

Title: AFF Big Survey – Future Accommodation Model (FAM)
 Date of issue: January 2019
 Audience: Chain of command, MOD
 Issued by: Michelle Alston, AFF Researcher

Issue

AFF surveyed Army personnel and families to ask about their views on communication of FAM. There were 3,284 responses to the survey¹.

Key findings

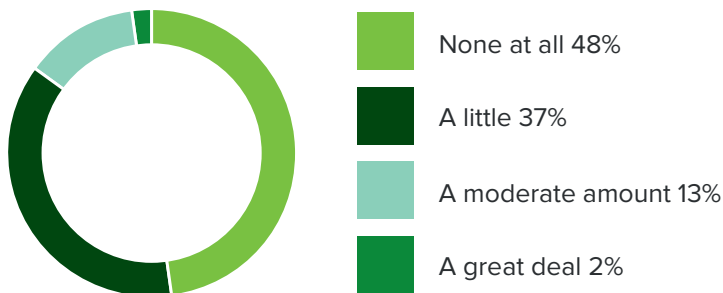
1. Families do not feel communicated with about FAM.
2. Families don't understand why FAM is being implemented.
3. Families want to be informed and listened to.
4. FAM is not compatible with the mobile Army lifestyle.
5. Families are concerned about FAM.

Background

1. Families do not feel communicated with about FAM

How much information have you received about FAM from the chain of command/MOD?

Respondents 2,584



“The information given has been very sparse. The information that we have received has been quite non-committal and hasn't really explained anything.”

- 1.1. The top answer for the source of the most helpful information about FAM was ‘Haven't received any helpful information’ (33%).
- 1.2. Spouses feel less informed than personnel, with 55% of spouses² stating they had received no helpful information about FAM, compared to 26% of Army personnel³.
- 1.3. There is concern that the information provided is vague, uses Army jargon and does not make it clear how it will actually affect families.
- 1.4. Based on comments from families, we identified that some families are concerned that the message given to them about FAM is disingenuous; presented as providing more choice and modernisation, but primarily about cost cutting. Some families did not feel listened to, suggesting that decisions were being made by senior personnel and government who are out of touch with the realities of Service life.

1. 3,284 total responses, however, not all respondents answered all of the questions.

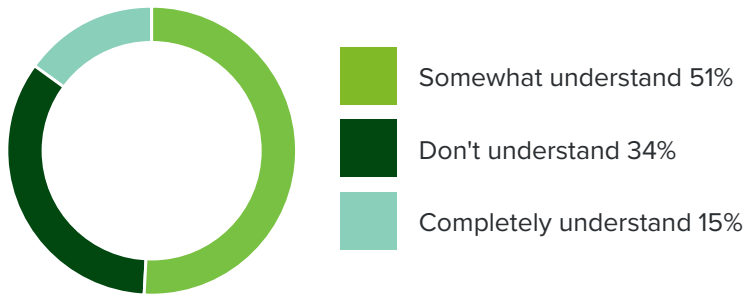
2. 1,955 spouses/civil partners responded to this question.

3. 555 Regular Army personnel respondents.

2. Families do not understand why FAM is being implemented

Do you understand why FAM is being implemented?

Respondents 2,544



2.1. Spouses¹ are less likely to understand why FAM is being implemented; with 38% stating they don't understand, compared to 23% of Army personnel². Those who stated that they completely understood about why FAM was being implemented were more likely to be very unhappy about it.

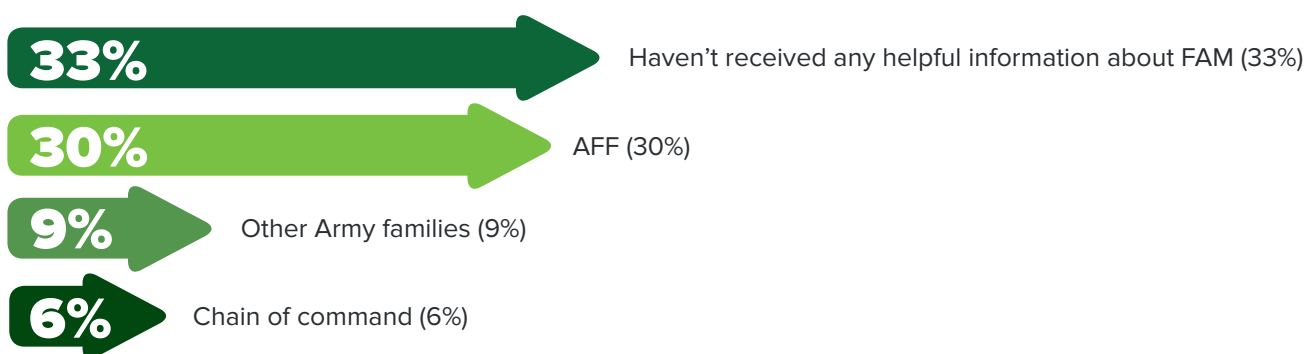
Respondents 2,463

	Very happy	Happy	Neither happy or unhappy	Unhappy	Very unhappy
Completely understand	12%	20%	25%	19%	24%
Somewhat understand	2%	9%	45%	29%	16%
Don't understand	<1%	<1%	71%	12%	16%

