A guide to help Service families during relationship breakdown
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A guide to help Service families during relationship breakdown

About this Guide

This guide has been prepared to help Service families during a legal relationship\(^1\) breakdown.

It may be helpful to understand that in the UK in 2007, 68% of divorces granted to women and 33% of divorces granted to men were due to behaviour related issues. More than half of the divorces granted involved at least one child under the age of 16.

Remember that tri-Service welfare support is provided free and in confidence by all three Services, in one form or another; Royal Navy, Royal Marines and their families can contact Naval Personnel & Family Service including Royal Marines (NPFS). Army personnel and their families can contact either their Unit Welfare Officer or the Army Welfare Service and personnel from the Royal Air Force and their families can contact the RAF Community Support Services (delivered via SSAFA-FH (under contract)).

The support available can extend to everyone spouse, civil partner\(^2\), partner, mother, father, son or daughter. All have someone to turn to and a list of useful phone numbers and websites are included in this guide at Section 13, so read on and use what you need.

This guide focuses on non-serving spouses and civil partners. However, serving personnel\(^3\) may also find it useful. Not all of the information here will be relevant to everybody - but keep it handy in case you need it later. You could start by writing your serving person’s details down as you

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\(^1\) The term legal relationship used throughout this guide refers to Marriage or Civil Partnership.

\(^2\) UK law recognises same-sex couples who have registered a legally recognised partnership with each other in a civil ceremony in accordance with the Civil Partnership Act 2004. Such couples receive the same eligibility to service allowances as those who are married.
may need them when making a phone call about the relationship breakdown. A space is provided in Section 14.

It is in your best interest to seek support early. Your Service Welfare Officer[^4] could be your first point of contact for most matters. They are trained to provide welfare support and offer a confidential service to serving personnel and their families.

Add their phone number in the rear of the guide. If you do not know who they are you can also use the other numbers at the back of this guide. You are also strongly advised to think about seeking legal representation.

The RAF have a legal team in HQ ALS, Germany who are available to give legal advice on Divorce/}

[^3] Throughout this guide the term serving personnel is used. This is a generic term used to cover officers and non-commissioned ranks, male or female from all of the Services.

[^4] The term Service Welfare Officer is the generic term used throughout this guide. Families and Service personnel should contact their Service representative: RN Naval Personal and Family Services (NPFS) / Royal Marine Welfare (RMW) - Army Unit Welfare Officer (UWO) - RAF OC Personnel Management Services (PMS) / SSAFA-FH

[^5] Dissolution and HQ Army Legal Assistance (ALA) are based at Bielefeld and provide free legal advice and assistance to all Service personnel and their families and entitled civilians world wide, outside of the UK.

Contact details for ALS:
Army Legal Assistance (HQ ALA)
Rochdale Barracks
Bielefeld
BFPO 39

Tel: 0521 9254-3191/3196
Mil:81-3191/3196
Fax Ext: 3115
email: justita5@bfqnet.de
A guide to help Service families during relationship breakdown
Making Relationships Stronger

Some families may find it useful to seek assistance in making their relationships stronger in order to avoid/reduce the likelihood of relationship breakdown. Advice can be sought from Service Welfare Staff or from the following organisations, booklets and courses to assist couples strengthen their relationship, these include:

**Moving Forward Together**
website: www.lcd.uk
Email: family.policy@lcdhq.gsi.uk
Tel: 020 7210 0726

**The Marriage Course**
website: www.themarriagecourse.org
Tel: 01380 831264 or 07721 651828

**Civil Partnerships**
information is available from Stonewall:
www.stonewall.org.uk

**Solutions** is provided under the Services umbrella to Service personnel, their dependants and entitled civilians assigned to Cyprus who have relationship difficulties. Appointments are via a central appointment booking scheme by telephone: (2596) Mil: 3318

**Relate BFG** the relate service is provided for anybody eligible within the BFG community experiencing relationship difficulties, there is also a Telephone Counselling service.
Tel: 021614722826 Mil: 72 2826
Email: relate.director@bfgnet.de

**Staff Care (NI)** provide a relationship counselling service to all serving personnel and their partners. Partners do not have to be married to use this service. Staff care provide a secure and confidential service, booking can be made through the Personal Welfare Service Co-ordinators Office at HQ NI.
Tel: 02892 266008 or Mil ext: 66008
A guide to help Service families during relationship breakdown
Opportunities for Reconciliation

Where individuals experience relationship difficulties they can seek support either individually or as a couple. Your nominated local Service Welfare Officer could be your first point of contact.

If you are in England you can also seek support and assistance through your Local Authorities or the equivalent authorities in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland who normally provide a range of educational, health, social and welfare support. In addition, the Services complement this with their own professional welfare support organisation. There are also many organisations, Service and voluntary, offering advice, assistance and financial support to serving personnel, spouses, civil partners and their children experiencing relationship difficulties.

Where a Service family is living in Service Families Accommodation (SFA) and experiencing relationship problems, an authorised person⁵ may give permission for a Reconciliation Period of up to 93 days. In these circumstances, a serving person, spouse or civil partner, may approach the Services Welfare Staff in confidence to request a Reconciliation Period.

The aim of the Reconciliation Period is to enable both parties to benefit from a short period apart but collocated to assist with reducing immediate stress or tension in the relationship within the family home. It provides space for both parties to think and work things out while still being close enough to communicate daily and maintain family contact on a regular basis.

When authorised, this enables the serving person to move into Single Living Accommodation (SLA) for a period of up to a maximum of 93 days whilst the other family members remain in the Service Families Accommodation (SFA). This will allow both parties the opportunity to seek reconciliation assistance, if required, from welfare staff or relationship support organisations.

⁵ In the RN, Army and the RAF this will be the Commanding Officer.
During this time the serving person will continue to pay SFA accommodation charges and the couple, supported by Services Welfare Staff, have an opportunity to reconcile if they wish to.

On assignments in Germany and Northern Ireland the Services normally provide access to formal counselling support at public expense. A counsellor can help couples who want to work on their relationship. They are professionally trained, though some offer their time voluntarily. All are trained to listen and help couples work out their relationship problems. Counsellors don’t negotiate for you or tell you what to do.

Family support provides counselling for the whole family. It deals with problems and may prevent a relationship breaking down and families splitting up. Tackling problems early is important to save relationships.

Counselling can also help families deal with the emotional stress that separation, divorce or dissolution can bring. Working things out through counselling may help family decisions and long-term relationships after the divorce or dissolution.

In the UK, where counselling support is more readily available, individuals or couples should seek advice from their Service Welfare Staff to establish what counselling support they can access. Those seeking private counselling support from non-Service sources are normally expected to fund it themselves. In some cases Service support may be available at public expense for a programme of counselling, seek advice from your Service Welfare Staff. A list of organisations that can assist can be found in Section 12 of this guide.
Ending a Legal Relationship in the Services

As soon as it becomes apparent that reconciliation is not possible, and the couple have decided that the relationship has irrevocably broken down, then the Service person must notify their unit/ship/station in order that their Personal Status Category (PStat Cat) can be changed.

