Guidance for Service Family Accommodation (SFA) Applications where Family Members are subject to Immigration requirements

Supporting you and your family through the SFA application process

Some of the Naval respondents to the recent Tri-Families Federations Immigration Survey told us that they were unsure where to find information about their entitlement to SFA and how the visa process could affect their application. In response, the Naval Families Federation (NFF) has produced this guidance to help Commonwealth and Non-UK personnel and their families[1] access the information they need more easily.

One of the most common questions the NFF receives from service personnel whose family members are subject to immigration requirements is **when to apply for SFA** and how a pending visa application may affect eligibility and entitlement. We understand that securing suitable accommodation is a key priority for families, particularly during periods of transition and relocation. This guidance has been developed to provide clear and accurate information for those who have submitted a visa application or are preparing to do so. Our aim is to help you understand the SFA application process, identify the best time to apply, and ensure that you have the right evidence in place to support a successful application.

By following the guidance set out below, you can help minimise delays, avoid common pitfalls, and give your family the best possible opportunity to secure accommodation when it is needed.

Is my family entitled to SFA?

For a non-UK family to occupy SFA they are required to meet the visa requirements outlined on the NFF website, under Visas along with the standard entitlement and eligibility requirements contained within JSP 464 Tri-Service Accommodation Regulations (TSARS)A Please note that where family members are on a visit visa (or have a visit status but do not require a visa) you cannot apply for SFA.

When should I apply?

You can apply for SFA and be allocated a property once you have successfully completed Phase 2 training. The safest approach is to submit your SFA application as soon as your family's visa application has been submitted, as this can help avoid unnecessary delays in securing accommodation.

To apply for SFA, you will also need a Forward Assignment Order (FAO) confirming your next assignment will be for a period **of at least six months or have at least six months** remaining on your current assignment at your duty station. This assignment order forms part of the evidence required for your SFA application. In most cases, personnel receive their FAO approximately three weeks before completing Phase 2 training.

[1] This guidance also applies to UK and Irish Service Personnel who wish to bring family members to the UK where those family members are non-UK nationals.

While you may apply for and be allocated SFA, neither you nor your family will be permitted to occupy the property until all relevant family visas have been granted. This is to ensure that each family member has the correct immigration permission before travelling to and residing in the UK and is not entering on a visitor visa or any other visa type that does not permit residence as part of a Service family.

Recommended process for bringing family members to the UK and applying for SFA

For personnel who are bringing their families to the UK from their country of origin, the recommended process for applying for SFA is outlined below.

It is important to note that **you do not need to have proof of SFA / address before submitting a HM forces visa application**. You can use a generic statement on the documents which NFF can provide you with to confer your entitlement to SFA once visas are submitted.

You may also use your Unit address on the visa application form. The employer support letter provided by your Unit will confirm that accommodation will be allocated upon your family's arrival in the UK.

Step-by-Step Guide

- **Submit your e1132 application at the same time as your family's visa application.**
- **Ensure that the 'Visa Required' box is selected on the e1132 form.** This will automatically apply a 12-week deferment period from acceptance of the SFA offer to the planned move-in date, allowing time for visa decisions to be received. The Responsible Officer (for example, a Divisional Officer at Warrant Officer level or above) named on your e1132 application will receive an email outlining their role in supporting the accommodation process. **However, responsibility for ensuring that your family holds the correct visa documentation and immigration permission remains with you.** If you are unsure of the requirements, you should seek advice from your Unit Personnel Office or the Naval Families Federation Immigration Support Service.
- **If UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) grants the visas within the deferment period,** provide evidence of the visa approval to your Divisional Officer (DO), or the Responsible Officer, who can confirm the approval to the Pinnacle Home Services Team. Subject to accommodation availability, Pinnacle may then be able to bring forward your move-in date.
- **If there is a delay in the visa decision**, you must contact the Pinnacle Home Services Team as soon as possible to explain the circumstances. Pinnacle will review the situation and advise on the available options. Depending on the demand for available SFA properties and the need to accommodate other entitled families, Pinnacle may either reschedule the move-in date for the same property or arrange for an alternative property to be offered once the visas have been granted.

