



Ministry of Defence

# UK Tri-Service Families Continuous Attitude Survey Results 2023

● Annual

Published: 20 July 2023

United Kingdom

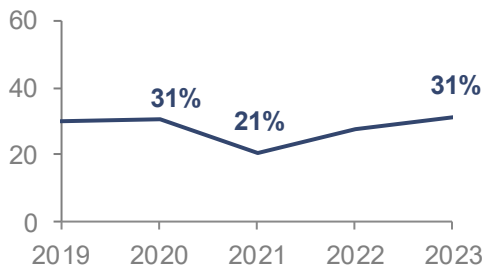
This statistical release provides results from the Families Continuous Attitude Survey (FamCAS) 2023, along with results from previous years.

Statistics from FamCAS are used by both internal Ministry of Defence (MOD) teams and external bodies to inform the development of policy and measure the impact of decisions affecting personnel and their families.

## Separation has returned to pre-COVID levels

Following a decrease in 2021, the proportion of families experiencing separation of over three months has increased over the past two years, returning to pre-COVID levels.

% families separated for more than three months

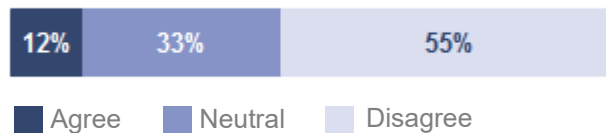


The proportion of families feeling negative about separation has also returned to pre-COVID levels.

## Service communication with families

For the first time this year, spouses were asked whether they agree or disagree that policies aimed at them are communicated effectively by the Services.

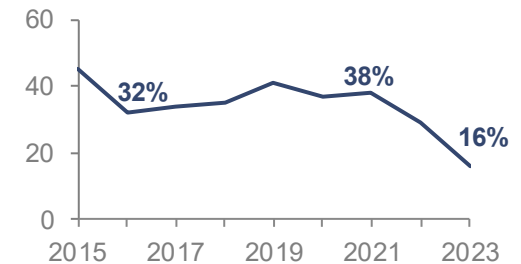
% Agree/disagree



Families are also asked whether they agree/disagree they are able to get the information they need about support offered to them by the Services. About three in ten agree whilst four in ten disagree.

## Satisfaction with Service Families Accommodation

% Satisfied with response to requests for maintenance/repair of SFA/Substitute SFA



The proportions of families satisfied with the overall standard, and the quality of maintenance/repair of SFA/SSFA have also fallen to their lowest levels reported since these questions were first asked in 2015.

Responsible Statistician: Surveys Head of Branch

Tel: 030 016 36856

Email: [Analysis-Surveys-Enquiries@mod.gov.uk](mailto:Analysis-Surveys-Enquiries@mod.gov.uk)

Background quality report: [www.gov.uk/government/collections/tri-service-families-continuous-attitude-survey-index](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/tri-service-families-continuous-attitude-survey-index)

Would you like to be added to our **contact list** so that we can inform you about updates to these statistics and consult you if we are thinking of making changes? You can subscribe to updates by emailing [Analysis-Publications@mod.gov.uk](mailto:Analysis-Publications@mod.gov.uk)

## Contents:

Section	Page
1 - About you	1
2 - Service comparisons	4
3 - Officer/Other Rank comparisons	6
4 - Overseas family comparisons	8
5 - Armed Forces Covenant	11
6 - Childcare and children's education	15
7 - Communication	18
8 - Deployment	20
9 - Employment	22
10- Healthcare	24
11 - Housing	26
12 - Impact of mobility	28
Methodology	32
FamCAS Glossary of Terms and Definitions	36
Further Information	38

## About these statistics

The Families Continuous Attitude Survey (FamCAS) refers to a set of harmonised Tri-Service questions included within the annual single Service Families Attitude Surveys.



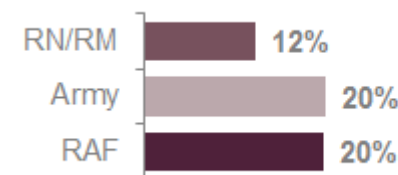
The FamCAS is one of the main ways that the department gathers information on the attitudes and experiences of Service families.

The 2023 FamCAS was distributed to a sample of 26,792 trained Regular Service personnel who were married or in a civil partnership. The Serving person was then asked to pass the survey on to their spouse. Only the Army survey used both online and paper questionnaires, the RN/RM has been online only since 2020 and the RAF moved to online only this year. The survey was open from late January until early May 2023.

### Response rates:

Overall 4,739 valid responses were received, representing a response rate of 18%.

This is unchanged from the 2022 response rate.



Between 2017 and 2021, response rates fluctuated between 20% and 25%, so have fallen since then. Despite this, the number of responses remains high and still allows robust inferences to be made. Measures of precision for all results are provided in the reference tables.

The RAF moved to an online only survey this year, as such the proportion of RAF personnel in the sample was increased. This transition was well managed by the RAF, with the overall response rate and results unaffected by this change.

## Impact of COVID-19

The FamCAS 2021 went into field late January 2021, during the third COVID-19 national lockdown in England. FamCAS 2022 was in field from late January 2022 until early May 2022, although national restrictions were being eased over this period, the survey asks about the past year and so will also capture experiences during lockdowns and restrictions.

Several areas of improvement were reported in 2021 including the effect of Service life on their children and their relationship with their partner, job security and household income. However, in 2022 and 2023, many of the increases reported in these areas have reverted back to the levels reported in 2020. These changes may be somewhat reflective of families re-evaluating following the lifting of restrictions, as attitudes towards some areas of Service life shift back to pre-COVID levels.

## About this statistical release

The following terminology has been used throughout this report:

- “married” refers to those who are married or in a civil partnership.
- “spouse” refers to spouse/civil partner.
- RN/RM is used as an abbreviation of Royal Navy/Royal Marines.

## AFCAS 2023 comparisons:

Many of these comparisons are based on a subset of [Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey](#) results (AFCAS) for Service personnel who are married/in a civil partnership. As a result they will not always match published AFCAS results.

## National comparisons:

National figures are used to provide context wherever possible. However, these are rarely directly comparable due to demographic differences between the general population and the population of Service spouses.

Reference tables and copies of single Service Armed Forces Families questionnaires are published as separate documents and can be found on the [FamCAS](#) webpage.

Please also see the Background Quality Report at the webpage above for full details of survey methodology, analysis and data quality considerations.

Only differences that are statistically significant are commented on within this report; statistical tests were carried out at the 99% confidence level. This is at a fairly stringent level and means that there should be a less than 1% chance that differences observed in FamCAS results are not representative of Service families as a whole. This reduces the likelihood of wrongly concluding that there has been an actual change based on survey results, which only cover a sample of Service families.

# Section 1 - About you

Section 1 provides background demographics of Service spouses and their families as well as information about how often they move and the amount of separation they experience.

## Data Quality Note

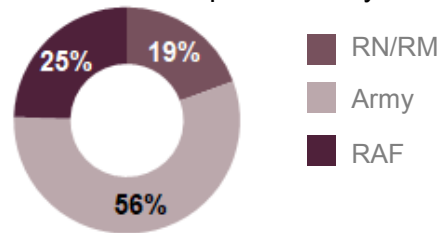
The estimates provided below are derived from the Joint Personnel Administration system (JPA)<sup>1</sup>. The estimate of married Service personnel is derived from a self-reported field so there may be some under-reporting. The 2023 [Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey](#) (AFCAS) estimated 48% of Service personnel were married/in a civil partnership, applying this to the trained Regular strength equates to just over 64,500 personnel.

**Approximately 57,000 Regular trained Service personnel are married or in a civil partnership<sup>1</sup>**

**Over half of all Service spouses are married to Army personnel<sup>1</sup>**

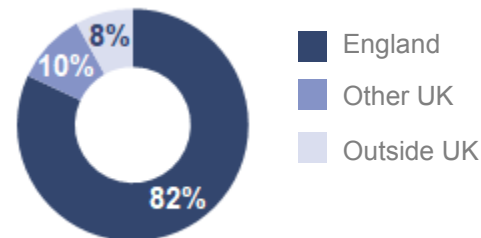
This distribution broadly reflects the relative size of the Services.

% married Service personnel by Service



**The majority of Service spouses live in England<sup>1</sup>**

% Service spouses by location



**72%** of Service spouses are married to Other Ranks<sup>1</sup>

**28%** of Service spouses are married to Officers<sup>1</sup>

Estimates within the rest of this report are taken from the FamCAS. Comparisons to other data sources are referenced.

**Nine in ten Service spouses are female**

The majority of Serving personnel are male.<sup>2</sup>

**Over three-fifths of Service spouses are aged under 40**

% Service spouses by age



## National Comparison

The [2021 Census](#) estimates 61% of the married population in England are aged over 50. This compares to 9% for Service spouses in England. This difference reflects the much older age profile of those married in the wider population compared to Service spouses.

**Just over one in eight Service spouses (13%) report a non-UK nationality**

A much higher proportion of Army Other Rank spouses report a non-UK nationality (22%) than the other Services/Rank groups. Overall, the Army report a higher proportion of non-UK nationalities amongst trained Regulars than the other Services.<sup>2</sup>

Nationality also differs by location. Of those spouses living outside the UK, 29% report a non-UK nationality compared to 12% of spouses living in England. Many of those living outside the UK accompanied their partner overseas in the past year (77%).

<sup>1</sup> Based on data from the Joint Personnel Administration system (JPA) as at 1 March 2023.

<sup>2</sup> Please refer to the [UK Armed Forces biannual diversity statistics](#) for age, gender and nationality information.

**79%** of Service families have children



This includes families with children over the age of 18. A slightly lower proportion, 72%, have at least one child under 18.

### National comparison

Although not directly comparable, the [2021 UK Labour Force Survey](#) (LFS), estimates 53% of married couple households have children and 40% have dependent children, considerably fewer than Service families.

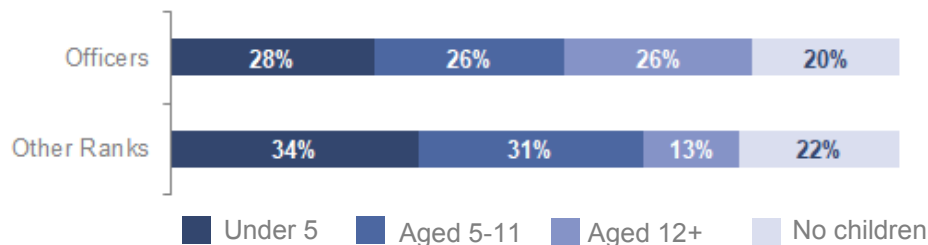
**56%** of Service families have at least one child of school age

**32%** of Service families have at least one child aged under 5

This has fallen from 37% reported in 2021 driven by changes amongst Army and RAF families.

### Other Rank families tend to have younger children than Officer families

% families by age of youngest child



This is due, in part, to the age difference between Officer and Other Rank spouses: 21% of Officer spouses are aged under 35 compared to 44% of Other Rank spouses. This reflects the age difference between Officers and Other Ranks in the Regular Armed Forces.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Please refer to the [UK Armed Forces biannual diversity statistics](#) for age, gender and nationality information.

**50%** of spouses are educated to Undergraduate level or above<sup>2</sup>

This differs by Rank and Service: 73% of Officer spouses compared to 41% of Other Rank spouses, 57% of RN/RM spouses followed by 52% for RAF and then 47% of Army spouses.

### National comparison

Although not directly comparable, the [2021 Census](#) estimated that 34% of those aged 16 or above in England or Wales were educated to [Level 4](#) or above (e.g. Higher National Certificate, Higher National Diploma, Bachelors Degree and post graduate qualifications).

**82%** of spouses are employed<sup>3</sup>

This includes 11% of spouses who are also serving in the Regular Armed Forces. Couples where both partners are members of the Regular Armed Forces are referred to as dual-serving couples.



**60%** of spouses are homeowners

The proportion of homeowners is unchanged since 2014. Homeownership differs greatly by Rank and Service, ranging from 44% for Army Other Rank spouses to 86% for RN/RM Officer spouses.



### AFCAS 2023 comparison

These results are broadly consistent with the AFCAS 2023 findings: 61% of married Service personnel are homeowners; 82% of spouses/civil partners are employed including 8% who are also serving in the Regular Armed Forces.

<sup>2</sup> Undergraduate level or above includes Undergraduate Degrees, Post-graduate Degrees and professional qualifications (e.g. teaching, nursing, accounting, civil engineering etc.).

<sup>3</sup> Employed refers to those in full-time, part-time or self employment.

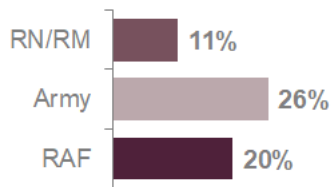
Service personnel are often posted to new locations and many spouses choose to accompany them rather than be separated. This means that Service spouses are also a very mobile population.

### Over a fifth of Service families (22%) moved for Service reasons in the past year

This has been largely stable since 2017 although increased in 2020, driven by Army families. This increase was largely due to the [Army Basing Programme](#) which involved the return of a large number of Service families from Germany to the UK over the summer of 2019.

### Army families are the most likely to move for Service reasons

% families moved for Service reasons in the past year



RN/RM families are the least likely to move for Service reasons; Royal Navy families cannot accompany Service personnel at sea.

A higher proportion of Officer families moved for Service reasons (26%) than Other Rank families (21%). Families living outside the UK are more likely to have moved for Service reasons (46%) than families living in England (21%).

### Just over two in five families (41%) have moved at least twice for Service reasons in the past five years

Just over a third of families have not moved at all over the past five years. RN/RM families are the most likely to have not moved (55%) followed by RAF families (34%) whilst Army families are the least likely to have not moved (27%) over the past five years.

A higher proportion of Other Rank spouses have not moved (36%) compared to Officer spouses (30%).

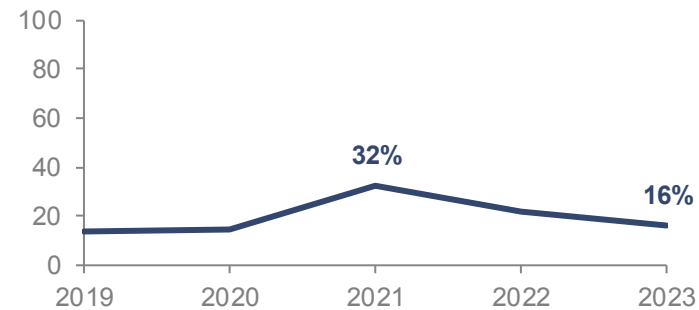
### Over three-quarters of Service couples (76%) live together during the working week

This differs by Service, Rank and location. Officer spouses, spouses of RN/RM personnel and those living in Wales are less likely to live with their partner (72%, 61% and 43% respectively). Spouses living overseas are more likely to live with their partner (87%) than families living in the UK.

### Levels of separation have returned to pre-COVID levels

Following restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 lockdowns, the proportion of families experiencing no separation rose to almost a third in 2021 but has fallen over the past two years, back to pre-COVID levels.

% families experiencing no separation



Correspondingly, the proportion of families experiencing separation of three months or more fell to 21% in 2021 but has now returned to the pre-COVID level of 31%.

A higher proportion of RN/RM spouses reported separation of more than six months (17%) than Army (10%) or RAF spouses (6%) over the past year.

### AFCAS 2023 comparison

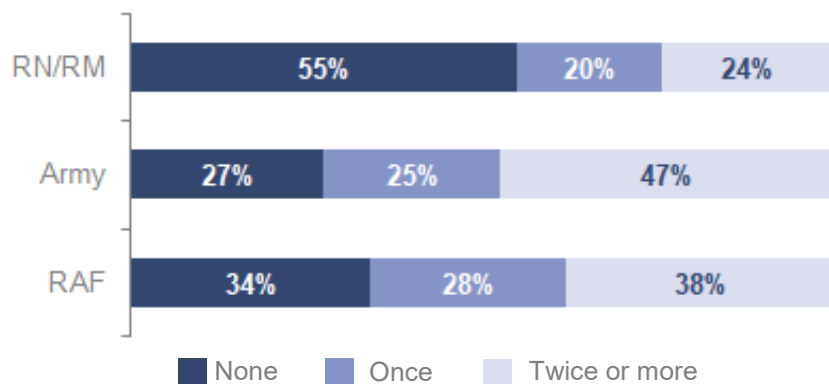
AFCAS also reported a reduction in separation from families in 2021. The proportion of personnel who reported not spending time away from their families increased from 12% in 2020 to 17% in 2021. This year, this has fallen to 14%, reflecting an increase in separation.

