance and sign-off processes were followed.

**Staffing and systems:** There were sufficient and appropriately trained staff, to implement and deliver the pilot. Overseas Bases reported minor but manageable increases in workload at the start of the pilot caused by an influx of queries, checking SP applications and resolving misinterpretations of the pilot policy.

**Complaints, parity and entitlements:** Implementation interviewees stated casework was handled flexibly and no complaints were noted. All interview and most focus group participants felt there was parity in treatment, housing quality and allocation, and welfare support between LTR(E) SP and married/civil partnered SP. There was also anecdotal evidence of decreases of pre-deployment ("shot gun") marriages.

### **3.1.3. Research Question 3: What aspects of the pilot implementation could be improved?**

Areas of improvement identified included a requirement for an implementation plan, formal budget, communications regarding preserved rights, document rationales and inclusion of Families Section into the pilot process and central tracker. Continued monitoring of void margins on bases in Cyprus should also be considered.

**Implementation plan:** Absence of a formal implementation plan led to variation in the interpretation of the pilot policy by staff in Overseas Bases.

**Evidence-based rationale for pilot:** Implementation interviews were able to provide an understanding and cite rationales for creating the pilot. Yet, rationales were not always consistent and often relied on anecdotal evidence, rather than robust, systematic evidence.

**Tracking:** To register and store information about SP on the pilot, a central spreadsheet was created and maintained by Unit HR Cyprus. However, this tracker was reported to be inconsistently updated by units, not prioritised and frequently contained error. Families Section did not have access to this information and were not inducted into the pilot, causing repeated requests for proof of LTR(E) status and allowances being withheld or delayed.

**LTR(E) Registration and Personal Status Category:** Overseas Bases felt communication of the change for PStatCat was not fully communicated and the manual process of changing these increased risks of errors. Delays and repeated requests from Families Section continue to cause frustrations for Overseas Bases and SP receiving allowances and travel approvals. Difficulties were identified for LTR(E) personnel to apply and obtain LTR(E) status.

**Preserved rights:** Delays to the MAO launch and a lack of set policy or announcements regarding preserved rights have created uncertainty about LTR(E) SP maintaining access to SFA and allowances on return to the UK.

**Future risks:** Void margins in Cyprus were raised as a future concern, particularly due to constant rotating units, seismic non-compliant housing and a new infrastructure programme, 'Project Apollo'. These were not factors caused by the pilot but could impact future SFA availability of SP and partners on the pilot.

#### **3.1.4. Research Question 4: How, if at all, did the above vary by location?**

It is not possible to compare the pilot implementation across locations.

Implementation interviews are limited to views on Cyprus therefore, variation in delivery and experience by location cannot be assessed. In addition, encouraging Service personnel to accept an assignment in the Falkland Islands was cited as a continued challenge for Defence, beyond the pilot.

#### **3.1.5. Recommendations**

1. Policy leads should develop communication plans specifically for partners and LTR(E) SP who did not join the pilot. Future evaluations should ensure data collection focuses on obtaining insights from these two populations.
2. Further training and information may be required for career managers to ensure information about the pilot is consistently shared to all SP.
3. Pilot communications should focus on ensuring information is sent via notice boards, routine orders, posters and Signal (WhatsApp chats) to ensure lower ranks are informed about the pilot offer.
4. Policy leads may consider developing and disseminating an implementation plan to assist teams in delivering the pilot. This may also standardise rationales for the pilot, provide clarity on the selection and addition of pilot locations and improve the tracker and FamSec processes across sites.
5. FamSec should be consulted and inducted into the pilot process.
6. Policy leads should train and communicate the importance of the tracker to unit teams and provide access to FamSec, to prevent repeated proof requests and errors

7. Policy leads should consider using estimates and costs from the evaluation period to create a formal budget and allow for assessment of scalability, costs and future uptake.
8. Future evaluation should assess the simplicity and ease of registering for LTR(E) status and the pilot (particularly for lower ranks).
9. Policy leads should communicate intentions and information regarding preserved rights and return to the UK to those on the pilot. When possible, formalise this in policy to further reassurances to LTR(E) SP and Overseas Base staff.
10. Policy leads should continue to closely monitor housing availability, particularly in locations with low housing stock and consider potential solutions of housing LTR(E) SP should SFA not be available.
11. As SP join pilot sites in other locations, future evaluation may be able to capture variations in implementation by location and assess location specific/cultural factors.

### **3.2. Findings: Impact Evaluation**

The impact evaluation addressed evaluation objectives B and C: “to understand the extent to which the pilot contributed to intended outcomes associated with improving the offer for SP in LTR(E)” and “contributed to any unintended outcomes.” Primary research questions for the impact evaluation were:

1. To what extent has the pilot contributed to the intended outcomes and impacts which lead to an improved overseas accommodation offer for SP in LTR(E)s?
2. To what extent has the pilot contributed to any unintended outcomes and impacts?
3. To what extent have the outcomes varied by location?

Contribution Analysis, a theory-based approach, was used to assess the extent to which the pilot contributed to intended and unintended outcomes and impacts.

Contribution Analysis states that if the steps and assumptions in the ToC are realised in practice (and other major influencing factors are accounted for), it is reasonable to conclude the pilot is achieving or contributing to intended outcomes, outputs, impacts and activities. This approach also assesses whether interventions have contributed to any unintended outcomes (positive and negative), not initially set out in the ToC.

This method infers causality by building a plausible, evidence-based case the pilot contributed to observed outcomes, in some cases, alongside other factors (alternative theories). Results of the Contribution Analysis cannot be used to produce future predictions or provide ‘proof’ of policy success.

Evidence expectations required to meet the claims were established to minimise evidence interpretation bias. Each claim and/or sub-claim was assigned one of the following ratings:

- **Met** (evidence collected meets pre-determined expectations)

- **Not Met** (evidence collected does not meet pre-determined expectations)
- **Partially Met** (evidence collected meeting some pre-determined expectations and/or there is limited evidence)
- **Limited Evidence** (there is insufficient evidence to fully assess the claim)

Overall, 8 claims/sub-claims were rated as 'met', 7 as 'partially met', and 1 as 'limited evidence'.

**3.2.1. Claim 1: Communication campaigns increase awareness and understanding of the pilot, (including accommodation and allowance options) for eligible SP and supporting staff.**

**Table 6: Claim 1 outcomes**

<b>Sub-claim(s)</b>	<b>ToC section</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Quality of evidence</b>	<b>Population(s) assessed in claim</b>
a. Eligible SP and partners were aware of the pilot	Output	Partially Met Survey data showed 73% (n=45) of SP and 63% (n=8) of partners were aware they could receive the same allowances as married/civil partnered SP. However, focus groups indicated some limitations in the dissemination of communications and therefore, awareness of the pilot	Moderate: SP Low: Partners	LTR(E) SP on the pilot Partners on the pilot
b. Eligible SP found out about the pilot through a variety of communications and there was high engagement with communications	Activity	Met Overall, there was good awareness of the pilot from SP and partners through a variety of communications channels.	High: SP Low: Partners	LTR(E) SP on the pilot Partners on the pilot
c. Eligible SP and partners understood information about the pilot	Output	Partially Met While evidence indicated <i>awareness</i> of the pilot and entitlements through communications, research activities suggested limited <i>understanding</i> about the pilot by some SP and partners.	High: SP Low: Partners	LTR(E) SP on the pilot Partners on the pilot
d. LTR(E) SP who did not serve accompanied were aware they could	Output	Limited Evidence Overall, it is difficult to assess the claim and alternative theories as data is limited/missing for this group. Only 7 LTR(E) SP who did not serve accompanied overseas responded to the survey and only 4 LTR(E) SP who did not join the pilot participated in interviews. Data for this sub-claim may not be indicative of the entire LTR(E) population who did not join the pilot.	Low/Insufficient	LTR(E) SP not on the pilot

