

## Written evidence submitted by the Ministry of Defence

### **HCDC WRITTEN EVIDENCE PART 1: SINGLE LIVING ACCOMMODATION**

#### **Background**

1. On 13 July 2023, the Defence Sub-Committee of the House of Commons Defence Committee launched an inquiry into Service Accommodation, referring to both Single Living Accommodation (SLA) and Service Family Accommodation (SFA). This document sets out the evidence and background against each of the Committee's questions which relate to SLA.

- a. What measures have been put in place to resolve the housing [accommodation] maintenance issues, hold service providers to account?
- b. What is the MOD doing, and what more could they do, to rebuild trust in Service accommodation?
- c. Are there examples of good practice in provision of Service accommodation, which could be replicated across Defence?
- d. Is enough money being invested to modernise and future proof military accommodation and how long will it take for all military accommodation to meet an acceptable standard of energy efficiency? Is the MOD being as forward thinking and innovative as it could be in its approach to new housing [accommodation] stock?

A document relating to SFA has been provided separately.

#### **Executive Summary**

2. By way of summary the submission provides more detail regarding the following principal themes:

- a. Despite significant investment, legacy issues with the condition and state of repair of single accommodation condition remain. The result is that a third of people in SLA are currently living in sub-standard accommodation.
- b. SLA is a significant component of the domestic accommodation for Service personnel, ranging from multi-occupancy rooms with shared ablutions, through to high specification ensuite rooms with storage, social areas and kitchens depending on the accommodation purpose and requirement.
- c. SLA policy and strategy is administered by Chief of Defence People (CDP) (senior sponsor), supported by Deputy Chief of Defence Staff (Military Capability) (DCDS (MilCap)), with a variety of delivery agents, but the Front Line Commands (FLCs) have the delegated responsibility to manage their accommodation according to need and priority.
- d. All FLCs have prioritised SLA condition, reinforced by proactive senior leadership engagement, and have plans to eliminate their worst accommodation. We take safety extremely seriously and a significant effort is currently under way to survey our estate for the presence of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) under the coordination of the Office for Government Property. Full surveys across the large Defence estate are ongoing but based on our current information RAAC has not traditionally been used by the MOD in the construction of domestic structures. In addition, the majority of single accommodation was not constructed during the period in which RAAC was in use.
- e. Infrastructure services contracts for SLA maintenance and sustainment are all meeting Key Performance Indicators (KPIs); any deterioration in performance noted by

Heads of Establishment (HoE) would be rectified through the mechanisms built into these contracts.

f. Defence is spending £5.3 billion over 10 years to improve SLA, having adopted modular and sustainable construction techniques in line with commercial best practice. The principal initiative for this is the Defence Estate Optimisation Portfolio (DEOP) which will provide over 14,000 new and refurbished single rooms using a repeatable design. This is underpinned by the improved management information provided by Project SLA Management Information System (SLAMIS).

## Introduction

3. In October 2022 the Secretary of State presented the Defence Accommodation Strategy (DAS) to Parliament, with the vision *'to provide a high-quality, flexible accommodation offer to our Service personnel to support operational effectiveness.'* Amongst the core principles of this is *'improving the quality of Defence-provided accommodation'* From the SLA perspective this will be achieved through three principal lines of effort: providing Service personnel with access to good quality accommodation that is aligned with modern living standards; maximising the use of accommodation to ensure affordability and value for money; and improving the sustainability of accommodation, while promoting sustainable behaviours in managing, maintaining and living in it as part of Defence's commitment to leading the charge in meeting the Government's ambitions for greater sustainability. As a minimum, single accommodation must offer appropriately quiet, secure, dry, ventilated and heated spaces, with access to hot water. At its best, in Defence's new-build properties the department has committed to providing SLA with single ensuite rooms with access to high-quality broadband, made to net zero build standards with construction being as sustainable as possible and consideration given to achieving net zero across the life cycle of the building. Despite significant investment, legacy issues with condition remain. At its worst this results in multi-occupancy rooms, shared ablutions, inadequate thermal comfort and ventilation and compromised security. The result is that a third of those in SLA are currently living in sub-standard accommodation. However, all the FLCs recognise the priority of improving single accommodation and are committed to increasing investment.

4. **SLA definitions.** SLA is broken into three principal categories:

- a. **Permanent.** Accommodation on units/bases to which personnel are allocated for an assigned tour of duty.
- b. **Temporary (transit).** Accommodation for visitors, or those on training courses.
- c. **Training estate.** Where units and individuals deploy to exercise, there are no accommodation charges levied for this component of the estate, neither is there a grading system.

Provision is diverse, from multi-occupancy rooms with shared ablutions (usually during basic training), to high specification ensuite rooms with storage, social areas and shared kitchens.

