



# Family Life and the Armed Forces Community Evaluation

**Dean Renshaw**



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# Foreword

This report explores the impact of just under £11.5 million of grant funding that the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust (the Trust) has awarded to support Armed Forces families experiencing difficult challenges. The Trust awarded these grants under two different funding programmes – Families in Stress and Removing Barriers to Family Life – but the aim of both programmes was to reduce barriers that exist for Armed Forces families.

These barriers can come in many forms, and the Trust's funding programmes encouraged charities to work with Armed Forces bases and units to meet those needs that Armed Forces families themselves identified as challenges. Working in partnership with Armed Forces bases and units was a requirement under the £4.35 million Families in Stress programme, and partnerships were strongly encouraged under the £7.12 million Removing Barriers to Family Life programme too.

Organisations that the Trust awarded through the Families in Stress programme had to show that the support they were offering was time limited and focused and would help families experiencing a particularly stressful period. The Trust was keen to see evidence of co-design and input from families within the design of these projects.

The Removing Barriers to Family Life programme, in turn, extended support in order to reach families of Veterans that were experiencing difficulties and young people within Armed Forces families, as well as serving families. The Trust wanted to support projects that might have a transformative impact on Armed Forces families and has been proud to work with grant-holders as they have faced additional challenges in delivering their work as part of the COVID-19 pandemic. These projects are not yet at an end, and some will continue to offer support through the next two years.

The impact of the projects supported by the two programmes has been analysed in this report by the Directory of Social Change (DSC). The Trust is delighted to share the stories of the grant-holders and their work, which has reached Armed Forces families across the UK – delivering innovative work to reduce domestic violence; supporting military spouse and partner employment and the development of the co-working hubs at or near various military bases; and supporting families that are transitioning out of the Armed Forces or becoming more dispersed. Notably, projects have been able to support service children during significant life events including deployment, illness or injury of a parent, moving home and school, parental divorce or separation, and distance from extended family.

DSC's analysis of the projects funded by the Trust offers significant learning opportunities, which will be of interest to policy makers and those who work with Armed Forces families. The needs of Armed Forces families can be complex and the projects supported by the Trust have enabled Armed Forces families to not only receive timely assistance but – importantly – get support that they have been able to shape themselves.

**Melloney Poole, Chief Executive**  
**Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust**

# About the Directory of Social Change

At the Directory of Social Change (DSC), we believe that the world is made better by people coming together to serve their communities and each other. For us, an independent voluntary sector is at the heart of that social change and we exist to support charities, voluntary organisations and community groups in the work they do. Our role is to:

- **provide practical information** on a range of topics from fundraising to project management in both our printed publications and e-books;
- **offer training** through public courses, events and in-house services;
- **research funders** and maintain a subscription database, *Funds Online*, with details on funding from grant-making charities, companies and government sources;
- **offer bespoke research** to voluntary sector organisations in order to evaluate projects, identify new opportunities and help make sense of existing data;
- **stimulate debate and campaign** on key issues that affect the voluntary sector, particularly to champion the concerns of smaller charities.

Visit our website [www.dsc.org.uk](http://www.dsc.org.uk) to see how we can help you to help others and have a look at [www.fundsonline.org.uk](http://www.fundsonline.org.uk) to see how DSC could improve your fundraising. Alternatively, contact our friendly team at **020 4526 5995** to chat about your needs or drop us a line at [cs@dsc.org.uk](mailto:cs@dsc.org.uk).

# About DSC's research

DSC undertakes bespoke and commissioned research and evaluation work for a wide range of charities and organisations. Our research and consultancy service includes:

- **strategic advice** for grant-makers, charities and companies;
- **sector surveys**, such as membership surveys and surveys of charities and funders;
- **impact evaluation** of giving by large grant-makers and companies;
- **topical research** on sector developments and sub-sectoral analysis;
- **case studies**, highlighting the work of our clients and other organisations in an accessible way.

Our commissioned research is led by the needs of our clients, but our policy work also informs our research for the benefit of the wider voluntary sector. This policy work includes campaigns such as Everybody Benefits, which raises awareness of the benefit of charities and the voluntary sector, and the recent #NeverMoreNeeded campaign, which highlights the vital work of charities during the COVID-19 pandemic and the crucial support they themselves needed during the crisis.

An important part of our work is providing research, insight and evidence on UK Armed Forces charities. This award-winning research<sup>1</sup>, funded by Forces in Mind Trust, has to date seen DSC publish ten accessible reports which provide analytical data, trends and commentary and are used by policymakers, government and charities alike. DSC is now recognised as the premier source of research and information on charities which support the Armed Forces community, and our evidence to Cobseo (The Confederation of Service Charities) on how the sector needed state assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic led to the government providing financial support to Armed Forces charities in 2020.

<sup>1</sup> DSC received the 2021 Forces in Mind Trust Research Award – see [www.fim-trust.org/news-policy-item/stuart-cole-wins-fimt-research-award-for-insights-which-supported-the-armed-forces-charities-sector-during-covid-19](http://www.fim-trust.org/news-policy-item/stuart-cole-wins-fimt-research-award-for-insights-which-supported-the-armed-forces-charities-sector-during-covid-19).

# About the author

## DEAN RENSHAW



Dean joined DSC in 2019 as a Senior Researcher and works on commissioned research projects in DSC's research team.

Dean has worked with a range of charities to help them better understand their existing data and gather new data from stakeholders in order to improve their vital services, projects and programmes. He uses a wide range of quantitative and qualitative research methods and enjoys working with charities to tailor the methodology to their needs. Dean's interests in the charity sector include charities that support mental health and wellbeing as well as charities that use gardening and horticultural activities to support their beneficiaries.

Prior to joining DSC, Dean worked as a data analyst in the fast-moving consumer goods industry. He holds a BSc (Hons) in Psychology from the University of Sheffield.

# Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank all of the organisations that provided information during the data-collection period of this research.

Special thanks go to Melloney Poole, Chief Executive, Sonia Howe, Director of Policy and Communications, Rachel Dawkins, Grants Manager, Carol Stone, Director of Grants and Rachel Murphy, Policy and Impact Analyst at the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust for their support throughout the research process, and to all of the organisations that are featured in and contributed to case studies.

The author is thankful to Tom Traynor for research support. Editorial work was carried out by Hazel Bird and Gabi Zagnojute.

# Executive summary

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

This primary aim of this evaluation is to explore the impact of funding made under the Removing Barriers to Family Life theme by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust (the Trust). This theme consists of the Families in Stress and Removing Barriers to Family Life funding programmes.

DSC's researchers analysed secondary data provided by the Trust and deployed two surveys to gather data directly from the organisations running the programmes under the Removing Barriers to Family Life funding theme. A third survey will be deployed in 2021 to further assess the Removing Barriers to Family Life funding programme from the perspectives of the beneficiaries of the projects.

## KEY FINDINGS

### Families in Stress

#### Overview of the projects

- A total of £4.35 million was provided in grants to support 25 projects.
- The median value of the projects across the programme was £149,319.
- At the time of writing (December 2020), 12 projects had been completed and 13 were ongoing. The COVID-19 pandemic had affected several projects and the Trust had displayed considerable flexibility during the uncertainty caused by the pandemic.
- The organisations within the Families in Stress programme varied in size. Most organisations were either medium or large (according to the size criteria set out by NCVO<sup>2</sup>).

#### The extent to which grants have had a transformative effect for Armed Forces families

- Several organisations demonstrated a focus on preventing beneficiaries becoming dependent on the projects.
- There was a clear understanding of the transformative effects that the projects were aiming to achieve.
- Examples of transformative effects achieved included the development of support networks within communities, improvements to health and wellbeing, and building confidence.
- Most of the survey respondents (19 of 21) agreed or strongly agreed that their project had brought about effective and noticeable change for Armed Forces families.

<sup>2</sup> 'How many voluntary organisations are there?' [web page], NCVO, 2019, <https://data.ncvo.org.uk/profile/size-and-scope>, accessed 6 January 2021.

### **The complexity of the needs of Armed Forces families**

- Organisations identified a range of complex needs addressed by their projects, including those resulting from geography, the culture and shared experiences in the Armed Forces, and the constantly changing nature of the Armed Forces.
- Some organisations identified complex needs that specifically related to the category of their respective projects – for example, emotional and psychological harm as a result of domestic violence and abuse.
- Other complex needs identified included isolation, poor health and wellbeing, and difficulties brought about by the transition to civilian life.

### **Evidence of emerging needs of Armed Forces families**

- There were relatively few findings from the secondary data regarding needs that may be under-researched or less well understood. Future end-of-grant reports and progress reports may benefit from directly asking organisations about them.
- Findings were typically related to the population each project was targeting, such as the unique circumstances of individuals in the Royal Navy that may not be found in other branches of the Armed Forces.
- The survey data revealed less widespread but interesting needs that were under-researched or not well understood, such as a high proportion of spouses being unable to drive, resulting in an inability to access services.

### **The barriers faced by Armed Forces families supported by the projects**

- Stigma was one of the most common barriers identified in the analysis of the secondary data.
- Trust was also identified by several organisations as a major barrier, and some organisations detailed the ways in which they attempted to gain the trust of their beneficiaries.

### **The role of partnership work and co-operation**

- Excellent examples of partnership work and co-operation were found from the analysis of secondary data, not only with Armed Forces bases but also with other organisations, such as schools and charities.
- The majority of the survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed (20 of 21) that partnership work with Armed Forces bases was important to their project.

### **Evidence of good practice of co-design**

- Evidence of good practice of co-design (i.e. collaboration with other organisations and individuals to benefit the design and development of a project) was clear in the analysis of secondary data. Organisations used co-design to avoid duplication of effort and often included beneficiaries directly in efforts to improve projects.

- Of a total of 16 respondents, 12 stated that their beneficiaries were involved in the design of their project.

### **The extent to which beneficiaries perceive that they have been supported through the projects**

- Generally speaking, the secondary data contained little evidence of beneficiaries' perceptions of support, although some evidence was found in the case studies provided by the organisations.

### **The sustainability of the projects, and risks and barriers to sustainability**

- Analysis of the secondary data revealed that staff turnover was a common risk to the sustainability of the projects.
- Financial sustainability was the most common concern regarding the sustainability of the projects, as evidenced in both the end-of-grant reports and the survey responses.

### **How the projects have used data to inform and show the impact of their work**

- The secondary data contained numerous examples of quantitative and qualitative data showing the impact of the projects on Armed Forces families.
- Out of a total of 22 respondents, 20 either agreed or strongly agreed that they collected data to inform and show the impact of their work.

### **Learning and good practice to inform similar projects that support Armed Forces families**

- The importance of building relationships with Armed Forces bases and other organisations was clear from the analysis of the secondary data.
- All 20 respondents to the statement 'My programme or service could be applied to similar Armed Forces families' agreed that this was the case.

### **Learning and good practice to inform wider public policy**

- The secondary data contained few references to learning and good practice to inform wider public policy, and future programmes may benefit from explicitly asking organisations about this topic (e.g. via end-of-grant reports).

### **The role of effective communications**

- While effective communications was a less prominent theme than the others, the projects displayed excellent examples of the benefits of effective communications, such as promotion via blogs, radio stations and leaflets.



### **The impact of COVID-19**

- All projects running during the COVID-19 pandemic were affected, although there was a degree of variation in how seriously this was the case.
- The projects displayed excellent adaptability to the pandemic, and the secondary data provided examples of projects adapting to new modes of service, such as digital delivery methods.

## Removing Barriers to Family Life

### **Overview of the projects**

- A total of 59 projects were awarded £7.12 million in funding.
- The median value of the projects across the programme was £97,500.
- The majority of the projects (N=50) were in the medium strand (i.e. grant totals between £30,000 and £100,000). The remainder of the projects (N=9) were in the large strand (i.e. grants over £100,000).
- The vast majority of the grants (N=50) were awarded to registered charities. The other types of organisation in receipt of grant funding were Armed Forces units (N=6), community interest companies (N=2) and one public sector organisation.
- All projects under this funding programme were ongoing as of the time of writing (December 2020) and had been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **The extent to which grants have had a transformative effect for Armed Forces families**

- The application forms showed a clear understanding of the transformative effects the projects aimed to achieve.

### **The complexity of the needs of Armed Forces families**

- Complex needs were demonstrated in the application forms. The complex needs of Armed Forces families that have relocated were highlighted as particularly complex, especially in relation to Armed Forces families from Gurkha communities.
- Most survey respondents agreed that their project had enhanced their understanding of the challenges faced by Armed Forces families.

### **Evidence of emerging needs of Armed Forces families**

- Emerging needs discussed in the application forms included stress on publicly funded welfare organisations and the changing demographics of Armed Forces families living on site.

### **The role of partnership work and co-operation**

- Projects demonstrated partnership work with a range of organisations (such as schools) and across geographical areas.
- The majority of the survey respondents (27 of 35) either agreed or strongly agreed that partnership work with Armed Forces bases would be important to their project.

### **Evidence of good practice of co-design**

- Projects demonstrated examples of co-design with their beneficiaries and with relevant organisations, such as schools.
- The majority (26 of 32 respondents) had included their beneficiaries in the design of their project.
- Four respondents stated that they felt it would have been beneficial to include their beneficiaries in the design of their project in hindsight.

### **The extent to which beneficiaries perceive that they have been supported through the projects**

- Projects shared examples of feedback from beneficiaries that demonstrated the beneficiaries' perceptions of support, including an example of how arts had been used as a way of engaging with children.

### **The sustainability of the projects, and risks and barriers to sustainability**

- Financial sustainability was noted as one of the most common barriers to the sustainability of the projects, both in the application forms and in the survey responses.
- Six respondents disagreed that their project was financially sustainable and a further five remained neutral on the statement 'My programme or service is financially sustainable.'
- COVID-19 was commonly cited as one of the biggest risks to the financial sustainability of the projects, particularly by organisations that rely on fundraising.

### **How the projects have used data to inform and show the impact of their work**

- The majority of the respondents (32 of 34) agreed or strongly agreed that they were collecting useful data to inform and show the impact of their work.
- A total of 21 respondents stated that they were not using the Trust's Impact Hub to measure impact. A further six did not know whether they were using the Impact Hub, suggesting that there is a need to further investigate the understanding and perceptions of this tool.

### **Learning and good practice to inform similar projects that support Armed Forces families**

- All respondents (N=35) who completed the question either agreed or strongly agreed that their project could be applied to similar Armed Forces families.

### **The impact of COVID-19**

- A total of 34 of the 59 projects had completed grant variation forms requesting a variation to their original grant.
- The most common request was to delay or postpone the project, followed by requests to extend the funding period and vary the content of the project. A variation in the budget was the least common request.
- Restrictions put in place by governments in response to the pandemic have affected the projects, with organisations stating that they were unable to conduct face-to-face activities and had therefore adapted their approach.
- When asked to what extent the COVID-19 pandemic had affected their project, 27 of 37 respondents stated that it had done so significantly and nine stated that it had done so slightly. Only one respondent stated that it had not affected their project, but this may be due to the fact that the project in question was still in its early stages.

### Overview of the Removing Barriers to Family Life funding theme

- The 84 projects under the two programmes within the Removing Barriers to Family Life funding theme had been awarded a total of £11.47 million.
- The median value of all the grants was £99,758.
- The most common project category was 'Children and young people' (20 projects).
- The Trust has responded swiftly and flexibly to the COVID-19 pandemic, with some survey respondents wishing to note their appreciation of this assistance.

# Introduction

## CONTEXT

Data from the latest UK Tri-Service Families Continuous Attitude Survey found that there are roughly 62,000 Regular Service personnel who are married or in a civil partnership, and that 79% of Service families have children.<sup>3</sup>

Armed Forces families experience unique circumstances that may not be found in the general population, such as frequent relocations and caring responsibilities.<sup>4</sup> These may expose Armed Forces families to additional stressors in family life that are not experienced by families in the general population.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

The primary aim of this evaluation is to explore the impact of funding provided under the Removing Barriers to Family Life funding theme by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust (the Trust). As of the time of writing (December 2020), the Removing Barriers to Family Life funding theme consisted of two funding programmes: Families in Stress and Removing Barriers to Family Life.

This evaluation aims to explore and identify learning and good practice that could benefit similar projects serving Armed Forces families, and to inform wider public policy to benefit Armed Forces families. The report examines and investigates the two funding programmes by looking at the following topics (where relevant) to assess and explore the impact of the Trust's funding:

- The extent to which grants have had a transformative effect for Armed Forces families
- The complexity of the needs of Armed Forces families
- Evidence of emerging needs of Armed Forces families (i.e. the emergence of needs that may be under-researched or not well understood)
- The barriers faced by Armed Forces families supported by the projects
- The role of partnership work and co-operation
- Evidence of good practice of co-design (i.e. examples and evidence of collaboration with other organisations and with individuals to develop and improve the services on offer)
- The extent to which beneficiaries perceive that they have been supported through the projects

<sup>3</sup> *UK Tri-Service Families Continuous Attitude Survey Results 2020* [PDF], Ministry of Defence, 2020, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/903296/Tri-Service\\_Families\\_Continuous\\_Attitude\\_Survey\\_2020\\_Main\\_Report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/903296/Tri-Service_Families_Continuous_Attitude_Survey_2020_Main_Report.pdf), accessed 6 January 2021.

<sup>4</sup> *The Role of Health Visitors and School Nurses: Supporting the health and wellbeing of military families* [PDF], Public Health England, 2015, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/479525/2903829\\_PHE\\_Military\\_Families\\_Accessible\\_v0.2.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/479525/2903829_PHE_Military_Families_Accessible_v0.2.pdf), accessed 6 January 2021.

- The sustainability of the projects, and risks and barriers to sustainability
- How the projects have used data to inform and show the impact of their work
- Learning and good practice to inform similar projects serving Armed Forces families, as well as to inform wider public policy

DSC's researchers identified an additional topic in the analysis of the Families in Stress programme, which was the role of effective promotion and communications. Furthermore, some of the Families in Stress projects and all of the Removing Barriers to Family Life projects ran during the (as of the time of writing) ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. As such, this report also explores the impact of COVID-19 on the projects under both the Families in Stress and the Removing Barriers to Family Life programmes.

## METHODOLOGY

DSC's researchers employed two main methodologies to analyse and assess the impact of the funding provided under the Families in Stress and the Removing Barriers to Family Life programmes. These were the analysis of secondary data and the use of surveys.

### Analysis of secondary data

The Trust provided DSC's researchers with secondary data (i.e. data collected by the Trust and not by DSC) to analyse. This data was provided in a range of formats, including Microsoft Word and Excel files, PDFs, images and MP3 files.

In order to analyse the secondary data in a way that would allow for all projects to be compared and analysed in similar ways, DSC's researchers prioritised the analysis of certain documents. These documents were:

- application forms submitted to the Trust;
- progress update forms, which provided an update on the progress of a project in a specific time period;
- end-of-grant progress reports, which were completed at the end of a project;
- grant variation forms, which were submitted to the Trust by organisations that requested a variation to their original grant (the grant variation forms analysed in this report were submitted due to the COVID-19 pandemic).

In order to analyse these documents, DSC's researchers employed a thematic analysis approach<sup>5</sup> using the topics outlined in section 1.2.

### Surveys

DSC's researchers designed and deployed two surveys to be completed by organisations in receipt of grant funding from the Trust under both funding programmes. The surveys aimed

<sup>5</sup> Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, 'Thematic Analysis', in *APA Handbook of Research Methods in Psychology*, Vol. 2: *Research Designs: Quantitative, qualitative, neuropsychological, and biological*, edited by Harris Cooper, Washington, DC, American Psychological Association, 2012, pp. 57-71.

to supplement the analysis of secondary data by directly asking respondents about their experiences while carrying out their projects. The surveys asked questions on a range of topics, such as the sustainability of the project, the needs faced by Armed Forces families in the project and the findings (if applicable) from the project. The surveys were designed and deployed using SurveyMonkey.

The Families in Stress survey launched on 14 September 2020 and closed on 19 October 2020. It received 21 responses.

The Removing Barriers to Family Life survey launched on 9 November 2020 and closed on 7 December 2020. It received 49 responses, although seven responses were completely blank (which may have been a result of respondents clicking through the survey to see what the questions were). This resulted in a total of 42 responses.

The remainder of this report features a number of quotes from the secondary data and from the survey respondents. Whereas the quotes from the secondary data are attributed to their respective organisations, the surveys were conducted on the basis of anonymity. Therefore, the attribution 'Survey respondent' is used for quotes from survey responses.

A third survey will be deployed in 2021 to further assess the Removing Barriers to Family Life funding programme from the perspectives of the beneficiaries of the projects within this programme.



## CHAPTER ONE

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# Families in Stress

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Families in Stress programme was established to support projects that assist serving personnel who are experiencing a stressful life event and who would benefit from an intervention from a provider that is able to provide specialised, localised and immediate support to the families of serving personnel. Examples of life events given by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust (the Trust) in its application guidance document include life-changing injury, bereavement, domestic abuse, a breakdown in relationships, experience of the civil or Service justice systems, and mental health or wellbeing issues.

The Trust established in its application guidance that the projects that would be supported would fill gaps in service provision and would not replicate or replace existing statutory or charitable service provision. Projects were asked to display an understanding of the diverse nature of Service families, and to be in a close partnership with local Armed Forces bases.

## 1.2 OVERVIEW AND ANALYSIS

In total, 25 projects received funding from the Trust as part of the Families in Stress programme. This funding was in excess of £4.35 million.

Of the total of £4.35 million, the smallest amount awarded was £83,161 to the National Communities Resource Centre for the Forces Family Futures project. The largest amount awarded was £300,000 to Children 1st (Moray) for the Children 1st Supporting Families Moray project. The median award across all 25 projects was £149,319.

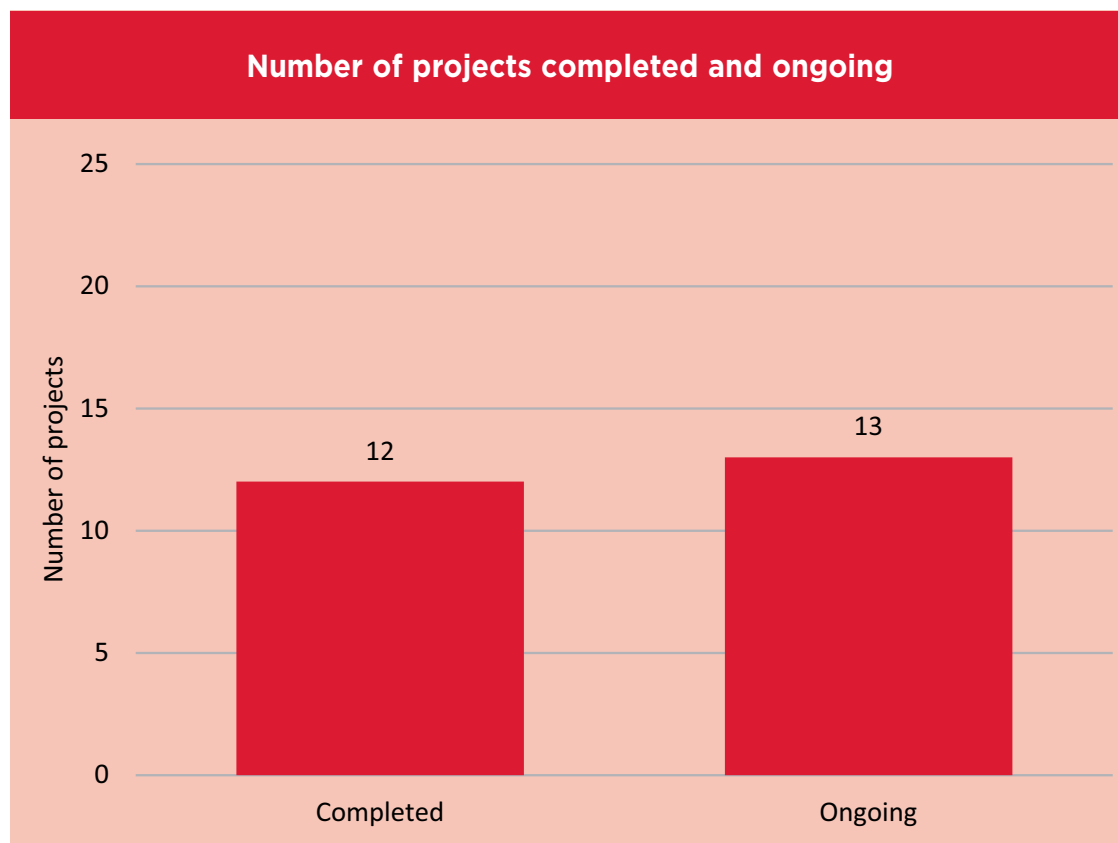
Appendix A provides a table of the 25 projects in the Families in Stress programme with their grant totals and a brief description of each project.



## Status of the projects

At the time of writing (December 2020), a total of 12 projects in the Families in Stress programme had been completed and 13 were ongoing (see figure 1.1). The COVID-19 pandemic had resulted in some projects running for longer than expected and being extended (with approval from the Trust) beyond their original end date.

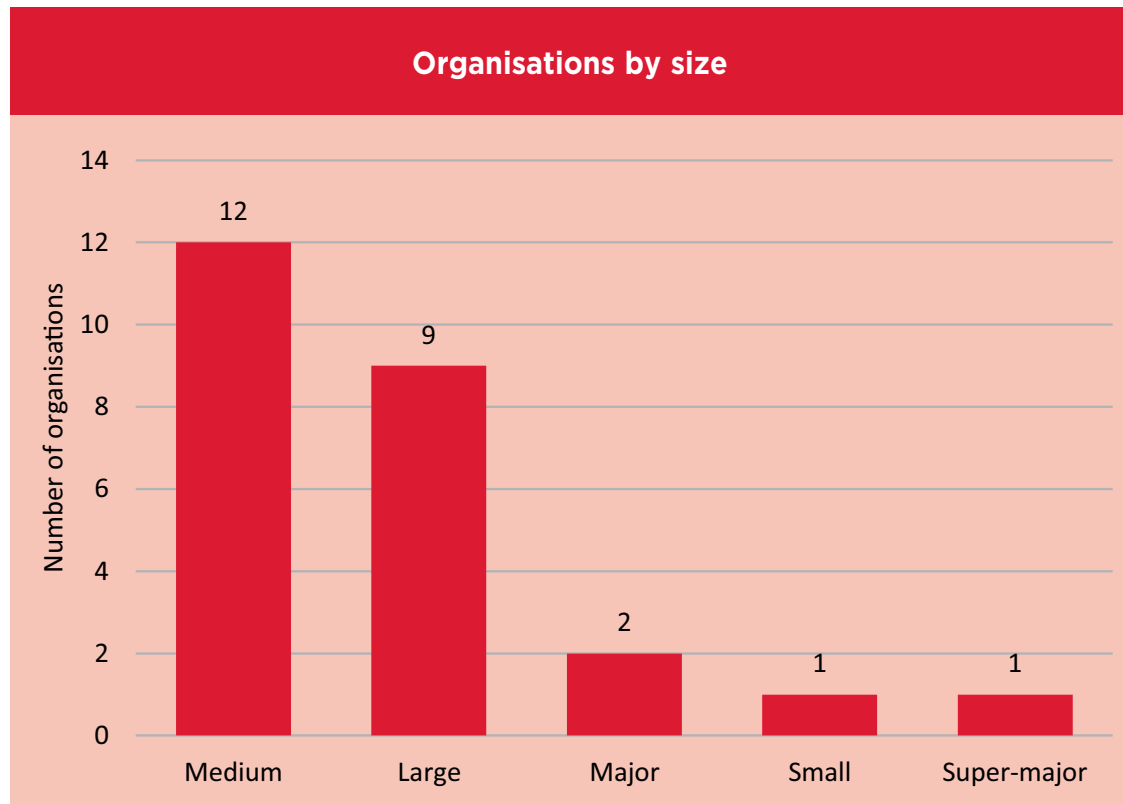
Figure 1.1



## Size of the organisations

As set out in the application guidelines for the Families in Stress programme, all organisations in the programme were registered charities. Using the income from the organisations' latest accounts, the organisations can be categorised according to size.<sup>1</sup>

Figure 1.2



As seen in figure 1.2, the majority of the organisations in the Families in Stress programme were medium (N=12), followed by large (N=9). No micro organisations (i.e. those with less than £10,000 income) were awarded grants. The one super-major charity that was awarded a grant was Barnardo's, for its Strengthening Community Families project.

It would appear that smaller charities were not as well represented as medium-sized and large charities. However, it is not clear whether this is because smaller charities are not successful in applying for funding or whether they are not applying for funding at all. It is possible that only larger organisations are able to provide services that benefit Armed Forces families in this particular area of provision, and larger organisations may find it easier to develop and maintain close partnerships with Armed Forces bases. The Trust may wish to investigate whether there is an opportunity for more funding to enable micro and small-sized charities to provide specific and smaller-scale projects.

<sup>1</sup> The size categories are those set out by NCVO: 'How many voluntary organisations are there?' [web page], NCVO, 2019, <https://data.ncvo.org.uk/profile/size-and-scope>, accessed 6 January 2021.

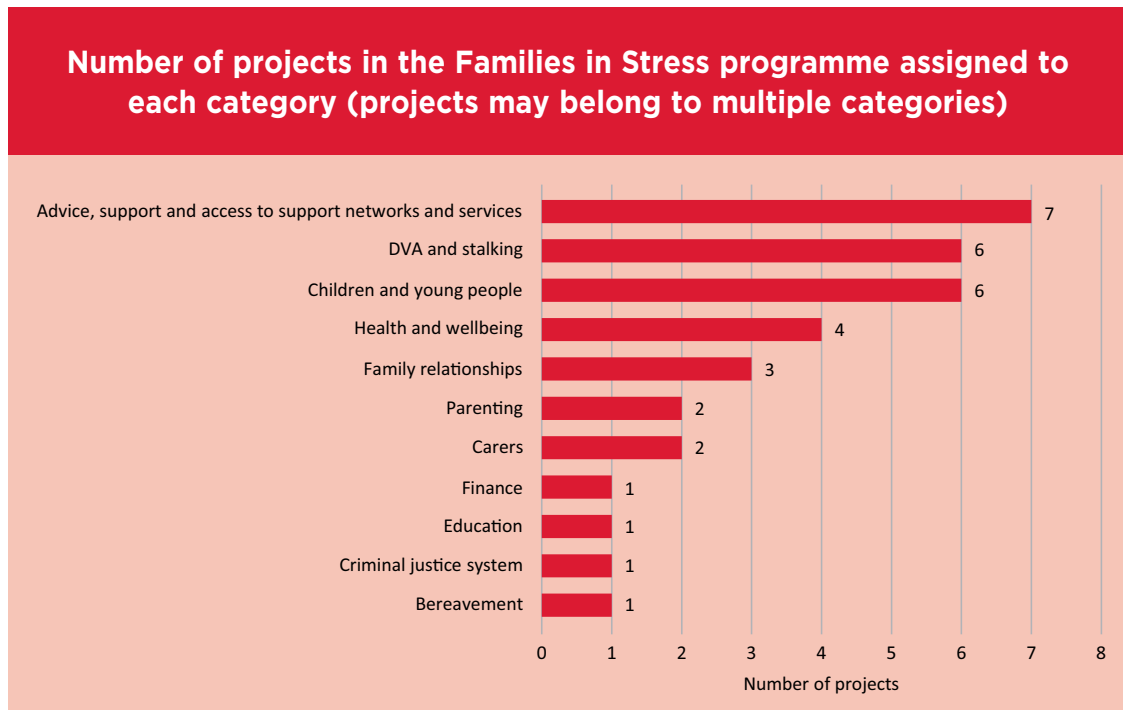
### 1.3 PROJECT CATEGORIES

DSC’s researchers identified several categories and assigned the projects to those categories (figure 1.3). The categories used for the Families in Stress programme were:

- Advice, support and access to support networks and services
- Bereavement
- Carers
- Children and young people
- Criminal justice system
- DVA (domestic violence and abuse) and stalking
- Education
- Family relationships
- Finance
- Health and wellbeing
- Parenting

It should be noted that the categories are not mutually exclusive and therefore projects may be assigned to multiple categories. For example, Aurora New Dawn: Forces Advocacy and Stalking Awareness was assigned to both ‘Advice, support and access to support networks and services’ and ‘DVA and stalking’.

