

# UK Tri-Service Families Continuous Attitude Survey Results 2017

● Annual

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United Kingdom

This statistical release provides results from the Families Continuous Attitude Survey (FAMCAS) 2017, 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, including major programmes such as the Armed Forces Covenant and Armed Forces People Programme.

## Satisfaction with Service family life



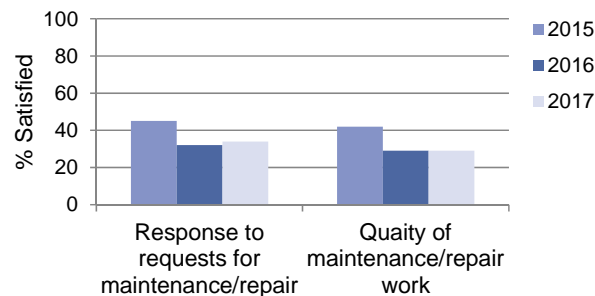
**60%** are **satisfied** with their quality of life married to a member of the Armed Forces.

However...

- **50%** feel **disadvantaged** about family life.
- **50%** do **not** feel part of the wider Service community.
- **57%** do **not** feel valued by the Services.

## Satisfaction with Service Families Accommodation

Levels of satisfaction with the maintenance of Service Families Accommodation (SFA) remain low following a large decrease in 2016.

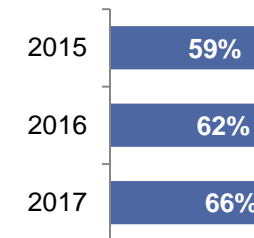


Satisfaction with the overall standard and value for money of SFA have improved since 2016 but remain below levels reported in 2015.

## Awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant

Awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant continues to improve amongst Service families.

% heard of the Armed Forces Covenant



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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 [DefStrat-Stat-WDS-Surveys@mod.uk](mailto:DefStrat-Stat-WDS-Surveys@mod.uk)

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## About these statistics

The Families Continuous Attitude Survey (FAMCAS) is a Tri-Service annual survey of the spouses/civil partners of Regular trained Service Personnel. This survey is one of the main ways that the Department gathers information on the attitudes and experiences of Service families.

The 2017 FAMCAS was distributed to a sample of 28,383 trained Regular Service personnel who were married or in a civil partnership. The Serving person was then asked to pass the questionnaire on to their spouse. The survey used both online and paper questionnaires and was open from February to May 2017.

### Response rates:

Overall 7,145 valid responses were received, representing a response rate of 25%.

This is the same as the 2014 and 2015 response rate but is a three percentage point decrease on 2016.



## About this statistical release

Throughout this report the term “married” refers to those who are married or in a civil partnership and the term “spouse” refers to spouse/civil partner. The term RN/RM is used as an abbreviation of Royal Navy/Royal Marines.

To enable more direct comparisons, the 2017 Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey (AFCAS) results have been subset to Service personnel who are married/in a civil partnership. Throughout this report these comparisons are referred to as “AFCAS 2017 comparisons”. Due to the subset these will not match results in the published AFCAS report [www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-continuous-attitude-survey-index](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-continuous-attitude-survey-index). National comparisons are provided for context but are not directly comparable due to the demographic differences of the general population and the population of Service spouses.

Reference tables and an example of a FAMCAS 2017 questionnaire are published as separate documents and can be found on the FAMCAS webpage - [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)

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

Note: Results of those who moved for Service reasons with those who did not move will be published in October 2017. A consultation on proposed changes to these statistics has been launched: [www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-reduction-in-scope-of-the-tri-service-families-continuous-attitude-survey-report](http://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-reduction-in-scope-of-the-tri-service-families-continuous-attitude-survey-report)

*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.

## Over 65,000 Regular trained Service personnel are married or in a civil partnership<sup>1</sup>

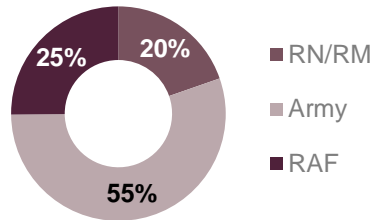
### Data Quality Note

The estimate of married Service personnel is derived from a self-reported, non-compulsory field on the Joint Personnel Administration system (JPA). As such there may be some under-reporting. The 2017 Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey (AFCAS) stated 52% of Service personnel were married/in a civil partnership, which would equate to over 70,000 personnel.

## Just over half of all married Service personnel are serving in the Army<sup>1</sup>

This distribution broadly reflects the relative size of the Services.

% married Service personnel by Service



**75%** of spouses are married to Other ranks<sup>1</sup>.

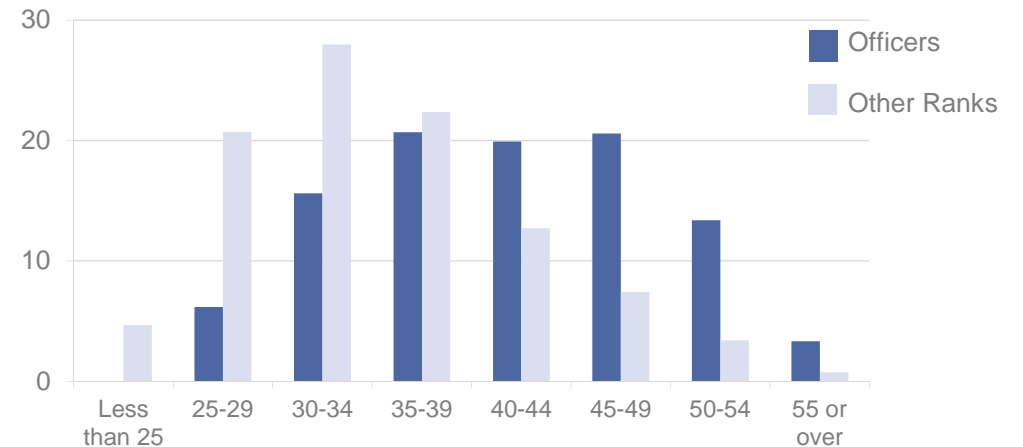
**25%** of spouses are married to Officers<sup>1</sup>.

## Just over nine in ten Service spouses are female

This reflects the fact that the majority of Serving personnel are male<sup>2</sup>.

**Spouses of Other Ranks are, on average, younger than those of Officers** This reflects the age difference between Officers and Other Ranks<sup>2</sup>.

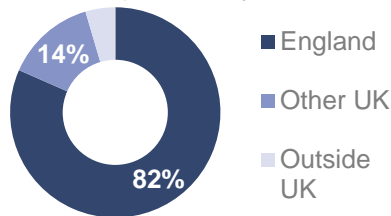
% Service spouses by age group



The majority (89%) of Service spouses are aged between 25 and 49 years old. Just 7% are aged 50 or over.

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

% Service spouses by location



The 2015 estimated national age profile<sup>3</sup> of married women aged 16-64 for England and Wales is more evenly distributed with similar proportions within each age group from 30 to 64.

On average Service spouses are younger than married women in the general UK population, reflecting the age profile of Service personnel.

<sup>1</sup> Source: The Joint Personnel Administration system (JPA) as at 1 April 2017

<sup>2</sup> Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-armed-forces-biannual-diversity-statistics-2017>

<sup>3</sup> Source: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/populationestimatesbymaritalstatusandlivingarrangements/2002to2015>

**79%** of Service families have children

**41%** of Service families have at least one child aged under 5

**51%** of Service families have at least one child of school age



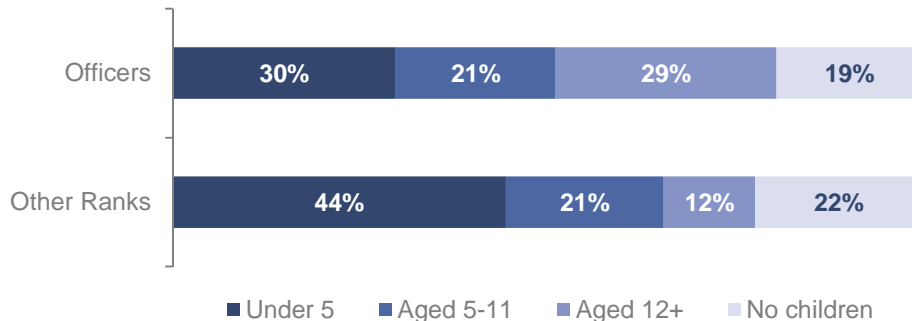
**74%** of spouses are employed<sup>1</sup>



The proportion of spouses who are employed differs by Service and Rank. Officer spouses are more likely to be employed (77%) than Other Rank spouses (73%). Army spouses are less likely to be employed (72%) than RN/RM (77%) or RAF (79%) spouses.

**Other Rank families tend to have younger children than Officer Families**

% families by age of youngest child



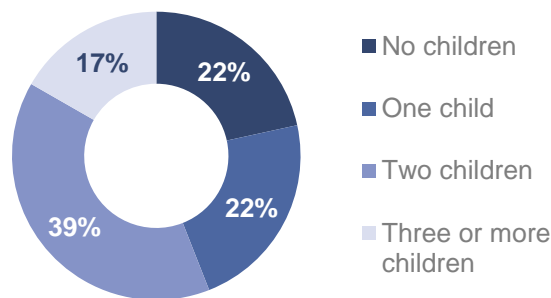
**11%** of spouses are also serving in the Regular Armed Forces

Couples where both partners are members of the Regular Armed Forces are referred to as dual-serving couples.

**Most families have one or two children**

Just over one in five families do not have children, a further one in five have one child. About two in five families have two children.

% families by number of children



**59%** of spouses are homeowners



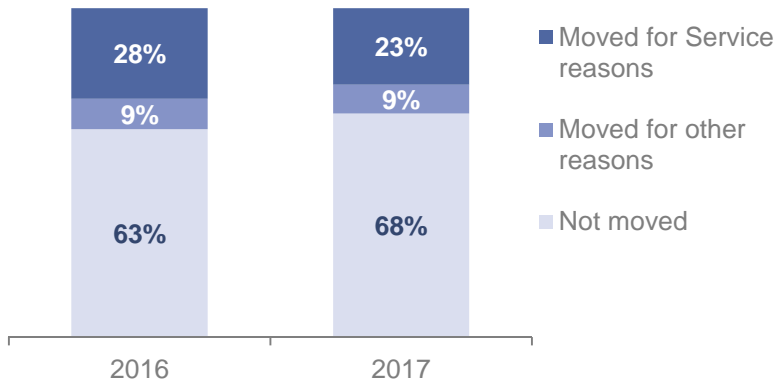
The proportion of homeowners differs greatly by Rank and Service, ranging from 42% for Army Other Ranks to 87% for RN/RM Officers.

**AFCAS 2017 comparison**  
 These results are similar to the AFCAS 2017 findings, which reported 58% of married Service personnel as homeowners.

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

**Just under a quarter of Service families moved for Service reasons over the past year** This has fallen by four percentage points since 2016; the first decrease observed since 2013 when this question was first asked.

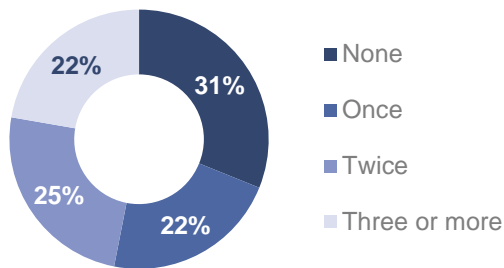
% families by whether they moved in the past year



Officer spouses are more likely to move home for Service reasons than Other Ranks spouses. Higher proportions of Army and RAF spouses moved for Service reasons over the past year than RN/RM spouses.

**About seven in ten spouses have moved at least once in the last five years**

% spouses by the number of times moved over the past five years

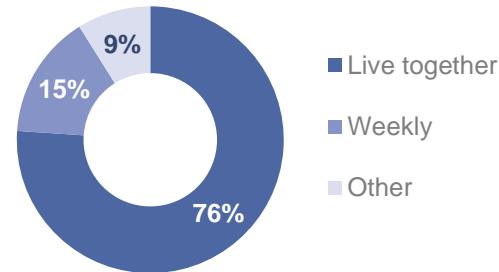


Service personnel are often posted to new locations and many spouses choose to accompany them rather than be separated. This means that Service spouses are also a very mobile population.

Officer spouses and spouses of Army or RAF personnel are, on average, more mobile than those married to members of the RN/RM or Other Ranks.

**Just over three quarters of Service couples live together**

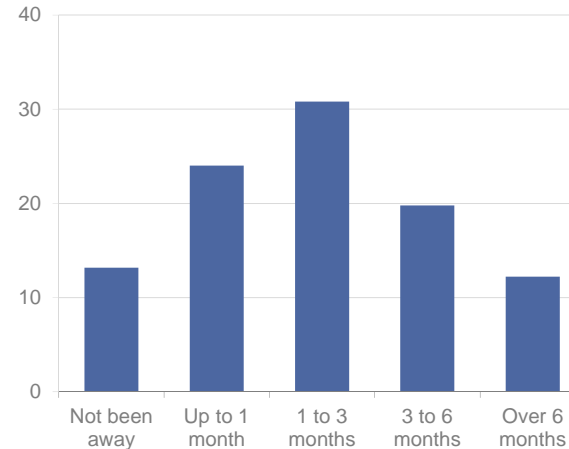
How often do you see your Service partner?



These proportions differ by both Service and Rank. Spouses of RN/RM personnel are less likely to live with their partner (62%) as are Officer spouses (70%).

**Despite the high proportion of Service couples living together, nearly a third of couples were separated from their partner for over three months last year**

% families by amount of separation



**AFCAS 2017 comparison**

These are broadly similar to the AFCAS 2017 results of time spent away from home for married Service personnel.

