



AFF Quick Poll results

army families federation

Our quick poll asked families ‘is patch life important to you?’ and ‘what does stability mean to your family?’ AFF had 1,010 responses from families in their own homes and living on the patch.

- 80%** of families said patch life was important
- 5%** said stability meant living in your own home (may mean soldier weekly commuting)
- 40%** said stability meant living together as a family but moving on posting
- 54%** said they wanted the flexibility to choose on each posting

So what?

With the Future Accommodation Model signalling a drive towards Army families living in their own home or private rentals, AFF is concerned what impact this policy will have on families. Whilst offering stability to families seems like a positive step, what do families really think stability means? Only 5% thought it was being geographically stable. These comments echo sentiments across the hundreds of comments we received.

“Patch life allows us to form and maintain a community within a lifestyle that often rips us away from traditional support networks. It’s priceless!”

“Stability is not about geography, it is about us being together as a family”

“It is key to our lifestyle to live with likeminded people who have experienced or are experiencing the same issues”

“We’ve just completed 15 months of living apart. It nearly killed our relationship and I think caused me to have significant mental health issues ...I was trying to cope with a full time job to ensure that I could pay the mortgage, as well as the upkeep of our home, childcare, elderly parents - all with no help from my husband”

“If we had to endure weekly or monthly commuting again it will be time to hand in their papers”

Key comments:

- **Soldiering is a unique way of life placing unique demands on the family**
- **Support network of the patch is a crucial support network for many families**
- **The patch provides much needed support particularly when operational and exercise commitments and workloads remain high**
- **Families need flexibility to change living arrangements dependent on posting, spouse employment**
- **Costs of weekly/monthly commuting can be too big a financial strain for some families**
- **Distance of commute; potentially many hours - results in pressure on the soldier and the family**
- **Further increases to already high levels of separation if weekly commuting**
- **Lack of childcare support in the week if soldier weekly commuting**
- **Mortgage pressures necessitating partner to work full time whilst unsupported in the week**
- **Feelings of isolation exacerbated by living in own home**