

Summary of

Living in our Shoes

Understanding the needs of UK
Armed Forces families

The Review Team

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Foreword

People continue to lie at the heart of our operational capability; attracting and retaining the right numbers of capable, motivated individuals to deliver Defence outputs is critical. In order to achieve this, our Armed Forces must be treated fairly, but also that their families will be supported and treated properly in line with modern-day family life. I am grateful for the hard work and research that has gone into preparing this independent review which draws on the principles of our nation's promise under the Armed Forces Covenant. Our Service people provide a constant presence upon which we rely for our capacity or reassuring allies, or supporting our national effort at home in times of emergency. Knowing that your family is properly supported when you are away frees Service people to focus on the job in hand. I look forward to engaging with stakeholders to revise our Armed Forces Families Strategy for 2020.

Lieutenant General James Swift
Chief of Defence People
June, 2020

Introduction to the Review Summary

In January 2019, the then Defence Secretary, The Rt Hon Gavin W

The recommendations relating to each issue are prioritised within three categories: short-term priorities for change; medium-term changes; and a few longer-term changes that are either aspirational in nature or recommendations provide the building blocks for longer-term change and transformation. Moreover, a change in one aspect of Service life would almost certainly produce a positive ripple effect in others.

All the recommendations require a willingness and shared commitment to make changes to the ways of doing things. It is a challenge to change the ways of doing things, but it is a challenge worth taking.

Presentation of findings

This report is divided into two main parts: the Review report and the Summary report.

1. The Review report

The Review report consists of ten chapters, and an annexe summarising the methods used.

2. The Summary report

This Summary report provides a brief overview of the issues raised in the main report and is designed to be read in conjunction with the main report. It summarises the key learning from the review and lists the recommendations. This Summary should be read in conjunction with the main review report.

Acknowledgements

It is not possible to undertake a wide-ranging review of this kind without the help and support of a large number of people. We offer our sincere thanks to all those who contributed to the review and who supported our work throughout 2019. We refer to people individually in the Introduction to the main report.

Most importantly we would especially like to offer our heartfelt thanks to all the Serving and non-serving members of military families, particularly the children and young people, all of whom spoke openly and honestly about their lived experiences of Service life, the challenges they face, the kinds of support they have received and the changes they would like to see. It is their words that tell the story in the main report and which have helped to shape many of our recommendations. We hope that we have done justice to their views and that this report is greater understanding of what it is like to 'live in their shoes' and to shed light on the issues that they have raised and the support they need.

Finally, we express our gratitude to Ray Lock, CEO of the Forces in Mind Trust, for supporting the review from the beginning to the end.

Chapter 1 Supporting Military Families: The Nation's Commitment

The Armed Forces Covenant

The Armed Forces Covenant was introduced in 2012 under the provisions of the Armed Forces Act 2011. The Covenant constitutes an enduring contract between the people of the United Kingdom, Her Majesty's Government and all those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces of the Crown and their families. It is a promise by the nation to ensure that those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, should be treated with fairness and respect in the communities, economy and society they serve with their lives, and should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. Moreover, special consideration is appropriate in some cases.

The Covenant provides tangible recognition that members of the Armed Forces community and their families are required to live their lives within a culture where operational effectiveness must be the number one priority. It is a promise by the nation to ensure that those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, should be treated with fairness and respect in the communities, economy and society they serve with their lives, and should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. The Covenant also explicitly acknowledges that military families play a vital role in supporting operational effectiveness, and that the whole nation has a moral obligation to offer them respect, support and fair treatment.

The Armed Forces Families' Strategy

The Armed Forces Families' Strategy 2016–2020 developed the commitment articulated in the Covenant. It acknowledges that military personnel can only fully deliver their Defence task if they have the support of their families. The Strategy sets out the commitment to ensure that military families are treated with fairness and respect in the communities, economy and society they serve with their lives, and should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. The intent is to operationalise the Covenant by removing disadvantage, whether real or perceived, and creating choice, thereby enabling families to make informed decisions.