Separation differs by Service with a higher proportion of RN/RM spouses reporting separation of more than three months (47%) than Army or RAF spouses (29% and 26% respectively).

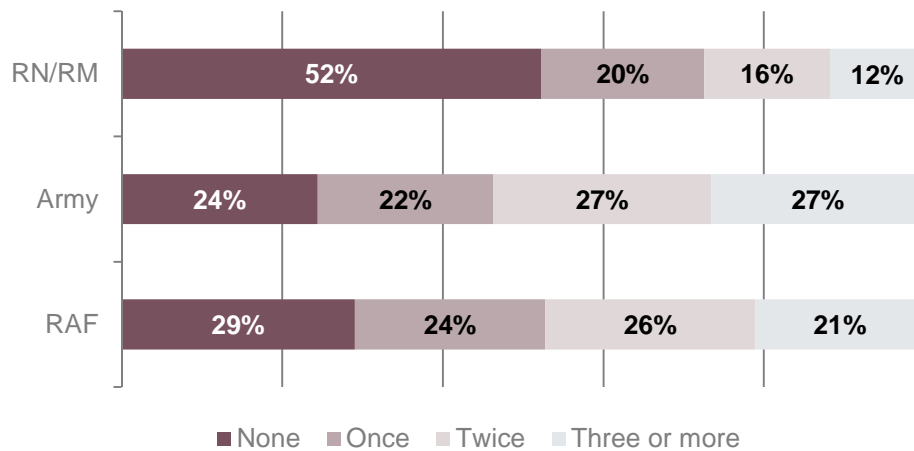
## Section 2 - Service comparisons

This section compares results for the RN/RM, Army and RAF families, highlighting the main differences in their experiences of and attitudes towards Service life.

### RN/RM families are less mobile; over half (52%) of RN/RM families have not moved for Service reasons over the past five years

This compares to 24% for Army and 29% for RAF families.

% moved for Service reasons over the past five years



### 15% of RN/RM families moved home for Service reasons in the last 12 months

This compares to 26% of Army and 24% of RAF families.

### 5% of RN/RM families accompanied their partner on an overseas assignment during the past year

This compares to 12% of Army and 10% of RAF families.

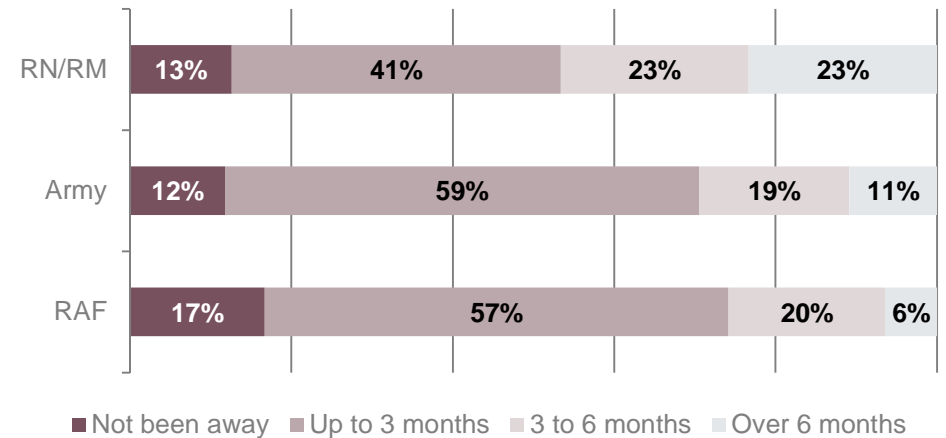
### RN/RM spouses are less likely to live with their partner during the working week

**62%** of RN/RM spouses live with their partner during the working week

This compares to 79% of Army and 80% of RAF spouses.

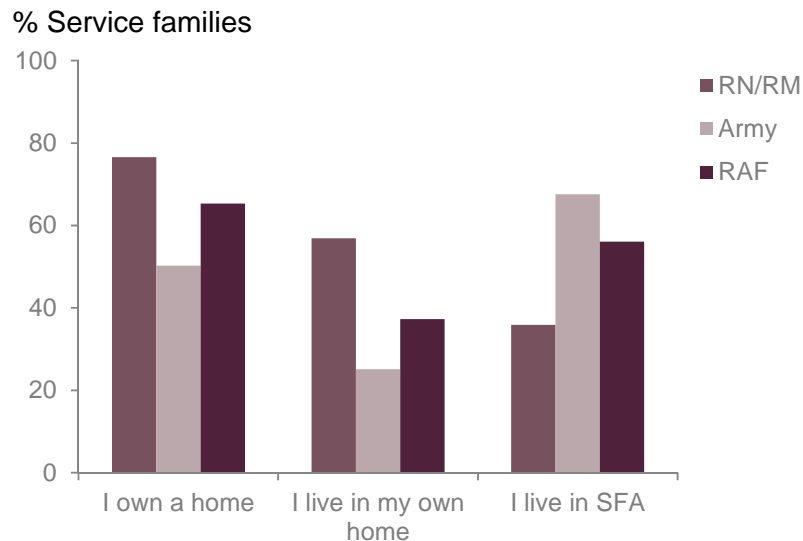
### RN/RM spouses are more likely to have experienced separation of more than three months over the past year

Amount of time the Serving spouse has been away for Service reasons in the past year



Royal Navy families cannot accompany Service personnel at sea. This tends to encourage home ownership, which provides stability, but makes it more likely that they will experience separation during the working week even if the Service person is based ashore.

**RN/RM families are more likely to own a home (77%) and more likely to live in this home (58%). Army families are more likely to live in SFA**



**RN/RM families are less likely to have children who changed school for Service reasons or to have experienced difficulties with their children’s schooling**

Of those families with school age children<sup>1</sup>.....

**8%** of RN/RM families had children who changed school for Service reasons in the past year

This compares to 19% of Army 17% of RAF families.

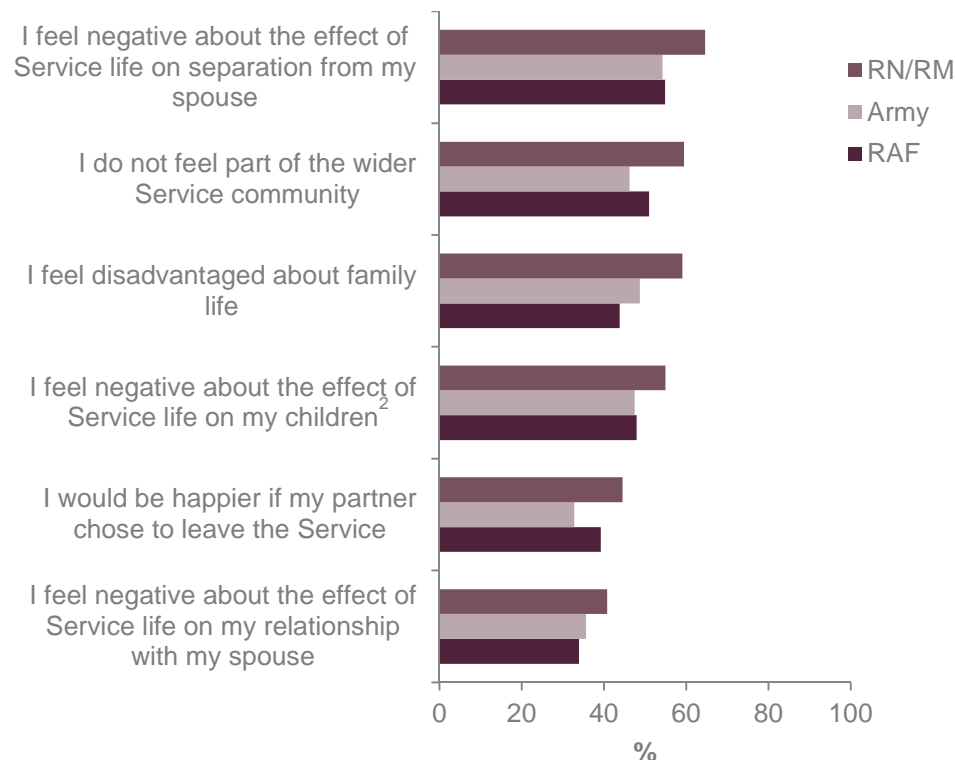
**18%** of RN/RM families experienced difficulties with their children’s schooling in the past year

This compares to 25% of both Army and RAF families.

**RN/RM spouses feel less disadvantaged about education (17%) than Army (28%) and RAF (27%) spouses**

Despite some benefits of stability, the higher levels of separation experienced by RN/RM spouses may impact on their views of Service life.

**RN/RM spouses feel more negative than Army and RAF spouses about many aspects of Service life**



RAF spouses feel the least valued by the Service (9%), whilst Army spouses are the least positive about household income (35%) and job security (56%).

Despite these difference in attitudes, there are no Service differences between levels of satisfaction with the quality of life being married to a member of the Armed Forces.

<sup>1</sup> SUBSET: Families with school age children (51%).

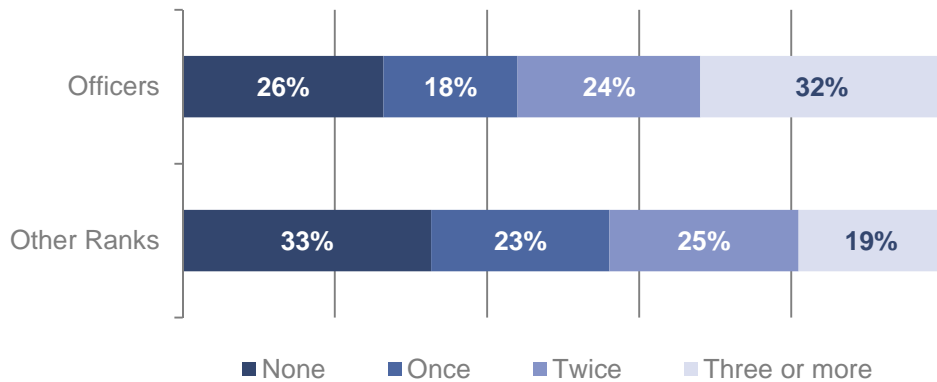
<sup>2</sup> SUBSET: Families with children (79%).

## 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.

**Officer families are more mobile with around a third (32%) moving three or more times over the past five years, compared to a fifth (19%) of Other Rank families**

% moved for Service reasons over the past five years



**28%** of Officer families moved home for Service reasons in the last 12 months

This compares to 21% of Other Rank families.

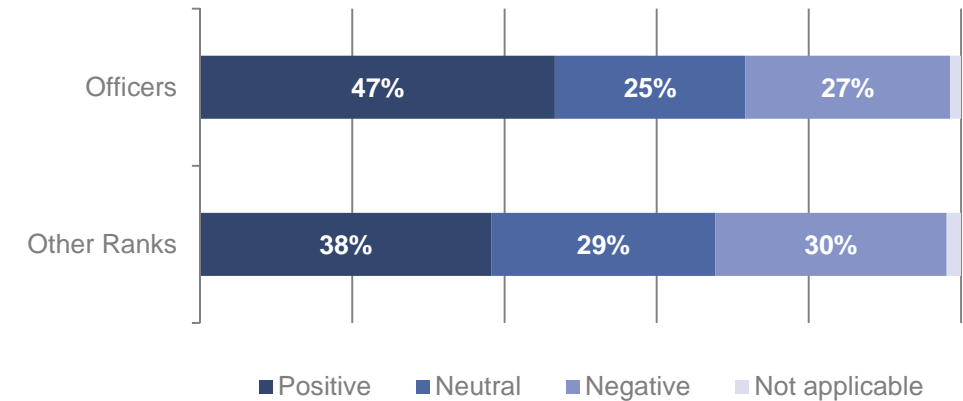
Although Officer families are more mobile, they are more likely to live separately from their spouse during the working week.

**30%** of Officer spouses live separately from their spouse during the working week

This compares to 22% of Other Rank spouses.

**Officer spouses are more likely to be employed and feel more positive about household income**

% feeling positive/negative about household income



The average salary for Officers is higher than that of Other Ranks<sup>1</sup>.

**77%** of Officer spouses are employed

This compares to 73% of Other Rank spouses.

