

# envoy

SUMMER 2019



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**Director:** Maria Lyle

**Office Manager:** Ruth McClelland

**Communications Manager:** Caroline Woodward

**Communications Assistant:** Nick Crouch

**Operations and Policy Manager:**

Lisa Thipthorp

**Policy Advisor (Health & Additional Needs):**

Alison Cotton

**Policy Advisor (Education & Childcare):**

Louise Briggs

**Evidence Manager:** Richard Coleman

**Evidence Assistant:** Kenneth Wood

**Evidence Assistant (Accommodation) job share:** Stan Brathwaite and Alanna Gleave

**Dispersed Families Project Manager:**

Tor Johnson



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Contact Chris Cappie on 01463 732223 or

email [c.cappie@methodpublishing.co.uk](mailto:c.cappie@methodpublishing.co.uk)

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## Welcome from the editor



We are now fully into our Families Days' season having started off at RAF Valley and RAF Leeming with many more in the diary. So if you see our inflatable gazebo at your station's event then please do come and see us and have a chat.

In the summer edition of Envoy last year, you might remember that we brought to you a piece on the Typhoon Display Pilot, Flt Lt Jim Peterson (and it really is great news that he is the display pilot for this year as well!). This year we have decided to 'go green' and we bring to you the Chinook Display Team and I hope you enjoy the read in our features' section. In particular meeting co-pilot, Flt Lt Anthony Jewitt and crewman, Sgt James Begg (he'll be the one waving the big foam hand!).

### I finish with news of an amazing prize draw for you worth £500!

The Victory Services Club has kindly donated to us a prize to win a free weekend break for one family (up to 2 adults and 2 school age children). I have to say I have enjoyed the odd overnighter there myself and it's a great place to stay when visiting London. The staff are super friendly as well – and the food... well, I'll leave you to perhaps find out for yourself one day. All details are in the VSC's article later on in this magazine.

*Caroline.*

Front cover: Chinook Mk6A flown by the Chinook Display Team perform a rolling landing at the Royal International Air Tattoo (RIAT) 2018. Image Credit: SAC Pippa Fowles RAF. © UK MOD Crown Copyright 2018.

## CONTENTS

### FEATURES

- 14 Flexible Working in the Armed Forces
- 16 Introducing the Chinook Display Team for 2019
- 19 Promoting our People – RAF Women's Cricket Captain, Corporal Eli Dey



Meet the team.

22

### FEDERATION

- 22 Meet the new RAF Families Federation Team
- 26 Accommodation Matters
- 28 Pilot of new accommodation system at RAF Wittering

### FINANCIAL

- 30 Transitioning out of the RAF

### SUPPORTING SPOUSES/PARTNERS

- 33 Forces Families Jobs: A new employment and training platform
- 34 Six Years On with the Unsung Hero
- 35 Unsung Hero case study – Running Jo
- 36 Supporting the Armed Forces Covenant – Inzpire



34 One of the latest classes – Supporting the Unsung Hero.

### HEALTH & WELLBEING

- 39 RAF Widows' Association
  - 41 Dare to Stop
  - 42 Paramotor Pilots fly over 40 RAF Stations for charity
  - 43 Everyone needs a break
  - 44 The Ripple Pond
  - 46 Victory Services Club – including an amazing prize draw!
- ### OF INTEREST
- 48 RAF Central Fund – new CEO Appointment
  - 49 New Chair for Service Children in State Schools (SCISS) working Group



Covenant signatory – Inzpire.

36



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**I AM** delighted to showcase our revamped Families Federation team in this issue.

We are exceptionally fortunate to have found some great candidates to join our hard working team, and as you will see in this issue they are looking forward to meeting RAF families and working on your behalf. Amongst other things we will be engaged with over this period, I want to highlight our Forces Families Jobs platform, where forces friendly employers will be advertising jobs for family members of those in the RAF. This is a tri-service project and there are already many employers engaged – please keep an eye on our news feeds and website as we will circulate details when it goes live in September.

I attended the launch of the Chronic Conditions and Disability in Defence Network in London recently,

and heard some really inspiring stories from Serving Personnel who were either living with serious health conditions, or were carers for parents or children with a health condition. We will be closely engaged with this great initiative, and I invite all of you who have experiences in this area to contact us and let us know, as we work with them to better shape policy to support you. Our new Policy Advisor post for Health and Additional Needs will of course be focussed on this area, and Alison will bring a huge amount of relevant experience to lead work here.



## FROM THE **DIRECTOR**



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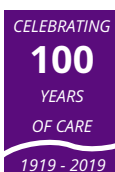
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*Image shows CAS, Sir Stephen Hillier and Lady Hillier celebrating after he returned from the final farewell tour of the Tornado to Scotland.*

# FOREWORD

By Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier and Lady Elaine Hillier

**So here we are at the end of our time in the Royal Air Force. It's over 39 years since one of us first walked through the gates of the RAF College Cranwell, and 35 years (12,824 days!) since we became a married couple within the RAF Family. If that makes us sound old, it's about how we feel after such a busy last 3 years!**

Along the way, there have been two (now grown-up) children, 9 operational deployments, and numerous exercises and other extended periods of separation. There have been 15 posting notices, we've lived on 10 different RAF Stations, and we are currently in our 21st home. There have been the enormous privileges of command at Squadron, Station and Group level, and, now, the RAF itself. We would never pretend that we understand every aspect of the benefits and challenges of RAF Family life, but we think our experience gives us at least some insight, so we'd like to share some parting thoughts with you.

The first is that the RAF Family today is really quite different compared to 3 decades ago. Perhaps that's obvious, and perhaps some might wish us to somehow get back to 'how it used to be'. Well, people were saying the same thing in the 1980s, and they'll probably be saying it in decades to come too.

The reality is that the idea of the RAF Family has to change over time, as we change how we live our lives. Compared to 30 years ago, our lives do now seem more complex, with pressures, challenges and indeed expectations that could not have been imagined back then. So the RAF Family can only succeed by being good at adapting to inevitable change.

But it's not the case that everything has changed during our time in the RAF Family. In fact, there's probably more that's the same than is different. The spirit, character, ethos and traditions of the RAF are undoubtedly the same:

People with the willingness and ability to do what it takes to get the job done; prepared to volunteer and to put the needs of others before themselves; ready to develop and make the most of every opportunity. Where there has been change, much has been very positive

and welcome: Much increased levels of spousal employment; greater levels of home ownership; more family stability; increasing support to the breadth of family units; the adoption of flexible employment. But we all know there are just as many challenges to deal with: family separation; the cost (and availability) of childcare; future accommodation models; medical and dental care; standards of accommodation; special needs education; and, again, spousal employment opportunities.

In getting to grips with all these current challenges, and the new ones which will inevitably emerge in the future, we should not under-estimate the quality and depth of the support which is available to the RAF Family, from that which is provided on units, formally and informally, through to our Service charities and, of course, the RAF Families Federation itself. The Federation's aims of providing support, assistance and an independent voice places it right at the heart of the RAF Family. It provides an invaluable connection between the issues being experienced across the RAF Family and the Service's senior leadership, and indeed the Government. As we

personally head towards the exit door, we would simply offer that the Federation can only succeed if everyone in the RAF Family engages with it fully, not only when things go wrong, but in day-to-day experiences, enabling the Federation to make things easier and better for others.

Our final words: We both want to say what an enormous privilege it has been for us to be part of the RAF Family over so many years. It's been the most incredible journey and we'll miss it enormously, even as we look forward to the next phase of our lives. Not everything in the RAF is perfect – no organisation is – and it's easy to be critical or to forget about all the things that go right. But regardless of where we sit in the RAF Family, we are all part of an organisation with a tremendous history, a vital role, and a very bright future. We can be proud of what we all achieve and the part that we play – everyone in the RAF Family makes an essential contribution. Thank you for all that you achieve every day and our very best wishes for the future, to each of you individually and to the RAF Family as a whole.



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## News

## Future Accommodation Model (FAM): Update for all personnel



What is the FAM pilot? A pilot is being developed to help us understand how personnel will choose to live in the future and how we can improve FAM.

## JSP 905 is online

JSP 905  
Armed Forces Pension Scheme 2015 and Early Departure Payments Scheme 2015

Part 1: Directive

JSP 905 is the policy document for the Armed Forces Pension Scheme 2015 and this includes the Armed Forces Early Departure Payments Scheme 2015.

## Flexible Service



Flexible Service became law on 1 April 2019, allowing Regular personnel of the Armed Forces to ask to temporarily work part-time and/or restrict their separation from home base.

## New policy to allow couples to live together in surplus SFA



A new policy has been introduced to allow couples in long-term relationships, including same sex couples, to live together in surplus SFA.

## Dispersed families survey snapshot



The RAF Families Federation has released a short report summarising the experiences of RAF dispersed families, as identified through a set of online surveys.

## Service Leaver's Guide

## Protection from tax hikes extended



Over 8000 armed forces personnel will continue to be protected from tax rises made by the Scottish Government.

## Free social media training for military spouses &amp; partners



Thanks to generous support from The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, BFBS is giving military spouses and partners the chance to upskill in social media marketing techniques absolutely free.

## RAF HIVE Deployment Information Packs



The RAF HIVE are reviewing the contents of the RAF HIVE Deployment Information Packs during this year. Input from users is needed to ensure the new packs contain required information.

## Numbers grow to almost a million



The Royal Air Force Museum is proud to announce that its visitor figures enjoyed substantial growth on the back of a major redevelopment of its London site and a re-invigorated public events programme.

## Historic Jet Provost displays planned for the RAF Cosford Air Show



With the RAF Cosford Air Show now less than two months away, the organisers have announced that the event will celebrate 65 years since the first flight of the BAC Jet Provost.

## BFPO Track and Trace app being withdrawn



BFPO's Track and Trace app was withdrawn from all online platforms on 30th April '19. There is now a service desk number to call.



The downloadable guide contains information about armed forces pensions, resettlement, reserve liability and support from charitable organisations of use prior to and after leaving regular service.

## Universities urged to boost support for armed forces



Two Government Ministers have written to universities calling on them to step up provisions for the forces community and sign up to the Armed Forces Covenant.

## Removing Barriers to Family Life programme launched



The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust will make grants to projects where they can see that the project is addressing a clear need, and where they think the idea will be of practical benefit.

## Mental health support training for RAF families



Families of serving RAF personnel can benefit from new training to spot mental health issues, thanks to the RAF Association. Delivery of training courses will begin at RAF Coningsby.

