

Families First



Message from Phil Riley, Director of Accommodation at DIO

As 2025 draws to a close, I am reflecting on a year of significant progress and change. We started the year with a landmark agreement to repurchase over 36,000 homes from the private sector, enabling us to end costly rentals, reduce maintenance costs, and invest in modernising the Service Family Accommodation (SFA) estate.



Phil Riley, Director of Accommodation at DIO.

In April, the Defence Secretary introduced the Consumer Charter, a major commitment to enhancing SFA and the experience of Service families. Since then, we have made tangible improvements including appointing a dedicated Housing Officer for every Service family, revising outdated policies to provide greater freedoms, and raising the standard of SFA by targeting 1,000 homes most in need of refurbishment. We remain on track to fulfil all Consumer Charter commitments by the end of the year.

Throughout the summer, our teams moved thousands of families across the UK and Europe, managing a high volume of appointments and resolving housing issues with empathy and professionalism. This dedicated approach ensured a smooth transition for families during one of our busiest periods.

November marked the release of the Defence Housing Strategy, which sets out a £9 billion renewal programme to modernise over 40,000 homes. Central to this strategy is the creation of a Defence Housing Service with a "Forces First" ethos, prioritising the needs of Service families.

Our collaboration with Pinnacle, VIVO, and Amey has strengthened winter preparedness, incorporating lessons learned from previous years. By conducting proactive boiler checks and stockpiling essential parts, we are working to minimise disruption and improve comfort during the colder months.

Looking towards 2026, thousands more families will benefit from our ongoing commitment to enhancing homes and the overall living experience in SFA. Feedback from the Future of Defence Housing Questionnaire highlighted the positive impact of new kitchens and bathrooms, as well as the importance of thermal efficiency. We are listening, and will continue to deliver improvements in these areas and keep families informed on our progress. Your insights are invaluable in helping us continually enhance the lived experience of our community.

I am personally committed to engaging with Service families, gathering feedback on what is working well and where we can improve. For example, thank you to everyone who has shared the changes you've made to your homes due to the revision of policies as part of the Consumer Charter, I am keen that we continue to modernise our policies to help people turn houses into homes and homes into communities.

Finally, on behalf of everyone at DIO, thank you for your patience and partnership. We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year filled with warmth, joy and peace.

Permanent Enhancements

As part of our Consumer Charter, we are committed to giving you more freedom to personalise your homes. Over the last few months we have shared how you can personalise your homes with [temporary enhancements](#), our new painting policy with the [Defence Homes Colour Palette](#) and now we have changed our policy on permanent enhancements.

We have introduced two categories of permanent enhancements that you can now make to your SFA home.

Green category permanent enhancements

These can be carried out immediately by either a family or a tradesperson if preferred. There is no longer a requirement to notify DIO or Pinnacle about making these enhancements. Any enhancements will instead be recorded by your Housing Officer during the Move-Out appointment.

These include: installing shelves, curtain poles, blinds and shutters, coat hooks and battery powered doorbells.

Amber category permanent enhancements

These must be carried out by a qualified tradesperson due to the intrusive element of the works. Families will need to notify DIO/Pinnacle of any amber permanent enhancements they wish to make prior to work starting so they can be given the appropriate installation and safety guidance.

These include: fitting electric vehicle charging points, external power supplies, external taps, patios and garden decking.

You can notify DIO and Pinnacle about this via the new simplified [Permanent Enhancement Process](#).

Share your Patch Hacks!

We want to see how you've personalised your SFA home to reflect your own style. As part of our [Patch Hacks](#) campaign, we're sharing how families are personalising their homes on our corporate channels to inspire other military families!

If you'd like to share your home, tag or message us on our [Instagram](#) or [X](#) account. Alternatively, [fill out this form](#) and we'll get in touch.



defencehomes.mod.gov.uk



[dio_mod](#)



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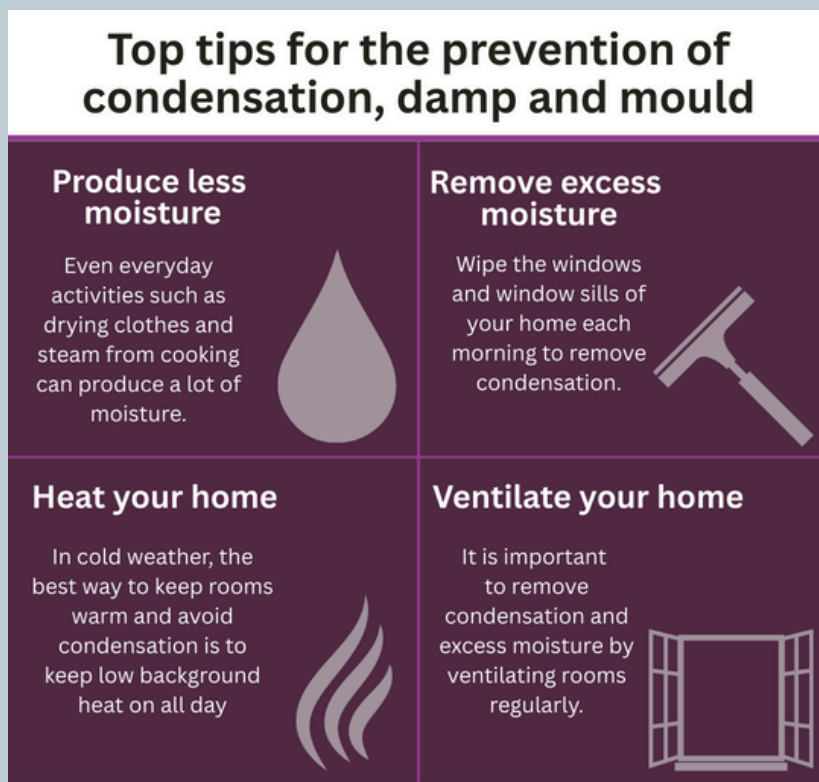
[Defence Infrastructure Organisation \(DIO\)](#)

