

# **Future Accommodation Model: one year on**

## **Supporting Service personnel to love where they live**

It's now been a year since the launch of the Future Accommodation Model (FAM) pilot. So far, FAM has given over 1,000 personnel across three pilot sites (HMNB Clyde, Aldershot Garrison & RAF Wittering) financial support and more choice over where, how and with whom they live.

FAM allows eligible Service personnel at pilot sites to choose a variety of accommodation options to suit their specific needs. That could mean being entitled to receiving additional financial support to rent or buy in a place that suits their desired lifestyle – whether that's closer to a buzzy town centre, nearer the peace of village life or simply buying a home to put down roots and have more stability for loved ones. Or remaining in Single Living Accommodation (SLA) or Service Family Accommodation (SFA), now with widened entitlements for those in Established Long Term Relationships (LTR(E)) and those who have visitation of their children over 80 nights.

## **Here's what Service personnel who have taken up FAM are saying about the pilot:**

### **Having enough room for the family**

Submariner Aaron Chapman and his wife Hannah moved out of Service Families Accommodation and into a privately rented property with their children.

Hannah said:

FAM has been a real lifesaver for us. We've now got a much bigger property, with a great kitchen as well as a front and a back garden, all for only £7 more than we were paying in SFA. Aaron's also got a garage to keep his tools in, so he's happy!

Aaron agreed:

It was a no brainer for us – we're paying pretty much exactly the same, but we're getting so much more property for our money. It's great for us and the kids to feel so comfortable and it's had a massive impact on family life. Because I know my family are happy, I'm happy to stay in the Navy.

### **Buying a forever home**

Physical Training Instructor Peter Oswald and his wife Heather got financial

support from FAM to buy their forever home in Scotland when Peter was posted to HMNB Clyde.

Essentially, we realised that as new buyers we'd be getting £125 towards our mortgage every month, which is absolutely phenomenal. Then, there's also money to cover legal fees for first time buyers too. Plus, we've been able to use Forces Help to Buy as well. We knew we had to jump on it.

The area we're moving to is gorgeous. It's also going to cut Heather's commute from 50 minutes to half that time, and I think it's important to have that little bit of space between work and home life. Plus, we're both Glasgow people and having the city on our doorstep, and the airport so close by, is amazing. It's also going to make it easier to spend more time with our families too. We couldn't be happier.

### **Modern parenting**

Senior Aircraftman Wilson who lives in SLA at RAF Wittering learnt he could receive monthly rental payments towards a rental property of his choosing. His application was approved and with the help of FAM he'll now be able to move out of SLA to a property suitable for him and his daughter, who visits regularly.

I've had an awesome experience with the FAM cell from my initial enquiry to getting my application through JPA. They helped me choose the right accommodation for my needs as a single parent. Throughout the process the FAM Cell were always on hand to help me when I had questions about the application.

### **Living in a way to suit a modern relationship**

W02 Cat Boslem at Aldershot Garrison gets support through FAM to rent a home with her partner.

He's ex-Forces, having served with the Royal Engineers. He has a house in Andover where his kids are, so he was already paying the mortgage there when we met. We opted to rent because we wanted to live together. So, we found our place, which is in a gorgeous village. I love where we live." She says: "FAM is making a massive difference to me. It's the first time in 22 years I've had anything back from the Army to contribute to the way I want to live.

### **The future of the pilot**

The FAM pilot will run for approximately 3 years. A decision will be taken in

2022 on whether to extend FAM across the rest of the UK.

### More information

Visit the [Future Accommodation Model page](#) on GOV.UK.

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## [UK embraces hydrogen-fuelled future as transport hub and train announced](#)

- Britain's first hydrogen train to revolutionise rail with trials beginning in the Midlands
- Tees Valley set to host UK's first hydrogen transport hub, bringing together industry and academia to help create hundreds of green jobs
- £23 million 'Hydrogen for Transport Programme' will see the funding of new hydrogen refuse trucks and hydrogen refuelling station in Glasgow

The first-ever hydrogen-powered train will run on the UK mainline today in a big step forward towards the UK's net-zero targets, Transport Secretary Grant Shapps announced today (Wednesday 30 September 2020), visiting the start of trials in Warwickshire.

Today's trials of the train, known as HydroFLEX, which have been supported with a £750,000 grant from the Department for Transport (DfT), follow almost 2 years' development work and more than £1 million of investment by both Porterbrook and the University of Birmingham.

