

2016 AFPRB

ARMED FORCES PAY REVIEW BODY

RAF FF SURVEY REPORT



Cover images: Participants in the RAF Cycling Association Downhill Inter-Station Race at Descend Bike Park, Hamsterley Forest, County Durham, Royal Air Force Aerobatic Team (RAFAT) member, also known as the Red Arrows, seen here being greeted by his son after arriving back at their homebase at RAF Scampton in the UK; Royal Air Force personnel packing sandbags ready for distribution to households affected by the widespread UK flooding in February 2014.
Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.



Image: Pictured are an RAF Sentinel and Airseeker and two Tornado GR4's. Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.

Introduction

Once again the responses we have received to our Quality of Life Survey have proved to be consistent with our previous year's report but, importantly, we sense that our people are less accepting and more frustrated with the issues that concern them most than they have been in the recent past. We have sensed a real and palpable weariness of perceived 'more jam tomorrow' policies and decisions, and a growing demand for honesty and tangible improvement.

The 3 issues we hear most about are:

- Accommodation
- Childcare and its impact
- Manpower versus Operational Tempo

Accommodation remains by far the number one issue reported to the RAF Families Federation: CarillionAmey performance has been so poor that the company's reputation is now irrevocably damaged – culminating in a savaging from the Public Accounts Committee earlier this year. Despite statistics showing recent improvement, the 'lived experience' of far too many SFA occupants remains very poor, causing stress and frustration that, for some families, is the final straw. Our people are genuinely angry about the current provision and unsurprisingly feel unprotected and ill-treated – by both the company and by DIO. Furthermore, the revised Combined Accommodation Assessment Scheme (CAAS) was introduced for SFA in April and, whilst there have been significant glitches with grading, the main complaint has been the wholly inappropriate decision to implement charge increases for the majority of occupants at a time of appalling contract performance by CarillionAmey. This has just exacerbated the sense of anger around the whole accommodation offer and that increases in charges are not being matched equitably by tangible improvements in quality and service. Many of the issues apply also to single personnel in SLA: Quality still remains patchy and the divisive lottery of grade 4 and grade 1 accommodation allocated on the same unit is not uncommon.

Similarly, we have heard more in the last 12 months than ever before about issues with infrastructure on units in poor condition and not being maintained: Leaking roofs, no heating for months at a time, broken toilets left unrepaired and limited access to facilities such as gymnasiums and clubs caused by poor maintenance have all eroded (for many) a real sense of feeling valued. Importantly, new recruits - well-qualified, intelligent young people with high expectations of a technically sophisticated Air Force - have been especially quick to express surprise and disappointment. As one young aircraft technician offered during a recent visit '5th generation aircraft, 5th generation Hangars and 1st generation barrack blocks'.

Finally, on accommodation, there is increasing nervousness about the Future Accommodation Model (FAM), which has the potential to change radically the way that accommodation is provided in the future. Our people are worried too about the potential impact on other aspects of Service life that FAM could bring, ranging from welfare support to the loss of 'patch life'. FAM has been presented as offering greater freedom of choice and more flexibility about how people choose to live. But it's also clear that the current system is viewed by MoD as unaffordable and unsustainable and that FAM represents a means to cut costs. Against this backdrop, FAM developments continue to make personnel nervous rather than optimistic and many are already concerned that SFA will be largely unavailable.

And, in the current absence of credible options and information, that quality will fall and prices rise, whichever option is selected.

In our current multi-generational force the need, cost and availability of childcare is becoming a huge burden on the diverse range of RAF families who need to access it – or indeed those who cannot afford to access it. Whilst acknowledging that this is an issue that affects many civilian families as well, we are nevertheless concerned about the wildly varying costs around the country and the growing strain it is placing on those that need childcare in order to meet their operational Service commitments. The MoD should not underestimate the impact this complicated and emotive issue is having and we welcome both the inclusion of childcare as an issue to be addressed as part of the MoD Family Strategy and the intent to produce a childcare policy. We believe firmly that there exists a direct link between affordable childcare and current retention, career management, future engagement strategies and spousal employment concerns.

For many RAF personnel the realities of our Whole Force and the change from ‘Large Scale’ operations to a more frequent, fast paced and potentially ‘bare base’ Operational Contingent requirement has meant for some unprecedented DWR turnarounds, an increase in Pre-Deployment Training (PDT) (and subsequent nights out of bed) and more time away from families. This high-end tempo of deployment and training for some squadron personnel and Force Elements is unrelenting, impacting both on those that remain fully deployable and those remaining non-deployable but invariably having to fill the gaps created. A common complaint is the short notice being given of a deployment and the concomitant impact on spouse employment, childcare and family life in general.

Public Sector pay restraint continues to cause resigned resentment, and seems to many of our personnel to be ‘out of pace’ as the private sector is perceived to be picking up. Whilst cognisant that there is a significant difference between saying you are going to leave the Service and actually leaving – we have been struck by the numbers telling us they are thinking about it, especially amongst some engineering trades where personnel are very quick to compare themselves with their civilian counterparts, quoting the benefits on some stations of quite literally ‘crossing the hangar floor’. Finally, the new pension may be the best in the public sector but it is still influencing many people’s decision making about their future.

All of these issues – and many others – continue to place pressure on the feeling of value and morale of RAF personnel and their families – the principal reason still given for leaving the Service is the impact of Service life on the family, rather than the impact on the Service person themselves. Many Airmen and Airwomen have told us that they continue to accept (and in some cases relish) all that service life throws at them and demands from them. However, when it impacts on children, loved ones or their ‘home life balance’ this is often seen as breaking the moral contract that they feel exists between the service and themselves. Increasingly, our subjective assessment, based on anecdotal evidence alone, would be that family morale is not as good as it is amongst serving personnel. One RAF wife described herself to us as “feeling bruised by the system”, which seems to us to be a description that many other spouses and partners would recognise.

With so many people initiatives underway and the inherent, substantial change to the RAF and military offer, together with the backdrop of increasing air power commitments across an increasingly unpredictable globalised world, maintaining morale and the provision of effective support to RAF personnel families across the Whole Force has never been more important.

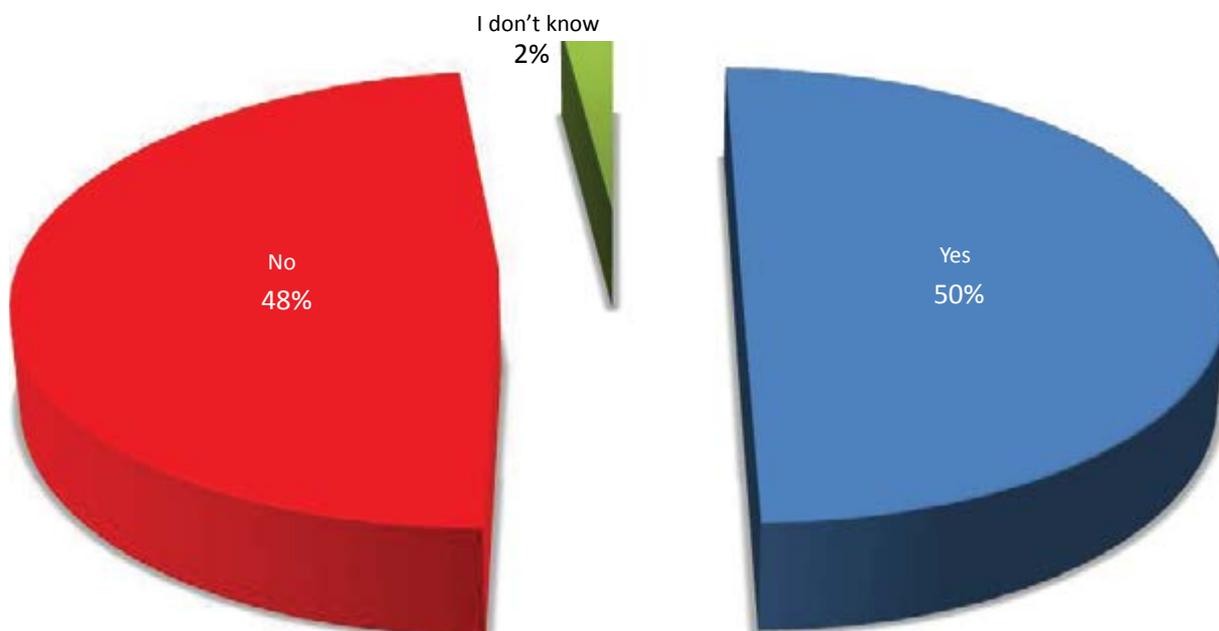
Our own assessment continues a theme that has not really changed from last year in that we sense that at all levels of the Service the uncertainty currently being experienced means that more RAF personnel and their families are thinking earlier and more seriously about their long term commitment to the Service. That does not mean they are all about to leave but it does show that our 'Multi-Generational Whole Force' is no longer prepared to commit "for life" and will move on more readily than perhaps in the past.

However, what is clear is that in meeting the Defence People Strategy Vision of sufficient, capable and motivated people, our personnel and their families remain resilient, pragmatic and dedicated. When we ask people if they are enjoying life in the RAF a consistent 75 – 80% respond positively.

