



Families First Newsletter

Issue: 11 | Date: November 29, 2023

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

Included in this issue of Families First:

- DIO's support to the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP)
- TechSee – using remote technology to help resolve faults
- Investment across the SFA Estate
- Key dates to note
- Useful links

DIO's support to the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP)

The UK Government has made a commitment to resettle Afghan nationals who worked for, or alongside, the British Armed Forces in support of the UK's mission in Afghanistan. The Ministry of Defence owes a debt of gratitude to these Afghan nationals and their families and is therefore contributing to cross Government efforts to house those who are eligible under the Afghan Relocation and Resettlement policy (ARAP) to the UK.

Currently, there are over 200 ARAP families living in Service Family Accommodation and it is expected that there will be many more moving into previously void SFA over the coming months and years.

DIO recognises that this may cause some concern, please be assured that we are working to minimise the impact on the housing stock available for Service families and are developing ways to manage any future impact. This includes looking to replace the homes that have been provided for ARAP families with newly purchased homes for Service personnel and their families, to increase capacity.

The overall responsibility for delivering welfare support and settling ARAP families into their local community will mostly sit with the local authority in which the SFA sits.

Cultural leaflets are being disseminated to Service families to help them understand more about the ARAP families moving in. If you wish to volunteer to assist in integrating neighbouring ARAP families into the community, the [Government Afghanistan Housing Portal](#) offers guidance on how people, organisations and businesses can offer support.

You can find more information on the ARAP programme [here](#) and FAQs regarding ARAP families living in SFA are available [via Defence Connect here](#). Please contact your Head of Establishment or your Service Housing Colonel if you have any further questions or concerns.

TechSee – using remote technology to help resolve faults in SFA

TechSee is a tool which enables families to send videos and images of technical issues to remote operatives who are then able to virtually assess the job ahead of attending the property. This helps the Regional Accommodation Maintenance contractors, Amey and VIVO, to ensure that the correct engineer is sent to your home with the right tools to fully resolve the issue.

Amey has been using TechSee since the beginning of the year and is already starting to see benefits in service delivery. Initially, TechSee was used on heating related tasks and around 30% of calls relating to heating issues are now being resolved using the technology. VIVO rolled TechSee out shortly afterwards and has experienced similar success.

By reducing the amount of callouts required, TechSee has enabled VIVO and Amey to respond to repairs and maintenance issues faster. Since its introduction in January, the average response time for routine works has reduced by nearly 60%.

TechSee also enables VIVO and Amey to virtually assess a damp & mould issue in a home without the need to schedule a home visit. This enables them to diagnose the issue and then advise the family on next steps and ensure they deploy the correct operative to complete any necessary follow-on works.

The tool is fully secure, and DIO would like to encourage families to cooperate with Amey & VIVO when prompted to use TechSee.

Investment across the SFA Estate

First of 176 new homes at Imjin Barracks set for completion

The homes were purchased from Taylor Wimpey through the Defence Infrastructure Organisation's (DIO) Capital Purchase Programme. They will be used by Service personnel and their families based at Imjin Barracks, with the first move-ins taking place in early 2024 and all homes set to be completed by 2026.

Imjin Barracks was identified as a location to purchase new homes under the Defence Estate Optimisation Army Programme which is delivering a better-structured, modern and more sustainable estate that improves security, resilience, and Army capability.

All 176 homes have been designed to be net zero in occupation, meaning they produce as much energy as they consume. As well as reducing commuting for personnel based at Imjin Barracks, the new homes include sustainability measures such as photovoltaic panels to generate green energy, low carbon heating systems, smart heating controls and electric vehicle charging points for every property.

Phil Riley, DIO Accommodation Director said: *'It is our top priority to deliver improved Service family accommodation across the Defence estate. Alongside our investment in upgrading existing homes, the Capital Purchase Programme enables us to purchase high-quality, energy efficient homes such as these in the places where we need them the most.'*

The DIO Capital Purchase programme is working with housing developers across the UK to deliver hundreds of new Service family homes where they are most needed.

In addition to the 176 homes at Imjin Barracks, last year DIO invested a further £173m in purchasing 423 new homes across the UK in areas including Lossiemouth, Brize Norton and Portsmouth.

Alongside purchasing new homes, DIO is investing £380m this financial year in existing Service Family Accommodation. This will be spent on improving the preparation of homes for Service families to move into; treating and preventing damp and mould and improving the thermal efficiency of homes; and refurbishing empty homes for reoccupation by service families in areas where



Preparing for winter

Works to prepare homes for winter are ramping up across the SFA estate as part of a £123m investment this year to address the underlying causes of damp and mould in thousands of homes. Capt Will Matthews posted on X (formerly Twitter) to say: *"Fair play to VIVO, absolutely 'all over it' this morning preparing our home for winter. Indoor & outdoor works, loft insulation, new extraction fittings et al.*

We had some real mould & condensation issues last year, part of the ongoing works for service homes is improving and repairing such issues. Prevention definitely better than cure! Top work folks, appreciated (@MOD_DIO)."

It's worth spending some time getting your home winter-ready ahead of the colder months. There are a few simple steps that families can take to keep their homes safe ahead of the winter period.

This [helpful quick reference guide](#) looks at some of the common issues which may affect your home in the colder months and explains simple steps that you can take to protect your home this winter.

Key Dates to Note

Local housing surgeries:

Hereford – 4 December

Marham – 4 December

St Athan - 4 December

Topcliffe – 7 December

Brize Norton – 19 December



**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](#)