

The background of the entire page is a vibrant rainbow with distinct bands of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple. Two white, stylized clouds are superimposed on the rainbow. The top cloud contains the 'aff' logo and the text 'army families federation'. The bottom cloud contains the title of the report.

**aff** | army  
families  
federation

 ANNINGTON TRUST

ANNINGTON TRUST  
*BRIGHTEN YOUR DAY!*  
REPORT

# Supporting Army families during COVID-19

Our former Chief Executive Sara Baade, a trustee of the Annington Trust, began discussions in April on how the trust could support families with COVID-19 projects.

We secured a grant of £25,000 to help families during lockdown with initiatives to make their lives easier during this difficult time.

For those with a poor WiFi connection, we sourced a number of O2 dongles to give away to UK-based families struggling with WiFi during the COVID-19 crisis. They provided emergency internet access for up to three months with a 10GB allowance each per month. This was promoted via our social media channels and was the most popular Facebook post in May, with a reach of nearly 13,500.

We sent out a total of 191 free dongles to families. One common reason that families gave for needing the dongles was poor internet speeds and multiple users, which was having a detrimental effect on both home schooling and parents working from home in some cases.

To lift families' mood during an unprecedented time, we also offered UK-based Army families the chance to apply for free book and magazine subscriptions, entertainment gift cards and children's activity boxes as part of our Brighten Your Day initiative, which was communicated via our website and our social media channels. This was our most popular Facebook post in June, with a reach of nearly 17,500.

Items included a three-month subscription to Rainy Day Box for children, a four-month subscription to Aquila Magazine for children aged 8 to 12 or a three-month subscription to Willoughby Book Club. Families could also apply for three-month gift memberships to Amazon's Audible service and £25 Netflix gift cards.

We also asked families to tell us what was on their lockdown wish list and offered them the opportunity to ask for an item of their choice up to the value of £50.

We had a total of 1,030 applicants for the Brighten Your Day initiative, and the funding allowed us to fulfil 407 of these.

We were able to provide 180 families with a three-month subscription to Rainy Day Box, 110 families with three-month subscriptions to the Willoughby Book Club and 50 four-month subscriptions to Aquila Magazine. In addition to this, more than 30 families received a £25 Netflix gift card and 20 families received a three-month membership to Audible. We were also able to provide 15 free choice items, which included sensory toys for a toddler, board games and a slow cooker.



"We had two children home schooling on Teams all day, two parents working from home, one on Skype, one on Zoom. WiFi couldn't cope so we were having to use mobile data to keep us going.

"We gave the dongle to my daughter who is in a room which the WiFi doesn't reach, so we were able to move her from the tiny box room where there was WiFi signal back to her own room."

"We won three months of activity boxes which will be great as hubby is about to deploy."

"It [slow cooker] certainly did brighten my day, it has brightened my whole week in fact. Bring on the home-cooked meals! Thank you so much."

"Emma was made up with her magazine! Very colourful, lots of great articles, puzzles etc. Thanks very much guys."

"Thank you for approving our application, that is very much appreciated, especially with the husband deployed and comms intermittent."

"Thank you for your very helpful message. We have found the dongle immensely useful during the lockdown, particularly for my husband who is the SP, who has been job hunting.

"We can't thank the generous donors enough.  
"Thank you again."

"Thank you so much for the dongle, it has made the world of difference to us.


"Previously I had a teenager trying to study and do online lessons (he sits A-levels next year), whilst at the same time I was trying to home school my seven-year-old online. Due to the poor internet in our area, only one of them could work at any one time. This meant missed work and frustration. Our 19-year-old at home from a gap year had no chance of any internet during the day! Now both children are able to do all the study required to the requisite deadlines, and our 19-year-old has even got a look-in!

"I have had to put my own work to one side to look after the children, however the dongle has meant that I have been able to study online at the weekend to give me more skills when returning to work."

"Thank you so much, this will make such a difference to the quality of face to face with my pupils, thank you so much."

"Thank you so much again, it really is appreciated. Please pass on our thanks to Annington Trust."





“My daughter was nearing completion of her degree course and we had poor internet connection at home throughout; I've tried three different service providers in recent years and, disappointingly, the speed didn't change.

“However, with your help, my daughter used the dongle near the end, which gave a considerably faster connection - and as a result she's submitted her dissertation and recently received confirmation of her BSc pass.

“As I'm genuinely thankful for all you've done, however short the time was, you genuinely made a difference.”

“Thank you - it's been really helpful as we just moved to Bovington Camp and the signal was awful. It wasn't strong enough to use on a laptop but just enough to have WhatsApp calls.”

“This will help our family out so much. I have a son with an EHCP and this will make things a lot easier. No more internet buffering when they are trying to do work also.”