Of those in full-time employment (43%):

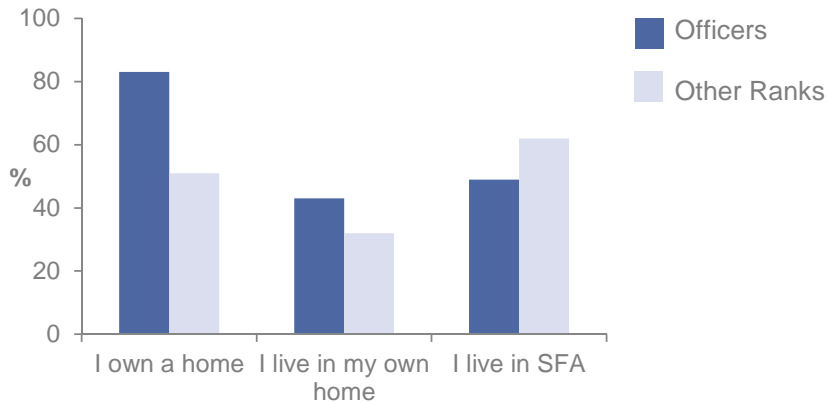
**Officer spouses are more satisfied with their job overall and that their job is well matched with their qualifications, and their skills and experience...**

**...however, Officer spouses feel more negative about the effect of Service life on their career (63%) than Other Rank spouses (54%)**

<sup>1</sup> Source: [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-armed-forces-monthly-service-personnel-statistics-2017](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-armed-forces-monthly-service-personnel-statistics-2017)



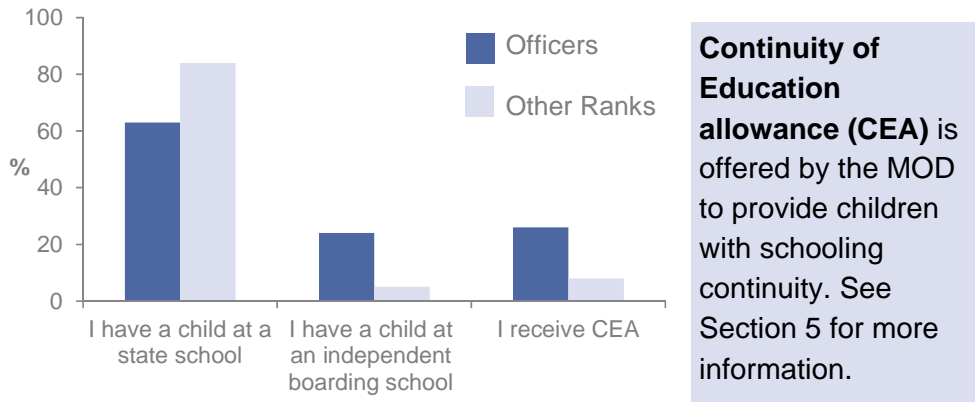
**Officer spouses are more likely to own a home, more likely to live in their own home and less likely to live in SFA**



Other Rank spouses feel more advantaged about housing (35%) than Officer spouses (28%).

Other Ranks families tend to be younger; they are more likely to have a child under 5, whilst Officer families are more likely to include a child aged 12-17.

**Officer families are more likely to have children in independent (boarding and day) schools than Other Rank families<sup>1</sup>**



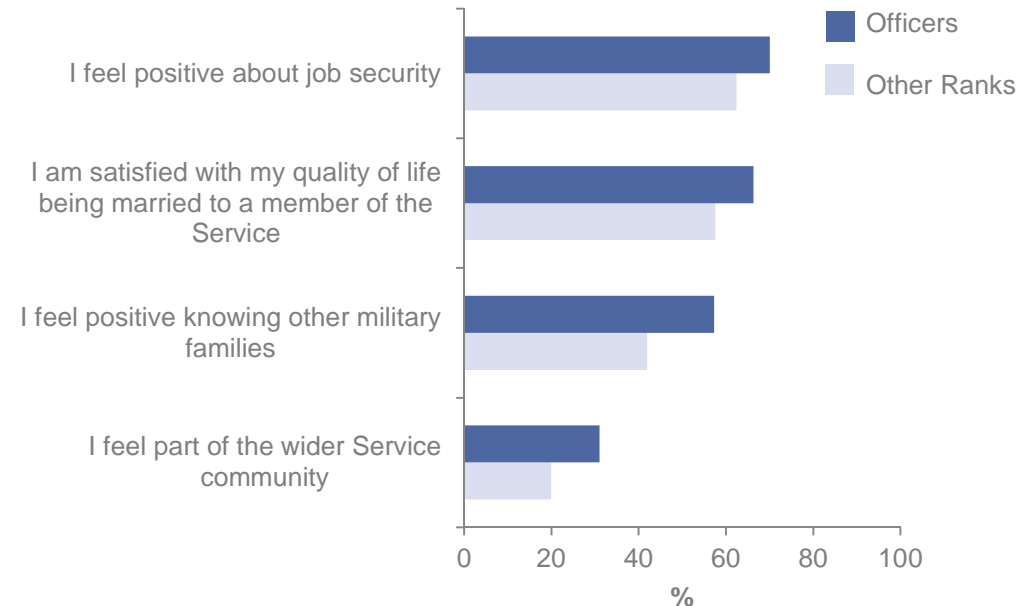
**Continuity of Education allowance (CEA) is offered by the MOD to provide children with schooling continuity. See Section 5 for more information.**

Officer families are more likely to receive the Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA); this reflects the higher proportion of children of Officer families in independent schools.

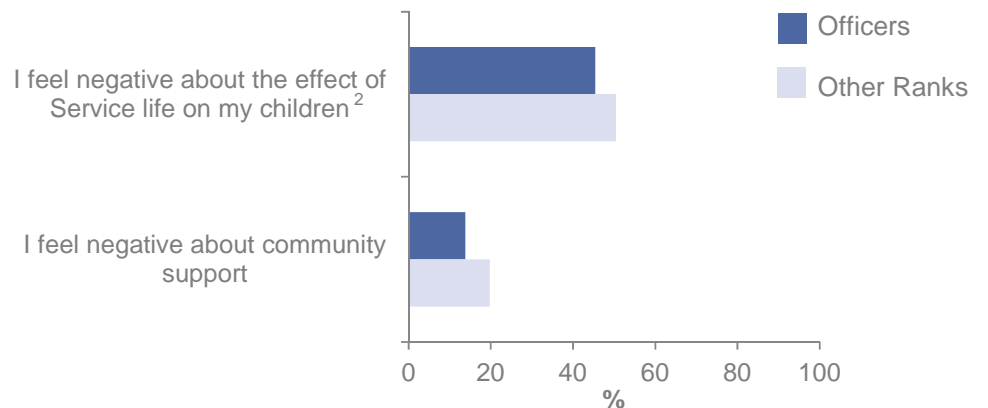
<sup>1</sup> SUBSET: Families with school age children (51%).

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

**Officer spouses have higher well-being scores, feel more proud of their spouse being in the Armed Forces and are more positive about many aspects of Service life...**



**...whilst Other Rank spouses feel less valued by the Services and more negative about other aspects of Service life**

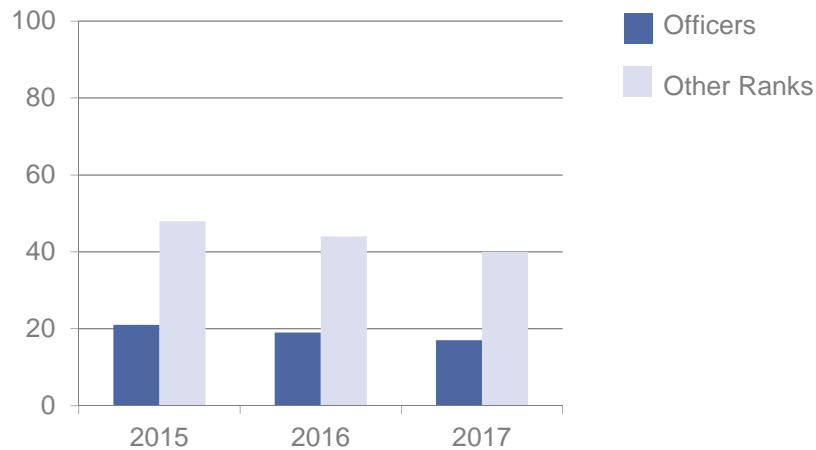


## Section 4 - Armed Forces Covenant, Well-being and Service Life

Section 4 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 new questions on well-being and satisfaction with Service life.

### The proportion of spouses who have never heard of the Armed Forces Covenant continues to decrease (from 41% in 2015 to 34% this year)

% have never heard of the Armed Forces Covenant



Nearly half (46%) of spouses have heard of and know at least a little about the Covenant, with Officer spouses (66%) more likely to know at least a little than Other Rank spouses (39%). RN/RM spouses are also more likely to know at least a little about the Covenant (55%) in comparison to RAF (48%) and Army (41%) spouses.

#### AFCAS 2017 comparison

Over two-thirds (67%) of married Service personnel know at least a little about the Covenant, with Officers more likely to know at least a little (92%) compared to Other Ranks (58%).

<sup>1</sup>Source: [www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk](http://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk)

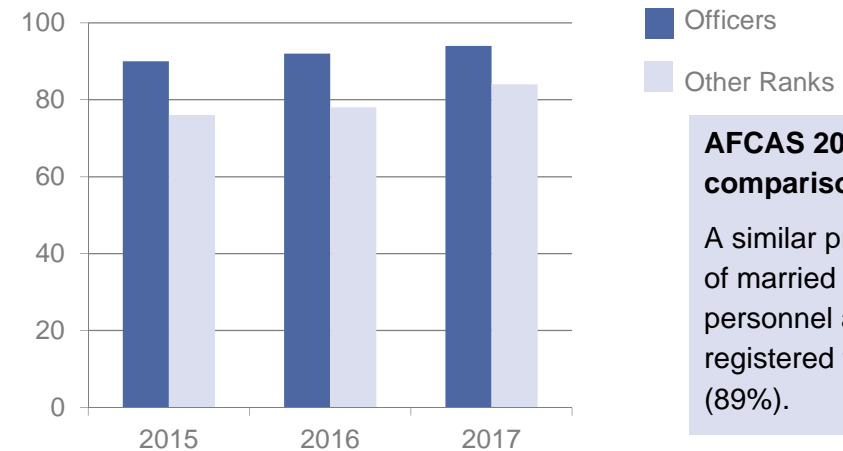
<sup>2</sup>Source: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/armed-forces-covenant-annual-report-2016](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/armed-forces-covenant-annual-report-2016)

#### Armed Forces Covenant<sup>1</sup>

Announced by the Government in May 2011, the Armed Forces Covenant sets out how Armed Forces personnel and their families can expect to be treated by the Government and the rest of the country in a number of areas including housing and healthcare.

### The majority (86%) of families are registered to vote; an increase of four percentage points since 2016. Officer spouses are more likely to be registered than Other Rank spouses

% registered to vote



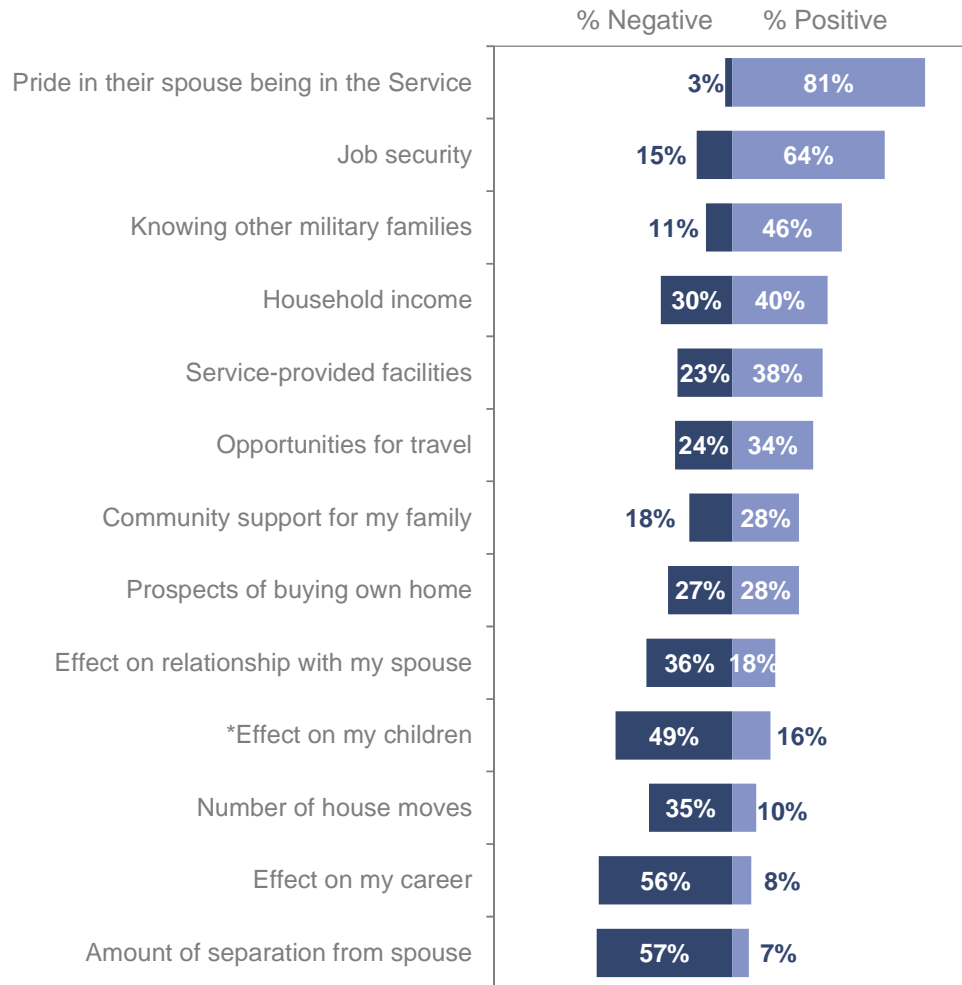
#### AFCAS 2017 comparison

A similar proportion of married Service personnel are registered to vote (89%).

#### Armed Forces Covenant<sup>1</sup>

During 2016, the MOD ran two campaigns encouraging Service personnel and their families to register to vote, one ahead of the UK local elections and another ahead of the EU Referendum in June<sup>2</sup>. This may have influenced recent results.

## Positive and negative aspects of Service life



\*SUBSET: 'Responses based on families with children (79%).'

### Data Quality Note

'Neither positive or negative' and 'Not applicable' responses have been excluded from the comparisons above.

## Pride continues to be the aspect of Service life that families feel most positive about (81%), up from 79% in 2016

This increase is driven by RAF families: Eight in ten RAF families now feel positive about pride in comparison to seven in ten last year.

% feel positive about...

Prospects of buying their own home ↑ 3 percentage points to 28%\*

Job security ↑ 8 percentage points to 64%\*

\*Changes since 2016

Increases in those feeling positive about job security since 2016 are driven by Army and RAF families.

