



Ministry
of Defence

Lieutenant General James Swift OBE
Chief of Defence People
Ministry of Defence
Defence People
Level 6, Zone B
Main Building
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2HB

24 March 2020

Dear families,

I wanted to write to you in these unprecedented times to provide some reassurance that we understand the concerns many of you have and that we are actively addressing how we can make things easier for you.

I'd like to thank you for the sacrifices you and your family make in supporting our Service Personnel at home and overseas and emphasise that your role is invaluable and essential to Defence outputs; this has never been truer in these challenging, uncertain times.

Those of you with children, like me, will be considering the potential impact to their education and the additional burden this places on the home environment. For families with additional needs I am keenly aware that the disruption to routine and specialist provision will add a layer of complexity.

As the response to the Coronavirus progresses we will continue to be asked to adapt our behaviours and lifestyles to protect the most vulnerable people in our society. This is essential to manage capacity in the health system. Many of us will adapt to working from home. Key workers, including many in the Armed Forces will continue to go to work to protect the nation. They will not be able to do this without your support, which makes it all the more important that you are adequately supported by us and that the impact on your home life and your own careers is recognised.

My team and I in Defence People, in partnership with the single Services and Families Federations, are working through these implications as a priority, to hopefully allay some of the concerns you will have. Guidance is included with this letter, some of which you may have received via your partner's Chain of Command addressing financial hardship and the potential impact to allowances. Attachments A-C will be relevant for most families and D-F for a small minority of families claiming specific allowances and expenses. For those of you concerned about your financial situation you should be aware that the military can request consideration for an advance of pay (JSP 754 Chap 7).

As things become clearer and we better understand what this means you will receive further guidance in other areas. We will utilise all avenues available to us to keep you up to date including; the Chain of Command, the Families Federations, HiVES and the British Forces Broadcasting Service (BFBS).

There are also various Armed Forces charities which are available to provide you with additional, specialist support. Attached to this letter I have provided contact details for some of the key organisations.

Lastly, I wanted to wish you all well and to urge you to keep in touch with each other and offer support to the most vulnerable. Please do so while continuing to adhere to the Government's latest guidelines and socially isolating wherever practicable.

Thank you for your unwavering support.

{Signed electronically}

Annexes:

- A. Contact Details for Key Charities and Support Organisations
- B. Coronavirus, Managing your Financial Resilience
- C. The Serve and Protect Statement
- D. Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA) – Regulatory Flexibility in Response to Coronavirus (COVID-19)
- E. Allowance and Expense arrangements in response to Coronavirus (COVID-19)
- F. School Children's Visits (SCVs) Interim Arrangements in Response to Coronavirus (COVID-19) - UPDATE 1

ANNEX A – Key contacts and information

HiVES

Nikki Peterson Army HiVE <https://www.army.mod.uk/people/support-well/hive/>

Nerys Bell RAF HiVE <https://www.raf.mod.uk/serving-families/hive-finder/>

Jo Gower Navy HiVE <http://shapehive.blogspot.com/2018/05/royal-navy-hive-welfare-information.html>

Families with Additional Needs

SSAFA Forces with Additional Needs Forum (FANDF) Additional Needs and Disability Guide: https://www.ssafa.org.uk/media/gcrgggxt/anad_guide_2018.pdf

Armed Forces Charities

The Royal British Legion <https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/>

SSAFA

<https://www.ssafa.org.uk/>

3 x Family Federations

<https://nff.org.uk/>

<https://aff.org.uk/>

<https://www.raf-ff.org.uk/>

Service Benevolent Funds:

The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity. <https://www.rnrmc.org.uk/>

ABF The Soldiers' Charity. <https://soldierscharity.org/>

The Royal Air Forces Association (RAFA). <https://www.rafa.org.uk/>

The Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund. <https://www.rafbf.org/>

The Royal Air Force Charitable Trust. <https://www.airtattoo.com/the-trust>

Joint Casualty and Compassionate Cell (JCCC) provide a Worldwide Compassionate Casework Service.

Defence Medical Welfare Service (DMWS) provide a whole force hospital bed welfare support service in certain locations in the UK (and overseas in Cyprus).