The subsequent Action Plan set out the priorities for 2018–2020 and key targets and timelines for achieving them. The Annual Report of the Armed Forces Covenant is intended to ensure that Parliament, on behalf of the people of the UK, can understand how the Covenant is being delivered. Since the Covenant was introduced, the focus on veterans has been excellent and provides a blueprint for increasing the support offered to currently Serving Armed Forces personnel and their families.

The Current Review

This review, commissioned in January 2019, was designed to understand the impact of the current and likely future structures and the needs of Service families in the modern day Armed Forces, and to assess if Defence is equipped to respond to their needs. The review team have considered the diverse needs of currently Serving military families, and have made evidence-based recommendations on how Defence, in partnership with the Government, can better support military families and their families.

- offer insights that will assist the work already taking place within the MOD and the Armed Forces
- encourage scrutiny and evaluation of new initiatives being developed
- suggest changes that could be made to strengthen the Covenant
- strengthen the Nation's resolve to promote and foster resilient, thriving Service families who are tr

- children thrive best in stable, loving households and parental separation and divorce increase the risk factors contributing to poor outcomes for children and young people
- being able to enjoy a continuing, loving relationship with each parent when parents split up is important to supporting children's well-being and positive child development
- there is a clear correlation between relationship breakdown and adult ill-health, including mental health and mortality, and children are also more likely to experience negative health outcomes
- repeated family disruptions increase children's vulnerability.

Family breakdown presents a series of challenges for all families but these are increased for military families, especially if they have been living in Defence accommodation.

Changing gender roles

Traditional gender r

Chapter 3

A Place to call Home: Increasing Choice

During the review, the topic most frequently raised by Service personnel and their families referred to accommodation.

In Chapter 3 we:

- examine in some detail the evidence relating to the state of and demand for military accommodation
- consider the Future Accommodation Model (FAM)
- recommend the changes that need to take place in the choices offered to Service families if the widespread dissatisfactions with Service accommodation in recent years is to be fully addressed.

In this Summary, we highlight the concerns relating to Service Family Accommodation (SFA), the steps being taken to improve the Defence estate, and discuss the accommodation options Service families might consider in the future. We put forward a number of recommendations for change.

Service Family Accommodation (SFA)

In the past, the majority of married couples would probably choose to live in Service Family

accommodation which they either own or rent, in an ar

¹ UK Tri-Service FamCAS Survey 2019.

² Armed Forces Covenant (2011).

Complaints

There were consistent concerns expressed about the complaints process in respect of repairs and – ‘complaints’ (Stage 1), so that there is no way of escalating a complaint to Stage 2 if the complaint has not – should be logged online and dealt with via a simple-to-use web-based system to ensure greater transparency and timeliness.

Home improvements

Families want to be able make their SFA feel like home so they feel very disheartened by rules which require them to return the property to its original state when vacating it, even if that means undoing obvious improvements such as applying a fresh coat of paint, putting new tiles in the bathroom, hanging – improvements are not encouraged or allowed, we believe that the policy should be reviewed and greater clarity offered to families as to the improvements which are generally regarded as welcome and as enhancing the property, and which do not have to be reversed.

Remaining in SFA: protecting children’s education and partner employment

and partner employment; family breakdown and the consequences of this in respect of parenting – required to move at short notice when the Serving partner is assigned elsewhere. Non-serving partners – in employment and the consequent loss of income.

Moreover, the current three month rule for claiming removal expenses on assignment can be extremely disruptive to children’s education and spousal/partner employment. While there is an established process whereby the Serving person can apply for a mid-assignment move outside of the usual timeframes and be eligible to receive removal expenses, these concessions do not appear to be well-understood.

Military life is essentially mobile. The concerns relate to the frequency and timings of that mobility, and whether SFA could be retained to promote greater family stability while the Serving person commutes to their military base if it is within a reasonable commuting distance. In civilian life many families stay in one location and at least one partner commutes daily or weekly.

