

RAF FF INDEPENDENT RESEARCH

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Federation**
Investigate | Influence | Change



RAF FF SURVEY REPORT
The Nation's Support to the RAF

April 2012

**WE'RE IN YOUR
CORNER**



With full support from the RAF, the RAF Families Federation is undertaking three themed surveys this year in order to deliver independent, evidence-based reports we hope will influence future policy as it impacts on RAF families. This report marks the completion of our first survey aimed at gathering families' views on the 'Nation's Support to the RAF'.

We are acutely conscious that such activity is taking place against a background of uncertainty and major restructuring across the RAF and that there is an element of 'survey fatigue' or, indeed, apathy towards such activity. Those facing relocation as a result of base closures and those having to cope with the dreadful news of compulsory redundancy have good reason to opt out of such surveys. Having said that, many so affected have willingly contributed to our work, providing real time examples of where policies are impacting adversely on family life.

Moreover, the RAF is still enduring a very high operational tempo and there is no doubt that many personnel are stretched and extremely busy. We were therefore all the more delighted that over 670 RAF family members took the time to either attend a workshop or go onto our website to contribute their views. Not only did voters tick the boxes to indicate their views but many took the time to write copious notes, helping to shape this report and add real depth and colour to the findings.

I take this opportunity to thank everyone who took part in the survey – we hope you agree with the findings and that you take heart from the fact that this report is being distributed at very high level across Government, the MoD and the RAF. Whilst we cannot promise immediate change to policies as a result of this work, when taken alongside the evidence produced by the chain of command and other sources, we remain confident that information sourced direct from families shapes and influences the future. It also ensures those in authority have a clear insight into the issues that concern personnel most.

Thank you for supporting the work of the Federation – without you, we have no voice.



D A McCAFFERTY
Chairman
RAF Families Federation

June 2012

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of its evidence-gathering activity for 2012, the RAF Families Federation ran a survey and live workshops to explore the continuing impact of the 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) on RAF families. The survey also focussed on the Armed Forces Covenant, seeking evidence as to levels of awareness of the Covenant and understanding of the many commitments it made to enhance support to the Armed Forces Community.

As anticipated, results indicated that RAF personnel and their families continue to feel bruised by the on-going effects of the SDSR and there was particular concern over the loss of certain equipment types and the impact of force reductions, both uniformed and Civil Servant, on the ability of the Service to deliver effectively beyond 2015. Confidence in the future was low and many opined that the SDSR had undermined their motivation to remain in the Service.

On the Covenant front, awareness was woefully low and it was quite apparent, particularly during workshops, that most had not read any of the Covenant documents and had a limited appreciation of which commitments might have a positive impact on their lives. Hopefully, the survey helped raise awareness of the Covenant with audiences, but the comments made online indicate a low level of confidence in the ability of the Government and Devolved Administrations to make any meaningful progress without dedicated resources to deliver the enhancements required.

For ease of reference, the top 10 findings arising from this survey were as follows:

1. Whilst 92% of voters felt the general public supports the RAF, a significant 31% of voters felt the Government does not support the Service at all.
2. More than half of voters told us the SDSR had discouraged them (or their serving family member) from staying in the RAF.
3. 56% of voters did not feel that the RAF will be 'Agile, Adaptable and Capable' post 2015.
4. Nearly a third of voters had not heard of the Armed Forces Covenant.
5. Only a quarter of those who took part in the survey knew that the first Interim Report on the Covenant had been published in Dec 11.
6. Nearly half of all voters knew nothing about the Covenant principles regarding removal of disadvantage in the areas of: continuity of children's education; access to healthcare; access to social/private housing; employment/training opportunities for non-serving family members, or the provision of enhanced Service accommodation.
7. When asked about the Service Pupil Premium, 58% of voters told us they had never heard of it.
8. A third of voters did not believe that the Covenant would help to improve Service accommodation.
9. Only 9% of participants had heard of the Community Covenant Scheme.
10. 83% of voters had never heard of the 'Big White Wall' online mental health support network.

BACKGROUND

Throughout Apr 12, the RAF Families Federation (RAF FF) ran an online survey and workshops entitled 'The Nation's Support to the RAF'. The purpose was to build on previous evidence of the impact of the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR), and to measure levels of awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant among both serving and non-serving RAF family members.

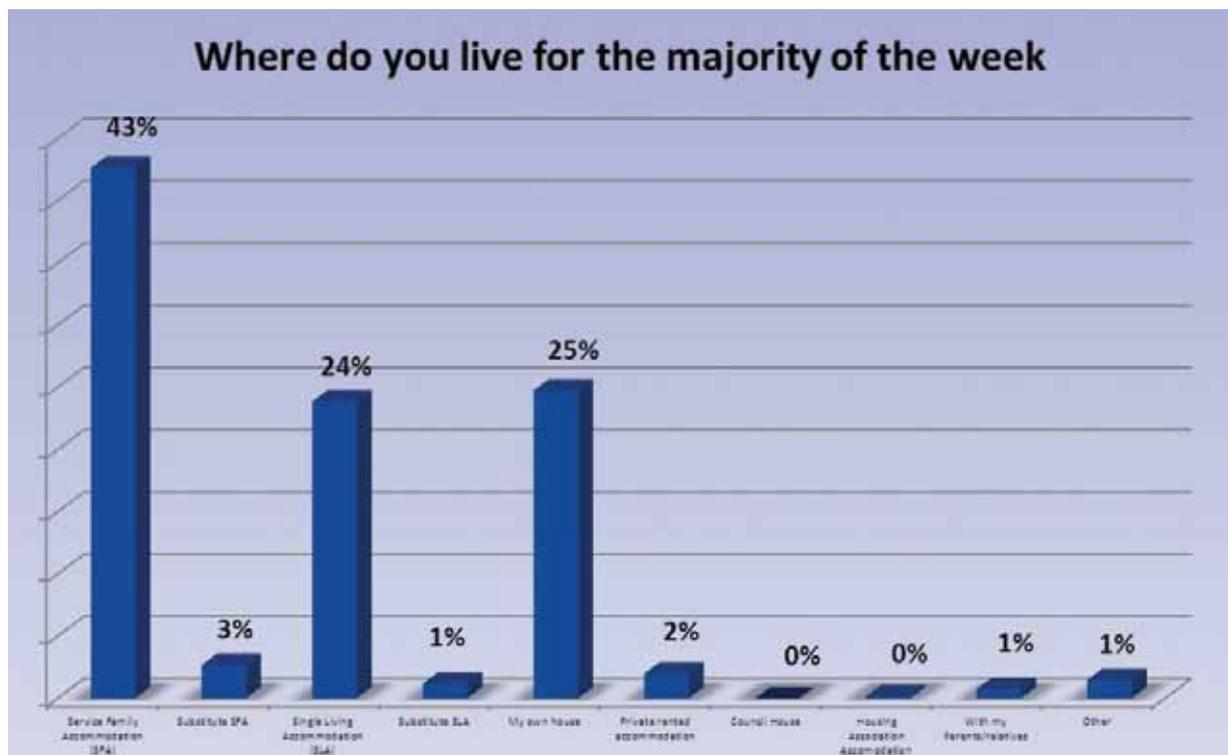
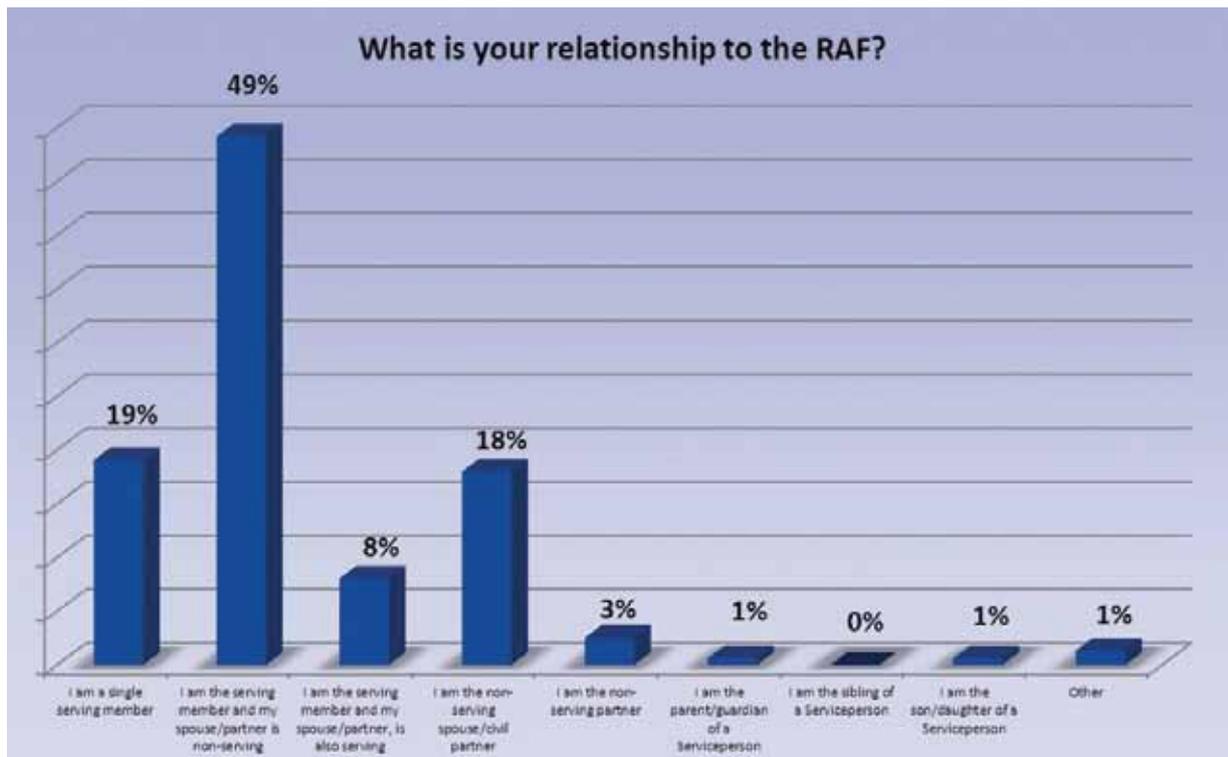
PARTICIPANT DATA

