



**Supplement to the Report Advancing
the Meaningful Participation of Women
in UN Peace Operations by Supporting
Personnel with Caring Responsibilities**

Organisational Toolkit:
Supporting Uniformed Personnel with
Caring Responsibilities

Monash Global Peace and Security (Monash GPS) - Monash University

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Glossary

A4P	Action for Peacekeeping
AU	African Union
AWA	Alternative working arrangements
AWWA	Army Women Welfare Association (AWWA)
BINUCA	UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic
BRIN	National Research and Innovation Agency (Indonesia)
CAR	Central African Republic
CMP	Corps of Military Police (India)
CO	Commanding Officer
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CPTM	Core pre-deployment training materials
CSDR	Council for Strategic and Defence Research, India
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EIF	Elsie Initiative Fund (UN)
FAR	Rwandan Armed Forces
FPU	Formed Police Unit
FWA	Flexible working arrangements
GAC	Global Affairs Canada
GPS	Global Peace and Security (Monash, Monash University)
HR	Human resources
IAWP	International Association of Women Police
IPO	Individual Police Officer
KAIPTC	Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre
MHPSS	Mental health and psychosocial support
MINUSCA	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
MISCA	International Support Mission to the Central African Republic
MO	Military Observer
MONUC	UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MONUSCO	UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAP	National Action Plan
PDDRC-S	Disarmament, Demobilization, Community Reintegration and Stabilization Program (DRC)

RAF	Royal Air Force (UK)
R&R	Rest and recuperation
SO	Staff Officer
SSR	Security Sector Reform
T/PCC	Troop and Police Contributing Country
UAF	Uruguay Armed Forces
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDPO	United Nations Department of Peace Operations
UNFICYP	United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNMISS	UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
WAAC	Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (UK)
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

Purpose

The purpose of this Toolkit is to provide defence and police institutions and UN peacekeeping entities with practical resources to increase the number of uniformed women eligible and available for deployment by addressing barriers linked to caring responsibilities.

Grounded in lived experience, policy analysis and operational practice, the Toolkit supports national and UN efforts to expand the pool of personnel who are eligible, available and supported to deploy, particularly women who disproportionately carry caring responsibilities. By addressing structural, policy and cultural barriers, the Toolkit aims to strengthen the meaningful participation of women, retention of skilled personnel and operational effectiveness in UN peace operations.

It aligns with national defence policies, UN Peacekeeping standards, the UN's Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy (2018-2028), the Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations and Women, Peace and Security (WPS) commitments.

The Toolkit is designed for senior military and police leadership, chain-of-command supervisors and commanders, personnel responsible for human resource issues or engaged in mission planning, and individual uniformed personnel – including those considering deployment. It is also designed for UN personnel engaged in mission planning, support and training.

Introduction

Why Women's Participation Matters in Peace and Security Institutions and Operations

Increasing the meaningful participation of women in UN peace operations is a strategic and operational imperative. Evidence consistently demonstrates that missions with greater gender diversity are better able to engage with local populations, understand community dynamics, enhance trust and improve protection outcomes. Women peacekeepers play critical roles in intelligence gathering, community engagement, conflict prevention and the identification of early warning signs, particularly in contexts where access to women and girls in local communities is otherwise limited. They also play critical roles in the many other aspects of modern, complex peace operations, from strategic planning to force protection to leadership.



UN/Gregorio Cunha, 2021

Women's meaningful participation also strengthens organisational and operational effectiveness by increasing the diversity of skills, experience and perspectives needed to address complex and evolving security threats. It can also enhance mission legitimacy and advance gender equality, which is also beneficial to peace operations given the positive correlation between gender equality and peaceful societies.

Despite sustained policy commitments, women remain underrepresented in uniformed roles in peace operations, particularly among troops. Barriers arise not only at the point of deployment, but earlier in the workforce lifecycle, including recruitment, retention, training and career progression. Caring responsibilities are a significant and often overlooked factor shaping who is able to serve, advance and deploy.

Addressing barriers linked to caring responsibilities is therefore not only a matter of fairness or inclusion. It is central to expanding the available talent pool, strengthening operational readiness and ensuring peace operations are equipped with the full range of skills, perspectives and capabilities required to succeed in complex environments.

““”

I can tell you as a man, if I patrol in a village with my uniform, when the villagers will see me, first thing they will do is run, yeah, they won't stay. Why? Because the atrocities that have happened were done by men in uniform... So, the approach for me of having women in the unit...the quality of the information collection, the quality of the way the UN would address, like sexual and gender-based violence, which have happened in a village... it definitely makes a difference (Interview with male police officer, UNHQ New York 30/10/24)

““”

... if you get more women into the military, into peacekeeping, they'll be able to do a lot more [than engagement]. They'll be able to... influence planning, [lead, bolster capacity] (Interview with UN staff member, UNHQ New York 29/10/2024).

““”

it's that whole mindset about protecting the women and children versus actually, I can hold my own and fight the men and protect the men (Interview with female military officer, UNHQ New York 29/10/2024)

““”

...gender diverse teams make better decisions. I also actually think that having diverse teams creates a safer environment, not just for women, but also for men... We don't really talk about that enough, and so having women in the room. I think actually a lot of men are grateful for that ... So I would say better decision making. I think diversity of any kind makes teams better because you just have more ideas. And I also think it creates a safer environment for everyone" (female civilian UNHQ New York 29/10/24)



UNAMID/Albert González Farran, 2013

Why This Toolkit Exists

This Toolkit accompanies the Report *Advancing the Meaningful Participation of Women in UN Peace Operations by Supporting Personnel with Caring Responsibilities*.¹ Together, they translate evidence into action.

The research shows that caring responsibilities are one of the most persistent, structural barriers to women's meaningful participation in UN peace operations. They shape who can deploy, who can progress, and who remains in uniform. The Toolkit is designed to help defence and police organisations move beyond awareness and into implementation, turning policy commitments into practical change that improves participation, performance and wellbeing.

Funded by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) under the Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations,² this work supports a shared goal: increasing women's meaningful participation in peace operations, enhancing operational effectiveness and advancing gender equality.



MONUSCO/Kevin Jordan 2020

Translating Commitments into Action

From policy intent to operational reality

Despite strong global commitments under the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, women remain significantly underrepresented in UN peace operations, particularly among uniformed personnel and most notably within troops.

While progress has been made since the launch of the UN Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy (2018-2028)³ and the Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations, with uniformed women in peace operations more than doubling from 4.9% in 2018,⁴ this progress is slow and uneven. By the end of November 2025, women comprise 9.84% of uniformed personnel in UN peace operations.⁵ Annual gender parity targets have been met in some categories, including military observers (MO), staff officers (SO) and police (formed police units – FPU – and individual police officers – IPO), but troop contributions – which comprise the greatest proportion of peacekeepers – continue to lag behind targets (Figure 1):

- 7.99% women in troop contingents (2025 target 12%)
- 22.75% women military observers (MO) and staff officers (SO) (2025 target 22%)
- 17.21% women in formed police units (FPU) (2025 target 15%)
- 32.22% women individual police officers (IPO) (2025 target 25%)

Figure 1: Women deployed to peace operations (30 November 2025) against gender parity targets



This gap is not explained by a lack of capability or interest among women. It reflects structural barriers embedded in how security institutions recruit, train, promote and deploy personnel.



In United Nations peacekeeping operations, the prioritization of the women and peace and security agenda, including the percentage of women among uniformed personnel and in leadership positions, has notably increased over the past decade. That progress has been welcomed by many Member States, from donors to troop- and police-contributing countries, an overwhelming majority of which express their support and interest in improving the gender balance of peacekeeping missions and making sure that they deliver dividends for women and girls. This support is evident in every Security Council meeting on peacekeeping and in other intergovernmental spaces, including in recent United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial meetings, at which Member States continued to pledge their support and renewed commitment to advance the women and peace and security agenda. (UN Secretary-General, 2025)⁶



You can have all the policies in the world, but until you change your culture and you let it be seen that people aren't disadvantaged by it, you won't get the change (Interview with female military officer, UNHQ New York 29/10/2024).

Caring Responsibilities are a Structural Barrier

Not a personal choice or individual limitation

The research identifies unpaid care work as a central, systemic constraint on participation. Globally, women undertake significantly more unpaid care work than men.⁷ In security institutions, this reality collides with rigid career pathways, inflexible deployment models and work cultures that assume unlimited availability.

Personnel with caring responsibilities face intersecting challenges, including constrained mobility, time pressure, rigid training and deployment requirements, gendered assumptions about commitment and capability, limited organisational support and significant personal and family strain.

These pressures are not insignificant. They directly affect recruitment, retention, training, career progression and deployment eligibility. Nearly half of women surveyed reported that caring responsibilities had negatively affected their career progression, and more than four in ten respondents had left or changed their role because caring responsibilities were incompatible with institutional expectations:



... the issues of caring, whether it's caring for elders or whether it's caring for children, tend to – without any one's deliberate decision – default to women in a partnership or in a family ... Single parents are more likely to be women... [or] have primary custody. And women are more likely to be looked to in a family structure to be helpful to their parents. As a result, there are a huge range of ways, given the structured nature of your average security institution, in which being a carer – or being someone capable of having a family and wanting to have a family – can cause those members to have to make really difficult decisions, if they are to balance societal expectations and the expectations that are programmed into them from childhood, whilst also meeting the gateways [and] the milestones that are required to progress in a security career, and to be even become eligible to deploy, let alone to be able to divest themselves of those responsibilities enough to deploy (Interview with female military officer, online 29/04/24).

Similarly, the 2024 UN Report *Towards Equal Opportunity for Women in the Defence Sector* highlights that “lack of support to parenting and family life” is the most highly cited barrier to women’s recruitment, retention and promotion in the military across among the 35 participating Member States.⁸ The same is the case for police institutions, where personnel struggle to find childcare and manage both professional and caring work responsibilities because of long, unpredictable and unsociable hours and frequent relocation.⁹



UNMISS/Gregorio Cunha, 2023

This Is a Capability and Performance Matter

Not a women's issue

Barriers to supporting personnel with caring responsibilities have far-reaching consequences. They sustain the underrepresentation of women in security sector institutions and peace operations, limit leadership diversity, narrow the range of skills and perspectives available to missions and undermine trust with local populations.

They also harm organisational effectiveness by driving attrition, increasing burnout and signalling that care and wellbeing are not valued. This affects all personnel. For instance, women are often forced into impossible choices between career and family, while men's caring responsibilities are frequently invisible or unsupported. The result is reduced performance, increased risk and long-term costs to institutions and missions.

Peace operations occur in are complex, people-centred and volatile environments. Excluding or losing experienced personnel and compromising well-being because systems cannot accommodate caring responsibilities weakens operational effectiveness.



In any security institutions, we are fundamentally dealing with people, with the community that we're trying to help. Whether we're talking about policing, whether we're talking about armed forces. We need people from a range of different perspectives. We need people from different cultural perspectives, we also need people who actually understand life. And life inherently includes family and family life. If we only have people in security institutions whose lives [have] been untouched by family responsibilities, not only do we have an incredibly [small] recruiting pool, but we have an incredibly limited viewpoint of the world and we will make bad decisions. We will make bad decisions in recruiting, we'll make bad decisions in planning, we will make bad decisions in deciding how to structure our force, we will make bad decisions in considering how to approach strategic problems (Interview with female military officer, online 29/04/22).



MONUSCO/Kevin Jordan, 2020

What the Toolkit Delivers

Practical guidance for real-world change

This Toolkit provides clear, actionable guidance for defence and police organisations, UN entities, supervisors, HR professionals and individual personnel. It supports organisations to design policies and practices that enable personnel with caring responsibilities to contribute fully and without compromising operational requirements.

The guidance is designed to be adaptable across contexts and to support sustainable system-level change rather than isolated initiatives.



UN/Gregorio Cunha, 2021

Key Definitions

Caring Responsibilities and Unpaid Care Work

The terms “caring responsibilities” and “unpaid care work” are not universally used or understood and may be interpreted differently across contexts and cultures. For the purposes of this Toolkit, caring responsibilities refers to essential activities undertaken to care for others, and for oneself, in response to a specific need. These activities are most often unpaid and are frequently undertaken by women. Caring responsibilities commonly include care for children and other family members, including those who are ill, disabled or elderly. Care activities may include household tasks such as cooking and housework, as well as direct physical and personal care. Personal care activities can include assisting someone to dress, bathe, eat or manage daily living tasks. The term care work, or unpaid care work, is used to recognise that these activities constitute labour rather than informal help. Recognising care work as labour highlights its value, time demands and impact on participation in paid work, careers and deployment opportunities.

Women’s Meaningful Participation

- Meaningful participation requires women to be engaged in decision making and leadership roles, not only present in numbers.
- Women must be represented across all functions, roles and occupational groups, not limited to support roles or gender stereotyped functions.
- Participation must occur at all levels and ranks, including senior and command levels and across the full lifecycle of operations and careers.
- Meaningful participation cannot be tokenistic, ad hoc or treated as a compliance or tick box exercise.
- When women are engaged only in small numbers, in junior positions or in support functions, their ability to influence decisions and shape outcomes is significantly constrained.
- As such, women’s meaningful participation must be enabled and sustained through institutional arrangements, adequate resourcing, leadership commitment and accountability mechanisms.
- Achieving meaningful participation often requires structural change, including legislative and policy reform, alongside changes to workplace practices and organisational culture.

Recognising that women are not a homogenous group, it is important to employ an intersectional approach to engage a diversity of women across different identity groups. Such an approach also recognises that while caring responsibilities may cause challenges for uniformed women to work in the armed forces and police, and to deploy on peace operations, these challenges can be compounded by other identity markers, (including race, ethnicity, class, caste, sexuality, parental status) and vary across cultures and geographies.

Gender Analysis

Because neutral systems are not neutral in practice

Gender analysis is a practical, evidence-based tool for identifying how women and men are differently impacted by policies, programmes, issues or interventions. It can also help identify how organisational systems affect different personnel differently. Applied to policies, career pathways, deployment models and workplace culture, it reveals where seemingly neutral practices create unequal outcomes. As a result of gender analysis, efforts can be identified and undertaken to strengthen fairness and effectiveness of systems – or policies, programmes, issues and interventions.¹⁰

Maternal Bias

In many workplaces, women are stereotypically viewed as primary caregivers who will prioritise family over professional responsibilities. These stereotypes can lead to assumptions that women are less committed, reliable or loyal to their organisation. Such perceptions contribute to maternal bias, which can position mothers as less capable workers or as a constraint on productivity. As a result, women may be steered toward support roles, excluded from leadership positions, overlooked for promotion or deployment opportunities and experience financial penalties. These cumulative impacts are often described as the motherhood penalty, reflecting the negative effects of maternal bias and career interruptions on income and career progression. In contrast, men with families are frequently perceived as more stable, committed and reliable, and may benefit from what is referred to as the fatherhood bonus in research literature.

Maternal bias can also affect women who do not have children, are not pregnant or do not plan to have children, based on assumptions about potential future caregiving. In some cases, women report being excluded from roles or opportunities due to assumptions about pregnancy or parental leave, including where a previous role occupant became pregnant.

