



# WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT CHILDREN FROM MILITARY FAMILIES?

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# LOOKING BACK:

**Where were we when KCMHR started in 2003?**

NO research on UK military families  
Meaning NO recognition of the needs of families  
Thus NO evidence based interventions available  
Traditional definition of family



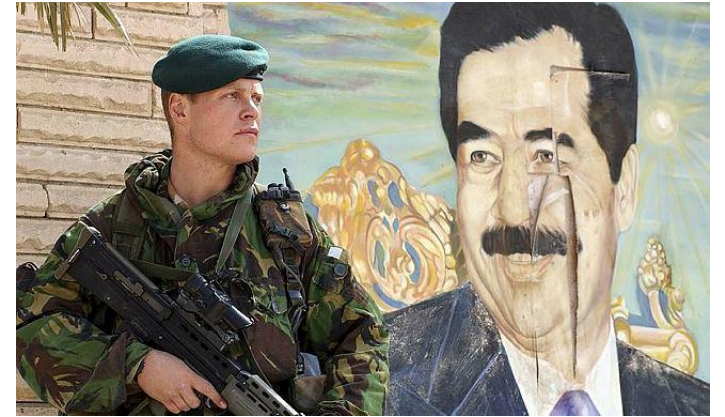
WHAT HAVE WE BEEN UP TO?

# KCMHR MILITARY COHORT

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- Three phases of data collection
- 9,990 participants (response rate = 56%) – based on Phase 2
- Sample includes:
  - Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Army and RAF personnel
  - Regulars and reservists
  - Men and women
  - Service leavers
  - ***Our only exclusion is Special Forces***