Figure 1.3



## Advice, support and access to support networks and services

A total of seven projects were categorised under 'Advice, support and access to support networks and services' (see table 1.1). The smallest grant awarded under this category was £85,674 and the largest was £300,000. The median value of the grants under this category was £208,447.

Table 1.1

<b>Projects under the 'Advice, support and access to support networks and services' category</b>		
<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Project title</b>	<b>Grant total (£)</b>
Children 1st (Moray)	Children 1st Supporting Families Moray	300,000
The Warrior Programme	Warrior Supporting Families in Stress	299,735
The Warrior Programme	The Warrior Serving Family Programme	297,021
Citizens Advice Hart District	Joining Forces for Families	208,447
Aurora New Dawn	Forces Advocacy and Stalking Awareness	150,000
Home-Start Norfolk	Reaching Out Building Bonds	101,607
Family Lives	Supporting Forces Families	85,674

## Bereavement

One project was categorised under 'Bereavement' (Cruse Bereavement Care: Support for Bereaved Families). This project was given £298,393.

## Carers

Two projects were assigned to the 'Carers' category. These projects were Carer Support Wiltshire: Courage to Care Carer Support for Serving Military Families and Suffolk Family Carers Ltd: Suffolk Families Project, which were awarded £131,822 and £121,422 respectively.

## Children and young people

A total of six projects were categorised under 'Children and young people' (see table 1.2). The smallest grant awarded under this category was £90,000 and the largest was £265,832. The median value of the grants for all six projects was £111,505.

Table 1.2

<b>Projects under the 'Children and young people' category</b>		
<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Project title</b>	<b>Grant total (£)</b>
Spurgeons	Recovering Together	265,832
Children 1st (Faslane)	Children 1st Family Supporting Families	168,000
Home-Start York	Supporting Military Families in Our Community	123,224
Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire	Military Families in Our Community Support Project	99,785
Relate Portsmouth and District	Naval Family Counselling	95,664
Home-Start Kennet	Serving Families	90,000

## Criminal justice system

One project was assigned to the 'Criminal justice system' category. This was for Barnardo's (London): Strengthening Community Families. The project was given a grant of £136,699.

## DVA (domestic violence and abuse) and stalking

Six projects were categorised as 'DVA and stalking' (see table 1.3). The grant totals ranged from £99,300 to £299,832, with a median award of £149,986.

Table 1.3

<b>Projects under the 'DVA and stalking' category</b>		
<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Project title</b>	<b>Grant total (£)</b>
Southern Domestic Abuse Service	Up2U Creating Healthy Relationships	299,832
Spurgeons	Recovering Together	265,832
Aurora New Dawn	Forces Advocacy and Stalking Awareness	150,000
Friends of Wavell	Tri-Service Family Support Service	149,972
Nottinghamshire Women's Aid Ltd	Supporting Families Experiencing Domestic Abuse	99,978
Hampton Trust	RADAR	99,300

## Education

One project was categorised under 'Education', which was Friends of Wavell: Tri-Service Family Support Service. The project was awarded £149,972.

## Family relationships

Three projects were assigned to the category of 'Family relationships' (see table 1.4). The amounts awarded ranged from £83,161 to £168,000. The median value of the three grants under this category was £95,664.

Table 1.4

<b>Projects under the 'Family relationships' category</b>		
<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Project title</b>	<b>Grant total (£)</b>
Children 1st (Faslane)	Children 1st Family Supporting Families	168,000
Relate Portsmouth and District	Naval Family Counselling	95,664
National Communities Resource Centre	Forces Family Futures	83,161

## Finance

One project was assigned to the category of 'Finance', which was Friends of Wavell: Tri-Service Family Support Service. This project was awarded £149,972.

## Health and wellbeing

Four projects were categorised as 'Health and wellbeing' (see table 1.5). The smallest value of the grant awarded under this category was £149,972 and the largest was £281,604. The median value of the grants under this category was £211,891.

Table 1.5

Projects under the 'Health and wellbeing' category		
Organisation	Project title	Grant total (£)
Sheffield Mind Ltd	Keeping Families in Mind	281,604
Mind	The AF Wellbeing Advisor Project	215,335
Citizen's Advice Hart District	Joining Forces for Families	208,447
Friends of Wavell	Tri-Service Family Support Service	149,972

## Parenting

Two projects were assigned to the 'Parenting' category. These were Friends of Wavell: Tri-Service Family Support Service and Unity (Southern) Ltd: Strengthening Families through Positive Parenting, which were given grants of £149,972 and £149,319 respectively.

## 1.4 THE EXTENT TO WHICH GRANTS HAVE HAD A TRANSFORMATIVE EFFECT FOR ARMED FORCES FAMILIES

It is evident from both the analysis of secondary data and the results of the survey that the projects within the Families in Stress programme have had a transformative effect on their participants. For the purpose of this report, a transformative effect is defined as one that has achieved an effective and noticeable change for the beneficiaries of a project.

## Analysis of secondary data

### Application forms

It was apparent throughout the application forms that the organisations had a clear idea of exactly what transformative effects they were hoping to achieve.

We help families identify and build on their existing connections, skills and knowledge. We help them identify and access opportunities and services in the community – whether it be around health, leisure or wider social networks.

**Family Lives: Supporting Forces Families**

After programme completion all clients will develop a relapse prevention plan through two or more ‘Moving On’ sessions to ensure that they can utilise new skills independent of the project and prevent long-term dependency.

**Southern Domestic Abuse Service: Up2U Creating Healthy Relationships**

The proven benefits to families include: strengthening the self-awareness of all family members; improving relationships between all family members; helping families develop their skills in positive conflict resolution; providing a space for reflection on how families want to live together, what works for each and for exchange of ideas from other families; building shared resilience in the face of difficulties; [and] providing general advice on a variety of practical topics. [The service] is also designed to be enjoyable for all concerned.

**Unity (Southern) Ltd: Strengthening Families through Positive Parenting**

One survey question was: ‘How will you demonstrate that your project will deliver services that support the families of serving personnel additional to those funded by government and how far will the service and/or outcomes complement existing initiatives?’ In response, multiple respondents stated that the prevention of dependency on the project was important in achieving a transformative effect. For example, the Hampton Trust conducted the RADAR programme with alleged perpetrators of domestic abuse. It stated that using motivational interviewing techniques to engage beneficiaries would ‘encourage and support change and ensure long-term dependency does not develop’.

The organisations had gained a clear understanding of the transformative effect that they aimed to achieve from research that they had conducted into the needs of the Armed Forces families that they intended to support. Notwithstanding, in general the assertions tended to be anecdotal and it was not clear whether they were based on published research or internal findings.



Commonly cited impacts of Warrior include significant reductions in stress, depression, anger and obsessive/compulsive conditions and increases in energy, feeling positive, calmness and ability to set and achieve goals. 'Getting rid of baggage', both mental and physical, was frequently reported, helping to improve wellbeing and the ability to 'focus on what really matters, what's important'.

**The Warrior Programme: Warrior Supporting Families in Stress**

We were recently approached for help for two families where the serving personnel had been recalled from deployment due to the severity of the situation at home. With our support one was able to return to his deployment after two weeks. This project will increase our flexibility to address the needs identified above by ensuring that we can respond promptly.

**Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire: Military Families in Our Community Support Project**

The application forms also highlighted that the transformative effect goes beyond the individual serving in the Armed Forces and their family, to indirect beneficiaries.

At a wider level, the project will impact positively on the Armed Forces, as serving personnel will be able to perform their duties better when they are confident that support is in place for their family. There will also be a positive impact on health and social care services, e.g. we have been able to demonstrate that needs for funded services have been reduced thanks to our initial assessment and preventative approach.

**Carer Support Wiltshire: Courage to Care Carer Support for Serving Military Families**

## **Progress update forms**

As the projects progressed, the transformative effect for Armed Forces families was one of the most common themes identified throughout the projects' progress update forms. When asked to detail their projects' progression, organisations typically provided evidence of how they had achieved a transformative effect for Armed Forces families.

Our group sessions have helped individuals not just open up to our staff but have also given them the tools to develop long-lasting support networks within their own communities. This was seen not just within schools but within the parent-targeted coffee mornings as well.

**Children 1st (Moray): Children 1st Supporting Families Moray**

This project has also achieved its first client to complete the programme whereby positive [feedback] from the client was received and [there was] evidence of a decrease in risk of domestic violence.

**Southern Domestic Abuse Service: Up2U Creating Healthy Relationships**

Parents' self-reported coping scores continue to demonstrate progress being made across key areas of need, with the significant majority of parents reporting that they have now achieved or partially achieved their identified goals in the following areas:

- managing children's behaviour, listening to children and respecting their rights (80%);
- being involved in the children's development/early learning and socialisation (67%);
- coping with physical health (100%).

**Home-Start Kennet: Serving Families**

The progress update forms also provided information on how the projects had supported wider groups of people, such as families. Several organisations were able to provide information on the transformative effects achieved for a wider group of people.

A detainee completed a referral form for his partner following his six-month sentence. He has a seven-week-old baby with his wife and wanted me to offer support to her around benefits and housing as they have a private rental and they have to move out in two months. This was causing his partner great anxiety and I worked with Riverside Housing at the MCTC [Military Corrective Training Centre] to arrange an application to apply for a discretionary payment, which was successful, to allow [the couple] more time to find somewhere else to live – this is still ongoing. CAPSS [Children Affected by Parental Service Separation – another Barnardo's project] also provided information on local support for Mum on her local children's centres, baby massage and yoga groups.

**Barnardo's (London): Strengthening Community Families**

Based on the families who have completed a review form and of those whose support is concluded:

- 90% reported feeling less isolated.
- 100% showed improvement in parenting.
- 30% reported progress in improved communities.

Five families have needed support with mental health issues and self-esteem. They have shown significant improvement in these areas, with support, which in turn has an impact on parenting and may lead to improved communities and feeling less isolated. Following support, in this area, one parent has returned to one of our groups, unsupported, and another has begun to attend.

**Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire: Military Families in Our Community Support Project**

Suffolk Family Carers Ltd detailed that it had signposted a family carer to other organisations which were able to give 'advice and information specific to the needs of the family unit'. Although this was not a transformative effect in itself, it enabled that particular individual to access the support required, thus achieving a transformative effect.

### **End-of-grant reports**

The projects' end-of-grant reports provided the most information on the transformative effects achieved for Armed Forces families. However, as not all of the projects were complete at the time of writing, the data presented below only displays the findings from a small subset of all projects under the Families in Stress programme.

The organisations provided both quantitative and qualitative data to display the transformative effects that they had achieved, and the data provided was typically simple and easy to understand.

The most significant achievement of the service has been the impact of the support provided to families. For the 132 individuals supported, the service achieved positive progress [towards] the following outcomes, which are in line with the Scottish Government's Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) outcomes framework:

- child is living in a safer environment: 86% success;
- child/young person has improved emotional health: 86% success;
- parent/carer/adult has increased resilience: 85% success;
- parent/carer's parenting skills have improved: 74% success;
- improved family relationships: 86% success;
- family has increased access to mainstream services: 83% success.

**Children 1st (Moray): Children 1st Supporting Families Moray**

We have had an impact on the individuals we reached. Our evaluation shows improvements were seen in participants' wellbeing, with 79% reporting an improvement, as well as in quality of life and self-esteem, with 75% and 71% of participants reporting improvements in quality of life and self-esteem respectively. We have also had an impact on the wider community by breaking down barriers around accessing support; this is evidenced in the increasing numbers of both direct and indirect beneficiaries throughout the programme.

**Mind: The AF Wellbeing Advisor Project**

Qualitative data was more varied across the projects. It ranged from descriptions of the outcomes achieved to feedback received directly from beneficiaries.

We recently carried out telephone interviews with a small sample of families, 6-12 months after their Home-Start support ended. We are happy to report that four out of five had maintained their positive progress and all valued the HS support they had received. One mother had started to go to local groups on her own, made friends with neighbours, enrolled her child in nursery and was planning to return to work. She reported feeling much more confident now.

**Home-Start Kennet: Serving Families**

Our family support/community liaison worker has regularly attended our drop-in group sessions. She has been able to introduce families to a group, reducing their isolation and building confidence, and has been a familiar face to enable people to approach her for support.

**Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire: Military Families in Our Community Support Project**

### Analysis of survey data

As shown in figure 1.4, the majority of the 21 respondents either strongly agreed (N=12) or agreed (N=7) with the statement ‘Because of the grant, the project brought about effective and noticeable change for Armed Forces families’. Two respondents selected ‘Neither agree nor disagree’. Overall, this shows a strong feeling among all survey respondents that their respective grants were important in bringing about effective and noticeable change for Armed Forces families.

Figure 1.4

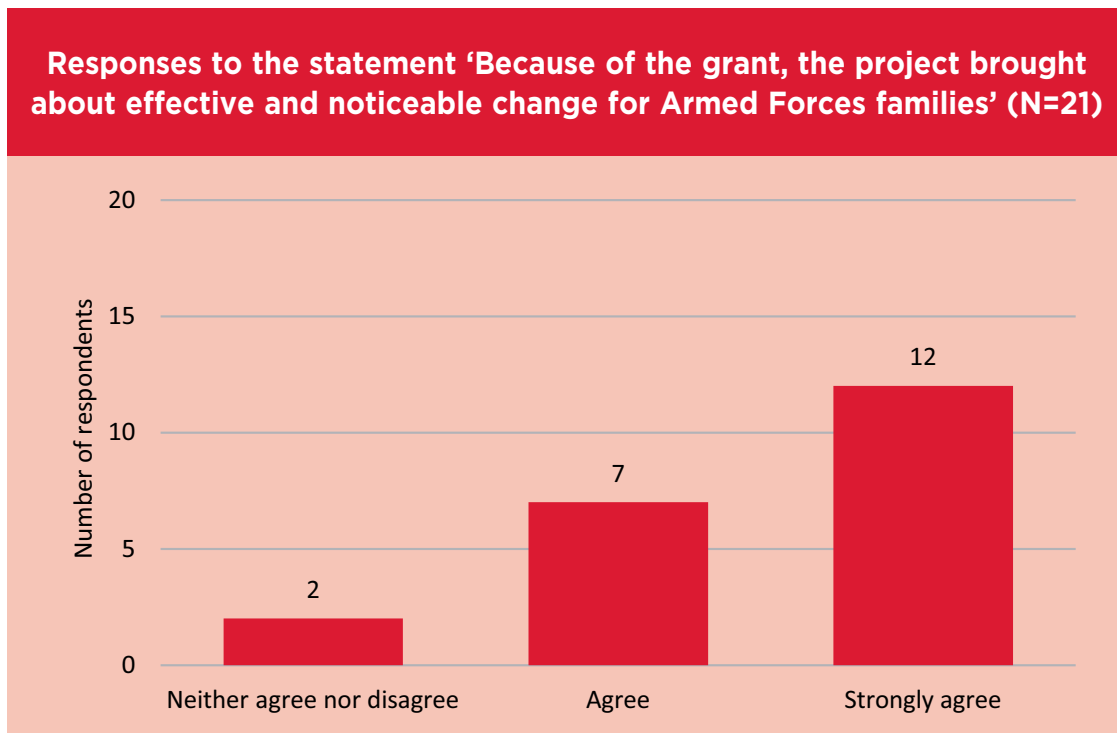
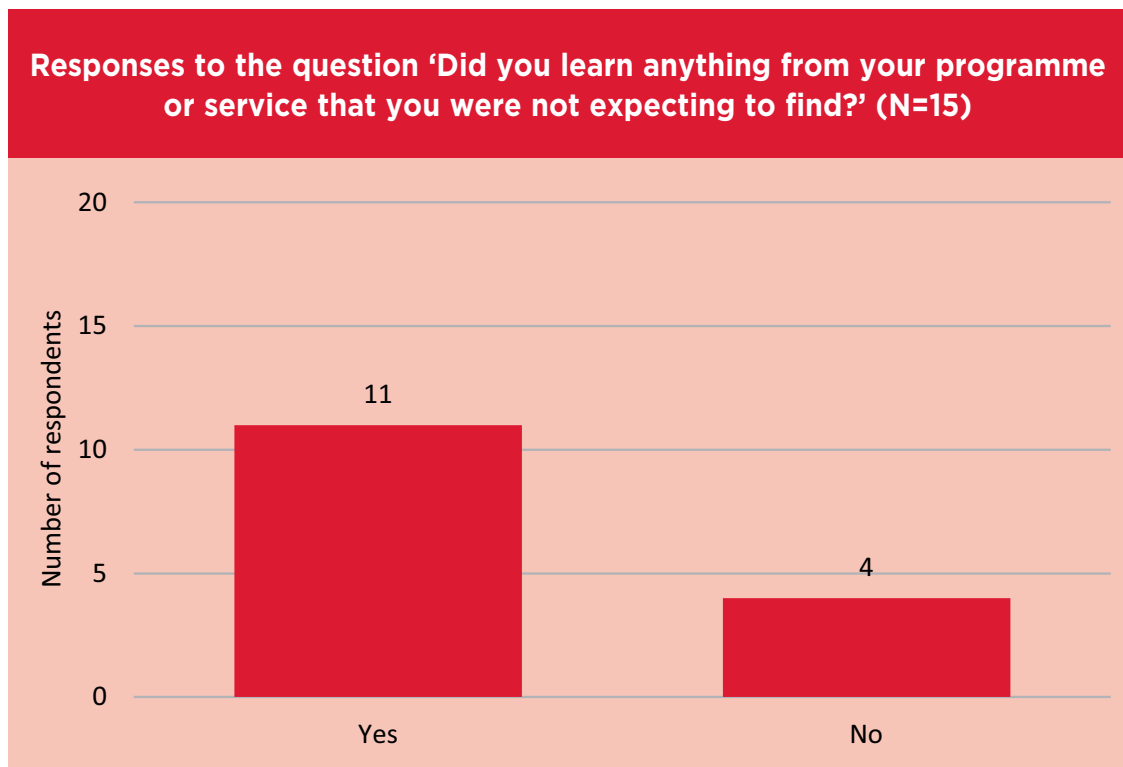


Figure 1.5 shows the number of respondents who stated that they learned things from their project that they were not expecting to find (N=11). While not strictly a transformative effect, this is worth considering as it indicates that a relatively high number of projects had unexpected findings. Future projects may benefit from asking respondents this question in order to identify potential transformative effects that they were not expecting to find. It may then be possible to use these unexpected transformative effects as a basis for future projects and research.

Figure 1.5



Respondents stated that these findings included the importance of relationships with Armed Forces bases and difficulties engaging with the Armed Forces community.

How challenging it would be to engage military families despite the programme being well respected and valued. Families were wary of receiving support even when they desperately needed it, sometimes concerned that it would affect their career. We strongly emphasised confidentiality so that families have been able to accept support.

**Survey respondent**

That it was important to have a strong relationship with the Army bases in order to recruit the families.

**Survey respondent**

Key change in personnel had a great impact on the way our service was viewed and expected outcomes achieved. At the outset we were very much a part of the welfare community and highly visible on base. Following personnel change we were not included and recognised as an integral offer of support. Many times, we found our service was not promoted or advertised as promised – so much so that at one stage we were not advised that the building we were delivering our training in was no longer available to us mid-way through the programme and we had to find alternative accommodation to complete the training.

**Survey respondent**

How difficult it is to reach out to the Armed Forces community.

**Survey respondent**

Some respondents provided interesting details pertinent to the specific area in which their project was working. For example, one respondent stated that an unexpected finding was that the majority of carers they saw were male serving personnel who were caring for female spouses with mental health difficulties.

## 1.5 THE COMPLEXITY OF THE NEEDS OF ARMED FORCES FAMILIES

### Analysis of secondary data

#### **Application forms**

It was clear from the application forms that the projects within the Families in Stress programme addressed a wide range of complex needs among Armed Forces families. The needs of Armed Forces families were often one of the first things discussed in the application forms.

For carers with complex needs or in crisis, we will provide specialist support work, recognising the additional stresses specific to Armed Forces families.

**Carer Support Wiltshire: Courage to Care Carer Support for Serving Military Families**

90% of families live in Service Family Accommodation scattered across North West London. While serving personnel come on base every day, their families simply do not come by the welfare services at the LINK (our information and welfare hub) in their everyday lives.

**Family Lives: Supporting Forces Families**

Any bereavement is a personal tragedy but for those in the 'military family', the loss of a loved one or colleague can bring with it its own unique issues.

**Cruse Bereavement Care: Support for Bereaved Families**

Several organisations mentioned complexity of needs in relation to geography. These included cases where Armed Forces families were identified as living in a concentrated area (e.g. Relate Portsmouth and District) and cases where Armed Forces families were more dispersed and unable to access locations further away from them (e.g. Barnardo's (London)).

Since beginning the service we have increasingly encountered families of military detainees who live outside of Essex and need support. The MCTC [Military Corrective Training Centre] is the only military detention facility in the country; most families do not necessarily live in Essex and there is an immediate need for support for these families that will only be met by Barnardo's [Strengthening Community Families] project.

**Barnardo's (London): Strengthening Community Families**

About 27% of [the UK's] naval families worldwide live in the Portsmouth area, so the sheer concentration of families in one place is a powerful indicator of the need for this service. Some elements of the service proposed exist in places, but provision is patchy and poorly co-ordinated, so that naval families often have difficulties accessing the help they need when they need it. This grant will provide the catalyst to stimulate greater co-ordination, leading to a more sustainable, connected offer in the long term.

**Relate Portsmouth and District: Naval Family Counselling**

Suffolk is a rural county where 40% of people reside in a rural area. Many military families will reside in these areas. People experience increased likelihood of isolation, poor access to services and transport, reduced employment opportunities and educational choices.<sup>2</sup> The caring role within a military family can exacerbate this isolation and detachment, thus increasing likelihood of stress. The intervention worker will support the identification of families in stress and co-ordinate access to services.

**Suffolk Family Carers Ltd: Suffolk Serving Families Project**

<sup>2</sup> Noel Smith and Cristian Dogaru, *Hidden Needs in Suffolk: Five years on*, Ipswich, University of Suffolk, 2016.

Several organisations also identified the culture and shared experiences of individuals in the Armed Forces as contributing to the complexity of needs faced by Armed Forces families.

Our experience supports the idea that the institutional and hierarchical nature of the Armed Forces often extends an extra layer of non-disclosure to outside services when Armed Forces beneficiaries are accessing support. A current case example of this includes an Army case where the victim is of lower rank to the perpetrator who used his position to force the victim to perform sexual acts on him over a 12-month period. In addition, the same officer ensured that he was based in the same location as the victim. Our intervention and work with Army welfare in this case has ensured that the alleged perpetrator in this case has been stationed outside of the UK, while the case is investigated.

**Aurora New Dawn: Forces Advocacy and Stalking Awareness**

Military families, while having common issues related to 'being a parent', also bring particular stressors, including isolation (through deployment, rurality, moving to new area, distance from family support or ethnicity); parent/child emotional and mental health needs; domestic abuse/partner relationship problems; poverty; housing; and foreign and Commonwealth issues relating to language or the immigration status of the spouse.

**Home-Start Kennet: Serving Families**

The transience of base-to-base life can leave partners lonely and isolated (most personnel are at Northolt for between two and three years). Lacking confidence, they can be overwhelmed, continually having to rebuild daily life and struggle with parenting. Parents tell us how separation is common, and partners and non-serving personnel report loneliness, isolation and a lack of support. A key part of the project is the development of social networks.

**Family Lives: Supporting Forces Families**

Just as society is constantly changing and adapting, so too does life in the Armed Forces. The changing nature of the Armed Forces was highlighted by some organisations as contributing towards the complexity of needs faced by Armed Forces families. Examples included changes as a result of specific conflicts and as a result of transition from the Armed Forces to civilian life.

An ex-Army chaplain reported the following to us in August 2015: 'Pressure on Army families has increased since Afghanistan. Soldiers were warned off for operations and could predict when they were away from home. They received an allowance for being in Afghanistan and extra leave in which to recover at the end of the tour. Now, the Army is expected to do the same as it used to with fewer soldiers. Training has increased, less notice is given. Families left behind are suffering significantly as a consequence of the prolonged absence of the soldier, reduced income and less time to recover after the absence.'

**Home-Start Kennet: Serving Families**



Presently at RAF Marham, there is a significant period of change due to the introduction of new Lightning aircraft and [personnel are] experiencing a dynamic deployment cycle of three months away every six months.

**Home-Start Norfolk: Reaching Out Building Bonds**

As people and situations change, so too do their needs. As relatives face the transition from pre- to post-deployment, they may wish to access symptom-specific or peer support, which we'll provide.

**Sheffield Mind Ltd: Keeping Families in Mind**

One organisation reported that cuts in statutory provision of some services had contributed to the complexity of the needs of Armed Forces families.

The situation is exacerbated by the cuts to public services in recent years, which means that family support is dwindling. This affects the whole community of course, but military families are doubly disadvantaged by their itinerant lifestyle and the difficulty in putting down roots in a community to the extent where they can benefit from the less formal support that is available.

**Unity (Southern) Ltd: Strengthening Families through Positive Parenting**

Some particularly complex needs were related to the specific issues that each project aimed to ameliorate and may not be found among all projects. For example, projects categorised as 'DVA and stalking' highlighted complex needs in relation to DVA and stalking that may not be found among the other categories.

While physical injury may be the most obvious danger, the emotional and psychological consequences of domestic abuse are also severe and long term. Emotionally abusive relationships destroy women's self-worth, lead to anxiety and depression, and increase feelings of helplessness, isolation and suicide ideation.

**Nottinghamshire Women's Aid Ltd: Supporting Families Experiencing Domestic Abuse**

## Progress update forms

Generally speaking, the progress update forms provided less information on the complexity of the needs of Armed Forces families than on other categories. However, as the progress update forms were completed at regular stages throughout the lifetime of each project, they were able to highlight some complex needs that arose as a result of the time of year.

There has been a change in the balance of issues, which may well be linked to the Christmas period, as there has been a significant rise in the amount of debt issues being reported alongside relationship and family issues.

**Citizen's Advice Hart District: Joining Forces for Families**

As the projects progressed, some organisations reported the complex needs faced by their beneficiaries in the reporting period. For example, Southern Domestic Abuse Service reported that one beneficiary disengaged from the service as 'he required more support around his poor mental health before being able to engage fully in the programme'. Similarly, the Hampton Trust stated that cases that had 'multiple and complex needs' included 'addressing debt, alcohol misuse [and] mental health needs' and 'preparing those suitable to attend Hampton Trust group work'.

As detailed above, the organisations frequently referred to health and wellbeing as a complex need.

[One case concerns a] serving [individual] who suffers with low mood and anxiety. [He] cares for his wife, who has complex mental health needs and also physical needs (currently under investigation and awaiting confirmation of diagnosis).

**Suffolk Family Carers Ltd: Suffolk Serving Families Project**

[One case concerns a] mother suffering with mental health issues with a newborn baby. [A] volunteer visits weekly for three hours.

**Home-Start York: Supporting Military Families in Our Community**

## **End-of-grant reports**

Complex needs were most commonly highlighted in the application forms and progress update forms, although some organisations did refer to them again in their end-of-grant reports.

One organisation highlighted the importance of specialist knowledge of the challenges faced by individuals in the Armed Forces.

This support was informed by specialist knowledge of the challenges faced by serving naval personnel and their families. Particular challenges faced by naval families included the stresses caused by lengthy deployments and the associated challenges of reconnection between family members on the return home of the serving member of the family. Our specialist knowledge and understanding of these stresses ensured that our staff were able to work alongside families to develop packages of support which addressed the specific needs of each family and each family member.

**Children 1st (Faslane): Children 1st Family Supporting Families**

The end-of-grant reports provided an opportunity for the organisations to address their initial expectations against the reality of the projects, such as the need for an increase of support.

It was initially anticipated that families would receive an average of six months' support. However, over the past three years, as external support services have reduced, families have started presenting to Home-Start with more complex needs. As a result, 20 families received extended supported for 8-12 months. This helped them to embed positive changes, ensuring they became stronger and more resilient moving forward.

**Home-Start Kennet: Serving Families**

Some organisations also took the end-of-grant report as an opportunity to confirm or reject their initial assessment of the complex needs faced by Armed Forces families.

The project's beneficiaries were all spouses or partners of serving Army personnel. It's important to note that many participants play a number of different roles in addition to being an Army spouse/partner. These can include full- or part-time work, including in a variety of Ministry of Defence or Service-related work, being a mother and/or being a Veteran. The common factor is that they are all part of a family with a serving spouse/partner.

**The Warrior Programme: The Warrior Serving Family Programme**

## Analysis of survey data

The survey respondents were asked to provide an open-ended response to the question ‘What were the needs faced by the participants in your programme or service?’ Most respondents typically provided a list of needs, although some provided examples of complex needs. For example, one project categorised as ‘DVA and stalking’ demonstrated a range of complex needs associated with DVA and stalking that may not be found among other project categories.

Complex needs around DVA in military families:

- no DVA support service to meet the distinctive needs of serving personnel’s families;
- fear of disclosing DVA because of the perceived stigma for victims of DVA, concern over the partner’s career [or] potentially losing their accommodation;
- family debt management issues;
- serving personnel’s spouse not in employment.

**Survey respondent**

Isolation and poor health and wellbeing were also needs commonly mentioned by the respondents.

The majority of the clients we worked with needed support with isolation, mental health issues, low self-esteem, lack of confidence, parenting and the use of other services in the community. Some of these issues were exacerbated by deployment, postings and lack of good transport links.

**Survey respondent**

Mental health needs and the stigma of seeking support, which we have presented as a sign of strength rather than weakness.

**Survey respondent**

Several respondents noted that the transition to civilian life was one of the most prominent needs faced by the beneficiaries of their projects.

Advice and support over a range of issues often specific to the effects of Service life, such as medical discharge and transition to civilian life.

**Survey respondent**

Transitioning to civvy street.

**Survey respondent**

## 1.6 EVIDENCE OF EMERGING NEEDS OF ARMED FORCES FAMILIES

### Analysis of secondary data

The secondary data typically made very little reference to the emerging needs of Armed Forces families. However, it is not clear whether this is because the projects were unaware of emerging needs, because they did not have the relevant evidence or because they were not explicitly asked about them (for example, in the end-of-grant progress report).

### Application forms

Some organisations were able to provide data that demonstrated the emerging needs of Armed Forces families that were under-researched or less well understood.

Our consultation with Army and RAF welfare services has identified that there is a gap in provision of trauma recovery and trauma-informed family support for Service families in Moray. They have told us that the Children 1st approach is much needed by Service families, especially regarding the following issues:

- social isolation with families often having very few links within their local community;
- fears that engagement could have a detrimental effect on the careers of serving members;
- concern that where there has been domestic abuse, the needs of the serving member might be prioritised over those of their partner and children;
- fear of stigma within their community;
- lack of access to information on what resources and support are available to them in the local community and how to access them.

#### **Children 1st (Moray): Children 1st Supporting Families Moray**

The Salisbury Plain Masterplan 2014 shows that 1,217 family units are moving to the area, which will bring an additional population of 2,362 adults (serving military and their partners) and 2,134 children.<sup>3</sup> One in ten of the adult population has a caring role, so about 236 of these adults are likely to have caring roles, as well as a significant number of their children.

#### **Carer Support Wiltshire: Courage to Care Carer Support for Serving Military Families**

<sup>3</sup> 'Salisbury Plain Masterplan (Army Basing Programme)' [web page], Ministry of Defence and Defence Infrastructure Organisation, 2014, <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/salisbury-plain-training-area-master-plan-army-basing-programme>, accessed 6 January 2021.

In contrast, one organisation cited a lack of data and evidence.

Statistics around the incidence of unhealthy relationships/DVA in the Navy are limited. It is estimated that one in four women and one in six men will experience DVA and that one in four children/young people live in households where DVA sometimes takes place between those caring for them.

**Southern Domestic Abuse Service: Up2U Creating Healthy Relationships**

### **Progress update forms**

The organisations identified relatively few emerging needs explicitly. In one case, an organisation was able to identify needs that may be unique to individuals in the Navy and not necessarily relevant to other branches of the Armed Forces.

Navy personnel spend long periods of time at sea and frequently their families remain in their localised areas. Should they return it is often for very short periods of time. This set-up means that domestic abuse within a family context frequently remains under the radar and it doesn't present itself to Navy welfare staff. It therefore remains under-reported. When disclosures are made it is often received as 'couples in conflict' rather than a specific [instance of] domestic abuse with a perpetrator-and-victim scenario. The head of Navy welfare felt that the Hampton Trust resource would be best utilised by providing a workforce development package whereby Navy welfare staff could receive training to increase competences in engaging families living with domestic abuse. This would provide opportunities to identify a perpetrator and victim within a family context.