Beyond practical constraints such as maternity leave or reduced flexibility, caring responsibilities adversely affect careers through bias and discriminatory assumptions. Some personnel leave their roles or the sector entirely due to perceived or actual discrimination linked to pregnancy or parenthood. Many women report compensatory behaviours, including working longer hours, avoiding requests for flexibility or support and overperforming to counter assumptions about reduced commitment.¹¹

Organisational Duty of Care

When people are supported to function well, missions run better and fewer things go wrong.

Duty of care requires organisations to take reasonable steps to protect the safety and well-being of personnel, including those with caring responsibilities. In peace operations, duty of care is a core operational requirement that directly affects performance, risk and mission effectiveness.

Duty of care extends to recognising and responding to the needs of personnel with caring responsibilities. Organisations that actively support personnel with caring responsibilities demonstrate higher responsiveness to workforce wellbeing overall. Our research shows a strong perceived link between attentiveness to caring responsibilities and responsiveness to staff well-being and care needs, with over 70% of surveyed personnel agreeing.¹² When organisations are attentive to caring responsibilities and care needs, it can:

- Improve self-care and help-seeking among personnel
- Reduce stress, burnout and reliance on negative coping mechanisms
- Reduce financial costs associated with under-performance, attrition, sick leave and disability pension claims¹³
- Contribute to lowering attrition rates and attracting and sustaining capable contributors over time
- Help avoid safeguarding issues, including self-harm and harm to others, and negative impacts on families
- Subsequently, it can contribute positively to individual performance, workplace cultures and operational outcomes and improve organisational credibility.

In peace operations, risks of not exercising duty of care are amplified due to high-stress environments, separation from support networks and sustained operational demands.



Recommendations

How to Use This Section

This section translates research findings into practical guidance for strengthening support for personnel with caring responsibilities across UN peace operations and troop and police contributing countries (T/PCCs). It summarises the recommendations contained within the associated Report and is designed to be used alongside the Implementation Table (Tool #1).

This section is not intended to be read as a checklist or a set of mandatory actions. Instead, it provides a structured way to identify priorities, assess current practice and plan context-appropriate improvements.

Step 1: Identify your role

Begin by identifying which actor group you sit within: the United Nations, a T/PCC, an armed force or police institution or individual personnel with caring responsibilities. Focus first on the recommendations that fall within your area of responsibility.

Step 2: Assess current practice

Use the recommendations as prompts to assess existing policies, practices, resources and workplace culture. Consider what is already in place, where support is inconsistent, and where personnel rely on informal arrangements rather than institutional safeguards.

Step 3: Prioritise actions

Not all recommendations will be feasible in all contexts. Use the Implementation Table (Tool #1) to assign priorities based on operational risk, impact on wellbeing and participation, available resources and organisational readiness. Early focus on high-impact, low-cost actions can build momentum and trust.

Step 4: Identify evidence and indicators

For each priority area, identify what evidence would demonstrate progress. This may include policies, training materials, budget allocations, usage data or qualitative feedback from personnel. Cultural change should be assessed through trends and perceptions over time rather than binary measures.

Step 5: Assign responsibility and timeframes

Clarify who is responsible for progressing each action and establish realistic timeframes. Many actions require coordination across levels or between organisations. Dependencies should be noted to avoid delays or duplication.

Step 6: Monitor, learn and adapt

Implementation should be iterative. Use lessons learned, feedback from personnel and operational experience to adjust approaches over time. Sharing lessons learned across missions and institutions strengthens consistency and reduces duplication.

A note on context

Operational environments, legal frameworks and resources vary significantly across institutions, missions and T/PCCs. Recommendations should be adapted to local context while maintaining focus on the underlying objective: enabling personnel with caring responsibilities to participate fully and safely in peace operations.

Used in this way, this section and the Implementation Table (Tool #1) support practical, sustained change that improves wellbeing, strengthens performance and advances meaningful participation in UN peace operations.

From Evidence to Action: Practical Guidance from Research

The research underpinning this Toolkit shows that while support for personnel with caring responsibilities has improved in some contexts, it remains inconsistent across missions, organisations and T/PCCs. Many personnel report uneven access to support, reliance on individual supervisors and limited institutional safeguards.

Concerns about cost, fairness and perceived backlash are common. However, the evidence is clear that effective support for personnel with caring responsibilities strengthens wellbeing, performance, safeguarding, organisational credibility and operational effectiveness. It also reduces attrition and the long-term financial costs associated with burnout, poor workplace culture and loss of experienced personnel.

Importantly, because women disproportionately carry caring responsibilities, these reforms are central to advancing women's meaningful participation in UN peace operations and within armed forces and police institutions more broadly.

The recommendations below are organised by responsible actor and are intended to be used alongside the Implementation Table (Tool #1), which translates them into assessable areas, priorities and indicators.

United Nations: Setting Standards and Enabling Consistency

The UN has a critical role in setting expectations, modelling good practice and embedding care considerations into mission frameworks.

- **Lead by example to encourage T/PCC support for personnel with caring responsibilities:** appoint more women to leadership positions, increase robust support for the organisation's own civilian staff with caring responsibilities (including flexible working arrangements, on-site childcare, access to lactation rooms), support mothers (and parents) returning to work and address maternal bias.
- **Negotiate Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with T/PCCs to ensure peacekeeper well-being, including adequate living conditions on mission:** including improved and consistent living conditions, access to healthcare and psychosocial services, and increasing support and resources to provide facilities and services that help peacekeepers destress.
- **Work with T/PCCs to ensure peacekeepers are able to remain connected to their families while deployed:** provide adequate conditions and amenities and ensure personnel have regular access to stable and reliable wi-fi to remain in contact with their families.
- **Advocate for and/or support assistance for peacekeepers to travel home on Rest and Recuperation (R&R) during long deployments:** work closer with T/PCCs to reduce the stress of family separation and improve support for personnel who cannot travel home on R&R due to limited leave or financial support for travel.
- **Bolster training for peacekeepers and for leaders to better address care:** integrate care issues into training to raise awareness of the challenges facing personnel with caring responsibilities, and the subsequent impact on well-being and performance [see Practical Tool #9]
- **Incorporate family and care issues into delivery of and advice for pre-deployment training:** including pre-deployment training on how to prepare for and manage home life and family relationships while deployed. [see Practical Tool #9]
- **Share lessons learned and good practices with T/PCCs, and raise awareness of the importance of supporting personnel with caring responsibilities:** consult personnel with caring responsibilities to learn lessons and identify issues to address, which can then be shared with T/PCCs.

These actions establish the enabling environment within which T/PCCs and institutions operate.

Troop and Police Contributing Countries (T/PCCs): Resourcing Participation and Retention

Member States are central to translating UN expectations into national systems, policies and resourcing decisions

- **Facilitate women's engagement in security sector institutions to increase the number of women deployed to UN peace operations, including by supporting personnel with caring responsibilities:** invest in attracting, recruiting, retaining and promoting women, provide support for personnel with caring responsibilities, address gender and maternal bias, and strengthen family-friendly policies.
- **Pay for communication services for deployed contingencies, including phone and wi-fi:** invest in access to stable internet and communication services and provide private spaces to speak with their families and friends to reduce the stress incurred among personnel by family separation and contribute to improved personnel performance and mission safeguarding.
- **Provide support to enable peacekeepers to travel home during R&R on long deployments:** address the prohibitive costs of flights when peacekeepers are deployed to remote locations or missions far from their home by covering some or all the costs for personnel to travel home when deployed for 12 months or more.
- **Offer shorter deployments:** encourage more women to deploy and provide more opportunities to deploy to peace operations by offering shorter deployments.
- **Invest in infrastructures of care:** identify, implement and monitor a budget line that improves accessible and affordable childcare and other care support infrastructures that accommodate the long and irregular hours typically demanded in the security sector.
- **Invest to retain talent and enhance performance:** reduce attrition and bolster capacity by investing in the careers of personnel with caring responsibilities to minimise the number of personnel, particularly women, leaving the sector.
- **Raise the age limit of deployment and recruitment:** increase the age limit for women to be recruited and deployed to accommodate those who take career breaks, are unable to deploy while children are young, or seek new careers when their children are older. [see Practical Tool #8]

These actions directly affect who can deploy and who remains in the workforce.

Armed Forces and Police: Institutional Change Where It Matters Most

Security institutions are where caring responsibilities most directly intersect with career progression, deployment eligibility and workplace culture

- **Conduct a Care Audit:** conduct a Care Audit to identify needs of personnel with caring responsibilities and evaluate the organisation's responsiveness to those needs [see Practical Tools #4 and #5]
- **Review and/or reform policy to be responsive to gender and the needs of personnel with caring responsibilities, with particular consideration given to human resource policies:** consult personnel with caring responsibilities to identify and address key challenges, ensure that policies are gender-responsive and help create a safe and enabling environment for women to have equal opportunities to work and advance their careers, and increase the number of women in decision-making and policy-making processes. [see Practical Tool #7]
- **Support flexible working arrangements:** Improve HR policies to better support personnel with caring responsibilities by providing opportunities for flexible working arrangements (FWA) to include remote or home working, job-sharing, part-time work and flexible worktimes, where feasible. Address stigma associated with uptake and discretionary application. [see Practical Tool #7]
- **Provide or facilitate access to infrastructures of care, to include childcare facilities (or subsidies for childcare and other care) and access to private spaces for lactation:** adopt "family-friendly" policies that accommodate diverse caring responsibilities, increase access to – or subsidise - child, elderly and dependent care, where possible provide wraparound childcare in the workplace to accommodate long working hours, ensure access to private spaces for expressing milk. [see Practical Tool #7]
- **Develop and deliver awareness-raising campaigns, to ensure personnel and leaders are aware of the challenges of managing caring responsibilities and work in the sector as well as the contribution of women and care-givers to the sector and to peace operations:** develop sensitisation and awareness raising campaigns targeted towards leaders, policymakers and decision-makers that attend to intersectional identity factors and cultural contexts and recognise the impacts of caring responsibilities on recruitment, retention, advancement and deployment of women. Also develop awareness raising for leadership and personnel more broadly to normalise care giving and encourage self-care, particularly among male personnel. [see Practical Tools #7 and #15]
- **Create processes to ensure personnel with caring responsibilities have regular and comprehensive information on what support is available to them as well as on deployment, training, career advancement and other opportunities:** ensure personnel and supervisors are familiar with HR policies and personnel are able to avail themselves of their provisions – and support is not simply dependent on sympathetic supervisors, this includes improved training and guidance for leadership on how to support their employees with caring responsibilities. [see Practical Tool #9]
- **Deliver training to enable access for personnel with caring responsibilities and to include care issues, such as self-care and how to manage family separation in pre-deployment training:** improve pre-deployment training to help personnel prepare for and adjust to the mission, include specific workshops for caregivers (including sharing information on what support policies are available to them prior to their deployment and how to manage caring responsibilities and family matters while deployed), and address mental health issues, self-care and stress management while deployed, as well as address stigma associated with seeking mental health support. [see Practical Tool #9]

- **Take disciplinary action against discrimination on the grounds of parental status or gender:** adhere to set policies and procedures that provide for fair and equal treatment, ensure that codes of conduct explicitly refer to non-tolerance for discrimination on the grounds of gender and parental status or other caring responsibilities, communicate these widely and take measures in the event of non-compliance. [see Practical Tools #7 and #9]
- **Identify, address and reduce gender and maternal bias:** develop awareness raising campaigns of attitudes and bias towards personnel with caring responsibility, notably women, and address these biases through information campaigns, training and performance reviews (for instance, develop promotion criteria which considers the impacts of care on career progression). [see Practical Tools #8 and #9]
- **Destigmatise help-seeking, self-care and men's caring responsibilities, including encouraging men to access parental, paternity and carer's leave:** enhance provisions of psychosocial support and counsellors on mission, as well as provision of structures, activities and resources that help well-being and support self-care, and train leaders to inculcate a work culture that is responsive to well-being and care. [see Practical Tool #9]
- **Invest in peacekeepers' well-being, to include provision of adequate living conditions on mission, means of communication and assistance to travel home during R&R on long deployments:** provide personnel with a decent bed, good toilet and basic amenities; private spaces and allocated times to make calls to families and friends; support with travel home on R&R during long deployments, recognising the impact of stress on personnel and mission outcomes. [see Practical Tool #9]
- **Establish, encourage and resource support structures for caregivers to include mentors, advocates and networks:** efforts to include establishing a network for former peacekeepers with caring responsibilities to share information, knowledge, and experiences on deployment to help support and empower other personnel who wish to deploy.
- **Support families with access to education, healthcare and accommodation, particularly for the families of deployed personnel:** assist in addressing the education, healthcare and accommodation needs of personnel's families, recognising this impacts the well-being and performance of personnel, enabling them to focus on their professional duties. [see Practical Tool #7]
- **Extend psychosocial support to families of deployed and returning personnel:** provide psychosocial support for personnel and their families, immediately prior to, during and post-deployment. [see Practical Tool #7]
- **Recognise the synergies between organisational duty of care, organisational support for personnel with caring responsibilities, and attentiveness to care more broadly (i.e. personnel self-care and well-being).** Utilise data to raise awareness of the connection between well-being, safeguarding and performance, and how these are impacted when organisations effectively exercise the duty of care.

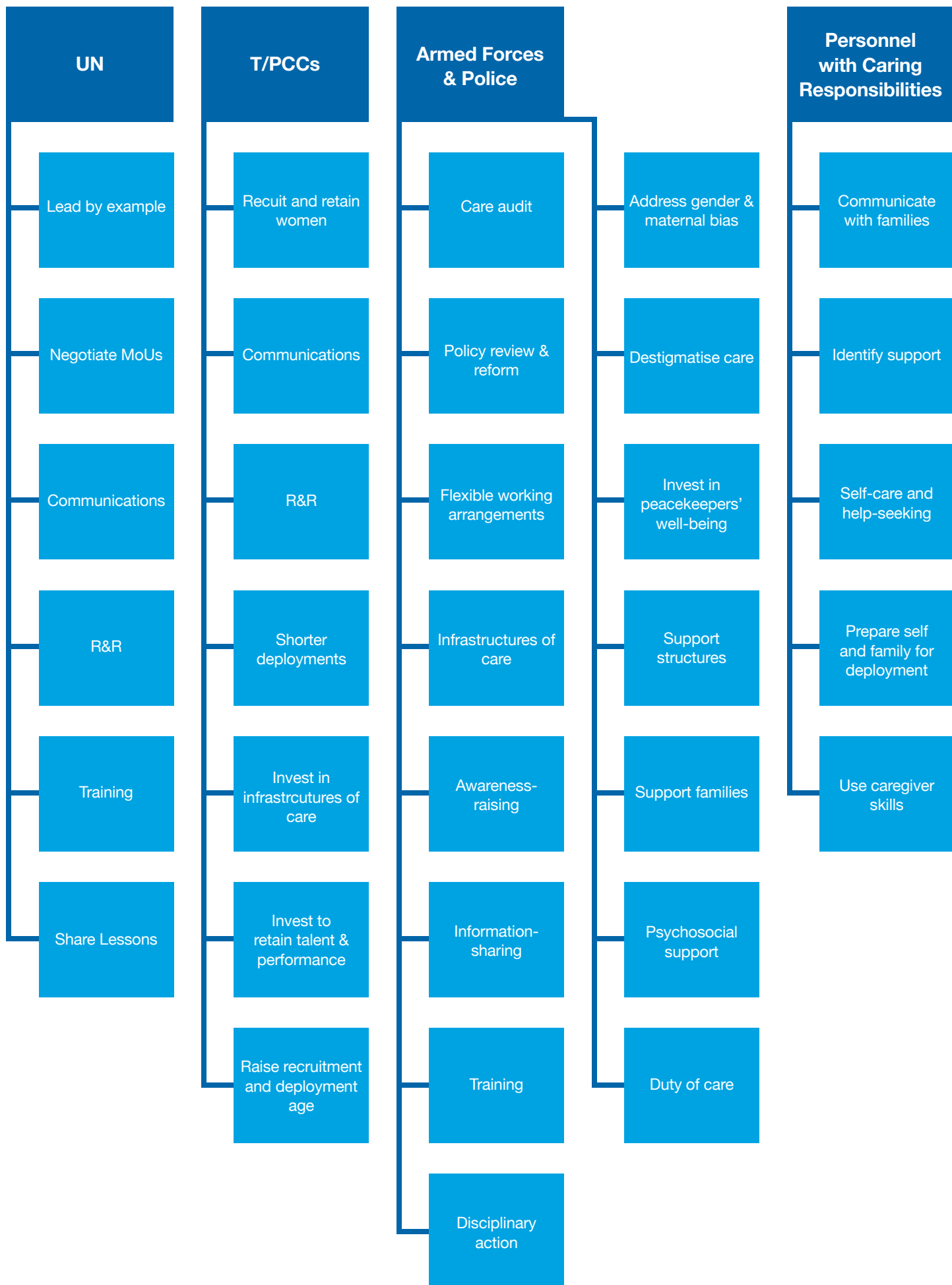
These actions are central to retention, performance and organisational credibility.

