

House of Commons: Written Statement

Ministry of Defence

Written Statement made by: **Minister for Defence People and Veterans (Leo Docherty)**.

UK Armed Forces Families Strategy 2022-2032

The Ministry of Defence (MOD)'s UK Armed Forces Families Strategy 2022-32 on making the recognition and care of Armed Forces families a national priority has today been Laid before the House.

The strategy addresses the challenges armed forces families face with mobility, deployment and separation and the implications this has for accessing good quality healthcare, education, and accommodation. It also notes the evolving nature of family life and the pressures this can place on childcare and managing the career of the partner or spouse alongside that of the Service person.

The strategy will be supported by an action plan that includes the commitments made in the government's response to Andrew Selous MP's *Living in Our Shoes* report. The strategy and action plan will be delivered in partnership with the devolved administrations, the charitable and private sectors.

The delivery of improved support is already underway. For example, the MOD is working with the Department for Education and local authorities to lessen the impact of mobility on service children's educational attainment. Informed by consultation with families, we are also working with the Department for Health and Social Care and healthcare providers across the UK to improve understanding of the health needs of armed forces families. To advocate for the skills and experiences of partners and spouses we are collaborating with the Department for Work and Pensions and charities to ensure that are recognised and valued by employers. And next year sees full roll out of the wraparound childcare programme.

But this is only the beginning. The Government and its partners value the role of all families in the Regular and Reserve forces and recognise their integral role in providing support to serving personnel based in the UK and overseas. Therefore, we are committed both to putting them at the heart of the Defence community and to helping them thrive in wider society. Together, under the principles of this strategy, we will continually review our policies to better support them, empower them and improve their lived experience.