

**BFSWS** provides services for adults with ill health and disabilities, carries out assessments where required and provides services for vulnerable adults as part of a multi agency response. Many of the professional health staff working with the armed forces overseas are SSAFA Forces Help employees, thus facilitating the multi-agency approach. A separate fact sheet on SSAFA Forces Help's professional health service is available.

Referrals to our service come from a variety of sources, such as health workers, Unit Welfare Officers, the Army Welfare Service, teachers, police and self-referrals. We also receive referrals from children and adult services in the UK and are often asked to do pieces of work on their behalf.

### **To make a referral to BFSWS**

#### **Phone**

Mil: 73 3039/3040

Civ: (0049) 05241 84 3039/3040

#### **Fax**

Mil: 73 2004

Civ: (0049) 05241 84 2004

**Out of Hours Service for emergencies also available on these numbers.**

### **HOW TO CONTACT BFSWS**

By calling Civilian: (0049) 05241 3039/3040 or Military: 73 3039/3040 you will be connected to the BFSWS's Central Referral Team (CRT). Trained administrative staff, overseen by the CRT Team Manager, take the referral details. Professional agencies will be asked to complete a Multi Agency Referral Form to ensure full and correct details and reasons for referral are made. Referrals are sent to the appropriate Family Support Team (North or South) for allocation, or may be dealt with by the Joint Response Team if there are child protection concerns.

Often agencies or members of the military community want advice or information without making a referral - this can be dealt with in CRT as a general enquiry.

Outside of normal working hours, in cases of emergency, a Duty Senior Social Work Practitioner supported by a duty Team Manager can be contacted on the same numbers as those for the office hours.



British Forces Social Work Service  
**bfsws**

Providing  
a statutory  
social work  
service on  
behalf of the  
Ministry of  
Defence  
for the  
military  
community  
based  
overseas

*A brief introduction  
to the services we  
provide and the  
people we help*

## BRITISH FORCES SOCIAL WORK SERVICE

The British Forces Social Work Service (**BFSWS**), delivered by SSAFA Forces Help, provides a service in accordance with the Children Act 1989, specifically Section 17 (children and families in need), Section 47 (protection of children), Section 20 (voluntary accommodation of children), and the Children Act 2004. As such our practice is underpinned by UK legislation. It is our statutory duty, as lead agency in safeguarding children, to investigate child protection referrals and to provide services for children and families in need.

The bulk of **BFSWS** responsibilities lie in North West-Europe, where a large number of UK military personnel and their families are based. However, the service could also be called upon to provide a social worker for statutory issues to military personnel in isolated detachments around the world.

**BFSWS is aware that, although the number of cases requiring a social work input is no more prevalent in the military than in the civilian world, the families are under different pressures.**

## WHO ARE THE BFSWS PERSONNEL?

**BFSWS** is staffed by professionally qualified and UK Social Care Council registered social workers employed as Senior Social Work Practitioners (SSWP). We are supported by administrative staff and are located in the 5 Garrisons in BFG. The Head of Service is based at Joint Headquarters in Rheindahlen with the Service Manager (Operations) and the Learning and Development Manager. There are 2 Family Support Teams managed by 2 Social Work Team Managers (North and South) with the SSWPs located across the 5 Garrisons.

Based in Gutersloh our Joint Response Team is co-located with three members of the Special Investigation Branch (SIB) of the Military Police. This team handles all initial child protection inquiries under Home Office Guidance and UK law. They provide the out of hours service dealing with the emergency protection of children.

In addition, **BFSWS** has Senior Social Work Practitioners in Fostering, Adoption and Additional Needs and Disability covering the whole of BFG. Our Team Managers also professionally supervise the community mental health social workers.

Although the number of cases requiring social work input is no higher in the military community than in the civilian world, military families are under different pressures. Many families with young children are away from home for the first time, living in a foreign country, away from close friends and family. For extended periods of time, they may become single parent families while their partner is posted away on deployment.

**BFSWS** is keen to offer a preventative service to prevent problems from escalating and ensure the family is helped or signposted to the relevant agencies at an early point. **BFSWS** works in partnership with those who seek its assistance.

**BFSWS social workers are qualified and experienced professionals, who offer an essential service in a confidential, sympathetic manner.**