



Wraparound childcare (WAC)

Keep up to date

There is more information due so you can [sign up to the RAFFF's weekly eBulletin](#) where any further news on WAC will be shared as/when it's available.

See also: [GOV.UK's Childcare for Service Children](#)

Still have questions on WAC?

Email us at enquiries@raf-ff.org.uk and a member of the team will be able to get back to you.

 **ROYAL
AIRFORCE
Families
Federation**
Support | Investigate | Influence

W R A P A R O U N D C H I L D C A R E

Q What is the Wraparound Childcare (WAC) Scheme?

A WAC funding can support eligible Service families with children aged 4 to 11 years old who are in school or being home schooled in the UK. If eligible, Personnel can claim up to 20 hours per week of funding for each child that is attending before and after school care during term time.

WAC is known as 'Out of School care' in Wales and 'School Aged Childcare' in Scotland. Parent(s) can choose their own OFSTED, (or equivalent), registered childcare provider.

Q What are the upcoming timelines of the Wraparound Childcare Scheme?

A Full UK Rollout of the WAC scheme will commence in the Autumn term 2022. Leading up to the launch, internal communications will be shared with personnel and their families. This will indicate what steps Service families will need to take to start claiming WAC from Autumn 2022.

Q How can people find out more information about the Wraparound Childcare Scheme?


A The Full UK Roll-out was announced on 21 July 2022. Following the initial announcement, more announcements, resources and information sessions will be shared to help Service families check if their family is eligible and provide information on how to sign up for the WAC scheme.

Before this information is available, Service families need to make sure that every child that they would like to claim WAC funding for is recorded on JPA and has a Tax-Free Childcare (TFC) account.

If your child(ren) is not recorded on JPA and/or you do not have a TFC account, Service families should take the following steps now:

1. **RECORD** your child(ren) on JPA.
2. **READ** information about TFC accounts by visiting [Tax-Free Childcare - GOV.UK](#).
3. **CHECK** if your family will financially benefit from having a TFC account or a salary sacrifice childcare voucher scheme, including the Armed Forces Childcare Voucher Scheme (AFCVS (Sodexo vouchers)). You **cannot have both** at the same time. To make an informed decision about which scheme suits your family best, use the [childcare calculator on GOV.UK](#). Please be aware, if you choose to leave the AFCVS, you cannot re-join it.
4. **APPLY:** If you choose to claim WAC funding, you can [create a TFC account](#) for your child(ren) on GOV.UK.
These steps are necessary before registering and claiming WAC.

What are the benefits of the Wraparound Childcare Scheme?

 The WAC scheme can help Service families with their childcare requirements, and can become an important factor in retaining Service personnel.

Feedback from pilots showed that many participants described a variety of ways that the WAC scheme positively impacted their family. Families said the WAC scheme has:

- been key in enabling both Serving and non-Serving spouses/partners to work longer hours if they wanted to.
- improved general wellbeing of the family.
- increased people's contentment with Service life for non-Serving partners.

- ⦿ created a better balance of childcare responsibilities between the parents
- ⦿ improved relationships and enabled an ability to put roots down in an area
- ⦿ created a better opportunity to plan finances

In addition, families mentioned how their children benefitted from the WAC pilot scheme. The main themes included:

- ⦿ Social skills: children being more confident; better able to interact with others; more independent, etc.
- ⦿ Friendships: children making friends quicker; having more time and more relaxed atmosphere outside school setting to interact with their friends; bonding with others not in their usual friendship group, etc.

Various surveys have shown that one factor determining retention is the impact that Service life can have on the wider family, including access to appropriate childcare. WAC funding aims to provide current and future Service parents with better flexibility and childcare support, mitigating some but not all of the difficulties that can sometimes be caused by mobility and deployment.

Q How can people register for and claim Wraparound Childcare (WAC) funding?

A To claim WAC funding, Service families should follow these steps:

- ⦿ Make sure their child(ren) is registered on JPA.
- ⦿ Apply for a Tax-Free Childcare (TFC) account for every child, aged 4 – 11 years, that they plan to claim for.
- ⦿ When step 1 and 2 is complete, register their child(ren) on the Defence Childcare portal from early September 2022 (link will be shared closer to the time).