<https://www.dmws.org.uk/>

Global Supportability Cell provides support to those overseas.

Chaplaincy support is available to all Service Personnel.

Support is provided by COBSEO - Service Charities and Regimental Associations.

<https://www.cobseo.org.uk/members/directory/>

Children and Young People

DCYP's main contact with families is through our Children's Education Advisory Service, (CEAS), based in Upavon. The team provide information, advice and support on a wide range of, mainly, education related matters such as schools admissions, Special Educational Needs and overseas education provision guidance.

Alongside this we also use our DCYP.gov.uk page

<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/directorate-children-and-young-people>

@DCYP_HQ and our Global Education Team twitter account: @GET_DCYP

The FB page is called Directorate Children and Young People – DCYP- British Forces. I know many of you can't access the link on MODNET but it is provided below if required.

<https://www.facebook.com/Directorate-Children-Young-People-DCYP-British-Forces-1469147250046984/?ref=bookmarks>

and the CEAS contact details are email at: DCYP-CEAS-Enquiries@mod.gov.uk

Other Charities

Mental Health:

Big White Wall <https://www.bigwhitewall.com/>

and Samaritans <https://www.samaritans.org/>

For Personnel and Families with chronic conditions, disability and caring responsibilities:

CANDID is primarily focused on the Service Person. [mailto:AFNetworks-CANDID-](mailto:AFNetworks-CANDID-0Mailbox@mod.gov.uk)

[0Mailbox@mod.gov.uk](mailto:AFNetworks-CANDID-0Mailbox@mod.gov.uk)

ANNEX D



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19 March 2020

DIRECTED LETTER – CONTINUITY OF EDUCATION ALLOWANCE (CEA) – REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY IN RESPONSE TO CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

1. I am directed to inform you of the following guidance for recipients of Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA) in response to Coronavirus (COVID-19). These arrangements are effective immediately and will remain in place until further notice by AF-Rem Allowances.
2. Under the current circumstances it has become necessary to consider introducing some flexibility into the current CEA regulations to reassure recipients that any deviation from CEA eligibility criteria caused directly by COVID-19 will not adversely affect their CEA eligibility. Similarly, if a CEA recipient becomes liable for any additional school fees as a result of the outbreak, they will be able to make a case for reimbursement to the Pay & Allowances, Casework and Complaints Cell (PACCC). Any additional school fees for boarding will be considered separately from routine CEA claims.
3. The circumstances that may require a deviation from current rules include (but are not be limited to) the following:
 - a. **The child is prevented from travelling to join their parents by governmental travel directive or the imposition of an isolation period; they are unable to join a designated guardian for valid reasons (e.g. the guardian is self-isolating) and continue to be accommodated at their school.** In this case, where the child remains at the school out with the normal academic term times, the CEA claimant will be entitled to reclaim any additional fees providing they are proportional to the routine boarding element of the school fees and only once authorised by the Chain of Command.
 - b. **A spouse or civil partner is prevented from re-joining the Service parent at their duty station by governmental travel directive or the imposition of an isolation period.** The guidance on Accompanied Status¹, dictates that when a Service person's spouse/civil partner is absent from the Residence at Work Address for a period of 90 day or more during a 12-month period, their ongoing eligibility for CEA will be reviewed. In conducting the assessment, exceptional circumstances relating to COVID-19 are to be taken into account.