A total of 671 family members took part in the survey; 378 attended workshops and 293 voted online. Votes came from 35 different locations, including three units which kindly allowed the RAF FF to run workshops on-site – our thanks go to the Station Commanders, personnel and families at RAF Marham, Cranwell and Brize Norton for their support.

Analysis of the personal data provided indicates that 74% of participants were serving, 23% were non-serving and 3% were Reservists. 36% of voters were female and more than two thirds of those who took part were married, with a further 16% defining their status as being in a long-term relationship. The remainder were either single, separated or divorced. 55% of voters had at least one child under the age of 18 living in their family home.

We received votes from Service family members of all ages, from under 20 to over 56. 35% of voters were aged 21-30, 32% were between 31-40 years old and 29% were 41-44 years old. All ranks were represented, with the exception of JT. Among the commissioned ranks, the majority of votes came from Fg Offs, Flt Lts and Sqn Ldrs; unfortunately participation by officers of Gp Capt+ was disappointingly low, with only 2% of the audience vote coming from those ranks.





The majority of those in SFA lived within 10 miles of their parent unit, although 8% had been housed between 11-20 miles away. A further 3% were living more than 21 miles away from their unit. 19% of those living in private accommodation in a civilian community lived more than 20 miles away from their unit.

INTRODUCTION

Initial announcements on the SDSR were made by Prime Minister David Cameron on 19 Oct 10. In summary, the long-term impact on the RAF would see a force reduction of 5,000 uniformed posts by 2015, which meant that, in addition to ‘natural wastage’ and other manning levers, a two-phase redundancy programme had to be implemented early last year. Over 50% of those selected for Phase 1 redundancy were non-volunteers, and we recognise the huge impact such compulsory redundancy has had upon all aspects of family life, from future employment prospects to housing provision.

The Second Phase announced on 12 Jun 12 saw a further 729 RAF personnel selected for redundancy. This was almost 200 less than originally predicted and this time approximately 70% were volunteers. However, this still left 30% as non-volunteers and a further group of unhappy personnel who had volunteered but not been selected.

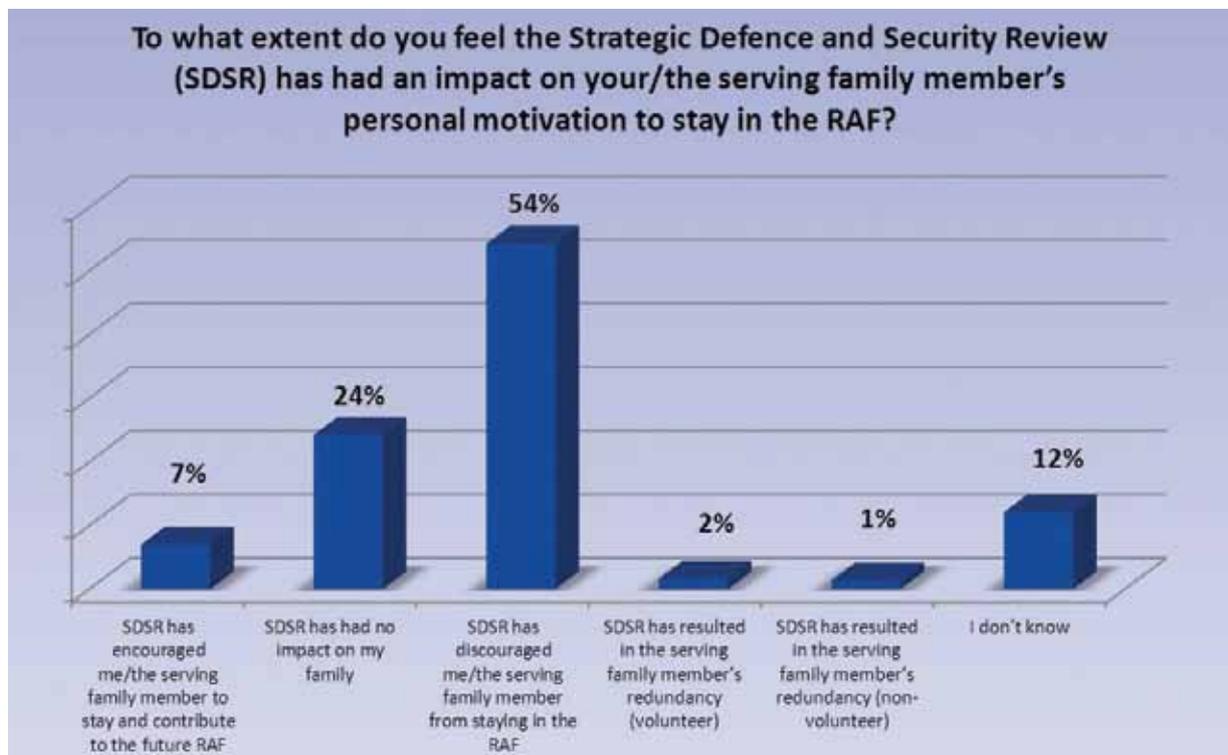
SDSR also confirmed the closure of RAF Kinloss, and the subsequent decision to withdraw the

RAF from Leuchars. The Nimrod MR4A project was cancelled, and the Harrier aircraft was withdrawn from service.

