

Families First



Foreword from Tricia Jakeman, Defence Families Champion at DIO

As we mark Armed Forces Week, I want to start by saying a heartfelt thank you to all the families who support our Service personnel every single day. I see, both professionally and personally, the commitment and resilience that Service life demands, and I never take that for granted.

As a parent, I also see this from another perspective. My own son is considering a future in the Armed Forces, and that brings with it both a sense of pride and a very real appreciation of what life can mean for families: the moves, the uncertainty, and the time spent apart. It makes me even more determined that we do everything we can to ensure families feel properly supported, particularly when it comes to the homes you live in.

Through the conversations I've had with many of you, I hear clearly how important it is that you feel safe, settled and supported. That's why improving Service housing, and the experience around it, remains such a priority for us.

As we begin to establish the new Defence Housing Service, we are working hard to make meaningful changes. That means not just improving homes, but improving how we listen and respond. Whether through Families Federations, feedback channels, or direct conversations, your voices are shaping the service we provide and strengthening the way we act on what you tell us.

This edition reflects some of that progress, alongside practical support for the months ahead – from summer safety advice to moving home checklists, and opportunities to connect through networks such as the Fathers Network.

We know there is more to do. But please be assured that we are committed to putting families first, and to building a service that truly reflects your needs and experiences.

Thank you, as always, for everything you do to support Defence.



Tricia Jakeman, Defence Families Champion at DIO

Stay connected with Defence Homes updates

Join the Defence Homes community and never miss an update. Families can now subscribe to receive the latest Defence Homes news, helpful updates and our Families First newsletter, all delivered straight to your inbox.

Signing up is quick and easy: just visit Defence Homes and enter your email address.

Defence Housing Service news

The Armed Forces Bill continues to move through Parliament, bringing important reforms for Service families. A central part of the Bill is the formal establishment of the Defence Housing Service (DHS), a new organisation focused on improving both the quality and availability of Service family homes while delivering the commitments set out in the Defence Housing Strategy.

To support the transition to the new service, Natalie Elphicke Ross OBE has been appointed Interim Chair of the Defence Housing Service. Having previously chaired the Defence Housing Strategy Review Team, she will lead the move to the new organisation, ensuring it is ready to deliver improved housing for military personnel and their families from day one.



Natalie Elphicke Ross OBE,
Interim Chair of DHS

While the leadership of the new service takes shape, the Bill itself has been steadily progressing. At each stage, MPs have debated the Bill or examined it in detail through committee, allowing proposed changes to be considered before moving forward.

Most recently, on 22 June, the Bill progressed through the report stage and third reading in the House of Commons. It now has reached the House of Lords where they will consider the Bill in detail over the coming months, in a similar process, examining its proposals and debating any amendments.

While the parliamentary process continues, the Bill's progress marks an important milestone in delivering the reforms to modernise and renew defence housing.

Join the new Fathers Network

A new pan-Defence Fathers Network is being established, and we need your input to shape it.

The network aims to connect fathers across Defence, offering peer support for balancing parenthood with Service life and its unique pressures. It will provide a safe, supportive space to share experiences, challenges and good practice.

Whether you're a new dad, an experienced parent, an adoptive or foster father, or even a granddad, we want to hear from you. And if this doesn't apply to you directly, please do share it with colleagues who may be interested.

[Complete the MS Form here](#) to help us build a network that works for dads across Defence.

Summer safety guidance

With summer underway, we want to share our top tips to help keep you and your family safe while enjoying the sunshine. This edition focuses on pests.

Bees and wasps

If you find an active nest inside or outside your home, you may not be able to tell if it's a bee or wasp nest. Contact Pinnacle on 0800 031 8628 so they can help to determine the best course of action.

A wasp or bee nest inside your home will be dealt with within 48 hours. A wasp nest outside your home will be dealt with within 10 working days. If outdoor wasp or bee issues pose a serious risk, VIVO and Amey will arrange for a specialist to attend.



Rats and Mice

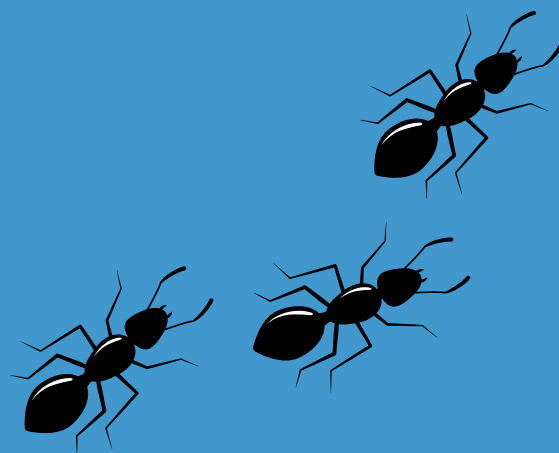
Overgrown lawns, litter, food scraps and pet waste make an area incredibly attractive for rodents so it's important to keep your garden tidy to reduce the likelihood of unwanted visitors coming into your home.

If you believe you have rats or mice affecting your home, contact Pinnacle on 0800 031 8628 or log it through HomeHub.

Ants, beetles and other bugs

Most bug issues within your home can be managed easily with off-the-shelf treatments from your local supermarket, online retailers or hardware stores.

If you find an active nest inside your home, contact Pinnacle on 0800 031 8628. Ants inside the home are typically dealt with within 10 working days.



If you require any further advice, please contact your local Housing Officer or Pinnacle at 0800 031 8628. You can also find more summer safety tips on the [Pinnacle website](https://www.pinnacle.gov.uk).

Moving out check-list

Moving out can be an exciting time of change, but it can also feel overwhelming with so much to organise and remember. This simple checklist includes some tips to help you stay on track from pre-move preparations to the day you leave.

☐ **Schedule any final repairs**

Contact Pinnacle on 08000 031 8628 to report any necessary repairs identified ahead of time, ensuring a smooth move out and move in for everyone involved.

☐ **Book your pre-move-out appointment**

Submit your e-1132 form at least 28 days before moving. If you are leaving SFA entirely, contact the Home Services team on 0800 031 8628 to book up to 2 months in advance of your move out date.

☐ **Meet move out standards**

Prepare your home in line with the [Pinnacle guide](#).

☐ **Arrange transfers or cancellations of broadband and home insurance**

For broadband, ensure to check your contract end date with your provider, any early termination fees and whether you need to return any equipment such as a router.

For home insurance, inform your insurer of your move date. Review and update your policy to cover your new address. Whilst moving, it is important to check you have the right insurance for storage, goods in transit and contents.

☐ **Update your address**

Notify key organisations such as your bank, DVLA, TV licensing, and healthcare providers.

☐ **Notify utility suppliers and take final meter readings on move-out day**

Inform gas, electricity, and water providers and take final meter readings. Top tip: taking a photo will help to show when the meter reading was taken.

☐ **Do a final check of your home**

Check for anything you may have left behind in built-in drawers, cupboards, garages or sheds.

☐ **Return keys**

During the final moveout appointment, you will hand your keys back to the Housing Officer.

For a full guide, visit the [Pinnacle website](#) for more detailed information.

Useful Links

- [Contact Pinnacle](#)
- [Visit Defence Homes](#)
- [Join the SFA Defence Connect page](#)
- [Join the next Pinnacle Virtual Outreach Day](#)