5. **Scope and scale.** The MOD provides a total of c.171,000 permanent, temporary, and training bedspaces worldwide. There is c.133,000 permanent and temporary bedspaces in the UK and c.17,000 bedspaces overseas<sup>1</sup> and ~21,000 bedspaces across the UK training estate. c.81,000<sup>2</sup> Service personnel occupy permanent SLA across all Services

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<sup>1</sup> Includes 7,473 in the Permanent Joint Operating Bases (PJOBS) (Gibraltar, Cyprus, Singapore and the South Atlantic Islands) and ~10,000 in the Army overseas estate (Germany, Norway, Canada, Belize, Brunei, Kenya and Nepal).

<sup>2</sup> Number of Service personnel tagged as occupying Permanent SLA in JPA, as at 31 October 2022 and reported to Armed Forces Pay Review Body (AFPRB).

meaning that 55.7%<sup>3</sup> of Armed Forces Personnel are accommodated in single accommodation. The variation between bedspaces and occupancy reflects the differential between permanent, temporary, and training.<sup>4</sup>

6. **Grading of SLA.** There are four grades<sup>5</sup> of permanent SLA based on the assessment criteria of location, age, state of repair, size and facilities. The charging structure is based upon the type of room and a Service person's eligibility for that room based upon their rank. Charges range from £0.97 - £8.32 per day (utilities included) depending upon the accommodation type and grade. This does mean that personnel of different ranks pay different amounts for the same size room (for example SNCOs/WOs and junior officers)

7. **Governance and management of SLA.** SLA governance is managed through Head Office, who provide the people and infrastructure strategy<sup>6</sup> and policy (Direct) through CDP and DCDS (MilCap) respectively; CDP is the senior sponsor. There are multiple delivery and maintenance models (Enable). The Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) is responsible for the maintenance of ~93% of UK and overseas SLA through the Future Defence Infrastructure Services (FDIS) contracts, Overseas Prime Contracts (OPC) and Private Finance Initiatives (PFI), for example, Devonport under the Armada PFI. SLA in two of the Naval dockyards (Portsmouth and Clyde) is delivered through the Future Maritime Support Programme (FMSP), which will shortly be replaced by Navy Support Integrated Global Network (NSIGN). Several Army overseas locations are delivered through an in-house model, for example Brunei and Nepal.<sup>7</sup> Finally, generation and operation of the estate is managed by the relevant FLC,<sup>8</sup> who bid for funding to deliver their plans and manage their single accommodation programmes according to their needs and priorities.

8. **Programmatic approach.** All the FLCs have prioritised bringing single accommodation up to a good standard. In many cases this requires a new build, however, there will be some major refurbishments needed, especially in constrained or heritage sites. While all FLCs have started SLA construction projects, DIO are in the process of instigating a pan-Defence 'SLA programmatic approach' which now has an agreed design and will use Cabinet Office commercial frameworks to drive efficiency, value for money and speed.

9. **Condition.** It is acknowledged that condition of the SLA is not universally of a sufficiently good standard to meet the demands of Service personnel. This can have a disproportionate impact on Defence's ability to retain, but also recruit, which has been recognised by each of the FLCs. Consequently, Defence is spending £5.3 billion over 10 years to improve SLA, including the provision of over 14,000 new and refurbished single rooms as part of the DEOP, while also prioritising single accommodation in top-level budget (TLB) minor works programmes.

### **Question 1 – What measures have been put in place to resolve (i) the housing [accommodation] maintenance issues, hold service providers to account?**

10. **Performance of contracts.** All SLA infrastructure services contracts (FDIS, FMSP and PFI) are today recognised to be performing to the required KPI standards. By way of example, FDIS has incentivised performance measures which are subject to quarterly review. Profit payments are withheld from the Contractors if they do not meet the 'acceptable

<sup>3</sup> MOD Analysis (Tri-Service) - Armed Forces strength was 145,146, including UK Regulars, Gurkhas and mobilised Reservists, 1 July 2023.

<sup>4</sup> An individual may occupy two types of bedspace concurrently if on a training course away from their home unit or, deployed on a short overseas tour.

<sup>5</sup> JSP 464 Vol 3 Pt1-2.

<sup>6</sup> DAS and the Strategy for Defence Infrastructure (SDI).

<sup>7</sup> This includes responsibility for design, resource and construct, through a combination of Royal Engineer professionally qualified officers and SNCO, while the construction force is principally made up of locally employed civilians.

<sup>8</sup> Navy, Army, RAF and UK Strategic Command.

levels' defined in the contract; the approach is similar in the other infrastructure services contracts. Any performance that falls below the acceptable level of performance is subject to a rectification plan.

