



MILITARY FAMILIES WORKING GROUP

# WHAT DOES THE TERM “MILITARY FAMILY” MEAN?

A COMPARISON ACROSS  
FOUR COUNTRIES

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Defining a family is particularly important for military family health research and for the provision of services and benefits. Studies repeatedly stress the importance of family in supporting military personnel throughout their service. However, much of this research adheres to traditional ideals of family structure despite changing social attitudes and potential nuances between the definition and function of 'family'. In order to ensure military family research is applicable to modern military families, we need a greater understanding of who a modern military family is.

The first step in this process is considering how the family as an institution is implicitly and explicitly constructed through the definitions contained within policies relating to military families and the military charity sector. Publicly available definitions of military families described in health, education, and social welfare policies and the charitable sectors of the United Kingdom, United States, Australia and Canada were reviewed.

- Definitions of family across the four countries varied according to civil definitions of marriage and relationships. Of the four countries compared in this report, only the US Department of Defense provides a general definition of both a "military" and a "veteran" family. The remainder define or allude to a definition of military or veteran families via policy related to access to benefits or services for those within the military community. This summary of policy definitions shows that most focus on spouses, partners, and children, with some variation across countries:
- The US had the most limited definition of military/veteran families, constraining spouse to married couple relationships only. In contrast, Australian and Canadian definitions were broader, including married couples as well as those in co-habiting (*de facto*) relationships.
- All countries included biological, adopted, and step-children, provided they were dependent on personnel.
- There were differences in the age at which children were judged to be dependent, for certain services, ranging from 18 years in the UK to 26 years in Canada. All countries include extensions to this age limit for children attending university or higher education and those with mental or physical disabilities.
- All countries include reference to parents within their definitions provided they are dependent on personnel. Other relatives such as aunts or uncles may be considered as dependent but were not always explicitly included.
- Charity definitions were more inclusive than government definitions, including immediate family members such as spouses, partners, and children, as well as parents, siblings, and carers.

Defining family allows military and government policy makers to restrict access to services and benefits that may have increased demand such as housing or healthcare. At the same time, less precise definitions provided in some policy documentation allows the military to be seen to be potentially inclusive to all relationships, including parents, siblings, and close friends. This tension between a more open approach to family and the restrictive eligibility criteria applied to services and benefits may lead to members of families that aren't reflected in governmental definitions, such as unmarried partners and parents, feeling excluded or unsupported by military services and programmes. Charitable organizations who adopt wider definitions than military or government can then explicitly position themselves as available to support the wider military community while also allowing for restrictions on services to designated family members if resources are limited. Limited definitions of family may also constrain academic research either to studies that align with military definitions or by recruiting family members who meet particular eligibility criteria for accessing services and benefits from military services and facilities.

### **Recommendations for researchers and future work include:**

- Provide a clear definition of military/veteran family in each study and the context behind why these particular participants were selected (for example, a study regarding benefits would explicitly outline the focus on those eligible for said benefit)
- Greater consideration of the function of family in the study design phase so all relevant members are included rather than relying on traditional definitions (for example, who might be affected during a deployment and therefore should be included in the study)
- Create a better understanding of the differences and tensions between definitions of family across policy, community services, and research and their implications
- Improve knowledge-sharing across countries through collaborative research projects
- Improve understanding of how military/veteran families define and structure themselves
- Improve understanding definitions of military family with the research literature
- Improve theory building and testing within military family research
- Explore conceptualisation of military families as distinct or similar from veterans families

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Executive Summary.....2
- Introduction .....6
- Methods.....7
  - Limitations ..... 7
- Intra-Country syntheses .....8
  - United Kingdom .....9
    - Background..... 9
    - Government definitions..... 9
    - Charity definitions..... 10
  - United States ..... 11
    - Background..... 11
    - Government definitions..... 11
    - Charity definitions..... 12
  - Australia..... 13
    - Background..... 13
    - Government definitions..... 13
    - Charity definitions..... 14
  - Canada ..... 15
    - Background..... 15
    - Government definitions..... 15
    - Charity definitions..... 16
- Inter-country synthesis.....17
  - Government definitions..... 19
  - Charity definitions..... 19
- Conclusions ..... 20
- Recommendations for Researchers..... 20
- Appendix: Military family definitions, by country and sector..... 21
  - United Kingdom ..... 22
    - Government definitions..... 22
    - Charity definitions..... 26
  - United States ..... 27
    - Government definitions..... 27
    - Charity definitions..... 30
  - Australia..... 31
    - Government definitions..... 31

Charity definitions.....	35
Canada .....	36
Government definitions.....	36
Charity definitions.....	41
Glossary .....	42
List of attendees .....	43

## INTRODUCTION

Family forms an important part of our identity, social support, and a sense of connection. Traditionally, the Western ideal of “family” has centred on a husband, wife, and children, changes to social attitudes regarding later marriage, childless couples, common-law or unmarried relationships, divorce, same-sex marriage, and non-cohabiting spouses/couples. The increasing role of non-kin friendships and increased cultural diversity within the military mean that traditional definitions may no longer be reflective of the wider military community.

Defining a family is key for military family health research and for provision of services and benefits. Studies repeatedly stress the importance of family in supporting military personnel during their career, on their return from deployment, during illness and injury, and in reintegrating veterans into civilian society following transition out of the Armed Forces. However, much of this research adheres to traditional ideals of family structure despite changing social attitudes and potential nuances between the definition and function of ‘family’. As a result, some military families may not be reflected within this research, especially single personnel, single parents, LGBTQ or others who may rely on other relatives such as parents, cousins, aunts, grandparents or non-kin friendship groups for their primary means of social support.

In order to ensure research in this area is applicable to modern military families, we need a better understanding of who a *military family* is. The need for this discussion emerged for an invitational roundtable we co-hosted in March 2017 at King’s College London. A range of issues in the field of military families were discussed and one of the key gaps that became apparent was how we define and use the term “military family”. Attendees were keen to explore the meaning of this term to academics, policy makers and practitioners as well as to family members themselves.

Prior to the 2017 CIMVHR Forum in Toronto, a second invitational roundtable was held to begin to address some of these questions. This report, and the supporting documentation contained within, formed the backbone of our discussions during this roundtable, which focused on governmental, military, and charity definitions of military families to reflect on how those providing services represent modern military families. How does the military define a military family? How does this differ from charitable organizations? What are the implications of these definitions for service provision and for research? What are the potential impacts of these definitions of military families?

We would like to thank Rachael, Alyson, Kelli, and Stewart for putting this document together and the associated background research. Working with our counterparts, Dr. David Albright of the University of Alabama, Dr. Galina Daraganova of the Australian Institute of Family Studies, and Nora Spinks of the Vanier Institute of the Family to shape the project and its purpose has helped us to advance these issues and their relevance across and within our allied nations.

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## METHODS

The purpose of this review was to identify definitions of military and veteran families supported and operationalised by governments and the charitable sector globally. For the purpose of this review, multiple country, policy, and organization-specific definitions of serving members and veterans were accepted. Definitions are provided within the background section for each country (see Appendix).

We performed a search of online, publicly available government websites and documents in four countries: the United Kingdom [RG], the United States [KG], Australia [SM] and Canada [AM] between July 18, 2017 and September 18, 2018. The focus of this search was on the following branches of government: veteran affairs, defence, health, welfare and education. Additional searches were performed in the following; devolved governments within Wales, Northern Ireland, and Scotland as well as England in the UK, government definitions from branches of ten states as examples in the US and provincial and territorial divisions of relevant government bodies in Canada.

A search of selected charitable organization websites was also performed for each country, with representative organizations selected by each country's author. During the initial searches, we did not request access to full documents or reports or contact any of the government branches or organisations for further explanation or comment. Following our discussions at the CIMVHR working group in September 2017, clarifications and additional definitions were included from representatives from each country in early 2018.

Where available, we extracted a definition of a military or veteran family for each government sector from federal and national policies, specific policies, or programs provided to military or veteran families from charitable organizations. To support each definition, links to websites from government, charities, or particular policies are provided in the appendix.

Intra-country syntheses of definitions across sectors and organizations were performed by each country's representative. The inter-country synthesis was drafted by two of the authors [RG & AM].

## Limitations

This report is a rapid synthesis of the available definitions of military and veteran families within the United Kingdom, United States, Australia and Canada only. As it was conducted using online sources, it is likely there are additional definitions that are not available in the public domain.



# **INTRA-** **COUNTRY** **SYNTHESES**



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## UNITED KINGDOM

### Background

Within the UK, the overarching framework of the Armed Forces Covenant forms the basis of much of the policy regarding military/veteran families (also commonly referred to as 'Service' families). This pledge was introduced into legislation and adopted across national, devolved and local government. It is an agreement between the military and civil society that aims to ensure military and veteran families have the same access to services as civilians and, in some cases, may receive priority services (e.g., prosthetic limbs for service-related injuries provided within the National Health Service).

Primary health care for UK military personnel is provided within Ministry of Defence (MOD) funded Defence Medical Centres. Family members deemed to be 'dependents' are able to attend these centres in certain locations if they are unable to access other health care services, such as when they are posted overseas. However, the majority of military family dependents attend health services within the National Health Service (NHS) system (free at the point of delivery service). Educational services within the UK are also provided by the state, with schools receiving additional funding for children from military families to help schools provide support in recognition of the specific challenges children from military families experience and as a commitment under the Armed Forces Covenant. Dependents accessing schools overseas are able to attend Service Children's Education schools near international British bases and assistance is provided for families sending children to independent boarding schools.

In the UK, a veteran is defined as anyone who has served for a minimum of one day in Her Majesty's Armed Forces (regular or reserve).

### Government definitions

There is no formally stated definition of "military family" or "veteran family" within the UK, with most definitions provided implicitly within policies that concern access and entitlement to services and benefits. Of these, the majority across the MOD, health, education and social welfare reflect traditional family formations that focus on married relationships and children. The Armed Forces Family strategy is intended to focus military policy on the impact of military life on military families and concentrates on the outcomes of spouses and children but acknowledges that the definition of family may vary in relation to information sharing versus financial benefits. For example, access to particular benefits associated with military service with high cost to the tax payer or limited supply, such as housing, is limited to couples who are married or in a civil partnership. However, there are variations within the application of definitions around entitlements. While there are clear exclusions for unmarried couples in relation to benefits such as Service families accommodation (military-provided housing), compensation and entitlements around bereavement deliberately acknowledge the complexities of family and include looser definitions that include non-married relationships and allow for varied family structures (kin and non-kin) to be reflected.

Despite its increasing importance within UK military welfare policy, the Covenant does not seek to define who a "relevant" family member might be. Other UK policy definitions also do not elaborate beyond "family members" or provide examples (with the implication of eligibility) of potentially eligible family members such as spouses and children. For example, veteran welfare services for those leaving with serious physical, mental or welfare needs outline the role of children and families in supporting transition but do not define these relationships. Such relationships are also not defined within the National Health Service (NHS). However, this omission is likely to be accounted for by the fact that the majority of military family members will seek health care through the NHS alongside their civilian counterparts and therefore eligibility criteria are not applicable in this situation.

'Non-traditional' families (unmarried couples, same-sex, blended families) are considered with policy definitions. Same-



sex relationships are recognised both through civil partnerships, a legalised formal relationship introduced prior to same-sex marriage, and through married relationships. Most definitions of children include any child under the age of 18 years who is dependent on military personnel. Consideration as “military children” under MOD education policy is inclusive of biological, adopted and step-children up until the age of 18 years or the cessation of full-time education but clarity is not provided across all policies. Many policies do not state an upper limit for which children are considered dependent; those that do endorse an age of majority of 18 years/cessation of full-time education. There are some limitations regarding entitlements available to foster children under specific circumstances. Older relatives such as grandparents and aunts may be considered as family members under certain policies if they are also dependent on personnel or where they might be considered next of kin.

