



Select Committee on the Armed Forces Bill

Chair, James Sunderland MP

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Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP
Secretary of State for Defence
Ministry of Defence
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19 March 2021

Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing on behalf of the Armed Forces Bill Select Committee in respect of the virtual visit to Service accommodation that the Committee formally requested on 5 March. As you know, this was due to take place yesterday, but authority for Service personnel to speak to the Committee was refused late the previous day.

The Committee is disappointed that this virtual visit was unable to go ahead as it would have provided members an opportunity to view the range of accommodation available. It would also have allowed us to speak directly to Service personnel in order to complement the Committee's oral evidence programme. The Armed Forces Bill provides an important opportunity every five years for Parliamentarians to examine not only the effectiveness, but the experience of the Armed Forces and the Committee remains keen to fulfil this role to the best of its ability. Accommodation has been highlighted as a key area of concern for Service personnel following recent work by the National Audit Office and the Public Accounts Committee.

I would therefore like to request on behalf of the Committee that the visit is rescheduled for another date. It is accepted of course that it may previously have been refused on grounds of Covid-19, inconvenience or operational requirement. If so, the Committee can make itself available up to Wednesday 15 April and would welcome the chance to see a range of accommodation and speak to personnel as planned. But if the visit was refused on other grounds, the Committee requests a clear explanation of the reasons.

In the event that a physical or virtual visit is impossible, the Committee would request that visual examples of the different grades and types of Service accommodation be provided in order to aid understanding. This would be most beneficial for those who have not previously visited or had direct experience of the accommodation for Service personnel and their families.

James Sunderland MP
Chair of the Select Committee on the Armed Forces Bill