Personnel with Caring Responsibilities: Enabling Agency Within Systems

While institutional change is essential, individual personnel also benefit from guidance on navigating systems and preparing for deployment.

- **Regularly communicate with family members:** share any hopes of deploying or other opportunities, maintain open communication through long and unpredictable work schedules to preserve and enhance personal relationships. For those who are deployed, schedule regular times to call families and maintain your routine to stay connected.
- **Identify what organisational and other support is available:** including formal policies, structures and processes in the security sector organisation, and informal support networks and structures such as family members, professional networks, and affordable and accessible childcare or other care facilities. [see Practical Tool #10C]
- **Practice self-care and ask for help if needed:** be alert to signs of stress and use well-being tools or resources provided by your security sector institution or the UN, avoid reliance on negative coping strategies, and help build a positive work culture that is supportive and open to discussions around care and well-being. [see Practical Tool #13]
- **Prepare your family and yourself for deployment:** this includes being aware of what is required of you and how your care and security work may impact each other. Ensure you have made all necessary preparations for your families while you are away, including what to do during a family emergency and organising care in your absence. [see Practical Tool #10C]
- **Have confidence in the skills you bring to security work and peace operations:** This might include empathy, attentive listening or attentiveness to the needs of others, and drawing from skills such as multitasking which can be developed through having to manage workloads and care.

These actions should be supported by organisational systems, not relied upon as substitutes for reform.



Practical Tools to support Uniformed Personnel with Caring Responsibilities

1. Implementation Table Template
2. Logframe (Logical Framework Matrix)
3. Theory of Change
4. Care Audit Tool
5. Care Audit Checklist
6. Organisational Scorecard (RAG Assessment)
7. Examples of Policy Recommendations and Sample Policy Language
8. Bias Interruption Tools for Selection Panels
9. Training Course Outline
10. Quick Reference Checklists to Support Personnel with Caring Responsibilities Deploying to UN Peace Operations
 - A. Organisational Checklist
 - B. Leadership Checklist
 - C. Individual Checklist for Personnel Preparing to Deploy
11. Family Care Plan Template
12. Carer's Passport Template
13. Self-Care Tips for Uniformed Personnel on Peace Operations
14. Risk & Mitigation Mapping
15. Communications and Engagement Strategy
 - A. Communications Planning Tool
 - B. Commanders Key Messages and Guidance
 - C. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

How to Use the Practical Tools in this Toolkit

The Toolkit includes a suite of practical tools designed to help the UN, T/PCCs and defence and police institutions support personnel with caring responsibilities. The tools help organisations translate the research findings and policy commitments into action.

The tools are intended to help organisations identify barriers to engagement, retention, advancement and deployment linked to caring responsibilities. They also intend to help organisations prioritise reforms and plan and monitor implementation in ways that strengthen workforce capability and operational effectiveness.

The tools provided are not prescriptive. They are offered as practical examples, templates and guiding frameworks that can be adapted, scaled and applied according to institutional mandate, operational context, resource availability and national or organisational frameworks. Not all tools will be relevant or feasible in all contexts, and users are encouraged to select and tailor those most appropriate to their needs.

Several of the tools draw directly on good practice examples identified through the research underpinning this Toolkit, including practices observed in national defence and police institutions and in UN peace operations. Others are informed by established approaches to organisational assessment, implementation planning, monitoring and evaluation commonly used across diverse organisational settings. Together, they provide a coherent set of options to support evidence-based decision-making.

The tools are designed to be used iteratively and in combination. For example, a Care Audit may be used to identify gaps and priorities; the Implementation Table to translate those priorities into actions; and a Logframe or Theory of Change to articulate how specific reforms will lead to improved outcomes. Scorecards and monitoring tools can then be used to track progress over time.

Above all, these tools are intended to support reflection, dialogue and informed action. They are most effective when used collaboratively, with input from leadership, human resource and planning staff, commanders and personnel with lived experience of caring responsibilities.

Practical Tool #1: Implementation Table Template

Linking Recommendations to Implementation

The recommendations above are intentionally framed as areas to be assessed, strengthened or enabled, rather than prescriptive actions. They feed directly into the Implementation Table, which supports organisations to:

- Prioritise actions
- Assign responsibility
- Assess resource implications
- Identify dependencies
- Manage risks

Used together, the Implementation Table and the recommendations provide a practical pathway from research findings to sustained organisational change.

The rationale and supporting evidence for each recommendation are detailed in the associated Report.

The Implementation Table that follows provides a condensed, action-oriented summary of those recommendations. It is designed to help organisations assess their current position, prioritise actions and plan implementation as well as promote accountability and trace progress over time.

Understanding the table headings

Recommendation

This column summarises the recommendations outlined above and detailed in the Report. They should be read as areas for assessment in the first instance and, thereafter, action.

Priority (1–5)

Indicates relative importance, with 5 being the highest priority. Organisations should determine priority based on operational risk, impact on wellbeing and feasibility.

Resource intensity (1–5)

Reflects the level of resources required, including staffing, funding and administrative effort, with 5 indicating the highest resource demand.

Responsible actor

Identifies who has primary responsibility for action, such as the UN, T/PCC, armed forces or police. While recommendations for individual personnel are included, they should be as efforts organisations will undertake to support personnel action these recommendations (such as access information and exercise self-care).

Timeframe

Sets a realistic period for action, recognising that some changes are immediate while others are longer term.

Dependencies

Identifies actions that rely on other reforms or approvals being in place.

Risks and mitigation

Highlights foreseeable risks to implementation and strategies to manage them.

Evidence or indicators

Identifies how progress might be demonstrated, such as policies, training materials, funding allocations or qualitative feedback.

The Implementation Table can also include columns to identify the type of recommendation, such as whether it primarily concerns a policy, resource, practice, work culture or leadership issue. This helps determine how progress should be assessed.

Important Guidance for Use

Not all recommendations will be feasible in all contexts. Organisations should adapt actions to their legal, operational and cultural environment while maintaining focus on the underlying objective: enabling personnel with caring responsibilities to participate fully and safely in peace operations.

Broadly, recommendations can be distinguished between A. Measurable and Assessable Areas and B. Culture, Leadership and Behavioural Areas, although many recommendations cut across both areas. When using the Implementation Table, organisations should aim to identify what type of action is required, which will help determine the evidence or indicators required to assess progress.

A. Measurable and Assessable Areas

These include policies, resources, structures and practices that can be evidenced, reviewed or audited. They are well suited to documentation review, reporting and formal indicators.

B. Culture, Leadership and Behavioural Areas

These areas are critical but less directly measurable. They should be assessed through qualitative evidence, such as gathered through workforce surveys. These areas should not be reduced to tick-box indicators. Progress should be assessed through patterns over time, leadership practice and the lived experience of personnel.

Recommendation	Priority (1-5)	Resources (1-5)	Responsible Actor	Timeframe	Dependencies	Risks & Mitigation	Evidence or Indicators
UN							
Lead by example to encourage T/ PCC support for personnel with caring responsibilities							
Negotiate Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with T/ PCCs to ensure peacekeeper well-being, including adequate living conditions on mission							
Work with T/ PCCs to ensure peacekeepers are able to remain connected to their families while deployed							

Advocate for and/or support assistance for peacekeepers to travel home on Rest and Recuperation (R&R) during long deployments.							
Bolster training for peacekeepers and for leaders to better address care							
Incorporate family and care issues into delivery of and advice for pre-deployment training							
Share lessons learned and good practices with T/PCCs, and raise awareness of the importance of supporting personnel with caring responsibilities							
T/PCCs							
Facilitate women's engagement in security sector institutions to increase the number of women deployed to UN peace operations							
Pay for communication services for deployed contingencies, including phone and wi-fi							

Provide support to enable peacekeepers to travel home during R&R on long deployments							
Offer shorter deployments							
Invest in infrastructures of care							
Invest to retain talent and enhance performance							
Raise the age limit of deployment and recruitment							

Armed forces and Police

Conduct a Care Audit							
Review and/or reform policy to be responsive to gender and the needs of personnel with caring responsibilities, with particular consideration given to human resource policies							
Support flexible working arrangements							
Provide or facilitate access to infrastructures of care, to include childcare facilities (or subsidies for childcare and other care) and access to private spaces for lactation							

<p>Develop and deliver awareness-raising campaigns, to ensure personnel and leaders are aware of the challenges of managing caring responsibilities and work in the sector as well as the contribution of women and care-givers to the sector and to peace operations</p>							
<p>Create processes to ensure personnel with caring responsibilities have regular and comprehensive information on what support is available to them as well as on deployment, training, career advancement and other opportunities</p>							
<p>Deliver training to enable access for personnel with caring responsibilities and to include care issues, such as self-care and how to manage family separation in pre-deployment training</p>							
<p>Take disciplinary action against discrimination on the grounds of parental status or gender</p>							
<p>Identify, address and reduce gender and maternal bias</p>							

Destigmatise help-seeking, self-care and men's caring responsibilities, including encouraging men to access parental, paternity and carer's leave							
Invest in peacekeepers' well-being, to include provision of adequate living conditions on mission, means of communication and assistance to travel home during R&R on long deployments							
Establish, encourage and resource support structures for caregivers to include mentors, advocates and networks							
Support families with access to education, healthcare and accommodation, particularly for the families of deployed personnel							
Extend psychosocial support to families of deployed and returning personnel							

Recognise the synergies between organisational duty of care, organisational support for personnel with caring responsibilities, and attentiveness to care more broadly (i.e. personnel self-care and well-being)							
Organisational support to enable Personnel with Caring Responsibilities to...							
Regularly communicate with family members							
Identify what organisational and other support is available							
Practice self-care and ask for help if needed							
Prepare your family and yourself for deployment							
Draw from your experiences as a caregiver to contribute to the UN peace operations							

Practical Tool #2: Theory of Change

A Theory of Change is an effective management tool that plots the process by which a desired outcome is reached.

Similar to a Logframe (see Practical Tool #3), it is a simple roadmap that explains how actions will lead to results, which will lead to immediate and longer-term outcomes. Unlike the Logframe that provides detail and is often used at the tactical or operational level, the Theory of Change is an overarching, strategic-level tool that provides a broad explanation of how change is expected to occur.

A Theory of Change helps to:

- Make assumptions explicit
- Test whether proposed actions are likely to achieve intended results
- Identify where change may stall or fail
- Support monitoring, learning and adaptation over time
- Provide conceptual foundation for Logframes

This Toolkit and the associated Report are informed by a Theory of Change which demonstrates how the recommendations outlined above can be translated into practical and measurable change:



Practical Tool #3: Logframe (Logical Framework Matrix)

A Logframe is a planning and management tool that sets out the logical sequence between:

- The overall outcome to be achieved
- The results required to reach that outcome
- The outputs that deliver those results
- The activities needed to produce the outputs

It also identifies indicators to help measure progress as well as where to gather indicator data (means of verification).

Finally, it includes any assumptions (i.e. conditions) that must be true for the project to succeed, but are outside the project's direct control.

Developing a Logframe can help ensure coherence between activities and intended goals. As such, when developing a Logframe it is good practice to begin by articulating the goal:

1. Articulate the goal or intended outcome
2. Map the results that are required to reach that goal
3. Identify the tangible outputs that need to be delivered to realise those results
4. List the activities required to produce those outputs
5. Select indicators and data sources
6. Reflect on assumptions appropriate to the context

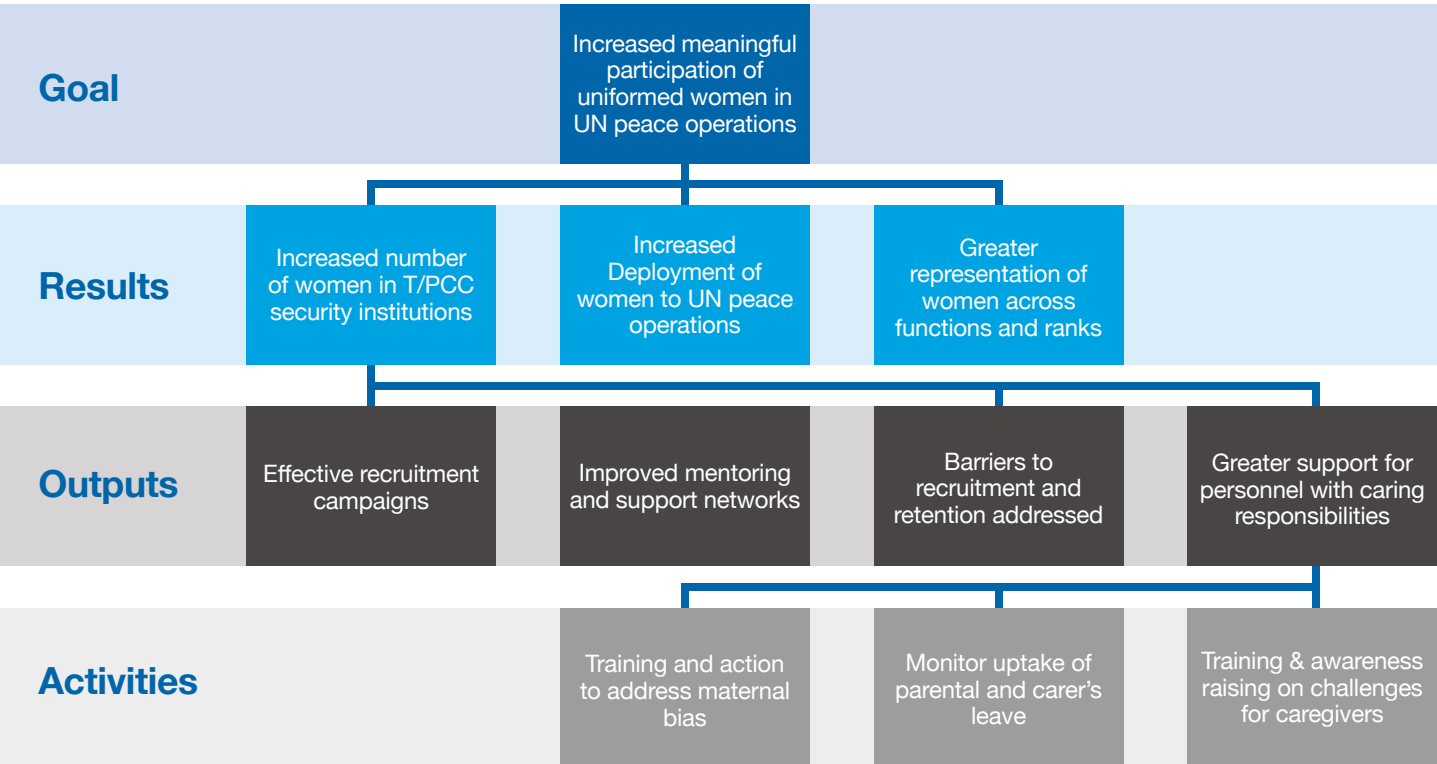
Working in this order helps ensure realisation of the goal and avoids focussing on activities with little consideration for the overarching goal or intended outcomes.