### 3.2.2. Claim 2: SP wanting to serve accompanied are effectively supported.

**Table 7: Claim 2 outcomes**

<b>Sub-claim(s)</b>	<b>ToC section</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Quality of evidence</b>	<b>Population(s) assessed in claim</b>
a. Eligible SP and partners have positive experiences of engaging with administration systems, accommodation and allowance processes	Activity Output	Met Eligible SP and partners had positive experiences engaging with administration, accommodation and allowances processes. Existing administration systems, processes and procedures were utilised for processing applications, housing and allowances for married/civil partnered personnel. Unit HR teams stated they used their existing training, expertise and knowledge to support SP.	High: SP Low: Partners and LTR(E) SP who did not take part in the pilot	LTR(E) SP on the Pilot Partners on the pilot LTR(E) SP not on the pilot
b. There is sufficient knowledge, support and processes to implement the pilot	Activity Output	Partially Met There was high satisfaction with support and knowledge of staff during the application process for the pilot. SP were satisfied in their ability to ask questions about the pilot to staff. There were some instances of Overseas staff self-interpreting the policy and delays in processes and entitlements due to FamSec requiring repeated proofs and evidence of LTR(E) status and pilot participation.	High	LTR(E) SP on the Pilot Delivery/ Implementation Teams

### 3.2.3. Claim 3: SP on the pilot receive suitable allowances to support serving accompanied.

**Table 8: Claim 3 outcomes**

<b>Sub-claim(s)</b>	<b>ToC section</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Quality of evidence</b>	<b>Population(s) assessed in claim</b>
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a. Implementation and delivery teams were able to process and deliver allowances and eligible SP received allowances.	Activity	Met A high proportion of SP who responded to the survey were satisfied with information about and applying for allowances. Partners were less satisfied; however, this finding is expected as during overseas assignments, SP are responsible for applying for allowances and receiving information. High proportion of SP did not experience issues receiving new allowance packages and despite FamSec delays, all SP were stated to have received necessary allowances.	High: SP and Implementation Teams Low: Partners	LTR(E) SP on the Pilot Partners on the pilot Delivery/ Implementation Teams
b. SP and partners on the pilot are satisfied with allowances and entitlements received and financially supported to live overseas.	Outcome	Partially Met LTR(E) SP felt financially supported to live in the same way as married SP. However, some issues are noted for partners – less than half felt financially supported to live overseas with their partner and more than 75% were not able to access employment overseas.	High: SP Low: Partners	LTR(E) SP on the Pilot Partners on the pilot

### 3.2.4. Claim 4: More LTR(E) SP volunteer to be posted to Cyprus.

**Table 9: Claim 4 outcomes**

ToC section	Outcome	Quality of evidence	Population(s) assessed in claim
Outcome	Partially Met Evidence indicates the pilot had a positive effect of enabling SP to volunteer overseas and consider volunteering/being assigned overseas in the future. However, this data is collected retrospectively of SP joining the pilot and may contain respondent biases. In addition, there was no baseline data to show there are more LTR(E) personnel volunteering now than in previous years.	High with some missing baseline data	LTR(E) SP on the Pilot

**3.2.5. Claim 5: Fewer SP get married in the 3 months before deployment if given the option to serve accompanied in a LTR(E).**

**Table 10: Claim 5 outcomes**

<b>ToC section</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Quality of evidence</b>	<b>Population(s) assessed in claim</b>
Outcome	Partially Met Overseas focus groups perceived a decrease in pre-deployment marriage and survey data showed the majority of SP and partners considered marriage so they could be accompanied / accompany their partner overseas. However, no quantitative measures of marriage and divorce rates could be collected, and further factors may affect decisions to marry/not marry.	High: SP Low: Partners	LTR(E) SP on the pilot Partners on the pilot

**3.2.6. Claim 6: The pilot increases LTR(E) SP intention to stay in the Armed Forces.**

**Table 11: Claim 6 outcomes**

<b>ToC section</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Quality of evidence</b>	<b>Population(s) assessed in claim</b>
Impact	Partially Met A high proportion of SP agreed the ability to serve in a LTR(E) influenced their decision to stay in the Armed Forces, made the Armed Forces feel like a modern employer, created an inclusive environment in Defence with a modern workforce and made them feel valued as employees. In addition, the majority of SP who completed the survey agreed serving accompanied overseas in a LTR(E) made them feel they were treated the same as personnel who are married or in civil partnerships. However, the survey data is self-reported, and may not reflect actual retention and may contain respondent biases.	High	LTR(E) SP on the Pilot

### 3.2.7. Claim 7: Cyprus has sufficient accommodation provision to cope with increased demand on accommodation.

**Table 12: Claim 7 outcomes**

<b>Sub-claim(s)</b>	<b>ToC section</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Quality of evidence</b>	<b>Population(s) assessed in claim</b>
a. There is appropriate accommodation for the pilot	Output	Met During the period of the pilot and monitoring data collected, data indicates all SP and partners on the pilot have been accommodated, no issues have been reported allocating accommodation and SP are largely satisfied with accommodation. However, void margins in Akrotiri were noted as a potential future concern.	High: SP Low: Partners	LTR(E) SP on the Pilot Partners on the pilot
b. The pilot does not impact ideal void margins, or contributes to decreases in SFA void margins above accepted level	Output	Met Overall, from November 2024 to May 2025, average void margins remained between 7-10%. This shows there have been small fluctuations in SFA void margins, while ensuring void margins remain close to accepted levels, stated in policy (10%). However, void margins on some bases did fall below 5%.	Moderate	N/A

### 3.2.8. Claim 8: Cyprus has sufficient services to cope with the demand that the extended entitlements brings

**Table 13: Claim 8 outcomes**

<b>Sub-claim(s)</b>	<b>ToC section</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Quality of evidence</b>	<b>Population(s) assessed in claim</b>
a. There are appropriate resources to implement the pilot	Input	Met There was sufficient and equal treatment and provision of housing, services and welfare between LTR(E) and married/civil partnered SP. This was despite some delays in access to services due to proving LTR(E) status to Families Section.	Moderate	LTR(E) SP on the Pilot LTR(E) SP not on the pilot

b. The pilot contributes to maintained ability for schools/ dentists/ doctors to cope with demand	Output	<p>Met</p> <p>No SP reported they were unable to access medical or dental services and there was high satisfaction among SP for medical service and dental service wait times. The majority of SP and partners did not need to access maternal/ midwifery services. The majority of SP were able to access and were satisfied with education services overseas. A lower proportion of SP were satisfied with wrap around childcare (43%). During chain of command interviews, childcare was cited as a limited service for all SP.</p>	High: SP Low: Partners	LTR(E) SP on the Pilot Partners on the pilot
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### 3.2.9. Claim 9: Fewer complaints are received from SP in LTR(E)s in Cyprus.

