

Families First Newsletter

A Message from DIO's new Accommodation Director



Phil Riley
DIO Director of
Accommodation

Dear Family,

I am delighted to be asked to write the forward for this latest edition of Families First, giving me the chance to introduce myself as the new Director of Accommodation in DIO.

Having joined from the Home Office in the middle of March, I have had a busy first month getting out and about to see as much of the current stock as possible. My visits have taken me from Portsmouth to Leuchars - with many stops in between! During this time I have been struck by the huge variation in the type and quality of housing stock we are providing to families - from the purpose built estates round Tidworth to the older and much more tired accommodation in parts of northwest London.

I recognise that there is a lot of work to be done in coming months, as we work with our delivery partners to get the most from the new Accommodation contracts. Every new contract takes time to bed in and deliver but, almost 13 months on, it is time that service families started seeing a real difference in our offer to you. At the top of my in-tray is getting Move Ins right ahead of the summer surge, ensuring that we improve your new home experience. We also need to use the summer period to get on top of the damp and mould issues that many of you have reported and we are working hard on delivering rectification plans across the homes that most need it. Finally, my team must support both Amey and VIVO in being agile in their response to repairs, as these are at times taking too long to resolve.

I am looking forward to meeting with many of you in coming months. In the meantime, please continue to use the 'Fast Feedback' offered by suppliers, as this is a really useful tool for improving the service.

Update on Performance Against Accommodation Contracts

Repairs & Maintenance

As of 24 April, the number of overdue repairs and maintenance tasks has fallen to **5,223**, down **75%** from the December peak of **21,100**.



Preparation of homes for Move-In

In March, the percentage of homes prepared to Move-In standard was **71%**. This figure has flatlined recently and work is underway to make further improvements.



Damp & Mould

A Damp & Mould 'First Responder' process is now in place.

As part of their visit, the First Responder may clean and treat areas of damp & mould. However, the main purpose of their visit is to:

- Assess the property to verify the telephone severity assessment
- Collect additional details about the issue
- Decide next steps including instructing professional surveys and/or scheduling works
- Provide advice on how to prevent or reduce damp & mould
- In severe cases, trigger a move-out

If the First Responder decides that either a professional survey or remediation works are required, Amey/VIVO will contact you directly to arrange a follow-up appointment.

So far, 76% of cases have had a professional survey instructed.

Active complaints



As of 23 April, the number of active complaints has reduced to **1,700**

Considerable work continues to resolve complaints and this has led to a **59%** fall in open complaints since the peak in November.

Call wait times

For week ending 23 April, the average call wait time for Pinnacle's National Service Centre was **17 seconds**.



SFA Investment across the Estate – Sustainability



Thermal Efficiency upgrades at North Camp

DIO is continuing with its programme of thermal efficiency improvement work at North Camp in Hampshire. VIVO is more than a quarter of the way through the project to upgrade doors and windows to 152 Service Family homes. This work is part of the £73m programme of investment to improve the heat retention of homes making them warmer, reducing fuel bills for families and, in turn, reducing Defence's carbon footprint.

DIO is also looking at how it can bring new types of heating into homes in line with reducing the use of fossil fuels and improving energy efficiency.

Project Nixie

Project Nixie is an innovative heating and hot water project that aspires to deliver heating to homes at considerably lower costs than traditional systems. It also aims to be CO2 emission free to meet the net zero targets set by the government.

DIO has had to overcome significant challenges to get to a point where the system is acceptable for use in family's homes. The first units are now being installed at South Cerney in Gloucestershire. Once these systems have proven to be effective, the new heating units will be installed in homes at Barton Stacey and Andover later this year, with a wider rollout to follow. DIO is confident that Project Nixie will deliver carbon emission free, low maintenance, efficient and cost effective heating systems to Service family homes.

In addition to Project Nixie, DIO continues with projects including installing solar panels, car charging points and energy efficient streetlights across the SFA estate. This ensures that not only is DIO improving homes for Service families but also reducing the MOD's carbon footprint.

Useful information for families

Coronation bank holiday

It is important for families to note that on the Coronation bank holiday (Monday 8th May), usual bank holiday closures will apply. This will mean that the home line services at the NSC will be closed, and no move ins or move outs will take place on this day.

However, please note, the repairs line at the NSC is open 24/7, 365 days a year on 0800 0318628, option 1, should families need to get in touch in case of an emergency.

Gas and Electrical Statutory and Mandatory Inspections

It is a legal requirement to undertake gas and electrical safety checks in your home to reduce the potential for a carbon monoxide incident or an electrical fire, and to keep you and your family safe from harm.

It is vital for your safety that you allow the contractor access to your home to carry out these safety checks

- If you live in the South East or South West Regions, VIVO will contact you directly by letter.
- If you live in the Central or North regions, Pinnacle will email you to book an appointment on behalf of Amey.

Please help us to keep you safe by being present when your appointment is booked, or by rearranging the appointment.

Key Dates to Note

23 May – Local housing surgery (VIVO), Crabtree Community Centre, Hermitage

23 May – Local housing surgery (VIVO), Aldershot Garrison Community Hub

20 June – Local housing surgery (VIVO), Aldershot Garrison Community Hub



**Defence
Infrastructure
Organisation**

Useful Links

[Contact Pinnacle](#)

[Make a request for compensation](#)

[Reporting damp and mould](#)

[Join the SFA Defence Connect page](#)

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