When used well, a Logframe supports coherent planning, realistic monitoring and adaptive learning. It helps ensure that activities are clearly linked to intended outcomes, resources are targeted effectively and progress can be assessed over time.

The following figure gives an indication of how the start of a Logframe may look, taking the example of the overarching goal of increasing the meaningful participation of uniformed women in UN peace operations:

	Goal (Outcome)	Results (required to reach goal)	Outputs (required to produce results)	Activities (required to produce outputs)
	Increased meaningful participation of uniformed women in UN peace operations	Increased participation of women in T/PCC security institutions	Polices, programs and structures that support care-givers	Care audit – consult personnel, map needs, scope resources, develop plan
Indicators	Number & % of women deployed by rank & role	Number & % of women in service and recruited	Number of new/ revised polices, programs and structures	Number of personnel consulted, amount of resources secured
Data source (means of verification)	Deployment statistics - DPO and T/PCC	Recruitment and retention statistics - T/PCC security institutions	T/PCC security institutions	T/PCC security institutions
Assumptions	Interest among women to deploy	Interest among women to join the armed forces/police	Availability of resources	Political will to support personnel with caring responsibilities

Typically, each overarching goal or intended outcome has several results, each of which have a number of outputs, and would typically each involve multiple activities. For instance, the image below shows that there are several activities required to for a single output, several outputs required for a single result, and several results required to reach a single goal:



Practical Tool #4: Care Audit Tool

The Care Audit Tool is a practical assessment tool designed to help defence and police organisations understand how well their existing systems support personnel with caring responsibilities, and where barriers to participation remain.

While the Implementation Table focuses on *what actions to take* and *who is responsible*, the Care Audit focuses on where an organisation is starting from. It provides a structured way to review policies, practices, resources and workplace culture to identify gaps, strengths and readiness for change.

Used early, the Care Audit establishes a baseline. Used over time, it allows organisations to track progress and assess whether reforms are translating into meaningful improvements for personnel with caring responsibilities.

What Is a Care Audit

A Care Audit is a structured review of how an organisation's policies, practices and working environment affect personnel with caring responsibilities, including parents, guardians and those caring for adults.

The audit focuses on identifying:

- Structural barriers that limit participation, progression or deployment
- Inconsistencies in how support is applied in practice
- Reliance on informal or discretionary arrangements
- Gaps between policy intent and lived experience

Purpose of the Care Audit

The purpose of the Care Audit is to evaluate the organisation's readiness to support personnel with caring responsibilities by reviewing:

- Policies and human resource frameworks
- Leadership practices and accountability mechanisms
- Access to resources and infrastructure
- Workplace culture and informal norms

The Care Audit is not an inspection or compliance exercise. It is a diagnostic tool designed to support learning, prioritisation and evidence-based decision-making.

When and How to Use the Care Audit

The Care Audit can be used:

- At the start of reform to establish a baseline
- To inform implementation planning
- As a periodic review to track progress over time
- To support reporting, learning and continuous improvement

The template below provides an example of how a Care Audit can be structured for a military or police organisation.

Section 1: Organisational Policy & Governance

Indicator	Yes/No/Partial	Evidence Required	Action Needed
1.1 The organisation has a formal definition of “caring responsibilities” that includes diverse family structures.		Provide policy reference	
1.2 There is a clear organisational policy outlining rights, entitlements, and accommodations for personnel with caring responsibilities.		Upload document or link	
1.3 Policies have been reviewed within the last 24 months.		Date of last review	
1.4 Policies align with national legislation, gender equality action plans, and relevant UN or international standards.		Summary of alignment	
1.5 A designated senior officer/unit oversees care-related policy implementation.		Title/role	

Section 2: Workforce Data & Monitoring

Indicator	Yes/No/Partial	Evidence Required	Action Needed
2.1 The organisation collects gender-disaggregated data on personnel with caring responsibilities.		Data collection method	
2.2 Data includes type of caring responsibility (e.g., primary/ secondary care for children, eldercare, disability-related care).		Types recorded	
2.3 Exit interviews or surveys record whether caring responsibilities or work-life balance influenced decisions to leave		Data collection method	
2.4 Data is used to inform deployment planning and personnel management.		Examples	
2.5 Family Care Plans are current for all personnel with caring responsibilities.		% of personnel with updated plans	

Section 3: Human Resources Processes

Indicator	Yes/No/Partial	Evidence Required	Action Needed
3.1 Recruitment, promotion, training and deployment processes do not indirectly penalise personnel with caring responsibilities.		Review findings	
3.2 Pre-deployment processes include assessment of caring responsibilities and required supports.		SOPs or checklists	
3.3 Leave, flexible working, and welfare provisions are transparent and accessible to all genders.		Policy extracts	
3.4 Complaints related to discrimination or bias against carers are recorded and tracked.		Data for last 3 years	

Section 4: Operational Readiness & Deployment

Indicator	Yes/No/Partial	Evidence Required	Action Needed
4.1 Pre-deployment briefings include information on care support mechanisms.		Briefing materials	
4.2 Processes exist to ensure personnel with caring responsibilities can deploy equitably (e.g., temporary accommodations, supportive planning timelines).		Examples or SOPs	
4.3 Commanders receive training on managing team members with caring responsibilities.		Training records	
4.4 There are procedures to address and update Family Care Plans during deployment.		SOP link or summary	

Section 5: Work Culture & Leadership

Indicator	Yes/No/Partial	Evidence Required	Action Needed
5.1 Leaders openly support work–care balance and challenge stigma around caring responsibilities.		Examples or statements	
5.2 Unit climate surveys measure perceptions of support for carers.		Survey excerpts	
5.3 Carers are proportionately represented in leadership roles and specialised units.		HR data summary	
5.4 The organisation actively tracks and mitigates maternal and gender bias (e.g. assumptions about availability).		Related initiatives	

Section 6: Facilities & Practical Supports

Indicator	Yes/No/Partial	Evidence Required	Action Needed
6.1 Facilities include nursing/lactation rooms, private spaces, and appropriate sanitation.		Site inspection photos or reports	
6.2 Childcare options exist (on-site or through partnerships/subsidies).		Description and access data	
6.3 Remote/virtual work options are available where operationally feasible.		Policy or usage data	
6.4 Wellbeing services (psychological, financial, welfare) include components tailored to carers.		List of services	

Section 7: Audit Summary and Recommendations

Strengths Identified: *e.g., comprehensive Family Care Policies; strong leadership commitment; consistent collection of disaggregated data.*

Gaps Identified: *e.g., inconsistent updating of Family Care Plans; limited childcare options; insufficient commander training.*

- **Priority Actions (Short-Term: 3–6 months):**
- **Priority Actions (Medium-Term: 6–18 months):**
- **Long-Term Organisational Reform Goals:**

Practical Tool #5: Care Audit Checklist

For Police and Military Contributors to UN Peace Operations

Purpose:

The Care Audit Checklist is a practical, operational tool designed to provide a rapid assessment of whether a military or police organisation supports personnel with caring responsibilities to be able to deploy to UN peace operations.

The checklist accompanies a Care Audit and is intended to be used at key decision points, particularly prior to deployment, to confirm that essential policies, supports and safeguards are in place and being applied in practice.

Specifically, the Care Audit Checklist supports organisations to:

- Confirm readiness to deploy personnel with caring responsibilities
- Identify immediate gaps that may prevent equitable deployment
- Support commanders and planners to make informed deployment decisions
- Ensure that existing policies and supports are translated into practice
- Reduce reliance on informal or discretionary arrangements

1. Policy Development

- “Caring responsibilities” are formally defined and non-discrimination on the grounds of caring responsibilities protected in Code of Conduct and disciplinary frameworks.
- Deployment criteria do not disadvantage personnel with caring responsibilities.
- Internal directive exists supporting the UN Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy.
- Measures are in place to ensure equal deployment opportunities for women with caring responsibilities.
- Policies exist that provide opportunities for shorter deployments for personnel with caring responsibilities, where feasible.
- Measures are in place that guard against career progression penalties for personnel unable to deploy due to caring responsibilities.
- Measures are in place to ensure equal deployment opportunities for women with caring responsibilities.
- Policies and resourcing exist that support the well-being of personnel on deployments, including support for regular communication with families, travel home during R&R on long deployments, and infrastructure that meets basic living standards, as well as welfare activities, support structures and information.

2. Data Collection & Accountability

- Gender-disaggregated data collected on deployable personnel.
- Data includes type/extent of caring responsibilities.
- Family Care Plans are mandatory and up to date for all deploying personnel.
- Data gathering and analysis of recruitment, retention, promotion, training, deployment and redeployment rates according to gender and caring responsibilities.

3. Personnel Management & Pre-Deployment

- Pre-deployment medical/welfare checks include caring responsibilities.
- Gender-responsive, trauma-informed welfare support available pre-deployment.
- Equal access to pre-deployment training for personnel with caring responsibilities.
- Deployment timelines allow time to organise/update care arrangements.

4. Operational Readiness & Deployment Support

- Pre-deployment training includes information on self-care, managing family separation, and support channels and resources.
- Personnel with caring responsibilities are not assumed to be non-deployable.
- Mechanisms exist for updating Family Care Plans during deployment.
- Rotation/extension and R&R decisions consider care obligations.

5. Work Culture & Leadership

- Commanders trained in gender-responsive, inclusive leadership.
- Leadership actively supports participation of personnel with caring responsibilities.
- Climate surveys monitor perceptions of fairness for carers.
- Evidence shows no maternal or gender bias in deployment decisions.
- Accessible complaints mechanisms exist for care-related discrimination.
- HR Policies and support networks that support personnel with caring responsibilities are regularly and widely communicated.
- Personnel briefed on conduct & discipline and non-discrimination obligations.

6. Facilities & Practical Support

- Private lactation and sanitation facilities available.
- Uniform/equipment adjustments available.
- Gender-responsive accommodation in mission areas.
- Family support (childcare, accommodation, counselling, welfare services) for deployed personnel.
- Communication channels are accessible to enable personnel to keep in regular contact with families

7. Integration with UN Gender Parity Commitments

- Gender Parity Action Plans exist and include specific commitments for supporting personnel with caring responsibilities.
- Barriers to recruitment, retention, promotion, training and deployment for personnel with caring responsibilities identified and tracked, and efforts to address them reported on annually in publicly available reports.
- Lessons learned from previous deployments (and non-deployments) incorporated into policy reforms.

Practical Tool #6: Organisational Care Scorecard (RAG Assessment)

Purpose

The Organisational Scorecard is a practical assessment tool designed to provide a clear, high-level view of how effectively a military or police organisation supports personnel with caring responsibilities.

Using a Red–Amber–Green (RAG) framework, the Scorecard enables organisations to assess current performance across key domains such as policy and governance, deployment and operational planning and workplace culture and leadership. It translates complex organisational issues into a concise visual snapshot that supports decision-making, accountability and prioritisation.

The Scorecard is intended to be used as:

- A diagnostic tool to identify strengths, risks and priority gaps
- A monitoring framework to track progress over time
- A quick-reference instrument for senior leaders and commanders
- A mechanism to support transparency and internal accountability

The Organisational Scorecard provides an at-a-glance assessment of organisational support. It helps ensure that commitments to supporting personnel with caring responsibilities are visible, measurable and embedded within organisational performance and leadership practice.

Frequency of Use

The Organisational Scorecard should be completed at least annually to provide a consistent snapshot of organisational performance in supporting personnel with caring responsibilities.

In addition, organisations are encouraged to complete the Scorecard:

- Following major policy or organisational reforms
- After significant changes to deployment models or workforce structures
- Prior to large-scale or high-tempo deployment periods
- As part of periodic organisational reviews or inspections

Completing the Scorecard at regular intervals allows organisations to track progress over time, identify emerging risks and assess whether reforms are being implemented consistently across units or commands.

However, the Scorecard is not intended to rank units or assign blame. Its purpose is to support learning, consistency and accountability and to enable leadership to take informed action.

Who Should Complete the Scorecard

The Scorecard should be completed through a collaborative process, rather than by a single individual, to ensure accuracy and credibility. At a minimum, completion should involve:

- A senior leader or commander with decision-making authority
- Human resources or personnel management representatives
- Welfare, wellbeing or family support staff (where applicable)

Interpreting Ratings

Green indicates that policies, practices and supports are in place and operating consistently.

Amber indicates partial implementation, inconsistency across units, or gaps between policy intent and practice. Amber ratings signal areas where targeted action is needed to prevent risk or regression.

Red indicates significant gaps or absence of necessary policies, supports or safeguards. Red ratings highlight areas of elevated risk that require priority attention and leadership intervention.

Amber and Red ratings are intended to support improvement, not to assign fault or penalise individuals or units. They highlight areas where systems, practices or resources require attention in order to support personnel with caring responsibilities more effectively.

Responding to Amber Ratings

When an area is rated Amber, organisations should:

- Identify the specific barrier or inconsistency driving the rating
- Clarify whether the issue relates to policy, resources, leadership practice or awareness
- Assign responsibility for improvement
- Monitor progress at the next review cycle

Amber ratings are often appropriate during periods of transition or reform and should be treated as opportunities to stabilise and consolidate change.

Responding to Red Ratings

When an area is rated Red, organisations should:

- Escalate the issue to senior leadership for review
- Assess potential impacts on deployment readiness, wellbeing, retention, etc.
- Identify immediate risk mitigation measures
- Develop a time-bound plan to address the gap
- Determine whether interim arrangements are required to ensure fairness and safety

Red ratings should prompt focused attention and resourcing, particularly where they relate to deployment equity, discrimination risk or duty of care.

