



WELCOME TO ENGLAND



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Foreword

By the Rt Hon Tobias Ellwood MP, Minister for Defence People and Veterans



On behalf of the UK Government I would like to extend a very warm welcome to England to you and your families.

There is a proud military tradition in England, and for centuries the Armed Forces have formed a vital part of our communities. We are firmly committed to supporting our Armed Forces community, as set out in the Armed Forces Covenant, and work closely with local authorities, other public services and charities to ensure that you and your families have access to the best support possible.

We appreciate the challenges that Service life can bring, and the impact that deployment will have on you and your family. This guide has been designed to make your move as easy as possible. It outlines the services that are available to you – from housing, employment and health, to education and childcare – and explains how to go about accessing them.

I hope that this proves useful and that you and your families feel settled into your new communities as quickly as possible.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tobias Ellwood'.



**WELCOME TO
ENGLAND**

Introduction

Welcome to England. This booklet is intended to provide Service Personnel, their families and Service Leavers with an overview of the public services and support available in England. The booklet also provides a list of different networks of support available and their contact details and useful links if you wish to access more detailed information. It is intended for all personnel, but especially those originating or moving from Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland or overseas because of the differences in service provision.



Armed Forces Covenant



The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise by the nation ensuring that those who serve, whether Regular or Reserve, or has served in the Armed Forces, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given the most - such as the injured or bereaved. The Covenant focuses on helping members of the Armed Forces community have support in a number of areas including:

- Education
- Family wellbeing
- Having a home
- Transitioning out of the Armed Forces
- Access to healthcare
- Managing finances

The Covenant supports serving personnel, service leavers, veterans, and their families. It is delivered by the different groups that have committed to making a difference. These include:

- Central government
- Single services (Royal Navy, British Army, Royal Air Force)
- Businesses of all sizes
- Local government
- Charities
- Communities
- Cadet forces and their adult volunteers

For more information visit
www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk.

Overview of English Government

The United Kingdom government in Whitehall has legislative responsibilities over England and several reserved policy areas of Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales including defence, foreign policy and benefits. However, for a few non-reserved service areas in England such as education, housing and healthcare local government has responsibility. There are up to three layers of elected local authorities (such as County, District and Parish Councils). For more information please visit www.gov.uk/understand-how-your-council-works.

Also, there are currently three areas which have greater devolution powers in England. These are Unitary Authorities, which are a merge of local councils. These are the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, the West Midlands Combined Authority and the Greater London Authority. They have limited local tax-raising powers.



Managing Finances

Some personnel have difficulties getting credit, as they have moved regularly and have not been able to build up a good credit rating. The UK Government has provided funding to establish an **Armed Forces Credit Union** which is a 'payroll deduction' system to allow Service personnel and Veterans in receipt of a military pension to save with and pay off loans from a credit union. The payment will come directly from your salary or pension at source. <http://joiningforcescu.co.uk/>.

MoneyForce is the official home of money guidance for the UK Armed Forces community, including active Service personnel, veterans, reservists and families. They provide information on debt, investments, loans and more, and have online interactive planners to help you take control of your finances. For more information visit www.moneyforce.org.uk.

More information is available at the **Money Advice Service** www.moneyadvice.org.uk, the **Department for Work and Pensions** www.dwp.gov.uk and **HM Revenue and Customs** www.hmrc.gov.uk.

Citizens Advice can provide advice and assistance with debt difficulties and other legal issues www.citizensadvice.org.uk/.

Treatment and support groups are available for people who want to stop gambling: **GamCare** offers free information, support and counselling for problem gamblers in the UK. It runs the National Gambling Helpline (08088020133) and also offers face-to-face counselling. www.gamcare.org.uk/. **Gamblers Anonymous** also provide advice if you have financial problems due to gambling or if it is creating family stress. www.gamblersanonymous.org.uk.