Separation and divorce

Non-serving partners are usually required to leave SFA within three months when the family splits up but they often experience problems when attempting to apply for local authority housing. A lack of connection – partners and their children having to leave their family home but they are faced with rules which deny them access to social housing. We understand that the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) went out to consultation in 2019 on new comprehensive statutory guidance for local authorities covering the Armed Forces Community and social housing. This included the suggestion that the local connection test should be waived for divorced and separated spouses and partners of Serving personnel. – are reduced. If one or both parents is under stress the detrimental impacts can be long-lasting.

Although the majority of civilian children continue to live primarily with their mother following separation/divorce, both parents are expected to maintain parental responsibility and to cooperate to

ensure that each child is able to maintain contact with both parents unless it is against the child’s best interests to do so. Given that the majority of military children will be living with their mother following separation, male Serving personnel are expected to take their share of parental responsibility and do their best to sustain regular contact. Operational requirements render co-parenting demanding and challenging for Service personnel. We are aware that wherever possible SFA and other facilities are made available for Serving personnel to enjoy quality time with their children as frequently as operational requirements allow. The provision of ‘contact’ houses is an important life-line for Serving parents who live apart from their children after separation or divorce.

Widening Access to SFA

Increasing numbers of couples choose to live in long-term cohabiting r

It is very important to ascertain the kind of supports that families living off the patch need in order to cope with the possibility of loneliness and isolation, especially during deployments, and to assess the impact of weekendings on couple relationships.

The Forces Help to Buy Scheme (FHTB)

The Forces Help to Buy Scheme is regarded as a very positive offer for Serving personnel:

“*...HAY: <H6'gWâ Y]gUa Uggj YfYhb]cb`dcg]hj Ytrc`UbXg'ci`XWUgHbX]b[`c`YzfUH\Yf'hUb'hY` yearly update to extend the scheme each December. This policy alone could retain personnel by tying them in to long service as they repay the investment. ...*”

(RN serving partner)

We are delighted that the scheme has been extended for three years to 2022, and that plans are in hand

The Future Accommodation Model (FAM)

During our review, plans progressed to pilot a new accommodation model which is designed to increase choice and encourage stability. The Future Accommodation Model (FAM) features a basic accommodation allowance, supplemented by additional payments, depending on whether the Serving person chooses to be – and SLA. The new approach is based on each Serving person's need rather than their rank or marital status.

The FAM is broadly welcomed by the Royal Navy and the RAF but many in the Army remain uncertain and harbour a degree of suspicion that the real aim is to do away with SFA and require Serving personnel to effectively destroy the sense of community built up on the patch, rendering Service families more isolated. This view was more likely to be expressed by Army personnel since the patch-based community remains a dominant feature of Army life:

“*...if FAM is instigated...it will rip the soul out of the military community. ...*”

(Army Serving partner)

W

Recommendation 10

The Ministry of Defence to allow families to retain SFA to enable non-serving partners to manage their work commitments and protect their career; and/or children to complete the school year, whenever possible.

SFA: medium term

Recommendation 11

The Ministry of Defence to:

- ensure that families continue to have choices in accommodation, and that future options take account of the outcomes, both positive and negative, from the three FAM pilots
- continue to maintain sufficient SFA stock at an acceptable standard and reduce the amount of SFA only if it is surplus to current and predicted requirements.

Recommendation 12

The Ministry of Defence to:

- reconsider the expectation that families are required to move SFA on assignment
- promote geographical clustering of military bases where operationally possible
- retain sufficient SFA to enable families to remain in the same SFA while the Serving partner commutes between different military establishments in the same area, if they wish to do so.

FAM: short term

Recommendation 13

The Ministry of Defence to consider whether offering additional incentives in remote areas would encourage home-ownership in the future.

Recommendation 14

The Ministry of Defence to continue to improve the messaging around the FAM to reduce suspicion and fear of it being seen as a cost-cutting exercise, and to enable families to make fully-informed choices that are appropriate for them.