Embedding Learning and Accountability

For both Amber and Red ratings:

- Actions should be documented in an implementation plan (e.g. the Implementation Table – Tool #1)
- Progress should be reviewed at agreed intervals
- Improvements should be communicated to relevant personnel
- Lessons learned should inform policy and practice updates

1. Policy & Governance

- Clear, formal policies recognise, support and protect against discrimination of personnel with caring responsibilities (including single parents, eldercare, disability-related care).
- Policies are regularly reviewed and aligned with national labour law and gender-responsive standards.
- Leaders actively communicate and champion these policies.
- Policies exist but are outdated, inconsistent, or poorly communicated.
- Limited monitoring of implementation.
- Care-related considerations included only in ad hoc ways.
- No clear policies referencing caring responsibilities.
- Informal, discretionary decision-making leading to inconsistent support.
- Senior leadership does not prioritise or acknowledge the issue.

2. Data & Personnel Tracking

- Organisation collects gender-disaggregated data and records caring responsibilities confidentially.
- Data informs staffing, deployment planning, and welfare provision.
- Secure systems ensure privacy.
- Partial or irregular data collection.
- Data not systematically used in planning.
- Privacy protections unclear or inconsistent.
- No structured data collected.
- Decisions made without consideration of personnel needs.
- Breaches of confidentiality or no data protection protocols.

3. Deployment & Operational Planning

- Pre-deployment processes include mandatory welfare checks and review of Family Care Plans.
- Flexible arrangements offered where possible (shorter deployment, temporary reassignment, alternative roles).
- Clear pathways for deferral without career penalty.
- Some welfare checks conducted, but not consistently or early enough.
- Limited flexibility; decisions often case-by-case.
- Deferral possible but may carry informal stigma.
- No formal pre-deployment checks related to caring responsibilities.
- Personnel expected to deploy regardless of family circumstances.
- No formal deferral mechanisms.

4. Workplace Culture & Leadership

- Leaders model supportive behaviour and challenge stigma around carers.
- Caring responsibilities not seen as a barrier to career progression.
- Personnel feel safe requesting flexibility without fear.
- Mixed leadership commitment.
- Stigma or bias exists in some units.
- Staff uncertain about consequences of disclosing caring responsibilities.
- Strong stigma associated with caring responsibilities (“not committed,” “less deployable”).
- Leaders discourage or ignore requests for support.
- Culture of silence; personnel hide caring roles.

5. Flexible Working & Accommodation

- Range of flexible options available: modified shifts, job-sharing, predictable rosters, remote/administrative reassignment where appropriate.
- Transparent pathways to request adjustments.
- Decisions recorded, fair, and appealable.
- Some flexibility, but dependent on unit or commander/supervisor.
- Process unclear or inconsistently applied.
- Limited tracking of accommodation decisions.
- No flexible working arrangements.
- Requests routinely denied without justification.
- Shifts and assignments routinely conflict with caring duties.

6. Welfare, Support Services & Training

- Access to counselling, family liaison services, or welfare officers trained in care-related issues.
- Specialist training for commanders on managing personnel with caring responsibilities.
- Peer support networks or parent/carer groups established.
- Basic support available but not specialised.
- Welfare officers under-resourced.
- Training optional or inconsistently delivered.
- No support services related to caring responsibilities.
- Commanders lack understanding or training.
- Personnel rely solely on informal networks.

7. Infrastructure & Facilities

- Family-friendly facilities available (e.g., breastfeeding rooms, child-friendly waiting areas).
- Meal, transport, or accommodation arrangements account for personnel with caring roles.
- Remote communication options for deployed personnel.
- Some facilities exist but are limited or poorly maintained.
- Infrastructure improvements discussed but not implemented.
- No consideration of carers in infrastructure or facility planning.
- Deployed personnel have minimal communication with dependents.

8. Accountability & Performance Monitoring

- RAG assessments conducted annually.
- Clear KPIs tied to leadership performance.
- Feedback from personnel captured and acted upon.
- Monitoring occurs irregularly.
- Weak accountability mechanisms.
- Limited follow-up on issues raised by personnel.
- No accountability systems.
- No monitoring, evaluation, or feedback loops.
- Persistent problems not addressed.

Practical Tool #7: Examples of Policy Recommendations and Sample Policy Language

1. Deployment Eligibility & Flexibility

Policy Recommendation

Introduce flexible deployment pathways that allow personnel with caring responsibilities—including single parents and dual-military families—to remain eligible for peacekeeping roles. Flexible deployment pathways can also include remote pre-deployment training.

Sample Policy Language

The organisation shall ensure that caring responsibilities do not constitute grounds for automatic exclusion from deployment. Commanders and supervisors must consider reasonable adjustments, including modified deployment lengths, staggered or split rotations, remote pre-deployment tasks, and alternative role assignments, where operational requirements permit.

2. Family Care Plans (FCP)

Policy Recommendation

Standardise and institutionalise Family Care Plans across the organisation to ensure consistency, accountability, and fairness.

Sample Policy Language

All deploying personnel who have primary or shared caring responsibilities shall maintain an approved Family Care Plan prior to deployment. The organisation shall ensure confidentiality of Family Care Plans and prohibit discriminatory treatment on the basis of declared caring responsibilities.

3. Anti-Discrimination & Protection Measures

Policy Recommendation

Explicitly prohibit discrimination based on caring responsibilities and require enforcement mechanisms.

Sample Policy Language

The organisation prohibits any form of discrimination, informal exclusion, or career penalty on the basis of actual or perceived caring responsibilities. Commanders must take corrective action in instances where personnel experience stigma, bias, denial of opportunities or disproportionate tasking linked to their caregiving status.

4. Communication Access During Deployment

Policy Recommendation

Endeavour to ensure predictable communication opportunities to support family wellbeing and reduce stress in theatre.

Sample Policy Language

The organisation shall endeavour to provide regular and reliable access to communication systems for deployed personnel with caring responsibilities, subject to operational security. Commanders must ensure communication schedules are respected except in cases of operational necessity.

5. Emergency Leave & Compassionate Support

Policy Recommendation

Ensure there is clear information on care-related and emergency leave, and that there are equitable and non-discriminatory care and emergency leave provisions. Simplify and standardise emergency leave processes for family crises.

Sample Policy Language

Personnel facing urgent family circumstances shall be granted **compassionate leave** following an expedited process not exceeding 24 hours for decision-making, unless operationally impossible. No adverse administrative or career consequences shall result from the use of compassionate leave entitlements.

6. Pre-Deployment Notification Periods

Policy Recommendation

Ensure personnel with caring responsibilities have adequate notice of deployments or training.

Sample Policy Language

The organisation commits to providing a **minimum notification period of X weeks** prior to deployment for personnel with caring responsibilities, except under rapid response conditions. Short-notice deployment must trigger the offer of additional support measures.

7. Reintegration & Post-Deployment Support

Policy Recommendation

Provide enhanced reintegration assistance for personnel balancing caring responsibilities post-deployment.

Sample Policy Language

Upon return from deployment, personnel with caring responsibilities shall receive tailored reintegration support, including flexible scheduling, reintegration leave and access to psychosocial services. Commanders must ensure reintegration needs are incorporated into post-operational follow-up.

8. Leadership Accountability

Policy Recommendation

Include support for personnel with caring responsibilities as part of leadership performance criteria.

Sample Policy Language

Supervisor and commander performance evaluations shall include an assessment of their commitment to supporting personnel with caring responsibilities, including equitable tasking, adherence to policies and promotion of an inclusive unit culture.

9. Data Collection

Policy Recommendation

Track gender disaggregated data and analyse how caring responsibilities may affect recruitment, retention, promotion and deployment of personnel.

Sample Policy Language

The organisation shall collect anonymised and gender disaggregated data on personnel with caring responsibilities to identify trends in recruitment, retention, promotion and deployment. Findings shall inform planning and resource allocation.

10. Institutional Support Services

Policy Recommendation

Strengthen institutional support structures for families during deployment.

Sample Policy Language

The organisation shall provide families of deployed personnel with access to welfare and psychosocial services, family liaison officers, crisis support and clear channels of communication throughout the deployment period. These services must be accessible, responsive and proactively offered.

Practical Tool #8: Bias Interruption Tools for Selection Processes

People with caring responsibilities may face subtle or unintended bias during hiring, promotion and award decisions. These tools help panels proactively interrupt those patterns and ensure evidence-based, equitable decision-making.

Pre-Panel Preparation

To ensure personnel with caring responsibilities have equal opportunities:

- Use standardised selection, promotion and deployment criteria that explicitly prohibit bias relating to caregiving.
- Require training for all selection boards and contingent leadership on gender and care dynamics.
- Provide written justification for non-selection to ensure transparency.
- Ensure the selection panel is diverse in its make-up, at least one female to be included.

Establish clear criteria:

- Define the job-related competencies and selection criteria in advance.
- No criteria indirectly penalise individuals for career breaks, part-time work or flexible schedules.
- Terms like “*ideal worker*,” “*flexibility*,” or “*availability*” are clearly defined in job-relevant terms.
- Weight criteria proportionally to job importance.
- Performance expectations focus on outcomes, not hours or perceived availability.
- Ensure every panellist understands and agrees to the definitions.

Identify common biases and share with all panellists. These can include:

- Affinity bias: preferring candidates similar to ourselves
- Confirmation bias: seeking evidence to confirm first impressions
- Halo/Horns effect: one trait (negative or positive) influences overall evaluation
- Stereotype bias: assumptions based on identity rather than evidence
- Elite bias: overvaluing elite institutions or companies
- Assumption bias: inferring skills or personality without evidence



For instance, examples of assumption biases are: “They might not manage the workload with kids/eldercare,” “They probably can’t travel or stay late,” “They’ve had too many breaks.”



These biases can be interrupted by asking: “Is this assumption or evidence?” or “What performance data supports this interpretation?”



The assumption behind these biases can be challenged by asking: “Are we comparing productivity relative to available hours?” and “Are we recognising achievements in the context of the candidate’s available working time rather than focusing solely on total output?”

The next step would be to normalise non-linear career paths:

- Career breaks or reduced hours are common and not indicators of commitment.
- Productivity relative to time worked should be considered
- Skills gained from caring roles (organisation, empathy, crisis management) can be relevant.

Interrupting bias during candidate interviews or reviews

Evidence-Based Evaluation:

- Require each panellist to provide specific evidence from the application or interview that supports each rating
- Ask: *“What evidence leads me to this conclusion?” “Is this assessment based on demonstrated performance, or assumptions about availability or commitment?”*

Standardised evaluation of career breaks or adjusted hours:

- All career breaks or adjusted hours to be assessed consistently across applicants
- A focus on the quality of outputs before and after breaks.

Remove unnecessary availability requirements:

- The role adequately reflects any stated hours, travel or on-site commitments
- Flexibility is not used as a proxy for overwork or constant availability.

Structured panel practices:

- Ask every candidate the same questions in the same order. Including questions on workload management, prioritisation, communication and avoid probing personal caring situations
- Use standardised scoring rubrics
- Redacted initial screening where possible. For instance, remove explicit references to parental leave, childcare, eldercare, etc. and dates that reveal career breaks until later evaluation stages
- Normalise flexible work examples and ensure panellists understand using flexible hours or remote work is not a performance deficit and flexibility is a planning tool, not a sign of reduced commitment
- Ask: *“Are we applying rules consistently across genders?”*

Bias Interruption Phrases for Panellists

Encourage panellists to use these phrases or questions to pause and correct bias patterns:

- *“Can you point to evidence in the application that supports that?”*
- *“Are assessing based on behaviour or assumptions?”* or *“Let’s focus on evidence not assumptions about caregiving.”*
- *“Are we evaluating output or perceived availability?”*
- *“Let’s return to the predefined criteria.”*
- *“Would we say this about a candidate without caring responsibilities?”*
- *“Is this feedback about style or about job-relevant competencies?”*
- *“Is this a role requirement or an expectation based on traditional work patterns?”*
- *“Let’s ensure we treat all career gaps consistently.”*

Accountability tools

Assign someone to monitor fairness, watching out for:

- Comments about personal life
- Assumptions about commitment or availability
- Unequal scrutiny of career breaks

Document evaluation processes, recording:

- Evidence supporting each score
- How criteria were applied consistently
- How career breaks or hours worked were normalised in scoring

Post-panel reflection questions:

- *“Did we rely on assumptions about availability or commitment?”*
- *“Did we treat all career paths consistently?”*
- *“Did we evaluate contribution rather than total hours?”*

Practical Tool #9: Training Course Outline

There are operational risks to not addressing challenges faced by personnel with caring responsibilities. Investment in training – to raise awareness, generate support and influence behaviour change – can offset these risks.

Below is an example outline of a training course that aims to support personnel with caring responsibilities, including to make informed decisions about deployment.

Such a course (*Family Responsibilities and Care*) will be freely available in multiple languages on the website of Peace Operations Training Institute (POTI) by mid-2026, developed by Monash GPS, delivered by POTI and funded by Global Affairs Canada as part of the project *Advancing the Meaningful Participation of Women in UN Peace Operations by Supporting Personnel with Caring Responsibilities* - <https://www.peaceopstraining.org>.

