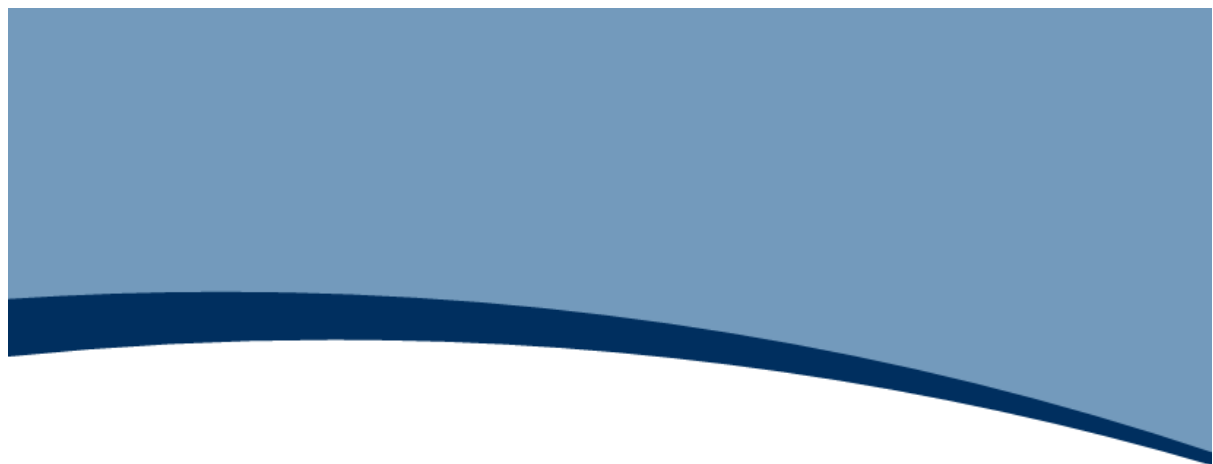


RAF Benson HIVE Bulletin April 2026



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News Updates

Transformative new childcare support could save Armed Forces families up to £6,000 a year



1 - Images UK MOD Crown Copywrite 2024

A new Ministry of Defence scheme to transform support for Armed Forces families with young children will be rolled out across Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland from September 2026, the Defence Secretary has announced on 20 March 2026.

This major boost could save eligible Armed Forces families up to £6,000 per year for each child, depending on where you are in the UK. Defence is committed to supporting Armed Forces families, wherever you live and work. This scheme will help with the cost of living and navigating life as a family in the Armed Forces, recognising the demands placed on Service personnel and the critical roles families play in support of them. Hundreds of families in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are expected to be eligible for the scheme. Defence Secretary, John Healey MP, said: "Our Armed Forces families are at the heart of our nation's security. With demands on defence rising, from the conflict in the Middle East to growing Russian aggression, we are asking more of our military, and it is right that we continue to step up our support for them." "This transformative offer will ensure more military families get the childcare support they need, no matter where they are posted." "We are making good

on our promise to Armed Forces families - supporting them as they support our dedicated military personnel defending the UK and our allies. Our message to the Armed Forces community is clear: this government is on your side."

On 19 March 2026, the Defence Secretary visited Dregghorn Barracks in Edinburgh to launch this new scheme and meet families who will benefit from this extra support.

About the scheme

Who is eligible for the scheme?

From September 2026, this new scheme will be rolled out to UK working Armed Forces families – in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland – with children aged between:

- 9 months until they reach 3 years old in Scotland and Wales, or
- 9 months to 4 years old in Northern Ireland.

Where a Serving parent is assigned to a non-UK location, but the family is located in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, you will be eligible as long as you meet the other eligibility criteria.

How will the scheme work?

The scheme will be delivered through Defence's existing Early Years childcare reimbursement scheme and will ensure that eligible working UK Armed Forces families receive the same Government funded childcare support as Armed Forces families in England.

If you and your Serving partner are employed and meet the income thresholds required to access an active Tax-Free Childcare account, this scheme could save your family thousands.

What next?

This scheme will be rolled out from September 2026, giving you more time to prepare and explore suitable childcare options.

Defence will continue to work closely with the devolved governments, and further details will be set out in the coming month.