- ⦿ Wait to receive confirmation that they meet the eligibility criteria.
- ⦿ After receiving the approved eligibility confirmation, Service families can start claiming back costs.

It is important to be aware:

- ⦿ That claims cannot be submitted until TFC accounts are in place and the registration is approved.
- ⦿ Up until 31 December 2022, claims for WAC can be backdated to the start of the Autumn 2022 term once the TFC has been activated and registration approved.
- ⦿ From 1 January 2023, claims can be backdated to the date the TFC account was applied for if there is a delay in TFC account activation. As such, Service personnel must make a note of the date the TFC account was applied for and be prepared to provide evidence of the TFC account application being submitted, or claims will only be backdated to the TFC activation date.
- ⦿ Service personnel must keep evidence of their invoice, proof of payment and screen shot of the online claims calculator calculation for two years.

Q Why is having a Tax-Free Childcare account mandated to claim WAC?

A Tax-Free Childcare (TFC) accounts are an existing tax efficient Government scheme where the Government contributes £2 for every £8 that is paid into a Tax-Free Childcare account. This money is then used to pay for childcare at settings that are accredited either by Ofsted or their equivalent.


By mandating the use of TFC accounts, it allows eligibility checking to be carried out by HMRC. HMRC will confirm the salary of the applicant, the partner employment details, the age of the children, and that the provider is accredited. HMRC will also carry out the three-monthly verification check to ensure eligibility remains.

Before applying for a TFC account, Service families should check if their family will financially benefit more from having a TFC account or salary sacrifice childcare voucher schemes. You cannot have both due to tax implications. Some families may be better off remaining with their salary sacrifice scheme, so need to carefully consider the benefits of both to see which scheme best suits your circumstances.

To make an informed decision about which scheme suits your family best, use the HMRC childcare calculator ([www](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk)). You may wish to seek additional and independent financial advice as necessary.

The criteria for TFC accounts and salary sacrifice accounts are different, and once you have left a salary sacrifice scheme you are not able to re-join it.

What prompted the Wraparound Childcare (WAC) Scheme?

 Difficulty in accessing appropriate childcare has long been cited by the Armed Forces Families Federations as a significant factor for individuals deciding whether to leave or remain within their Service.

In Autumn 2019, the Directorate Children and Young People (DCYP) provided Secretary of State (SofS) with numerous options to address this. In response, SofS asked that a proposal for a wraparound childcare (WAC) offering should be developed.

A commitment to 'offer [funding for] wraparound childcare for Forces families' subsequently appeared in the Conservative Party manifesto in 2019.

WAC will help to remove some of the barriers that Service families face around childcare. Feedback from the WAC pilots has been very positive. The scheme is helping Service children form new friendships and settle into new schools and locations more easily, and has had positive financial, occupational and wellbeing benefits for families. WAC may therefore help to improve Service personnel's retention rates.

Q Who is involved in the Wraparound Childcare scheme?

A The project is led by the Wraparound Childcare Project Team, which is part of Armed Forces Families and Safeguarding. You can contact them by emailing:

People-AFFS-WAC-FRO-Mailbox@mod.gov.uk

Q How does Wraparound Childcare fit in with the wider work of Defence projects?

A The WAC scheme is part of the UK Armed Forces Families Strategy 2022-32. The strategy provides both the context and the framework for the delivery of a range of practical interventions designed to strengthen and improve policies and service provision across the Armed Forces families agenda, leading to improved retention and enhanced operational effectiveness.

Q How much does Wraparound Childcare cost?

A Defence has secured funding of up to £1.4Bn over ten years.

Q Why is the funding only available Monday to Friday, term-time only? What about weekend shift workers?

A Wraparound childcare, which in some areas is known as out of school care, is meant to provide “wraparound” support for some families at the start and/or end of the school day to help parents manage their working hours; extra flexibility can help parents work longer or in some cases help them to work in a job more suited to their skills, which they previously would not have been possible due to school hours.