Table 14: Claim 9 outcomes

ToC section	Outcome	Quality of evidence	Population(s) assessed in claim
Outcome	<p>Met</p> <p>Overall, no complaints were recorded because of the pilot. Data on numbers of complaints (regarding LTR(E) status or treatment) pre-pilot were not collected and cannot be used to assess any changes. Concerns were raised in interviews about complaints increasing on return to the UK without formal policy regarding preserved rights.</p>	High	LTR(E) SP on the Pilot

### **3.2.10. Recommendations**

The following recommendations have been developed from findings of the Contribution Analysis, to support the continued implementation of the pilot aligned to the intended impacts and objectives set out in the ToC.

#### **1. Communications:**

- a. To develop further/specific communication pathways for LTR(E) SP moving individually (not within units) and lower ranks SP.
- b. To develop targeted communication and information materials for LTR(E) partners, these could be shared directly with SP to disseminated to partners if required.
- c. Targeted, clear and accessible communication and education campaigns, tailored to improve SP and partners understanding of allowances and entitlement, including those in the pilot. This can be through specific guides for LTR(E) SP regarding pilot entitlements or FAQs specifically for families and partners.
- d. Future evaluations should test partners awareness of communications and understanding of the pilot offer. In addition, future research design should ensure evidence can isolate understanding about the pilot and general understanding of overseas allowances.

#### **2. Delivery of pilot**

- a. Training and further improved communications about the pilot should be encouraged for career managers and commanding officers to ensure they can provide accurate and consistent guidance to LTR(E) SP, particularly single movers.
- b. Pilot implementation and policy teams should formally introduce and induct FamSec into the pilot process to reduce delays and repeated requests for LTR(E) status.

#### **3. Evaluation design**

- a. To more accurately assess the isolated impact of the pilot, future evaluations should collect baseline measures and additional qualitative and quantitative data on overseas volunteering among LTR(E) SP, factors influencing decisions to marry, LTR(E) intentions to remain in the Armed Forces, and changes in complaints. Future evaluations may consider using non-pilot locations as comparison groups for assessing the rate of complaints among LTR(E) SP.
- b. The current evaluation could have revised the ToC during the data collection phase to ensure more claims were assessed as part of the impact evaluation. Future evaluations should consider holding another ToC workshop with stakeholders and assessing further impacts, outcomes, outputs and assumptions to robustly assesses the impact of the pilot.

#### **4. Future Monitoring**

- a. Cyprus should continue monitoring accommodation void margins, particularly in Akrotiri. If accommodation becomes unavailable, the policy

team must ensure there is a consistent implementation of alternative accommodation, in line with existing policy, which is not discriminatory towards LTR(E) SP and partners.

- b. The Accommodation Policy team may wish to continue monitoring complaints and casework from LTR(E) SP on the pilot as they return to the UK to ensure preserved rights are implemented as intended. Acknowledging delays of the MAO, the policy team may still wish to consider providing formal communications and policy regarding preserved rights to reassure SP and support overseas staff and unit leads.
5. Access to external agencies associated with relationship breakdowns, currently available to married/civil partnered couples, should be expanded to LTR(E) SP.

### **3.3. Findings: Value for Money Evaluation**

The VfM evaluation addressed evaluation objective D: “to understand the extent to which the pilot was delivered economically, efficiently, effectively and equitably to achieve value for money”.

The VfM evaluation used ‘4E Analysis’ (DIFID, 2018; King and Oxford Policy Management, 2018) to examine the performance of the pilot under 4 dimensions: Economy, Efficiency, Effectiveness and Equity.

The 4E approach to VfM evaluation goes beyond a traditional cost-benefit approach by considering how resources are being used, the delivery and context of the pilot and if the delivery and outcomes are equitable across all groups. This method was particularly useful for the pilot, where a traditional cost-benefit analysis was not appropriate as no formal budgets were developed. Limited projected costs/ incurred costs were available, as existing accommodation was utilised and FLCs absorbed welfare and allowance costs as part of their business-as-usual activities.

Primary research questions of the VfM evaluation, under each 4E dimension were:

#### **Economy**

1. What is the overall cost of providing housing and allowances to SP in LTR(E)s on the pilot?
2. What is the cost of updating systems, training staff and providing administrative support related to the new entitlement? How does this compare to previous costs of admin processes?
3. What is the satisfaction with the quality of accommodation provided to SP in LTR(E)s on the overseas pilot?
4. Have there been increases in complaints/casework regarding accommodation since the launch of the overseas pilot compared to before the pilot?

#### **Efficiency**

1. Is the accommodation for SP in LTR(E) allocated efficiently, ensuring minimal voids or under-utilisation?

2. What percentage of SP have to serve un-accompanied temporarily/ are temporarily put into a hotel/ go in Single Living Accommodation (SLA) as dual serving?
3. How can housing allocation be improved to avoid unnecessary complexity, whilst ensuring SP are accommodated properly?
4. Are the processes for claiming and managing allowances simple and streamlined, reducing admin burden for SP and personnel administrators?
5. Is the process for registering LTR(E) simple and streamlined, reducing burden for SP and HR?
6. Can the systems be streamlined to maintain or improve speed and accuracy, without adding complexity?

### **Effectiveness**

1. To what extent does the pilot contribute to the intended outcomes?

### **Equity**

1. Is housing distributed fairly between those in LTR(E) and those who are married, or do married SP remain prioritised?
2. Does the pilot remove any disparities in benefits between those in LTR(E) and those who are married?
3. Are there any differences in housing and allowance distribution, and satisfaction between male and female LTR(E) SP?
4. Are there any differences in satisfaction and moral between LTR(E) SP with and without accompanying children?

Each sub-dimension and dimensions were assigned one of the following ratings:

- **Poor** - performance of the pilot falls below the minimum expected standards. Evidence shows resources were not used properly and outcomes were limited and/or areas of substantial improvement identified.
- **Adequate** - the minimum expected level of performance was achieved. While there is some evidence the pilot delivered acceptable VfM, gaps or inconsistencies are present.
- **Good** - the pilot generally performed well against pre-determined VfM expectations. Evidence indicates resources are used well, with positive results and in some cases exceeded basic expectations. Some opportunities for further optimisation remain.
- **Excellent** - pilot performance was consistently strong across the dimension. Evidence demonstrates resources were used equitably, in an optimal way to deliver results, with little room for improvement relative to the context.

The results for each dimension can be found in the tables below.

### 3.3.1. Dimension: Economy

**Table 15: Outcome from ‘economy’ dimension**

Research questions for dimension	Rating	Explanation	Quality of evidence
<p>What is the overall cost of providing housing and allowances to SP in LTR(E)s on the overseas pilot?</p> <p>What is the satisfaction with the quality of accommodation provided to SP in LTR(E)s on the overseas pilot?</p> <p>Have there been increases in complaints/casework regarding accommodation since the launch of the overseas pilot compared to before the pilot?</p>	Good	<p>While there was no formal budget, and limited ability to obtain estimates of uptake for costs, allowances and accommodation on the pilot, this does not conclude poor value for money. Evidence suggests no additional costs incurred beyond standard operating procedures and no financial constraints or requirements for new funding were identified. FLCs were able to absorb allowance costs, and housing was provided using existing infrastructure, therefore incurring no additional expense to Defence.</p> <p>SP did not have issues receiving accommodation. Housing quality was cited as generally low in Cyprus and not specific to the LTR(E) pilot. The survey showed 84% of SP were satisfied receiving accommodation within their entitlement, 86% satisfied with the location of accommodation and 66% satisfied receiving their choice of accommodation.</p> <p>No complaints/issues were identified in monitoring data, the survey or interviews. However, no baseline data on casework/complaints pre pilot was collected, therefore the evaluation cannot accurately assess increases/decreases in numbers of complaints and casework.</p>	Moderate
<p>What is the cost of updating systems, training staff and providing administrative support related to the new entitlement? How does this compare to previous costs of admin processes?</p>	Excellent	<p>No additional administrative costs were identified as administrative systems and processes for LTR(E) SP to receive housing and allowances on the pilot were part of business as usual and used existing processes and knowledge. Minor, initial increases in workload were reported but cited as manageable.</p> <p>The survey showed high satisfaction with the support of unit staff (82%) and knowledge of unit staff (76%) during the application process. In addition, there was high satisfaction among SP with applying for accommodation (78%) and applying for allowances (76%) to serve accompanied overseas.</p>	High