This process ensures that accommodation can be secured at the earliest opportunity while recognising that families cannot occupy SFA until all required visas have been approved. Occupancy of SFA is conditional upon family members holding the correct immigration status, and SFA must not be used by family members who have entered the UK on a visitor visa or any other immigration route that does not permit them to reside in the UK as part of a Service family.

What is the E1132

The **e1132 online application system** is available for applications for SFA in the UK. To access the system, you must have access to the Defence Intranet and an active MOD email account.

For further information and to access the application portal, visit the Pinnacle website and click *How do I apply?*

Applying for Service Family Accommodation - Pinnacle Service Families

The online system allows you to:

- Submit your application for SFA.
- Track the progress of your application.
- View available properties that match your entitlement and preferences.
- Register your preferred properties (up to three choices).
- Review and accept an offer of accommodation.
- Electronically sign your Licence to Occupy.

Using the online system enables you to manage your SFA application from start to finish and provides visibility of key stages throughout the allocation process.

Please note: When you select the **"Visa Required"** box on your e1132 application, you will not be able to book a move-in appointment through the online system. Once your family's visas have been granted and confirmed to Pinnacle, the move-in appointment can be arranged directly with the Pinnacle Home Services Team.

Who is Pinnacle and how do I contact them?

The Pinnacle Home Services Team is the primary point of contact for Serving personnel and families for housing and the allocation of Service Family Accommodation and they are responsible for managing the application process. If you need to discuss your application or request a change to your move-in date, you should contact them directly.

Please visit our website for more information and contact details: Service Family Accommodation (SFA) | MOD Housing Guide

Tip: Once your family's visas have been approved, please do not send copies of visa documents directly to Pinnacle. Instead, provide the visa decision documentation to your Divisional Officer (DO), or the Responsible Officer nominated on the e1132 application. They can then confirm the visa approval to the Pinnacle Home Services Team. Following this confirmation, you can ask whether your move-in date can be brought forward, subject to accommodation availability and operational requirements.

What should Serving Personnel (SP) do if they have concerns?

- **Contact the Pinnacle Home Services Team** for advice on SFA applications, allocations, move-in dates, or any accommodation-related concerns.
- **Keep Pinnacle informed of any developments with the visa application.** The Serving Person remains responsible for managing their e1132 application and should provide updates and supporting evidence, such as visa submission confirmations or visa approval notices, as soon as these are available to their Responsible Officer or Divisional Officer, who can then contact the Pinnacle Move Assistant.

- **Seek support through the Divisional System or Unit Personnel Office (UPO)** if there are concerns about assignment dates, accommodation requirements, or the impact of visa delays on family arrangements.
- **Contact the Naval Families Federation (NFF)** if further guidance is required. The NFF can provide specialist independent advice and help families understand the accommodation and immigration processes and identify the most appropriate sources of support.
- **Remember:** Early communication is key. Keeping both Pinnacle and your Divisional Officer informed of any visa-related delays will help ensure that the most appropriate accommodation solution can be considered for you and your family.

Important: Do not travel to the UK simply because your visas have been granted if your SFA move-in date is still in the future. **Families are not permitted to occupy SFA before the agreed move-in date**. If you choose to travel before this date, you will need to arrange alternative accommodation at your own expense until the property becomes available. For this reason, you should not book travel until both your visas, and your SFA move-in arrangements have been confirmed.

Please note: This guidance is aimed at families applying for visas from overseas. If your spouse, partner, or family members are already resident in the UK under a different immigration route, you should seek individual advice, as different accommodation and immigration considerations may apply.

Who can I contact for further help?

For further guidance please reach out to one of the team members at Naval Families Federation or visit the links below.

You can speak to:

Helen Fish, Families Engagement, Advocate & Housing Lead by email contactus@nff.org.uk or call 023 9265 4374

Clare Marlow, Immigration Support Officer by email immigration@nff.org.uk or call 023 9265 4374

Email your enquiry through our direct form

Visit our website: Accommodation - Naval Families Federation

Read through the Service Family Accommodation FAQs: SFA-FAQs.pdf

Visit the Pinnacle website: Applying for Service Family Accommodation - Pinnacle Service Families

Clare Marlow
Naval Families Federation, Immigration Support Officer
immigration@nff.org.uk