## **Charity definitions**

While none of the major UK charitable organisations supporting military families specifically define this term, most list the beneficiaries they will provide support and advice to. Such lists are more inclusive than government definitions, including both traditional nuclear family structures (spouse/partner and children) as well as explicit mention of former partners, parents, siblings and carers.



# UNITED STATES

## Background

In the United States, active duty military have access to TRICARE for their medical insurance. This provides access to care from physicians within a military treatment facility or in the community through a civilian provider that accepts TRICARE (depending on the type of TRICARE the service member elects to enrol). The reserve forces and their families are only eligible for TRICARE if they are on active duty orders and during transition of deactivation from the active duty orders. Most reserve forces do not live near a military installation and therefore receive their care in the private sector. Eligible veterans can receive their health care through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Many veterans, including retirees, choose to receive their health care in the private sector outside of the VA. Although there is a growing trend of more veterans receiving care in the private sector, especially in rural areas, many veterans choose to get some care within the VA and some in the private sector. Military children living within the US receive their education through the civilian sector, through public schools, private schools, charter schools, home schooling, online schools (such as K12), etc. Military children living in US territories and overseas attend one of the 166 Department of Defense schools.

In the US, a veteran is defined as “a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable” under Title 38 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

## Government definitions

The US Department of Defense defines dependants within traditional family formations as the spouses and children of military personnel. These are limited to married relationships only and children under the age of 21 years, with exceptions for children progressing to higher education and those with mental or physical disability that prevents them from supporting themselves and parents who may be dependent on personnel. The definition of spouse was extended to same-sex marriages following a ruling by the US Supreme Court in 2013, although this has been adopted by less than half of states.<sup>1</sup> The military branches vary slightly in their definition, with most referring to Department of Defense and Family Readiness Strategy definitions. However, some branches such as the Air Force allow vaguer definitions of family in order to support non-traditional families. The strictest definitions come in relation to benefits available for military families.

The United States governmental agencies define “military families” by who is eligible for enrollment in the Defense Enrollment and Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) and the definitions set forth in Title 38 of US Code that outlines veteran benefits within the US. Benefits such as installation access, Department of Defense school access, health care through the Military Health System, benefit enhancements during deployment and housing contain more explicit and restrictive definitions regarding the dependants who are eligible for access to their services. Definitions within states are similar to federal agencies. Monetary services, such as college education costs, are stricter and usually are defined as “spouse”, “surviving spouse”, and “child-biological, adopted, step”, with reference to eligibility as per Title 38 of US Code. State services that support military/veterans and their families with non-monetary services use looser definitions. While blended families are recognised within US military family definitions, these are limited to step-children and parents/step-parents that are dependent on personnel. Couple relationships remain limited to spouses only.

The National Guard has a federal-level family program, which defines family very broadly in their scope and purpose. They simply state that they are supporting and educating families and communities in which the service member resides, as they are geographically separated from military personnel. The guide for families of Reserve forces discusses the family as a larger unit than just the spouse and child dependants, in contrast with many of the federal military programs.

<sup>1</sup>United States v. Windsor - <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/570/12-307/>



The following people are discussed as family: husband, wife, father, mother, son, daughter, brother, and sister. However, it then discusses entitlements and benefits of family members and discusses people that are eligible based on their enrolment in DEERS. This goes back to entitlement versus inclusiveness.

Veteran families are seldom mentioned outside of the eligibility for TRICARE, surviving spouse benefits, and possible Department of Veterans Affairs benefits. Veterans' families are not tracked within the United States and most support for any veterans' families come from charities. Some charities (not limited to) that specifically address veterans' families are: Veterans Families United, Veterans Coming Home, and the Institute for Veterans and Military Families. No specific definition is given that encompasses veteran families. This term would be expected to be defined more broadly, however, due to it being less tied to entitlements than active military. Access to certain VA benefits was extended to same-sex veteran families following another Supreme Court ruling.<sup>2</sup>

## Charity definitions

Charitable and non-profit organizations that work with military and their families continue to centre on spouses and children. Many do not provide clarification and simply state that they work with "military and their families"; however, those that do provide some specifics adopt more liberal definitions of "military family" that include parents, grandparents, and aunts and uncles. Reference is made to carers with no stipulation on the type of familial relationship.

<sup>2</sup>Obergefell v. Hodges – <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/576/14-556/>



# AUSTRALIA

## Background

Within Australia, education and health care are provided by a mixture of government-funded, government-subsidised, and private providers. Australian Defence Force (ADF) members can receive health care from Department of Defence-funded services but may also use the general health care system with costs often met by the Department of Defence. The family of ADF members access the general health care system but, under the national ADF Family Health Program, dependants can apply to be reimbursed for some out-of-pocket expenses. Ex-serving ADF members and their families also receive health care through the general health care system but, depending on their eligibility for support, ex-serving ADF members, war widow(er)s and eligible dependents can have some or all of their use of these services (public or private) funded by the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA). Education is provided by government and private providers, with responsibility for government-funded schools largely devolved to the states. Families of ADF members receive their education within the general system but, in some instances, can be eligible for education assistance from state governments or from the Department of Defence.

In Australia, a veteran is defined as someone who has “rendered eligible war service”, or “is a member of the defence forces who on or after 31 July 1962 was outside Australia, but not on operational service, who was killed or injured by the action of hostile forces”. However, eligibility for DVA services does not depend on the strict definition of “veteran”. Other current and ex-serving ADF members (including reserves and cadets) who have not been on operational duty can also be eligible for benefits and pensions from the Department of Veterans Affairs depending on their individual circumstances and the specific benefit or assistance.

## Government definitions

There is no overarching Australian government definition of a military or veteran “family”. Instead, definitions are usually only articulated in reference to eligibility for benefits or entitlements and tend to focus on specific relationships—usually “partners” and “dependents”—rather than a general notion of “family”. Recognition of family relationships is usually confined to relationships within households.

The ADF follows Australian civil law in explicitly recognising legally married couples and co-habiting (*de facto*) relationships (same-sex and opposite sex); both forms of relationship are often classed as “partners” or “spouses”. Under Australian law, a *de facto* relationship is defined as one in which a couple is not married to each other, and are not related by family, but “have a relationship as a couple living together on a genuine domestic basis”. In most instances, there is no specific time-period that has to have passed before a relationship can be recognised as *de facto* but the duration of the relationship might be considered as a factor in formal recognition. Partners from civil partnerships are also recognised. Legislation introducing same-sex marriage was passed in Australia in December 2017. Before this, *de facto* same-sex couples already had the same entitlements as opposite-sex *de facto* couples and their families in areas such as social security and family assistance, aged care, veterans' entitlements, child support, and family law.

The category of “dependents” usually includes children who ordinarily live with the ADF member and are aged under 18 or 21 (according to the specific benefit or service condition). In most instances, partners or children who live apart from the member because of the member's posting in a different Australian location (an “unaccompanied” posting), or who are temporarily away from home for their education, are also included in eligibility criteria as “dependents”. Children from blended families are also considered in line with wider definitions within civil Australian law. In some circumstances,



the ADF and/or Department of Defence also recognise other “dependents” and these do not necessarily have to be the biological family of the ADF member. For example, a person acting as a guardian or housekeeper can be considered a dependent if the ADF member has a dependent child and no spouse or partner or if their spouse or partner is an invalid or absent on ADF duty. Other people than partners, children, or guardian/housekeepers can also be recognised as dependents, or as having an interdependent relationship with the ADF member, depending on the circumstances; the ADF member usually has to apply for special recognition of such relationships. The definition of “dependents” is complex but focuses on whether the person is dependent on the ADF member to provide a home and care and if they have a close personal relationship.

Other family members, such as siblings or parents, are not usually recognised by the ADF unless they are dependent on military personnel for financial or interdependent support and personal care. Non-dependent parents, including step-parents, can be eligible for “Family Assistance” for attending a Court of Inquiry (an Inquiry to determine the facts or circumstances surrounding a death, accident, injury, or other serious matter pertaining to the ADF). Parents and siblings are also eligible for “Family Assistance” for attending a Coronial Inquest.

Definitions of family can vary across different organisations and according to the specific benefit in question. The Defence Community Organisation (DCO), an organisation that sits within the Department of Defence, does have a specific definition of “family”; this includes spouses and cohabiting partners, children who ordinarily live with the ADF member, and the parents of single ADF members. This definition is used to define eligibility for DCO assistance (e.g. access to social workers, the Defence family helpline, “family” events, education or employment assistance, home assistance, etc.) and is taken into account in DCO advice to the broader Department of Defence. Because the DCO is one of the few organisations to explicitly define “family”, their definition is often used in other contexts such as research on Australian military families. Defence Families of Australia (DFA), the official body appointed by the Australian government to represent the views of Defence families, also uses the DCO definition.

The Department of Veterans’ Affairs (DVA) uses similar definitions as the ADF when specifying eligibility criteria for benefits or assistance—i.e. partners and dependents - but also customarily includes the widows or widowers of deceased ADF members. The Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS), an agency that comes under the broad DVA umbrella, recognises a much wider range of family relationships than the other government agencies listed here. “Family members” (of a current or former ADF member) who are potentially eligible for VVCS counselling include siblings, parents, widows/widowers, interdependent partners, ex-partners up to five years from separation, ex-partners who are co-parenting a child under 18, and children of any age (i.e. including adult children).

The Australian states provide limited specific assistance to members of the military, veterans, or their families (or “war widow/ers”). In each state, eligibility for benefits rely on pre-existing eligibility for Federal DVA benefits and thus do not in themselves require a specific definition of military or veteran “families”.

## Charity definitions

Australian military charities often describe themselves as supporting the family of current or ex-serving ADF members but they rarely define who counts as a family member. Where definitions are given they are again usually focused on spouses, cohabiting partners, widows/widowers, and dependent children.



# CANADA

## Background

Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members are provided healthcare federally within a specialized system operated by the Department of National Defence (DND). This system does not provide healthcare to family members except in exceptional circumstances. It also does not provide healthcare to veterans or their families. In Canada, healthcare insurance and service provision are governed at the provincial level for military and veteran families. The delivery of education and health services is primarily devolved to provincial and territorial governments, with the exception of two federal health bodies.

In Canada, a veteran is defined by Veterans Affairs Canada as a former member of the Canadian Armed Forces who successfully underwent basic training and was honourably released.

## Government definitions

Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC), Department of National Defence (DND), and the Canadian Armed Forces Morale and Welfare Services (CFMWS) did not have a general definition of a family used by any parties, or uniformly within each department.

VAC and DND definitions are policy specific and tied to eligibility for services or receipt of funds. Typically, they referred to a spouse or survivor of the service member or veteran as defined by legal marriage or common-law status, defined by a length of period cohabitating in a relationship. The definition of a legal marriage in Canada was extended to same-sex marriages through federal legislation in 2005.<sup>3</sup> Definitions of spouses were typically restricted to current relationships, and did not apply to fractured or previous relationships, except to define benefits from VAC related to relationships during service. Dependents were defined broadly as biological, adopted, or step-children; more specific criteria around age and living arrangements were defined as they related to the particular service or benefit. The definition of family members was more inclusive in situations where services were not being directly provided or were provided free of charge (e.g., Road to Mental Readiness website). VAC definitions are also tied to service and benefit-specific eligibility criteria of the serving member. For example, the VAC Family Caregiver Relief Benefit did not provide a definition for family, but restricted eligibility to veterans who are receiving a disability award and qualified for an informal caregiver; the ongoing need was 12 months or greater, the informal caregiver was 18 years or older and not receiving payment for services, and the veteran did not live in a long-term care or nursing home.