11. **Impact of condition.** Failures in SLA are often related to condition. Many units have ageing accommodation blocks that are likely to experience failures, regardless of maintenance. The Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey (AFCAS) results in 2023 bear this out: while maintenance KPIs are met, satisfaction levels regarding quality of repairs remain low at 29%. Heating and hot water failures are one example, and are regularly highlighted by external assurance, such as OFSTED, who inspect our training establishments. However, this issue is prevalent across the single accommodation estate. To target this, FLCs through their DIO managed Hard Facilities Management contracts, have introduced enhanced planned maintenance for heating and hot water systems with "plug-in" functionality for temporary boilers and generators to improve resilience, reliability and availability across a significant number of SLA. Furthermore, fault, defect and maintenance management information for heating, hot water, damp and mould is being enhanced, enabling pro-active interventions that will reduce the probability of failure, improve the reliability of installations and support an improved lived experience. Future development by DIO of data capture and analytical tools will help the earlier identification and prioritisation of investment opportunities across the FLCs SLA estate. This will enable mitigation of the worst accommodation until it can be replaced. The four-tier grading system allows the identification of the bedspaces most at risk and allows for correlating charges. Satisfaction with charging is at 57%, indicating that personnel recognise that they pay less for worse condition accommodation, but they are still far from content.

12. **Holding to account.** All of the delivery models have a similar holding to account process, whereby the HoE has monthly Site Infrastructure Management Meetings (SIMMs) with the contractor and delivery agents, to review performance. Data quality is improving, especially in terms of issues and risk reporting; the holding to account process is considered fit for purpose.

13. **FLC plans.** The FLCs all plan on eliminating their worst accommodation and replacing it with high quality accommodation that meets the standards set out in the DAS. Until all below standard accommodation is removed, low occupier satisfaction scoring is likely to continue. However, FLCs have arrested the downward trend since 2018, and their plans for SLA are prioritised and ambitious.

## **Question 2 – What is the MOD doing and what more could they do to rebuild trust in Service accommodation?**

14. **Satisfaction levels.** In the latest 2023 AFCAS results, satisfaction with the overall standard (42%), responses to maintenance/repairs (27%) and quality of maintenance/repairs (29%) of SLA remained at its lowest levels but have been steady at this level for some years. Satisfaction with value for money remains at 57%. The MOD published the results of the inaugural SLA survey in September 2022 and are currently planning for the second survey to be launched in Spring 2024. The purpose of these surveys is to assess the Single accommodation lived experience, expectations for accommodation in the future and, to highlight any trends on SLA usage. This data provides evidentiary support for improvements and changes to SLA policy. The next policy area to be addressed using data from the SLA survey is a review of need and entitlement, and next year it will contribute to the next level of the Defence Minimum Standards (DMS).

15. **DMS.** The minimum standards for Single accommodation have been published in the DAS. The assessment of each bedspace uses SLAMIS data,<sup>9</sup> and a physical survey

completed by single Service representatives. The assessment of the estate against the DMS is complete and data being collated. Analysing this data is the priority, enabling the FLCs to highlight the 'quick wins' to ensure that bedspaces meet the standard. When DMS goes live on 1 April 2024, it will mean that some bedspaces will no longer meet the minimum standard. For some FLCs, this will have an impact on their accommodation capacity, and FLCs are working through those impacts and mitigations.

16. **Leadership.** Senior engagement and backing have been powerful in indicating to personnel clear intent and tangible commitment to improve SLA. This was most publicly evidenced in the decision of the Second Sea Lord (2SL) to close Vivian Block at HMS Collingwood, Fareham, in February 2023. Well-beyond its intended life, repeated defects had rendered the block unfit for occupation and beyond recovery. Demolition is due to start this year, with a temporary, "podded" accommodation village providing sufficient rooms pending a new build replacement. 2SL afterwards issued a directive that HoEs were empowered to remove from use any accommodation at the Vivian standard or below. The approach by senior leadership is making a tangible difference in terms of estate condition. Work is ongoing to develop a centralised reporting mechanism that will allow the CDP, as SLA Sponsor, to monitor progress.

17. **What more could be done.** To avoid duplication, further initiatives are captured under Question 3 – best practice; and, Question 4 – financial investment.

### **Question 3 – Are there examples of good practice in provision of Service accommodation, which could be replicated across Defence?**

18. There are significant numbers of best practice initiatives, which are then shared across the delivery agents and FLCs. The examples described below are all contributing to improving SLA provision.

