



Ministry of Defence

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

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List of abbreviations

DIO Defence Infrastructure Organisation

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

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.

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 will receive 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 4](#).

1.2. Pilot locations

Military bases on Cyprus and the Falkland Islands were selected initially as pilot locations as they are in 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 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

<p>Summary</p>	<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,</p>
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	administrative systems and how/whether the pilot implemented as intended.
Population (Participants)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy and implementation staff (Cyprus only)
Population (Data collected about)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy and Implementation Teams • LTR(E) SP • LTR(E) Partners on the pilot
Quality of Evidence	<p>High</p> <p>Methodologically strong, well-executed with clear quality assurances, giving high confidence in the validity and reliability of findings.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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

Summary	<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 housing 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>
Population (Participants)	N/A
Population (Data collected about)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LTR(E) SP • LTR(E) Partners on the pilot
Quality of Evidence	<p>Moderate</p> <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.</p> <p>Data can be used and is likely reliable but not verified.</p>

Table 3: Summary of research activity: Overseas Survey

<p>Summary</p>	<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"> • Demographic Questions • Preparation and Awareness of the Pilot • Life Overseas • Consequences of the Pilot • Further Comments <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>
<p>Population (Participants)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LTR(E) SP applying for/on the pilot • LTR(E) Partners on the pilot • LTR(E) SP at the pilot sites who did not join the pilot
<p>Population (Data collected about)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LTR(E) SP applying for/on the pilot • LTR(E) Partners on the pilot • LTR(E) SP who did not join the pilot
<p>Quality of Evidence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High for SP applying for/on the pilot <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"> • Low for LTR(E) Partners on the pilot and LTR(E) SP who did not join the pilot. <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>

	Insights can be used illustratively but are not enough for broader conclusions. Further data and research on these populations is required.
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Table 4: Summary of research activity: Chain of Command Focus Groups

Summary	<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>
Population (Participants)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chain of Command members to manage/oversee LTR(E) SP and pilot processes.
Population (Data collected about)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LTR(E) SP applying for/on the pilot LTR(E) Partners on the pilot LTR(E) SP who did not join the pilot Implementation Teams Contractors, agencies and other support units/staff
Quality of Evidence	<p>High</p> <p>Methodologically strong, well-executed with clear quality assurances, giving high confidence in the validity and reliability of findings.</p> <p>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

Summary	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.
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	<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>
Population (Participants)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LTR(E) SP who did not join the pilot • Some LTR(E) SP on the pilot attended interviews.
Population (Data collected about)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LTR(E) SP who did not join the pilot • LTR(E) Partners on the pilot • Policy and Implementation Teams • Contractors, agencies and other support units/staff
Quality of Evidence	<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. Process evaluation

3.1. Summary of findings

The evidence suggests the pilot was delivered as intended, but there were minor 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.

3.2. Overview

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?

Primary and secondary research questions can be found in Annex B. 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).

3.3. Methodology

The process evaluation was primarily informed by implementation interviews and complemented by routine monitoring data, survey with SP and partners who did and did not join the pilot, Chain of Command Focus Groups and LTR(E) SP interviews undertaken up to May 2025.

3.4. Findings

This section presents findings from the process evaluation of the overseas pilot. Results are organised according to the primary process research questions. Under each question, a summary is provided. Primary themes from implementation interviews are then explored to address the question.

When presenting findings, 'Overseas Bases/Units' refers to housing officers, welfare officers and unit leads, and 'Head Office/Policy' refers to policy, UK Strategic Command and allowance leads who took part in implementation interviews.

To note, 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.

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

Summary

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

During the launch and initial phases of the pilot, a formal policy, either within a Joint Service Publication or Defence Instruction Notice, had not yet been published. As an interim, a DIN was created which outlined the intended policy. During implementation interviews, the DIN was cited as receiving correct governance and sign-off and all interviewees felt it was clearly and well communicated to teams involved in designing and implementing the pilot:

“There was a set policy which detailed the application form and the core information to both units and personnel seeking to apply.” [Overseas Base]

“From an audit perspective, we were conducting assurance, oversight of the processes, and the data being captured as consequence...and then any issues being raised to us obviously then we were engaging with and seeking to resolve whatever issue is.” [Overseas Base]

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:

“I wouldn't say there's been a massive change in my responsibilities. It's just business as usual for us.” [Overseas Base]

“I don't think training is such a thing, because we're just treating them as if they are a married couple. It's just a different scenario.” [Overseas Base]

Housing and Welfare

All SP were successfully housed in SFA and most implementation staff felt there was sufficient housing:

“Yeah, we didn't have any issues, but even now, we haven't been informed, at least I haven't been informed, about the challenges in housing because of the LTR(E)” [Overseas Base]

Void margins refer to the percentage of vacant properties at any given site, accepted void margins vary between sites. Void margins are required to manage the estate and the movement of occupants in and out of properties. High void margins (over accepted void margins) indicate accommodation is not being used efficiently, providing poor value for money for Defence, whereas low void margins indicate insufficient vacant properties should personnel need to be housed in exceptional circumstances.

Monitoring data also showed acceptable void margin levels in Cyprus are ~10% and during the pilot evaluation, average void margins remained between 7-10% indicating sufficient housing. However, some concerns about future void margins were raised (explored under Research Question 3).

Overseas survey results showed lower satisfaction amongst respondents with housing quality (61%, n=44), in comparison to location (86%, n=44), choice (66%, n=44) and receiving accommodation within entitlement (84%, n=45). However, housing quality in Cyprus was cited as generally low in implementation interviews and focus groups and not specific to LTR(E) SP or the pilot. No formal complaints were registered. Focus group participants stated they felt there was no disparity in the housing allocation and quality between LTR(E) SP and married/civil partnered SP.

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 (further explored in research question 3).

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:

"I think the communication of this, this policy change, was a huge success and one that the team should be proud of." [Head Office]

"We flooded it in terms of the comms channels and those that actually wanted to apply were well aware and got their applications in. So, the target audience was met." [Overseas Base]

Other interviewees felt communications were missing details or were misunderstood by SP regarding eligibility, applications, Personal Status Categories (PStatCat) and pilot applications:

“Nearly a year into this introduction and people just don't understand. They've got the LTR registered on JPA, and they had that agreed in the UK, but don't quite understand as part of the pilot, they've still got to fill in a pilot application to be accepted.” [Overseas Base]

“There was quite a lot of individuals who would then go to another area or request to be posted and then go ‘I thought that the pilot was over here as well?’...So probably some clearer comms and a roll out plan I think would be beneficial for SP to really understand what they're getting and where they're getting it.” [Head Office]

“Not understanding that they are category one only when they are on pilot here overseas. But when they go back their Pstat will revert back to what it was originally...that wasn't relayed properly.” [Overseas Base]

Survey results also showed under half of SP who responded to the survey and were on the pilot (47%, n=45) agreed adverts/communications about the pilot had enough information to help them decide whether to serve accompanied/ accompany their partner overseas, and nearly a quarter (24%, n=45) disagreed information about allowances and accommodation helped them to decide whether to serve accompanied overseas. The overseas survey also showed 60% (n=45) of SP understood information about allowances and 62% (n=45) understood information about accommodation they would be entitled to while serving accompanied overseas.

Chain of Command focus group topic guides did not explicitly ask about pilot communications; however, in Akrotiri and Ayios Nikolaos, some participants felt communications were not “pushed out enough”, particularly to SP already in post when the pilot commenced. Participants also commented on limited communications to partners. However, this is not an issue specifically with the pilot but a wider communication issue within the Armed Forces as partners often do not directly receive communications (see for example: Communicating with Service personnel: understanding awareness of changes to accommodation policy - GOV.UK). During interviews with LTR(E) SP who did not take part in the pilot, participants highlighted “information gaps”, particularly among lower ranks, and stated awareness of the pilot depended on SP having “good relationships” with career managers.

Recommendations:

- 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.
- Further training and information may be required for career managers to ensure information about the pilot is consistently shared to all SP.
- 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.

3.4.2. Research Question 2: What aspects of the pilot implementation worked well?

Summary

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:

“People have got the same aim and going for it and that's been really nice. So, I would say it's probably the most positive beneficial stakeholder work I've done in my time here.” [Head Office]

“We had a good relationship with those already on the ground having been on previous visits there, so there was a good relationship.” [Head Office]

Participants noted governance and sign-off processes were followed and “rapid”, decision making was cited as an essential part of pushing the policy forward and successfully launching the pilot:

“There was no lack of planning, but it was done at pace and without the bells and whistles but delivered that which it needed to deliver in a pretty speedy time frame.” [Head Office]

Requests to add new bases and allow SP in-situ to join the pilot were carefully considered. ‘In situ’ refers to LTR(E) SP already stationed (situated) at pilot sites who were permitted to join the pilot up to 6 months after launch i.e. June 2024. Consequently, new bases have been added, and SP in-situ were able to join the pilot, resulting in perceived positive outcomes for LTR(E) SP overseas.

Receiving allowances and housing

All implementation interviewees stated SP had received entitled housing and allowances on the pilot. Of SP on the pilot who responded to the overseas survey, 85% (n=40) did not experience issues receiving their new allowance package. In addition, 78% (n=40) felt financially supported to live with their partner overseas, and 69% (n=45) were satisfied receiving an allowance package that supported their circumstances while serving accompanied overseas. Lower satisfaction levels for allowance packages may be indicative of issues raised in focus groups regarding perceived insufficient Living Overseas Allowances (LOA) rates and high cost of living in Cyprus. While important to the experience and retention of SP, these issues are

beyond the scope of the pilot. All focus group participants also stated LTR(E) SP on the pilot were receiving necessary allowances and entitlements.

Staffing and Systems

Both Head Office and Overseas Bases reported 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. Nevertheless, Overseas Bases felt and continue to feel prepared for the pilot implementation, stating their roles and responsibilities have not changed as the pilot uses existing systems, knowledge and routine processes for welfare and housing applications:

“It did increase, at least at the start of its initial phase, it did increase the workload but it kind of settled once the pilot settled as well. We do get odd queries which we deal with in business as usual.” [Overseas Base]

Implementation interview results are complimented by evidence from the overseas survey showing high satisfaction with the knowledge (76%, n=45) and support (82%, n=45) provided to SP by Unit HR staff during the application process, and high satisfaction of SP on the pilot applying for accommodation (78%, n=45) and allowances (76%, n=45) to serve accompanied overseas.

Complaints, Parity and Cohesion

Implementation interviewees stated casework was handled flexibly and no complaints were noted:

“Some even saying complaints reduced because of the pilot: not that I had much visibility of it anyway. But you know, there were definitely conversations that were had, you know, before the pilot that and are no longer had because of the pilot.” [Overseas Base]

All implementation interviews and most focus group participants also felt there was parity in treatment, housing quality and allocation, and welfare support between LTR(E) SP and married/civil partnered SP. Implementation interviews and focus groups suggested the pilot contributed to LTR(E) SP viewing the Armed Forces as a modern employer, incentivising retention and increasing satisfaction and morale:

“SP got the support as if they were married or in a civil partnership and therefore, I think it was from my view, a seamless transposition of policy onto those in the pilot scheme.” [Overseas Base]

“I think people are just grateful that the Army have moved with the times and understand not everybody wants to get married or should be married.” [Focus Group Dhekelia]

“There's a real perception of feeling invested in as an LTR(E) and that the Defence is looking to become a more modern employer where you whereby you don't have to get married in order to be entitled to accommodation for your family, which is much more in line with modern family dynamics.” [Head Office]

“I know of three people that I've had direct interactions with who because of the pilot opted to come [on overseas assignment].” [Overseas Base]

There was also anecdotal evidence of decreases of pre-deployment (“shot gun”) marriages from overseas focus groups and implementation interviews:

“I remember only being like Private in Germany 20 years ago and like the amount of young soldiers that got married at 21, 19 just to have a pad in Germany...you'd see it - a soldier getting married at 21 and by the time they were 26 going through their first divorce. And in the battalion, we're not really dealing with any of that really now, because I think what is a positive of this is you're getting a lot of young soldiers doing the LTR.” [Focus Group Episkopi]

Of SP on the pilot who took part in the overseas survey, 86% (n=43) agreed the ability to serve accompanied overseas in a LTR(E) creates an inclusive environment in Defence with a modern workforce and 95% (n=43) agreed it makes the Armed Forces feel like a modern employer:

Overall, a key positive outcome of the pilot cited in implementation interviews and focus groups was ‘parity’. Participants reported no differences in treatment, welfare assessments, wraparound and provisions or housing quality between LTR(E) SP and married/civil partnered SP:

“SP got the support as if they were married or in a civil partnership and therefore, I think it was from my view, a seamless transposition of policy onto those in the pilot scheme.” [Overseas Base]

Results of the overseas survey showed the majority of SP (87%, n=45) on the pilot were satisfied they were receiving the same entitlement as personnel who are married/in civil partnerships and serving accompanied overseas. In addition, of SP on the pilot who took part in the survey, 98% (n=43) agreed serving accompanied overseas created equality between LTR(E) and married/civil partnered SP, and 93% (n=43) agreed serving accompanied overseas in an LTR(E) made them feel treated the same as personnel who are married or in civil partnerships.

Focus group participants also felt LTR(E) SP and partners had been accepted into the military community in Cyprus and were not treated differently:

“I live in the SFA and there's no clear delineation between people that are LTR, they've just been integrated. It's not generally a question either if you see people in SFA that they ask if you're in an LTR. They just assume if you're in SFA that you're married.” [Dhekelia]

However, some focus groups did note a difference in the aftercare and external agencies available to LTR(E) SP and partners, particularly those supporting relationship breakdowns. For example, married/civil partnered SP and partners going through a divorce/separation can access support from external agencies, however, this was often challenging and/or not available to LTR(E) SP and partners.

3.4.3. Research Question 3: What aspects of the pilot implementation could be improved?

Summary

Key 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

Overall, all participants felt the pilot had been implemented successfully. While Head Office interviewees noted minimal or no issues during the pilot implementation, interviewees at Overseas Bases noted minor challenges:

- Needing further assistance from other staff members and Head Office to interpret the policy due to nuanced questions or queries
- Overseas Base staff members self-adjusting the policy/DIN according to personal interpretation and knowledge
- Overseas Base staff members witnessing other overseas base staff and/or themselves interpreting the policy differently to others.

