

“I chose childminding” | A Forces Family Case Study

Susan’s husband was serving in the Royal Navy, and she understands the challenges and isolation this brought whilst having small children.

When her son was born around Christmas time, her husband had two-weeks leave and was then away for nine months. She had stopped working and did not drive so visiting family meant taking two buses and walking the last mile home. She missed adult company and as most of her friends were single and busy going out socialising - she began to feel quite isolated.

Meanwhile her husband missed out on all the ‘firsts’ because he was at sea. When he went away, he would send the children a postcard from every port that they docked in. They had a huge map on the bedroom wall, and they put a pin to show where Daddy had been and made up a scrap book about Daddy’s travels.

A daughter came along three years later and whilst Susan was prepared this time for the challenges, she also had a toddler to amuse. She also became very adept at changing a plug, wall papering and using power tools. Susan tells us of her daughter kissing a picture of Daddy every night when going to bed. When Daddy came home, she kissed him and the other Daddy in the photo as well. She eventually worked out that he was her one Daddy, and it was the same person - but the photograph was a good substitute when he was away.

At this point Susan learnt to drive and felt the urge to return to work. After exploring a number of possibilities, she decided childminding was the perfect solution, as it could provide the family with greater financial stability and working from home meant that she was able to look after her own children, as well as support other families in her community.

Susan’s childminding career spanned some 21 years, during which time she also gained a degree in psychology, qualifications in counselling and delivered training to support other childminders with their career development.

Her children also benefited from having other minded children around all the time, so they always had others to play with and her daughter in particular, thrived on being amongst a mix of age groups - both older and younger.

Susan made some really good friends during her childminding career and still keeps in touch with many of the families today.

*For further information on SCMA and the support and services we provide, please visit our website at **childminding.org** or email **information@childminding.org**.*