



As a dual serving family, it often feels as if we offer **twice the level** of commitment to the Armed Forces, whilst only receiving **half the level** of support.



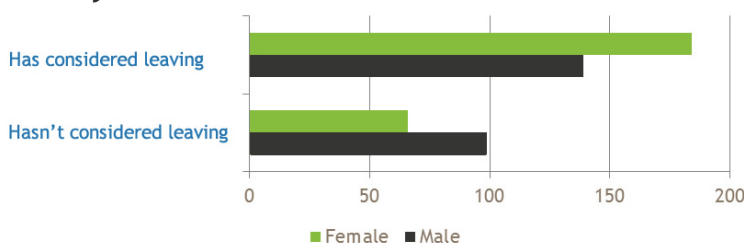
Dual Serving Families

aff SURVEY

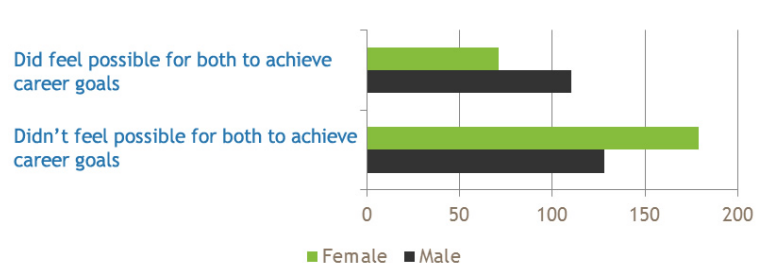
AFF conducted a survey on the issues facing dual serving families in November 2014 following comments from dual serving families that their unique issues often go unrecognised. The survey was advertised through social media and the AFF website and disseminated through the chain of command. 323 people completed the survey.

The majority of those that responded were Army Regulars from a good range of ranks but with a particularly good response from junior officers.

**IN** the last 12 months, has one or both of you considered leaving the Army due to the challenges of being a dual serving family?



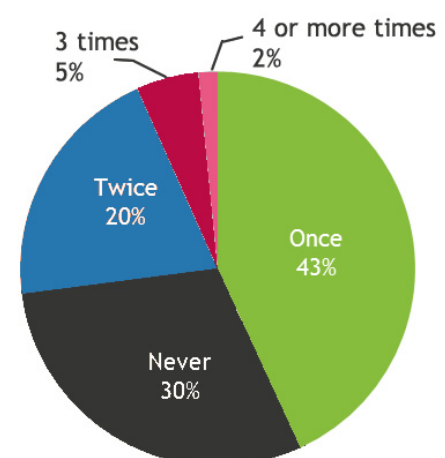
**DO** you feel it is possible for both of you to be able to achieve your career goals?



**THE** top five issues rated as a significant issue for dual serving families were:

- Suitable postings
- Timings of posting decisions
- Understanding of the situation from manning branches
- Ability to take leave at the same time
- Ability to source appropriate childcare

**HOW** often in the last five years have you been assigned to the same area?



# What do dual serving families want?

## Postings

- Being posted within a reasonable distance of each other
- Greater understanding and communication between the manning branches to assist with postings and to deconflict deployments and last minute postings

“ Co-location is key to allow dual serving families to stay happy in their employment and ultimately remain in the Armed Forces. ”

## Education & Childcare

- Appropriate childcare is key to facilitating the return to work of the primary carer.
- Consideration should be given to the support provided for dual serving families, including a potentially more flexible Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA). Fee paying schools are often the only providers of extended-day childcare, including flexible boarding, for school aged children.
- Family stability is not just based on one parent being at home and in the same place. The family life of a dual serving family is very fluid - therefore, consider CEA being automatically granted to dual serving families.

“ Due to remoteness of postings childcare options are extremely limited. Childcare providers know this so put their prices up because they know you are trapped. Recruitment of au pairs is difficult in remote/countryside locations as most don't drive. This forces the more expensive nanny and fulltime nursery option. ”

**Chief Executive Comment:** It is clear from this survey that dual serving families are incredibly proud to be both serving. They accept the difficulties and are pragmatic, resourceful and determined in achieving this. However, it is concerning that many personnel, often female, feel they have to leave due to the pressures of juggling childcare with being dual serving and the impression they both cannot achieve their career goals.

## Housing

- The majority of dual serving families live in Service Families Accommodation (77%) with a fifth living in their own home (20%)
- Possibility of evening and weekend housing maintenance appointments
- More flexibility to be housed between posting areas
- Allow unmarried dual serving families to live in Service Families Accommodation

“ Defence Housing doesn't help in that they only do repairs, surveys, etc during the working day meaning that we have to have time off work, either at the good grace of line managers or by taking leave, which is unacceptable. ”

## Working Patterns

- More flexible working is needed to balance career with childcare
- Achieve through flexible working resources such as DII laptops and smart phones to allow personnel to work from home
- Possibility of career breaks or flexible working needs to be considered
- Important to have greater understanding to be allowed to take leave together

“ The Army naturally lose a lot of quality female officers once they have had children, a tiny bit of flex would make all the difference. With DII laptops and work mobile phones there should be no reason why some female or male officers could not do 4 out of 5 days in the office, compressed hours or something similar. ”