Interviews highlighted the lack of a formal implementation plan. The DIN set out the aims, entitlements and application processes, i.e., telling people what to do. In contrast, an implementation would have detailed how to operationalise the policy/DIN, specifically for delivery teams. Some interviewees felt the absence of an implementation plan and further guidance led to variation in the interpretation of policy by staff in Overseas Bases:

“Policy doesn't cover everything and there will be nuances where people make their own understanding and judgment on what they think should be.”
[Overseas Base]

“I wouldn't say that I've ever seen an implementation plan. I've seen a DIN about it that tells the detail of what we're going to try and achieve, but really that's an outward communication to our people about how it's going to be managed. I think although that is kind of used loosely as a planning document, it's not quite the same as having an implementation order.” [Head Office]

Evidence-Based Rationale

During implementation interviews, all participants 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. Decisions and evidence used to decide pilot sites were also found to have relied on tactic/anecdotal knowledge and ease of implementation, rather than a recorded, set criteria or framework for selecting locations based on robust evidence:

“I think there was some evidence to show that quite a lot of particularly younger members of the armed forces were getting married quite quickly in order to be able to take up overseas posts.” [Head Office]

“It was my personal experiences...I've seen both the serving personnel and their partners seeing their lives shattered through making life changing decisions, they weren't ready for, so that was my driver. What the driver for the department was, I can't say I'm afraid.” [Head Office]

“The ease in which we could implement something in those areas without it being too onerous in terms of legislation with the overseas terminology. We already own all the housing in Cyprus and the Falkland Islands. We know that there was a surplus of housing, so we weren't going to drive any bad behaviours or drive-up costs, and we had a good relationship with those already on the ground.” [Head Office]

A formal, documented rationale for the pilot and framework with set criteria for pilot locations may ensure a consistent, known rationale to the pilot and have assisted the team when advocating or arguing against inclusions of new sites. Preliminary findings of the implementation interviews were shared with stakeholders, as outlined in the evaluation protocol. Since then, stakeholders have already taken corrective action and created a document formally outlining existing papers, evidence, rationale, and key decisions used to inform the pilot and pilot locations.

Rapid Decisions

As stated above, rapid decision making during the implementation of the pilot was seen as necessary. However, some implementation interview participants also felt the speed meant some documents were not fully reviewed and decisions not formally logged:

“We didn't make a full decisions log and that's one of the things I wish we did...I didn't have a separate spreadsheet going of who would sign these things off because of moving so quickly.” [Head Office]

Tracking and Families Section

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 errors:

“[The spreadsheet] is only as good as the information provided by the unit stations...we are having to chase the units and stations every time...we always, always, always find errors.” [Overseas Base]

Families Section (FamSec) was also cited as not having access to this tracker or information about LTR(E) SP on the pilot, causing some delays in allowances. FamSec are part of UK Strategic Command and support SP going overseas by conducting supportability assessments to confirm medical, educational and relocation entitlements. Only when FamSec has confirmed supportability can SP book flights, ship personal belongings etc.

All focus groups with chain of command also highlighted barriers and delays from FamSec. While units were aware of who was participating in the pilot, focus groups and implementation interviews indicated FamSec were not introduced to the pilot and did not have access or knowledge of this information. This resulted in entitlements and supportability being withheld/delayed, and SP feeling frustrated by repeatedly having to provide proof of their relationship status and participation in the pilot:

“It would have been possibly useful for FamSec and the unit administrators to have done something where they fully understood eligibility a little bit better. We've probably had to learn that on the hoof as we've gone along, purely because as much as eligibility seemed like it was covered by the policy, there were occasions where the policy was a little bit woolly.” [Overseas Base]

“It's only really when FamSec sort of challenges the Service person to say, 'it's not registered on JPA', then they'll come into us and say, 'I need JPA updating', that's when we start tracking. And that's where BFC then created these trackers.” [Focus Group, Dhekelia]

“I found it quite difficult to get the information and I found that I had to give all the information to Famsec, then give all the information to the unit, then give all the information to housing... I was collating all my evidence; personal information, banking information, stuff like that...and in giving it out all over the place.” [Focus Group Ayios Nikolaos]

Focus groups highlighted that in Dhekelia, the team had created personal and informal working relationships and protocols with FamSec:

“When we had the FamSec ladies come down for BFC I spoke to them...they realised then, that we needed to link in more and we just done it amongst ourselves. But I don't think it's actually in policy.” [Focus Group Dhekelia]

This indicates updating trackers and communicating with FamSec is site-led and not in formal policy. Without proper handover and standardised protocols for handling FamSec requests, there is a risk of outdated or missing information being captured on trackers, and further delays in FamSec approvals. An implementation plan may be useful to standardise the tracker and protocols across sites. In addition, it may be useful to provide FamSec with access to the tracker, to reduce administrative burden on SP and unit staff.

Eligibility

Implementation interviews highlighted only SP were entitled to the pilot and queried the extension of the pilot to civil servants in LTR(E)s who may be assigned to overseas posts. However, this is likely beyond the scope of the current pilot and policy which focuses specifically on the Armed Forces:

“When civilians have enquired about it, if you want to come as a long-term relationship, they’re forced to live off camp, which I don’t see that as being fair.” [Overseas Base]

Budget and Costing

While efforts were made to estimate costs and uptake of the pilot prior to launch, there were limitations to obtaining accurate figures. Total population figures for LTR(E) SP were unknown as SP are not mandated to declare their relationship status. In addition, uptake of allowances, accommodation and entitlements is generally difficult to measure as these are affected by individual circumstances and will change with every incoming SP and unit i.e., some SP may require access to many entitlements/allowances which others do not:

“Because everyone’s experience is personal with what allowances they get. So, we know that people are going to be in long term relationships, but we don’t know every single one of their circumstances. We didn’t know how many children there would be and that sort of stuff, so we just kind of assumed at the maximum of everything.” [Head Office]

“Every year, one of them rolls out and a new one rolls into replace them and essentially, you don’t know how many houses are required in any area when that’s happening because you don’t know how many married or company personnel are going to come with them.” Head Office]

While interview participants stated no formal budget was created for the pilot, some participants mentioned reassurances were given to senior leaders the pilot was ‘under-budget’ and not exceeding expected costs. However, these reassurances are not entirely accurate; housing costs are limited as existing/surplus housing is being utilised and allowance/welfare costs are present but, being absorbed by FLCs as part of business-as-usual procedures. Therefore, costs may be limited but are still being incurred. Without a formal budget or estimates, the evaluation cannot

accurately and robustly assess whether the pilot has remained within intended budgets or will continue to be scalable in the future.

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:

“When they go back to UK, we have to change that into their actual PStat Category 5. That extra step that we are required to do when they come out here and when they go back, sometimes they forget. The communication wasn't done properly on that.... we did get direction afterwards...but we were not informed.” [Overseas Base]

“That's one bump I've seen [manually having to change Pstat] and that's purely down to JPA not being agile enough to adjust to what we're doing.” [Head Office]

“The main thing would be I think the change in PStat Cat either when they return to the UK not changing and then them drawing further entitlements on JPA that they're not meant to.” [Head Office]

“Interviewer: Was that noted as a missing step because somebody had gone back to the UK and not changed? Participant: Yes, that's correct. I think DIO [Defence Infrastructure Organisation] housing, they identified that because when they applied for housing back in the UK, they still had put themselves down as Pstat Category 1.” [Overseas Base]

Given the risk of errors and repeated requests from FamSec causing frustrations and delays, it was suggested future policy (beyond the scope of the pilot) and administrative processes consider adding a specific category on JPA for LTR(E) SP.

LTR(E) Registration

Difficulties were identified for LTR(E) personnel to apply and obtain LTR(E) status. Part of the issue involved delays and difficulties with FamSec, mentioned above, however, some participants also felt the process of applying to the pilot and registering as LTR(E) was difficult especially for lower ranks who do not have access to MOD laptops:

“I think just the process of how soldiers apply, I think just maybe needs reviewing and simplifying... Private soldiers, lance corporals - they don't have MODNET laptops. They don't have access to all this stuff. Now the process you can do like all your personal computer and what not but all of them forms and the way it's articulated is quite confusing for a young soldier...It's quite a complex process of where hurdles can be missed.” [Focus Group Episkopi]

In addition, focus group participants in Dhekelia, Ayios Nikolaos and Akrotiri felt the eligibility criteria to register as LTR(E) was too strict and many SP could not gather

the required evidence, despite being in committed relationships for many years. In Episkopi there was a debate between focus group participants – some SP felt it was better to add more restrictions and evidence requirement to obtaining LTR(E) status as it otherwise “devalued” committed relationships and marriages. In contrast, others felt this was unfair as SP could easily become married and creating further restrictions would encourage more shot-gun marriages.

Future evaluation and research should be conducted to assess the ease of application for lower ranks to the pilot and the eligibility criteria and LTR(E) registration process.

Preserved Rights

A key issue raised across implementation interviews and focus groups was returning to the UK and preserved rights for LTR(E) SP. During implementation interviews, Head Office participants stated that SP on the pilot would receive 2 years of preserved rights on return to the UK following overseas assignment. Under preserved rights LTR(E) SP and partners could continue accessing SFA. Preserved rights were put in place as a temporary buffer between SP returning to the UK and the launch of the MAO in March 2024. However, 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:

“The main challenge that we’ve seen has come from the delay of MAO, which means that we were expecting people who were on the trial to return to the UK from their overseas postings entitled to SFA on their next assignment. Now that hasn’t happened...which is a real difficulty in terms of coherence of the accommodation offer for our families.” [Implementation Interviews Head Office]

“My only caution is over the fact that MAO hasn’t yet rolled out...the consequences of the pilot running and then managing the expectations of those that are on it and a potential switch back of those in UK arguably worse off than those on the pilot overseas.” [Implementation Interviews Head Office]

Focus groups also raised concerns about preserved rights as participants felt there was a lack of communication and information which impacted the reassurances and information they could provide to SP. This in turn was seen as creating concerns among SP about removing entitlements, and participants felt retention and/or shot-gun marriages on return to the UK could be impacted:

“So, this person has gone now from living committed, accompanied with his partner for a couple of years and then the Army’s gonna go ‘actually now after this date, you’re now back on surplus, you’re not entitled’.” [Focus Group Dhekelia]

The evaluation recommends policy and communication teams immediately begin to consider preserved right policies and communications to SP to ease concerns regarding entitlement and provide SP with time to plan and adjust to returning to the UK.

Future Risks

As mentioned above, 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'. Project Apollo will ensure all housing in Cyprus meets seismic compliance regulations. Depending on how Project Apollo is implemented, this may impact future availability; should new housing be built on vacant land, there would be no impact, whereas, if existing housing is demolished there may be a strain on availability:

“Don't get me wrong, you know there is peaks and troughs of housing availability across the board, but we've also got a major housing refurbishment program going on with the project Apollo. Houses been knocked down, new houses being built, so that's the driver to availability rather than LTR having a massive impact.” [Overseas Base]

These were not factors caused by the pilot but could impact future SFA availability of SP and partners on the pilot. In addition, sufficient housing in Cyprus does not guarantee sufficient housing at other pilot locations. As SP begin to join the pilot in new overseas areas, a formal evaluation should be commissioned to monitor and assess housing availability.

Recommendations

- 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.
- FamSec should be consulted and inducted into the pilot process.
- 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.
- 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.
- Future evaluation should assess the simplicity and ease of registering for LTR(E) status and the pilot (particularly for lower ranks).
- 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.

- 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.

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

Summary

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:

“It [the pilot] was a way of us removing one more barrier that could have put people off, so it's certainly worth a try. However, it turns out that actually it wasn't much of a barrier. There are bigger barriers, i.e., people don't want to go to the South Atlantic Islands into the freezing, freezing cold for 12 months.”
[Head Office]

“That's one of the hardest places to get people to volunteer to go, so for Falklands was anything that we can add on to that overall package of being able to go was a win.” [Head Office]

Recommendation

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.

3.5. Conclusions

Evidence from implementation interviews and additional research activities shows all SP and partners participating in the pilot have received entitled allowances and housing. During the period of the evaluation FLCs and Overseas bases were able to cope with housing demands and absorb costs.

The pilot may now benefit from developing a formal budget and implementation plan and creating/evaluating communications specifically for career managers, partners and lower SP. In addition, FamSec were identified as key stakeholders who should also be inducted and included in the pilot processes. Preserved rights should also be confirmed and communicated to staff and SP.

Overall, results indicate the pilot has been implemented as intended and there is perceived parity of treatment between LTR(E) SP. There is preliminary evidence this in turn is contributing towards long-term intended impacts of the pilot such as widening accommodation entitlements, recruiting and retaining individual in the

Armed Forces and creating a modern Defence which recognises diversity of relationships. This is explored further in the impact and VfM evaluations.

3.6. Limitations – process evaluation

Limitations of the evaluation are discussed at the end of the report. Limitations specific to the process evaluation include:

Representativeness of views expressed by participants

The implementation interviews used purposive sampling to identify staff who had been involved in the design and implementation of the pilot and policy. This method ensured participants had direct experience of the pilot implementation and could provide detailed insights into their experiences. However, this method does exclude other voices who may have been on the periphery of implementation and could have also provided valuable insight.

Limitations of the data collected can be found in the respective research reports.

4. Impact Evaluation

4.1. Summary of findings

The evidence suggests 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 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.

4.2. Overview

The impact evaluation was designed to determine the extent to which the pilot contributed to intended and unintended outcomes and impacts, as outlined in the ToC, using 'Contribution Analysis' to determine the extent to which the pilot contributed to observed and intended outcomes.

Primary research questions of 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?

4.3. Methodology: Contribution Analysis

The three main approaches outlined in the Magenta Book for an impact evaluation are experimental, quasi-experimental or theory based. Contribution Analysis is a theory-based, mixed methods approach to impact evaluation. It was selected as the most appropriate approach given the following complexities:

- SP could join and leave the pilot at different timepoints due to varying assignment start dates and lengths making it difficult to create cohorts with similar start/end dates.
- Cohort sizes were unknown as SP may be assigned to a new post as an individual augmentee (SP who move overseas alone i.e., not part of a wider team/unit), or as a formed unit (group) limiting the ability to create cohorts of similar sizes and characteristics.
- The pilot was embedded in a changing context and implementation may have varied by location, due to the size and location of the base (i.e. Cyprus compared to Canada)
- It was not ethical to randomly allocate LTR(E) SP to a control and experimental (pilot) condition i.e., prevent one group from accessing SFA and certain allowances.

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.

The Contribution Analysis methodology for the pilot followed the steps outlined below based on Mayne (2008) and (2019):

1. The evaluation team worked closely with policy and implementation stakeholders to develop claims from the evaluation questions and ToC (key activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts).
 - a. For example, the ToC outcome 'Increase in LTR(E) and wider SP volunteering to be posted to overseas sites' was translated into the claim 'More SP volunteer to be posted to Cyprus'.
 - b. Most claims were taken from the outcomes, outcomes and impacts but some explored the processes and implementation of the pilot (i.e., ToC resources and activities)
2. A total of 16 claims were developed: 9 primary claims and 5 sub-claims.
 - a. Sub-claims examined nuances and accounted for different key populations in the pilot, e.g. LTR(E) SP on the pilot, LTR(E) Partners on the pilot, and LTR(E) SP not on the pilot.
3. Research activities and evidence requirements were identified to accurately and robustly assess and rate each claim.
 - a. For example, monitoring data on the number of SP volunteering to be posted to Cyprus and overseas focus group views on recruitment, retention and volunteering were identified as necessary data sources to assess the above claim.
4. 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:
 - a. **Met** (evidence collected meets pre-determined expectations)
 - b. **Not Met** (evidence collected does not meet pre-determined expectations)
 - c. **Partially Met** (evidence collected meeting some pre-determined expectations and/or there is limited evidence)
 - d. **Limited Evidence** (there is insufficient evidence to fully assess the claim)
5. A one-hour, online workshop was held with stakeholders to finalise claims, evidence requirements and expectations before data collection. Stakeholders were sent the claims in advance for review prior to the workshop. The Evaluation Team updated the claims based on feedback, whilst also ensuring data could be collected which would be used to assess the claims.
6. Evidence was collected during the evaluation period and results were compared directly to pre-set expectations to obtain ratings.