In April 2014, the MOD introduced the Forces Help to Buy (FHTB) scheme<sup>1</sup> under the New Employment Model programme. The scheme offers advances of salary to Service personnel for the purpose of buying a home. This may have impacted the results above.

## More families feel negative about the amount of separation from their spouse than any other aspect of Service life (57%), unchanged since 2015

% feel negative about...

Effect on my children ↑ 3 percentage points to 49%\*

Number of house moves ↓ 4 percentage points to 35%\*

\*Changes since 2016

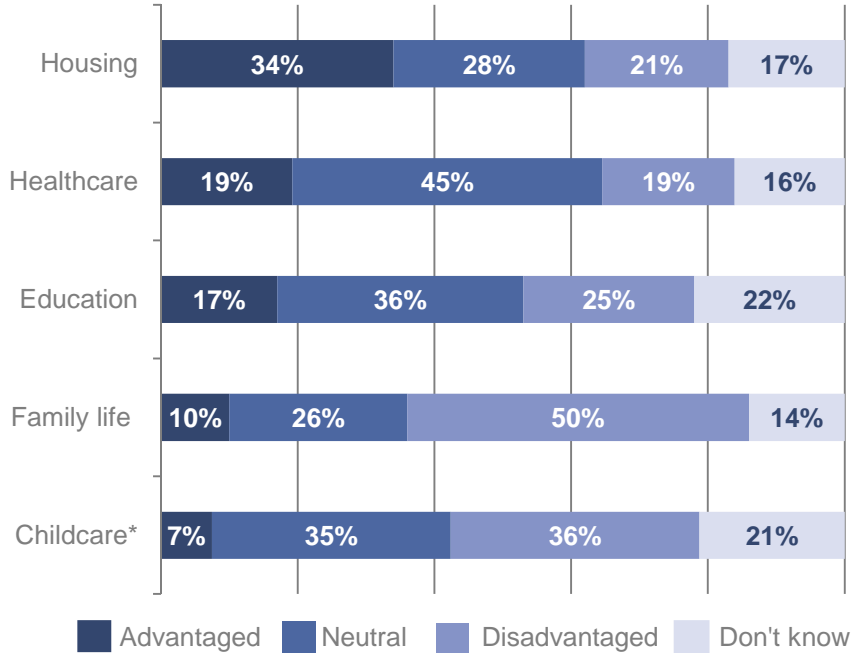
SUBSET: 'Effect on my children' responses based on those with children (79%).

Families feel more negative about Service-provided facilities than in 2016 (up from 20% to 23% this year).

<sup>1</sup>Source: [www.gov.uk/guidance/forces-help-to-buy](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/forces-help-to-buy)

**Half of Service families feel disadvantaged about family life in comparison to the general public; just one in ten feel advantaged**

% feel advantaged/disadvantaged compared to the general public



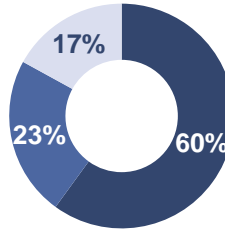
\*SUBSET: Responses based on those families with children (79%).

RN/RM families are more likely to feel disadvantaged about family life (59%) in comparison to the other Services (Army: 49%; RAF: 44%).

**AFCAS 2017 comparison**

A similar proportion of married Service personnel feel advantaged or disadvantaged about family life (13% and 54%) and housing (30% and 25% respectively) when comparing themselves to the general public on these issues.

**Although housing remains the issue that families feel most advantaged about (34%), the proportion feeling disadvantaged has increased to 21% from 18% in 2015**



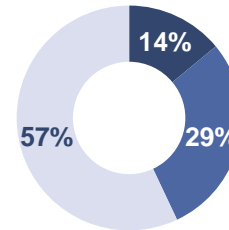
■ Satisfied  
■ Neutral  
■ Dissatisfied

**Six in ten spouses are satisfied with their quality of life, being married to a member of the Armed Forces**

Officer families (66%) are more satisfied than Other Rank families (58%).

However, whilst most families are satisfied with their quality of life, five in ten (50%) feel disadvantaged about their family life compared to the general public (see chart opposite).

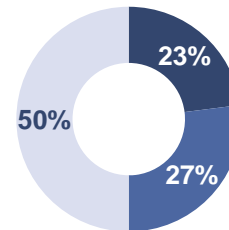
% agree/disagree: I feel valued by the Service



**Over half (57%) of families do not feel valued by the Services**

A higher proportion of Other Rank families (58%) do not feel valued by the Service compared to Officer families (54%). RAF families are also less likely to feel valued.

% agree/disagree: I feel part of the wider Service community

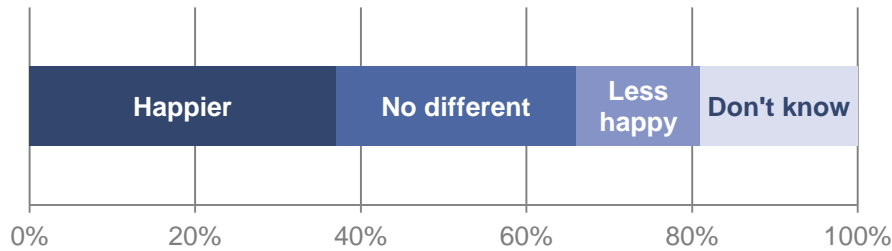


**Half of families do not feel part of the wider Service community**

A higher proportion of Other Rank families (53%) do not feel part of the wider Service community compared to Officer families (43%). A higher proportion of RN/RM families disagreed with "I feel part of the wider Service community" (59%).

■ Agree  
■ Neutral  
■ Disagree

Over a third (37%) of Service spouses state they would be happier if their spouse chose to leave the Service; 29% would feel no different and a further 15% would feel less happy



RN/RM spouses are more likely to feel happier (44%) if their partner left the Service in comparison to RAF (39%) and Army spouses (33%).

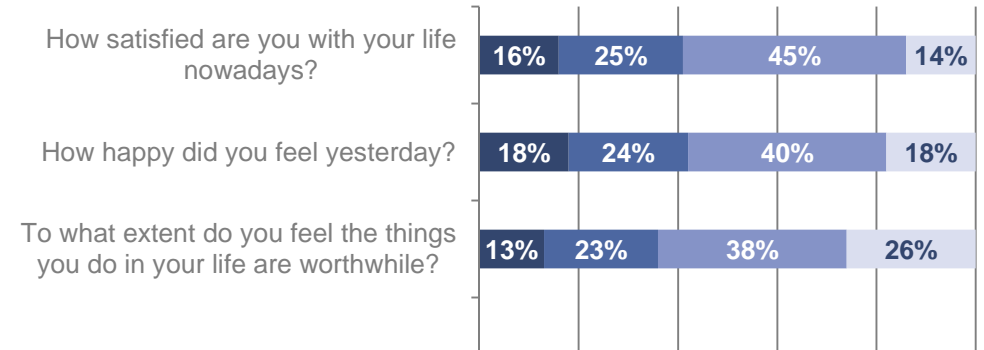
Spouses were asked for the first time this year to respond to four well-being<sup>1</sup> questions on a scale of 0 (Not at all) to 10 (Completely). These questions aim to make an assessment of their life overall, as well as providing an indication of their day-to-day emotions.

The Office for National Statistics collects data on well-being for the general population in their Annual Population Survey. Average scores are released in their Measuring National Well-being report<sup>1</sup>.

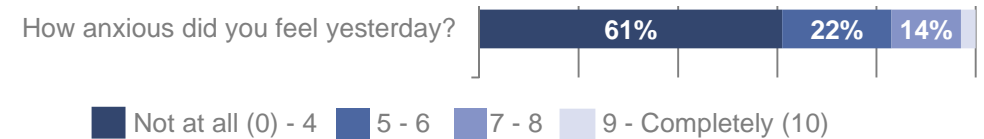
The demographic make-up of spouses of the Armed Forces is different to the general population, therefore spouses' well-being scores are not directly comparable to the general population. However, average national well-being scores provide some context to these findings. For UK females<sup>2</sup>, average national well-being scores for the four questions range between 7 and 8; the average anxiety score is 3. The average well-being scores for female Service spouses range between 6.5 and 7; the average anxiety score is 3.5.

Note: an anxiety score of 0 is equal to not feeling anxious, a score of 10 is equal to feeling completely anxious.

On average Service spouses rate their life satisfaction, happiness and how worthwhile the things they do in life are as high (score of 7)



Six in ten (61%) Service spouses rated their anxiety as low (0-4)



There are little differences in well-being scores between the Services, however Officer spouses are more likely to rate their life satisfaction, and their happiness yesterday as high (7 or above) in comparison to Other Rank spouses.

Officer spouses are more likely to rate their anxiety as low (66%) than Other Rank spouses (59%).

### AFCAS 2017 comparison

Married Service personnel tend to score their happiness yesterday, life satisfaction and the things they do in life being worthwhile lower in comparison to their spouses.

<sup>1</sup> Source: [www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/bulletins/measuringnationalwellbeing/2015-09-23](http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/bulletins/measuringnationalwellbeing/2015-09-23)

<sup>2</sup> Source: [www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/datasets/personalwellbeingandprotectedcharacteristics](http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/datasets/personalwellbeingandprotectedcharacteristics)

## Section 5 - Childcare and Children's Education

Section 5 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.

### Nearly eight in ten (79%) Service families have children

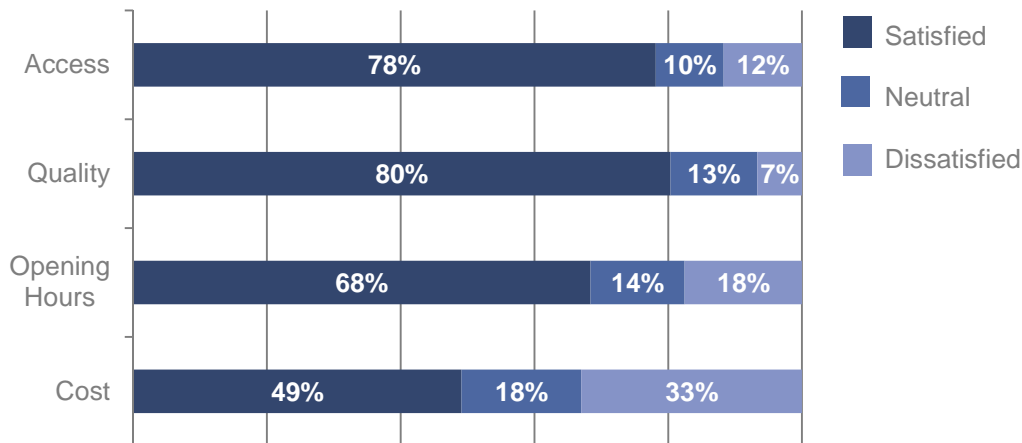
### Over a third (36%) of families with children required early years (0-4) childcare

Nine in ten were able to access early years childcare if they needed it<sup>1</sup>



### The majority of families are satisfied with the quality, access and opening hours of early years childcare, but less so with cost

% satisfied/dissatisfied with aspects of early years childcare<sup>1</sup>



RN/RM families are more satisfied with access (84%) in comparison to other Service families. Officer families are more satisfied with all aspects except access, in comparison to Other Rank families.

<sup>1</sup>SUBSET: Families who needed early years childcare (28%)

<sup>2</sup>SUBSET: Families with school age children (51%).

<sup>3</sup>Source: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/childrens-education-advisory-service>

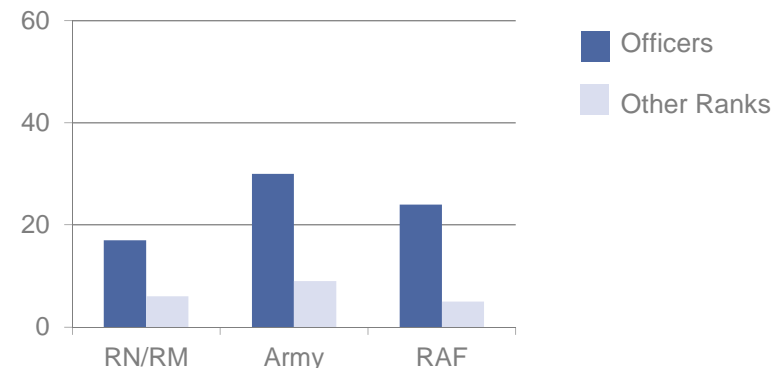
### Half (51%) of all families have at least one child of school age

The majority of families with school age children have at least one child in a state school (79%). A higher proportion of RN/RM families have a child at a state school (86%). Other Rank families are also more likely to have a child at a state school (84%) compared to Officer families (63%).

Army families are more likely to have a child in a Service school (10%) than the other Services, but this proportion has decreased three percentage points since 2015.

### One in ten (12%) families with school age children receive Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA); Officer families are more than three times as likely to receive CEA than Other Rank families

% families with school age children<sup>2</sup> who receive CEA



**Continuity of Education allowance (CEA)** is offered by the MOD to provide children with the continuity in their education and enable the spouses of Service personnel to accompany them on postings.<sup>2</sup>

**A quarter (24%) of families with school age children experienced difficulties with their children’s schooling in the last 12 months**

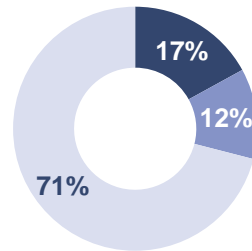
The most common difficulties experienced by families with school age children:

- 8%** Getting a place at the school of choice
- 7%** Unsuitable educational standard of your local school
- 6%** Differences in syllabus

*SUBSET: Families with school age children (51%).*

**Less than a fifth (17%) of families with school age children changed schools for Service reasons in the last 12 months**

Whilst this proportion has reduced in the last two years (22% in 2015), the proportion of families who have changed schools for other reasons has increased by three percentage points (from 9% in 2015 to 12% in 2017). These changes are particularly notable for Army Other Rank families.