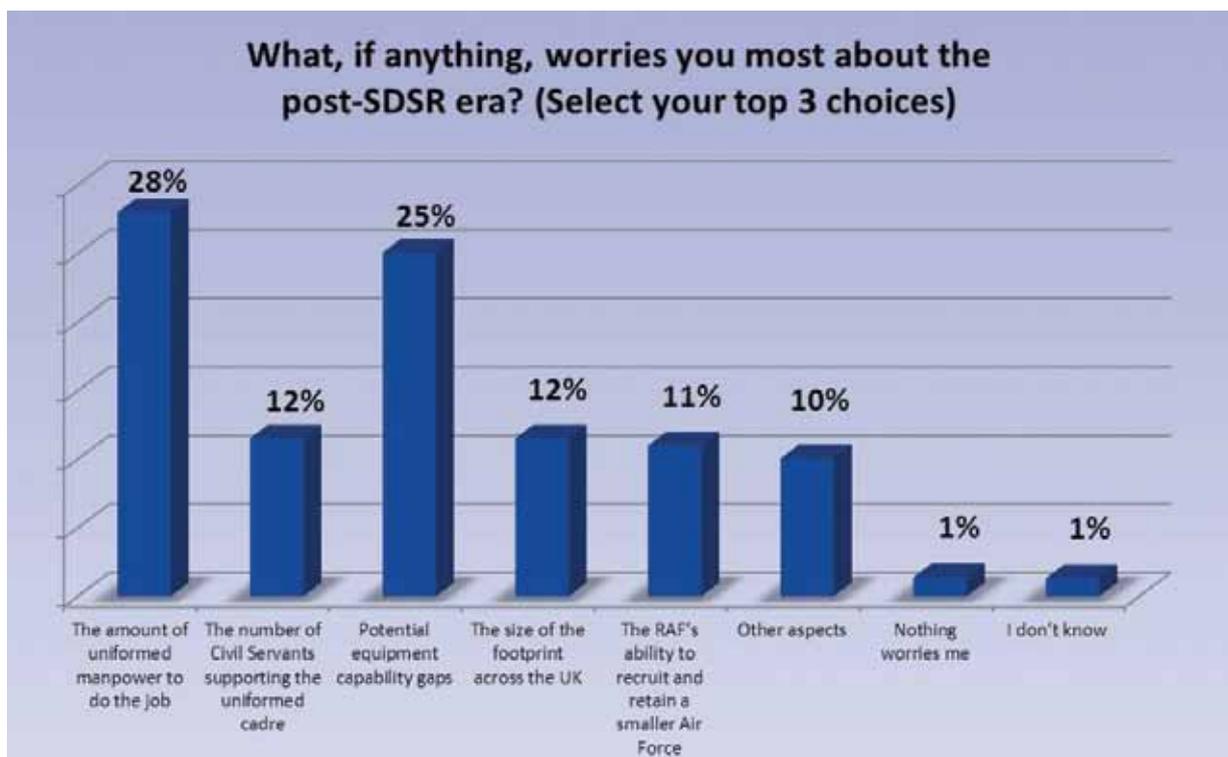
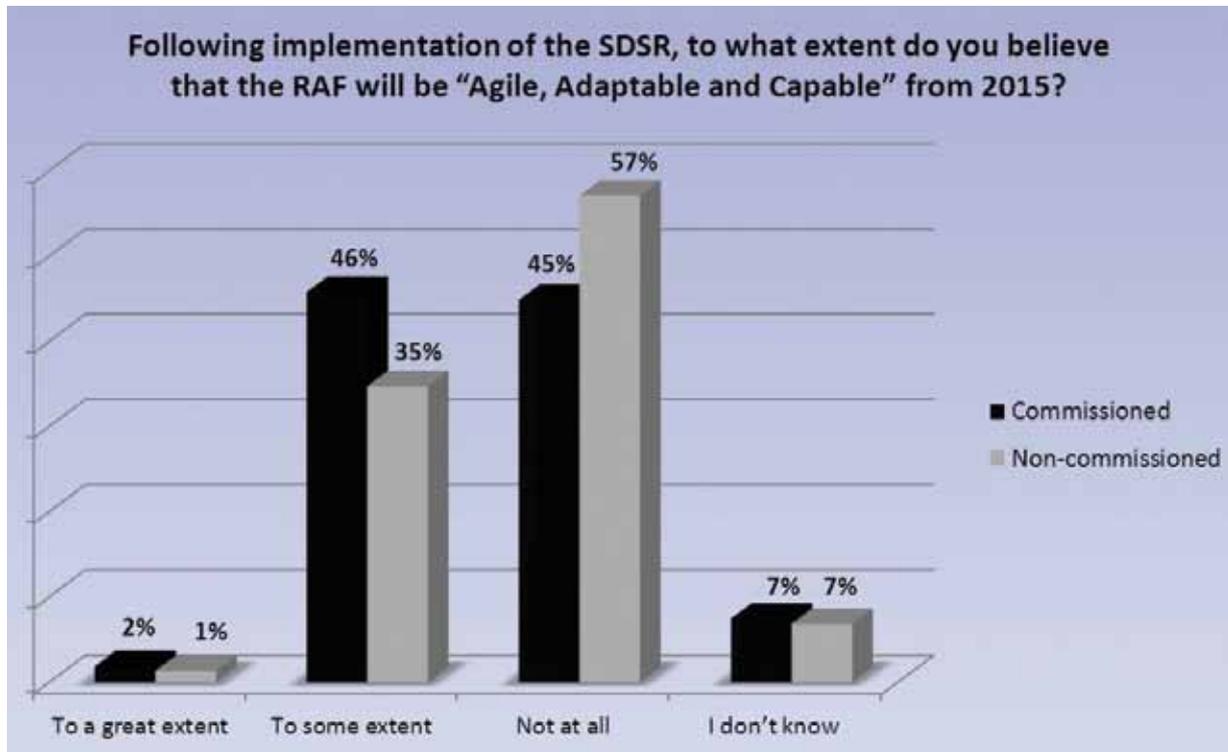
In addition to these significant structural changes, an overarching Allowances Review was launched to save £250m per year across the 3 Services; the outcome was announced in early 2011. Personnel have seen changes to their entitlement to claim allowances such as Home to Duty (HTD), Local Overseas (LOA), Get You Home (GYH), and the Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA) and this has had a huge impact on family household incomes. When these changes are combined with a continuing pay freeze for anyone in the Service earning over £21,000, viewed against a backdrop of a worsening national economy and rising living costs, it is apparent that many families are now struggling.

IMPACT OF THE SDSR

The RAF FF posed a number of questions to establish how the SDSR had, or was, affecting RAF families. The results are detailed in the following graphs:



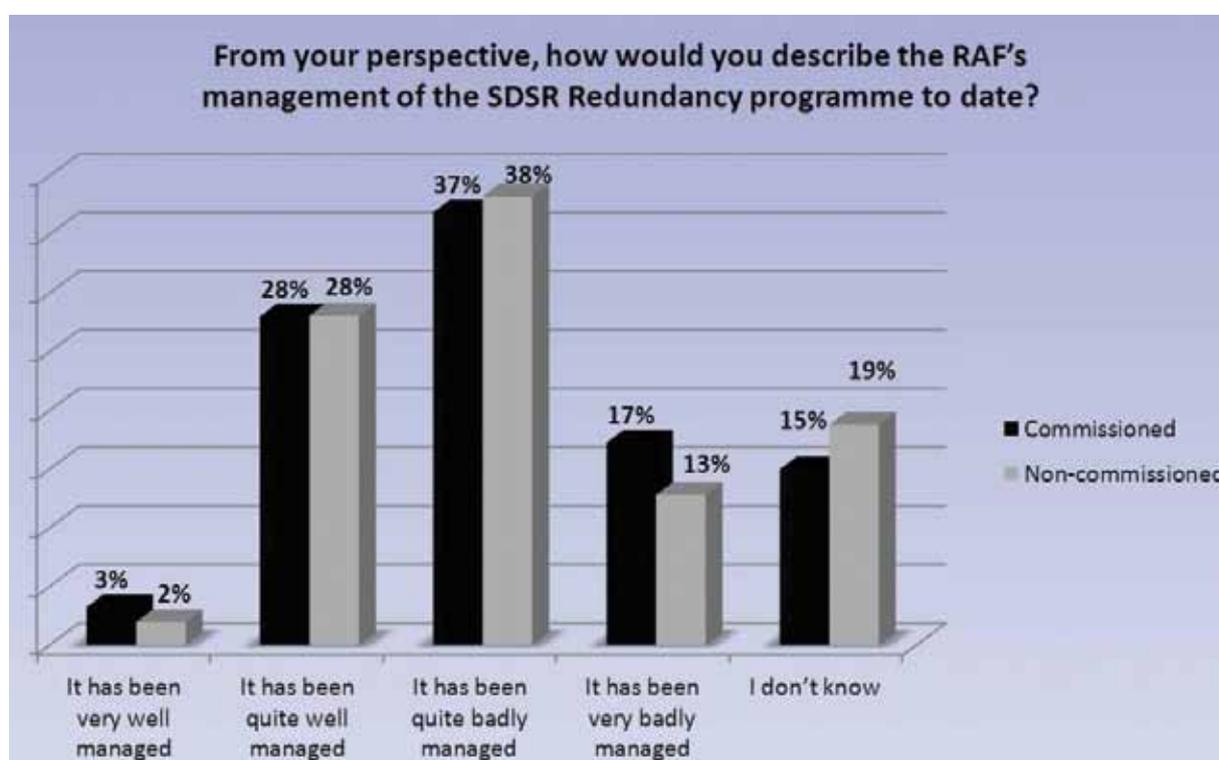
It is apparent that many serving personnel, and their families, have less motivation to remain in the Service post SDSR. Many have been left feeling bruised and angry at the loss of personnel, aircraft and units, and are beginning to experience, at first hand, the real and very personal impact of the cuts imposed upon them by the Government and senior MoD/RAF staffs.



Anecdotal evidence gathered during the workshops indicates that many serving personnel are concerned about the future of the RAF and some questioned whether the Service will still be capable of fulfilling its role, post 2015.

When we asked audiences in 2011 to give their views on the planned reduction of 25,000 MoD Civil Service posts, 43% told us they believed the cuts were 'about right'. This year, 12% of our audience expressed concern at the number of Civil Servants left to support the uniform cadre in the post-SDSR era, perhaps reflecting the impact of the civilian Voluntary Early Release Scheme (VERS) on many units.

Following feedback last year from some families, who raised concerns at the way the RAF had managed the redundancy programme, we introduced two new questions to gauge wider opinion. Our top level statistics indicated that 52% of voters felt the programme had not been managed well, so we delved further to determine whether there was any difference of opinion between the commissioned and non-commissioned cadres.



When we asked voters to quantify which aspect of the programme had concerned them most, 22% told us it was the selection process, whilst 20% felt the RAF had not handled the communication aspects very well. Other concerns included 'the timescales involved', 'being considered whilst deployed', and the 'management of appeals'. On a positive note, 23% told us they had no concerns about the management of the programme and, clearly, personal views are heavily influenced by their own status as volunteers or compulsory redundees.