Chapter 4

**Growing Up in the Military:
The Impact of Service Life on Children and Young People**

The impact of Service life on children featured highly during this review, with the majority of military parents raising concerns about the effect of their lifestyle on their children and, in particular, on their education.

Chapter 4 of the report explores in detail the:

- factors which impact on Service children
- impact of repeated cycles of deployment
- evidence relating to the educational attainment of military children
- transitions which disrupt schooling and sever friendships
- evidence about entry to higher education
- support needs of military children, especially those with special educational needs
- support needs of young carers
- ways in which children and their parents can be better supported.

The impact of Service life on children and young people proved to be one of the most sensitive issues and to all of the issues explored in the main report and list our recommendations.

While there are no accurate records of the number of military children in the UK, the 2019 FamCAS Survey indicates that 79 per cent of Service families have children, 53 per cent of all Service families have at least one child of school age, and just over a third (34%) of families with children require early years (0-4) childcare.³ Military children and young people face the same challenges as civilian children, but having a parent in the military creates unique stressors and challenges which are not always recognised by the military or addressed in schools and in wider society. These include: high mobility; long periods of parental separation; the revolving shift from a two-parent to a one-parent household; and disruptions in education and friendship networks.

Deployments and separation

deployment the greater the perceived negative impact. The UK Ministry of Defence Harmony Guidelines vary between the three single Services, and are measured slightly differently. The Royal Navy experiences the highest number of days away from home, and the longest deployments of up to nine months, which are considered by most families and the Chain of Command to be too long, especially for children. Work is currently in train to revisit the Harmony Guidelines and the amount of time spent away from home the time families spend apart is an important goal.

Dispersed living arrangements also increase the time spent apart. This raises issues about how families make choices about where they live and the importance of ensuring that they have a very clear understanding of the pros and cons of each option. Greater information is required about how ‘weekending’ impacts on the numbers of days spent away from the family over and above the time spent apart as a result of military activities:

“ My husband was away on pre-deployments, duties, courses, exercises etc at least nine months every year. Sometimes he would come home at weekends, other times that was not possible...Such long and regular periods of separation is very hard on a family. ”
(RM non-serving partner)

3 FamCAS 2019 op.cit.

Families stressed that 4 months is about the right length of time for a deployment in normal circumstances, and that 6 months and over is simply too long when children are growing up. Young children can be confused and upset by their parent going away for long periods, and this can lead to behavioural problems. In Chapter 4 we refer to a number of research studies showing that deployment has an adverse impact both academically and pastorally on children.

Uncertainty about when Serving partners will be coming home adds to the stress of time apart and the inability to plan:

“ H Y c d M U j c b U h a d c c Z h Y U Y z h Y a U j h b U b W d f j c X g U b X h Y U W c Z a U b d c k Y f a U Y g a m i
 \ i g U b X g k c f _ ! j Z V U b W W a d Y Y m c b ! Y j g h i H \ j g W g g b c h c b m c i f a U f j U Y t g Y V h i

The Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report 2019⁵ includes data which suggest that the proportion of Service children who go on to higher education after the end of Key Stage 5 is four percentage points lower than it is for non-Service, non-free school meals children, with Service children being more likely to go into employment at age 18 than non-service children. We know that a number of Service children choose to follow in their parents' footsteps and join the Armed Forces. More research is needed to fully understand the onward progr

achieve this if the child moves every two years or so and clubs have long waiting lists. We refer to some of the initiatives designed to support Service children in the main report.

Children and young people are proud to have a parent in the military. None of them want to be treated as disadvantaged, but they want people to understand what it's like to be the child of military parents and the additional stresses they experience. They need to know that support is available when they need it. Accor



Our research shows that military spouses often find it difficult to get their qualifications accepted in another country without additional training. We urge the Armed Forces and the Devolved Governments to continue to work together to provide information about employment opportunities when military families relocate between different nations of the UK, and to facilitate the portability of credits and qualifications.