Benefits and Tax

Support for all:

Serving personnel and their families may be entitled to **Department for Work and Pensions** and or **Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs** benefits in the same way as other UK citizens. Examples of benefits include *Universal Credit*, *Tax Credits* and *Jobseeker's Allowance*. For more information visit www.gov.uk/browse/benefits.

Your **local council** may have welfare rights advisers who can help with problems surrounding benefits or your eligibility. You can find your local council by typing in your postcode on <https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>.

Citizens Advice is an independent organisation which will provide you with information and advice on issues relating to benefits such as *Housing Benefit* and *Income Support*, for further information visit www.citizensadvice.org.uk/.

Support for the Armed Forces:

If you live in Service provided accommodation you are entitled to a 50% **Council Tax discount** on second homes that you own. The property must be a second home, which is defined in legislation as an unoccupied and furnished dwelling. You can apply to your local Council's Tax department to check eligibility and claim the discount.

If you own your own home or are living in rented accommodation you may be eligible for a **reduction in your Council Tax**, to find out if you qualify contact your local council.

The **Defence Privilege Card** enables Service personnel and their spouses to access discounts both online and on the high street if you produce your card. The membership card, which costs £4.99 for five years, entitles you to discounts in stores, restaurants, leisure facilities and other venues. To apply for your card contact the Defence Discount Service at: www.defencediscountservice.co.uk.

The Royal British Legion also offer a **Benefits and Money Advice Service** for their beneficiaries – details can be found here www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-support/finance/benefits-advice/.

Employment

Whilst employment levels for spouses, partners and veterans are on a par with national averages, it is recognised that some spouses can have difficulty in finding employment due to the constraints of Service life. Some Service leavers who are changing career paths can also struggle in their transition into civilian work. There are a number of ways to find work in England and below is a list of some support services available.

Support for all:

For Information, advice and guidance to help you make decisions on learning training and work visit the **National Careers Service**. Advice on interview technique and writing an effective CV is also available. <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/>.

You can search and apply for full or part-time jobs in Great Britain and abroad using the Government jobs website - **Universal Jobmatch**, available at www.gov.uk/jobsearch.

More support including training, work placement programmes, work experience, job progression, help starting your own business and benefits is available from **Jobcentre Plus** at www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus.

Your **Local Council** will have more information on local jobs and training.

Apprenticeships can offer you opportunities to learn on the job, get the experience you need, and work towards a qualification. They are open to anybody living in England over the age of 16 – for more information visit www.gov.uk/topic/further-education-skills/apprenticeships.

Support for the Armed Forces:

Hundreds of business organisations have signed **Armed Forces Covenant pledges** which may include flexible employment arrangements for Service families and Veterans – check who has signed and what they have pledged to do here - www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-force-corporate-covenant-signed-pledges.

As part of the Armed Forces Covenant, the Department for Work and Pensions has initiatives that help current and former members of the Armed Forces and their families access Jobcentre Plus services. This includes having an **Armed Forces Champion** in every Jobcentre Plus district who ensures that the Department for Work and Pensions provides support that meets the needs of the Armed Forces community. See more information on the Department for Work and Pensions and the Armed Forces here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/jobcentre-plus-services-for-the-armed-forces-and-their-families/armed-forces-enhanced-access-to-jobcentre-plus-services-and-armed-forces-champions.

The **Families Federations** have information and advice on employment and opportunities on their websites.

There are also specialist training courses available and organisations who are able to support Service spouses / partners seeking employment, such as RBLI LifeWorksFamilies at www.wearelifeworks.org.uk/families/.



Support for Transition:

The **Career Transition Partnership (CTP)** is the Ministry of Defence's official provider of Armed Forces Resettlement. It provides resettlement support, career transition advice and training opportunities specifically for Service leavers. Regardless of time served, all members of the Armed Forces can benefit from CTP support when leaving service. For more information visit www.ctp.org.uk/. Linked to the CTP, the **Recovery Career Services** is a tri-Service scheme offering careers advice, training and support to wounded, injured and sick personnel who are leaving the Armed Forces. For more information visit www.ctp.org.uk/news/recovery-career-services-443900.