7. Evidence was categorised as: 'high', 'moderate', 'low' or 'missing'. This ensured claim ratings were not based on whether evidence simply existed but factored in credibility and robustness.
8. Alternative theories for each claim and sub-claim were developed by analysts. Alternative theories were not necessarily in opposition to claims but could outline contributory or contextual factors.
9. Quality assurance was undertaken:
 - a. A Government Social Researcher undertook an assessment of all the claims using the data collected during the pilot. All claims were then assessed by an additional independent Government Social Researcher.
 - b. The Evaluation Task Force Evaluation and Trial Advice Panel – a panel of professional, academic and government experts in evaluation methods – reviewed the evaluation project protocol, theory of change and contribution claims. They provided feedback for improvement and analytical rigour.
 - c. A workshop was held with key stakeholders involved in the policy, design and delivery of the pilot. Stakeholders included Accommodation Policy Team, UK Strategic Command, Overseas Housing Teams, Armed Forces Remuneration Team, Overseas Unit HR Teams and independent GSR members (to provide quality assurance and oversight of the workshop). Stakeholders assessed assigned ratings, interpretations of the evidence and alternative theories. Feedback, challenges, agreements and queries were collated, and claims were adjusted accordingly. Stakeholders also provided further insight and alternative theories to explain ratings and observed outcomes.
10. All claims were finalised and reviewed by a Government Social Researcher

4.4. Research Activities

The impact evaluation was informed by data from implementation interviews, routine monitoring data, survey with SP and partners who did and did not join the pilot, Chain of Command Focus Groups and LTR(E) SP interviews undertaken up to May 2025.

4.5. Findings

This section presents the impact evaluation findings using Contribution Analysis. Each contribution claim is presented alongside a table outlining the claim/sub-claim rating(s), evidence categorisation and the research population included. Following each table is a narrative of the evidence for each claim/sub-claim and key alternative/complimentary theories.

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

To note, 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.

4.5.1. 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

Sub-claim(s)	ToC section	Outcome	Quality of evidence	Population(s) assessed in claim
a. Eligible SP and partners were aware of the pilot	Output	Partially Met	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	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	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	Low/Insufficient	LTR(E) SP not on the pilot

In this instance, supporting staff include unit HR and career managers and commanding officers who support SP prior to overseas moves and can inform them about offers overseas including the pilot.

**4.5.1.1. Sub-claim 1a: Eligible SP and partners were aware of the pilot
Outcome: Partially Met**

Sub-claim 1a is rated as partially met, indicating some awareness of the pilot among eligible populations.

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. Participants in two focus groups felt some SP remained unaware of the pilot despite communication campaigns. Some focus group participants noted some SP, including chain of

command, were unlikely to ever engage with any Defence communications, and while SP may not have seen communications prior to moving overseas, Unit Human Resources (Unit HR) and overseas teams consistently advertised the pilot in welcome briefs/packs and to SP on arrival:

“Communication as we said wasn’t great in the first point, advertising it and then you might be taking away an opportunity that people didn’t get to see the first-time round.” [Focus Group Akrotiri]

“We’ve got three in the pipeline that are coming out here as LTR(E)s they’ve all been very upbeat and surprised that they can do this but they haven’t known about it. It’s only in passing when we send our arrivals email out and it’s got the LTR(E) DIN in it and they read it and go ‘oh wow, so I can bring up my other half?’” [Focus Group Ayios Nikolaos]

Focus groups and interviews with LTR(E) SP stated awareness of the pilot often relied on good relationships with career managers and commanding officers, highlighting a need to target training and communications to these individuals to ensure consistent and equitable dissemination of information about the pilot:

“It was my career manager that originally told me. He said about going out. He’s an old friend of mine.” [LTR(E) SP Interview]

“My CO, who was a good people person and I guess I had that relationship with him, he knew that this was happening. So, as it was announced, he kind of messaged me and said that if I was still interested then I should apply.”
[LTR(E) SP Interview]

Alternative explanation

Gaps in communications to partners and junior ranks were identified. However, during stakeholder workshops this was acknowledged as a broader issue in the Armed Forces and was considered an alternative theory to explain lower awareness among these populations.

4.5.1.2. Sub-claim 1b: Eligible SP found out about the pilot through a variety of communications and there was high engagement with communications

Outcome: Met

Evidence from the survey, implementation interviews and email reports from Unit HR Cyprus showed a variety of communications methods were employed to advertise the pilot including Unit HR, friends, welcome packs, emails, intranet and service apps:

“We flooded it in terms of the comms channels and those that those who actually wanted to apply were well aware and got their applications in. So, the target audience was met.” [Implementation Interview: Overseas Bases]

Of SP on the pilot who responded to the survey, 33% selected multiple communication channels as methods they found out about the pilot, indicating communications were diverse and effective in raising awareness.

4.5.1.3. Sub-claim 1c: Eligible SP and partners understood information about the pilot

Outcome: Partially Met

While evidence indicated awareness of the pilot through communications, research activities suggested limited understanding about the pilot.

Of those who took part in the survey:

- 56% (n=45) of SP agreed they received sufficient and accurate information about allowance entitlements on the pilot and 60% (n=45) agreed they understood the information.
- 58% (n=45) of SP agreed they received sufficient and accurate information on accommodation entitlements while serving accompanied overseas and 62% (n=45) agreed they understood this information.
- 63% (n=8) of partners disagreed they had received or understood sufficient and accurate information about allowance entitlements they would receive while accompanying their partner overseas.
- 47% (n=45) of SP agreed adverts/ communications about the pilot had enough information to help them decide whether to serve accompanied overseas.

Interviews with implementation staff at Overseas Bases indicated details of eligibility and application procedures may have been missing from pilot communications. Focus groups highlighted not all LTR(E) SP, particularly younger SP or those joining the pilot as individual augmentees, understood information about the pilot or how to register:

“I think just the process of how soldiers apply maybe needs reviewing and simplifying...its young soldiers statistically, majority apply to come out here... They don't have MODNET laptops, they don't have access to all this stuff...all of them forms and the way it's articulated is quite confusing for a young soldier who's potentially only been in the Army 2 years.... It's quite a complex process of where hurdles can be missed.” [Focus Groups: Episkopi]

Alternative explanation

Agreed alternative theories for limited understanding of allowances, accommodation and difficulty registering included:

1. Engaging with HR systems, receiving allowance/accommodation information and passing this information onto partners is the responsibility of the SP. Therefore, low understanding and receipt of information from partners is likely a wider issue in the Armed Forces, not specific to the pilot.
2. SP predominantly learnt about the pilot via 'word of mouth' methods (16% chain of command, 25% colleagues/friends). This prevents fact checking and is open to misinterpretation of the pilot.
3. Renumeration Team stakeholders stated there was a consistent lack of understanding of overseas allowances among SP, not associated to the pilot.
4. SP may not have separated information about general overseas allowances from information about allowances and accommodation on the pilot.
5. During workshops, stakeholders described two distinct groups: individual augmentees and units. Units receive multiple visits, briefings and discussions of packages (including the pilot) prior to moving overseas in comparison to individual augmentees. Due to this, LTR(E) SP moving to Cyprus as individual augmentees could be less aware of the pilot than LTR(E) moving within larger units.

4.5.1.4. Sub-claim 1d: LTR(E) SP who did not serve accompanied were aware they could

Outcome: Limited evidence

It was not possible to assess this sub-claim as data is limited/missing for the population.

Small sample sizes prevent the utilisation of data to control the risk of over interpretation and generalisation, 7 LTR(E) SP who did not serve accompanied overseas responded to the survey, and 4 LTR(E) SP who did not join the pilot participated in interviews.

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

Table 7: Claim 2 outcomes

Sub-claim(s)	ToC section	Outcome	Quality of evidence	Population(s) assessed in claim
a. Eligible SP and partners have positive experiences of engaging with administration systems, accommodation and allowance processes	Activity Output	Met (Adjusted from 'partially met' following stakeholder workshops)	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	High	LTR(E) SP on the Pilot Delivery/ Implementation Teams
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4.5.2.1. Sub-claim 2a: Eligible SP and partners have positive experiences of engaging with administration systems, accommodation and allowance processes

Outcome: Met

Sub-claim 2a is rated as met, indicating eligible SP and partners had positive experiences engaging with administration, accommodation and allowances processes.

Implementation interviews found 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.

The majority of SP who responded to the survey had high satisfaction of engaging with administration processes and systems:

- evidencing LTR(E) status (58%, n=45)
- changing LTR(E) status on the joint personnel administration system (JPA) (62%, n=45),
- applying for accommodation (78%, n=45)
- applying for allowances (76%, n=45).

SP were also largely satisfied in receiving accommodation (84%, n=45) and allowances (69%, n=45) within their entitlement. Only 18% (n=40) of SP who responded to the survey had issues being allocated accommodation on the pilot and 15% (n=40) experienced issues receiving their new allowance package.

Alternative explanation

Alternative/complimentary theories suggested by stakeholders included:

1. Difficulty differentiating issues of housing and allowances due to the pilot and general issues affecting all SP from the survey evidence. Stakeholders were confident issues with housing and allowances due to the pilot will reduce as pilot and systems become routine.
2. The administration of the pilot used existing processes and systems which likely contributed to this sub-claim being met. Systems to process allowance and accommodation applications have been established for many years in overseas teams and staff are trained and experienced in using them. Online automation of the application process is a complementary theory explaining SP satisfaction with

administration and application systems. Applications are all completed online, likely to offer a smoother user experience.

4.5.2.2. Sub-claim 2b: There is sufficient knowledge, support and processes to implement the pilot

Outcome: Partially Met

Survey data showed high satisfaction with support (82%, n=45) and knowledge (76%, n=45) of staff during the application process for the pilot. Survey data also showed SP were satisfied in their ability to ask questions about the pilot to staff (73%, n=45). Implementation interviews complimented findings as staff were prepared to support the pilot. No issues were reported regarding knowledge, training and staffing, and there were no complaints reported in monitoring data or implementation interviews regarding housing assignment, welfare and wrap-around provisions. Overseas bases reported a minor, but manageable, increase in workload during the launch of the pilot only, due to an initial increase in applications and queries about the policy and entitlements.

Overseas bases received some nuanced queries and casework regarding the pilot and eligibility criteria. While interviews cited sufficient oversight from the Accommodation Policy Team to support casework, primarily via bi-monthly meetings, some overseas participants admitted to instances of self-interpreting the policy or witnessing others interpreting the policy in a different way to others. Consequently, in these situations, resolutions to queries may have depended on individual knowledge and understanding of the pilot policy and may not have been consistently applied. Implementation interviews identified overseas bases were only provided with the policy but not an implementation plan. The policy sets out the aims, entitlements and application processes, i.e., telling people about the pilot and what to do. An implementation would detail how to operationalise the policy and specific procedures to follow in instances such as receiving nuanced queries, specifically for delivery teams.

Alternative explanation

Stakeholders proposed an alternative theory that individual interpretation of policies occurs across policies in all teams and is a wider issue across any policy area. The provision of an implementation plan may be useful in the future to ensure a consistent process is followed by all staff when encountering and interpreting nuanced queries/casework. The policy team have created a more detailed plan of the pilot in response to receiving this feedback.

“I wouldn’t say there’s been a massive change in my responsibilities. It’s just business as usual for us.” [Implementation Interview: Overseas Bases]

“Policy doesn't cover everything and there will be nuances where people make their own understanding and judgment on what they think should be.”
[Overseas Base]

“As we progressed there were nuances with the relationships, with the queries that came through from the units and stations. And the good thing was that we did have, I think it was monthly or bimonthly meetings...So, we were able to raise those issues and concerns quite rapidly and get the answers.”
[Implementation Interview: Overseas Bases]

The evaluation identified limited integration between the pilot design and implementation processes and the Families Section (FamSec). FamSec are part of UK Strategic Command and support SP going overseas by conducting supportability assessments to confirm medical, educational and relocation entitlements. Only when FamSec has confirmed supportability can single Services i.e., Army, and SP book flights, ship personal belongings etc. This was a barrier to the sub-claim being fully met. FamSec had not been considered when designing and implementing the pilot. They do not have access to or evidence of SP's LTR(E) status and/or participation in the pilot. This causes FamSec to repeatedly request evidence of SP LTR(E) status and pilot participation. This delays SP receiving necessary entitlements such as concessionary flights for partners and removals allowances. While the issues were resolved once FamSec received the required evidence, the process of repeatedly sending proofs and encountering delays was cited as complicated and frustrating:

“I found it quite difficult to get the information and I found that I had to give all the information to FamSec, then give all the information to the unit, then give all the information to housing... I was collating all my evidence; personal information, banking information, stuff like that...and in giving it out all over the place.” [Focus Group Ayios Nikolaos]

“So, service people were going direct to welfare, welfare was then putting them into contact with FamSec, FamSec would not have anything to show that the relationship was being registered on JPA, then the service person would come to us sort of frustrated that people were not helping them.” [Focus Group Dhekelia]

“It would have been possibly useful for FamSec and the unit administrators to have done something where they fully understood eligibility a little bit better. We've probably had to learn that on the hoof as we've gone along.”
[Implementation Interviews Overseas Base]

“The first hurdle was the person couldn't get the removals because removals didn't have them as been entitled to moving as a family.” [Implementation Interviews Overseas Base]

During stakeholder workshops, Head Office staff and FLCs were not aware of FamSec and agreed with the proposed alternative theory of FamSec not being known and included in the initial launch contributing to the claim not being fully met. FamSec were acknowledged as an important part of policy delivery and successful implementation of the pilot and should be given access to required databases. Stakeholders also felt there was a wider need to understand the FamSec model of working and if married/civil partnered personnel experience similar delays to those in LTR(E)s.

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

Table 8: Claim 3 outcomes

Sub-claim(s)	ToC section	Outcome	Quality of evidence	Population(s) assessed in claim
a. Implementation and delivery teams were able to process and deliver allowances and eligible SP received allowances.	Activity	Met	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	High: SP Low: Partners	LTR(E) SP on the Pilot Partners on the pilot

4.5.3.1. Sub-claim 3a: Implementation and delivery teams were able to process and deliver allowances and eligible SP received allowances.

Outcome: Met

Evidence from the survey and implementation interviews indicates this sub-claim is met and implementation and delivery teams were able to process and deliver allowances to eligible SP.