A change to PStat Cat should only take place once it has been authorised. Prior to a change being authorised, both members of the legal relationship should have explained to them by Service welfare staff what impact this may have on their continued eligibility to SFA and other Service financial allowances/benefits.

Service Families Accommodation (SFA)
SFA is provided to serving personnel as part of their conditions of service, normally where they are married or in a civil partnership. SFA is also provided where a serving person is single and has taken on full time legal responsibility for the care of any children.

Once the PStat Cat has been changed, the couple is regarded as being estranged and normal eligibility to SFA ceases.

The second 93 day period known as (notice to vacate) will then commence.

At this estrangement stage, the Service person normally moves into SLA and they continue to be responsible for paying the SFA accommodation charges for up to 93 days from the date of the change of PStat Cat. This date cannot be backdated.

The Local Service Commander will then notify the local Defence Estates Operations Housing organisation (DE Ops Housing) of the change in circumstances. DE Ops Housing then issue the estranged family remaining in the SFA with a 93 days Notice to Vacate letter. This is part of the formal legal process that the Ministry of Defence takes to commence repossession of the property.

Using the 93 Day (notice to vacate) Period
The purpose of allowing a family to remain in SFA for a further 93 day (notice to vacate) period, is to allow them time to seek alternative accommodation and to plan their move and transition back to civilian life.

During this period only the accommodation charges are paid for by the Service person. The family remaining in the SFA normally become responsible for Gas, Electricity and Telephone Bills, along with any damage done to the SFA during this period.

Leaving SFA at the end of the 93 day (notice to vacate) period
If families fail to vacate SFA at the end of the 93 days, DE Ops Housing in conjunction with the local Service Commander, will be required to take legal action to repossess the property, particularly if it is required for Service reasons. A brief explanation of the process is as follows:

- Within 7 days of expiry of the 93 day (notice to vacate) period, DE Ops Housing will

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6 In the RN and Army this is authorised by the Commanding Officer, in the RAF by OC PMS.
inspect the property and explain the legal process to you along with any re-housing options.

- Approval may then be sought to commence legal action. Once approved, you will be advised in writing that legal action is commencing. If an order for possession is granted, it is up to a Court of Law to determine the details, including the date by which you must leave the SFA.

- Should you still remain in the SFA after the date set by the court, DE Housing Operations will seek authorisation to apply for an eviction warrant (called Enforcement of a Decree of Ejection in Scotland).

- If approval to obtain a warrant is given, DE Ops Housing will instruct the County Court Bailiff to arrange for a date of eviction and you will be notified of this by letter. When the eviction date is received, you will be informed and, at the same time, the Local Housing Authority will be informed that the eviction is to take place on a certain date.

- On the day of the eviction the County Court Bailiff and a DE Ops Housing representative will attend. By prior agreement, a Service welfare representative may be on hand to give assistance to you, if you so wish.

- A final statement of outstanding charges will be raised within 5 days of the eviction and this will be sent by recorded delivery to your forwarding address.

### Financial Support

At this stage, financial support for the family normally remains the responsibility of the Service person. This should be mutually agreed between couples, whilst any Child Support Agency (CSA) assessment or Department for Work and Pension claims are processed.

The Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission (CMEC) is a new Non-Departmental Public Body established to take responsibility for the child maintenance system in Great Britain. [www.childmaintenance.org](http://www.childmaintenance.org)

Families are able to request that alleged cases of lack of financial support are investigated.

If families remain in SFA after the end of the 93 day (notice to vacate) period they become ‘irregular occupants’ and are responsible for payment of all charges. The rent paid for the SFA is called ‘Damages for Trespass’ (Violent Profits in Scotland) the rate of which will be set locally, similar to that charged for social housing.

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7 Now within the new Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission (CMEC)
8 In the RN this will be the Commanding Officer via NPFS/RMW, in the Army this will be the Commanding Officer through Service welfare staff. RAF through OC PMS.
Children

Divorce, dissolution or separation is a difficult time for all the family and any children can become very involved emotionally and may not understand what is happening to the parents they love.

Children of different ages will have different levels of awareness; older children will have lots of concerns - talk to them as they will need your reassurance.

You may not want to tell them everything in detail, you will know best what they need to know, but do take their needs into consideration. When you are talking to your children, tell them what is happening to their family, it’s better for them to know. They may not wish to be involved in making decisions, but most children will still want to feel they are being listened to.

Encourage them to ask questions and try to give them honest and reassuring answers, but if something is not yet decided, then say so and reassure them that you will tell them as soon as you can. They may have concerns about not living with both parents, not being able to see one parent very often, where they will be living, perhaps a change of school, moving out of the area and losing contact with their friends. All the things that you will probably be already thinking about yourself, so let them know you understand that they may have worries.

National Children’s Home (NCH)
The NCH have a website that has information for children, young people and parents who are dealing with a family break-up, written for children to help them better understand the reasons for and implications of a relationship breakdown.
www.itsnotyourfault.org

Education
If your child(ren) are of school age, and particularly if they are at a critical stage of their education, you may wish to discuss options with their teacher, especially when considering either alternative schools or if moving within or back to the UK. You should also consider discussing the situation with the Children’s Education Advisory
Service for advice on these issues. Contact details are at Section 12.

**Service Parenting or Carers Responsibilities**
The Services have a vested interest in helping serving personnel manage the needs of their employment with their family life. However, serving personnel who are parents or carers must be available for deployment at any time.

Serving personnel with care responsibilities have a personal responsibility for ensuring that they have care arrangements in place, for their child(ren) or relatives for whom they have care responsibility. This should cover any absence, including deployment or if the relationship they rely on for sharing their care provision breaks down.

It will help you if you make clear, well-planned and agreed care arrangements well in advance of any known deployments. You can get advice and support from the Service Welfare Staff.

During a relationship breakdown, if any children are to be left in the care of someone who is not a close relative, for a period of over 28 days you should be aware that there are legal requirements to notify the Local Authorities to ensure the child receives the best possible care. Your Service Welfare Staff or your Local Authority Children Services department will be able to provide you with more advice.

**Finally** Seek advice if you think that your child(ren) need help to deal with their issues. Consider talking to a teacher, your health visitor or GP, or speak to one of the welfare agencies listed in this guide (Section 12).
Legal Matters

Sources of Advice
During a relationship breakdown a priority is to find somewhere to live and ensure that you have sufficient financial support. In addition you are strongly advised to consider seeking legal advice from a solicitor so you understand your rights on:
- Separation
- Divorce/Dissolution proceedings
- Arrangements for the children
- Arrangements for private property
- Financial Support.