Empowering Armed Forces families

Defence remains committed to listening to the voices of those in the Armed Forces community. With childcare being cited as one of several factors affecting Armed Forces retention and morale, this new scheme supports this government's mission to fix the recruitment crisis and improve lived experiences.

Wider support that Defence has delivered for Armed Forces families since July 2024 include:

- [A new housing strategy](#), which allocates £9bn to improve over 40,000 military homes.

- Awarding Service personnel with the [biggest pay rise](#) in 20 years.
- Bringing the Armed Forces Covenant into law through the [Armed Forces Bill](#), introduced this year. This will ensure that all government departments place the Armed Forces community at the heart of government decision-making.
- [Setting up a Families Hub](#) to help people make informed choices about navigating family life in the Armed Forces.

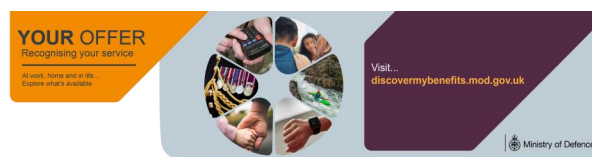
Signposting

To find information on Childcare and early Years, including costs and general guidance across the UK, [visit the Families Hub](#).

For useful signposting to information, support and organisations to help navigate Service family life, [visit the Families Hub](#).

The Ministry of Defence's Families Continuous Attitude Survey – which asks a random sample of Regular Service families about daily aspects of Service – closes on 15 April 2026. To check if you are in the sample, and to access the survey, [use the online checker](#).

Introducing the Continuity of Education Allowance advisory helpdesk



A new team is ready to help you with questions about Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA). Moving around for your work in the Armed Forces can make it hard to keep your children's education on track. This is where CEA comes in – helping your children stay settled in education, even when Service life means your family must move.

Here to help

Sometimes, working out if you're eligible to claim CEA – or how to claim it – can feel complicated and confusing, as every situation is different. That's why we've set up a new team in the Pay and Allowances Casework and Complaints Cell (PACCC) to assist. From 1 April 2026, the CEA advisory helpdesk will provide a group of experts to help you, your family, or your Unit HR team with any tricky questions about the allowance. Whether you're trying to understand the rules or need help with a complex case, the team will point you to the right people and make sure you get clear guidance.

The new helpdesk works alongside the **Education Advisory Team (EAT) (UK)** service within Defence Children Services (DCS). This remains available to provide professional, independent advice, guidance, and support to Service families on children's education – covering school

admissions, Special Educational Needs Allowance (SENA), and boarding school applications (including schools not currently on the Boarding School Database).

How to get in touch

CEA advisory helpdesk

Your first stop should always be your Unit HR team. If extra support is needed for your case, they – or you – can contact the CEA Advisory Team directly at DBSAFVS-MilOps-PACCC-CEAAdvice@mod.gov.uk

You can also follow the team on Defence Connect – join: [Group: Pay and Allowances Casework and Complaints Cell \(PACCC\)](#) When you get in touch, please include your name, number, rank and unit so the team can help you as quickly as possible.

Education Advisory Team, Defence Children Services

You can contact the EAT team, within DCS, for guidance and advice at RC-DCS-HQ-EAT@mod.gov.uk


What's next

The helpdesk is just getting started and will be tested and developed over the coming months. A GOV.UK page will be on the way by Autumn too – giving easier access to families and those who can't access the Defence network.

Find out more For further information on CEA and how to claim it visit [Chapter 14 of JSP 752](#) – the main Armed Forces policy guidance for pay and allowances.

RAF Benevolent Fund- Do you need one-off support with your bills and cost of living

Do you need one-off support with your bills and cost of living?




Lightning Reach is a free online portal that connects you to financial support from various sources, quickly and securely - all in one place.

Connecting you to:

- ✔ Charitable grants
- ✔ Local authority schemes
- ✔ Help with bills
- ✔ Benefits check
- ✔ Other vital support


Some of our support providers

There are over 2,500 organisations offering support, which include:



How does it work?


- 1 Sign up**
Create a secure profile in just 10-15 minutes
- 2 Support Match**
Discover what support you have been matched with
- 3 Apply**
Provide supporting evidence and submit your application(s)



"Knowing there's support out there for people like me means the world. I don't like asking for help, but this came at the right time and made a real difference."