A high proportion of SP who responded to the survey were satisfied with applying for allowances to serve accompanied overseas (76%, n=45). In addition, 85% (n=40) of SP reported no issues with receiving new allowance packages while serving accompanied overseas. Implementation interviews highlighted no concerns in the administration process for housing or allowances as these were routine processes for Unit HR staff. As stated in Claim 2b, there were some delays in the allowance

due to FamSec. Nevertheless, all SP were stated to have received necessary allowances and no complaints or casework from SP not receiving entitlements were noted in monitoring data, implementation interviews or focus groups. Focus groups did highlight concerns of allowance entitlements for LTR(E) SP on the pilot returning to the UK, whether allowances would be preserved, and when/how this would be communicated:

“So out here you’re classed as married, you’ve got your allowances, you’re committed. But as soon as you step foot off that plane in the UK, your PStat is back to Stat 5... Participant 2: - and I think that’s where you open up to low morale, sign off rates.” [Focus Group Dhekelia]

“I think we need a more clear direction on what we do with LTR(E) because my priority will be people that are LTR(E) and Pstat 1 out here, their Pstat will change going back. And it’s only because of their allowances that are here so. And it’s down to the availability of quarters that are in that area.” [Focus Group Episkopi]

Alternative explanation

Additional alternative theories for claim 3a being met are largely similar to claim 2. The use of existing, automated systems used by Unit HR reduces the potential issues of SP receiving incorrect entitlements. Specifically, for claim 3a, stakeholder workshops identified removals and relocation allowances were time bound (6 months within assignment). Therefore, contractors for removals and overseas moves may not have been aware of the pilot and entitlement to removals of SP in situ, leading to delays as contractors needed to be informed and exceptional authority granted to approve ‘out of bounds’ removal allowances. ‘In situ’ refers to LTR(E) SP already stationed (situated) at pilot sites who were permitted to join the pilot up to 6 months after launch i.e. June 2024. FamSec and lack of awareness of removal contractors may account for some of the proportion of SP experiencing issues applying for and receiving allowance packages.

4.5.3.2. Sub-claim 3b: SP and partners on the pilot are satisfied with allowances and entitlements received and financially supported to live overseas.

Outcome: Partially met

Sub-claim 3b was rated as partially met as evidence indicated SP but not partners felt financially supported to live overseas.

The overseas survey showed 69% (n=45) of SP were satisfied in receiving an allowance package that supported their circumstances serving overseas, 78% (n=40) agreed they were financially supported to live with their partner overseas and 87% (n=45) were satisfied in receiving the same entitlement as personnel who are

married/in a civil partnership and serving accompanied overseas. This was also reflected in overseas focus groups where chain of command agreed LTR(E) SP were treated equally and received equal entitled allowances as married/civil partnered SP.

In contrast, some issues were noted for partners - over 40% (n=8) did not feel financially supported to live overseas with their partner and more than 75% (n=7) were not able to access employment overseas. In addition, over 75% (n=7) of partners did not feel allowances given by Defence were suitable for supporting them while unemployed overseas.

Alternative explanation

The stakeholder workshops noted Cypriot employment policy as alternative theory contributing to this subclaim being partially met. Most survey data was obtained from Cyprus where the 'Treaty concerning the Establishment of the Republic of Cyprus' (1960) is in place. Under the treaty, job opportunities must first be offered to Cypriot citizens. This may limit employment opportunities to partners, not specific to the pilot or LTR(E) partners, but likely affecting spouses and civil partners too. Stakeholders also highlighted how overseas panels and townhalls with SP and spouses/partners frequently cited dissatisfaction with allowances and employment, demonstrating wider challenges not limited to the pilot or LTR(E) SP/partners.

4.5.4. 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 (with a lack of baseline data)	High with some missing baseline data	LTR(E) SP on the Pilot

Claim is rated as partially met. Survey results indicate SP were satisfied with the ability to be accompanied overseas and demonstrated a willingness to volunteer/be assigned overseas. Of SP who responded to the survey:

- 79% (n=43) agreed the pilot influenced their decision to volunteer/accept their overseas assignment
- 95% (n=43) would be willing to volunteer/be assigned again overseas if they were able to serve accompanied.
- 79% (n=43) also agreed the ability to serve accompanied at their current overseas location influenced their decision to accept assignment/volunteer at that location over others.

- 60% (n=43) disagreed they would have moved unaccompanied if not able to bring their partner
- 67% (n=39) disagreed they would have enjoyed their overseas assignment if their partner was not able to accompany them
- 100% (n=43) would recommend serving accompanied overseas to others.

Chain of Command focus groups complemented the survey results, emphasising the pilot had encouraged LTR(E) SP to be assigned overseas and enabled operational effectiveness. The pilot was seen as particularly useful in roles where specialist knowledge/skills were required which a LTR(E) SP possessed:

“This post wouldn’t have even been an option for me, I wouldn’t have even put it down without the LTR. They’re really merit based so to get this post you’ve got to be top of the game so potentially would have had someone who scored lower on the board without having this option” [Focus Group Episkopi]

“We’ve seen a positive increase in the role. The role that fills in my place, nobody volunteered with it - they put the run back out then with LTR again and we had one applicant, and he came out because his partner could come out with him. So if that wasn’t open that would again would have gone unanswered and you would then be looking at service needs – so somebody who didn’t want to be here would have been told you are now coming for three years.” [Focus Group Episkopi]

“I’m the same. If it wasn’t for the LTR overseas I would not be here. My job is a critical role. At the time, I was the only person in the whole [service and skillset] who could fill the role... I would have actually left the services entirely to maintain my relationship back in the UK and not be here...luckily, for me, this scheme exists and luckily for [service and team] this scheme exists.” [Focus Group Ayios Nikolaos]

While survey and focus group data indicate a high number of SP were influenced by the pilot to volunteer overseas, this data is self-reported and collected retrospectively of SP joining the pilot, therefore, may contain respondent biases. In addition, no baseline was collected, therefore, the analysis cannot show more/less LTR(E) SP volunteering now than in previous years. These potential biases and a lack of baseline data have lowered the overall claim rating to ‘partially met’.

Alternative explanation

Ultimately, while the pilot may be contributing to a rise in overseas volunteering and improved operational effectiveness, stakeholders agreed with a proposed alternative theory stating the pilot likely represents only one factor in a complex system of internal and external influences on SP decision making. Overseas assignments may generally be viewed as more ‘attractive/exciting’; not all services allow SP to volunteer (i.e., Army operates largely on mandated moves), and stakeholders argued the current geo-political climate may also be driving increased overseas postings.

4.5.5. 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

ToC section	Outcome	Quality of evidence	Population(s) assessed in claim
Outcome	Partially Met (with a lack of data)	High: SP Low: Partners	LTR(E) SP on the pilot Partners on the pilot

Claim 5 is rated as partially met. Survey results showed the majority of SP (63%, n=43) and partners (63%, n=8) agreed they considered marrying their partner/forming a civil partnership so they could be accompanied/accompany their partner overseas. However, there is no certainty as to whether this entire proportion would have got married without the pilot. Participants in overseas focus groups also perceived a decrease in pre-deployment marriages:

“I just don’t think people are in a rush to get married and I think they used to force that in the military kind of push people towards that just to be sort of entitled to a house.” [Focus Group Akrotiri]

“We have got 1 person in our department that did have a shotgun marriage, but she wouldn’t have if she could have got the LTR.” [Focus Group Dhekelia]

“I remember only being like Private in Germany 20 years ago and like the amount of young soldiers that got married at 21, 19 just to have a pad in Germany...you’d see it - a soldier getting married at 21 and by the time they were 26 going through their first divorce. And in the battalion, we’re not really dealing with any of that really now, because I think what is a positive of this is you’re getting a lot of young soldiers doing the LTR.” [Focus Group Episkopi]

While evidence indicates the pilot may have allowed SP to serve accompanied overseas without the pressure of pre-deployment marriage, no quantitative measures of marriage and divorce rates pre-pilot and during the pilot were able to be collected through monitoring data. Therefore, baseline measures including both qualitative and quantitative data is required to fully assess this claim and provide a rating of ‘met’. Future evaluations should also collect evidence on other factors influencing LTR(E) SP decisions to marry to better isolate the effect of the pilot on this claim.

Focus groups highlighted concerns about increases in marriage rates on return to the UK if preserved rights were not formalised:

“Participant 1: We're doing a unit move next year...them LTR people will not be entitled to a SFA in [location]. So it's like a future problem 12 months from now what's going to happen with them people?... Participant 2: Probably get a rise of marriages going back to.” [Focus Group Episkopi]

“I'm entitled to a quarter and the preserved rights. It's after 2026 that's where it might become difficult because obviously, I'll fall under the surplus category and we all know how the UK is pretty thin on the ground, especially in Garrisons. So that bridge I'll have to cross; either we'll get married, hopefully not, or we'll probably have to go back in our own private home.” [Focus Group Dhekelia]

“This person has gone now from living committed, accompanied with his partner for a couple of years and then the Army's gonna go ‘actually now after this date, you're now back on surplus, you're not entitled’...straight away it's going to be ‘well do we have to get married?’. That's a choice you have to make.” [Focus Group Dhekelia]

Alternative explanation

Alternative theories for Claim 5 proposed by Stakeholders considered broader changes in culture and society towards marriage may also be demonstrated in the Armed Forces population. ONS data from marriages in England and Wales (2021 and 2022) shows an overall decrease in number of marriages by 20.8% from 1922 to 2022. Levels of cohabitation prior to marriage also increased to highest levels in 2021/2022 with 90% of couples cohabitating before marriage compared to approximately 60% in 1994.

Stakeholders felt marriage decisions may not be solely due to the pilot. Marriage can be influenced by cultural, religious, personal or financial reasons. Stakeholders agreed an increase or decrease in marriage should no longer be a priority of the pilot. Instead, the focus should be on ‘parity’: ensuring overseas assignments and policies are not discriminatory against LTR(E) SP and thereby, compelling SP into marriage. As the pilot matures, ensuring parity may naturally change marriage rates, but this no longer needs to be tracked or a central impact of future evaluations.

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

Table 11: Claim 6 outcomes

ToC section	Outcome	Quality of evidence	Population(s) assessed in claim
Impact	Partially Met (with a lack of data)	High	LTR(E) SP on the Pilot

Claim 6 is 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 (84%, n=43), made the Armed Forces feel like a modern employer (95%, n=43), created an inclusive environment in Defence with a modern workforce (86%, n=43) and made them feel valued as employees (88%, n=43). 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 (93%, n=43). Results from chain of command focus groups corroborate these findings as participants agreed the pilot enabled LTR(E) personnel to be assigned overseas and was particularly important for filling specialised roles. Anecdotal evidence from a letter written by a chain of command member in Cyprus stated they had witnessed retention positives from the pilot and LTR(E) SP feeling valued overall:

“We currently have several members of the Squadron benefitting from this scheme. Without it we would not have been able to retain those individuals in Cyprus and as such, would have lost a number of roles and key personnel.”
[Written letter from Chain of Command, Cyprus]

The claim is rated as partially met, given similar limitations as with Claims 4 and 5. Survey data is self-reported, and indicates intention to stay, however this may not reflect actual retention and may contain respondent biases. While evidence suggests attribution of retention to the pilot, the isolated effect of the pilot cannot be measured, and no baseline evidence has been collected to assess the influence of being accompanied pre/post evaluation on retention. There may also be a need for more time to pass to understand if the pilot did have an impact on retention. Future evaluations may wish to use the current data and insights as baseline measures to evaluate retention trends. In addition, interviews of the pilot cohort may be useful in the future to capture further factors influencing retention and better isolate the effect of the pilot.

Alternative explanation

Stakeholders agreed more with the alternative theory proposed suggesting other retention incentives may be driving intentions to remain in the Armed Forces. Results from the Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey (AFCAS), promote this theory, highlighting several other factors driving retention including job security, dental provision, house purchasing schemes and financial incentives. Therefore, the pilot is likely one of many contributing factors modernising the Armed Forces and improving retention.

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

Table 12: Claim 7 outcomes

Sub-claim(s)	ToC section	Outcome	Quality of evidence	Population(s) assessed in claim
a. There is appropriate accommodation for the pilot	Output	Met	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	Moderate	N/A

To note: both sub-claims have been rated met specifically for Cyprus during the period of the pilot evaluation data collection. Monitoring is recommended on future void margins in Cyprus (particularly Akrotiri) and other pilot locations.

4.5.7.1. Sub-claim 7a: There is appropriate accommodation for the pilot

Outcome: Met

During the period monitoring data and research activities were undertaken for the evaluation, data indicated sufficient SFA accommodation and SP were largely satisfied with accommodation. During implementation interviews staff reported no issues allocating accommodation as processes/systems were the same as for married/civil partnered SP. Implementation interviews and quantitative figures from monitoring data showed no applications were rejected because of insufficient housing and no LTR(E) couples were placed in the private rental sector due to insufficient accommodation on bases. Chain of command focus groups and implementation interviews cited fair accommodation provisions between married/civil partnered and LTR(E) SP:

“Everyone in an LTR is getting the houses so it's only positive, I'm yet to see a negative.” [Focus Group Akrotiri]

“We've got enough houses, there's always been some question about how suitable it is, but that's to do with compliance...down at Akrotiri, they were tight on houses...But here we've got enough houses to support them.” [Focus Group Ayios Nikolaos]

Satisfaction scores from the survey showed high satisfaction for both SP and partners responding to the survey in receiving accommodation within their entitlement (84%, n=45 and 75%, n=8, respectively), and satisfaction with the location of accommodation (86%, n=44 for SP). Satisfaction with the quality of accommodation was slightly lower for SP responding to the survey (61%, n=44).

Implementation interview and focus group participants stated quality of accommodation in Cyprus was generally low and there was no specific disparity between quality of accommodation received by LTR(E) personnel compared to married/civil partnered SP. Stakeholder workshops agreed dissatisfaction with accommodation quality was not specific to the pilot.

The majority of SP (77%, n=44) and all partners who responded to the survey were not allocated another type of accommodation before SFA overseas. Stakeholder workshops explained SP already in-situ may have responded 'yes' to this question as they would have been placed in Single Living Accommodation or temporary accommodation prior to joining the pilot and receiving SFA. SP may have already been working overseas before their partner/family joined or because they travelled overseas first and their partner/family joined at an appropriate time, for example during a school holiday.

4.5.7.2. Sub-claim 7b: The pilot does not impact ideal void margins, or contributes to decreases in SFA void margins above accepted level

Outcome: Met

Void margins refer to the percentage of vacant properties at any given site, accepted void margins vary between sites. Void margins are required to manage the estate and the movement of occupants in and out of properties. High void margins (over accepted void margins) indicate accommodation is not being used efficiently, providing poor value for money for Defence, whereas low void margins indicate insufficient vacant properties should personnel need to be housed in exceptional circumstances. The accepted void margin for Cyprus is 10%. Monitoring data (Table 2) showed average void margins for Cyprus remained between 7-10% during the period of the evaluation. This indicates the pilot did not impact ideal void margins and margins remained within accepted levels, with some minor fluctuations.

When considering void margins at different bases in Cyprus, there are some important variations to note:

- **Episkopi and Dhekelia:** From November 2024 to May 2025, void margins at these bases consistently remained within acceptable levels. The pilot had minimal impact on reducing vacant properties or influencing void margins.