### 3.3.2. Dimension: Efficiency

**Table 16: Outcome from 'efficiency' dimension**

Research questions for dimension	Rating	Explanation	Quality of evidence
<p>Is the accommodation for SP in LTR(E) allocated efficiently. Does the pilot impact the ability of bases to maintain the appropriate level of voids to allow for flexibility in the stock but reduce underutilisation. What percentage of SP have to serve un-accompanied temporarily/ are temporarily put into a hotel/ go in SLA as dual serving?</p>	Adequate	<p>This sub-dimension has been given a rating of adequate due to the way it has been measured rather than an effect of the pilot or reflection of the pilot itself. Future evaluation research needs to consider more ways of understanding the impact of the pilot alone on void margins, housing availability and housing assignment.</p> <p>Accepted void margins in Cyprus are 10%. Average void margins for Cyprus remained between 7-10% during the period of the evaluation. However, there was some variation in void margins at individual bases, with particular concern for Akrotiri (factors beyond the control of the pilot continue to impact void margins at this location). No applications were declined due to insufficient housing, and no issues were reported regarding housing allocation.</p> <p>Of SP who responded to the survey, 23% reported being temporarily placed into another type of accommodation before receiving SFA. Stakeholders were confident this was due to SP being on site before the arrival of partners/joining the pilot and no casework or complaints arose involving housing allocation. Temporary placement in accommodation when unaccompanied is standard across overseas policy and not specific or discriminatory towards LTR(E) SP.</p>	Moderate
<p>Are the processes for claiming and managing allowances simple and streamlined, reducing admin burden for SP and personnel administrators?</p>	Good	<p>The evaluation did not explicitly explore 'simplicity' of claiming allowances and registering LTR(E), therefore, proxy measures from the survey, focus groups and interviews were used. These suggest SP did not experience issues being allocated allowances, were satisfied with applying for allowances and satisfied with knowledge and support of unit staff during application processes. Implementation staff reported no instances of SP on</p>	Moderate

<p>Is the process for registering LTR(E) simple and streamlined, reducing burden for SP and HR? Can the systems be streamlined to maintain or improve speed and accuracy, without adding complexity?</p>		<p>the pilot not receiving entitled allowances. Some delays were noted due to FamSec requiring repeated proofs of LTR(E) entitlement to allowances and concessionary flights.</p> <p>SP satisfaction with the clarity of evidence required to obtain LTR(E) status was 58% and during interviews and focus groups SP expressed frustration at the type of evidence and length of time required (365 days) to prove LTR(E) status. Again, FamSec processes were seen as frustrating as LTR(E) SP needed to repeatedly prove and provide personal data.</p> <p>During implementation interviews, delivery staff suggested a specific LTR(E) PStat Category for JPA to streamline pilot processes, improve accuracy and reduce the manual changing of PStat Categories.</p>	
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### 3.3.3. Dimension: Effectiveness

**Table 17: Outcome from ‘effectiveness’ dimension**

<b>Research questions for dimension</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Quality of evidence</b>
<p>To what extent does the pilot contribute to the intended outcomes, as assessed in contribution claims analysis?</p>	<p>Good</p>	<p>62% of contribution claims were marked as met and 31% partially met. Limited evidence meant caveats were placed around some of the claims. Future evaluations may wish to collect baseline data and evidence from partners on the pilot and LTR(E) SP who did not join the pilot to address evidence gaps and better assess contribution claims.</p> <p>Survey results showed SP were either able to access necessary medical, dental or wrap around childcare services or did not need to. In addition, both partners and SP on the pilot were enjoying/enjoyed their overseas assignment and 95% of SP would volunteer to be assigned overseas again if able to serve accompanied. Again, no baseline measures for these views</p>	<p>High</p>

		were collected, therefore, it is difficult to isolate the impact of the pilot alone from other factors.	
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### 3.3.4. Dimension: Equity

**Table 18: Outcome from 'equity' dimension**

<b>Research questions for dimension</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Quality of evidence</b>
<p>Is housing distributed fairly between those in LTR(E) and those who are married, or do married SP remain prioritised?</p> <p>Does the pilot remove any disparities in benefits between those in LTR(E) and those who are married?</p> <p>Are there any differences in housing and allowance distribution, and satisfaction between male and female LTR(E) SP?</p> <p>Are there any differences in satisfaction and morale between LTR(E) SP with and without accompanying children?</p>	Good	<p>Evidence indicates the pilot created equality, community cohesion and LTR(E) SP felt treated the same as married/civil partnered SP. Housing was fairly distributed and there was evidence of community cohesion between married/civil partnered and LTR(E) SP and partners.</p> <p>Satisfaction scores between male and female were broadly similar. However, fewer male SP agreed they were enjoying/enjoyed their overseas assignment (84%) than female SP (100%). These differences are not significant and may not be caused by the pilot.</p> <p>SP with and without children broadly agreed they enjoyed/were enjoying their overseas assignment. There was some difference in ratings of morale between SP with children and without children.</p>	Moderate

### 3.3.5. Recommendations

The following recommendations have been taken from findings of the 4E VfM analysis. These may assist the pilot to ensure it continues to meet intended long-term impacts and achieve VfM by delivering the policy efficiency, economically, effectively and equitably across all groups.

1. **Explore equity in experiences:** investigate potential differences in morale and overseas experiences between male/female SP and SP with/without children to ensure differences are not due to unintended barriers or impacts of the pilot.
2. **Provide further clarity and evaluate LTR(E) requirements:** Defence may wish to review evidence requirements/length of time to register for LTR(E) status. The review should include clearer rationalised and further support to SP navigating this process.
3. **Continued monitoring of void margins and improved evaluation methods to assess housing efficiency:** Overseas bases and policy teams should continue monitoring housing availability at pilot locations. Future evaluations should refine methods isolating the pilot's impact on housing efficiency and availability.
4. **Collection of further baseline data:** Future evaluations may wish to collect more baseline data (also highlighted in the impact and process evaluation) on complaints, willingness to volunteer and enjoyment of overseas assignments. In addition, research activities should ensure data is obtained from partners on the pilot and LTR(E) SP who did not join the pilot to better assess the pilot's effectiveness.
5. **Future measures of simplicity:** Future VfM evaluations should assess 'simplicity' of claiming/registering for allowances and LTR(E) status to ensure efficiency can be properly rated. This may include using specific survey, interview or focus group questions.
6. **Use of estimates and a formal budget:** Policy leads should consider using estimates and costs from the evaluation period to assess costs and uptake in the future. Developing a formal budget, informed by the pilot in Cyprus, may be useful for providing further transparency, tracking actual costs, monitoring uptake and providing senior leaders with accurate figures to inform future decision making.
7. **Assessing data and ToC:** Future evaluations should consistently review intended data required and the ToC with stakeholders to ensure data required remains relevant and any necessary changes to the ToC are reflected in research activities. This will be essential for a more robust evaluation of VfM 'efficiency' in the future.