The **British Forces Resettlement Service** is a not-for-profit scheme created to help members of the Armed Forces Community with employment aspects of their transition to civilian life. www.bfrss.org.uk/.

Additionally, **X-Forces** offers enterprise, start up and self-employment training. To find out more visit www.x-forces.com.

The three **Families Federations** have also been involved in a two year project to look at the support available to families during transition. Visit their websites for more details and information, such as the NFF's 'Families Transition Guide.'

Housing

In England, in addition to Service Family Accommodation and Single Living Accommodation there are several housing options available depending on where you would like to live.

Buy

The government operates several schemes to help people buy property. For example, the **Help to Buy and Lifetime ISAs** helps first-time buyers anywhere in the UK save towards a first home. The **Shared Ownership** scheme allows you to buy a share of a home that would otherwise be unaffordable, and military personnel will be given priority over other groups. With **Help to Buy: Equity Loan** the Government lends you up to 20% (up to 40% in London) of the cost of a new build home, so you will only need a 5% deposit. For more information and to see which scheme might best suit you, visit www.ownyourhome.gov.uk/.

Until December 2019, the government operates a **Forces Help to Buy Scheme**. This could let you borrow up to 50% of your salary to a maximum of £25,000, interest free. For more information visit www.ownyourhome.gov.uk/scheme/forces-help-to-buy.

Rent

You may wish to **rent a home privately**. You can rent either directly from the landlord or through a letting agent, but in either case check to see if they belong to an accreditation scheme, and what fees you will be charged. Your local authority should be able to provide you with a list of agencies. You'll usually pay the first month's rent and the deposit

(typically equal to the first month's rent) on the day you move into the property – your landlord must protect your deposit in a government approved tenancy deposit protection scheme. For more information on your rights and responsibilities when renting a property from a private landlord, visit www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-rent/how-to-rent-the-checklist-for-renting-in-england.

The **MOD Tenancy Deposit Scheme** allows defence personnel to apply for an advance of salary loan to help meet the cost of a deposit for a rental property. For more information visit https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/699727/JSHAO-29-TENANCY_DEPOSIT_LOAN_SCHEME.pdf.

If you are interested in applying for **social housing** you can contact your local council housing department for more information, but be aware that there may be a long waiting list for properties in certain areas. Local councils are responsible for drawing up and operating their own allocation scheme within the framework of legislation. Service Personnel and Service leavers may be eligible for social housing, as are any other citizen.

Accordingly, councils can set their own criteria to decide who qualifies to go on to their waiting list but must not apply a local connection test to disqualify former Service personnel up to 5 years after they have been discharged; and former Service personnel with urgent housing needs must be given 'additional preference' (i.e. high priority) for social housing.

Housing Support

You may be eligible for support to help pay the rent through schemes such as **Housing Benefit and Universal Credit**. For more information and to assess your eligibility visit www.gov.uk/browse/benefits.

The **Families Federations** provide support on housing and accommodation issues: Army: <https://aff.org.uk/advice/housing/> Navy: <https://nff.org.uk/accommodation/> RAF: www.raf-ff.org.uk/housing/.

Advice

The **Joint Service Housing Advice Office (JSHAO)** is the MOD's tri-Service focal point to provide Service personnel and their dependants with civilian housing information for those wishing to move to civilian accommodation at any time in their career, and for those during resettlement to assist with the transition to civilian life. www.gov.uk/government/collections/joint-service-housing-advice-office-jshao.

Some charities such as **SSAFA** and **RBL** also offer housing advice to Service families and can give you details of estate agents and housing organisations in the area in which you live.

Stoll helps Service leavers find affordable accommodation across the country with a number of social housing providers.