19. **Army SLA improvement programme.** The Army is exploiting modular construction techniques, where the accommodation units are built off-site and include energy-efficient designs. These modules can be purchased at speed, and this enables responsiveness and flexibility that represents a step-change from traditional construction methods. For example, a recent SLA build at Imjin Barracks in Gloucestershire based design features on feedback from resident Service personnel such as soundproofing, full-height windows and individual thermostats with Smart monitors. Similar accommodation units were built for course students at the Defence School of Transport, not only saving ~£1 million annually on hotel accommodation, but significantly reducing the carbon footprint of the school. The use of modern practices and the latest materials also allows energy efficiency features such as the incorporation of solar panels to drive down utilities costs and meet the MOD's carbon reduction goals.

20. **Training estate accommodation.** The Defence training estate is largely based on legacy 1940s infrastructure. The training estate is managed on behalf of Defence by the Army, who have replaced 4,000 bedspaces (~20% of the estate) to date, with 70 carbon efficient single and double-storey accommodation blocks. The new training accommodation at Westdown Camp in Wiltshire was prototyped, refined and modified during construction to deliver buildings that were not only better quality and more modern, but also generate power for the site, cutting expensive utility bills, and achieving the MOD's Defence Related Environmental Assessment Methodology (DREAM) 'Excellent' rating. These buildings also include smart building technology that provides data on energy usage to enable further

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<sup>9</sup> SLAMIS has been developed and run by DIO to draw together all SLA data (both DIO managed, and non-DIO managed) into a single location, providing oversight of availability and condition. SLAMIS includes a central booking system. See more detail at Para 23.

design improvements. The use of modern construction techniques has reduced construction times from 15 to 13 weeks, and the use of standard, modular and repeatable designs exploits the MOD's permitted development rights, minimises bureaucratic drag and can be mobilised at short notice to exploit departmental underspend.

21. **Defence Estate Optimisation Portfolio.** At £5.1 billion, Defence Estate Optimisation (DEO) is the largest infrastructure investment portfolio of its kind in Defence. DEO does several things for Defence, but specifically creates a better lived and working experience for Defence personnel, drives down Defence infrastructure emissions and delivers long term cost savings for the Defence budget. Over the next 10 years DEO is currently forecast to provide over 14,000 new and refurbished single rooms with an allocated SLA budget of £791 million. DEO has appointed industry design and build partners following a competitive tender and procurement exercise. The framework alliance contract will ensure accelerated delivery and value for money in refining repeatable and sustainable designs for Service accommodation that can be used across the estate. Repeatable design, with standardised components at scale, will reduce capital and running costs, while providing modern and comfortable accommodation.

22. **Project HYDRO.** Developed and implemented in April 2020 to improve building resilience, it took proactive measures to prevent heating and hot water failures across the Air estate. The programme includes installation of temporary boilers within 24 hours of failure and preventative maintenance to boilers and district heating systems during the summer. The result has been fewer instances of boilers failing, and for shorter periods when they do, improving the quality of life for RAF personnel. A Phase 2 is looking to address the root causes of boiler failure through a district heating replacement programme, which will also support decarbonisation ambitions. HYDRO is a good example of where the FLCs have made balance of investment decisions to provide additional resilience and has been extended across other FLCs, where resources have allowed.

23. **SLAMIS.** The SLAMIS capability is the means by which DIO will provide Defence with a single source of accurate data on SLA Type, Location, Condition for charging, Occupancy and Utilisation, through development of a global bedspace index; a booking tool, and a 4-tier grading tool,<sup>10</sup> for use at site level; and Defence-wide reporting capabilities. Once the SLAMIS Project has delivered the complete suite of reporting capabilities, MOD will be able to share a range of management information across the Department, to allow future decisions to be made about SLA. The SLAMIS project has taken longer than intended to deliver, reflecting the complexity of the existing SLA environment and operating models, the extensive range of stakeholders and dependencies and, the challenges of maintaining and reporting accurate data.

24. In progress to date, the SLAMIS booking tool has already successfully been rolled out across the UK and part of the overseas estate to improve FLC management of SLA; SLAMIS now offers the MOD a detailed picture of the SLA estate, with 127,105 bedspaces now bookable through accommodation cells.<sup>11</sup> Given the variation of operating models, the SLAMIS booking tool was designed to be sufficiently basic to enable core allocation activity, with the requirement for the FLCs to provide an offline service to support local working practices; this has required engagement across multiple stakeholder groups at establishment level. There is potential to generate improvements through greater centralisation, at site level, and on a more regional basis, through efficiencies of scale, staff

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<sup>10</sup> 4 Tier-grading (4TG) is the process by which we assess the Condition for Charge for all SLA bedrooms. The new 4TG tool enables the online collation of the 14 serials of information used to provide an assessment, and for that information to be more easily reported through the SLAMIS reporting capabilities.