### 3.4. Findings: Scalability

The evaluation also considered whether the pilot is scalable in Cyprus, with regards to services, housing and budget. Considerations of scalability of cost, housing and services is based on evidence and assumptions collected from interviews, focus groups, surveys and monitoring data for Cyprus only and not formal modelling.

To robustly assess scalability of the pilot, a formal budget and estimates of costs and uptake will be required for future evaluations to conduct statistical modelling at each pilot location. Scalability of the pilot at more overseas bases would also require consideration of the socio-cultural factors at each location, for example cultural acceptance of couples in long-term relationships.

**Service Availability:** The evaluation found key services such as medical, dental and schooling in Cyprus are considered scalable. Since it is not possible to predict the extent and type of service any SP, partner or spouse would require, services overseas operate on a ratio bases i.e., x number of houses filled = x level of demand. This means providers are already set up to adjust according to demand and should be able to absorb increases or changes in uptake as the pilot develops. Future evaluations should continue to monitor this assumption as SP join the pilot in different locations.

**Budget:** Allowance and welfare costs are routinely absorbed by FLCs as part of business-as-usual activity for SP who are married/in a civil partnership. If the pilot does not exist, LTR(E) SP may decide to marry, generating the same demand and financial requirement from FLCs. Therefore, it is likely FLCs can continue to absorb costs associated with extending eligibility to those in LTR(E). A formal budget, as outlined in the process and VfM evaluation, may be useful in the future for providing further transparency and accurately assessing financial scalability and estimates of the pilot.

**Housing:** The pilot currently uses existing, vacant SFA to house LTR(E) SP and partners, therefore creating no additional housing expenses and reducing the cost of maintaining vacant housing to Defence. Stakeholders confirmed the pilot would adhere to existing overseas accommodation policy, also applied to married/civil partnered SP. Should housing become limited/unavailable, SP would be accommodated in SFA on alternative bases or in the private rental sector. Therefore, should the pilot continue, housing is likely scalable and equitable between LTR(E) and married/civil partnered SP. However, future evaluations may wish to monitor if and how policy is implemented to ensure LTR(E) SP are not unfairly discriminated against should SP require alternative SFA.

## **5. Evaluation conclusions and recommendations**

Overall, evidence indicates the pilot has been successful and is scalable within Cyprus, and likely to further pilot locations. Across surveys, interviews and focus groups there was a consensus the pilot served as a positive incentive to volunteer for overseas assignments, remain in the Armed Forces and was enabling the modernisation of Defence and accommodation policy. Additional, key successes included:

- All participating SP and partners received entitled allowances and accommodation and no complaints or casework relating to disparity in policy or treatment between LTR(E) and married/civil partnered SP were received during the period of the evaluation.

- Services, Unit HR, accommodation and welfare teams, and infrastructure were able to support the pilot.
- Evidence highlighted community cohesion between LTR(E) SP, LTR(E) partners and the wider military community in Cyprus. Unit cohesion was also strengthened as LTR(E) SP were able and willing to volunteer overseas and fill specialist posts under the pilot.

Some wider contextual factors and issues identified during the pilot evaluation included:

- The MAO pause is preventing policy on preserved rights from being finalised, creating uncertainty and potential risks of future complaints as LTR(E) SP on the pilot return to the UK.
- A general lack of knowledge around allowances for serving abroad may reduce satisfaction and understanding of allowances and accommodation received specifically under the pilot.
- Evidence suggesting barriers to participation in the pilot were not specific to the pilot and were shared across the wider overseas Armed Forces community. This included a lack of employment for partners, isolation from friend/family, limited childcare availability and limited transport (specifically on Cyprus bases). The latter two barriers were specific to Cyprus but may also be wider issues across overseas locations.

Key recommendations emerging from all evaluation strands included:

- Continuation and expansion of the pilot evaluation to allow for ongoing assessment of the pilot's intended aims, impacts and scalability in locations beyond Cyprus, and monitoring the implementation of early recommendations.
- Improved communications to enhance understanding of the pilot offer, specifically to junior ranks and partners.
- Continued monitoring of housing availability to ensure the pilot remains scalable in Cyprus and other pilot locations. In addition, ensure overseas SFA policy is implemented fairly between LTR(E) SP and married/civil partnered SP in cases where SFA is limited.

Strengthen the evidence base of future evaluations by:

- Formalising a pilot budget (using existing estimates from Cyprus as a baseline) to accurately track expenditure and outline/assess financial responsibility of different areas.
- Undertaking further research on LTR(E) SP who were eligible but did not join the pilot to understand experiences and barriers to the pilot
- Undertaking further research on LTR(E) partners on the pilot to understand experiences.
- Formalise and communicate clear plans for preserved rights policy as LTR(E) SP begin to return to the UK to prevent uncertainty, disparity in policies between LTR(E) and married/civil partnered policy and future complaints.

- Integrate Families Section into the pilot process to prevent delays in allowances and reduce frustrations for SP in needing to provide repeated proofs and documents.
- Taken together, findings strongly suggest the pilot is an effective policy. Addressing impact, process and VfM evaluation recommendations will further strengthen the pilot, allowing it to continue modernising Defence and deliver equitable accommodation policy for LTR(E) SP and partners.

## **6. Limitations**

This evaluation followed government best practice for evaluating government policy as outlined in the HMT Magenta Book and Government Social Research guidance for conducting research. However, there are a number of limitations of this evaluation. These limitations are explored further in the impact evaluation report.

### **1. Data and evidence limited to Cyprus**

While the pilot was available in multiple locations, during the evaluation period SP only joined the pilot in Cyprus.

Findings and recommendations from Cyprus should still be used to inform the pilot and delivery as the evaluation has provided valuable insights into the successes and barriers of the pilot. It is possible to generalise the findings related to the allocation and payment of allowances and accommodation. However, there is limited generalisability to other pilot and overseas locations, particularly locations where the culture and structure is very different. Evaluation findings from Cyprus should be used as a case study to inform future scaling and adaptations in other locations and potential learnings for delivery and policy.

### **2. Limited Evidence: Impact of pilot on housing availability and experiences of partners and LTR(E) SP who did not join the pilot**

The pilot evaluation lacked evidence to isolate the impact of the pilot on housing availability, applying for and receiving allowances and to understand the experiences of LTR(E) partners and SP who did not join the pilot. While some proxy data was available, it was not sufficient to determine isolated effects of the pilot. This evidence gap meant some contribution claims and 4E dimensions could not be robustly assessed or were rated lower. It is important to note these lower/lack of rating do not reflect negatively on the pilot, but rather the data available. This limitation has been explicitly acknowledged throughout the evaluation and is addressed in recommendations.

### **3. Limited evaluation timeframe**

The evaluation was commissioned for one year; however, the pilot is ongoing until March 2027. As a result, the current evaluation findings reflect only the implementation findings and initial experiences from the first cohort of SP joining in Cyprus. Since the evaluation commission and conclusion, the programme has expanded to further locations and SP have joined the pilot in locations beyond

Cyprus. The evaluation has only captured experiences of SP on the pilot in their first year, therefore there may be a lag in observing longer-term outcomes and impacts as outlined in the Theory of Change.

