

Forces Children Scotland welcomes the [raft of new measures to improve military family housing](#) announced by the UK Defence Secretary, John Healey MP on the 18<sup>th</sup> of April.

Article 27 of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) outlines the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for their physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. For too long Service Family Accommodation (SFA) has failed to meet this basic right for the children living there.

Our co-produced [Forces Children's Rights Charter](#) calls for SFA to be a place where "I am safe where I live and play." A place where they can thrive.

We welcome the commitment for SFA houses to be ready to live in when families arrive, more reliable repairs, and improved information. Children and young people have told us that they want to be able to make SFA their own home by decorating and making changes but also that they want a simple way to raise concerns when things aren't right.

"Frustrating as you can't make it your own, can't decorate. It didn't feel like house of our own, it makes us upset." Marie

"Most equipment in the house was breaking. The sink was replaced three times, and the shower was breaking. Electricity kept going out. Mould throughout the house. Rooms smell rank." Elizabeth

"You can't decorate, and our last house had black mould and a crack down it. It was only fixed after we moved out and it made the next people sick. The top floor caved in after we left." Sophia

We therefore welcome the commitment to modernise policies to allow greater freedom for families to make improvements, a named housing officer and a new simpler complaints process.

We welcome the formation of the independent review team to take forward the Defence Housing Strategy to be chaired by Natalie Elphicke Ross. We asked that the review team build in mechanisms to hear directly from children and young people about their experiences of SFA housing. We seek assurances that SFA will meet the needs of disabled children in line with Article 23 of the UNCRC.

"SFA housing is not accessible for disabilities. Our house was difficult to manoeuvre and Dad had to build decking to accommodate my sister's wheelchair as the MOD would take too long. It was a flat on the first floor and we had to carry my sister up and down the stairs. The MOD will try to accommodate but it's not good enough. My dad left the Army five years ago because the houses weren't suitable for my sister." – Jaiden

## Forces children Scotland Housing response April 2025

We also ask that modernisation of current SFA stock, and any new houses built considers the need for children to have sufficient room to play and socialise in line with their rights under Articles 27 and 31 of the UNCRC.



"It hurts your pride to have a fault in the house, I wouldn't want friends over." Sophia

We ask that the independent review team considers how it can ensure that all of the asks within The Forces Children's Rights Charter can be delivered by the Defence Housing Strategy Review.

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