James received over £700 towards a well-being break and food vouchers from the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund and the Royal British Legion

Sign up today
Create your free account and discover support today.
www.lightningreach.org/RAFBF



THRIVE (PrePRD Only) Course 13-17 Apr 26

This course is designed for service personnel who are at risk of reaching PRD status but have not yet crossed that threshold. Its purpose is to prevent escalation and support individuals in remaining effective and engaged in the workplace.

Course description

The Thrive Course is a new one week residential programme designed to equip students with practical tools to enhance their overall health and wellbeing. Attendees are required to complete a series of online learning modules based on the Defence Psychoeducation Programme prior to arrival. This will be detailed in the JIs prior to attendance.

The course is structured around the NHS Five Steps to Mental Wellbeing, which are, Giving to Others, Keep Learning, Being Active, Connecting with Others, and Taking Notice, which serve as the core framework for delivery. Teaching follows a 20/80% split between classroom-based sessions and practical activities, allowing students to apply the concepts covered.

Formal sessions focus on key topics including sleep hygiene, stress management, habit formation and goal setting, addiction awareness, support signposting, and nutrition. Practical activities are used to facilitate deeper discussion and vary depending on weather

conditions and availability. Core activities typically include mountain biking, indoor climbing, walking, swimming, Equestrian, Golf, Yoga, Reflexology, Archery and mindfulness, with additional options available.

For further info contact:RC-Pers-PRUSNI-PRC-0MAILBOX@mod.gov.uk

Global Support Organisation Overseas Guides



The Global Support Organisation (GSO) supports and enables Ministry of Defence (MOD) personnel and UK Defence activity overseas. The GSO provides non-operational support to around 5,000 MOD personnel and families on permanent assignments overseas, in addition to supporting UK Defence activity.

The guides are accessible on the [GOV.UK page](#).

- [European Entry Exit System guidance](#)
- [Healthcare – Central European Practice](#)
- [Brunssum, Netherlands guide](#)
- [Brussels, Belgium guide](#)
- [Izmir, Turkey guide](#)
- [Mons, Belgium guide](#)
- [North Germany guide](#)
- [South East Germany guide](#)
- [South West Germany \(Ramstein\) guide](#)
- [South Italy guide](#)
- [North Italy guide](#)
- [Portugal, Lisbon guide](#)
- [Scandinavia guide](#)



Month of the Military Child FREE Activity Session - Wednesday 8th April

Come and join us in the Station Church for a free children's craft session to celebrate the Month of the Military Child followed by a free ice cream from the BFBS ice-cream van.



COME AND JOIN US CELEBRATE



WHERE: STATION CHURCH

DATE: WEDNESDAY 8TH APRIL 2026

TIME: 1300 - 1400

FREE CRAFT SESSION FOR ALL MILITARY CHILDREN

(Children under the age of 8 need to be accompanied by an adult)

PLEASE COME AND JOIN US FOR AN HOUR OF FUN,
FOLLOWED BY A FREE ICE-CREAM FROM THE BFBS ICE
CREAM VAN.

Booking required so that we can purchase age related crafts.
To book your child's space, please email with child's name and
age to:

Janine.Ansty-Bridges263@mod.gov.uk



Easter Flower Baskets

If you have booked onto the Easter Flower Basket session on Thursday 9th April, please can you ensure that you are outside the back door of the Soft Play Room opposite the Costcutter

Shop 5 mins earlier so that we can get you booked in and set up around the tables ready for a 1030 start.

VIVO in Bloom

VIVO are thrilled to launch a curated selection of wellbeing events in collaboration with Nurture!

These creative workshops help improve holistic wellbeing for you and your community.



Flower basket arranging

Learn how to make your very own hanging basket to take home and display!

We supply all materials, plants & PPE.

Date

Thursday 9th April 2026

Time

10-30 - 1130

Location

Soft Play Area - Community Centre. Limited Spaces Available



How to take part

Turn up on the date listed. Don't forget to bring your family and enjoy!

RAF Benson Groups/Clubs



Location: Upstairs in the Station Community Centre Price: £1 Session

Ben Club
Tuesdays **4-5:30**
Reception - Year 3
(Starting age 5)

Inters
Tuesdays **6-8pm**
Year 6 & Year 7

Juniors
Wednesday **5:00-7**
Year 4 & Year 5

Seniors
Wednesday **7-9**
Year 8 onwards

NEW MEMBERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!