#### 4. Causality

Individual research activities undertaken as part of this evaluation cannot provide statistical or experimental causality i.e., state the pilot is the single cause of any observed changes. The research activities were not intended to isolate the pilot as the single cause of change and no control or comparison groups were used. However, the evaluation has used robust methodologies and Contribution Analysis to build a coherent picture of the pilot's implementation, impact and VfM. Evidence and recommendations can be used confidently and have allowed the evaluation to make robust and well-supported conclusions about the implementation, delivery, impact and VfM of the pilot.

#### 5. Theory of change review

The ToC was not sufficiently revisited with stakeholders. The ToC was developed and workshopped during initial stages of the evaluation but not reassessed until the end of data collection. Had it been reviewed and refined sooner it is likely more contribution claims could have been assessed and key assumptions tested in greater depth.

#### 6. Vested stakeholder interest

The methodological process for Contribution Analysis involves workshopping analyst interpretations of data and claim rating with key stakeholders to ensure correct interpretation, gather queries and challenges and obtain further insights and alternative theories from stakeholders. Stakeholders present for the current evaluation were those in the UK and Cyprus involved in the policy design and implementation. These stakeholders had a vested interest in the pilot and were largely in favour of the pilot and therefore, its' success. This may have created a potential bias during workshops where stakeholders sought to improve or justify ratings and reduce limitations to ensure the evaluation showed positive results. To reduce effects of this potential bias, the evaluation team asked for independent analysts to be part of stakeholder workshops to provide an unbiased, overview and challenges of the data, interpretations, and stakeholder comments. Overall, there were no instances of stakeholders directly asking for claims to be better rated.

### 7. References

Department for International Development (2018) [DFID's approach to value for money in programme and portfolio management - ICAI](#)

Oxford Policy Management and Julian King & Associates (2018) OPM's approach to assessing Value for Money accessed via: [OPM Report Template version 5](#)

## **Annexes**

### **Annex A: Theory of Change for the Overseas Pilot (across 2 pages)**

The Theory of Change with a description of the assumptions and causal links can be found in the impact evaluation.

