

UP & CLOSE PERSONNEL



The RAF Families Federation's Dawn McCafferty shares some of their casework

Dear Families Federation...

I LIVE in Service Families Accommodation and currently have a four-bedroomed house as we are lucky enough to have four lovely children. However, since moving in, my eldest son has turned 19; unfortunately, through no fault of his own, he is currently unemployed and not in education.

My other children are boys of eight and four and a girl of two. I have been offered a posting but, having enquired with the local HIC staffs, I have been advised that I am no longer entitled to a four-bedroom quarter as my son is no longer considered an entitled member of my family. This response upset me, my wife and son a great deal and I asked the HIC staff if I was expected to throw him out on the street. She simply reiterated the policy.

I was subsequently advised that I might be able to apply for a four-bedroomed house, above entitlement, but if I was then housed in Substitute Service Families Accommodation, I would be required to pay the difference in rent between a three- and four-bedroomed house. As a Sgt with four children potentially posted to an area where employment for spouses is extremely hard to come by (North Wales), I felt this was beyond my pocket.

I am therefore faced with the prospect of either kicking my son out or asking him to share a room with his significantly younger siblings, something I think is unfair on him and his younger brothers or sister.

It seems that the current policy is wholly inflexible and fails to recognise that there is a recession going on and that many youngsters cannot find work and need to remain in what they rightly regard as their family home.

There seems no compassion here and I wonder if there is anything you can do to highlight this issue to the relevant policy makers.

Sergeant W



Dear Sgt W...

YOU have touched on a subject that has come across our desks on a number of occasions and which we have already flagged up to the MoD staffs and Ministers.

As you say, Tri-Service Accommodation Regulations are strict in their definition of a family and whilst HICs with surplus accommodation at their disposal (not many) can afford to be more flexible, if there is a shortage of SFA, they have to stick to the existing rules or risk denying fully entitled families quarters.

We have been in discussions with

the MoD policy staffs regarding the current definition of family and we have specifically highlighted the case you exemplify, where young adults require accommodation even if not in full-time education.

We will continue to press for an extension to the current rules to allow young adults to retain an entitlement to their own bedroom in Service-provided accommodation.

Whilst this cannot deliver a sudden increase in availability of four-bedroomed houses, which are already in short supply, we hope it will provide some flexibility in the allocation of SFA and SSFA that recognises the needs of larger families with older children still at home.

● If you have been affected by this issue, or find yourself in a similar situation, please speak to one of the Families Federation team on 01780 781650 or go to the website at www.raf-ff.org.uk