"The communication about the selection process has, in his experience, been badly managed. ...the management of advising him that he was not selected was appalling. He was advised 'if you don't hear anything by the end of the day, assume that you are safe.'"

"I have heard of people wanting to leave and not being allowed, and others desperate to stay and last out their career and not being allowed."

"It seems to have fostered a lack of job security, making it hard for families to commit to a future involving the RAF."

"He has been in for over 15 years and that's all he has ever wanted to do. It is disheartening that what was once 'a job for life' is no longer seen as such."

"This SDSR...was actually all about balancing the books. Contracts with big business couldn't be cancelled, on-going costs couldn't be cut, so they cut people's pay, allowances and conditions and took the tools of our trade away from us e.g. Harrier, Nimrod etc."

"This isn't just a job or a career; it's a home and a life to most as well."

"SDSR was done too quickly and without any concern for the long-term impact on personnel and capability."

"Timescales involved in the notification of redundancies (following completion of board) are too long. People are on edge and cannot move on (either plan for retirement or new jobs or re-motivate themselves if they are safe)."

"HMG gives less with one hand and takes more with the other – we could hardly be busier, yet we are being shrunk to fit a budget not to fit a strategy."

"As a result of SDSR and manpower cuts, the workload of those remaining has increased and will continue to do so with more redundancies/departures. This results in more stress, sickness and poorer quality of life for those remaining, so what is being done to reduce the workload of everyone?"

"Since the SDSR redundancies were announced, my family and I have been extremely worried about me being made compulsorily redundant (both tranches I have been in the running). This has been an incredibly tough time for my family and me and it's still not over till mid-June!"

"The SDSR has left massive capability shortfalls in Defence. There are not enough people to cover all that is asked of us, and the fact that we are still able to perform is solely down to the high quality personnel and their 'can do' attitude."

Federation note: *All comments were provided before the Second Phase of redundancies were announced and we are hopeful that 'Lessons Learned' will have improved the process for those involved.*

INTRODUCTION

The Armed Forces Covenant was launched in May 11 by the Prime Minister. In broad terms, it is a statement describing the relationship and mutual obligations between the Government, the Armed Forces and wider society. The Covenant aimed to identify where disadvantage arises as a result of military service and to remove that disadvantage where possible.

The inclusion of military families at the heart of the Covenant was most welcome and confirms our belief that operational effectiveness derives to a large extent from the support offered to those in uniform by those who love them most. Commitments aimed specifically at families included:

1. An increase in Council Tax Relief from 25% to 50% for those deployed on eligible operations.
2. A £200 per year Pupil Premium for Service children educated in state schools in England.
3. An additional £3m fund to support state schools with significant numbers of Service children.
4. Work with financial institutions to review their approach to the provision of credit and other services to members of the Armed Forces.
5. Health – a commitment to ensure the Department of Health gives due consideration to the needs of Service families during the NHS reform process.
6. Accommodation and Housing – a commitment to review the provision of Service Accommodation.
7. Local Communities – the introduction of a Community Covenant scheme, which will encourage local communities to support their Armed Forces communities and vice versa.

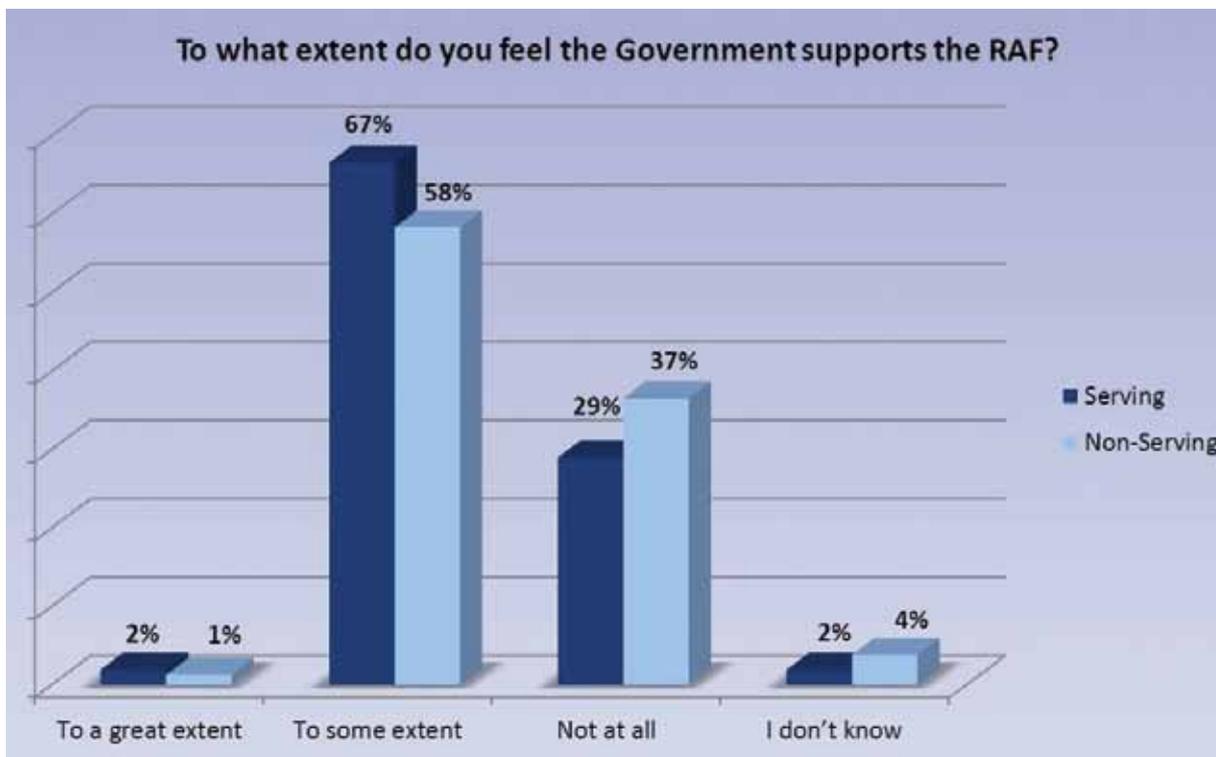
Our 2012 survey asked questions on key commitments made in the Covenant, to determine levels of awareness and understanding. Supporting information on the purpose and aims of the Covenant was made available to participants, either verbally during workshops, or via links to key documents on the RAF FF website.

SUPPORT TO THE RAF

We asked voters to tell us to what extent they felt the RAF was supported by the general public, the Government and their local community.

Whilst only 7% of voters felt the general public does not support the RAF at all, it was apparent that there were strong feelings about the lack of support offered by the Government. Our top level statistics indicated that 31% felt the Government did not support the Service at all, so we undertook further analysis to determine whether there was any difference of opinion between serving and non-serving voters.

We received a varied response to local community support to the Service. Given that we received votes from families across the country, and overseas, there was clear evidence that support is stronger in some areas than others. While 17% of voters felt their local community supported the RAF 'to a great extent', 18% felt they received no support at all.



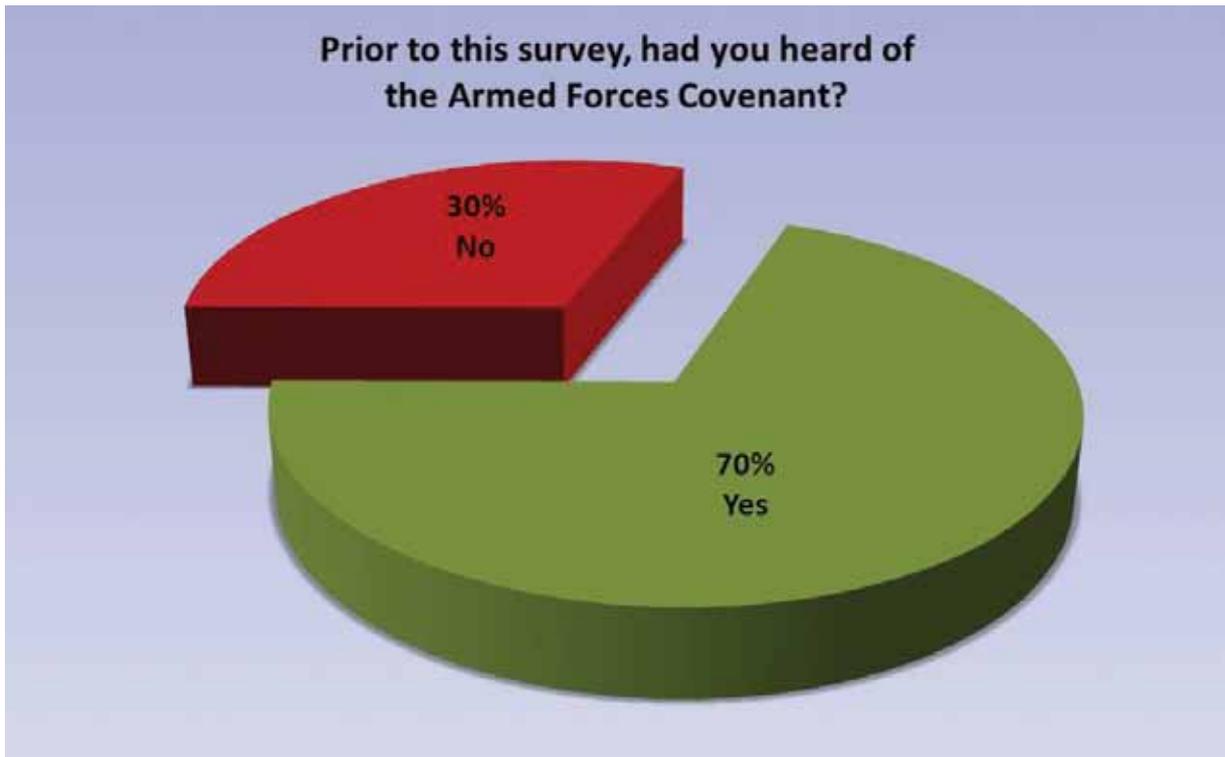
"I think the support for the RAF, in general, is far less than the support for the Army. This is partly because every time the military as a whole is mentioned in the media or by the Government it is called the 'Army' or 'Soldiers' so I feel that the general public forget that the RAF is involved in all operations, too!"