Tackling Damp and Mould

Over the last few years we have made substantial progress in tackling damp and mould that has been reported to us. It is important that you report any damp and mould that you discover straight away, including any recurring issues, so we can resolve the issue promptly. You can do this by either:

- Completing the dedicated [damp and mould](#) report form on the Pinnacle website.
- Calling Pinnacle on 0800 0318628, selecting option 1, then option 4.
- Chatting to Pinnacle online, you can do this by selecting the chat option on Pinnacle website.

We also recommend you read our helpful guide on how you can help [prevent condensation, damp and mould in your home here](#).



Awaab's Law, which took effect in October 2025, requires social landlords in the UK to address damp and mould hazards within fixed timeframes. While we are not bound by this legislation, DIO has voluntarily committed to upholding the standards expected of a responsible landlord and our response times to reports of damp and mould in UK SFA have been adjusted.

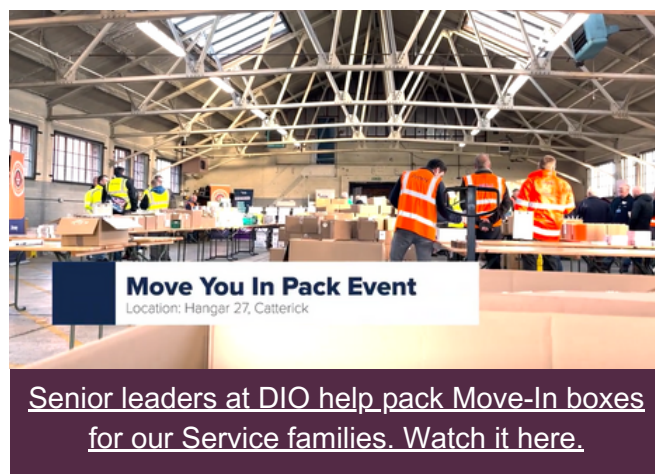
For more information on how to tackle damp and mould, visit [Defence Homes](#).

Supplier News

Move-in box-packing in Catterick with Amey and E50k

Earlier this month, several senior leaders from DIO volunteered to take part in the bi-annual “Move-you-In” box-packing event organised by Amey and E50K. Annually, 6,000 of these boxes are delivered to Service families when they move into their homes.

Any boxes that aren't used are donated to veteran's centres or homeless charities. The boxes are multi-purpose and can either be coloured in by children or used as a memory box. They include essentials from veteran owned businesses like cleaning products, hygiene products, toilet paper and crayons.



Defence minister visits refurbished SFA in Portsmouth

Last week, Secretary of State for Defence, John Healey, visited newly renovated Service family homes in Portsmouth along with Portsmouth MPs Amanda Martin and Stephen Morgan. Properties in the area are being refurbished as part of targeted upgrades to the 1,000 homes most in need across the UK.

The upgrades in Portsmouth, carried out by VIVO, include new kitchens and bathrooms and are expected to be ready for families to move in by Christmas.

Read more about the wider programme of works that are transforming military homes across the UK [here](#).



Further News

Spreading Christmas cheer to military children

Several Pinnacle Housing Officers volunteered to lend a helping hand at Bovington Garrison in Dorset. The group of volunteers helped pack 2,000 gift boxes for children whose parents are deployed over the festive season.

The initiative, called “Christmas Smiles” is led by the Little Troopers Charity (LTC), which supports military children with parents serving overseas in the British Armed Forces.

The team even met Coronation Street actor Colson Smith, who came along to show his support and present for ITV’s This Morning.

Got a problem over Christmas?

Please be assured that DIO, Pinnacle and our suppliers will still be available over the festive period for any emergencies. You can contact Pinnacle through the National Service Centre by calling 0800 031 8628.

We want to know what you think of Families First!

We want to ensure Families First continues to be a useful source of information for anyone who lives in SFA.

Please [answer the survey linked here](#) to let us know what you think we are doing well and how we can improve.



Useful Links

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