

**If you belong to a Service family, the Government is working to provide you with extra support and services. This is part of the Nation's Commitment to you.**

### What is the Nation's Commitment?

Our Service men and women make a commitment to the nation by serving in the Forces; and we know that without the support of their families, many would find their job more difficult. Therefore to repay this commitment and support, the Government is taking steps to help you manage the lives of yourself and your family with as little stress as possible.

Look out for:

- Compensation for most serious injuries doubled.
- Free further education for Service leavers.
- Access to substantial grants to adapt houses for disabled veterans.
- Retention of places on NHS waiting lists.
- Help for Service leavers to get on the housing ladder.
- Priority boarding school places for Service children.
- Fairer treatment when Service families apply for social housing.
- Help for Service partners to find work when they move.
- A fairer route to British citizenship for Foreign and Commonwealth Service children.
- Special advocates to speak up for the Service Community in Government departments, and in the Devolved Administrations in Scotland and Wales.



### Find out more

What the Government is doing to fulfill its side of the Nation's Commitment is laid out in a report called the Service Personnel Command Paper. This leaflet tells you about the parts of this report that relate to you as a member of a Service family; there are different leaflets available for those who are serving, and for veterans (including information on war widows and widowers). For copies of any of these leaflets, email [DCDSPERS-SEC-SPCPMailbox@mod.uk](mailto:DCDSPERS-SEC-SPCPMailbox@mod.uk).

You can download the leaflets, as well as copies of the Service Personnel Command Paper, from [www.mod.uk/spcp](http://www.mod.uk/spcp). This website also has contact details for organisations that can help you claim for everything you are entitled to claim.

### The HIVE Information Service

This is a tri-Service information network, available to all members of the service community. To find out about relocation, local unit and civilian facilities, places of interest, schools and further education, housing, healthcare facilities, employment and training opportunities in your location, go to [www.hive.mod.uk](http://www.hive.mod.uk), or tel: 01 722 437980/Mil: 94331 4980.

### NI Aftercare Service

For medical, vocational and benevolence support to former UDR and R IRISH(HS), go to [www.aftercareservice.org](http://www.aftercareservice.org)

### Citizens Advice Bureaux

Citizens Advice, in partnership with the Royal British Legion and the RAF Benevolent Fund, can provide advice on benefits and money matters specific to the Armed Forces. Go to [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk), or visit your local bureau.

### Community Support

Further information is available by visiting:  
Royal Navy [www.rncom.mod.uk](http://www.rncom.mod.uk)  
Army [www.army.mod.uk](http://www.army.mod.uk)  
Royal Air Force [www.rafcom.co.uk](http://www.rafcom.co.uk)

## What is the Government doing for members of Service Families?



This leaflet tells you about the support the Government is putting in place for you as a member of a Service family.

 HM Government

# What have we done for Service Families?

In 2008, we took unprecedented action to make sure that Armed Forces personnel, their families and veterans are not put at a disadvantage by Service life. This leaflet highlights some recent changes and others which will be happening soon. For the most up-to-date information, go to [www.mod.uk/spcp](http://www.mod.uk/spcp).

Our Service families are as varied as the Services themselves – with or without children, some just joining the military community, whilst some are preparing to leave. Some have strong links to a local area, others have moved many times. What is most relevant to you will depend upon your own circumstances.

## Housing

All Service personnel are provided with accommodation but many people aspire to owning their own home, particularly those with families. And they must also make plans for the time when they will not have Service accommodation available.

When it comes to finding a home, frequent moves, operational deployment and serving overseas can all make things difficult for a Service person and their family. MOD's aim is to find ways of helping more serving personnel to buy their own home. We are currently working with the Homes and Communities Agency on a **pilot Armed Forces Home Ownership Scheme**.

Service personnel are now a **priority group**, when applying for any **affordable housing scheme** across England, Scotland and Wales. Special changes have also been made to these schemes to take account of the frequent moves which we expect of Servicemen and women. There will be arrangements to allow Service personnel to sub-let their homes when they are posted away, and your priority status will continue for 12 months after your discharge date.

Members of the Armed Forces who are about to leave Service can now apply to stay in any available **MOD 'void' property** (that is, an empty house owned by the MOD, which is not needed for another purpose) on a temporary basis while you look for a permanent home. This will not jeopardise your place on social housing waiting lists. A property may not be available, but we will do our best.

Some local authorities give priority to people who have a **'local connection'** to their area, when they allocate social housing. Housing legislation in England and Wales, has been changed to give members of the Armed Forces a 'local connection' whilst serving at a duty station. This will give the Armed Forces parity of treatment with their civilian compatriots when applying for social housing. We are working to get the same rules in place for Scotland.

In addition, new supported housing will be built in England for Service leavers at risk of homelessness.

## Education and skills

Service family members can now get **basic skills training** at their local Armed Forces education facility (if there is space). Ask your local Armed Forces education facility for details.

## Schools and childcare

We know that access to a school of choice can be more difficult for Service families because you are posted

frequently, and often at short notice. This means that deadlines for school place allocation have already passed and places in popular schools have been filled.

We have made changes to the Schools Admission Code so that local authorities and admissions authorities must take the particular needs of Service children into account. Service children will also have **greater priority for state boarding school places** (this includes the children of Service personnel who have been killed or seriously injured while on duty).

Access to childcare can be difficult for many Service families. We are working to ensure that English local authorities recognise this when they assess local childcare provision.

## Health

If a family member is on an NHS waiting list in one area, and then has to move, the time they have spent on the waiting list will be recognised, **so you do not have to start at the bottom of the list in your new area**. Inform your families NHS doctor before you leave your current area.

If you are considering IVF treatment, the MOD has taken steps to help you stay in one area until your course of treatment is finished.

We are also working to make it easier for you to find a dentist in your area. Contact NHS Direct for more information (0845 4647/[www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)).

## Employment and Benefits

Service spouses are now eligible for **early access to the Government's New Deal** (an initiative aimed at getting people back into work). Further information is available from your local Job Centre Plus.

If you accompany your spouse on an overseas posting, you may find it difficult to get a job and keep up your National Insurance contributions. This can impact on your ability to claim National Insurance contribution-related benefits (including Jobseeker's Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance). We now plan to award **Class 1 National Insurance credits**, so this problem will no longer arise. These will be introduced from tax year 2010/11.

The Department for Work and Pensions has produced a factsheet explaining how you can access **contributory state benefits**. There is a link to this from [www.mod.uk/spcp](http://www.mod.uk/spcp).

## Foreign and Commonwealth Personnel

The Borders Immigration and Citizenship Bill, now going through Parliament, will provide our Foreign and Commonwealth personnel (and their families) with **special routes to obtain British citizenship**. In addition rule changes have already come into effect to ease immigration issues for F&C families. Firstly, unmarried and same-sex partners of F&C Armed Forces personnel will now be granted limited leave to enter or remain for the first time. Secondly, spouses, civil partners, unmarried and same-sex partners of Forces personnel will now be able to apply for settlement providing their serving spouse, civil partner, unmarried or same-sex partner has completed at least five years continuous service and they have been in a relationship for at least two years.

To find out more about what we are doing for you, and how you can access this support, go to [www.mod.uk/spcp](http://www.mod.uk/spcp)