"RAF family members of serving personnel are not well supported by the local community. This is even more evident when applying for work and being treated like 2nd class citizens at the JobCentre Plus."

"Local support seems to be focussed on the Army's Yorkshire regiment, despite their being based a long way away, whilst the RAF living and working locally, putting time, effort and money into the town, are of far less interest. This was summed up perfectly last year with a Forces' Welcome Parade, in which the Army marched and the RAF were ignored."

"Having served on exchange with the US military and being made to feel like a hero on Veteran's Day by members of the public, even as a member of a foreign service, I feel ashamed by the support we (don't) get."

"We are the poor relation in comparison to our sister Services. Our senior officers are never (seen to be) as vocal as the other Service chiefs and it rarely seems we stand up for ourselves in a tri-Service environment."



Although 70% of voters had an awareness of the Covenant, it was clear many participants had only a limited understanding of the Covenant content and what it means for them personally. Responses to many of the Covenant questions were predicated on a basic lack of knowledge. Few participants had actually read the key Covenant documents or were aware of the principles involved, so explanations were provided at every workshop.

Service channels of communication on the Covenant appear to have had limited effect. Whilst 34% of voters said they had heard of the Covenant through the national media, only 12% sourced their information from the MoD Communications / website. 8% had heard about it by 'word of mouth', but only 7% had received information through their Chain of Command.

Only 25% of participants were aware that the

Government had published the first Interim Report into the Covenant on 20 Dec 11. Anecdotal feedback given during workshops suggested that perhaps this publication date had been set deliberately, as the majority of the Services had been stood down for the Christmas period by that date, so few would have been aware that the Report had been issued. Even fewer voters were aware that a Ministerial Committee had been established to oversee the implementation of the Covenant, and there was a sense of apathy as to how effective the Committee might be.

This lack of awareness sends a strong message to all those involved in communicating the aims of the Covenant to the RAF. There clearly needs to be more work done to ensure that all members of the Service family are aware of the commitments made by Government Departments and other organisations.

"It comes across to many serving personnel as a publicity stunt that has not had any real benefit to those on the 'shop floor'."

"Instead of high ranking officers and politicians making reports and setting up committees about the Covenant, actually do something about it and create some measures so RAF personnel, especially non-commissioned ranks, feel valued by their employer."

"I feel the Government will U-turn on the proposed Covenant at the earliest opportunity."

"Great aspiration – but I fear likely to fail owing to lack of resources."

"I contacted my local council where I am going to live to see how this would enhance my position on the housing list, to be told they do not recognise the Covenant. I informed them it was from the Government, they said that they were not getting involved in that scheme. It's a joke!"

"Still don't understand what it is going to do."

"Nice words and good intention – but needs action and funding to support it and make it realistic."

"Just more hollow words that make politicians look good but they conveniently forget or shelve once the spotlight has been reduced."

"Having just 'googled' it, it sounds like a great idea. Unfortunately, as with everything else in the military, communication is so horrendous that I've had to find it out for myself."

"I've seen no change to how the Armed Forces are supported. Serving or family."

"It is a sticking plaster; there is no real substance to it."

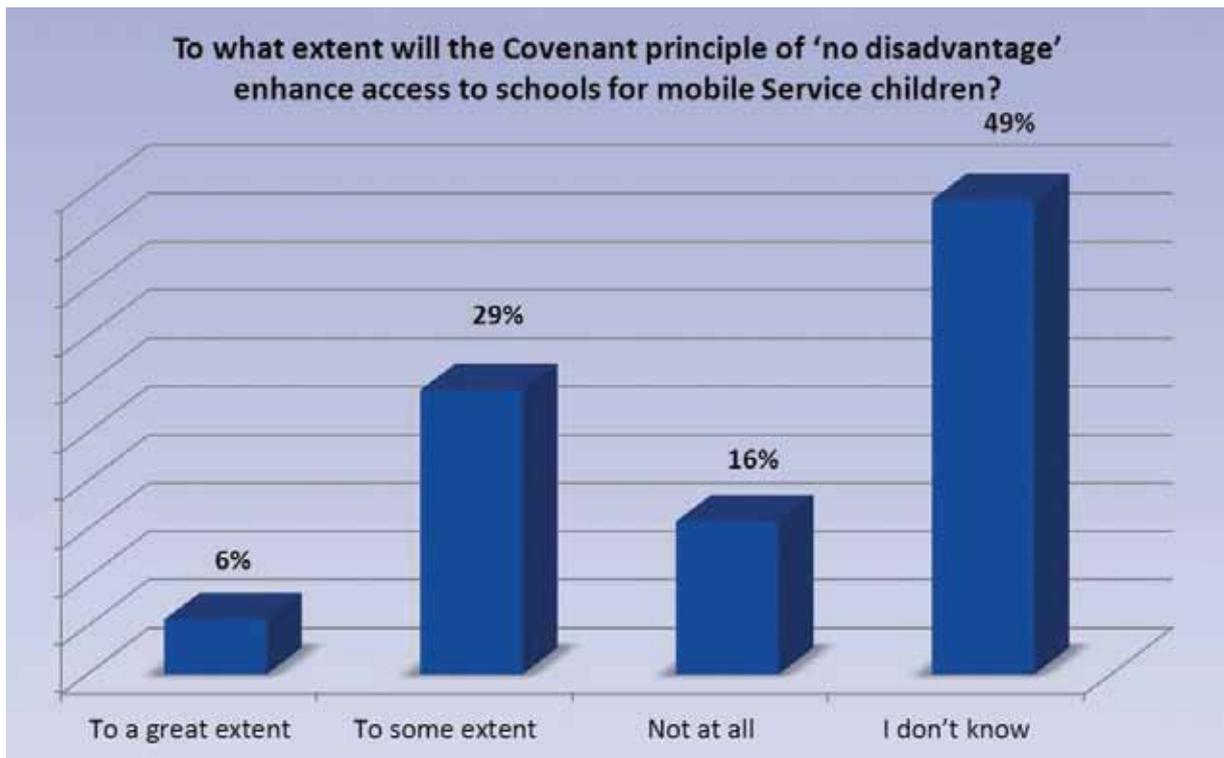
"The Covenant is aspirational and everything is 'as funds allow'. Without any extra money nothing will change."

"Without the RAF Families Federation I would be in the dark about much that goes on."

"Smoke and mirrors."