## Training to ease RAF Stations' childcare shortage



Partners of serving personnel at six RAF stations in the south east of England can take advantage of free training to become childminders, thanks to a grant secured by the RAF Association.

Further details on all these stories can be found on

**raf-ff.org.uk**

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**Wedgetail to be new RAF early warning radar aircraft**



Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson has signed a \$1.98Bn deal to purchase five E-7 Wedgetail aircraft. The E-7 fleet will replace the current E-3D Sentry aircraft.

**New veterans ID cards rolled out to service leavers**



A new ID card for armed forces veterans, which will help them access specialist support and services, has started to be issued to service leavers.

**Working from your SFA**



Running a small business from home makes sense for many families. It offers greater flexibility for those who move frequently, have childcare or other caring responsibilities.

**Subsidised breaks for serving RAF personnel**



The RAF Benevolent Fund has expanded its welfare breaks scheme for serving personnel to include locations across the whole of the UK.

**RAF Museum launches Dambusters: virtual reality experience**



The Royal Air Force Museum invites you to take a seat on board a Lancaster during the legendary Dambusters raid of 1943, using Virtual Reality technology.

**2019 Family Activity Breaks (FAB)**



The aim of FAB is to provide families with a fun and adventurous holiday and the opportunity to meet other families that have experienced the loss of a 'serving' loved one.

**Fund reaches out to communicate with RAF Family in a new way**



The RAF Benevolent Fund has launched a new way to communicate with its beneficiaries with a live web chat facility. The web chat can be accessed via the Fund's website.

**We want to keep everybody protected**



Check out the RAF's new monthly Cyber Awareness campaign launched in association with Get Safe Online. The first topic is about 'Keeping Your Family Safe Online'.

## CIVVY STREET NEEDS YOUR HELP.

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## DISPERSED FAMILIES PROJECT –

TOR JOHNSON

Since the last edition of Envoy we are delighted to have released our Dispersed Families survey snapshot – a short summary of the main benefits and challenges of dispersed living in the UK, as reported to us through our online family surveys. We have been encouraged by the positive feedback for the report, and I will continue to work on a more detailed piece of work over the coming months.

I have also been planning and writing our Overseas Families survey, including meeting with members of Community Support and the Career Management team at HQ Air to ensure that our priorities are aligned. I am really pleased that the Libor team have agreed to extend the project through to the end of the year so that we can carry out this important piece of work. I am really

looking forward to engaging with RAF families across the world and hearing about the issues that matter to them, so please do get involved if you are currently in an overseas posting or have returned within the last 12 months.

Alongside all of this I attended a policy conference in London, represented the RAF FF at the Future Commanders' Study Period (at the Defence Academy) and continued to support RAF Dispersed Families, either directly or through our Facebook group. A busy but rewarding couple of months, and I look forward to reporting back to you in the next edition as the project continues to develop.



## POLICY –

LISA THIPTHORP

With three of us now in the Policy team here at the RAF FF, Louise, Alison and I are looking forward to getting under the skin of the main issues we know our serving personnel and families are facing. Following our inaugural strategy meeting as a full team it became clear very quickly that unless we work a 60 hour week we can't possibly do it all. Well, not immediately anyway!

We hope to start by bringing to life the differences our families face when they move across the devolved administrations as we know mobility can cause all sorts of challenges – especially if families are accompanying and if there are SEN and continuity of care issues on top.

A series of Family Snapshots will update you on recent developments in policy change in our key

areas of focus to include Education, Childcare, dual serving couples, spousal employment along with other hot topics.

The more evidence we have, the better and more accurate picture we can portray and the stronger our argument to initiate change when it is needed so do please ALWAYS report your issue to us as well as your unit welfare teams.



## EVIDENCE –

RICHARD COLEMAN

It is really exciting as the brand new Evidence and Issues Manager to be updating you all on our work for the first time. I have an expanded team working to respond to any issues that you log with us. For quite some time we have been seen as a source of support for those living in SFA, but I would like to remind everyone that are keenly interested in hearing from those who live in SLA and may be experiencing issues. Please get in touch – we can lobby much more effectively on your behalf when we have a full picture of the problems.

You will have seen the news on the changes around SFA eligibility. This is potentially the start of a set of gradual changes in this area, and we are keen to review what data is available on all serving personnel – not just those in marriages or civil partnerships. To do this we will be reviewing all the different data sources out there to see what it says about all serving personnel in the modern RAF, and to understand if there is information missing. We can only represent you effectively if we are collecting evidence from you all!



## COMMUNICATIONS –

CAROLINE WOODWARD

Making communications easier is a theme that comes in to us loud and clear, from all ranks of personnel as well as our family members.

So with that in mind, our weekly eBulletin has been designed to provide a quick and easy online solution for you. Receive an email just once a week with a summary of news.

“There are also stories about our people and station news, military charity offers and holiday offers – whatever is topical at the time.”

A typical eBulletin could include work-related information (new policies, Future Accommodation Model updates for instance) – but it's not all about work! It includes events that you could get involved in or go along to; new initiatives (such as a new employment and training platform that's launching in September). There are also stories about our people and station news, military charity offers and holiday offers – whatever is topical at the time. Subscriptions are growing weekly so please feel free to sign up (it's free): [raf-ff.org.uk/publications/register-for-ebulletin/](http://raf-ff.org.uk/publications/register-for-ebulletin/)

**eBulletin**  
ROYAL AIR FORCE Families Federation

Welcome to eBULLETIN, a convenient way for RAF personnel, their families and supporters to keep up-to-date with the latest news from the Federation. eBULLETINs will provide information and links on housing matters, changes to MOD policy that may affect you and the latest news for RAF personnel and their families. Please share.

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Royal Air Force Typhoon jets based at RAF Coningsby have departed to begin... [More information](#)
- HHH Countess of Wessex opens new play parks at Wiltshire**  
The play parks have been completely renewed, with the main area on St. George's... [More information](#)
- BPPO Track and Trace app being withdrawn**  
BPPO's Track and Trace app will be withdrawn from all online platforms from 30 April 2019... [More information](#)
- Universities urged to boost support for armed forces**  
Two Government Ministers have written to universities calling on them to step up... [More information](#)
- Working from your SFA**  
Turning a small business from home makes sense for many families. It offers greater flexibility for those who work... [More information](#)
- Historic Jet Provost displays planned for the RAF Coastal Air Show**  
With the RAF Coastal Air Show now less than ten months away... [More information](#)
- RAF Museum's numbers grow to almost a million**  
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- How Angharad saved my granddaughter's life**  
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**S**ince 2013 the Armed Forces has had several Flexible Working policies, which have enabled hundreds of people to choose how they do their work; better able to mould their commitment to the Service around personal demands. Whilst the tangible differences that these policies make to people's lives are simplistic in nature, the resulting affect is significant. By creating a more family orientated and 'life friendly' work ethic, people in the Service are increasingly satisfied with the control that they have over their working day.

Through simply discussing and registering the arrangement with their boss, Flexible Working has enabled people to; reduce the time they spend in the workplace to avoid the rush hour, work from home to be there when the kids get in from school, work longer during the week to start the weekend earlier, or work from another location to be that bit closer to home to reduce the need to tackle that long commute. The policies are really a guide, the length at which they can be adjusted or used in tandem to suit the individual circumstances is simply a question of creativity, and tolerance within the given workload. That said, despite Flexible Working options being a great choice for many people, there has long existed a thirst for a policy that gives personnel the option to work less or take a break from the operational deployment cycle. Until now that is...

# FLEXIBLE SERVICE JOINS THE Spectrum of Flexible Working policies

By Squadron Leader Merlin Andrew, SO2 Flexible Engagement System, HQ Air Command

From the 1st of April 2019, by using Flexible Service, Regular Service personnel will be able to apply to temporarily work part-time and/or restrict their separation from their home unit, which in effect opts them out of deployments beyond 35 days. The options will come with a reasonable reduction in salary and annual leave based on the type of Flexible Service and duration of the arrangement, up to 3 years in one go, or 4 years in a rolling 12-year period.

By first conducting the Flexible Duties Trial between 2016 and 2019, we were able to identify and prove the demand for more predictability where flexibility was afforded. Subsequently, the organisation wanted to be sure that any personal arrangements that were put in place, particularly childcare, would be honoured with a level of protection that people could rely upon. The resulting feedback indicated that 70% of personnel who had used the Trial advised that it had increased their intention to remain in the Service.

In ensuring that these lessons formed the fundamental principles of Flexible Service, the Armed Forces would make a positive stride towards a more agile way of

engaging and retaining people. This would help those that historically might have pursued alternative job opportunities that permitted more time with their family or focussing on other interests.

*"This radical and modernising change provides new opportunities for our hard-working servicemen and women to balance service commitments with personal responsibilities. In return, our Armed Forces and the UK stand to retain their skills and commitment for longer."*

**Rt Hon Tobias Ellwood,  
Minister for Defence People and Veterans.**

By changing the law and introducing the Flexible Working Bill it enabled Flexible Service arrangements to be recognised at a legal level; meaning that personnel can get up-front assurance that the Armed Forces will support their pattern of absence or protection from short-term operational demands wherever possible.

The change in statutory legislation also gives personnel a right to apply for Flexible Service by law. However, due to the nature of commitments for the Armed Forces there remains an expectation that there will remain cohorts within 'high-touch' posts that demand more time in a specified environment, be that for either contact with equipment, other people, or dare I say, the enemy... These types of positions may seldom be compatible with Flexible Service, or Flexible Working on a frequent or uniform basis, however to dampen this rigorous operational demand, the Service also offers a great number of leave policies to enable individuals to get away from the workplace when they can – meaning that there's at least something for everyone!

In so far as how Flexible Service has been received, it is testament to the desire for such a great leap in people policy that, when the RAF opened the Flexible Service application window on 1 February this year, applications flooded in. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the RAF has found the degree of enthusiasm for Flexible Service expressed by applicants is centred around their family responsibilities and their keen interest to continue serving:

*"I found out about Flexible Service, which allows me to balance my commitment to the Service with my commitment as a mother. I have applied to work three days a week and to restrict my separation from home base. This is good for my family and for me, it gives us the certainty over when and where I work, while enabling me to continue in a role that I enjoy and where I can see the value that I add."*

**Squadron Leader Julia Buckingham,  
Legal Branch, HQ Air Command.**

*"Last summer I received a last-minute notification of an Out-of-Area assignment, causing a lot of stress because I am a carer for my wife who has a severe health condition. This led me to consider my future in the RAF. Ultimately being part of the Flexible Duties trial and now applying for Flexible Service gives me greater peace of mind because, if operational need allows, I'll be able to continue to serve without the worry of being deployed at short notice."*

**Flight Sergeant Andrew Farr.**

As the page turns on what has been several years' work to successfully launch Flexible Service, the policy staff at the respective single-Service headquarters are not yet ready to hang up their hats. Work in the coming year has already been set to carve a path through the next stage of the game. As such, 'Flexible Engagement System II' will likely explore how we employ Reserve Forces and aim to yield more flexibility for people within those engagement types. Whilst detail is scant at this stage, and the horizon hazy, you can guarantee it'll be an interesting journey, which I'll look forward to updating you on in the months ahead.