## Section 2 - Service comparisons

There are differences in the survey results for each Service which reflect the unique challenges faced by each. In particular, Army and RAF families experience higher mobility whilst RN/RM families are less likely to live together and experience more separation. This section highlights the main differences in families' experiences of, and attitudes towards Service life.

### Army and RAF families are more mobile than RN/RM families

% by number of moves for Service reasons over the past five years



RN/RM families are the most likely to have not moved within the past five years, whilst Army families are the most likely to have moved twice or more.

### Army families are the most likely to have moved home for Service reasons over the past year (26%) followed by RAF families (20%)

These results both differ to the 11% reported by RN/RM families.

Army spouses feel the most negative about the number of house moves (39%) followed by RAF spouses (31%). RN/RM feel the least negative (21%).

### During the past year, around one in ten Army and RAF spouses accompanied their partner on an overseas assignment

This compares to 5% of RN/RM spouses.

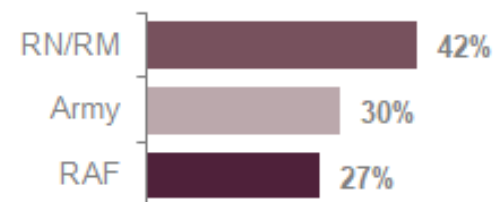
Army spouses are the most positive about opportunities for travel (36%) followed by RAF spouses (27%). RN/RM are the least positive (22%).

### The proportion of spouses living with their partner differs by Service

Around eight in ten Army and RAF spouses live with their partner during the working week (both 79%), compared to 61% for RN/RM spouses.

### RN/RM spouses are more likely to have experienced separation of over three months compared to Army or RAF spouses

% separated due to Service reasons for three months or more in the past year



This is somewhat reflected in the larger proportion of RN/RM spouses who feel negative about the amount of separation from their partner (65%). This compares to around half of RAF and Army spouses.

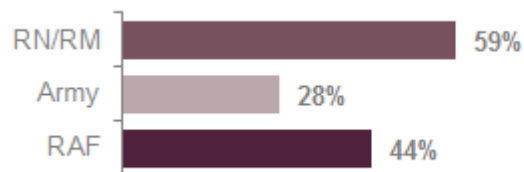
### RN/RM families are the most likely to own a home (76%)

This is followed by 66% of RAF families. Army families are the least likely to own a home (51%). Around three in ten Army and RAF families feel negative about the prospect of buying a home, compared to around two in ten RN/RM families.

Royal Navy families cannot accompany Service personnel at sea. This tends to encourage home ownership, which provides stability. Despite this, Royal Navy spouses are still more likely to experience separation during the working week even if the Service person is based on shore.

## RN/RM families are the most likely to live in their own home whilst Army families are the least likely

% living in their own home during the working week



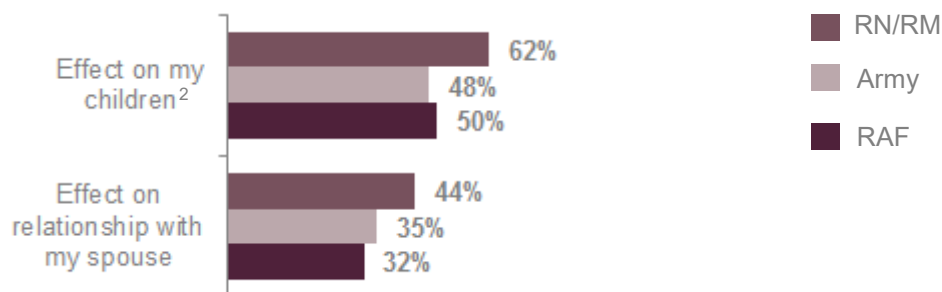
Army families are the most likely to be living in Service Family Accommodation (68%) followed by RAF (50%) and then RN/RM families (34%).

## RN/RM families are less likely to have a child who changed school for Service reasons over the past year<sup>1</sup>

Less than one in ten (8%) RN/RM families have a child who changed school for Service reasons compared to 20% for Army and 14% for RAF families.

## Despite some of the benefits of stability, RN/RM spouses feel more negative about some aspects of Service family life

% feel negative about...



RN/RM families also feel more disadvantaged about family life (56%) compared to Army (44%) and RAF (40%) families. Fewer RN/RM families are satisfied with their quality of life as a Service family (45%) compared to Army (52%) and RAF (50%) families. Half of RN/RM spouses would feel happier if their partner chose to leave the Service, followed by RAF spouses (42%) and then Army spouses (31%).

<sup>1</sup> SUBSET: Families with school age children (56%).

<sup>2</sup> SUBSET: Families with children (79%).

## Seven in ten RN/RM families (70%) feel the frequency of current communications is not often enough

This is followed by 62% of Army and 53% of RAF families. Over four in ten (45%) Army families disagree that they were able to get the information they needed about support offered to them by the Service. This compares to 36% for RN/RM and 35% for RAF families.

## Army spouses are less likely to be employed than RN/RM or RAF spouses

% employed<sup>3</sup>



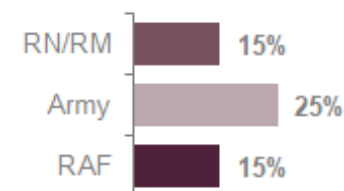
This may contribute to Army families feeling less positive about household income (28%) than RN/RM (41%) or RAF families (47%).

Of those looking for a job in the past year, Army spouses are more likely to have experienced difficulties than other Service families.

These differences in employment may be due, in part, to the higher mobility of Army spouses. However, moving with their partner may also contribute to more positive views on Service life.

## Army families are more likely to agree they feel part of the wider Service community than other Service families

% feel part of the wider Service community



Army spouses are also more likely to agree that they feel valued by the Service and that their family benefits by being a Service family than RN/RM and RAF spouses.

<sup>3</sup> Employed refers to those in full-time employment, part-time employment or self-employed

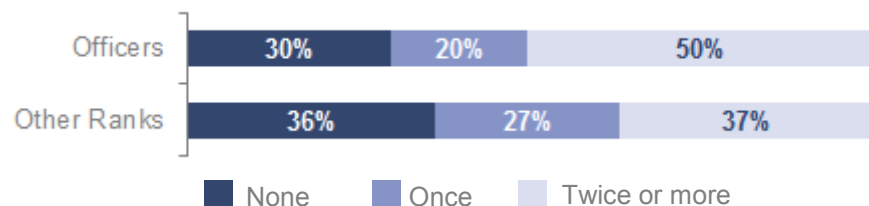


## Section 3 - Officer/Other Rank comparisons

This section compares results for Officer and Other Rank families, highlighting the main differences in their experiences of, and attitudes towards Service life. Over seven in ten Service spouses are married to Other Ranks (72%).

### Officer families are more mobile than Other Rank families

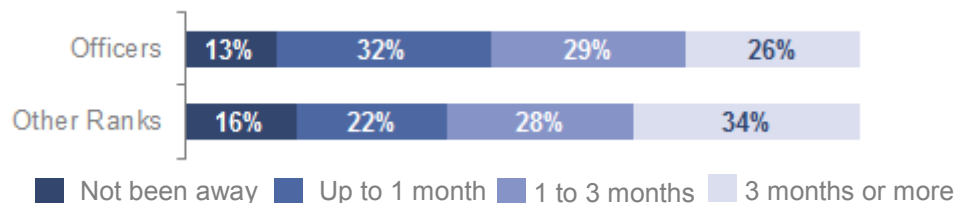
% number of times moved home for Service reasons over past five years



Over the past year, Officer families were more likely to have moved for Service reasons and accompany their partner overseas than Other Rank families. As a result, Officer spouses feel more negative about the number of house moves but are more positive about opportunities for travel than Other Rank spouses.

### Over the past year, Other Rank spouses experienced more separation of over three months from their partner for Service reasons than Officer spouses

% by time spent away over the past year



However, Other Rank spouses are more likely to live with their partner (77%) than Officer spouses (72%).

Although attitudes towards the amount of separation do not differ, Other Rank spouses are more likely to feel operational tours are too often (26%) and too long (50%) than Officer spouses (16% and 41% respectively).

Despite Officer families being more mobile, there is no significant difference by Rank in the proportion of families with a child who changed school for Service reasons over the past year. This may be partly due to the higher proportion of Officer families with a child at an independent boarding school (20%) compared to Other Rank families (5%).

### Other Rank spouses were more likely to have looked for a job over the past year than Officer spouses

% looked for a job in the past year



Of those who did look for a job over the past year, Other Rank spouses were more likely to experience difficulties finding suitable employment than Officer spouses. Officer spouses are a little more likely to be employed (84%) compared to Other Rank spouses (81%). Despite this...

### Officer spouses feel more negative about the effect of Service life on their career than Other Rank spouses

% feel negative about effect of Service life on their career



This may be due, in part, to the higher mobility of Officer families and the higher proportion living apart during the working week which could make pursuing a career more difficult.

## When comparing themselves to the general public, Officer families feel more disadvantaged about family life than Other Rank families

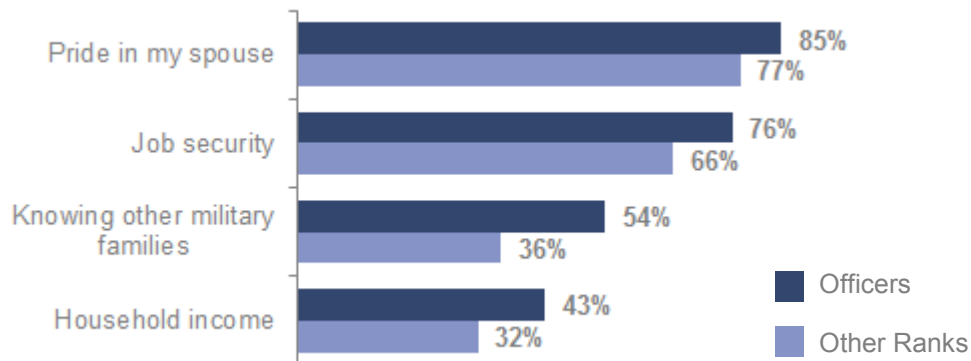
% feel disadvantaged about family life



Officer families also feel more disadvantaged about healthcare, education, housing and access to commercial products and services than Other Rank families. However, this may reflect differences in perceptions about the general public rather than experiences of Service life since Officer families report more positive views about several aspects of Service life than Other Rank families.

## Officer families feel more positive than Other Rank families about many aspects of Service life

% feel positive about:



Also, a slightly higher proportion of Officer spouses agree they support their partner's career in the Service (90%) than Other Rank spouses (87%).

Views on household income may reflect higher levels of [pay](#) for Officers than Other Ranks. Other indicators may also suggest higher levels of household income for Officer families. For example, Officer families are considerably more likely to own a home (78%) than Other Rank families (52%).

## Officer spouses are more satisfied with their quality of life as a Service family than Other Rank spouses

% satisfied with quality of life as a Service family

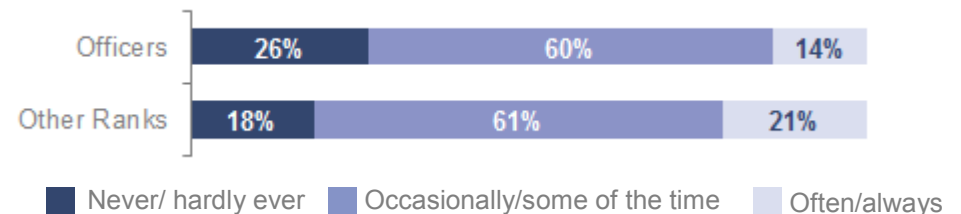


Officer families are also more likely to agree their family benefits from being a Service family (35%) than Other Rank families (31%).

Officer spouses are more likely to agree they feel part of the wider Service community (29%) than Other Rank spouses (16%). This may contribute to lower levels of loneliness amongst Officer spouses.

## Officer spouses are more likely to never/hardly ever feel lonely than Other Rank Spouses

% by how often they feel lonely



Other Rank spouses are more likely to feel lonely often/always than Officer spouses.

On average, Officer spouses score slightly better on all four of the well-being measures such as satisfaction with your life nowadays, than Other Rank spouses.

### Measuring well-being

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) collects [data on well-being](#) for the general population in their Annual Population Survey.

## Section 4 - Overseas families comparison

This section compares results for families living overseas (405 respondents) against those for families living in England (3,338 respondents); highlighting the main differences in their experiences of, and attitudes towards Service life. Over eight in ten Service families (82%) live in England whilst 8% live overseas, outside the UK.

### Data Quality Note

Due to the number of respondents from overseas there may be less evidence to identify differences as statistically significant.

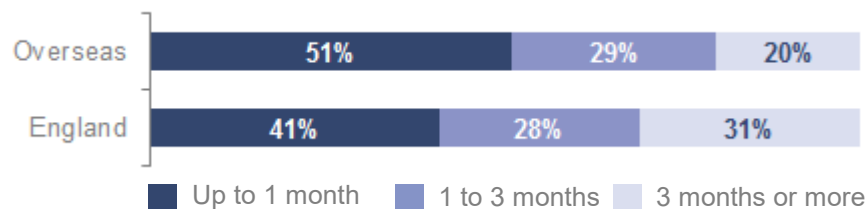
Amongst overseas families, there is a lower proportion of RN/RM families (12%) compared to families in England (20%). Correspondingly, overseas families have higher proportions of Army and RAF families than those living in England. Also, overseas families have a slightly higher proportion of Officer families (32%) compared to families in England (29%). These variations may contribute to differences between results for overseas and England families.

This section highlights differences on average between families living overseas and those living in England. Experiences and views of living overseas will differ by family, depending on location and many other circumstances.

**Over three-quarters of families living overseas (77%) accompanied their partner overseas in the past year**

**Overseas families are less likely to experience separation of over three months than families living in England**

% by amount of separation in the past year



This may explain why overseas families feel less negative about separation (33%) than families living in England (54%).

<sup>1</sup> Based on data from the Joint Personnel Administration system (JPA) as at 1 March 2023.

**Overseas families are more mobile than those living in England**

Three in five overseas families (60%) have moved at least twice in the past five years. This compares to four in five for families in England (40%).

**Families living overseas are more likely to live with their partner (87%) than families living in England (76%)**

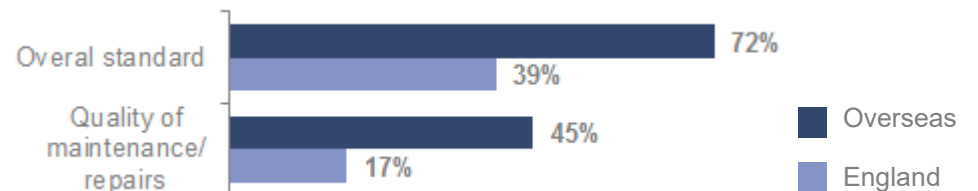
This is largely due to the high proportion accompanying their partner overseas.

**Nearly three-quarters of overseas families live in SFA (74%) compared to 58% of families living in England**

A further 12% of overseas families live in SSFA ([Substitute Service Family Accommodation](#)), whilst just 3% live in their own home compared to 39% of families in England.

**Overseas families are much more satisfied with most aspects of SFA/SSFA than those living in England**

% satisfied with SFA/SSFA<sup>2</sup>



Overseas families are more satisfied with all aspects of SFA/SSFA except speed of allocation.

Those living overseas are also more able to access facilities on their local base than those living in England which may contribute to overseas families feeling more positive about Service provided facilities (49%) than those living in England (27%).

<sup>2</sup> SUBSET: Those living in SFA/SSFA (59%)

## Overseas spouses are considerably less likely to be employed than those living in England

% employed



Overseas spouses are less likely to be in full-time employment (23%) compared to those living in England (54%).

Spouses living overseas are also more likely to have looked for a job in the past year (48%) than those in England (37%)

## Of those who looked for a job, overseas spouses were more likely to experience difficulties than those living in England

% experienced difficulties finding suitable employment<sup>1</sup>



These differences may contribute to....

## Overseas spouses feel more negative about the effect on their career than those living in England

% feel negative about effect on their career



Of those who require further/higher education, overseas families are less able to access it (43% unable) compared to those living in England (23% unable).

<sup>1</sup> SUBSET: Those who looked for a job in the past year (38%)

## Similar proportions of families overseas and in England have children (76% and 79% respectively)

There is little difference between the ages of children in overseas families and those in England. Similar proportions have children of school age; 54% of overseas families and 57% of families living in England.