<sup>11</sup> As at 23 October 23.

resilience and increased knowledge base of accommodation policy. While SLAMIS continues to embed, FLCs report that at site level it has enabled them to better interrogate data and has driven better behaviours in the management of SLA accommodation. By way of example the Royal Navy has piloted a flexible room pilot in Portsmouth, providing a hotel-style booking service of SLA to maximise occupancy. However, this needs to be cognisant of the requirement for unit cohesion, which benefits the lived experience, mental health and contribution to the moral component of combat power.

25. Currently data regarding SLA is sourced from several different locations which risks inconsistent reporting. The introduction of SLAMIS will, once fully delivered, provide an accurate view of SLA across the whole estate via the Asset Information Portal (AIP). The data available will include number, location, condition and utilisation.

**Question 4 – (i) Is enough money being invested to modernise and future proof military accommodation and (ii) how long will it take for all military accommodation to meet an acceptable standard of energy efficiency? (iii) Is the MOD being as forward thinking and innovative as it could be in its approach to new housing stock?**

**(i) Is enough money being invested to modernise and future proof military accommodation?**

26. **Overview.** Since delegation of funding to FLCs in 2018, significant progress has been made in improving SLA condition. Over the next 10 years, FLCs and DEOP have committed to a £5.3 billion SLA improvement programme.

27. **Royal Navy.** Plans to invest £1 billion over the next 10 years on SLA, tackling the worst accommodation and balancing this with modernisation of trainee accommodation. Navy Command has active, funded projects to replace or refurbish SLA blocks (and where necessary, their associated messes and district heating systems) at eight establishments, with work starting on site for the first of these during autumn 2023.

28. **Army.** Using a programmatic approach over 10 years, the plan is to life cycle replace 16,500 permanent SLA bedspaces with new net-zero buildings delivered through modular modern methods of construction. This is the biggest SLA programme in Defence since Project Single Living Accommodation Modernisation (SLAM) 20 years ago, and by July 2023 over 1,000 of the bedspaces in this new programme were under construction.

29. **RAF.** The SLA Programme has identified approximately 7,000 bedspaces for replacement and 6,000 bedspaces for refurbishment, removing all Grade 3 and Grade 4 SLA for permanent staff and trainees over the next 10 years. This will address the worst SLA across the RAF estate and provide modern, ensuite and sustainable accommodation. As of August 2023, there are five Projects within the SLA Programme currently in progress at RAF Marham, Honington, Waddington, Cosford and Brize Norton, which will provide a total of 1,260 new bedspaces once completed. Continual small-scale improvements to blocks, mainly in the form of ablution and kitchen/utility room refurbishments, will remain an integral part of Air's infrastructure plan.

30. **UKStratCom.** Plans to invest ~£810 million in its SLA, principally in the Permanent Joint Operating Bases (PJOBs), where it is developing innovative approaches in response to limitations presented such as industry capacity. Seismic compliance on the Cyprus estate remains a priority.

31. **Summary.** A simple summary of plans by FLC and DEOP is shown at the table here. These plans are subject to funding approval in the ABC24 process and may not be

confirmed until November 2024. However, they indicate a committed and ambitious intent to meet the requirements laid out in the DAS.

<b>FLC</b>	<b>Plans</b>	<b>Funding</b>
Navy	Replacement or refurbishment of SLA blocks at 8 sites starting Autumn 23.	£1Bn/10
Army	8,500 bedspaces/10	£1.2Bn/10
DEOP (Army)	8,696 new bedspaces/10 1,540 refurbed bedspaces/10	£0.533Bn/10 <sup>12</sup>
Air	7,000 new bedspaces/10 6,000 refurbed bedspaces/10	£1.5Bn/10
UKStratCom	An SLA Programme to upgrade our worst condition SLA first	£0.810Bn/10
DEOP (Air and UKStratCom)	3,404 new bedspaces/10 556 refurbed bedspaces/10	£0.257Bn/10
<b>Totals</b>	<b>~40,000</b>	<b>£5.3Bn/10</b>

**(ii) How long will it take for all military accommodation to meet an acceptable standard of energy efficiency?**

32. All new build and refurbishment projects will be designed to meet legislative requirements for net zero and the MOD's sustainability strategy. However, this will need to be subject to departmental balance of investment decisions.

33. SLA will be included as part of the strategic net zero roadmap with a greater emphasis on efficiency. Work is on-going to understand the scope of the requirement.

**(iii) Is the MOD being as forward thinking and innovative as it could be in its approach to new housing stock [SLA]?**

34. Technologically, the MOD has designed SLA which are modular and efficient, exploiting modern building techniques employed across the construction sector. Additionally, smart building pilot sites at RAF Leeming and HMS Collingwood are trialling the installation of wireless/battery-less smart technology in bedspaces to ensure heating and lighting use are controlled.