Module 1: Defining Care

- **Caring responsibilities**
 - What are family and caring responsibilities?
 - Who has family and caring responsibilities?
 - The gendered nature of unpaid care work
 - Caring responsibilities disproportionately fulfilled by women
 - The caring responsibilities of men are often ignored
 - Cultural variation and intersectionality
- **Destigmatising care**
 - The value of care work to societal peace, security and prosperity
 - How destigmatising care (including self-care and help-seeking) can reduce stress and improve well-being – and the subsequent impacts on retention, performance and safeguarding
 - How recognising and supporting men’s caring responsibilities can positively impact well-being and support women’s retention

Module 2: Challenges Faced by Personnel with Caring Responsibilities

- **Time and flexibility**
- **Bias and stigma**
 - Implicit and Explicit Bias
 - Maternal bias
 - What it is
 - How it impacts personnel with caring responsibilities
 - How it can be identified, avoided and addressed
 - Non-discrimination on the grounds of gender and parental responsibility
 - What this means
 - Why it is important
 - How violations are addressed
 - Confidential reporting mechanisms
 - The effects of stigmatising care on accessing support and help-seeking
- **Impact on women's meaningful participation**
 - Recruitment, retention, deployment, role allocation.
 - Access to training and deployment opportunities
 - Career progression
- **Subsequent impacts**
 - Well-being
 - Organisational and operational effectiveness
 - Women's meaningful participation in UN peace operations
 - Global policy framework (Women, Peace and Security agenda, Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations, UN Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy)
 - Subsequent impact on peace operations (workplace cultures, and peacekeeping practices and outcomes)
- **Mitigating factors**
 - Organisational policy and practice
 - Strong, empathetic leaders
 - Workplace cultures
 - Family support structures
 - Informal networks and resources

Module 3: Families and Deployment

- **Family disconnection as a key stressor on deployments**
 - How it can be identified and addressed
 - Subsequent impact on well-being, performance, workplace cultures and peace operations
 - Impact of deployments on families and family unity
 - Available support, resources and strategies
- **How to manage the family/home while deployed**
 - Pre-deployment: available support, information, tools and strategies
 - During deployment
 - Warning signs
 - Communication
 - Available support, information, tools and strategies
 - Post-deployment / reintegration
 - Warning signs and strategies
 - Available support, information and tools for personnel and their families
- **Policy framework for peacekeepers with caring responsibilities**
 - Deployment duration
 - Communications
 - R&R
 - Reintegration

Module 4: Other Dimensions of Care

- **Self-Care and Well-being**
 - Link between caring responsibilities and well-being
 - Why self-care and well-being are important in peace operations and how stress can impact performance, workplace cultures and peace outcomes
 - How to exercise self-care
 - What frameworks, structures, tools and resources exist to support the well-being of personnel on pre-, during and post-deployment
- **Duty of Care**
 - What is organisational duty of care?
 - How are support for personnel with caring responsibilities, self-care and organisational duty of care connected?
 - What policies, structures and resources are available to support personnel with caring responsibilities
 - What policies, structures and resources are available to support personnel well-being
 - What resources, amenities, policies and structures are available to support the well-being of personnel deployed on peace and other operations?
 - What responsibility do personnel have towards each other?
 - How can personnel support each other, what signs to look out for, what to do in specific instances?
 - Guidance for personnel with command responsibility and other supportive roles, including on deployments

Practical Tool #10: Quick-Reference Checklists to Support Personnel with Caring Responsibilities Deploying to UN Peace Operations

A. Organisational Checklist

Pre-Deployment Support Checklist

- Avoid assumptions about availability based on caregiving
- Verify completion of mandatory pre-deployment health, welfare and readiness checks for all personnel regardless of gender and parental status/caring responsibilities
- Update/ensure accuracy of Family Care Plans (i.e. details of individual personnel's caring responsibilities and support structures)
- Negotiate and regularly review an organisational care plan for personnel with caring responsibilities (e.g. UK's Carer's Passport)
- Identify and communicate resources and structures to support personnel with caring responsibilities
- Identify suitable deployment length (e.g. 6-month rotations, split deployments for some military roles, reduced-length UN deployments for specialised functions where feasible)
- Ensure pre-deployment briefings, include information on how to manage family separation and support self-care and well-being
- Assign Family Liaison Officer (FLO) or equivalent national focal point
- Confirm understanding of UN or military emergency repatriation policies for family members deployed to family duty station
- Ensure deployed personnel know what redress is available to them should any requirements be unjustifiably refused and how to access reporting mechanisms.

Mission Support Checklist

- Establish predictable communication access for deployed personnel, including secure and stable internet access and regular times to communicate with family/friends accounting for time differences/family schedules
- Review R&R and financial support for travel home during R&R
- Engage in discussions on the classification of family duty stations
- Invest in infrastructure that meets basic living standards and supports the welfare and well-being of all personnel, to include a decent bed, good toilet, basic amenities and recreational/welfare facilities
- Conduct frequent welfare check-ins
- Ensure awareness of mission welfare and well-being support structures and resources.
- Monitor contingent culture for stigmas relating to family responsibilities, care leave, and maternal bias and other forms of discrimination, and ensure personnel have access to support mechanisms and disciplinary structures
- Ensure deployed personnel know how to request Compassionate Leave (T/PCC) or Emergency Leave (UN) and respond swiftly to reports of family emergencies and guide personnel through leave processes
- Ensure deployed personnel know what redress is available to them should any requests be unjustifiably refused and how to access reporting mechanisms.

Post-Deployment Checklist

- Offer reintegration leave or post-operational leave per defence policy
- Conduct a reintegration interview that addresses care-related stress, family adjustment and welfare
- Establish and consolidate programs to support the families of deployed personnel during and after deployment
- Document and share lessons learned for improving organisational support.

Commander Responsibilities Checklist

- Engage in all leadership training on supporting personnel with caring responsibilities (e.g. barriers, maternal bias and how to support career development and progression)
- Understand legal and policy requirements regarding Family Care Plans
- Avoid making assumptions about readiness or availability based on caregiving
- Maintain non-punitive, return-to-duty pathways for personnel who do not deploy, deploy for short durations or are repatriated early for family emergencies – ensuring caregivers are not penalised in career progression
- Apply gender- and caregiver-sensitive deployment planning
- Maintain confidentiality and respect personnel privacy
- Ensure reporting mechanisms for discrimination, harassment and bullying are understood by all personnel
- Ensure a zero-tolerance approach towards discrimination, harassment and bullying of those with caring responsibilities, that it will not be tolerated, and lead by example.

B. Leadership Checklist

Pre-Deployment

- Assess caregiving situations in personnel's families
- Ensure flexible deployment options are considered
- Provide pre-deployment support resources

In-Mission Support

- Support regular communication with dependents
- Implement family-friendly leave policies
- Offer accessible well-being resources

Post-Deployment Reintegration

- Provide reintegration support services
- Offer flexible leave and accommodations
- Ensure childcare continuity

Manager Responsibilities

- Set clear expectations of behaviour
- Provide support, leadership and guidance
- Exercise zero tolerance of discrimination and harassment
- Promote culture of inclusion

C. Individual Checklist for Personnel Preparing to Deploy

Care Arrangements

- Plan childcare and other care arrangements
- Identify elder care support

Family Engagement (Planning and Communication)

- Discuss deployment with your family
- Arrange regular times to communicate
- Share Family Care Plan with your family

Family Support (Policies, Structures and Resources)

- Identify policies that can help your family while you are deployed (e.g. education, housing, psychosocial support)
- Engage support structures (e.g. informal networks, service associations)
- Utilise resources (e.g. well-being support Apps and websites)

Well-being

- Prepare for family separation to be a stressor on deployment
- Exercise self-care and seek help when needed
- Access support structures and resources during and after deployment

Career Planning and Chain of Command Engagement

- Have early, proactive career conversations with your chain of command about your aspiration to deploy
- Discuss required training, readiness requirements and promotion or career progression pathways linked to deployment
- Be transparent about caring responsibilities and planned arrangements to reduce assumptions or potential marginalisation from opportunities
- Document agreed arrangements where possible to support continuity if leadership changes

Practical Tool #11: Family Care Plan Template

A Family Care Plan ensures support for personnel's dependents when unavailable due to service obligations. It would typically include:

- **Service Member Information**
- Dependent information
- Identified guardians (primary and alternate)
- Emergency, short-term and long-term childcare/eldercare arrangements
- Childcare/eldercare arrangements during deployment
- Legal documents (POA, consent-to-travel, custody plans)
- Financial arrangements for dependent care
- Medical and, where relevant, schooling details
- **Transportation and Relocation Plan (where relevant)**
- Emergency contact persons and contingency plans
- Required support from unit or mission.

Practical Tool #12: Carer's Passport Template

A Carer's Passport supports the personnel as the caregiver. It can be added to a personnel's file and would typically include:

- Description of caring responsibilities
- Required flexibility (appointments, emergencies, adjustments)
- Agreement between service member and chain of command on how needs will be supported.

A Carer's Passport is applicable to a non-deployed environment, although it may contain information on ability to deploy.

Sample Carer's Passport

1. Service Person Details

- Name:
- Service Number:
- Rank:
- Branch:
- Unit/Station:
- Role:
- Contact Email:
- Contact Number:

2. Caring Responsibilities

Dependent Details and support requirements:

3. Impact on Work

Caring responsibilities may affect:

- Start and finish times
- Availability for evening/overnight duties
- Short-notice callouts
- Ability to deploy without advance planning
- Travel away from station for extended periods

4. Support Requested

Detail of support requested by personnel, for instance:

- Flexibility with start/finish times on certain days
- Ability to notify chain of command of potential emergency leave requirements
- Advance notice for planned detachments or training
- Permission to utilise flexible working arrangement policies, where feasible
- Carer's leave when required, in line with organisational policy

5. Support Agreed by Chain of Command

Detail of support agreed following discussion, which may include, for example:

- Flexible Working
- Short-Notice Absence
- Detachments/Training
- Carer's Leave
- Workload Adjustments

6. Review Plan

- Review Frequency: for instance, every 6 months, or sooner if caring needs change
- Next Review Date:

7. Privacy and Information Sharing

- This document will be shared with:
 - Service member's immediate chain of command
 - Welfare officer (as required)
 - Administrative staff only on a need-to-know basis
- Stored securely in accordance with organisational data protection standards.

8. Signatures

Service Member:

Signature:

Date:

Line Manager / Chain of Command:

Name/Rank:

Signature:

Date

Welfare/HR Representative (if applicable):

Signature:

Date:

Good Practice: UK Carer's Passport

In 2024, the UK introduced a Carer's Passport for Defence personnel with caring responsibilities to help manage both work and care. The passport is intended to create consistency for personnel, particularly when changing roles or managers, and to inform planning of assignments by taking into consideration the circumstances of employees. By introducing a Carer's Passport, personnel who have negotiated flexible working arrangements no longer need to renegotiate these arrangements from scratch when changing roles or managers, reducing disruptions and stress.

Practical Tool #13: Self-Care Tips

Self-care is critical on peace operations - and beyond. It helps protect well-being and, in turn, benefits performance and mission outcomes.

SELF-CARE TIPS FOR UNIFORMED PERSONNEL ON PEACE OPERATIONS



Psychological & Emotional Well-Being

- Daily grounding exercises
- Use journaling or seek help early
- Self-care Apps
- Check in with peers
- Mental health support



Physical Health & Energy

- Prioritise sleep & hydration
- Short workouts



Social Connection

- Stay in touch with family
- Join unit activities



Stress & Exposure

- Debrief difficult events
- Focus on what you can control



Work-Life Balance

- Take rest days
- Limit news & social media



Caring Responsibilities

- Plan for family needs
- Seek support early



Resources

- Medical support
- Fitness guides

When to seek help:

- Persistent insomnia or irritability
- Difficulty concentrating
- Feelings of hopelessness

SELF-CARE = MISSION READINESS AND WELL-BEING

Taking care of yourself is a professional responsibility

Practical Tool #14: Risk and Mitigation Mapping

Anticipating and Managing Implementation Challenges

Once priority actions have been identified to support personnel with caring responsibilities, this tool helps organisations anticipate risks that may arise during implementation.

Risks may occur at strategic, operational or workforce levels, and may differ across T/PCCs, institutions and operations.

This tool supports proactive planning by identifying common concerns (such as cost, readiness, fairness or backlash) and pairing them with evidence-informed mitigation strategies. Used early, it reduces resistance, strengthens leadership confidence and supports consistent application.

It can also be used as part of a Communication Strategy (Tool #15) to raise awareness of and build commitment to the need to support personnel with caring responsibilities.

Risk: Perception that caregivers reduce operational readiness.

Mitigation: Share data showing support retains talent and improves organisational effectiveness.

Risk: Stigma within units.

Mitigation: Leadership messaging and role-modelling.

Risk: Costly and administrative burden.

Mitigation: Streamlined digital care plan systems.

Risk: Perception that putting needs of the individual above the service can compromise ability to deliver.

Mitigation: Share data demonstrating positive correlation between well-being and performance.

Risk: Blanket policies that fail to meet the needs of everyone.

Mitigation: Empower individual personnel and commanders/supervisors to request and provide support on a case-by-case basis where feasible.

Risk: Supporting caregivers with assistance for childcare, flexible working arrangements, communications on deployment and travel home during R&R on long deployments is prohibitively costly.

Mitigation: Identify less costly initiatives and map priorities; analyse data that assesses cost benefits of investment (e.g. associated with attrition, stress).

Risk: Supporting caregivers risks perceptions of unfair treatment.

Mitigation: Provide well-being support, access to regular communication and support to travel home on R&R during long deployments to all personnel; encourage uptake of paternity or carer's leave among men.

Risk: Expediting support to increase the participation of women risks backlash.

Mitigation: Share data that shows increased participation of women enhances effectiveness, and support for caregivers enhances the well-being of all; uphold and communicate zero tolerance policies and discipline non-compliance.

Risk: Six-month deployments increase training and deployment costs and can compromise unit cohesion (if individuals have shorter rotations than the rest of their unit or squadron).

Mitigation: Communicate the benefits of investing in shorter deployments in terms of individual well-being and performance and mission effectiveness. Implement other strategies to enhance unit cohesion.

Risk: Fewer T/PCCs deploying personnel to UN peace operations where MoUs require increased investment to protect the well-being of peacekeepers (e.g. provision of adequate living conditions, communications, travel home).

Mitigation: Identify additional sources of investment and communicate the benefits to mission outcomes of investment.

Practical Tool #15: Communications and Engagement Strategy

Purpose

A Communication and Engagement Strategy provides a structured, intentional approach to how an organisation conveys information to and builds relationships with its personnel and stakeholders.

Such a strategy is critical for ensuring that policies, entitlements and support mechanisms for personnel with caring responsibilities are clearly understood, consistently applied and trusted, and that behaviours, attitudes and actions align with strategic priorities.

By proactively raising awareness of both the support required by carers and the support provided by the organisation, a Communication and Engagement Strategy helps:

- Normalise caring responsibilities across ranks and genders
- Reduce stigma and misinformation
- Enable early planning around deployment and service demands.

In doing so, it contributes to

- Retaining skilled personnel
- Improving individual well-being and performance
- Enhancing organisational capabilities and effectiveness.

Developing a Communications and Engagement Strategy would begin by mapping intent (the aim or purpose of the strategy), key messages and target audiences, communication approaches and content and available tools:

A. Overarching Messages (Across All Audiences)

- Supporting personnel with caring responsibilities is a capability and readiness issue, not a concession
- Retention of experienced personnel reduces recruitment and training costs and preserves institutional knowledge
- Diverse teams, including women and caregivers, improve organisational and operational effectiveness
- Caregiving is undertaken by both women and men, across ranks and roles
- Clear communication and leadership modelling reduce stigma and enable early, proactive planning.

B. Strategic Context

- Caring responsibilities (childcare, eldercare, dependent care) are a normal part of service life
- Operational demands and deployments can disproportionately affect carers if support is unclear or inconsistently communicated
- Clear, credible communication underpins retention, morale, gender equity and operational effectiveness
- Silence or ambiguity fuels stigma, misinformation and self-selection out of opportunities
- Visible leadership commitment and credible lived experience narratives are critical to cultural change

C. Communication Objectives

- Ensure personnel and families understand available supports, entitlements and expectations
- Normalise caring responsibilities across genders, ranks and roles
- Reinforce leadership commitment to fairness, inclusion and duty of care
- Enable early planning for deployment, posting and career decisions
- Reduce stigma, misinformation and fear of career penalty
- Ensure personnel are aware of complaint reporting mechanisms.

D. Priority Audiences

Strategic Level

- Organisational leadership
- Mission leadership
- Policy staff

Operational / Tactical Level

- Commanders and supervisors
- Deployed contingents
- Training establishments
- Force generation staff and recruiters
- Capability, workforce and personnel planners
- HR and welfare policy leads

Individual and Family Level

- Personnel with caring responsibilities
- Personnel considering deployment
- Families and support networks

External actors

- National Government
- UN leadership
- Prospective recruits

E. Communication Approaches and Content

Leadership Messaging

- Commander and senior leader statements framing care support as duty of care and connected to bolstering capability, readiness and retention.
- Clear, repeated messaging that caregiving does not equate to reduced commitment or deployability.
- Explicit reinforcement of non-discrimination and zero tolerance for bias.

