

CHOOSY (Contact Houses bOOKing SYstem)

Simpler handling of booking of MoD Welfare Contact Houses in Colchester

- MoD Welfare Contact Houses are houses available to military personnel and their families who need accommodation for short periods of time.
- The Colchester Garrison has two contact houses, which are presently booked by requesting them via an electronic mailbox.
- The mailbox is checked often but not daily. The officer in charge then needs to open and check a spreadsheet to see if the houses are available for the requested dates.
- If they are, the officer makes a preliminary booking and emails back providing also a booking form and requesting payment. The booking forms are emailed back by the person wanting to book.
- The objective of CHOOSY is to simplify this and other processes associated with booking contact houses.
- On receipt of an email request, the officer will launch CHOOSY to check the availability.
- If the availability is there, the officer simply enters the name, surname and email address of the person requesting the booking and clicks on the dates to provisionally book them for that person.
- Upon confirmation, CHOOSY then sends an email back to the person requesting the booking to confirm. The email will also include the total cost of the booking (at the rate of £35 per day).
- The email will point to a Google Form that will need to be filled to confirm the booking. When the form is filled, Google will send an email to the officer.
- Upon receipt, the officer opens CHOOSY again and clicks on the "Form Submitted" button associated with a booking.
- If everything is correct and the payment is made, the officer will press the "Confirm" button to email back that the booking is now correctly in place.

If time allows, CHOOSY should also have the following features:

- If the houses are not available for a period, but they are for part of the period, an email should offer such a shorter period.
- Cancellations may be requested by the person making the booking, and ideally CHOOSY should partly automatise them.
- If possible, CHOOSY should retrieve the relevant information from Google so the officer can check it without opening Google Sheets.
- A priority system is used by which if the Contact Houses are needed for higher-priority reasons, bookings may be cancelled (by email). This cannot happen in the last 7 days prior to the booking date. So, if at some point a higher priority need for the houses emerges, CHOOSY should allow the officer to send a cancellation email, if the booking is more than 7 days away.
- NOTE: All information handled by CHOOSY must be stored in human readable form, in either an XLSX format or a CSV format.