3. Families want to be informed and listened to

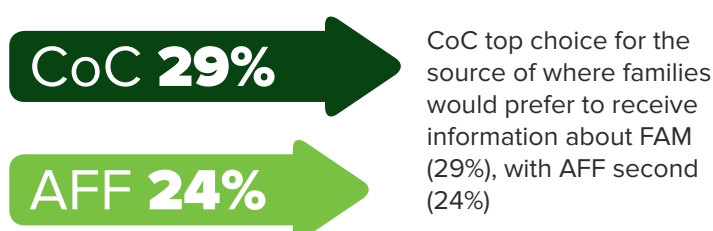
From which source have you received the most helpful information about FAM?³

Respondents 2,544



From which source would you prefer to receive information about FAM?

Respondents 2,544



1. 1,917 spouses/civil partners responded to this question.

2. 553 Regular Army personnel respondents.

3. Other sources included MOD announcements, GOV.UK website, HIVE and media reports.

- 3.1. Chain of command (6%), MOD announcements (6%) and GOV.UK website (4%) had very low response rates as a source of helpful information.
- 3.2. Respondents want information sent direct to the spouse and family (email, briefing pack, newsletter) with factual, clear information that is easy to understand and outlines the real impact for families.

"I would like to see a system where we partners receive information about housing etc into our personal inboxes from the chain of command, so we do not have to rely on our serving partners!"

4. FAM is not compatible with the mobile Army lifestyle

From the comments sections of the survey, we have identified the following themes:

- 4.1. There was significant concern that FAM is incompatible with the mobile Army lifestyle; particularly for those in corps or trades that are highly mobile, and for officers.
- 4.2. There is a fear that this will lead to families living unaccompanied, putting pressure on family relationships and work life balance.
- 4.3. There was a sense that FAM may work for the other less-mobile Services, but not for the Army, and that a 'one size fits all' approach to Service accommodation will not work and is unfair.

"It is a deciding factor in my partner leaving the service, we are no longer supported as a family by the military to remain together for his postings."

"We already own our own property which we cannot live in due to being posted to different parts of the country every two years..."

5. Families are concerned about FAM

From the comments sections of the survey, we have identified the following themes:

- 5.1. **Cost cutting** – Families expressed frustration that FAM was being implemented for cost cutting reasons.
- 5.2. **Loss of patch support** – Families are very concerned at the loss of the informal 'patch' welfare network, providing crucial support to mobile families with a unique lifestyle; as well as resulting in a negative impact on unit cohesion and operational effectiveness.
- 5.3. **'The Offer'** – There was concern that the implementation of FAM would have a significant negative impact on the offer, which would result in a detrimental impact on recruitment and retention.
- 5.4. **Entitlement** – Some families felt FAM could offer a more progressive option to modern Army families, as it would extend entitlement to unmarried personnel. However, some families felt that widening entitlement was a mistake and that rank based housing should remain to ensure families live harmoniously.
- 5.5. **Private rental** – Families highlighted fears about living in private rental, such as whether pets would be permitted, if there would be enough housing stock and security of tenure.
- 5.6. **Costs** – There were also concerns about the impact of the cost of living outside SFA, with families stating that many key Army footprint areas have a very high cost of housing – both rental and purchasing their own house. They also felt that the removal of subsidised SFA could essentially be seen as a pay cut for personnel.

"The introduction of FAM does not take into account the realism of how the Army works and lives. It is naive and a pure cost cutting exercise, poorly thought out and badly planned. The MOD is not listening to families and poor communication about FAM is one of the reasons I don't feel valued as an Army spouse."

"As a spouse whose husband is away at least 80% of the year currently, if it wasn't for living in a community of military families who understand the situation, I would fall to pieces. The mental health side of living in military life is hard enough as it is but then to be taken away from people that understand I feel would be devastating."

The logo consists of the lowercase letters 'a', 'f', and 'f' in a bold, rounded, sans-serif font. The letters are a vibrant green color and are positioned centrally on the page.

army families federation

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Army Families Federation is a charitable incorporated organisation registered in England and Wales with registered charity number 1176393 and a charity registered in Scotland with registered charity number SC048282 having its principal office at IDL 414, Floor 1, Zone 6, Ramillies Building, Marlborough Lines, Monxton Road, Andover SP11 8HJ