

Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA)

Due to our high rates of mobility, boarding school is often the only viable choice for Service children. Families find it an agonising decision - often a decision that they swore never to even consider when their children were younger. Service personnel who claim CEA have to sign a mobility certificate agreeing that they are prepared to move wherever the MOD requests them to. In claiming CEA, a Service person must fully accept that accompanied service is the overriding principle for maintaining their entitlement to the allowance.

Is it going to be cut?

Recent newspaper articles speculating that Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA) is under threat probably stem from the planned review of the Armed Forces financial package - the Strategic Review of Remuneration (SRR). The SRR aims to develop packages tailored to support an appropriate balance between mobility and stability for families, as well as individuals, and will be looking at education, accommodation (including options for greater home ownership), relocation and travel in the future. The Army values and encourages accompanied service - particularly for those who are serving in deployable units and headquarters and for those stationed outside GB - and acknowledges that CEA is vital in supporting accompanied service. The SRR doesn't envisage the removal of CEA and Army Personnel Policy staff are fully engaged in ensuring that the Army's needs - now and in the future - will be properly met within the SRR work.

Can you afford the boarding school you have chosen?

AFF has received a number of queries lately from Army personnel currently claiming CEA who are finding it difficult to meet the ever-increasing difference between CEA and the fees they have to pay. When you are looking for a suitable boarding school, remember to be realistic about the amount of money you might need to allocate from your salary for school fees. Try not to take any second income you currently have into account as you may not be able to work in future postings. It's also worth remembering that the fees quoted are the flat fees and don't always include extras such as music lessons, school trips and uniform costs which can add up to a significant sum at the end of each term.

For further information on CEA contact CEAS on 01980 618244 or email enquiries@ceas.detsa.co.uk

CEA is available from the beginning of the academic year in which a child turns eight until they reach the end of the stage of education in which they are eighteen. In exceptional circumstances CEA may be extended to cover the academic year in which a child turns nineteen. Parents are required to pay 10% of the termly fees at the school they have chosen for their child(ren) up to the maximum termly CEA rates, with any shortfall in fees being met by the parents. A Special Educational Needs Allowance (SENA) is also available in certain circumstances - please contact CEAS for further advice.