Living on a military base can isolate military spouses from the wider community, which, along with other factors, can impact on their employment. Clearly, there are a number of factors to be taken into account when considering the employment prospects of non-serving partners, such as the age of the Service spouse, their level of education, employment history, and whether they have children or not and their children's ages. But factors such as mobility, accommodation, and education are amenable to change in order to support employment opportunities.

Difficult employment choices

Non-Serving partners often feel that they have to make a choice between being with the Serving partner or having a stable base and pursuing their career, but that they can never have both. They frequently argue for longer assignments and fewer moves:


“Partner employment has always had an impact on my family. With the constant moving around my wife cannot really settle down into a decent job, and even if she can get a job, then by the time she has built up her experience we move again and she has to start from scratch again and again.”
(Army Serving partner)

Postings overseas present the most serious challenges. A number of partners asked why they are not able to apply for civil service jobs on military bases, especially when they are living overseas. They refer

Officers – Officers 3 % provide more childcare facilities wherever possible, and many can identify buildings on the patch which would be suitable. One of the challenges they face is assessing the nature of the demand among their Service families and the extent to which this can be reasonably met by existing childcare providers in the local community. Childcare provision is regulated through national registration in the different nations of the UK, and any provision on a military base must conform to the standards set. We suggest that Commanding

Developing a more holistic approach

Planning in the military must take account of the whole family and not simply prioritise the Serving person when decisions taken have considerable implications for spouses/partners and their children. Given the changing expectations of military spouses and partners, support for the wellbeing of non-serving partners should extend to taking measures to protect and enhance their employability. In turn, spouses and partners are committed to supporting the Serving person in their employment and are contributing to operational capability. Addressing the career development of military spouses and partners should be an essential element of support for military families and an issue of concern in its own right. W



Postings and relocation: medium term

Recommendation 59

The three single Services to:

- take account of the nature of a non-serving partner's employment when relocating the Serving partner and to ensure that a period of time is allowed in which to manage a shift of employment (including retaining SFA)
- review the necessity for frequent postings every two or three years and to consider whether the current military model could be redrawn to allow families to stay longer in one location or commutable area without compromising operational effectiveness.

Evaluation/research: medium term

Recommendation 60

The Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces to encourage research to understand the needs of early years Armed Forces childcare and to discern the most appropriate evidence-based practice which should be employed by the sector to enhance the positive aspects of childcare provision, mitigate any risks, and encourage the sharing of good practice across the Armed Forces community.

Recommendation 61

The Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces to ensure robust evaluation of the individual employment initiatives to assess the role they play in supporting non-serving partners, the resources they need, the numbers of partners they are able to support and the demand for using them, their effectiveness in promoting and sustaining employment and other outcomes in respect of partner satisfaction and wellbeing, the appropriate governance structures, and their impact on retention.

Recommendation 62

The Ministry of Defence, through the Partner Employment Steering Group, to develop greater understanding of what works best for which military partners/spouses, and foster collaboration and joined-up initiatives to enable better coordinated partner employment support across the nations of the UK.

Chapter 75 SC010001ter coor

All the concerns are heightened by the frequency of relocation and the need for family members to undergo repeated transitions to new healthcare practices. In order to support fair access to treatment, the Armed Forces Covenant sets out a number of health commitments for the Armed Forces community.

Military families also highlighted the stigma of discussing mental health issues and that this can act as a barrier to seeking help. Families are scared to admit to mental health issues in case this has a negative impact on the Serving person's career prospects. While the Armed Forces Mental Health Strategy focuses on the Serving person, it is crucial that mental health issues need to be considered in the context of the whole family. It is not helpful to separate the Serving partner from the rest of the family when addressing mental health issues. Mental health issues reverberate throughout the family and more research is needed to understand how mental health issues in military families are affecting children and young people, and how the young people'

Continuity of care: short term

Recommendation 67

The Ministry of Defence to continue to work with the national health services across the UK to ensure that an Armed Forces Family Code articulates what is required to deliver appropriate continuity of care for Service families as they move around the UK, and to ensure that information is available to advise families about maintaining continuity of care on posting to a new area or healthcare system.