***UK MoD funded***





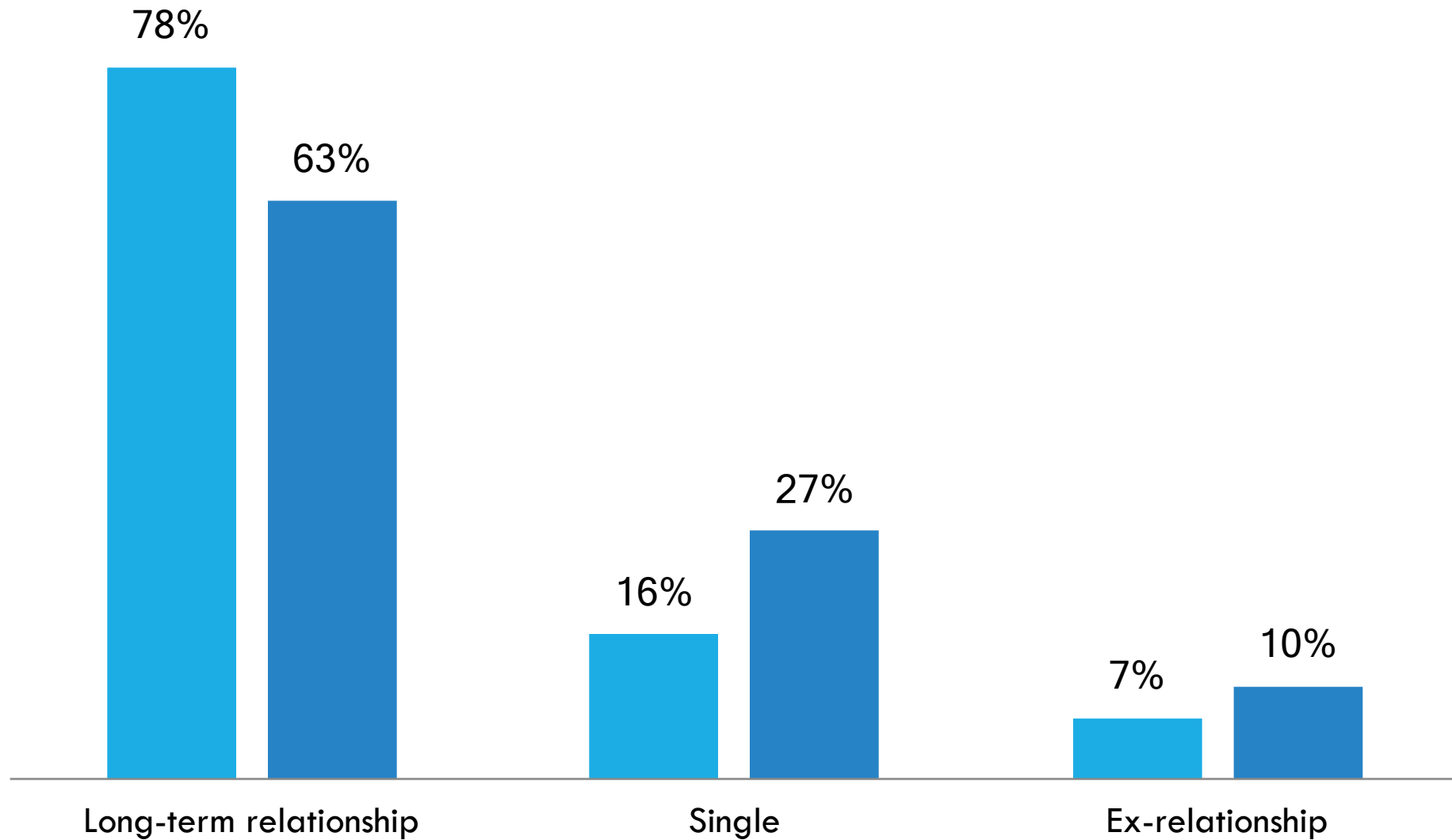
# KCMHR MILITARY COHORT

- Included questions on:
- Relationship status & satisfaction; Family circumstances; Impact of military service on relationships & children; Family problems as a result of deployment
- Allows for sub-studies
- BUT from the perspective of the Service person