The CFMWS, composed of civilian staff funded by non-public funds and the Canadian Armed Forces, is a separate agency from DND within the federal public administration that provides services to military families, broadly defines a military family on their website to include parents of single serving members, siblings, as well as traditional spouse or partner and children. CFMWS uses a more specific definition of a military family based on exemptions under the Income Tax Act when describing eligibility for specific services, such as the CFONE card. Spouses include married, cohabiting, and common-law relationships (including same-sex); dependent children are defined by both age and capacity. Older family members who collect a pension while residing with the serving member are also included.

Few provinces had explicit content related to military families; as such, few had documents defining military families. No province/territory had a general definition that applied to all sectors; definitions that did exist varied by sector. No province referred to military families or had military family specific resources, legislation, or laws within their searchable, web-based Ministry of Education website. The exception was Saskatchewan, where the Government of Saskatchewan developed the Saskatchewan Scholarship of Honour for the families of fallen or disabled CAF soldiers. Eligible military

<sup>3</sup><http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-31.5/>



family here was defined as a spouse or child of a serving member. Of note, the Canadian Counsellors and Psychotherapy Association recently developed a resource for school counsellors on working with military families in Canada, in partnership with the Vanier Institute for the Family.<sup>4</sup>

Ministries or departments of Health in six of twelve provinces referenced military families in relation to eligibility for provincial health insurance; all provinces specified families as being spouses and/or dependents. Ontario and Alberta specified definitions of spouses and dependents of serving members; both definitions outlined criteria for what constituted a spousal relationship (seemingly rooted in provincial policy/law on those terms) and age and capacity criteria for what constituted a dependent. Federal health care bodies (Health Canada, Public Health Agency of Canada) did not mention military families in their web-based resources or searchable through their web-based material.

Non-traditional families are reflected in many of these definitions. Same-sex relationships are included within married, cohabiting, and common-law relationships and blended families addressed through the inclusion of step-children. Older relatives are also considered, provided they are dependent on service personnel.

## **Charity definitions**

Canadian charitable organizations providing support to military and veteran families typically did not specify a family definition, with the exception of the Vanier Institute of the Family. The Vanier Institute defines the family most broadly, without eligibility criterion based on cohabitation; instead, the definition focuses on the role of support and intangible ties binding group members. Often, family was defined post hoc by the types and breadth of services provided to the military families. For example, Wounded Warriors Canada funds counselling programs for couples including an active service personnel member and True Patriot Love provides grants for services and programs aimed at military-connected children and youth.

<sup>4</sup>See [www.ccpa-accp.ca/school-counsellors-working-military-veteran-families](http://www.ccpa-accp.ca/school-counsellors-working-military-veteran-families) for more detail





# INTER- COUNTRY SYNTHESIS



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## GOVERNMENT DEFINITIONS

Of the four countries compared in this report, only the US Department of Defense provides a definition of both a “military” and a “veteran” family (Table 1: Overview of similarities and differences in government definitions of military/veteran families). The remaining countries define or allude to a definition of military or veteran families via policy related to access to benefits or services for those within the military community. Where such benefits have tangible financial reward for military service, such as eligibility for housing or healthcare, definitions tend to be limited to heteronormative family structures such as spouses and children, with inclusion of older relatives provided they are dependent on personnel for support. Non-dependent relatives such as siblings and other relatives may not be explicitly mentioned in policy definitions but may be considered within definitions of family if they meet eligibility criteria for dependence.

Definitions of family across the four countries varied according to civil definitions of marriage and relationships. The US had the most limited definition of military/veteran families within the available documentation, with only married couple relationships deemed to be eligible for most of the services provided. In contrast, Australian and Canadian definitions were the broadest, including married couples, common-law partnerships, as well as co-habiting (*de facto*) relationships. Unlike Australia, Canadian definitions of cohabiting relationships typically included relationship duration specifications in line with common-law partnership status in civilian sectors. Both UK and Australia definitions separately recognised civil partnerships for same-sex couples. All countries recognised same-sex marriages within definitions of dependents. The exclusion of non-married but long-term, cohabiting relationships from military definitions of families may prevent such families from accessing military support. This may result in couples entering marriage before they ready in order to access particular benefits such as housing and healthcare, with implications for relationship satisfaction and breakdown.

**Table 1: Overview of similarities and differences in government definitions of military/veteran families**

Overarching government definition	UK	US	AUS	CA
Definition of military family	X		X	X
Definition of veteran family	X		X	X
<b>Eligibility for benefits and services</b>				
<b>Spouse/partner</b>				
Married (including same-sex)				
Common-law/de facto	X	X		
<b>Children/adolescents</b>				
Children (biological, adopted, step)				
<b>Other family members</b>				
Parents (if dependent)				
Other relatives (if dependent)		X	X	
Siblings	X	X	X	X

\* Includes recognition of same-sex civil partnerships/unions in the UK and Australia



Other dependents are largely limited to children, with policies across all countries including both biological, adopted, and step-children under this definition, provided they are dependent on personnel. There were differences in the age at which children were judged to be dependent, ranging from 18 years in the UK to 23 years in the US for some benefits; ages vary for dependent children in Canada and Australia according to the particular benefit on offer. All countries included extensions to this age limit for children attending university or higher education as well as those with mental or physical disabilities. All four countries explicitly refer to parents within their definitions regarding eligibility for services provided they are dependent on personnel. Other relatives, such as aunts and uncles, may also be included within definitions of dependents but this tended to be implied rather than stated.

## CHARITY DEFINITIONS

In contrast to government definitions, those provided by charitable organizations within the four countries tend to be more inclusive than government definitions. Many did not define family and some, particularly in the US, continued to align with government definitions. However, among those that did discuss family members, the majority continue to focus on immediate family members such as spouses, partners and children but indicated consideration of other family structures by the inclusion of support and information services for parents, siblings and carers. By adopting wider or unclear definitions, such organizations explicitly position themselves as available to support the wider military community but allowing them to refer those seeking help onto appropriate services to limit resources to designated family members if required.

## CONCLUSIONS

Defining family allows military and government policy makers to restrict access to services and benefits that may have increased demand such as housing or healthcare. Conversely, less precise definitions provided in some policy documentation allow the military to be seen to be potentially inclusive to all relationships, including parents, siblings, and close friends. However, differences between this more open approach and the explicit eligibility criteria for services and charitable organizations may lead to family members who aren't reflected in governmental definitions, such as unmarried partners and parents, feeling excluded or unsupported by military services and programmes despite the important role they play in supporting current and former military personnel. These restricted definitions may also limit academic research that aligns with military definitions or that relies on recruiting family members from military bases and facilities who meet particular eligibility criteria. Charitable organizations who adopt wider definitions explicitly position themselves as available to support the wider military community while allowing for restrictions on services to designated family members if resources are limited.



# RECOMMEN- DATIONS FOR RESEARCHERS



**CIMVHR**  
Canadian Institute for Military  
and Veteran Health Research

**ICRSMV**  
L'Institut canadien de recherche sur  
la santé des militaires et des vétérans



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCHERS

Following the discussions of the working group, eight recommendations for researchers working with military families were suggested to help provide understanding across international studies and increase diversification of research in this area. These include:

- Provide a clear definition of military/veteran family in each study and the context behind why these particular participants were selected (for example, a study regarding benefits would explicitly outline the focus on those eligible for said benefit)
- Greater consideration of the *function* of family in the study design phase so all relevant members are included rather than relying on traditional definitions (for example, who might be affected during a deployment and therefore should be included in the study)
- Create a better understanding of the differences and tensions between definitions of family across policy, community services, and research and their implications
- Improve knowledge-sharing across countries through collaborative research projects
- Improve understanding of how military/veteran families define and structure themselves
- Improve understanding definitions of military family with the research literature
- Improve theory building and testing within military family research
- Explore conceptualisation of military families as distinct or similar from veterans families



# **APPENDIX:** **MILITARY FAMILY DEFINITIONS, BY COUNTRY AND SECTOR**



**CIMVHR**  
Canadian Institute for Military  
and Veteran Health Research

**ICRSMV**  
L'Institut canadien de recherche sur  
la santé des militaires et des vétérans



# UNITED KINGDOM

## Government definitions

Organization	Definition	Link
<b>Military definitions</b>		
<b>Ministry of Defence (MOD)</b>	<p>No stated definition of 'military family' within the MOD.</p> <p>A veteran is defined as anyone who has served for at least one day in the UK Armed Forces (regular or reserve) or Merchant Mariners who participated in military operations. No stated definition of veteran family.</p>	<a href="http://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Veterans-Key-Facts.pdf">www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Veterans-Key-Facts.pdf</a>
<b>Governmental department policy definitions</b>		
<b>Cross-departmental policy</b>	<p><b>Armed Forces Covenant</b></p> <p>A pledge that those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who are injured and the bereaved.</p> <p>343B Interpretation of Part - In section 343A "service people" means:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>members of the regular forces and the reserve forces</li> <li>members of British overseas territory forces who are subject to service law;</li> <li>former members of any of Her Majesty's forces who are ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom; and relevant family members (not defined)</li> <li>relevant family members (not defined)</li> </ol>	<p><a href="http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/588140/30012016_AFC_Report_FINAL_WEB.PDF">www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/588140/30012016_AFC_Report_FINAL_WEB.PDF</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/support-and-advice/families">www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/support-and-advice/families</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uk-pga/2011/18/crossheading/armed-forces-covenant-report_">www.legislation.gov.uk/uk-pga/2011/18/crossheading/armed-forces-covenant-report_</a></p>
<b>Ministry of Defence (MOD)</b>	<p><b>Armed Forces Family strategy documentation</b></p> <p>"The Service 'family' comprises not only those we recognise in terms of entitlement, but those we need to engage and communicate with. There are also those who, at times, will need additional support - and we have a role in helping them access it. Accordingly, the definition of family will be different for different purposes – all-encompassing when it comes to communications and rightly narrower in definition when it comes to defined benefits" (p2).</p> <p>No explicit definition of family provided. Describes seven aspects of offer to military families; partner employment, accommodation, children's education and childcare, community support, specialist support, health and wellbeing and transition.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/492121/20160108-UK_Armed_Forces_Families_Strategy_2016.pdf">www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/492121/20160108-UK_Armed_Forces_Families_Strategy_2016.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/492121/20160108-UK_Armed_Forces_Families_Strategy_2016.pdf">www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/492121/20160108-UK_Armed_Forces_Families_Strategy_2016.pdf</a></p>
	<p><b>Military guidance - Joint Service Publication (JSPs)</b></p> <p>JSPs refer to families but contain sometimes conflicting information – <i>spouses, dependents, entitled family, close family, immediate family etc.</i> Some JSPs provide definitions of dependent but these can also be contradictory, ranging from spouse/partner and children to older relatives.</p>	<a href="http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/joint-service-publication-jsp">www.gov.uk/government/collections/joint-service-publication-jsp</a>



JSP 464: Service Family Accommodation (SFA) And Substitute Service Family Accommodation, UK And Overseas (2016)

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/jsp-464-tri-service-accommodation-regulations-tsars](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/jsp-464-tri-service-accommodation-regulations-tsars)

- Dependent defined as “*spouse/civil partner or child of a Service person or entitled civilian who depends on him or her for support*”. (Part 2, Annex C to chapter 1, para 7)
- Service personnel who co-habit with a partner who is not their legal spouse/civil partner are not eligible under any circumstances (Part 1, Section V, para 0110)