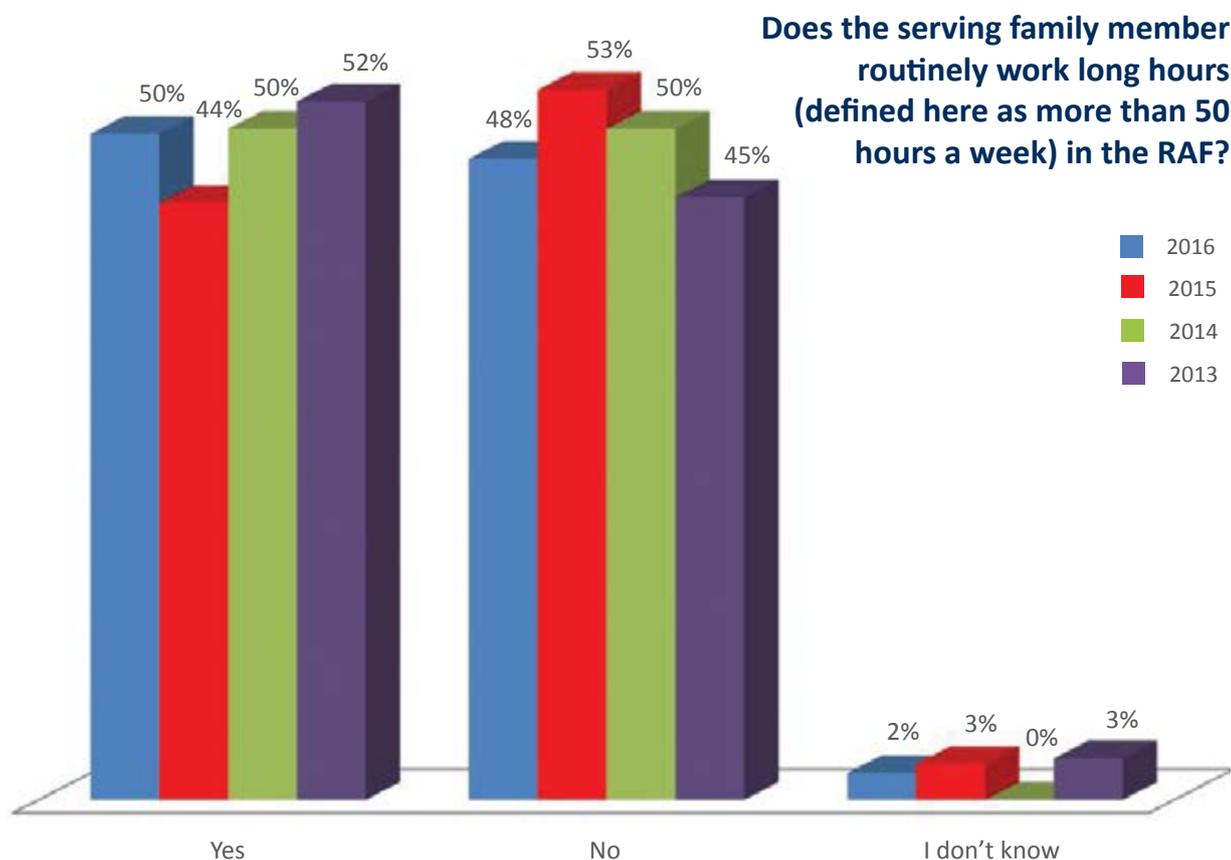


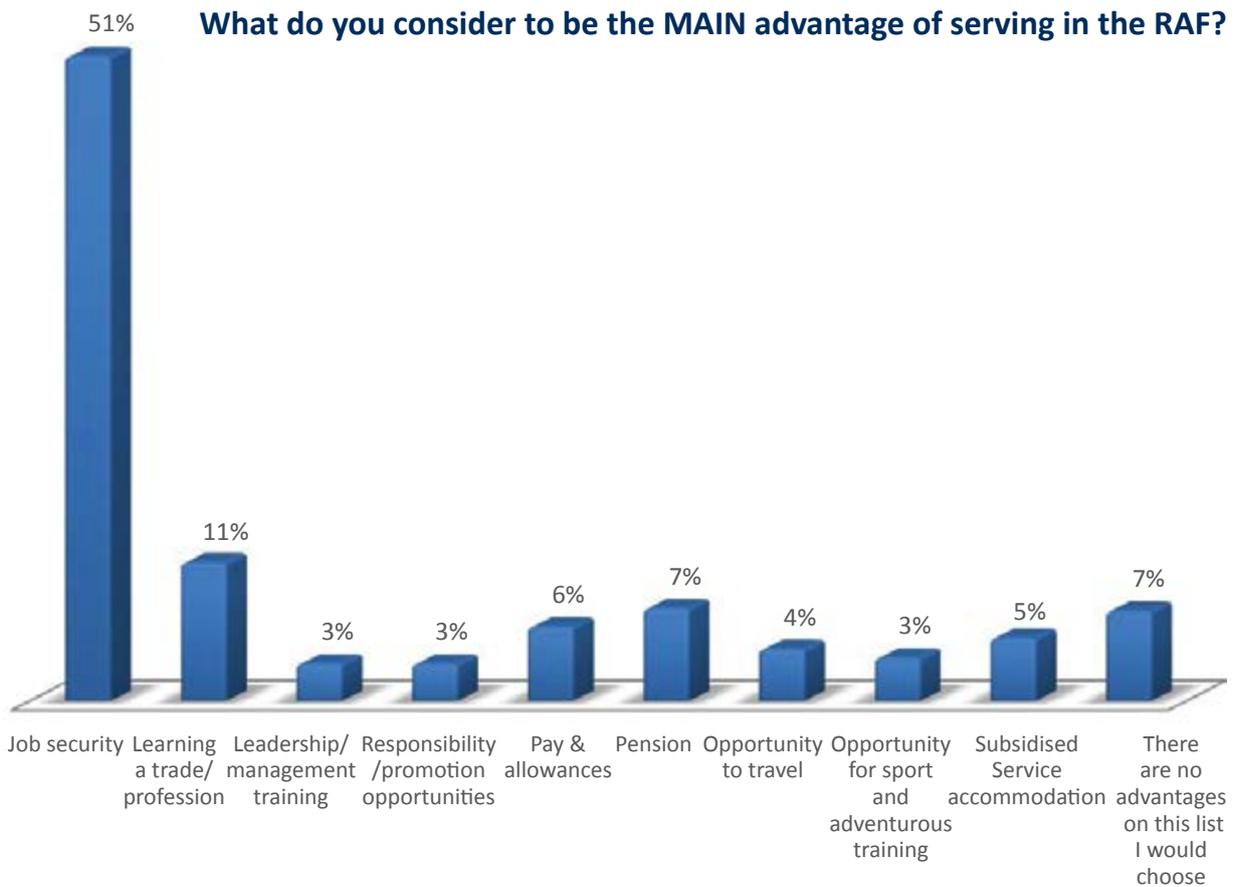
Image: A ground crew member marshals a Royal Air Force Tornado GR4 with 617 Squadron (The Dambusters), during the multi-national exercise Shaheen Star 4 in the Middle East. RAF Photographer. Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.

Does the serving family member routinely work long hours (defined here as more than 50 hours a week) in the RAF?