Healthcare

Healthcare for Serving Armed Forces in England

Defence Medical Services (DMS) provide general practice, dentistry, rehabilitation and mental health services (community and residential) for serving Armed Forces personnel in England. Some Service Personnel working on specific operational areas may have eye care services provided for them, otherwise Service Personnel should go to a local ophthalmic practitioner. The Ministry of Defence also provides healthcare for those on military operations and for specialist occupations. Community and hospital care is provided by the National Health Service in England.

Healthcare for Armed Forces families and Service Leavers

The **NHS** provides most health care services for Armed Forces families and Veterans. Alongside other services the NHS provides dental, mental health and rehabilitation services. Most Service Families are not eligible for Defence Medical Services.

All Service Families and veterans should register with a local **NHS GP** who look after general health needs. It is important to do this as soon as possible, rather than wait until treatment is needed. To register, you should contact your chosen practice and ask to be included on their patient list. You should also tell the practice that you are a military family, which will help to ensure that you are treated in line with the Armed Forces Covenant, and your position on any NHS waiting list is retained if moved around the UK due to the Service person being posted.

NHS GPs are the main route (except for emergencies) to hospital and community healthcare.

The NHS also provides dental care, but this is one of the few NHS services where you may have to pay a contribution towards the cost. You may also have to pay for eye care and prescription charges. Again, it is important to register with an NHS dentist as soon as possible, rather than wait until treatment is needed. To find out about charges and exemptions in the NHS please visit www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/help-with-health-costs.

For more information on finding an **NHS GP or dentist** in England, visit www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/AboutNHSservices/Pages/NHSservices.aspx.

For further information on **NHS healthcare for armed forces families**, visit www.nhs.uk/nhsengland/militaryhealthcare.

Pharmacy services

Pharmacists are highly trained health experts who can advise you on minor health concerns such as coughs, colds, diarrhoea, aches and pains, as well as healthy eating and stopping smoking. They can also help you decide whether you need to see a medical health professional. Most pharmacies now have a private consultation area where you can discuss issues with pharmacy staff without being overheard. Alternatively, you can arrange a consultation over the phone.

To find out more about pharmacy services and what pharmacists are in your local area, visit www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/pharmacies/what-to-expect-from-your-pharmacy-team/.

Drug and alcohol treatment

If you need treatment for drug and / or alcohol addiction, there are a range of free and confidential services that can provide help and support.

There are two main ways you can choose to get into treatment – self-referral or through your GP.

For information on drug addiction and getting help, visit the NHS website at www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/drug-addiction-getting-help/.

You can also visit the Frank website to find local drug treatment services – for more information visit www.talktofrank.com/ or call their helpline on 0300 123 6600. They can talk you through all your options.

To find out about alcohol support, visit the NHS website at www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-support/.

NHS 111 for urgent medical care

If you need urgent medical attention but it's not a life-threatening situation, you should first call the **NHS free phone number 111** to speak to a fully trained adviser. The 111 service operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

NHS 111 will assess you and give you the option to speak to a nurse, doctor or paramedic if appropriate. You'll then be advised where you need to go for treatment. This could be an urgent treatment centre, an out-of-hours GP service, your local GP in normal hours, or the nearest A&E if necessary.

Urgent treatment centres (walk-in centres and minor injury units)

If you need urgent medical attention but it's not a life-threatening situation, you can get help from an urgent treatment centre. Currently, the NHS offers a mix of walk-in centres, urgent care centres, minor injury units and urgent treatment centres, all with different levels of service. By the end of 2019, these will all be called urgent treatment centres.

Urgent treatment centres are GP-led and open for at least 12 hours a day every day of the week (including bank holidays).

You may be referred to an urgent treatment centre by NHS 111 or by your GP. You can also just turn up and walk in.



Conditions that can be treated at an urgent treatment centre include:

- sprains and strains
- suspected broken limbs
- minor head injuries
- cuts and grazes
- bites and stings
- minor scalds and burns
- ear and throat infections
- skin infections and rashes
- eye problems
- coughs and colds
- feverish illness in adults
- feverish illness in children
- abdominal pain
- vomiting and diarrhoea
- emergency contraception.