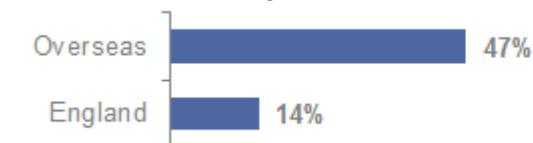
## Half of overseas families with school age children use a MOD school compared to 1% of families living in England

More families living overseas use independent day schools (16%) compared to those living in England (7%). Fewer overseas families have a child in a state school (18%) than families living in England (86%).

The MOD provides schools and early years settings in key locations overseas, these are run by [Defence Children Services](#) (DCS).

## Overseas families are more mobile and hence more likely to have a child change school for Service reasons in the past year

% had a child change school for Service reasons in the past year<sup>2</sup>



However, of those with a child who changed school, overseas families were more likely to be able to apply within the timeframe for the normal point of entry (80%) compared to families living in England (61%). This is due, in part to less use of state schools amongst overseas families.

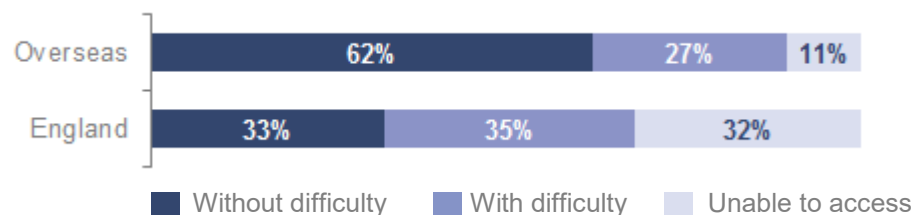
## Fewer overseas families needed childcare for school age children in the past year (30%) compared to those living in England (53%)

This may be due, in part, to lower employment rates amongst overseas spouses. There is no difference in requirement for early years childcare between families living overseas or in England.

<sup>2</sup> SUBSET: Those with school age children (56%)

## Of those who required treatment, overseas families were more able to access dental treatment than families living in England

% by ability to access dental treatment <sup>1</sup>

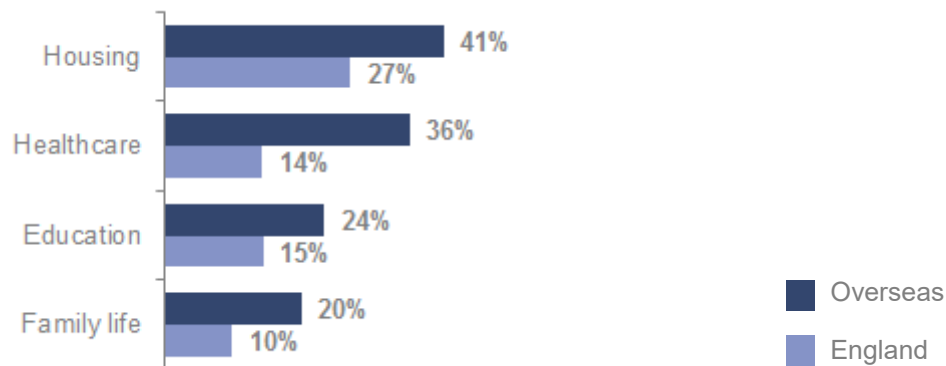


Overseas families were also more able to access GP Services without difficulty (71%) than families living in England (61%). This may contribute to overseas families feeling more advantaged about healthcare than families living in England.

Access to [healthcare overseas](#): families posted to some larger overseas units can access medical and dental care at the station Medical Centre. However, healthcare available for families varies by overseas location.

## Overseas families feel more advantaged about many aspects of Service family life compared to those living in England

% feel advantaged compared to the general population about...

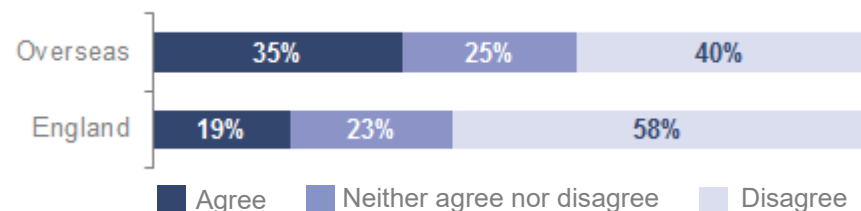


Overseas families feel more disadvantaged about access to commercial products and services than those living in England.

<sup>1</sup> SUBSET: Those families who required dental treatment (89%)

## Overseas families are more likely to feel part of the wider Service community than those living in England

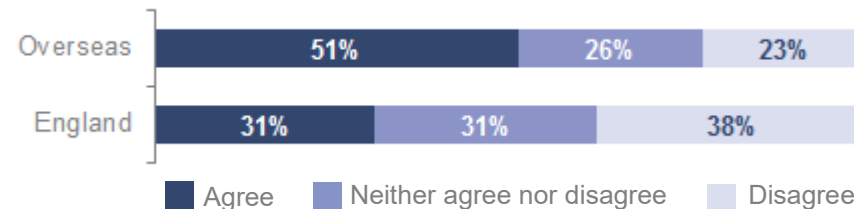
% agree/disagree they feel part of the wider Service community



Overseas families feel more positive about knowing other military families and community support for their family than those living in England.

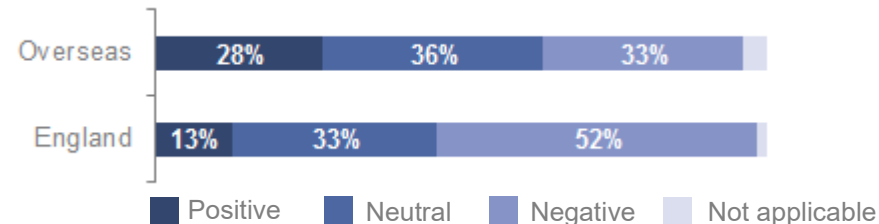
## Overseas families are also more likely to feel their family benefits from being a Service family

% agree/disagree their family benefits from being a Service family



## Overseas families are more positive and less negative about the effect of Service life on their children than those living in England

% positive/negative about effect on their children<sup>2</sup>



Overseas spouses also feel more positive and less negative about the effect on their relationship with their partner than those living in England. Fewer overseas spouses would feel happier if their partner left the Service (27%) than those living in England (37%).

<sup>2</sup> SUBSET: Those families with children (79%)

## Section 5 - Armed Forces Covenant, well-being and Service life

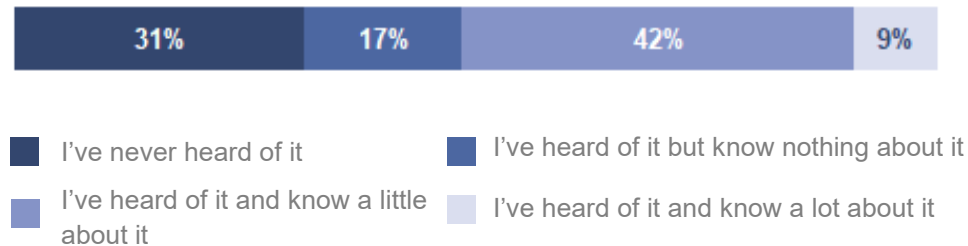
Section 5 covers voting registration as well as a number of questions related to the Armed Forces Covenant. These measure whether families feel advantaged or disadvantaged compared to the general public, and how positive or negative they feel about particular aspects of Service life. This section also includes questions on well-being and satisfaction with Service life.

### Armed Forces Covenant

Announced by the government in May 2011, the [Armed Forces Covenant](#) is a promise by the nation ensuring that those who serve or who have served in the Armed Forces and their families, are treated fairly.

### Three in ten have never heard of the Armed Forces Covenant, unchanged since 2018

Awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant



Between 2015 and 2018 the proportion of spouses reporting that they had never heard of the Armed Forces Covenant fell from 41% to 33%. Since then, levels of awareness of the Covenant have generally remained unchanged.

Officer spouses continue to have a greater awareness of the Covenant compared to Other Rank spouses. The majority (85%) of Officer spouses have at least heard of the Covenant compared to 62% of Other Rank spouses.

A higher proportion of Army spouses have "never heard of" the Covenant (36%) compared to RN/RM and RAF spouses (27% and 22% respectively).

### Overall, the majority (83%) of Service spouses are registered to vote, unchanged since last year

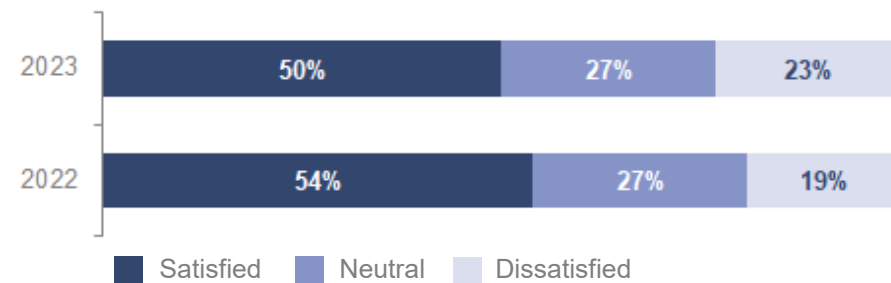
Officer spouses are more likely to be registered to vote (90%) than Other Rank spouses (80%).

### AFCAS 2023 comparison

A slightly higher proportion of married Service personnel are registered to vote (91%).

### Fewer families are satisfied with their quality of life as a Service family, compared to last year

% satisfied/dissatisfied with their quality of life as a Service family

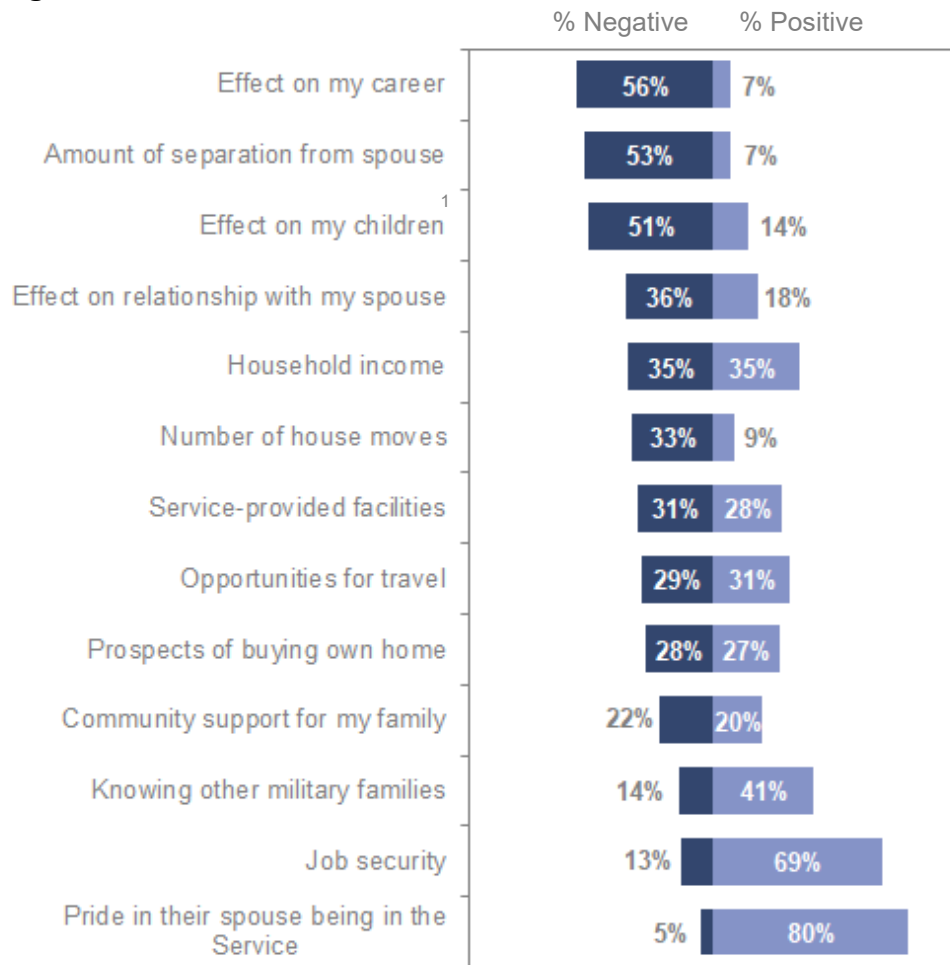


This decrease is particularly evident for RN/RM and RAF families, with RN/RM families now the least satisfied compared to other Service families.

### Spouses' views on whether their family benefits from being a Service family are mixed

Whilst just over a third (32%) agree that their family benefits, 37% disagree. Despite this, the majority (88%) agree that they are supportive of their partner's career in the Service.

**Effect on my career, separation and effect on my children continue to be the aspects of Service life spouses feel most negative about**



**Pride in their spouse continues to be the aspect Service spouses feel most positive about, at 80%, unchanged since 2019**

This is followed by job security, with nearly seven in ten (69%) feeling positive about this aspect of Service family life. Unchanged this year, the proportion feeling positive about job security is above all reported levels prior to 2019 but remains below the peak level reported in 2021 (75%).

<sup>1</sup>SUBSET: Families with children (79%).

**Attitudes towards some aspects of Service family life continue to show signs of decline in 2023**

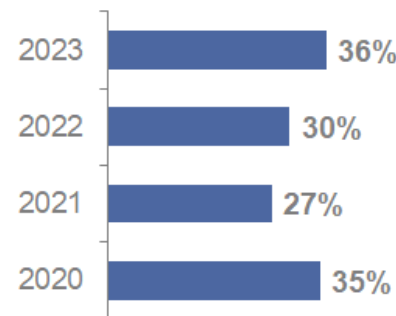
**Positive attitudes towards some aspects have fallen to their lowest reported levels this year**

For example, the proportion of families feeling positive about household income has fallen 12 percentage points in the last two years, to just over one in three (35%). This may be due, in part, to the impact of cost of living pressures on Service families.

Similarly, the proportion of families feeling positive about Service provided facilities has fallen eight percentage points since 2021 to 28%, the lowest level reported since this question was first asked in 2015. This may reflect the reduction in satisfaction with some aspects of Service Family Accommodation. See Section 11 for more detail.

**For other aspects, negative attitudes of Service family life are returning to the levels reported pre-COVID**

% feeling negative about the effect on the relationship with their spouse/partner



Following a dip in 2021, the proportion of spouses feeling negative about the effect on the relationship with their partner has steadily increased, from 27% in 2021 to 36% this year.

Of those with children<sup>1</sup>, just over half (51%) now feel negative about the effect of Service family life on their children. This is up from 45% last year, returning to the level reported in 2020.

## Family life remains the aspect families feel most disadvantaged about in comparison to the general public, at 45%

Housing remains the aspect families feel most advantaged about in comparison to the general public. However, the proportion of families feeling disadvantaged about housing has increased this year from 18% in 2022 to 24%, having remained relatively stable since 2018. This may be reflective of some of the findings reported in Section 11.

## The proportion of families feeling disadvantaged about healthcare in comparison to the general public has increased for the second year in a row, to three in ten

Between 2015 and 2021 the proportion of families feeling disadvantaged about healthcare in comparison to the general public was around a fifth. This has since increased from 26% last year to 30% this year, its highest level since this question was first asked in 2015.

This may reflect the continued reduction in families' access to healthcare services following the COVID-19 pandemic. See Section 10 for more detail.

## The proportion of families feeling advantaged about childcare has increased for the first time since this question was first asked in 2017

Of those families with children<sup>1</sup>, just over one in ten (11%) now feel advantaged about childcare compared to the general public. Previously this figure was 7%. This may be due, in part, to the introduction of the Wraparound Childcare Scheme last year.

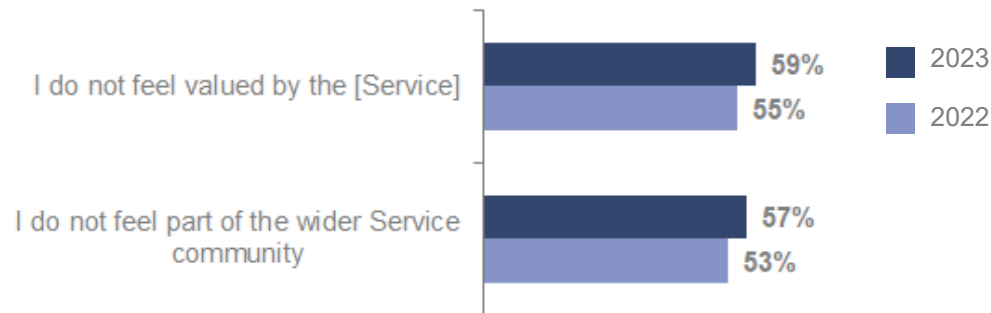
The [Wraparound Childcare Scheme](#) (WAC) was launched by MOD in Autumn 2022, providing funding for wraparound childcare during term time for eligible Service children aged 4 to 11 years old.