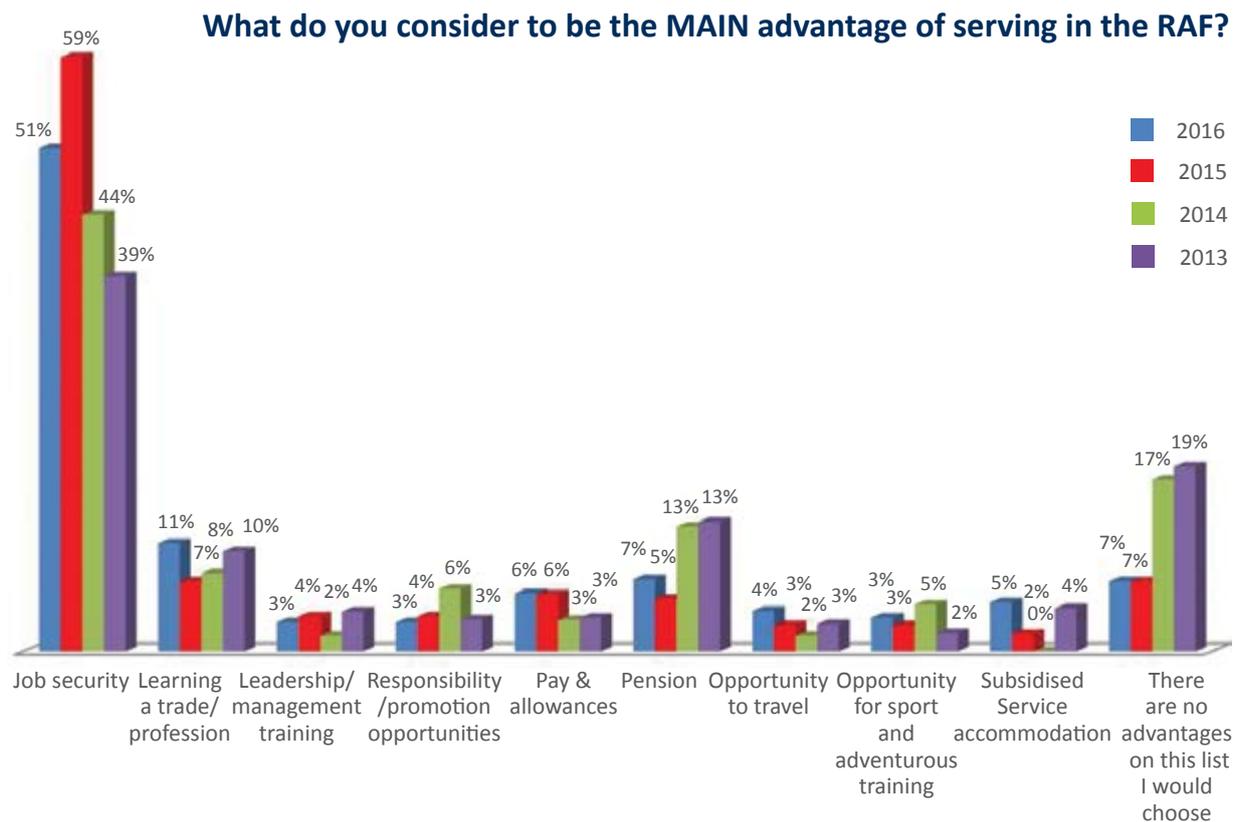


In comparison to previous results:

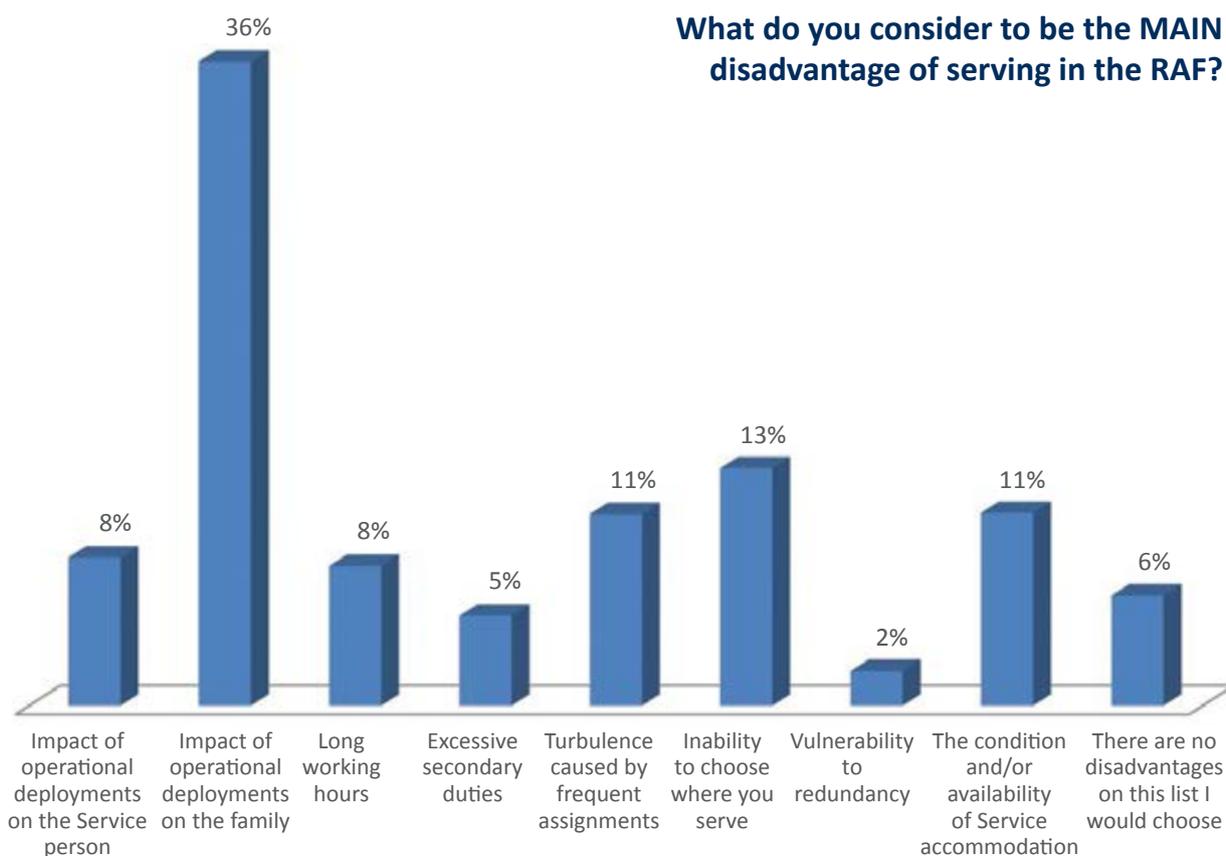




In comparison to previous results:

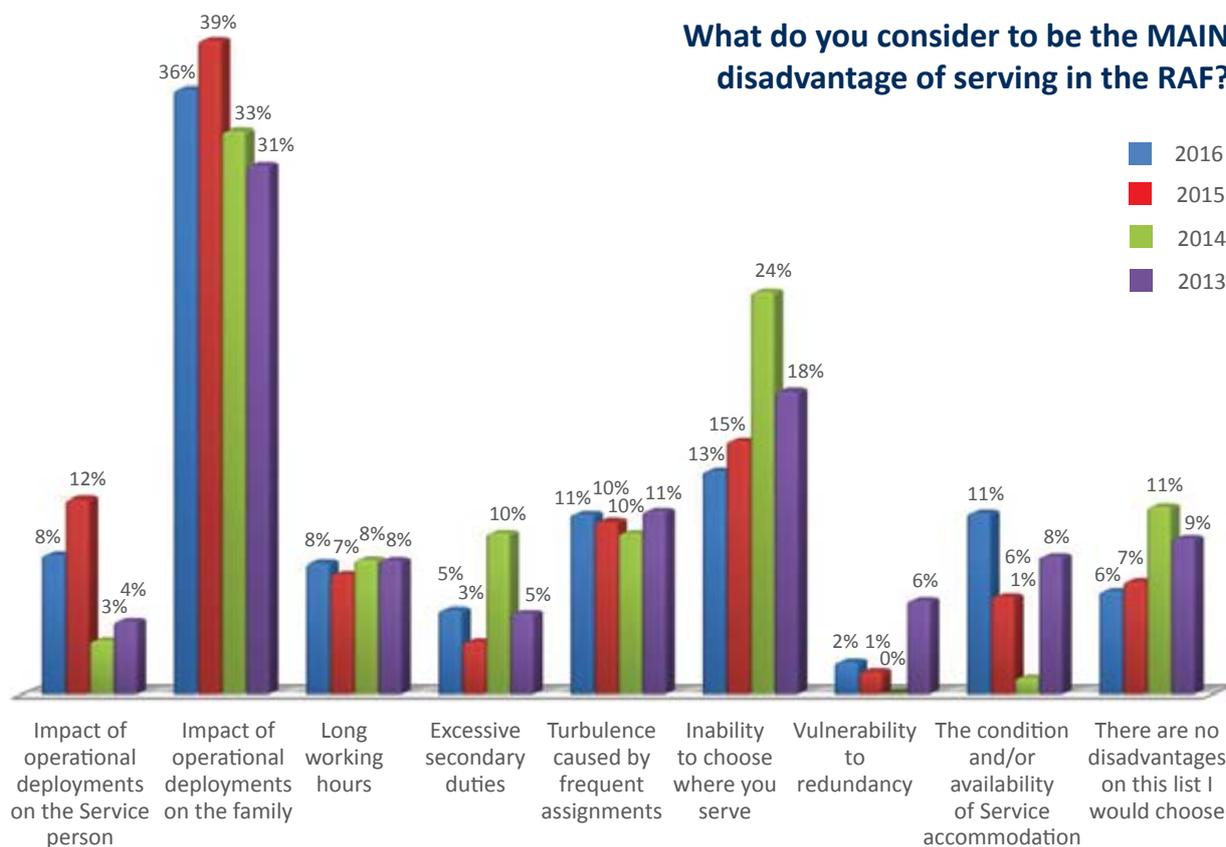


What do you consider to be the MAIN disadvantage of serving in the RAF?



In comparison to previous results:

What do you consider to be the MAIN disadvantage of serving in the RAF?



As with previous reports, we have included a representative cross section of the comments received as part of the survey responses, to add colour and emphasis to the raw data.

Comments:

Operational deployments frequently come forward due to medical and other “fall downs” often throwing family life into turmoil (spouse’s employment, childcare etc).

