

**Chairperson**  
Mrs Kim Richardson

# Naval Families Federation



8 October 2009

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I am writing to you today on behalf of all three Families Federations on a subject that has caused us some alarm. In his keynote speech to the Labour Party Conference in Brighton, the Prime Minister revealed that from April 2011 employees who join an employer-supported voucher scheme will not be entitled to the existing exemptions. Also that from April 2015, existing recipients of vouchers will have their vouchers withdrawn completely.

Although the take up for vouchers in MOD has not been as high as we would have liked, I would like to register concern on behalf of each and every one of the families who subscribe to this scheme. Our families are telling us that accessible affordable childcare is a challenge, so to remove something that has gone some way to making this easier is, in our view, a retrograde step. Free nursery places are a terrific idea, but are they really going to be a realistic option for our mobile population who are always joining the bottom of the waiting list?

As an aside, you may be interested to know that the website Netmums has registered over 200 comments on the subject – all expressing concern - and that the Downing Street petition asking the Prime Minister to rethink the decision has over 31,000 signatures.

I have copied this letter to the Minister for Women and Equality as she has expressed an interest in Service families and the challenges they are currently experiencing in finding work and childcare.

This is the first time I have felt the need to correspond with you directly outside our planned meetings, which I hope will reinforce the importance we place on this. I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards

Kim

cc: Rt Hon Harriet Harman MP, Leader of the House of Commons,  
Minister for Women and Equality, and Lord Privy Seal.  
Dawn McCafferty, Chairman, RAF FF. Julie McCarthy, Chief Executive, AFF.