# THE RAF CHINOOK DISPLAY TEAM 2019

The RAF Chinook Display Team 2019 is made up of pilots, crewmen and engineers of 18(B) Sqn based at RAF Odiham. Unlike other displays on the circuit, the Chinook Display is staffed entirely by frontline personnel, who must juggle their display flying with their operational training throughout the season.

Operations are where the Display is focused, with several of the team having recently returned from Op NEWCOMBE in Mali, the Display gives the opportunity to show why the iconic helicopter is so at home in any environment.

The Chinook has been deployed on constant operations since 1982 and today aircraft are in Africa, the USA as well as exercises in the UK. Key to its high demand is how extremely capable and highly versatile the aircraft is, it can be operated from land bases or seaborne vessels into a range of diverse environments, from the Arctic to the desert or jungle. Such a large aircraft is surprisingly nimble and as you will see from the displays at the families days and air shows, it demonstrates a number of manoeuvres born out of battlefield requirements, the nose down quick stop allows the aircraft to very quickly perform a 180 degree turn to a near standstill, ideal when looking for troops on the battlefield.

Fully laden, the Chinook Weighs in at 24 ½ Tonnes (The weight of 11 of our Team Land Rover Discoveries) the Display aircraft (at a modest 15 Tonnes inc fuel)

shows of the speed and lift available from the massive engines, and when paired with a crowd centre split, onlookers can experience the iconic Blade slap. Importantly the Chinook is up-close and personal with air show goers, be sure to look out for the crewman waving from the ramp as it demonstrates its hover and be sure to wave back!

The success of the Display is truly a team effort, alongside the flying crew, every show brings a small army of engineers lead by our Engineering Manager to maintain the Chinook before and after the displays.





Chinook Display Team 2019 © Crown Copyright.

## Co-pilot, Flt Lt Anthony Jewitt and Crewman, Sgt James Begg spoke to the RAF Families Federation about their journeys into the RAF.

### FLT LT ANTHONY JEWITT

Flt Lt Jewitt (Ant) joined the RAF in 2008 having been part of the University of London Air Squadron on a pilot bursary. It took him three attempts to get in which in itself is a message to anyone currently at school or university and wondering if this could be a future career for them. Ant always had a massive interest in aviation from around mid-way through high school onwards. So he joined Initial Officer Training (IOT) in 2008 and graduated in 2009. He then began his journey into flying training and made his first front line role in 2016.

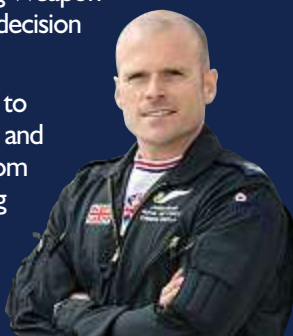
Ant is married to Diana and is a proud father to two young girls aged 4 and 10 weeks. Having chosen the Chinook, with this type of aircraft based in limited locations, the family took the decision to buy their own home. Prior to this they had locations in Service Family Accommodation (SFA) and lived the 'mobile' experience this lifestyle brings. The main aim now being to settle into a local community relatively close to RAF Odiham where the children can make friends, join local groups etc.



### SGT JAMES BEGG

Sgt Begg joined the RAF in 2009 came in as a direct entrant into the Recruit Training Squadron (RTS) at RAF Halton. James had always admired the Chinook and at the time he said he was lucky as the RAF were recruiting Weapon System Operators so it was an easy decision to apply.

James has been married for 10 years to Simone – both are from Manchester and they too followed the same route from SFA into their own family home living in Andover. James and Simone have two children – a daughter aged 6 years old and a son, who's 2 years old.



### WHY THE CHINOOK

Both gents were aware of the work the Chinook had done in the Falklands being a proven workhorse and in Afghanistan also. They were inspired by seeing its capabilities and think it's safe to say it is the most iconic aircraft that the RAF has – its sound is so distinctive. A firm favorite for many.

### FAMILY SEPARATION

With the Squadron being fully operational at all times, both sets of families are used to Ant and James being out on rotational deployments and exercises – their most recent being Op NEWCOMBE where they were part of some 90 personnel of four crews and 3 Mk 5 Chinooks, working for the French Air Force. This was a good Operation for the RAF as the heavy lift capability that the RAF brought to the mix was appreciated by the French. Normally for their aircraft, what took a week to do with the Chinook, would have taken a month to achieve the same amount of work for them.

Ant added, "This is a slightly different commitment however. The families are experiencing us doing long hours at the moment; particularly in the lead up to passing the Public

Display Authority (PDA) flight test (at time of writing). We're putting in some long days to make sure we are ready. On the flip side, the positive to this is that we are actually at home more as the display season itself mitigates us from summer detachments."

The families are always keen to go and watch and James shared his plan of equipping his family with their own 'Big Orange Hands' so that he can spot them all during displays. Quite a neat idea!

### PROUDEST MOMENTS IN THE RAF

For both – without doubt it was being awarded their Brevets!

### BIGGEST CHALLENGES

Now this questions didn't come easily, and for both gents.

James went first and added that his greatest challenge so far was being away on an extended period – for the first time. "You're going to and will be in a new Theatre with all the 'unknown' going through your head, I was a new dad as well but with your operational crew, you realise just how the others support you through as most will have been through it themselves in the past. That's where we become one big family. It does get easier though each time but that was a challenge at the onset of my career."

Ant added, "The thing that's important to us is that it isn't just you when you are on your career journey in the military – it affects all of your family."

"For me, being away in Mali (Op NEWCOMBE) over Christmas and missing the family was testing. My wife was seven months pregnant too and I was able to see pictures of scans but not physically being there was hard."

### FREE TIME!

When both aren't working they both answered at the same time – we like to spend any free time with our families – being a dad and a husband. For Ant, it was the odd bit of skiing too and also walking his dog (a Jack Russell called Lily). With James, he manages the odd game of squash with his pals and additional time with Labradoodle, Diva.

### INTERESTED IN JOINING THE RAF?

Both Ant and James were adamant that if you are remotely interested in joining the RAF, to go for it. Their advice to you:

"If you don't get in on the first round – keep going! And if you end up in a position where you are waiting to join, keep learning things and developing new skills; use your time wisely. Don't just wait for the next intake slot."

If you have chance to see the Chinook at an airshow or families day – Ant and James encourage you to go and have a look. "The whole Display Team love showing people around the aircraft and talking to them about how life is for them in the RAF. The Display stand will be on hand too with all sorts of information so please come and visit us."

For show dates and to follow them this season:

@ChinookDisplay

@rafchinookdisplayteam

@rafchinookdisplay

RAF Recruitment: [raf.mod.uk/recruitment/](http://raf.mod.uk/recruitment/)

# PROMOTING OUR PEOPLE:

## Eli hoping to seize the Dey this season

**RAF Women's Cricket Captain Corporal Eli Dey is excited that the 2019 season is underway, and she is looking forward to taking on the Royal Navy and the Army in the T20 and 40-Over Inter Services tournaments in the summer.**

This season will be the talented all-rounder's second full season as skipper, and she goes into it in a confident mood after a positive first training session that was held at RAF Benson back in March:

"We had a good turn-out at our first training session at RAF Benson. Seventeen players turned out and that's a very good sign and it shows that we are now getting more players interested in cricket - and with the help of the senior players and our Head Coach, Sqn Ldr Lisa Kelly-Tonge, we should have a great season."

Dey, who recently started studying for her England Cricket Board Level 2 coaching certificate, says that she is looking for her side to improve in all facets of the game this season, and that she has a big role to play as captain:

"We need to keep improving in all areas and make sure that we make our opposition fight for every run and every wicket. It is my job to bring our players on and give them the confidence to fully express themselves on the field."

**"The Women's game is growing, and we are growing alongside. The future is very exciting for us"**

Dey's cricket career was a slow-burner to begin with. She first played the game during her childhood in South Africa. Years later she was begged to go to the RAF Cricket trial by one of her colleagues whilst stationed at RAF Honington 13 years ago and she hasn't look back since.

Dey, who scored 57 not out against the Royal Navy in the 40-over game last season, also plays for the United

Kingdom Armed Forces (UKAF) side, which combines the very best players from across the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force. She hopes some of her RAF teammates will join her in that the UKAF squad this season:

"Playing for UKAF is an amazing experience. You play with some quality players from the Army and Royal Navy, and it pushes you on to better yourself. I feel that, as captain, it is my job to help bring some of our players through so that they also get selected from the UKAF side this season."

Head Coach Sqn Ldr Kelly-Tonge is also in a positive mood and she is looking forward to her team progressing this season:

"The progression of this side over the past couple of seasons is testament to their commitment and dedication to improve. They have taken ownership of their performances and have the freedom to express themselves on the pitch."

"My vision for the future is that cricket continues to provide a platform where Women in the RAF can express themselves through sport and develop key skills. Seeing the Women's Tournament moved to Lord's would be the ultimate aim with the RAF lifting the trophy of course."

The Women's game is growing, and we are growing alongside. The future is very exciting for us."

**Follow Eli and the team's progress: Twitter @RAFLadiesCC**



*L to R: England Women's wicket-keeper, Sarah Taylor with Corporal Eli Dey.*

*Cpl Eli Dey at the crease against the Australian Army in 2015, at The International Defence Cricket Challenge (IDCC) in Australia.*





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Model shown is a Fiesta ST-3 3-Door 1.5 200PS Manual Petrol with optional Full LED Headlamps.  
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Figures shown are for comparability purposes; only compare fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> figures with other cars tested to the same technical procedures. These figures may not reflect real life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including the accessories fitted (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load.

\*There is a new test used for fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> figures. The CO<sub>2</sub> figures shown, however, are based on the outgoing test cycle and will be used to calculate vehicle tax on first registration.

# MEET THE NEW RAF FAMILIES

**Maria Lyle**  
Director



I joined the RAF Families Federation in late 2018 after a varied career - including serving in the RAF, working in leadership roles in local and central government, and most recently as a Director for a large IT Operations specialist.