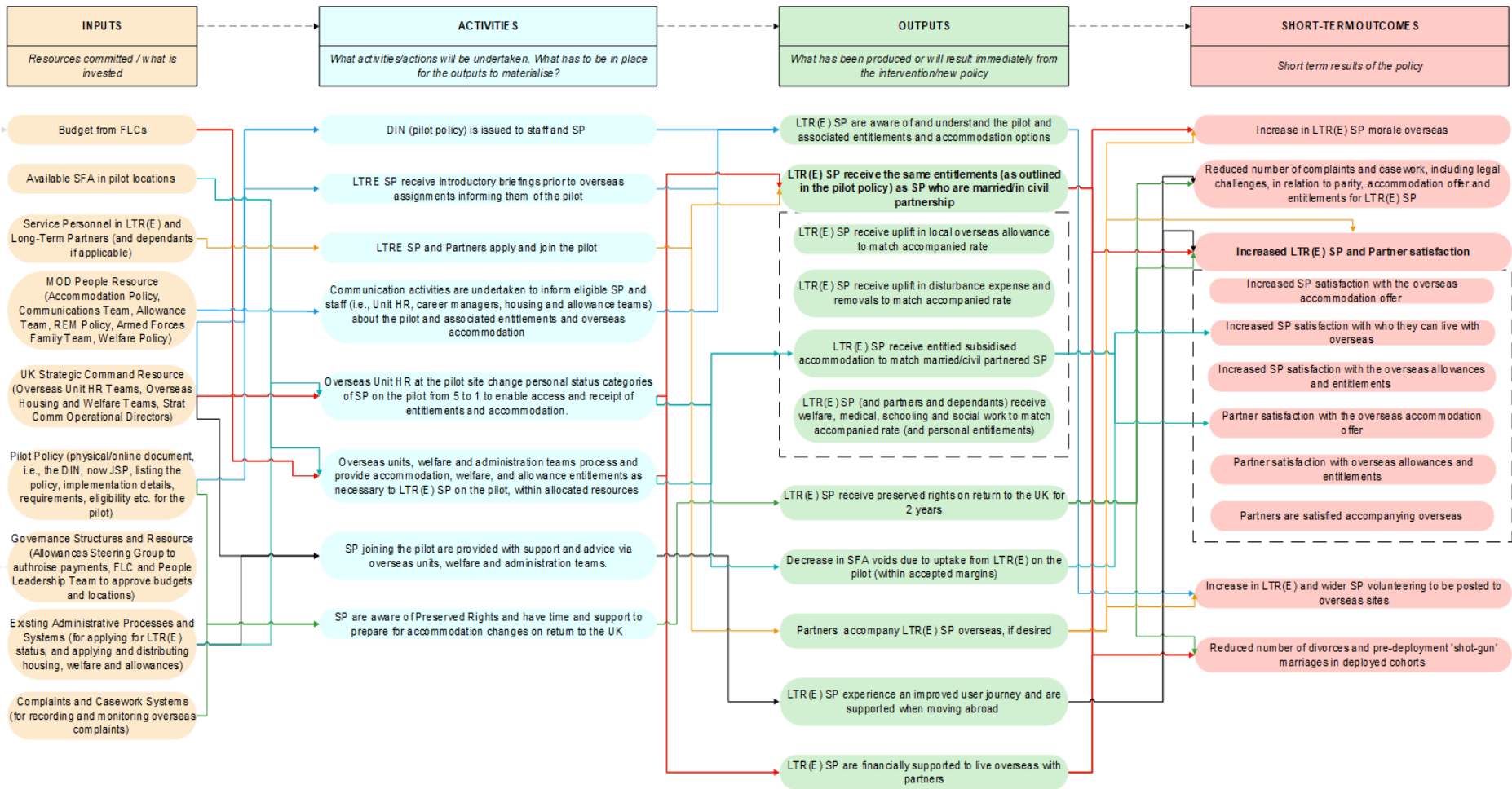
#### **Problem Statement**

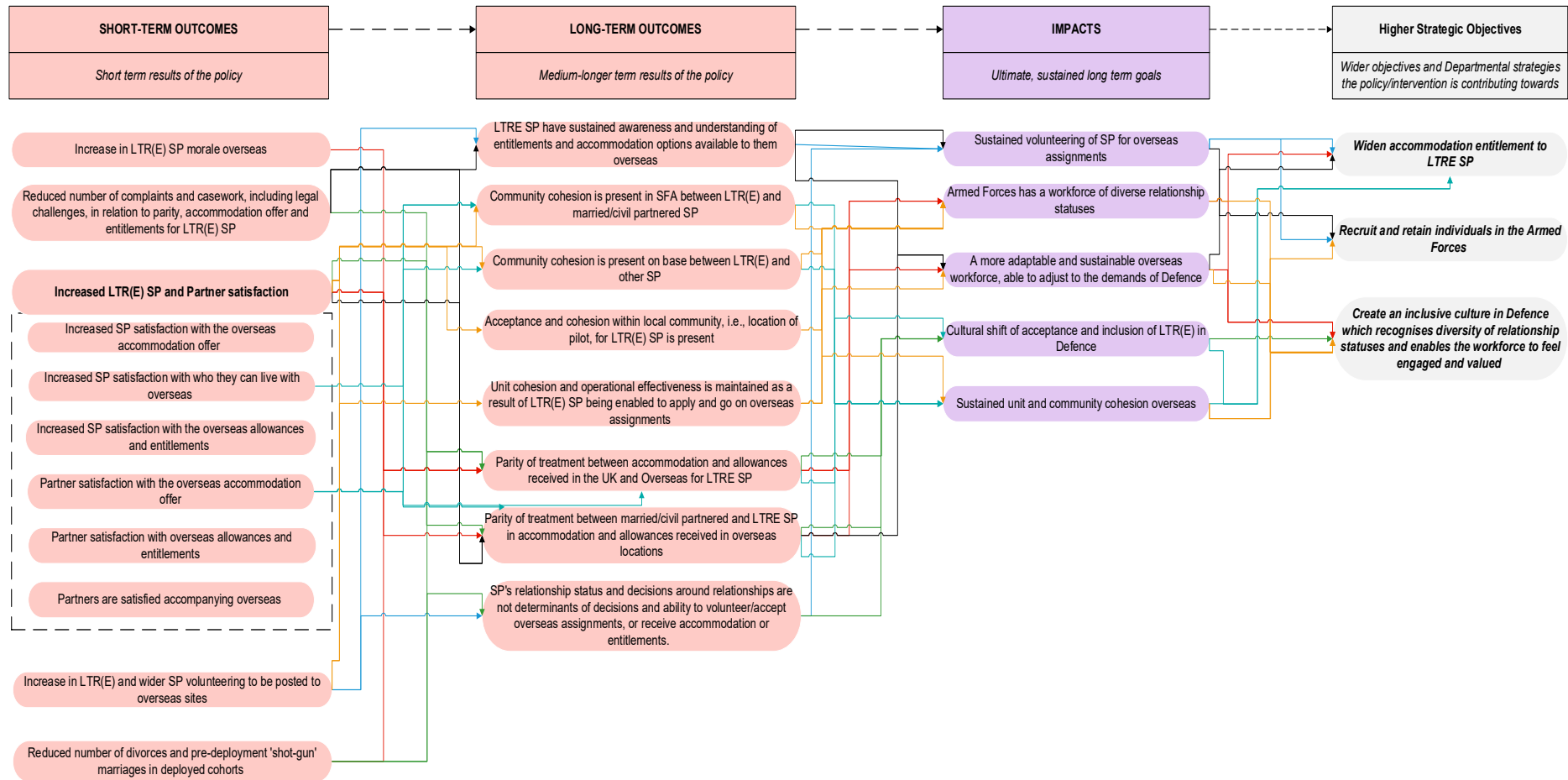
*What has prompted the launch of the policy/intervention and what does it seek to solve?*

Currently, there is disparity between the accommodation offer for Service Personnel (SP) in Established Long-Term Relationships (LTR(E)) and SP who are married/in civil partnerships.

The proposed launch of the Modernised Accommodation Offer was designed to remove this disparity in the UK, however, overseas, LTR(E) SP would still remain unentitled to accommodation and moving based-allowances which their married/civil partnered counterparts receive.

The Accompanied LTR(E) Overseas Pilot launched as a positive statement of intent for LTR(E) SP and contributes towards commitments and recommendations outlined in the new 2025 Strategic Defence Review to widen accommodation entitlements for SP in LTR(E) in an effort to recruit and retain individuals.





## **Theory of Change Assumptions**

This Theory of Change was created prior to a decision from the MOD that preserved rights would end on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026. Theory of Change (TOC) is a methodology for planning, monitoring, and evaluating an intervention. It is a description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context and highlights any risks, assumptions or complexities in the intervention.

### **Inputs**

- FLCs have budgets and can fund LTR(E) SP on pilot, allowances, welfare etc.
- DIO manages Cyprus SFA estate and SFA estate in UK to grant SFA under preserved rights
- Eligible SP and their partners can provide evidence, apply and register as LTR(E)
- Head Office stakeholders have the capacity and are motivated to produce the policy and launch the pilot
- Teams have access to necessary systems and tools to ensure Policy/DIN is written on time
- Pilot is authorised through appropriate governance
- There are existing systems for processing housing, welfare and allowances which staff are trained on, and these will continue to be used for the pilot
- There are existing systems for capturing casework and complaints and these will continue to be used for the pilot

### **Activities**

- SP can access and receive communications and pilot policy. SP trust, understand and engage with policy and communications. Career managers are informed and tell eligible SP about the pilot
- Staff in charge of briefings prior to overseas assignments are informed of, and advertise the pilot during briefings
- SP and partners want to join the pilot/serve overseas
- Unit HR staff are informed of eligible SP and correctly and timely change PStatCat.
- Overseas unit have knowledge, resource and sufficient provision to cope with increased demand on services that extended entitlements brings
- Preserved rights are approved, added to policy and communicated to SP. Preserved Rights are given for 2 years after returning from overseas assignment, SP are changed back to their correct PStatCat.

### **Outputs**

- SP and Staff engage meaningfully, and sufficient detail is provided to allow SP to make a decision to join. Options are attractive and there is a perceived benefit to overseas postings which outweighs any costs or hesitations.
- Sufficient services (medical, dental and schooling) overseas available to sustain potential increase in demand from pilot cohort. FLCs have sufficient budget and overseas units have sufficient provision to cope with increased demand on services that extended entitlements brings. Receiving allowances,

accommodation and entitlements contributes towards increased satisfaction and morale and decreased complaints/casework

- SP receive and understand communications and policies regarding preserved rights. It is made clear SP receive preserved rights two years following their return from pilot sites.
- Housing LTR(E) SP on the pilot will use vacant SFA properties at pilot sites and decrease void margins
- Partners want to live overseas, and options are attractive to mitigate any hesitations/risks.
- Support, knowledge and sufficient staffing and resource from unit HR/admin staff creates a smooth application process leading to improved user journeys
- FLCs have sufficient budget to provide allowances and extended entitlements to LTR(E) SP. LTR(E) SP and partners do not have additional financial burdens and can cope with potentially lack of employment for partner overseas.

### **Outcomes**

- Accommodation and allowances provided on the pilot contribute to satisfaction and this is not hindered by other factors beyond the pilot e.g., employment opportunities, sense of community/isolation, wellbeing.
- SP awareness and participation in the pilot, leading to receiving the same entitlement and having their partner able to join, will incentivise overseas volunteering. Satisfaction and increased morale from the pilot means SP have a positive experience on the pilot and share their experience to encourage others to join.
- Community and unit cohesion are informed by the ability of LTR(E) SP to be accompanied overseas and the presence of LTR(E) partners and SP has a positive impact on the military and local community. Unit cohesion refers to building the necessary bonds of trust within the team and between commanders and subordinates, over time.
- LTR(E) SP volunteering for overseas assignments ensure operational effectiveness is maintained.
- Existing anecdotal evidence indicates increased divorce and marriages due to overseas deployment as SP marry to have partners accompany and/or receive entitlements. Ensuring LTR(E) SP receive the same entitlements as married/civil partnered SP will lead to a reduced need to get married in the LTRE cohort who do not wish to get married or are only doing so to receive entitlements and allowances. Consequently, this should lead to a sustained reduction in number of divorces and pre-deployment marriages.

### **Impacts**

- Extending entitlements to LTR(E) will lead to more SP volunteering to be posted abroad and contribute to an engaged and valued workforce. Overseas volunteering is an incentive to stay. Parity and overseas volunteering are key retention factors.

### **Causal Links as Outlined in the ToC**

## **Allowances and Entitlements**

Budget from FLCs, resource from Strategic Command and the Policy Team direct and permit Overseas Units and teams to change the PStatCat of SP on the pilot and process and provide accommodation, welfare and allowances within allocated resources. LTR(E) SP and partners on the pilot receive the same entitlements as SP who are married/in civil partnerships and are financially supported to live overseas with partners. Entitlements received includes an uplift in local overseas allowances, disturbance and removals allowance, subsidised accommodation and welfare, medical, schooling and social work entitlements.