As the wife of a successful high-ranking officer, I feel very torn about the decisions we make regarding our future. I want to be a supportive wife to my husband who enjoys his job and is very good at it; however as a mother, I am concerned about the effects our frequent moves have on the children’s education. We are aware of the assistance available with boarding schools but we simply could not bear to be separated from our children like that. Even the possibility of my husband “living in” during the week and returning to a family home at weekends is very difficult to contemplate. As a woman who had a career herself, I have felt unable to return to work due to the needs of our children, wanting to be their stable parent, always there when they need me but somewhat frustrated that I cannot return to work.

*Frequent deployments mean that support has to come through service community. Access to facilities can be challenging e.g. dentistry. Children’s education and ability to socialise can also be affected. Wife’s ability to have a fulfilling career is also compromised
With over 50% of the past 2 years spent overseas on training and operation, the family is feeling significant disruption.*

Service children gain bonus funding at school for a reason. Almost every aspect of service life impacts negatively on the family. Frequent location moves, absence of parents through deployment and long normal hours all contribute to a lack of stability.

The disadvantages are starting to outweigh the advantages. Turbulence on children and spouses employment are now a big ‘leave’ factor, as is the condition of quarters.

I don’t think just one disadvantage can be put forward at present as there are many that impact upon each other.

Leave is too difficult to take due to work, low manpower levels and block leave bans.

All the cuts to staff means those still serving are doing two or three people’s jobs. Okay to do this for a short period of time, but not sustainable. The powers in charge need to stop cutting staff levels before they burn out those who are trying to bridge the working gap. They can’t maintain these levels of workloads, leaving people mentally and physically exhausted will just create bigger problems in the future

RAF service is great when the service person is at home. Whilst working long hours during the week it’s actually a stable lifestyle we can enjoy. However, longer operational deployments with no R+R impact on the family life especially given the current 18 month turn around for the branch.

Whilst deployments have on paper reduced, commitments remain as high as ever. On the whole the Service can have minimal impact on family life as most are used to the tempo at which we operate but after time this wears thin and relationships are tested.

I am an RAF spouse. I am also a professional person in my own right. Moving house frequently makes having a meaningful career (with progression etc) almost impossible. When my husband was posted overseas for 18 months, I had to leave a good job. I found it hard to get appropriate work, and it cost our family a lot in terms of salary/pension that I missed out on. It is time that the military realised that not all spouses are doing "little jobs"- a lot of us are actually highly skilled.

Six month detachments and no R&R. Not good.

Fewer people, less money but more work to do mean more stress which puts strain on relationships.

The main disadvantage is accommodation. SFA is abysmal... I can't say it any clearer than that. Respectable private sector landlords would not be able to get away with the shoddy maintenance provided.

Increased accommodation charges for decreasing standards of accommodation. Long working hours over extended periods due to under manning and over work leave precious little time for any sort of quality of life outside of work

My husband's service means that it is extremely difficult to plan holidays and day to day family events. He is frequently away at virtually no notice. It is then impossible to get babysitters etc. I therefore gave up good career to be the constant in our children's lives.

The hours are so long my husband may as well be on deployment. He feels guilty for taking leave and when he does his phone is constantly going off with work related issues. The poor man has no down time and quality of work life balance extremely poor.

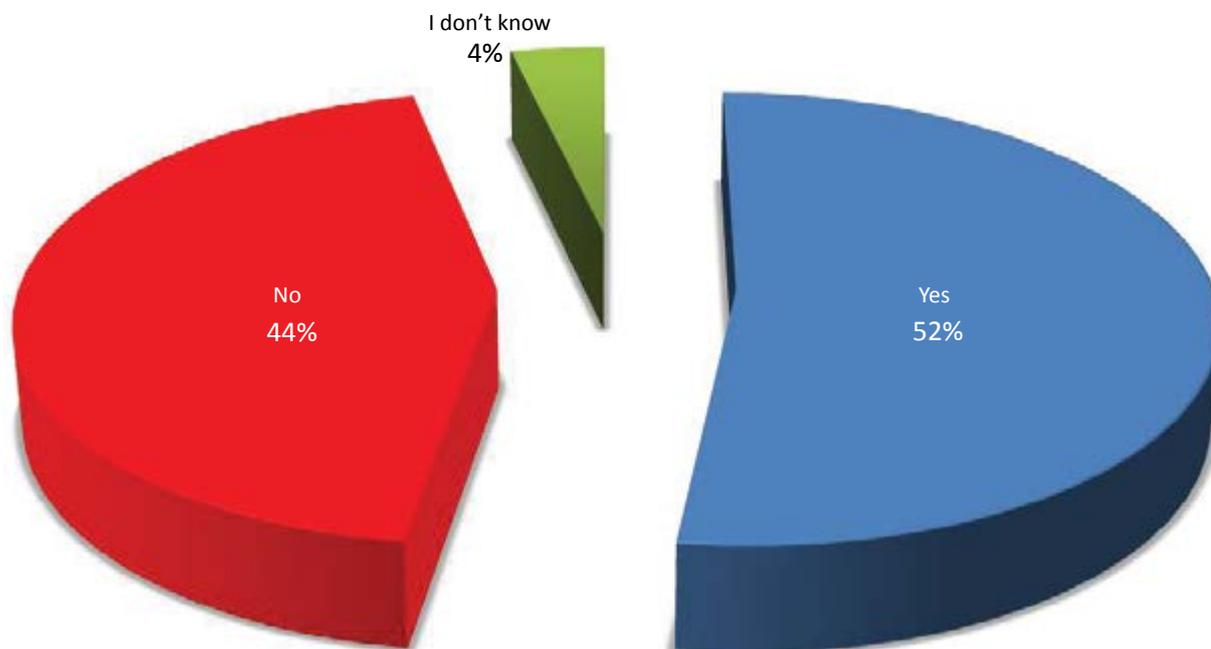
Main advantage seems to be job satisfaction. We have lived apart for some years to give the children stability - but of course this has an impact on family life, as would never send them to boarding school. Nevertheless we enjoy good quality of life and enjoy being part of the RAF wider family.

The lack of a real terms pay rise over the last 5 years has left us poorer.

My husband works in excess of 60 hours per week, starting at 7:00am and finishing anywhere between 6:00- 9:00 PM this is having a huge impact on our family.

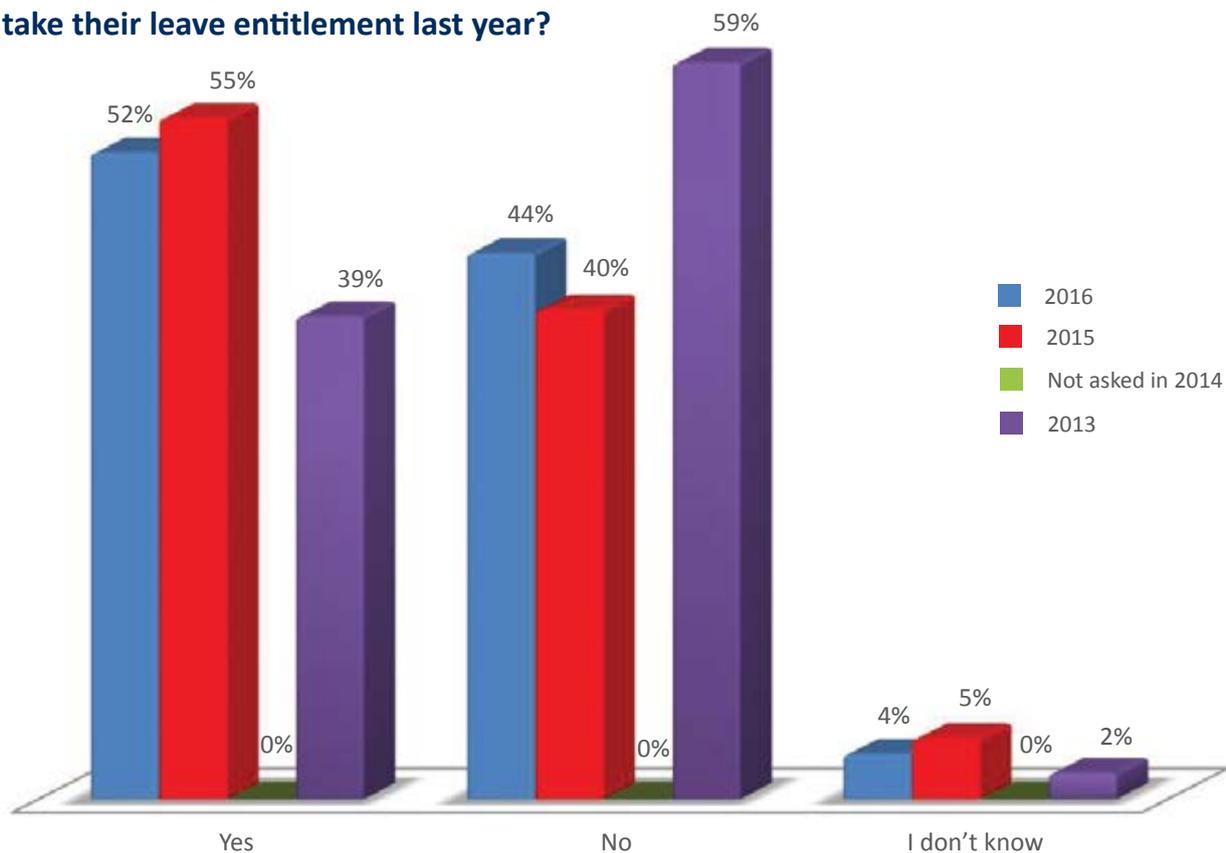
As a wife we know what we sign up for but there has to be balance and for us there isn't any. I try to hold everything together whilst looking after two young children and working and there comes a breaking point it's when it affects the children and you constantly have to pick up the pieces of them missing their father. We can't even manage to get a full week together for a holiday when their dad has been out of the country for 7 months.