I am passionate about voicing the concerns of Serving Personnel and families to policy makers and senior leaders, and trying to ensure that the Federation team represents you all. Whether you are single, in a relationship, have children – or have other caring responsibilities – the Federation is here for you and wants to understand your experiences and challenges. Please get in touch and raise issues with us via the 'log an issue' route on the website. It really does make a difference.

**Ruth McClelland**  
Office Manager



As Office Manager I am often the first point of contact and am responsible for all aspects of the office including health & safety, travel requirements and resources.

Having been married to a 'Heavy' for over 30 years I followed my husband around and have encountered the ups and downs of changes in my career path. Working any job around family life with flexibility to accommodate the RAF requirements of my husband. I worked in a bank (cleaning lol) and various shops, pubs and offices. I spent nearly 15 years in prisons, working in various departments and have successfully pulled all this experience together and utilise these skills in this position.



# FEDERATION TEAM

## Caroline Woodward

### Communications Manager

I have been at the Families Federation now for nearly five years having worked previously in various comms and marketing roles in the third sector from organisations such as the Young Farmers' Clubs through to more recently sight loss organisations - RNIB and Guide Dogs.

I absolutely love promoting the work of the Families Federation through our many channels. (Nick even says that if I'm not out on the road for at least one day a week, I can be a pain to work with!). This includes sharing what news and services are out there in the wider armed forces community which personnel and families can tap into (there are hundreds!). I still feel lucky to be the editor of Envoy - our free quarterly magazine and by having my feelers out and gathering content, there is still so much to listen to and learn about life in the RAF!



Nick Crouch and Caroline Woodward.

## Nick Crouch

### Communications Assistant

I started my career as an apprentice draughtsman and my working life has been in a variety of industries and roles from working on gas pipelines to the MOD (RAF). Latterly, for almost 20 years, I earned my living in the publishing and marketing sectors, which stood me in good stead for my current position. My tasks at the Federation include graphic design, gathering and posting news onto the RAF FF website and transmitting via social media and our eBulletin.

## Tor Johnson

### Dispersed Families Project Manager

I was recruited to the RAF Families Federation to manage the Dispersed Families project, starting in June 2017. Having left the RAF in 2006 I spent ten years working in education management, enjoying living in our own home whilst my serving husband commuted to various postings.

These former careers gave me a broad range of skills and experiences – from managing change programmes to interior design! But it is my personal understanding of life as a dispersed RAF family that has been most beneficial since joining the Families Federation. Although we are spending our current tour back in quarters I am still passionate about championing the needs of those families who are not living in quarters, or who have been allocated accommodation away from their station.



Follow us on the following social media platforms

 @raf\_ff

 @RAFFamFed

 raffamsfed

 RAF Families Federation



Ken Wood, Alanna Gleave, Richard Coleman and Stan Brathwaite.

## Richard Coleman

### Evidence Manager

I was fortunate enough to join the RAF Families Federation in April 2019 as the Evidence and Issues Manager. After 22 years' service with the British Army and a short 18 month experiment with teaching within Further Education, I was looking for a role that could utilise my Joint Services management experience. Having completed seven years of tri-service roles, experience has taught me that things rarely change if people facing specific challenges do not express their concerns. As an independent voice for all Serving Personnel and families we collate evidence in an attempt to inform and influence those in a position to implement change. Things will get better if we speak with one voice.

## Ken Wood

### Evidence Assistant

I started in the Families Federation in April 2019 and am looking forward to the role and being one of the main points of contact for serving personnel or families who contact us with concerns or enquiries.

I was in the Royal Air Force for 22 years as a Mechanical Transport Driver from 1987 to 2008 and in this time I served in various roles and units including RAF Innsworth, HQ AFCENT in the Netherlands in a Nato position, RAF Henlow and RAF Saxa Vord. I also completed various out of area tours throughout my career. After leaving the RAF I went to work at HMP Peterborough in various roles from a Prison Officer to an Offender Supervisor. Finally working in a Public Protection department working alongside the Police and other outside agencies such as Probation and Children's Services.

## Stan Brathwaite

### Accommodation Assistant (job share)

With 38 years as a communications electronic engineer in the RAF and a further three years in the same roles as a contractor in the MOD, at all of the very interesting Isolated Detachments has sculpted a highly polished cynic of all things establishment-related. However as a young thrusting Corporal, the moves between five stations, eight MQs and Hirings and the associated family disruption in a nine-year period was the last straw that saw me and my wife scrambling into the private housing market. That was the precursor for the mortgage rates to rise exponentially, 15% or more, oops! We stoically dug in and survived. Does this qualify me to represent families? You might think not, however in my defence, I find it a privilege to assist RAF families and serving personnel, especially as a number of organisations seem to need more than a gentle reminder of the very important role that you all play in the defence of the realm.

## Alanna Gleave

### Accommodation Assistant (job share)

I joined the Families Federation in March 2019 after spending some time as a full-time Mum. Previously I served in the RAF, leaving as a Squadron Leader in the Personnel branch. I also spent time working for the Stabilisation Unit, a tri-departmental (DfID, FCO and MOD) government unit in central London.

Married to an ex-RAF Officer, and having served myself, I have lived in almost every RAF accommodation type, from SFA and SSFA to SLA and SSSA. As a result, I have a personal understanding of many of the issues and frustrations regarding accommodation which are often raised with the Families Federation.

## Alison Cotton

Policy Advisor (Health & Additional Needs)

I am delighted to be taking up this role with the RAF Families Federation and using my knowledge and experience to benefit members of the RAF and their families. I am moving out of education, where I have had a full career as a teacher and SEN specialist.

In March 2019, I also completed a three year MSc in Global Military Veterans and Families Studies at Anglia Ruskin University. My studies included reviewing the research around the area of the psychological impact of deployment on military personnel and the mental health of children who have a parent who has been deployed. My final assignment focussed on the importance of educating healthcare professionals, such as GPs and Nurses, to have an awareness of the military lifestyle and culture and to understand how it may impact on military personnel and their families' lifestyle, health and behaviour.

## Lisa Thipthorp

Policy and Operations Manager

I made the natural move from RAF Association Welfare Project Manager to the RAF Families Federation in 2015 and have enjoyed every minute (well, mostly!) since I arrived. To be part of a committed team of experts whose purpose is to make life better for our serving personnel and their families is a very good reason to get out of bed in the morning!

Being the Policy and Operations Manager has allowed me to get closer to some of the vast number of research projects being conducted around the country (and abroad). Research and evidence is at the heart of everything we do so it is vital that we work closely with these institutions. Happily, academics are very keen to ensure the voice of the family is heard and we are keen to ensure work is ongoing in the policy areas where greatest change and most significant positive impact is felt.

## Louise Briggs

Policy Advisor (Education & Childcare)

I have worked for the RAF Families Federation since October 2016, initially as the Transition Liaison Manager, on a funded project collaborating with the Naval and Army Families Federation to produce a report. This report was about families' experiences of transition to civilian life, called 'Lifting the Lid on Transition – the families' experience and the support they need.' The work was funded by the Forces in Mind Trust and was published in November 2018.

Since March 2019, I have been in this new role as Policy Advisor for Education and Childcare and am thoroughly enjoying working in this new field, understanding policy and initiatives and helping RAF serving personnel and families in this key area that impacts so many. This also nicely utilises my professional background in Higher Education administration and management.

After growing up as a military child, I am now a military wife – married to a serving RAF Officer since 2002 with two children. Last year, my husband left regular service and joined the full time reserve service and we are now settled in Lincolnshire enjoying a new lease of life with stability and the ability to actually plan life!



Alison Cotton, Lisa Thipthorp and Louise Briggs.

# ACCOMMODATION MATTERS

by Stan Brathwaite, RAF FF Accommodation Specialist

**The past six months has been exceptionally busy with a flurry of accommodation meetings, visits and initiatives.**

The grandly titled Accommodation Delivery Forum and the Service Family Accommodation (SFA) Communications Group meetings were chaired by the Head of the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) with all the usual stakeholders in attendance including the Chief Executive Officer of Amey, the RAF Housing Colonel and staff from Community Support Air Command. Those present also included representatives of the families federations (our new Director Maria attended for us) and topics discussed were the current SFA/Single Living Accommodation (SLA) maintenance contract, the delivery of that service and the push-back from families. We are confident that we forcefully and accurately reflected your views and concerns especially those raised by you by way of our website and by telephone.

Maria has also met with the Minister for



Defence Personnel and Veterans on a number of occasions, and with the other family federation leaders was grilled

by the House of Commons Select Committee; a highly tense and nerve-racking televised occasion - worth a watch through Parliament UK's website if you get a spare few minutes. Separate evidence was also submitted to Mr Andrew Selous MP for the review he is conducting for the Secretary of State for Defence on how military families are supported.

And 'so what' I hear you say, has all this high profile and intensive level of activity achieved? Well as you can expect, the answer is not always immediately obvious, and based on my personal experience progress can be slow at best; there are no real-time or quick fixes, so please be patient. I can however highlight below those areas where there has been resounding progress and success.



## CO-HABITATION

A quaint term from a different age, which places severe entitlement limitations on 21st century families. The policy has been relaxed in recent months following constant campaigning over the years by us and other agencies. Basically the easing of the policy relies on the Serving Person providing proof of the period of time that they have been in a 'Long Term Relationship (LTR)' and crucially, the location of where they seek SFA, this in turn is simply down to 'the availability of SFA'. As you will be aware, 'availability' means that in some locations the change in rules will not offer a change in circumstances. Incidentally this change in policy is one strand on the path to the Future Accommodation Model (FAM).

### What are the current rules for Cohabitation in Surplus SFA?

All non-entitled regular and Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) (FC) SP are currently eligible to apply for Surplus SFA at entitled rates where availability of surplus SFA permits, however, JSP 464 policy currently prevents these SP from cohabiting. In addition, entitled PStat Cat 2 SP, are also not permitted to cohabit in their SFA.

### What are the changes to cohabitation?

To be eligible to cohabit in surplus SFA, SP will have to have completed more than 4 years of Service and be in an established Long-Term Relationship (LTR(E)). An LTR(E) will be defined by specified criteria and recorded as such on JPA. No entitlement exists to accommodation or eligibility to any other supporting payments or allowances based on the LTR(E) status.