A&E departments

An A&E department (also known as an emergency department or casualty) deals with genuine life-threatening emergencies, such as:

- loss of consciousness
- acute confused state and fits that are not stopping
- persistent, severe chest pain
- breathing difficulties
- severe bleeding that cannot be stopped
- severe allergic reactions
- severe burns or scalds.

A&E departments are open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to treat people with serious and life-threatening emergencies. Please use this service carefully so it can best support those who need it most.

In a life-threatening emergency dial 999.

Sexual health services

Sexual health services are free, confidential and available to everyone regardless of sex, age, ethnic origin and sexual orientation.

Services and advice are available from:

- GPs
- Contraception clinics (also known as family planning clinics)
- Sexual health clinics
- Sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing clinics
- Genitourinary medicine (GUM) clinics
- Pharmacies
- Sexual assault referral centres (SARCs)
- Young people's services.

To find out which service is right for you, ask your GP or call NHS 111 who will be able to advise you.

For more information on sexual health services, visit www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/AboutNHSservices/sexual-health-services/Pages/guide-to-sexual-health-services.aspx.

Eye care services

The NHS recommends that you should get your eyes tested every two years (more often if advised by your ophthalmic practitioner or optometrist). Eyes rarely hurt when something is wrong with them, so having regular eye tests is important to help detect potentially harmful conditions.

An NHS sight (eye) test is free of charge if you are in one of the eligible groups and your sight test is considered clinically necessary. If the ophthalmic practitioner can't see a clinical need, then you'll have to pay for the test privately. For more information on eligibility visit www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/help-with-health-costs/free-nhs-eye-tests-and-optical-vouchers/.

Providing feedback or making a complaint about an NHS service

Most NHS care and treatment goes well but sometimes things can go wrong. There are two ways to tell the NHS what you think:

- Provide feedback
- Make a complaint.

To find out how to do this, visit www.england.nhs.uk/contact-us/complaint/.

Mental health services for Serving Personnel, Veterans and families

For Service families, the **NHS** provides a range of free mental health services, which in most cases require a GP referral. There are, however, some mental health services that allow people to refer themselves. These typically include services for drug and alcohol problems, as well as some psychological therapies. To find out more about these services and how to access them, visit www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/AboutNHSservices/mental-health-services-explained/Pages/accessing%20services.aspx.

The **Ministry of Defence** has useful information for families on their website www.gov.uk/guidance/mental-health-support-for-the-uk-armed-forces#serving-personnel.

Defence Medical Services (DMS) provides mental health services to Serving personnel.

The **Military Mental Health Helpline** provides help, advice and support for Serving Personnel and their families 24/7. You can call them on 0800 323 4444.

You can also access confidential emotional support and advice by contacting the

Samaritans. They provide a 24/7 helpline, and are available on 116132.

The **Big White Wall** is an online mental health resource that provides free support for the Armed Forces community. Visit www.bigwhitehall.com for more information.

Education and Childcare

As in the rest of the UK, education is free in state schools in England. The local authority is responsible for providing education in the area where you live. Full time education is compulsory for all children aged 5 to 18, either at school or otherwise, with a child beginning primary education during the school year they turn 5. Children must remain in school until the last Friday in June of the school year in which they turn 16, but the education leaving age is 18, so in these last two years children must receive some sort of schooling or training.

Like the rest of the UK the school year is broken up into 3 terms:

- Autumn Term usually runs from the beginning of September until Christmas time;
- Spring Term starts at the beginning of January and lasts until Easter (usually the end of March);
- Summer Term starts from the end of the Easter holidays (usually early April) until the middle of July.

Each term also has a half term break; schools are usually closed for a week.

School years in England are grouped together in phases that focus on specific curriculum requirements and examinations. For more information visit www.gov.uk/national-curriculum.