Recommendation 68

The DHSC in England and national health services across the UK to ensure that family members of Serving personnel are able to retain their relative place on waiting lists when they move to another area, and that GPs and other healthcare professionals support their transition from one area to another, in line with the commitments made in the Armed Forces Covenant.

Recommendation 69

The Clinical Commissioning Groups in England to be required through the Armed Forces Covenant to ensure timely access to CAMHS and paediatric services and that children and young people maintain their relative place on waiting lists when their parents are required to relocate to another area.

Recommendation 70

The Ministry of Defence to take account of the healthcare needs of military families when posting Service personnel to a new area.

Continuity of care: medium term

Recommendation 71

The NHSEI, NHS Scotland, NHS Wales and Health and Social Care Northern Ireland to ensure that all Armed Forces families have access to an Armed Forces Care Coordinator or an Armed Forces Champion if they need support and help in accessing healthcare services.

Integrated care: medium term

Recommendation 72

The Ministry of Defence to work with the providers of national health services across the whole of the UK to evaluate new models of integrated primary care being established in some military bases and consider how to extend effective models to other military bases.

Recommendation 73

The Ministry of Defence and Defence Medical Services (DMS) to consider allowing family members to access Defence primary care services wherever possible and appropriate, and particularly when national health facilities are not easily accessible in the immediate locality.

Mental health: medium term

Recommendation 74

The Ministry of Defence to consider how families of Serving personnel can be more involved in breaking down the stigma of mental health issues, and can benefit from the comprehensive activities and treatments to support Serving members of the Armed Forces, in order to promote better mental health and wellbeing for the whole family.

Mental Health: longer term

Recommendation 75

The Ministry of Defence, in consultation with the DHSC and the Devolved Governments, to ensure that future mental health and wellbeing plans include mental health awareness activities and communication strategies aimed specifically at families of Serving personnel, perhaps via a designated App.

Recommendation 76

The Ministry of Defence and Defence Medical Services (DMS) and the national health services across the UK to explore ways in which a range of mental health services could be better integrated to provide holistic care for Serving personnel and their partners and children.

Parenting support: medium term

Recommendation 77

The Ministry of Defence and DMS to consolidate and refine a Parental Support Programme and facilitate roll out to bases in all three Services.

Disclosing mental health issues, as well as gambling and excessive drinking, are also worries for some families. Stigma is still an issue, making it hard to talk about these problems. Civilians can face long waiting lists for mental health treatment so it is essential that Service personnel with mental health issues, including PTSD, can transfer to NHS support seamlessly when they leave the care of the DMS.

Finding a job in 'civvy street' can also be stressful. We heard about interactions with JobCentrePlus that had been very unsatisfactory. As one person put it: 'they were trying to f t a square peg into a round hole with no understanding of the Covenant or life as a military family'. This had caused upset and disappointment. JobCentrePlus staff were described as lacking understanding about military life.

Ensuring holistic support

The Defence Holistic Transition Policy¹² is important in promoting holistic support, and the UK Strategy for Our Veterans¹³ encompasses a ten year vision which is designed to ensure that the transition to civilian life should be as smooth as possible so that veterans can contribute fully in a society which understands and values what they have done and what they have to offer. In order to achieve this it is fully recognised that appropriate support must be in place throughout a person's military career for them and their family. Transition support needs to be available for the whole family long before anyone takes the decision to leave the Armed Forces. This holistic approach should address many of the concerns we heard during the review and serve to reduce the worries and anxieties some Serving personnel and their families spoke about.