The Hampton Trust currently are one of the only UK-based organisations actively identifying and risk-assessing serial and priority perpetrators using [the Priority] Perpetrator Identification Toolkit (PPIT). The Navy are keen for us to incorporate this into our workforce development plan and we anticipate in the future supporting Navy welfare staff to use this tool across their teams.

**Hampton Trust: RADAR**

One organisation explicitly identified an emerging need and associated difficulties in its progress update forms.

Moray Council have identified an emerging need for families who have children who have additional needs. The Children 1st steering group discussed barriers for Armed Forces families engaging with supports offered by welfare services. While both the Army and the RAF provide support for families in this situation, they can only do so when families disclose their circumstances. Steering group members from the Army and the RAF have informed us this could be for a variety of reasons. Some may fear this could affect prospects for promotion or a posting in a country which may not be equipped to meet the family's needs. Others may view this as personal information they do not want to share, even though it is mandatory for Army personnel and encouraged by the RAF. Many of the families who have children with additional needs may cope in usual circumstances during the holidays, but the restrictions of lockdown have meant a greater pressure placed on families at this time, as usual supports offered have been more limited.

**Children 1st (Moray): Children 1st Supporting Families Moray**

### **End-of-grant reports**

The organisations identified very few emerging needs in their end-of-grant reports, which may suggest that future programmes would benefit from explicitly asking about them. However, one organisation listed a range of additional challenges that may be less well understood.

Separation from military personnel brought additional challenges to those experienced by all separated parents including isolation from naval community [and] insecurity of housing tenure.

**Children 1st (Faslane): Children 1st Family Supporting Families**

### **Analysis of survey data**

When asked about unexpected findings, one respondent from a project categorised as 'DVA and stalking' stated that there was a greater need for specialist independent advocacy.

We learned that the need for specialist independent advocacy was way more prevalent than we anticipated. 93% of victims engaged with our services and we do not have the resources to meet the vast needs of victims trying to access our services.

**Survey respondent**

Another respondent stated that they had found that a high proportion of spouses in their project were unable to drive, which was an unexpected finding.

The high proportion of spouses unable to drive, leading to them being unable to access services and therefore reduce their isolation, was not expected. The stigma around accessing support was also unexpected. This led to us encouraging self-referral to eliminate the need to approach other services in these cases.

**Survey respondent**

In addition, another respondent suggested that there was a lack of networking among the professionals who support Armed Forces families.

There is insufficient networking for professionals supporting military families and also for the families.

**Survey respondent**

## 1.7 THE BARRIERS FACED BY ARMED FORCES FAMILIES SUPPORTED BY THE PROJECTS

Analysis of secondary data

### **Application forms**

One of the most common barriers identified by the organisations was stigma. This was found among individuals in the Armed Forces as well as their families and acted as a barrier to accessing the support required.

Families tell us about the stigma of asking for help, how 'no one wants to appear different on base ...' Families with SEND [special educational needs and disabilities] children tell us how they feel ostracised. They talk [about] the difficulties of making friends: how 'the Bumps and Babies group is cliquy'. A significant part of this project is around reaching and engaging parents.

**Children 1st (Moray): Children 1st Supporting Families Moray**



[As suggested] by the Centre for Social Justice,<sup>4</sup> families don't seek help because of perceived stigma and concerns about the impact on a military career and Keeling et al.<sup>5</sup> suggest that secondary (external) support systems can be the answer to making work-enforced separation more manageable.

**Sheffield Mind Ltd: Keeping Families in Mind**

Fear of stigma within the naval community.

**Children 1st (Faslane): Children 1st Family Supporting Families**

Anecdotal evidence from local Minds [i.e. local groups of Mind] working with the Armed Forces community also suggests that spouses and partners do not tend to engage with statutory mental health services due to the associated stigma and a lack of knowledge.

**Mind: The AF Wellbeing Advisor Project**

In addition to stigma, organisations identified trust as a major barrier faced by Armed Forces families supported by these projects. Some organisations proactively worked to gain the trust of the Armed Forces families in their projects.

Our delivery model is designed to tackle these issues and get support to the families most in need. By embedding our staff within the bases, we will become a familiar and trusted figure within the base community, which will allow [the staff] to break down the barriers that families face. Our staff will [provide] support in a variety of ways and use different venues so that families feel most comfortable. This will build strong relationships and ensure families trust our staff in order to make the process easier should support need to be escalated to a more intensive service to address more complex needs.

**Children 1st (Moray): Children 1st Supporting Families Moray**

Many are also concerned about the confidentiality of the military support services even though these services work to a strict code of confidentiality.

**Spurgeons: Recovering Together**

We have worked very hard to gain the trust of our Armed Forces colleagues in the first six months of our project and would like to continue this groundbreaking work.

**Aurora New Dawn: Forces Advocacy and Stalking Awareness**

A fear of repercussions was identified by one project under the category of 'DVA and stalking'. This may suggest that there are some barriers unique to one type of project or category and that may not be found in others.

<sup>4</sup> *Military Families and Transition* [PDF], Centre for Social Justice, 2016, <https://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/core/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/MILITARY-FAMILIES.pdf>, accessed 6 January 2021.

<sup>5</sup> Mary Keeling, Simon Wessely, Christopher Dandeker, Norman Jones and Nicola T. Fear, 'Relationship Difficulties among UK Military Personnel: Impact of sociodemographic, military, and deployment-related factors', *Marriage & Family Review*, vol. 51, no. 3 (2015), pp. 275-303.

As identified in the Ministry of Defence's 'Feedback on common concerns' guidance document (September 2015),<sup>6</sup> many victims do not report DVA due to fear of repercussions – i.e. the effect on theirs or their partner's career or losing their accommodation.

**Spurgeons: Recovering Together**

In some cases, organisations and individuals approached the project organisations directly. Children 1st (Faslane) noted that it was approached by a local primary school to target specific families who were struggling to engage with the school.

### Progress update forms

As the projects progressed, some of the barriers identified in the application forms were examined in further detail. For example, some organisations reported ways in which they could build trust and maintain anonymity for the Armed Forces families in their project.

On 30 November [2018] we are invited to present at a Families Briefing for deployment from the Kinloss Army base. They have instigated three parents' groups, two in schools and one in an RAF building off the base. The latter was not well attended despite publicity: it was felt people felt rather too 'observed' in attending, so this has been relocated to a more anonymous venue, and at a time of the parents' choosing, which covers a breakfast club option.

**Children 1st (Moray): Children 1st Supporting Families Moray**

Building trust with referrals and participants is key.

**The Warrior Programme: Warrior Supporting Families in Stress**

From experience, the wellbeing advisor recommends face-to-face recruitment, particularly given high levels of stigma on base, and is happy to meet potential participants one to one to encourage participation and dispel myths. To date she has met and coached one military wife. She has also attended a number of support groups (and has a number of coffee mornings booked in), including an Army Families Federation (AFF) support group ..., where she spoke to five parents.

Like Oxfordshire Mind, the wellbeing officer coached a participant one on one. This person was worried about participating in a group setting, and they now feel confident to join in and will be attending a course with others.

**Mind: The AF Wellbeing Advisor Project**

Building trust with referrals and participants is key and we have explored new ways of achieving this and we are gaining traction. However, the majority of expressions of interest are self-referrals not referred by the obvious welfare agencies and therefore greater advertisement is required through social media.

**The Warrior Programme: The Warrior Serving Family Programme**

<sup>6</sup> Updated in 2017; see 'Feedback on common concerns' [web page], Ministry of Defence, 2017, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/armed-forces-domestic-abuse-common-concerns/feedback-on-common-concerns>, accessed 6 January 2021.

In some cases, wariness around confidentiality was not entirely unfounded. One organisation reported that despite assurances that its counselling was confidential, it had been contacted in the past to disclose attendance at counselling by welfare team members and GPs.

On some occasions, [personnel] were hesitant to take up the offer, not because they didn't need the support, but because they were worried that what was discussed in counselling would be fed back to welfare.

We would adamantly reassure the person that counselling is a strictly confidential and protected space, but they would on occasion still be very wary and cautious and say 'we will think about it' and not come back to us.

Welfare team members have contacted us on occasion asking us to disclose attendance at counselling in the past, and our response has been to not break confidentiality, but to offer to ask the client themselves to get in touch and let welfare know they are accessing counselling.

This is a standard approach we adopt, as in the past GPs have asked us to disclose attendance at counselling - but we have declined as we do not wish for attendance/nonattendance at counselling to be a punitive measure.

**Relate Portsmouth and District: Naval Family Counselling**

Additional barriers that may not have been anticipated were identified as the projects progressed. These included not anticipating the complex needs of beneficiaries, the need to offer support via different media (e.g. telephone-based support in addition to face-to-face support) and problems with data from local government sources.

We are finding that of those referred into the service, the cases are more complex with many more issues per client therefore taking more time and resources.

**Citizen's Advice Hart District: Joining Forces for Families**

[One potential] change for discussion and consideration [is] telephone support for families who are deployed outside RAF Northolt to help them cope with the transition. This may also be an option for families who are reluctant to meet and would like the discretion of telephone support. This could be substituted for some of the befriending support, which is less popular.

**Family Lives: Supporting Forces Families**

Sheffield City Council no longer holds a list of schools in the area with military families. However, a report is being written about the areas in which there are military communities; once this is complete, targeting of schools in these areas will begin.

**Sheffield Mind Ltd: Keeping Families in Mind**

## End-of-grant reports

Organisations typically reflected on the barriers already discussed in their application forms and progress update forms, such as stigma and trust.

There was a slow take-up because of stigma around mental health and an attitude of 'keep calm and carry on'. A lot of resource was allocated to helping people feel comfortable to open up about their mental health and establishing trust.

**Mind: The AF Wellbeing Advisor Project**

Some organisations were able to disclose additional barriers that they had not anticipated until the project had been completed. These additional barriers included accepting the need for help, difficulties engaging with beneficiary populations and gender differences.

More people feel able to admit they need help and take action to seek it so that asking for help is seen as strength rather than weakness. Participants realise the programme is about 'being the best that you can be' by tackling the issues and barriers that may be holding them back. The positive impact extends to 120 children and wider family members: 'I deal with things so much more calmly, which has a good effect on the children too.'

Contacts we had developed through initial focus groups in Wiltshire and Catterick had expressed severe difficulties in contacting and engaging with the families. We eventually gained traction through presentations to Army Welfare Service welfare officers, coffee mornings, Facebook pages and BFBS [British Forces Broadcasting Service] radio across the garrison areas. By the second year of operation, word-of-mouth promotion from serving family members became the primary source of referral.

**The Warrior Programme: The Warrior Serving Family Programme**

We had anticipated that potentially some male partners of serving personnel would attend and ensured promotional materials were gender neutral; however, only female participants attended.

**Mind: The AF Wellbeing Advisor Project**

## 1.8 THE ROLE OF PARTNERSHIP WORK AND CO-OPERATION

### Analysis of secondary data

#### **Application forms**

The Trust clearly emphasised the importance of working in partnership with Armed Forces bases throughout the application guidance documents, and all successful applicants provided a letter of endorsement from the Armed Forces base they partnered with. The application forms detailed a number of examples of projects working in co-operation with Armed Forces bases and other organisations. Feedback from Armed Forces bases was crucial in expanding and enhancing the projects before the organisations submitted their applications.

Children 1st have widened the scope of our project through the feedback we received both from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund and our consultation with services in the Moray area. The project will now work with the Army Welfare Service at the Kinloss base and SSAFA at RAF Lossiemouth. The project will support active Service personnel and their families at both bases as well as reservists and Veterans living in the area.

**Children 1st (Moray): Children 1st Supporting Families Moray**

Based on the feedback from our consultations with bases and the results of our online survey, we are proposing two amendments.

**Citizens Advice Hart District: Joining Forces for Families**

We know that the majority of Service families negotiate times of stress using their own resources and that others manage to access sufficient support from services and projects. As we have developed the project with RAF Northolt it has become clear, however, that more emphasis is needed to engage struggling families who are 'off the radar'.

**Family Lives: Supporting Forces Families**

Initial discussions were held with staff supporting families at Chester Dale [Army barracks], to establish a need and wish for a service such as this to support families. This work established that this type of programme would suit and meet the needs of Forces families, to give them a break, a chance to learn to work and communicate more effectively, and to become more resilient to change.

**National Communities Resource Centre: Forces Family Futures**

In addition to working with Armed Forces bases, some applications outlined co-operation and partnership work that organisations had undertaken with other organisations to inform their applications.

The headteacher of Kinloss Primary School ... advised that communication between the school and serving families was difficult. We have therefore developed a strategy where our staff will be embedded at both bases.

**Children 1st (Moray): Children 1st Supporting Families Moray**

We attend the Armed Forces Covenant Board and liaise with Sheffield City Council's Armed Forces Champions. We've developed links with Addaction, Home-Start, White Ensign [and] the Air Force Association, all of who have said there's a need for a local service aimed at relatives.

**Sheffield Mind Ltd: Keeping Families in Mind**

The organisations were specifically asked to detail their relationship with their local base or bases, and most highlighted the importance of their good relationships with Armed Forces bases and similar organisations.

We have been based within HMS *Nelson* since April 2017 and our relationship with our colleagues is excellent.

**Aurora New Dawn: Forces Advocacy and Stalking Awareness**

The solid working relationship between Barnardo's and the staff at the MCTC [Military Corrective Training Centre] has shaped this project. The MCTC and Barnardo's have successfully worked together for the last two years; we understand current internal and external provision, which has enabled us to identify gaps and create a service that meets the needs of detainees, families and the military.

**Barnardo's (London): Strengthening Community Families**

Citizens Advice Rushmoor, as a member of the Welfare Forum at Aldershot Garrison, was well placed to assess needs for this project. Citizens Advice Hart likewise has a good working relationship with RAF Odiham, having provided an outreach service at its HIVE.

**Citizens Advice Hart District: Joining Forces for Families**

We are currently building on our existing partnership with RAF Honington, where we have historically undertaken joint work.

**Suffolk Family Carers Ltd: Suffolk Serving Families Project**

## **Progress update forms**

Throughout the progress update forms, there is a clear sense of co-operation and partnership in the provision of service delivery, which has ultimately benefitted the Armed Forces families in the projects.

This period has seen a continued and increased intake of referrals, coming directly from continued relationship-building and promotion directly into these military services. We also now have provisional dates booked in to meet with the RAF welfare services, of which we are awaiting confirmations.

We have also been invited to or asked to attend the 'Mental Health' day on Thorney Island on 1 May 2019. This will be another big step in us embedding the Up2U programme into the Army Welfare [Service] and with the Army personnel attending.

### **Southern Domestic Abuse Service: Up2U Creating Healthy Relationships**

Staff are cleared to attend a family day at Kinloss Barracks and another at RAF Lossiemouth. The dates for these coincide, so three [members of staff] will attend each one - specifically those staff designated by Children 1st to be the 'friendly faces' of the organisation in each location. Staff will chat and disseminate information to families while offering a stone-painting activity, which is very popular just now among children in Moray.

In terms of partners, we have established a steering group, which will meet quarterly to guide and review our progress with service delivery. Currently this group comprises representatives of Moray Council, Locality Wellbeing (WEST) for Education and Social Care, Forres health visitors, local GP practices and midwives, nursery managers, Forres youth and families outreach worker[s] at St Leonard's Church, as well as two local schools and of course the representatives from SSAFA, the Army Welfare Service and the SSAFA branch.

### **Children 1st (Moray): Children 1st Supporting Families Moray**

The IMDAS [Independent Military Domestic Abuse Service] workers have continued working from Kendrew Barracks on a weekly basis. There are two new units due on camp and work has been done to get promotional materials within the welcome packs and to be part of the briefing days for those new to the camp. This means the IMDAS service and its information and promotional material will be disseminated to all new soldiers and families.

### **Nottinghamshire Women's Aid Ltd: Supporting Families Experiencing Domestic Abuse**

In some cases, collaboration with other organisations was a learning opportunity for the projects and allowed the organisations to learn from each other and share good practice.

We have also liaised with Action for Carers (Surrey). Their Armed Forces carers support co-ordinator will be spending a day with us, so that we can learn about the implementation and development of their project, discuss opportunities and share good practice.

**Suffolk Family Carers Ltd: Suffolk Serving Families Project**

However, not all of the co-operation and collaboration detailed in the progress update reports was positive, and there were some examples of difficulties encountered when working with other organisations.

It was felt by the IMDAS [Independent Military Domestic Abuse Service] workers that there was a surprising resistance from the housing worker to the project, as it potentially would lead to more domestic abuse cases requiring housing.

**Nottinghamshire Women's Aid Ltd: Supporting Families Experiencing Domestic Abuse**

There have been difficulties engaging with the HMNB [Her Majesty's Naval Base] chain of command/welfare team – although this is in hand. If we might leverage any contacts the LCA<sup>7</sup> has, so much the better.

**Citizens Advice Hart District: Joining Forces for Families**

Despite assurances of our course being advertised in [the magazine] *Marham Matters*, sadly this did not happen, which meant we had to spend a lot of additional time trying to look at ensuring the information about the prep course was advertised sufficiently on camp. I eventually had to make contact with a senior member of staff to help support on this element to the project. While it is all understandable as there had been a change of staff there, it has meant we have had to divert time and effort to an area we had not planned on doing, and maybe not had the take-up [the project] could [otherwise] have generated.

**Home-Start Norfolk: Reaching Out Building Bonds**

One project noted that while it was having difficulties engaging with the Armed Forces base, it reached out to similar organisations to share best practice to inform how it would engage with the base in the future. It is important to note, however, that these difficulties are not unique to Armed Forces charities, and difficulties and challenges are likely to occur in many co-operative working relationships.

<sup>7</sup> It was not possible to determine from the documents what the respondent meant by 'LCA'.



## End-of-grant reports

In the end-of-grant reports available, the projects typically detailed examples of partnership and co-operation with organisations and individuals other than the Armed Forces bases listed in their application forms. The other organisations included Armed Forces charities, local government, the NHS and education services.

Local Mind project staff also made links with Army/RAF welfare staff on bases. In some cases the local Mind project workers also liaised with the padres [i.e. officers in the Royal Army Chaplains' Department], who act as support on base. Local Mind project workers also linked in with local branches of SSAFA.

**Mind: The AF Wellbeing Advisor Project**

Partnership working included joining key members of Wiltshire Council on a liaison visit to Home-Start BFG [British Forces Germany]. Representatives from all three Home-Start schemes held a stand and talked to families who felt that they might need support during this major transition, as well as those interested in training to volunteer, as a way of becoming involved in their new communities. Feedback received directly from rebasing families about their anxieties and support needs was used to shape future Home-Start services.

We also liaised closely with partner agencies, such as the NHS and education services, to determine families' likely support needs and ascertain what extra support was available through their services, equipping Home-Start to signpost to specialist services as required. In addition, we met with potential referrers, including unit welfare officers (who would be moving to Wiltshire) and BFG [British Forces Germany] HIVE, in order to promote future referrals.

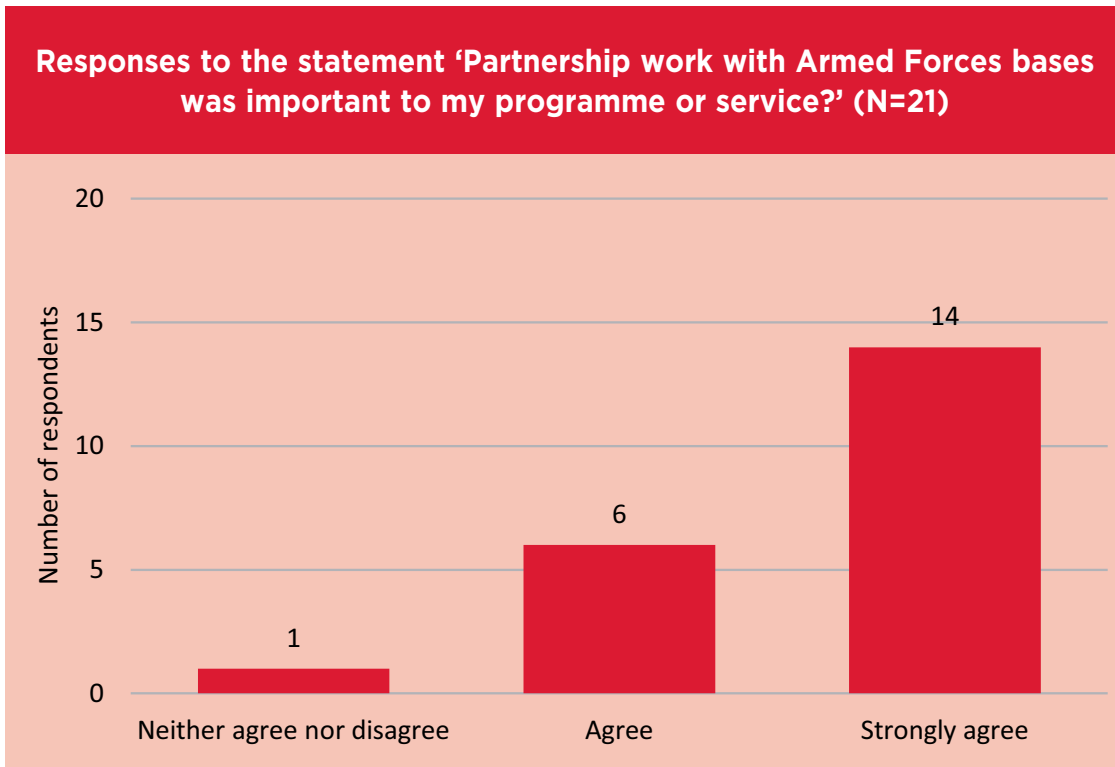
**Home-Start Kennet: Serving Families**

## Analysis of survey data

The organisations were asked in the survey whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement 'Partnership work with Armed Forces bases was important to my programme or service'.

As seen in figure 1.6, the majority of those who responded to the question (N=21) either agreed or disagreed, with 14 respondents strongly agreeing and 6 agreeing. One respondent neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, which suggests that throughout the projects, partnership work with Armed Forces bases was important to the projects.

Figure 1.6



## 1.9 EVIDENCE OF GOOD PRACTICE OF CO-DESIGN

Analysis of secondary data

### Application forms

Several examples of good practice of co-design were notable in the application forms. These often demonstrated good practice enacted with a range of individuals and organisations. Some of the most notable examples of good practice of co-design concerned the avoidance of duplicating other services and also complementing other services.

Our service will complement other projects both locally and across the UK. Aurora New Dawn has frontline services across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. We work in close partnership with our local and national partners to ensure the best service is made available to victims.

**Aurora New Dawn: Forces Advocacy and Stalking Awareness**

We have worked with the CWS [Community Welfare Service] team to ensure the project will fill gaps in provision and enhance existing support.

**Family Lives: Supporting Forces Families**

[On the topic of] avoiding duplication, Home-Start York is the only local service offering confidential in-the-home support for preschool children for six months or longer. Our service is a useful complement to children's centres and a support to families with specific needs.

**Home-Start York: Supporting Military Families in Our Community**

Nottinghamshire Women's Aid have liaised closely with military staff, particularly Army Welfare Service personnel, to ensure that duplication is avoided and this project only enhances current support.

**Nottinghamshire Women's Aid Ltd: Supporting Families Experiencing Domestic Abuse**

Several organisations emphasised that their project had been designed in collaboration with Armed Forces bases, which had allowed them to target the specific and often complex needs of Armed Forces families.

We've visited the local recruiting office and we're continuing to develop links, particularly with the Navy and Air Force. [Personnel in the] Occupational Health Department at Navy Command Headquarters emailed us to confirm that Navy relatives face loneliness, separation anxiety, tensions arising when personnel return after deployment, and pressures of lone parenting and household management while partners are absent. These are issues which our counsellors are skilled in addressing.

**Sheffield Mind Ltd: Keeping Families in Mind**

Our local Mind delivery partners already work closely with the six Armed Forces bases, and have been assured in direct discussions with base welfare officers that this project will complement and add value to existing work offered on site and by other local support service providers, as there is little available.

**Mind: The AF Wellbeing Advisor Project**

### **Progress update forms**

Some organisations demonstrated further examples of collaboration and co-operation throughout their respective projects. Unlike the application forms, the progress update forms show clear examples of where beneficiaries' feedback had been used to enhance or improve projects.

We are exploring additional funding and the expansion of the service as a priority, with both client and stakeholder feedback reinforcing the need for the service to increase its capacity.

**Aurora New Dawn: Forces Advocacy and Stalking Awareness**

A presentation entitled 'Family Lives and Family Life' was delivered to families at the RAF Northolt base. The purpose of this was both to ask parents what they would like to discuss during workshops and one-to-one sessions and also to share and discuss the challenges they face.

**Family Lives: Supporting Forces Families**

It was pointed out to us that our literature (leaflets) may not capture all family carers, for example:

- single unaccompanied soldiers who may be struggling with a long-distance caring role
- couples who don't have children.

We took these comments on board and later that week we designed some additional literature to complement our leaflets and posters.

**Home-Start York: Supporting Military Families in Our Community**

Feedback from mums has led us to introduce a Filial Play Therapy session for some families at the end of the You and Me, Mum course. This will help them to appreciate the value of the play therapy their children are receiving, and increased mums' confidence to continue this work with their children at home.

**Spurgeons: Recovering Together**

Home-Start York highlighted one example where a collaborative project helped to build trust and create a sense of community among the beneficiaries, which is especially important as many of the organisations had previously identified trust as a significant barrier faced by beneficiaries.

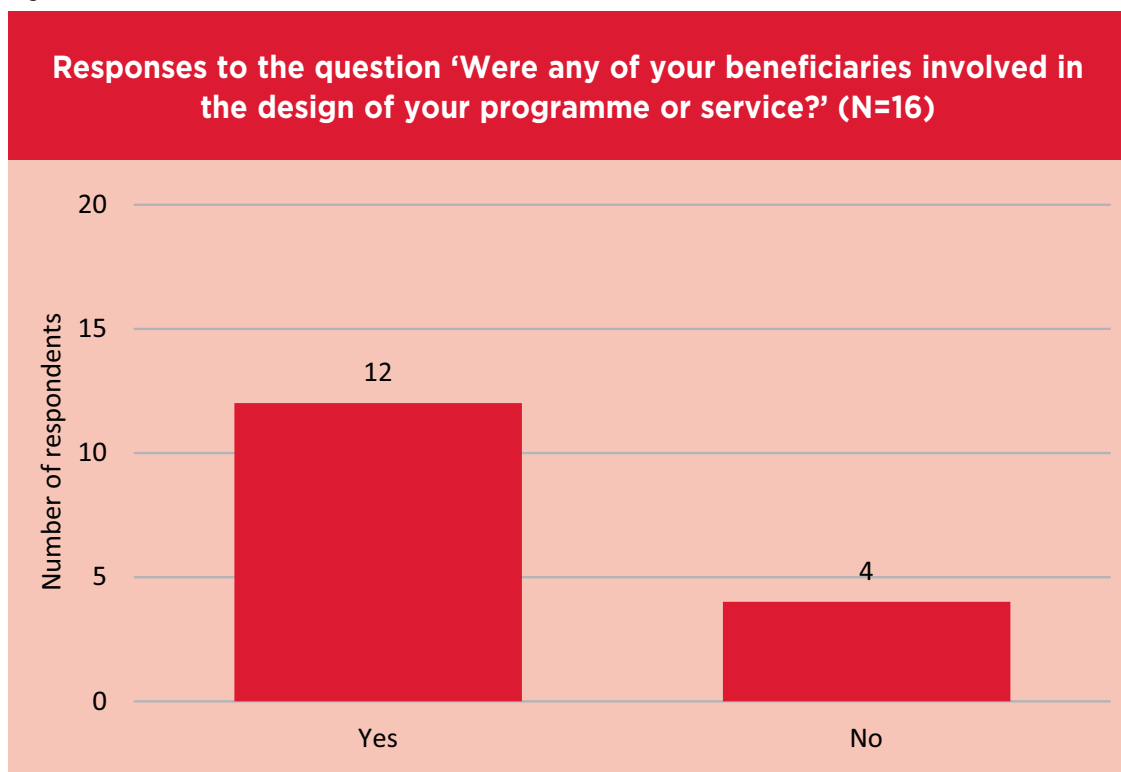
Forces families were closely involved in another initiative we developed to promote a sense of wellbeing and build trust and referrals. They have, with other families, painted a mural in a local dementia care home. Some [other] parents ... have become involved [and have been] joined by other military mums with preschool children. This has given the group a sense of community within the city in which they are based and has widened their social network, sharing positive experiences. It has also produced another four referrals; these mums will benefit from having the Home-Start home visiting service, which will support other issues such as parenting, loneliness and having no family support living locally.

**Home-Start York: Supporting Military Families in Our Community**

## Analysis of survey data

Figure 1.7 shows that 12 survey respondents stated that their beneficiaries were involved in the design of their respective projects.

Figure 1.7



When the respondents were asked to elaborate further, the most common response concerned working with beneficiaries to identify the support required.

They provided us with their experiences and what support they are or were looking for that is related to Armed Forces life.

**Survey respondent**

Discussions took place with all the services<sup>8</sup> on the base to ascertain the type of support that was deemed to be of most use to families. Questionnaires were distributed to families to ascertain the type of support they felt would be most helpful. [We attended] as many events that were held on base [as possible] to engage with families to ensure we were providing the most appropriate service over the three-year project.

**Survey respondent**

<sup>8</sup> It could not be established whether the respondent meant service provision or the military Services.

One organisation noted that it had worked with its beneficiaries to modify its project as it progressed.

We modified the programme on an ongoing basis, based on the experiences of families as they reported in their feedback forms [on] what could be improved.

**Survey respondent**

Most respondents did not answer the question ‘Do you think it would have been useful to include beneficiaries when planning the programme or service?’. Two respondents selected ‘yes’ and two respondents selected ‘no’. The respondents who selected ‘no’ stated that it would not have been useful because theirs was an established programme. One respondent who said it would have been useful stated that they were new in their post, which suggests that promotion of the concept of co-design with beneficiaries may be useful when collaborating with individuals who are new to working with Armed Forces families.

## 1.10 THE EXTENT TO WHICH BENEFICIARIES PERCEIVE THAT THEY HAVE BEEN SUPPORTED THROUGH THE PROJECTS

Analysis of secondary data

### **Application forms**

As the application forms were completed before the projects began, they contain no references to the beneficiaries’ perception of support. However, some organisations did provide examples from other projects or similar work, usually in the form of a case study to highlight the intended effect of their project.

What our clients say:

- ‘People like you have helped me a lot and I want this to be known.’
- ‘You have made me feel better when I have been at my lowest.’
- ‘I feel better knowing someone cares and is doing something.’
- ‘It’s great to talk to someone who understands what I am going through. Thank you.’
- ‘Having someone I can talk to helps a lot.’
- ‘My friends and you have kept me going’

[Additionally, one] client has a local IDVA [Independent Domestic Violence Advisor] in her area in Dorset but she said, 'I want to speak to you because you understand the military side of things too.'

**Aurora New Dawn: Forces Advocacy and Stalking Awareness**

A family supported said, 'My volunteer from Home-Start is fantastic. She understands what it is like being in the Forces as she was an Army wife herself and really gets how I feel when my husband is off on exercise. I've really clicked with her and my children love seeing her each week. I'm an RAF wife and feel quite isolated. She was great when my son was poorly and phoned me regularly. She was like a mum to me, which really helps as my mum is not around.'

**Home-Start Norfolk: Reaching Out Building Bonds**

## Progress update forms

Organisations provided quotes and case studies throughout their progress update forms in order to demonstrate the impact of their projects.

One of the families which had recently moved to the area had two children, one of whom had a diagnosis with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The family were socially isolated, the children were finding difficulty settling into school and Mum was struggling with the lack of specialist resources for her child with ASD. Mum was keen to become engaged with the local community and find meaningful employment. After popping in to Talking Tuesday, the family became engaged in the wider life of the service [provided by Children 1st]. The family attended Wacky Wednesdays, and Mum was invited to come along to the Forces group on a Friday and plans to apply to volunteer with the service [provided by Children 1st].