In the UK some individuals may be able to get free legal help if they can’t afford it. Community Legal Advice offer this service through legal advisers and solicitors. Details are at Section 12 of this guide.

In the UK, Service Welfare Staff, HIVE or your local Citizens’ Advice Bureau should also be able to signpost you to sources of legal advice.

Those on accompanied assignments overseas are normally able to access legal advice through locally based Armed Forces Legal Services.

Contact your Service Welfare Staff for more information.

Mediation
If you wish to avoid ending up in court with your spouse or civil partner, there are alternatives. If you are thinking about divorce, civil partnership dissolution or splitting up with your partner, mediation may help you reach agreement on issues such as your children’s care and splitting property and finances. You can ask a trained mediator to act as an impartial third party; they will help you come to an agreement without bias. You can find mediation services in your area by calling the Family Mediation Helpline on 0845 60 26 627, or by visiting the Family Mediation Helpline website: www.familymediationhelpline.com

Divorce/Dissolution
The process of divorce after marriage (or in the case of civil partnership/dissolution) and sources of support and assistance are described in detail on the Directgov.co.uk website, details of which are at Section 12 of this guide.
You may apply for maintenance for you and/or your children, for personal maintenance (regular payments for a given period of time), or a “Clean Break” settlement. Applications are made to the County Court or High Court. “Clean Break’s” are normally awarded as a lump sum in full and final settlement of all obligations. Clean breaks are normally taken because the individuals no longer want to be dependant on someone with whom they no longer wish to be in a relationship. Maintenance for children is normally made by applying to the Child Support Agency (CSA). More detail on the CSA is in the money matters section (Section 8).

If you have children The terms ‘custody’ and ‘access’ are no longer used officially or legally to describe which parent the child or children live with and how often the other parents sees them. The term ‘parental responsibility’ is the legal term used to describe all the rights and duties that parents have towards their children.

You do not lose parental responsibility if you get divorced. You will carry on being the children’s full legal parent, whether or not the children live with you.

The court expects you and your partner to agree where the children will live (residence) and how you will arrange to see them (contact). If you can do this between you, there is no need for a court order. If you can’t decide which parent the children should live with (residence) or how often they should see the non-resident parent (contact), then you should think about seeking mediation. If mediation is not suitable than either of you can apply for a court order under Section 8 of the Children Act 1989.

More information and useful support guides are available from:
Divorce and Separation
www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk

Living Together Breaking Up Checklist
www.advicenow.org.uk

Family Mediation - We’re Splitting Up
www.advicenow.org.uk/familymediation

Advice Now Guides - Parents Apart
www.advicenow.org.uk/advicenow-guides/family/parents-apart/

The House
If you own a house check to see if the title deed has your name on it. If not, register a matrimonial restriction so the house cannot be re-mortgaged or sold without your knowledge. A solicitor can help you with this.

If you are planning on leaving the house prior to the end of the 93 days without an order of possession in place you are advised to seek legal advice. This is to ensure you are without prejudice for eligibility to Housing Assistance from a local authority by intentionally making yourself and your family homeless.
Arrangements for leaving SFA Accommodation

If you are in SFA and have decided to separate, for family stability it is essential that you find alternative accommodation, so use the 93 day notification to vacate period to do this.

The whole emphasis on housing and only staying in SFA for 93 days is quite daunting - 93 days sounds a long time but if you’re emotionally upset you tend to put things off.

This needs planning in advance so it is essential that you start looking as quickly as possible.

It is recommended that you seek advice and assistance from the local housing authority in the area where you wish to live, as soon as possible. In Northern Ireland you should seek help from the Housing Executive.

You may wish to consider applying for social housing but in most areas there will be a waiting list. If alternative accommodation is not immediately available for you, you will be entitled to advice and assistance under the homelessness legislation. If you have a dependent child(ren) (or you or a household member are vulnerable for some reason) the local authority (or Housing Executive) may have a duty to secure suitable accommodation for you. These duties are slightly different in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Certificate of Cessation of Entitlement to Occupy a Service Families Quarter and of Impending Homelessness
(Issued by the HIC licensing branch).
If you are applying to a local authority or housing association for accommodation it is recommended that you send them a copy of the Certificate of Cessation of Entitlement to occupy, completed and signed by your local DE Ops Housing and issued by the HIC licensing branch, which shows that you will have to leave your Service Families Accommodation. For more information you should contact the Joint Services Housing Advice Office (JSHAO). They can also provide advice on future accommodation arrangements, contact:
JSHAO, Erskine Barracks, Wilton, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP2 0AG
Tel: 01722 43 6575
Fax: 01722 43 6577 www.army.mod.uk/jshao

Further information about seeking accommodation, legal advice and money matters...
A guide to help Service families during relationship breakdown

along with sources of support can be found at Section 12 in this guide and should be used to assist in planning the move of the estranged family from SFA back to civilian life.

Alternative accommodation
Short-term arrangements could include:

- Staying with relatives or Friends. However be aware, if you are living in SFA and leave before DE Ops Housing proceed with the legal action at the expiry of the 93 day notice to vacate period, and you plan to seek help from a Local Housing Authority, the authority may decide that you have made yourself and your family ‘intentionally homeless’. This could affect your entitlement to be secured accommodation by the authority - so check with the authority first.

- The Services Cotswold Centre in Corsham, Wiltshire, provides short-term accommodation for eligible families. Contact your Services Welfare Staff for more information.

- SSAFA-FH Stepping Stones Homes, offer temporary supported accommodation to separated Service and ex-Service families, and also support and provide assistance in finding a permanent home.

- Applying for surplus SFA in the UK. You may apply for a short term SFA occupation at a location close to where you want to settle in the UK. Contact your Service Welfare Staff for more information.

Alternative accommodation
Long-term arrangements could include:

- Buying your own property (including through shared ownership schemes)
- Local Authority Accommodation (social housing)
- Housing Association Accommodation (social housing)
- Private Rented Accommodation (living in private rented accommodation could remove all duty from the Local Authority to find you a home).
**Money Matters**

**First Steps**
You should gather as much information as you can on your financial situation. This should include any savings and insurance, any other payments (tax) or cash receipts, what you owe and payments that you make on a regular basis e.g. Direct Debit or Standing Order payments via your bank account. If you don’t already have one, you could also consider opening up a bank account in your own name.

**Financial Support**
One of the most immediate needs after a break up will be ensuring your financial affairs are clear for you and any children, by drawing up a budget. Even if you are in employment, you may be eligible for financial assistance from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). Information required for housing benefit will be issued at least 4 weeks prior to the new rate coming into effect. If you have queries relating to housing benefit you should contact your Local Authorities directly or Jobcentre Plus who will tell you if you are able to claim any DWP benefits in order to top up your income and/or maintenance you are receiving.