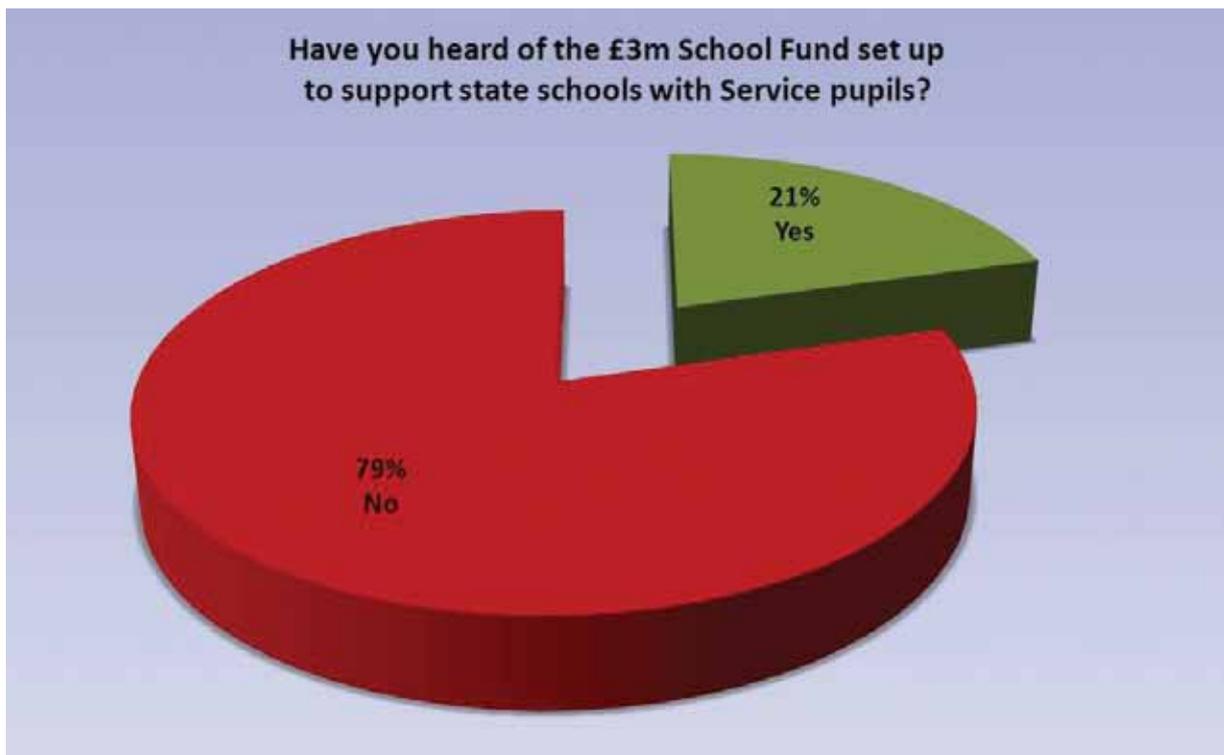
"The lack of publicity and information makes me wonder how much use it's designed to be."

"Whilst the Covenant will be enshrined in law, it is in effect a fairly 'toothless document'. However, it is not a bad starting place."



When asked about their awareness of the Service Pupil Premium, 42% of voters had heard of it but many had never linked it to the Covenant. Only 22% of voters had registered their child(ren) as a member of a Service family, to allow their school to qualify for the Premium, while 9% were completely unaware of the

requirement. A number of points were raised as to how schools appeared to be using the funding. Parents asked what governance checks were in place to ensure the funds were being used to appropriately support Service children, as there were concerns that perhaps the money was simply going into the ‘school pot’.



It became apparent during workshops that few people were aware of the £3m School Fund. Parents were therefore encouraged to contact their schools to ensure that, where appropriate, grants could be pursued.

We also gathered data from those RAF families who had encountered problems changing schools following an assignment. In the last four years, 13% of voters have faced problems, ranging from: the timing of the assignment (within the academic year); the lack of school places in schools of choice to different syllabuses being offered.

"I cannot see how the 'no disadvantage' term will make a real difference. If there are no places in a particular school, there are no places."

"Our children have gained from moving schools. Their new school is far better than their old one and they were able to settle very quickly and both have thrived."

"The Covenant is aspirational and depends on funding. As always, if there is no money nothing changes. Some schools are biased against Service children as they see them as disruptive and not part of the local community."

"The constant stress over education is our main reason for applying for redundancy – the benefits no longer outweigh the down sides."

"Why is the Service Pupil Premium not available in Scotland? Has the Government forgotten about their Scottish units?"

"Pupil premium seems to have made no difference to my children. Schools seem to have absorbed it into their funds and it doesn't appear to have directly benefited any of my children."

"The Admissions Code is a good idea/step toward supporting Service children but in practice it will not work as families would like. The devil is in the detail!"

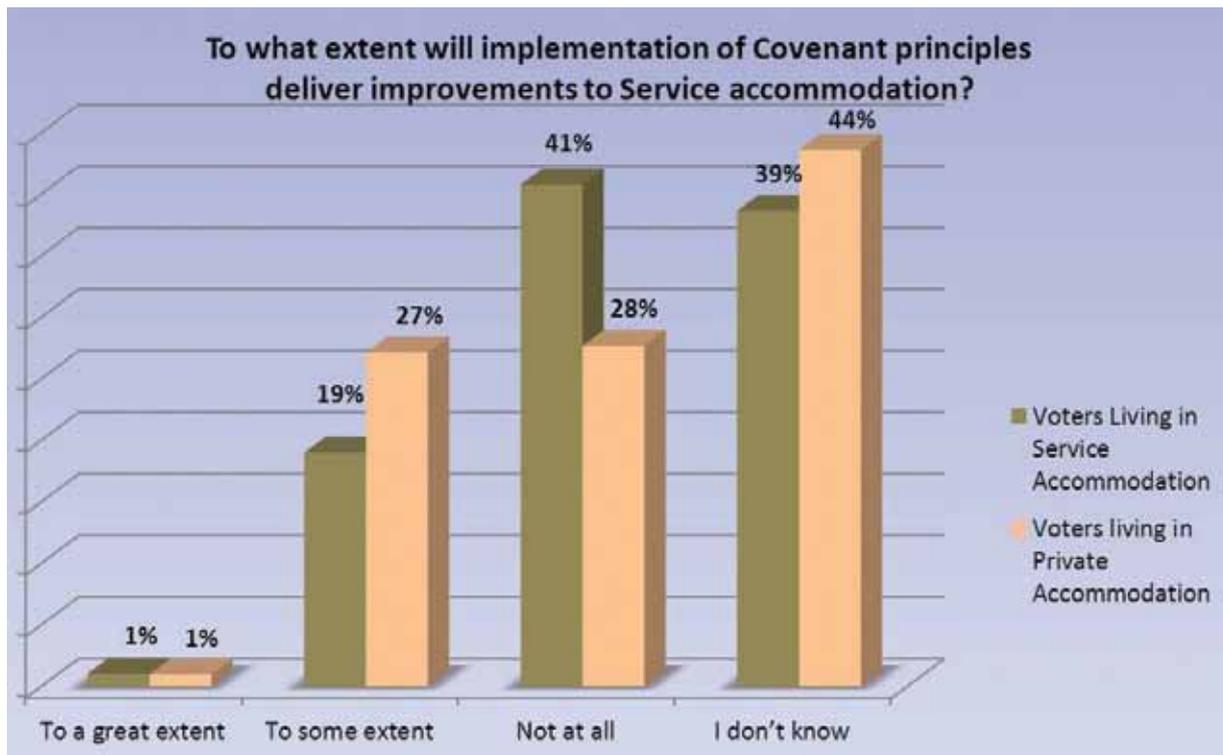
"Schools admission organisations do need to understand the transient nature of Service personnel and that relocation may be for a variety of reasons other than change of assignment."

"My three sons were brought up with the RAF, they all had multiple schools in several countries with no discernible effect – two of the three have Hons Degrees. Good parenting is the answer!"

"Hopefully my husband will have left the RAF by the time our children go to school."

"I have found the main problem in finding school places has almost always been because of last-minute posting decisions and failure by the HIC to allocate housing on time."

"Children of Service personnel should not be subject to catchment areas – the Government should guarantee school of choice for Service families."



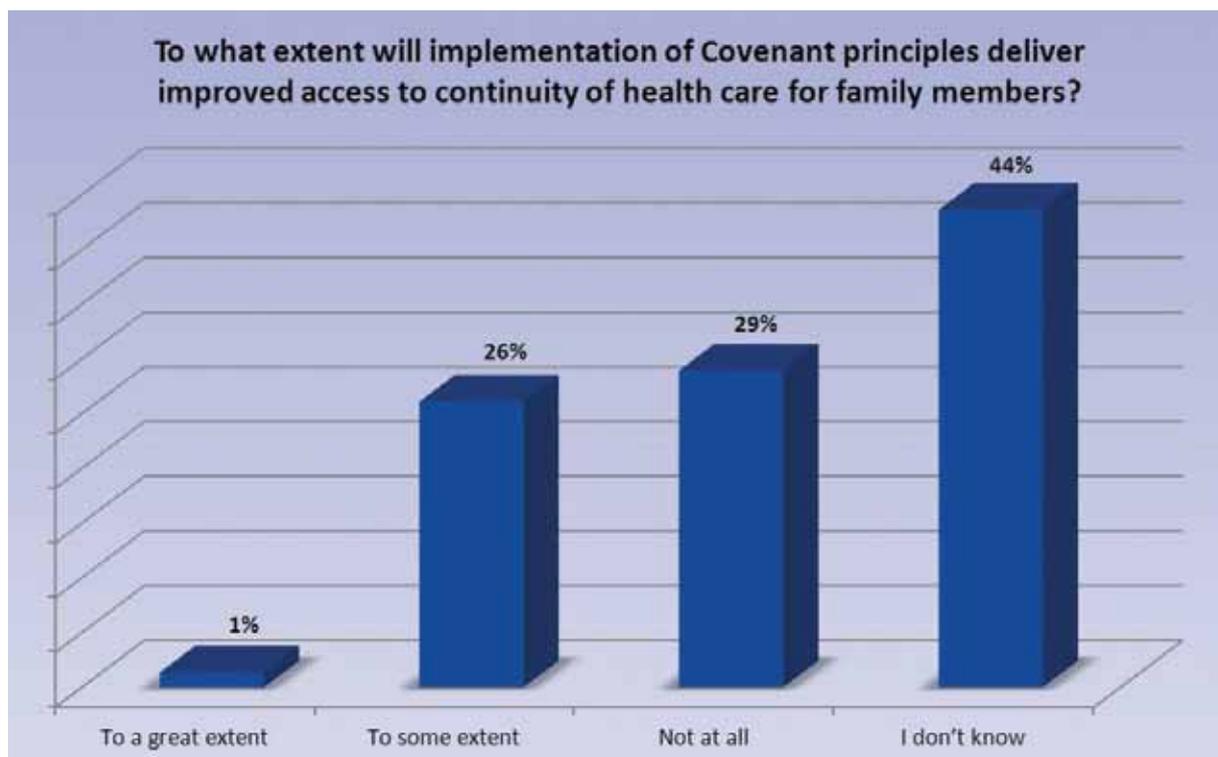
Initial analysis highlighted that only 23% of participants believed the Covenant would deliver improvements to Service Accommodation to ‘some’ or ‘a great extent’. Anecdotal feedback indicated a lack of confidence in the Covenant’s ability to deliver any improvements, particularly given the 3-year spending ‘pause’ on accommodation upgrades, which was announced within months of the Covenant being launched. Although voters welcomed the Budget announcement of an additional £100m to be made available for SFA upgrades, it is feared this money would not go far and the majority would