For more information, email Kayleigh Crawley on

kayleigh.crawley@oneymca.org or visit airplayconnect.org



LITTLE CHERUBS' PLAYGROUP



**HELD EVERY MONDAY & THURSDAY
MORNING FROM 0930 – 1100
IN THE SOFT PLAY AREA AT THE
COMMUNITY CENTRE
£1.00 ENTRY PER CHILD WHICH
INCLUDES SNACKS & JUICE
AND HOT BEVERAGE FOR PARENTS.**

(All fees go towards purchasing weekly snacks, craft materials & new toys)

For any enquiries regarding the group, please
email: BEN-BSW-HIO@mod.gov.uk

**RAF BENSON BABY & EXPECTANT
MUM'S GROUP**

IN THE STATION CHURCH

**EVERY WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON
FROM 1330 – 1430**



**Are you a new parent or expectant
mum?**

**Please come and join us for a cuppa
and chat and get to make new friends.**

**Open to all families on station.
£1.00 per family.**

Homestart Support for Families with a child/ren under 5 years old

Homestart are looking to provide support to military families with a child or children under the age of 5 years, the short form below will help inform what support they offer, grateful if folk would take the time to complete it.

[Supporting armed forces families \(serving and veteran\) – Fill in form](#)



Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund - Summer Holiday Provision

Thanks to a generous grant from the RAF Benevolent Fund, RAF Benson will be providing 2 full day activities per week over the summer holidays, these will include football camps, day trips and Stn activities. Open to young people aged 5 - 16 @ £10 per day. More details to follow.

RAF Benson Thrift Shop



RAF Benson Thrift Shop (located behind the Post Box, near the Costcutter)

- Join the FB group (optional, but adverts go out daily)
- Look out for our opening times in the window.
- Open an account.
- Drop off your unwanted items (10 items per week).
- Whatever sells, **you** get 80% of the sales price back.
- The other 20% goes back into the Community for great projects!
- We're always after volunteers to open at your convenience.



Volunteers: Contact Flt Sgt Rachel Kay on x6666 or Rachel.kay808@mod.gov.uk



Latest donations:

£250 Hogs Haven
£250 Karting Club
£100 Badminton Club
£1000 to Youth Groups
£150 Skateboarding Club
£500 Winter Wonderland
£1500 Local Primary Schools
£800 Benches for Sharland Hall
£290 Junior Football Coaching Eqpt

Local Area Events

Vale of the White Horse District Council Easter Events

Fun activities and community days, family exercise, a museum of marvellous things and a cartoon circus are just some of the free and low-cost activities available for children and their families to enjoy during the Easter holidays. South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils are providing activities and events at venues across the area from 29 March to 12 April. For more info, click here: <https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/leisure/enjoy-fun-for-all-the-family-this-easter/>



South Oxfordshire District Council

This Easter the holidays are going to be jam-packed full of activities for children in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse. Click here for more information:



Oxfordshire Mummies Easter Events

Easter 2026 – What's on for kids in and around Oxfordshire. Click here for more information: <https://oxfordshiremummies.co.uk/days-out-in-and-around-oxfordshire/easter-2022-whats-on-for-kids-in-and-around-oxfordshire/>

National Trust Easter Events

Find Easter Adventures near you. Click here for more information: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/whats-on/easter-egg-hunts>

April Owl Festival – Sunday 12th April 2026, open to all.



12PM TO 4PM

FREE ENTRY

APRIL OWL FESTIVAL

Haddenham Village Hall
Banks Road, Haddenham, HP17 8EE

Owl Encounter! Up Close, Hands On,
Totally Unforgettable!

SUNDAY 12TH APRIL

- Hold a real owl
- Craft Making Station
- Owl decorating Crafts
- Sand Art Making
- Craft Fair Market
- Games
- Face Painting
- Pop up cafe
- And more..

Banana Twist Events
bananatwistevents@gmail.com

Waddesdon Manor Easter Fun

Join them this Easter for a fun-filled Easter adventure sure to surprise and delight. This Easter their trail is jam-packed with lots of fun games and creative activities for little ones. Follow your map, get involved in each activity and don't forget to collect your chocolate egg at the end!