Lived Experience and Storytelling

- Short case studies of women and men who:
 - have deployed while managing caring responsibilities
 - have accessed flexible working arrangements or other support to enable their continued engagement
 - have progressed their careers while caregiving
- Stories highlighting:
 - early conversations with chain of command
 - practical problem-solving
 - positive command support
- Include diverse ranks, roles, family structures and mission contexts.

Good Practice Visibility

- Highlight good practice and institutions implementing effective measures
- Share examples drawn from:
 - flexible deployment models
 - family support infrastructure
 - communication access on mission
 - leadership practices that reduce stigma
- Frame good practice as replicable and scalable, not exceptional.

Practical Guidance and Clarity

- Plain-language guidance on:
 - Family Care Plans
 - communication entitlements
 - leave and R&R options
 - flexible working or deployment pathways
- FAQs addressing common concerns.

Visual and Narrative Tools

- Use imagery that reflects:
 - women and men as caregivers
 - diverse family structures
- Avoid tokenistic imagery or stereotypes
- Pair visuals with real stories or quotes to reinforce credibility.

F. Platforms and Channels

Internal

- Commander's messages and briefings
- Pre-deployment training and induction sessions
- Career management and HR briefings
- Intranet hubs and digital toolkits
- Leadership training modules

External

- Public-facing case studies (where appropriate)
- Mission websites and official social media
- Policy briefs and reports
- Media interviews or op-eds highlighting institutional leadership

G. Resources and Responsibilities

- Assign clear ownership for communication activities
- Align timelines with policy rollouts and implementation milestones
- Coordinate messaging across institutional levels
- Ensure lived experience contributors are supported and consent processes are clear.

Practical Tool #15A: Communications Planning Tool

Building Understanding, Trust and Buy-in

Effective communication underpins successful implementation. This tool should be used alongside the Implementation Table and Risk Mapping, and can help develop a Communications and Engagement Strategy (Tool #15)

The Communications Planning Tool helps organisations plan clear, credible and consistent messaging about caring responsibilities, available supports and expectations. It emphasises communication as a leadership function, not a one-off announcement.

This tool supports:

- Normalising caregiving across ranks and genders
- Enabling early planning for deployment and career progression
- Reinforcing the link between care, capability and mission success.

It also encourages the use of lived experience stories, imagery and good practice examples to build trust and relevance.

Step 1: Define the Strategic Intent

What is this communication intended to achieve?

- Improve understanding of available supports and entitlements
- Normalise caring responsibilities across genders and ranks
- Reduce stigma and fear of career penalty
- Support early planning for deployment and career progression
- Reinforce leadership commitment to duty of care and fairness
- Retain experienced personnel and expand the deployable workforce

Step 2: Identify Priority Audiences

Who needs to hear this message?

- External Stakeholders
- Commanders and supervisors
- Personnel with caring responsibilities
- Personnel considering deployment or training
- Families and support networks
- HR, welfare and career management staff

Step 3: Shape the Core Messages

What must be clearly understood?

- Caring responsibilities are a normal part of service life
- Support for carers strengthens capability and readiness
- Caregiving does not equate to reduced commitment or deployability
- Supports are applied fairly and consistently
- Early conversations enable better planning and outcomes
- Caregiving skills contribute positively to organisational and operational effectiveness

Step 4: Select Communication Methods

How will the message be delivered?

- Leadership statements or commander's messages
- Pre-deployment briefings or training modules
- HR or career management guidance
- FAQs or intranet resources
- Visual materials and imagery
- Lived experience stories or case studies
- External communications (where appropriate)

Step 5: Use Lived Experience and Good Practice

How will credibility be built?

- Share stories of women and men managing caregiving and deployment
- Highlight practical problem-solving and command support
- Showcase good practice
- Use imagery that reflects diverse roles, families and contexts
- Ensure contributors are supported and consent processes are clear

Step 6: Identify Risks and Mitigation

What could undermine this communication?

- Stigma or backlash
- Misinterpretation as preferential treatment
- Concerns about cost or readiness
- Inconsistent application by leaders
- Mitigation actions:
 - Leadership role-modelling
 - Evidence linking support for caregivers with enhanced wellbeing, retention and performance
 - Clear, consistent messaging across levels
 - Reinforcement of non-discrimination expectations

Step 7: Assign Responsibility and Resources

Who is accountable?

Lead responsibility:

Supporting roles:

Timeframe:

Resources required:

Step 8: Monitor and Adjust

How will effectiveness be assessed?

- Feedback from personnel and families
- Uptake of supports or enquiries
- Survey or climate data
- Recruitment, retention, deployment or promotion trends
- Lessons learned incorporated into future communication

Key Reminder

Communication is not a one-off activity. It is an ongoing leadership responsibility that shapes trust, behaviour and participation. Effective communication enables personnel with caring responsibilities to remain engaged, deploy when ready and contribute fully to mission success.

Practical Tool #15B: Commanders' Key Messages and Guidance

Leadership in Practice

This tool provides concise, capability-focused messages for commanders and supervisors. It can be used as part of a Communication Strategy.

It recognises that leadership behaviour and language are central to whether policies are trusted and applied consistently. The guidance supports commanders to:

- Frame care as a readiness and planning issue
- Ensure policies are applied fairly and transparently
- Remove assumptions and informal barriers

This tool recognises leadership behaviour sets the culture

- What leaders say and do signals whether caring responsibilities are accepted or penalised
- Visible support and role-modelling reduce stigma and encourage help-seeking
- Commanders play a critical role in ensuring policies translate into practice.

This tool should be used in leadership briefings, training and command guidance.

1. Supporting carers is a capability issue

- Personnel with caring responsibilities represent a significant proportion of our trained and experienced workforce
- Retaining them preserves skills, reduces attrition costs and strengthens readiness
- Supporting carers increases the pool of personnel who are able and willing to deploy.

2. Caregiving does not equal reduced commitment

- Caring responsibilities affect availability at times, not professionalism, motivation or competence
- Assumptions about deployability or commitment create informal barriers and undermine trust
- Decisions should be based on capability and planning, not stereotypes.

3. Fairness means consistency, not sameness

- Supporting carers does not mean lowering standards or creating unfair advantage
- It means applying policies consistently, transparently and without bias
- Flexibility where feasible strengthens teams rather than weakens them.

4. Well-being and performance are linked

- Stress, burnout and unresolved family pressures directly affect focus, judgement and performance
- Supporting well-being is a preventive measure that contributes to mission success and safeguarding

Practical Guidance for Commanders

Commanders and supervisors should:

- Encourage early, confidential conversations about caring responsibilities
- Avoid assumptions about deployability or ambition
- Apply policies transparently and document decisions
- Seek HR or welfare advice where needed rather than relying on discretion alone
- Reinforce that caregiving is compatible with leadership and progression.

Practical Tool #15C: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Clarifying Expectations and Reducing Misinformation

This tool addresses common questions and concerns raised by personnel, leaders and families. It can be used as part of a Communication Strategy.

The FAQ reinforces key messages about fairness, standards, readiness and non-discrimination, and helps reduce:

- Misinformation
- Anxiety
- Inconsistent interpretation of policies.

It can be adapted for internal guidance, pre-deployment materials or intranet resources.

1. Why is this an organisational priority?

Supporting personnel with caring responsibilities strengthens workforce capability, retention and readiness. Many experienced personnel leave or self-select out of training and deployment opportunities due to unmanaged care pressures or fear of career penalty. Addressing these barriers expands the pool of deployable personnel, improves well-being and contributes directly to mission effectiveness.

2. Is this about lowering standards or expectations?

No. Standards remain unchanged. Supporting carers is about ensuring fair access to opportunities and enabling personnel to meet requirements through effective planning, not lowering performance or readiness thresholds.

3. Is this only relevant to women?

No. Caring responsibilities affect women and men across all ranks and roles. While women disproportionately carry caring responsibilities, men also care for children, elders and dependents. Normalising care across genders reduces stigma and supports the whole workforce.

4. Won't this create unfair advantages?

Fairness does not mean treating everyone the same; it means applying policies consistently and transparently. Support mechanisms are available to all personnel based on need and operational feasibility, not gender or rank.

5. Will disclosing caring responsibilities harm my career?

No. Policies explicitly prohibit discrimination based on caring responsibilities. Early disclosure enables planning and reduces the risk of being unintentionally sidelined due to assumptions or lack of information.

6. What if my circumstances change?

Caring responsibilities can change over time. Family Care Plans and support arrangements should be reviewed regularly and updated as needed, including during deployment where possible.

Other FAQ include:

- **What support is available?**
- **Where can I find more information?**

Responses to these FAQ will be specific to the institution.

FAQs and responses to them should be adapted to the institution and context.

Good Practice Case Studies

This section presents a small number of selected case studies from defence, police and peacekeeping contexts that have taken deliberate, practical steps to identify and address barriers faced by personnel with caring responsibilities.

The examples illustrate how policy reform, leadership action, investment in support infrastructure and cultural change can improve participation, retention and operational effectiveness when implemented in a way that is responsive to context and operational realities. The good practice examples draw from T/PCC security sector institutions as well as professional associations and networks.

These case studies do not represent exhaustive or perfect models, nor do they suggest that challenges have been fully resolved. Rather, they highlight concrete actions taken in different national, institutional and mission settings to respond to evidence of workforce attrition, unequal access to deployment and barriers to career progression. Moreover, there is a particular focus on the good practices of UK, Indonesia and India as these Troop and Police-Contributing Countries (T/PCCs) are the central case studies in the Report.¹⁴

Taken together, the examples demonstrate that barriers linked to caring responsibilities are not fixed or inevitable. While approaches vary according to legal frameworks, resources and operational demands, the underlying principles are transferable. Organisations are encouraged to draw on the elements most relevant to their context and apply them alongside the recommendations and practical tools in this Toolkit.

British Armed Forces

The British Armed Forces have a number of good practices to support personnel with caring responsibilities. For instance, flexible maternity leave arrangements include shared parental leave that extends up to 52 weeks. Apart from 2 weeks of mandatory leave that a mother must take, the balance of leave, up to 50 weeks, can be converted into shared parental leave and also covers adopting parents.

The British Armed Forces also have several policies to accommodate flexible working options, including Remote Working, Variable Start and Finish Times, and Compressed Working and Leave policies.¹⁵ The Armed Forces (Flexible Working) Act 2018 also allows personnel to request part-time work and limit the days away from their home base to 35 (Flexible Service) to improve work-life balance and enable personnel with families to balance demands. For these policies, the Royal Airforce won the Working Families' Best for Mothers Award in 2020, and the Army was a finalist for the same award in 2023. The Army was also commended by Working Families in 2022 under the Best for Fathers Award category for initiatives introduced within its flexible working policies.

In 2022, the UK Ministry of Defence adopted a breastfeeding policy which ensures access to private and suitable spaces for breastfeeding and pregnant personnel. It provides guidance for leadership on how to manage personnel who are breastfeeding, including information on how to best support their staff, including physical activities and daily tasks.¹⁶ The British Army's Guide to Creating Breastfeeding & Wellness Room provides information on setting up lactation/breastfeeding rooms and what facilities are required, including a fridge, comfortable chairs and storage.

The Continuity of Education Allowance provides up to 90% of boarding school tuition fees for children of serving personnel who are expected to move over 50 miles within the next 4 years. It is designed to support families to ensure that their children's education is not interrupted as they would otherwise normally be required to move with their parents. We heard from serving men and women how this policy supports their careers in the armed forces as it ensures continued access to opportunities, such as training and deployment.

The Royal Air Force won the 2020 Working Families' award Best for Mothers due to the measures in place to support women in the service retain and advance their careers after having or adopting children. Some best practices include giving advice and support to both mothers as *well as* their line managers as they take leave and return to work, flexible working arrangements, no deployment for the first 18 months after having their child, and in some cases affordable childcare was set up where local providers were too costly.

The armed forces also have special fitness training for ante- and post-natal personnel, support women in accessing specific healthcare services, and provide resources to commanders to support pregnant women and those returning from maternity leave.¹⁷ Other forms of support include parent networks among British Army and Royal Navy personnel, a Defence Breastfeeding Network for the wider defence force and a Defence Child Bereavement Network.¹⁸

UK Policing

Since 2017, police institutions in the UK have partnered with the UN on the *HeForShe* Campaign. Each police institution in the UK has signed up for the initiative. Since 2019, UK Policing have released seven *Gender Equality in UK Policing* reports.¹⁹ These reports contain events, initiatives, programmes and good practices on eradicating misogyny and sexual harassment in the workplace. Examples include workshops, listening circles and internal communications campaigns aimed at shifting attitudes and normalising respectful behaviour; development with the HeForShe Alliance of a 'Male Allyship Toolkit', training of personnel to actively support gender equality and model inclusive behaviours; introduction of flexible working advocacy programmes; dialogue and other initiatives to address maternal bias and promote acceptance of maternity and care within police culture. One example of many instances of good practice highlighted in these reports was the Maternity Evidence Café conducted in June 2024 by the Lancashire Constabulary, with the HeForShe Alliance, Women in Policing Network and the Open University. The purpose was to exchange knowledge on organisational policies and procedures in place to support police who are pregnant, on maternity leave and returning to work after maternity leave, as well as discuss lived experience and gaps in support. This information subsequently informed recommendations for policing on how to improve support.²⁰ While challenges persist, the campaign has improved women workplace safety and participation in police institutions across the UK.

Additionally, UK police institutions have supported flexible working practices, including part-time working, job sharing, school term time working, compressed and staggered hours, flexitime, and remote or home working. This has led to working part-time becoming an established norm and supporting the engagement and career advancement of women in the police, recognising the gendered nature of care work and the challenges of managing family and professional life.²¹

Indonesia

Indonesia is one of the most significant contributors of female peacekeepers globally. Many informed women we spoke with in Indonesia expressed satisfaction with the opportunities, fair treatment and respect they had received, with many having been deployed to UN peace operations multiple times and many having achieved high rank. The Government, the armed forces and police also demonstrate commitment to enhancing opportunities to advance the meaningful participation of women in the security sector and UN peace operations, demonstrated in several initiatives. Notably, Indonesia advocated for improvements to support the meaningful participation of women in peacekeeping during presidency of the UN Security Council (UNSC), which led to the Security Council passing Resolution 2538 (2020) on women and peacekeeping. UNSCR 2538 is the first resolution on peacekeeping devoted in full to women, and the first resolution in the history of Indonesian diplomacy in the UNSC.

With specific regard to supporting personnel with caring responsibilities, Indonesia has comprehensive legislation that provides childcare and responds to the broader needs of care-givers. The Indonesian National Armed Forces and the National Police have instituted many initiatives to better respond to the needs of personnel with caring responsibilities. These initiatives include both formal policies and informal practices, an empathetic response among many leaders towards the challenges that primary care-givers can face. For instance, several uniformed women from Indonesia provide examples of supportive commanders and supervisors who allow them to take time off for family emergencies, flexible hours at work to accommodate caring responsibilities and, on occasion, bring children to work. Formal policies include provisions for maternity, emergency and other forms of leave to support care-givers.