JSP 751: Joint Casualty And Compassionate Policy And Procedures: Management Of The Casualty (2015)

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/436114/20150113-OS-Issue\\_15-JSP\\_751-Volume\\_1-Redacted\\_Version.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/436114/20150113-OS-Issue_15-JSP_751-Volume_1-Redacted_Version.pdf)

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/436115/20150114-OS-Issue\\_15-JSP\\_751-Volume\\_2-Redacted\\_Version.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/436115/20150114-OS-Issue_15-JSP_751-Volume_2-Redacted_Version.pdf)

- Next of Kin: Spouse/civil partner if married or separated (but not divorced). Eldest child, a parent, sibling, or other relative, or friend if no living relatives for single, widowed or divorced personnel. Personnel can nominate emergency contact, does not need to be NOK (Section 3, para 01.01.0104)
- Dependant defined as “*spouse, civil partner, partner, child or parent of the individual or someone who lives in the same household as the individual... can also be someone who reasonably relies on an individual to make arrangements for the provision of care for assistance should they fall ill or are injured or assaulted. For example, this could include an elderly aunt or grandparent. It does not include tenants or boarders living in the family home, or someone who lives in the household as an employee, for example a live-in housekeeper*” (Section 7, para 01.03.0125)
- Funeral provision for attendance of one close family defined as Spouse, Civil Partner, Parent, Legal Guardian, Children, Grand Parents, Sibling including whole or half blood, Parent in Law, Emergency Contact
- Next of kin contact details form acknowledges complexities of family relationships stating “*owing to the complicated nature of some family relationships, this spreadsheet contains additional facts on family dynamics to ensure that future invitations can be targeted to the NOK appropriate to the event*” of injury or death. (Appendix 1 to Annex g to Vol 2, part 1, chp 1)

JSP 765: Armed Forces Compensation Scheme Statement Of Policy (2016)

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/590779/20170206-JSP765\\_A.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/590779/20170206-JSP765_A.pdf)

Eligible partner for compensation in recognition of the financial loss suffered as a result of bereavement include (Chp4, para 4.1-4.6):

- person who was married to the deceased or was their civil partner for at least six months prior to bereavement
- if personnel were not married/in civil partnership, partner may be entitled if they lived with the deceased as partners in a substantial and exclusive relationship, were not prevented from marrying or forming a civil partnership; and if they were financially dependent or interdependent on the deceased
- Substantial and exclusive relationship or financial dependence/interdependence may be proven by joint rental accommodation, lease or property ownership, bank account, savings or investments, shared responsibilities for children, evidence showing the length of relationship, evidence of will or insurance policy naming partner as principal or co-beneficiary
- A relationship is not an exclusive relationship if one or both of parties is married/in civil partnership/substantial and exclusive relationship with someone other than the other party in the relationship
- Eligible child is birth child, an adopted child or other child who was financially dependent on the deceased defined as under 18 years of age or, if in full-time education or vocational training, under 23 years of age. Includes child born within 12 months of bereavement. Age criteria do not apply if child is unable to support themselves due to physical or mental disability





JSP 342 Education of Service Children and Young People (2014)

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-education-of-service-children-jsp-342](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-education-of-service-children-jsp-342)

Service child defined as:

- legitimate or legitimated child or step-child of either or both of the spouses/civil partners where at least one of the spouse/civil partners is a serving member of Her Majesty's Armed Forces (including a reservist on active duty)
- a child statutorily adopted by either or both of the spouses/civil partners
- a child of the family (a legal term meaning any other child who is being brought up in the household of the husband/wife/civil partners at their expense or was so being brought up immediately before the spouses/civil partners were estranged, separated by legal order, divorced or the civil partnership was dissolved or before the death of the husband, wife or civil partner)
- a child is deemed to be below the age of majority (18 years). (Though this is extended for those in full time educations or for those who have a disability) (Part 1, Chp1, para 3).

JSP 752 Tri-Service Regulations for Expenses and Allowances Part 2: Guidance

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/625496/20170701-JSP\\_752\\_Part2\\_V31\\_Jul17.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/625496/20170701-JSP_752_Part2_V31_Jul17.pdf)

Continuity of Education Allowance for Service children

Helps military families achieve continuity of education for children that would otherwise be denied if children accompanied them on frequent assignments both at home and overseas. Eligible for personnel on regular accompanied posting with:

- child who has fulltime residence with personnel and will be moved as a result of posting
- child is aged between 8-18 years

**Veterans Welfare Service**

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/transitional-welfare-requirements-protocol](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transitional-welfare-requirements-protocol)

Children and families discussed but not defined.

**Devolved governments**

**Scotland**

[www.gov.scot/Publications/2013/03/6959](http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2013/03/6959)

Scoping review conducted in 2013 looked at immediate family members only.

**Wales** - expert group of the needs of the Armed Forces Community in Wales – no stated definition.

<http://gov.wales/docs/dsjlg/meetings/armedforcesexpertgroup/141029-afeg-terms-of-ref.pdf>

**Northern Ireland** - families not mentioned.



## Health

### National Health Service (NHS)

**England** - information provided on military life for members of an armed forces family. Describes personnel and their spouses, partners or children.

#### Examples of documents from general practitioner commissioning groups regarding military families

Mentions difficulties that families can have but most do not define.

b. Their families – i.e. spouses / partners and dependent children and adults. Most are registered with NHS GP Practices. Approximately 20,000 are registered with Defence Medical Services (DMS) Centres in England

**Scotland** - reference to families but no definition, scoping review conducted in 2013 looked at immediate family members only.

**Wales** - no stated definition.

[www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Militaryhealthcare/veterans-families-reservists/Pages/family.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Militaryhealthcare/veterans-families-reservists/Pages/family.aspx)

[www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/armed-forces-participation-framework-2017.pdf](http://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/armed-forces-participation-framework-2017.pdf)

[www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/armed-forces-commissioning.pdf](http://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/armed-forces-commissioning.pdf)

[www.sussexarmedforcesnetwork.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/2015-04-07-Armed-Forces-Health-Operational-Plan-V4.pdf](http://www.sussexarmedforcesnetwork.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/2015-04-07-Armed-Forces-Health-Operational-Plan-V4.pdf)

[www.nhsggc.org.uk/media/215055/12-44.pdf](http://www.nhsggc.org.uk/media/215055/12-44.pdf)

### Public Health

**England** – families mentioned but not defined.

**Scotland, NI & Wales** – families not mentioned

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/479525/2903829\\_PHE\\_Military\\_Families\\_Accessible\\_v0.2.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/479525/2903829_PHE_Military_Families_Accessible_v0.2.pdf)

## Education

### Service Pupil Premium (SPP) – Department of Education

Pupils attract the SPP if they meet the following criteria:

- one of their parents is serving in the regular armed forces
- they have been registered as a ‘service child’ in the school census at any point since 2011
- one of their parents died whilst serving in the armed forces and the pupil receives a pension under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme or the War Pensions Scheme

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-service-pupil-premium/service-pupil-premium-what-you-need-to-know](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-service-pupil-premium/service-pupil-premium-what-you-need-to-know)

### Armed Forces Bereavement Scholarship Scheme

Can apply for assistance with further and higher education if:

- one of your parents died as a result of their service in the armed forces
- your parent died on or after 1 January 1990
- you’re 16 or over and in full-time education
- you or a surviving parent receive bereavement benefits from the Armed Forces Compensation scheme, War Pension scheme or Armed Forces Attributable Benefits scheme
- foster children not eligible

[www.gov.uk/support-military-bereaved-children](http://www.gov.uk/support-military-bereaved-children)

## Social welfare

### Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)

As part of the Armed Forces Covenant, DWP has initiatives that help current and former members of the armed forces and their families access Jobcentre Plus services. Support is available to:

- service leavers and serving personnel within resettlement period
- spouses and civil partners of currently serving and ex-service personnel

Other benefits for family members limited to spouses and/or partners.

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/jobcentre-plus-services-for-the-armed-forces-and-their-families/armed-forces-enhanced-access-to-jobcentre-plus-services-and-armed-forces-champions](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/jobcentre-plus-services-for-the-armed-forces-and-their-families/armed-forces-enhanced-access-to-jobcentre-plus-services-and-armed-forces-champions)



## Charity definitions

Organization	Definition	Link
<b>SSAFA (Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association)</b>	<p>SSAFA offers help and support to all serving members and former members of all ranks of the Armed Forces who have received one day's pay in; the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Army and Royal Air Force; the Volunteer Reserve Forces, including Royal Navy Reserves, Royal Marine Reserves, Army Reserves and Royal Air Force Reserves; or Nursing services.</p> <p>The following people are also eligible for our support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wives/former wives, husbands/former husbands, civil partners/ former civil partners</li> <li>• Widows and widowers</li> <li>• Partners who are, or were, in an established relationship with a Beneficiary</li> <li>• Children who are dependent on a beneficiary</li> <li>• Those who provide, or provided, care for a beneficiary</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.ssafa.org.uk/help-you/check-your-eligibility">www.ssafa.org.uk/help-you/check-your-eligibility</a>
<b>Royal British Legion</b>	Dependents can include children, spouses and partners, widows or widowers and may also include relatives and cohabiters of beneficiary or those dependent on them. Carers included if they have ongoing caring responsibility for a beneficiary.	<a href="http://www.british-legion.org.uk/get-support/eligibility/">www.british-legion.org.uk/get-support/eligibility/</a>
<b>Army Families Federation</b>	The AFF supports all Army families, including families of the Regular Army and Army Reserves. It also means parents and siblings of serving soldiers, as well as spouses and children.	<a href="http://www.aff.org.uk/have_your_say.htm">www.aff.org.uk/have_your_say.htm</a>
<b>Royal Air Force Family Federation</b>	Support for anyone whose life is affected by having a member of the family in the RAF can contact us, be it husband, wife, partner, children, grandparents, brother, sister.	<a href="http://www.raf-ff.org.uk/family-parents.asp">www.raf-ff.org.uk/family-parents.asp</a>
<b>Navy Families Federation</b>	Contact form has options for parent, spouse/partner, ex-spouse/ex-partner and other.	<a href="https://nff.org.uk/contact-the-nff/">https://nff.org.uk/contact-the-nff/</a>
<b>Help for Heroes</b>	Help for Heroes provides support for the close family, dependents and carers of Serving and Reservist Personnel and veterans who have suffered injuries or illness as a result of their service to the Nation. No definitions stated.	<a href="http://www.helpforheroes.org.uk/about/our-faqs/">www.helpforheroes.org.uk/about/our-faqs/</a>
<b>Combat Stress</b>	Provides mental health treatment and support services for veterans and their family members free of charge. No definition provided.	<a href="http://www.combat-stress.org.uk">www.combat-stress.org.uk</a>