Your area Housing Information Centre (HIC), may be able to provide the information required to assist you with the completion of your benefit forms, or if you are in the UK you could contact your nearest Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) who can also advise on these matters.

You should not delay in submitting your benefit claims as these are not backdated and are only paid from the date of registration of the application.

**Moving to your Future Accommodation**
Those on accompanied service overseas will normally be moved back to the UK at public expense along with their personal effects. Those in the UK may have their personal effects moved at public expense from SFA to a final address in the UK, contact your Service Welfare Staff for details. Additional support can be requested from non-public funds through Service Welfare Staff or direct to a Service charity.

Details are at Section 12 of this guide.
The CMEC is responsible for the assessment, collection, payment and enforcement of child support maintenance. It will become involved in a child support case when requested to do so by either parent because agreement cannot be reached on the amount of voluntary child maintenance, or if the parent with care requests DWP support. You should note that both parents have a legal responsibility to support their children if they can afford to do so.

The CMEC uses the following terms:

- **Parents with Care** - those parents with whom the children live.

- **Absent Parents** or Non-Resident Parent (NRP) - those with whom the children do not live.

Any ‘Parent with Care’ who is not already receiving maintenance can apply at any time for an assessment. The formula used by the
Agency is based on a specific sum that has been calculated as being needed for each child, plus a sum for lone parents and another sum for family expenses. The Child Benefit you receive is then deducted from the total, and the remainder is the amount the ‘Parent with Care’ should receive each week. Further advice regarding deductions from net pay is available from the CMEC website: www.csa.gov.uk

If individuals do not agree with the level of the assessment made, they may have the right to appeal to the Child Support Tribunal within 28 days from receipt of the assessment.

The Child Maintenance & Enforcement Commission Helpline number is 08457 133133, in the UK or for Service families overseas: +44 (0) 151 227 2274.

Do not be afraid to contact the CMEC if you need further advice or information and ensure that you are very careful when filling in their various forms as errors can delay or cause incorrect payment. If the ‘Absent Parent’ consistently fails to meet their financial responsibilities in respect of their children, the CMEC may make a Deduction from Earnings Request (DER) against the serving person. The CMEC has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Ministry of Defence, and all orders are made under the relevant Service Act.

Pensions
In legal proceedings begun on or after 1 Dec 2000, courts have the option of making pension sharing orders on civil partnership, divorce or dissolution. This allows pension rights to be treated like other assets and part of the value is transferred from the pension member to the former spouse or civil partner. When such an order is made, the former spouse or civil partner is given pension credit rights. These will be payable when they reach pension age.

The Armed Forces Pension Scheme (AFPS) is a non-contributory public pension scheme. There is no opportunity to transfer pension credit rights out of the AFPS into other pension arrangements. Further advice should be sought from a qualified
legal advisor. Different processes take place under Scottish law and you should seek qualified legal advice in such cases.

You can access a booklet titled Pension Benefits on Divorce via the internet at: www.mod.uk/issues/pensions

**Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA)**

Normally CEA can only be claimed for the term following estrangement. However, if any of a serving person’s children for whom CEA is already being provided are within 2 years of taking GCSE or A-Level examinations or equivalent at the time of the estrangement, CEA may be continued up to and including the term in which the examination is taken for that child(ren) only, so long as the serving sailor/soldier/airman continues to be eligible for CEA in all other respects. A serving person in these circumstances, who continues to receive CEA to enable completion of GCSE examinations, will not have a further entitlement for A-Level studies for the same child. You should seek advice from Service Welfare Staff, CEAS or your serving person’s HR admin staff in the first instance. The serving spouse will be required to submit supporting evidence from the school for consideration and authorisation.

**Managing Debt**

If you have difficulties with debt, admitting that you are struggling and seeking help are important first steps towards resolving your debt problems. Don’t be embarrassed or ashamed to disclose all your debts and financial difficulties because ignoring the problem and not replying to correspondence will only make things worse. Your problems will not go away without specific remedial action.

You are advised to use free specialist advice (avoid commercial debt management companies advertised in the media). Local Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and the CAB website provide useful advice and support. Unit welfare staff and HIVE can offer signposting advice and the Consumer Credit Counselling Service Debt Helpline (0800) 138 1111 also has a useful website www.cccs.co.uk
Domestic Abuse

In some circumstances, a relationship breakdown may involve domestic abuse. The UK has laws to prevent ‘Domestic Abuse’ and the MoD has a policy of zero tolerance in place to support those who suffer from it. Domestic abuse may occur when anyone is violent towards their partner whether man or woman, married or living together and they can be prosecuted for a serious offence such as assault or grievous bodily harm. Abuse includes emotional abuse such as constantly belittling your partner or denying them money as a form of control. Domestic abuse may also include behaviour that impacts on a child(ren).

In an emergency, seek support from the Civil or Service police. In the UK there is a free phone 24-hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline run in partnership between Women’s Aid and Refuge which can be contacted on 0808 2000 247. The Service Welfare organisations can also provide a confidential support service and offer advice and signposting to other agencies such as Local Authority Specialist, Victim Support or Respect. Further information is also available in the Women’s Aid Survivors Handbook, details in Section 12.

Those subject to immigration control are advised to seek qualified immigration advice and contact the Immigration Enquiries Bureau (IEB).

Opening hours are:
Monday - Thursday 09:00 to 14:45 hrs (4.45pm) and on Friday 09:00 to 14:30 (4.30pm)
Tel: 0870 606 7766
Service welfare support for non-British spouses or civil partners is provided in the same way as for UK citizens.

For non-British citizens subject to immigration control the significant difference from a UK citizen, is that ‘Leave to Remain’ in the UK is normally linked to the serving spouse’s immigration status including, in some cases, eligibility to allowances and benefits. When their current period of Leave to Remain expires, the estranged spouse and family may find themselves without permission to stay in the UK, with no recourse to public funds or the right to work.

The serving person remains responsible for providing financial support for their estranged family. In cases of estrangement during an accompanied assignment overseas, individuals should seek advice from unit or Service Welfare Staff in the first instance. Normally on formal change of Personal Status Category (PStat Cat) on the Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) system, units notify the UK Border Agency in writing of the change of status.

Those subject to immigration control should ensure that:

- By the end of the 93 days’ Notice to Vacate period they have sufficient means of support and accommodation if they are not planning to leave the UK.
- If they plan to remain in the UK after their current period of Leave to Remain, they must make an application for Further Leave to Remain before their current Leave to Remain expires or else depart from the UK.
- They seek qualified immigration advice if they are concerned about their immigration status.
- They seek CAB/JobCentrePlus advice about their eligibility to UK state benefits and support.
- They seek advice from JSHAO or Local Authority Housing Advice Centre about their eligibility for housing support.