**Children 1st (Moray): Children 1st Supporting Families Moray**

Some of the feedback from the training is included below:

- 'I did not realise how subtle domestic abuse could be - this will help me better identify abuse in those I work with.'
- 'I would not have thought coercive control was as damaging as physical abuse before this training.'
- 'This training really made me think - you never know who you are working with and this has taught me to be more observant and recognise the signs of domestic abuse - definitely something I will incorporate into my work now.'

**Hampton Trust: RADAR**

[Feedback included:]

- 'I wouldn't normally open up. I wouldn't normally share problems and stresses and learn ways to help.'
- 'I find learning about attention training useful to clear mind distractions - good when anxious.'

**Mind: The AF Wellbeing Advisor Project**

## End-of-grant reports

Similarly to what they did in their application forms and progress update forms, the organisations provided case studies in order to demonstrate the impact of their projects. In the end-of-grant reports, these were typically longer and more detailed than those found in the progress update forms. In their end-of-grant reports, organisations were required to answer specific questions about a case study, which included:

- 'Tell us a little about this person. What challenges had they faced? How did they find out about your project?'
- 'How did your project help this person? What difference has your project made?'
- 'Do you have any quotes from the person regarding their experiences?'

An example is provided below.

### **Tell us a little about this person. What challenges had they faced? How did they find out about your project?**

A mother was experiencing poor health and awaiting a diagnosis. Mother had become increasingly isolated, worried about what would happen if she went out with her young children and became unwell. Mother's eldest child had also started displaying challenging behaviour in school.

### **How did your project help this person? What difference has your project made?**

Mother was carefully matched with a Home-Start (HS) volunteer with a nursing background, who supported Mother to engage with medical professionals during her investigations. The HS volunteer also provided emotional support regarding [the mother's] health difficulties, and opportunities to discuss and swap ideas regarding the children's behaviour.

By the end of HS's involvement, despite ongoing health difficulties, the family felt they had received great support from their volunteer and were in a much better position.

Mother reported improvements in managing the children's behaviour, in coping with her physical health and mental health difficulties, and in her own self-esteem, as well as reduced isolation.

### **Do you have any quotes from the person regarding their experiences?**

Mother described the volunteer as a 'lifesaver' for helping her through this difficult time.

**Home-Start Kennet: Serving Families**



## 1.11 THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROJECTS, AND RISKS AND BARRIERS TO SUSTAINABILITY

### Analysis of secondary data

#### **Application forms**

Application guidance documents provided by the Trust to organisations applying for funding made it clear that the outcomes of the projects should be sustainable for the Armed Forces families that participated. Furthermore, these projects were time-limited and intended to provide immediate short-term interventions for Armed Forces families.

There were few references to sustainability in the application forms, although one organisation did highlight its intention to leave a 'legacy' if it were not able to secure funding to support the project in the future.

In the long term, should it not be possible for the Hampton Trust to secure funds to continue with the project after the agreed period, it is the aim of the project to leave the legacy of staff throughout the chain of command who are more confident in handling perpetrators of domestic abuse.

**Hampton Trust: RADAR**

#### **Progress update forms**

The progress update forms provided more insight into the sustainability of the projects. One of the most common risks to sustainability noted throughout the progress update forms was staff turnover, which was typically out of the organisation's control. However, the organisations were able to address the problems, for example by recruiting replacement staff or by redistributing the workload among other staff.

We appointed a junior PSA [parent support advisor] ... to join the Families in Stress team in October 2018. Unfortunately she had to relocate to France within the month ... We had to readvertise in November 2018.

**Friends of Wavell: Tri-Service Family Support Service**

We also underwent a staff restructure with the loss of several members of staff and at the same time the lead member of staff linked to this project has had to be off work for six months undergoing medical treatments.

These changes have had an impact on the ability for us to keep our presence at Marham and the referrals to our service have declined at present.

**Home-Start Norfolk: Reaching Out Building Bonds**

Due to unforeseen circumstances out of our control, we have had to postpone delivery in Oxfordshire Mind. Sadly, the wellbeing advisor secured and inducted last quarter has had to unexpectedly manage personal family circumstances and so is unable to start delivery until September. We are very confident in this candidate's ability to deliver as she holds an impressive track record in this area, [and] moreover she has been fully inducted. Therefore, rather than recruit again, we believe it is in the best interests of the project to postpone the start time of these courses instead.

**Mind: The AF Wellbeing Advisor Project**

Client contact has been delivered by three members of the DDT [Direct Delivery Team]. However, one member has resigned from the service within this quarter. This caseload has been redistributed among the other facilitators.

**Southern Domestic Abuse Service: Up2U Creating Healthy Relationships**

## End-of-grant reports

Throughout the end-of-grant reports, there were few references to sustainability or risks to sustainability. However, financial sustainability was most commonly highlighted as a risk to the sustainability of a project.

In Helensburgh and Lomond, we continue to communicate with Argyll and Bute Council to identify potential funding sources in order to re-establish support for all families, including naval families. This has been challenging due to the severe financial constraint currently being experienced by the local authority.

**Children 1st (Faslane): Children 1st Family Supporting Families**

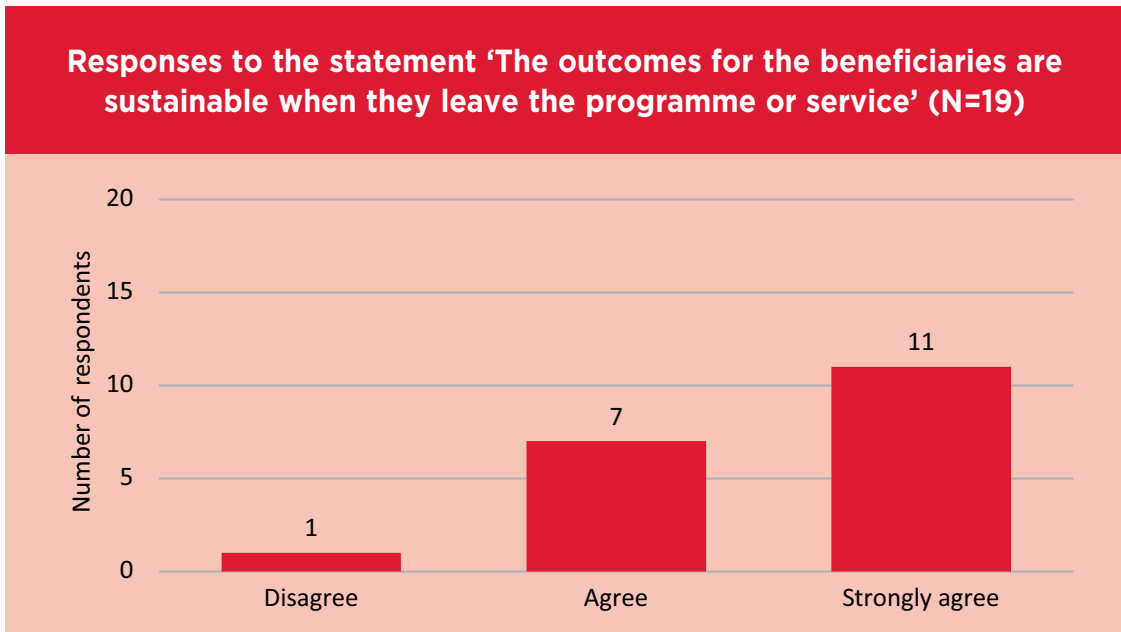
[The] main challenge is securing sufficient funding to sustain the work beyond each grant period. We are responding in two ways: (1) by making the case for funded referrals from mainstream agencies and (2) by developing commercial income opportunities to augment charitable grants.

**The Warrior Programme: The Warrior Serving Family Programme**

## Analysis of survey data

The survey respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with three statements relating to various dimensions of the sustainability of their projects. The first statement was 'The outcomes for the beneficiaries are sustainable when they leave the programme or service'. As seen in figure 1.8, the majority of the 19 respondents to this question either agreed (N=7) or strongly agreed (N=11) with the statement, and only one disagreed. This suggests that the outcomes for beneficiaries are overwhelmingly (although not universally) sustainable once they leave these projects.

Figure 1.8



Another question asked respondents whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement 'The infrastructure needed to run my programme or service is sustainable'. As shown in figure 1.9, this statement yielded more varied replies than other statements on sustainability, with 14 of the 20 respondents to this question agreeing or strongly agreeing that the infrastructure needed to run their project was sustainable. Four respondents neither agreed or disagreed with the statement and one respondent disagreed (with a further one respondent stating that they didn't know).

Figure 1.9

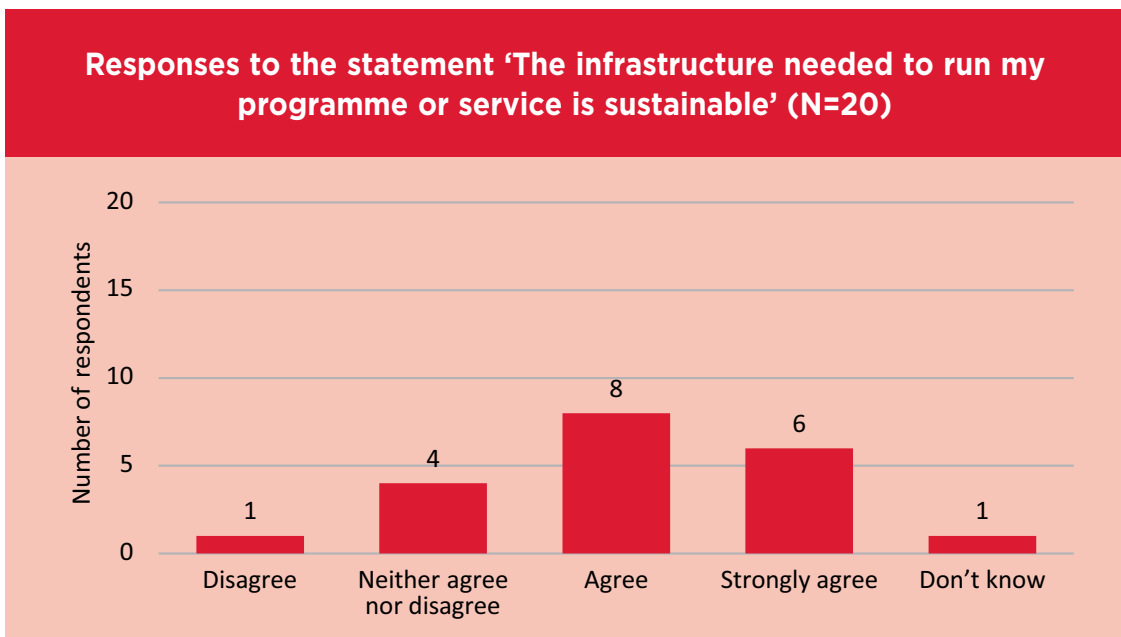
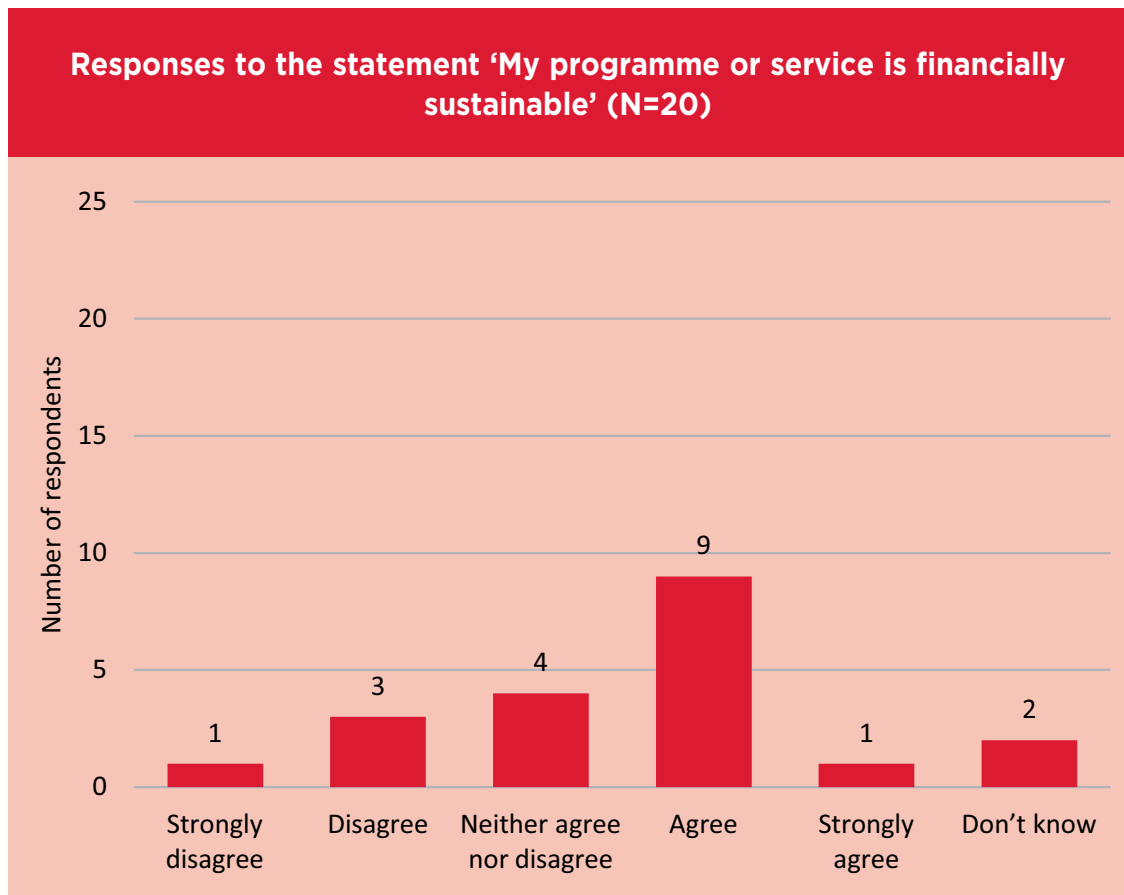


Figure 1.10 shows responses to the statement ‘My programme or service is financially sustainable’. Again, there is a larger degree of variation compared to figure 1.8. Of the 20 respondents to this question, nine agreed with the statement and only one strongly agreed, which is in stark contrast to the responses to the other statements about sustainability. Four respondents neither agreed or disagreed, three respondents disagreed and one respondent strongly disagreed with the statement. Two respondents indicated that they didn’t know whether their project was financially sustainable. The relatively large number of respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed suggests that financial sustainability is one of the weakest aspects of sustainability across all of the projects.

Figure 1.10



Many of the open-ended responses elaborated further on the risks and barriers to the sustainability of the projects. Concerning sustainability, funding and finance were most commonly highlighted as concerns for these projects.

Ongoing financial sustainability is challenging and at the time of writing it is hard to see how we would be able to continue to provide the services in the same form after the end of our grant period. Many families will leave our support stronger and able to cope better but many require ongoing support that can vary between intensive and informal. We also know there is an ongoing need within the community and many more families we could help.

**Survey respondent**

We could not secure subsequent funding after this grant.

**Survey respondent**

Funding should be continued in order to continue the programme and to buy in the expertise required to support families.

**Survey respondent**

Our board of trustees have recently highlighted reliance on two or three funding streams, in particular around trusts and foundations, as our most serious risk around sustainability. The need for our service and the value we provide in terms of preventative outcomes is clear but there is no long-term funding model in place. [This is] something that is far from unique across our sector.

**Survey respondent**

Longer-term funding is now needed to continue the groundbreaking work we have achieved with our partners in the Forces.

**Survey respondent**

One respondent also noted that one of the ways in which they were looking at financial sustainability and its associated challenges involved a strategic review with a focus on income diversification.

Our strategic review this month will focus on income diversification in a post-COVID-19 environment. We are building an infrastructure across the organisation at governance, management and volunteer level to give us the best possible chance of addressing the issue.

**Survey respondent**

Respondents rarely discussed non-financial risks or barriers to the sustainability of their projects. However, among those who did, responses included awareness of the services offered, engagement from the Armed Forces community and volunteer recruitment.

Barriers to sustainability would be raising awareness of the service to Armed Forces families that are dispersed. Funding would be a long-term barrier to sustainability.

**Survey respondent**

[Barriers include] engagement from the Armed Forces community [as well as] acknowledgement of family carers, who they are and the issues they face.

**Survey respondent**

Our model is based around recruiting volunteers, which at times of transition of the Forces communities resulted in lack of continuity in our ability to deliver the programme to its maximum potential.

**Survey respondent**

[Barriers include] securing ongoing funding and recruiting sufficient volunteers.

**Survey respondent**

Respondents also noted the effect that COVID-19 has had on the sustainability of their projects and the associated challenges.

COVID-19 had a huge impact - communications is a bigger issue than first realised, now limited in its effectiveness by geography.

**Survey respondent**

We don't yet know what the longer-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the voluntary sector may be.

**Survey respondent**

## 1.12 HOW THE PROJECTS HAVE USED DATA TO INFORM AND SHOW THE IMPACT OF THEIR WORK

### Analysis of secondary data

#### **Application forms**

When asked to demonstrate how their project would deliver services that supported the families of serving personnel, some organisations referred to research and data (although not all organisations cited the research) that they had conducted or consulted to understand the potential impact of their work.

Home-Start UK research demonstrated increased family resilience by the end of support<sup>9</sup> ... Netherlands research into the long-term impact of Home-Start volunteers noted positive changes in parental wellbeing, competence and consistent behaviour towards children after three years.<sup>10</sup>

#### **Home-Start York: Supporting Military Families in Our Community**

The Hampton Trust has designed and delivered an award-winning intervention called CARA [Cautioning and Relationship Abuse] in partnership with Hampshire Constabulary. Delivered as two five-hour workshops to low-risk domestic abuse perpetrators, CARA has been a randomised control trial carried out by Cambridge University.

#### **Hampton Trust: RADAR**

Research shows that 40% of the effectiveness of counselling is attributable to the strength of the social network supporting the counselees. With this in mind, as the counselling sessions draw to an end, people will be offered entry to a programme of peer support provided by [the] Motiv8 peer support group programme. This will ensure that the young people continue to benefit from emotional support that will build long-term resilience. In keeping with the principles of peer support, the means and frequency of contact will be determined by the people concerned.

#### **Relate Portsmouth and District: Naval Family Counselling**

<sup>9</sup> Joyce Kenkre and Elizabeth Young, *Building Resilience: Volunteer support for families with complex circumstances and needs* [PDF], University of South Wales and Home-Start, 2013, <https://www.home-start.org.uk/building-resilience>, accessed 6 January 2021.

<sup>10</sup> Jo M. A. Hermanns, Jessica J. Asscher, Bonne J.H. Zijlstra, Peter J. Hoffenaar and Maja Deković, 'Long-Term Changes in Parenting and Child Behavior after the Home-Start Family Support Program', *Children and Youth Services Review*, vol. 35 (2013), pp. 678-84.

When they were asked to detail research conducted into the needs of Armed Forces families the projects intended to support, the organisations provided strong examples of research and data.

Our proposal directly responds to [the following]:

- [According to] the NAPO briefing to the Parliamentary Inquiry on Stalking, many men displaying stalking behaviour have an armed or disciplined service background.<sup>11</sup> ...
- Rape/sexual assault is reported by a member of the Armed Forces every week; between 2001 [and] 2011, 56 Army personnel were court-martialled for sexual offences – of these, only 16 resulted in conviction.
- Hidden violence is a particular issue for foreign and Commonwealth Service personnel.
- [Research from] Dr Emma Williamson highlights the need to use much broader approaches which address areas of control and decision-making within families in order to identify risk of domestic violence and abuse. In particular, confusion about gendered roles within military families when military personnel are present and absent appeared to be an issue.<sup>12</sup>
- Research evidences that independent support is the key to better safeguarding of victims and their children.<sup>13</sup>

**Aurora New Dawn: Forces Advocacy and Stalking Awareness**

The 2013/14 Crime Survey for England and Wales found that, overall, 28.3% of women (an estimated 4.6 million women) have experienced domestic abuse since the age of 16.<sup>14</sup> However, official reporting of the Crime Survey for England and Wales underestimates the extent of domestic abuse and underestimates its impact on women and men. This is because when measuring the scale and frequency of abuse experienced by survivors, the researchers capped the number of incidents they would record at five. This meant that if over five incidents of abuse occurred in a series, they were recorded just as five.

**Nottinghamshire Women's Aid Ltd: Supporting Families Experiencing Domestic Abuse**

<sup>11</sup> *Stalking and Harassment: A study of perpetrators* [PDF], NAPO, 2011, <https://www.napo.org.uk/sites/default/files/BRF22-11%20Stalking%20and%20Harassment%20-%20a%20study%20of%20perpetrators.pdf>, accessed 6 January 2021.

<sup>12</sup> Emma Williamson with Natasha Price, *Pilot Project: Domestic abuse and military families* [PDF], University of Bristol, 2009, [www.bris.ac.uk/media-library/sites/sps/migrated/documents/finalreport.pdf](http://www.bris.ac.uk/media-library/sites/sps/migrated/documents/finalreport.pdf), accessed 6 January 2021.

<sup>13</sup> Emma Howarth, Louise Stimpson, Diana Barran and Amanda Robinson, *Safety in Numbers* [PDF], The Hestia Fund, The Sigrid Raising Trust and The Henry Smith Charity, 2009, [https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Safety\\_in\\_Numbers\\_full\\_report.pdf](https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Safety_in_Numbers_full_report.pdf), accessed 6 January 2021.

<sup>14</sup> 'Violent crime and sexual offences: Intimate personal violence and serious sexual assault' [web article], Office for National Statistics, 1 February 2015, <https://tinyurl.com/y5asyf72>.



Data was particularly salient in reference to how the projects would be led and managed. Examples of data used to manage and lead the projects included data from case management systems and data from monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

Our project lead will use project planning tools and work to agreed milestones. Monitoring and evaluation feedback will support further development of the project and additional, added-value services for families. Existing policies will inform our work around vulnerable adults, safeguarding, data protection, staff supervision and training to comply with governance requirements.

**Suffolk Family Carers Ltd: Suffolk Serving Families Project**

Clear monitoring and evaluation tools will be used for all assessments and the Hampton Trust will use their robust electronic case management system for this work.

**Hampton Trust: RADAR**

Data was commonly referred to in relation to how the projects would demonstrate impact and measure success. Responses were typically detailed and provided a clear perception of what data would be available by the end of the project.

Children 1st has a comprehensive outcome monitoring tool, Integrated Information Management System (IIMS), which allows the collation of a wide range of information about the young people and families we support. Our Outcomes Framework relates to the Scottish Government's Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) wellbeing indicators: Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included (SHANARRI). Outcomes can be reported at 3 levels:

- **level 1:** SHANARRI indicator;
- **level 2:** service level outcome;
- **level 3:** individual outcome indicators.

**Children 1st (Moray): Children 1st Supporting Families Moray**

The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) is a confidential, client self-report questionnaire designed to be used before and after therapy. ... The WEMWBS is a standardised outcome measure with established validity and reliability. It is responsive to changes over time and, therefore, can measure the effect of one-to-one or group work interventions.<sup>15</sup> It comprises 14 positively worded statements with five response categories from 'none of the time' to 'all of the time'. Each statement is scored from 1 to 5; the sum of 14 statement scores produces a total score. Statements cover both feeling and functioning aspects of mental wellbeing.

**Sheffield Mind Ltd: Keeping Families in Mind**

<sup>15</sup> Hendramoorthy Maheswaran, Scott Weich, John Powell and Sarah Stewart-Brown, 'Evaluating the Responsiveness of the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS): Group and individual level analysis', *Health and Quality of Life Outcomes*, vol. 10 (2012), art. 156.

[Our] standard evaluation uses the Relate tool: 'The Difference We Make'. This enables national-level data collection and analysis to support continuous improvement in counselling theory and practice as well as at the local level.

Additional measures are used for family counselling:

- The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) measures psychological distress overall, as well as emotional, conduct, hyperactivity and peer relationship problems.
- Young People's Core (YP Core) measures psychological distress, wellbeing and risk.
- [The] Goals Based Outcomes tool (GBO) measures progress against goals.

These tools have been adapted for young people aged 11-16 and are completed independently by the clients. GBO can also be used with 17- to 18-year-olds.

SDQ and YP Core can be administered by any member of staff, including administrators, receptionists and practitioners, requiring no specialist training. GBO is administered by a counsellor at the beginning of the session, so that the family can discuss their goals [and receive] support feedback for informed practice.

**Relate Portsmouth and District: Naval Family Counselling**

In one project in particular, there was a clear emphasis on collecting high-quality data to use in a wider data set that would be employed to benefit Armed Forces families in the future.

Our SafeLives Insights data set will also include information from this project. This will be available to us quarterly and annually and will include both domestic abuse and sexual violence victims. It is possible that in future years we will be able to include information for stalking victims under the Insights data set and we are in negotiation with SafeLives about this. In the meantime we ensure that all the outcomes related to the stalking awareness package will be collected separately by our strategic stalking lead.

**Aurora New Dawn: Forces Advocacy and Stalking Awareness**

## Progress update forms

The progress update forms typically provided snapshots of the data that had been collected at the time the progress update form was completed.

All participants engaged fully and gave positive feedback [at] the end of the course [on the] evaluation form.

**Unity (Southern) Ltd: Strengthening Families through Positive Parenting**

The organisations also frequently mentioned their method of capturing data, and some referred to how they had improved the method.

Updated review forms have been carried out with the Forces families attending to continue to assess the group's impact. Statistics indicate that:

- Those completing reviews reported feeling less isolated.
- [There was] improvement towards parenting.
- [There was] reported progress towards improved communities.

**Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire: Military Families in Our Community Support Project**

## End-of-grant reports

When organisations discussed data in their end-of-grant reports, they tended to give examples of the data collected and how the data was used (for example, for evaluations).

Mind's Research and Evaluation Team independently evaluated the impact of the course between August 2017 and March 2020, generating insights to inform future service development. They captured key process learning from qualitative interviews with both local Mind facilitators in the two pilot sites, as well from participants (where relevant). They captured participant wellbeing outcomes using pre and post questionnaires.

100% of the participants identified as female. Participants were largely young to middle aged; the vast majority (52%) fell within the age band 31-40 years. The majority of the participants identified as heterosexual (96%). Some participants (9%) identified as having another experience of disability. 90% of the participants were White British. Just under half of the participants reported having personal experience of mental health problems.

**Mind: The AF Wellbeing Advisor Project**

We have adapted and implemented our evaluation forms for our group settings. These forms are 'user friendly', and have enabled us to draw accurate data, using the MESH (Measuring and Evaluation System at Home-Start) evaluation system, before, during and after support.

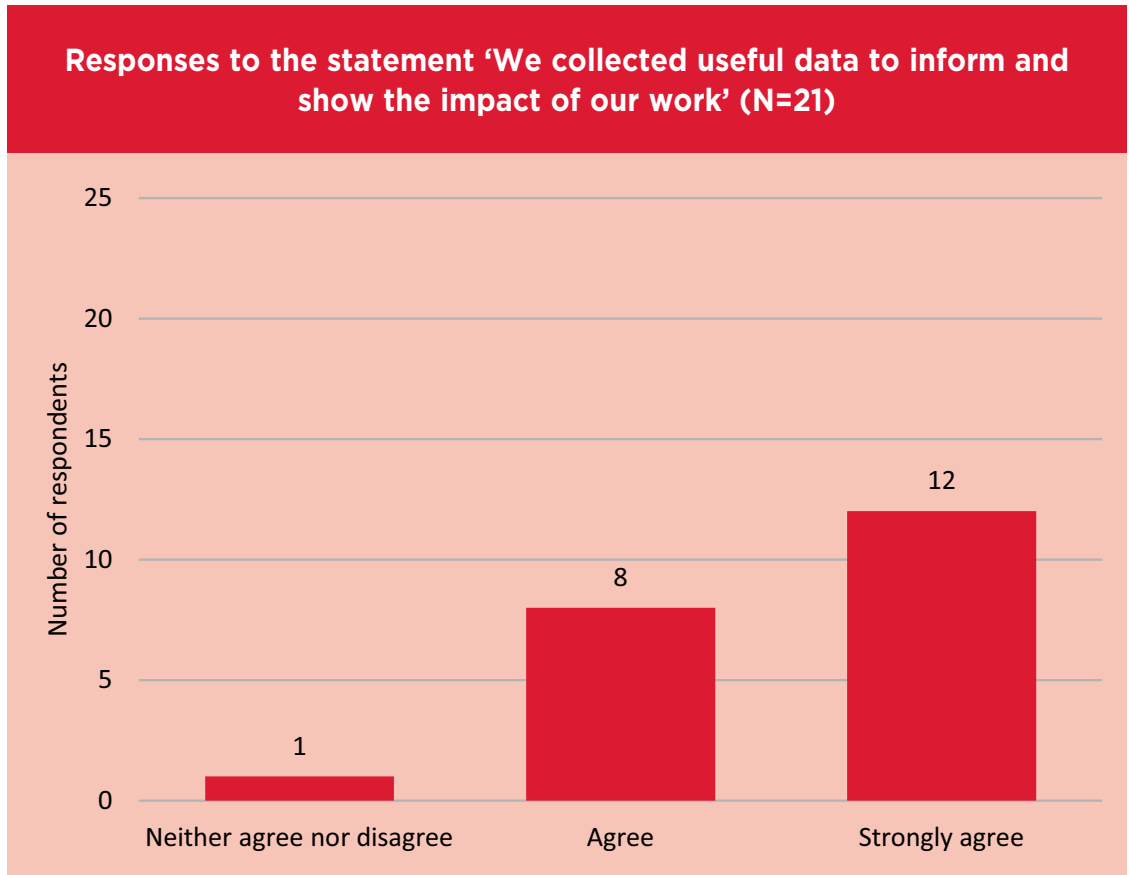
Our family support/community liaison worker has also completed initial support evaluation forms, with families, and frequently completed review forms, then eventually ending forms. Again, using the MESH evaluation system, we have been able to keep track of progression or identified any emerging issues needing support, e.g. the decline in the number of Nepalese attending our Dalton Barracks drop-in group.

**Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire: Military Families in Our Community Support Project**

### Analysis of survey data

When asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement 'We collected useful data to inform and show the impact of our work', 20 respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they did so, with only one respondent stating that they neither agreed nor disagreed (see figure 1.11).

Figure 1.11



The survey respondents were also asked how they measured the effects of their programme or service on their beneficiaries. One of the most common ways in which the projects were measured involved feedback from beneficiaries.

[We] collected, when possible, feedback from families [in] pre and post questionnaires. Wherever possible, [we collected] school feedback if [the] child attended local school.

**Survey respondent**

[We carry out an] ongoing review where young people and families feed back on changes [and the] information goes into [a] database to measure [the] impact of change.

**Survey respondent**

We have an evaluation session where the families self-assess and can call on the help of the leaders of the session if needed. Based on that self-assessment, and on various exercises during the programme, we are able to get direct feedback from the families on what benefits they are deriving. We follow up with the families [through] their support workers.

**Survey respondent**

Some respondents discussed specific tools and frameworks.

The tools used to monitor someone's progress in reaching these goals were: DVA-specific Outcomes Empowerment Star, SOUL<sup>16</sup> and a service user survey.

**Survey respondent**

We use Family Star as a tool and tailored questionnaires.

**Survey respondent**

We use three outcome measures: the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale, the Brief Resilience Scale [and the] Campaign to End Loneliness Measurement Tool.

**Survey respondent**

Respondents also pointed out that they had conducted evaluations to measure the effects of their programme or service on their beneficiaries. However, it was not always clear whether these were independent evaluations or who had conducted them.

<sup>16</sup> The respondent was likely referring to the SOUL Record. See 'The SOUL record' [web page], Inspiring Impact, 2006, <https://www.inspiringimpact.org/resource-library/the-soul-record>, accessed 6 January 2021.

We have commissioned external evaluations during years one and two of the project.

**Survey respondent**

We used an external evaluator who followed up with clients.

**Survey respondent**

## 1.13 LEARNING AND GOOD PRACTICE TO INFORM SIMILAR PROJECTS THAT SUPPORT ARMED FORCES FAMILIES

### Analysis of secondary data

#### **Progress update forms**

Some of the progress update forms gave examples of relationship-building. Examples ranged from more vague mentions of relationship-building to more explicit examples (e.g. incorporating food-based activities into the group). For example, Aurora New Dawn noted an increase in referrals as the result of building relationships with partners throughout the Armed Forces.