Unlike diesel trains, hydrogen-powered trains do not emit harmful gases, instead using hydrogen and oxygen to produce electricity, water and heat. The ground-breaking technology behind the trains will also be available by 2023 to retrofit current in-service trains to hydrogen, helping decarbonise the rail network and make rail journeys greener and more efficient.

The Transport Secretary also announced the ambition for Tees Valley to become a trailblazing Hydrogen Transport Hub. Bringing together representatives from academia, industry and government to drive forward the UK's plans to embrace the use of hydrogen as an alternative fuel could create hundreds of jobs while seeing the region become a global leader in the green hydrogen sector.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

As we continue on our road to a green recovery, we know that to really harness the power of transport to improve our country – and to set a global gold standard – we must truly embed change.

That's why I'm delighted that, through our plans to build back better, we're embracing the power of hydrogen and the more sustainable, greener forms of transport it will bring.

To kick-start this exciting development in Tees Valley, the DfT have commissioned a masterplan to understand the feasibility of the hub and how it can accelerate the UK's ambitions in hydrogen. The masterplan, expected to be published in January, will pave the way for exploring how green hydrogen could power buses, heavy goods vehicles (HGVs), rail, maritime and aviation transport across the UK.

The aim would then be for the region to become a global leader in industrial research on the subject of hydrogen as a fuel, as well as research and development (R&D) hub for hydrogen transport more generally, attracting hundreds of jobs and boosting the local economy in the process.

Through our £23 million Hydrogen for Transport Programme, the plans announced today also include £6.3 million of funding for a green hydrogen refuelling station and 19 hydrogen-powered refuse vehicles in Glasgow, a world-first for the size of the fleet. This will give a post-COVID boost to local economies through the creation of green jobs while also decarbonising the transport network.

The next stages of HydroFLEX are already well underway, with the University of Birmingham developing a hydrogen and battery-powered module that can be fitted underneath the train, which will allow more space for passengers in the train's carriage.

Mary Grant, CEO of Porterbrook, said:

Porterbrook is committed to innovation and the delivery of a carbon-neutral and sustainable railway. Today's mainline testing of HydroFLEX achieves another important milestone on this journey. I'm also delighted to be able to announce our intention to start producing HydroFLEX trains, creating the world's first electric and hydrogen-powered bi-mode rolling stock, as well as generating significant opportunities for the UK supply chain.

The department is developing even more ways to slash emissions across transport, as work to create the transport decarbonisation plan continues. The plan will develop a first-of-a-kind approach to decarbonise every mode of transport and is due to be published before the end of this year.

Julian David, techUK's CEO said:

The announcement today on the further progress of the Hydrogen for Transport Programme is a demonstration of the UK government's commitment to developing a hydrogen infrastructure as part of its efforts to decarbonise transport and encourage the shift to zero-

emission vehicles.

With the growing demand to switch to a net-zero economy, the advancement of R&D means we can further demonstrate this innovative technology for road, rail, and freight and logistics as an efficient and economic solution. techUK is excited to work together with the tech community and the government to spearhead the market offering for green hydrogen.

Professor Stephen Jarvis, Head of the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences at the University of Birmingham, said:

The University of Birmingham is setting the pace for rail innovation both in the UK and globally. The HydroFLEX project is a great example of how world-class R&D, together with the right industry partnerships, can deliver decarbonisation technologies that are both innovative and practical.

Successful mainline testing is a major milestone for HydroFLEX and is a clear demonstration of the important role hydrogen has to play in the UK's rail industry. Through the University and Porterbrook, we're looking forward to delivering this technology into the UK transport market, ensuring a cleaner future for our railways.

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## [Landmark event for the space industry lifts off](#)

Space-Comm Expo, taking place on 7 and 8 July 2021 at the Farnborough International Exhibition and Conference Centre, will present a showcase of technology, thought-leadership, debate and analysis, and business growth opportunities.

Hosted by Farnborough International and Hub Exhibitions, with support from the UK Space Agency, UKSpace, ADS Group, KTN and other founding partners, Space-Comm Expo is an opportunity for industry, academia and government to meet with a dedicated focus on exploring the commercial future of space for business, defence and aerospace.

Graham Turnock, CEO of the UK Space Agency says:

The UK Space Agency is pleased to support the Space-Comm Expo. This

platform will showcase the innovation, entrepreneurship and international collaboration that characterises the UK's commercial space sector. It's a fantastic opportunity to come together after what has been a very challenging 2020 for everyone, and to look ahead to the UK's future opportunities in space.

