

**SECTION 5a**



# What about the wider family?

## ***"Deployment"***

*Hard times are ahead,  
Lots of housework to be done,  
Dad's on deployment.  
Sending Blueys out,  
I am wishing you are here,  
Can time go quicker?*

**This poem was written by a Year 8 pupil who is also a young carer. If you have had a parent who has had to go away for lengthy periods of time for work, you will probably recognise the sentiments being expressed by this young person.**

Having a parent go away for operational exercises or deployments is very common and an important part of military life. Many Armed Forces families might also experience 'weekending', which is when a serving person works away from their home address during the week but returns home for family weekends.

**Being separated from a parent like this can be difficult for the whole family, but you are not alone.**

There are lots of organisations that can offer advice and support, and plenty of people who can provide suggestions for helping you cope. What's more,

although it may not feel like it at the time, experiencing difficult things, such as a parent being deployed, will help you grow stronger and better equipped for dealing with the challenges that come with adult life.

**The most important advice is to talk to others about how you are feeling. As the famous proverb says...**

**A problem shared is a problem halved.**

## Thoughts from from Service children and young people like you ... how do they manage periods of separation?

- Remember, you're not alone. We're one big family, Forces kids.
- Find out what you can about what your parent will be doing whilst away.
- Don't worry about being worried – it's perfectly normal!
- It's fine to be upset – don't bottle up your feelings, let them out.
- Keep in mind that your parent has been well trained to keep safe.
- Try and keep yourself busy – it will distract you from worrying.
- Sport and recreation can really help with relieving stress and tension.
- Think positively – when you do, usually positive things happen.
- Talk to your friends and people that understand what it's like. Have you asked your brothers and sisters how they are feeling?
- Keep in touch with your deployed parent whenever you can.
- Think ahead about what you will talk about when you speak with them.
- Support your family members as they might be struggling emotionally.
- Be proud of what your military parent does to support the nation.

*"Military life has always shaped the pace of our family, and it looks like this will continue, so I kept going - I've done this before, right? Many times. But this time I offered support to his girlfriend, and her family who are still new to this life and I wondered "what must they be thinking?" I felt that it was my duty to minimise the impact of him being away on others.."*  
**Read 'Mum to Military Parent' in this guide.**

*"Tell us what would help...whether it's school runs, a hot meal, a weekend of calm, or just someone to listen. We can be the extra pair of hands and the constant presence that makes the hard bits a little easier. You don't have to be superhuman, we're here to fill the gaps!"* **Super proud parents of a serving RM who help their daughter-in-law and grandchildren.**

**Naval Families**  
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