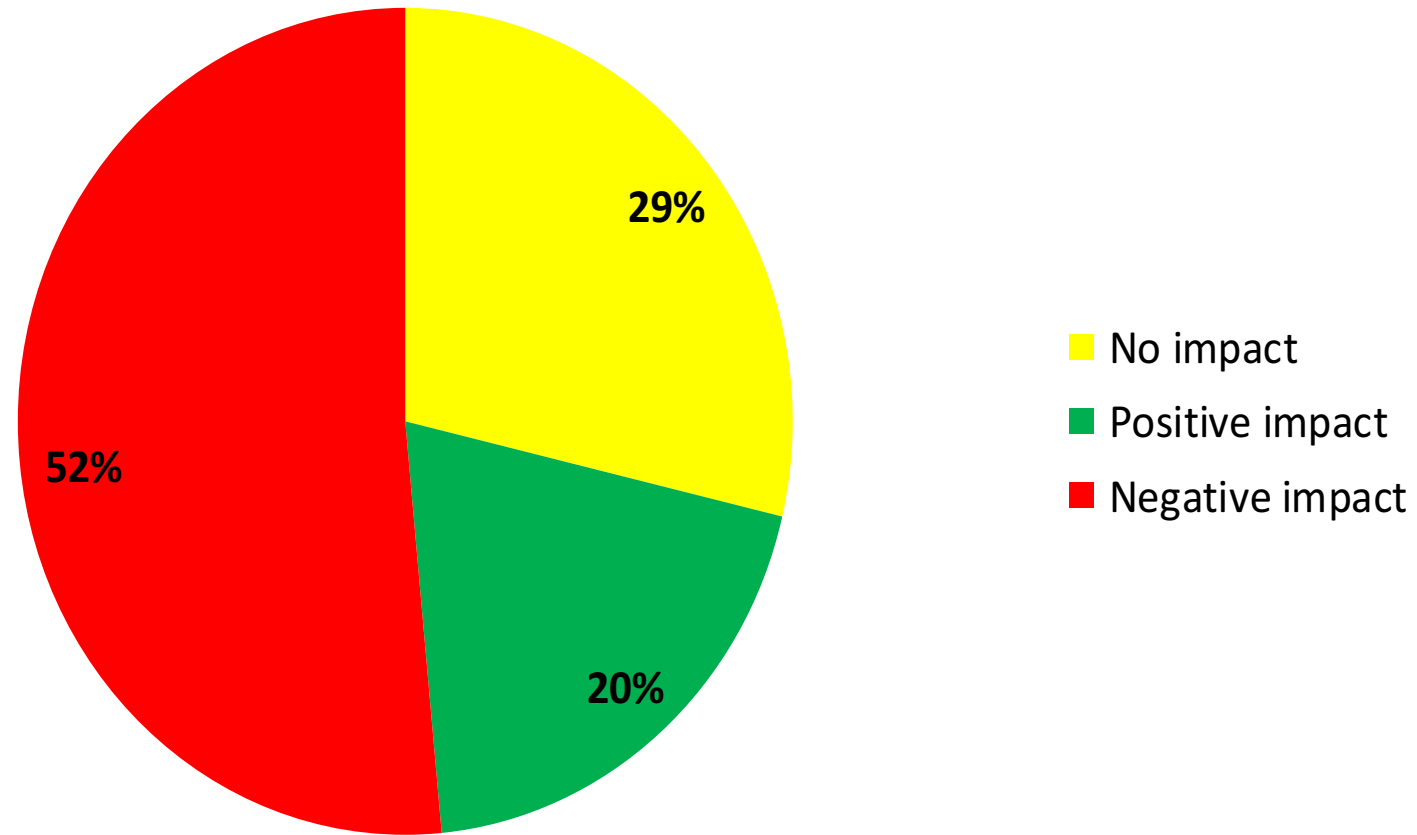


## Marital status by gender (%)

■ Male ■ Female



## PERCEIVED IMPACT OF MILITARY CAREER ON CHILDREN



# DEPLOYMENT WORRIES

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Communication with home

Being separated from their family

Not getting enough sleep/time to relax

Experiencing combat

In danger of being killed or injured





# THE KIDS STUDY

Funded by the US  
Department of Defense



# Kids Study

**How does paternal deployment impact on children's emotional, social and behavioural development?**

**What about paternal post-traumatic stress disorder & alcohol misuse?**

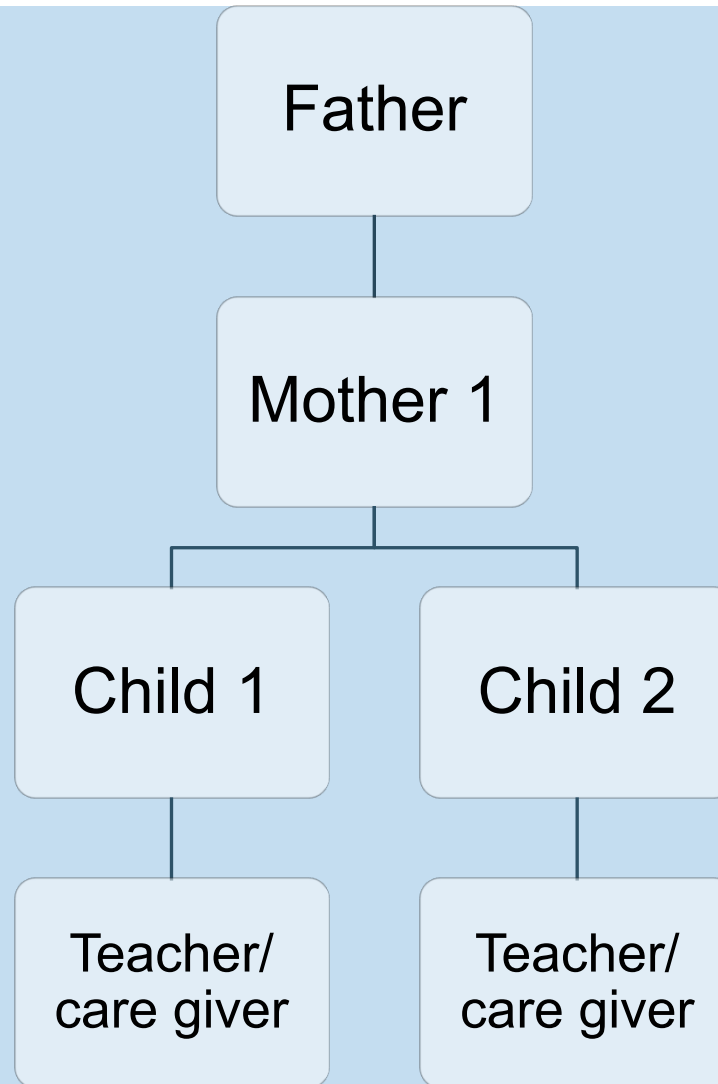
**How do military children compare with the other children?**

