

When Dad was deployed for months at a time, Mum gave up her job to keep us going through the moves and separations. She was always there – every school run, every sports day. After Dad left the Army, things changed. Mum went back to work, and I'm proud she's doing what she loves again. But sometimes she's not at the school gates, and I have to share her time with her job. Life feels different, but I know it's her turn now.

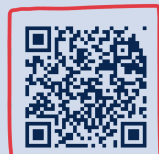
I was excited that Mum was leaving the RAF, but it took a long time. After one long deployment, she came home – but soon started "weekending" between Lossiemouth and England for work. Every Sunday night, I dreaded her leaving again, afraid she wouldn't come back. When she finally left the forces, we were all under one roof again. However, I started to struggle in school. I realised that my identity was built in my military life and now I don't feel like I belong anymore. There is a lot of talk about teenagers finding themselves and their identity, but mine has been taken away.

They say we're home now.

Some of us feel okay, some of us are still learning. This new life looks different for each of us, and we're finding our way with the help we need. And with support from [The Ruby Boots Project](#), we don't have to do it alone.



Get involved:



By 12, I'd lived in six houses – and loved it. Moving meant new schools, friends, and adventures. When Dad left the Army, we moved just down the road instead of across the country. At first, I thought it would be great, but I missed the patch, where you could knock on any door and someone would welcome you with cake. I missed the opportunity to have fresh starts and experience new things. I felt trapped and overwhelmed, like I had itchy feet.

When Dad left the Navy, I was happy – no more deployments, no more goodbyes. We moved into our own house, and he started work as a mechanic. But a year later, he got into an accident. Suddenly, I was helping him in ways I never expected, as his carer. People say I'm "mature for my age", but for me, it's just life. It felt strange at first... but now I know what it's like to have dinner together every night.