Advice can also be sought from:
Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC). Tel: 020 7211 1500  
www.oisc.gov.uk

Immigration Advisory Service  
www.iasuk.org

UK Borders Agency Tel: 0870 606 7766  
www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk

To check entitlement to UK State Benefits and Allowances you should contact JobcentrePlus  
Tel: 0800 556688 website:  
www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)  
Contact your local CAB office  
www.adviceguide.org.uk  
or  
DWP Tel: 0800 882200  
www.dwp.gov.uk

Housing Advice:  
Your Local Authority  
and/or  
Joint Service Housing Advice Office (JSHAO)  
Tel: 01722 436575  
www.army.mod.uk/jshao
A guide to help Service families during relationship breakdown
**After the Divorce/Dissolution**

**Parental Responsibility** This is the legal term that describes all the rights and duties parents have towards their children. It gives you the right to agree to the medical treatment for your child, to choose which religion they are brought up in or to choose the school that they attend.

You do not lose parental responsibility if you get divorced. You will carry on being the child(ren)'s full legal parent, whether or not the child(ren) live with you.

**Contact** This is the legal term now used to describe ‘access’. This is when, where and for how long the chid(ren) will see or communicate with the non-resident parent (the parent they don’t live with) or another adult (such as a grandparent). Contact can include phone calls and letters/presents (indirect contact) as well as visits and overnight stays (staying contact).

**Residence** This is the term now used for ‘custody’. This indicates where the child(ren) will live and who they will live with after the divorce.

**Children and Access when the Serving Parent is Assigned Overseas** These arrangements should be discussed and agreed as part of the contact arrangements before the divorce/dissolution. If you and your partner can’t decide or agree, you should think about seeking advice through a mediation service, the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) or from your solicitor.

If, however, you are unable to decide this and mediation is not suitable, you can apply to the court for an order. You can do this whether or not you have already started divorce/dissolution proceedings. There are two helpful leaflets about court proceedings and children available from the Court Service website: www.hmcourts-service.gov.uk

**Resolution** The association of specialist family solicitors: www.resolution.org.uk

**CAFCASS** the organisation that looks after children’s interests in family court proceedings: www.cafcass.gov.uk

**Accommodation Arrangements for Single Service Personnel, Maintaining Contact with Children**

After divorce, many Service personnel find that they return to Single Living Accommodation (SLA). This may be within single block or Mess accommodation and is not a suitable environment for children to stay during contact periods.

Housing alternatives that may be appropriate for Service parents who have children and contact rights after divorce/dissolution include:

- Use of a Service Contact/Welfare House - Available at most camps/units/bases
- Eligibility for SFA Single Service personnel can apply for SFA but only on a surplus basis
- Private Accommodation Arrangements

You can contact your Service Welfare Officer if you require any assistance.
A guide to help Service families during relationship breakdown
Sources of Support

Who you can turn to for Help

Your local Service Welfare Office should be your first point of contact, details are in this section. In addition, there are many organisations, Service and voluntary, offering advice, assistance and financial support to serving personnel, their spouse/civil partner and/or their children. These are also listed in alphabetical order in this section.

Publicly Funded Service Sources of Support

Army Welfare Service (AWS) The AWS provides free professional and confidential welfare support for Army personnel and their families wherever they are located. For welfare enquiries contact The Army Welfare Information Service, HQ Land Forces, Louisburg Block, Erskine Barracks, Wilton, Salisbury SP2 0AG.
Tel: 01722 436569
Fax: 01722 436307 or email: awis@hqland.army.mod.uk
Website: welfare/supportagencies/aws/index.htm

Children’s Education Advisory Service (CEAS) The CEAS provide free guidance to families on schools, special educational needs and MoD educational allowances.
Tel: 01980 618244
Website: www.ceas.mod.uk

Confidential Support Line (CSL) The CSL is a free-phone help-line run under contract by SSAFA-FH for Service personnel and their families. It offers totally confidential, non-judgmental, guidance to the Service community, from anywhere in the world. The line operates 7 days a week from 1030 to 2230 hrs (local UK time). Any vulnerable Service person or family member phoning (writing or emailing) the trained civilian support staff of the CSL receive guidance as to what their options are. The Service person/family member must then make their own decision as to how to progress the issues raised.
The CSL may be contacted:
• From UK 0800 731 4880
• From Germany 08001827 395
A guide to help Service families during relationship breakdown

- From Cyprus 800 91065
- From the Falklands Islands # 6111
- From anywhere in the world +44[0] 1980 630854 and the support staff will phone back.

Website via www.ssafa.org.uk

**Debt Advice** Use free specialist advice (avoid commercial debt management companies that you see advertised in the media). HIVE offer signposting advice and the Consumer Credit Counselling Service Debt Helpline (0800) 138 1111 also has a useful

Website: www.cccs.co.uk

**Defence Estates Housing Operations** Responsible for housing, telephone contact is through the Housing Information Centre 0800 169 6322

Website: www.defence-estates.mod.uk

**HIVE** The HIVE information centres provide free help, information and signpost you to professional agencies. Their core function is the provision of information – virtually anything from bus times to “confidential welfare signposting”. This means that although they can’t sort out all your problems for you, HIVE information officers can point you towards the best sources of advice and assistance across both military and civilian organisations. HIVE information centres can give you practical assistance in sending e-blueys and messaging through the British Forces Broadcasting Service (BFBS) and in some cases free internet access.

Tel: 01722 4364980 or HIVE online

Website: www.hive.mod.uk
Joint Service Housing Advice Office (JSHAO) The JSHAO provides a central contact point for free information and advice on Council and Housing Association accommodation, shared ownership and house purchase in the UK. JSHAO can also advise on the methodology of re-housing. Service personnel and their dependants can use the service, as can separated partners occupying SFA. For more information about re-housing options contact them.
Tel: 01722 436575
www.army.mod.uk/jshao/

Naval Personal and Families Service The purpose of NPFS is to support the Royal Navy, its personnel and their families in peacetime and war by helping prevent or reduce the effects of personal difficulties especially those which arise as a result of Service life. NPFS offers directly, or with other agencies, advice, counselling support (practical and emotional) and advocacy (contacting officials) on behalf of clients. NPFS staff may be Service or civilian, male or female and from a variety of specialisations including social work, counselling, community development and youth development. An understanding of the complexities of Service life and its effects are central to the understanding and ethos of the agency. Telephone numbers for your local NPFS can be found from their website at www.rncom.mod.uk

Pastoral Care The Service Chaplains provide spiritual leadership, moral guidance and pastoral support to Service personnel and their families irrespective of their religion or belief. To contact your local chaplain or padre use the details in your local Service Community guide or ask at the HIVE.