## SUB-LETTING

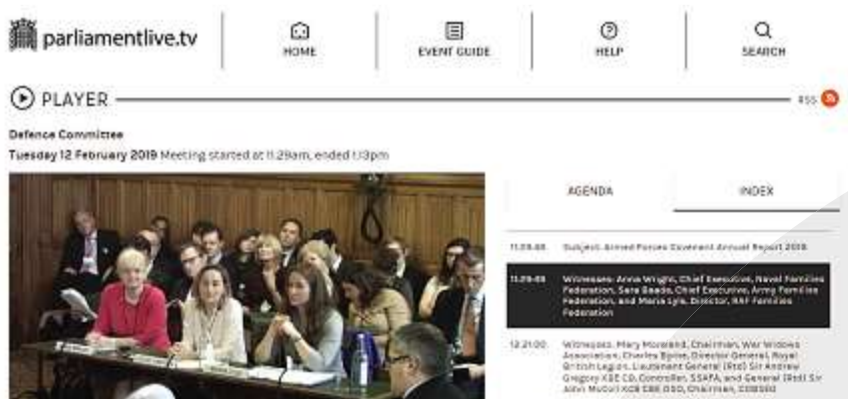
The current size and cost of the Defence estate is not sustainable, including the cost of maintaining empty service homes. MOD and DIO are undertaking a number of initiatives to address these issues. In addition to other initiatives such as disposals, a sub-let project began 2017 with the aim of generating income through short-term lets, whilst providing flexibility to meet the future needs of Defence.

The majority of sites are sub-let via DIO's contractor Amey. SFA identified for sublease are available on the open private rental market via Amey's letting agent Orchard & Shipman (O&S). Potential tenants are subject to normal credit checks and reference checks.

Maintenance of SFA at these sites, whether military or privately occupied, continue to be carried out by Amey as

part of the NHP contract. Private tenants are not given any preferential treatment within the process, any issues or complaints will be dealt with by Amey in accordance with the process and the normal contracted response repair times continue to apply.

Investment for improving service homes will continue to be targeted at homes occupied by service families. Revenue raised by this project is returned to the DIO as part of its overall running and investment in the estate; 95% of the income is reinvested by DIO directly in SFA upgrade work across the portfolio benefitting all top level budgets (TLBs). The remaining 5% is passed to the local chain of command for reinvestment in infrastructure, but to the local commander's own priorities – therefore it will be targeted to where it is needed most to meet the needs of Defence.



## FUTURE ACCOMMODATION MODEL (FAM) AND FAM PILOT

We are also pleased to advise that more significant information has been shared with us by the FAM Team at the Ministry of Defence (MOD). Plans for the FAM Pilot are well advanced and it is anticipated that it will commence at RAF Wittering. The pilot will last for in excess of three years to fully understand all the challenges, so in reality it will be some years before the roll-out to all serving personnel and their families commences.

The main aim of the Pilot is to finesse the concepts that formed the basis of the FAM strategy. This will also define the operating procedures, the support that has to be put in place and of course the impact on the current allowances policy. In this issue of Envoy you will find the update that we received from the FAM Team back in April. We will endeavour to update you in a timely manner of progress on our website. If you have any specific concerns or questions on any aspect of the FAM project, do please contact us and we will pass them on to the FAM Team.

## FUTURE DEFENCE INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES (FDIS)

The FDIS suite of contracts will provide Regional Accommodation Maintenance Services, National Accommodation Management Services, Regional Hard FM maintenance Services and a National Training Estate contract. They will provide facility management services across the UK Defence estate, replacing existing arrangements when they come to an end. Each contract will be seven years in length, with options to extend up to a further three years, subject to satisfactory performance and other considerations. The framework from which the competition will be run has been successfully awarded, with the competition for the FDIS contracts being run at the end of the summer.

## FINALLY

Meanwhile in the real world of SLA and SFA, complaints - and complaints about complaints, around the delivery of maintenance continues to dominate our in-trays. We urge you to come to us when you have a problem about SLA or SFA, even if you have resolved it. I would be curious to know if you have complimented Amey staff and operatives on a good level of service that you had received - it is also useful to hear these side of things. We are reminded, at meetings, and with the surveys that DIO and Amey commission, that at least 95% of families in SFA are satisfied, so please let me have your take on this.

And in the next issue and onwards I am pleased to say that you will see a joint article from Alanna and I – my new job share team member. Alanna is also a subject matter expert (SME) on all things relating to accommodation and you can meet her in our federation's team profile section in this edition of Envoy.





# Pilot of new accommodation system at RAF Wittering

The MOD's Future Accommodation Model (FAM) is looking at how the MOD can provide housing to personnel over the next 50+ years. A pilot has been developed to help understand how forces families will choose to live in the future, and how FAM can be improved. It's a chance for the MOD to test the policy and the way its delivered before a decision is made whether to roll it out across the UK.

**Where and when?** The confirmed pilot site for RAF families is RAF Wittering, with the pilot commencing 31<sup>st</sup> May 2020.

**What if we're posted to RAF Wittering?** You'll be updated as the pilot continues to be developed. You can find out more on the FAM .gov.uk page which will be continuously updated, and the full JSP will be published this summer

**Pilot options** If you're posted to RAF Wittering and your serving partner has fewer than four years service then current policy will continue to apply. If they have four years or more then you will be able to express a preference

for the type of accommodation you want to receive (subject to availability) – **see below**. If you'll already be at RAF Wittering when the pilot starts then you won't need to move unless you want to.

**Non pilot sites** The pilot is expected to run for around three years before a decision is made about whether to roll it out across the UK. If this is confirmed, the majority of bases are expected to transition to FAM over the following decade. To find out more, search 'FAM' on .gov.uk, watch the FAM video on YouTube, speak to chain of command, or talk to your HIVE or RAF-FF – [www.raf-ff.org.uk](http://www.raf-ff.org.uk)

## Rent near work (50 miles)



- ✓ You can choose to rent a home equivalent to SFA for broadly the same personal cost
- ✓ You can rent in the location of your choice, with the people you want to live with
- ✓ If you need to leave a tenancy early for MOD reasons, MOD will pick up the cost

## Buy a home



- ✓ You can buy a home, whether you are single or in a relationship
- ✓ If you buy a home once assigned to a pilot site you will get the new core accommodation payment towards your mortgage payments
- ✓ You can also make use of Forces Help To Buy

## Single Living Accommodation



- ✓ SLA will continue to be available for all personnel
- ✓ If you currently own or rent your own home and get the Get You Home (Travel) (GYH(T)) allowance, you can use your new accommodation payment for SLA in the working week

## Service Family Accommodation



- ✓ If you are in a long term relationship you can apply for SFA at a pilot site (subject to availability)
- ✓ SFA will not be sold as part of the pilot
- ✓ Personnel assigned to a pilot site choosing SFA can retain their current entitlement (subject to SFA availability)



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- ✓ EMOTIONAL WELLBEING
- ✓ INDEPENDENT LIVING
- ✓ TRANSITION

# TRANSITIONING out of the

As your family moves towards leaving the Royal Air Force there may well be choices that will have to be made about lump sums and it is important that you understand them.

**In this article Mary Petley of the Forces Pension Society describes the choices and their implications.**

Mary Petley ©FPS.



The lump sums and the options – which are irrevocable once taken – are as follows:

- AFPS 75 provides an automatic tax-free lump sum of three times the pension. Those leaving with an Immediate Pension (IP) having given 22 years Reckonable Service (RS) after age 18 as an Other Rank or 16 years RS after age 21 as an Officer can choose to buy another lump sum and pay for it from their pre-tax pension between their retirement and age 55. This is known as Resettlement Commutation and can be tax-efficient as it reduces 'earned income'. This is not available to those leaving with an invaliding pension.
- AFPS 05 provides an automatic tax-free lump sum of three times the pension. It is payable on discharge with an ill-health pension, discharge at or after age 55 or age 65 if discharged before age 55 and, when payable, individuals may choose to give up some or all of this lump sum to improve their taxable pension. This is known as inverse commutation (IV). IV may increase the member's tax bill as it increases 'earned income'.
- The AFPS 05 EDP scheme provides an automatic tax-free lump sum normally worth three times the pension. To qualify, individuals must have given at least 18 years' service and must be at least age 40. There are no options in respect of this lump sum.
- AFPS 15 does not provide an automatic pension lump sum. The pension is payable on discharge with an ill-health pension, on discharge on or after age 60 or at state pension age, if discharged before age 60 and, when it is

# ONINING RAF



IT PAYS TO UNDERSTAND  
YOUR PENSION

payable, any member can commute – that is they may generate a tax-free lump sum by surrendering pension. Commutation may have the effect of reducing tax liability as it reduces ‘earned income’.

- The AFPS 15 EDP scheme provides an automatic tax-free lump sum of 2.25 times pension. To qualify, individuals must have given at least 20 years’ service and must be at least age 40. The whole EDP lump sum – all or nothing – can be surrendered to improve their EDP income which may increase tax liability by increasing ‘earned income’.

Most Servicemen and women have entitlements in more than one scheme, having been transferred to AFPS 15. I will use the example of Sergeant Freddie Fox to illustrate the benefit choices that need to be made in such cases.

Freddie joined on 1 April 1998 and he is to be discharged on 31 March 2020 at age 40 (exactly 22 years’ service). His final pensionable pay (FPP) is £40,000.

His **AFPS 15** benefits and choices would be:

An AFPS 15 pension, payable at state pension age, based on pensionable earnings since 1 April 15. Taking account of earlier rates of pay and incorporating the Earnings Index, his pension would be £4,198.44. When he comes to claim this pension he can choose to commute to generate a lump sum – rule of thumb: £1 surrendered generates £12 tax free. To calculate the maximum lump sum he can generate:

Multiply the pension by 20 and divide by 56 = £1,499.44  
THEN  
Multiply £1,499.44 by 12 = £17,993.28

The remaining pension would be (£4,198.44 - £1,499.44)  
= £2,699.

An AFPS 15 EDP tax-free lump sum of £9,446.49 (2.25 x pension) and an annual EDP income of £1,427.47 (34% of pension) payable until state pension age, with CPI increases applied at age 55. If he gave up the EDP tax-free lump sum his taxable EDP income would increase by £542.44 per year.

Had he been an **AFPS 05** member before 1 April 2015, he would be entitled to the following:

AFPS 05 pension and lump sum, preserved until age 65. The pension would be FPP x RS in AFPS 05, divided by 70 (£40,000 x 17/70 = £ 9,714.29). The tax-free lump sum would be £29,142.87. When he claims this pension, his IV choice is that for every £100 of his tax-free lump sum he gives up, his taxable pension will be improved by £6.10 per year. So, if Freddie surrendered the whole of his tax-free pension lump sum his taxable pension would increase by £1,777.72.