- Changed for Service reasons
- Changed for other reasons
- Did not change

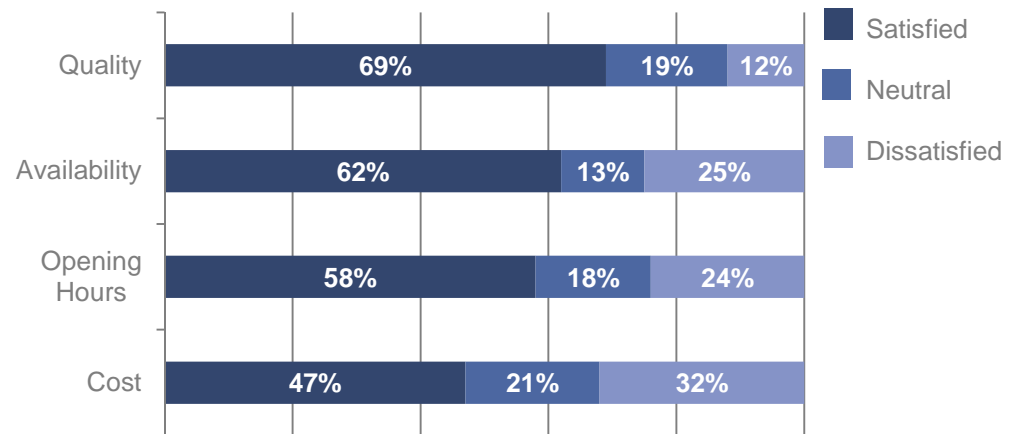
Families who changed schools for Service reasons are more likely to experience some difficulties e.g. differences in syllabus (20%) and the school admission period not coinciding with notification of assignment (17%), than those who changed schools for other reasons (5% and 2% respectively).

**Of those families with school age children, nearly half (48%) required childcare e.g. breakfast/after school/holiday clubs in the last 12 months**

This proportion is consistent across the Services and between Officer and Other Rank families. The demand for this type of childcare is highest amongst families with younger children. Over half (58%) of families with children aged 5-11 years require this type of childcare compared to those with children aged 12-17 years (29%).

**A third (32%) of families who required childcare for school age children are dissatisfied with the cost of their local childcare**

% satisfied/dissatisfied with aspects of local childcare for school age children



*SUBSET: Families with school age children who needed local childcare (23%).*

Families are generally more satisfied with early years childcare than childcare for school age children when it comes to quality, accessibility and opening hours.

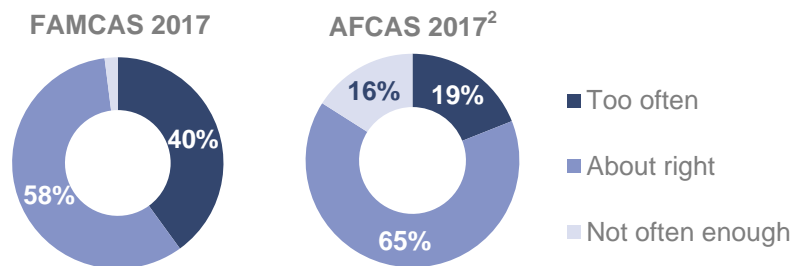
## Section 6 - Deployment

Section 6 looks at spouses' experiences of the support and information services available to them before, after and during their spouse's deployments and their views on the length and frequency of operational tours.

Since the end of combat operations in Afghanistan in autumn 2014, the number of Service personnel deployed on operations has reduced and the nature, length and frequency of deployments has changed. In 2017<sup>1</sup>, 46% of Army Officers and 25% of Army Other Ranks deployed individually rather than as a Unit, compared to 32% and 18% respectively in 2016. RAF Officers also saw an increase in deployment as individuals. Many Army tours are now shorter with less front line exposure whilst Royal Navy tours are often longer. These changes may have had an effect on the provision of and attitudes towards deployment support to families.

### Two in five spouses felt that operational tours were too often compared to just under one in five married Service personnel

Views on the frequency of operational tours

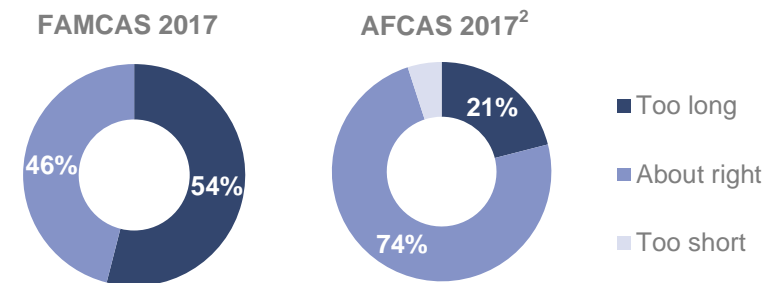


Other Rank spouses were more likely than Officer spouses to say their spouse's operational tours were "too often".

A higher proportion of Army spouses indicated the frequency of operational tours was "about right" compared to RN/RM or RAF spouses.

### More than half of spouses felt that operational tours were too long, compared to a fifth of married Service personnel

Views on the length of operational tours



A higher proportion of RN/RM spouses felt that operational tours were too long (65%) compared to RAF (55%) and Army (45%) spouses. Other Rank spouses were more likely to feel that operational tours were too long compared to Officer spouses.

### One in three spouses did not know where to go for Service-provided welfare support whilst their partner was deployed

This remains unchanged since 2015. RN/RM spouses are less likely to know where to go for Service-provided welfare support (whilst their partner is away on an operational tour) than Army or RAF spouses.

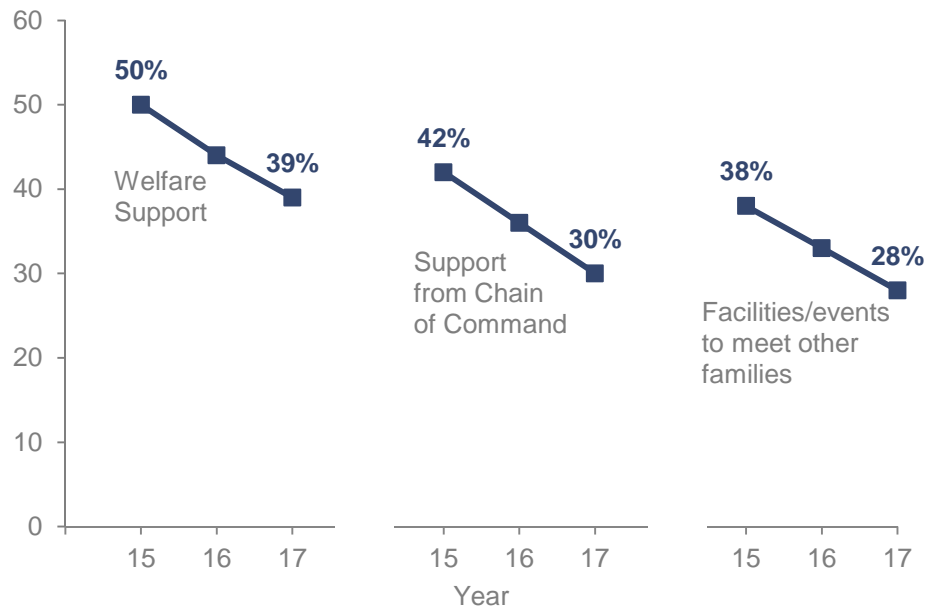
<sup>1</sup> Source: AFCAS 2017 data; AFCAS report: [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/armed-forces-continuous-attitude-survey-2017](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/armed-forces-continuous-attitude-survey-2017)

<sup>2</sup> Source: AFCAS 2017 comparisons; data subset to Service personnel who were married/ in a civil partnership.



**Satisfaction with all forms of Service-provided support before, during and after their spouse’s last operational tour has decreased markedly year on year since 2015**

% satisfied with support before operational tour<sup>1</sup>



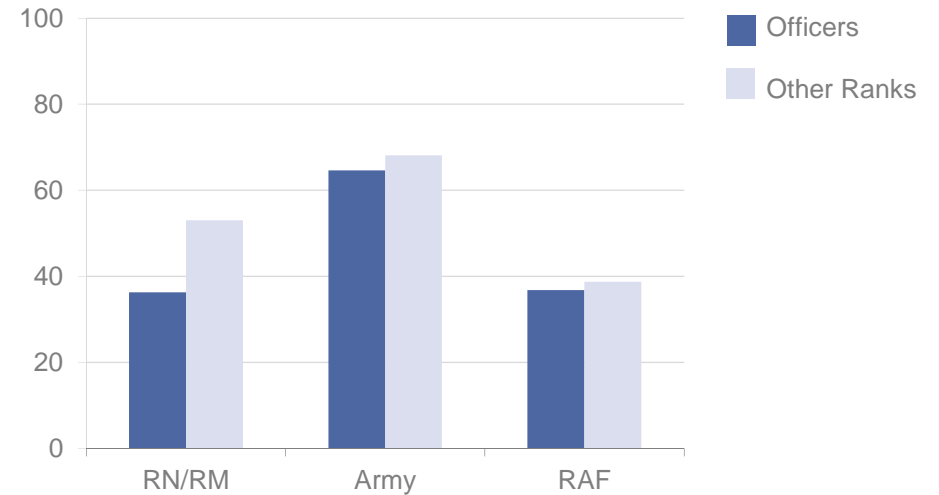
Whilst the chart above shows there have been decreases in satisfaction with types of support before operational tours, there have also been decreases in satisfaction with support during and after deployments.

These changes are particularly notable for Army Other Rank spouses, where satisfaction has decreased by at least ten percentage points since 2015 across all types of support and before, during and after deployments.

RAF spouses are the least dissatisfied across most types of support.

**RAF families are less likely to use Service-provided support before, during or after their spouse’s last operational tour**

% used welfare support during their spouse’s last operational tour<sup>1</sup>



Use of welfare support and facilities/events to meet other families is highest amongst Army families before, during and after deployments.

Families of RN/RM Other Ranks were more likely to make use of these types of support than RN/RM Officer families.

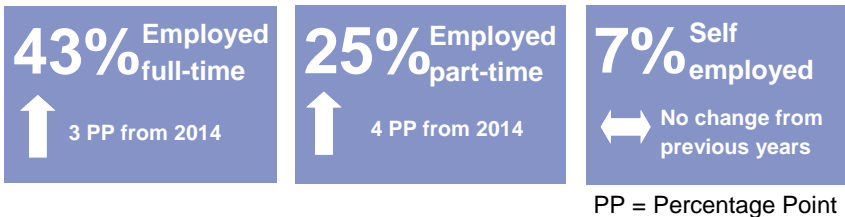
<sup>1</sup> SUBSET: Families where the Service spouse has been deployed on an operational tour within the past two years (38%).

## Section 7 - Employment

Section 7 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 there has been no change since last year, employment rates remain at the highest levels recorded

**74%** of spouses are employed ↑ 7 PP from 2014

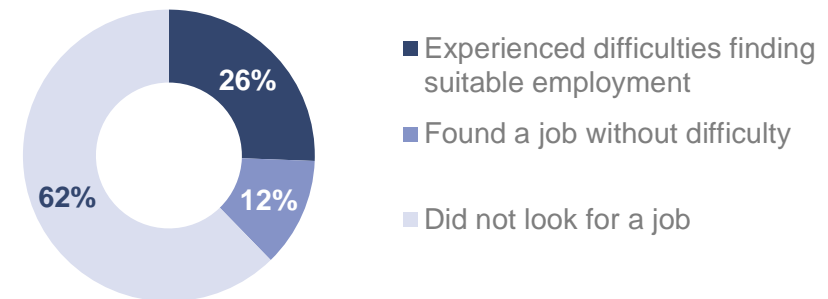


The employment rate for female Service spouses aged 16-64 was **73%** this year. This compares with a UK employment rate<sup>1</sup> of **70%** for all women aged 16-64.

Over the past year about four in ten spouses looked for a new job



Over the past year just over a quarter of all spouses experienced difficulties finding suitable employment



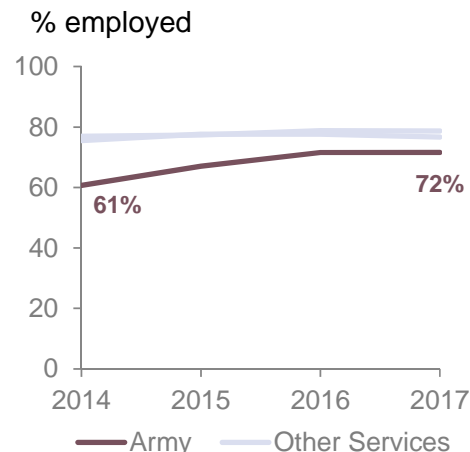
The top two reasons cited by those who experienced difficulties were:

**50%** Having a spouse who is often away<sup>2</sup>  
**48%** Partner unable to assist with care responsibilities<sup>2</sup>

The top reasons differed by rank. The top reasons for Officer spouses were those listed above and “employment history” whilst Other Rank spouses selected “access to affordable and quality childcare” as their third top reason.