**What's it like to have a father in the military?**

**Kids study funded by:  
U.S. Department of Defense**

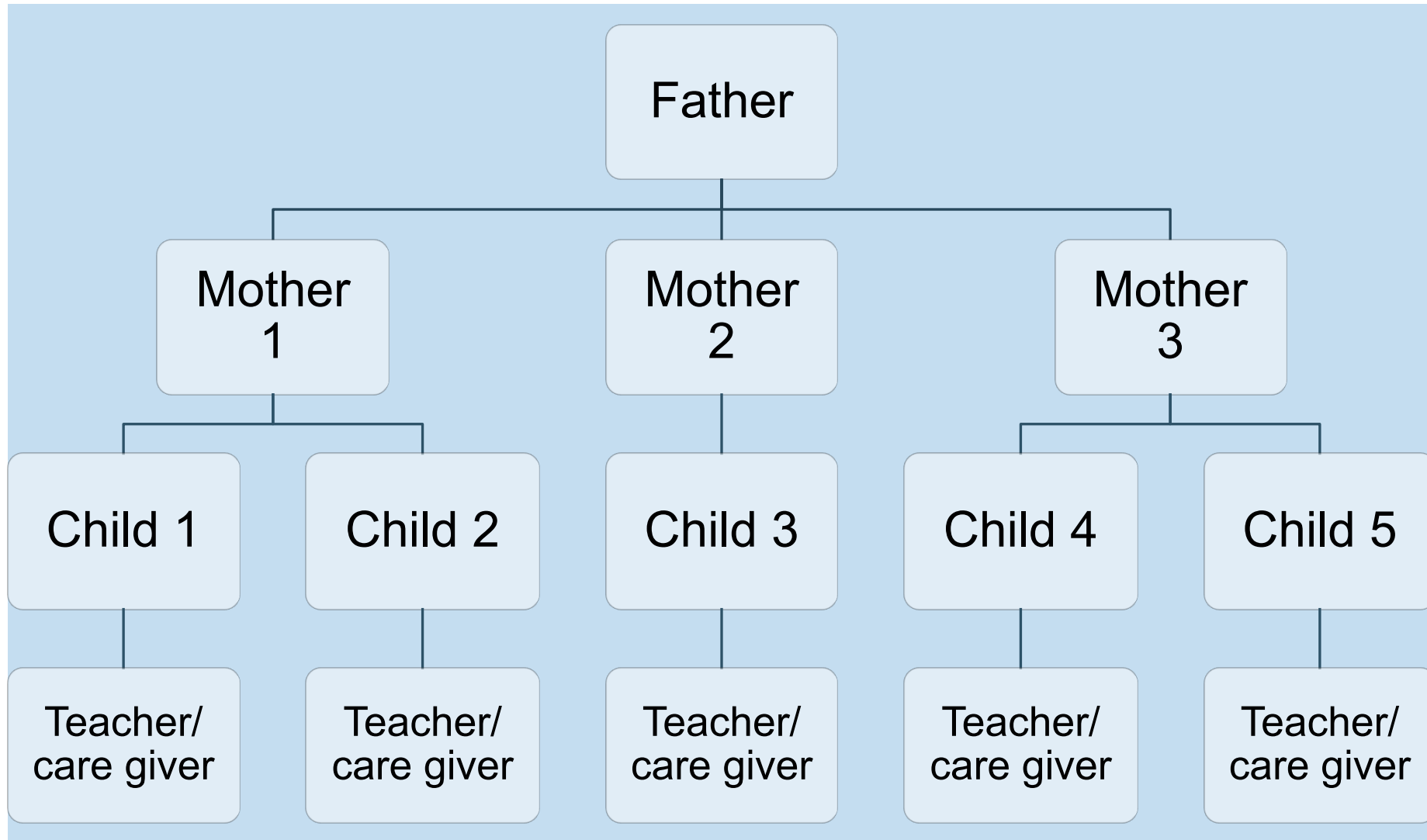
# Kids Study – ideal scenario

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# Kids Study – real world

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# WORST THINGS ABOUT HAVING A FATHER IN THE UK ARMED FORCES

Lack of contact  
(61%)

Nothing (18%)

Relocating (16%)

*"Him never being around.  
He missed most of my  
childhood."*

*"No, it has always been part  
of my life and I am used to  
it."*

*"That we have to leave  
friends and family behind  
when we move."*

3 December 2010

# THE HUFFINGTON POST

AdChoices 

THE BLOG

## The Story of the Military Child: Why society is getting it wrong and how it's hurting military kids

🕒 03/01/2016 08:47 am ET | Updated Mar 01, 2016

A military kid's life is so much more than deployments and moving.