As a short-term outcome, satisfaction and morale of LTR(E) SP and partners increase. This includes satisfaction with the overseas accommodation offer, allowances and entitlements, who SP can live with overseas, and partner's accompanying overseas. In addition, there is a reduced number of complaints, case work and legal challenges in relation to parity in accommodation and entitlements and the ability to serve and be supported accompanied overseas.

Longer-term outcomes follow for parity in the treatment of LTR(E) SP in accommodation and allowances received overseas, in comparison to SP who are married/civil partnered. In addition, parity of treatment between the accommodation and allowances received in the UK and overseas for LTR(E) SP. Sustained impacts include a cultural shift of inclusion of LTR(E) in Defence and a workforce of diverse relationship statuses, contributing towards higher Defence Strategic Objectives of widening the accommodation entitlement to LTR(E) SP and creating an inclusive culture, recognising diversity of relationship statuses and enabling an engaged and valued workforce.

## **Communications**

Resource from UK Strategic Command and MOD People Communication Teams issue the pilot policy to staff and SP, undertake communication activities to inform staff and SP about the pilot. LTR(E) SP receive introductory briefings from Communications Teams and UK Strategic Command prior to moving overseas to inform them of the pilot. SP are aware of and understand the pilot from communication activities, the policy and introductory briefings. LTR(E) SP volunteer to be posted to overseas sites after understanding and being informed about the pilot and policy entitlements.

Longer term outcomes include a sustained awareness and understanding of the pilot and accommodation options available to LTR(E) SP, and SP's relationship status no longer becoming a determinant of ability to volunteer or accept overseas assignment. Sustained impacts include sustained volunteering of LTR(E) SP overseas, consequently meeting higher Defence Strategic Objectives to widen the accommodation entitlement to LTR(E) SP and recruit and retain individuals in the Armed Forces.

## **Preserved Rights**

The pilot policy, outlining policy and processes for preserved rights and existing systems for complaints and casework ensure SP are aware of preserved rights and have time and support to prepare for accommodation changes on return to the UK. Preserved rights are provided SP for up to 2 years from their return to the UK from overseas assignments (this means they will continue to remain PStatCat 1 and receive SFA and entitled allowances). As a result of receiving preserved rights, there is an increase in LTR(E) SP and partner satisfaction, and reduced complaints and casework, including legal challenges.

Short-term outcomes also include a reduced number of post-deployment marriages, leading to longer-term outcomes of parity of treatment between accommodation and allowances received in the UK and overseas for LTR(E) SP and SP relationship statuses and decisions around their relationships not being determined by allowances, accommodation or overseas assignment. Long-term, sustained impacts is a cultural shift in the acceptance and inclusion of LTR(E) in Defence and a workforce of diverse relationship statuses, contributing to the higher Defence Strategic Objective of creating an inclusive culture, recognising diversity of relationship statuses and enabling an engaged and valued workforce.

### **Systems, HR and User Experience**

The UK Strategic Command, particularly overseas housing, welfare and HR teams, and existing administrative processes and systems staff provide SP joining the pilot with support and advice, creating an improved user journey and ensuring SP are supported when moving abroad. As a short-term outcome, SP and partners have increased satisfaction, particularly with overseas accommodation, allowances and entitlements. In addition, there is a reduced number of complaints and casework in relation to parity, the accommodation offer and entitlements.

Overall, this works to support longer-term outcomes of a sustained awareness and understanding of entitlement and accommodation options available to LTR(E) SP and parity of treatment between married/civil partnered and LTR(E) SP in accommodation and allowances received overseas. This causes sustained, long-term impacts of a more adaptable and sustainable workforce that can adjust flexibly to the demands of Defence and sustained overseas volunteering of LTR(E) SP. Thereby contributing to higher Defence Strategic Objectives to widen the accommodation entitlement to LTR(E) SP and recruit and retain individuals in the Armed Forces.

### **Housing**

Existing systems allow LTR(E) to apply for accommodation and new entitlements. As an immediate output, LTR(E) SP receive the same accommodation entitlements as SP who are married/in a civil partnership, specifically entitled subsidised accommodation. In addition, void SFA in pilot locations decreases, within accepted margins.

Short-term outcomes include increased SP satisfaction with who they can live with overseas and SP and partner satisfaction with the overseas accommodation offer. These lead to longer-term outcomes of community cohesion in SFA between LTR(E)

SP and married/civil partnered SP and wider community cohesion on base between LTR(E) SP and other SP. In addition, there is parity between married/civil partnered/married SP in accommodation received overseas and parity between the UK and overseas accommodation offer for LTR(E) SP. This leads to the impact of sustained community cohesion overseas and a cultural acceptance and inclusion of LTR(E) in Defence, contributing to higher strategic objectives of widening accommodation entitlement to LTR(E) SP.

### **LTR(E) Service personnel and partners on the pilot**

SP in LTR(E) and partners (and dependants, if applicable) apply and join the pilot, and partners accompany SP overseas. LTR(E) SP and partners are given the same entitlements, as outlined in the pilot policy, as SP who are married/in civil partnerships and partners can accompany SP overseas. This leads to an immediate outcome of increased morale for LTR(E) SP and satisfaction for LTR(E) SP and partners - for accommodation offer, who they can live with, overseas allowances and entitlements and partners accompanying overseas. In addition, there is an increase in LTR(E) volunteering to be posted to overseas sites.

Longer-term outcomes include community cohesion within the Armed Forces in SFA between married/civil partnered SP, and on the wider base. There is also an acceptance of LTR(E) and community cohesion within the local community. Unit cohesion is maintained as an outcome of increase LTR(E) SP volunteering. These outcomes create longer-term impacts of a workforce of diverse relationships and an adaptable and sustainable workforce, able to adjust to the demands of Defence.

Longer-term impacts of LTR(E) and Partners joining the pilot, feeling satisfied and facilitating community and unit cohesion also include a cultural shift in the acceptance and inclusion of LTR(E) personnel in Defence, sustained volunteering of LTR(E) SP overseas and sustained community cohesion overseas. These longer-term impacts contribute to Defence Strategic Objectives of recruitment and retention and creating an inclusive culture in Defence which recognises diversity of relationship statuses and enables the workforce to feel engaged and valued.

### **Contextual Factors for Awareness**

- Most SP can volunteer to go to overseas, most Army personnel in Cyprus are directed to go as part of unit moves.
- The current geo-political climate may mean an increased number of SP are called to overseas assignments.
- Not all SP/units stationed overseas remain in their overseas location during the length of their assignment. In many cases SP travel abroad for further operations or even back to the UK. In these cases, partners/spouses remain in the assigned location without the SP.
- In some pilot locations, the UK has sovereignty within bases, meaning UK laws apply. These bases are likely to be more culturally similar to the UK than other overseas assignments.
- Cultural norms may vary depending on the overseas location - importantly, this includes the acceptance of non-married or same-sex partners cohabitating. This

may affect the ease to which the pilot can be offered and implemented, the safety and wellbeing of LTR(E) partners at these locations, and the willingness of partners to accompany.

- There has been a general restriction, due to Civil Service recruitment controls, in the ability to employ spouses and partners. Tax implications may also make it harder for spouses and partners to gain employment overseas.