

MOD STANDARDISES ACCOMMODATION AND DOMESTIC SUPPORT FOR SENIOR OFFICERS

The MOD has changed its policy for senior officer accommodation and provision of domestic assistance which will save at least £3 million a year.

Following a comprehensive review, the Ministry of Defence has disestablished the status of Official Service Residence (OSR) this financial year and is publishing a new Tri-Service policy on the provision of Domestic Assistance and Official Hospitality.

Until now, a number of Service properties at the highest level were granted OSR status if the post held by the occupant involved significant official entertaining duties. This status conferred an enhanced package of furniture, fixtures and furnishings for that property which has now been discontinued so all equivalent Service Families Accommodation is managed to the same standard.

In addition, the support provided to the most Senior Officers, such as Domestic Assistance for official hospitality, has been reduced and harmonised across the Services. The changes also revise the rules in relation to Official Hospitality. The combination of these measures is expected to save at least £3 million per year. Domestic assistance will now be linked to official hospitality events and officers in command will receive five hours domestic assistance per week in support of their role rather than the 24 hours per week under previous arrangements.

The Minister for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans, Andrew Robathan, said: "The Ministry of Defence is committed to identifying efficiencies and savings where possible whilst maintaining essential operational capability. These measures will ensure that the support provided to Senior Officers and those in command is appropriate and driven by business need, and they will lead to savings in due course."

There are currently 26 properties classed as OSR. The changes to OSR mean savings will be made over time as and when the furniture, fixtures and furnishings require maintenance or replacement.

The residences of those posts with OSR status were Type I or Type II Service Families Accommodation (SFA) enhanced to a superior standard in terms of furniture, fittings and equipment to support the level of representational hospitality the individual was required to conduct.

Type I and Type II Service Families Accommodation is the entitlement for Senior Service Officers 2\* and above (Rear Admiral, Major General and Air Vice Marshal and above) OSR properties will now just be classified as Type I or Type II SFA and managed in the same way as the rest of the SFA estate.

Although there will be no future expenditure on enhanced furniture, fittings and equipment for OSRs, these properties still require structural maintenance, and are furnished to the relevant scale so savings will be realised over time.