# UNITED STATES

## Government definitions

Organization	Definition	Link
<b>Military definitions</b>		
<b>Department of the Army</b>	Defines a military family as: a unit that may consist of a husband, wife and children with either the husband and/or wife as the primary military enlisted.	<a href="http://www.armymwr.com/about-us/army-glossary/">www.armymwr.com/about-us/army-glossary/</a>
<b>Department of Veterans Affairs</b>	A Veteran family is defined by federal regulations as “a single person or a family in which the head of household or the spouse of the head of household, is a veteran”. Access to Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA) is limited to the spouse or widow(er) and dependent children of a qualifying sponsor (depends on disability due to service)	<a href="http://www.va.gov/op3/docs/StrategicPlanning/Veteran_and_Family_Reintegration_Forum_Report.pdf">www.va.gov/op3/docs/StrategicPlanning/Veteran_and_Family_Reintegration_Forum_Report.pdf</a>
<b>Department of Defense (DoD)</b>	<p>Dependent Defined</p> <p>The term “dependent”, with respect to a member of a uniformed service, means the following persons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The spouse of the member.</li> <li>2) An unmarried child of the member who is:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. under 21 years of age;</li> <li>b. incapable of self-support because of mental or physical incapacity and is in fact dependent on the member for more than one-half of the child’s support; or</li> <li>c. under 23 years of age, is enrolled in a full-time course of study in an institution of higher education approved by the Secretary concerned for purposes of this subparagraph, and is in fact dependent on the member for more than one-half of the child’s support</li> </ol> </li> <li>(3) A parent of the member if             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the parent is in fact dependent on the member for more than one-half of the parent’s support;</li> <li>b. the parent has been so dependent for a period prescribed by the Secretary concerned or became so dependent due to a change of circumstances arising after the member entered on active duty; and</li> <li>c. the dependency of the parent on the member is determined on the basis of an affidavit submitted by the parent and any other evidence required under regulations prescribed by the Secretary concerned.</li> </ol> </li> <li>(4) An unmarried person who—             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. is placed in the legal custody of the member as a result of an order of a court of competent jurisdiction in the United States (or Puerto Rico or a possession of the United States) for a period of at least 12 consecutive months</li> <li>b. either—                 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. has not attained the age of 21;</li> <li>II. has not attained the age of 23 years and is enrolled in a full time course of study at an institution of higher learning approved by the Secretary concerned; or</li> <li>III. is incapable of self-support because of a mental or physical incapacity that occurred while the person was considered a dependent of the member or former member under this paragraph pursuant to clause (i) or (ii);</li> </ol> </li> <li>c. is dependent on the member for over one-half of the person’s support;</li> <li>d. resides with the member unless separated by the necessity of military service or to receive institutional care as a result of disability or incapacitation or under such other circumstances as the Secretary concerned may by regulation prescribe; and</li> <li>e. is not a dependent of a member under any other paragraph</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<a href="http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/USCODE-2011-title37/html/USCODE-2011-title37-chap7-sec401.htm">www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/USCODE-2011-title37/html/USCODE-2011-title37-chap7-sec401.htm</a>



### Other Definitions

For purposes of subsection (a):

(1) The term “child” includes—

- a. a stepchild of the member (except that such term does not include a stepchild after the divorce of the member from the stepchild’s parent by blood);
- b. an adopted child of the member, including a child placed in the home of the member by a placement agency (recognized by the Secretary of Defense) in anticipation of the legal adoption of the child by the member; and
- c. an illegitimate child of the member if the member’s parentage of the child is established in accordance with criteria prescribed in regulations by the Secretary concerned

(2) The term “parent” means—

- a. a natural parent of the member;
- b. a stepparent of the member;
- c. a parent of the member by adoption;
- d. a parent, stepparent, or adopted parent of the spouse of the member; and
- e. any other person, including a former stepparent, who has stood in loco parentis to the member at any time for a continuous period of at least five years before the member became 21 years of age

## Definitions within policies

### Department of Defense (DoD)

#### Family Readiness Strategy

Aims to prepare families to effectively navigate the challenges of daily living experienced in the unique context of military service. Defines family as: A group composed of one Service member and spouse; Service member, spouse and such Service member’s dependents; two married Service members; or two married Service members and such Service members’ dependents. To the extent authorized by law and in accordance with Service implementing guidance, the term may also include other nondependent family members of a Service member.

[www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodi/134222p.pdf](http://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodi/134222p.pdf)

#### Department of Education Defense Activity

It is DoD policy that DDESS Arrangements are operated under authority of reference (a). Enrollment is limited to eligible children of military members and civilian employees of the Federal Government, as determined by the Secretary of Defense.

6.1. The DDESS Arrangements within CONUS, Alaska, and Hawaii shall: 6.1.1. Provide a tuition-free education for the dependent children of military members and civilian employees of the Department of Defense occupying permanent living quarters for any part of the school year on any military installation served by a DDESS Arrangement.

4.1. While overseas, DoD dependent students may be enrolled in a DoD dependents school or be provided support for enrollment in non-DoD schools or may take correspondence courses when no DoD dependents school is available, at US Government expense, under the conditions prescribed in this section.

[www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodi/134226p.pdf](http://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodi/134226p.pdf)

[www.dodea.edu/Offices/Regulations/upload/1342\\_13010.pdf](http://www.dodea.edu/Offices/Regulations/upload/1342_13010.pdf)

### Department of the Air Force

#### Warrior and Survivor care

Family is defined as next of kin and the individuals identified by the Airman to be notified in an emergency and those identified by the Airman as family. In some instances, benefit entitlements, sharing of sensitive information regarding health care and access to other information may be withheld from some identified here as family members due to Federal law which specifies who may be allowed access.

[http://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af\\_a1/publication/afi34-1101/afi34-1101.pdf](http://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af_a1/publication/afi34-1101/afi34-1101.pdf)

### Department of the Navy

Defined as those individuals for whom the Service member is legally obligated to provide support. This includes, but is not limited to, minor children, persons with disabilities, and others for whom the Service member is legally obligated to care for and who are unable to care for themselves in the absence of the Service member.

<https://doni.documentservices.dla.mil/Directives/01000%20Military%20Personnel%20Support/01-700%20Morale,%20Community%20and%20Religious%20Services/1740.4D.pdf>



<b>Department of Defense -TRICARE</b>	Family members of active duty forces, reserve forces, retired veterans —spouses and children – who are registered in Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) are eligible.	<a href="http://manuals.tricare.osd.mil/DisplayManualPdfFile/TO08/194/AsOf/ts08/c3s1_2.pdf">http://manuals.tricare.osd.mil/DisplayManualPdfFile/TO08/194/AsOf/ts08/c3s1_2.pdf</a>
<b>Survivor Benefit Plan</b>	Monthly, lifetime benefit for survivors of retired military members. This includes spouse, children, spouse/children, former spouse, or natural interest person that has a legitimate insurable interest. These are all specifically outlined -children must be under the age 18 OR enrolled in college and under the age 22 (must be unmarried). Natural interest person examples include siblings or a child who does not otherwise meet the child requirement.	<a href="http://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary/provide/sbp/coverage.html">www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary/provide/sbp/coverage.html</a>
<b>Education</b>	<b>US Department of Education</b> A school-aged child whose parent/guardian is serving in the United States military, at home or abroad (includes active duty, National Guard, and Reserve forces). Works to accommodate military leave (in conjunction with school absences for children), funding for schools who educate military children and programs for military children with special needs. Includes interstate compact which allows equal education for students regardless of the state they reside in due to military moves.	<a href="http://www.ed.gov/veterans-and-military-families">www.ed.gov/veterans-and-military-families</a>
<b>Social welfare</b>	<b>Social security</b> Veterans or military families are not specifically defined other than “served in the military”.	<a href="http://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/ssb/v71n2/v71n2p1.html">www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/ssb/v71n2/v71n2p1.html</a>

## State examples

*NB: Most of the following are defined from benefits that the state offers to military or veteran families*

State	Definition	Link
<b>Alabama</b>	A dependent is defined as a child, stepchild, spouse or the un-remarried widow(er) of the veteran (any person who served on active duty military or naval service during any war in which the US has been engaged, who was discharged with any condition other than dishonourable).	<a href="http://www.va.state.al.us/gi_dep_scholarship.aspx">www.va.state.al.us/gi_dep_scholarship.aspx</a>
<b>California</b>	Section 297.5 of the Family Code for the state of California defines veteran spouses as including registered domestic partners. Veteran dependent is natural/adopted child/step-child, unmarried surviving spouse, spouse of veteran. Veteran is defined as any citizen of the who served in active military, naval, or air service who received an honourable discharge.	<a href="http://www.calvet.ca.gov/about-us/laws-regulations">www.calvet.ca.gov/about-us/laws-regulations</a>
<b>Georgia</b>	There are specific definitions with certain benefits, such as “honourable discharge” and “dependent or spouse” but no definitions for these terms. Some benefits refer back to federal definitions.	<a href="https://veterans.georgia.gov">https://veterans.georgia.gov</a>
<b>Iowa</b>	Used throughout but not defined “Dependent”, “Spouse”, “Child”, “Family”, or “Veteran” even though they are used throughout.	<a href="https://va.iowa.gov/benefits">https://va.iowa.gov/benefits</a>
<b>Maryland</b>	Refers to Title 38 of US Code, section 101 to define veteran and dependent which references the federal definition.	<a href="http://veterans.maryland.gov/military-service-recognition">http://veterans.maryland.gov/military-service-recognition</a>
<b>Missouri</b>	Missouri provides services to veterans, family members of veterans, survivor of a veteran. Missouri defines a veteran as someone who possesses a federal DD214 (military discharge papers) that have a discharge of honourable or general with honourable conditions. There does not seem to be a specific given definition for family members of veterans.	<a href="http://www.mo.gov/veterans">www.mo.gov/veterans</a>
<b>New Jersey</b>	Veteran is defined under veteran’s preference for employment as being involved in certain peacekeeping missions and/or conflict throughout time from 1940-present. Different programs define families eligible for benefits as current spouses, surviving spouses, child (biological or adopted), surviving children.	<a href="http://www.nj.gov/military/veterans/njguide/2016-NJ-Veterans-Benefits-Guide.pdf">www.nj.gov/military/veterans/njguide/2016-NJ-Veterans-Benefits-Guide.pdf</a>



<b>Ohio</b>	Defines military family as spouse, children, and surviving family members. The terms used specifically include “spouse” and “other survivors”.	<a href="http://dvs.ohio.gov/main/Benefits.html">http://dvs.ohio.gov/main/Benefits.html</a>
<b>South Carolina</b>	National Guard Family Relief program defines military family as being a family member and enrolled in DEERS (Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System).	<a href="http://va.sc.gov/benefits.html">http://va.sc.gov/benefits.html</a>
<b>Vermont</b>	Defines ‘veteran family’ loosely with most information for families referring to federal benefits	<a href="http://veterans.vermont.gov">http://veterans.vermont.gov</a>
<b>Wyoming</b>	Wyoming consistently uses the terms “veterans and their families” and states that eligibility for programs is continually evolving. No specific definition of “family”.	<a href="http://wyomilitary.wyo.gov/wp-content/uploads/flipbook/8/mobile/index.html#p=64">http://wyomilitary.wyo.gov/wp-content/uploads/flipbook/8/mobile/index.html#p=64</a>