An AFPS 05 EDP tax-free lump sum of £29,142.87 and an annual EDP income of 50% of the value of his AFPS 05 pension, rising to 75% at age 55 plus CPI increases. Freddie has no choice to make in respect of this EDP lump sum.

Had he been an **AFPS 75** member prior to 1 April 2015, he would be entitled to the following:

An AFPS 75 IP of £8,919.06, which is 17/22nds of the 22 year rate for a Sergeant. The tax-free lump sum is £26,757.18. The most he can commute is the difference between the 22 year lump sum for a Sergeant (£33,948) and the lump sum for a Sergeant with 37 years’ service (£51,723) – so £17,775. So, if Freddie took the whole £17,775, his pre-tax pension would be reduced by £1,714.40 per year (£96.45 per £1,000) until age 55 when his pension will be restored to its original level and increased by CPI. The cost per £1K is based on his age on discharge. The full table of costs is at Annex B of [bit.ly/2JzrwCK](http://bit.ly/2JzrwCK). You will pay back more than you borrow but, if you are a 40% tax payer, the cost may well be totally off-set by the saving on tax.

If you are a Member of the Forces Pension Society and have questions about lump sum choices or any other pension related issue, contact [pensionenquiries@forpen.co.uk](mailto:pensionenquiries@forpen.co.uk)

If you are not a Member but would like to learn more about us, visit [forcespensionsociety.org](http://forcespensionsociety.org)



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# A new employment and training platform

**All three families federations are working collectively to build a new employment and training platform – Forces Families Jobs – which will launch in September.**

It's a brand new website which is free to use and is specifically designed to support family members of current serving personnel in their search for employment, training or volunteering opportunities. Personnel who are leaving the Service, during their first year of transition out of the armed forces, are also included in the offer.

Apply for jobs and access employment and training opportunities with companies and organisations who are forces family friendly. Use this website with confidence in knowing that employers have signed the Armed Forces Covenant or are able to demonstrate their commitment to the Armed Forces.

Search easily for organisations who have met the bronze, silver or gold Employment Recognition Scheme standards (ERS). In turn employers will be able to match your CV to the roles they're recruiting for.

## RESEARCH

Last year, the Army Families Federation published a report from the research project into spousal employment. It was run in partnership with the University of Warwick; the creation of an employment platform was one of the key recommendations.

## SO FAR...

We have been working closely with the Defence Relationship Management team (DRM), and other key organisations to develop the content and encourage companies who have signed the Armed Forces covenant to submit their profiles in readiness for when we launch.

## FUNDING AND SUPPORT

We are grateful for funding provided from a few organisations –



one key sponsor being the Royal Air Forces Association who has funded elements of the website's development. Other supporters (at time of writing) include ABF The Soldier's Charity, Broadbean, DRM, Manpower and the University of Wolverhampton.

## FOLLOW THE PROGRESS

Sign up to our eBulletin for news on the platform as it grows. Search #forcesfamiliesjobs on social media or talk to Caroline at the RAF Families Federation with any questions on 01780 781650 or email [caroline.woodward@raf-ff.org.uk](mailto:caroline.woodward@raf-ff.org.uk)

In the next issue of Envoy, find out about some of the businesses who will be advertising their job vacancies on FFJs.

Employers profile form:  
[bit.ly/FFJemployers](http://bit.ly/FFJemployers)



# FOR JOBS.

Quick Job Search

Keywords  United Kingdom  Location

[Advanced Job Search](#)

# SIX YEARS ON - supporting spouses IN BUSINESS

**'Supporting the Unsung Hero' (SUH)** is the award winning business start-up programme from the **University of Wolverhampton** and **Black Country Chamber of Commerce**. This year it enters its sixth year helping members of the armed forces community turn bright ideas into successful businesses.



As one of the original successful bids to the £35million LIBOR fund in 2013, the programme has been in high demand from spouses and dependants of serving armed forces personnel, veterans and reservists to help them realise their ambition to start-up and develop a business. Now in its sixth year, and sponsored by HSBC the training course and mentoring programme continues to grow in popularity and has already been attended by 640 delegates at Ministry of Defence (MOD) bases in the UK and overseas.

**Sarah Walker, Project Manager and Armed Forces Champion** said: "We have come a long way since our first cohort in 2013 run from here at the University of Wolverhampton. To date we have delivered thirty courses throughout the UK from Scotland to Portsmouth and overseas in British Forces Germany, Belgium, Gibraltar and Cyprus. It is overwhelming to see that we have been able to positively influence more than 640 armed forces families who have gone on to start their business journey, with many now entering their third and fourth year of trading."

Over the years SUH has been fine-tuned to become the leading, FREE business training programme designed specifically to meet the needs of armed forces families and has become widely acknowledged and appreciated for its delivery of first class coaching, setting the benchmark for business training provision for the service community. SUH is recognised as the springboard to entrepreneurship in the military community and has created opportunities for wider engagement with the MOD contributing to several research consultations relating to spousal education and employment. It has also enabled a new community of military entrepreneurs to network, support each other and in some cases this has led to

new business collaboration and skills sharing.

**Sarah added:** "SUH is so much more than just a training programme, there are many inspirational stories and fantastic achievements worthy of celebration, the community network is very supportive and has made a really positive impact on the lives of many of our members. Importantly it has had a positive impact on the MOD's employment model, spousal support policy and initiatives."

For more information about and to sign up for the programme contact their friendly team:

Telephone: 01902 321 272

Email: [suh@wlv.ac.uk](mailto:suh@wlv.ac.uk)

Website: [wlv.ac.uk/supportingtheunsunghero](http://wlv.ac.uk/supportingtheunsunghero)





# RUNNING JO

**RAF spouse, Jo Wilkinson enrolled on one of the Unsung Hero courses to springboard her business into reality.**

Running takes hard work, focus and determination and to be successful you need good advice and support. Running your own business is no different and the Supporting the Unsung Hero (SUH) Programme has been central to setting me on the right track for my running coaching business 'Running Jo'. Before the course I thought what I needed most was practical information about how to write business plans and do accounts but SUH made me realise

that developing the right mindset was as important to being successful in business as doing the right things. So what the top four most helpful things I learnt from the course?

1. The aim of business is to make money - otherwise it's just a hobby. This mental shift has been the biggest change for me but early on I realised this was essential. When you are doing something that you love it's easy to forget to the purpose of your business is to make your living and you can't do that unless you make some money. Conversely making money enables me to spend more time doing what I love.
2. I have to spend as much time on the business as I do coaching. In the early days that meant writing business plans and working out finances. Now its marketing, accounting and developing next year's business plan. Before I started the course, I thought I would spend all my days coaching and 'business stuff' filled me with dread. Now I enjoy the business-side as much as the coaching as I can see the huge benefits it brings to making my business successful which in turn enables me to spend more time coaching.
3. Market research is essential. You have to be confident that people will actually pay money for your services or you won't have a business. Inspired by the course one of the most useful early steps was to arrange a market research evening with a few friends who met my 'target customer' criteria. I plied them with champagne and good food and listened to what they had to say. Their feedback has been invaluable in shaping how I operate and greatly improved how I market myself and Running Jo.
4. Be able to communicate clearly and concisely who you are and what you do. The two-minute "elevator pitch" on the

final day of the course was by far the hardest and most nerve-wracking part of the course but it has been the most useful exercise of all. The ability to sum up what I offer and how I can benefit you as my customer has been something I have used on almost a daily basis whether responding to emails or meeting new people.



## So what is Running Jo?

Do you want to run fitter, run further or run fast but work, family and life get in the way? As an experienced, knowledgeable ex-GB athlete I know the challenges you face because I have faced them myself. My remote coaching packages bring my experience and enthusiasm to your running. You get a personalised training programme which fits around

your commitments whether you run every day, once a week or it varies week to week. More than just a plan, I give you as much coaching, guidance and feedback as you need, motivation to get out of the door, focus on your goals, and belief in your ability to run as fit, as far and as fast as you want.

To find out how I can help your running contact me on [runningjocoaching@gmail.com](mailto:runningjocoaching@gmail.com), look up my Facebook page Running Jo Coaching and follow me on Instagram and twitter @runningjo10k



# SUPPORTING THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT –



**S**et up in 2005 by three RAF veterans, Inzpire is now an award-winning supplier of defence managed services, cutting-edge mission systems, and a trusted partner of the UK MOD. Zara McArdle tells us about the company.

We make the world-leading GECO family of mission systems for airborne customers, we train the British Army to fly Apache helicopters, we instruct RAF pilots in cockpit skills, we support UK Typhoon operations and we are experts in simulation and synthetic environments. Boasting over 2500 years of military experience between our employees and over 300,000 flying hours, we recognise that a truly great company – one capable of delivering to the highest expectations of the UK and global military and civilian sectors – is only possible with great people. Our vision is to become the most respected and trusted defence company in the world, putting traditional concepts such as

honour, trust and respect back into the military-industrial relationship, and be respected not just for our outstanding products and services but for the way we conduct our business commercially. We believe that success is based on trust, proven performance and doing the right thing.

We work closely with our military colleagues to give back our experience, provide innovation and deliver capability to those that voluntarily put themselves in harm's way, in the hope that they may return safely to their families, as we did. We stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our military colleagues as part of the Whole Force, whilst also recognising the sacrifices made by the Armed Forces Community and are extremely proud signatories of the Armed Forces Covenant.

As Inzpire's internal-recruiter, I joined the company in December after a 15 year career in the RAF. I am now utilising not only my service experience, but that as a military spouse to ensure our policies actively support the recruitment of the Armed Forces community. I can categorically say that we truly recognise that a diverse, talented and highly motivated workforce is pivotal to our continuing success, therefore we actively recruit only the highest calibre individuals who share our vision. Being part of Inzpire is about being part of an amazing company and we are committed to being an employer of choice.

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“

We have just introduced a guaranteed interview scheme for all members of the Armed Forces community who meet our advertised requirements”

”

It was only on leaving the armed forces that I truly appreciated how much unconscious bias can have a negative impact when job searching, particularly so for military spouses. I was horrified at an interview to be asked about my partner's career, how long we intend to live in the area and what family support we have around us. Such bias can include negatively viewing a succession of short term jobs, time out between jobs and even local employers and recruiters who can recognise a military address and discount an application based on that!

We have just introduced a guaranteed interview scheme for all members of the Armed Forces community who meet our advertised requirements, which includes military spouses and partners. Our HR policies support family members of serving personnel, veterans and reservists, recognising that service life is far from straight forward and have a generous holiday package, flexible working and home-working (where it's appropriate) to assist.

