

Carers - prevent problems after deployment by preparing before!

We are all aware of the difficulties families face at the time of deployment. The general pages on this website cover a lot of issues relevant to all at this time. I would urge that you read these and follow the practical advice given. However, we cannot hide the fact that those of us who care for others have differing needs. At a time such as this it is vital to acknowledge this, and make every effort to prevent problems occurring by preparing as much as possible.

Support and advice is a very personal issue: there is no such thing as 'the right way' to seek support. There are many different organisations and people involved in the provision of welfare support to carers and individuals with additional needs. I have listed below details (in no particular order) of some of these. Who you do or do not contact is up to you, but think about it sooner rather than later. Remember - after you have made sure the children are okay, walked the dog, done the shopping etc., who is making sure that you are okay?

Friends and Family - Never assume they will not want you to ask for help. Very often they are desperate to be asked, but do not volunteer as they assume that you are 'coping' fine.

Health Visitor - Your local Health Visitor is often able to put you in touch with local support either at group level or a local person who may be in a similar situation to yourself.

Social Worker - If you have been appointed a Social Worker (not all families are), they can prove to be an invaluable resource in the local community.

Unit Welfare Officer - You may or may not feel comfortable seeking advice from your Unit Welfare Officer, feeling you do not want the Army to know your business. However, they have all attended detailed training in welfare issues and can provide invaluable support.

Army Welfare Service - The Army Welfare Service (AWS) provides a network of welfare support throughout the UK and overseas.

SSAFA FH - The SSAFA Additional Needs and Disability Advisor (ANDA) is based at SSAFA HQ in London. They have a superb helpline available where you will be able to get advice on all matters relating to welfare and additional needs.

Homestart - In both UK and BFG Homestart provide excellent home-based support to families. This service is not purely for additional needs, but obviously this places a particular strain on a family.

National Carers Association - The National Carers Association provide a helpline called 'CarersLine'. They can provide advice and support for all issues.

Contact a Family - Contact a Family is a national registered charity, founded in 1979, dedicated to helping families who care for children with any disability or additional need.

AFF - Of course, we are available at any time to provide support and give advice. You can either contact your local co-ordinator or AFF Central Office on 01980 615525