## Charity definitions

Organization	Definition	Link
<b>Armed Forces YMCA</b>	Serves active duty military and their families from all service branches with a focus on junior enlisted. No specific definition of “family” provided.	<a href="http://www.asymca.org/who-we-are">www.asymca.org/who-we-are</a>
<b>Overwatch Alliance</b>	Partners with organizations to assist military veterans, military spouses, veterans’ families and caregivers. These terms are not defined.	<a href="http://overwatchalliance.org/whowehelp">http://overwatchalliance.org/whowehelp</a>
<b>Blue Star Families</b>	Provide resources, free activities and training to military spouses and families and conducts research. Specifically targets actively serving (including National Guard and Reserve forces). A family member is defined as spouse, child, aunt/uncle, parents, grandparents.	<a href="https://bluestarfam.org">https://bluestarfam.org</a>
<b>Coast Guard Mutual Assistance</b>	Provides financial assistance to current or retired US Coast Guard members and their immediate family members (defined as lawful spouse, unmarried, dependent children (biological and adopted and step-children) under the age of 21 years unless physically or mentally handicapped and parents or other family members dependent on the CGMA sponsor for over half of their support. “Surviving family” members are also supported on a case-by-case basis but not defined.	<a href="http://www.cgmahq.org">www.cgmahq.org</a>
<b>Fisher House Foundation</b>	Provides housing resources (including houses, hotels and sky miles for travel) for military families during period of illness or injury of military member (while receiving treatment). Criteria for each house is specifically determined by the local chapter with no specific definition of military family.	<a href="http://www.fisherhouse.org">www.fisherhouse.org</a>
<b>National Military Family Association</b>	Advocacy group that promotes interests at policy level for military issues and provides services and scholarships to military families, including Coast Guard, Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Corps. No specific definition provided.	<a href="http://www.militaryfamily.org/about-us">www.militaryfamily.org/about-us</a>
<b>Operation Homefront</b>	Provides financial assistance, free homes to disabled veterans, many military family events/activities. No specific definition provided.	<a href="http://www.operationhomefront.org">www.operationhomefront.org</a>
<b>United Service Organization (USO)</b>	Provides services to service members and families through USO centers, programs, entertainment. Definition includes still serving (in uniform) and their families, transitioning military and their families, wounded/ill/injured service members and their families, and families of fallen military. No specific definition of “family” provided but program delivery focuses on spouses and children.	<a href="http://www.uso.org/programs">www.uso.org/programs</a>
<b>Wounded Warrior Project</b>	Serves post-9/11 veterans who suffered a physical or mental injury in connection to their military service and their families and caregivers through connection and support. No specific definition of “family” provided.	<a href="http://www.woundedwarriorproject.org">www.woundedwarriorproject.org</a>
<b>Military Child Education Coalition</b>	Performs research and provide resources and support for the education of military-connected children. Child is defined as birth to age 23 with parent in active duty, National Guard, or reserve forces. However, the policy passed by the federal government to provide a military identifier to students through the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015) only includes children of active duty parents.	<a href="http://www.militarychild.org">www.militarychild.org</a>





# AUSTRALIA

## Government definitions

Organization	Definition	Link
<b>Military definitions</b>		
Department of Defence	No stated definition of 'military family'.	
<b>Definitions within policies</b>		
Department of Defence	<p><b>Entitlement to benefits</b></p> <p>The Commonwealth provides benefits to assist a member's family with costs arising out of Service needs. Most benefits are provided only for family members who are also dependents living in the same household as the member.</p> <p>Household member definitions are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child – under the age of 21 years as recognised for the purposes of Part 7 Division 1 Subdivision D of the Family Law Act 1975. Includes biological, adopted, step-children and those placed in the home as result of permanent care order (long-term foster care until child reaches 18 years). The age limit does not apply in the case of disability</li> <li>Spouse - a person who is married to the member in accordance with the Marriage Act 1961</li> <li>Partner - registered relationship prescribed by the law of a State or Territory including civil partner and de facto relationships. A de facto relationship is where two people who are not married are living together (or usually live together) and are members of a couple. A de facto relationship can be between people of the same-sex or opposite-sex</li> <li>Couple - a member and their spouse or partner</li> <li>Non-Service spouse and non-Service partner</li> </ol>	<a href="http://www.defence.gov.au/PayAndConditions/ADF/Chapter-1/Part-3/Div-2.asp">www.defence.gov.au/PayAndConditions/ADF/Chapter-1/Part-3/Div-2.asp</a>
	<p><b>Recognition of Dependents</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A member's dependents are any of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>spouse or partner, even if he or she is not financially dependent</li> <li>dependent children under 21 years. There is no means test on child income. Their spouses or partner's children are also covered. Older children may be dependents if they have a disability</li> <li>In some circumstances, a person acting as a guardian or housekeeper, if the member has a dependent child and no spouse or partner (or their spouse or partner is an invalid, or absent on ADF duty)</li> <li>Other persons recognised as dependents by the CDF under Chapter 1 Part 3 Division 2. Members need to apply and request special consideration of their particular circumstances</li> </ol> </li> <li>A dependent must normally live with the member</li> </ol>	<a href="http://www.defence.gov.au/PayAndConditions/ADF/Chapter-8/Part-1/">www.defence.gov.au/PayAndConditions/ADF/Chapter-8/Part-1/</a>
	<p><b>Entitlement to Family assistance for attendance at Court of Inquiry</b></p> <p>Assistance provide for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The spouse or partner of the member</li> <li>A child of the member</li> <li>A parent of the member or parent of the member's spouse or partner</li> <li>A dependent of the member</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.defence.gov.au/PayAndConditions/ADF/Chapter%2D8/Part-7/default.asp">www.defence.gov.au/PayAndConditions/ADF/Chapter%2D8/Part-7/default.asp</a>
	<p><b>Family assistance for attendance at a coronial inquest</b></p> <p>Assistance provided for members of the family of ADF member whose death is the subject of the coronial inquest e.g. partner, parent (including a step-parent) or sibling of ADF member.</p>	<a href="http://www.defence.gov.au/PayAndConditions/ADF/Chapter%2D8/Part-8/default.asp">www.defence.gov.au/PayAndConditions/ADF/Chapter%2D8/Part-8/default.asp</a>





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**Assistance available if a member dies or suffers personal injury or disease as a result of service**

[www.defence.gov.au/PayAndConditions/ADF/Chapter-11/Part-2/Div-1.asp](http://www.defence.gov.au/PayAndConditions/ADF/Chapter-11/Part-2/Div-1.asp)

- A dependent child is a person who meets all the following conditions:
  - The person meets the definition of child (as previously described)
  - The person is wholly or partly dependent on the member for economic support
  - The person meets either of the following conditions.
    - They are under 16 years old
    - They are 16 or more years old but under 25 years old, and meet the education test (in full-time education at a school, college, university or other educational institution or not ordinarily in employment or working on their own account)

**Some aspects of dependency:**

- A child of a member is taken to have been wholly or partly dependent on a member at a time if the child would have been so dependent at that time but for an incapacity of the member as the result of an injury
- A child of a member who, immediately before the occurrence of an event, lived with the member is taken to have been wholly dependent on the member at the time of the occurrence of that event
- A child of a member who was born alive after the member's death is taken to have been born immediately before the member's death and to have been wholly dependent on the member at the time of the member's death
- A child of a member who was conceived before the time of an assessment of the member's SRC compensation mentioned in subsection 11.2.11.2, and was born alive after that time, is taken to have been born immediately before that time and to have been wholly dependent on the member at that time

**Spouse:**

Has the same meaning as in the [Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988](#).

- a.in relation to an employee or a deceased employee—a person who is, or immediately before the employee's death was, a de facto partner of the employee; and
- b.in relation to an employee or a deceased employee who is or was a member of the Aboriginal race of Australia or a descendant of indigenous inhabitants of the Torres Strait Islands—a person who is or was recognised as the employee's husband or wife by the custom prevailing in the tribe or group to which the employee belongs or belonged

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**Defence Community Organisation (DCO)**

DCO provides a range of support to Defence families. The family of an ADF member consists of the spouse or interdependent partner and children who normally live with the ADF member, or the parents of a single ADF member.

[www.defence.gov.au/DCO/About/Default.asp](http://www.defence.gov.au/DCO/About/Default.asp)

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**Partner Education and Employment Program (PEEP)**

Provides funding towards initiatives aimed to contribute to the employability of partners when they are relocated as a consequence of their ADF partner's military service. 'Partner' means spouse or interdependent partner of ADF personnel.

[www.defence.gov.au/DCO/\\_Master/documents/Guidelines/PEEP-Guidelines.pdf](http://www.defence.gov.au/DCO/_Master/documents/Guidelines/PEEP-Guidelines.pdf)

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**Defence Housing Australia**

Service Residences (SR) are generally provided to Members With dependents (MWD). Eligible if personnel:

[www.dha.gov.au/housing/service-residences/step-1-check-your-eligibility](http://www.dha.gov.au/housing/service-residences/step-1-check-your-eligibility)

- have a spouse, recognised interdependent partner or children who live with you
  - have other Defence recognised dependents who normally live with you, or
  - are a member with dependents (unaccompanied) and your dependents need housing
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**Department of  
Veterans' Affairs  
(DVA)**

**Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS)**

Provides free and confidential, nation-wide counselling and support for war and service-related mental health conditions and relationship and family matters. Family eligible if they are:

- partner and children (any age) of current and former members of the ADF or with DVA card
- ex-partner of members listed above within five years of separation or while co-parenting a child under 18 years of age with a member listed above
- partners, children (any age), siblings, parents of ADF members killed in service-related incidents
- family members of current and former ADF members who die by suicide or reported suicide
- ADF War Widow[er]s

[www.vvcs.gov.au/  
Clients/eligibility-  
at-a-glance.htm](http://www.vvcs.gov.au/Clients/eligibility-at-a-glance.htm)

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**Benefits and payments / Eligibility**

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) provides support to current and former serving members and their families through a range of benefits (including ongoing or one off payments). Partner/Spouse defined as married to, in a de facto relationship with, or separated from, a member/veteran (including same-sex relationships). Widow/widower and children mentioned in terms of benefits they may be eligible too but are not defined

[www.dva.gov.au/ben-  
efits-and-payments/  
eligibility](http://www.dva.gov.au/benefits-and-payments/eligibility)

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**Defence Service Homes Insurance**

Eligible for widow/widower of someone who served with Australian Defence Forces. Not defined

[www.dsh.gov.au/  
lending/eligibility.htm](http://www.dsh.gov.au/lending/eligibility.htm)

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**Partner Service Pension**

The partner service pension is for any eligible partner of a veteran with qualifying service; former partner of a veteran with qualifying service; or widow or widower of a veteran who had qualifying service. Those eligible include those:

legally married to and living with a veteran or living in a de facto relationship

if remain a member of a couple but have to live separately because one or both of you is too frail or ill to stay at home, and the separation is likely to be indefinite

[www.dva.gov.au/  
factsheet-is45-part-  
ner-service-pension](http://www.dva.gov.au/factsheet-is45-partner-service-pension)

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**Veterans' Children Education Scheme (VCES)**

The Veterans' Entitlement Act 1986 (VEA) defines an eligible child of a veteran as the veteran's natural or adopted child, or any other child who is, or was immediately before the death of the veteran, wholly or substantially dependent on the veteran. An eligible child is:

- under 16 years; or
- between 16 and 25 and undertaking full-time education (including an Australian Apprenticeship, Traineeship or cadetship); *and*
- the child of a current or former member of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) who is receiving (or was receiving prior to their death) a disability pension
- the child of a current or former ADF member whose death was war or defence caused; or
- the child of a veteran who was an Australian prisoner-of-war and is now deceased
- students whose veteran parent had operational service but whose death was not war or defence caused, and have also lost their other parent are also eligible. This loss may be through death or where the surviving parent is not maintaining them

[www.dva.gov.au/  
factsheet-mrc47-edu-  
cation-schemes](http://www.dva.gov.au/factsheet-mrc47-education-schemes)



## Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act Education and Training Scheme (MRCAETS)

[www.dva.gov.au/factsheet-mrc47-education-schemes](http://www.dva.gov.au/factsheet-mrc47-education-schemes)

The Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004 (MRCA) defines an eligible young person as a dependent who was wholly, mainly or partly dependent on the member and includes any person for whom the member stands in the position of a parent. An 'eligible young person' is:

- under 16 years old; or
- between 16 and 25, undertaking full-time education (including an Australian Apprenticeship, Traineeship or cadetship) and not ordinarily engaged in full-time work on his or her own account; and
- a dependent of a member or former member who: is eligible, or was at some point, for the Special Rate Disability Pension (SRDP); suffers an impairment that constitutes 80 or more impairment points; or whose death was related to service

## State examples

State	Definition	Link
<b>Victoria</b>	<p><b>Department of Premier and Cabinet</b></p> <p>Concessions available for eligible veterans, war widows and their dependents, for costs such as local council rates, water, gas and electricity bills, public transport and vehicle registration. Largely rely on have DVA veterans card (available to service pensioners, social security age pensioners (paid by DVA) and war widows and widowers who receive the income support supplement).</p> <p><b>Public transport</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• War Veterans/War Widow(er) Concession Card – Eligibility: hold a Department of Veterans Affairs Gold or White Card or previously be entitled to a DVA Victorian War Widow(er) Transport Concession Card; and</li> <li>• have documentary evidence of their partner/spouses overseas war/peacemaking service</li> </ul>	<p><a href="http://www.dpc.vic.gov.au/index.php/veterans/concessions-for-eligible-veterans">www.dpc.vic.gov.au/index.php/veterans/concessions-for-eligible-veterans</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.ptv.vic.gov.au/tickets/fares/concession/war-veteran-war-widower">www.ptv.vic.gov.au/tickets/fares/concession/war-veteran-war-widower</a></p>
<b>Western Australia</b>	<p><b>Department of Health</b></p> <p>Veterans and entitled persons (EP) can access a comprehensive range of admitted and non-admitted services in WA publically funded hospitals. Non-admitted services include emergency, outpatient and community services.</p> <p><b>Eligibility</b></p> <p>'Entitled person' means a person who has elected to be treated under DVA arrangements and:</p> <p>a) has been issued with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a Gold Card, or</li> <li>• a White Card, or</li> <li>• an Orange Card (pharmaceuticals only), or</li> <li>• a written authorisation on behalf of the Repatriation Commission, or</li> </ul> <p>b) is a Vietnam veteran or his/her dependent who is not otherwise eligible for treatment and who is certified by a medical practitioner as requiring urgent hospital treatment for an injury or disease. Dependent is not defined</p>	<p><a href="http://www.health.wa.gov.au/dva_management/home/">www.health.wa.gov.au/dva_management/home/</a></p>



## Charity definitions

Organization	Definition	Link
<b>Returned and Services League (RSL)</b>	National support and advocacy organizations for current and ex-serving Australian Defence Force personnel. Provides support for “families” but this is not explicitly defined except in relation to some specific grants or forms of assistance.	<a href="http://www.rslnational.org">www.rslnational.org</a>
<b>RSL DefenceCare</b>	Charity and not-for-profit organizations helping Australian Defence personnel and veterans and their families in times of injury, illness or crisis. Assist family members as well but not definition given.	<a href="http://www.defencecare.org">www.defencecare.org</a>
<b>Soldier On</b>	Soldier On supports veterans who have served by focusing on their physical and mental health, their family, their community and their future. Partners and children of veterans are encouraged to seek support, even if their family member is not looking to get help from Soldier On.	<a href="http://www.soldieron.org.au">www.soldieron.org.au</a>
<b>Legacy</b>	Support for military widows and children.	<a href="http://www.legacy.com.au">www.legacy.com.au</a>
<b>Wounded Heroes</b>	National community of organizations established to support Australian servicemen and women and their families, and to ease the financial, emotional and personal hardships of contemporary military life. No definition but service programs focus on spouses and children.	<a href="http://www.woundedheroes.org.au/programs">www.woundedheroes.org.au/programs</a>
<b>Mates4Mates</b>	Not-for profit established to support current and ex-serving Australian Defence Force personnel (and their families) who are wounded, injured or ill as a result of their service. Some assistance is potentially available to “immediate family members” who are defined as “spouses, partners, children, parents”.	<a href="http://mates4mates.org/become-a-mate/">http://mates4mates.org/become-a-mate/</a>



# CANADA

## Government definitions

### Federal

Organization	Definition	Link
<b>Military definitions</b>		
<b>Department of National Defence</b>	No general definition of family provided.	<a href="http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/about-policies-standards-defence-admin-orders-directives-5000/5044-1.page">www.forces.gc.ca/en/about-policies-standards-defence-admin-orders-directives-5000/5044-1.page</a>
<b>Veterans Affairs Canada</b>	No general definition of family provided.	
<b>Canadian Armed Forces Morale and Welfare Services</b>	No general definition of family provided.	

### Definitions within policies

<b>Department of National Defence</b>	<p><b>Dental Benefits</b></p> <p>a. Eligible spouse: a person legally married to you or a person who is living with you in a common-law relationship which has been recognized in accordance with the provisions of QR&amp;O 1.075</p> <p>b. Eligible children: unmarried child or children (including an adopted child, a step-child or a foster-child), provided he or she is not a member of the Plan as an employee: under twenty-one (21) years of age; or between twenty-one (21) and twenty-five (25) years of age and in full-time attendance at an educational institution; or twenty-one (21) years of age and over with a mental or physical impairment who is incapable of engaging in self-sustaining employment and is primarily dependent upon you for support.</p>	<a href="http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/caf-community-benefits/dependents-dental-care-plan.page#part_1_1_a">www.forces.gc.ca/en/caf-community-benefits/dependents-dental-care-plan.page#part_1_1_a</a>
	<p><b>Relocation Benefits</b></p> <p><b>Dependent:</b> means, in respect of an officer or non-commissioned member:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the member's spouse or common-law partner, who is normally resident with the member at the member's place of duty or who, if living separately, is doing so for military reasons;</li> <li>a relative by blood, marriage or common-law partnership or adoption legally or in fact who is normally resident with the member and for whom the member may claim a personal exemption under the Income Tax Act;</li> <li>a housekeeper, if the member is single and has a dependent child as defined in CBI 205.015 for whom the member maintains a home in which the member also normally resides;</li> <li>a child who is normally resident with the member and for whom the member would have been eligible to claim a personal exemption under the Income Tax Act if the child were a relative by blood, marriage or common-law partnership or adoption legally or in fact and for whom the member has accepted full financial responsibility and has commenced adoption proceedings;</li> <li>a child or legal ward of the spouse or common-law partner or the member, or of the spouse or common-law partner and the member, or an individual adopted legally or in fact by the spouse or common-law partner or the member, or by the spouse or common-law partner and the member, who cannot be claimed as a personal exemption by the member under the Income Tax Act but who is single and in full-time attendance at school or university, if it would be equitable and consistent with the purpose of this section that such a person be a dependant; or</li> </ul>	



- a family member who is permanently residing with the member, but who is precluded from qualifying as a dependent under the Income Tax Act because the family member receives a pension

**Spouse:** in relation to a member, does not include a spouse who is living separate and apart, within the meaning of the Divorce Act, from the member.

### Education Benefits for Children

Child defined as: a biological child, adopted child or legal ward, of a member or a member's spouse or common-law partner, who resides with the member at the member's place of duty, is under 21 years of age and continues to be in a dependent relationship with the member or the member's spouse or common-law partner.

[www.forces.gc.ca/en/about-policies-standards-benefits/ch-12-education-of-children.page#sec-12-1-01](http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/about-policies-standards-benefits/ch-12-education-of-children.page#sec-12-1-01)

### Regular Forces Pension Plan

Children defined as: adopted child(ren) or stepchild(ren), born before you reached age 60 or stopped being a member of the plan, whichever happens later, and who is/are: younger than age 18 or between ages 18 and 25, and in full-time attendance at a school, college, university or other educational institution that provides training or instruction of an educational, professional, vocational or technical nature.

**Survivor defined as:** The person of the same or the opposite sex who: was married to you at the time of your death or when you reached age 60, whichever is earlier or had been living with you in a conjugal relationship for at least one year at the date of your death, and, if you are over age 60, has cohabited continuously with you since before you reached age 60.

[www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/fac-caf/srvv/glsr-reg-eng.html#lists](http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/fac-caf/srvv/glsr-reg-eng.html#lists)

### Road to Mental Readiness

Program to provide guidance and skills to mitigate the stress of the deployment experience on military families. No definition of family provided for family resource page, but has frequently asked questions related to parents of deployed member, as well as resources for spouse and dependents.

[www.forces.gc.ca/en/caf-community-health-services-r2mr-family/index.page](http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/caf-community-health-services-r2mr-family/index.page)

### Services for Ill/Injured Members

Dependent defined as: officer or non-commissioned member's child, legal ward, or legally adopted child, who is: single; in the custody and control of the officer or non-commissioned member; under 16 years of age or of any age if prevented from earning a living by reason of mental or physical infirmity; and dependent upon the officer or non-commissioned member for support.

[www.forces.gc.ca/en/about-policies-standards-benefits/ch-211-ill-injured-benefits.page](http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/about-policies-standards-benefits/ch-211-ill-injured-benefits.page)

### Supporting your Family Through Deployment

Family member is defined by military member and can include: spouse, life partner, parent or alternative.

[www.forces.gc.ca/en/caf-community-health-services-r2mr-deployment/supporting-your-family-through-deployment.page](http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/caf-community-health-services-r2mr-deployment/supporting-your-family-through-deployment.page)

### Public Health Service Health Insurance Plan

The Public Service Health Care Plan (PSHCP) is offered to eligible employees and retirees of the public service (including the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Canadian Forces). Coverage is available for;

- the person to whom you are legally married
- the person with whom you have lived for a continuous period of at least one year, whom you have publicly represented as your spouse and with whom you continue to live as if that person were your spouse
- eligible dependent children; unmarried and either under the age of 21 or be under the age of 25 and a full time student; a child who is dependent upon you for support because he or she is incapable of engaging in sustainable employment by reason of mental or physical impairment may also be covered under certain circumstances

[www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/benefit-plans/health-care-plan/frequently-asked-questions/public-service-health-care-plan-frequently-asked-questions.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/benefit-plans/health-care-plan/frequently-asked-questions/public-service-health-care-plan-frequently-asked-questions.html)



**General Policy Definitions**

Spouse, in relation to an individual, means a person who is legally married to the individual, and who: resides with the individual or in a health care facility; or, maintains or is being maintained by the individual.

Dependant means a person who lives with or is maintained by the client and is recognized by the Department as someone who is dependent on the client.

[www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/about-us/policy/definitions/992](http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/about-us/policy/definitions/992)

**Educational Assistance**

As a child of a deceased Canadian Armed Forces member or veteran, you may qualify if your parent died as a result of their military service or when they died, they were in receipt of a disability benefit of 48% or more. You must enter into a full-time educational program prior to your 25th birthday. This assistance can only be provided until the academic year in which you turn 30 years old.

[www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/services/information-for/families-and-survivors/education-assistance](http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/services/information-for/families-and-survivors/education-assistance)

**Operational Stress Injury Resource for Caregivers**

No definition provided.

<http://caregiverresource.theroyal.ca/>

**Disability and Death Benefits**

A survivor is defined as a person who, at the time of the member's or veteran's death, was a spouse or common-law partner. The term "survivor" excludes surviving separated spouses, surviving former (divorced) spouses and surviving former common-law partners. Under the Pension Act, a separated spouse, former spouse or former common-law partner may be eligible for a pension if the person was awarded alimony, support or maintenance or was entitled to an allowance under the terms of a written agreement with the member or veteran. \* Caveats for recent marriages and living apart. 1. "Common-law partner" refers to a person who is cohabiting with the member or veteran, in a conjugal relationship, having so cohabited for a period of at least one year. For further detail, refer to the policy entitled Establishment of a Common-Law Partnership. 2. "Spouse" refers to a person who is married to, and residing with a member or veteran.