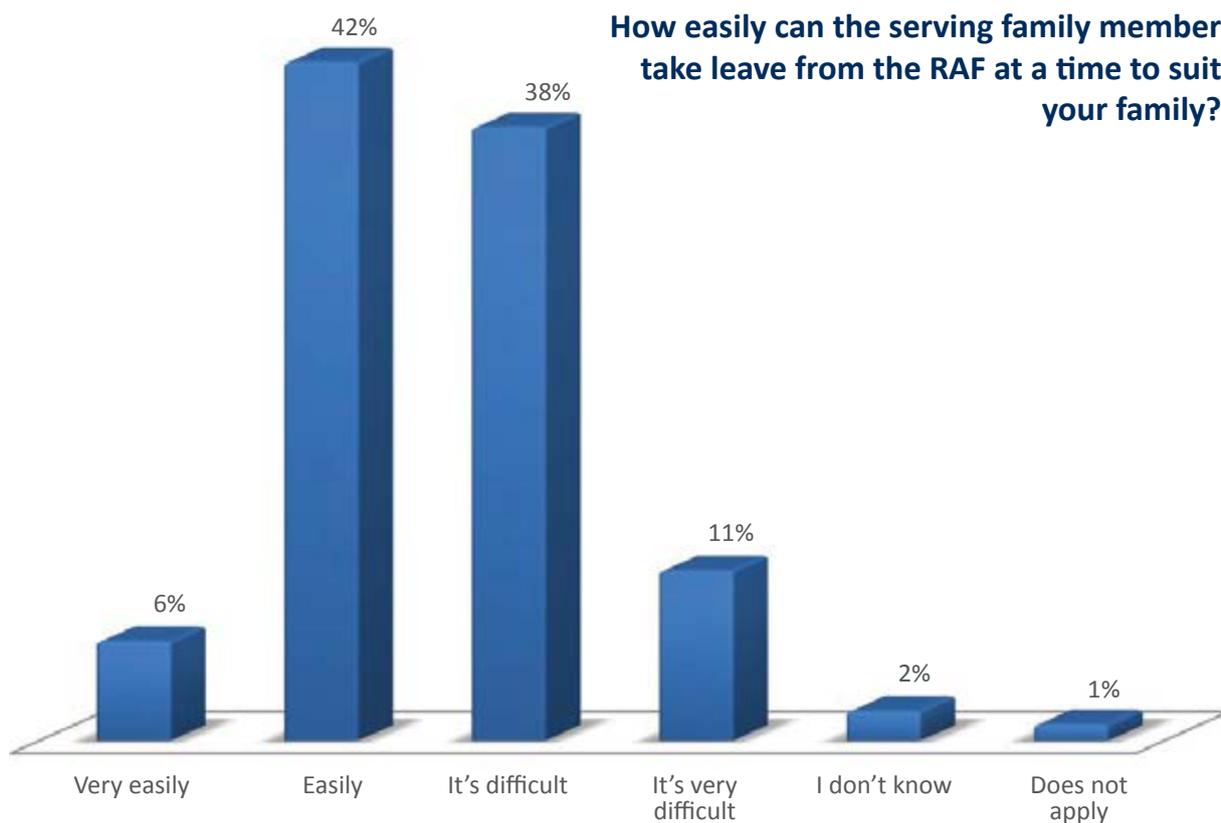
Did the serving family member manage to take their leave entitlement last year?



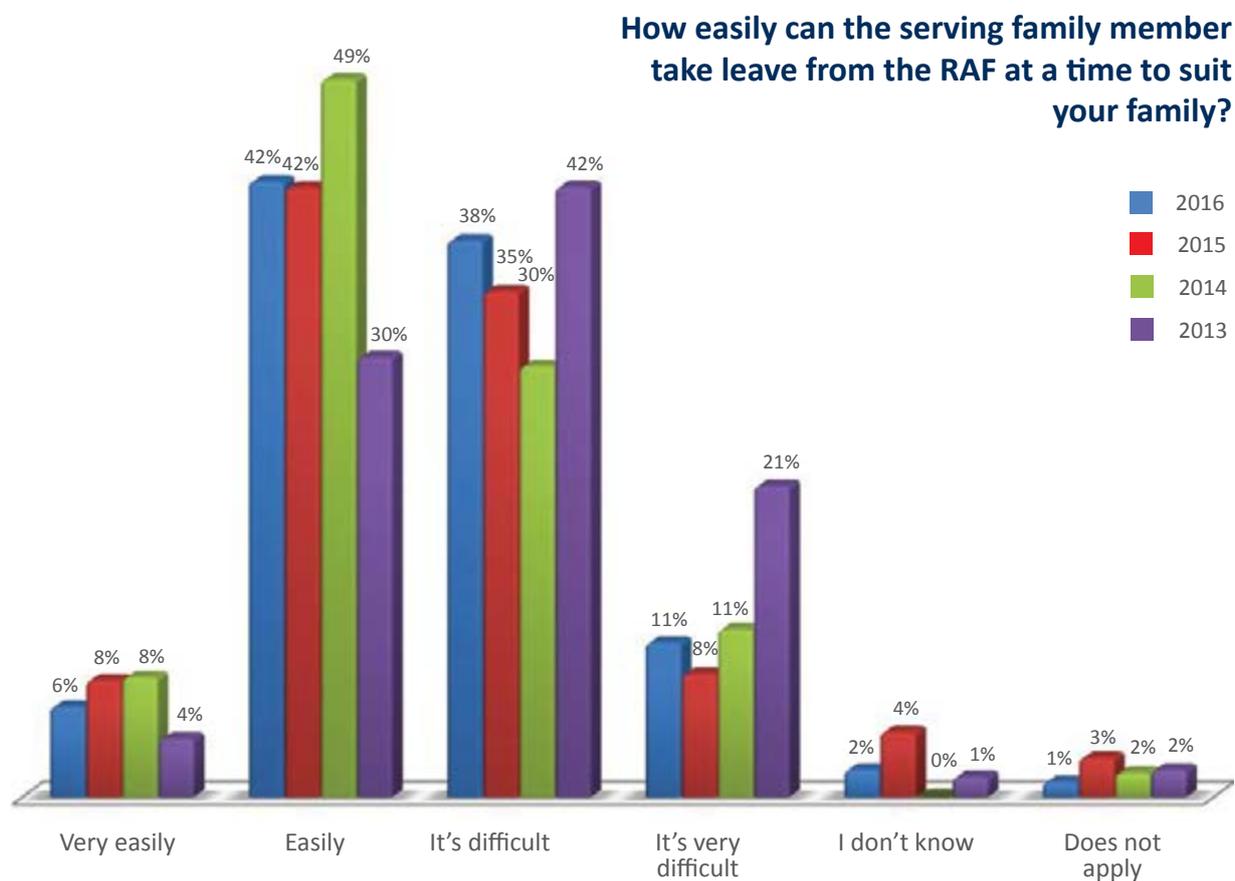
In comparison to previous results:

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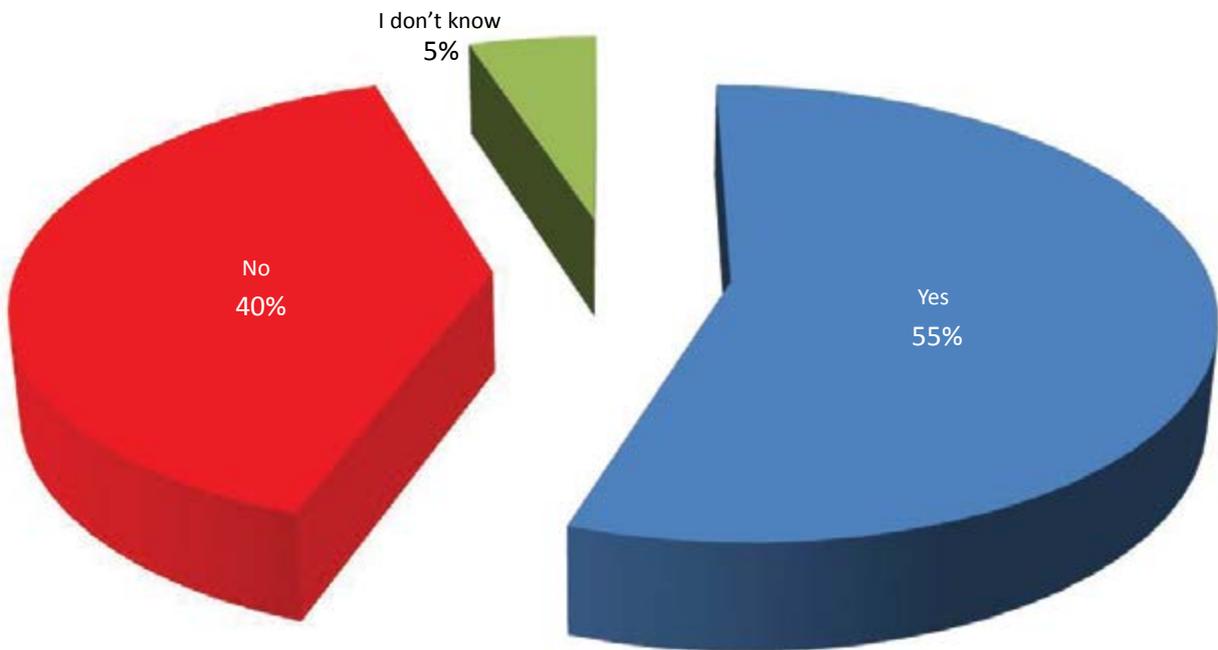




