



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

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## Steady improvement

In 2009, DE Operations Housing undertook a customer survey of Service families who have moved in the last year.

Steady improvement has been achieved in virtually all areas but DE Ops Housing accepts that more work is required to reach the standard and performance that Service families expect.

A further survey will be undertaken of families who have moved during 2010.

## Improving Service

MODern Housing Solutions (MHS), who provide repair and maintenance services for Service Family Accommodation (SFA) in England and Wales, has reorganised their helpdesk to improve customer service.

The helpdesk has been split into two. One team will now concentrate on helping customers who wish to request repair and maintenance. The other team will focus on resolving customer problems and complaints more effectively.

## HIC opening hours

With effect 1 July, HIC telephone lines will open from 0830 hrs to 1500 hrs Monday to Friday, apart from the last Wednesday of each month when the HIC will close at 1200 hrs to allow for staff training.

Providing Repairing Maintaining Improving Upgrading Managing

# Home front

Information for Service Families from Defence Estates Operations Housing



## Colchester gets homes fit for heroes

DE Operations Housing has completely refurbished 136 homes, externally and internally at Colchester, as well as providing a new large play park (pictured centre).

Inside, improvements included new kitchens, new bathrooms with shower, better insulation, new curtains, carpets and flooring, new heating and electrics, the moving of walls to create more spacious rooms, new internal doors, more storage space, digital television booster and aerial, as well as full redecoration. Outside improvements included replacement roofs, as well as new windows and external doors.

Garrison Commander Colonel Tom Fleetwood (pictured above left with Mrs Angie Vennard and the Mayor of Colchester) said: **"The upgrade of these quarters has made a real difference to the quality of life of the occupants. The delivery of top quality accommodation is a priority for all of us. I am delighted to see how well the work has gone. The play park has been much needed and long awaited and I know families are delighted with such a fantastic facility."**

Lucy Jackson and her husband Corporal Karl Jackson M.C, serving with 3 Parachute Regiment, moved into their home with seven-month-old son Jake (pictured above right).

Mrs Jackson said: **"When I saw the refurbished property, I was over the moon. Anything that**

**makes living here easier with a husband in an operational unit is absolutely invaluable to a Forces family. The house is a pleasure to live in and coming home puts a smile on my face."**

Corporal Jackson was awarded the Military Cross for 'gallantry in the face of enemy on land' on his last tour of duty in Afghanistan. At the age of 28, he has already completed two tours in Afghanistan and is set to return, as the Brigade goes back under Op HERRICK for the third time since 2006.

He said: **"The last thing you need when you're out in Afghanistan are niggling problems with your home. A house like this makes the job so much easier."**

Angie Vennard and husband Private Chris Vennard, also serving with 3 Parachute Regiment, moved into their three-bedroom home earlier this year with their children Aidan, three, and Ethan, one.

When asked what her refurbished home was like, Mrs Vennard said: **"The house is absolutely gorgeous. It's airy and spacious with a really modern kitchen and bathroom. Having space makes a big difference as the kids get older and, since I don't drive, having a new play park close by is great."**

## Housing facts

DE Operations Housing manages the allocation, maintenance and improvement of over 49,000 properties across the UK

## Planning ahead

Traditionally, the summer months are the busiest period in the DE Ops Housing calendar. This is because many Service personnel and their families move during this period - as it causes less disruption to school age children.

This year preparations began at the start of the year with a number of initiatives. These included:

- The early preparation of empty properties so they were ready for allocation - in some areas by as many as 700 SFA.
- Working closely with the local chains of command.
- Increasing resources in the right areas.

Work has also been ongoing to remind Service families of the need to notify the Housing Information Centre (HIC) on receipt of assignment - as that helps our staff identify where houses will be available and where we'll need a property. DE Ops Housing has also sought the support from local Commanders to manage the issue of Service personnel who retain SFA, despite being posted. This practice denies other Service families who need a property in the area and also takes up valuable resources when Substitute SFA is required.

Although we are at an early stage, the latest information shows an improvement in the Move In success rate, compared to earlier years.

## USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS AND INFORMATION

### Repair and Maintenance

England and Wales  
0800 707 6000

Scotland  
0800 328 6337

Northern Ireland  
0800 030 4651

### Allocations and Move in/Out

Housing Information Centres (HIC)

0800 169 6322  
Mil 95410 8000

### SFA forms and information

[www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/MicroSite/DE/OurPublications/ServiceFamilyAccommodation/](http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/MicroSite/DE/OurPublications/ServiceFamilyAccommodation/)

## Home front ?

Home front is produced by Defence Estates Operations Housing for occupants of Service Family Accommodation.

## Welcome Packs

Welcome Packs are being launched on 2 August to ensure that Service families are given key information about their SFA when they move in, and where you can find more useful information.

The Move In pack provides a useful place to store document and information about your SFA.

The packs will also contain a fridge magnet and key ring with the handy phone numbers to request repairs and maintenance.