In Q3 we received 18 referrals: more than double what we saw in the previous reporting period, in half the timeframe. There are currently 22 cases open to the Armed Forces Advocate [a post within Aurora New Dawn]. This is a positive development and has come on the back of the extensive promotion and relationship-building outlined in our previous report.

**Aurora New Dawn: Forces Advocacy and Stalking Awareness**

Incorporating food into our group support has also shown to be highly effective at encouraging participation and easing anxieties with our parents. Moray Foodbank has kindly provided us with breakfast provisions to run our Chatty Café mornings. Our Chatty Café on a Thursday has been very well attended, particularly since permanently relocating to the Lossiemouth Youth Café.

**Children 1st (Moray): Children 1st Supporting Families Moray**

In one case, co-operation between organisations which each received a grant under the funding programme was noted to have had positive outcomes. This suggests that future programmes may wish to encourage co-operation between organisations where there may be synergy between the projects.

Meetings have also been had with Aurora New Dawn so as to establish effective working relationships and to determine how to proactively work with individuals involved with domestic abuse. This is proving to be successful in that those at risk of domestic abuse are able to be safeguarded appropriately and efficiently through multi-agency working.

**Southern Domestic Abuse Service: Up2U Creating Healthy Relationships**

### **End-of-grant reports**

Some organisations suggested that one-to-one support was particularly beneficial, which may be of interest to similar projects in the future.

We have learned the importance of providing support to all family members individually (if appropriate) and as a whole family. This involved a higher level of intensive support and working with families, in many cases, for a long period of time.

**Children 1st (Faslane): Children 1st Family Supporting Families**

One-to-one support has engaged beneficiaries and helped to build confidence so they felt able to engage with groups, which they might not otherwise have done.

**Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire: Military Families in Our Community Support Project**

One project highlighted the importance of domain-specific expertise, in this case in relation to the needs of naval families.

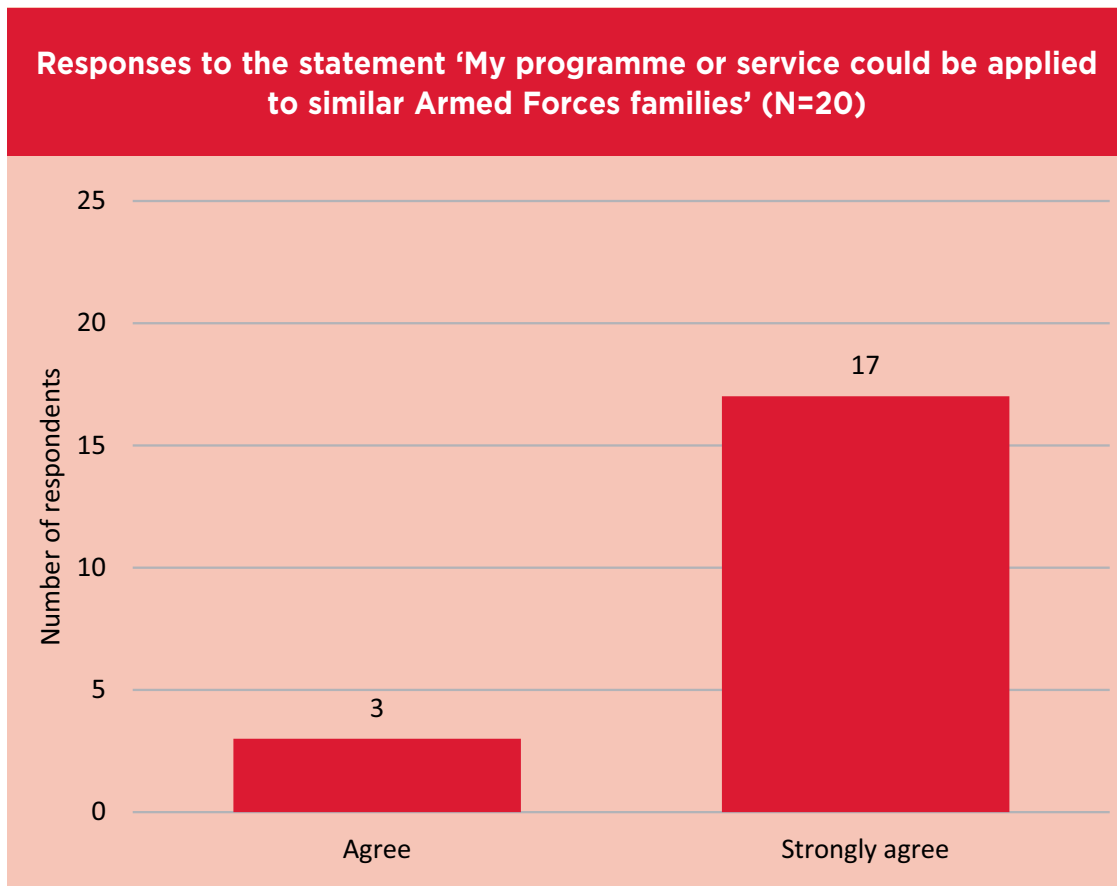
It is also clear that our expertise in understanding the needs of naval families and providing relationship-based support is valued by naval families, and that they speak to other families about the quality of our support – increasing the confidence of other families to engage with us either through approaching us themselves or having been referred by another agency.

**Children 1st (Faslane): Children 1st Family Supporting Families**

### Analysis of survey data

On a related note, 20 respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement ‘My programme or service could be applied to similar Armed Forces families’ (one respondent skipped this question) (see figure 1.12). No respondents disagreed or remained neutral on this statement, suggesting that the projects under the Families in Stress programme would be applicable to similar Armed Forces families. Future projects may therefore benefit from collaborating with and learning from the projects in this funding programme.

Figure 1.12



When asked about learning that could be useful for similar projects, respondents stated that support and co-operation from within the Armed Forces would be beneficial, especially for projects categorised as ‘DVA and stalking’.



Domestic abuse workers reported that better results were seen in relation to outcomes for families when the serving soldier was held accountable and fully supported by their unit welfare officer.

**Survey respondent**

Interaction with welfare staff and getting them on board, and interaction and engagement with higher ranks is imperative.

**Survey respondent**

Get the chain of command to support your initiative.

**Survey respondent**

## 1.14 LEARNING AND GOOD PRACTICE TO INFORM WIDER PUBLIC POLICY

### Analysis of secondary data

#### **End-of-grant reports**

Very few mentions were made of learning and good practice to inform wider public policy. Future programmes may benefit from explicitly asking organisations what the implications of their projects are for wider public policy.

When implications for public policy were mentioned, organisations typically referred to the specific needs or populations of the beneficiaries of the projects.

All single parents we supported were mothers.

**Children 1st (Faslane): Children 1st Family Supporting Families**

What also came out of the evaluation was concern expressed by participants that new, younger Service families (particularly in the lower ranks), those 'outside the wire' and those of Commonwealth serving personnel should be targeted for future support.

**The Warrior Programme: The Warrior Serving Family Programme**

We see wives and partners of Service personnel as a major part of military life. Wives and partners can often feel like they aren't acknowledged.

**Mind: The AF Wellbeing Advisor Project**

## Analysis of survey data

The survey respondents were asked, 'What did you learn from the programme or service that could be useful for wider public policy?' Good communication and partnership work were among the findings highlighted by survey respondents.

Communication is key! Both with the clients needing support and with other service providers.

**Survey respondent**

Partnership working and links with wider organisations such as the local Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference enabled us to highlight the specific needs of military families and share our learning to influence policy; in particular training of local professionals in the specific and complex issue of DA [domestic abuse] in military families.

**Survey respondent**

Knowledge of the unique circumstances of the Armed Forces and the resulting implications for service delivery were also pointed out by several respondents.

The unique needs of military families and distribution of families geographically.

**Survey respondent**

Organisations and charities need a better understanding of the needs of Armed Forces families.

**Survey respondent**

Knowledge of the support and networks available was discussed by some participants, with one participant suggesting that there should be a local 'forces family champion' in each geographical area.

Perhaps a local forces family champion in areas who have knowledge of all local support and networks.

**Survey respondent**

## 1.15 THE ROLE OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

### Analysis of secondary data

#### **Progress update forms**

A less prominent but noticeable theme that was identified during the analysis of secondary data was the importance of communications. The progress update forms detailed the various modes of communication and the impacts they had on the projects' ability to promote attendance and increase awareness.

Courage to Care services and events are also promoted on blogs, radio stations and community pages hosted by our partners. Our new promotional literature is also in many venues and surgeries in the area. Our link with a medical centre resulted in them sending our information directly to families who have identified themselves as carers.

Since October, the Courage to Care team have been at various community-based events and venues, continuing to raise awareness of the Courage to Care service and increase referrals to Carer Support Wiltshire and the Courage to Care team.

#### **Carer Support Wiltshire: Courage to Care Carer Support for Serving Military Families**

During January a target leaflet drop was carried out in the Rushmoor and Hart areas which covered families stationed at Aldershot Garrison and RAF Odiham. There were families who contacted the service as a result of this activity and word-of-mouth activity was also recorded.

Regular use of the Facebook page (JFFF) has been utilised to promote outreach events and provide general topical information.

#### **Citizens Advice Hart District: Joining Forces for Families**

To promote the service directly to families we developed a Home-Start AFC<sup>17</sup> open-top bus tour of York to promote awareness to new Service families moving to the city. We had 10 mums with 15 children join the tour for the day. We were able to share this well-attended event, bringing support and trust in the military community, on our social media, which brought interest and a further Forces referral.

#### **Home-Start York: Supporting Military Families in Our Community**

Face-to-face promotion, while time-consuming, has been the most effective way to secure participants. This quarter our wellbeing advisor attended a number of community events to raise awareness of the course, including choirs, staff meetings on base and [the] 'Little Flyers' social club.

#### **Mind: The AF Wellbeing Advisor Project**

<sup>17</sup> It was not possible to determine from the documents whether the respondent meant the Armed Forces Covenant or the Armed Forces Covenant Trust Fund when referring to 'AFC'.

## End-of-grant reports

When given the opportunity to reflect on their projects in the end-of-grant reports, some organisations highlighted the important role of effective communications to promote the service.

[We saw the importance of] allowing a longer lead-in time for advertising and promoting the service.

We recognise that time is needed to establish a new service: for 'word of mouth' to spread, for people to be in the right place mentally to access help, and to account for the unexpected (for example, short-notice deployments affecting engagement).

We have worked hard over recent years to increase the profile of Home-Starts in Wiltshire, which has included updating all of our publicity materials in line with a strategic rebranding exercise led by Home-Start UK (our national body), to better reflect equality and diversity among families.

**Home-Start Kennet: Serving Families**

## 1.16 THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

### Analysis of secondary data

#### Grant variation forms

Some (but not all) of the projects under the Families in Stress programme operated during the COVID-19 pandemic, which had major effects on almost all aspects of life and had significant impacts on the projects in the programme. Several organisations completed grant variation forms, which allowed the Trust to account for projects which required variations.

The variations were most notable in disruptions to the schedules of the projects as initially described in their application forms.

This would change the programme end date, which is currently 30 September 2020. The new programme end date will be approximately 22 weeks after the restart date. This will have no impact on the project costs.

**Carer Support Wiltshire: Courage to Care Carer Support for Serving Military Families**

The grant variation forms also provided information on how COVID-19 had disrupted the projects.

All face-to-face counselling has been stopped. All clients are now being provided with telephone or Zoom counselling.

Support groups have been postponed. A Facebook group has been created to provide a space for military families to share their creative writings with each other and hopefully reduce social isolation.

Recruitment of our community engagement officer has been postponed as all promotional events and face-to-face support groups have been postponed.

Our KfiM [Keeping Families in Mind] annual event has been postponed as it was due to be held on 31 May 2020. This would have used a large part of our activities and promotion budget.

We will be reviewing our budget within the next few weeks to identify any underspend and plan additional support that Armed Forces families want or need. This may include a review of our end date.

**Sheffield Mind Ltd: Keeping Families in Mind**

### **Progress update forms**

COVID-19 dominated the progress update forms for the projects that were ongoing from March 2020 onwards. Some organisations highlighted how they had adapted to the pandemic.

In the wake of COVID-19 and on the basis of government advice, in late March the Aurora team made the transition to remote working.

**Aurora New Dawn: Forces Advocacy and Stalking Awareness**

In the last quarter the Children 1st Moray has been flexible and responsive in changing our service provision to meet the needs of families during the COVID-19 outbreak.

**Children 1st (Moray): Children 1st Supporting Families Moray**

A focused activity was undertaken during January and February in the Portsmouth, Gosport, Fareham and Havant area to raise the visibility of the project and its service amongst the conurbations of service families, schools and potential outreach locations. This included developing further referral partners and stakeholders to increase the ability of potential families to access the service.

This was starting to bear fruit when the current public health crisis occurred. While [we are] still providing a service via telephone and email, the numbers seeking help have slowed. We believe this is a temporary situation as people get used to the restrictions. We expect a spike in referrals once these have become the norm.

**Citizens Advice Hart District: Joining Forces for Families**

During the COVID-19 crisis we will continue to support families by weekly phone calls. We are also referring families to welfare services, if appropriate.

**Home-Start York: Supporting Military Families in Our Community**

In April [2020], with the country in lockdown, face-to-face services were no longer possible. Family Lives worked tirelessly to ensure that families were still supported by video or phone.

We have adapted our training to be delivered electronically via [Microsoft] Teams and trained three new volunteers in June with a further two waiting to be trained.

**Family Lives: Supporting Forces Families**

The COVID-19 pandemic has also brought additional and immediate stressors to the projects which would not have been anticipated when they started.

Face-to-face consultation ceased almost overnight and the service moved to an email- and telephone-only service. All events were cancelled and most networking events with other services and charities were either cancelled or transferred to teleconference or video calls. Joining Forces for Families has continued to participate in as many as possible.

**Citizen's Advice Hart District: Joining Forces for Families**

Other clients have claimed to have experienced additional pressures at work due to COVID-19; therefore, their availability is limited.

**Southern Domestic Abuse Service: Up2U Creating Healthy Relationships**

One project was particularly affected due to the unique nature of its beneficiaries, showing that not all projects were affected in the same way.

Due to COVID-19, movement across the country was restricted to essential travel only. [The] court martial [process] has been closed and therefore numbers have been low at the MCTC [Military Corrective Training Centre] and there were a number of weeks where no new detainees were admitted.

**Barnardo's (London): Strengthening Community Families**

Another organisation highlighted the importance of collaborative working in dealing with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Effective partnership working was crucial during this time as all agencies were working with more limited capacity, with most people working from home. Moray Council looked to promote joined-up working to ensure no vulnerable young people fell through the gaps.

**Children 1st (Moray): Children 1st Supporting Families Moray**

### **End-of-grant reports**

Two organisations highlighted the effects of COVID-19 in their end-of-grant reports. These discussions largely dealt with similar themes to those found in the progress report forms, such as adapting to the pandemic and the increased needs of beneficiaries.

As the COVID-19 pandemic took hold (towards the end of this project), the lives of local families were completely disrupted. We responded rapidly by adapting our delivery methods to telephone/video calls, providing emotional support, and helping families navigate through an extremely stressful and worrying situation. For many families who were facing difficulties before 'lockdown', this crisis pushed them to their limit, while their previous support networks (including school/nursery provision) became inaccessible. We helped families organise how they were going to access food and medicines, shared resources with them on a range of things (such as setting up new routines and ideas for indoor play), helped them make connections with new COVID-19 community support networks, and funded emergency essentials.

**Home-Start Kennet: Serving Families**

## CHAPTER TWO

# Removing Barriers to Family Life

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

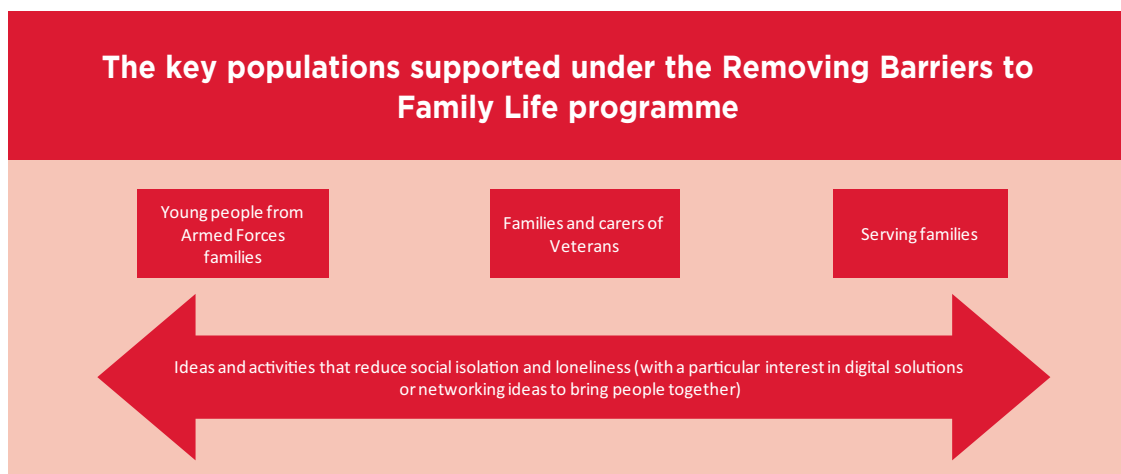
The Removing Barriers to Family Life programme was the second funding programme under the broader Removing Barriers to Family Life theme. This particular funding programme was open to Armed Forces charities and community interest companies (CICs) in addition to charities and CICs that had delivered substantial projects or programmes of work specifically supporting Armed Forces families in the previous two years.

Grants were made to organisations to deliver projects focusing on three key populations that the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust (the Trust) wished to support (see figure 2.1):

- young people from Armed Forces families;
- families and carers of Veterans;
- serving families.

The Trust was particularly interested in supporting projects that reduced social isolation and loneliness across these three groups. The Trust also stated in its application guidance documentation that when considering larger projects, it was particularly interested in how digital solutions or networking ideas intended to bring people together could be used to reduce social isolation and loneliness.

Figure 2.1





Funding was provided to organisations across two strands:

- the medium strand, which awarded projects between £30,000 and £100,000 each;
- the large strand, which awarded projects over £100,000 each.

All projects under this funding programme were ongoing as of the time of writing (December 2020).

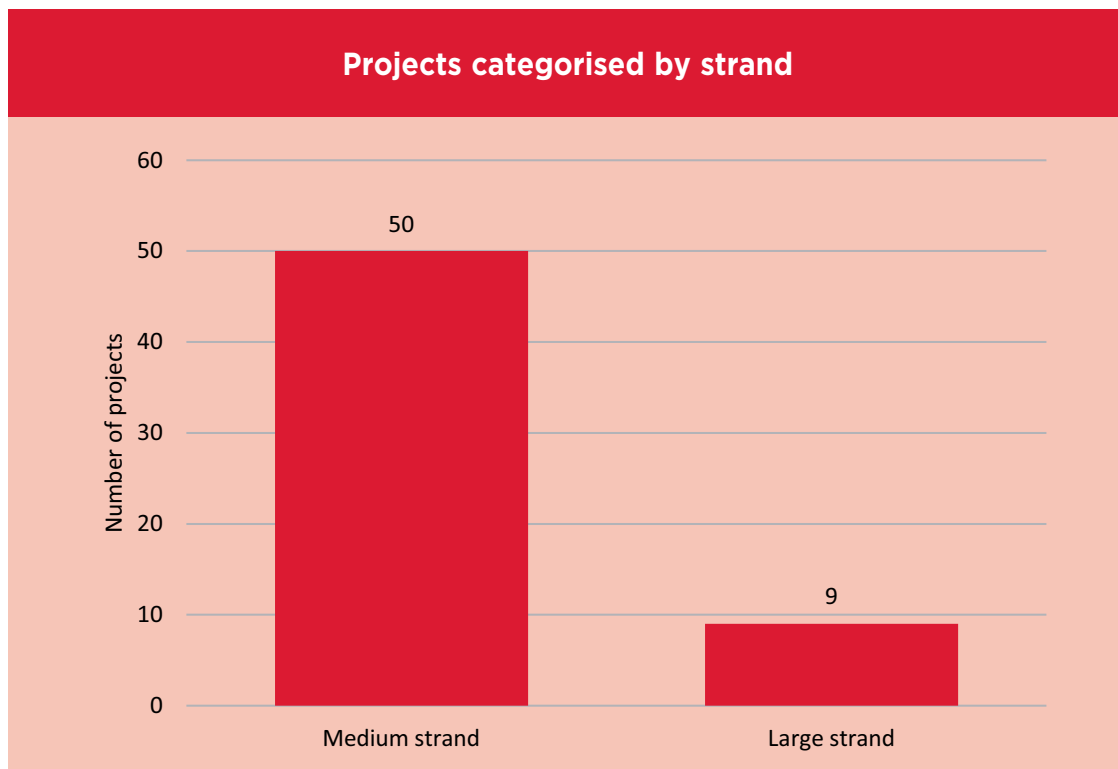
As most of the projects are in their early stages, implications for wider public policy are not explicitly considered in this chapter, although there are examples throughout the chapter which do have such implications.

## 2.2 OVERVIEW AND ANALYSIS

Overall, 59 projects were awarded a total of £7.12 million. The median award across all projects under this programme was £97,500. The smallest grant awarded across all 59 projects was £35,050, which was awarded to The Cart Shed for its Young Cart Shed project. The largest grant awarded was for £361,181, to RAF Lossiemouth for Supporting the Forces Child in Moray (Moray’s Dandelion Project).

When categorised according to project strand (see figure 2.2), 50 projects were in the medium strand (i.e. the grants each totalled between £30,000 and £100,000) and 9 projects were in the large strand (i.e. the grants each totalled over £100,000).

Figure 2.2

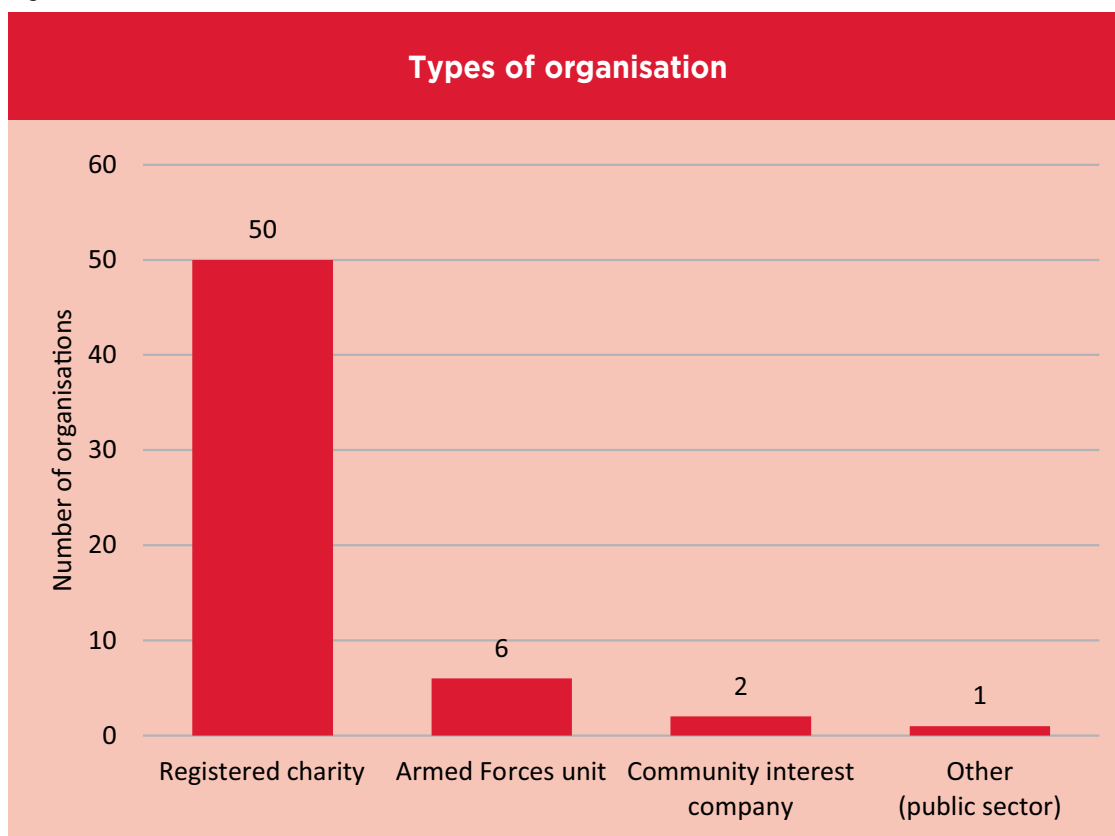


Appendix B provides a table of the 59 projects in the Removing Barriers to Family Life programme with their grant totals and a brief description of each project.

## Organisation types

According to the data gathered from the application forms, the majority of the organisations which received funding within the Removing Barriers to Family Life programme were registered charities (see figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3



## 2.3 PROJECT CATEGORIES

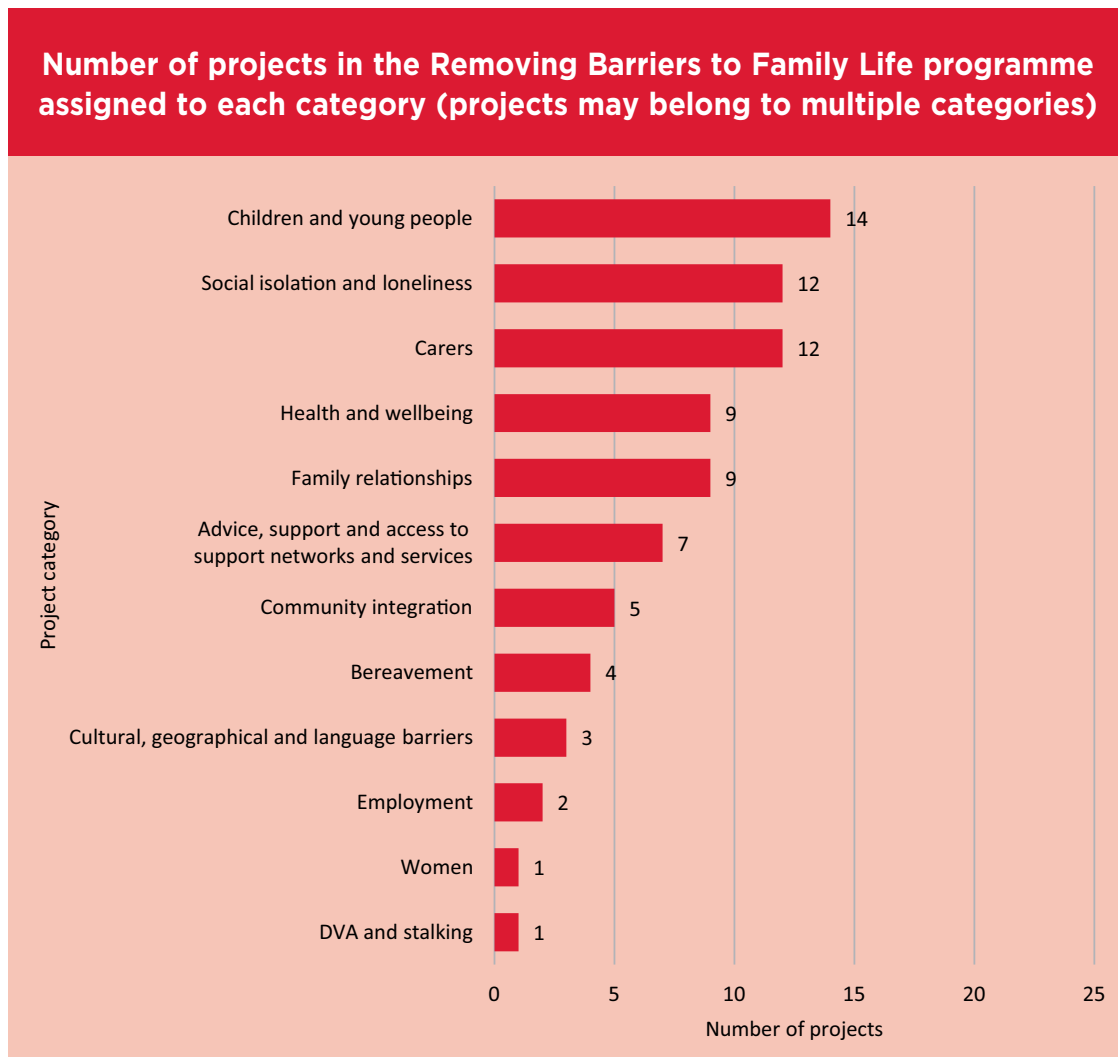
DSC's researchers assigned categories to the 59 projects within the Removing Barriers to Family Life programme (see figure 2.4). These were similar to those for the Families in Stress programme (see section 1.3) but with some variations. The categories used for the Removing Barriers to Family Life programme were:

- Advice, support and access to support networks and services
- Bereavement
- Carers
- Children and young people
- Community integration
- Cultural, geographical and language barriers

- DVA (domestic violence and abuse) and stalking
- Employment
- Family relationships
- Health and wellbeing
- Social isolation and loneliness
- Women

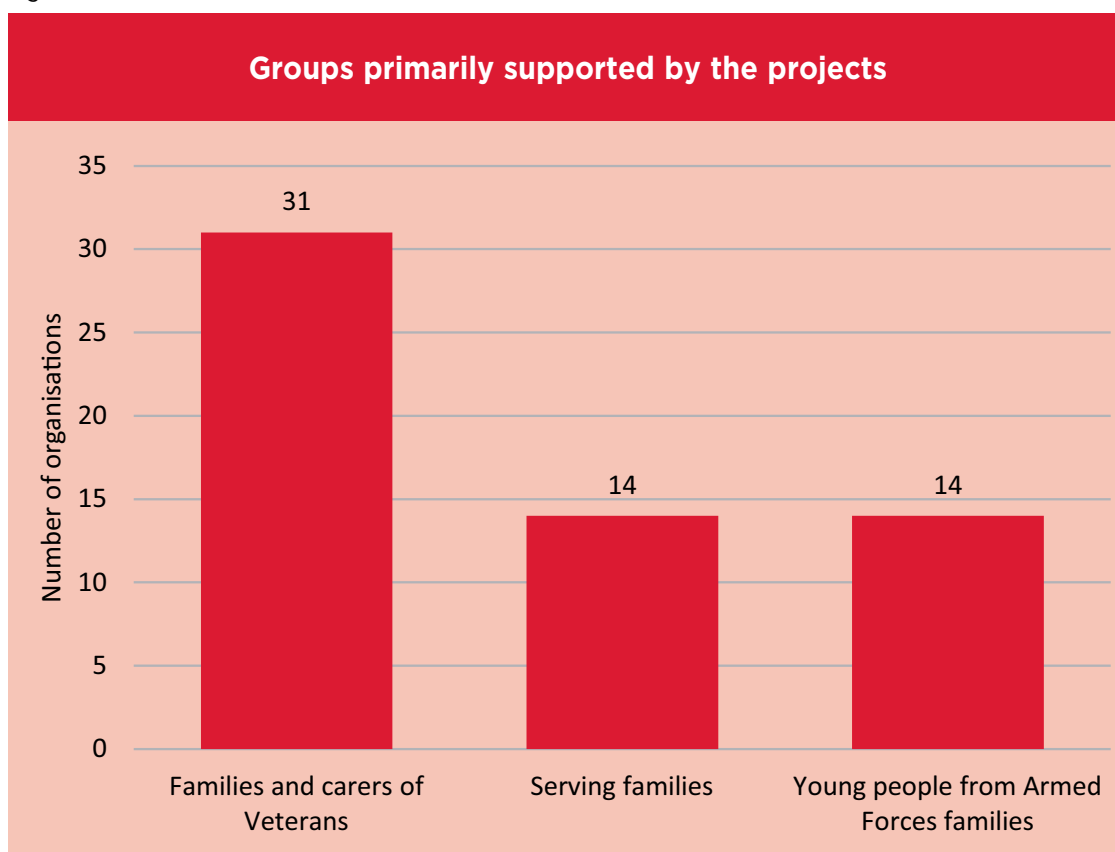
It should be noted that the categories are not mutually exclusive and therefore projects may be assigned to multiple categories. For example, the Focus on Families and Carers project from Improving Lives Plymouth was assigned to both ‘carers’ and ‘social isolation and loneliness’.

