

The new Armed Forces Commissioner website brings together information about the Commissioner's role and the help which the office can provide.

What does it mean for our serving members and their families? What does it mean for BAFF itself?

The Armed Forces Commissioner replaced the Service Complaints Ombudsman (who replaced the "Service Complaints Commissioner") on 1 April 2026. The new office continues the Ombudsman's independent oversight of the Service Complaints system, including applications concerning admissibility, delay, maladministration and the substance of completed complaints.

Its remit is also significantly wider. Serving personnel and relevant family members can approach the Commissioner about **general welfare matters** arising from Service life. These might include accommodation, unacceptable behaviour, the quality of services or the adequacy of equipment. The Commissioner can investigate individual concerns, undertake wider thematic investigations and report findings and recommendations to Parliament.

Not every concern will result in a formal investigation, and the Commissioner cannot intervene in operational or command decisions or replace existing complaints, legal and welfare arrangements. Nevertheless, concerns reported to the office may help to reveal patterns and wider problems affecting the Armed Forces community.

BAFF welcomed the establishment of the Commissioner and the launch of this accessible source of information and guidance. We encourage serving personnel, families and those advising them to become familiar with what the office can – and cannot – do.

The effectiveness and independence of the new Commissioner will be tested by experience. Supporting constructive engagement with the office, identifying issues which may merit wider investigation and following its reports and recommendations should be a major focus for BAFF; more on that below.

The website's particularly useful starting pages are:

[What can the Commissioner do for me?](#)

[General Service Welfare Matters](#)

[Service Complaints](#)

Lastly, what are the implications for the future of BAFF itself?

BAFF welcomed the Armed Forces Commissioner legislation all the way, but does it render BAFF's mission superfluous?

A glance at allied nations such as Australia, Germany and yes, even the United States shows that representative organisations in various forms can and do function effectively in the same space as various forms of commissioner or inspector-general.

Check out the website of the Armed Forces Commissioner

As far as BAFF is concerned, it's no coincidence that the radical reorganisation of the Federation is taking place in the same year as the arrival of the Armed Forces Commissioner. The reorganised BAFF is already lower-cost and lighter on its feet, less interested in functioning as an all-purpose staff association from tomorrow. How that develops going forward is entirely up to us.

- The AFC website's homepage is here: [Welcome to the Armed Forces Commissioner](#).