35. However, the most pressing issue is with funding the level of ambition that exists, while addressing the wider financial headwinds impacting the construction sector. Therefore, the department is looking to explore innovative and novel approaches in financing the future programme.

Annex:

A. FLC Supplementary Information.

<sup>12</sup> Total DEO investment in Army is £3.35 billion which includes technical accn. £0.533 billion is specifically SLA investment.



**Annex A to SLA HCDC Response****FLC SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION****ROYAL NAVY**

1. Navy Command has c.200 SLA blocks with a total of c.21,250 bedspaces across its estate. Key facts include:

a. The majority of SLA blocks were built between 1960 and 2000. The newest block was completed in 2021; the oldest dates from the 1600s (Royal Citadel).

b. Accommodation is a mixture of single ensuite (c.45%); single cabins with shared ablutions (c.15%); and multi-occupancy (c.40%). Multi-occupancy rooms (from two to 30 people) are used for new entry recruits; some RM Units (although these will be phased out in favour of single ensuite); and as a last resort to increase capacity at accommodation hot spots.

c. The majority of SLA (c.70%) is maintained through the FDIS contracts. The SLA at Devonport Naval Base (c.9%) is maintained under the Armada PFI arrangement. The SLA at Portsmouth and Clyde naval bases is maintained by KBS and Babcock respectively through the FMSP contracts (c.21%).

d. While only 44% of SLA rooms are graded Good or Very Good by the Grade for Charge methodology, more than 90% of rooms and 85% of bedspaces will meet the Defence Minimum Standard on 1 April 2024 (Grade for Charge is influenced by many factors, not just condition). The failures all relate to the layout of the shared bathroom facilities. The affected blocks are due for demolition and replacement from 2025, and work is in hand to scope what cost-effective changes can be implemented in the interim.

2. Notwithstanding that most rooms meet the DMS, many are in SLA blocks that are at or past their design life. Navy Command aims to invest £1 billion over the next 10 years on this. Striking a balance between tackling the worst accommodation for trained strength personnel, and the need to modernise trainee accommodation, the Command has active, funded projects to replace or refurbish SLA blocks (and where necessary, their associated messes and district heating systems) at eight establishments. The DEO Programme will also provide new accommodation for Royal Marine personnel as they relocate from RMB Stonehouse and for Royal Navy personnel in Portsmouth as the old Wardroom at HMS Nelson is closed. Subsequent waves of investment in the latter half of the decade and beyond will bring all SLA to modern standards.

3. New build blocks will generally be delivered through the DIO-led SLA programmatic approach, and will use standard designs with modern, modular methods of construction to provide single ensuite as standard (except for initial trainees) in blocks that meet net zero carbon and other sustainability targets. It is not possible to commit to precise timescales for the SLA replacement since the pace and volume achieved will be limited by two factors: the impact of inflation which remains very significant for construction materials and labour; and the capacity within the MOD and industry to undertake the work (noting that Industry is also seeing very healthy demand for non-MOD construction).

4. In the interim, Navy Command is working closely with its HoEs and industry partners to improve the living conditions of our people today. Perhaps this was most publicly evidenced in the decision of the 2SL to close Vivian Block at HMS Collingwood in Fareham in February 2023. Well-beyond its intended life, repeated defects had rendered the block unfit for occupation and beyond recovery. Demolition is due to start this year, with a temporary,

“podded” accommodation village providing sufficient rooms pending a new build replacement. Beyond this example, Navy Command has protected infrastructure spend from the financial pressures facing the MOD, and all HoEs are empowered to make plans and decisions to meet their local needs. There is a general focus on increasing resilience in heating and hot water systems, stopping water ingress through roofs and windows, and increasing ventilation in bathrooms to prevent damp and mould. There is also a broad campaign of redecoration, installing modern lighting systems and improving energy efficiency.

5. Navy Command led the roll-out of SLAMIS which is now being used at all sites except one (for contractual reasons, with that site providing room condition and occupancy data into the SLAMIS database). Analysis confirms previous perceptions that the geographic spread of personnel has changed over the years, creating areas of shortage and surplus. SLAMIS is now enabling improved visibility and utilisation of rooms in shortage areas; providing granular evidence to inform decisions on future Unit moves; and informing the numbers of rooms required to be provided by the SLA programme.

## ARMY

6. SLA is Chief of the General Staff's (CGS's) number one infrastructure priority. As such, significant investment in SLA is underway across the estate to create a living environment fit for the Army, and to deliver benefits for our people and capability whilst offering the best value for money for Defence.