¹ JSP752, Chapter 2, Section 1, AnnexA

- c. **Where it is unsafe for a child to remain in the boarding environment at their school but they are able to convert to day-pupil status for the period covered by these arrangements.** In this case, if the child is able to live with their parents or a designated guardian and travel to the school daily, the claimant may convert to CEA(Day) from the beginning of the next academic term. This can apply even if their child has not completed 3 consecutive academic terms at the same school. Should the school be required to close altogether then the child should stay with their parents or designated guardian. In these circumstances CEA eligibility will not be adversely affected. If the school/boarding facility should re-open mid-term after CEA(Day) is in issue, any additional boarding fees may also be reimbursed.
- d. **The child travels to an overseas area but is prevented from returning to their school because of a government travel directive, school closure or the imposition of an isolation period.** Where the child is required to remain at the overseas duty station, the parent will continue to receive the additional Local Overseas Allowance until the child is able to return to their school and CEA eligibility will be unaffected.
- e. **Where a claimant is about to complete their service and a delay in examinations causes an extension to the Academic year.** In these circumstances any additional school fees should be the subject of PACCC casework.
- f. **Where the impact of COVID-19 on critical stages of education (GCSEs, A-Levels, B-TECs and Scottish Nationals and Highers or equivalents) and schools recommend an extra year of CEA.** In these circumstances, the reimbursement of any additional school fees should be the subject of PACCC casework with advice from Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS).
- g. **Where a School closes following governmental direction; the length of closure is yet to be determined and the school fees are required to be paid before the start of the next academic term.** In these circumstances CEA claimants should submit their claims and pay the school fees. Should claimants receive a refund from the school at a later date the CEA element should be declared to PACCC.

Any other circumstances that arise should be considered on a case by case basis, through casework submitted to the PACCC taking into account the exceptional circumstances brought about by COVID-19. Any reimbursements from the school to the claimant that arise must be declared.

4. It will be necessary for parents to keep up to date with the situation as it develops in the UK, as well as in host nation/overseas assignment areas for those assigned overseas and make decisions based on the facts and guidance published by the UK Government (www.gov.uk) as well as any host nation guidance and arrangements.

5. The terms of this Directed Letter will remain in place until rescinded or replaced by AF Rem Allowances. Any additional cost to CEA as a result of COVID-19 are to be captured so the information is available if required at a later date.



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16 March 2020

DIRECTED LETTER – ALLOWANCE AND EXPENSE ARRANGEMENTS IN RESPONSE TO CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

1. I am directed to inform you of the following clarification for those in receipt of allowances or expenses in response to Coronavirus (COVID-19). These arrangements are effective immediately and will remain in place until further notice by Rem Allowances. MOD general guidance on 2019 Novel Coronavirus can be found at [2020DIN06-003](#).
2. The individual circumstance of each SP who is hospitalised, on sick leave or self-isolating must be considered on its own merit and assessed to ensure that appropriate provision is being delivered². Units should interpret the regulations in JSP 752 reasonably and intelligently, taking into account the aim of each allowance³.
3. JSP 752 already provides guidance on when allowances should start, continue and cease, which varies by allowance. The Allowances Absence Matrix (Chap 2, Sect 3) shows the impact of various types of absence on allowances 'at a glance'; this includes hospital in-patient and sick leave. For some allowances (e.g. HDT, GYH, LSA) the matrix guides Units to conduct a manual review and, in such cases, the relevant Chap/Sect in JSP 752 provides further detail, including any specific criteria/caveats⁴. The latter should also be used to guide entitlement if SP are temporarily working from home, as some allowances cease after a period of time⁵.
4. There are some situations (e.g. self-isolating/sick leave on unit/in SSSA) that the regulations may not adequately cover under the current circumstances. This DL provides additional guidance and, in some cases, flexibility to the CoC (noting that it is for the CoC to determine **where** the SP takes sick leave and/or self-isolates). It also clarifies entitlement in other areas:
 - **Food and Incidental Allowance – Chap 5 Sect 5.** If a SP is hospitalised or sent on sick leave then the absence matrix and Chap 5, Sect 5, clarify entitlement. However, if the FIA claimant is sent on sick leave or self isolates in the accommodation which gives FIA entitlement (e.g. SSSA), FIA is **exceptionally authorised** to remain in issue, but is to be reviewed by the CoC every 14 days.

² For example, 'where' the SP is on sick leave or self-isolating will be a key consideration.

³ For example, for HDT, is the SP travelling daily to/from their RWA to the Duty Station; for FIA, is the SP on sick leave or self-isolating in the accn for which FIA is being paid or at the Family Home/PMP.

⁴ For example, GYH(T) continues for any period of sick leave spent at the permanent or temporary duty station, but ceases (after a period of time) if that sick leave is spent at the SP's QRes.

⁵ As the SP is not experiencing the circumstances that the allowance is designed to cover.