### AFCAS 2023 comparison

Married Service personnel feel more disadvantaged about family life compared to Service spouses.

## More families report that they do not feel valued by the Service, nor feel part of the wider Service community, compared to levels previously recorded

Views on...



The proportion of families who do not feel part of the wider Service community (57%) is now at its highest level since this question was first asked in 2017. Nearly six in ten (59%) families do not feel valued by the Service, returning to the level previously report in 2017.

### AFCAS 2023 comparison

Married Service personnel are considerably more likely to agree that they feel valued in the Service (37%) compared to Service families (14%).

## The proportion of spouses who would feel happier if their partner chose to leave the Service has increased eight percentage points since 2021, to 37%

This is a return to the level reported in 2019. This may be somewhat reflective of other attitudes returning to pre-COVID levels, with several improvements reported in 2021 when fewer families felt they would be happier if their partner left.

RN/RM spouses are considerably more likely to feel happier if their partner chose to leave the Service (50%), compared to other Service families.

It is worth noting that, overall, just over three in ten (31%) would feel no different if their partner chose to leave the Service.

<sup>1</sup> SUBSET: Families with children (79%).

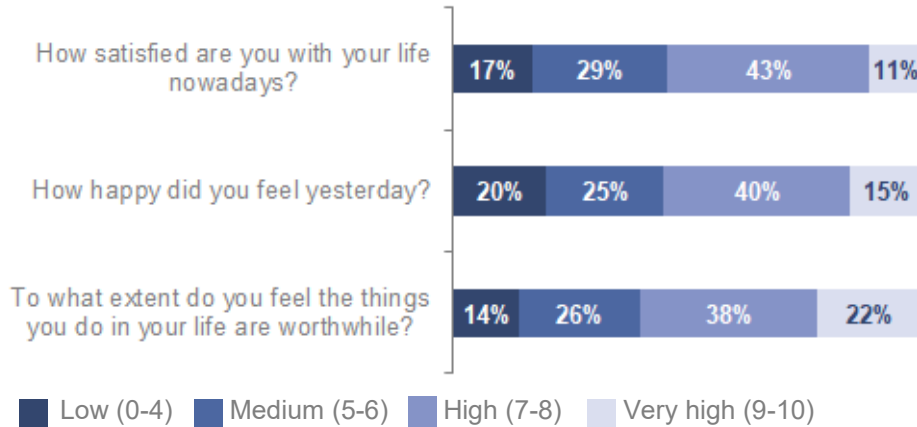


## Measuring well-being

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) collects [data on well-being](#) for the general population in their Annual Population Survey.

## Well-being measures of Service spouses

Views on...



The well-being of Service spouses remains relatively unchanged compared to last year. However, there has been a slight increase in the proportion rating their life satisfaction as 'low', up from 14% in 2022.

Just over three in ten (32%) spouses rate their anxiety as "high", unchanged since 2020.

## National comparison

[National well-being scores](#) are not directly comparable to those of Service spouses due to differences in demographics. For example, national figures include a larger proportion of over 60s, who generally score their well-being higher than younger people. However, the latest national well-being results from 2022 by sex may still provide some context. The proportion of UK females scoring aspects of their well-being as 'very high' (a score of 9-10) ranges between 24-35%. These are considerably higher than corresponding results for female Service spouses (11-22%).

## Well-being scores differ by attributes, such as employment status

Overall, spouses who are employed, homeowners, those who live in their own home, or are married to an Officer, tend to be more positive across the four well-being measures.

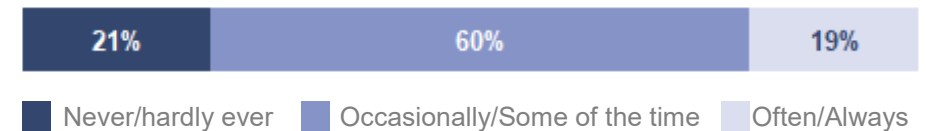
However, there are overlaps between these groups, for example Officer spouses are more likely to be homeowners and so the differences observed may be due to other reasons.

## AFCAS 2023 comparison

Well-being results for married Service personnel and Service spouses are relatively similar.

## Levels of loneliness remain unchanged this year, with around one in five (19%) feeling lonely often or always; a similar proportion never or hardly ever feel lonely

% by how often spouses feel lonely



Loneliness levels dipped slightly in 2021 when just 15% of spouses reported feeling lonely often or always. Levels are now in line with those reported last year and in 2019-2020.

## National comparison

The latest results from the [2016-2022 ONS Community Life Survey](#) provide some context to these results. For females in England, 7% feel lonely often or always. Although not directly comparable, this figure is considerably different from female Service spouses (20%).

## Section 6 - Childcare and Children's Education

Section 6 focuses on families with children, particularly their ability to access childcare, and satisfaction with local childcare facilities. This section also covers the difficulties families experience in relation to their children's schooling.

**Just under eight in ten (79%) Service families have children**

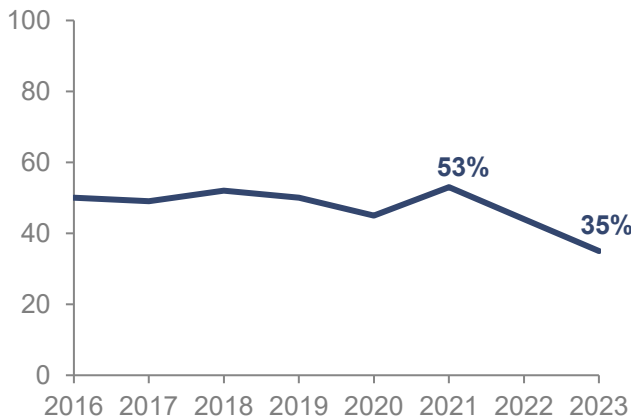


**Nearly three-quarters (74%) of families with a child aged under five<sup>1</sup> required early years (0-4) childcare**

Of those who require early years childcare, nine in ten are able to access it.

**Satisfaction with the cost of early years childcare has fallen for the second year in a row to its lowest reported level**

% satisfied with cost of early years childcare<sup>2</sup>



Satisfaction with cost has fallen 18 percentage points since 2021, to 35%. This decrease may be due, in part, to cost of living pressures.

The majority of families are satisfied with quality (78%) and opening hours (68%) of early years childcare, both unchanged this year.

Although still high, satisfaction with access has fallen six percentage points since last year, to 72%, back in line with the level reported in 2020.

### National Comparison

Although not directly comparable, the [Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents in England](#) from 2021 also reports much more positive views around the quality than the cost of childcare.

<sup>1</sup>SUBSET: Families with a child aged under five (32%)

<sup>2</sup>SUBSET: Families who needed early years (0-4) childcare (24%).

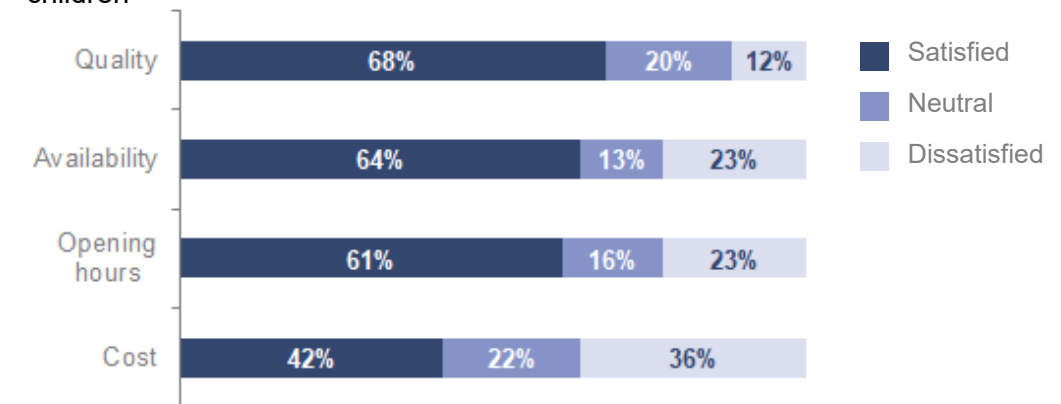
**Over half (56%) of all Service families have at least one child of school age**

**Of these families, just over half (51%) required childcare such as breakfast/after school clubs in the last 12 months**

This figure is in line with all previous levels apart from 2021 when requirement fell to around four in ten (41%). This may have been due, in part, to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on schooling.

**Over four in ten (42%) families who required childcare for school age children are satisfied with the cost of their local childcare**

% satisfied/dissatisfied with aspects of local childcare for school age children<sup>3</sup>



Levels of satisfaction with all four aspects of local childcare remain relatively unchanged since 2017 when these questions were first asked.

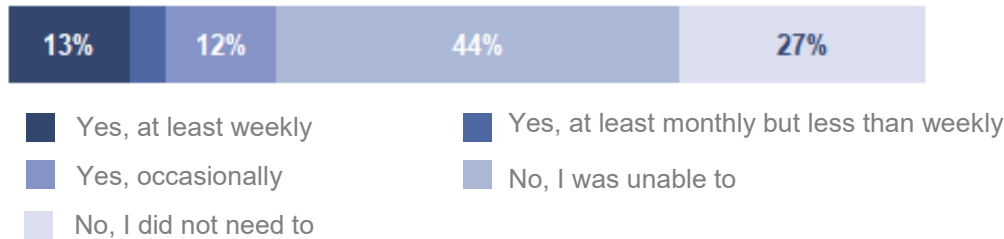
Army families are less satisfied with the cost and quality of local childcare compared to other Service families.

In general, families are more satisfied with most aspects of early years childcare than childcare for school age children, apart from cost.

<sup>3</sup>SUBSET: Families who needed childcare for school age children (29%).

## Around one in eight families with children use free informal childcare at least weekly<sup>1</sup>

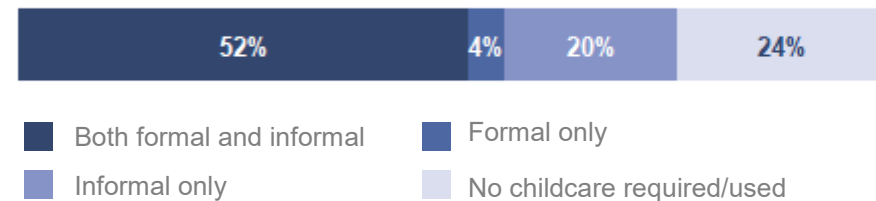
Use of free informal childcare<sup>2</sup>



Just under three in ten (29%) families with children make some use of free informal childcare. RN/RM families are more likely to access free informal childcare at least weekly than Army and RAF families.

## Over half (56%) of families with children required formal childcare in the last 12 months

Requirement for formal/informal childcare<sup>2</sup>



Use of childcare is affected by the age of the children. Of those families with at least one child aged 0-11, 70% require formal childcare. This increases to 76% for families with at least one child aged under five.

### National Comparison

Although not directly comparable to Service families, the [Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents in England](#) reports around 73% of families with a child aged 0-4 used formal childcare.

<sup>1</sup>Free informal childcare such as grandparents, extended family, friends etc.

<sup>2</sup>SUBSET: Families with children (79%).

## Of those families who required childcare<sup>3</sup>, over half (52%) do not currently use any government childcare initiatives

The top reason for not using these initiatives is uncertainty around eligibility. A higher proportion of Other Rank families do not use any of these initiatives (55%) compared to Officer families (45%).

Tax free childcare accounts and free childcare hours are the most commonly used government childcare initiatives amongst Service families<sup>3</sup> (32% and 16% respectively). Since 2022, the proportion using tax free childcare accounts has increased considerably, by nine percentage points. This may be due, in part, to [MOD's introduction of its Wraparound Childcare Scheme](#) and the eligibility criteria.

A lower proportion report using the Salary Sacrifice scheme (7%), which may be due, in part, to the [closure of the childcare voucher scheme](#) in 2018.

## One in ten families with school age children<sup>4</sup> receive Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA); Officer families are much more likely to receive CEA than Other Rank families

% families with school age children who receive CEA<sup>4</sup>



This reflects the higher proportion of Officer families with a child at an independent boarding school (20%; Other Rank families: 5%).

**Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA)** assists Service personnel with boarding school fees to achieve the continuity of education for their children that would otherwise not be possible if their children accompanied them on frequent assignments both at home and overseas. Further details are available from the [Children's Education Advisory Service](#).

<sup>3</sup>SUBSET: Families with children who required childcare in the past 12 months (60%).

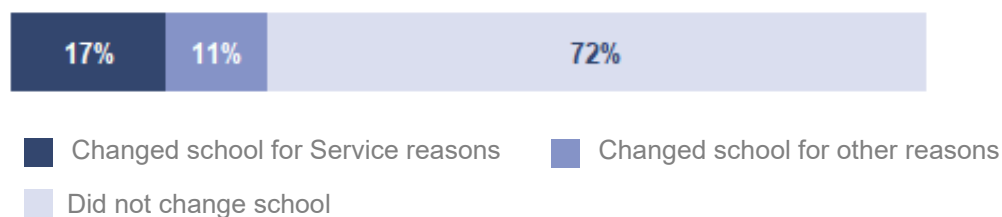
<sup>4</sup>SUBSET: Families with school age children (56%).

## The majority (81%) of families with school age children<sup>1</sup> have at least one child at a state school

Other Rank families are more likely to have a child at a state school (87%) compared to Officer families (66%).

## The proportion of families with school age children who changed school for Service reasons in the last 12 months remains unchanged this year, at 17%

% changed school/did not change school



## Just over a quarter (26%) of families with school age children experienced difficulties with their children's schooling in the past year

In line with results since 2020, the proportion of families experiencing difficulties with their children's schooling remains above the lowest level reported in 2019 (19%).

## The most common difficulty experienced by families<sup>1</sup> with their children's schooling was obtaining support for Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Nearly one in ten (9%) families with school age children experienced difficulties with obtaining support for SEN, increasing for the first time since this question was first asked in 2017.

The second most common difficulty was getting a place at the school of their choice. This was selected by 7% of families, unchanged since first asked in 2017.

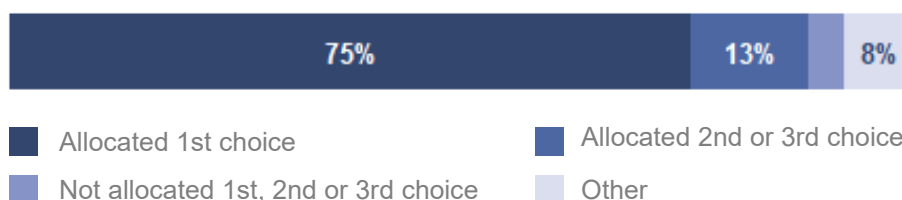
<sup>1</sup> SUBSET: Families with school age children (56%).

## Nearly two-thirds (64%) of families who changed schools were able to apply within the timeline for a normal point of entry<sup>2,3</sup>

Just under three-quarters (74%) of families who changed schools in the last 12 months applied for a place at a state school.

## Three-quarters of families who applied for a place at a state school were allocated their first choice of school, similar to previous years

State school allocation<sup>4</sup>



## National Comparison

Although not directly comparable to Service families, [national figures on school applications](#) offer some context: 83% of secondary school place applicants received an offer of their first choice school. For primary school applicants this was 93%.

Nearly four-fifths (78%) of families who applied for a place at a state school were happy with their allocation. Conversely, just over a fifth were not happy with their allocation.

<sup>2</sup> SUBSET: Families with at least one child who changed school (16%).

<sup>3</sup> The normal point of entry refers to the school's application period for the beginning of Reception, Year 7, Year 12 or equivalent.

<sup>4</sup> SUBSET: Families with a child who changed school and applied for a place at a state school (11%).

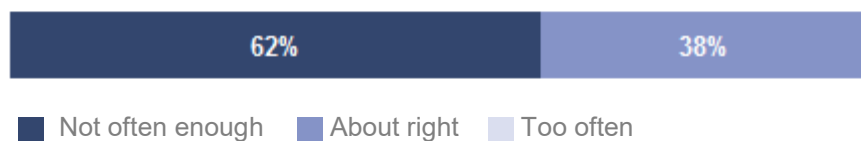
## Section 7 - Communications and access to local base

Section 7 covers views and experiences of communications between the Armed Forces and families as well as preferred methods of communication. This section also looks at the ability of spouses to access facilities on their local base.

The agree/disagree question about being able to get the information families need about support offered to them by the Service was introduced in 2022. All other items on this page were introduced this year.