Childcare

Parents in England with children under the age of 18 can access financial help with childcare costs from the government. Parents can access different levels of support in relation to your financial and

employment circumstances. Please visit www.childcarechoices.gov.uk for more detail and help choosing the best scheme for you. Your local authority will be able to provide more information on local providers and schools.

Pre-school

- The foundation stage includes **pre-school, nursery and Reception**. Children have a baseline assessment in Reception.

All children aged 3-4 in England are entitled to 570 hours of **free early education or childcare** a year. This is often taken as 15 hours each week for 38 weeks of the year. Some 2 year olds are also eligible if as a family you receive some forms of support. This can be provided in playgroups, nurseries, community childcare centres or nursery classes in schools. Your local authority will be able to provide more information on local providers and schools. For more information visit www.gov.uk/find-free-early-education. Working parents in England with children aged 3-4 can also qualify for an **additional 15 hours of free nursery a week**, you must earn the minimum of the equivalent of 16 hours per week at the national living or minimum wage and less than £100,000 a year.) Please visit www.childcarechoices.gov.uk to find out whether you are eligible.

Parent and toddler groups where you can take your child to play with other children will be available – contact your local council to find out more. Child-minders are also available to care for your child in their own homes. To find a registered childminder visit www.gov.uk/find-registered-childminder.



Statutory Education

Compulsory school age is 5 but most children start school in the September following their fourth birthday. They will normally attend a primary school and then move to a secondary school from the age of 11. In primary school children are assessed via:

- **Key Stage 1** covers Years 1 to 2. Children have a phonics screening test at the end of Year 1, Key Stage 1 SATS in English and Maths in Year 2.
- **Key Stage 2** covers Years 3 to 6. Children sit Key Stage 2 SATS in English, spelling punctuation and grammar in Year 6.

The secondary school curriculum is divided into 3 stages:

- **Key Stage 3** covers Years 7 to 9.
- **Key Stage 4** covers Years 10 to 11. Children will take GCSEs or other national qualifications.

At 16 your child can leave school, but must do one of the following until they are 18:

- Stay in full-time education, for example at a college for Year 12 and 13 sitting **AS-levels** in Year 12 for some subjects and **A-levels** in Year 13. Pupils generally study 3 or 4 subjects.
- Start an apprenticeship or traineeship;
- Spend 20 hours or more a week working or volunteering, while in part-time education or training.

To **find a place** for your child in a school local to you please contact your local authority for information. As part of the Covenant, the School Admissions Code provides specific information on the school admissions process for service families and ensures that your child will have a place. Service families can apply for and be allocated a place before they move into the area providing their application is accompanied by

an official letter stating the relocation date and details of a unit or quartering address. More information can be found on the DfE website - www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education.

State schools, academies and free schools in England, which have children of service families in school years Reception to Year 11, can receive the **Service Pupil Premium**. It is designed to assist the school in providing the additional support that these children may need and is currently worth £300 per child who meets the eligibility criteria. Please notify your school of your eligibility at the first opportunity.

Some schools in the UK are eligible to receive the **Educational Support Fund**, if they have at least one Service child subject to exceptional mobility of deployment. If you think this would apply to you, please notify your school.

The aim of the **Continuity of Education Allowance** is to assist Service personnel to achieve continuity of education for their children through boarding school, that would otherwise be denied if their children accompanied them on frequent assignments both at home and overseas. To see if you are eligible please contact the Children's Education Advisory Service www.gov.uk/childrens-education-advisory-service.

It is recognised that the operational needs of the Armed Forces can prevent a Service family taking leave during school holidays. You can apply in writing to your child's school for permission to allow your child **leave of absence during term time**, but the final decision will be at the discretion of the school head teacher. The MOD has published advice to head teachers regarding school term time absence for children of Service personnel. www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-term-time-absence-for-children-of-service-personnel-mod-guidance.