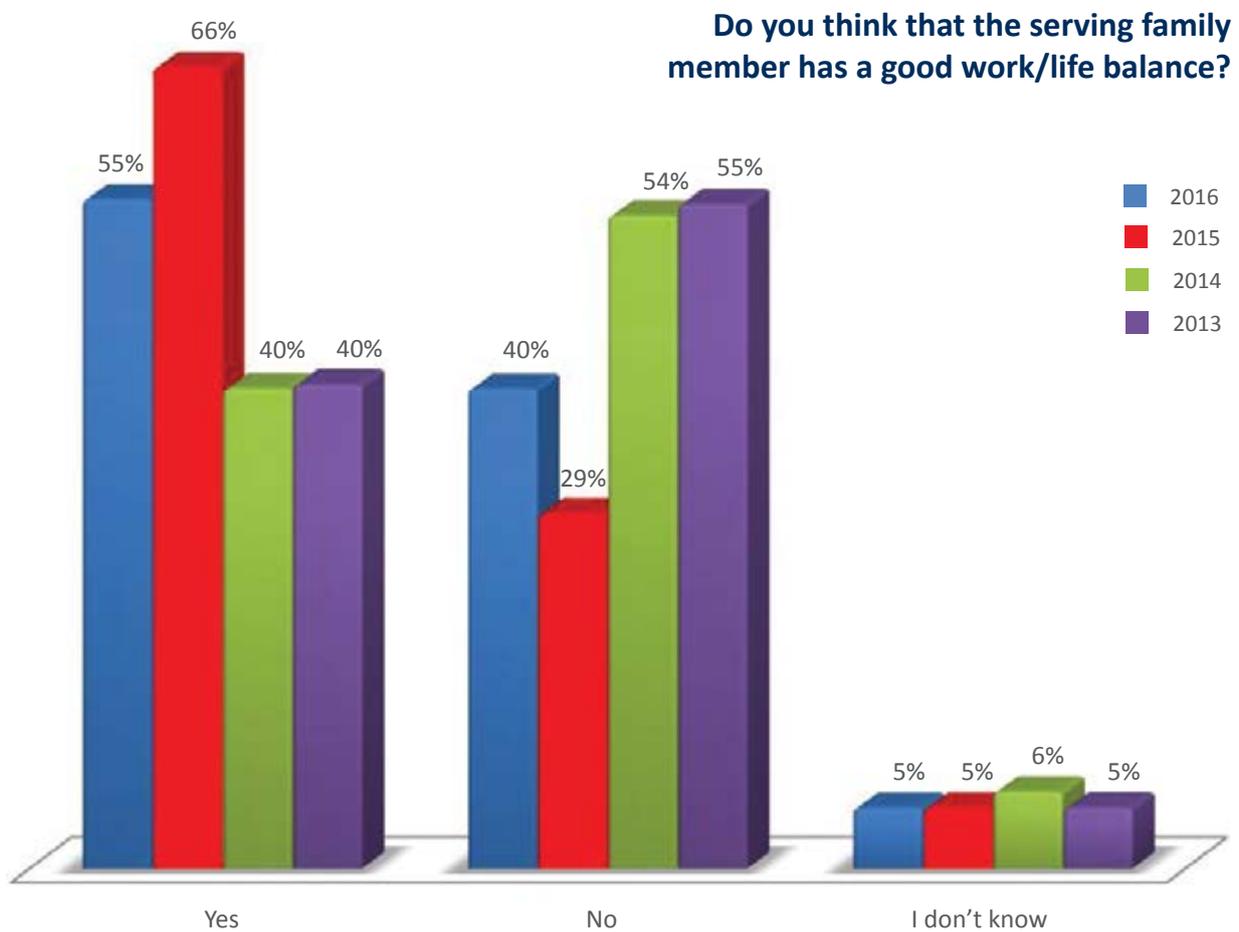
In comparison to previous results:



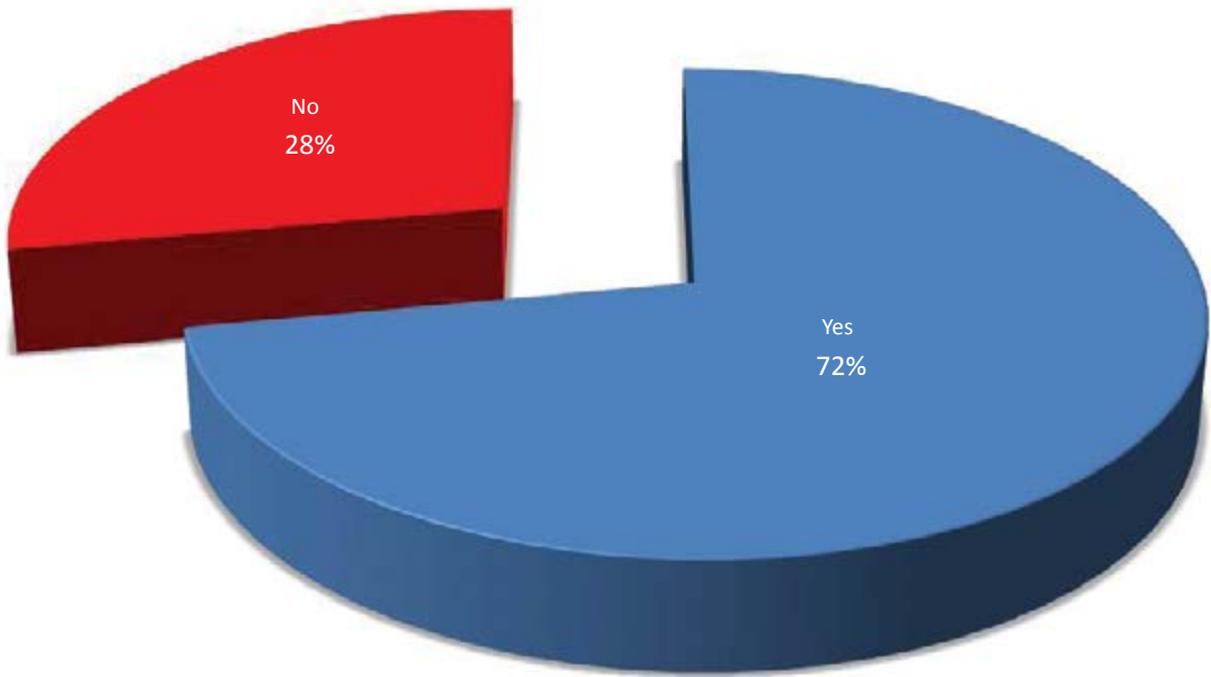
Do you think that the serving family member has a good work/life balance?



