

# Background Quality Report

## Forces Help to Buy Statistics

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 Overview

The Forces Help to Buy (FHTB) statistics are published on a monthly basis. The report includes information on the total number of Armed Forces personnel who have made first stage applications (those who pass initial eligibility checks) and second stage applications (those who pass detailed eligibility checks) to the FHTB scheme as well as those who have received FHTB payments each month since it was launched in April 2014. It also provides a breakdown of recipients by Service and the percentage of payments made to Officers and Other Ranks. It summarises the total monetary value of payments made and an average amount per person.

#### 1.2 Methodology and Production

There are two different sets of data which are used in the production of this report:

- i. First and second stage application data and recipients of FHTB, as well as the total value of FHTB payments is provided by the FHTB team at Defence Business Services (DBS) Military Personnel who administer the scheme on the second working day of each month to People-Accommodation (for the preceding month). This information is collated on an excel spreadsheet by desk officers who process applications and payments; there is a daily and a monthly payment register which records transactions (the DBS team compare daily and monthly payment registers and reconcile any differences before reporting monthly payments). See Key Points and Trends and Figure 1, 2 and 3 of the report.
- ii. Service and Rank breakdown is provided by the Chief of Defence Personnel Research and Evidence (CDPRE) team using a bespoke report from the Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) system which collates information included on an individual's pay records. This is compiled into an excel spreadsheet and sent to People-Accommodation each month on request, in order to be ready for the date of report publication. See Figures 4 and 5 of the report.

Once the data sets are available, they are then combined and used to calculate the statistics for the reports by using excel, and checked for accuracy once completed.

### 2. Relevance

The People-Accommodation team regularly receive Parliamentary and Ministerial business regarding FHTB and, more generally, home ownership in the Armed Forces, or the means by which it is being incentivised. The MOD is also keen to promote the scheme and have proactively published a number of case studies, real life, examples of people who have used FHTB to buy their own properties and benefitted from the scheme, and there has been some coverage in Service family federation magazines. Internally, within the MOD, there are a number of stakeholders, such as Defence Resources, single Service Housing Staffs and New Employment Model champions who use figures to monitor expenditure and behavioural change of Armed Forces personnel.

### **3. Accuracy**

Application and payment data is recorded manually by DBS in excel worksheets. As such, there is the possibility that human error may result in mistakes. However, DBS have established a reconciliation process to double check daily payment registers against the monthly payment register.

Again, the management information received from JPA is only as accurate as the data which has been put into the system. This could be vulnerable to human error, although the JPA Superuser who downloads the report from JPA does check the report for exceptions.

Figures will be sanity checked once they have been compiled and before they are submitted as final versions.

### **4. Timeliness and Punctuality**

DBS send their FHTB data to People-Accommodation as early as possible at the beginning of each month (typically the second working day).

JPA MI is requested around this period from CDPRE's area.

The release date for this publication was pre-announced on the [MOD's Calendar of Upcoming Releases](#)<sup>2</sup> section of GOV.UK.

The FHTB Statistics report is typically published on the third Thursday of each month (for the preceding month). This therefore allows two weeks or more for the report to be formulated, checked and validated before a final version is ready.

### **5. Accessibility and Clarity**

Data is summarised in the Key Points and Trends section. There are 5 figures in the report, each of which is supported by an explanatory paragraph, which provides contextual information.

The report is accompanied by an excel spreadsheet template which creates the figures from data sets. The figures present the data in graphs or pie charts in a clear visual format so it can be easily understood by users.

The report is can be accessed at the [MOD Official Statistics by Topic](#) page.

### **6. Coherence and Comparability**

The report provides statistics by month since the FHTB was launched in April 2014.

The FHTB scheme is an advance of salary scheme operated by the MOD and underpinned by an MOD formulated internal policy. FHTB cannot be compared with Government affordable home ownership schemes, which, albeit similarly named (such as Help to Buy), operate very differently and are owned by other Government Departments.

The only comparison that could be made is to the MOD's previous home ownership scheme, the Long Service Advance of Pay (LSAP) scheme, although there are some differences in regulations between the two schemes, not to mention the total amount advanced (LSAP was limited to £8,500 and saw reduced applications given rising house prices and the promise of the launch of FHTB), they are therefore not directly comparable.

## 7. References

	Reference	Website Location
1	Statistics at MOD Homepage	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-defence/about/statistics">https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-defence/about/statistics</a>
2	MOD's Timetable of Future Releases of National and Official Statistics	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mod-timetable-for-future-releases-of-national-and-official-statistics">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mod-timetable-for-future-releases-of-national-and-official-statistics</a>

## 8. Contact Details

Please contact DefStrat-Stat-WDS-Hd, tel 0207 80 78792 if you have any queries about the FHTB publication.

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