We understand the exceptional skills required to juggle the upheaval of a short notice move or deployment, to apply for and successfully gain employment after each relocation, the remarkable organisation required to become both mum and dad overnight, the ability to quickly make friends and adapt to new environments and challenges and the general can-do attitude the Armed Forces community possess.



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### Tips to try and avoid any unconscious bias negatively affecting your job search:

- ✓ You do not have to include an address on your CV
- ✓ You do not have to include a location of your employment history
- ✓ You do not have to put hobbies and interests
- ✓ Keep your email address professional, full name or initials work best
- ✓ Ensure your social media is private/professional in case you are 'googled'
- ✓ If you have undertaken a variety of roles due to service life, focus your CV on transferable skills such as organisation, communication and management
- ✓ If able, make use of the station learning centres for professional and personal development, or websites such as Future Learn that are free
- ✓ You might not need part-time or home-working. If an employer is flexible and you want to, you can work full-time which opens up your options when job searching

I engage closely with the families federations and as a qualified recruiter I am happy to provide free CV support and guidance, in my spare-time, via Linked In [www.linkedin.com/in/zaramcardle](https://www.linkedin.com/in/zaramcardle).

Find out more on Inzpire: [inzpire.com](https://inzpire.com)

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Help for Heroes is a charity registered in England and Wales (1120920) and Scotland (SC044984).

# RAF WIDOWS' ASSOCIATION



Registered Charity No: 1030945

By | Kerry McNally, Chair

**I**n 1992 a group of young RAF Widows met to try and address the problems that many of them faced, from that initial meeting the RAF Widows' Association was founded.

The RAF Widows' Association (RAFWA) is a national charity for women and men who have lost their spouse or partner whilst serving in the RAF at the time of their death or who died within two years of leaving the RAF.

The association's aim is to offer comfort, support, friendship and a special understanding of the problems new widows and widowers are facing. We believe it is useful and reassuring to meet and talk with others who are in a similar position.

The Association is divided into regions which are overseen by a Point of Contact. This person organises social events locally as required by the members. We currently have just over 200 members who are spread across the country, including some who live overseas, and are mainly to be found clustered around large RAF stations.

Twice a year we host national weekend meetings. Members have the opportunity to join us for a subsidised weekend, in a hotel, around the country. In the last year we have visited Lichfield, where we incorporated a visit to the National Memorial Arboretum, Leeds and Bath. We vary the location so that it allows the opportunity for as many of our members as possible to be able to attend.

Many people are often unsure about joining the Association as they do not know what to expect, I remember feeling a lot of trepidation prior to my first meeting with members of the Association but my fears were ill founded as I was met with kindness and friendship and yes there were a few tears but it was lovely to be able to talk to someone who was that little bit further on in their bereavement and to realise that I would eventually 'get through' my grief and bereavement.

Making new friends, having some 'me time', having fun and having a supportive network in times of need all help in reducing that sense of isolation that can sometimes be overwhelming in times of bereavement.

Friendships flourish and we hear about our members going on holiday together and having days out.

Nationally, we work closely with our sister single service Widows Associations to improve the situation of the bereaved family.

We are very much supported by the RAF Benevolent Fund and we work closely with other Service-related charities who provide help and information.

The Association is run by a network of volunteers who themselves are RAF Widows, so they do really understand what the members are going through.

If you think you are eligible to join our Association please contact me via [RAFWidows@gmail.com](mailto:RAFWidows@gmail.com) our website is [rafbf.org/raf-widows](http://rafbf.org/raf-widows)



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 **Email [join@theiet.org](mailto:join@theiet.org)**

\*\*Free text line, no charges apply.

**[www.theiet.org/armed-forces](http://www.theiet.org/armed-forces)**

\*Visit [www.theiet.org/armed-forces](http://www.theiet.org/armed-forces) to see if you meet the SRA criteria.

The Institution of Engineering and Technology is registered as a Charity in England & Wales (no 211014) and Scotland (no SC038698), Michael Faraday House, Six Hills Way, Stevenage, SG1 2AY, United Kingdom.

# Dare to STOP

By | Padre Chris Hodder



**What** would your ideal holiday be? Touring country roads on a bicycle? Visiting hallowed historic houses or special and scenic sites? Navigating the night life in a place that never sleeps? Swimming in the sea? Or sleepily sizzling on the sand?

I hate sand, personally. I don't like it in my toes, and it gets everywhere, but I have kids, so have to face it each year with resignation, hoping that by November I will have hoovered the worst of it out of the car seats and it will no longer be visible unless I have to rummage under the boot floor for the compressor or something.

## How will you spend your summer?

I hope that, whatever you do, you do get a couple of weeks off to recharge. Although the planning and packing can be hard work, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that holidays are good for building our emotional and mental wellbeing. That might simply be by topping up our Vitamin D levels, or by allowing time and space to build different memories in the relationships that are close to us. Spending time with friends and family can be just what we need to unwind after a stressful period at work.

Holidays make us to stop and step away from our busy work/domestic life routines and carve out a different canvas to inhabit for a week or two. Taking a break makes us more productive when we do return, but also help us to reflect on our work/life

balance and think about adjustments or whether it is time for a change in direction.

Whilst the plethora of ideas about how we should spend our time and money doing holidays is ever growing, the idea of stepping back from routine is not new. Different faith traditions have had subtly different ideas about what a 'Retreat' (from the Latin, 'to withdraw, to drawback') is, but at its heart all of them recognise the value of pulling back. Sometimes we need to slow down and be attentive to the self, the world around, others, and make mental and spiritual space. It's hard to hear the still small voice in a world that only shouts.

I can remember, some years ago when I was a University Chaplain, a wise monk from a community in France called Taizé, who visited the East Midlands. My colleague and I were taking a group of students there one summer and the monk had come over to the UK to encourage students to take part. He was talking to one particular student, a high achiever who always took on far too many challenges and was often stressed and rushing about. "I can't afford to spend my summer sitting quietly in a monastery," she opined. "I have far too much to get done".

"Dare to stop," he replied. He had nailed her need in three words. And of course, she came, and grew enormously as a person as a result.

Maybe this summer, for a little while – dare to stop.



# PARAMOTOR PILOTS FLY over 40 RAF STATIONS for CHARITY



**A** record-breaking RAF officer and his friend flew more than 260 miles on paramotors to raise money for the Royal Air Forces Association.

Flight Lieutenant Giles Fowler, the UK's highest flying paramotor pilot, and Paul Mockford, son of the Chairman of the Aylesbury and Halton Branch of the RAF Association, took to the skies of Lincolnshire.

Their 263 mile challenge, #RAFA40, saw them fly over 40 current and former RAF stations. Raising more than £3,000 for the RAF Association.

The pair's two day trip was split over six legs, starting from the former Bomber Command airfield at RAF Goxhill, near Hull, and finishing at RAF Halton in Buckinghamshire. The route took them over Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire.

Giles, 40, from Lowestoft, said, "Paul and I met briefly at a flying festival, and we quickly realised we both had a connection with both paramotoring and the RAF Association, which his father Derf has been closely involved with for years.

"I wanted to attempt a challenge and raise money for something that's close to my heart, and the RAF Association is a great charity which does so much to help active and former RAF personnel and their families."

Paramotoring is similar to paragliding, but pilots wear a small engine and a propeller on their back, and are able to take off from flat fields instead of having to launch from hills and summits.

Giles is a serving officer in the RAF with 25 years' flying experience, and holds the record for the highest UK paramotor flight, at 21,746ft. He also flew the longest non-stop flight in the UK, travelling 300 miles coast to coast, from former RAF Brawdy in Pembrokeshire to Beccles Airfield in Suffolk in 2017.

Giles and Paul were assisted by friends and fellow paramotorist enthusiasts Katie Pagett and Andy Greaves, who provided ground support by carrying fuel, spare parts and supplies for the pilots.



Team image:  
(Centre, l-r) Paramotorists Paul Mockford and Flight Lieutenant Giles Fowler with their air crew Andy Greaves and Katie Pagett.





©RAF Benevolent Fund.

# 'EVERYONE NEEDS A BREAK' – welfare breaks scheme extended for serving personnel



**Royal Air Force  
Benevolent Fund**  
CELEBRATING 100 YEARS

**T**he RAF Benevolent Fund has expanded its welfare breaks scheme for serving personnel to include locations across the whole of the UK.

Having supported the RAF Family for the past 100 years, the Fund knows how stressful Service life can be.

Deployment, separation and continuous moves can all add to pressures at work and home. To help, the RAF Benevolent Fund are offering subsidised breaks across the UK to serving personnel and their families. All properties are available to RAF families at the affordable rate of between £35 and £64 a night.

**Leon Hart, Head of Respite and Care at the RAF Benevolent Fund, said:** "Everyone deserves a break, particularly serving families who live with the pressures of service life from day to day.

"This scheme is just one way the Fund supports the serving community, providing things like our Airplay youth support scheme, funding relationship counselling and free access to the mindfulness app Headspace."

The breaks will run on selected dates during the 2019 summer holiday period and will offer an opportunity to rent a caravan or cottage in many popular UK locations.

Locations include Hammer Bank Lodge, Windermere; Reighton Sands Holiday Park, Filey; Rose Cottage, Loch Ness; Fox Glove Cottage, Loch Lomond; Coast House, Littlehampton; Awel Y Mor, Llandudno; and Butlins Resort, Bognor Regis.

Properties are available throughout the English and Scottish school holidays during summer 2019. Best effort will be made to ensure that applicants are offered their first choice dates, but priority will be given to families with welfare needs.

One RAF Family, who enjoyed a break earlier this year, said: "We really were at a low point before this holiday. Family, our relationship, stress, you name it, we were going through it. We were at our wits' end before we went away. It was our last chance in our marriage and keeping our family together.

"We arrived at this amazing house with a big garden and everything we needed, overlooking the sea. Straightaway it was like we had left everything behind, the worries, the stress. From day one we started to become a family again, and husband and wife."

To book, go online to **rafbf.org**

# THE RIPPLE POND



The Ripple Pond is a self-help peer support network for the adult family members of physically and emotionally injured service personnel and veterans.



©RipplePond.

We are not a crisis organisation. The emphasis is on meeting and speaking to people in a similar situation, to give and receive support from those who are walking a similar journey to yourself.

The Ripple Pond was established in 2011 by Julia Molony and Sue Hawkins, both of them mothers to physically injured soldiers. They each individually reached out in a time when their lives were changing forever and found little in the way of support for the parents of the injured. Realising if they were in this position others would be to, they formed The Ripple Pond.