Indian Armed Forces

Indian Armed Forces provide a broad range of policies supporting personnel with caring responsibilities, including:

- Leave entitlements:
 - Annual Leave
 - Maternity and Paternity Leave
 - Childcare Leave (CCL)
 - Child Adoption Leave
 - Medical Termination of Pregnancy Leave
- Compassionate postings and temporary attachments for caregiving purposes.
- Spouse co-location for dual serving couples, where feasible
- Separated Family Accommodation when personnel are deployed
- Extensive military healthcare system providing:
 - Free medical care for personnel and dependents
 - Accommodation support for families relocating for medical reasons
- Educational support, including:
 - Army Public Schools with priority admission
 - School transport
 - Child Educational Allowance (CEA)
 - Growing provision of day-care centres and creches via the Army Women Welfare Association (AWWA)
- Pensions for unmarried or divorced daughters of deceased personnel

India's Army Women Welfare Association (AWWA)

The Army Women Welfare Association (AWWA) is a welfare organisation dedicated to supporting army personnel and their families, providing a comprehensive range of supports:

Educational Benefits

- Certificate courses for wives and dependents of Army members
- Pre-primary schools
- Schools across India for differently-abled children
- Hostels for girls and boys in major cities
- Education Grants to wards of martyred service members

Healthcare Support

- Early intervention centres in 7 hospitals for detecting disabilities at birth
- Social and emotional support to patients suffering from cancer and their caretakers,
- Ex-Serviceman Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS)
- Counselling services

Financial and Legal Empowerment

- 24-hour helpline providing legal advice on entitlements and benefits
- Financial training and small business development
- Immediate financial relief for families of fallen soldiers

Childcare Services

- Subsidised creches/daycare.
- Caregiving support on deployments by AWWA spouses of Commanding Officers

Social and Emotional Support

- 24-hour helplines
- Support for widows of servicemen killed in service

Canadian Armed Forces

The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) has implemented a number of policies to help support personnel with caring responsibilities. For instance, personnel are provided a maximum combined 1 year of maternity or parental leave, including 16 weeks of maternity leave and 37 weeks of parental leave. Personnel are also given medical support throughout this period.

For personnel who deploy to UN peace operations, the Home Leave Travel Assistance (HTLA) reimburses peacekeepers for travel expenses incurred while taking leave to visit family members. The CAF also provides compassionate status, which allows for geographic postings for reasons such as family related issues.

Members of the CAF are also given 3 days post-deployment debriefing sessions in Brussels, Belgium. Here, they are given appointments “with social workers” and “time to relax” and decompress between the mission and returning home (Interview #70).

Additionally, the Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services provides support to members and their families. Bases and wings have Military Family Resource Centres which work with military families to achieve work-life balance, providing support through childcare, peer support networks, counselling and emergency services. One Canadian peacekeeper explains:



...[the Military Family Resource Centre] is a place to support your family while you're deployed or away, or even if you're away for two weeks, on course, and it, and it doesn't matter if it's for the primary caregiving or secondary,... if someone's away, and it provides emergency services, provides child-care, it provides peer support networks, it provides counselling. So, it's extremely good practice, and it's a really good institution, and it's something that's grown over the past 25 years to provide that level of support (Interview with a Canadian peacekeeper, 04/09/24)

Norway

To address low uptake of parental leave among men, Norway introduced a father's quota which - since 2018 - provides 15 weeks of paid non-transferable leave. This has seen an increase in men accessing parental leave and has since been adopted in other Nordic countries, including Sweden and Iceland. The father's quota encourages greater sharing of caring responsibilities between men and women, with one interviewee explaining that the quota ensures “fathers [can] be with their kids” and making it “very natural for the male parent to stay home with the kids as [it is] for the female” (Interview with male military officer, New York, 05/11/2024)

Uruguay

In a project supported by the Elsie Initiative, the Uruguay Armed Forces (UAF) are trialling six-month deployments to encourage more women to participate in peacekeeping. The shorter rotations include job-sharing arrangements, assigning two women to a position where each deploy for six months, with both personnel receiving their pre-deployment training up front. The shorter rotations intend to encourage “more women with caring responsibilities [to] deploy because they would be gone for shorter periods from home” (interview with UN staff member, UNHQ, New York, 28/10/24).

Alongside this pilot project, the UAF, with the support of the Elsie Initiative Fund, also provide support for personnel with caring responsibilities while they are deployed to help facilitate their meaningful participation and representation. This includes financial support for child and elderly care to help eliminate some barriers to deployment.²²

The UAF also recognises the important role of leadership and acknowledges the influence of workplace culture in shifting biases and stereotypes towards caring responsibilities. Efforts are being made to build an enabling work environment where personnel with caring responsibilities feel able to speak with management about any issues related to their caring responsibilities and have access to entitled leave without impacting their career progression.²³

Ghana

The Ghana Armed Forces have implemented a number of policies and projects to support women in the security sector and carers in the armed forces. For instance, apart from three months maternity leave entitlements, mothers can negotiate flexible work arrangements which allow them to work half days upon returning to work.

Ghana is also implementing a Gender Strong Unit (GSU) program supported by the Elsie Initiative Fund, which requires battalions and police units to deploy a higher number of women than is outlined in the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy (by at least 5%). As part of the program, Ghana has deployed a GSU to UNIFIL, where efforts to accommodate higher numbers of women have included increasing the number of separate accommodation and facilities, improving their wellbeing and capacity to fulfil their peacekeeping duties.

New Zealand Police

In 2016, the New Zealand Police established the Police Women’s Advisory Network (WAN) to support the recruitment and advancement of women in the police. It provides advice to the Police Commissioner and Police Executive on strategies to recruit, retain and advance women within the police, and has been engaged in initiatives including mentoring programmes and leadership forums.

Another supportive network is the Mums in Blue Facebook group, which was established in 2021 by New Zealand Police Constable Shayna Tapusoa. The group connects hundreds of women police who are balancing their work with being a mum. It provides a safe, peer-led space for support, advice and sharing information. It has led to initiatives within the New Zealand Police to convene senior leaders and subject matter experts to address challenges facing women police with children.²⁴

In 2025, the Mums in Blue Network received the Excellence in Law Enforcement Initiative for Women in the Community Award from the Australasian Council of Women and Policing (ACWP).²⁵

International Association of Women Police (IAWP)

The International Association of Women Police (IAWP) is a global organisation, established in 1915, dedicated to providing women police with a range of resources, and opportunities for networking, training, collaboration and mentoring to advance women in policing. Members represent more than 70 countries and 30 affiliate organisations. Through its international conferences, regional chapters, and online platforms, IAWP connects women across ranks and career stages, helping to reduce isolation, build capacity and address challenges, including managing caregiving responsibilities alongside operational demands, deployments, and leadership roles. IAWP also plays an important role in advocacy and organisational change, promoting policies and practices that support women's engagement and advancement in policing. More about IAWP can be found on their website: <https://www.iawp.org>

Network for Uniformed Women Peacekeepers

The Network for Uniformed Women Peacekeepers is a UN initiative launched in 2023 to connect and empower women in military, police, justice, and corrections roles within peacekeeping missions. It aims to connect women peacekeepers to share experiences and provide a platform to elevate women peacekeepers' unique challenges and contributions, thereby improving mission effectiveness and fostering a more inclusive, supportive environment for women peacekeepers. The Network also plays a key role in information-sharing and peer support, helping uniformed workmen peacekeepers address challenges they face, including those related to family separation, gender and maternal bias, and well-being. The Network is coordinated by the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA)-Department of Peace Operations (DPO) Office for Coordination and Shared Services (OCSS), in partnership with the Office of Military Affairs (OMA), the Police Division, and the Justice and Corrections Service, with support from Germany. The Network can be reached via dpo-womenpknetwork@un.org.

What Works: Summary of Select Transferable Practices

The following table highlights common, evidence-informed practices drawn from the good practice examples. While implemented in different national and organisational contexts, these approaches demonstrate transferable principles that can be adapted to support personnel with caring responsibilities, improve retention and expand the deployable workforce. Only one example is given for each practice area, acknowledging there are multiple examples for each. As noted above, many of the good practices selected are drawn from the T/PCC case studies of the Report (UK, India and Indonesia), acknowledging there are many more examples.

Practice Area	What Was Done	Barrier Addressed	Why It Works	Examples
Flexible deployment lengths	Introduced shorter or alternative deployment options (e.g. six-month rotations, job-sharing)	Long separations deter personnel with caring responsibilities from deploying	Reduces family disruption while maintaining operational contribution	Uruguay
Structured parental and carer's leave	Expanded maternity, paternity and shared parental leave entitlements	Career interruption and attrition linked to childbirth and caregiving	Signals institutional commitment and supports retention and progression	Canada
Early and supported return to work	Modified training, phased return, tailored fitness standards	Physical and career barriers post-maternity	Enables safe reintegration without informal penalties	UK
Family accommodation on deployment	Classified missions as family-duty stations; provided family housing	Forced separation discourages deployment	Enables longer or repeated deployments with reduced stress	India
Communication access on deployment	Funded Wi-Fi, phones, welfare centres and family visit arrangements	Family separation stress; isolation	Improves wellbeing, focus and safeguarding	UK
Travel support during R&R	Reimbursed or subsidised travel home during long deployments	Financial barriers to maintaining family connection	Reduces strain and burnout during extended missions	Canada
Childcare and care infrastructure	Wraparound childcare, subsidies, creches, education support	Lack of affordable or accessible care	Enables participation across ranks and postings	India (AWWA)
Family-focused welfare services	Dedicated family resource centres, welfare officers and helplines	Families unsupported during deployment	Stabilises home environment, improving performance	India (AWWA)

Flexible working policies	Remote work, variable hours, compressed schedules	Rigid work patterns incompatible with care	Retains experienced personnel and reduces attrition	Ghana
Compassionate postings and co-location	Geographic flexibility for caregiving needs	Forced separation of families	Supports dual-career and dual-service families	Canada
Leadership guidance and training	Resources for commanders on pregnancy, care and bias	Inconsistent application; reliance on discretion	Translates policy into practice	Indonesia
Carer's Passport / continuity tools	Documented care arrangements across roles and managers	Repeated renegotiation; loss of informal agreements	Provides consistency and planning certainty	UK
Gender quotas or strengthened targets	Required higher representation of women in deployed units	Structural underrepresentation	Forces systemic adjustments to facilities and planning	Ghana
Cultural change initiatives	Awareness campaigns, role modelling, leadership messaging	Stigma and maternal bias	Normalises care across genders and ranks	Norway
Dedicated networks and associations	Formal and informal support, mentoring and advocacy networks	Isolation and lack of information	Builds peer support and institutional memory	IAWP

Key Takeaway from the Case Studies

Across diverse contexts, these examples demonstrate that supporting personnel with caring responsibilities is not a concession. It is a strategic investment in people, performance and mission success.

Cross-Cutting Lessons

Across contexts, the case studies demonstrate that:

- **Early planning beats ad hoc flexibility**
Systems that enable early disclosure and structured support reduce disruption and risk.
- **Care support is a retention strategy**
Organisations that invest in care retain skilled, experienced personnel and expand their deployable pool.
- **Leadership behaviour matters as much as policy**
Clear guidance, training and role-modelling determine whether policies are trusted and used.
- **Support for carers benefits the whole force**
Many measures improve wellbeing, performance and morale for all personnel, not only caregivers.
- **There is no single model**
Effective approaches are context-specific, but the principles are transferable.

Recommended Resources

Documents

- DCAF (2022) Global MOWIP Report: Fit-for-the-Future Peace Operations: Advancing Gender Equality to Achieve Long-term and Sustainable Peace. Geneva: DCAF. https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/MOWIP_GlobalReport_EN.pdf.
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- UN (2024) Mental Health Strategy for United Nations Uniformed Personnel. [https://resourcehub01.blob.core.windows.net/\\$web/Policy%20and%20Guidance/corepeacekeepingguidance/Medical/Mental%20Health%20Strategy%20-%20English.pdf](https://resourcehub01.blob.core.windows.net/$web/Policy%20and%20Guidance/corepeacekeepingguidance/Medical/Mental%20Health%20Strategy%20-%20English.pdf)
- UN (2024) Mental Health Strategy: A Gender-responsive Approach to Uniformed Personnel

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Support Networks, Apps and Hotlines

Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations

A major global effort led by Global Affairs Canada, supporting the increased meaningful participation of uniformed women in peace operations by addressing systemic barriers, providing guidance, training, and funding to T/PCCs and partners - https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues-development-enjeux_developpement/gender_equality-egalite_des_genres/elsie_initiative-initiative_elsie.aspx?lang=eng.

Network for Uniformed Women Peacekeepers – UN initiative launched in 2023 – can be reached via dpo-womenpknetwork@un.org.

UN's MindCompanion Web and Mobile Application (available at <https://un-mindcompanion.un.org> and from the Google Play and Apple App stores.

SecurityWomen – a global advocacy organisation for the inclusion of more women in security sector institutions, including the military and police services – <https://www.securitywomen.org>

UN Female Military Peacekeepers Network – FaceBook group, established 10 years ago – <https://www.facebook.com/groups/UN.female.military.peacekeepers.network/>.

Army Women Welfare Association (AWWA) – a non-governmental welfare organisation supporting serving personnel in the Indian Armed Forces and their families – <https://awwa.org.in>

International Association of Women Police (IAWP) – a non-profit organisation dedicated to advancing women in policing through leadership development, peer support, advocacy, and knowledge-sharing across national and international contexts – <https://www.iawp.org>

National Women's Veterans Associations often provide peer support, networking, and access to services to ease transition, reduce isolation, and assist women veterans. e.g. in Australia: **Women Veterans Australia (WVA)** and **Women Veterans Network Australia (WVNA)** – <https://www.womenveteransaustralia.org.au> and <https://engage.forcenet.gov.au/provider/women-veterans-network-australia>, respectively.

Many T/PCCs have networks for serving and retired police and military personnel. For instance, in the United States (US), **Service Women's Action Network (SWAN)** is an advocacy and support network for serving military women and veterans in the US. It has a 24/7 assistance hotline – (888) 502 – 8755 – and has other resources on its website - <https://www.servicewomensactionnetwork.org>.

Counselling for serving personnel and veterans and their families is available in many T/PCCs. For instance, **Open Arms (Australia)**, which provides counselling and other support for serving and retired armed forces personnel and their families in Australia, and provides 24-hour crisis support – 1800 011 046, <https://www.openarms.gov.au>.

Many T/PCCs also have crisis hotlines for veteran, such as the **US Lifeline for Vets** (888-777-4443) – <https://nfv.org/lifeline-for-vets/>.

There are also many civil society organisations that provide support, information and other resources for care-givers, including those who are separated from those they care for due to their work in peace operations such as **ConnectedApart** – an online platform that provides resources and services for those who are separated from their children because of work, study or travel for other reasons - <https://connectedapart.com>.

Other Useful Resources, Training and Tools

Peace Operations Training Institute (POTI) online training, including Family Responsibilities and Care Course (launch date by mid-2026) - <https://www.peaceopstraining.org>

BetterEvaluation - <https://www.betterevaluation.org>

Bias Interrupters - <https://biasinterrupters.org>

Elsie Initiative Fund - <https://elsiefund.org>

Evaluation Toolbox - <https://www.betterevaluation.org>

Endnotes

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