

Families First



Foreword from David Brewer, Chief Operating Officer at Defence Infrastructure Organisation

Autumn often marks a period of change and in line with change, we have launched the Red Tape Challenge, giving Service families the opportunity to tell us about the processes that make living in SFA more difficult than it should be.

I would encourage families to take part. Every submission will be reviewed and considered, helping us identify where practical changes can be made. The feedback we receive will inform our priorities and support improvements that have a tangible impact on the experience of living in SFA.

The Red Tape Challenge is one of a number of pledges we have introduced setting out clear commitments to Service families covering the quality of homes, customer service and how we listen to family feedback. To keep up to date with progress against these commitments, sign up to the Defence Homes subscriber service for updates direct to your inbox.

Ensuring families are involved in shaping future improvements is important. Feedback helps us understand where our services are working well and where improvements can be made. We recognise that military life brings unique challenges, and the experiences shared by Service families help us focus our efforts on the issues that matter most.



David Brewer, Chief Operating Officer at DIO

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RED TAPE CHALLENGE

This month, the MOD launched the Red Tape Challenge, inviting Service personnel and families to tell us about processes that are getting in the way of them enjoying their homes, so that we can work to change them.

This is just one of [a series of new pledges](#) setting out clear commitments to Service families on the quality of their homes, customer service, and ensuring their voices are heard.

You can submit your experiences and ideas on [the Defence Homes website](#). All submissions will be reviewed and carefully considered to help inform future improvements and we will keep families updated on the progress of the Red Tape Challenge through our regular communications channels.

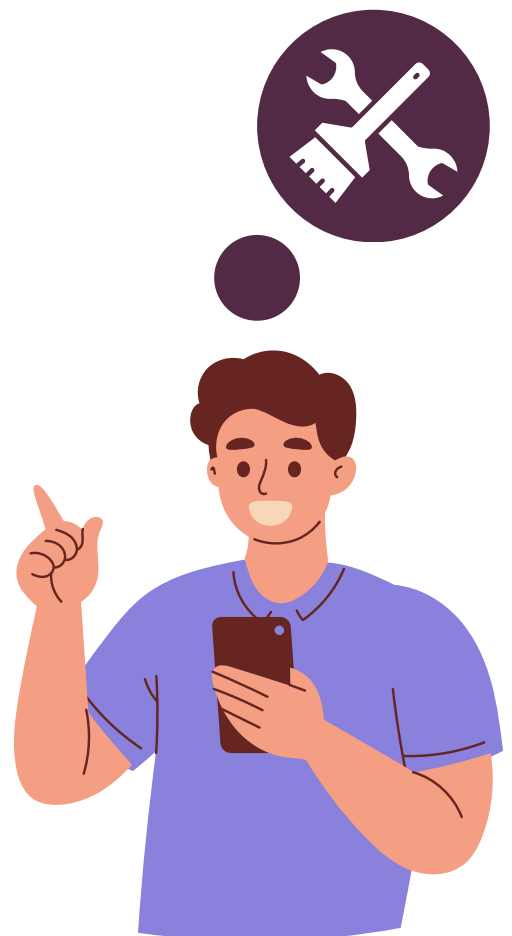
Have you tried HomeHub?

HomeHub is our online platform designed to support Service families in reporting and tracking housing repairs. It is now available to all Service families living in UK SFA homes maintained by providers Amey and VIVO Defence Services.

It gives you easy access to:

- Request repairs and book appointments online
- Track the progress of repairs
- View and manage appointments
- Log a complaint or compliment
- Update your contact details
- View your move in and move out documentation

It's easy to get started, simply follow the instructions on the [Defence Homes website](#).



Top Tips - Choosing your next home

When choosing your preferred home, it is natural to focus on the SFA charge. However, taking a few extra factors into account could help you find a home that better suits both your family's needs and your budget.

As part of the E1132 application process, you will see several factors that contribute to the overall cost of your home. Look out for the SFA charge, CILOCT (Contribution in Lieu of Council Tax), garage charges where applicable, furniture requests, and the home's Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating when selecting your property via the E1132.

While a lower SFA charge may seem like the most affordable option, it is not always the most cost-effective in the long run. Generally, homes with higher EPC ratings are more energy efficient, which can mean less energy to heat the home and lower energy bills. Newer or recently refurbished homes often benefit from better insulation and more efficient heating systems, which could help keep running costs down.

Before submitting your home preferences, it is worth thinking about the energy usage of your current home. Factors such as the size of your home, energy efficiency and heating type can affect running costs.

By considering all the costs involved, you can make an informed choice and feel more comfortable and confident in your new home from day one.

What does EPC mean?



An EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) rating is a legal document that provides an energy efficiency rating (from A to G), that indicates how much it will cost to run your home.

If your home is graded A, your home is classed as incredibly energy efficient, meaning lower energy consumption. This can result in lower energy bills depending on your usage. With the same logic, if your home is graded G then your home isn't very efficient which means a much higher energy consumption. This can result in a more expensive energy bill depending on your usage.

Understanding your property's EPC rating can give you an indication into how expensive running costs will be. This can be influenced by things like insulation, heating systems, ventilation, windows, lighting and use of renewable energy systems like solar panels.

Gas Safety in your home

Earlier this month marked Gas Safety Week, a timely reminder to check your alarms and report any concerns to help ensure your home is as safe as possible. Please take a moment to read the advice below to help keep you and your family safe.

- If you live in SFA, you will be contacted when your annual gas safety check is due. Please ensure that someone aged 18 or over is at home for the appointment, and let Pinnacle know in advance if you need to rearrange. All engineers will carry identification, which you should ask to see before allowing them into your home.
- Keep the area around your boiler clear so that engineers can access it easily during inspections and maintenance appointments.
- If you smell gas or suspect a gas leak, act quickly. Stop using gas appliances, open doors and windows, turn off the gas supply if it is safe to do so, and leave the property if necessary. Do not use electrical switches or naked flames until the issue has been resolved.
- Carbon monoxide (CO) is often referred to as the 'silent killer' because it cannot be seen, smelt or tasted. Make sure everyone in your household knows the warning signs of CO poisoning, including headaches, dizziness, nausea and breathlessness.

Never attempt DIY gas repairs yourself or use unqualified engineers. If you think there may be an issue with a gas appliance, report it through [HomeHub](#) or contact the National Service Centre on 0800 031 8628.

Aiming to move before Christmas?

Service families planning a move in the UK before or during the Christmas and New Year period are encouraged to submit their accommodation and removals applications as early as possible. Demand for moving services is typically higher at this time of year so booking early gives you the best opportunity to secure your preferred moving date and make arrangements confidently ahead of the festive period.

While arrangements are always in place to support short-notice needs, early applications help us to plan our effectively and reduce pressure during the busy winter period to deliver the best possible service to Service families. We encourage anyone expecting to move before Christmas or over the holiday period to start the process as soon as they can.



Useful Links

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



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