During workshops, stakeholders highlighted Dhekelia or Episkopi were built when the Armed Forces had much higher SP numbers and overseas assignments. Therefore, an alternative theory acknowledges the pilot alone is unlikely to ever reduce void margins in these bases beyond accepted levels.

- **Akrotiri:** low void margins in Akrotiri have remained a concern throughout data collection. Prior to January 2025 and since May 2025, void margins were

3-4%. Some remaining stock is unavailable for various maintenance issues (e.g., damp/mould). Therefore, true void margins in May 2025 were 1.79%.

Alternative explanation

During workshops, stakeholders acknowledged low void margins in Akrotiri, however felt these were impacted by factors beyond the control of the pilot, affecting all SP not specifically LTR(E) SP, and proposed the following alternative theories:

1. Units continuously rotate in and out of bases in Cyprus, specifically Akrotiri causing more noticeable fluctuations in housing stock
2. Akrotiri has recently seen an increase in personnel resulting from increased overseas assignments in response to changes within the wider geo-political landscape.
3. A high number of 'non-seismic compliant/fit for habitation' housing have been removed from circulation and are pending demolition and rebuild under Project Apollo, further limiting housing availability:

“Don't get me wrong, you know there is peaks and troughs of housing availability across the board, but we've also got a major housing refurbishment program going on with the Project Apollo. Houses been knocked down, new houses being built, so that's the driver to availability rather than LTR having a massive impact.”
[Overseas Base]

Project Apollo is a building project to renew housing in Akrotiri and ensure all houses are seismic compliant, this may involve removing small numbers or entire blocks of housing at a time for development - funding and final plans for the project are still waiting for approval.

While the pilot does not directly control or cause these factors, the pilot may place further pressure on the housing stock in the future. A concern was also raised in focus groups regarding potential animosity between married/civil partnered SP and LTR(E) SP in the future should housing availability become scarce:

“It goes back to your question about people getting treated differently. I think in two years time you might find that they do. Because you have married people here trying to look for houses and then someone who's been in relationship for a year and isn't married might get a house rather than them. I think you might then get a little bit of animosity between the wives and stuff like that.” [Focus Group Akrotiri]

Stakeholders were confident as the pilot became 'normalised', animosity would not occur as SFA entitlement for LTR(E) SP would be an accepted part of military culture and policy. In cases of limited accommodation, stakeholders also stated current overseas policy would be applied fairly to LTR(E) and married/civil partnered SP. Personnel would be housed at another base or private sector accommodation if required.

Further alternative theories considered in workshops for sub-claims 1 and 2 included:

1. Cyprus can currently maintain sufficient accommodation as SP often move in units, creating space for incoming SP. In the future, should larger numbers of units move in than leave, there may be restrictions on SFA availability.
2. As the policy is still in the pilot phase, numbers of LTR(E) SP requiring SFA may be small enough and manageable for accommodation to cope.
3. There will always need to be sufficient SFA and consistent application of policy in cases where there is no SFA available as LTR(E) SP/any SP can choose to get married at any time and therefore become entitled to SFA.
4. Pilot sites were specifically chosen with sufficient housing capacity to absorb demand.

Table 13: Void margin percentages for bases in Cyprus and average void margin percentages for Cyprus over the course of monitoring data collection. Data was provided by Unit HR Cyprus.

Month and Year	Dhekelia Void Margin (%)	Episkopi Void Margin (%)	Akrotiri Void Margin (%)	Average Cyprus Void Margin (%)
Nov-24	10	10	4.03	8.01
Dec-24	10	10	4.03	8.01
Jan-25	7	8	10	8.33
Feb-25	8	8	10	8.67
Mar-25	10	10	10	10.00
Apr-25	10	10	10	10.00
May-25	10	10	3.3	7.77

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

Table 14: Claim 8 outcomes

Sub-claim(s)	ToC section	Outcome	Quality of evidence	Population(s) assessed in claim
a. There are appropriate resources to implement the pilot	Input	Met	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	Met	High: SP Low: Partners	LTR(E) SP on the Pilot Partners on the pilot
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4.5.8.1. Sub-claim 8a: There are appropriate resources to implement the pilot Outcome: Met

Implementation interviews, LTR(E) SP interviews and chain of command focus groups indicated 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 FamSec (see Claim 2), Difficulties were cited by LTR(E) SP obtaining nursery and childcare services, however, these are not LTR(E) specific and affect all SP with children:

“We've just applied, need to check emails actually, but I've applied for AirMed to get her home, so again in terms of the pilot, I assume we wouldn't be treated any differently to married people.” [LTR(E) SP Interview]

“The nursery's got a huge wait list. Yeah, we're on the wait list. But it's unlikely we'll probably get one before [child] starts school. And there's, I think one child minder on camp... The way that they're prioritised the nursery I believe is basically: dual working in military, dual working mix and then obviously you know single person working. So it's probably no different for LTR(E).” [LTR(E) SP Interview]

“The only thing is it slows down again we go back to family section so to then get your status card, but there's no difference between a married person and an LTR person having that status card, and that gets you access to your medical, dental, schooling” [Focus Group Ayios Nikolaos]

One focus group indicated some restriction in LTR(E) SP and partners accessing services supporting relationship breakdowns which should be further explored:

“Other agencies, they offer care to family members, those that are with a Service soldier or direct family (mother, father and stuff like that). And it's very hard to explain to them that I'll refer to as boyfriend and girlfriend...if they were married and going through a divorce, yes. They're going through a divorce, but they're still classed as a family member...whereas a boyfriend, a girlfriend, it's a different category and it's hard to get the support for them because technically they're not a family member.” [Overseas Focus Group Episkopi]

4.5.8.2. Sub-claim 8b: The pilot contributes to maintained ability for schools/dentists/ doctors to cope with demand

Outcome: Met

Survey data strongly suggested services were able to cope with demand from the pilot. No LTR(E) SP reported they were unable to access medical or dental services. 91% (n=43) of SP and 86% (n=7) of partners who responded to the survey did not need to access maternal/midwifery services. There was high satisfaction among LTR(E) SP who responded to the survey for wait times for medical services (79%, n=33) and dental services (83%, n=35).

Overall, 38% (n=13) of LTR(E) SP responding to the survey with children accompanying them overseas were able to access wrap around childcare overseas. The majority of LTR(E) SP were able to access, and were satisfied with, education services overseas (62%, n=13 and 64%, (n=11), respectively). During Chain of Command interviews, childcare was cited as a limited service for all SP. During fieldwork supplies of teachers in Cyprus and nursery provision were highlighted as key issues in Townhall meetings. This affected all children and SP not only LTR(E) or those in the pilot.

Alternative explanation

The alternative theory to Claim 8 proposed it is not possible to predict which services any SP will require overseas. Medical, dental and childcare operate on a ratio bases and adapt according to the requirements presented at the time.

4.5.9. Claim 9: Fewer complaints are received from SP in LTR(E)s in Cyprus.

Table 15: Claim 9 outcomes

ToC section	Outcome	Quality of evidence	Population(s) assessed in claim
Outcome	Met	High	LTR(E) SP on the Pilot

Claim 9 is rated as met. Overall, no complaints, following the process outlined in JSP464 Tri-service accommodation regulations were recorded on monitoring information data regarding the pilot or LTR(E) entitlements. Monitoring information data was quality assured at source and implementation interviews reflected difficulties in gaining information from various teams and units on policy sites. Some complaints may be missing/ unreported. No complaints or concerns were cited in implementation interviews regarding the pilot, one participant felt complaints had reduced due to provisions and parity provided by the pilot:

“Some even saying complaints reduced because of the pilot: not that I had much visibility of it anyway. But you know, there were definitely conversations

that were had before the pilot that and are no longer had because of the pilot.”
[Overseas Base]

A high proportion of LTR(E) SP on the pilot who responded to the survey believed serving accompanied overseas created equality between SP in LTRs and SP who are married/in civil partnership (98%, n=43). The majority of SP also agreed policy changes to serve accompanied overseas in LTR(E) made them feel treated the same as married/civil partnered SP (93%, n=43) and the ability to serve accompanied overseas created an inclusive environment in Defence with a modern workforce (86%, n=43). These positive sentiments may provide contributory theories to why complaints against the policy and associated to LTR(E) were low.

Chain of command focus groups and implementation interviews did identify a potential for complaints to increase in the future should preserved rights continue to not be communicated or outlined in formal policy:

“Preserved rights will become quite key because they would have left their spouses or partner's job in the in the UK, they would probably have rent their house, but when they come out here they live in SFA because they're entitled to it. But we do have that preserved rights onto 2027, I think 2027 or 26. But my point is when they go back, we need to have that assurance from the MoD that they've got that right for the entitlement of the SFA when they go back because otherwise they will be in the dilemma whether they're going to move into the house, if they haven't got the entitlement.” [Implementation Interviews Head Office]

Stakeholders acknowledged concerns regarding preserved rights. The Accommodation Policy team have told the Evaluation Team they remain alert to the issue and emphasised preserved rights are dependent on the implementation of the Modernised Accommodation Offer (MAO).

Alternative explanation

Alternative theories considered by researchers and stakeholders regarding no complaints being identified included:

1. Some complaints may not be received by Unit HR and therefore not recorded i.e., dealt with informally at a team level. Additionally, some complaints may go directly to stage 3 and be captured directly by the Overseas Accommodation Policy team rather than be monitored and captured by unit HR.
2. LTR(E) SP may be hesitant to complain about the pilot and entitlements as this could be viewed as an additional benefit they do not wish to be removed.
3. As cited in implementation interviews, bi-monthly meetings and rapid decisions and solutions may limit casework arising and SP complaints.
4. Evidence collected may be biased as it is only collected in pilot locations (Cyprus). Non-pilot locations may also have no complaints/casework. Future

evaluations may wish to use non-pilot locations as comparison groups to assess the impact of the pilot specifically on complaints.

4.6. 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, that 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.

4.7. Limitations – impact evaluation

Limitations of the evaluation are discussed at the end of the report. Limitations specific to the impact evaluation include:

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. This evidence gap meant some contribution claims 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 the quality and availability of data to measure the claims. The evaluation also did not capture the experience of married SP who may have been affected by the LTR(E) pilot and availability of accommodation. This limitation has been explicitly acknowledged throughout the evaluation and is addressed in recommendations.

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. As the first cohort of pilot SP begin to return to the UK and it will be important to understand their full experiences on the pilot and capture their perspectives of preserved rights. Without continued evaluation, there is a risk the pilot's development, particularly in new settings, will remain unexamined.

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 during the data collection phase it is likely more contribution claims could have been assessed and key assumptions tested in greater depth. Future evaluations should revise the ToC continuously with stakeholders to reflect the iterative nature of developing and delivering a pilot policy.

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.

5. Value for Money Evaluation

5.1. Summary of findings

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.

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.

5.2. Overview

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

- What is the overall cost of providing housing and allowances to SP in LTR(E)s on the pilot?
- 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?
- What is the satisfaction with the quality of accommodation provided to SP in LTR(E)s on the overseas pilot?
- Have there been increases in complaints/casework regarding accommodation since the launch of the overseas pilot compared to before the pilot?

Efficiency

- Is the accommodation for SP in LTR(E) allocated efficiently, ensuring minimal voids or under-utilisation?
- 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?
- How can housing allocation be improved to avoid unnecessary complexity, whilst ensuring SP are accommodated properly?
- Are the processes for claiming and managing allowances simple and streamlined, reducing admin burden for SP and personnel administrators?
- 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?

Effectiveness

- To what extent does the pilot contribute to the intended outcomes?

Equity

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

The 4E analysis allowed the VfM evaluation to assess if the pilot was minimising cost of resources without sacrificing quality and satisfaction for LTR(E) SP and partners, and spending well, wisely and fairly to ensure impact and limit inequalities between groups. The analysis assessed intended versus actual performance of policies/interventions, in this case the pilot. This method infers causality by highlighting areas where the pilot performed as expected and met VfM standards. However, 4E analysis cannot be used to provide 'proof' of VfM or costings about the pilot. The VfM framework used in this evaluation was developed collaboratively with stakeholders and is grounded in the pilot's ToC.

5.3. Methodology

The methodology for 4E VfM is outlined below:

1. Each dimension (economy, effectiveness, efficiency and equity) is directly mapped to the ToC. The evaluation team worked closely with policy and implementation stakeholders to translate VfM research questions and key activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts of the ToC stakeholders were most interested in into measures to assess each dimension.
 - a. For example, the outcome 'reduced number of complaints and casework' was translated into measures under 'economy' and 'efficiency' assessing increases/decreases in casework and complaints regarding accommodation and registering for LTR(E) status.
 - b. Measures assessed under each dimension are listed in Annex C
2. To ensure all critical elements of the ToC were assessed, the dimensions 'Economy' and 'Efficiency' were each further broken down into two sub-dimensions.
3. Expectations of what results would look like under each dimension were established to minimise biases and retrospectively fitting data to dimensions (an

example is included Annex D). Results could be considered poor, adequate, good or excellent. All results are presented in this report.

- a. For example, under the example of 'equity', more than 50% of SP in LTRE report feeling unfairly treated compared to married SP indicating 'poor' VfM. In contrast more than 90% SP in LTRE report feeling fairly treated compared to married SP indicating 'excellent' VfM.
4. A workshop was held with stakeholders and economists to quality assure and agree dimensions, evidence required and expectations under each rating before data collection. The expected thresholds for poor, adequate, good and excellent were based on analyst and stakeholder judgement and expertise due to a lack of existing evidence suggesting an appropriate threshold. Thresholds were not changed once the data collection had started to limit subjectivity and assessment being clouded by stakeholder biases on the pilot performance. There was only one change to the 'efficiency' dimension where the threshold had been documented incorrectly before data collection which became apparent during assessment of the results. Feedback and necessary changes from stakeholders on the thresholds were implemented prior to data collection.
5. Research activities and types of evidence required to accurately and robustly assess and rate each dimension were identified.
 - a. For example, monitoring data on the number of SFA allocated to those on the pilot and implementation interviews were identified as necessary data sources to assess the dimension 'efficiency' (See Annex D).
 - b. Required evidence was collected during the evaluation period and results were compared directly to pre-set expectations to obtain ratings.
6. Evidence from research activities was also categorised using a rating system: 'high', 'moderate', 'low' or 'missing', to ensure overall conclusions of dimensions were not based on whether evidence simply existed but also how credible and robust the evidence was.
7. A badged Government Social Researcher undertook an assessment of all the dimensions using the data collected during the pilot. Each sub-dimension and dimensions were assigned one of the following ratings:
 - a. **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.
 - b. **Adequate** - the minimum expected level of performance was achieved. While there is some evidence the pilot delivered acceptable VfM, gaps or inconsistencies are present.
 - c. **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.
 - d. **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.
8. To establish an overall rating for 'Economy' and 'Efficiency', standard practice, guided by the MOD Evaluation team, was used. The lower of the ratings was

applied. For example, if one sub-dimensions as rated as 'poor' and another as 'adequate', an overall rating of 'poor' would be applied. This ensures results are not unintentionally overinflated and the evaluation presents VfM performance fairly and accurately.