We owe these kids more. We need to talk about the positives of being a part of a military family. But there's a reason this story doesn't get as much press; and the result may be causing a lot of unrecognized harm.

# BEST THINGS ABOUT HAVING A FATHER IN THE UK ARMED FORCES

Financial benefits  
(25%)

Sense of pride (25%)

Relocating (21%)

*"We go to go to good schools because of the discount that dad gets from the Army."*

*"That he fights for the country and helps people."*

*"I have done and seen things most people wouldn't get to do and it's been really fun ..."*

# ADOLESCENCE IS A TIME OF CHANGE

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## SERVICE PARENTS' & ADOLESCENTS' CHALLENGES & EXPERIENCES STUDY

Funded by the US Department of  
Defense



# SPACE STUDY SAMPLE



## 100 Fathers

Selected on basis of their PCL-5  
responses collected from Phase  
3 of KCMHR cohort study



Online data  
Father/mother  
/child

Data from  
home visits  
Father/mother/  
child

# NOVEL METHODOLOGY

- ✓ Data collected online & through home visits
- ✓ Multi-informant data
- ✓ Hot Topics
  - communication & relationship quality
- ✓ Five Minute Speech Sample (FMSS)
  - parent-child communication
- ✓ DAWBA (Development & Well-Being Assessment)
  - adolescent emotional wellbeing
- ✓ FAD (Family Assessment Device)
  - family functioning



# UK ARMED FORCES FAMILIES' STRATEGY

2016-2020

# UK ARMED FORCES FAMILIES' STRATEGY 2016-2020

## Foreword

I am delighted to publish the first UK Armed Forces Families' Strategy which sets out our approach to Service families and provides guidance for MOD policy officials.

The recent Strategic Defence and Security Review rightly placed the recruitment and retention of our people as a priority for Defence. Britain's military competitive advantage is due to the professionalism and skills of our people, both Regulars and Reserves. At times of financial constraint, when there are increasing demands on our resources, we must make the most of the talents of all who work for us. But our personnel can only fully deliver their Defence task if they have the support of their families as well as the confidence that their loved ones will be able to access the right support when required. So doing more to listen, talk to and empower those families is vital if we are to continue attracting and retaining capable and motivated Service personnel.

We already expect a great deal from our military families. Our personnel are expected to provide an unlimited liability; this means that they might face serious injury or death during their service to the Nation. They will periodically be required to deploy on operations, sometimes at very short notice, or for protracted periods, or having only recently returned from a previous separation – and sometimes all three. There is often little or no choice for the Service person or their families in these separations. Their military career will also necessitate directed relocation within the United Kingdom or overseas. There are also the day-to-day realities of Service life, working long or unsociable hours with the associated impact that this can have on the family, such as childcare responsibilities. All of this places considerable additional pressure on Armed Forces' families; this combination of pressures is not faced in almost any other profession. So I remain indebted to Service families for their continued contribution to Defence. I am determined to do everything to make sure they are given the support and recognition they deserve.

**Lt Gen Andrew Gregory, Chief of Defence People**

**January 2016**



# UK ARMED FORCES FAMILIES' STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

## SERVICE FAMILY

- a. Partner Employment
- b. Accommodation
- c. Children's Education and Childcare
- d. Community Support
- e. Specialist Support
- f. Health and Wellbeing
- g. Transition



# TRANSITION & MILITARY FAMILIES

Ashcroft Veterans' Transition Review 2014

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Highlighted difficulties that families have during transition

- Housing
- Schools
- Finances

Recommendations to improve spouse's participation in the process

- Families to be considered during resettlement plans
- Allow access for spouses to education & training material provided to personnel on leaving to aid family preparation
- Families should be able to access transition consultancy service

# GAPS IN THE KNOWLEDGE BASE

Families in transition from military to civilian life

Military mothers

Parents & siblings of Service personnel



# CONCLUDING POINTS

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There is a large community of children from military families

These children can face a range of unique challenges which may impact on their health & wellbeing

***A robust evidence base is needed to develop & deliver effective support & services***



# THANK YOU



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