



Ministry  
of Defence

JAMES CARTLIDGE MP  
MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE PROCUREMENT



21 April 2024

Dear Jeremy,

I am writing further to the Ministry of Defence (MOD) oral evidence session held on 27 February 2024, in support of your inquiry into Service Accommodation. I gave evidence alongside the Chief of Defence People, Vice Admiral Phil Hally, the Defence infrastructure Organisation Chief Executive, Mike Green and the Director of Army Basing, Major General Richard Clements. I committed to provide further information on a number of issues.

### **Timescale for the review on the Modernised Accommodation Offer (MAO) for Service Family Accommodation (SFA) and how the review will be conducted.**

The MOD is preparing to undertake a review, the terms and timescales of which are currently being considered. We will be able to update Service Personnel, Ministers and Officials as the review progresses. In support of this review, we have also launched activity to improve HR data quality on the relationship status and construct of modern military families, plus a survey launched on 18 March 2024 aimed at understanding the demand for family accommodation. This survey was available to all Regular and Full Time Reserve Service-Full Commitment personnel until Thursday 4 April 2024.

### **SFA Properties and Gas Certification**

You asked for the total SFA properties with out-of-date gas safety certificates by period of expiration following my letters to you of 21 June 2023 and the subsequent amendment on 31 August 2023.

The reasons for the data discrepancy between the two letters are as follows:

- Data in the letter of 21 June 2023 did not include properties with recently expired Landlord Gas Safety Inspections (LGSIs) which were not part of the surge.

- When the surge approach to clear the backlog ended, reporting did not initially include those properties where the LGSI had become due since the beginning of the surge.
- Data in the letter of 31 August 2023 included all properties with an outstanding LGSI, regardless of the length of time since expiry or whether the property was part of the surge.

As at 18 April 2024, 252 occupied homes have an outstanding valid gas safety certificate, at least 2 appointments to carry out inspections have been made for all of these. The table below shows certificates by period of expiration:

| <b>Expired LGSI as at 18 April 2024</b> |               |              |
|---|---------------|--------------|
| <b>Timeline</b>                         | <b>Amount</b> | <b>TOTAL</b> |
| Expired 1 month                         | 217           | 252          |
| Expired 3 month                         | 31            |              |
| Expired 6 month                         | 4             |              |
| Expired 12 month                        | 0             |              |

This can be broken down further by reason and action taken:

| <b>No of SFA</b> | <b>Percentage</b> | <b>Reason</b>   |
|------------------|-------------------|---|
| 181              | 72                | Appointment booked before 1 May   |
| 7                | 3                 | Appointment booked after 1 May  |
| 10               | 4                 | Family due to move out so gas safety check will be done in next 10 workings days during empty period. |
| 10               | 4                 | Service person on exercise/ deployment.   |
| 8                | 3                 | Access issues including no contact.   |
| 8                | 3                 | SFA sublet to civilian tenants – access refusal has led to legal action being engaged.                |
| 28               | 11                | Other, such as status of property/ family circumstances to be clarified                               |

For the 8 SFA (3%) with access issues, contractors and the military Chain of Command/Welfare are working together to gain access. This could be either via the Service family or authorised access via the Chain of Command using the new Red Card System, which was introduced on 1 March 2024 and is comprised of three stages; yellow card, red card, and a final notice.

Officials monitor progress daily to escalate any issues and report weekly and fortnightly to seniors and Ministers. Contractors continue to be pressed at Chief Executive level.

### **Contract timescales for maintenance work in SLA under FDIS contracts**

This point has already been addressed in the transcript correction.

### **If and in what way, the SLAM project delivery model differed from that of the SLA projects which form part of the Defence Estate Optimisation Programme and why the SLAM framework agreement was not continued.**

Project SLAM (Single Living Accommodation Modernisation) was a 10-year self-contained, guaranteed programme of Single Living Accommodation (SLA) only projects, pan-Front Line Commands (FLC) and with a single source supplier - Debut (a Joint Venture of Lendlease and Babcock Support services). Project SLAM included both capital build and a 7 year operate & maintain service. It was one of the largest new build and refurbishment projects in the UK and delivered successful renovations and construction in 52 locations from Scotland to Cornwall. 121 separate projects were improved, and more than 22,000 SLA bedspaces created.

The Project SLAM business case approval expired after the Phase 2 extension. The SLAM framework was not extended because there was no provision in the contract for a further extension.

The Defence Estate Optimisation Portfolio is about optimising the defence estate and is an estates change programme which is focused on 30+ major projects, which include SLA as an element. There will be a lot of construction and refurbishment work on both single living and service family accommodation as well as a range of operational, educational, and technical facilities that span the MOD's UK estate. The Project SLAM Framework which utilised one contractor to manage the entire project from design and planning, through to construction and maintenance, was deemed too narrow to be utilised as part of DEOP and would not result in efficient and effective delivery.

**Whether contractors' past performance was taken into consideration as part of the process when the FDIS contract bids were assessed?**

All suppliers were contracted through CCS Frameworks which are pre-assessed for suitability, capacity, and capability therefore MOD did not subject them to further testing and as such, their bids were assessed on the tender bid criteria only. In any event, the ability to take past performance into account under the current procurement regulations is very limited in its scope. The new Procurement Act which will come into force for new procurements from Autumn 2024 will broaden the scope for Departments and we are keen to utilise this going forwards.

I trust this information is useful and look forward to the Inquiry's report in due course.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Cartlidge', written in a cursive style.

**JAMES CARTLIDGE MP**