The **MOD's Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS)** provides advice, support and guidance regarding the educational well-being of the children and young people belonging to families in all three services. All advice given is impartial, child-centred and focuses on the best interests of the individual. The CEAS team provides guidance on special educational needs and/ or disability, retention of Service Family Accommodation, school admissions and appeals and Continuity of Education Allowance. Please look for more information on www.gov.uk/government/groups/the-childrens-education-advisory-service-ceas.

Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can affect a child or young person's ability to learn. If you think your child may have special educational needs, contact the SEN co-ordinator, or 'SENCO' in your child's school or nursery. For more information visit <https://www.gov.uk/children-with-special-educational-needs>

Further Education and Adult Learning

For Service Personnel:

Service Personnel can access vocational training from their unit via the chain of command.

Service Personnel are also eligible to apply for the **Standard Learning Credits Scheme**. This is for courses that benefit the Service or preparation for resettlement. You must complete an application form – MOD Form 1950 – before starting the course, and repayment will be 80% of the course fee, up to a maximum of £175 per financial year.

Service Personnel will have automatically been enrolled on the **Enhanced Learning Credits scheme**. This will, depending on your length of service, provide financial support for further and higher education. To check your entitlement, speak to your local Education Staff.

For All (including partners/ spouses/ children of Service Personnel/ Service Leavers):

School leavers and mature students can access a wide range of further education courses and qualifications across England, for which tuition fees may be applied. You may be able to borrow money to help pay for tuition fees and to help with living costs via Student Loans, or be eligible for other support or grants depending on your circumstances. For further information visit www.gov.uk/student-finance.

Advice on Adult learning in England can be found at www.gov.uk/education/adult-and-community-learning.

Advice on **apprenticeships and traineeships** can be found online at www.gov.uk/topic/further-education-skills/apprenticeships and www.gov.uk/find-traineeship.

The **Military Preparation College for Training** offers opportunities for young people through training and education equipping them for post 16 and Higher Education. It runs four academies- the Military Preparation College, Military Preparation School, Sports and Exercise College and Sports Apprenticeships. <https://mpct.co.uk/>.

Networks of support for the Armed Forces Community

There are times in most peoples' lives when they feel they need help and support; whether it is for personal or family reasons. Below you can find contact details for organisations which support and help Serving personnel and their families.

In the first instance we recommend you:

Contact your **unit welfare officer** (Army)

Seek assistance through the **Divisional System** (Royal Navy)

Seek assistance through the **Regimental System** (Royal Marines)

Contact **Royal Navy Royal Marines Welfare** on 02392 728777 (Royal Navy and Royal Marines)

Contact **RAF SSAFA Support** on 03000 111 723 (RAF)

The single services have their own services to provide advice, support and resources. The Family Federations provide an independent voice for all service personnel and their families. These are

- **The Army Families Federation.** For more information visit www.aff.org.uk.
- **The RAF Families Federation.** For more information visit www.raf-ff.org.uk.
- **The Naval Families Federation.** For more information visit www.nff.org.uk.



The single services also provide welfare support on behalf of the chain of command to service personnel and their families. This is provided through

- **The Army HIVE** at www.army.mod.uk/HIVES.
- **The RAF HIVE** at www.raf.mod.uk/serving-families/hive-finder/.
- **Royal Navy Welfare Information Support** at www.royalnavy.mod.uk/welfare/find-help/welfare-information-support.

The Veterans Gateway puts veterans and their families in touch with the organisations best placed to help with the information, advice and support they need. <https://www.veteransgateway.org.uk>. Tel: 0808 802 1212.

The Military Mental Health Helpline provides help, advice and support for serving personnel and their families 24/7. Tel: 0800 323 4444.

The Royal British Legion (RBL) provides practical care, advice and support to serving members of the Armed Forces, Veterans of all ages and their families. www.britishlegion.org.uk/ Tel: 0808 802 8080.