[www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/about-us/policy/document/1482](http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/about-us/policy/document/1482)

"Dependent child", in reference to a member or veteran, means: his/her natural or adopted child; or a child of his/her spouse or common-law partner, who is ordinarily residing in the member's or veteran's household, at the time of the member's or veteran's death; or an unborn child who is subsequently born alive.

[www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/about-us/policy/document/1585](http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/about-us/policy/document/1585)

**Support for Parents & Caregivers**

Extends the definition of a military family to include parents and caregivers of single serving personnel throughout its website for publicly available, freely provided services.

[www.cafconnection.ca/National/Programs-Services/For-Parents-and-Caregivers.aspx](http://www.cafconnection.ca/National/Programs-Services/For-Parents-and-Caregivers.aspx)

**Military Family Service Program**

The Parameters 4 Practice in the Military Family Service Program provides a military family services' definition: "Defining the military family is understood to be all Canadian Armed Forces' personnel, Regular and Reserve Force, and their spouses, partners, parents, children and relatives. It also includes Non-Public Fund and the Department of National Defence civilian employees during a deployment with the Canadian Armed Forces to a mission area outside of Canada, their parents, spouses, children and relatives."

[Internal document]





### CFOne card

Confirms membership within the Canadian military community and provides access to rewards programs and services, such as PSP recreation program and CANEX stores.

Eligible family members are defined as:

- The member's spouse or common-law partner who is normally residing with the member at the member's place of duty or who, if living separately, is doing so for military reasons;
- A relative by blood, marriage, common-law partnership, adoption legally or, is normally resident with the member and for whom the member may claim a personal exemption under the Income Tax Act;
- A child, under the age of 19, who is normally resident with the member and for whom the member would have been eligible to claim a personal exemption under the Income Tax Act if the child were a relative by blood, marriage, common law partnership, adoption legally or, in fact, for whom the member has accepted full financial responsibility and has commenced adoption proceedings;
- A child or legal ward of the spouse or common-law partners and the member who is single and in full-time attendance at school or university and is under the age of 26; and
- A family member who is permanently residing with the member, but who is precluded from qualifying as a dependent under the Income Tax Act because the family member receives a pension

[www.cfmws.com/en/OurServices/CFOne/Eligibility/Pages/Definitions.aspx](http://www.cfmws.com/en/OurServices/CFOne/Eligibility/Pages/Definitions.aspx)

## Provincial

Sector	Province	Definition	Source
Education	Saskatchewan	Scholarship of Honour to recognize Canadian Forces soldiers (Regular and Reserve) who actively served in designated military operations since January 2001. The Scholarship is also available to family members (defined as spouse and children) of fallen or disabled soldiers.	<a href="http://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/education-and-learning/scholarships-bursaries-grants/scholarships/saskatchewan-scholarship-of-honour">www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/education-and-learning/scholarships-bursaries-grants/scholarships/saskatchewan-scholarship-of-honour</a>
Health	Alberta	Dependent of CF member defined as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• spouse</li> <li>• adult interdependent partner - person who lives together with another person in a relationship of interdependence under any of the following circumstances: continuous period of not less than three years, relationship of some permanence as there is a child by birth or adoption, two persons entered into an adult interdependent partner agreement with each other</li> <li>• child under 21, unmarried, wholly dependent</li> <li>• child 21 or older and unmarried, wholly dependent due to physical or mental disabilities</li> <li>• child under 25 and unmarried, enrolled in three or more courses at an accredited educational institute</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.cafconnection.ca/getmedia/dc637968-0aa9-46e7-a3e5-b2c-ca23815dc/Instructions-for-ALTA-families.aspx">www.cafconnection.ca/getmedia/dc637968-0aa9-46e7-a3e5-b2c-ca23815dc/Instructions-for-ALTA-families.aspx</a>
	British Columbia	Military family mentioned but no definition provided, law/act could not be located.	<a href="https://archive.news.gov.bc.ca/releases/news_releases_2005-2009/2007HEALTH0164-001648.pdf">https://archive.news.gov.bc.ca/releases/news_releases_2005-2009/2007HEALTH0164-001648.pdf</a>
	Manitoba	Mentioned but no definition provided re: immediate access to provincial health insurance.	<a href="http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/?item=17343&amp;posted=2013-05-15">http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/?item=17343&amp;posted=2013-05-15</a>





<b>New Brunswick</b>	No definition provided for 'spouse or dependent'.	<a href="http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/health/MedicarePrescriptionDrugPlan/content/medicare/ApplyingforaCard.html">www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/health/MedicarePrescriptionDrugPlan/content/medicare/ApplyingforaCard.html</a>
<b>Nova Scotia</b>	No definition provided for 'family member'.	<a href="https://novascotia.ca/dhw/msi/eligibility.asp">https://novascotia.ca/dhw/msi/eligibility.asp</a>
<b>Ontario</b>	Military Family Member defined as: Spouse or dependent of a regular force member of the Canadian Forces or Reservist currently deployed by the Canadian Forces into active service where spouses is defined as "to whom one is married; with whom one has been living in a relationship, if the two persons have: cohabitated for a period of at least one year; or are together the parents of a child; or have a cohabitation agreement under the Family Law Act". Children are defined as dependent aged under 22 years of age, or 22 or older but dependent due to a mental or physical disability.	<a href="http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/publications/ohip/military_family.aspx">www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/publications/ohip/military_family.aspx</a>
<b>Prince Edward Island</b>	Spouse or a dependent child of a serving member of the Canadian Armed Forces or the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.	<a href="http://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/20101130_627-656.pdf">www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/20101130_627-656.pdf</a>
<b>Saskatchewan</b>	A resident who is the spouse of a member of the Canadian Forces and who is not separated from his or spouse is entitled to insured services on and from the first day that he or she establishes residence in Saskatchewan. A resident who is the dependent of a member of the Canadian Forces and who ordinarily resides with that member is entitled to insured services on and from the first day that he or she establishes residence in Saskatchewan.	<a href="http://www.qp.gov.sk.ca/documents/PIT/Regulations/S/S29R13-2016-01-26.pdf">www.qp.gov.sk.ca/documents/PIT/Regulations/S/S29R13-2016-01-26.pdf</a>
	<p><b>Definitions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. ("separated" means, with respect to spouses, that they are living apart pursuant to a decree of judicial separation or a separation agreement or because of desertion on the part of one of the spouses;</li> <li>b. "spouse" means the legally married spouse of a person; or a person who has cohabited with another person as spouses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) continuously for a period of not less than two years; or (ii) in a relationship of some permanence, if they are the parents of a child.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Every dependent of a person described in subclause (i) who is not married and who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. is under 18 years of age prior to commencement of the current year;</li> <li>b. has reached his majority, as determined by The Age of Majority Act, within three years immediately preceding the commencement of the current year and is attending an educational institution; or</li> <li>c. is dependent on that person for maintenance by reason of physical or mental infirmity</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2013/may/07/caf-family-members-moving-interprovincially-now-receive-immediate-health-coverage-upon-their-arrival">www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2013/may/07/caf-family-members-moving-interprovincially-now-receive-immediate-health-coverage-upon-their-arrival</a>



<b>Veteran's Preference Policy for hiring in civil service</b>	<b>Manitoba</b>	The individual is a Canadian citizen and is a surviving spouse or surviving common-law partner(1) of a person who died from causes arising during service as described in a., b., or c. above and who lived in Canada at the time of the death of his or her spouse or common-law partner.	<a href="http://www.manitoba.ca/csc/policyman/veterans.html">www.manitoba.ca/csc/policyman/veterans.html</a>
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## Charity definitions

Organization	Definition	Link
<b>Wounded Warriors</b>	Families not defined explicitly. Funds programs for the partners/spouses of serving personnel specified, as well as family assistance. Child defined as someone having a parent in the Canadian Armed Forces (current or ex-service) as part of eligibility criteria for veterans Child Scholarship.	<a href="https://woundedwarriors.ca/how-we-help/cope-couples-overcoming-ptsd-everyday/">https://woundedwarriors.ca/how-we-help/cope-couples-overcoming-ptsd-everyday/</a>  <a href="https://woundedwarriors.ca/how-we-help/peer-support-family-assistance-fund/">https://woundedwarriors.ca/how-we-help/peer-support-family-assistance-fund/</a>  <a href="https://woundedwarriors.ca/how-we-help/veterans-child-scholarship/">https://woundedwarriors.ca/how-we-help/veterans-child-scholarship/</a>
<b>True Patriot Love</b>	No definition of military or veteran family provided explicitly, but states that '... of a father, mother or sibling' to refer to eligibility and rationale for TPL Family & Children Fund. Also lists supports for spouses in projects potentially eligible for funding. No further eligibility regarding how military family defined.	<a href="http://truepatriotlove.com/get-funding/tpl-family-and-children-fund/">http://truepatriotlove.com/get-funding/tpl-family-and-children-fund/</a>
<b>Royal Canadian Legion</b>	No definition of a military or veteran family provided explicitly. Does provide eligibility criteria for the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of veterans with respect to educational bursaries.	<a href="http://www.legion.ca/who-we-are/what-we-do">www.legion.ca/who-we-are/what-we-do</a> <a href="http://www.legion.ca/support-for-veterans/support-for-families">www.legion.ca/support-for-veterans/support-for-families</a>
<b>Vanier Institute of the Family</b>	<p>No specific definition of military or veteran family.</p> <p>Broadly defines a family: Any combination of two or more persons who are bound together over time by ties of mutual consent, birth and/or adoption or placement and who, together, assume responsibilities for variant combinations of some of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical maintenance and care of group members</li> <li>• Addition of new members through procreation or adoption</li> <li>• Socialization of children</li> <li>• Social control of members</li> <li>• Production, consumption, distribution of goods and services</li> <li>• Affective nurturance – love</li> </ul>	<a href="http://vanierinstitute.ca">http://vanierinstitute.ca</a>

## GLOSSARY

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>ADF</b>	Australian Defence Force
<b>CAF</b>	Canadian Armed Forces
<b>CFMWS</b>	Canadian Armed Forces Morale and Welfare Services
<b>DCO</b>	Defence Community Organisation (AUS)
<b>DEERS</b>	Defense Enrollment and Eligibility Reporting System (US)
<b>DND</b>	Department of National Defence (CA)
<b>DoD</b>	Department of Defense (US)
<b>DVA</b>	Department of Veterans' Affairs (AUS)
<b>DWP</b>	Department of Work and Pensions (UK)
<b>MOD</b>	Ministry of Defence (UK)
<b>NHS</b>	National Health Service (UK)
<b>SFA</b>	Service Families Accommodation (UK)
<b>VAC</b>	Veterans Affairs Canada

## LIST OF ATTENDEES

Country	Organisations attending
UK	Army Families Federation
	Behavioural Insights Team
	Business School, University of Aberdeen
	Combat Stress
	Department of Psychology, Oxford Brookes University
	Forces in Mind Trust
	King's Centre for Military Health Research, King's College, London
	Ministry of Defence
	Naval Families Federation
	RAF Families Federation
	Royal British Legion
	Ulster University
	Veterans & Families Institute, Anglia Ruskin University
US	Military Family Research Institute, Purdue University
	School of Social Work, University of Alabama
	University of St. Thomas
Australia	Australian Institute of Family Studies
	Department of Veterans' Affairs
	Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service
Canada	Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services
	Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research
	Department of Family Studies and Gerontology, Mount Saint Vincent University
	Department of National Defence
	Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Manitoba
	Queens University
Vanier Institute of the Family	