7. The Army have ~2,500 SLA buildings across the UK estate, over 2,900 worldwide. Key facts include:

- a. The majority of Army SLA (almost half) was built from the 1930s to 1999.
- b. Investment between 2000 and 2019 provides approximately a third of the estate, with principal programmes including the Army Basing Programme (ABP) and Project SLAM.
- c. The Army's oldest SLA buildings were first constructed in the 1700s (Edinburgh Castle, Woolwich RA and Invicta Park).
- d. The Army's newest five SLA in the portfolio were built in 2022.

8. SLAMIS reports the Army estate as including 1,520 SLA buildings, 55,544 rooms and 67,409 bedspaces, further details include:

- a. 32,097 rooms are reported as having ensuite facilities.
- b. 4,336 rooms are reported as multi-occupancy (shared ablutions) with 14,446 bedspaces.
  - (1) 1,025 X type rooms (Phase 1 recruits) with 5,122 bedspaces.
  - (2) 3,311 Y type rooms (Phase 2 Trg four bed rooms) with 9,324 bedspaces.

9. Estate Management:

- a. Most of the Army estate is maintained under standard contracts (UK - FDIS).
- b. PFIs provide approximately 20% of UK SLA buildings (These are all within England and represent approximately 25% of England's SLA buildings).

10. Over 30,000 of the Army's SLA bedspaces are located in relatively modern buildings of good condition. A notable proportion remain in buildings considered beyond end-of-life and in need of replacement. A programmatic approach is being applied over 10 years to replace or conduct major refurbishment of 16,500 SLA bedspaces in buildings that are net-zero carbon in operation. The new buildings are being delivered through modern modular methods of construction, and generate their own electricity. The Army SLA Programme will invest £1.2 billion over 10 years to deliver 8,500 bedspaces and raise the average standard of SLA condition.

11. The £3.35 billion DEOP Army Programme will deliver a range of technical and living accommodation. £533 million of this is specifically dedicated to SLA and will deliver ~10,000 bedspaces through a mix of refurbishing existing SLA and building new SLA blocks.

12. To improve living conditions, the Army SLA programme will prioritise modernisation of the under-invested core sites to be retained across the estate and focus on removing the last of the multi-occupancy rooms, whilst continuing to renew the oldest accommodation on the estate. The programme is being delivered in tranches. As of July 2023, over 1,000 of these bedspaces were in construction. The new bedspaces offer ensuite single accommodation with full-size double beds, increased storage, and kitchen and communal facilities. Designs have been tested and adjusted following consultation with soldiers.

13. In addition to the delivery of 16,500 new bedspaces, Regional Command have an enduring annual programme of repair, renewal and redecoration to maintain the existing estate which routinely upgrades more than 2,000 bedspaces a year.

14. In total, 20% of the Army's training estate accommodation has now been replaced by Net Zero Carbon Accommodation Programme (NetCAP) buildings. This consists of 4,000 temporary accommodation bedspaces across our training camps. This approach is being rolled out across the remainder of the estate where appropriate, contributing towards making the Army's estate more environmentally sustainable.

*11 December 2023*

## ROYAL AIR FORCE

15. The RAF through its Air Infrastructure 10-Year Strategic Plan aims to remove all Grade 3 and Grade 4 (for condition) SLA by 2033, through a mix of replacement and refurbishment works. This is in addition to new SLA being delivered by new equipment capability programmes and as part of the DEOP.

16. Air Command has c.538 SLA blocks across 25 units with a total of c.20,932 bedrooms and c.26,650 bedspaces across its estate. Key facts include:

- a. The majority of SLA blocks were built between the 1930's up to 2015. The newest recent blocks were completed in 2023; the oldest blocks date from the 1920's.
- b. Accommodation is a mixture of single ensuite (c.36%); single rooms with shared ablutions (c.37%); and multi-occupancy (c.27%). Multi-occupancy rooms (from two to approximately 12 people) are used for Phase 1 & Phase 2 Trainees or transit accommodation.
- c. With the exception of RAF Fylingdales (45 bedspaces) all SLA is maintained through the FDIS contracts.
- d. While only 72% of SLA rooms passed DMS, more than 80% will meet the DMS on 1 April 2024. The bedspaces that do not meet DMS are a mixture of multi-occupancy rooms and single-occupancy rooms. The high-risk failures mostly relate to ventilation/mould issues in shared/ensuite ablutions and window security issues. The affected blocks are currently being reviewed under Air's SLA programme for either refurbishment or replacement, and work is being done to scope the most effective route to combat these failures in the interim.

17. The accommodation needs of the RAF has changed significantly since the last major SLA build programme. The RAF has subtly different needs to the other Services in that it delivers operational output from the home base, which drives the need to consider shift workers and duty-rest to support safe aviation output. The recent Defence-wide SLA survey has allowed personnel to give their view on what they want from their Service accommodation and therefore being able to influence future designs for SLA to meet their needs.