RAF Social Work Support Service SSAFA-Forces Help RAF (UK) provides RAF personnel and their families with a professional social work support service offering an all-embracing service to
the RAF Community out with the normal chain of command. The service’s staff includes fully trained social workers and Personal Family Support Workers who are able to deal with a broad range of social support issues within the Service environment in a confidential manner. The service is a vital means of ensuring that RAF personnel and their families are not disadvantaged and, more importantly, that they are properly supported by a professional, sympathetic and confidential service.

Tel: 0845 1300 975
Email: info@ssafa.org.uk

**Royal Marines Welfare**

Royal Marines Welfare has offices at every main Royal Marines establishment, these are open weekdays. Each unit has 1 or 2 workers based in a Welfare Office, which deals with that Unit’s personnel and their families. In addition there is also an out of hours system for emergencies. The guardroom of each unit will be able to call the duty Welfare worker should you need urgent help. Telephone numbers for local RMW can be found from the Website: [www.rncom.mod.uk](http://www.rncom.mod.uk)

**Service Children’s Education (SCE)**

If your child is at an SCE school overseas and if you are worried about how your child may be coping, it is often a good idea to talk with your child’s teacher or seek advice about further forms of support. Service Children's Education has its own team of child psychologists and social workers who form part of the Pupil and Family Services Directorate. You may contact them directly for confidential advice at a centre near you in Germany or Cyprus.

If you require information about the service provided by the Pupil and Family Services Directorate please contact their administrative support staff on:

Civilian: 00 49 (0) 2161 908 2256 or 00 49 (0) 2161 908 2265
Military: 94867 - 2256 or 94867 - 265
Address: Pupil and Family Services
Headquarters Service Children’s Education
Wegberg Military Complex
BFPO 40

**Services Cotswolds Centre Corsham (SCCC)** This MOD funded short term transit accommodation facility is mid way between Bath and Chippenham, just off the M4 outside Corsham, Wiltshire. The Centre provides temporary housing for families of serving personnel from all three Services. Whether you are in transit between assignments, retiring, have welfare housing issues or have been the subject of emergency evacuation from overseas, the Centre offers a secure, comfortable and affordable place to stay. In the case of estranged families and those leaving the Services, the family should include at least one child. The accommodation consists of sixty single storey, centrally-heated, three bedroom chalets and converted flatlets. All are self-catering, fully furnished and include cooking utensils, freezer, fridge, cutlery, crockery, bedding and towels.
Tel: 01225 810358
Website: [www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/DefenceForServiceCommunityTheServicesCotswoldCentre.htm](http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/DefenceForServiceCommunityTheServicesCotswoldCentre.htm)

**Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (SPVA)** This is the single point of contact within the MoD for providing information and advice on personnel administration, pay, allowances, pensions and compensation for serving personnel, veterans and their families. Pay and Pension Enquiry Service, advice given to third parties may be limited - contact number normal opening hours:
Monday - Friday 0700 - 1900
Tel: 0141 224 3600 Freephone: 0800 085 3600
E-mail: JPAC@spva.mod.uk
Veterans Welfare Service. The VWS supports all those who have served in the UK Armed Forces and includes their widow(er)s and dependants. There is no minimum length of service required and there is no requirement to have been on active service in order to be considered a veteran. Callers to the Helpline can receive advice on a wide range of subjects such as welfare issues, War Pensions, Armed Forces Compensation Scheme, Service records, medals and military graves.
Free Helpline 0800 169 2277, Textphone 0800 169 3458
Telephone Number (Overseas) +44 1253 866043
Email: veterans.help@spva.gsi.gov.uk
Website: www.veterans-uk.info

Children's Support
ChildLine ChildLine is the free helpline for children and young people in the UK. If you are a child or young person needing help, please call the free 24-hour helpline on 0800 1111. Lines can be busy but please keep trying and you will get through.
Website: www.childline.org.uk

NCH NCH was founded in 1869 and known for many years as the National Children’s Home. It is now known as NCH, the children’s charity. This is one of the UK’s leading children’s charities, helping children achieve their full potential. NCH provide a website with practical information for children, young people and parents going through a family break-up.
Website: www.itsnotyourfault.org

Forces Additional Needs and Disability Forum (FANDF) FANDF exists with support from SSAFA-FH, to keep Service families with disabled and additional needs dependants (children and adults) in touch with issues that affect them both inside and outside of Service life; FANDF produces
newsletters and holds meetings. For more information ring the fully qualified and experienced additional needs advisor who is able to provide guidance and advice on any disability or additional needs matter.
Tel: 0102 4639234
Website: www.ssafa.org.uk

**Child Maintenance & Enforcement Commission (CMEC)** The CMEC calculates and collects child maintenance from the parent who is not the main day-to-day carer of their child (the absent or non-resident parent) and makes sure that it is paid to the parent or person who is the main day-to-day carer of the child (the Parent with Care). It is part of the DWP.
Tel: 08457 133 133
Website: www.childmaintenance.org or www.csa.gov.uk

**Community Legal Advice (England and Wales)** Community Legal Advice is the new name for Community Legal Service Direct. You can use their website to:
- learn more about them and how they can help you
- read free information leaflets
- see if you qualify for legal aid
- get free impartial debt advice using their debt management tool

To request a call back from the Community Legal Advice simply text 'legalaid' and your name to 80010 and they will call you back within 24 hours.
Tel: 0845 345 4 345
Website: www.clsdirect.org.uk or www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk
**Connexions** This organisation supports teenagers aged 13-19 years, and can help teenagers to deal with all sorts of problems. Counselling can also be arranged through Connexions if necessary.
Tel: 08080013219
Website: www.connexions-direct.com

**Debt Support**

**Consumer Credit Counselling Service** Through its free national telephone service, ten regional centres and also online service CCCS Debt Remedy is able to help people with debt problems wherever they live. Based on a proven and successful formula, the specialist advisory service has already helped thousands of people in the UK by providing counselling on personal budgeting, advice on the wise use of credit and, where appropriate, managing achievable plans to repay debts.
FREEPHONE 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday Tel: 0800138111
Website: www.cccs.co.uk

**National Debtline** This is a national telephone helpline for people with debt problems in England, Wales and Scotland. The service is free, confidential and independent. National Debtline is committed to answering your call and then discussing your debt problems with you and the options available to you. The specialist advice that they give over the telephone is backed up with written self-help materials which they can send out for free. If your circumstances meet certain criteria, they can, if you are interested, assist in setting up a free Debt Management Plan for you.
Tel: 0808 808 400
Website: www.nationaldebtline.co.uk
Other Sources of Support

Advice Now Advice Now is the Citizens Advice Bureau independent website providing information on rights and legal issues. Visit the website: www.advicenow.org.uk