9. A workshop was held with key stakeholders involved in the policy, design and delivery of the pilot. Stakeholders attending the workshop included Accommodation Policy Team, UK Strategic Command, Overseas Housing Teams, Armed Forces Remuneration Team, Overseas Unit HR Teams and independent GSR members (to provide quality assurance and oversight of the workshop). Stakeholders assessed ratings, and interpretations of the evidence. Feedback, challenges, agreement and queries were collated, and dimensions were adjusted accordingly. Stakeholders did not disagree with any ratings and were able to provide further insight to explain ratings and evidence collected. To note, stakeholders were largely in favour of the pilot and therefore, likely to be interested in its' success. This potential bias is discussed under 'Limitations'.
10. All dimensions were finalised and reviewed by a badged Government Economist, accounting for all quality assurance and stakeholder feedback.
11. A review of the final report was undertaken by two Government Economists.

5.4. Research activities

The VfM evaluation was informed by data from implementation interviews, routine monitoring data, survey with SP and partners who did and did not join the pilot, Chain of Command Focus Groups and LTR(E) SP interviews undertaken up to May 2025. Findings from the Contribution Analysis used for the impact evaluation were also used.

5.5. Findings

This section presents the results of the VfM analysis, using the 4E Framework. For each dimension, the overall rating and quality of evidence are presented. Following this, a summary of the evidence collected and further insights from stakeholders are provided.

To note, 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.

5.5.1. Dimension: Economy

Overall, 'Economy' for the pilot was rated as 'Good' with 'High to Moderate' quality of evidence.

- Sub-dimension 1 was rated as 'Good' with 'Moderate' quality of evidence.
- Sub-dimension 2 was rated as 'Excellent' with 'High' quality of evidence.

5.5.1.1. Economy sub-dimension 1

Research questions for dimension

1. What is the overall cost of providing housing and allowances to SP in LTR(E)s on the overseas pilot?
2. What is the satisfaction with the quality of accommodation provided to SP in LTR(E)s on the overseas pilot?
3. Have there been increases in complaints/casework regarding accommodation since the launch of the overseas pilot compared to before the pilot?

Rating and explanation

Sub-dimension 1 was rated as 'Good' with 'Moderate' quality of evidence.

While there was no formal budget, implementation interviews stated there was effort to obtain some estimates of cost and uptake of allowances and accommodation. In most cases, this involved assuming a maximum uptake of the pilot to guarantee services would be able to cope. However, uptake estimates were not always possible to obtain or accurate as allowance costs and welfare needs vary with incoming cohorts, for any demographic of SP not specifically LTR(E) SP. It is not possible to fully predict what the needs of SP will be i.e., who will require childcare services, what medical, dental or material services will be used.

"We used our amazing statisticians in the team to understand how many long-term relationships we might have on the pilot... and based on that number and all the allowances that we were projecting; we then came up with an overall total." [Implementation Interviews Head Office]

"I think the reality is you don't know the circumstance of the service person at their next assignment. You could have somebody who is married with five kids, married, with no kids, not married, in long term relationship, whatever." [Implementation Interviews Overseas Base]

"Everyone's experience is personal with what allowances they get. So, we know that people are going to be long term relationships, but we don't know every single one of their circumstances...so we just kind of assumed at the maximum of everything." [Implementation Interviews Head Office]

"We accounted for an SP utilising everything that was made available as part of that allowance package. Not all of them either needed it or became eligible...because of that, I think it is still under budget." [Implementation Interviews Head Office]

To note, as there was no formal or published budget, this latter quotation cannot be accurately assessed.

As confirmed in implementation interviews, “the support framework exists anyway” as FLCs currently absorb allowance costs for married/civil partnered SP. Therefore, they were able to absorb allowance costs as part of business-as-usual procedures at “no additional cost”. Housing was also provided using existing infrastructure, again limiting cost. Stakeholder workshops cited the use of vacant housing was in fact cost efficient, preventing Defence from paying to keep and maintain empty SFA.

“If anything, there was a decrease because a lot of empty houses... So...it was just the allowances piece. In reality, the argument was they could just get married - we have no idea how many people aren't gonna get married to get on this.” [Implementation Interviews Head Office]

“DIO keep close tabs on how many void available houses they have in all of their locations so they can tell us how much capacity is in the system to enable this kind of trial, and the single services can tell DIO how many LTR(E) they have registered on their JPA system and on average how many of those are going to be in overseas locations so we can make sure that there was going to be sufficient accommodation.” [Implementation Interviews Head Office]

“Everyone in an LTR is getting the houses so it's only positive, I'm yet to see a negative.” [Focus Group Akrotiri]

During workshops, stakeholders highlighted that due to difficulties estimating uptake and welfare needs, overseas services work on a ratio basis. Therefore, it is likely services were and currently remain equipped for any increased demands from the pilot. It should be highlighted pilot costs and provisions are likely scalable and affordable. Logic dictates FLCs and overseas services should be able to continue absorbing future costs and demands of the pilot as any LTR(E) SP could get married and therefore require entitled housing, services, welfare and accommodation. Scalability of housing will be impacted depending on the size and needs of incoming units overseas. This is further discussed in the impact evaluation and under the dimension ‘Efficiency’.

Implementation interviews, chain of command focus groups and monitoring data also showed no complaints regarding the pilot, accommodation provided on the pilot or pilot allowances:

“Some even saying complaints reduced because of the pilot: not that I had much visibility of it anyway. But you know, there were definitely conversations that were had, you know, before the pilot that are no longer had because of the pilot.” [Implementation Interviews Overseas Base]

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.

Survey results overall provided evidence of 'good' economy; 84% (n=45) of SP and 75% (n=8) of partners were satisfied receiving accommodation within their entitlement, 86% (n=44) of SP were satisfied with the location of accommodation. 66% (n=44) of SP were satisfied receiving their choice of accommodation and satisfaction with the quality of accommodation was slightly lower for SP responding to the survey (61%, n=44). Whilst these survey results were considered 'adequate', combined with other findings the overall rating was considered 'good'. Implementation interview and focus group participants stated overall quality of accommodation in Cyprus was low and there was no specific disparity between quality of accommodation received by LTR(E) personnel compared to married/civil partnered SP:

"In terms of size, they're good size houses. In terms of location, the vast majority got the location near duty station...Housing quality in Cyprus is crappy, being brutally honest." [Implementation Interviews Head Office]

In addition, 83% (n=40) of SP who responded to the survey did not experience any issue being allocated their accommodation while serving accompanied overseas. Of SP who experienced issues and left comments explaining the issue, these were related to eligibility to apply for the pilot, limited clarification/understanding of entitlement or issues with the SFA such as leaking pipes (structural issues are beyond the scope of the pilot and will affect all SP):

"I still don't know exactly what my entitlement is, we were only offered 3 of the oldest houses; so seemingly just surplus." [Survey participant comment]

"I have been with my partner for over 5 years but because one part of our evidence was at a year yet. They wouldn't accept it." [Survey participant comment]

"Constantly having to chase for allocation to enable removals from UK." [Survey participant comment].

Stakeholders acknowledged delays with removals – contractors for removals were not aware of the entitlement change for LTR(E) SP, particularly those in situ ('in situ' refers to LTR(E) SP already stationed (situated) at pilot sites who were permitted to join the pilot up to 6 months after launch i.e. June 2024), and removals is typically time bound. This in turn may have led to delays, as contractors needed to be informed, and exceptional authority granted to approve 'out of bounds' removal allowances.

Overall, evidence from implementation interviews and survey data indicates the pilot did not create any additional financial constraints or pressures and accommodation was successfully provided. However, given no/limited evidence of estimated costs, uptake or a formal budget, the overall rating remains at 'good' as the evaluation cannot conclusively state allowance and accommodation costs fell within estimates and are justified by improved outcomes.

5.5.1.2. Economy sub-dimension 2

Research questions for dimension

1. 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?

Rating and explanation

Sub-dimension 2 was rated as 'Excellent' with 'High' quality of evidence.

Implementation interviews found no additional staff training was required, and 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:

"At the start of the initial phase, it did increase the workload but it kind of settled once the pilot settled." [Implementation Interview Overseas Base]

"I wouldn't say there's been a massive change in my responsibilities. It's just business as usual for us." [Implementation Interview Overseas Bases]

Of those who responded to the survey, 82% (n=45) of SP were satisfied with the support of unit staff and 76% (n=45) were satisfied with knowledge of unit staff during the application process. In addition, there was high satisfaction among SP responding to the survey with applying for accommodation (78%, n=45) and applying for allowances (76%, n=45) to serve accompanied overseas. While 20% (n=45) of SP were dissatisfied receiving an allowance package that supported their circumstances, this does not imply they had difficulties or inconveniences receiving the package. This result could potentially be due to the actual allowance package not being sufficient to support SP and partners overseas rather than administrative errors.

5.5.2. Dimension: Efficiency

Overall, 'Efficiency' for the pilot was rated as 'Adequate' with 'Moderate' quality of evidence.

- Sub-dimension 1 was rated as 'Adequate' with 'Moderate' quality of evidence.
- Sub-dimension 2 was rated as 'Good' with 'Moderate' quality of evidence

5.5.2.1. Efficiency sub-dimension 1

Research questions for dimension

1. 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?
2. What percentage of SP have to serve un-accompanied temporarily/ are temporarily put into a hotel/ go in SLA as dual serving?

Rating and explanation

Sub-dimension 1 was rated as 'Adequate' with 'Moderate' quality of evidence.

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.

The evaluation team and stakeholder workshops concluded there were insufficient measures to assess whether LTR(E) SP were temporarily assigned unaccompanied overseas or given temporary allocation to other accommodation whilst waiting for SFA, due to insufficient accommodation. Monitoring data showed no applications to the pilot were declined due to insufficient SFA; however, this measure alone is not enough to draw meaningful conclusions.

Only one survey question assessed temporary allocation and could not properly isolate whether temporary placement was due to LTR(E) status and/or the pilot. Of SP who responded to the survey, 23% (n=44) of SP reported being temporarily placed into another type of accommodation before receiving SFA. This may be because SP were on site prior to the pilot or arrived before partners and were placed into another type of accommodation (e.g., SLA) before being allocated SFA. Stakeholders were confident in this assumption as no casework arose involving housing allocation and they stated being placed temporarily in accommodation when unaccompanied is standard across overseas policy and not specific or discriminatory towards LTR(E) SP. Reassuringly, no partners who responded to the survey reported being placed into temporary accommodation, indicating by the time of arrival SP and partners had correctly been allocated SFA.

This sub-dimension also measured efficiency of void margins. Void margins refer to the percentage of vacant properties at any given site. The accepted void margin for Cyprus is set at 10%. Vacant properties on sites are needed in case individuals need to be housed in an emergency e.g., a fault with existing housing. However, very high void margins over accepted levels indicate accommodation is not being used efficiently and there are too many vacant properties on site, creating a financial burden for Defence. In contrast, when void margins fall below accepted levels, this indicates there is insufficient housing supply and may not support housing individuals in exceptional circumstances.

Efficiency also sought to measure whether the pilot had led to a reduction in the percentage of vacant SFA available for habitation without impacting ideal void margins of habitable SFA i.e. ensuring housing on base was being properly utilised to reduce excess vacant housing. Some SFA may not be habitable due to its

condition or not being seismically compliant. This can impact the overall void margin for the SFA estate, but this SFA is not considered in the void margin for habitable SFA.

Evaluation leads and stakeholders concluded this measure should not have been included as there was no specific data to measure this – only proxy data using void margins. Void margins used to estimate this measure showed small fluctuations of 20-30% reductions during the period of data collection. However, these reductions were not consistent, and it is not possible to conclude they were the result of the pilot. When considering each base, there were small, temporary reductions of void margins in Dhekelia or Episkopi while void margins in Akrotiri fell below accepted margins (explored in further detail below). Stakeholders also felt some locations, particularly Episkopi, would never/rarely see reductions in vacant properties as they were built for larger numbers of Armed Forces personnel which are not present today. In addition, evidence collected cannot isolate the effect of the pilot on vacant properties and it is unlikely reductions are solely due to the pilot.

Average void margins in Cyprus during the period of the pilot evaluation remained between 7-10%.

However, when considering void margins at the three bases in Cyprus, there are some important variations to note:

1. **Akrotiri:** low void margins in Akrotiri have remained a concern throughout evaluation data collection. Prior to January 2025 and since May 2025, void Margins have been 3-4%. Some of this remaining stock is unavailable for various maintenance issues (e.g., damp/mould) or due to housing not being seismically compliant. Therefore, true void margins are closer to 1.79%.
2. **Episkopi and Dhekelia:** Episkopi and Dhekelia saw a small reduction in void margins from 10% (Dec 24) to 8% and 7%, respectively, in Jan 2025, and have consistently remained within acceptable void margins. This indicates the pilot is operating effectively at these bases with minimal impact on reducing vacant properties or influencing void margins beyond accepted levels.

During stakeholder workshops, it was acknowledged void margins in Akrotiri are impacted by a number of factors beyond the control of the pilot. Akrotiri continuously sees units rotating and recently has seen an overall increase in personnel, particularly given changes within the wider geo-political landscape. A high number of non-seismic compliant/fit for habitation housing has been removed from circulation and is currently pending demolition and rebuild under Project Apollo. Project Apollo is a building project to renew housing in Akrotiri and ensure all houses are seismic compliant, this may involve removing small numbers or entire blocks of housing at a time for development - funding and final plans for the project are still waiting for approval.

While the pilot does not directly control/cause these factors, the pilot may place further pressure on the housing stock and there may be reduced ability to house

LTR(E) personnel in the future. Stakeholders have confirmed in this case, LTR(E) SP will be treated equally to married/civil partnered SP and housed in one of the other bases such as Episkopi.

Stakeholders also highlighted Dhekelia or Episkopi were built when the Armed Forces had much higher SP numbers and overseas assignments. Therefore, the pilot alone is unlikely to ever impact void margins on these bases

Removing measures assessing temporary housing allocation/temporary assignment unaccompanied, and percentage reductions in vacant properties would increase the overall rating to 'good'. The evaluation acknowledges reviewing measures, and the ToC throughout the data collection process should occur in future evaluations to ensure appropriate and relevant data is being collected (further explored in limitations).

Of the remaining measures, there was good efficiency with the administrative processes and housing allocation. No delays in housing applications and allocations were identified during implementation interviews. The housing team in Cyprus confirmed there were no set timescales to complete housing applications within and applications for LTR(E) SP were treated the same as married/civil partnered SP. Monitoring data showed no applications were declined due to insufficient housing and no complaints were reported regarding housing allocation. Reasons for rejected applications were because the SP wanted to live outside of the base, which was not in line with the pilot policy, and is also not an option for married/civil partnered SP.

Data from the overseas survey showed the majority of SP were satisfied with the location (86%, n=44) of their housing on the pilot, 61% (n=44) were satisfied with the quality of their accommodation and 66% (n=44) were satisfied with receiving their choice of accommodation. Implementation interviews and overseas focus groups stated low quality housing was an issue beyond the pilot, affecting married/civil partnered SP too.