Figure 2.4



The projects can also be grouped according to the populations they aimed to support. As part of the application process, the applicants were asked, 'Which group will you primarily plan to support with this project?' Applicants were able to choose from one of the three groups this programme targeted (see figure 2.5).

Figure 2.5



### Advice, support and access to support networks and services

Seven projects were categorised under 'Advice, support and access to support networks and services' (see table 2.1). The smallest grant awarded in this category was £68,773, to Royal Star & Garter for the Family Matters project. The largest grant awarded was £300,000 to The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity for the Strengthening Families - By Your Side project. The median value of all grants in this category was £98,000.

Table 2.1

<b>Projects under the 'Advice, support and access to support networks and services' category</b>		
<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Project title</b>	<b>Grant total (£)</b>
The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity	Strengthening Families - By Your Side	300,000
The Ripple Pond	Small Ripples Making Big Waves!	100,000
The Royal British Legion	Benefits Debt & Money Advice Service	100,000
Liverpool Veterans HQ	Supporting Forces Families - Today & Tomorrow	98,000
Citizens Advice Hart District	Joining Forces for Families	95,987
St John & Red Cross Defence Medical Welfare Service	Families & Carers Wellbeing Support	94,196
Royal Star & Garter	Family Matters	68,773

## Bereavement

Four projects were assigned to the 'Bereavement' category (see table 2.2). The smallest award was £68,773 to Royal Star & Garter for the Family Matters project and the largest was £299,695 to Cruse Bereavement Care for the Together in Force project. The median value of the projects under this category was £77,425.

Table 2.2

<b>Projects under the 'Bereavement' category</b>		
<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Project title</b>	<b>Grant total (£)</b>
Cruse Bereavement Care	Together in Force	299,695
War Widows' Association of Great Britain	WW.it - War Widows in Touch	80,000
Blesma	Outreach Programme for Veterans/Families: Scotland	74,849
Royal Star & Garter	Family Matters	68,773

## Carers

A total of 12 projects were assigned to the 'Carers' category (see table 2.3). The smallest grant was awarded to Blesma for the Outreach Programme for Veterans/Families: Scotland project (£74,849) and the largest grant was awarded to Cornwall Rural Community Charity for the Veteran Carer Outreach project (£100,000). The median value of the grants in this category was £98,404.

Table 2.3

<b>Projects under the 'Carers' category</b>		
<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Project title</b>	<b>Grant total (£)</b>
Cornwall Rural Community Charity	Veteran Carer Outreach	100,000
Age UK Lancashire	Forces & Families Service	99,951
Active Plus	Family Matters	99,760
Suffolk Family Carers Ltd	Military Families - Caring as One	99,507
Improving Lives Plymouth	Focus on Families and Carers	99,422
St John & Red Cross Defence Medical Welfare Service	Families & Carers Medical Welfare	98,808
Liverpool Veterans HQ	Supporting Forces Families - Today & Tomorrow	98,000
Goodwin Development Trust	Community Hub, Families and Carers Project	86,500
Age UK Herefordshire & Worcestershire	Veteran and Carer Wellcheck	78,972
Age UK Portsmouth	SAS or Special Advice Service	76,479
RAF Association	Supporting RAF Families Affected by Dementia	76,043
Blesma	Outreach Programme for Veterans/Families: Scotland	74,849

## Children and young people

In total, 14 projects were categorised as 'Children and young people' (see table 2.4). The smallest grant was awarded to The Cart Shed for its Young Cart Shed project (£35,050) and the largest grant was awarded to RAF Lossiemouth for the Supporting the Forces Child in Moray (Moray's Dandelion Project) (£368,181). The median value of all grants in this category was £97,350.

Table 2.4

<b>Projects under the 'Children and young people' category</b>		
<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Project title</b>	<b>Grant total (£)</b>
RAF Lossiemouth	Supporting the Forces Child in Moray (Moray's Dandelion Project)	368,181
HQ 160th Brigade Wales	Supporting Service Children in Education in Wales - Regional Roles	338,000
Royal Caledonian Education Trust	Your Mind Matters Wellbeing Project	303,000
Make Some Noise Ltd	Upbeat Families	100,000
National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children	Seeking Solutions	100,000
Never Such Innocence	Voices of Armed Forces Children	100,000
Service Children's Progression Alliance (University of Winchester)	Helping Schools Help Service Children	97,500
Carterton Family Centre	The Street Based Youth Team	97,200
Reading Force	Reading Force - Keeping Families Connected	90,000
SSAFA Forces Help	Disability Support for Forces Families	90,000
Little Troopers	Little Troopers at School	85,000
HQ 38 (Irish) Brigade	Project Garrison Green Up	74,030
Army Welfare Service Thiepval Barracks	HEROS Ice-Hockey Programme	60,000
The Cart Shed	Young Cart Shed	35,050

## Community integration

Five projects were assigned to the 'Community integration' category (see table 2.5). The smallest grant was £74,140 to Army Training Centre Pirbright Initial Training Group for the Creating Positive Outcomes through Play project and the largest grant was £337,000 to the RAF Association for the Developing a Military Coworking Network project. The median value of the grants in this category was £94,680.

Table 2.5

<b>Projects under the 'Community integration' category</b>		
<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Project title</b>	<b>Grant total (£)</b>
RAF Association	Developing a Military Coworking Network	337,000
Aggie Weston's	Aggie's Community Waves	100,000
Greenwich Gurkha Ex-Servicemen Association (GGESA)	Ex-British Gurkha Bereaved Family Support	94,680
Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire	Home-Start for Serving Families	75,105
Army Training Centre Pirbright Initial Training Group	Creating Positive Outcomes through Play	74,140



## Cultural, geographical and language barriers

Three projects were categorised as ‘Cultural, geographical and language barriers’ (see table 2.6). The smallest grant in this category was awarded to Greenwich Gurkha Ex-Servicemen Association for the Ex-British Gurkha Bereaved Family Support project (£94,680) and the largest grant was awarded to Communities Fiji Britain for the Transitioning into Life in the UK for Fijian Service Families project.

Table 2.6

<b>Projects under the ‘Cultural, geographical and language barriers’ category</b>		
<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Project title</b>	<b>Grant total (£)</b>
Communities Fiji Britain	Transitioning into Life in the UK for Fijian Service Families	169,000
The Warrior Programme	Strengthening and Connecting Serving Families	100,000
Greenwich Gurkha Ex-Servicemen Association	Ex-British Gurkha Bereaved Family Support	94,680

## DVA and stalking

One project was categorised as ‘DVA and stalking’. This was the Nepali Domestic and Sexual Abuse Project from Citizens Advice Rushmoor, which was awarded £90,000.

## Employment

Two projects were assigned to the ‘Employment’ category. These were Developing a Military Coworking Network from the RAF Association and Investing in Our Military Families from Royal British Legion Industries, which were awarded £337,000 and £91,072 respectively.

## Family relationships

A total of nine projects were categorised under 'Family relationships' (see table 2.7). The smallest grant was awarded to Home-Start Mid & West Suffolk for the Healthy Parents, Healthy Families project (£85,557) and the largest grant was awarded to Woody's Lodge for the Woody's Find Me A Space project (£330,000). The median value of all grants in this category was £99,756.

Table 2.7

<b>Projects under the 'Family relationships' category</b>		
<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Project title</b>	<b>Grant total (£)</b>
Woody's Lodge	Woody's Find Me A Space	330,000
Forward Assist Ltd	Family First	240,412
Help for Heroes	Psychological Wellbeing for Specialist Military Units	100,000
TGP Cymru	Veterans Family Engagement Service	100,000
Oxfordshire Play Association	Armed Forces Support Project	99,756
Sheffield Mind Ltd	Keeping Families in Mind (Veteran Families)	98,980
RAF Wittering - Community Support	Families Centre for Service Families	86,622
Goodwin Development Trust	Community Hub, Families and Carers Project	86,500
Home-Start Mid & West Suffolk	Healthy Parents, Healthy Families	85,557

## Health and wellbeing

Nine projects were assigned to the 'Health and wellbeing' category (see table 2.8). The smallest grant awarded was £74,849 to Blesma for its Outreach Programme for Veterans/Families: Scotland and the largest grants awarded were of £100,000 and went to Cornwall Rural Community Charity for the Veteran Carer Outreach project and Veterans in Crisis CIC for the Forces Family Hub project. The median value of the grants in this category was £90,000.

Table 2.8

<b>Projects under the 'Health and wellbeing' category</b>		
<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Project title</b>	<b>Grant total (£)</b>
Cornwall Rural Community Charity	Veteran Carer Outreach	100,000
Veterans in Crisis CIC	Forces Family Hub	100,000
Finchale Group	Family Force	99,570
Improving Lives Plymouth	Focus on Families and Carers	99,422
Tom Harrison House	Military Families Addiction Recovery Experience	90,000
Walking With The Wounded	Digital Therapy for Families & Carers	87,000
Mutual Support - Armed Forces Multiple Sclerosis Support Group	Mutual Support & Respite Weekends	80,000
RAF Association	Supporting RAF Families Affected by Dementia	76,043
Blesma	Outreach Programme for Veterans/Families: Scotland	74,849

## Social isolation and loneliness

Twelve projects were categorised under 'Social isolation and loneliness' (see table 2.9). While there is a cross-cutting theme of reducing social isolation and loneliness across all of the projects in this funding programme, the 12 projects assigned to this category have social isolation and loneliness as significant components.

The smallest grant in this category was £50,177 to CAN International for the Tackling Loneliness in Gurkha Veterans Community project and the largest grant was £299,695 to Cruse Bereavement Care for the Together in Force project. The median value of the grants in this category was £87,840.

Table 2.9

<b>Projects under the 'Social isolation and loneliness' category</b>		
<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Project title</b>	<b>Grant total (£)</b>
Cruse Bereavement Care	Together in Force	299,695
Make Some Noise Ltd	Upbeat Families	100,000
The Warrior Programme	Strengthening and Connecting Serving Families	100,000
Veterans in Crisis CIC	Forces Family Hub	100,000
Improving Lives Plymouth	Focus on Families and Carers	99,422
Greenwich Gurkha Ex-Servicemen Association	Ex-British Gurkha Bereaved Family Support	94,680
The Family Foundation	#FamilyConnectors	81,000
Age UK Portsmouth	SAS or Special Advice Service	76,479
Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire	Home-Start for Serving Families	75,105
Blesma	Outreach Programme for Veterans/Families: Scotland	74,849
Army Training Centre Pirbright Initial Training Group	Creating Positive Outcomes through Play	74,140
CAN International	Tackling Loneliness in Gurkha Veterans Community	50,177

## CASE STUDY

### Age UK Herefordshire & Worcestershire: Veteran and Carer Wellcheck

Age UK Herefordshire & Worcestershire is an independent charity in the counties of Herefordshire and Worcestershire and a brand partner of Age UK, which works to improve the quality of life of older people in the local area. Age UK Herefordshire & Worcestershire is part of a wider network of over 130 local Age UKs in England, as well as Age Scotland, Age Cymru and Age NI.

Age UK Herefordshire & Worcestershire provides advice for older people as well as home support services to allow older people to live safely and independently in their homes, health and wellbeing services for older people, and training in health and social care skills throughout the West Midlands. The charity offers a service for Veterans as part of the National Joining Forces programme (in partnership with SSAFA) to provide holistic support for Veterans. It works with Veterans to produce plans to allow them to access support tailored to their specific needs with the aim of improving their quality of life and allowing them to maintain their independence.

The project was in its early stages at the time of writing (December 2020); however, it intended to support the carers of older Veterans, focusing on their social, emotional, practical and economic needs. The service will work to create an individual support plan, which is then regularly reviewed. The project plans to work closely with existing services on offer from Age UK Herefordshire & Worcestershire.

Age UK Herefordshire & Worcestershire noted in its application form that stakeholder feedback had demonstrated an increasing demand for support and information for the carers and families of Veterans. It also suggested that the number of older carers is increasing and so there is a need to support clients and carers.

The project plans to use a built-in review process to monitor its effectiveness and to demonstrate the impact of the service on its beneficiaries. At the conclusion of the project, Age UK Herefordshire & Worcestershire plans to collect feedback via an established questionnaire that will be used to monitor quality and develop services.

## Women

One project was categorised under 'Women', which was the Empowering Women through Music project from the Military Wives Choirs Foundation. This project was awarded £95,961.

## 2.4 THE EXTENT TO WHICH GRANTS HAVE HAD A TRANSFORMATIVE EFFECT FOR ARMED FORCES FAMILIES

### Analysis of secondary data

#### **Application forms**

The application forms demonstrated a clear understanding of the transformative effects that the projects wished to achieve. The organisations most commonly demonstrated this understanding by providing clear lists of desired outcomes.

Ultimately, participants will be able to state that they are a proactive part of their community with new friends and activities in their lives. Where necessary, [participants will gain an] understanding of [the] trauma, memories and legacies of Service life [and share them with] their families - an inclusive sharing of life's experiences, when possible. All sharing must be by choice ... The positive impact of feeling needed and wanted by your local community is profound.

**Age UK Portsmouth: SAS or Special Advice Service**

Our intended outputs for this project are to:

- support 400 carers who are Veterans or carers who are caring for a Veteran;
- support 300 carers to access a carer's assessment.

Our intended outcomes are for the Veterans who are caring or carers who are caring for a Veteran to maintain or increase their wellbeing, and to reduce their risk of poor physical or mental health.

**Cornwall Rural Community Charity: Veteran Carer Outreach**

Measurement of successes in regards to outputs will include:

- number of users signed up to the platform;
- number of users accessing/downloading resources;
- number of users participating in the webinars;
- number of topics/conversations in the chat/forum function;
- number of local, regional and national events advertised on the calendar;
- number of users (both carers and those affected by dementia) sharing their stories on the platform and the interactions from these;
- number of blog posts and interactions;
- number of site visits and impressions via a marketing awareness campaign.

**RAF Association: Supporting RAF Families Affected by Dementia**

## CASE STUDY

### **CAN International: Tackling Loneliness in Gurkha Veterans Community**

CAN (Communities and Nature) International is a charity that aims to improve the wellbeing of members of disadvantaged and marginalised communities and to work towards the conservation of nature. The charity works in collaboration with various partners, such as government agencies, and raises funds for conservation and sustainable development.

CAN International runs the Gurkha Centre, which supports Gurkha Veterans and their families throughout the UK to facilitate their transition. The charity organises community awareness workshops, drop-in sessions and peer-to-peer support meetings. It also supports the Veterans' access to public services such as the NHS and pensions help. The Gurkha Centre also assists Veterans' groups to build partnerships directly with local councils and other stakeholders including the NHS to allow the groups to liaise with them directly to address their unique challenges.

The Tackling Loneliness in Gurkha Veterans Community project was in its early stages at the time of writing (December 2020); however, it intended to support the families of Gurkha Veterans in Aldershot and Farnborough in Hampshire to deal with the effects of loneliness and social isolation. This will be achieved by creating networks of Gurkha Veterans and helping the groups to implement social activities (such as regular afternoon tea sessions) to bring the families of Gurkha Veterans together. The project will also provide a befriending service via telephone that will provide information and signpost individuals to relevant advice and support networks. Monthly 'bring and share' meetings will be organised to encourage the Veterans and their families to share their experiences, and the project aims to organise meetings of Gurkha families with relevant stakeholders (such as local councils and the NHS) to enable beneficiaries to reach out to the stakeholders themselves to address their challenges directly.

In its application form, CAN International stated that it intended to collect data on topics including (but not limited to) whether beneficiaries appreciated its activities, how beneficiaries' connectivity changed, and how beneficiaries' perceptions of social isolation and loneliness improved. At the conclusion of the project, the charity intends to administer a brief questionnaire to gather data on its success. This data will be used in a final project report and shared across social media.

## 2.5 THE COMPLEXITY OF THE NEEDS OF ARMED FORCES FAMILIES

### Analysis of secondary data

#### **Application forms**

The organisations frequently referred to complex needs in their application forms. Several organisations noted that geographical factors often negatively contributed to the needs of Armed Forces families.

Blackpool is an area of high recruitment to the Armed Forces and is a place to which many Veterans choose to return, as it is the place where they spent their childhood and is familiar to them.

**Age UK Lancashire: Forces & Families Service**

The wide geographical reach in Scotland, combined with the complex needs of our most elderly/vulnerable members, means that further support is needed to ensure that Veterans/families in Scotland feel supported.

**Blesma: Outreach Programme for Veterans/Families: Scotland**

Multiple organisations also noted the complex needs of children and young people.

Carterton Community College told us that the situation they face with many young people from RAF families is desperate and Thames Valley Police have identified an increase in drug and alcohol abuse and anti-social behaviour in young people.

**Carterton Family Centre: The Street Based Youth Team**

[We would provide] support ... through[out] the experiences of repeated transition of schools due to frequent relocations and when [children] have a parent deployed away from home.

**Little Troopers: Little Troopers at School**



One particularly notable population of Armed Forces families supported by these projects is families that have relocated to the UK. This is particularly the case among Gurkha communities.

The issues of loneliness and isolation of ethnic minority communities are widely reported in literature (Age UK, undated<sup>1</sup>). We also observed these challenges among ethnic minorities in the UK, particularly the Gurkha Veteran communities while working with them during the last three years. Perhaps it is not very surprising as they have to relocate and separate from families and do come from a different landscape, both geographically and culturally. Also, many of them do lack proficiency in English. During the last few months, sadly we had to learn the tragic stories of suicide by some ex-Gurkha soldiers and their family members in Aldershot, associated with loneliness.

**CAN International: Tackling Loneliness in Gurkha Veterans Community**

Our project is needed to address an identified need for specialist support for Nepali families locally who have settled in the area. Large-scale migration to the area followed 1997 changes to immigration rules for Gurkha Veterans.

**Citizens Advice Rushmoor: Nepali Domestic and Sexual Abuse Project**

It is clear from the application forms that the Armed Forces families served by these projects are by no means a homogeneous group. The particular roles individuals from these families have in the Armed Forces can result in varying needs.

Military partners face unique stressors including isolation, long and anxious periods whilst partners are on operations, and the demands of single-handed childcare. ... This is amplified for SMU [specialist military unit] families, who must deal with particularly unpredictable deployments, increased risk of partners being seriously injured or killed, and the unknown nature of their work. In many instances the family will not know where in the world their loved one is operating, adding additional stress.

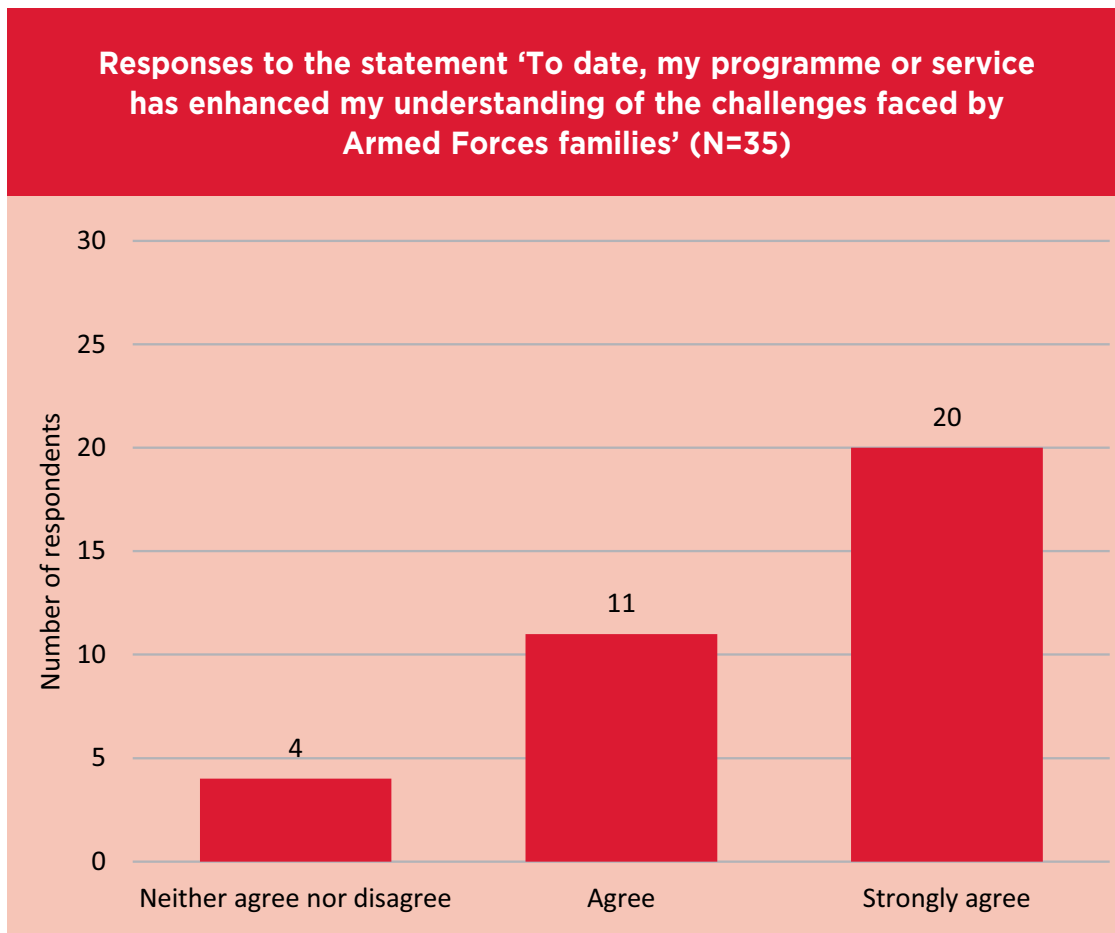
**Help for Heroes: Psychological Wellbeing for Specialist Military Units**

<sup>1</sup> The exact reference intended by the respondent could not be traced. However, see, for example, *Connecting with Culture to Reduce Loneliness amongst Ethnic Minority Communities: Examples from the Time to Shine programme in Leeds* [PDF], Care Connect, the University of Sheffield and Age UK, 2018, [https://www.ageuk.org.uk/contentassets/2fda2880a8fd4756bc9a939de2568d97/loneliness\\_bame.pdf](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/contentassets/2fda2880a8fd4756bc9a939de2568d97/loneliness_bame.pdf), accessed 6 January 2021.

## Analysis of survey data

While not strictly looking at the complex needs of Armed Forces families, figure 2.6 shows the responses to a survey question relating to the respondents' understanding of the challenges faced by Armed Forces charities. The majority of the 35 respondents who answered this question either agreed or strongly agreed (N=31) that their project had enhanced their understanding of the challenges faced by Armed Forces families, while relatively few respondents remained neutral on the matter (N=4).

Figure 2.6



## CASE STUDY

### Forward Assist: Family First

Forward Assist is a charity that helps Veterans to reintegrate into civilian life and provides services to assist them in building the capacity and skills to access employment. The services offered by Forward Assist include support, advice and guidance, and advocacy services. The organisation also runs projects intended to reduce social isolation and loneliness and to support Veterans and their families by improving their health and wellbeing. Forward Assist runs the Citizenship Reloaded programme, which provides an eight-week Veteran-specific course to facilitate the transition to civilian life. The programme includes interactive group sessions with experienced social workers and mental health professionals who can provide support and advice for the families.

The Family First project was in its early stages at the time of writing (December 2020); however, it intended to provide holistic support for the family in an environment suitable for the needs of children, parents and the entire family. The project acknowledges the importance of sustained support for Armed Forces families and so plans to provide a long-term service for as long as its beneficiaries require support. It aims to build long-term relationships with Armed Forces families based on trust, integrity and openness. The project intends to provide tailored counselling sessions for Armed Forces families both virtually and in groups (COVID-19 permitting). Subjects covered will include healthy relationships, life skills, emotion regulation, managing anxiety and depression, and positive living sessions including family activities (such as cooking sessions) and therapeutic activities for Veterans and their partners.

Forward Assist has noted that it has conducted an extensive consultation to understand the needs of Armed Forces families in order to develop support that is tailored to their specific needs.

At the conclusion of the project, Forward Assist will conduct an evaluation that will look at the effects on the Veterans and their families via anonymous questionnaires and one-to-one sessions in order to examine and assess the impact of the project.

## 2.6 EVIDENCE OF EMERGING NEEDS OF ARMED FORCES FAMILIES

### Analysis of secondary data

#### Application forms

While there were relatively few references to emerging needs in the application forms, some projects did discuss potential emerging needs of Armed Forces families.

There is enormous stress on the publicly funded welfare organisation, with emphasis heavily focused on those with acute and urgent need. We believe that the provision of strong pastoral support and an active community will act as an early intervention process and prevent many of the problems which are not visible to the welfare teams until they have become more serious.

**Aggie Weston's: Aggie's Community Waves**

The demographic of Forces families living on sites is changing, and service provision is not changing to meet these needs. The bases that we will deliver in have many families living only a short distance from the base, and currently integration with this community is very limited.

**Make Some Noise Ltd: Upbeat Families**

## CASE STUDY

### HQ 38 (Irish) Brigade: Project Garrison Green Up

HQ 38 (Irish) Brigade is an Armed Forces unit that trains for and delivers warfighting capabilities, supports and trains indigenous forces overseas, and supports local authorities and emergency services in response to natural and other disasters in the UK.

The Project Garrison Green Up project was in its early stages at the time of writing (December 2020); however, it intended to provide therapeutic horticulture to Armed Forces families with a focus on those families who have children with additional needs. The users of the project will include Armed Forces families with children with special care needs, serving personnel who may benefit from therapeutic horticulture as part of stress and suicide awareness programmes, and personnel under the care of a personnel recovery unit or defence primary healthcare.

The unit has noted that studies have demonstrated the benefits of horticultural therapy for people with poor mental health and wellbeing. The project intends to provide an opportunity for Armed Forces families and individuals to socialise and so reduce loneliness and social isolation in a safe environment.

The project will collect data in line with international best practice, including feedback from users. At the conclusion of the project, HQ 38 (Irish) Brigade also intends to carry out a cost-benefit analysis and a comparison with similar projects.

## 2.7 THE ROLE OF PARTNERSHIP WORK AND CO-OPERATION

### Analysis of secondary data

#### **Application forms**

Examples of partnership work were evident in the application forms. These included partnership work with a range of organisations, including schools and across geographical areas.

Since the creation of Little Troopers at School, over 500 schools have engaged with the project and information sheets we have made available. The feedback has been so positive with much interest for the project to expand. One school told us: 'We're super-excited about the Little Troopers at School project. The primary pack is full of activities, lesson plans and lots more. We had so much fun doing a couple of the activities with the children at Alexander First school. They created their own Little Troopers notice board and finger-painted dandelions, which is the flower of the military child.'

**Little Troopers: Little Troopers at School**

By collaborating across Liverpool, Halton and Wirral, where there is explicit demand for support in each of these themed areas, we will be able, through this Supporting Forces Families - Today & Tomorrow project and funding, to pool our resources and get more bang for our beneficiaries and our funders' buck.

**Liverpool Veterans HQ: Supporting Forces Families - Today & Tomorrow**

## Progress update forms

In the progress update forms, there was a strong sense of co-operation between the projects and a range of organisations.

[A representative of the project] has been making contact with established organisations that she will feed into (SSAFA and Royal British Legion). She has had a meeting with [an individual at the University of Central Lancashire], who is keen to set up a central register of support for Veterans in Lancashire.

**Age UK Lancashire: Forces & Families Service**

We have worked closely with the police, courts, domestic abuse services and other practitioners to ensure that we have the latest information about how services are operating in order to support our clients to access additional support and reporting mechanisms needed. We have additionally worked with other services to understand and put in place COVID-19-specific safeguarding options aimed at reducing risk.

**Citizen's Advice Hart District: Joining Forces for Families**

The project team have established new partnerships and referral pathways and are receiving referrals from a range of providers:

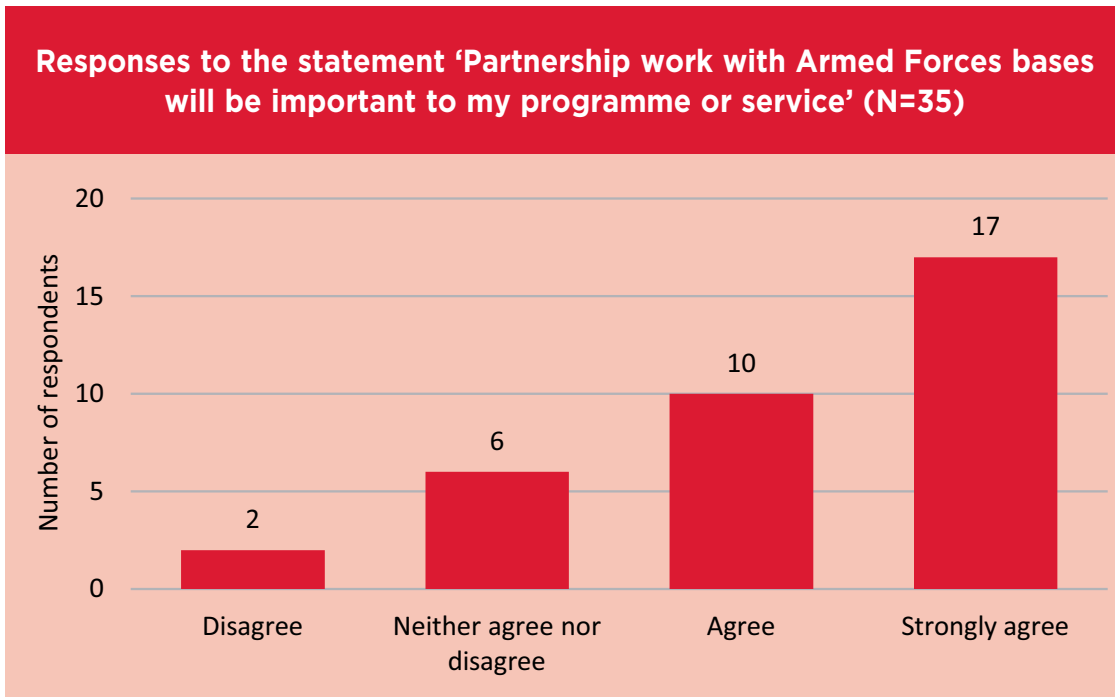
- the Poppy Factory;
- Change Step Peer Mentors;
- SSAFA;
- RBL [The Royal British Legion];
- VC Gallery;
- Woody's Lodge;
- Veterans' local groups;
- community groups;
- schools.

**The Family Foundation: #FamilyConnectors**

## Analysis of survey data

As shown in figure 2.7, the majority of the 35 respondents to this question either agreed or strongly agreed (N=27) that partnership work with Armed Forces bases would be important to their programme or service. Only two respondents stated that partnership work with Armed Forces bases would not be important to their project.

Figure 2.7



## CASE STUDY

### Little Troopers: Little Troopers at School

Little Troopers is a charity that supports children with one or both parents in the Armed Forces. The charity offers resources, initiatives and support for children in Armed Forces families, particularly during separation periods, with the aim of keeping the parent and child connected and bonded while they are apart.

Little Troopers at School is a national project that provides schools with information and practical resources to help them find out more about the unique needs and circumstances of Armed Forces children and how these children can be supported to ensure they do not experience educational disadvantage. Ultimately, the project aims to ensure all military children get fair and consistent support within their education setting, wherever that may be, in all circumstances and however many times they move schools.

The resources also help schools to be better equipped to deal with issues when they arise and prevent children in Armed Forces families from reaching an emotional crisis point.

Little Troopers will use funding from the Trust to increase the number of children, schools and education professionals engaged in Little Troopers at School by delivering a series of workshops and conferences, as well as creating a series of new school resources.

In terms of monitoring, the Little Troopers at School project will use feedback surveys, roadshow feedback forms and data on a variety of metrics, such as the number of enquiries received and the number of schools using and engaging with the scheme.

## 2.8 EVIDENCE OF GOOD PRACTICE OF CO-DESIGN

### Analysis of secondary data

#### **Application forms**

There were several positive examples of good practice of co-design throughout the application forms. Examples often detailed how the organisations had included their beneficiaries from these and other projects to inform the design and structure of their projects. Schools were also frequently contacted to inform the design of projects involving children and young people.

We have organised and delivered an event on behalf of Worcestershire Association of Carers to showcase the support available for carers of Veterans. This was attended by over 100 carers and family members of Veterans and during the course of this they were asked their opinions on the current service and how it should be developed. We regularly request written feedback from our service users and use this to inform and develop new services.