## **Space-Comm Expo Overview**

Five theatres situated on the exhibition floor will be the location for world-class content delivered in five very distinct formats. From C-suite keynote addresses through to a demo lab and dedicated product showcase theatre, this programme offers a comprehensive snapshot of the issues and challenges leading the space industry. There is also a focus on the design, production and manufacture of small satellites and satellite applications, and a downstream theatre with sessions exploring applications such as satellite navigation, earth observation and satellite communications.

Business growth opportunities including:

- Meet the Buyer
- A dedicated Start-up Zone for businesses under three years old.
- Private roundtables for pre-arranged meetings to find synergies and identify opportunities that boost investment returns.

Gareth Rogers, CEO of Farnborough International says:

Through Space-Comm Expo we're creating an opportunity for the highly innovative space industry to push commercial as well as technological boundaries.

Space-Comm Expo is a new style of event for the industry reflecting its dynamic nature and ensuring maximum value for exhibitors and visitors. Shaped with input from a number of organisations including UKSA and ADS Group, this will be a targeted and strategic opportunity for different sectors of this vibrant and fast-growing industry to come together and move forward in a number of different ways, whether that's knowledge sharing, innovation insight or business growth.

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## **[Review of HMCTS face-to-face digital support testing published](#)**

News story

Good Things Foundation has today (30 September 2020) published its assessment of a test service that helps people to access reformed HMCTS online services from 26 organisations across the UK.



The independent assessment finds users are 'overwhelmingly positive' about their experience.

HMCTS commissioned the test service to learn how the face-to-face digital support service can be successfully implemented across a range of organisations to inform the design of a national service. The future service will ensure that people without the confidence, skills or necessary equipment have the help and support they need to successfully use our online services.

Since 2017 almost 800 appointments have taken place in citizens advice centres, law centres and community-based centres, helping people access various HMCTS online services including probate or divorce applications. Using a mixture of interviews, data and case studies the report explores how centres have helped and supported users, the impact COVID-19 has had on delivery and summarises what has been learnt.

Lauren Van Staden, HMCTS Deputy Director, User Experience said:

We welcome this report from Good Things Foundation which outlines the work from our partnership over the last three years. The network has allowed us to test digital support in a variety of different settings so that we can learn how to design a service that meets the needs of our users.

It has also allowed us to speak directly to users who need support and the organisations delivering it to make sure the user is at the centre of our design. We look forward to taking these findings and feeding them into a national service.

Since the onset of COVID-19, we have been working with Good Things Foundation to adapt the way support is provided. The testing has moved from offering solely face-to-face appointments to a hybrid model of remote support and face-to-face appointments, where they can be offered safely. In order to allow for further testing and to develop a system that is COVID-19-secure, we

have extended testing by a further 12 months. The test will then be replaced with a larger national service and contract in 2021.

- as of 31/08/2020, a total of 782 digital support sessions took place
- the testing will continue to support people to use HMCTS Civil Money Claims, Divorce, Help with Fees. Probate, Single Justice System and Social Security and Child Support (PIP appeals, ESA appeals, Universal Credit appeals) online services
- the full report: [HMCTS Digital Support Service: Implementation review](#) can be viewed on [Good Things Foundation website](#).

Published 30 September 2020

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## [Restoring rivers for people and wildlife](#)

Since 2009 I have had the pleasure of managing the hugely successful and multi award winning Cumbria River Restoration Programme. Things have changed incredibly since the beginning when river restoration work mainly consisted of light touch low risk interventions, such as woody debris implementation or minor tweaks to the river channel. We are now delivering large scale restoration projects, as well as those still very important low risk measures on a grand scale across all catchments within Cumbria.

This year alone we have delivered over 12km of river improvements or restoration as well as contributing to the restoring of 2.5km of the high profile River Keekle project. This involved the removal of tons of plastic from the river channel. We have also delivered over 25 hectares of habitat improvements by better connecting rivers to their flood plains in turn contributing to Natural Flood Management. To aid fish migration, three weirs have also been removed so far this year which will help improve access to vital spawning habitat for all fish species. With many more planned projects throughout the year and beyond it's certainly an exciting future ahead!