### A lower proportion of Army spouses are employed than RN/RM or RAF spouses

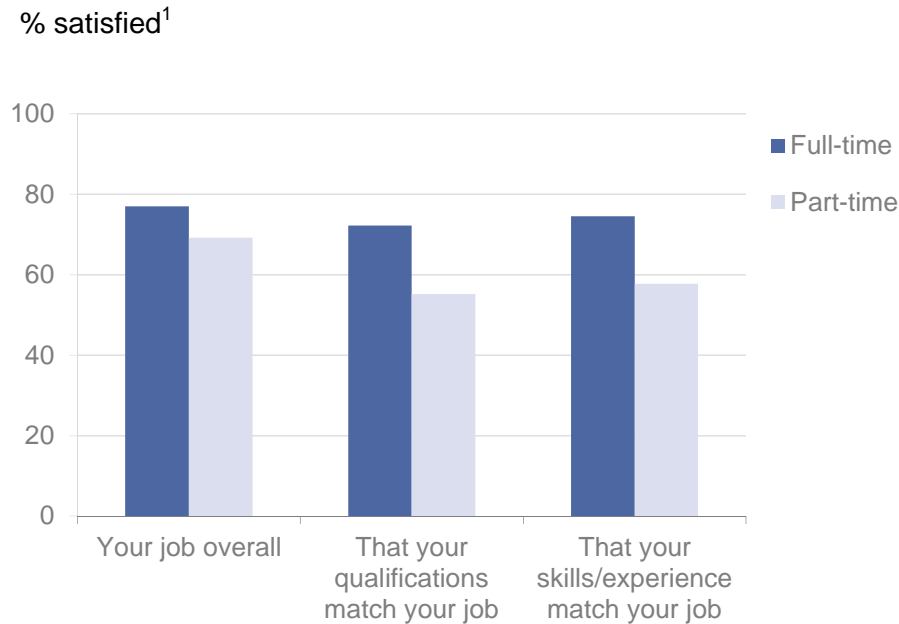
This is likely to be due, at least in part, to the higher proportion of Army spouses moving home or accompanying overseas. The difference between Service employment rates has narrowed since 2014.



<sup>1</sup> Source: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/uklabourmarket/june2017>

<sup>2</sup> SUBSET: Those who experienced difficulties finding suitable employment (26%).

**Overall job satisfaction remains high, however those in part-time employment remain less satisfied than those in full-time work**



Satisfaction levels have changed little over the past few years.

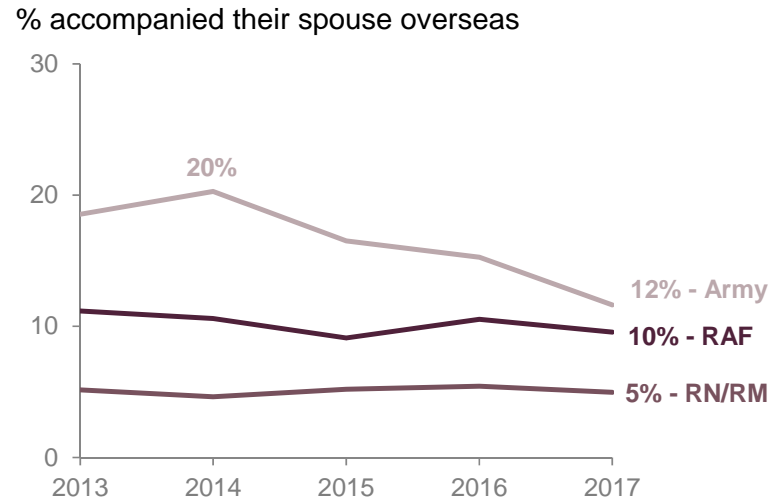
Amongst those in full-time employment, Officer spouses are more satisfied with their job overall and that their qualifications and skills match their job. However, Officer spouses feel more negative about the effect of Service life on their career than Other Rank spouses.

Satisfaction levels for those self employed are similar to those in full-time employment.

<sup>1</sup> SUBSET :Those in full-time employment (43%) and those in part-time employment (25%).

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

**The proportion of spouses who accompanied their partner on an overseas assignment decreased from 12% last year to 10% in 2017**



This decrease is driven by a reduction in the proportion of Army spouses accompanying their partner overseas which has fallen from a peak of 20% in 2014 to 12% this year.

Despite this reduction, Army spouses remain the most likely to accompany their partner overseas. RN/RM spouses are the least likely, although 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.

Of those who did accompany their spouse overseas<sup>2</sup>.

**31%** were unable to find paid employment

**20%** were unable to access Service-provided information before moving overseas

These figures remain largely unchanged since 2015 when these questions were first included in the survey.

## Section 8 - Healthcare

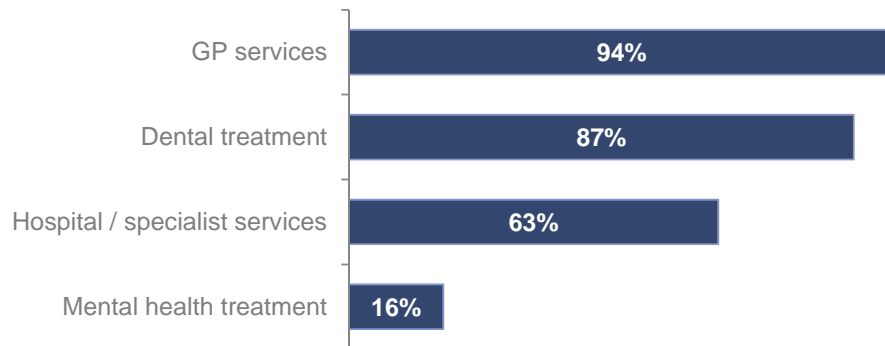
Section 8 looks at access to healthcare services for Service families.

### Data Quality Note

The survey aims to measure healthcare provisions for family members not in the Armed Forces. As such, families where both spouses were serving in the Armed Forces, who did not have children, were not asked these questions.

**The majority of Service families required access to dental treatment and GP services over the past year; far fewer families required access to mental health treatment**

% required access over the past year



The proportion of families seeking mental health treatment has increased from 14% in 2016. There has been a decrease in families seeking hospital/specialist services since 2015 (66%).

### Armed Forces Covenant goal<sup>1</sup>:

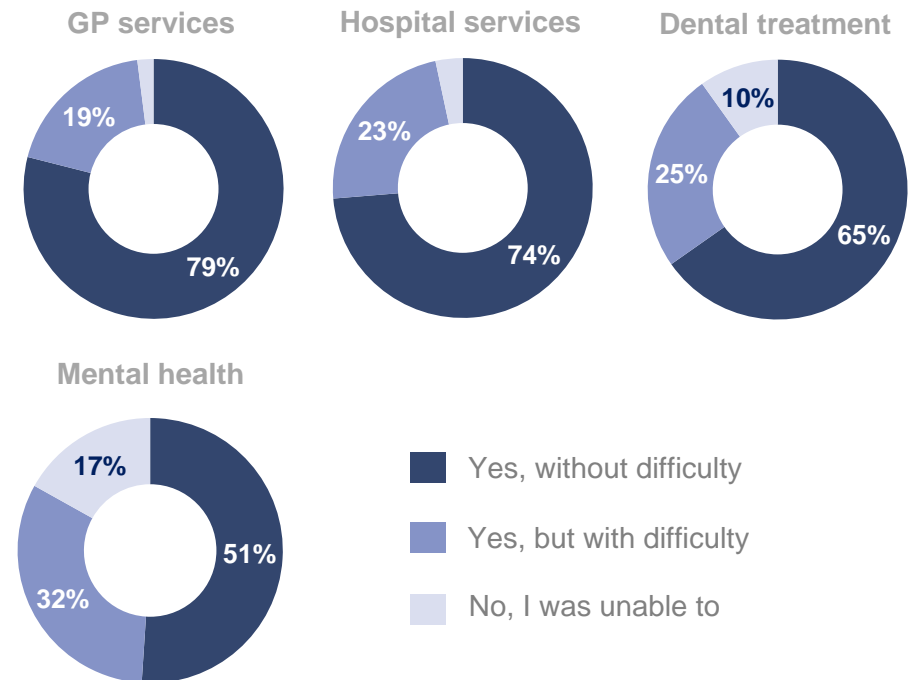
Members of the Armed Forces community should enjoy the same standard of, and access to healthcare as received by any other UK citizen in the area where they live.

<sup>1</sup> Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/armed-forces-covenant-annual-report-2015>

<sup>2</sup> SUBSET: Those who required each healthcare treatment: GP services (94%), Hospital/specialist services (63%), Dental treatment (87%) and Mental health treatment (16%).

**The large majority of families were able to access GP and hospital services but those seeking dental or mental health treatment experienced more difficulties**

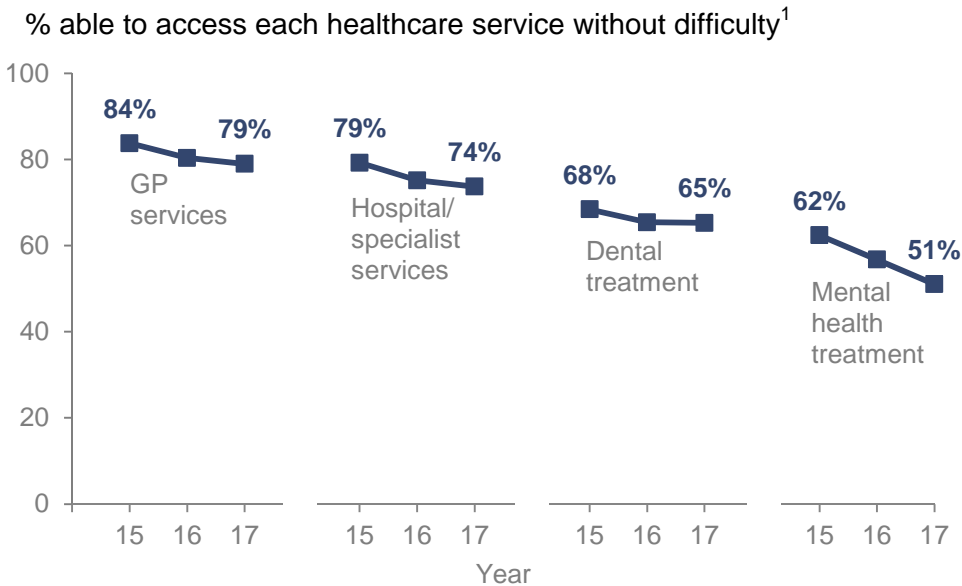
% accessing healthcare services over the past year<sup>2</sup>



Of the 16% of families who required access to mental health treatment, half experienced difficulties or were unable to access treatment.

Of those families who required dental treatment, one in four experienced difficulties and a further one in ten were unable to access treatment at all.

**Since 2015 there has been a reduction in the proportion of families able to access healthcare services without difficulty**



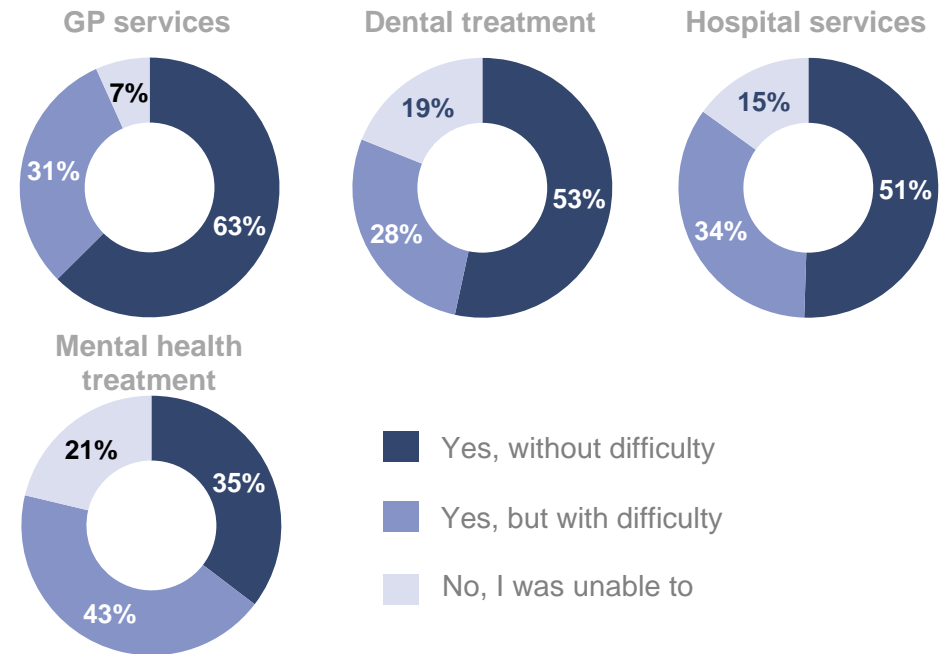
This decrease is particularly notable for Army families. There has been no change in access to GP services for RAF families and no change in access to dental treatment for RN/RM or RAF families.

Although not directly comparable, the 2017 GP Patient Survey<sup>2</sup> shows a small decrease in access to GP services; most patients (84.3%) say they were able to get an appointment or speak to someone the last time they tried, this compares with 85.5% in 2015.

The Dental Statistics from the 2017 GP Patient Survey<sup>2</sup> indicate little change in the success rate of those trying to get a dental appointment (93%) over the last few years. It is noted that those who had not been to the practice before were less successful in getting an NHS dental appointment suggesting increased difficulties for families who have moved recently.

A minority of families moved whilst undergoing healthcare treatments, ranging from 3% who moved whilst undergoing mental health treatment to 12% who moved whilst undergoing treatment with their GP.

**Of those families who moved whilst undergoing healthcare treatment<sup>3</sup>, many either experienced difficulties continuing their treatment or were unable to continue their treatment altogether**



**Armed Forces Covenant goal<sup>4</sup>:**  
 Family members should retain their relative position on any NHS waiting list, if moved around the UK due to the Service person being posted.