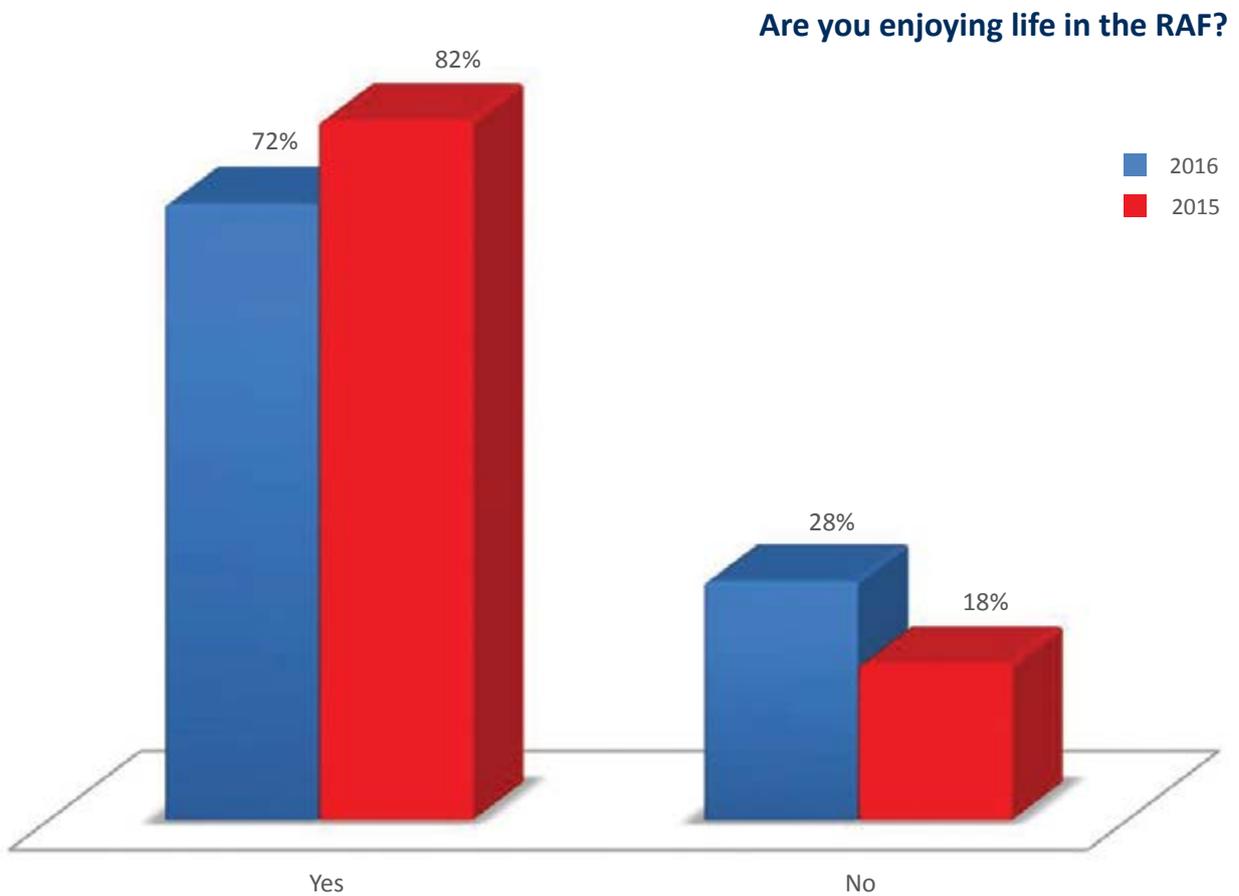
In comparison to previous results:



Are you enjoying life in the RAF?



In comparison to previous results:



I firmly believe that it is incumbent on the individual to make the most of the opportunities that are available. Despite this however, the erosion of advantages afforded by service life, alongside increased workload due to a lack of available manpower, make retention a less palatable proposition. I don't think there is an easy solution, especially in the current climate of saving imperatives and cut backs; however, I do believe we must protect our most valuable asset, experienced and loyal personnel in addition to making retention and recruitment more attractive than it currently is.

As the wife of a serving officer I have to choose between a rock and a hard place: Either buy a house somewhere affordable on an RAF officers salary - which means a long way from High Wycombe/MOD/Northwood etc - and stay put whilst not seeing him for several weeks at a time (weekend work seems to be the norm these days) or 'follow the flag' and move home every 2 years or less. If I chose the former, there is the possibility that the marriage will suffer. If I chose the latter, I sacrifice my career and face the stress of having to fight to get a decent house, find decent schooling, a doctors, a dentist etc. And it is a fight now. This is not how it was when we were first married and these things were much easier to sort out. Life now for RAF personnel and their families is harder and more stressful.

A lot of personnel are working extremely hard to make the best of the current situation and, no doubt, Service Chiefs are shackled to the problems that have been created over many years. Family support is essential to ensuring those serving can complete the job in hand knowing that their loved ones are being suitably supported be that through welfare, housing or having a voice.

I am very proud of the role my husband fills and that of the RAF in general. There does however seem to be a shortage of resources (manpower and aircraft) which is resulting in longer hours and a reduction in quality of life. Whilst it is understood that being in the Armed Forces means you are never off duty there has to be some down time and quality of life otherwise it will become increasingly difficult to retain talented people and there will be an impact on people's health.

Whilst the serving person's quality of life is good, as a spouse/partner, it is becoming increasingly demoralising to hand in notice in a full time job to then know that on future job applications you will be scrutinised and penalised by employers for your loyalty to the RAF.

I enjoy my job and some of the opportunities it brings, but often the cost is a poor work life balance away from my wife and children either due to displaced locations or long hours.

Quality of life is very good at the moment but long term it is unsustainable for 2 serving personnel with a young family.

I still am very proud to be the Wife of Serving Member of the Armed Forces and it has done us well in terms of been able to get on the property ladder. The quality of Married Quarters is getting worse and when you live in a Quarter that has been so poorly maintained it can be a little depressing.

Accommodation is disgusting and helps to sap every ounce of morale from my bones.

Feeling valued and extolling the positives service life has to offer, to the young airmen/women, is increasingly difficult.

I enjoy aspects of military life and having the support of likeminded families around is good.

My husband is working very long hours, has not had a pay rise for several years, and there are less personnel to cover even more exercises and deployments. The standard of the SFA and the estate has decreased over the last 5 years and the morale of serving personnel and the families has dropped significantly.

Despite a sense that RAF families are often taken for granted and rewarded in any way other than pay and allowances, the challenge of service life and the sense of pride in service outweigh the negatives. Service life is exceptionally rich but after some 35 years of service I notice a strong sense amongst colleagues that there is an ever increasing reliance on good will.

The military community has always been the significant factor in helping me enjoy our military life. Without it, we would have left the military long ago.

We have our own house away from the base, as encouraged by current policy, but we do not feel part of the RAF it is merely a job that my husband has. A job that takes him away from us for over 50% of the year and from which he is unable to take his full leave allocation.

I still enjoy being part of the community but there is a continued drive of doing more with less and reducing the things that make serving worthwhile; coupled with separated living during the working week, the impact of serving grows more difficult to justify.

I love the social side and the opportunities that the RAF offers.

Whilst detachments can be hard, living within the military community provides a vital support network from other families who 'get it'.

Many of the families that I know put up with the difficulties that forces life throw up due to the fact that our partners have relatively good job security and we benefit from substantial discount on accommodation.

Quality of life is fairly good. We get good pay, dental, healthcare and opportunities for sport and AT. The place it falls down is the length of operational deployments. 3 months away from home was bad enough but acceptable, 6 months is far too long in my opinion.

We have had a couple of years of relative stability i.e. no deployments or excessive time away from home, but this has not always been the situation. Overall I do enjoy life as the wife of a serving member of the RAF and found it to be a mainly positive experience.

Quality of food and accommodation whilst 'living in' is on the whole appalling. Given the increases in charges for this balanced against the lack of increases in pay then it is somewhat demoralising.

Presently we are really lucky with a modern house and we will be settled for the next few years. Although the job is busy and can be stressful, we almost always have the weekends together and we are in a lovely area where we can afford to get out and enjoy our life as well as saving a large portion of our wages for a house deposit. Overall at the moment we have a great quality of life, though I do worry that with the price of SFA increasing we will be forced to save less to afford the payments for the SFA or be forced to continually buy and sell on each move, potentially losing money, market dependant and missing out on the family communities.

I neither enjoy nor don't enjoy life in the RAF. I'm married to a man who is married to the RAF!

Shrinking numbers with an ever increasing workload finds those left to be far busier than before. With numerous issues regarding SFA and recent changes to both pensions and pay it is understandable why many are questioning their future.

Quality of life on the whole is good. However poor standard of military accommodation and work stresses relating to promotion can cause the quality of life to be reduced.

Pinch point trade - nearly 300 pers short, pressure showing.

Huge degree of moral blackmail being exerted to work long hours and take on extra duties.

Put simply, if you are on the operations side of the RAF, don't expect much in the way of quality of life. The RAF is still an interesting place to work and I'm proud to say I'm in the RAF, far more than I would be proud to say I'm a banker or an accountant, but the way we are going is creating mono-dimensional people with no life outside of work, running them into the ground and discarding them at the end of their careers. A better work life balance would go an awful long way to improving quality of life and therefore individuals' performance.

Quality of life is what you make it, taking advantage of opportunities when they arise. Notwithstanding this, whilst I understand the need for efficiency savings, the solutions constantly appear to erode the advantages of service life.

In previous years the "impact of RAF Service" on family life was mitigated by a fair salary.

Fantastic opportunities, professional service, proud to serve.

I've constantly been made to feel like the wives of serving personnel are still widely seen as stay-at-home support pillars whose main purpose it is to facilitate their partner's career. I know dozens of talented, well-educated, driven women who were driven out of the careers they loved because of frequent postings and a lack of support networks that made it impossible/unaffordable to continue training or move up in their career. Often, the best they can hope for is moving sideways permanently, which makes them/their CVs even more 'unemployable'.

We are losing so many technical trades to civilian companies. I am an avionics CPL and it is rare to find a cheerful optimistic junior rank working on the aircraft. A large portion of juniors are seeing salaries outside and leaving.

I am a very proud wife of a serving Engineer and yes we have lived in lovely parts of the country but as a family we make the most of a bad hand! The quality of life can be limited due to deployments and the extra pressure that is been put upon Service Personnel depending on their Trade.