18. As set out in its Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy, the RAF has set itself the target of being net zero by 2040. All new build accommodation, including major refurbishments, must adhere to sustainable policy and building standards, and will be designed to the highest standards of energy efficiency by investment in renewable energy and sustainable building fabric. The RAF is also piloting near-zero and carbon-positive construction technologies to exploit and take advantage of the opportunities this presents including modernised accommodation and an energy resilient estate.

19. The introduction of a DMS ensures that the RAF personnel will not be allocated sub-standard rooms. There is ongoing investment to supplement the broader SLA Programme with ablution refurbishment projects as well as kitchen conversions. The RAF's aim is for all SLA to be of the highest quality, even if this means taking SLA bedspaces offline to focus on investment in new-builds.

20. Air's SLA programme, through over £1 billion of dedicated investment, will raise the standard of SLA across the Air estate, aiming to deliver 7,000 replacement and 6,000 refurbished bedspaces to meet Air-directed goals by 2033, to remove all Grade 3 and 4 Accommodation for permanent staff and trainees. The first two phases of 1,200 replacement

bedspaces at five sites is underway. The SLA programmatic approach seeks to employ modern methods and carbon efficient and sustainable construction to achieve maximum economies of scale, including use of a common ensuite room design to reduce cost per bedspace that meets the requirements of Service Personnel. New bedspaces will also be delivered to support equipment capability programmes and DEOP. Where possible, requirements are being combined to achieve economies of scale and deliver the best value for money for Defence.

## **STRATEGIC COMMAND**

21. UKStratCom has c.230 SLA blocks with c.14,000 SLA bedspaces across both the UK and overseas with the condition of the accommodation varying across the estate.

- a. SLA is primarily single occupancy (UK c.90%, overseas c.53%) with mixture of ensuite and shared ablutions. Multi-occupancy rooms, which vary from two – 20 bedspaces, are used for transit accommodation, short term courses and exercises.
- b. 50% of UK bedspaces are Grade 1 for condition and 99% will meet DMS by April 2024. 24% of the overseas bedspaces are Grade 1 for condition, with the majority (59%) at Grade 3.
- c. While most of the SLA is managed by the FDIS (and the overseas equivalent) contract, three UK sites (accounting for 25% of UK bedspaces) are PFI managed, all of this accommodation is grade one for condition.

22. Through the UKStratCom ExCo, UKStratCom Infra secured an additional £228 million funding in ABC22 (profiled 2<sup>nd</sup> Epoch) to support the delivery of our SLA Upgrade Programme. This funding is in addition to our existing planned SLA delivery programme. In total we are currently planning to allocate c.£809 million to the improvement of our SLA. In October 2022, utilising 4TG condition assessments, the UKStratCom Infrastructure Board agreed the prioritisation of SLA investment targeting the worst first.

23. A significant amount of this SLA will be delivered via a modular approach to delivery using a standardised design for the UK estate. Standardised designs for new accommodation have been developed and continue to go through cycles of review and update, these align to agreed policy standards which ensures it conforms to sustainability and net zero ambitions of Defence.

24. There are challenges in delivering the standardised approach to our bedspaces on the overseas estate. More innovative methods of delivery are being explored to provide the same lived experience improvements as those on the UK estate.

25. The new contract has enabled the latitude to develop new ways of delivering infrastructure with a particular focus of SLA and treating worst first. UKStratCom ran a pilot scheme in old SLA blocks with shared facilities. These have been upgraded to provide greater privacy and better quality to enhance the experience of SP. The pilot has been very successful and there are plans to roll out this initiative to all shared ablutions SLA.

## **Overseas**

26. The current stock of SLA accommodation across the four PJOB locations (Cyprus, Gibraltar, Singapore and the South Atlantic Islands) varies in terms of standard, condition and grade. Working with our industry partners we have been closely monitoring; heating, hot water and damp problems across the c.7,500 SLA bedspaces and we have seen a marked reduction of outstanding issues beyond what would be deemed acceptable against industry standards norms. In terms of reporting and monitoring across the entire estate, in Q1 of

2023, of the 62 incidents of loss of heating, hot water and damp and mould, nearly 50% were resolved in less than 12 hours of being reported and a further 25%, in 24hrs (with the remainders closed out in five days). Programme APOLLO in Cyprus is ensuring that our single accommodation is seismically compliant, to ensure its safety and resilience in the event of earthquakes. The SLA at Ascension Island is also scheduled to be replaced in FY 2023/24.

27. The rollout of the new OPC, equivalent to the FDIS contract for the UK estate, should see an improved service, which has been evidenced at Gibraltar, which was the first area to transition from the legacy contract in November 2022.