Click here for more info: <https://waddesdon.org.uk/whats-on/easter-adventures/>



Oxford Castle & Prison - Adopt a Dragon Easter Event now until 10th April 2026

Join their masters and learn Oxford's history with Dragons, how to care for them and adopt your very own to take home. Don't worry, each dragon is already house-trained and guaranteed not to get any bigger or eat the family pet.

Click here for more info: <https://www.oxfordcastleandprison.co.uk/whats-on/adopt-a-dragon-easter-event/>

Support



PERSONAL SUPPORT AND SOCIAL WORK SERVICE RAF

FIGHTING YOUR OWN BATTLES? WE'VE GOT YOU.

If you serve in the RAF, we're here to support you with all of **life's challenges**, from money worries to mental health struggles.

WE'RE CONFIDENTIAL. WE'RE INDEPENDENT OF THE CHAIN OF COMMAND.

Whatever your rank.
Whatever you're facing.
We've got your back.

ssafa
the
Armed Forces
charity

ROYAL AIR FORCE

Registered as a charity in England and Wales Number 210260 in Scotland Number SC032058 and in Republic of Ireland Number 20220200. Established 1985.

- Live Chat ssafa.org.uk/raf
- WhatsApp +4420 3769 0808
- Facebook facebook.com/ssafarafpssws
- Email psswraf@ssafa-fhs.org.uk
- Phone 0800 058 4690 (UK callers)
020 4570 3939 (Overseas callers)



Do you need some headspace?

We offer **FREE** memberships to the online mindfulness app Headspace, for RAF serving personnel and their partners.

- ✓ Improved mood, relaxation and sleep quality
- ✓ Focus on specific areas such as sport, health or happiness

Sign up today: rafbf.org/mindfulness
Or call: 0300 222 5703



finding it tough?
MENTAL WELLBEING COURSES

ROYAL AIRFORCES Association

Are you or someone you know finding it tough?

We are offering free tailored mental wellbeing training courses for members of the RAF community, specific to your RAF connection, that will help you overcome some of the struggles you may face.

We'll help you to see things differently and learn practical steps to tackle some of life's challenges - or the challenges experienced by the people you care about - helping you and others to take the first steps to get back on your feet.

Who are the courses for?

- All partners, parents, brothers, sisters and children (over 18) of anyone serving in the RAF
 - All RAF veterans and their families
 - Those supporting the RAF community.
- For example: anyone working on an RAF station (eg. MOD civil servants and defence contractors), medical staff, civilian staff or volunteers.

We welcome people who want to support their friends, family members and colleagues, and spot any signs that they may be struggling, as well as gaining some tips for managing their own mental wellbeing and resilience.

LEONARDO MBDA



Book now at rafa.org.uk/fit
Call 0800 018 2361
Email FIT@rafa.org.uk

Accommodation

Service Families Accommodation Communications Updates



Let's get building: MOD set to start construction on first military homes in a decade

Good homes will be placed at the heart of UK military family life as the MOD is set to begin the construction of 265 new military family houses at RAF Brize Norton, Oxfordshire, the first such development in almost a decade. Families living in the area will see a range of new, modern apartments, houses and bungalows begin to be built at Carterton near the air base in the coming weeks, once formal approval is received.

In addition to the building of the houses at Brize Norton, DIO will also be refurbishing another 2,000 homes across the UK in the next 12 months alone, building on the 1,250 worst-condition properties already brought up to standard. This work is a step towards widening access for families who have previously not been able to benefit from a military home, with 1,000 of the refurbished houses being brought back into use for military families. This is almost double the number of previously empty homes that were brought online for families over the previous 12 months.

To read more on this, see the Defence Homes article [here](#).

Message for Service families

We know many of you, especially those in long term relationships or with childcare responsibilities for more than 80 nights a year have been waiting a long time for clearer information about widening access to Defence housing. Thank you for your patience.