SSAFA, The Armed Forces Charity, provides practical support and assistance to Service personnel, Veterans and their families. They also have two Stepping Stone Homes for women with a Service connection who find themselves without somewhere to live, and provide advice on the adoption process. www.ssafa.org.uk Their Forcesline is a free helpline providing advice and is completely independent of the chain of command and is on 0800 731 4880.

Help for Heroes provides advice and help on mental health, injury or illness, welfare and financial support, career recovery, free courses, and a variety of other services. Visit www.helpforheroes.org.uk/ for more information.

Combat Stress provides help with issues like trauma, anxiety, depression and PTSD. Call their 24-hour free helpline for Serving personnel, veterans and their families on 0800 138 1619

You can also access confidential emotional support and advice by contacting the **Samaritans**. They provide a 24/7 helpline, and are available on 116132.

Commemoration

The United Kingdom has a proud history of military tradition. Remembrance events such as The Royal British Legion's Festival of Remembrance and Remembrance Sunday take place every year, and most towns or cities mark Remembrance somehow.

Military museums and heritage sites provide important insights into English history. Museums such as the National Army Museum, the Imperial War Museums in London, Manchester and Duxford, or the naval dockyards at Portsmouth and Chatham, among many others, play an important part in helping people understand the role of the Armed Forces in British life both at home and abroad. For more information on military museums and other sites in England visit www.visitengland.com/things-to-do/military-history.

Armed Forces Day is a chance for the country to show its support for the men and women who make up the Armed Forces community: from Serving personnel to Service families, Veterans and cadets. There are many ways for people, communities and organisations across the country to show their support and get involved. For more information visit www.armedforcesday.org.uk.



Useful Links

Armed Forces Covenant - www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk

Apprenticeships - www.gov.uk/topic/further-education-skills/apprenticeships

Armed Forces Day - www.armedforcesday.org.uk/

Army Families Federation - www.aff.org.uk

Army HIVE - www.army.mod.uk/HIVES

Benefits information - www.gov.uk/browse/benefits

The British Forces Resettlement Service - www.bfrss.org.uk/

Careers service - <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/>

Citizens Advice - www.citizensadvice.org.uk/

Childminders - www.gov.uk/find-registered-childminder

Children's Education Advisory Service - www.gov.uk/childrens-education-advisory-service

Defence Privilege Card - www.defencediscountservice.co.uk

Find local council - www.gov.uk/find-local-council

Forces Help to Buy - www.gov.uk/guidance/forces-help-to-buy

Free early education - www.gov.uk/find-free-early-education

Help for Heroes - www.helpforheroes.org.uk/

Help to Buy - www.helptobuy.gov.uk/

Houses of Parliament visit - www.parliament.uk/visiting/visiting-and-tours/

Jobcentre Plus - www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus

Military Kids Club Heroes - MKC Heroes is a unique 'student voice' group originally formed in the City of Plymouth for the support of Service children and young people which has now expanded across the country. Members of the Military Kids Club (MKC) Heroes are ambassadors and young advocates for Service families. Most importantly, they are friends for each other – especially in times of need. www.britishlegion.org.uk/remembrance/schools-learning/mkc-heroes/

Mental Health Support - www.gov.uk/guidance/mental-health-support-for-the-uk-armed-forces

Money Advice Service - www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk

Naval Families Federation NFF - www.nff.org.uk

Recruit for spouses - www.recruitforspouses.co.uk

Register for GP / Dentist - www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/AboutNHSservices/Pages/NHSservices.aspx

Register to vote - www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

Royal Air Force Families Federation - www.raf-ff.org.uk

Royal British Legion - www.britishlegion.org.uk/

SSAFA The Armed Forces Charity - www.ssafa.org.uk

Stoll Housing and Helping Veterans - www.stoll.org.uk

Student finance - www.gov.uk/student-finance

Traineeships - www.gov.uk/find-traineeship

Universal jobmatch - www.gov.uk/jobsearch

Visit England information - www.visitengland.com/