It is critically important to understand the transition out of the military through a wider lens and to provide holistic support to families from an early point in the Serving person'

Chapter 8

Duty of Care and Moral Responsibility: Supporting Service Families

Looking after and providing support to military families and ensuring their wellbeing are essential if the Armed Forces are to meet their objectives and mission. When families are cared for in the military community, Serving personnel are more likely to concentrate on their jobs when deployed or away from their families and to stay in the Armed Forces. The perceived incompatibility of military life and family life is a key driver in decisions to leave the military earlier than might have otherwise been the case.

The aims of our review were threefold, to:

1. Consider the diverse needs of Service families.
2. Assess whether the current support on offer is meeting these needs.
3. Provide evidence which will enable the MOD and the Armed Forces to enhance the delivery of vital support for military families.

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of doing so. Women and men can be victims as well as perpetrators and the complexities of domestic violence can be challenging for both parties. The consequences for their career, and it may ultimately lead to relationship breakdown, which can result in the loss of the family home for families living in SFA.

The Ministry of Defence Domestic Abuse Strategy 2018–2023 promises to develop a culture of support that does not tolerate domestic abuse and which ensures access to high quality services. It is essential that the MOD Strategy is consistent across the whole of Defence if the culture of silence is to be tackled, abuse is to be addressed, and family members are able to seek support and safety. More work is needed to encourage domestic abuse victims in military families to feel comfortable seeking help without fear of reprisal from the abusive partner.

and there is a higher risk of family violence among military personnel who report symptoms of PTSD. There is evidence that being in the Army is associated with the perpetration of both stranger and family violence, while there is a reduced risk of family violence amongst Naval and RAF Serving personnel. This may well be due to the nature of the work. Further research is needed to understand potential differences in violent behaviour between military personnel in the three Services. In addition, exploration of the complex dynamics of intimate couple relationships in military families is essential to developing interventions and support for each partner and for the couple. Partnership working with expert providers, such as New Dawn, is essential.

Providing welfare support: how well are identified needs being met by the three Services?

There is a need for a consistent approach across the three Services to ensure that families are supported in a timely and effective manner. This includes ensuring that families are aware of the support available and that the support is accessible and easy to use. The three Services should work together to ensure that families are supported in a consistent and effective manner.

Breaking down stigma in seeking help for worries and concerns that can cause stress calls for strong and consistent messaging to reassure Serving personnel and their families that it is perfectly acceptable to seek help. Given the known barriers to seeking help there needs to be greater pro-active engagement with families throughout the Serving person's military career. The duty of care for Service personnel needs to extend to their families as well.

Reviewing the Tri-Service Welfare Policy

The Tri-Service Welfare Policy sets out key principles while recognising the individuality of each Service. A Joint Welfare System across all three Services which is owned/overseen by the Chief of Defence People is the purpose in future, and a more pr



Chapter 9

In the early years of grant funding although projects were required to report on their work, there was no formal evaluation. More recently the aim has been to undertake more systematic evaluations and to disseminate learning. An Outcomes Measur

Welfare support: medium term

Recommendation 93

The Armed Forces and the Ministry of Defence to:

- encourage small acts of kindness, including a welcoming committee to engage with families moving into a new area
- promote pro-active support to enhance wellbeing through a family centre/family hub on every military base as the safe 'go to' place for information, group activities, education, co-working hubs, children's activities, informal peer support and professional support programmes, and to encourage community integration
-

How the loss of a partner's property affects relationships, the quality of family life and, ultimately, the quality of the work undertaken by the Serving partner. There needs to be mor

Armed Forces Covenant: short term

Recommendation 107

The Ministry of Defence, Government Departments in England, and the Devolved Governments to:

- reinvigorate and strengthen the Armed Forces Covenant through legislation to drive recognition
-
-

Living In Our Shoes: Understanding the needs of UK Armed Forces families, June 2020

Authors: Janet Walker, Andrew Selous and Gabriela Misca

This summary report and the full report of the review are available at www.gov.uk

Hard copies of both reports are available on request from:

Armed Forces People Support - Families Team

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