We understand how important it is for families to have clarity about their housing options, especially when it comes to making decisions about work, schooling, and other aspects of family life. This remains a priority for Defence, and we are continuing to develop the detail. The final approach will be shaped by the wider Defence Investment Plan, which will set out how Defence will spend its money over the coming years to deliver the priorities of the Strategic Defence Review, including equipment, housing, infrastructure and people. We will share further information as soon as we are able to provide clear and dependable guidance on what widening access will mean for you and your family and how it will work.

To read the full message, click [here](#).

Families First Newsletter

The latest issue of the Families First newsletter, featuring the latest Defence housing news and updates, is now available on the [Defence Homes website](#).



Families News

Money Saving Central: Places Kids Eat Free (or for £1) Easter

 PLACES WHERE KIDS EAT FREE (OR FOR £1)
EASTER HOLIDAYS 2026
moneysavingcentral.co.uk/kids-eat-free

ANGUS STEAKHOUSE Kids under 8 eat FREE daily, 12pm to 5pm	MORRISONS Kids Eat FREE all day, every day with a £5 spend
ASDA Kids eat for £1 daily, with no adult spend	MARCO PIERRE WHITE Kids under 12 Eat FREE daily with an adult spend
ASK ITALIAN 2 Kids eat free from 27th March - 19th April 2026	PAUSA CAFE @ DUNELM Kids eat FREE with every £4 spend all day
BELLA ITALIA Children eat free Sunday - Thursday	PIZZA HUT Kids Eat Free Every Day after 3pm
BEEFEATER & BREWERS FAYRE 2 Kids Eat Free Breakfast with one paying adult	PREMIER INN 2 Kids eat for free with 1 adult breakfast
BILLS Kids eat free Mon 30th March - Fri 10th April	PRETO Kids up to age 10 eat free with 1 paying adult
BREWDOG Kids eat free 28th March - 12th April 2026	PUREZZA Kids under 10 get free pizza with every adult meal
CAFE ROUGE Kids Eat FREE 12-4pm every day of the week	SA BRAINS PUBS Kids eat for £1 on Wednesdays
COCONUT TREE Kids eat free Mon 30th March - Sun 19th April	SUBWAY Kids Eat Free from the 6th - 13th April
CHIQUITO Kids eat free during all school holidays	SIZZLING PUBS Kids eat for £1. Every Monday to Friday, 3 - 7pm
DOBBIES GARDEN CENTRES Kids eat for £1 with an adult breakfast or lunch	TABLE TABLE 2 Kids Eat free breakfast daily with 1 paying adult
FARMHOUSE INNS Kids eat FREE weekdays 30th March - 17th April	TGI FRIDAYS Kids Eat Free with any adult meal (Via App)
FRANKIE & BENNY'S Kids eat FREE daily from 30th March - 17th April	THE REAL GREEK Kids under 12 eat FREE Sundays with £10 spend
FUTURE INNS Under 5s eat for free with any adult meal	TRAVELODGE 2 kids eat for free with 1 adult breakfast
GORDON RAMSEY RESTAURANTS Kids under 10 eat FREE all day, every day	TURTLE BAY Kids eat free with every £15 adult spend
IKEA Kids get a meal from 9.5p daily from 11am	WHITBREAD INNS 2 Kids eat for FREE with 1 adult breakfast
LAS IGUANAS Kids under 12 eat FREE with 'My Las Iguanas' App	YO! SUSHI Kids eat free all day (weekdays) in school holidays

Copyright of MONEY SAVING CENTRAL

**How to Feed Your Kids 3 Meals for
£1.95 this Easter**
(With No Cooking or Washing Up)

 Breakfast	 Lunch	 Dinner
<p>Kelloggs Cereal, a piece of fruit & water FREE at Morrisons Cafes from Monday 30th March to Sunday 19th April 2026</p> <p>Available Daily from 8am - 12pm</p> <p>Cost = FREE</p> <p>Adults & Kids</p>	<p>Kids can get tomato pasta, a refillable soft drink & a piece of fruit for 95p at Ikea</p> <p>Available from 11am Daily</p> <p>Cost = 95p</p> <p>Unlimited Kids</p>	<p>Kids eat at Asda Cafes for £1 with NO adult spend required!</p> <p>Available all Day Every Day</p> <p>Cost = £1</p> <p>Unlimited Kids</p>
<p>Moneysavingcentral.co.uk/kids-eat-free</p>		

Reading Force - Month of the Military Child

With Month of the Military Child just around the corner in April, Reading Force are encouraging families to sign up for their free books and resources, available to all Forces families, serving, veteran, reservist, or ex-serving (including those affected by bereavement, separation, or divorce), with children or grandchildren aged 0–18. Find out more at: <https://www.readingforce.org.uk/>

**IF YOU'RE INTO IT,
READ INTO IT...
GO ALL IN WITH
READING FORCE!**





WE'RE INVITING YOU TO REQUEST YOUR FREE BOOKS!