### Over six in ten families (62%) feel the communications they currently receive are not often enough

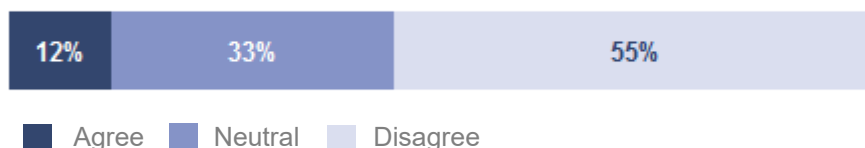
% views on the frequency of current communications



Just 1% of spouses feel communications are too often. RAF families are more likely to feel communications are about right (46%) than other Service families. Nearly half of families living overseas (49%) feel the frequency of communications is about right compared to 37% of families in England.

### Over half of families (55%) disagree that policies aimed at them are communicated to them effectively by the Services

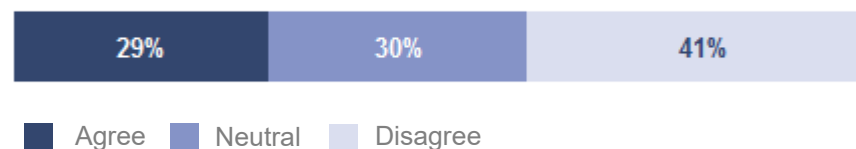
% agree/disagree policies aimed at them are communicated to them effectively by the Services



More RN/RM families disagree than other Service families. Overseas families are less likely to disagree than families living in England.

### Over four in ten families (41%) disagree they are able to get information they need about support offered to them by the Services

% agree/disagree they are able to get information they need about support offered to them by the Services



Army families and Other Rank families are less likely to agree they are able to get the information they need about support offered to them by the Services, compared to their counterparts.

### Families are largely neutral about the relevance and clarity of information they receive from the Services

This may reflect the large proportion of families who feel they do not receive enough communication from the Services and are therefore, unable to comment on relevance or clarity.

A fifth of families were satisfied with the relevance of the information they receive and a quarter were satisfied with how clear the information is.

### Data quality

It should be noted that the respondents to the Families surveys are those who received communications about the surveys. Results in this section may be influenced by this.

## Data quality

A question asking how the Services currently communicate with you was added this year. It should be noted that the main methods of distribution for this survey were email and postal invites sent via the Serving person. The majority of respondents (92%) completed the survey online; only Army offered a paper survey option. These factors may have influenced the results for this section.

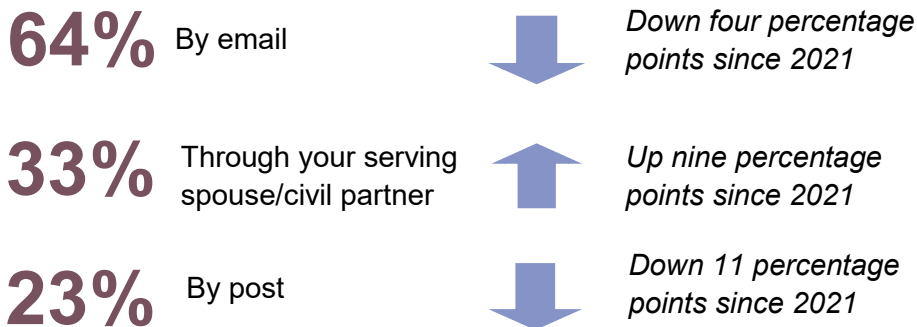
## The main method of current communication with Service spouses is via their Serving partner, selected by just under half of respondents (47%)

The second most selected method is via social media (18%).

RN/RM and Army online surveys also include the option of “I do not currently receive any communication”, selected by 58% and 46% of spouses respectively.

## Spouses were asked how they would prefer the Service to communicate with them; email remains the most preferred option

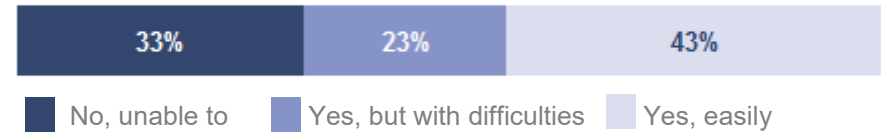
The top three methods selected as either first or second preference are:



One in ten spouses selected “I do not wish to receive any communication” as their 1st or 2nd preference.

## Of those who required access to their local base, a third were unable to do so

% able to access facilities on their local base <sup>1</sup>

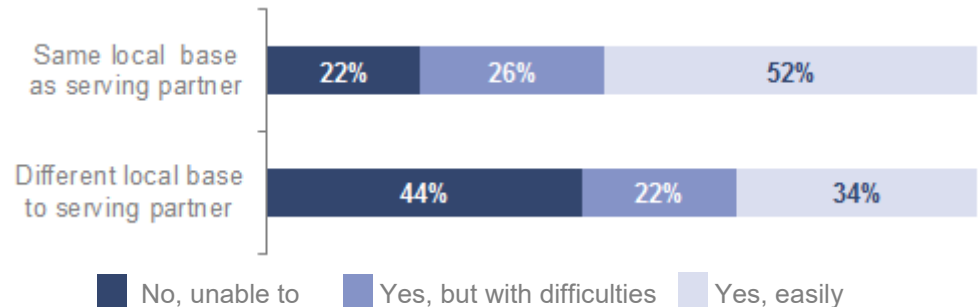


The proportion unable to access facilities has improved from the 38% reported in 2022. Just over four in ten (43%) were easily able to access their local base.

RN/RM spouses are less able to access their local base than their counterparts in other Services. This may be due, in part, to the lower proportion of RN/RM spouses living with their Serving partner and hence fewer sharing the same local base as their partner.

## Of those who required access, spouses with the same local base as their serving partner were more able to access it

% able to access facilities on their local base <sup>2</sup>



Ability to access their local base has improved since last year for those with the same local base as their partner. However, there has been no change in ability to access facilities amongst those with a different local base to their partner.

<sup>1</sup> SUBSET: Spouses who required access to their local base (50%).

<sup>2</sup> SUBSET: Spouses who required access and have the same local base as their serving partner (27%) compared to those who required access but have a different local base (18%).

## Section 8 - Deployment

Section 8 looks at spouses' views on the length and frequency of operational tours. This section also looks at their experiences of the support and information services available to them before, during and after their spouse's deployments.

During 2014 the UK Armed Forces reduced its military presence in Afghanistan from over 5,000 personnel to less than 500. Since then, deployments have been more dispersed over a wider range of locations. See the [MOD Annual Report and Accounts](#) for more information.

### Nearly a quarter of spouses feel that the frequency of operational tours is “too often”

Views on the frequency of operational tours



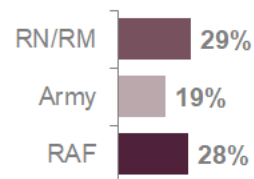
The proportion of spouses who feel that the frequency of operational tours is “too often” fell to 17% in 2021. This has increased over the past two years and is now back in line with the 2020 levels.

#### AFCAS 2023 comparison

In comparison to their spouses, 16% of married Service personnel feel they deploy “too often” while 23% feel their deployments are “not often enough”.

### RN/RM and RAF spouses are more likely to feel that the frequency of operational tours is “too often” than Army spouses

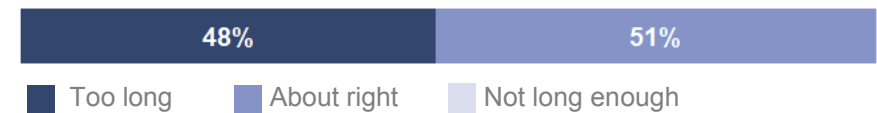
% feel frequency operational tours is too often



More Other Rank spouses feel the frequency of operational tours is “too often” (26%) than Officer spouses (16%).

### Nearly half of spouses report that the length of operational tours is “too long”, unchanged since 2020

Views on the length of operational tours<sup>1</sup>



More Other Rank spouses feel the length of operational tours is “too long” (50%) than Officer spouses (41%).

#### AFCAS 2023 comparison

Fewer married Service personnel felt the length of their tours was “too long” (16%) compared to their partners.

### Nearly three in eight spouses (37%) do not know where to go for welfare support and information whilst their spouse is on an operational tour

Although unchanged since last year, this is above all reported results prior to 2022. Nearly six in ten (58%) do know where to go for welfare support and information whilst their spouse is on an operational tour.

### RN/RM spouses are less likely to know where to go for welfare support and information than other Service spouses

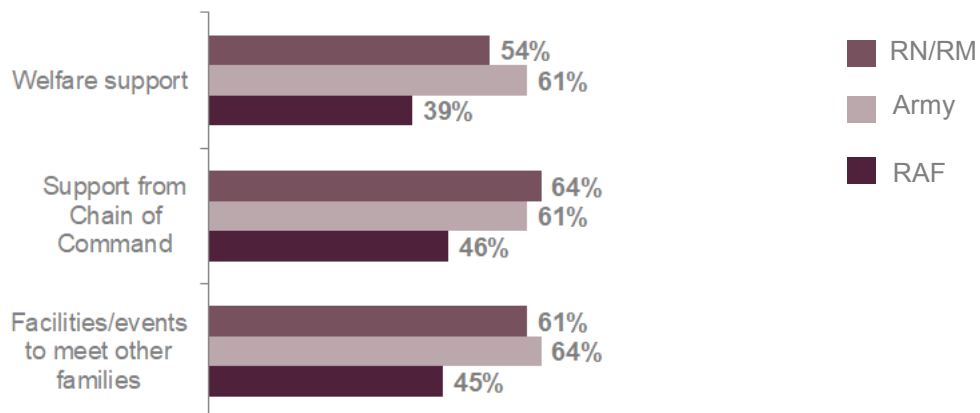
% spouses who know where to go for welfare support and information whilst their partner is on an operational tour



<sup>1</sup> SUBSET: Those whose spouse has been deployed within the past two years (43%).

## RAF spouses are less likely to make use of Service-provided support before, during and after their partner's deployment than RN/RM or Army spouses

% used support during partner's deployment <sup>1,2</sup>



Nearly seven in eight spouses (87%) make use of lines of communication with their partner during deployment; this remains the most used support service.

Use of many aspects of support has fallen compared to 2016/2017 amongst Army families. For example, 73% of Army families said they used welfare support before their partner's deployment in 2016. In 2023 this has fallen to 63%.

[AFCAS 2023](#) reports a much lower proportion of RAF personnel deployed as part of a unit on their last deployment (33%) than the other Services (ranging from 70% for the Army to 82% for the Royal Navy).

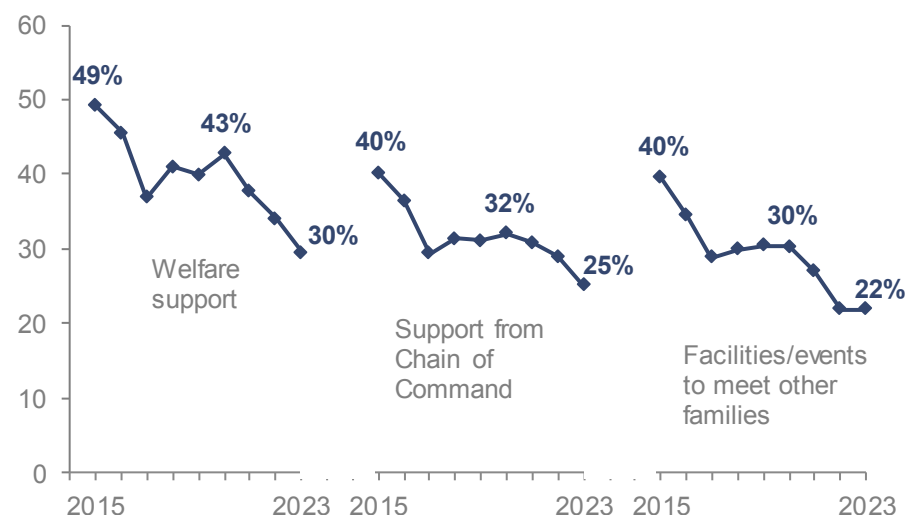
AFCAS also shows a decrease in the proportion of Army personnel deployed as part of a unit, falling from 79% in 2016 to 70% in 2023. These differences may contribute to some of the results shown here.

<sup>1</sup> SUBSET: Those whose spouse has been deployed within the past two years (43%).

<sup>2</sup> USE is derived by summing responses with a valid satisfaction level who did NOT tick the "Did not use" response option.

## Although unchanged this year, satisfaction with Service-provided support during deployment has fallen below levels reported in 2020

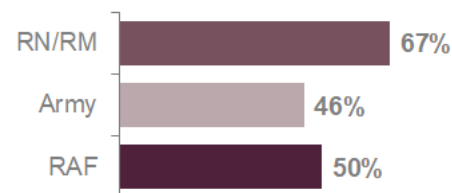
% satisfied with aspects of support during their spouse's deployment<sup>1</sup>



Between 2015 and 2017, satisfaction with all types of support (except lines of communication) fell sharply. Levels of satisfaction never recovered from these decreases and many have fallen again since 2020.

## RN/RM spouses report higher levels of dissatisfaction with facilities/events to meet other families before, during and after their partner's deployment

% dissatisfied with facilities/event to meet other families during their partner's deployment<sup>1</sup>



RN/RM spouses are also more dissatisfied with welfare support before and during their partner's deployment than other Service spouses.

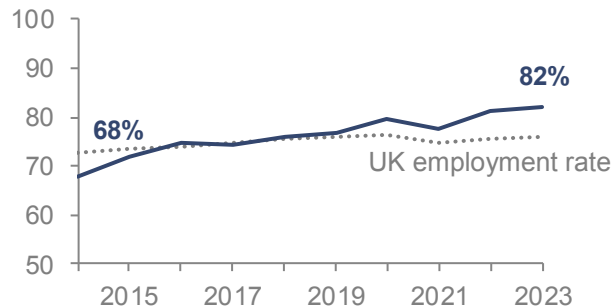


## Section 9 - Employment

Section 9 provides information on employment status, experiences of looking for a job and job satisfaction. It also covers the experiences of families who accompanied their spouse overseas.

### Although unchanged this year, the employment rate for Service spouses follows an increasing trend

% spouses employed

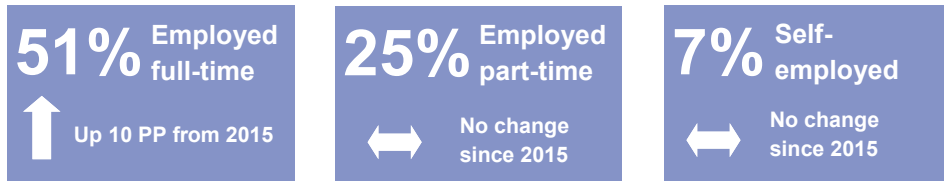


#### National comparison

The [UK employment rate](#) for all those aged 16-64 is 76%.

The UK employment rate has increased over the same time period but not as sharply as the increase for Service spouses. There are now 82% of Service spouses employed. This is slightly lower for Army Other Rank spouses (78%).

### Spouse employment by type:



PP = Percentage Point

### Those living outside the UK are less likely to be in employment

Less than half (47%) of spouses living outside the UK are employed, this compares to over 80% for those living in UK locations. Spouses living outside the UK are less likely to be in full-time employment (23%) and more likely to be “not employed—seeking employment” (23%) than those living in the UK.

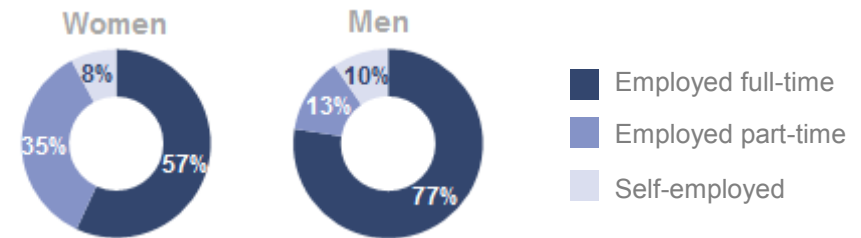
<sup>1</sup> Employed refers to those in full-time, part-time or self-employment

### Employment differs by gender

The employment rate for female Service spouses (aged 16-64) is 81% compared to 92% for male spouses. However, this difference narrows and is no longer statistically significant when excluding dual-serving spouses.

Of those in employment, a much higher proportion of women are employed part-time than men. Gender differences are still apparent after excluding dual-serving spouses.

% by employment type (excluding dual-serving spouses)<sup>2</sup>



#### National comparison

[UK employment rates](#) (aged 16-64) differ by gender with 72% of women being employed compared to 80% of men.

Of UK women in [employment](#), approximately 60% work full-time and about a third work part-time. This compares to around 75% and 10% respectively for UK men in employment.