Further work **may** be undertaken to look at an expansion to cover weekend shift workers, however this cannot be guaranteed.

Q Why can breakfast be included in a claim, but other meals can't?

A The majority of Breakfast Clubs in school settings already provide some form of breakfast for children attending these. Evidence shows that when children eat breakfast, benefits include:

- Improved cognitive function, particularly memory, attention, and executive function.
- Improved academic performance, including school grades and achievement test scores.
- Increased on-task behaviour in the class.

Where breakfast is an additional cost, but within the capped hourly rate, it will be included in the funding.

Q If hours can be pooled per family per week, why is the extra funding for disabled children in receipt of certain government allowances limited to 20 hours? If the family has hours left from another child that are being used by the disabled child, why is the funding limited to the standard capped rate?

A Eligibility is linked to Tax Free Childcare (TFC), where disabled children meeting certain eligibility criteria are paid double the government top up (up to £4000 per year per child). The Defence policy caps the hours to 20 hours per week per child, so the higher rate is capped at 20 hours per child. The disabled child is still able to pool their hours within a family setting, however, any hours over 20 hours will be paid at the standard rate

Q Why are Service Personnel on Full Time Reserve Service Home Commitment (FTRS HC) and Limited Commitment (LC) contracts and Military Provost Guard Service (MPGS) not eligible?

A This Wraparound childcare policy captures the needs of those that are most likely to be impacted by mobility and or deployment, which may make it harder for their families to access the wraparound childcare that they need. Regulars and Full Commitment (FC) are eligible for the funding.

Q Why is Defence providing Wraparound Childcare (WAC) funding?

A Armed forces families are at the heart of the Defence community. They play a key role in the protection of the United Kingdom and provide tremendous support to serving personnel.

WAC scheme aims to provide current and future Service parents with better flexibility and childcare support, mitigating some but not all of the difficulties that can sometimes be caused by mobility and deployment, especially when trying to find appropriate childcare. WAC can help partners to manage their career alongside the Service person, help children form friendships more easily, and help to better balance home life with the demand of Service life.

The WAC scheme shows that while personnel continue to do extraordinary work on behalf of the country, Defence is committed to ensure that they receive the right support to care for their family.

Q Why is Full Rollout only in the UK and not overseas?

A Under the current proposal, the Wraparound Childcare (WAC) scheme can only be rolled out to families where the WAC provider is working within the UK, registered by Ofsted (or equivalent), and able to take payments from Tax Free Childcare (TFC) accounts. Eligibility testing for TFC is carried out by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), who determine that both parents (or the lone parent) is working the required hours, and their wage is under the threshold in terms of earnings.

Early discussions have taken place with HMRC to look at the possibility of using TFC overseas and during the first year of full operation within the UK. Further work will be carried out to look at what might be possible for those serving accompanied overseas to ensure they are not disadvantaged; however, it is unlikely that there will be a "one size fits all" solution.

Q There have been 80 reported safeguarding allegations in afterschool clubs in the past five years as reported by the BBC. Why is Defence encouraging Service families to put their children in after school clubs?

A The decision to use an after-school club is one that is taken by the parent. Defence is not encouraging their use needlessly. Defence will not recommend any wraparound childcare provider and parents should take care when choosing their provider.

However, to be eligible to claim WAC funding, the child must attend an Ofsted or equivalent registered provider, which undergo safeguarding inspections following the education inspection framework. WAC funding will not be paid for any wraparound childcare that is at unregistered provider.

raf-ff.org.uk

01780 781650

enquiries@raf-ff.org.uk

13-15 St Georges Road Wittering Peterborough PE8 6DL



Facebook page [@RAFFamFed](https://www.facebook.com/RAFFamFed)



Facebook groups

- [RAF Families](#)
- [RAF Dispersed Families](#)
- [RAF Families Forum](#)



Search for RAF Families Federation



[@RAF_FF](https://twitter.com/RAF_FF)



[@raffamsfed](https://www.instagram.com/raffamsfed)



[RAF Families Federation](https://www.youtube.com/RAF Families Federation)