Army Benevolent Fund (ABF) The ABF is the Army’s leading charity and helps fund many other charities and organizations that operate either directly or indirectly in support of the Service family, children, the elderly, the disabled and those seeking employment. It works in partnership or close co-operation with Regimental and Corps Associations and charities to which it is normally best to direct enquiries in the first instance. It has provided support to such organizations as the AFF, RELATE, SSAFA-FH in supporting Serving soldiers, veterans and their families who are in need.
Tel: 0207-591 2000

Army Families Federation (AFF) The AFF exists to make life better for Army families, by raising issues that are causing concerns, with the chain of command. Visit the AFF’s website, or contact them on Tel: 01980 615525 or Website www.aff.org.uk

Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) CAFCASS was set up on 1 Apr 01, under the provisions of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act which brought together the family court services previously provided by the Family Court Welfare Service, the Guardian ad Litem Service and the Children’s Division of the Official Solicitor’s Office. They are a non-Departmental public body. The main types of cases in which the courts ask CAFCASS to help are when:
- parents or carers are separated or divorcing and have not reached agreement about arrangements for their children.
• social services have become involved and children may be removed from their parents’ care for their safety.
• children could be adopted.
CAFCASS is independent of the courts, social services, education and health authorities and all similar agencies. Website: www.cafcass.gov.uk

**Citizens Advice Bureau** The Citizens Advice Bureau service helps people resolve their legal, money and other problems by providing free information and advice from over 3,000 locations and by influencing policymakers. Visit www.adviceguide.org.uk for practical, reliable, up-to-date information including frequently asked questions in English, Welsh, Bengali, Gujarati, Punjabi, Urdu and Chinese on a wide range of topics and fact sheets to download. Information is continuously reviewed by their team of advisers and covers England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Local Telephone numbers are available from their Website: www.nacab.org.uk

**Dads’ Space** This is a web based provision for fathers who may be looking for extra support and advice around raising their children. ‘Dads’ Space is part of the ‘Parent Know-How’ initiative through the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to improve the provision of support for parents. Through Dads’ Space, fathers can access no nonsense advice and information based on both fathers’ own experiences and up-to-date research. The site will also address the more complex family matters including domestic violence, divorce and post separation parenting.
Website: www.dads-space.com

**Directgov** Directgov brings together the widest range of public service information and services online. It has extensive sections on a range of issues surrounding relationship breakdown, divorce and separation. Produced by the Department for Work and Pensions, Directgov provides information
from across UK government departments on topics ranging from travel safety and parental leave to special educational needs and local NHS services. The site also brings together an increasing number of online government services to make your life easier, from booking a driving test and taxing your car to renewing your passport or applying for a student loan. You can browse by topics, including money, employment, travel, transport and education or by audience groups, such as disabled people, the over 50s, and parents. Alternatively you can use their search engine to find content directly. The site also gives you access to government directories, as well as links to relevant third parties who can offer additional trusted advice and support.

Website: www.direct.gov.uk

**Families Need Fathers** Families Need Fathers is firstly a social care organisation, concerned with a particular area of child welfare. Via information, advice and personal support they help parents to retain and further develop the children’s relationship with them. They provide books and leaflets, an information website, have telephone helpline and internet forums in which members offer and seek comments and support. They publish a quarterly journal and have a network of telephone contacts and local meetings. Some legal information and support is available.

Tel: 020 7613 5060 9.30am - 4:30pm week days
Helpline: 0870 607 496 6pm - 10pm week days
email: fnf@fnf.org.uk Website: www.fnf.org.uk


Tel: Lone Parent Helpline: 0800 018 5026 Website: www.gingerbread.org.uk and www.oneparentfamilies.org.uk
**Health Matters** Both your local General Practitioner (GP) and your health visitor can provide support and advice, particularly concerning younger children's well-being. Contact details through your GP or local telephone directory.

**Homestart** Homestart is a national voluntary organisation that offers support, friendship and practical help to young families under stress in their own homes. Contact details can be found in the local telephone directory.
Tel: 0800 0686368
Website: [www.homestart.org.uk](http://www.homestart.org.uk)

**Jobcentre Plus** If you are separated, divorced or had your civil partnership dissolved, you can get support from a Jobcentre Plus which will give you guidance on accessing benefits you may be entitled to if you are of working age. For more information
Tel: 0800 055 6688
Website: [www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk](http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk)

**Mediation Services** These services provide a completely independent professional service to help separating and divorcing couples. There are agencies covering the different parts of the UK:
- National Family Mediation England and Wales
  Tel 01392 271610
  Website: [www.nfm.u-net.com](http://www.nfm.u-net.com)
- Family Mediation - Scotland
  Tel 0845 119020
  Website: [www.familymediationscotland.org.uk](http://www.familymediationscotland.org.uk)
National Society for Children and Family Contact When a relationship breaks down it isn’t just the partners who suffer. It’s the children who have most to lose; and not just because of the stress of seeing their parents upset. They also risk losing contact with one of their parents, and with that parent’s family too. Grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins: half their family, half their life, can be devastated by parental acrimony. The NSCFC believes that continuing contact with a child’s extended family is vital for the child’s balanced development, and it works to foster those all-important family contacts. As such they offer free support and advice to all those in need, and a Helpline at National rate is also available 24 hours a day.
Tel: 0870 766 8596
Website: www.nscfs.com

Naval Families Federation The Federation has been set up to give Royal Navy and Royal Marine families an independent voice, anybody with a family member serving in the Royal Navy or the Royal Marines is encouraged to contact the NFF. All families need to do is to choose their form of communication with the NFF, whether by telephone, e-mail or through the post.
Tel: 023 9265 4374
Website: www.nff.org.uk

Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) The Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) is an independent, non-departmental public body set up under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. The OISC does not provide immigration advice, recommend or endorse a specific advisor; they hold a list of Registered Advisers and also a list of those advisers who have a charge against them.
Tel: 0207211 1500
Website: www.oisc.gov.uk
Relate Relate offers counselling for relationship problems, either face-to-face or on the phone. Relate also offers Relateen, which is counselling for children aged 10-16.
Tel: 0845 1304016
Website: www.relate.org.uk

Respect Respect is the UK membership association for domestic violence perpetrator programmes and associated support services. The aim is to increase the safety of those experiencing domestic violence through promoting effective interventions with perpetrators.
Tel: 020 7022 1801
Website: www.respect.uk.net or email info@respect.uk.net

Royal British Legion (RBL) The RBL is a leading charity in safeguarding the welfare, interests and memory of those who have served in the Armed Forces and their dependants. It provides financial, social and emotional support to millions and its benevolence spans all age groups from the oldest to the very young.
Tel: 08457 725 725
Website: www.britishlegion.org.uk/

