



Defence
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Families First Newsletter

Issue: 12 | Date: December 14, 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:

- A message from Phil Riley
- Christmas Service Update for Families
- Investment across the SFA estate
- Tell us what you think of the Families First Newsletter
- Key dates to note & useful links

A message from DIO Accommodation Director, Phil Riley

Dear families,

As we move into last few weeks of the year, I wanted to reflect on the last 12 months and give you a bit of an insight into our plans for 2024.

This time last year, I think we all know that the system wasn't working. Call wait times at the National Service Centre were too long, response times for heating failures were too long and there were far too many missed appointments. I'd like to apologise once again for the levels of service some of you have received.

After some difficult conversations and a lot of hard work, things are getting better. Calls to Pinnacle are now answered in seconds and our maintenance contractors, VIVO and Amey, have increased their resource to enable them to respond faster. There's still plenty of work to do and I'd like to reassure you that my team and our contractors' teams are absolutely committed to making improvements across the board. Additionally, we will continue to impose the maximum financial penalties available where progress is slower than required.

Another big focus for us is addressing the damp and mould issues we have in our housing stock. We're investing £123m this financial year to enable works on thousands of homes to improve their thermal efficiency. We're getting through these works at pace, with over 1300 homes receiving an upgrade so far and many more to come.

Looking ahead to 2024, it will be another busy year for me and my team. Not least in our continued support to the Afghan Relocation and Resettlement policy (ARAP). You may have seen that DIO is providing over 700 previously void SFA to support the programme. I have spoken to quite a few Afghan families across SFA and transitional sites and every one has a tale to tell about the conditions they endured in Pakistan and the real threat to life they faced in Afghanistan. We owe a debt of gratitude to those brave Afghans who risked their lives working alongside our forces so providing decent homes and a warm welcome seems the least we can do for them.

We're working equally hard to minimise disruption and to ensure that the needs of Service families are met. This includes looking to replace some of the homes provided to the ARAP programme by purchasing new homes through the Capital Purchase Programme which allows us to purchase high quality homes in locations where we have a shortage. It is also worth noting that the work to support the ARAP programme is funded separately from core SFA and therefore is not coming at the expense of UK Service families.

The introduction of the New Accommodation Offer will come with its own challenges and we're hard at work preparing for go-live on 11 March – not least by giving over 1000 void homes a full makeover to bring them back online to help us meet an increase in demand.

Finally, I'd like to thank you for your patience over what has been a challenging period. I know how important your homes are to you and delivering high quality homes for you and your family is my number one priority.

Wishing you a merry Christmas and a happy new year,

Phil



Christmas service – update for families

Over the Christmas period the Pinnacle National Service Centre will remain open 24/7. Both VIVO and Amey will be resourced throughout and operating standard working hours. Out of hours schedulers will be covering weekends as usual over the Christmas period and working on Boxing Day and New Years Day to manage urgent repairs.

Investment across the SFA Estate

Contract awarded to build 138 new homes for service families in Cyprus

A £48 million contract has been awarded to build new homes for service personnel and their families at Dhekelia Station in Cyprus.

The work will be carried out by the Lagan Iacovou Joint Venture (JV) on behalf of the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) and UK Strategic Command as part of the APOLLO programme. The scheme has been funded by UK Strategic Command and delivered through the Defence Capital Infrastructure Programme.

The 138-house project will deliver three- and four-bedroom properties, which have all been designed to be sustainable for years to come. Features include solar panels, air source heat pumps and electric vehicle charging points. The new houses have also been designed to be seismically compliant, meaning that safeguards against earthquakes have been incorporated into their design.

Green, shaded community spaces will be created in front of the houses, whilst service roads will provide access to the rear.

APOLLO Programme Director, UK Strategic Command, Tracey Fuoco, said: *“The award of the contract to Lagan Construction and the Iacovou Group for 138 new seismically compliant homes in Dhekelia represents a significant step towards achieving the APOLLO programme’s aim of reducing the risk posed by earthquakes to people living and working across the Sovereign Base Areas.”*

“I’m grateful to the project team for all the work which they have done to get the project to this point. The new housing will provide modern homes for service families in Dhekelia and I look forward to seeing the work progressing on site from early next year.”



Tell us what you think of the Families First Newsletter

We hope this newsletter provides a useful and relevant update for you. We would be grateful if you take a few minutes to [share your feedback to help us improve Families First](#).

Key Dates to Note

Local housing surgeries:

Lyneham community centre - every 2nd Thursday of the month. 09:00-11:00

Colerne community centre - last Thursday of the month 10:00-12:00

Warminster community centre -3rd Thursday of the month 09:00-12:00

Innsworth Community centre - last Monday of the Month 09:00- 12:00



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Useful Links

[Contact Pinnacle](#)

[Make a request for compensation](#)

[Reporting damp and mould](#)

[Join the SFA Defence Connect page](#)

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