



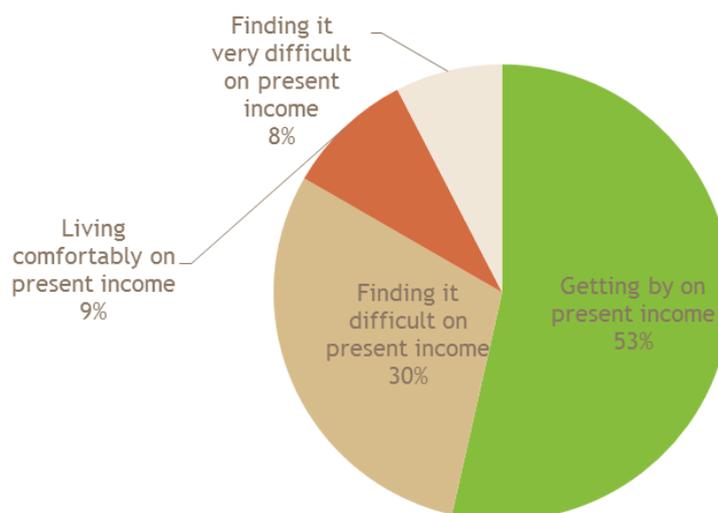
Are you managing on your current pay?

The Sunday Express ran an article on soldiers' pay, highlighting evidence presented to MPs which suggested that soldiers are going hungry during training. Whilst not endorsing the article, AFF used it as a chance to perform a quick poll on how you rate your current income. AFF recognises that the pay freeze and a one per cent pay cap to soldiers' pay will result in families 'feeling the pinch'. Our simple poll provided an opportunity to see how you view your current income. Happily fifty three per cent of the respondents that answered state that you are 'getting by' on your current income, however, many respondents commented that their soldier's income was being complimented by a spousal income.

AFF knows that many newspaper reports are disingenuous, but the story they tell can provide us with an opportunity to look at the issues facing Army families. We do not use the results of our quick polls to influence command or politicians, instead using them to 'test' media stories and to see if there is a need to do further methodologically sound research.

The results are shown below:

198 responses



Getting by on present income

"We, as a household, are getting by however little extras in life have gone such as family days out, my gym membership. Also less goes on better quality of food we buy; I tend to shop where there are bargains and only buy something which is on special offer. During the day I tend to have the heating turned down/off and wear two or sometimes three layers of clothing, the same in the evening once my child has gone to bed. This all goes to help reduce the cost of bills as everything is going up except wages, so in effect we have a pay cut"

"We are being very careful as we can see things becoming more difficult especially when we lose child benefit on top of all the allowance reductions and lack of pay rises. We have moved many times which meant that I had to give up my career and I will be penalised further for following the flag and bringing up my children"

Finding it difficult on present income

"I accepted a job in London in 2009 (for 2010 - 2012 posting) based on the pay and allowance profile explained to me by my RAO. As my wife is a xxxxxx, we decided I would go unaccompanied as the cost of childcare for our two young children in London is prohibitive and would have exceeded her full-time pay by 45%. Since SDSR, my GYH allowance has been cut, subsistence and 'London' allowances reduced to the extent that it now actually costs me money to work in London. In addition to this, we have lost all our Tax Credits. Service personnel make decisions on the information and costings available to them at the time, and ultimately suffer because MOD 'efficiencies' are introduced within the two year tour cycle of its people. I'm an Officer - God knows how our soldiers are coping"

"My husband is a WO1 so in theory we shouldn't be finding things too hard, but as fuel/food prices are rising we are feeling the pinch. For instance, we knew things would be tight sending our eldest son to boarding school but as fuel has gone up so much, it now costs considerably more than we budgeted for when we first decided to send him to school three years ago. My husband finishes in four years and I am seriously beginning to worry that we won't be able to buy a house when the time comes as we no longer have the disposable income to save for a deposit"

"The problem with pay freezes or minimal increases for the lowest paid is that they do nothing to combat the effects of inflation and the increasing costs of energy, food and clothing, particularly for children, who need new shoes every three months. I know that many in the civilian sector are in a similar position of hardship, but Service families are at a disadvantage. We don't have a real choice where we live or serve or the accommodation provided. It's about time that the Pay Review Board got their finger out and gave due recognition that we suffer. I'm concerned about some mates who are 'singlies'. They are paying about £540 per month to live in substandard accommodation and PAYD is a joke; with the contractors ripping them off if they want a choice other than the basic menu. They're struggling just as we are"