### Those in full-time employment are more satisfied that their qualifications match their job (76%) than those employed part-time (61%)<sup>3</sup>

There are similar differences between satisfaction levels with their job overall and that their job matches their skills and experience. Self-employed spouses are also more satisfied than those employed part-time.

<sup>2</sup> SUBSET: Those aged 16-64 in employment but NOT dual serving (71%)

<sup>3</sup> SUBSET: Those in full-time employment (51%) and those in part-time employment (25%)

## About three in eight spouses looked for a job in the past year



This is largely unchanged since 2015. There was a decrease in 2021, most likely due to the pandemic.

## Of the 38% of spouses who looked for a job, about five-eighths (63%) experienced difficulties finding suitable employment

Although unchanged since 2018, this is lower than all levels reported prior to this. Of those who looked for a job, Army Other Rank spouses were more likely to experience difficulties (70%) than those in the other Services.

### Top reasons cited by those who experienced difficulties:

**53%** Having a spouse who is often away<sup>1</sup>

**50%** Partner unable to assist with care responsibilities<sup>1</sup>

**48%** Extended family live too far away to assist with childcare<sup>1</sup>

The top reasons differ little by Service or Rank.

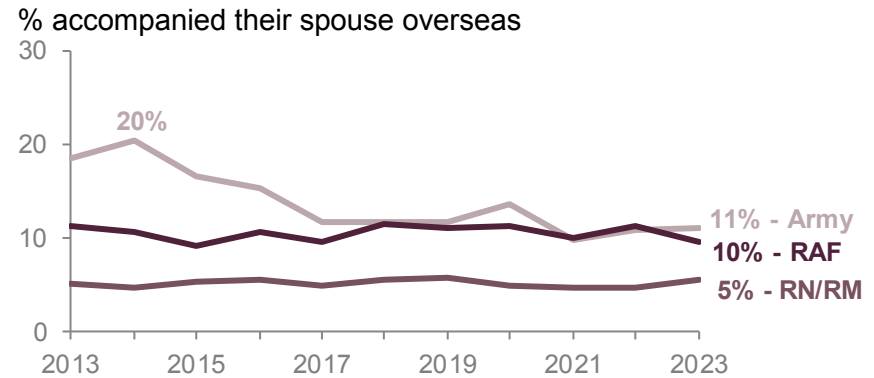
“Being overseas with my spouse” was the most common difficulty (82%) for those living outside of the UK.

## Three in five spouses would use courses to help them find or change employment if the MOD offered them, unchanged since 2021

A higher proportion of Army Other Rank spouses said they would use the courses (65%) than RN/RM or RAF Other Rank spouses (59% and 58% respectively). Those living overseas are more likely to take up the courses (74%) than those living in England (59%).

<sup>1</sup> SUBSET: Those who experienced difficulties finding suitable employment (24%).

## One in ten spouses accompanied their partner overseas in the past year, although this differs by Service



RN/RM spouses are less likely to accompany their partner overseas than Army or RAF spouses. This reflects the lower proportion of RN/RM personnel who are posted to overseas locations where it is possible to be accompanied by their spouse.

The proportion of Army spouses accompanying their partner overseas fell from a peak of 20% in 2014 to 12% in 2017. Since then, the proportion of spouses accompanying has remained largely stable for each of the Services.

Of the 8% of spouses living outside the UK, over three-quarters (77%) had accompanied their partner overseas in the past year.

## Of those who accompanied their partner overseas in the past year<sup>2</sup>, just under half (47%) were unable to find employment

This has increased by 13 percentage points since last year and is the highest level reported since this question was first asked in 2015. This change is largely driven by Army spouses. Free text analysis identified several difficulties finding employment overseas such as Brexit, diplomatic status and qualifications not being recognised.

A quarter (25%) of families were unable to access Service-provided information before moving overseas and a further 39% experienced difficulties accessing information, largely unchanged since 2020.

<sup>2</sup> SUBSET: Those who accompanied their partner on an overseas assignment over the past year (10%).

## Section 10 - Healthcare

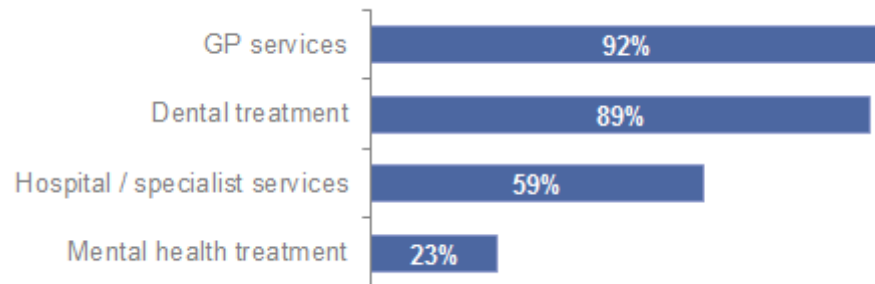
Section 10 looks at access to healthcare services for Service families.

### Data Quality Note

The survey aims to measure healthcare provisions for family members not in the Armed Forces. This means, dual-serving families without children, were not asked these questions.

### The proportion of families requiring access differs by type of healthcare

% required access this year



The majority of Service families required access to GP services and dental treatment over the past year.

In 2021, the requirement for all types of healthcare treatment decreased, due, at least in part, to the COVID-19 pandemic.

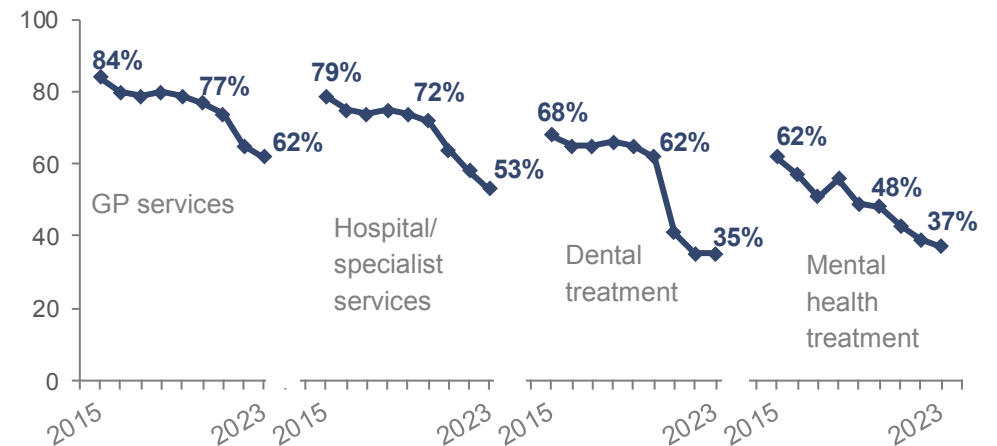
The proportion of families requiring dental treatment has increased over the past two years returning to 2020 levels. The need for dental treatment has increased since 2018 (86%).

Although unchanged this year, mental health requirement has been following an upward trend since 2015, when this question was first asked. There was a dip in requirement in 2021, possibly due to COVID-19.

In accordance with the [Armed Forces Covenant](#), the Armed Forces community should enjoy the same standard of, and access to, healthcare as that received by any other UK citizen in the area they live.

### Of those requiring access, the proportion of families able to access healthcare without difficulties has fallen over time

% able to access each healthcare service without difficulty<sup>1</sup>



The proportions of families able to access healthcare without difficulties have decreased significantly since 2015 and fell sharply between 2020 and 2022. The impact of COVID-19 lockdowns on healthcare provision are likely to have contributed to these changes.

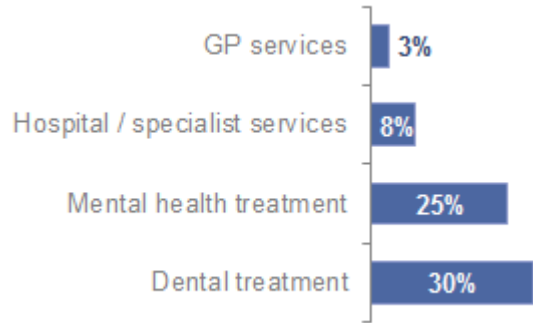
Levels are unchanged this year for most types of healthcare, but the proportion able to access hospital/specialist services without difficulty has fallen further from 58% in 2022 to 53% in 2023.

A higher proportion of families living overseas were able to access dental treatment without difficulty (62%) than families living in the UK.

<sup>1</sup>SUBSET: Those who required each healthcare treatment: GP services (92%), hospital/specialist services (59%), dental treatment (89%) and mental health treatment (23%).

**Of those who required treatment, a quarter of families were unable to access mental health treatment and three in ten were unable to access dental treatment**

% unable to access each healthcare service <sup>1</sup>



The proportion of families unable to access dental treatment has decreased from the 34% reported last year but remains far above the 13% reported in 2020, pre COVID-19. A quarter of families are unable to access mental health treatment, considerably more than the 17% reported in 2020.

**Of those families who required access to healthcare services, fewer feel their access has been affected by COVID-19 compared to 2021<sup>2</sup>**

To better understand the continued impact of COVID-19, online respondents were asked about the effect on access to healthcare treatment. In 2021, 72% felt their access to dental treatment had been affected by COVID-19, this has fallen to 43% this year. Those who felt their access to other healthcare treatments was affected by COVID-19 has also fallen from around a half in 2021 to just over a third in 2023.

**A small proportion of families moved whilst undergoing healthcare treatments**

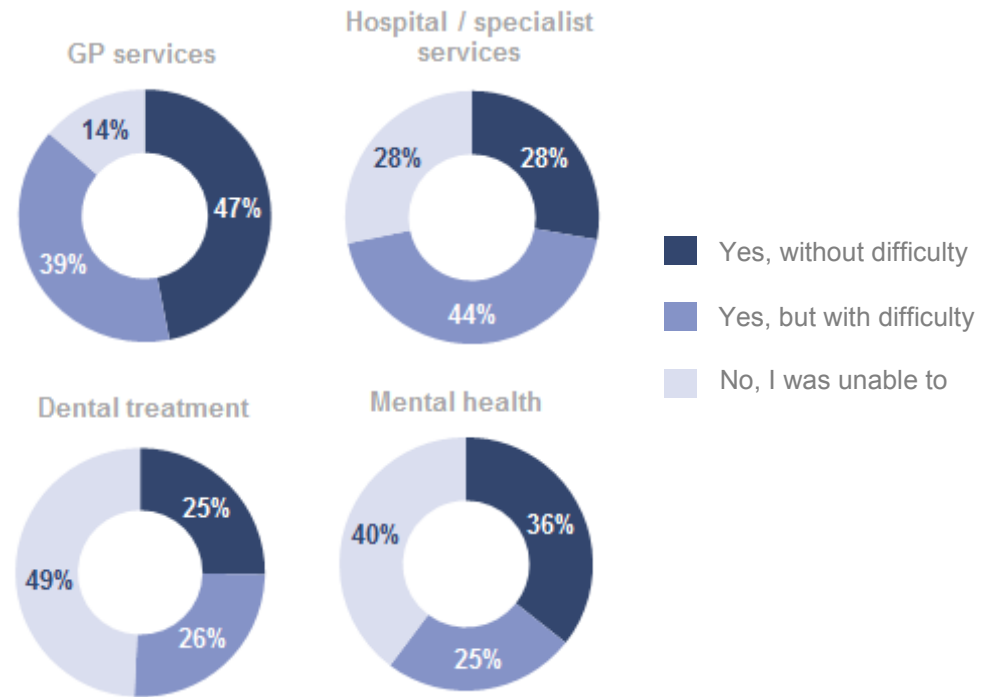
This ranges from 3% who moved whilst undergoing mental health treatment to 10% who moved whilst undergoing treatment with their GP.

<sup>1</sup> SUBSET: Those who required each healthcare treatment: GP services (92%), hospital/specialist services (59%), dental treatment (89%) and mental health treatment (23%).

<sup>2</sup> SUBSET: Those who responded online and required healthcare treatment: dental treatment (67%), GP services (68%), mental health treatment (17%), hospital/specialist services (44%).

**Less than half of families who moved whilst undergoing treatment were able to continue their treatment without difficulty**

% families by ability to continue healthcare treatment following a move <sup>3</sup>



**The proportion of families able to continue hospital/specialist services without difficulties has fallen from 42% in 2022 to 28% this year, the lowest reported level to date**

Although unchanged this year, the proportions of families able to continue dental treatment or GP Services without difficulties have fallen since 2020 from 47% and 62% to 25% and 47% this year.

**A small proportion of families (7%) moved whilst on a waiting list for an operation or consultant appointment**

Of these families, 48% felt their waiting time had increased as a result of moving compared to 24% who felt it had not, similar to previous years.

<sup>3</sup> SUBSET: Those who moved whilst undergoing healthcare treatment: GP services (10%), dental treatment (7%), hospital/specialist services (8%) and mental health treatment (3%).

# Section 11 - Housing

Section 11 covers home ownership and the reasons for not owning a home. It also looks at the types of accommodation spouses live in during the working week, and how this compares to where they would prefer to live. It also reports on levels of satisfaction with Service Family Accommodation (SFA) and Substitute Service Family Accommodation (SSFA).

## Three-fifths of families (60%) own their own home

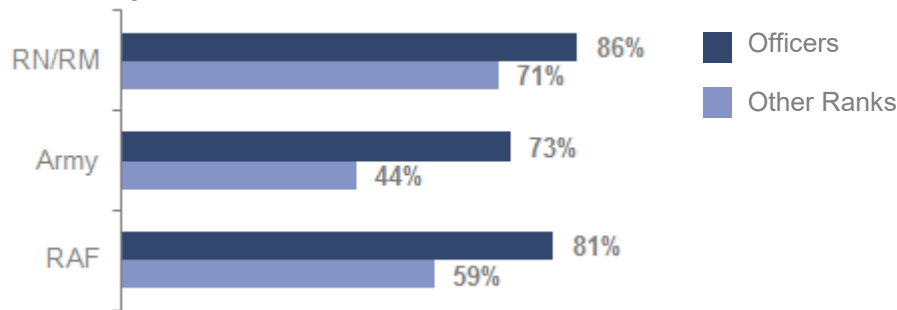
This is unchanged since 2014.

### National Comparison

Although not directly comparable, the latest [English Housing Survey](#) reports that 64% of households in England were owner occupied in 2021-2022.

## Home ownership differs greatly by Rank and Service

% owning their own home



## Two in five families (40%) do not own a home at the moment

Of these families, the top reasons for not owning a home are:

- 59%** Cannot afford to buy a suitable home at the moment
- 39%** Living in Service accommodation is better suited to families' needs
- 31%** Want to be able to move with their spouse when they are posted
- 27%** Do not want to buy a home where they are currently located

A higher proportion of Other Rank families (62%) cited affordability as a reason for non-homeownership than Officer families (44%).

## Around three in eight families (38%) live in a privately owned home during the working week, unchanged since 2018



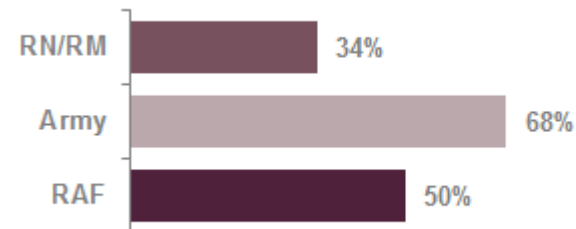
However, this is above all levels reported prior to 2018.

RN/RM families are more likely to live in a privately owned home (59%), followed by RAF (44%) and then Army families (28%).

Officer families are more likely to live in their own home (46%) than Other Rank families (34%).

## Just under three-fifths of families (57%) live in Service Family Accommodation (SFA) during the working week, although this differs by Service

% living in SFA

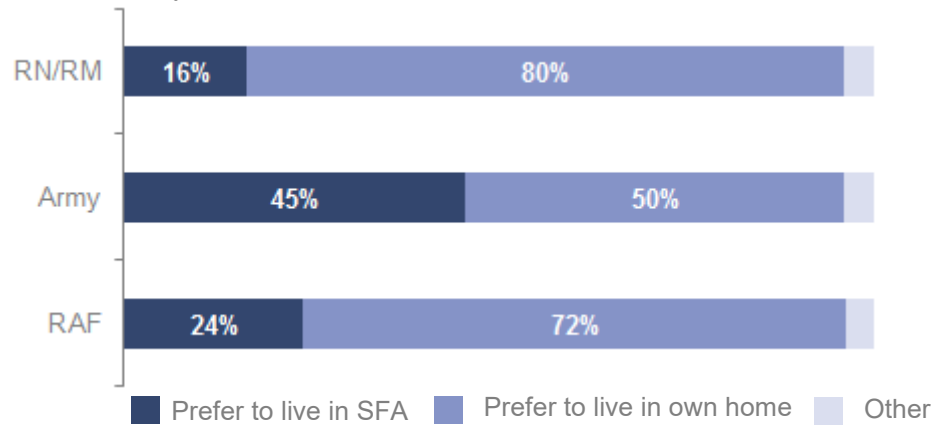


Other Rank families are more likely to live in SFA (62%) than Officer families (46%). This is largely driven by Army and RAF families as there is little difference between Officer and Other Rank RN/RM families.

