



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Customer Fact Sheet 1

The Four-Tier Grading System

Q. Who sets accommodation charges for SFA and how are they assessed?

A. Defence Estates (DE) does not set or receive the income from charges for Service Families Accommodation (SFA), which are deducted from pay. The charges are recommended by the Armed Forces Pay Review Body (AFPRB) and are based on the grade of the property as determined by a Board of Officers at Unit or Brigade level. These boards assess standards and reset charges, where appropriate, against MOD criteria called the 4 Tier Grading Regulations (4TG).

Q. What is the Four Tier Grading System?

A. 4TG is the system by which Service Accommodation is graded to inform the setting of charges. 4TG provides a mechanism for assessing the standard by the award of points against specific criteria. SP Pol Accommodation, Families and Welfare and SP Pol Pay and Charges are the joint tri-service MOD sponsors of the 4TG regulations in consultation with Single Service Authorities. It provides a consistent means of levelling charges for the differing standards of SFA. It is underpinned by Accommodation Scales contained in Joint Services Publication (JSP) 315.

Q. What do the different grades mean?

A. SFA is graded from 1 to 4, with Grade 1 being the highest level. Criteria measured, amongst other things, including property size, number of fixtures and fittings (such as electrical sockets) and other facilities. Environment and location can also affect grading. For example, a property meeting the scale and in perfect condition may not be Grade 1 if it is a considerable distance from shops, banks or a public bus route.

Q. How do I know what grade my accommodation is?

A. You are informed of the current grade of your SFA when you are allocated a property. You can ask for a copy of the grading assessment and the findings of the Board of Officers.

Q. What can I do if I disagree with the grading after I have moved in?

A. Following a Grading Board, should the SFA/SLA occupant suspect that there is an error in the Grading Points Summary Sheet or wish to challenge the findings of the Board, they should immediately inform the appropriate sponsor in writing. The findings of the board may then be reviewed.

Q. If I experience loss of a facility in my SFA, can I get a downgrade?

A. Deficiencies or reduction in amenities, lasting for 7 days or less, will not generate any deficiency points score. Where there is a significant deficiency or reduction in amenities, including a permanent or intermittent failure of utilities covered by the accommodation charge (meaning water and sewerage to SFA and gas, electricity, heating oil, water and sewerage to SLA) which is likely to last between 7 days and 3 months, Commands/Divisions/ Districts may authorise temporary downgrading of accommodation. Where the temporary deficiency is likely to last for more than 3 months, the case is to be referred to the Service Authority at MOD level. In respect of the temporary downgrading of SFA in the UK, Defence Estates Operations Housing may recommend to the respective Service Authority that temporary downgrading would be appropriate as a result of deficiencies reported by occupants, identified during move in/out or other routine visits to the SFA.

IMPORTANT NOTE

DE does not hold the budget for accommodation charges. We do not set or collect charges for SFA. Charges are deducted from your salary by your employing Service and paid into their budget. The Armed Forces Pay Review Body sets charges. The grading of accommodation is set by the findings of a Board of Officers on behalf of Commands/Divisions/Districts. Any challenge, re-grade or temporary downgrade has to be staffed through the chain of command. DE can only action any changes to grading when authorisation from the Budget Holder has been given.