



Army Families Federation

AFF Survey February 2008

Service Families Accommodation Move In Standards in England and Wales

This survey was conducted between 11 and 29 February 2008 to establish whether families were moving into Service Families Accommodation (SFA) that was of an acceptable standard. During this period AFF staff asked the questions below to Army families living in England and Wales. The survey was also posted on the AFF Facebook page. A total of 105 responses were received, the majority by people who had moved into SFA between early 2006 and January 2008. Whilst some of these problems are therefore historical, AFF believes that there are still Army families moving into SFA below an acceptable standard.

1. When you last moved into an SFA, was it of an acceptable standard (cleanliness, state of repair)?

105 families responded to the survey. 44% said their SFA was of an acceptable standard; 56% said that it was not, due to either cleanliness or its state of repair. If the SFA was not of an acceptable standard, explanations ranged from doors being inoperable, dirty cookers, bind weed in the living room, rain coming in through windows, stained and smelly carpets, faulty lighting, and missing curtain hooks.

2. If no, did you: (a) refuse to move in, or (b) move in anyway?

Of the 56% whose allocated SFA was not acceptable, only 3% refused to move in. The 97% who moved in anyway did so either because they did not know that they were allowed to turn the accommodation down, or their removal van had arrived, or turning the SFA down would have proved too difficult due to family circumstances, or that schooling had already been arranged and change of address details were already in place.

3. If the house was unclean, did MHS arrange to clean it for you?

Of the families who were offered unclean SFA, only 24% said that MHS arranged to have the house cleaned. The remaining families had to clean their house on move in, having already cleaned their previous accommodation for move out.

4. If the house needed repair work, has the work now been carried out?

The survey was completed in the main by families moving into SFA between early 2006 and January 2008; if the accommodation was in need of repair, 38% of families said that this work had still not been carried out.

5. Did you know that you can refuse to move in if the SFA is not of an acceptable standard?

60% of families knew that they could refuse to move in if the SFA was not of an acceptable standard. However, they did not feel that this was always a viable option for the reasons given to question 2 above. Additionally, some families stated that they had been told by DE that they could not refuse the accommodation, and that if they did they would be put on a waiting list or could be allocated even worse accommodation.