

Military families to benefit from £3,000 of childcare support

- Service families with children aged 4 to 11 years to benefit from wraparound childcare
- More than 20,000 service children will be eligible for 20 hours free childcare per week
- Defence Secretary outlines further family support for UK Armed Forces personnel

The Wraparound Childcare (WAC) scheme will provide up to 20 hours per week of free childcare before and after school during term time for eligible military parents with children aged 4 to 11 years.

Its roll-out follows successful trials at pilot sites around the country over the last two years and from the Autumn school term will be open to more than 20,000 children across the UK.

While childcare costs vary across the UK, serving personnel are expected to save around £3,000 per child per year based on typical costs.

The wraparound childcare scheme provides practical support to some of the unique challenges faced by service families, such as frequent relocations that require military families to move home, find new schools and childcare provision, and adjust their lives. This is part of the Armed Forces' commitment to being an inclusive, modern and flexible employer.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

Our Armed Forces personnel sacrifice a great deal in the service of their country and whether it is providing flexible working or accommodation options, I am determined they feel supported in their family life.

Providing free wraparound childcare is another clear way of supporting the unique challenges they face as parents and will go a long way to helping them to enjoy a thriving family life as well as a thriving career.

Corporal Vicki Taylor, Royal Air Force said:

Everyone I have spoken to who also benefits from wraparound childcare agrees that it's a fantastic scheme. For my family it saved us financially, reduced our stress levels, and has given us more quality time with our children.

The wraparound childcare [pilot scheme](#) began in September 2020 and an expansion in September 2021 meant six sites – Woolwich Barracks, RAF High Wycombe and RAF Halton, Catterick Garrison, and in Lincolnshire and the Plymouth area – took part. Over 1,900 children benefited from support at these sites during the pilot.

This scheme is part of the wider package of support to service personnel and their families, as laid out in the [Armed Forces Families Strategy](#), and has already had a positive impact on service families involved. Recent feedback shows an improvement in family wellbeing, increased contentment with service life for non-serving partners as well as the huge financial savings.

The Ministry of Defence is committed to supporting service families and has also introduced [flexible working arrangements](#), expanded offerings to co-habiting couples and extended [Help to Buy](#), giving our armed forces the chance to get a foot on the housing ladder.