be spent on upgrading the ‘worst first’. The perception is that the funds would be directed towards upgrading Army quarters, leaving the other two Services with little benefit.

Nearly half of voters did not know whether the Covenant principles would enhance access to social or private housing for Service personnel, whilst 26% felt it would not help at all. There was a lack of awareness of existing schemes available to assist Service families to purchase their own homes and few were aware of their entitlement to social housing on leaving the Service.

“DIO really need to get their act together, allocation of SFA is a joke. Employ Families Officers and you have someone who has some understanding of family needs.”

“The resolution of housing problems will probably relate more to the general availability of housing than to the success or otherwise of the Covenant.”



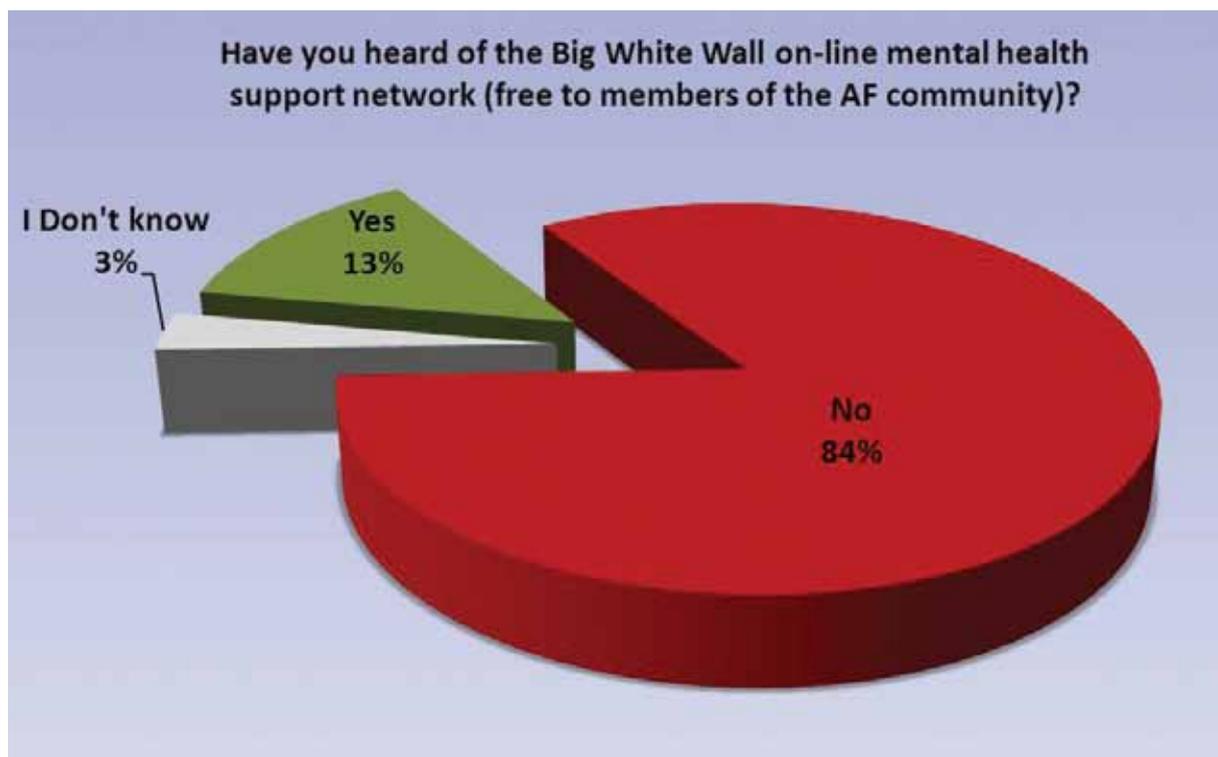
In light of the forthcoming, fundamental changes to the way in which the NHS will be run, concerns were expressed that the Covenant commitments may get 'lost' in the new system and that mobile Service families may not get the recognition and support they need from the medical professions.

When asked about access to local NHS dental facilities, 36% of participants said they felt it was poor, which is a similar response to the one received when the RAF FF originally asked this question of RAF families in 2009. Of those participants who had received treatment from a NHS dentist, 19% of non-serving family members had to travel more than 10 miles to attend appointments. Nearly a third of voters said they had not seen an improvement in access to NHS dentists in the last four years, despite the commitments made in the Service Personnel Command Paper (SPCP), issued by the previous

Government in 2008.

There was a more positive response to the issue of access to local NHS medical centres/ GP surgeries. 42% of respondents reported that they had good access to these facilities and the only problems raised seemed to be availability of appointments, location, and the availability of public transport between their homes and the surgeries.

9% of voters said they had faced problems obtaining new or continuing medical treatment when they had been assigned to a new duty station in a different Primary Care Trust region. Their issues included: 'the new PCT would or could not provide the treatment'; 'the family member was placed at the bottom of the waiting list' and 'there were differences in costs/ charges.'



There was a fundamental lack of awareness across audiences of the 'Big White Wall' support network. Again, this demonstrates a need for better communication between the Covenant Team, the RAF and families. This service is being

supported financially by the MoD and the RAF FF would wish to see RAF families taking full advantage of the service, for fear it may be withdrawn if not used sufficiently during the trial.

"As regards to using a dentist, I cannot afford to register with a private dentist because I had to leave my job when we were posted. All NHS dentists within a reasonable travelling time are full."

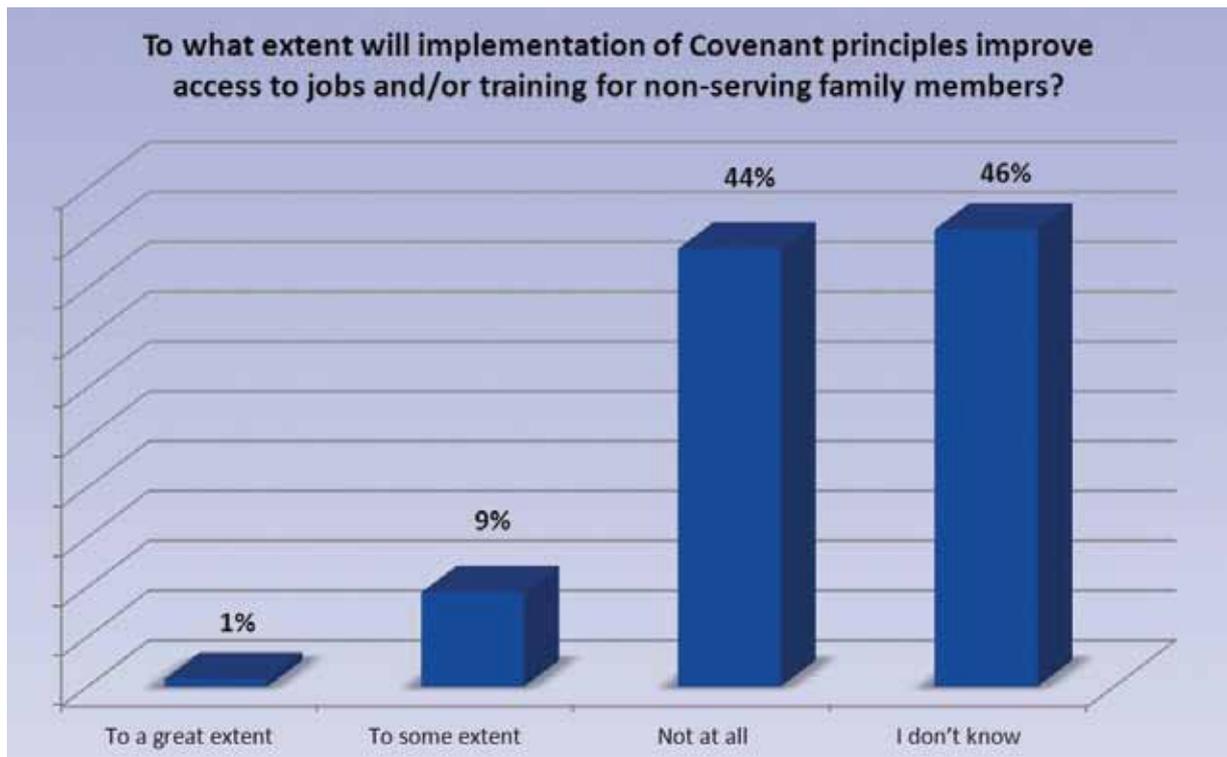
"My children have a dentist, but I have been put on a list which is apparently likely to take around 3 years, so not likely to see a dentist at this posting!"