- **Longer Separation Allowance – Chap 10 Sect 1.** If a SP (either INVOLSEP or VOLSEP) is hospitalised or sent on sick leave then the absence matrix and Chap 10, Sect 1 clarify entitlement. However, if an existing LSA claimant is on sick leave or self isolates in their accommodation and are unable to return to their duty station, family home or permanent residence, LSA is **exceptionally authorised** to remain in issue, but is to be reviewed by the CoC every 14 days.
- **Get You Home (Overseas) – Chap 9 Sect 11.** If a SP or immediate family have booked travel that is subsequently cancelled by either the airline or by country travel restrictions then the SP is to reclaim costs via the airline, travel agent or their own travel insurance⁶. SP are **not** to reclaim via JPA. If the SP has already reclaimed costs in accordance with para 09.1127 (flight ticket values over £1000) then recovery action is to be taken by Unit HR. For travel that is cancelled for unforeseen or unavoidable **Service reasons**, the SP may be entitled to reclaim costs via Refund of Nugatory Holiday Expenditure (Chap 17 Sect 6). The CO can exceptionally authorise the carry forward of unused GYH (O) journeys in accordance with para 09.1117.
- **Refund of Nugatory Holiday Expenditure – Chap 17 Sect 6.** If a SP or immediate family have booked travel which is subsequently cancelled by either the airline or by country travel restrictions then the SP is to reclaim costs via the airline, travel agent or their own travel insurance. SP are **not** to reclaim via JPA. For travel that is cancelled for unforeseen or unavoidable **Service reasons**, the SP may be entitled to reclaim costs in accordance with this chapter. Each case will be considered on its own merits.
- **Special Messing Allowance – Chap 5 Sect 6.** If a SP is hospitalised or sent on sick leave then the absence matrix and Chap 5, Sect 6 clarify entitlement. However, if the SMA claimant is sent on sick leave or self isolates in the accommodation which gives SMA entitlement, SMA is **exceptionally authorised** to remain in issue, but is to be reviewed by the CoC every 14 days.
- **Subsistence Entitlements on Assignment – Chap 5 Sect 1.** If, due to travel restrictions, the SP and/or immediate family are unable to travel on assignment and no appropriate public accommodation is available (e.g. Cotswold Centre, welfare accommodation, SFA or SLA), then NS/DS or PAR is **exceptionally authorised**, but is to be reviewed by the CoC every 14 days.
- **Duty Travel – Chap 6 Sect 7.** If the CoC has determined that the SP must self- isolate away from the duty station, a return journey at public expense can be **exceptionally authorised**.

5. The terms of this Directed Letter will remain in place until rescinded or replaced by AF Rem Allowances.

⁶ JSP 752 strongly advises SP to purchase suitable travel insurance with cancellation cover (Annex A to Sect 11 of Chap 9).



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16 March 2020

DIRECTED LETTER – SCHOOL CHILDREN’S VISITS (SCVs) INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS IN RESPONSE TO CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) - UPDATE 1

1. I am directed to inform you of the following interim arrangements for School Children’s Visits (SCVs) in response to Coronavirus (COVID-19). This is an update to the previous DL issued on 9 March and updated information has been added in **blue text** below. These arrangements are effective immediately and will remain in place until further notice by Rem Allowances. MOD general guidance on 2019 Novel Coronavirus can be found at 2020DIN06-003.
2. With Easter SCVs fast approaching it is necessary to consider whether any flexibility or changes to current policy are required so that Service personnel are able to manage visits in a sensible way. It is important to note that parents, or appointed Guardians, are responsible for the welfare of children attending boarding school in the UK at all times, including whilst on SCVs. It will be necessary for parents to keep up to date with the situation as it develops in the UK, as well as in the host nation/overseas assignment area for those assigned overseas and make decisions based on the facts and guidance published by the UK Government (www.gov.uk) as well as any host nation guidance and arrangements.
3. In order to give parents the flexibility to respond to a potentially rapidly changing situation both in the UK and overseas, the following provisions have been agreed and should be read alongside JSP 752 Chapter 10 Section 2 – School Children’s Visits. Any other questions should be addressed through Chain of Command to GAU, Families Section DSCOM or DE Strat in the normal way and AF Rem can then be consulted further as required:
 - **What if a Service person (SP) decides that their child should not travel to the overseas area on a SCV and wishes to arrange a reverse SCV instead?** The regulations at JSP 752 10.0228 already allow for a reverse visit for one parent for reasons of child welfare. Should a parent consider this to be the preferred option for them during the Coronavirus outbreak, then a reverse SCV can be authorised in lieu of one of the SCVs for each eligible child. This is in addition to the reverse visit already allowed for welfare reasons which may already have been taken or which may be required later in the academic year.
 - **What if a SP has already booked a SCV flight for a child to the overseas area but the Coronavirus situation changes and they need to cancel the flight because of official advice?** If it is necessary to change travel plans because of official advice from the UK Government (www.gov.uk), advice from the children’s school or from their local Commanding Officer or the Government of the country to which they are assigned, then

