



Employment Support Guide for Service Spouses and Partners

The UK Armed Forces Families' Strategy, published in January 2016, identifies partner employment as a priority area in which service families would like extra support given the impact that service life can have on partners/spouses employment.

The MOD works with a number of organisations to offer additional support where possible. Through the Armed Forces Covenant employers are being encouraged to utilise the many skills that those within the Service community can offer.

This guide signposts to sources of support that may be helpful to Service spouses and partners who are seeking employment.

The Armed Forces Covenant



The Armed Forces Covenant works to ensure that members of the Armed Forces community, including Veterans and families, have the same access to government and commercial services and products as any other citizen.

This support is provided in a number of areas including:

- education and family well-being
- having a home
- starting a new career
- access to healthcare
- financial assistance
- discounted services

The Armed Forces Covenant website, www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk provides extensive information on all these issues, including employment <https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/support-and-advice/families/>

Further information about support services available is provided on GOV.UK <https://www.gov.uk/topic/defence-armed-forces/support-services-military-defence-personnel-families>

Defence Relationship Management

Defence Relationship Management has increased the number of organisations and employers pledging to support the Armed Forces Covenant to over **1750** (as at July 2017). DRM Account managers encourage employers to review their HR policies to assist spousal and partner employment. A full list of those organisations that have signed the Covenant is at <https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/get-involved/who-has-signed-the-covenant/>

Employment Support Opportunities

The following employment support opportunities are open to Service partners. The list is intended as a guide, is not exhaustive and should not be considered an endorsement by the MOD;

- **Royal British Legion Industries Lifeworks Families** is a free support service to help equip military spouses and partners with the skills and confidence to find employment or develop their career. It is available to all spouses and partners of any serving (or recently discharged) member of the Armed Forces, including Reserves. For further details visit <https://www.wearelifeworks.org.uk/families/> or call 0800 319 6844.
- **Wolverhampton University, Supporting the Unsung Hero** is a free 10 month business start-up course and mentoring programme for the dependents of Service personnel, run by experienced and knowledgeable business advisors <http://www.wlv.ac.uk/study-here/hm-armed-forces/business-start-up-courses/dependants-business-start-up-programme/>. For further details and to register for the Business Start-Up programme contact the Programme Co-ordinator on 01902 322760 or mod-enquiries@wlv.ac.uk (please include a contact telephone number with your enquiry).
- **Recruit for Spouses** is an award-winning independent social enterprise that works to support Service spouses and partners find jobs/start businesses (CV writing, career coaching, workshops etc.) as well as working to promote the value and benefits that employing Service spouses can bring to businesses. <http://www.recruitforspouses.co.uk/>
- **Chartered Management Institute** The MOD Family Membership Scheme is designed to offer a discounted CMI membership rate for the family members of all serving personnel who hold a current CMI

membership package - you can apply online at <http://www.managers.org.uk/mod-membership> or call 0333 220 3132 quoting FAMMOD to claim the discounted rate.

Service Families Federations

The single Service Families Federations have dedicated recruitment and employment pages on their websites for Service partners.

Information on CV writing and interview tips, volunteering, business start- up loans, mentoring and support is also available.

Naval Families Federation (NFF)

<https://nff.org.uk/news/employment/spousal-and-family-employment/>

Army Families Federation (AFF)

http://www.aff.org.uk/army_family_life/employment_training/index.htm

http://www.aff.org.uk/army_family_life/employment_training/job_hunting.htm

RAF Families Federation (RAF FF)

<https://www.raf-ff.org.uk/spouses.asp>

Families in Northern Ireland

FEAT (Families' Employment Advisory Team) is specific to Northern Ireland (contact: tel. 0289266705/02892266008) and provides an option for providing careers advice in person. It provides a support network for spouses/partners wishing to seek employment.

Other Information

The following organisations will assist in finding employment and provide help and support for business start- ups for the Armed Forces Community and families.

- <http://www.theenterprisenetwork.co.uk/component/content/article/2-uncategorised/29-moving-to-civvy-street.html>
- <https://www.sorted.org.uk/Home.aspx>
- <https://www.x-forces.com/>
- <http://forcesenterprisenetwork.co.uk/>

The **Department for Work and Pensions** provides comprehensive information on all aspects of work, benefits and pensions for the spouses and partners of Armed Forces personnel:



The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is responsible for welfare, pensions and child maintenance policy. As the UK's biggest public service department it administers the State Pension and a range of working age, disability and ill health benefits. For more details visit [gov.uk – about us](https://www.gov.uk/about-us).

Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) is the UK's tax and customs authority, responsible for making sure that money is available to fund the UK's public services and for helping families and individuals with targeted financial support. For more details visit [gov.uk – about us](https://www.gov.uk/about-us)

Looking for Work

Searching for jobs couldn't be easier - did you know if you are looking for work, you can type 'search for jobs' or 'Universal Jobmatch' into your chosen search engine, or go to [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) and search for 'jobs' to use the Government's free job board from anywhere in the world!

How to claim

To find out if you are eligible for Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) go to [gov.uk – Jobseeker's Allowance](https://www.gov.uk/jobseekers-allowance)

To find out if you are eligible for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) go to [gov.uk – Employment and Support Allowance](https://www.gov.uk/employment-and-support-allowance)

For more information on all other benefits please visit [gov.uk - Benefits](https://www.gov.uk/benefits).

Universal Credit

Universal Credit is a single monthly payment for people in or out of work, which merges together some of the benefits and tax credits that you might be getting now. Universal Credit is being rolled out in stages, and will replace:

- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Income Support
- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit

To find out if you are eligible for Universal Credit go to [gov.uk - Universal Credit](https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit).

Help with Benefits when you are abroad

You may be able to export your Jobseeker's Allowance as long as you have claimed at least 4 weeks before leaving the UK. Go to [gov.uk – claiming benefits abroad](https://www.gov.uk/claiming-benefits-abroad) to find out more.

National Insurance Credits

Class 1 and Class 3 National Insurance credits are available for Service spouses and civil partners to cover periods where you accompany a member of the Armed Forces posted outside the UK

Visit the [gov.uk – Class1 National Insurance Credits](https://www.gov.uk/class1-national-insurance-credits) and [gov.uk -Class 3 National Insurance Credits](https://www.gov.uk/class3-national-insurance-credits) for more information on how to apply.

Overseas help

For advice or information about pensions and benefits (including Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), Disablement Benefit (DB), Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), Bereavement Benefit or Widows Pension, Incapacity Benefit and Maternity Allowance) go to [International Pension Centre \(IPC\)](https://www.internationalpensioncentre.com)

The EURES website has useful information if you are thinking about working in Europe.

<https://ec.europa.eu/eures/public/en/jobseekers-dashboard>

Tax Credits

For queries relating to Tax Credits you can find more information about these including; Tax Credits, Child Benefit, Working Tax Credits and other Tax related queries go to [gov.uk – tax credits/working abroad](http://gov.uk-tax-credits/working-abroad) or you can speak to an adviser by contacting the office for HM Revenue and Customs.

Jobcentre Plus Armed Forces Champions

The Department for Work and Pensions has an Armed Forces Champion in every Jobcentre Plus District. The Champion is there to make sure that Jobcentre Plus support, advice and guidance reflect the needs of the Service community.

The Champion focuses specifically on the Jobcentre Plus support available to:

- Service leavers;
- Serving personnel currently within their resettlement period; and
- spouses/civil partners of currently serving and ex-Service personnel.

If you are a Service person, a Service family member or a veteran having difficulty in accessing one of the following initiatives, please ask the Jobcentre Plus staff member that you are dealing with to speak to their District Armed Forces Champion.

The role of the Armed Forces Champions is to:

- develop and maintain joint working arrangements between Jobcentre Plus and the Armed Forces community in their District;
- provide information to Jobcentre Plus staff about specific Armed Forces initiatives;
- provide an understanding of the issues the Forces community face that can be a barrier to employment;
- be the first point of contact for Jobcentre Plus staff and Services welfare/families staff to advise on queries regarding individual Armed Forces cases; and
- focus specifically on the Jobcentre Plus support available to Service leavers, those within their resettlement period; and spouses/civil partners of currently serving and ex-Service personnel. Where necessary and appropriate, the Champions will work to put support in place.

The Champions work in partnership with the Armed Forces community and support organisations in their District, as well as local and national employers, to identify work trials, employment opportunities and support for Service leavers and their families. They also work to raise the profile of the Service community in terms of the skills, knowledge and experience they can offer, and working with colleagues to ease some of the barriers to work being faced by Service families.

The Champion will tailor their activities to match the needs of the Armed Forces community in their District. This means some activities may differ from District to District, but the role and responsibilities of the Champion remain the same regardless of location.

The Champions are not customer facing - a Service leaver could not walk into their local Jobcentre Plus office and expect their local Champion to be based in that office. However, the Champions maintain close contact with Jobcentre Work Coaches who will make them aware of Armed Forces issues and raise points directly to the Champion on request of the customer.

Each of the Services has appointed points of contacts who form a link with the relevant Champion(s) within their area. Members of the Service community who wish to bring an issue to the attention of their local Champion can do so via their nominated Service focal point or via their local Jobcentre Plus office.