Families living outside the UK are more likely to live in SFA (74%) than those living in England (58%).

## Accommodation preferences differ by Service

% families by accommodation preference



A higher proportion of Army families express a preference for SFA than RN/RM or RAF families.

### Just under seven in ten families (69%) are living in their preferred type of accommodation

Most of the remainder (26%), are not currently living in a privately owned home but would prefer to be. These figures are largely stable over time.

### Of those families living in SFA/SSFA, nearly three-quarters (74%) are now dissatisfied with the response to requests for maintenance/repair work<sup>1</sup>

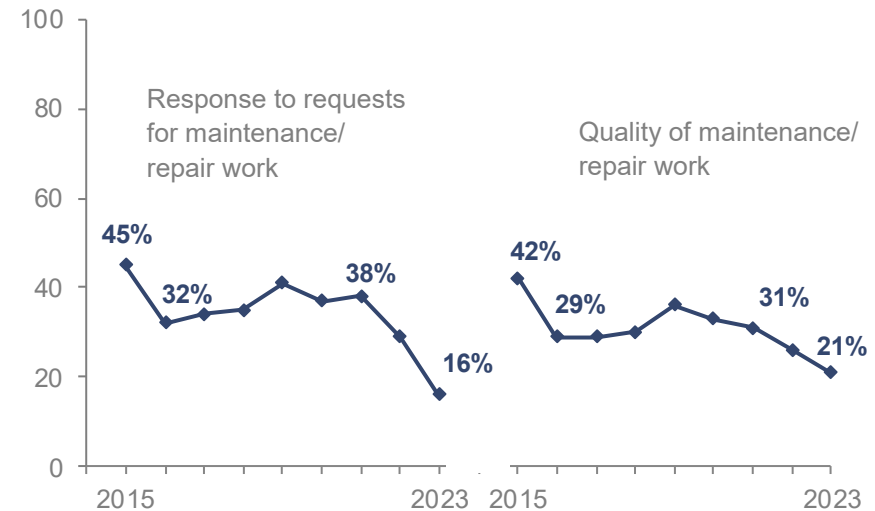
This has risen steeply from the 55% reported last year. The proportion of families dissatisfied with the quality of maintenance/repair work has also increased from 54% in 2022 to 65% this year. These are the highest levels of dissatisfaction reported since these questions were first asked in 2015.

The level of dissatisfaction with the overall standard of SFA/SSFA has also increased this year; by seven percentage points to 39%. This is also the highest level of dissatisfaction reported. Correspondingly, satisfaction with the overall standard of SFA/SSFA has fallen seven percentage points this year to 44%.

<sup>1</sup> Subset: Those who live in SFA/SSFA (59%).

## Satisfaction with aspects of maintenance/repair of SFA/SSFA has fallen over the past two years to the lowest levels ever reported

% satisfied with aspects of SFA/SSFA<sup>1</sup>



Satisfaction with other aspects of SFA/SSFA, such as the speed and fairness of accommodation allocation, has fallen since 2021.

Satisfaction with most aspects of SFA/SSFA fell markedly in 2016 due, in part, to underperformance by the National Housing Prime contractor and changes to the SFA charging method in April 2016.

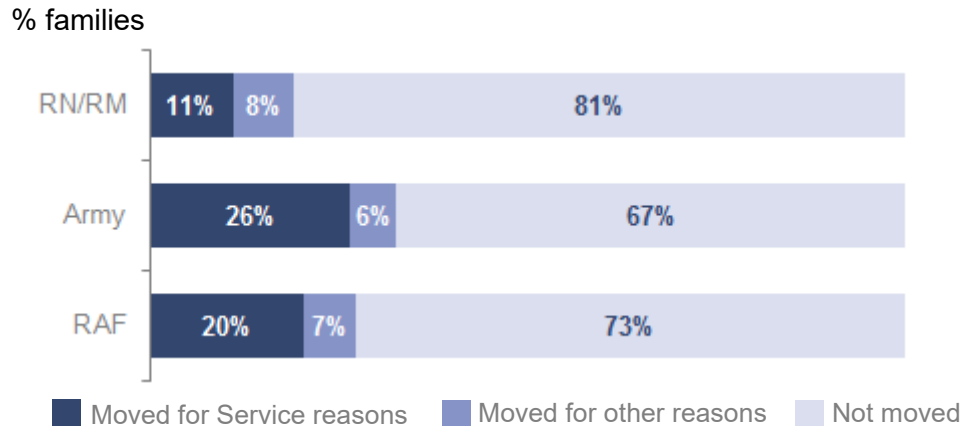
A new contract was awarded to three suppliers in April 2022 to provide services to SFA homes in the UK on behalf of the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO). Pinnacle Group provide National Accommodation Management Services whilst Amey and Vivo provide Regional Accommodation Management Services. DIO also reported a [backlog for repairs and maintenance](#) in December 2022. These factors may have had some impact on this year's results.

Overseas families are more satisfied with most aspects of SFA/SSFA than families living in England. For example, 82% of overseas families living in SFA/SSFA are satisfied with the value for money of their accommodation compared to 56% of families living in England.

## Section 12 - Impact of Mobility

Section 12 looks at the impact of moving location on the families of Service personnel. It looks again at some of the questions from the previous sections and compares the responses of those who moved for Service reasons with those who have not moved over the last 12 months. In this section, “moved” refers to those who have moved for Service reasons. **This section compares the 22% of families who moved for Service reasons with the 71% of families who did not move.**

**Just over one in five Service families moved for Service reasons over the past year, although this differs by Service**



Army families are the most likely to move for Service reasons, followed by RAF and then RN/RM families.

Levels of mobility have been largely stable since 2017. There was an increase in 2020, driven by Army families, due to large numbers of families moving from Germany to the UK as part of the [Army Basing Programme](#).

Families who moved are more negative about the number of house moves (51%) than families who did not move (28%).

**Families who moved are more likely to live with their Serving spouse (89%) than families who did not move (73%)**

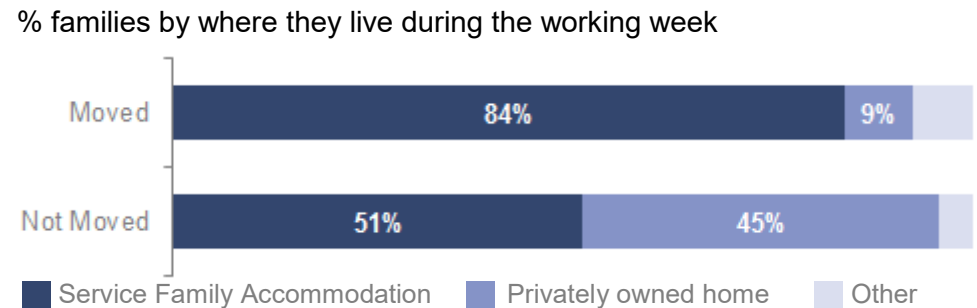
This is to be expected as those who move for Service reasons are likely to be accompanying their Serving partner.

Families who moved were less likely to experience separation of six months or more (5%) than families who did not move (12%).

**Spouses who moved are less likely to own a home (45%) than those who did not move (63%)**

Families who moved feel more negative about the prospects of owning a home (39%) than those who did not move (25%).

**The majority of spouses who moved live in Service Family Accommodation (SFA) during the working week**



This may partly explain why those who moved feel more positive about Service provided facilities (39%) than those who did not move (26%).

**Families who moved express more of a preference for SFA (53%) than families who did not move (30%)**

About two-fifths of families who moved (41%) would prefer to live in their own home compared to 66% of those who did not move.

Fewer families who moved are living in their preferred type of accommodation (59%) compared to families who did not move (72%). Just over a third of families who moved (34%) are not living in their own home but would prefer to be compared to 23% of families who did not move.

## Those who moved are less likely to be employed than those who did not move

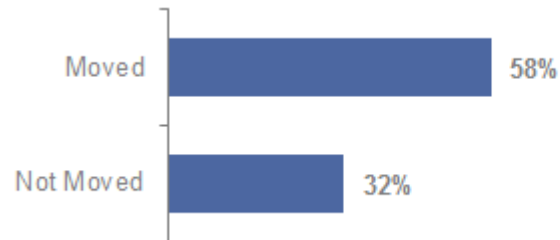
% employed<sup>1</sup>



This is driven by the difference in the proportion of spouses employed full-time (moved: 44%, not moved: 53%). Of those in full-time employment<sup>2</sup>, spouses who moved are less satisfied that their job matches their skills and experience (70%) than those who did not move (80%).

## Spouses who moved are more likely to have looked for a job over the past year than those who did not move

% looked for a job in the past year



## These differences may be contributing factors to those who moved feeling more negative about the effect on their career

% feel negative about effect of Service life on their career



<sup>1</sup> Employed refers to those in full-time, part-time or self employment

<sup>2</sup> SUBSET: Those in full-time employment (Moved:10% Not moved: 38%)

## Families who moved were less able to access dental treatment than those who did not move

% unable to access dental treatment if required<sup>3</sup>



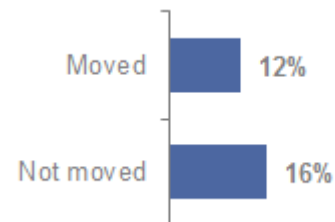
### Access to NHS dentist

The [2022 dental statistics](#) stated “respondents who had not been to the practice before were much less successful in getting an NHS dental appointment.”

Of those who required hospital or specialist services<sup>4</sup>, those who moved were less able to access them without difficulties (46%) than those who did not move (56%).

## Those who moved are less likely to rate their happiness wellbeing measure as very high than those who did not move

% rating how happy they felt yesterday as very high (9 or 10 out of 10)



Those who moved also have slightly lower average scores for three of the four [well-being measures](#) than those who did not move; satisfaction with their life nowadays, how happy they felt yesterday and the extent they feel the things they do in their life are worthwhile.

<sup>3</sup> SUBSET: Those who required dental treatment (Moved:18% Not moved:62%)

<sup>4</sup> SUBSET: Those who required hospital or specialist services (Moved:11% Not moved:42%)



**A lower proportion of families who moved have children (74%) compared to those who did not move (81%)**

Fewer families who moved have school age children (51%) compared to families who did not move (59%).

**Of those with children, families who moved are more likely to require early years (0-4) childcare than those who did not move**

% families requiring early years childcare<sup>1</sup>



Those who moved and required early years childcare<sup>2</sup>, are less satisfied with access, quality and opening hours of early years childcare than those who did not move.

There is no difference in requirement for childcare for school age children. However, those who moved are less satisfied with the quality of childcare for school age children than those who did not move.

**Of those with children, 52% of families who moved are unable to access any free, informal childcare<sup>3</sup>**

This differs to the 42% reported by families with children who did not move.

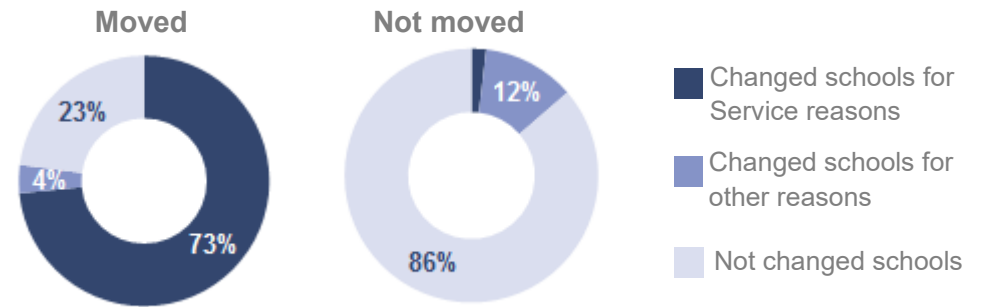
**Families with school age children who moved, are less likely to have a child at a state school (69%) than those who did not move (84%)<sup>4</sup>**

Families with school age children who moved, are more likely to have a child at an independent boarding school (16%) than those who did not move (7%). As a result, they are also more likely to be in receipt of [Continuity of Education Allowance](#) (CEA) (19% compared to 8%).

<sup>1</sup> SUBSET: Those with children (Moved:16% Not moved:57%)  
<sup>2</sup> SUBSET: Those requiring early years childcare (Moved:6% Not moved:17%)  
<sup>3</sup> Free informal childcare such as grandparents, extended family, friends etc.  
<sup>4</sup> SUBSET: Those with school age children (Moved:11% Not moved:42%)

**Of families who moved and had school age children, just over seven in ten (73%) had a child change schools for Service reasons compared to just 2% for those who did not move**

% families with child who changed school<sup>4</sup>

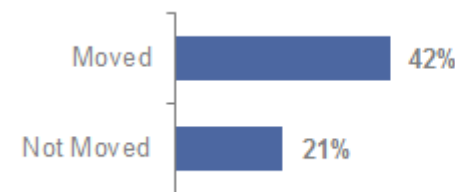


Of those families who moved and had a child who changed school<sup>5</sup>, over half (55%) were able to apply within the timeframe for the normal point of entry (such as Reception or Year 7). This compares to 81% for families who did not move and had a child change school.

Of those families who moved and applied for a place at a state school,<sup>6</sup> 73% were allocated their first choice; 76% were happy with their child's allocation. Similar proportions were reported for those who did not move.

**Families with school age children who moved, were more likely to experience difficulties with their children's schooling than those who did not move**

% experienced difficulties with their children's schooling<sup>4</sup>



This difference is partly due to the larger proportion of children changing school for Service reasons amongst families who have moved.

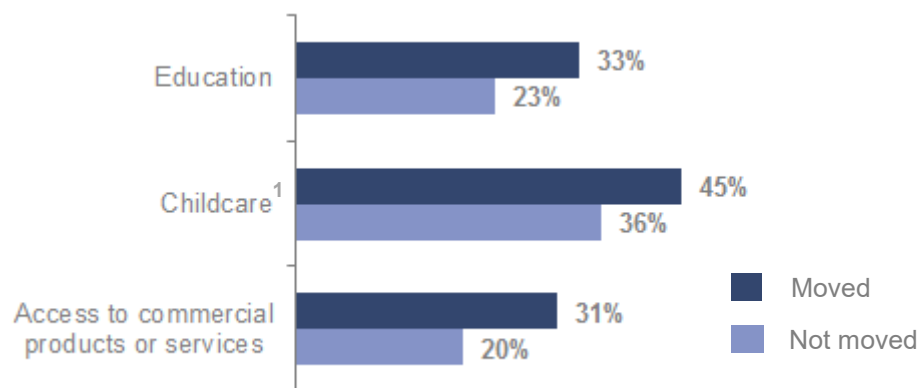
<sup>5</sup> SUBSET: Those with a child who changed schools (Moved:9% Not moved: 6%)  
<sup>6</sup> SUBSET: Those who applied for a place at a State school (Moved:7% Not moved: 4%)

Moving home can cause upheaval for Service families, such as finding employment or changing their child’s school. The previous pages show those who moved are less likely to be employed, less likely to own a home and are more likely to have difficulties with their children’s education and are less satisfied with some aspects of childcare.

These difficulties are likely to impact on attitudes, and may explain why those who moved feel more negative about some aspects of Service family life such as the effect on their career and the prospects of buying a home.

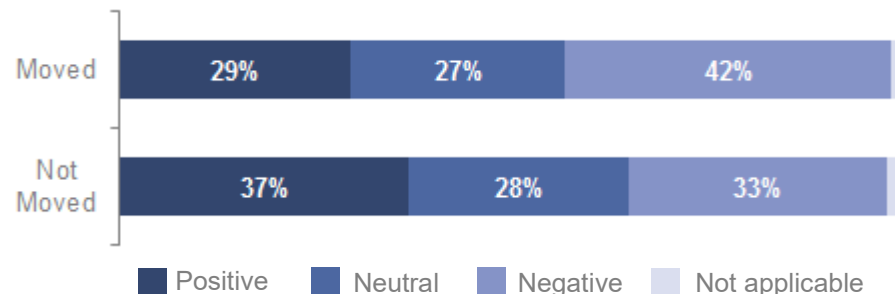
### Families who moved feel more disadvantaged than those who did not move about some aspects of family life

% feeling disadvantaged about...