RAF Benevolent Fund (RAFBF) RAFBF provides support to all members of the RAF family in need. If you have ever served in the Royal Air Force, or you are an immediate dependant of someone who served, than you may be eligible for assistance. Grants, loans and advice are available for a broad range of help, including: mobility aids and specialist equipment for the sick and disabled, help with housing and accommodation, assistance in accessing and funding care, as well as individual grants to relieve specific financial need. If you think you may be eligible for help
Tel: 0800 1692942
Website: www.rafbf.org
RAF Families Federation The RAF Families Federation exists to provide an independent voice for the serving RAF and their families (spouses, civil partners, partners, parents, children, siblings) on issues of concern to them. The team represents these views to senior RAF staffs and ministers. The Federation operates outside the RAF chain of command and is managed as an independent organisation by the Royal Air Forces Association (RAFA), a well-established and highly respected charity.
Tel: 01780 781650
Website: www.raf-families-federation.org.uk

Royal Marines Benevolent Fund The principal purpose of the Fund is to benefit persons who are serving or who have served in the Royal Marines, or their dependants, to relieve need, hardship or distress.
Tel: 023 92 547201

Royal Naval and Royal Marine's Children's Fund (RNRMCF) The RNRMCF supports children of serving and retired RN, RM, QARNNS and Reserve personnel in need of care and help. Grants are given for education, equipment, home care, etc, where a social need is proven. Children are defined as from birth to age 18. The RN & RM Children’s Fund works closely with many charities dedicated to providing help to children. If the type of assistance falls outside the objects of the Fund, then the application will be referred to other charities with the object of creating a care package. Application forms can be printed from the website. Applications are received from a number of sources including the Naval Personal and Family Service.
Tel: 023 92 639534
Website: www.rnrmchildrensfund.org.uk
Royal Naval Benevolent Trust (RNBT) Exists to provide relief for ratings and their dependants in cases of necessity or distress. They may offer help towards anything from childcare to removal expenses, disability aids to training for a second career, even food and clothing. Ex-Service personnel can also be helped. Requests for assistance can be made.
Tel: 023 92 690112
E-mail: RNBT rnbtrnbt@rnbt.org.uk
Website: www.rnbt.org.uk

Samaritans The Samaritans provide confidential non-judgemental emotional support 24 hours a day for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair including those which could lead to suicide.
Tel: 0845 909090
Website: www.samaritans.org

Stepping Stone Homes SSAFA-FH offer temporary supported accommodation to separated Service and ex-Service families, women and Children. Stepping Stone Homes also provide support and assistance in finding a permanent home, those in SSH can also be on a housing waiting list. The homes provide families with time and space to assess their situation in a calm, secure environment and to make plans for their future. The Homes are fully equipped, so all the families need to bring are their own essentials, such as clothes and teddy bears. There is no room for their own furniture, but if required the staff can offer help with storage facilities. There are two Stepping Stone Homes which are situated in Tyne & Wear and North West London. Each home offers slightly different accommodation. Tyne & Wear accommodates 7 families and is a large family house in extensive gardens. Gildea House
Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen’s Families Association - Forces Help (SSAFA-FH) SSAFA-FH is a national charity helping serving and ex-Service personnel and their families in times of need. It is committed to helping people in need, suffering or in distress, regardless of age or condition. SSAFA-FH is committed to helping anyone who has served just one paid day in any of our Armed Forces, including the Reserves and those who did National Service, and their dependants, including their husbands or wives, civil partners, partners, children, widows and widowers. It offers practical as well as financial support and housing advice. For many it is a friendly face in a new community, a shoulder to cry on when times are hard, a listening service for those in need.

Tel: 020 740 38783
Email: info@ssafa.org.uk
Website: www.ssafa.org.uk

UK Border Agency Advice and application forms to apply for leave to remain in the UK under all categories of the immigration rules including marriage, civil partnership and after discharge. Tel: the Immigration Enquiry Bureau (IEB) 0870 606 7766. Callers who are hard of hearing: Minicom 0800 389 8289. Opening hours are Monday-Thursday 9am-4.45pm and on Friday 9am-4.30pm. It is often easier to get through later in the day.

Website: www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk
A guide to help Service families during relationship breakdown
Explaining Abbreviations and Jargon

ASU Accommodation Service Unit - Produce bill charges for SFA
AWS Army Welfare Service - responsible for providing welfare support to Army personnel and their families.
AWIS Army Welfare Information Service - They provide information to soldiers and families of Army personnel.
Child Maintenance & Enforcement Commission (CMEC) Replacement name for (CSA) as of January 2009
DE Ops Housing Defence Estates Operations Housing.
DWP Department of Works and Pensions. Find them in the Yellow Pages.
JSHAO Joint Service Housing Advice Office.
MoD Ministry of Defence
MoD 11/32 The Official DE Ops Housing Application Form for SFA in England, Scotland and Wales.
NPFS Naval Personal and Family Service. The RN’s specialist social and community work organisation.
OC PMS Officer Commanding Personnel Management Squadron. Responsible for personnel/welfare matters on an RAF Station.
RELATE The name of the National Marriage Guidance Council in England and Wales. Find them in the Yellow Pages.
ROSO Regimental Operations Support Officer.
SFA Service Family Accommodation.
Tri-Service Anything involving the 3 Armed Services.
UWO Unit Welfare Officer. All Regular Army Units have either a UWO or Admin Officer who will advise in the initial stages.
A guide to help Service families during relationship breakdown
### Useful Telephone Numbers and Notes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Your nearest HIVE</strong></th>
<th>Help, information and signposting to professional support agencies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Online at <a href="http://www.hive.mod.uk">www.hive.mod.uk</a> or phone +44(0) 1722 434980</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Confidential Support Line</strong></th>
<th>Personal support from a confidential telephone support worker</th>
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<td>0800 7314880 (UK) +44 (0) 1980 630854</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>RAF Social Work Support Service</strong></th>
<th>0845 1300 975</th>
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<tr>
<th><strong>RN &amp; RM Welfare Service</strong></th>
<th>Online at <a href="http://www.rncom.mod.uk">www.rncom.mod.uk</a></th>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Your nominated Army Unit Welfare Officer (UWO)</strong></th>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Army Welfare Information Service (AWIS)</strong></th>
<th>Confidential information and access to the Army’s Welfare Service</th>
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<td>+44 (0) 1722 436569</td>
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<th><strong>Your legal advisor</strong></th>
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You could write down your Service person’s details here, they may be needed later.

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<th><strong>Full name</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Rank</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Service number</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ship/Unit/Station Name</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Contact telephone number</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Address</strong></td>
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Finally:

If you have any suggestions for inclusion or amendments please send them to:

SSAFA Forces Help
19 Queen Elizabeth Street
London
SE1 2LP

Tel: 020 7403 8783
A guide to help Service families during relationship breakdown

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Distributed to individual’s experiencing relationship difficulties by Service welfare staffs and SSAFA-FH, also available as a PDF copy on the internet or intranet.

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