Of the 7% of families who moved whilst on a waiting list for an operation or consultant appointment, 38% felt their waiting time had increased as a result of moving compared to 31% who felt it had not.

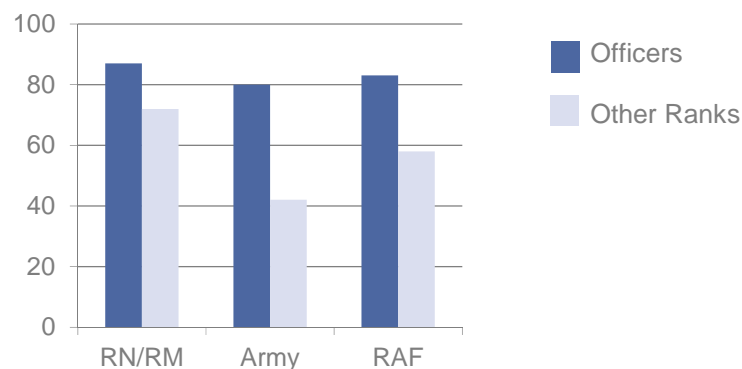
<sup>1</sup>SUBSET: Those who required each healthcare treatment: GP services (94%), Hospital/specialist services (63%) Dental treatment (87%), and Mental health treatment (16%).  
<sup>2</sup> Source: GP Patient Survey results: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/2017/07/06/gp-patient-survey-2017/> and Dental statistics: [https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/2017/07/06/gpps\\_dent\\_y111864861/](https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/2017/07/06/gpps_dent_y111864861/)  
<sup>3</sup>SUBSET: Those who moved whilst undergoing healthcare treatment: GP services (12%), Dental treatment (7%), Hospital/specialist service (9%) and Mental health treatment (3%).  
<sup>4</sup>Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/armed-forces-covenant-annual-report-2015>

## Section 9 - Housing

Section 9 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 what they would prefer to live in. It also reports on levels of satisfaction with Service Families Accommodation (SFA) and Substitute Service Families Accommodation (SSFA).

**More than half (59%) of Service spouses own their own home; Officer families have a higher rate of home ownership (83%) compared to Other Rank families (51%)**

% owning their own home



**Six in ten non-homeowners cannot afford to buy a suitable home at the moment**

The top reasons for not owning a home:

**60%** Cannot afford to buy a suitable home at the moment<sup>1</sup>

**37%** Living in SFA is better suited to my family's needs<sup>1</sup>

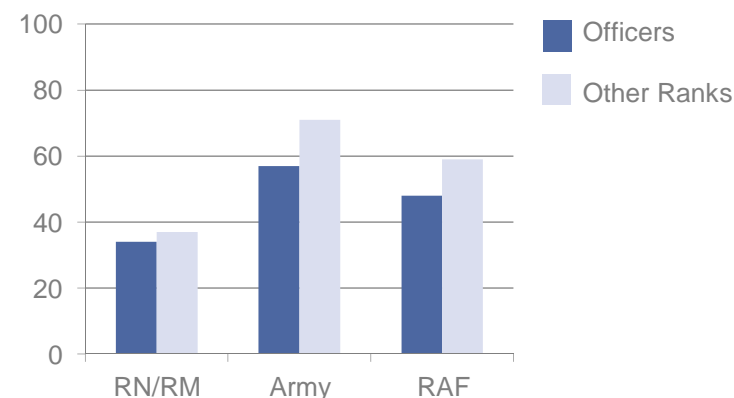
**37%** Want to be able to move with my spouse<sup>1</sup>

Whilst there are no Service differences across the top two reasons, RN/RM spouses are much less likely to select "want to be able to move with my spouse" as a reason for not owning their own home (26%) in comparison to the other Services (RAF: 43%; Army: 37%).

<sup>1</sup> SUBSET: Those families who do not own a home (41%).

**Around six in ten (58%) families live in SFA during the working week, unchanged since 2014**

% families living in SFA



Army families are the most likely to live in SFA (68%) followed by RAF families (56%). RN/RM are much less likely to live in SFA (36%).

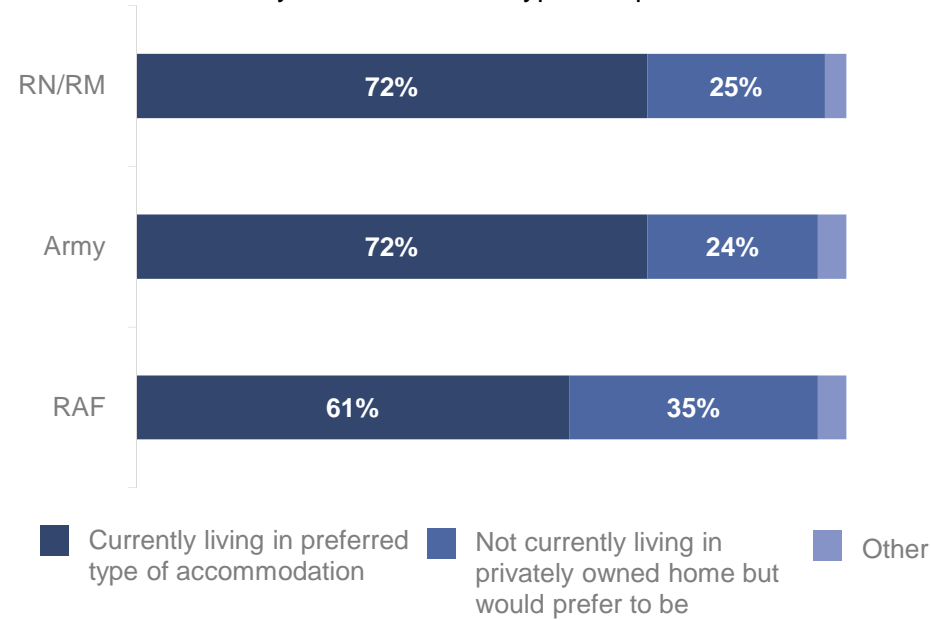
Officer families are less likely to live in SFA (49%) than Other Rank families (62%). This is driven by differences within Army and RAF families. Similar proportions of RN/RM Officer and Other Rank families live in SFA.

**Over a third (35%) of families live in a privately owned home during the working week, unchanged since 2014**



## The majority of spouses are living in their preferred type of accommodation

% Service families by accommodation type and preference

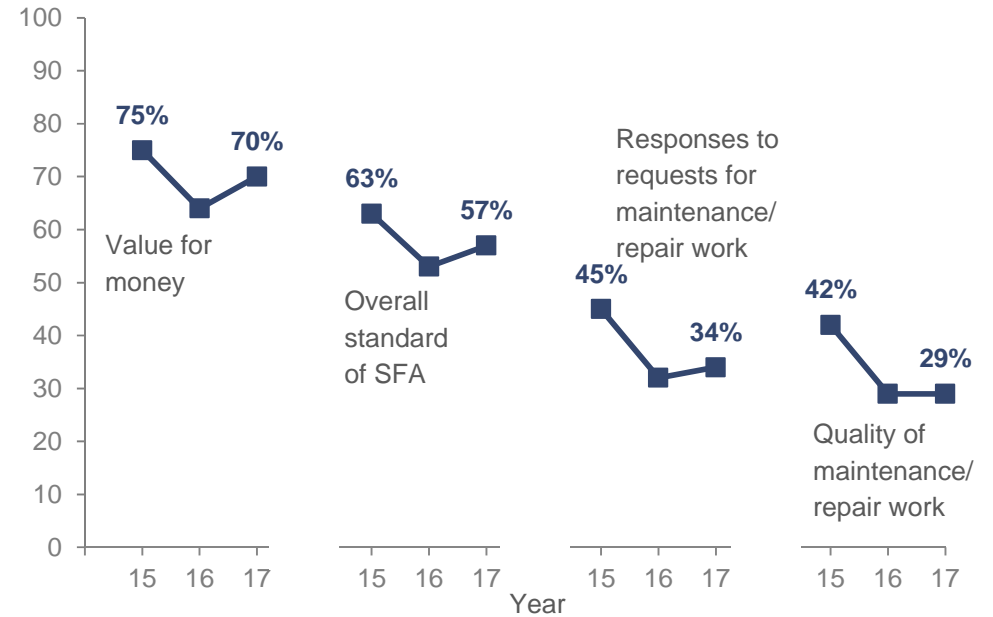


However just over a quarter of families (27%) are not living in a privately owned home but would prefer to be.

Whilst the majority of RN/RM and RAF families would prefer to live in a privately owned home, a similar proportion of Army families would choose to live in SFA as would choose to live in a privately owned home (both 48%).

## Satisfaction with SFA/SSFA has improved for just two aspects (value for money and overall standard) since 2016 but has not returned to the levels seen in 2015

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



Levels of satisfaction are lower for the response to requests and quality of maintenance/repair work than other aspects of SFA/SSFA. Of those families living in SFA/SSFA, just over a third (34%) are satisfied with the response to requests for maintenance/repair work and 29% are satisfied with the quality of maintenance/repair work.

Whilst satisfaction with these aspects remains unchanged since 2016, levels are still below those reported in 2015 (45% and 42% respectively).

Levels of satisfaction with all other aspects of SFA such as “the security of your SFA/SSFA” remain similar to those reported in 2016.

Satisfaction with most aspects of SFA 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.

<sup>1</sup> SUBSET: Those living in SFA/SSFA (61%).

# Key questions

The following charts highlight the key questions for each section of the FAMCAS report. The key questions are presented by Service in the charts with an overall Tri-Service figure provided for comparison. Overall differences from last year (2016) and the year before (2015) are presented.

A positive change value represents an increase from a previous time period, a negative value represents a decrease.

↔ Indicates no statistically significant change has been found.

N/A indicates that no comparable data is available for that year and therefore no significance tests have been carried out.

## Key Questions - About you

Table Ref	Response		Overall %	% Change from 2016	% Change from 2015
B1.1	I am female.		91	N/A	↔
B1.11	I have children.		79	↔	↔
B3.2	I have a child under the age of 5.		41	↔	↔
B3.15	I have school age children.		51	↔	↔
B1.8	I own a home.		59	↔	↔
B1.10	I am employed.		74	↔	2
B1.9	I am a member of the Regular Armed Forces.		11	N/A	N/A

↔ Indicates no statistically significant change has been found.

N/A No significance tests available.



## Key Questions - About you: Mobility and separation

Table Ref	Response		Overall % Positive	% Change from 2016	% Change from 2015
B1.7	I moved home for Service reasons over the last 12 months.		23	-4	-4
B1.14	I have not moved home for Service reasons in last 5 years.		31	N/A	N/A
B1.14	I have moved home for Service reasons at least twice in the last 5 years.		47	N/A	N/A
B1.3	I live with my spouse.		76	↔	↔
B1.6	My spouse has not been away from home.		13	↔	↔
	<i>For Service reasons over the last year</i>				
B1.6	My spouse has been away from home for more than 3 months.		32	↔	-6
	<i>For Service reasons over the last year</i>				
B1.6	My spouse has been away from home for more than 6 months.		12	↔	-3
	<i>For Service reasons over the last year</i>				

## Key Questions - Armed Forces Covenant and Service life

Table Ref	Question		Overall % Positive	% Change from 2016	% Change from 2015
B2.3	I have never heard of the Armed Forces Covenant.		34	-3	-7
B2.4	I feel advantaged compared to the general public about housing.		34	↔	↔

↔ Indicates no statistically significant change has been found

N/A No significance tests available

## Key Questions - Armed Forces Covenant and Service life cont.

Table Ref	Response		Overall % Positive	% Change from 2016	% Change from 2015
B2.7	I feel disadvantaged compared to the general public about family life.	<p>RN/RM: 50% Army: 45% RAF: 40%</p>	50	N/A	N/A
B2.10	I feel negative about the effect on my children.	<p>RN/RM: 49% Army: 45% RAF: 45%</p>	49	3	5
<i>SUBSET: Families with children (79%).</i>					
B2.11	I feel positive about Service-provided facilities.	<p>RN/RM: 38% Army: 40% RAF: 35%</p>	38	↔	5
B2.17	I feel negative about the amount of separation.	<p>RN/RM: 57% Army: 55% RAF: 55%</p>	57	↔	↔
B2.21	I feel positive about job security.	<p>RN/RM: 64% Army: 55% RAF: 75%</p>	64	8	8
B2.28	I agree that I feel part of the wider Service community.	<p>RN/RM: 23% Army: 25% RAF: 15%</p>	23	N/A	N/A
B2.29	I would be happier if my partner chose to leave the Service.	<p>RN/RM: 37% Army: 35% RAF: 40%</p>	37	N/A	N/A

## Key Questions - Childcare and children's education

Table Ref	Response		Overall % Positive	% Change from 2016	% Change from 2015
B3.9	I needed early years (0-4) childcare in the last 12 months.	<p>RN/RM: 36% Army: 35% RAF: 35%</p>	36	↔	N/A
<i>SUBSET: Families with children (79%).</i>					
B3.10	I needed early years (0-4) childcare and was able to access it.	<p>RN/RM: 90% Army: 90% RAF: 90%</p>	90	↔	N/A
<i>SUBSET: Families who needed early years childcare (28%).</i>					

↔ Indicates no statistically significant change has been found.

N/A No significance tests available.

