



# Families First Newsletter

Issue: 10 | Date: October 31, 2023

Welcome to DIO's monthly newsletter designed to provide families living in SFA with useful updates and information on their homes.

Included in this issue of Families First:

- Performance update on Accommodation contracts
- Tackling Damp and Mould Programme in SFA – an update
- Winter Safety guide
- Key dates to note
- Useful links

## Update on Performance Against Accommodation Contracts

### Active complaints



As of 15 October, the number of open complaints has reduced to **885**, down **78%** compared to this time last year.

### Preparation of homes for Move-In

In September, the percentage of homes prepared to Move-In standard was **79%**, up from **70%** in August. Work continues in order to make further improvements.



### Compensation

Following on from families' feedback, Pinnacle has introduced a new improved compensation system making the process much easier for families to claim.

Families will see new forms on the Pinnacle website, be required to validate their email address (to ensure this is correct and vouchers are sent to the correct place) and will receive regular emails to update them on their claim's progress. All communications from the new system will be received from [no-reply@pay729.net](mailto:no-reply@pay729.net).

Pinnacle is aware of several legacy claims still in the previous system. The team is working hard alongside Amey, VIVO and voucher providers to process these claims as quickly as possible.

If you haven't heard back on a claim that pre-dates the new system (submitted before 1 Aug 23), please contact: [compensation@pinnacleservicefamilies.co.uk](mailto:compensation@pinnacleservicefamilies.co.uk)

### Repairs & maintenance

As of 30 September, the number of outstanding repairs and maintenance tasks stood at **5,587**. This number has remained steady in recent months and considerable work to reduce this is ongoing.



### Call wait times



During September, the average call wait time for Pinnacle's National Service Centre was **23 seconds**.

## Tackling damp and mould in SFA – An Update

DIO and its industry partners are tackling damp and mould in thousands of homes.

Earlier this year, a damp and mould taskforce was set up to assess the Service Family Accommodation (SFA) estate to fully understand the extent and the causes of damp and mould. As part of this work, a 'First Responder' process was established and over 5,000 homes with a reported damp and mould issue have been visited. DIO acknowledges that repeatedly removing surface mould is not a long-term solution for families and has worked with its maintenance contractors, Amey and VIVO, to look at the root causes of damp and mould in detail.

A year-long programme of works to address the underlying causes of damp and mould in thousands of homes is now underway. Most homes will receive a package of relatively simple works based on the most common recommendations from damp and mould surveys. These works are backed by £29 million of investment and will tackle the most severely affected homes first. In some cases, these works should be sufficient to resolve the issues, but in others more substantial works will be required. These more substantial works are backed by a further £94 million of investment this financial year.

If you have reported a damp and mould issue, you will receive a letter two to three weeks before work begins at your home which will confirm dates, details of how appointments will be booked in, and who to contact if you need further information.

Unfortunately, not all works will happen straight away, and some families will be waiting longer than others.

In the interim, if you see damp and mould reoccurring, you can request further first responder visits to ensure it is kept to a minimum by calling the National Service Centre (NSC) on 0800 031 8628.

More information on how to reduce condensation in your home, which can help prevent damp and mould, can be found here: [A guide to preventing condensation, damp & mould](#). If you need to report damp or mould for the first time, call the National Service Centre on 0800 031 8628 to raise a report and undergo an initial assessment of the issues in your home.

Further work will be required beyond the 12-month plan to fully address the causes of damp and mould in Service family homes. It is estimated that this will take two or three years and will require significant investment in addition to current funding. DIO is working to secure the additional funding required to build on the £400m additional funding announced in the Defence Command Paper Refresh for SFA over this financial year and next.

DIO is committed to keeping families up to date as works progress across the SFA estate. Please see the Frequently Asked Questions document for further information: [Damp and mould works FAQs](#).

## Investment across the SFA Estate

### Families in Devon to benefit from improved homes

The 42 homes, on the Rock Park and Coombe estates in Dartmouth, have had a range of improvements including new roofs, soffits and facias, guttering, windows and doors, external wall insulation, canopies, external lights and exterior painting.

These works have transformed the properties into high-quality, energy efficient homes ready for Service personnel and their families to move into.

In addition to more than 14,000 homes receiving an upgrade in the last two years, a further £400 million is being invested in Service Family Accommodation across the UK over the next two years to help ensure families live in the standard of homes they rightly deserve.

Through this investment, over 1000 UK properties will undergo extensive refurbishments this year to boost the number of quality homes available to Service families.

### Phil Riley, DIO Director of Accommodation said:

“Improving the standard of Service Family Accommodation is our top priority so I’m delighted to see the completion of this project. Dartmouth has a rich Naval history and local Service families deserve to be living in high-quality homes such as these. Thanks to the local teams for their great work.”



## Winter Safety Guide

It’s worth spending some time getting your home winter-ready ahead of the colder months. There are a few simple steps that families can take to keep their homes safe ahead of the winter period.

DIO has worked with our suppliers to develop a [helpful quick reference guide](#) which can be found on Pinnacle's website. The guide looks at some of the common issues which may affect your home in the colder months and details any simple steps which can be taken to protect your home this winter.

## Key Dates to Note

### Local housing surgeries:

**Hereford** – 4 December

**Coningsby** – 10 November

**Marham** – 4 December

**St Athan** - 4 December

**Topcliffe** – 9 December



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## Useful Links

[Contact Pinnacle](#)

[Make a request for compensation](#)

[Reporting damp and mould](#)

[Join the SFA Defence Connect page](#)

[New Accommodation Offer](#)