On the whole the RAF life is great. The RAF gives the service person a skill and provides job security. My husband enjoys his work and enjoys travelling on deployments. However, the uncertainty of when deployments are (exact dates of departure and return), and the length of deployments really take their toll on family life.

I'm enjoying the RAF from a personal perspective but the impact on my family is becoming the single biggest factor to leaving the service.

I hear phrases such as the 'need to break the dependency culture'. This is deeply offensive - we do not wish to be dependents, but prohibitively expensive housing (especially in the SE), few career opportunities - thanks to frequent house moves and the cost of childcare means we often have very little option. Like my husband I have a degree and post-grad professional qualifications, but find myself treated as some sort of imbecilic scrounger by the housing/personnel/CEA administrative systems.

The advantages of private sector work, better pay, less movement, no six month absences for trips to the South Atlantic etc, etc are starting to look more and more attractive.

Both having worked in private industry before my husband joined the RAF we feel that actually it is still a good life style, especially whilst children are young, the impact on me as a wife of has hampered my career but for arguments sake so has having the children!

I've always considered myself a lifer until recently. The changes to pay and increase in SFA charges saw me lose money in my monthly pay (after a 1% pay rise) and the constant failings of the maintenance contractors for SFA have led me to re-evaluate my priorities and I am now seeking to progress my career around what's best for my family in the long term. I hope to continue within the RAF, but I am increasingly encouraged to keep my options open.

It's too late for surveys.....

The infrastructure around the camp is falling apart due to lack of maintenance. The SFA is in dire need of updating and better routine maintenance.

Life in the RAF may well be better than life out of it, but it's a close run thing which is why people are actively considering PVR'ing more than they used to.

Managing family life in the service is difficult and the benefits of serving (e.g. pension, pay and promotion etc.) are being eroded. The large proportion of military personnel will have to find another job after the military.

Hard work is a given in the military. But the package for the family has been eroded. Lose the family, lose the serviceman/woman.

I used to be very proud to serve in the RAF and would deploy without question or complaint. Now I find our pay is decreasing (with the introduction of the new pay model and increase in National insurance I have taken a £600 per year pay cut), and our allowances are reduced or don't match the increase in food and fuel price increase.

There are some wonderful parts of being part of a military family, from the sense of community, family events, deployment packs, sports facilities, social teams to groups like Poppy Pods and Tickets for Troops.

There are three key elements keeping our family in the military - pension, SFA housing and CEA. Removal or excessive change to any of these will give us little cause to stay in the military.

Our "independent" pay review body isn't and toes the government line.

As a married couple with both individuals serving, it has become increasingly difficult to find the work life balance we wish to have while both remaining within the RAF. The constant erosion of the 'offer' is gradually taking its toll and it is unlikely to be a 'big' event that will cause one of us to leave but more likely the cumulative impact of the wider offer (accn standard/charges/lack of pay increase above 1% for a number of years/frequency of deployments).

Why do we have an 'Armed Forces Pay Review Body'? They are supposed to be independent, and yet we all know they just recommend what the government tell them to recommend. They are NOT an independent organisation.

Surely the point of the AFPRB is there to listen to our complaints and make a recommendation from that. If they just agree on what the government says anyway then what is the point of them doing their jobs?

I feel the military rely heavily on people's commitment and pride but 'the deal' I joined up on is simply not there anymore, the continual erosion of pay/allowances which has been matched only by the increased operational commitment and chronic under manning has eroded personnel's morale.

I'm on Loan Service in Oman. My main dissatisfaction is the level of allowances. Why should service personnel be expected to contribute towards costs that are solely caused by service need Having worked alongside many different nations and seen how much they are rewarded/recompensed I can see the British treat their service personnel poorly in comparison.

Service life is difficult especially when you are both serving and working long hours. Both our trades expect above and beyond and do not understand the implications financially and emotionally on both serving personnel the child care cost to cover both your shift patterns is normally around £1000 this is a lot to lose out your pay a month for serving your country and regularly leaving your children for deployment with no help from the RAF to meet your service requirements just a high stress level and bigger childcare bill. Yes it is a choice to have children and stay in the RAF however the modern world requires both mum and dad to work and if you both give it your all in the military it would help to have more support for serving parents both in the military and single serving parents.

So far in 2016, we have visited RAF personnel and families at the following units overseas:

- SHAPE
- Ramstein
- Brunssum
- Uedem

In addition, we have taken evidence online from personnel based elsewhere in:

- Belgium
- Cyprus
- Germany
- Holland
- Kuwait
- USA

Issues raised:

Much work has been done by MoD/JFC to better communicate the overseas offer. It should also be borne in mind that the majority of RAF personnel volunteer to serve overseas (those that don't are often "voluntold" and a carrot, such as promotion or a choice of future location, is often involved). Doubling the number of concessionary flights for children to/from UK, the removal of CILOCT payments and the reduced grade for charge for overseas accommodation are positive examples of changes to encourage volunteers to come forwards. The decision that the AF Covenant applies equally to personnel and families overseas is also welcome and has resulted in a number of disadvantages caused by overseas service being removed by commercial firms and government departments. However, much still needs to be done.

Even so, overseas assignments still come with a number of issues. They can still be expensive, especially in the early months and especially in the USA. Some locations are unable or unwilling to accept personnel and families with additional needs and it is therefore essential that personnel investigate thoroughly the issues, costs and practicalities of moving overseas before they volunteer to do so and then find themselves with a problem when they get there. Many don't....

The majority of issues raised with us through the year have been local in nature and are being tackled – albeit in some cases after much angst. However, some common themes have emerged:

- CAAS in Europe has not been implemented successfully due to inaccurate data and is being revisited.
- LOA rates continues to attract criticism from some. We understand a Cost of Living Review is underway to improve the methodology and process behind the calculation of overseas allowances, which should provide more clarity and openness for 'customers'.
- In Europe, the withdrawal of welfare support back to a central point (SHAPE) is a cause for concern and may result in service families being returned to the UK because their need is greater than the welfare support's capacity at location.

Quality of life questions - Overseas

We asked overseas personnel at each location visited to complete the Quality of Life survey and added the results to the responses to the online responses received from other locations overseas. The results do not vary significantly from those received from UK-based personnel – although we would highlight the, not surprising, 85% who said they are enjoying RAF life as the most positive response received to the question.

Does the serving family member routinely work long hours (defined here as more than 50 hours a week) in the RAF?	Totals	
Yes	36	43%
No	47	56%
I don't know	1	1%
Total	84	100%

What do you consider to be the MAIN advantage of serving in the RAF?	Totals	
Job security	48	58%
Learning a trade/profession	5	6%
Leadership/management training	2	2%
Responsibility/promotion opportunities	1	1%
Pay & allowances	6	7%
Pension	10	12%
Opportunity to travel	6	7%
Opportunity for sport and adventurous training	1	1%
Subsidised Service accommodation	0	0%
There are no advantages on this list I would choose	5	6%
Total	84	100%



What do you consider to be the MAIN disadvantage of serving in the RAF?	Totals	
Impact of operational deployments on the Service person	1	1%
Impact of operational deployments on the family	25	31%
Long working hours	7	8%
Excessive secondary duties	6	7%
Turbulence caused by frequent assignments	12	14%
Inability to choose where you serve	10	12%
Vulnerability to redundancy	2	2%
The condition and/or availability of Service accommodation	12	14%
There are no disadvantages on this list I would choose	9	11%
Total	84	100%

Did the serving family member manage to take their leave entitlement last year?	Totals	
Yes	44	53%
No	38	45%
I don't know	2	2%
Total	84	100%

How easily can the serving family member take leave from the RAF at a time to suit your family?	Totals	
Very easily	6	7%
Easily	34	41%
It's difficult	31	37%
It's very difficult	12	14%
I don't know	1	1%
Does not apply	0	0%
Total	84	100%

Do you think that the serving family member has a good work/life balance?	Totals	
Yes	51	61%
No	31	37%
I don't know	2	2%
Total	84	100%

Are you enjoying life in the RAF?	Totals	
Yes	71	85%
No	13	15%
Total	84	100%

The RAF Families Federation (RAF FF) provides independent, evidence-based reports on topics relevant to all serving RAF personnel and their families. We engage through unit visits, via the RAF FF website, the Federation's magazine 'Envoy' and through social media.

We also "Quick 6" online surveys, focussing on specific issues and comprising a few short, sharp questions in order to overcome a degree of "survey fatigue" amongst people

Responses have been received from the following units:

Abbey Wood	Benbecula	Benson	Boscombe Down
Boulmer	Brize Norton	Buchan	Coningsby
Corsham	Cranwell	Digby	Fylingdales
Halton	Henlow	Honington	High Wycombe
Leeming	Linton-on-Ouse	Lossiemouth	Marham
Northolt	Northwood	Odiham	Scampton
Shrivenham	Shawbury	Spadeadam	St Mawgan
St Athan	Swanick	Waddington	Wattisham
Wittering	Wyton	Winterbourne Gunner	

Overseas responses were received from:

Belgium	Cyprus	Germany	Holland
Kuwait	USA	Oman	



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RAF FF SURVEY REPORT