### Families who moved also feel less positive and more negative about family income than those who did not move

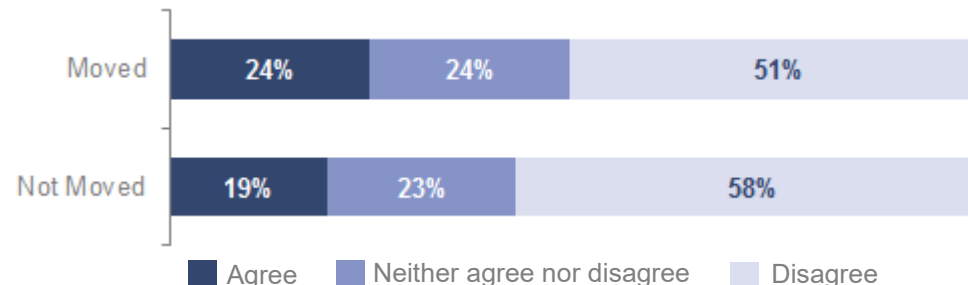
% feeling positive/negative about family income



<sup>1</sup> SUBSET: Those with children (Moved: 16%, Not moved 57%)

### However, families who moved are more likely to feel part of the wider Service community than those who did not move

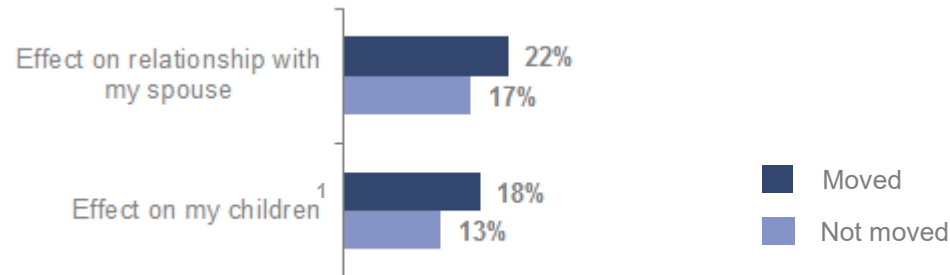
% agree/disagree they feel part of the wider Service community



Families who moved also feel more positive about knowing other military families and community support for their family. This sense of community and being more likely to live with their partner may contribute to other, more positive views on Service family life

### Those who moved feel more positive about some aspects of Service family life than those who did not move

% feeling positive about...



Families who moved also feel more advantaged about family life (14%) and more valued (17%) than those who did not move (10% and 12% respectively). Those who moved are also more likely to agree their family benefits from being a Service family (38%) than those who did not move (31%). However, there is no difference between levels of satisfaction with the quality of life as a Service family.

Families who moved are less likely to say they would feel happier if their partner left the Service (32%) than those who did not move (38%).

# Methodology

---

## 1. Target Population

The target population for FamCAS 2023 was the spouses/civil partners of all trained UK Regular Armed Forces personnel including Gurkhas but excluding Special Forces and those deployed or attending training courses at the time the survey sample was drawn from the Joint Personnel Administration system.

## 2. The survey

FamCAS is distributed in electronic format for all three Services and a paper version is available for the Army. The RN/RM has run an online survey for several years and the Army and RAF introduced an online survey in 2016. In 2020 the RN/RM decided to remove the paper option, running an online only Families survey. For a small number of questions this change in methodology may have impacted on results. Where this is the case, footnotes or discontinuities are included in the reference tables.

This year, the RAF removed the paper option for their Families survey. In 2022, just 21% of RAF respondents used the paper survey option. As a result of this, together with an increase in sample size and well organised communications plan, the number of responses increased compared to last year with the response rate only falling by one percentage point. There was no discernible impact on RAF results due to this change in methodology.

E-mail invites to the online questionnaire are sent to Service personnel who are asked to forward the invite onto their spouse/civil partner. The RAF also distribute postcard invites to the Serving person to pass on. Only the Army distribute paper questionnaires. Data collection ran from late January 2023 to early May 2023, a relatively long period which allows time for Service personnel to pass on the survey to their spouse/civil partner as some may be living separately due to postings/assignments.

The survey is anonymous. Individual level data are only available to a small group of civilian researchers working on the analysis and report production and the data does not contain any identifier which can be linked back to the Service person or their spouse/civil partner.

## 3. The sample and respondents

The total FamCAS 2023 sample consisted of 26,792 personnel. FamCAS questionnaires were issued to Service personnel selected under a (disproportionate) stratified simple random sampling process. Samples were designed to provide sufficient responses to yield estimates with a reasonable margin of error under cost constraints. Due to low expected response rates most strata are a complete census. Table A1, below, shows the strata we can select a sample from and the corresponding level of precision<sup>1</sup> we aim for.

---

<sup>1</sup> Precision is based on half of a 95% confidence interval width, often referred to as the margin of error.

**Table A1: Precision aimed for by strata**

Strata	Precision
RN Officer England	5%
RN OR6-9 England	5%
Army Officer England	5%
Army OR6-9 England	5%
Army OR1-4 England	5%
RAF Officer England	5%
RAF OR6-9 England	5%
RAF OR1-4 England	5%

Based on 2021 and 2022 response rates this sample design was expected to yield precisions of around 3% for each Service and 4% to 5% for each Rank group by Service. Despite conducting a census for Royal Navy OR1-4 and for all Royal Marines the margin of error for these groups are expected to be between 8% and 16%. Margins of error for each question can be found in reference tables published alongside this report on the [FamCAS](#) website.

4,739 responses were used in the FamCAS 2023 analysis, giving an overall response rate of 18%. The table below contains detailed information on the number of questionnaires issued and received along with corresponding response rates.

**Table A2: Response rates by Service and rank group**

		Sample size	Surveys returned	2023 response rate	2022 response rate	2021 response rate	2020 response rate
<b>Royal Navy</b>	Officers	2 305	436	19%	22%	30%	23%
	Ratings	5 189	539	10%	11%	18%	12%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>7 494</b>	<b>975</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Royal Marines</b>	Officers	339	52	15%	18%	24%	18%
	Marines	1 170	98	8%	8%	12%	8%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1 509</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Army</b>	Officers	1 920	708	37%	38%	46%	47%
	Ranks	7 400	1 196	16%	18%	24%	23%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>9 320</b>	<b>1 904</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>28%</b>
<b>Royal Air Force</b>	Officers	2 192	594	27%	31%	33%	34%
	Ranks	6 277	1 116	18%	17%	23%	22%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>8 469</b>	<b>1 710</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>All Services</b>	Officers	6 756	1 790	26%	29%	35%	32%
	Ranks	20 036	2 949	15%	15%	21%	19%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>26 792</b>	<b>4 739</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>22%</b>

Note that percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole % for ease of interpretation.

#### 4. Weighting methodology and non-response

Due to the sample design and the differences in prevalence of non-response between the Service, rank and location strata, the distribution of characteristics amongst the FamCAS respondents did not reflect the distribution in the whole Armed Forces spouse/civil partner population. Response rates

tend to vary by strata; therefore, responses are weighted by Service, rank and broad location to correct for the bias caused by over or under-representation.

The weights were calculated simply by:

Population size within weighting class (p)

---

Number of responses within weighting class (r)

Weighting in this way assumes missing data are missing at random (MAR) only within weighting classes. This means we assume that within a single weighting class the views of non-respondents do not differ (on average) to the views of respondents.

The results for each respondent within each weighting class are multiplied by the weight for that class. This effectively scales up response to the population size. Classes with larger weights are less represented in the data and so need to be scaled up more.

**Table A3: Weightings used for FamCAS 2023 analysis**

Weighting Class	Weighting Applied	Weighting Class	Weighting Applied	Weighting Class	Weighting Applied
RM_OF1+_Eng	10.75	Army_OF1+_NI	6.00	RAF_OF1+_Cyp	4.94
RM_OF1+_Scot_NonUK	5.50	Army_OF1+_Scot	3.20	RAF_OF1+_NonUK	5.99
RM_OR1-4_Eng	21.62	Army_OF1+_Wales	3.84	RAF_OF1+_Scot	5.44
RM_OR3-9_NI_Scot_Wales	12.67	Army_OF1-4_Cyp	4.05	RAF_OF1-4_Eng	8.38
RM_OR6-9_Eng	13.44	Army_OF1-4_Eng	16.89	RAF_OF1-4_NI_Wales	8.53
RN_OF1+_NonUK	8.35	Army_OF1-4_Ger	3.13	RAF_OF5+_Eng	7.61
RN_OF1+_Scot	5.89	Army_OF1-4_NonUK	3.75	RAF_OR1-2_Eng	9.96
RN_OF1-4_Eng	7.48	Army_OF5+_Eng	13.72	RAF_OR1-4_Cyp_NonUK	6.63
RN_OF1-4_NI_Wales	8.44	Army_OF5+_NonUK	4.05	RAF_OR1-4_NI_Scot_Wales	9.08
RN_OF5+_Eng	7.34	Army_OR1-2_Eng	53.83	RAF_OR3-4_Eng	7.23
RN_OR1-2_Eng	25.25	Army_OR1-4_Cyp_Ger	10.52	RAF_OR6-9_Cyp	4.19
RN_OR1-4_Scot_Wales_NonUK	16.21	Army_OR1-4_NI	14.18	RAF_OR6-9_Eng	9.43
RN_OR3-4_Eng	13.72	Army_OR1-4_NonUK	43.30	RAF_OR6-9_NI_Wales	7.63
RN_OR6-9_Eng	9.16	Army_OR1-4_Scot	12.02	RAF_OR6-9_NonUK	6.91
RN_OR6-9_NI_Wales	6.64	Army_OR1-4_Wales	11.09	RAF_OR6-9_Scot	8.00
RN_OR6-9_NonUK	6.15	Army_OR3-4_Eng	23.71		
RN_OR6-9_Scot	10.70	Army_OR6-9_Cyp	4.30		
		Army_OR6-9_Eng	28.96		
		Army_OR6-9_Ger	4.24		
		Army_OR6-9_NI	9.50		
		Army_OR6-9_NonUK	5.35		
		Army_OR6-9_Scot	5.04		
		Army_OR6-9_Wales	6.97		

## 5. Analysis and statistical tests

Attitudinal questions in the questionnaires have generally been regrouped to assist in analysing results and to aid interpretation. For example, questions asked at a 5-point level (e.g. Very satisfied – Satisfied – Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied – Dissatisfied – Very dissatisfied) have been regrouped to a 3-point level (e.g. (Satisfied – Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied – Dissatisfied)).

Missing values, where respondents have not provided a response/valid response, or 'don't know' or 'not applicable' responses have not always been included in the analysis. If they have been excluded, then this will be detailed in table footnotes.

Some questions are filtered to exclude invalid responses. For example, questions about children's schooling will be subset to those respondents with school age children. These "subsets" are detailed

in table footnotes. As a result of these exclusions the unweighted counts (or 'n') will vary from question to question and these are shown within the reference tables published alongside this report on the [FamCAS](#) webpage.

Where applicable, Z tests at a 1% alpha level were used to test whether observed estimates were significantly different to estimates from previous surveys. A statistically significant difference means that there is enough evidence that the change observed is unlikely to be due to chance variation (less than a 1% probability that the difference is the result of chance alone).

## **6. Format of the reference tables (published separately to the report on the [FamCAS](#) webpage)**

Each reference table refers to a question asked in the survey and includes estimates of the proportion of the population by category. Each table is broken down by Service and by Officer/Other Rank with the total column referring to the Officers and Other Ranks results combined.

Excel tables are also available with additional breakdown of the spouse/civil partners broad location (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales & Non-UK), which are provided at Annex C.

Section 9 of Annex B provides a subset of tables that compare results of those who moved for Service reasons over the past year against those who did not move. These tables are broken down by Service.

## Glossary

Term	Description
AFCAS	The Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey.
Armed Forces Covenant	The Armed Forces Covenant defines the principles for ensuring that Armed Forces personnel are not disadvantaged in their access to public and commercial services as a result of their service. It also sets out that in some cases special treatment may be appropriate, for example for those that have given the most, such as the injured and the bereaved.
CEA	Continuity of education allowance. This is offered by the MOD to provide children with the continuity in their education.
Defence Board	The highest committee in the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and is responsible for the full range of Defence business, other than the conduct of operations.
HIVE	Service information hub which assists personnel in a wide variety of topics affecting their everyday Service and personal life
JPA	Joint Personnel Administration - JPA is the system used by the Armed Forces to deal with matters of pay, leave and other personal administrative tasks
Married	Refers to those married or in a civil partnership
Marines	RM personnel of NATO ranks OR1 to OR9
Ministry of Defence Research Ethics Committee (MODREC)	Ensures that all research involving human participants undertaken, funded, or sponsored by the MOD meets nationally and internationally accepted ethical standards
Missing at Random (MAR)	Statistical theory that states that those who did not respond to a question do not differ from those who did respond
Missing value(s)	Refers to the situation where a respondent has not submitted an answer or a valid answer to a question
MOD	Ministry of Defence
N/A	Not applicable
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
Non-response	Refers either to a person who although sampled and sent a questionnaire did not reply or to a respondent who did not reply to a question
OF	Officer of NATO rank designation ranking from '1' lowest to '10' highest
Officer(s)	All regular trained officers of NATO rank OF1 to OF10
Operational/Deployment Welfare Package	Measures taken to support the morale of Service personnel by making the fullest possible provision for their emotional and physical wellbeing whilst on operational deployment
OR	Other Ranks of NATO rank designation ranking from 'OR1' lowest to 'OR9' highest
Other Rank(s)	Other Ranks are members of the Royal Marines, Army and Royal Air Force who are not Officers. The equivalent group in the Royal Navy is known as "Ratings".
RAF	Royal Air Force
RM	Royal Marines
RN	Royal Navy
Service Accommodation	Any type of accommodation that includes 'SFA', 'SSFA', 'SLA', 'SSSA' and 'Onboard a ship or submarine'

<b>Term</b>	<b>Description</b>
Service(s)	Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Army and RAF
Service spouse	Within this report this term refers to the spouse or civil partner of a Regular trained member of the Armed Forces.
SFA	Service Family Accommodation
SLA	Single Living Accommodation
SNCO	Senior Non-Commissioned Officer (NATO ranks OR6 to OR9)
Soldiers	Army personnel of NATO ranks OR1 to OR9
Spouse	Within this report this refers to both spouses and civil partners
SSFA	Substitute Service Family Accommodation
SSSA	Substitute single Service Accommodation. Formerly Substitute Single Living Accommodation (SSLA)
Standard Error	A measure derived using weighting factors from the sample proportion and unweighted count in a sampling distribution and used as a benchmark in order to ascertain a range of values within which the true population proportion could lie
Statistically significant	Refers to the result of a statistical test in which there is evidence of a difference between estimates
Statistical tests	Refers to those tests which are carried out to see if any evidence exists for a change in response proportions from one year to another
Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR)	In the context of the Services, refers to a Review of what needed to be done to restructure and rescale the size of the Armed Forces to meet future Defence requirements of the UK's national security.
Trained strength	Trained Strength comprises military personnel who have completed Phase 1 and 2 training. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phase 1 Training includes all new entry training to provide basic military skills.</li> <li>• Phase 2 Training includes initial individual specialisation, sub-specialisation and technical training following Phase 1 training prior to joining the trained strength.</li> </ul>
Unit	A sub-organisation of the Service in which personnel are employed
Unweighted count	Refers to the actual number who provided a valid response to a question in the survey
Weighting (factors)	Refers to factors that are applied to the respondent data set by Service and rank group to make respondent Service rank groups representative of their population equivalents
Weighting class	Refers to those members of a specific rank group to whom a weighting factor is applied
X-Factor	Additional payment to Armed Forces personnel to compensate for differences in lifestyle, working conditions and expectations compared to civilian equivalents
z test	Statistical test based on a standardised distribution which allows comparison between years for populations of different sizes



## Further Information

---

### Contact Us

Defence Statistics welcomes feedback on our statistical products. If you have any comments or questions about this publication or about our statistics in general, you can contact us as follows:

Email: [Analysis-Publications@mod.gov.uk](mailto:Analysis-Publications@mod.gov.uk)

If you require information which is not available within this or other available publications, you may wish to submit a Request for Information under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000 to the Ministry of Defence. For more information, visit the [GOV.UK FOI webpage](#).

### If you wish to correspond by mail, our postal address is:

Defence Statistics (Surveys)  
Ministry of Defence, Main Building  
Floor 3 Zone M  
Whitehall  
London  
SW1A 2HB