During the delivery of our current Veterans project, a carer or family member is often the first point of contact and it is through this engagement that they have raised the need for support to continue with their caring role. We have used this face-to-face feedback to enhance our current service but also to develop a project aimed at carers and families.

#### **Age UK Herefordshire & Worcestershire: Veteran and Carer Wellcheck**

We consulted with heads of local schools on the need for provision [and] the impact this would have for families.

[The] headteacher [at] Pirbright described to us the 'frustrating gap' between support the school can offer and what is available outside of this to meet more complex needs. Winston Churchill Secondary outlined the need to 'close the gap' in support for Service children who can 'go under the radar'. She relates this to their frequent transitions between schools, stating that once needs are identified, they are 'not with us long enough for us to make a difference'.



The poorer educational attainment of Service children in Surrey has been recognised by the SCMPB [Surrey Civilian Military Partnership Board] as a key issue as it goes against the positive national trend. Our project proposes to support the most vulnerable children to bring about long-term sustainable change including improved educational attainment.

**Army Training Centre Pirbright Initial Training Group:  
Creating Positive Outcomes through Play**

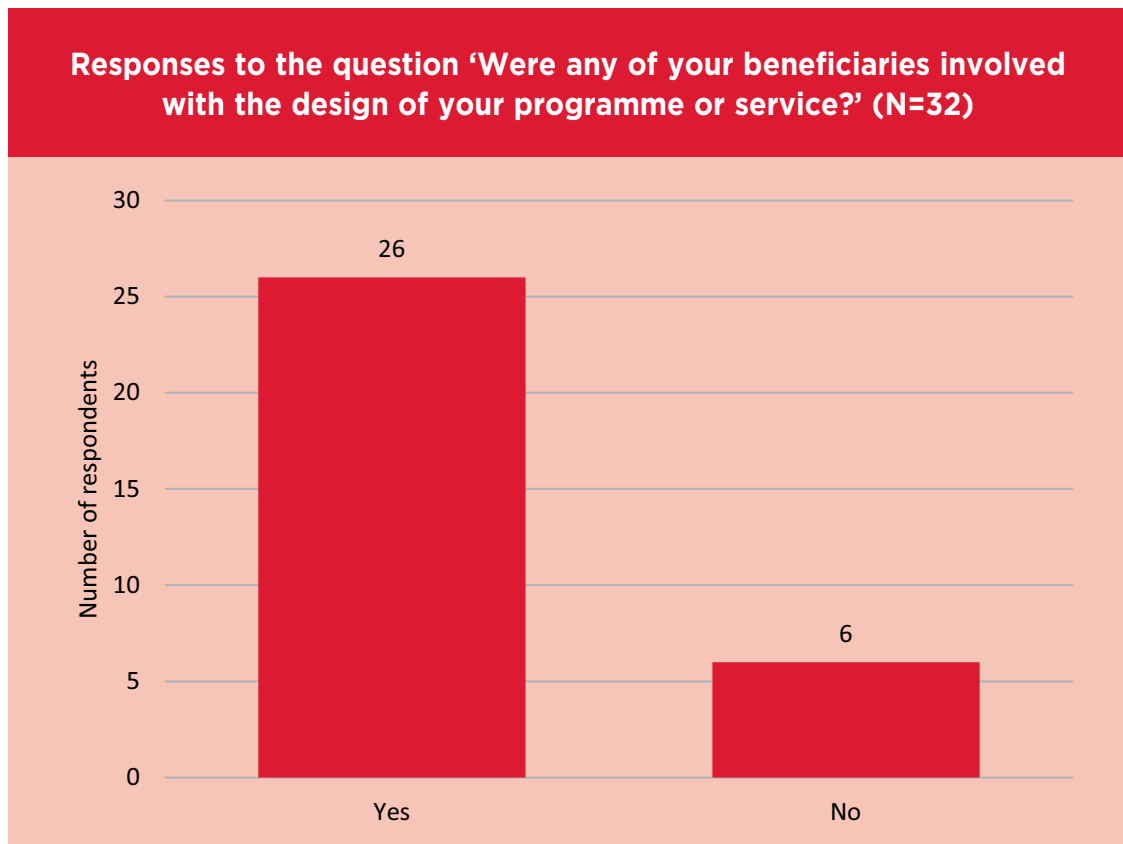
Over the past year we have been holding regular steering group meetings with Veterans and members of their families who have accessed our current provision. At each meeting we have asked attendees what they think of current services, what gaps they believe exist and how we can improve our offer.

**Cornwall Rural Community Charity: Veteran Carer Outreach**

### Analysis of survey data

Figure 2.8 shows that most of the 32 respondents to this question included their beneficiaries in the design of their project (N=26). The respondents who had not done so (N=6) were asked whether, in hindsight, they felt it would have been useful to include their beneficiaries in the design of their project. Four respondents stated that it would have been useful, one stated that it might have been useful and one stated that it would not have been useful.

Figure 2.8



The respondents were also asked what insight or feedback their beneficiaries provided during the planning phase of the project. Most of the respondents provided the methods through which they collected feedback from their beneficiaries.

[We used] meetings, surveys, focus groups [and] feedback.

**Survey respondent**

We used focus groups and surveys along with feedback given by beneficiaries to help plan our service.

**Survey respondent**

Survey gave feedback on how the opportunity to meet in a way that was professionally focused, rather than around children, was really important for military partners.

**Survey respondent**

Some respondents noted that the unique circumstances and needs of Armed Forces families in their project meant that it was vital to include their beneficiaries when planning the project in order to ensure that they could design the project around their needs.

The entire programme was built upon [the] lived experience of the Forces child in Moray schools, feedback from serving parents and views of educational practitioners.

**Survey respondent**

We spoke to schools to find out what support they felt was missing and what would help them best support military children and we spoke to military families to find out what in particular they felt schools could strive to achieve in supporting military children. We also ran a survey to collate data on school movement and the impacts.

**Survey respondent**

Our beneficiaries continually feed back to us about their unique situations and needs in order that we can continually evolve our project to meet these needs. The beneficiary feedback has included the need for up-skilling of project staff on applying for civil court injunctions and increased awareness of immigration options. The beneficiaries also provide feedback on where they heard about our service, which enables us to further target messages and information.

**Survey respondent**

## CASE STUDY

### Liverpool Veterans HQ: Supporting Forces Families - Today & Tomorrow

Liverpool Veterans HQ is a charity based in Liverpool that helps Veterans, their families and carers by offering support, advice, guidance and referral pathways for their complex needs. Liverpool Veterans HQ helps with issues such as homelessness, benefit claims, and problems with health and wellbeing.

The Supporting Forces Families - Today & Tomorrow project was in its early stages at the time of writing (December 2020); however, it intends to promote the health and wellbeing of Armed Forces families and carers of Veterans. It plans on doing this by offering a variety of services and support networks including (but not limited to) emotional support, parenting programmes, support for housing, support for benefits, and bereavement and funeral support.

The project encompasses the entire Armed Forces family's wellbeing and aims to reduce the risks of poor health and wellbeing by adopting a holistic approach that looks at the family as a singular unit. Over 90% of the team members on the project are Veterans, and they intend to engage with local partners in order to provide care for Armed Forces families.

One of the components of the Supporting Forces Families - Today & Tomorrow project is Parent Talk, which is a course that focuses on helping parents in Armed Forces families to nurture young people, improve the family's resilience and support the unity of the family.

An important component of the project is how it plans to help families to experience social contact via community events such as sporting events, cultural events, days out and community volunteering programmes (insofar as the COVID-19 pandemic allows). The project will also focus on outreach engagement via aged Veterans coordinators, who will work on addressing the complex and specific needs of Armed Forces families with a Veteran aged over 67.

The charity intends to use the Trust's Outcomes Measurement Framework to evaluate the project upon its conclusion.<sup>2</sup> This will complement the existing performance management system in use (Plan, Do, Review), the outputs of which will be used to review and make adjustments to the project design before delivering the next iteration of the project.

<sup>2</sup> *Report and Financial Statements for the 14 Month Period to 31 March 2019* [PDF], Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, 2019, <https://covenantfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/AFCFT-Annual-Report-and-Accounts-2018-19.pdf>, accessed 6 January 2021.

## 2.9 THE EXTENT TO WHICH BENEFICIARIES PERCEIVE THAT THEY HAVE BEEN SUPPORTED THROUGH THE PROJECTS

### Analysis of secondary data

#### **Progress update forms**

The progress update forms provided an opportunity for the organisations to share examples and feedback from their beneficiaries that highlight the beneficiaries' perceptions of support during the projects.

Teachers, parents and young people have all commented on how impactful the project has been for them. Teachers and parents have shared that the project allows them to speak with their students and children about how they are feeling about Mum or Dad deploying or how they are feeling about an upcoming relocation and the impact it has on them. Using the arts has provided a soft way to speak about the topics, a new way of engaging with Service children.

**Never Such Innocence: Voices of Armed Forces Children**

### **CASE STUDY**

#### **RAF Lossiemouth: Supporting the Forces Child in Moray (Moray's Dandelion Project)**

RAF Lossiemouth is an Armed Forces unit based in Moray in northeast Scotland. It is one of two RAF Quick Reaction Alert stations that protect UK airspace, particularly throughout the north of the UK.

Supporting the Forces Child in Moray (Moray's Dandelion Project) was scheduled to launch in August 2020 but, due to the impact of COVID-19 on school settings, has been delayed for 12 months. It intends to employ a team of workers who will:

- provide social, emotional and mental wellbeing support to young people in Armed Forces families throughout Moray who are experiencing significant and emotional life events;
- offer training for staff in schools, thus enhancing the local ability to support the Armed Forces community;

- work collaboratively with military bases and educational establishments to bring about lasting behavioural and policy changes that will support Armed Forces families in the future.

The project aims to improve the emotional, social and educational outcomes of children from Armed Forces families in school settings. It also aspires to create transformative change at the organisational level through education and by encouraging school staff to provide support to children from Armed Forces families. The project ultimately aims to have a direct impact on every school in Moray.

The project works closely with Moray Council, which is a full partner in the project and provided matched funding.

## 2.10 THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROJECTS, AND RISKS AND BARRIERS TO SUSTAINABILITY

### Analysis of secondary data

#### **Application forms**

Financial sustainability was mentioned by some organisations as a particular barrier to the sustainability of their projects, and some projects noted in their application forms how they intended to ensure financial sustainability for their projects.

Ongoing maintenance would be funded through [a grant], for example. Longer term, the aspiration would be to apply for formal recognition through the John Muir Award and Enabling Environments Award.

**HQ 38 (Irish) Brigade: Project Garrison Green Up**

As part of this project, Make Some Noise (as an AQA-accredited training centre) would like to offer training to both Ministry of Defence community and welfare staff but also to volunteers, thus enabling the project to become sustainable beyond the grant funding.

**Make Some Noise Ltd: Upbeat Families**

Organisations did not always refer to sustainability in their application forms in terms of financial sustainability. Blesma noted that it intended the outcomes of its project to be sustainable through developing sustainable support networks.

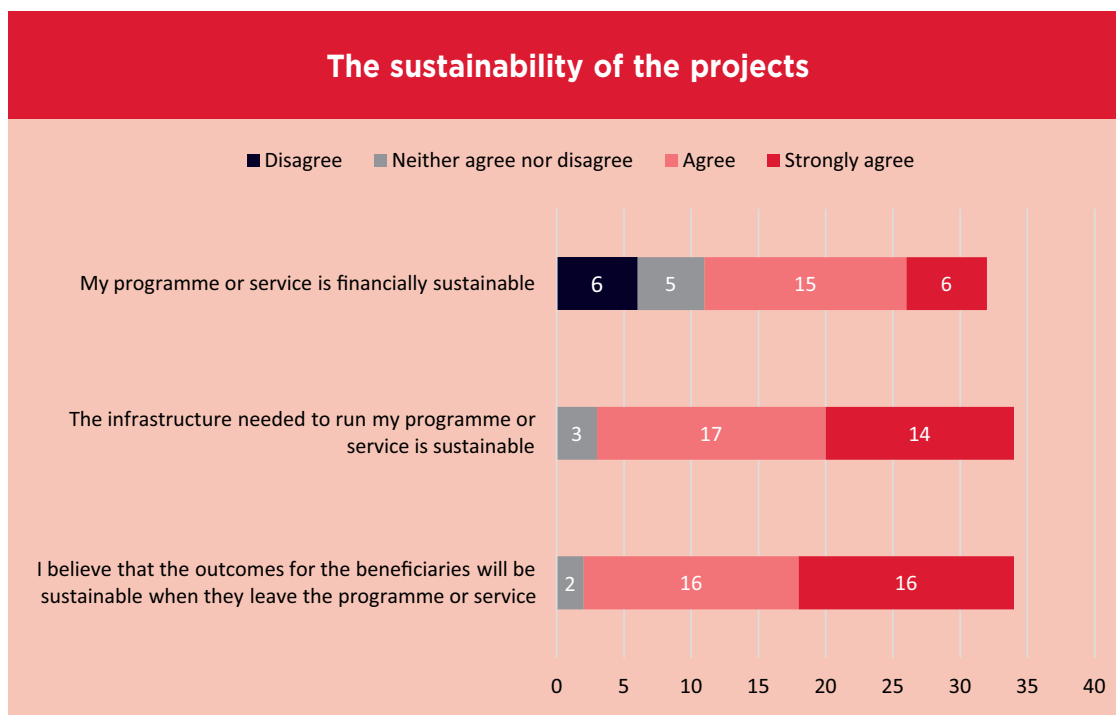
[The project] will help reduce isolation by bringing families and Blesma members together, enabling them to develop sustainable peer-to-peer and intergenerational support networks.

**Blesma: Outreach Programme for Veterans/Families: Scotland**

### Analysis of survey data

The survey respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with three statements about the sustainability of their project on three dimensions of sustainability: financial sustainability, the sustainability of the infrastructure and the sustainability of the intended outcomes for Armed Forces families (see figure 2.9).

Figure 2.9



While most respondents stated that their project was sustainable on all three dimensions, the statement 'My programme or service is financially sustainable' received the greatest variation in responses. Fewer respondents strongly agreed with this statement, and this was the only statement with which any respondents disagreed.

The survey respondents were also asked about the biggest risks and barriers to the sustainability of their projects. Several respondents noted financial sustainability as a cause of concern.

Funding [is] only available on short timescales where true sustainability will require time and resources to embed.

**Survey respondent**

Financial limitations.

**Survey respondent**

Unable to source additional funding.

**Survey respondent**

Securing future funding for the project.

**Survey respondent**

Although we receive fees for the care we give, we rely on charitable donations to provide the level of care we do. This project is out of the scope of care fees, although very important for the wellbeing of all involved.

**Survey respondent**

Loss of funding.

**Survey respondent**

Funding is the biggest risk but we are planning well in advance to access funds from sources within the Armed Forces community along with community funding.

**Survey respondent**

Financial provision to provide a single point of contact and link to appropriate services.

**Survey respondent**

Unsurprisingly, the impact of COVID-19 was also reported as one of the biggest risks to the sustainability of the projects. It had clearly had an impact on the financial sustainability of the projects, in terms of both fundraising and increasing the demand for the services provided.

COVID-19 has severely impacted on our fundraising for 2020 and possibly into 2021.

**Survey respondent**

Funding [is a risk to sustainability], as we initially had one year's worth of funding and our project has really taken off and worked so well we really could have done with two or three years' more funding. Due to COVID-19 our service has seen an unprecedented rise in demand for our support and help.

**Survey respondent**

Funding in the age of COVID-19 [is a risk to sustainability].

**Survey respondent**

We fear that COVID-19 has changed the landscape for grant-funded programmes. We are hopeful that [the Trust] will continue to support our activities, but we have no information on this. In the meantime, we are working on trading activities, which we hope will help us to be sustainable in the longer term.

**Survey respondent**

In addition to financial sustainability, some respondents reported that the restrictions put in place in response to COVID-19 had resulted in them having to adapt their ways of working. It was noted that particular populations of Armed Forces families (e.g. children in schools) are facing additional stressors.

COVID-19 represents a fundamental risk [as] the peripatetic staffing base [is] unable to move between schools.

**Survey respondent**

The key observation we need to make at this time is the pressure schools are under due to COVID-19. Although we have approached a large number of schools and many have engaged, the message is clear. Schools are currently overstretched in attempting to deliver the curriculum during the pandemic.

**Survey respondent**



COVID-19-related challenges (e.g. not being able to organise face-to-face activities, hence producing less impacts than expected) are one of the key risks to the sustainability of our programme.

**Survey respondent**

[A challenge is] current COVID-19-related pressure on school staff time and budgets.

**Survey respondent**

## CASE STUDY

### The Cart Shed: Young Cart Shed

The Cart Shed is a charity that provides training opportunities for individuals and communities experiencing social exclusion. It helps individuals enter employment, provides opportunities for people to enjoy the natural environment via rural skills therapy to support health and wellbeing, offers volunteering and employment opportunities within the local community, and provides support for individuals with mental health and wellbeing problems. Most of the activities conducted by The Cart Shed are focused on coppicing, a traditional woodland management practice in which trees are cut to the ground to allow the stump or stool to regrow, with the wood then being used to provide craft items such as baskets, fencing and furniture.

The Young Cart Shed project originally intended to allow young people to attend weekly sessions at the woodlands for 11 weeks with their parents or carers. However, the project had to be adapted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Throughout the summer of 2020, The Cart Shed offered weekly sessions for children emerging from the first COVID-19 lockdown. These sessions focused on play and friendship and allowed children to extend their boundaries, develop self-esteem and self-confidence, grow in resilience, and learn new skills such as building and lighting fires with flint and steel, woodcraft and constructing shelters. Feedback from parents confirmed that the impact of being in the woods was dramatic – energising the children, connecting them to their peers and enabling them to access education in a more manageable way.

In the last week of November 2020, the charity also started a four-week course for parents. The course, offered as a wellbeing experience, was open to both Veteran and serving families and provided time for parents to learn a new skill and share life experience. Although the numbers of participants were relatively low, those who did attend – all veterans – gained from sharing their perspective of bringing up children through the many transitions required in Service life. The Cart Shed had hoped to extend this course to engage groups of serving parents; however, the plan was interrupted by COVID-19 restrictions.

The Cart Shed developed a 'theory of change' in 2018 and this is used to inform its data-collection processes. Individuals will be assessed before attending and during their time in the project. The Cart Shed also plans to use follow-up questionnaires that will be sent six months after a person's participation to provide data that can be used to evaluate the impact of the project. At the conclusion of the project, this evaluation process will be used in conjunction with national and local data to benchmark the outcomes of the project.

## 2.11 HOW THE PROJECTS HAVE USED DATA TO INFORM AND SHOW THE IMPACT OF THEIR WORK

### Analysis of secondary data

#### **Application forms**

Throughout the application forms, there was a clear understanding of the importance of collecting useful data in order to show the impact of the organisations' work and to further develop these projects and similar ones in the future. Several applicants specifically noted which tools and frameworks they planned to use throughout their respective projects.

We will employ an outcome-focused model and develop key performance indicators as a basis for client/carer surveys, reviews and producing client journeys to show the impact the service has had on their lives. With consent, data will be captured using our case management and reporting system (Charitylog). All quality elements of the proposed services will be captured and reported.

#### **Age UK Herefordshire & Worcestershire: Veteran and Carer Wellcheck**

Measurement will be key to knowing we are delivering and meeting our objectives for the Little Troopers in School project ... Feedback surveys, roadshow feedback forms, the number of enquiries received, resources used in education settings, the number of schools utilising the scheme and engaging, [and] parent feedback will all be factors we will be monitoring closely throughout the project timeline.

#### **Little Troopers: Little Troopers at School**

Data from other sources, such as the Office for National Statistics, was also referenced by one organisation, which indicated that this data could be used as a benchmark against which its own data could be compared.

Data sets relate to both national (Office for National Statistics) and local data collection, which will enable us to benchmark outcomes. We will gather data on social isolation, loneliness, community engagement, health and general wellbeing.

#### **The Cart Shed: Young Cart Shed**

One organisation noted that it would also collect 'informal' data, which could be used to inform and develop the project.

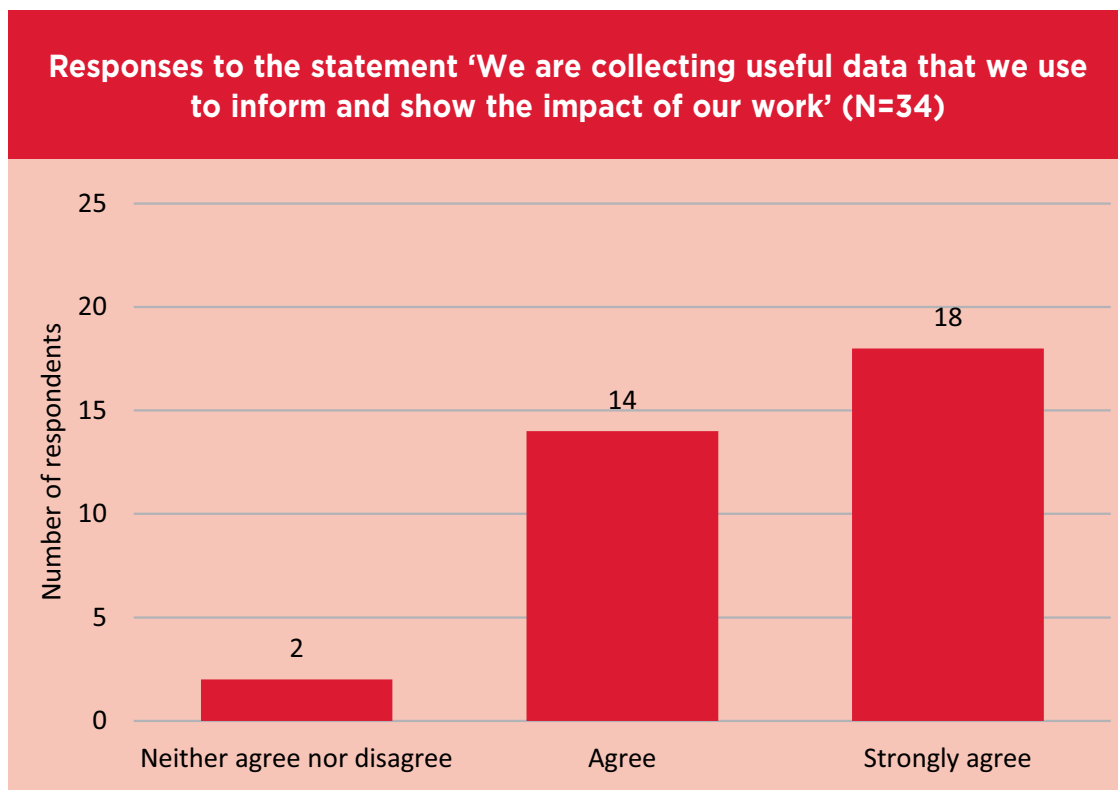
For less formal evaluation we will talk to young people and their parents about our service and record any verbal feedback and also occasionally gather Post-It Note comments.

**Carterton Family Centre: The Street Based Youth Team**

### Analysis of survey data

Figure 2.10 shows that the majority (N=32) of the 34 respondents to this question reported that they were collecting useful data to inform and show the impact of their work, and only two respondents reported that they neither agreed nor disagreed that they were collecting useful data.

Figure 2.10



The respondents were asked what data they were collecting to measure the effects of their project on their beneficiaries. Examples of quantitative data collected included demographic data, number of referrals to the projects and wellbeing metrics.

[We track] referrals made into the programme and collate evidence on the impact this makes to the wider community.

**Survey respondent**

[We collect information on] age, Service background, need [and] requirements, geographic location, household numbers, wellbeing information and [other] issues.

**Survey respondent**

We are collecting data on the number of clients assisted, type of support provided, and number and nature of awareness-raising activities and outcomes.

**Survey respondent**

I am using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale. I am keeping records of all areas [where] support has been offered, to enable case studies. This information will be broken down further into headed sections, i.e. housing, mental health, finance, social isolation, employment and education.

**Survey respondent**

We'll be using [the] Youth Engagement Scale, [the] WEMWEBS [Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale], staff observations and other bespoke tools to measure engagement in the project, improved confidence, wellbeing and resilience over time. We'll also be measuring the number of young people engaging with the project and basic anonymised demographic data such as gender; serving, Veteran or reservist family [status]; and location.

**Survey respondent**

Our review forms work on a 0-5 scoring basis so we can closely follow any progression or any further need. This covers parenting skills, parenting wellbeing, children's wellbeing (physical and mental health for both parents and children), and family management (including household budget, use of services, integrating into the wider community, stress within the family and the day-to-day running of the home). Outcomes are measured using this system. This is then entered into a database where appropriate information is stored and data summarised from this.

**Survey respondent**

The survey respondents also collected qualitative data. Examples given included case studies and interviews.

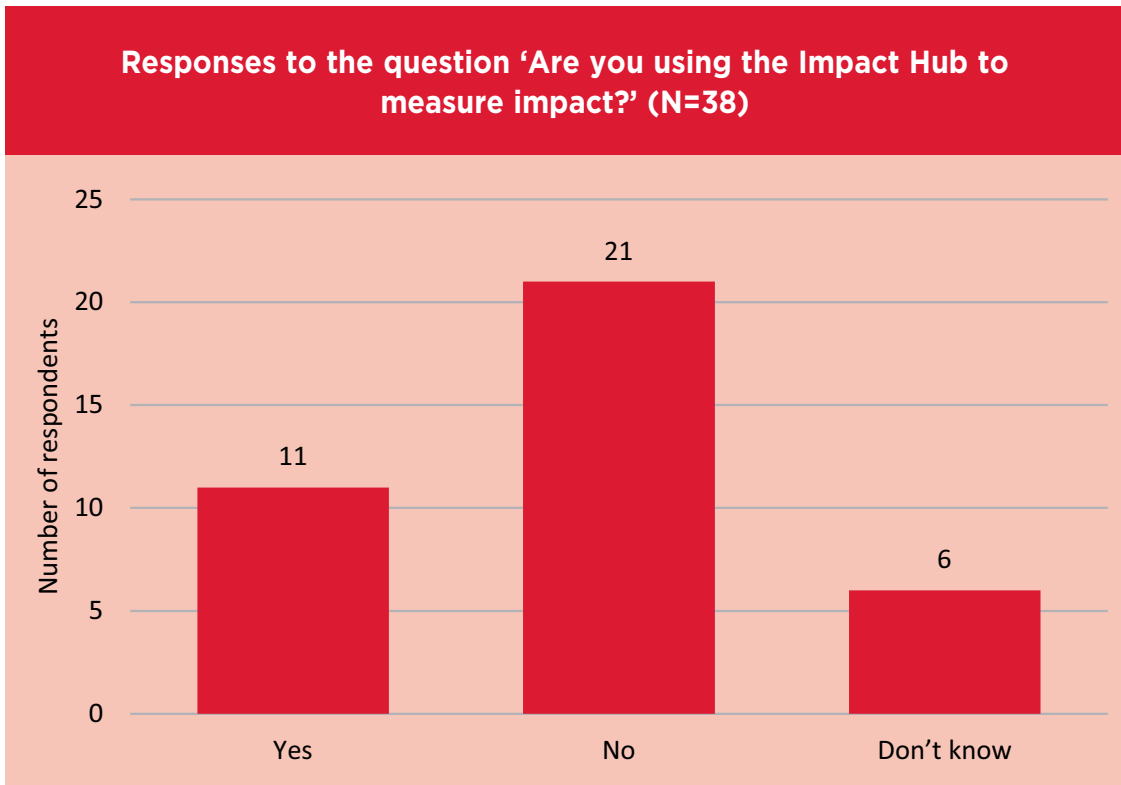
[We collect] anecdotal case studies [and] programme feedback surveys.  
**Survey respondent**

[We seek] feedback through informal interviews and session reports.  
**Survey respondent**

[We gather] verbal and written feedback.  
**Survey respondent**

Figure 2.11 shows that the majority of the 38 respondents to the question presented in the figure were not using the Impact Hub (an online portal provided by the Trust to allow organisations to measure their impact) to measure impact at the time of the survey (N=21). Six respondents did not know whether they were using the Impact Hub.

Figure 2.11



Although the reason the respondents were not using the Impact Hub was not within the scope of this survey, one respondent did provide the following comment.

The reporting portal on the AFCT [Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust] site does not allow for the volume of data and outcomes that we are collecting and want to share with the Covenant to be expressed. For example, we are unable to upload graphics to demonstrate the range of issues we are working with [service users] on and the impact and outcome that our work is influencing for the individual as well as the local health and social care economy.

**Survey respondent**

The relatively high number of respondents who did not know whether they were using the Impact Hub, in addition to the large numbers of respondents not using the Impact Hub, may warrant further research. This could examine the reach and awareness of the Impact Hub across different funding programmes, and also give an opportunity for users to provide feedback to further improve the Impact Hub.

The respondents were asked which data-collection tools they were using. Some respondents named specific tools and frameworks.

[We use the] SWEMWBS [Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale] but [are] soon to use [the] Impact Hub.

**Survey respondent**

Lamplight.

**Survey respondent**

Progress Star and [we measure wellbeing] using WEMWB [Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale] national validated tool.

**Survey respondent**

Star outcomes.

**Survey respondent**

We use [an internal] database but are currently in the process of implementing a new database, called Charitylog. This will enable us to draw more detailed information and improve both input accessibility and output. Our initial visit, review and end forms are used constantly.

**Survey respondent**

One respondent noted that online tools were not appropriate for use with the Armed Forces families in their project.

Due to safety concerns if our beneficiaries are identifiable as well as language difficulties, feedback is more easily provided verbally than through an online tool.

**Survey respondent**

## CASE STUDY

### The Royal British Legion: Benefits Debt & Money Advice Service

The Royal British Legion (RBL) is the largest Armed Forces charity in the UK and consists of over 235,000 members and 110,000 volunteers.<sup>3</sup> Established in 1921, RBL provides support to serving and ex-Service personnel throughout their lives and to their families. RBL provides a wide range of services including welfare services, residential care homes, befriending, and practical support for education and employment.

The Benefits Debt & Money Advice Service provides support for Armed Forces families preparing to leave the Armed Forces. This consists of education to help families understand and manage budgets, support to help individuals claim benefits, support through insolvency proceedings, and representation at appeals and tribunals for individuals in financial crisis. The service is provided via face-to-face support and also by telephone.

RBL has robust evaluation and monitoring arrangements in place to allow it to know whether its support has been successful for each individual case. Beneficiaries who use the service complete an Independent Living Star at the beginning and end of their period of support. This looks at outcome areas such as finances, social life and wellbeing, allowing RBL to provide holistic support. RBL also collects data via feedback questionnaires.

In addition to the data and evidence collected by RBL, the Benefits Debt & Money Advice Service is externally audited in order to provide comprehensive and objective data.