Overall, efficiency to process application and allocate housing is good, and average void margins in Cyprus stayed within accepted limits. Evidence indicates some concern around void margins at individual bases, particularly in Akrotiri, and there is limited evidence to solely measure the pilot's impact on reducing the percentage of vacant properties. In addition, satisfaction with quality of housing is below 75%. Therefore, this dimension has been given a rating of adequate.

5.5.2.2. Efficiency Sub-dimension 2

Research questions for dimension

1. Are the processes for claiming and managing allowances simple and streamlined, reducing admin burden for SP and personnel administrators?

2. Is the process for registering LTR(E) simple and streamlined, reducing burden for SP and HR?
3. Can the systems be streamlined to maintain or improve speed and accuracy, without adding complexity?

Rating and explanation

Sub-dimension 2 was rated as 'Good' with 'Moderate' quality of evidence

Evaluation research methods did not explicitly assess 'simplicity' of claiming allowances and registering LTR(E). Therefore, proxy measures from the survey, focus groups and interviews were used. As stated under sub-dimension 1, this is a limitation of the evaluation rather than the pilot. Future evaluations will ensure data required, 4E measures, and the ToC are consistently reviewed and updated throughout the evaluation process. This dimension was rated as good overall because of the different aspects which make up this sub-dimension including use of and engagement with of HR systems.

Implementation interviews found no new administration systems or processes were required as staff simply followed existing procedures 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:

"I don't think training is such a thing, because we're just treating them as if they are a married couple. It's just a different scenario." [Implementation Interviews Overseas Base]

The majority of SP who responded to the survey had high satisfaction of engaging with administration processes and systems. Of SP responding to the overseas survey, 82% (n=45) were satisfied with the support and 76% (n=45) with the knowledge of staff during the application process for the pilot. Survey data also showed SP were satisfied in their ability to ask questions about the pilot to staff (73%, n=45). The majority of SP were satisfied changing their LTR(E) status on the joint personnel administration system (JPA) (62%, n=45) and applying for accommodation (78%, n=45) and allowances (76%, n=45). SP were also largely satisfied in receiving accommodation (84%, n=45) and allowances (69%, n=45) within their entitlement. Only 18% (n=40) of SP who responded to the survey had issues being allocated accommodation on the pilot and 15% (n=40) experienced issues receiving their new allowance package.

Of SP responding to the survey, satisfaction with the clarity of evidence required to obtain LTR(E) status was 58% (n=45) - more SP responding to the survey were satisfied than dissatisfied. This finding was also echoed in interviews and focus groups where personnel expressed frustration at the type of evidence and length of time required (365 days) to prove LTR(E) status.

One SP reflected that having shared accounts or living together was not always possible as a modern couple/being in the military:

“A lot of people have been boyfriend and girlfriend in the UK or, you know, partners longer than that, but may not actually live together or share bank accounts, so it's hard for them to actually find that evidence. And with the policy being policy and you need that evidence...if someone's willing to bring someone from the UK to be to move their life, surely they could be a bit of justification of the evidence changing because not every Tom, Dick and Harry's going to decide to uproot their life, to move to another country with someone just because they haven't got a bank statement that shows they've been transferring money to them a year ago.” [Focus Group Dhekelia]

During implementation interviews, overseas interviews and focus groups, Families Section (FamSec) were also cited as not being inducted into the pilot process or having access to data about LTR(E) SP. Consequently, FamSec repeatedly requested information and personal data from SP and Units to approve some overseas entitlements, leading to delays in the process and frustrations from SP:

“I found it quite difficult to get the information and I found that I had to give all the information to Famsec, then give all the information to the unit, then give all the information to housing... I was collating all my evidence; personal information, banking information, stuff like that...and in giving it out all over the place.” [Focus Group Ayios Nikolaos]

“It would have been possibly useful for FamSec and the unit administrators to have done something where they fully understood eligibility a little bit better. We've probably had to learn that on the hoof as we've gone along.”
[Implementation Interviews Overseas Base]

Finally, some issues were identified with SP changing their PStatCat as this was viewed as a manual process (initially not well communicated) which would lead to later issues if personnel forgot to change categories on return to the UK. During implementation interviews, some delivery staff raised the idea that if the pilot was to extend, a specific LTR(E) PStatCat should be added to JPA to streamline/improve accuracy:

“When they go back to UK, we have to change that into their actual PStatCat 5. That extra step that we are required to do when they come out here and when they go back, sometimes they forget. The communication wasn't done properly on that... we did get direction afterwards. It was only last month I think we got that direction that their PStat had to be changed, but we were not informed.” [Implementation Interviews Overseas Base]

“We need a definite category for LTR(E) so we can align all the allowances, all the entitlements to that particular PStat.” [Implementation Interviews Overseas Base]

5.5.3. Dimension: Effectiveness

Overall, 'Effectiveness' for the pilot was rated as 'Good' with 'High' quality of evidence.

Research questions for dimension

1. To what extent does the pilot contribute to the intended outcomes, as assessed in contribution claims analysis?

Explanation for Rating

A total of 50% of contribution claims were marked as met (8 out of 16). One claim could not be assessed due to limited evidence and 44% (7 out of 16) of claims were marked as partially met. Limited evidence available meant caveats were placed around some of the claims. For example, no baseline data was collected on the number of complaints and evidence on housing availability was rated as 'met' only for the current period with current numbers of SP and only in Cyprus. In addition, there was limited evidence from SP who were eligible but did not join the pilot and partners. Future evaluations may wish to collect baseline data and address evidence gaps to better assess contribution claims. Furthermore, following stakeholder consultations for contribution claims analysis, claim 5 (fewer SP get married in the 3 months before deployment if given the option to serve accompanied in an LTR(E)) was identified as no longer relevant to the pilot/ a claim that would not be assessed in future evaluations. Reducing marriages was concluded to no longer be an impact, instead the impact should be related to removing disparities in policy/offers between married/civil partnered and LTR(E) SP. Removing this claim would make negligible difference to the current rating but can be considered for a future evaluation.

Further measures assessing this dimension included the percentage of SP and partners enjoying their overseas assignment and satisfaction with waiting times for services. In many cases, survey results for partners regarding satisfaction with wait times and access and satisfaction of childcare have been withheld due to disclosure control. Given low proportions of partners responding to the survey, caution should be taken when interpreting survey results from partners.

A lower proportion of partners (63%, n=8) would recommend accompanying overseas, in comparison to 100% (n=43) of SP who would recommend serving accompanied overseas. Of those who responded to the survey, 95% (n=43) of SP were willing to volunteer/be assigned overseas again if able to serve accompanied and 87% (n=39) of SP and 86% (n=7) of partners were enjoying/enjoyed their overseas assignment. In addition, lower proportions of partners recommending the overseas pilot could be due to difficulties accessing employment opportunities, transport limitations and isolation from friends and family which were identified as potential barriers/challenges in the survey and during overseas focus groups and interviews.

These barriers are not exclusive to LTR(E) partners or the pilot and affect spouses and partners across the Armed Forces. As no baseline measures for views on enjoyment or recommending overseas assignment were collected, the evaluation can also only infer the pilot has had an impact on these views. In the future, the evaluation may wish to collect baseline data or use counterfactuals to better understand the specific effect of the pilot on willingness to volunteer/accompanying overseas and enjoyment of overseas assignments. As stakeholder consultations noted enjoyment and willingness to volunteer again could be impacted by other factors outside of the pilot such as accommodation, job/training opportunities overseas, the overseas location or biases meaning the participant responds more positively thinking retrospectively about their assignment.

Of those who responded to the survey, 61% (n=44) of SP were able to access medical services overseas without difficulties (23% did not need to, n=44) and 79% (n=33) were satisfied with wait times for medical services. 68% (n=44) of SP were able to access dental services overseas without difficulties (20% did not need to, n=44) and 83% (n=35) were satisfied with wait times for dental services. Survey results showed the majority of SP (91%, n=43) and partners (86%, n=7) did not need to access maternal or midwifery services while overseas.

For SP with children accompanying them overseas, 38% (n=13) who responded to the survey were able to access necessary wrap around childcare, 62% (n=13) were able to access necessary education services for their children without difficulties and 64% (n=11) were satisfied with education services overseas. Lower satisfaction with education services and access to childcare services may be due to limited nursery spaces and available childcare services/hours overseas, identified in focus groups, LTR(E) SP interviews and stakeholders' consultations:

“The nursery's got a huge wait list. Yeah, we're on the wait list. But it's unlikely we'll probably get one before [child] starts school. And there's, I think one child minder on camp.” [LTR(E) SP Interview]

The evaluation and stakeholder consultations have noted issues with childcare are not specific to LTR(E) SP/partners and are beyond the scope of pilot; however, the pilot may place further pressure on the childcare system.

5.5.4. Dimension: Equity

Overall, 'Equity' for the pilot was rated as 'Good' with 'Moderate' quality of evidence.

Research questions for dimension

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 morale between LTR(E) SP with and without accompanying children?

Explanation for rating

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 satisfaction scores between male and female SP and SP with and without children accompanying overseas were similar.

Survey results showed 98% (n=43) of SP agreed serving accompanied overseas creates equality between Service personnel in long term relationships and Service personnel who are married/in civil partnerships. In addition, 93% (n=43) of SP responding to the survey agreed policy changes allowing them to serve accompanied overseas in an LTR(E) made them feel treated the same as personnel who are married or in civil partnerships, and 86% (n=43) agreed the ability to serve accompanied overseas in an LTR(E) creates an inclusive environment in Defence with a modern workforce. There is no data to assess differences in morale or perceptions of equality for LTR(E) SP who did not join the pilot. Survey data which would have provided a proxy measure was disclosure controlled as the respondent population was too small.

Equality and community cohesion was also reflected in overseas focus groups and implementation interviews. Focus groups emphasised there was no difference in the community and treatment of LTR(E) personnel and they had equal access to services as married/civil partnered SP would:

“Like in the SFA and there’s no clear delineation between people that are LTR, they’ve just been integrated.” [Focus Group Dhekelia]

“I haven’t noticed any divide between people being sort of married and LTRs or anything like that. So LTRs are fully included within the unit, invited to everything. There is no issue.” [Focus Group Ayios Nikolaos]

Some delays were noted due to FamSec (as mentioned above) creating a minor disparity in the process of receiving removals and allowances between married/civil partnered SP and LTR(E) SP. In addition, LTR(E) partners on the pilot were required to provide next of kin details. In comparisons, for spouses and civil partners the SP is automatically considered the next of kin. While there were no complaints regarding this additional information, it is considered a disparity between the administration of LTR(E) partners and married spouses/civil partners.

Satisfaction scores between male and female were broadly similar for receiving allowances (<10% difference) and the quality of overseas accommodation (<15% difference). However, fewer male SP agreed they were enjoying/enjoyed their

overseas assignment (84%, n=39) than female SP (100%, n=39). These results cannot be used to ascertain whether they are due to the pilot.

During stakeholder workshops, it was cited a higher number of dual serving couples were female. Therefore, future evaluation and research may wish to explore satisfaction and parity between a) dual serving LTR(E) couples and single serving LTR(E) couples on the pilot and b) male and female dual serving couples.

SP with and without children broadly agreed they enjoyed/were enjoying their overseas assignment (<10% difference). There was slightly more difference between ratings of morale between SP with children (55% rated as high, n=44) and without children (79% rated as high, n=44).

While not initially added as a sub-dimension to the equity evaluation, findings from focus groups and overseas interviews also stated the pilot had encouraged LTR(E) SP to fill job vacancies overseas as they could do so without leaving their partners behind. Thus, indicating the pilot was increasing/creating equal employment opportunities for LTR(E) personnel as well as those who are married or single:

“This post wouldn’t have even been an option for me, I wouldn’t have even put it down without the LTR. They’re really merit based so to get this post you’ve got to be top of the game so potentially would have had someone who scored lower on the board without having this option.” [Focus Group Episkopi]

Interviews and focus groups also indicated a potential disparity between overseas and UK accommodation policy as LTR(E) personnel were being given more entitlements overseas than in the UK - this is something which should be considered in future policy to ensure offers abroad and in the UK remain equitable for all in long-term relationships:

“This person has gone now from living committed, accompanied with his partner for a couple of years and then the Army’s gonna go ‘actually now after this date, you’re now back on surplus, you’re not entitled’...straight away it’s going to be ‘well do we have to get married?’. That’s a choice you have to make.” [Focus Group Dhekelia]

5.6. 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.

5.7. Limitations – VfM Evaluation

Limitations of the evaluation are discussed at the end of the report. Limitations specific to the VfM evaluation include:

Theory of Change Review

The ToC could have been more frequently revisited with stakeholders. The ToC was developed and workshopped during initial stages of the evaluation but not reassessed until the end of data collection and the evaluation period. Had it been reviewed and refined sooner it is likely additional dimensions and measures of the 4Es could have been assessed in greater depth. Future evaluations should revise the ToC continuously with stakeholders throughout data collection and analysis.

4E's dimensions

The 4E's approach is designed to be a qualitative assessment of the evidence, whilst also using quantitative measures. However, the lack of prior evidence to set thresholds for assessing each dimension can be a limitation. This was mitigated by setting thresholds in advance and using stakeholders to determine and agree thresholds. The subjectivity in setting thresholds for each dimension is also a strength of the approach as it can be used in interventions where evidence is complex or missing and benefits of the intervention can be hard to define.

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 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.

Vested stakeholder interest

As with the impact evaluation, the methodological process for 4E analysis involves workshopping analyst interpretations of data and claim ratings 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 limitations to ensure the pilot 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 asking for dimensions to be better rated.

6. Evaluation limitations

In addition to limitations listed for each evaluation, the following apply to the entire evaluation:

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 (e.g., higher number of Royal Navy SP, non-British protectorate bases, or different cultural acceptance of LTR(E)). 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.

Limited participation in other pilot sites is not an issue specific to the pilot. Locations such as the Falkland Islands (mentioned in implementation interviews) are particularly difficult to encourage overseas assignment to as they offer more limited infrastructure and education opportunities for older children. Other bases have only been introduced more recently into the pilot offer; therefore, it may take more time for SP to join the pilot in these locations.

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.