The River Restoration programme started as a partnership between the Environment Agency, Natural England and the 3 Cumbria Rivers Trusts (Eden Rivers Trust, West Cumbria Rivers Trust and South Cumbria Rivers Trust). Using mapping work of the 3 main rivers in Cumbria (the Kent, Eden and Derwent) we were able to identify potential opportunities where we could deliver river restoration works that could benefit both people and wildlife. The programmes main aim at that time was to deliver projects that addressed the water framework directive and protected areas that were at risk of deterioration. The team set about getting work done on the ground, which required the engagement of local landowners and other stakeholders. By delivering low risk demonstration projects we gained a great deal of



experience and confidence, which has enabled us to increase the scale of our ambitions over the years. It also gave us some vital clues on how our rivers react to these interventions, after being choked and constrained in modified channels for decades.

In 2015 Cumbria was devastated by the impacts of Storm Desmond, which resulted in extreme damage to both the environment and local communities on a huge scale. Something interesting was observed in the aftermath of this catastrophic event, the river restoration projects delivered prior to Desmond stood up well and proved extremely resilient to the exceptional impacts of this major event. In fact only weeks after Storm Desmond the watercourses where interventions had been delivered, soon returned to as they were prior to the event. The most important observation was the flood risk benefits that some of these projects have provided, by allowing the rivers to better connect to their natural flood plains, this helped to safely store much of the increased volumes of water. What was also apparent post the event is how quickly water re-entered the channel and also how quickly the surrounding land dried, allowing for normal farming practices to resume not long after. Subsequently this programme is not only providing significant benefits for the environment but on a larger scale has the potential to make a real difference to the flooding of communities downstream. As such every project now not only looks at the positive impacts of biodiversity and natural hydromorphology but also the potential flood risk benefits that could also be realised.

Alongside our River Restoration programme the Natural Flood Management (NFM) Programme was established, which aims to use nature based solutions to help reduce flood risk to our local communities. The Cumbria River Restoration Strategy and the NFM programmes now work closely together, both realising that they can deliver the objectives of each programme, sometimes within one scheme or project. This helps to ensure we choose our project locations wisely and ensure every pound of investment focusses on safeguarding the environment and protecting our communities. We have delivered some truly awe-inspiring projects so far and we really want to continue to make a big difference to the environment and our communities by delivering this work on much greater scale. The Cumbria NFM programme is now entering its final phase and is on target to deliver over 300,000m<sup>3</sup> of flood water being held back, in turn reducing flood risk. The NFM programme will also see 500 hectares of restored or created habitat improvements, nearly 50km of rivers improved and enhanced over 1,000 hectares of soil improvements.

Climate change isn't going away and river restoration work, along with many other interventions can make a real difference. But to make a 'real' difference we need everyone to pull together, from local communities, landowners, farmers and government organisations to work even better together into the future. The recently released Environment 2025 plan gives us a real steer and directive on the type of work that we and partners need to deliver collaboratively in the future. It definitely feels like things are now moving in a positive direction with more and more organisations and local charities coming on board. However more needs to be done in order to see a real change to the environment, climate change and our way of life and our local

communities. It is certainly an exciting time moving forward and I personally look forward to the benefits this brings.

Further information:

My name is Olly Southgate and I have been at the Environment Agency for 18 years now. I started my career in the Northeast supporting the fisheries monitoring programme in Yorkshire, on rivers like the Ouse, Derwent, Wharfe and Esk. From there I moved over to the Northwest to take on a role as an Ecological Appraisal officer, delivering the monitoring programme in Greater Manchester and Cheshire, as well as the Mersey Salmon programme. After this I moved back into a fisheries role taking on a position as a Senior Fisheries officer and area Fisheries Project Lead. After successfully delivering a wide range of fisheries and angling projects I was asked to take on the role as a river restoration project manager for the whole Northwest. So here I am now still delivering a wide range of projects in the Northwest, but mainly focussed in Cumbria and Lancashire. In my time at the Environment Agency I have been fortunate to deliver some of the most challenging and inspiring environmental projects delivered in the UK, and received conservation and environmental project awards, including most recently the River Champion 2020 award. I am a keen sharer of 'lessons learnt' and have established a European River Restoration Community, a podcast series on river restoration and delivered various conferences and workshops over the years, in order for us all to learn more from each other and deliver greater things for the environment and our communities in the future.

- To learn more about the work we have completed have a listen to Salford University podcasts that we have been involved in. They contain some really lively debate from people from a wide range of backgrounds on the current issues and more importantly some useful information on the techniques we can all do to make a real difference going forward – <https://soundcloud.com/universityofsalford/managing-floods-in-a-changing-climate-podcast-1>
- Swindale Beck River Restoration Project – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fmzjRJUi9UY>
- River Keekle River Restoration – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7o8BJJhWxC4>
- Ennerdale Mill Dam Removal – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ryWc-8ZAEjk>