We all know reading makes your world bigger, makes you smarter, and fuels your creativity. But did you know a study has proven that just **SIX** minutes of reading can reduce your stress level by 68%? And reading increases your empathy and compassion. Wow! 2026 is the National Year of Reading, reminding us to Go All In and get reading.

At Reading Force, we don't just encourage people to read, we encourage you to chat about books – with family and friends. And if you want to, complete one of our special resources – a scrapbook or a teen journal.

Why do it? Because sharing and chatting about a book – whether you loved or hated it, is fun, bonding, and a great excuse for a conversation.



WE'LL HELP YOU BEGIN WITH FREE BOOKS AND RESOURCES FOR MILITARY CHILDREN.

We LOVE the Month of the Military Child, as we get to shout about how amazing military children are. To celebrate, we're inviting you to request your free books!



Simply go onto our website, request your book and resource and we'll post them to your home.

We are tri-service, and welcome children & young people aged 0-18, who are from serving, veteran, bereaved, and divorced forces families. We have books for dyslexia readers too. We would love you to get involved – whether you're new to Reading Force or have taken part before, Go All In.

WWW.READINGFORCE.ORG.UK



Military Connected Children and Young People – Survey invitation: Our Health, Our Community, Our Voice

We need your help! We're asking children and young people from military families to answer some questions and we'd really love to hear from you!

What is it all about? We want to find out what life is like for children who have a parent or guardian in the military. We're asking questions about your home, your school, your friends, and how you feel. This helps us understand what's great about military life, and where young people might need more support.

What are Social Determinants of Health? These are just the things around you that can affect how healthy and happy you feel, like where you live, who you spend time with, whether you feel safe, and whether you can get help when you need it.

What will I need to do? You'll be asked to fill in an online survey. It's not a test and there are no right or wrong answers! It will take about 10–15 minutes and you can do it at home or at school.

Everything you say is private. Your name won't be shared with anyone.

Why should I do it?

- Because your opinion really matters!
- To help other children in military families get better support
- Hundreds of young people all over the UK are doing it too and you'll be part of something really important

Please use the relevant QR to your age group in the poster attached. Or follow the links below to the survey:

Age 8-11 – [Qualtrics Survey | Qualtrics Experience Management](#)

Age 12-15 – [Qualtrics Survey | Qualtrics Experience Management](#)

Age 16-18 - [Qualtrics Survey | Qualtrics Experience Management](#)



Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust: New funding opens to help young service children get the best start in life



New funding opens to help young service children get the best start in life.

Young children in serving armed forces families often experience change in their early years before they even start school.

Frequent moves, long periods of separation, and the pressures of service life can all affect a child's sense of stability at a critical stage of development.

A new round of funding has now opened to help early years providers and local authorities respond to these challenges and give service children the strong, nurturing start they deserve.

Early Years Programme

The Early Years programme delivered by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust (the Trust) on behalf of the Ministry of Defence, is part of the Armed Forces Families Fund. It supports projects that improve childcare provision for children aged birth to five from serving armed forces families. Focus is on helping early years settings develop practical projects that reflect the realities of military life, ensuring young service children can access safe, consistent environments that support their learning, wellbeing and sense of security before they begin primary school.

What funding can support

The Trust is looking to fund projects that make a meaningful difference for service children by:

- Increasing capacity so more service children can attend early years settings.
- Enhancing learning environments to support children's educational development.
- Developing staff knowledge and skills through targeted training and resources focused on the needs of service families.
- Strengthening local partnerships, encouraging collaboration and resource-sharing across settings and local authorities.
- Improving engagement with families, particularly during times when additional support may be needed.