7. References

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Annexes

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

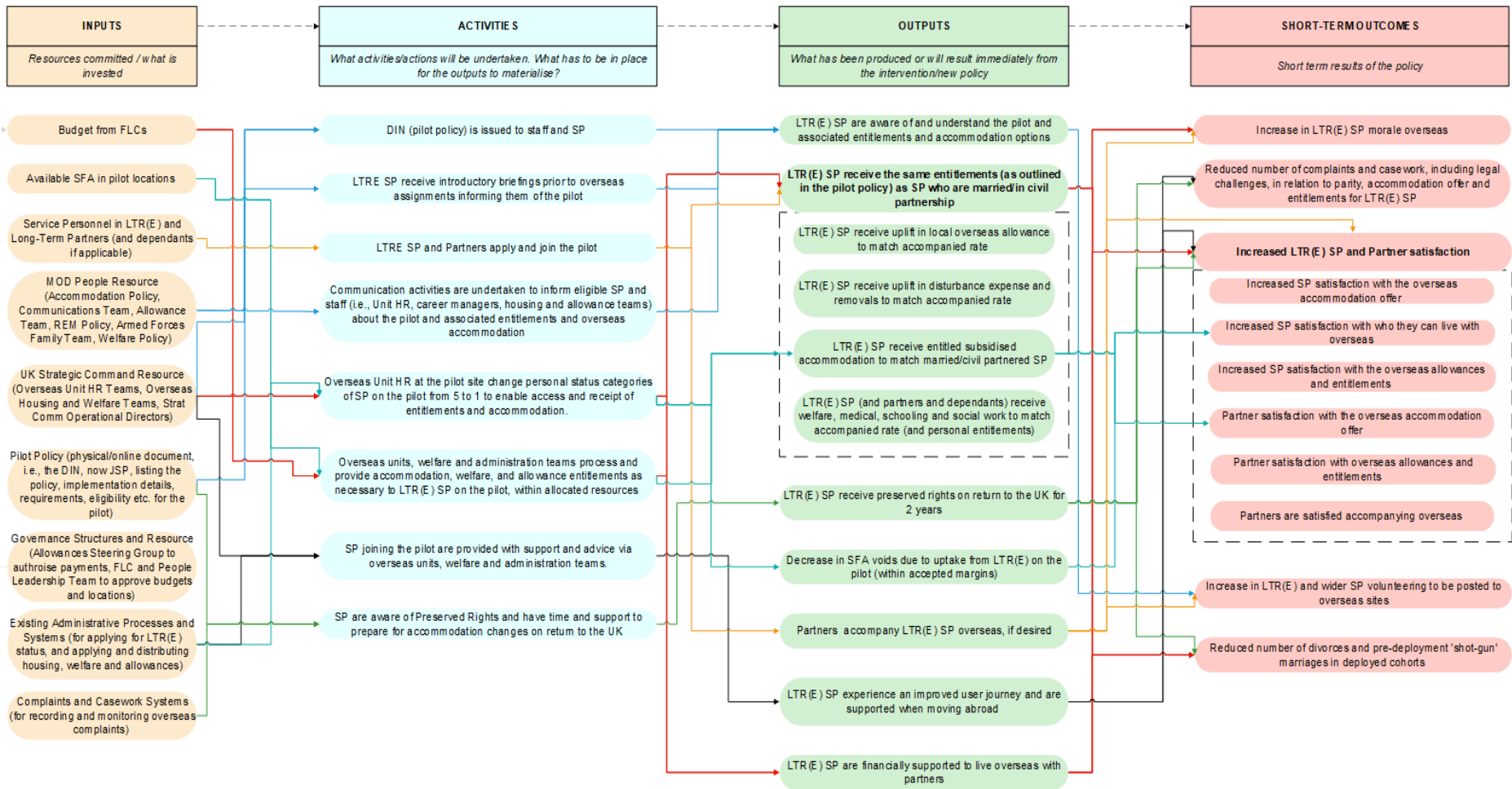
Problem Statement

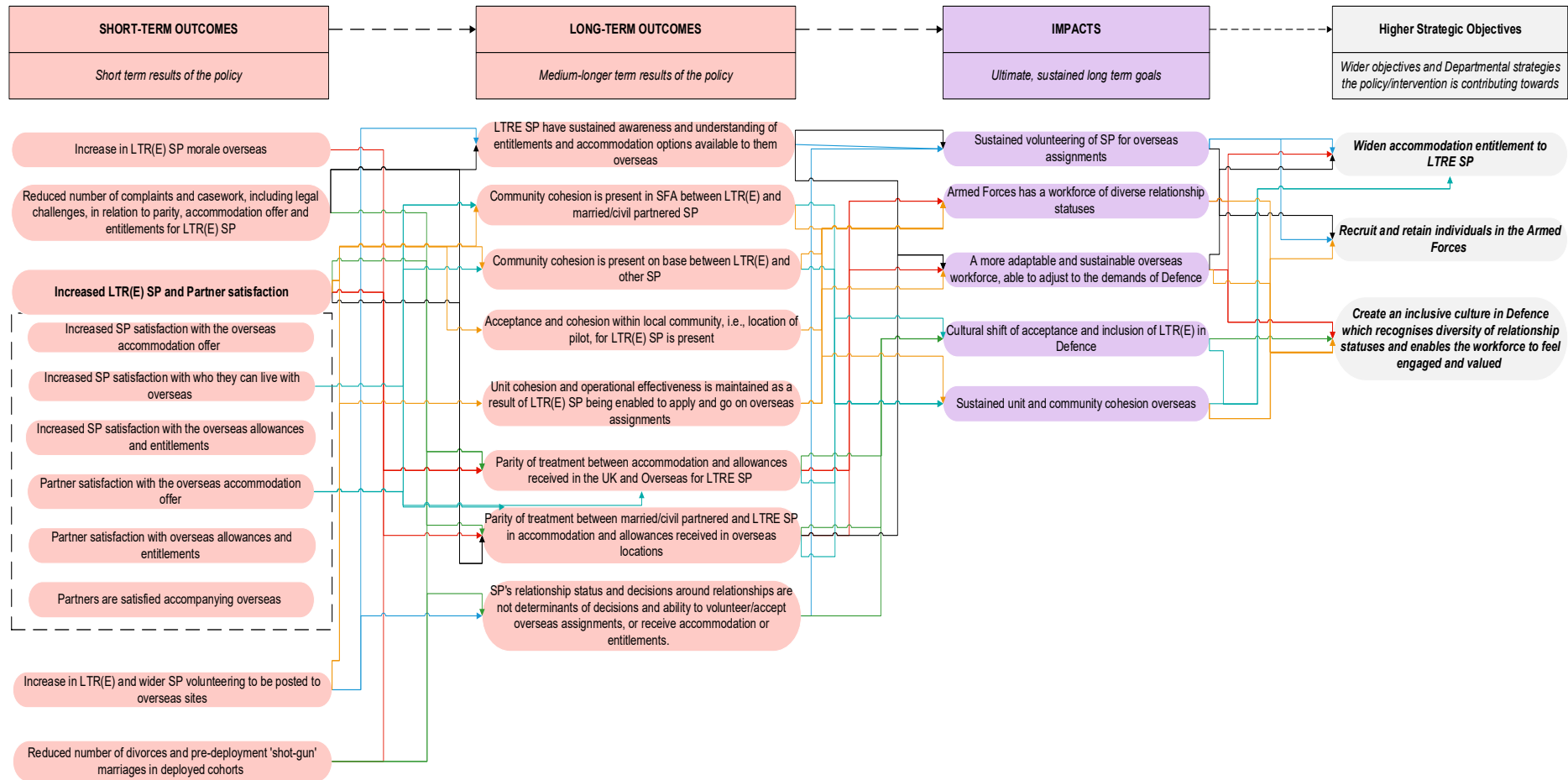
What has prompted the launch of the policy/intervention and what does it seek to solve?

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 31st 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 cohort who do not wish/are only doing so to receive entitlements. Consequently, leading 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 a 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.

A.B. Annex B: Full list of research questions for the process evaluation.

Primary research questions

- To what extent has the pilot been delivered as intended?
- Have the processes detailed in the Accompanied LTR(E) Overseas Pilot DIN and implementation plan been followed?
- Have the activities listed in Accompanied LTR(E) Overseas Pilot DIN and implementation plan been completed as planned?
- Were there any unexpected or unintended issues in the delivery of the intervention?
- How, if at all, has the local context influenced delivery?
- What aspects of the pilot implementation have worked well?
- What aspects of the pilot implementation could be improved?
- What can be learned from the delivery methods used?
- How, if at all, did the above vary by location?

Secondary research questions

- To what extent is there appropriate accommodation to implement the pilot?
- Is there sufficient SFA available to accommodate SP on the pilot?
- To what extent are there appropriate financial resources to implement the pilot?
- Is there sufficient FLC budget to deliver the pilot (for example, allowances)?
- To what extent are there appropriate human resources to implement the pilot?
- Is there sufficient staff to deliver the implementation of the pilot?
- Are staff sufficiently trained to implement the pilot?

- Are there sufficient staff to deliver wrap around services and support (such as schooling, medical care) to SP, their partners and if applicable, children?
- To what extent are there appropriate administrative systems in place to implement the pilot?
- Are the administrative processes (for allocating accommodation, processing accompanied allowances and processing VISAs) fit for purpose?
- What is the user experience of interacting with the administrative systems for both the SP (for registering LTR(E), applying for accommodation, receiving accompanied allowances) and staff?
- To what extent are the communications and training provided to SP about the pilot effective in supporting the implementation of the pilot?
- How did SP hear about the pilot?
- Have the communications enabled SP to understand the pilot and live in SFA with their partner?
- Was there any information on the pilot which was not clear/ SP did not understand?
- To what extent are preserved rights implemented as intended?
- Do SP understand preserved rights?
- Did SP use preserved rights on return to the UK? Why/ why not?
- How, if at all, do the above vary by location?

A.C. Annex C: Measures assessed under each dimension, mapped to the pilot ToC

Economy (Sub Dimension 1):

1. Financial constraints reported by policy/implementation team impacting delivery.
2. Financial constraints reported by stakeholders when implementing the pilot.
3. Cost of providing allowances relative to budgeted costs at start of project.
4. The cost justified by improved outcomes.
5. Suitability of accommodation provided under the pilot in terms of size, quality and location for SP and their families.
6. Satisfaction/dissatisfaction of LTR(E) SP and partners with accommodation provided under the pilot in terms of quality and location.
7. Complaints and casework regarding accommodation provided under the pilot.
8. Issues identified by LTR(E) SP and partners receiving accommodation within their entitlement.

Economy (Sub Dimension 2):

1. Average number of days taken to process SFA and SLA housing applications from Jan 23-24 compared to Jan 24-25.
2. Administrative costs of processing applications and training staff.
3. Increases in workload reported by implementation teams and potential need for additional staff to be employed.

4. Difficulties/ inconveniences reported by LTR(E) SP in receiving their housing and/or allowances.
5. Satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the housing application and allowance claiming processes reported by LTR(E) SP.

Efficiency (Sub Dimension 1):

1. Changes in void margins in Cyprus.
2. Completion of housing allocation within agreed timescales and SP arrival on base without SFA.
3. Administrative issues in housing allocation due to the pilot reported by delivery staff and SP.
4. SP serving un-accompanied temporarily or temporarily living in other accommodation whilst waiting for SFA.
5. Satisfaction/dissatisfaction with choice, location and quality of accommodation reported by SP.
6. Reductions in the percentage of vacant properties since the launch of the pilot, compared to before the pilot launch.

Efficiency (Sub Dimension 2):

1. Simplicity of the process for receiving allowances reported by SP.
2. Simplicity of the process for registering LTR(E) reported by SP.
3. Ability of delivery staff to process applications and handle allowances efficiently.
4. Casework related to registering LTR(E)s in Armed Forces Families Team.
5. Issues reported by the delivery team with SP changing their PStat Cat from 5 to 1 on return to UK.

Effectiveness:

1. Percentage of contribution claims met, as outlined in the impact evaluation.
2. Recommendations to join the pilot and enjoyment of overseas assignment reported by SP and partners.
3. Satisfaction/dissatisfaction reported by SP and partners with waiting times for medical, dental, maternal and WAC services.

Equity measured:

1. LTR(E) reporting feeling fairly treated compared to married SP.
2. Chain of Command reporting no change in morale of SP who missed the pilot (due to eligibility criteria).
3. Complaints reported regarding parity of treatment.
4. Differences in satisfaction/dissatisfaction with housing quality, receiving allowances and overseas assignment reported between male and Female LTR(E) SP.
5. Differences in satisfaction/dissatisfaction with overseas assignment and morale reported between LTR(E) SP on the pilot with accompanying children compared to LTR(E) SP not on the pilot with children unaccompanied.

A.D. Annex D: Example of 4E dimension ‘Equity’ outlining required research activities and criteria under each rating to assess the dimension.

Sub-dimension	Sources	Poor	Adequate	Good	Excellent
<p>a. Is housing distributed fairly between those in LTRE and those who are married, or do married SP remain prioritised?</p> <p>b. Does the pilot remove any disparities in benefits between those in LTRE and those who are married?</p> <p>c. Are there any differences in housing and allowance distribution, and satisfaction between male and female LTR(E) SP?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation research: understand how housing is allocated when applications are received (is there disparity at this stage), what the criteria is for allocation and determine any differences in benefits between cohorts, view on any inequality. • SP survey: whether they feel they are treated fairly. • MI: number of SP on pilot, by Rank and service, number of complaints around parity of treatment. • Chain of Command 	<p>1. More than 50% of SP in LTRE report feeling unfairly treated compared to married SP.</p> <p>2. Chain of Command report a decrease in morale of SP who missed the pilot (due to eligibility criteria).</p> <p>3. Some complaints about parity of treatment (casework) at the pilot sites and UK.</p> <p>4. Satisfaction scores for housing quality, receiving allowances and satisfaction with overseas assignment differ by >20% between</p>	<p>1. More than 50% of SP in LTRE report feeling fairly treated compared to married SP.</p> <p>2. Chain of Command report a decrease in morale of SP who missed the pilot (due to eligibility criteria).</p> <p>3. A few (2+) complaints about parity of treatment.</p> <p>4. Satisfaction scores for housing quality, receiving allowances and satisfaction with overseas assignment differ by >15% between male and female LTR(E) SP.</p>	<p>1. More than 75% of SP in LTRE report feeling fairly treated compared to married SP.</p> <p>2. Chain of Command report no change in morale of SP who missed the pilot (due to eligibility criteria).</p> <p>3. One or two complaints about parity of treatment.</p> <p>4. Satisfaction scores for housing quality, receiving allowances and satisfaction with overseas assignment differ by >10% between male and female LTR(E) SP.</p>	<p>1. More than 90% SP in LTRE report feeling fairly treated compared to married SP.</p> <p>2. Chain of Command report no change in morale of SP who missed the pilot (due to eligibility criteria).</p> <p>3. No complaints around parity of treatment.</p> <p>4. Satisfaction scores for housing quality, receiving allowances and satisfaction with overseas assignment differ by <10% between male and female LTR(E) SP.</p>

<p>d. Are there any differences in satisfaction and moral between LTR(E) SP with and without accompanying children?</p>	<p>interviews: drop in morale of SP still living in SLA/ PRS i.e. people who missed the trial.</p>	<p>male and female LTR(E) SP. 5. Satisfaction with overseas assignment and morale differs by >20% between LTR(E) SP on the pilot with accompanying children and LTR(E) SP not on the pilot with children unaccompanied.</p>	<p>5. Satisfaction with overseas assignment and morale differs by >15% between LTR(E) SP on the pilot with accompanying children and LTR(E) SP not on the pilot with children unaccompanied.</p>	<p>5. Satisfaction with overseas assignment and morale differs by >10% between LTR(E) SP on the pilot with accompanying children compared to LTR(E) SP not on the pilot with children unaccompanied.</p>	<p>5. Satisfaction with overseas assignment and morale differs by <10% between LTR(E) SP on the pilot with accompanying children compared to LTR(E) SP not on the pilot with children unaccompanied.</p>
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