flights can be cancelled and the costs of the cancelled flight will be met by the MOD. The SCV can then be re-arranged for a later date or a reverse SCV can be authorised instead.

- **What if a SP has already booked a SCV flight for a child to the overseas area but due to the Coronavirus situation they would prefer to cancel the SCV?** In this scenario, where the decision was based on preference rather than any official advice, parents could decide to cancel the SCV flights and MOD would meet the cost of the cancelled flights. However, this would count as one of the child's SCVs.
- **What if a child travels to the overseas area on a SCV but cannot return following the Easter holiday because of official travel advice, school closure or an isolation period has been imposed?** In this scenario, parents could decide to cancel the flight back to the UK and re-arrange for a later date once the school re-opens or travel advice changes. Any cost incurred in the cancellation and re-booking would be met by the MOD.
- **What if a parent travels to the UK on a reverse SCV but cannot return to the overseas area following the Easter holiday because of official travel advice or an isolation period has been imposed?** In this scenario, parents would be permitted to cancel the flight back to the overseas area and re-arrange for a later date once the official advice permitted travel. Any cost incurred in the cancellation and re-booking would be met by the MOD.
- **What if a reverse SCV to the UK has been booked but a change to the situation in UK means that the SP would prefer their child to travel to the overseas assignment area?** If it is necessary to change travel plans because of advice from the UK Government (www.gov.uk), advice from the children's school or from their local Commanding Officer or the Government of the country to which they are assigned, then flights can be cancelled and the costs of the cancelled flight will be met by the MOD. If appropriate, a SCV could then be arranged for the child instead.
- **What if a child cannot travel to the overseas assignment area due to official travel advice and the parent cannot travel to the UK due to official travel advice?** The cost of return travel from the child's school to a Guardian's address in the UK may be claimed in accordance with JSP 752 10.0211, less the normal parental contribution.
- **Can a SP claim subsistence if they are visiting UK on a reverse SCV and cannot return to the overseas area due to travel restrictions, an imposed isolation period or due to closure of their child's school?** There is no entitlement to subsistence or hotel costs during reverse SCVs. Any questions from displaced families should be directed through Chain of Command who will provide advice on assistance in these circumstances.
- **If a spouse returns to the UK on a reverse SCV and remains in the UK for an extended period what effect would this have on accompanied status and overseas allowances?**
In accordance with JSP 752 Annex A to Section 1 of Chapter 2, when a Service person's spouse/civil partner is absent from the family home for an extended period, there may be a requirement for an assessment of a Service person's accompanied status in order to assess eligibility for expenses and allowances. The exceptional circumstances relating to Coronavirus will be taken into account when making any assessment.
- **What if flights are not available to/from my overseas assignment area due to COVID-19 restrictions but it is possible to make a SCV journey by vehicle and I wish to do so?** In this scenario, you may choose to travel by car and claim the cost of ferry/Eurotunnel and terminal MMA travel in line with the regulations already in place for those assigned to North West Europe. In line with these regulations no subsistence is authorised. JSP 752 Para 0.0211 c. refers.

4. The terms of this Directed Letter will remain in place until rescinded or replaced by AF Rem Allowances. The costs associated with any flights which are cancelled and re-booked should be recorded so that they are available should this information be required at a later date.