## Key Questions - Childcare and children's education cont.

Table Ref	Response		Overall % Positive	% Change from 2016	% Change from 2015
<b>B3.11</b>	I am satisfied with access of local early years (0-4) childcare. <i>SUBSET: Families who needed early years childcare (28%).</i>		78	↔	N/A
<b>B3.16</b>	I have at least one child at a state school. <i>SUBSET: Families with school age children (51%).</i>		79	↔	↔
<b>B3.22</b>	I did not experience difficulties with my children's schooling. <i>SUBSET: Families with school age children (51%).</i>		76	N/A	N/A
<b>B3.36</b>	My child changed schools for Service reasons in the last 12 months. <i>SUBSET: Families with school age children (51%).</i>		17	-4	-5
<b>B3.37</b>	I needed childcare for my school age children in the last 12 months. <i>SUBSET: Families with school age children (51%).</i>		48	N/A	N/A
<b>B3.39</b>	I am satisfied with the quality of local childcare for school age children. <i>SUBSET: Families with school age children (51%).</i>		69	N/A	N/A

## Key Questions - Deployment

Table Ref	Response		Overall % Positive	% Change from 2016	% Change from 2015
<b>B4.2</b>	I know where to go for Service-provided welfare support while my spouse is on an operational tour.		63	↔	↔
<b>B4.3</b>	I am satisfied with the welfare support I received before my spouse's most recent operational tour. <i>SUBSET: Spouse deployed within last two years (38%).</i>		39	-5	-11

↔ Indicates no statistically significant change has been found.

N/A No significance tests available/

## Key Questions - Deployment cont.

Table Ref	Response		Overall % Positive	% Change from 2016	% Change from 2015
B4.6	I am satisfied with the welfare support I received during my spouse's most recent operational tour. <i>SUBSET: Spouse deployed within last two years (38%).</i>		37	-9	-12
B4.10	I am satisfied with the welfare support I received after my spouse's most recent operational tour. <i>SUBSET: Spouse deployed within last two years (38%).</i>		30	-6	-12

## Key Questions - Employment

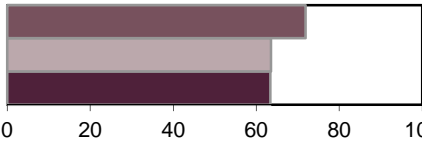
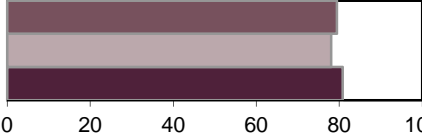
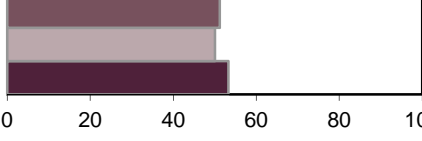
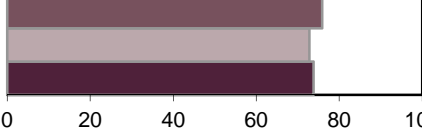
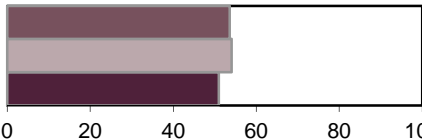
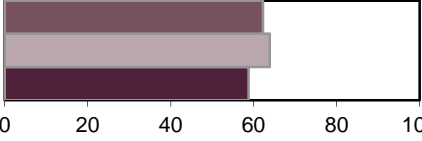
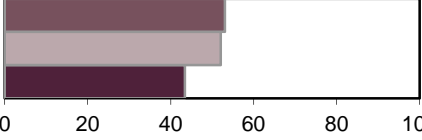
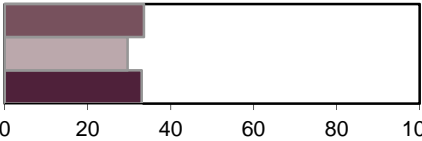
Table Ref	Response		Overall % Positive	% Change from 2016	% Change from 2015
B5.18	I am employed.		74	↔	2
B5.8	I am in full-time employment.		43	↔	↔
B5.19	I have looked for a job in the past year.		38	↔	↔
B5.21	I had difficulties finding suitable employment in the past year.		26	↔	↔
B5.5	I accompanied my spouse on an overseas assignment in past year.		10	-2	-3
B5.3	I was able to access Further or Higher education without difficulty in the past year. <i>SUBSET: Those who needed access to Further or Higher education (31%).</i>		53	N/A	N/A
B5.4	I was able to continue an educational course previously started without difficulty in the past year. <i>SUBSET: Those who needed to continue a course (18%).</i>		43	N/A	N/A

↔ Indicates no statistically significant change has been found.

N/A No significance tests available.

## Key Questions - Healthcare

**Table**  
**Ref Response**

					Overall % Positive	% Change from 2016	% Change from 2015
<b>B6.9</b>	I was able to access dental treatment without difficulty.	RN/RM Army RAF			<b>65</b>	↔	<b>-3</b>
<i>SUBSET: Families who required access to dental treatment (87%).</i>							
<b>B6.10</b>	I was able to access GP services without difficulty.	RN/RM Army RAF			<b>79</b>	↔	<b>-5</b>
<i>SUBSET: Families who required access to GP services (94%).</i>							
<b>B6.11</b>	I was able to access mental health treatment without difficulty.	RN/RM Army RAF			<b>51</b>	↔	<b>-11</b>
<i>SUBSET: Families who required access to mental health treatment (16%).</i>							
<b>B6.12</b>	I was able to access hospital/specialist services without difficulty.	RN/RM Army RAF			<b>74</b>	↔	<b>-6</b>
<i>SUBSET: Families who required access to hospital/specialist services (63%).</i>							
<b>B6.21</b>	I was able to continue dental treatment in a new location without difficulty.	RN/RM Army RAF			<b>53</b>	↔	↔
<i>SUBSET: Families who moved while undergoing dental treatment (7%).</i>							
<b>B6.22</b>	I was able to continue GP treatment in a new location without difficulty.	RN/RM Army RAF			<b>63</b>	↔	<b>-9</b>
<i>SUBSET: Families who moved while undergoing GP treatment (12%).</i>							
<b>B6.24</b>	I was able to continue hospital/specialist treatment in a new location without difficulty.	RN/RM Army RAF			<b>51</b>	↔	<b>-10</b>
<i>SUBSET: Families who moved while undergoing hospital/specialist treatment (9%).</i>							
<b>B6.26</b>	Waiting time for an operation/consultant appointment was NOT increased due to my move.	RN/RM Army RAF			<b>31</b>	<b>-10</b>	↔
<i>SUBSET Families who moved whilst on a waiting list for an operation/consultant appointment (7%).</i>							

↔ Indicates no statistically significant change has been found.

N/A No significance tests available.

## Key Questions - Housing

Table Ref	Response		Overall % Positive	% Change from 2016	% Change from 2015
B7.1	I own my own home.		59	↔	↔
B7.2	I am currently saving up to buy a home in the future.		20	↔	↔
B7.13	I live in Service Family Accommodation (SFA) during the working week.		58	↔	↔
B7.13	I live in a privately owned home during the working week.		35	↔	↔
B7.15	I am living in my preferred type of accommodation.		69	3	↔
B7.16	I am satisfied with the overall standard of SFA/SSFA.		57	4	-6
		<i>SUBSET: Families who live in SFA/SSFA (61%).</i>			
B7.23	I am satisfied with the speed at which SFA is allocated.		55	N/A	N/A
		<i>SUBSET: Families who live in SFA/SSFA (61%).</i>			
B7.18	I am satisfied with the response to maintenance/repair work.		34	↔	-11
		<i>SUBSET: Families who live in SFA/SSFA (61%).</i>			
B7.19	I am satisfied with the quality of maintenance/repair work.		29	↔	-13
		<i>SUBSET: Families who live in SFA/SSFA (61%).</i>			

↔ Indicates no statistically significant change has been found.

N/A No significance tests available.

# Methodology

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## 1. Target Population

The target population for FAMCAS 2017 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 and paper format. The RN/RM has run an online survey for several years and the Army and RAF introduced an online survey in 2016.

Both the paper questionnaires and e-mail invites to the online questionnaire are sent to Service personnel who are asked to pass them onto their spouse/civil partner. Data collection ran from February 2017 to the end of April 2017, 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.

It is suspected that the introduction of online questionnaires for Army and RAF spouses in 2016 led to a small increase in the number of Service personnel completing the survey on behalf of their spouse and increased item non-response for later questions due to a rise in partially completed questionnaires. Details of this issue are provided in the 2016 Background Quality Report. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/tri-service-families-continuous-attitude-survey-index>

This year, to improve the validity of responses, the question “Are you married to/in a civil partnership with a member of the Regular [Royal Navy/Royal Marines/Army/RAF]?” was added to the start of both the online and paper questionnaire. Those who responded no to this question were unable to continue with the electronic survey and were removed from the paper survey responses.

## 3. The sample and respondents

The total FAMCAS 2017 sample consisted of 28,383 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. The table below shows the strata we are able to select a sample from and the 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 2016 response rates this sample design was expected to yield precisions of around 2.5% 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 6% and 9%. Margins of error for each question can be found in reference tables published alongside this report here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/tri-service-families-continuous-attitude-survey-index>

7,145 responses were used in the FAMCAS 2017 analysis, giving an overall response rate of 25%. 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	2017 response rate	2016 response rate	2015 response rate	2014 response rate
<b>Royal Navy</b>	Officers	1 982	715	36%	38%	35%	37%
	Ratings	5 653	1 135	20%	22%	21%	20%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>7 635</b>	<b>1 850</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Royal Marines</b>	Officers	346	95	27%	29%	29%	34%
	Marines	1 519	249	16%	22%	19%	26%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1 865</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>28%</b>
<b>Army</b>	Officers	2 127	961	45%	45%	45%	42%
	Soldiers	9 957	1 965	20%	22%	20%	22%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>12 084</b>	<b>2 926</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>Royal Air Force</b>	Officers	1 602	552	34%	41%	34%	31%
	Airmen	5 197	1 473	28%	32%	23%	21%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>6 799</b>	<b>2 025</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>23%</b>
<b>All Services</b>	Officers	6 057	2 323	38%	41%	38%	37%
	Ranks	22 326	4 822	22%	24%	21%	21%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>28 383</b>	<b>7 145</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>25%</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 rank in order to correct for the bias caused by over or under-representation.



The weights were calculated simply by:

$$\frac{\text{Population size within weighting class (p)}}{\text{Number of responses within weighting class (r)}}$$

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 2017 analysis**

Weighting Class	Weighting Applied	Weighting Class	Weighting Applied	Weighting Class	Weighting Applied
RN_OF5+_Eng	5.00	Army_OF5+_Eng	10.65	RAF_OF5+_Eng	13.82
RN_OF1+_Scot	4.64	Army_OF1+_NI	2.70	RAF_OF1+_Scot/Wales	6.64
RN_OF1+_NI/Wales	2.95	Army_OF1+_Scot	3.29	RAF_OF1+_Cyprus/NonUK	4.24
RN_OF1+_NonUK	4.33	Army_OF1+_Wales	6.40	RAF_OF1-4_Eng	9.92
RN_OF1-4_Eng	5.04	Army_OF1+_Cyprus	1.84	RAF_OR6-9_Eng	10.56
RN_OR6-9_Eng	5.14	Army_OF1+_Germany	2.09	RAF_OR6-9+_NI/Wales	6.35
RN_OR6-9_NI/Wales	3.43	Army_OF5+_NonUK	1.84	RAF_OR6-9_Scot	4.82
RN_OR6-9_Scot	5.98	Army_OF1-4_Eng	13.60	RAF_OR6-9_Cyprus	3.26
RN_OR6-9_NonUK	5.18	Army_OF1-4_NonUK	3.33	RAF_OR6-9_NonUK	4.40
RN_OR3-4_Eng	7.32	Army_OR6-9_Eng	21.20	RAF_OR3-4_Eng	7.17
RN_OR1-4_Scot/Wales	19.56	Army_OR6-9_NI	5.02	RAF_OR3-4_Scot	4.57
RN_OR1-4_NonUK	10.89	Army_OR6-9_Scot	4.48	RAF_OR1-4_Wales	6.47
RN_OR1-2_Eng	10.98	Army_OR6-9_Wales	8.27	RAF_OR3-4_Cyprus	4.83
RM_OF1+_Eng	5.12	Army_OR6-9_Cyprus	3.38	RAF_OR1-4_NonUK	6.63
RM_OF1+_Scot/NonUK	4.36	Army_OR6-9_Germany	3.09	RAF_OR1-2_Eng	11.04
RM_OR6-9_Eng	6.28	Army_OR6-9_NonUK	3.70	RAF_OR1-2_Scot	7.29
RM_OR6-9_Scot/Wales/NonUK	5.48	Army_OR3-4_Eng	22.41	RAF_OR1-2_Cyprus	4.96
RM_OR3-4_Eng	13.60	Army_OR1-4_NI	9.68		
RM_OR1-4_Scot/NonUK	13.00	Army_OR3-4_Scot	8.71		
RM_OR1-2_Eng	15.56	Army_OR1-4_Wales	12.75		
		Army_OR1-4_Cyprus	7.14		
		Army_OR1-4_Germany	8.58		
		Army_OR1-4_NonUK	17.28		
		Army_OR1-2_Eng	48.72		

## 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 here <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/tri-service-families-continuous-attitude-survey-index>

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 here <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/tri-service-families-continuous-attitude-survey-index>)**

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 also 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.

## Glossary

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.
Armed Forces Pay Review Body	Provides independent advice to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Defence on the pay and charges for members of the Naval, Military and Air Forces of the Crown.
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 ranks 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 spouse	Within this report this term refers to the spouse or civil partner of a Regular trained member of the Armed Forces.
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.

Service Accommodation	Any type of accommodation that includes 'SFA', 'SSFA', 'SLA', 'SSSA' and 'Onboard a ship or submarine'
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
Special Educational Need (SEN)	Children who have needs or disabilities that affect their ability to learn
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 change in proportions between years
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
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 in order 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

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### Contact Us

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