Claire Rick, Director of Strategy of the Trust, said: "Children in armed forces families face unique challenges. The Early Years Programme helps early years settings provide stable, nurturing environments and better-tailored support, giving service children the strong start they deserve, whatever their family circumstances." **Find out more** Early years providers and local authorities supporting children aged birth to five from serving armed forces families are encouraged to find out more about the funding, eligibility, and application process. Full details and supporting resources are available on the Early Years Programme page on the Trust's website www.covenantfund.org.uk

You're not alone:

Support and guidance for young people at an unsettling time



ssafa | the
Armed Forces
charity

At this unsettling time, SSAFA Community Health would like to offer some advice and support. It is important you know that you are not alone.

Why do I feel this way?
After experiencing an event that has been scary, upsetting or stressful:



- You may feel a mix of emotions, such as, worried, upset, scared, sad, afraid, angry, confused, stressed or others.
- You may feel these emotions on their own or all at once.
- You may even not feel any emotions at all.
- You may also have these feelings at a later date.
- You might have certain feelings in your body, like a tightness in your chest or like your tummy is churning.

Either way, all of this is normal and you are not alone.



What can I do to help myself?

- Talking to others, like friends, family and professionals at this time is important.
- Write down how you are feeling, as an outlet or to understand different thoughts and emotions.
- Try a simple breathing exercise:
 1. place your hand on your tummy, to feel your tummy go up and down.
 2. breathe in through your nose for **5 seconds**.
 3. hold your breath for **2 seconds**.
 4. breathe out through your mouth for **7 seconds**.



<p>Where can I go for online support? There are a number of trusted online services that offer support if you want to talk, learn about ways to cope, or connect with others.</p> <p>Support for young people from Armed Forces families KOOTh.com/MOD Provides free mental wellbeing support for young people aged 11-19 from Armed Forces families, both in the UK and overseas. You can chat online with trained mental health practitioners, use self-help tools, or take part in moderated community support. kooth.com/mod</p> <p>Support for all Armed Forces family members Headspace Headspace offers free access to mindfulness, breathing, and relaxation tools to support mental wellbeing for families and Armed Forces personnel who sign up using a MOD email address. headspace.com</p> <p>HeadFIT HeadFIT provides simple, practical tools to help you look after your mental fitness, including tips, exercises and self-help resources. headfit.org/</p>	<p>Togetherall Togetherall is an online support service for Armed Forces family members aged 16+. It offers anonymous, 24/7 access to trained counsellors, a supportive community, and a range of self-help resources. togetherall.com</p> <p>Other support available to all young people YoungMinds YoungMinds provides information, advice and support for children and young people experiencing mental health difficulties. youngminds.org.uk</p> <p>Mind (for young people) Mind offers guidance, resources and support to help young people understand and manage their mental wellbeing. mind.org.uk/for-young-people/</p> <p>The Mix The Mix provides free, confidential support for young people, including information, one-to-one support and helpful resources. themix.org.uk/</p> 
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RAF HIVE Service



HIVE Information Officer (HIO): Janine Ansty-Bridges

Location: Community Centre

Opening hours: Mon - Thurs 0800 - 1600, Fri 0800 - 1500

Tel: 01491 827213 Teams Work No: +44 303 371 8545

Connect Online - [RAF Benson HIVE Facebook](#) – RAF Benson HIVE X.com - [RAF HIVE Instagram](#)

Station Welfare Contacts

SSAFA – Leanne Wheeler

Office Location: 4 Viking Terrace

Tel: 07384 237987 (office hours only)

Email: Leanne.Wheeler@ssafa-fhs.org.uk

Chaplaincy: The Revd (Sqn Ldr) Michael McCormick & The Revd (Sqn Ldr) Rachel Cook

Office Location: Station Church

Tel: 01491 837766 Ext 6234

Email: michael.mccormick103@mod.gov.uk rachel.cook117@mod.gov.uk

Station RAF People and Families Support Contacts

Station Families Housing Officer (SFHO): WO Philip Withey

Office Location: Community Centre

Tel: Duty Mobile - 07815 697370 (No Texts)

Email: philip.withey301@mod.gov.uk

Community Development Officer (CDO): Meg Wickett

Office Location: Community Centre

Tel: 01491 827213

Email: meg.wickett407@mod.gov.uk

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