"Last 3 times we moved my teenager has had to start process of dental treatment from scratch and is still awaiting braces she should have had fitted over 3 years ago."

"We had little trouble in registering our children for dental or medical treatment locally. My wife has enjoyed continuity of care despite moving from Wilts to Herts."

"The current changes in the NHS are brought into focus for mobile Service families and the 'N' of the NHS is becoming incorrect; services vary by region and are not nationally uniform at all. Perhaps we in the Services are better placed to notice this?"

"Mental health support especially for families is very poor. NHS practitioners have no idea how Service families function."



Whilst many participants acknowledged the aspiration behind this particular Covenant pledge, many felt that the lack of employment opportunities across the UK will prevent progress. There was a sense of cynicism amongst some voters who felt that the previous Government had made similar promises through the Service Families Employment Task Force (a forum set up as a result of the 2008 Service Personnel Command Paper) but nothing

appeared to have improved since then.

50% of voters told us that they or their non-serving spouse/partner has had to leave a job because they had been assigned elsewhere. This continues to have a huge impact on the non-serving partners' morale, employment history, ability to maintain or update professional skills and qualifications, and opportunity to contribute to the household finances.

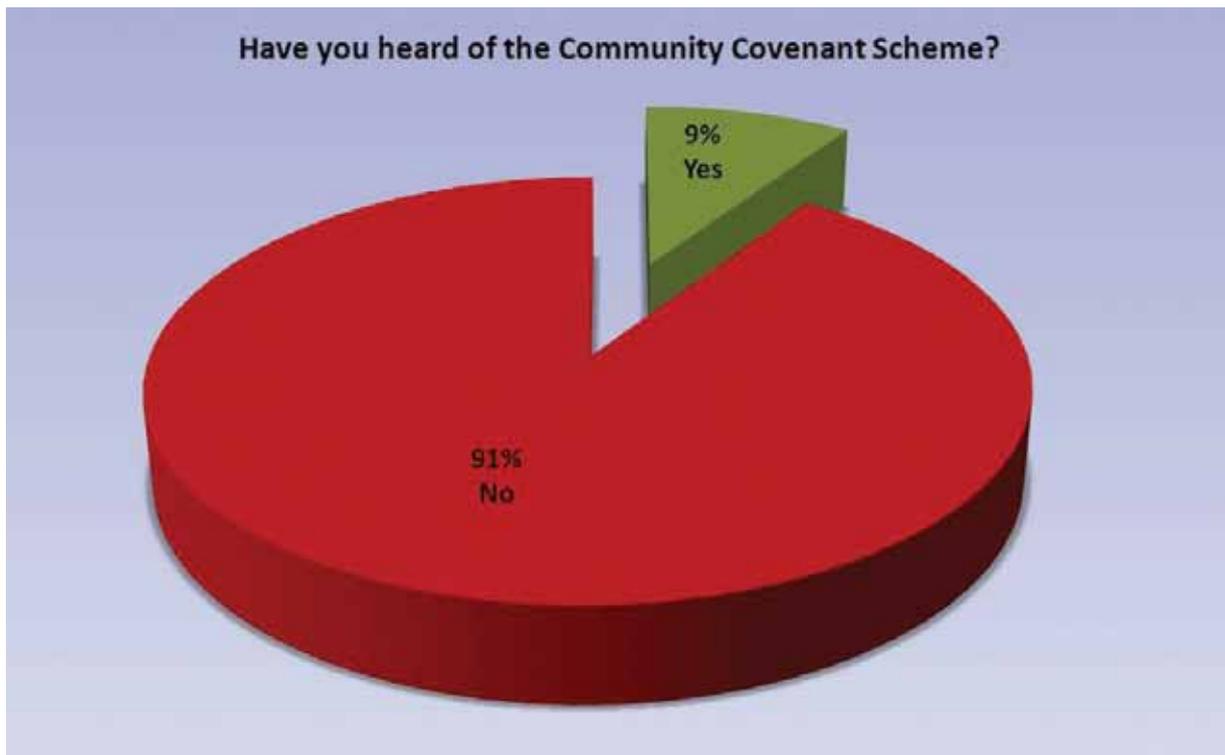
"I asked our local Job Centre about their Armed Forces' Champion. They had never heard of the scheme. I found out who it was and contacted them; they do not have the resources to do anything = just a headline promise."

"A Covenant will not create jobs that are simply not there because of the economic climate."

"Civilian companies are under so much pressure to stay afloat at the moment, they are looking for flexible employees that can work around them, and they are not in a position to take on spouses and family members that need understanding and flexibility."

"People don't always understand when deployments or active duties are on the cards and don't understand why you ask for some flexibility with your job."

"They are happy to have the RAF base but it's nigh on impossible to get a decent job as no-one will employ RAF wives."



There was an overwhelming lack of awareness about the Community Covenant Scheme, even in areas where local councils and RAF units had already signed up to the Scheme. The few voters who had heard of the Community Covenant told us that they had heard of it either via their chain of command, MoD websites, national media,

word of mouth or through the RAF FF. Very few voters were aware of the £30m Community Covenant Grant Scheme or how it could benefit both the Station and the local area, both financially and in terms of mutual support and understanding.

“It contains some interesting and potentially very encouraging statements; however, it appears to be down to the community to volunteer to adhere to it, rather than a blanket agreement across the nation state.”

“Whilst I am aware of what the Covenant wishes to see happen for Service families, as yet it has not been implemented here... It is my belief that we have, for a long time, brought a lot of wealth to local communities and offered support in a wide range of activities from charity work to providing manpower during times of difficulty or strike action. I do not believe that the local population are aware of how much we are involved and at minimal cost to them.”

“Communication of the Covenant and what it means to Armed Forces personnel should be briefed to all personnel and their families... County Councils should be highly influenced to put Community Covenants into place, so the appropriate funding can go into areas that are highly populated by Armed Forces personnel and their families.”

SOME FINAL WORDS FROM RESPONDENTS

“Our senior officers have been given an impossible choice of choosing between equipment and personnel. Basically the Covenant is worthless. It seems the attitude of this Government and the Civil Servants is that, if they have to house it or educate it then they don’t want it.”

“Given the latest cuts to people and equipment I couldn’t feel any more de-motivated with morale in general lower than I’ve ever seen (been in 9.5 years). I have little chance of promotion now and feel unwanted by the RAF. I expected a career and to feel valued, obvious that isn’t the case any longer.”

“No idea what the Covenant promises. It seems to promise to make things better, but doesn’t say how.”

“Thank you for the opportunity to comment and I hope the evidence you are able to gather is useful in your engagement with the RAF Senior Leadership Team and Ministers. Sadly I do not think it will make any difference at all.”

“The Covenant delivers NOTHING on any level that shouldn’t already be there.”

“I appreciate the public purse shouldn’t compensate non-serving family members for the loss of wages on posting, but some cognisance of the issue needs to be made, especially on overseas postings where there is very little opportunity for employment.”

“Although well meaning, I don’t believe that all parts of the Covenant will be enforced. Given the fiscal problems the country is facing, I can see Service personnel becoming a lower priority, especially post HERRICK.”

“My wife used to be supported by the Stn Med Centre – now she has to register with a local GP. The RAF service we used to receive understood the stresses and strains of detachments on wives – the civilians do not.”

“I decided to buy private accommodation to ensure my children were stable through their education and I have to live away from home as a result. Although not the best situation, we prioritised their needs above ours to provide continuity.”

“Senior Officers need to start communicating their medium-term strategy so their staffs have something good to work towards.”

“Thank you for representing us. Nobody else seems to have the time, capacity or inclination to represent our needs and to battle against those in positions of authority who do not care.”



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