

# Families First



## Foreword from Jane Sutton, Operations Director North at DIO

As January draws to a close, I hope you enjoyed a wonderful festive season. The colder months of the year always present difficulties, and the holidays add their own unique challenges. Together with our suppliers, we have made significant efforts to strengthen our resilience and best support families during this period.

This resilience remains in place as we enter 2026 and we are conscious we may see more adverse weather in the coming months. That has certainly been the case in previous years when we have seen named storms lasting into February and March. In addition to everything we are doing in response to winter there are also steps families can take to ensure your home is winter ready. We encourage you to take a look at our winter guidance, which can be found [here](#).



Jane Sutton, Operations Director  
North at DIO.

Looking back to the end of 2025, we prioritised our commitment to carry out targeted renovations to 1,000 homes before the end of the year. I'm really pleased to confirm that those houses have all been completed, and the families who live there have received the promised upgrades which included new heating systems, kitchens, windows and doors and bathrooms. However, the work doesn't stop there, we are already working to refurbish another 250 homes by April, this will include over 200 homes in Helensburgh, Scotland and we were delighted to show the Secretary of State the progress being made during his recent visit to the estate.

As we develop our plans to deliver the recommendations set out in the Defence Housing Strategy we will be setting out an ambitious programme to improve and refurbish hundreds of homes across the UK by March 2027 and beyond. We look forward to sharing our plans for individual estates in the coming months.

I'm proud of the improvements we made in 2025 and I look forward to 2026 as we look to build on these achievements and deliver better homes for our families in line with our new target standard for military homes.

# New Armed Forces Bill to drive the biggest renewal of Service Family housing in a generation

Service families will benefit from the newly introduced Armed Forces Bill which promises better housing, better services and better protections for our forces and their families. The Bill will create a new Defence Housing Service, which will have a simple ethos - to put the needs of forces and their families first and drive the biggest improvement in forces accommodation for a generation.

The Defence Housing Service will deliver on the recommendations of our Defence Housing Strategy which was announced in November and is backed by £9 Billion of investment to build, renew and repair 9 in 10 defence family homes, harnessing the opportunities created by our landmark deal which brought 36,000 properties into public ownership. In recognition of the Bill being introduced, the Defence Secretary visited Scotland where more than 200 homes in Argyll & Bute have been upgraded. Read the full article on Defence Homes [here](#).



Defence Secretary, John Healey MP visiting Petty Officer Michael Pass and his wife Katrina in newly refurbished home in Helensburgh

## 1000 homes upgraded for military families in 2025

Service families across the UK celebrated the end of 2025 in their newly improved homes with more upgrades promised in 2026. Urgent works on the 1000 homes most in need of refurbishment finished ahead of schedule, with a further 250 to be completed by April 2026. This means that 12 months on from the Consumer Charter launch, we will have increased our initial target by 25%.



Cpl Jack Crean, Nina and Charlie in their newly refurbished home.

The first phase of work took place in homes across the UK, with upgrades made to almost 700 properties in England, over 150 properties in Northern Ireland, over 100 in Wales and over 50 in Scotland. Unreliable boilers and heating systems have been upgraded, hundreds of leaky roofs have been repaired, and new bathrooms, kitchens, windows and doors have been installed. We visited Cpl Jack Crean, his partner Nina and their one-year-old son Charlie, who moved into a newly refurbished home at Basingbourn Barracks in December.

*"We are really pleased to be in our new home for Christmas. Everyone is a lot happier here, especially Charlie. It's nice to live in an up-to-date house, it works so much better for the whole family and if I was to go away, I know that my family is in a clean, modern house."*

# Christmas Support: A look back

Ahead of winter, DIO, Pinnacle, Amey and VIVO worked closely together to make sure we had the right resilience in place to support families during the colder months. Below are some of the highlights and figures that show the impact of this work over the Christmas period.



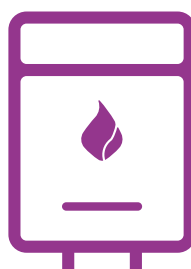
5,646 calls handled by Pinnacle from 24/12 to 04/01, with teams working on Christmas Day



Average call wait time for families was 54 seconds from 24/12 to 04/01



4,086 repairs and maintenance jobs completed from 24/12 to 04/01



12 boilers replaced from 24/12 to 04/01



104 cookers repaired or replaced from 24/12 to 04/01



117 engineers from VIVO and Amey on call during the Christmas Bank Holidays



“Just brilliant, especially being Christmas Eve. Thank you!”

“Excellent service, thank you so much for saving Christmas!!”

“Fantastic service to replace a faulty oven on Christmas Eve.”

# Further News

## Tackling Damp and Mould

During colder weather, condensation can contribute to the development of damp and mould. Please remember it is important that you report any damp and mould 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 the Pinnacle website.

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

### Top tips for the prevention of condensation, damp and mould

#### Produce less moisture

Even everyday activities such as drying clothes and steam from cooking can produce a lot of moisture.



#### Remove excess moisture

Wipe the windows and window sills of your home each morning to remove condensation.



#### Heat your home

In cold weather, the best way to keep rooms warm and avoid condensation is to keep low background heat on all day



#### Ventilate your home

It is important to remove condensation and excess moisture by ventilating rooms regularly.



## Defence Talks Podcast: Military families - The importance of defence housing and support

In December, Defence Strategy Review Chair, Natalie Elphicke Ross OBE and Housing Specialist from Army Families Federation, Cat Calder, feature on the Defence Talks Podcast, produced by the Council on Geostrategy, to discuss the [Defence Housing Strategy](#).

You can [listen to the episode here](#).



### Useful Links

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