## One of our members whose husband is serving in the RAF recently sent us their story:

"I stumbled upon The Ripple Pond at a time when I desperately needed help and support living with my husband with PTSD. His illness had got so bad that I was at the end of my tether, trying to juggle being a good Mum and keeping myself healthy so that I could be the supportive wife too. It's pretty much impossible to do all of this unless you are Wonderwoman. The Ripple Pond's online Facebook group has been an amazing method of support. I felt relieved that I was no longer suffering on my own and could vent in the group and receive comments of support and encouragement. It didn't really matter if someone couldn't help – it was the fact that there were people feeling just like me. I am a veteran myself so was pretty clued up but that is not always the case for all. The Ripple Pond is fantastic and I can't recommend them enough for people in my position. I am grateful daily that I made that phone call"

We have three avenues of support, the main being our group meetings. These are kept small with a maximum of

six in any one group.

This ensures everyone has the opportunity to share and be heard. We try to run them monthly depending on the groups needs and are facilitated by a Group Administrator (who is a member of The Ripple Pond). We also have a 'buddy' system whereby we put members in touch with one another, so regardless of whether there is a meeting in their area, they can still access that face-to-face support. And thirdly, we have a private Facebook page. This is a judgement free area where members can share their stories, celebrate a good day or commiserate after a bad day, regardless of time. There will always be someone around to comment and support.

The Ripple Pond has five members of staff based in the Hub in Aldershot with our members being spread all over the UK.

Forces families often do not recognise the underlying stress they cope with. Helping a loved one with an injury is unique and personal. The Ripple Pond sets out to support the silent party of trauma in the military, the family members who live alongside it who are trying to make sense of it. If you are caring for a loved one with a military attributed injury – remember to take care of yourself too. To find out more go to [theripplepond.org](http://theripplepond.org)

Facebook and Twitter @theripplepond



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# VICTORY SERVICES CLUB

**I am sorry to say that I had been in the Royal Air Force for twenty seven years before I had ever heard of the Victory Services Club. Of course, everyone has heard of the RAF Club and the Union Jack Club, but what was the Victory Services Club and what did it offer and why did it tempt me to leave the RAF after thirty years of service to apply for and succeed in getting a job here?**

Of all the military clubs in London it is unique and very special. The Club is open to all ranks of the Armed Forces and our mission is to deliver Value Service and Courtesy irrespective of whether you are, or were, an Air Chief Marshal or an Aircraftman and every rank in between. If you are ever visiting London for either work or pleasure and you are eligible to be a member through your military service, the Victory Services Club is the place to visit and stay.

While details about the Victory Services Club can be found on [vsc.co.uk](http://vsc.co.uk), you should first know that the Club is in Central London, adjacent to Marble Arch, which is the junction of Oxford Street and Park Lane. It is very easy to get to as it is close to Paddington and Marylebone stations, and Marble Arch is on the Central Line. The Club uniquely offers free membership to all ranks who are Serving members of the UK Armed Forces, and those of NATO and the Commonwealth including regulars and reservists. Membership for the spouse or partner of serving armed forces members is also free. The Club has a relatively modest annual membership charge for former members of the Armed Forces and offers a separate family membership scheme for those who have not served themselves, but who are parents or children of those who have served or are serving in the Armed Forces. It is very easy to join the Club online and to book bedrooms via the website.

The Club has 202 bedrooms, with prices currently ranging from £52.50 to £123; of these 75% have air conditioning and there is free wi-fi coverage throughout the Club. Of our 202 bedrooms nine of them are accessible bedrooms which have all been recently refurbished, with tremendous support from the RAF Benevolent Fund. The RAF Central Fund, together with the RN and RM Charity, the Army Central Fund other Service charities, including Help for Heroes has generously supported upgrades to our bedrooms. Our members can benefit from a 50% discount on car parking charges in Park Lane. The Club has a very comfortable and a relaxed feel and dress code. Our dining facilities are extremely modern with air conditioning and free-wi-fi. Our food offer includes Club classics to fine dining, together with a varied children's and vegetarian menus, all at very reasonable prices. Our Victory Ale is £3 a pint which can be enjoyed in a smart and comfortable air conditioned bar. Our Afternoon Teas are extremely popular. The Club has a team of Porters who provide our security, assistance with finding taxi's, planning sightseeing trips, and helping with luggage. Membership entitles you to stay at number of other Clubs worldwide, including New York, under our reciprocal agreements. The Club's infrastructure is very well maintained.

The Victory Services Club is a charity and we have a wide range of Trustees drawn from the three Services. The serving RAF Trustees are Wing Commander Tracey Pilkington SO1 Recovery Delivery RAF and Warrant Officer Jon Crossley (CASWO). In addition, we also have Air Vice-Marshal (Retired) Steve Chisnall, and Mrs Mandy Hickson, a former Tornado GR4 pilot. Uniquely we offer free Respite and Welfare breaks to individuals and their families who are recommended to us by either the Services Recovery staffs such as the Recovers Staff



ENVOY SUMMER 2019  
[raf-ff.org.uk](http://raf-ff.org.uk)





at High Wycombe, and leading Service charities including SSAFA and the Royal Marines Charity. These breaks are for two nights and include all meals for a family of two adults and three school age children. Tickets to a top London attraction are provided for free as well. Since April 2018, the Victory Services Club has provided 139 free Respite and Welfare breaks; this number increases year-on-year. The Club is also a perfect venue for meeting friends and colleagues at reunion events, ranging from small informal gatherings to large dinners, at which we can host 180. The Club is an exceptional location for a wedding venue, with impressive menus, outstanding staff, and 202 bedrooms for overnight guests.

The Victory Services Club is a unique and special place. It is recommended that you come and try it, remembering that it is free to join if you are serving.

Club Secretary, Air Commodore (Retired)  
Nigel Beet CBE



## READER PRIZE DRAW

The Victory Services Club is kindly offering one reader to win a free weekend break for one family (up to 2 adults and 2 school age children). Simply email your details to [enquiries@raf-ff.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@raf-ff.org.uk) (putting VSC Break Entry into the subject heading) by Friday 19th July and we will contact the lucky winner who will need to book their break before the 31st March 2020. The value of this break would be in the region of £500. Entrants must be over 18.

Open to all readers of Envoy except employees of the RAF FF and their families, its publishers, printers and anyone connected with the competitions. Only one entry per household please. Your details will not be passed on to any third party organisations.

# RAF CENTRAL FUND NEW CEO APPOINTMENT



**The RAF Central Fund is delighted to announce the appointment of Ross Perriam as their Chief Executive Officer as of June 2019.**

Ross brings substantial knowledge and experience to this important role. Over the last 15 years, Ross has held Director, COO, CEO and Trustee positions in the UK and European fitness and sports sectors, recently transitioning into the not-for-profit and charitable sectors. In his current role as CEO of EMO UK, Ross has worked closely with Sport England and other sporting bodies to promote a more active nation on behalf of the UK government. The successful acquisition of the popular ClassFinder Ltd is included in his impressive achievements at EMO UK.

Prior to his role at EMO UK, Ross facilitated the formation of FitGroupUK, a collaboration of key opinion leaders from across the sector to lead the industry in engaging with the nation's inactive population of 15 million people.

With his distinctive outlook and experience, Ross's approach has been to bring diverse groups together to transition through periods of significant change in the sector, effectively improving communication and engagement across organisations. In addition, Ross has an impressive track record of developing new revenue streams, securing increases to current funding and raising brand profiles.

Ross said, "I couldn't be more honoured to have been chosen to lead the RAF Central Fund. I believe in the benefits of physical activity and will do my best to support the Board of Trustees and team in fulfilling their passion to make a difference for RAF serving personnel."

Speaking on behalf of the Central Fund Board, the Chair of Trustees Dr. Eamonn Molloy said, "We are fortunate to have found someone of Ross Perriam's calibre and experience to lead the RAF Central Fund. Ross brings deep expertise in motivating others through physical activity, which is critical as we continue to refine the Central Fund strategy in this period of exciting changes in the sector. We believe his combination of sector experience, commercial acumen and commitment to the physical well-being of serving RAF personnel positions him to be an excellent fit for the role of CEO at the Fund."



# NEW CHAIR FOR SERVICE CHILDREN IN STATE SCHOOLS

**S**ervice Children in State Schools (SCISS) was formed as a working group to look into the issues relating to English state schools providing for children whose parents serve in the armed forces. Steph Fawdry recently took over as the Chair and shares with the RAF Families Federation a bit about her background.

I have been in teaching for 23 years and, I can honestly say, I LOVE it! In September 2010 RAF Benson Community Primary School was struggling to get a substantive headteacher and I was asked, by the Local Authority, to take on the role of Headteacher of the school. During that year I got to know how special and unique the school and community was - with almost 100% service children and that the school, at the heart of this community, had to ensure that they gave the children the very best experiences that they could. I just adored the school, the changing nature of its population and especially how spirited and resilient the children were. So in went my application for the permanent role and the rest, they say, is history!

Not having a military background myself, I had to quickly come to terms with the acronyms, the rank structure and general military way of life. It was at this point when I came across SCISS and the work that the group did in supporting schools. Being initially instrumental in obtaining the Service Pupil Premium (SPP) for schools, SCISS as an organisation has supported schools in many ways over the years and I was delighted in 2012 to be asked to join the National Executive Advisory Committee (NEAC).

It now meant that I could raise the issues that our school was facing in doing all we could to support our service children and, in turn, support other schools in similar positions. When I started at RAF

Benson the numbers were 149; it's now settled at 196 with a number of children set to go and some more to welcome to our school. Our average mobility rate each year is 54% which presents challenges for the budget, for staffing and for resources and also has an impact on planning as we do not actually know how many children we will have in school until they all turn up in September!

## Becoming Chair of SCISS

Becoming the Chair was not a decision that I made lightly as I know that it comes with great responsibility. Our team of representatives from around the country will be a strong voice in supporting schools with service children and will provide advice and support to schools in various ways.

We very much anticipate speaking with Government on issues that schools supporting service children face such as transition for children with Special Educational Needs when moving from one area to the other and also the validity of the Reception Baseline Testing which is due to become statutory from September 2020 as a measure of performance re-tested again in year six - quite a challenge if you only have two children in year 6 who were in Reception at your school!

Watch this space for SCISS future projects – we have an exciting journey ahead!

Follow on Twitter @SCISSUK

Access the SCISS Handbook: [gov.uk/government/publications/service-children-in-state-schools-handbook](https://gov.uk/government/publications/service-children-in-state-schools-handbook)



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