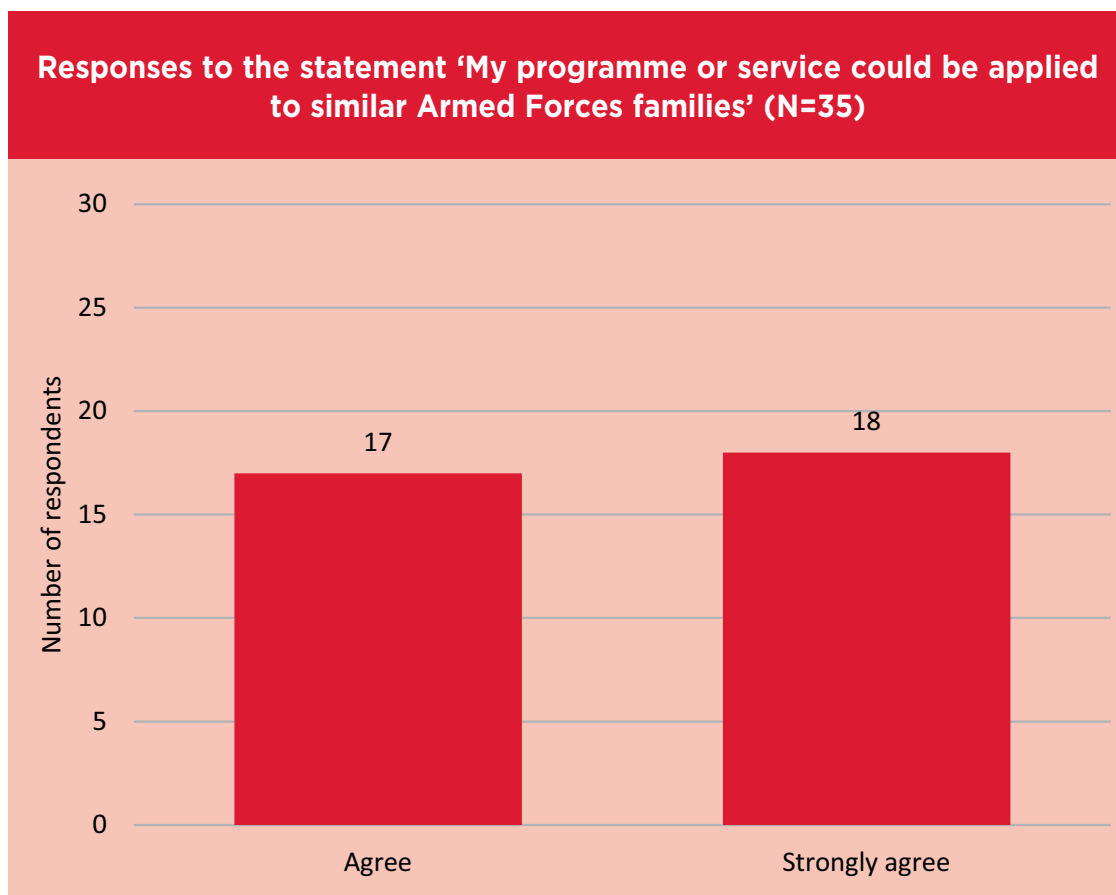
<sup>3</sup> 'Who we are' [web page], Royal British Legion, 2020, [www.britishlegion.org.uk/about-us/who-we-are](http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/about-us/who-we-are), accessed 6 January 2021.

## 2.12 LEARNING AND GOOD PRACTICE TO INFORM SIMILAR PROJECTS THAT SUPPORT ARMED FORCES FAMILIES

### Analysis of survey data

As the projects are still in their very early stages at the time of writing (December 2020), there are very few early findings to inform either similar projects or wider public policy. However, all of the 35 organisations that responded to the statement presented in figure 2.12 either agreed or strongly agreed that their project could be applied to similar Armed Forces families. This suggests that there is an opportunity to promote and provide information on the projects which could then be used to inform the design of similar projects serving Armed Forces families.

Figure 2.12





## CASE STUDY

### Royal Star & Garter: Family Matters

Royal Star & Garter provides specialist nursing, dementia and therapeutic care for Veterans and their partners living with disabilities or dementia, and staff work to ensure that individuals who require care receive compassionate and personalised support. Royal Star & Garter runs three Homes, in High Wycombe, Solihull and Surbiton.

Parts of the Family Matters project were delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic at the time of writing (January, 2021); however, the charity intends to progress work to provide support to the families and carers of Veterans moving into any of its Homes and throughout their entire journey in the care of the staff at the Homes. Through the project, the charity will formalise its services to enhance the family support it already offers, providing consistency in its interactions with families in order to help them understand the person-centred approach to care the charity takes at its Homes.

The project aims to extend its Reach Out cafés currently available at each location. The cafés are focused on bringing together Veterans' families to enable them to learn more about the care the charity provides and to aid their understanding of dementia. With the outbreak of COVID-19 this has been put on hold, as access to care homes across the country has been heavily restricted.

An online portal that provides regular updates to families on what is happening in the Homes called 'Family Connections' has been developed and launched in early 2021. This has become a central focus for the project, as it enables remote access to information that families would otherwise be missing out on.

New services that will also be developed as part of the project include an information leaflet for families; advice and information on dementia, mental health and wellbeing; and workshops that will help families to develop listening techniques.

The project will also provide support for Armed Forces families who experience bereavement. This support will include enabling families to celebrate the life of the individual in the Home and providing welfare check-ups for immediate family members.

Staff at Royal Star & Garter have worked to develop and identify a number of outcomes that will indicate whether the project is successful. These outcomes will be measured via regular surveys looking at the perceptions and understanding of moving into the Homes and settling in, direct feedback from Armed Forces families at Reach Out cafés, and periodic interviews and online surveys throughout the project to understand and improve it based on feedback.

## 2.13 THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on all of the projects within the Removing Barriers to Family Life programme. Both the pandemic itself and the associated measures put in place by governments to deal with it have resulted in many projects delaying their start date. Some projects have been forced to adapt their delivery methods in response to the restrictions.

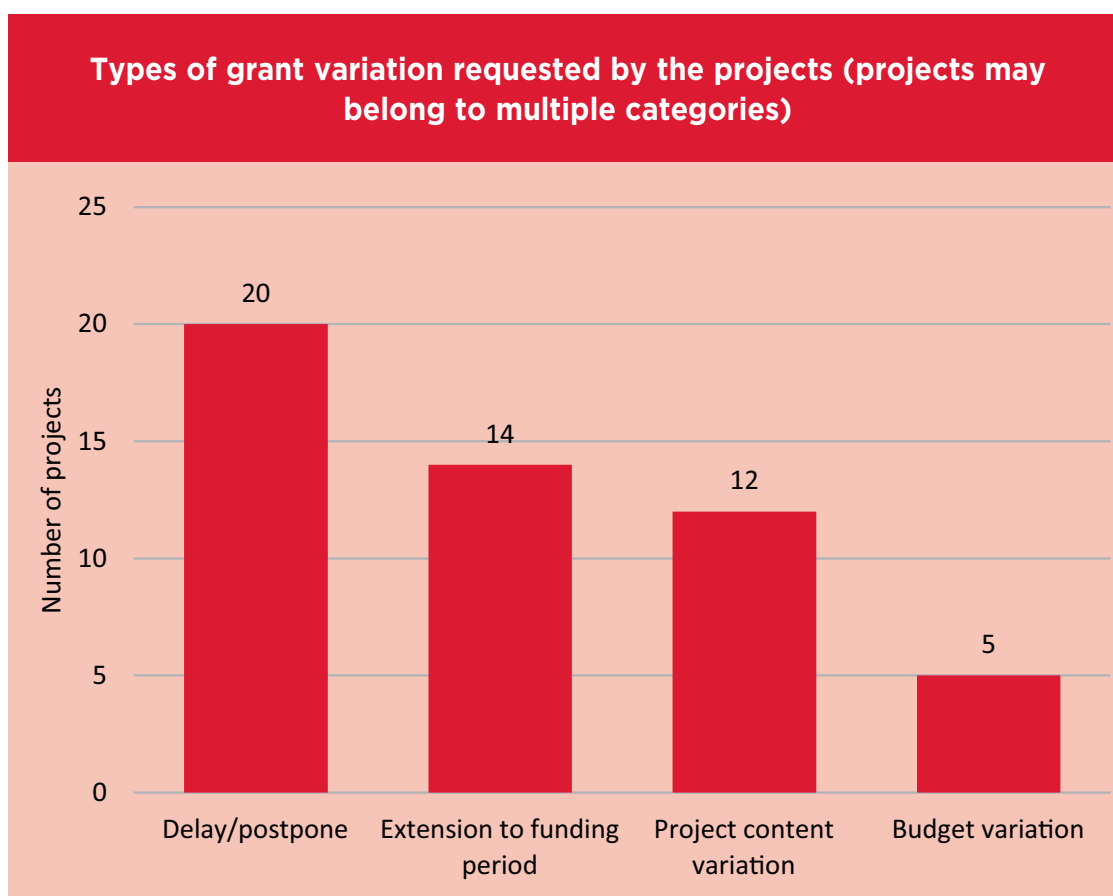
### Analysis of secondary data

#### Grant variation forms

As of December 2020, 34 of the 59 projects had completed grant variation forms requesting a variation to their original grant.

As shown in figure 2.13, the most common type of grant variation requested was to delay or postpone the project, followed by requests to extend the funding period and then requests to adjust the content of the project. The least common type of grant variation requested was a change to the budget.

Figure 2.13



One of the most common problems noted by the organisations in the grant variation forms was the inability to conduct their work as a result of the restrictions imposed by governments to deal with the pandemic.

The pandemic has reduced the ability for staff to get out to the beneficiaries of the funding. With Age UK Portsmouth not confirming bank information, the funding has yet to be received, resulting in recruitment of staff not fully occurring.

**Age UK Portsmouth: SAS or Special Advice Service**

We are not able to facilitate youth workshops in a safe and manageable environment and the planned family fun days would encourage mass gatherings and therefore would be against government guidelines.

**Army Training Centre Pirbright Initial Training Group:  
Creating Positive Outcomes through Play**

Some projects have responded to the circumstances by adapting their services to offer alternative solutions, such as digital modes of delivery.

Planning activities, action plans, training and liaison meetings with beneficiary groups have progressed, and [we are providing] 'virtual' group gatherings plus support via social media channels, one-to-one telephone calls and socially distanced meetings when allowed.

**Aggie Weston's: Aggie's Community Waves**

The co-ordinator will provide support and guidance to the Veterans' families via telephone and online. They will organise the Gurkha families' virtual meetings via Zoom once a week, helping families to share experiences and reduce isolation/loneliness in these challenging times. Zoom subscription fee (£144/year) to be taken from [the area of the budget for] families network support.

**CAN International: Tackling Loneliness in Gurkha Veterans Community**

We have adapted our family interventions for another service funded [by] Forces in Mind Trust so that we are still reaching families, using video calls, phone and email, as we are not currently able to offer face-to-face interventions. Some families are responding positively and naturally. Some new referrals have said they will wait until 'we get back to normal' as they prefer face to face.

**The Cart Shed: Young Cart Shed**

## Progress update forms

In the progress update forms that were available at the time of writing (December 2020), the impact of COVID-19 was frequently discussed. Organisations detailed how they had adapted their ways of working to incorporate digital solutions and to continue to provide services throughout the pandemic.

Some meetings have been held over [Microsoft] Teams due to the current situation of COVID-19 restricting more face-to-face contact. The HARRI [Health Advice Recovery Resilience Information – a bus provided by the NHS that offers health and wellbeing information] ... will be at The Harbour and [a project representative] will be attending with leaflets and her own flyers to generate some interest from the Blackpool organisations.

### **Age UK Lancashire: Forces & Families Service**

Since late July, the project team have finally been able to attend four of the six CESSA [Church of England Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's] Housing Association housing schemes and hold socially distanced and drop-in surgeries. This is to introduce the project to the residents and share with them how they would benefit by participating. The project team worked and continue to work with the Housing Scheme managers in identifying those Veteran spouses and family members that require socialisation and/or financial advice and support.

### **Age UK Portsmouth: SAS or Special Advice Service**

At the end of June, we ran a virtual cookery programme called Six Weeks to Nutrition for Families. The course looked at how nutrition can impact upon mental health and families cooked healthy recipes together. A total of six families took part. Families have also been given the opportunity to join in with other online activities funded through different pots of funding. These activities have included crafts, photography and floristry. Although not family specific, we wanted Armed Forces families to have access to some form of activities and to know that they had not been forgotten about during these difficult times.

### **Finchale Group: Family Force**

Firstly, we offered group chats via WhatsApp for parents to connect and share thoughts and ideas to cope during lockdown. These chats are facilitated by our group co-ordinators at the same time and day of the week that the group would have taken place but parents are able to communicate with each other at any time. Co-ordinators are actively available at the normal group session times but are also responding at any time during working hours.

### **Home-Start Mid & West Suffolk: Healthy Parents, Healthy Families**

In one case, an organisation's progress update form detailed an example of how the COVID-19 pandemic had resulted in an increased need for services.

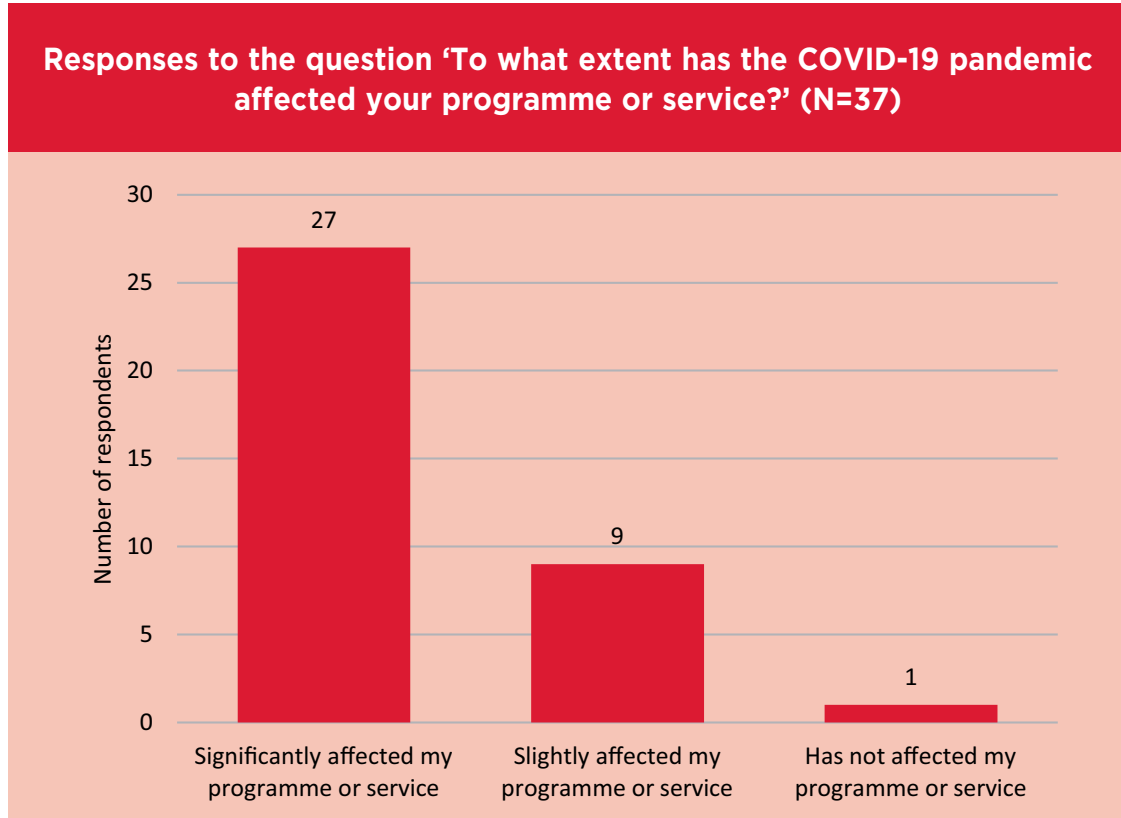
The project team set up a Gurkha helpline service to provide guidance and information to Gurkha families. The helpline team is providing guidance and information relating to tackling isolation during the pandemic, government guidance on travel, meeting families, accessing parks, supply of essential items (e.g. masks), housing, and financial matters (e.g. pension applications). In many cases, we have signposted [families] to the relevant agencies including the NHS and the council.

**CAN International: Tackling Loneliness in Gurkha Veterans Community**

### Analysis of survey data

Figure 2.14 shows that the majority of the 37 respondents to a question on the effect of COVID-19 reported that their project had been significantly affected (N=27) and a further nine respondents had been slightly affected. This means that 36 projects had been affected by the pandemic. Interestingly, one organisation reported that it had not been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, although this respondent did state that their organisation was 'only six months into the project and just getting established', and so this may be a result of the project being in its inception period.

Figure 2.14



## CASE STUDY

### **Walking With The Wounded: Digital Therapy for Families & Carers**

Walking With The Wounded is a charity that provides support for Veterans, helping them to reintegrate into society and maintain their independence. It offers support programmes in areas such as employment, housing, health and wellbeing, and the criminal justice system.

The Digital Therapy for Families & Carers project was in its early stages at the time of writing (December 2020); however, it intends to provide one-to-one digital therapy to carers and wider Armed Forces family members who are experiencing suicidal thoughts. The online service will join carers and adult family members with digital therapists who can provide support over ten sessions and help the individual to develop resilience.

Therapies on offer will include eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing, trauma-focused cognitive-behavioural therapy, behavioural activation, cognitive-behavioural therapy and counselling for various conditions such as depression, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder, panic and trauma.

Walking With The Wounded will collect metrics and data on (among other things) the take-up of the services, socio-demographic profiles, patterns of activity in the service and discharge summaries for individuals who have completed the programme of therapy. In addition, follow-up surveys, psychometric tests and Outcomes Stars (tools to support outcomes measurement) will be used to measure certain performance indicators, such as reduced isolation, reduced anxiety, improved emotional health and reduced levels of stress.



## CHAPTER THREE

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# Overview of the Removing Barriers to Family Life funding theme

### 3.1 OVERVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust's (the Trust) Removing Barriers to Family Life funding theme, which as of the time of writing (December 2020) comprises the Families in Stress and Removing Barriers to Family Life funding programmes, consists of 84 projects and totals £11.47 million in funding. The median value of the grants under the funding theme is £99,758.

Of the project categories discussed in the previous chapters, seven categories are present in both funding programmes:

- Advice, support and access to support networks and services
- Bereavement
- Carers
- Children and young people
- DVA (domestic violence and abuse) and stalking
- Family relationships
- Health and wellbeing



Figure 3.1 shows the total amounts of grant funding awarded to all of the projects across each of the categories (categories that are not featured in both funding programmes are not present in the figure). Projects categorised under ‘Children and young people’ received the most grant funding (£2.8 million) and were the most numerous (20 projects), and projects under the ‘Bereavement’ category received the least grant funding (£0.7 million) and were the least numerous (4 projects).

Figure 3.1

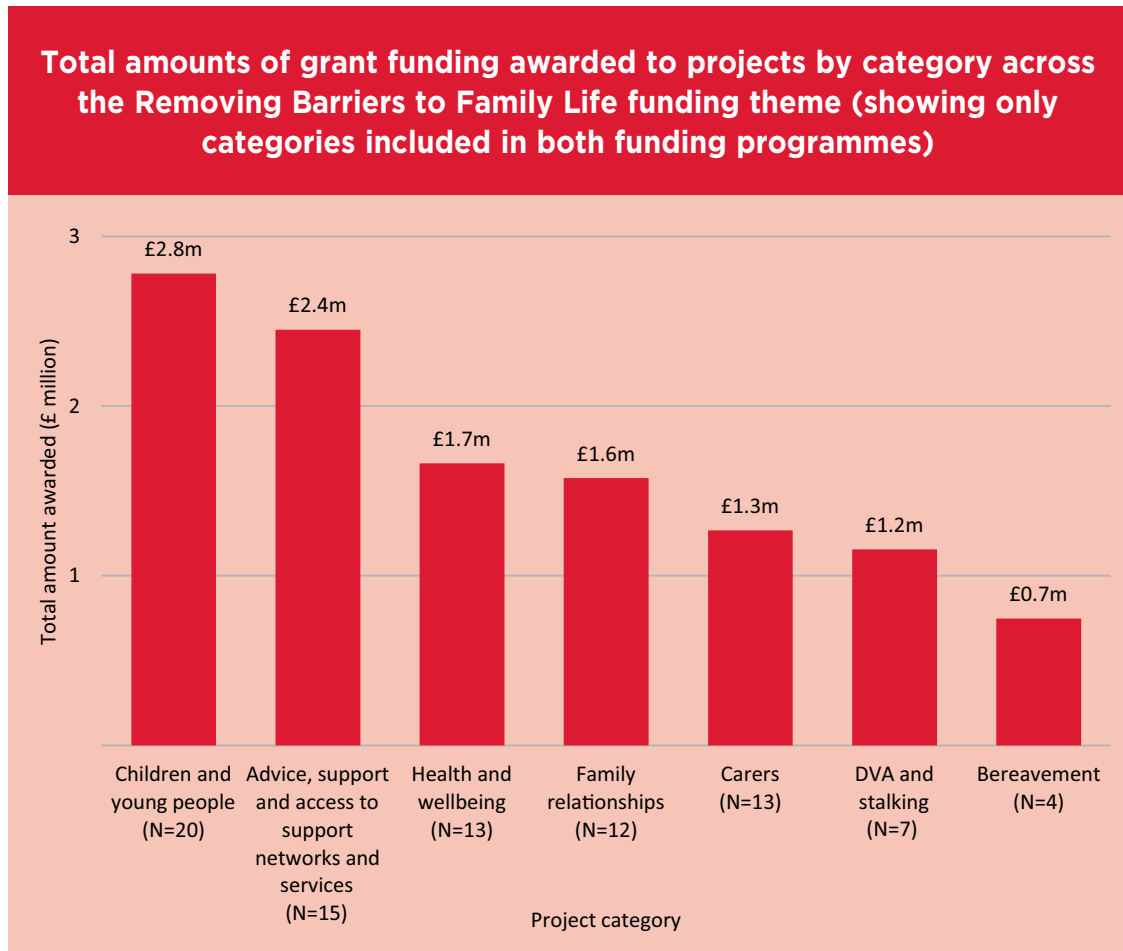
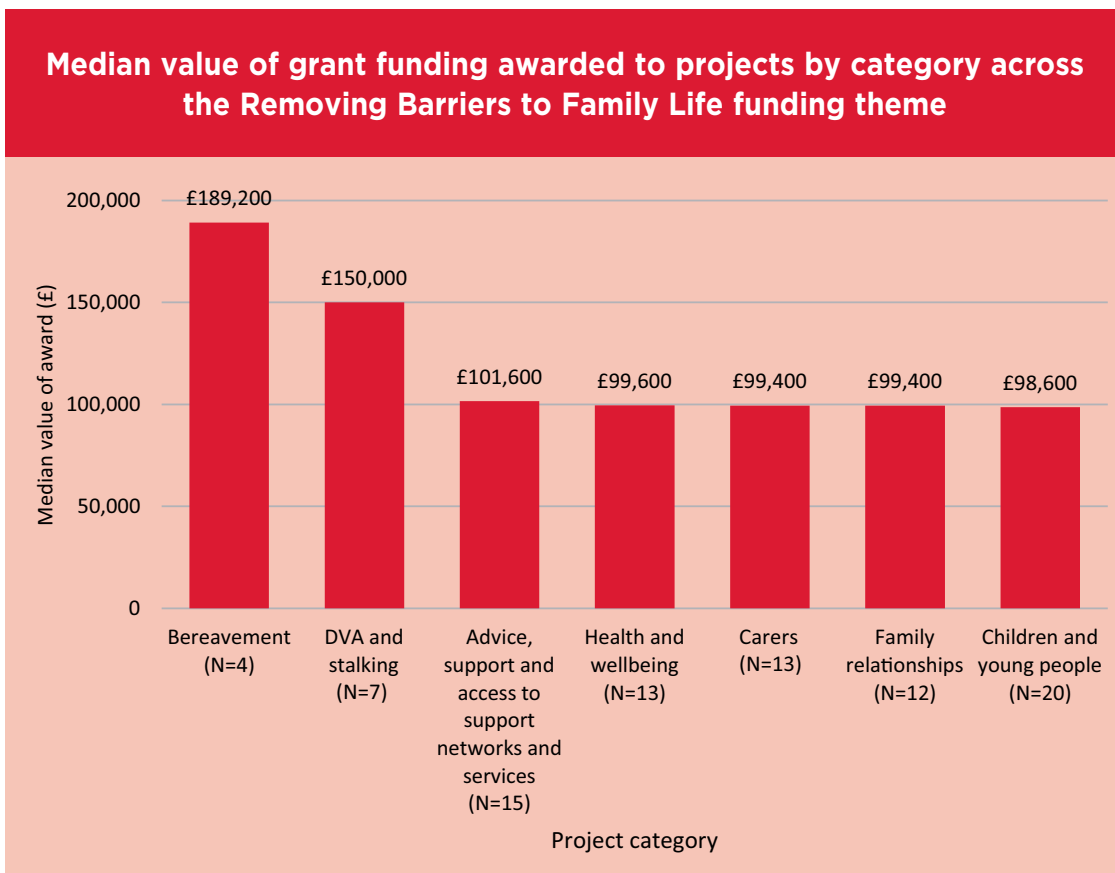


Figure 3.2 shows the median values of the grants under each project category. Broadly speaking, the median values of the grants are fairly similar, with the exception of those for 'Bereavement' and 'DVA and stalking'. However, this may be explained by the relatively small number of projects under these project categories.

Figure 3.2



## 3.2 HOW THE TRUST HAS RESPONDED TO COVID-19

Across both funding programmes, projects have been severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Trust has responded swiftly and flexibly by providing the opportunity for organisations in receipt of grant funding to request variations to their grants. This was particularly apparent in the Removing Barriers to Family Life survey, in which several respondents wished to note their appreciation for the Trust's response to the pandemic.

We were able to adapt our project approach following the approval from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust team, which helped us greatly to work towards achieving our intended project outcomes.

**Survey respondent**

We are grateful for the Fund's support materials and interest in our project and their willingness to be flexible when we needed to adjust our timeline.

**Survey respondent**

The design of this programme and the flexible and intelligent approach taken by the Covenant is excellent and we are very grateful to be part of it.

**Survey respondent**

## APPENDIX A

# Projects in the Families in Stress programme

Organisation	Project title	Grant total (£)
Children 1st (Moray)	Children 1st Supporting Families Moray	300,000
Southern Domestic Abuse Service	Up2U Creating Healthy Relationships	299,832
The Warrior Programme	Warrior Supporting Families in Stress	299,735
Cruse Bereavement Care	Support for Bereaved Families	298,393
The Warrior Programme	The Warrior Serving Family Programme	297,021
Sheffield Mind Ltd	Keeping Families in Mind	281,604
Spurgeons	Recovering Together	265,832
Mind	The AF Wellbeing Advisor Project	215,335
Citizens Advice Hart District	Joining Forces for Families	208,447
Children 1st (Faslane)	Children 1st Family Supporting Families	168,000
Aurora New Dawn	Forces Advocacy and Stalking Awareness	150,000
Friends of Wavell	Tri-Service Family Support Service	149,972
Unity (Southern) Ltd	Strengthening Families through Positive Parenting	149,319
Barnardo's (London)	Strengthening Community Families	136,699
Carer Support Wiltshire	Courage to Care Carer Support for Serving Military Families	131,822

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Project title</b>	<b>Grant total (£)</b>
Home-Start York	Supporting Military Families in Our Community	123,224
Suffolk Family Carers Ltd	Suffolk Serving Families Project	121,422
Home-Start Norfolk	Reaching Out Building Bonds	101,607
Nottinghamshire Women's Aid Ltd	Supporting Families Experiencing Domestic Abuse	99,978
Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire	Military Families in Our Community Support Project	99,785
Hampton Trust	RADAR	99,300
Relate Portsmouth and District	Naval Family Counselling	95,664
Home-Start Kennet	Serving Families	90,000
Family Lives	Supporting Forces Families	85,674
National Communities Resource Centre	Forces Family Futures	83,161

**APPENDIX B**

# Projects in the Removing Barriers to Family Life programme

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Project title</b>	<b>Grant total (£)</b>
RAF Lossiemouth	Supporting the Forces Child in Moray (Moray's Dandelion Project)	368,181
HQ 160th Brigade Wales	Supporting Service Children in Education in Wales – Regional Roles	338,000
RAF Association	Developing a Military Coworking Network	337,000
Woody's Lodge	Woody's Find Me A Space	330,000
Royal Caledonian Education Trust	Your Mind Matters Wellbeing Project	303,000
The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity	Strengthening Families – By Your Side	300,000
Cruse Bereavement Care	Together in Force	299,695
Forward Assist Ltd	Family First	240,412
Communities Fiji Britain	Transitioning into Life in the UK for Fijian Service Families	169,000
Aggie Weston's	Aggie's Community Waves	100,000
Cornwall Rural Community Charity	Veteran Carer Outreach	100,000
Help for Heroes	Psychological-Wellbeing for Specialist Military Units	100,000
Make Some Noise Ltd	Upbeat Families	100,000

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Project title</b>	<b>Grant total (£)</b>
NSPCC	Seeking Solutions	100,000
Never Such Innocence	Voices of Armed Forces Children	100,000
TGP Cymru	Veterans Family Engagement Service	100,000
The Royal British Legion	Benefits Debt & Money Advice Service	100,000
The Ripple Pond	Small Ripples Making Big Waves!	100,000
The Warrior Programme	Strengthening and Connecting Serving Families	100,000
Veterans in Crisis CIC	Forces Family Hub	100,000
Age UK Lancashire	Forces & Families Service	99,951
Active Plus	Family Matters	99,760
Oxfordshire Play Association	Armed Forces Support Project	99,756
Finchale Group	Family Force	99,570
Suffolk Family Carers Ltd	Military Families - Caring as One	99,507
Improving Lives Plymouth	Focus on Families and Carers	99,422
Sheffield Mind Ltd	Keeping Families in Mind (Veteran Families)	98,980
St John & Red Cross Defence Medical Welfare Service	Families & Carers Medical Welfare	98,808
Liverpool Veterans HQ	Supporting Forces Families - Today & Tomorrow	98,000
Service Children's Progression Alliance (University of Winchester)	Helping Schools Help Service Children	97,500
Carterton Family Centre	The Street Based Youth Team	97,200
Citizens Advice Hart District	Joining Forces for Families	95,987
Military Wives Choirs Foundation	Empowering Women through Music	95,961
Greenwich Gurkha Ex-Servicemen Association	Ex-British Gurkha Bereaved Family Support	94,680

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Project title</b>	<b>Grant total (£)</b>
St John & Red Cross Defence Medical Welfare Service	Families & Carers Wellbeing Support	94,196
Royal British Legion Industries	Investing in Our Military Families	91,072
Citizens Advice Rushmoor	Nepali Domestic and Sexual Abuse Project	90,000
Reading Force	Reading Force - Keeping Families Connected	90,000
SSAFA Forces Help	Disability Support for Forces Families	90,000
Tom Harrison House	Military Families Addiction Recovery Experience	90,000
Walking With The Wounded	Digital Therapy for Families & Carers	87,000
RAF Wittering - Community Support	Families Centre for Service Families	86,622
Goodwin Development Trust	Community Hub, Families and Carers Project	86,500
Home-Start Mid & West Suffolk	Healthy Parents, Healthy Families	85,557
Little Troopers	Little Troopers at School	85,000
The Family Foundation	#FamilyConnectors	81,000
Mutual Support - Armed Forces Multiple Sclerosis Support Group	Mutual Support & Respite Weekends	80,000
War Widows' Association of Great Britain	WW.it - War Widows in Touch	80,000
Age UK Herefordshire & Worcestershire	Veteran and Carer Wellcheck	78,972
Age UK Portsmouth	SAS or Special Advice Service	76,479
RAF Association	Supporting RAF Families Affected by Dementia	76,043
Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire	Home-Start for Serving Families	75,105
Blesma	Outreach Programme for Veterans/ Families: Scotland	74,849



<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Project title</b>	<b>Grant total (£)</b>
Army Training Centre Pirbright Initial Training Group	Creating Positive Outcomes through Play	74,140
HQ 38 (Irish) Brigade	Project Garrison Green Up	74,030
Royal Star & Garter	Family Matters	68,773
Army Welfare Service Thiepval Barracks	HEROS Ice-Hockey Programme	60,000
CAN International	Tackling Loneliness in Gurkha Veterans Community	50,177
The Cart Shed	Young Cart Shed	35,050

# Family Life and the Armed Forces Community Evaluation

This report from the Directory of Social Change looks at the impact of funding made under the Removing Barriers to Family Life theme by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust (the Trust), which consists of the Families in Stress and Removing Barriers to Family Life funding programmes.

Through the use of surveys and an analysis of data provided by the Trust, this report looks at topics including:

- The transformative effect of support for Armed Forces families
- The complexity of the needs of Armed Forces families
- The role of partnerships and co-operation between projects
- The sustainability of the projects supported by the Trust
- How the projects have used data to evaluate and show their impact

This is a valuable resource for charities, government and policymakers to explore and understand how the projects funded by the Trust support Armed Forces families.

‘The report is encouraging and uplifting. Encouraging because the right issues have been tackled and uplifting because so much has been achieved and learned during the process. Armed Forces families can be a particularly difficult community to support, partly because individuals may be reluctant to expose vulnerability and also because they are often geographically dispersed.

This report describes some inspired and cutting-edge projects and demonstrates how grant-holders had adapted to the difficulties of supporting families during the pandemic – demonstrating excellent understanding of the complex challenges faced by this cohort. I applaud and thank them for their hard work and the tremendous support they have provided to the Armed Forces community, as evidenced in this excellent report.’

**Anna Wright, CEO, Naval Families Federation**