

In November 2024 AFF conducted a survey that asked you to share your experiences of 0-5 years childcare across the UK and overseas. More than 200 of you responded with your experiences.

Due to the small number of responses we had from overseas, we haven't included these in any of the figures stated here but we will be including your important contributions when we work with our stakeholders so that your voices are heard.

You told us...



72% of you struggled to find available childcare with hours that suit your needs.



62% of you found the cost of childcare is too expensive and as it varies across the UK this can put a strain on your family income.



You have had to make changes to your lifestyle because of issues around childcare.



Hard to find spaces, you need to go on a waiting list for at least three to six months.



More than half my wage is used to cover the nursery cost.

You let us know that...



The stress of sourcing suitable childcare is detrimental to your mental health.



You feel that your children miss out on socialisation and development opportunities by not being able to attend suitable childcare settings.



Many of you feel that finding childcare is made more challenging by being assigned by the Army to places away from support from trusted friends and family.



Impacts job choice, location, socialising, mental health.



The effort trying to find a place... is exhausting and not sustainable.

Families in different UK nations raised the following primary concerns around 0-5 years childcare...



In Scotland one of the main concerns was availability and **87%** of the responses from this part of the UK mentioned this. The other concern in Scotland was cost, especially when families compare it to the current offer available to military families based in England or overseas.



In Wales you told us that the cost of childcare was having a direct impact on your employment opportunities.



In England **63%** of you felt that childcare was too expensive despite some families having access to increased funded hours.



In Northern Ireland you told us that the cost of childcare is prohibitive and that there are limited funded childcare options.



We have no family or friends around to help and relieve us, and therefore I couldn't go back to my job and help out on our finances. It isolates our little one as well as me.



I do not see why we don't get free hours like in England. We get posted to where work tells us we are going, it seems very unfair.

What we will do...



Share an overview of your stories and evidence with our stakeholders in the MOD to continue to help them understand what your issues are.



Advocate for better communication about the childcare offer available to you in each location. Some families are not aware of the options they do have open to them and ensuring families aren't missing out is vital.



Continue to work with relevant stakeholders including governments across the UK to build on understanding of the childcare challenges faced by Army families.