

# Future Focus: Service pupil outreach

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## Overview

The Future Focus programme was a series of university campus visits for students from Armed Forces families (service children). Service children have been identified by the Office for Students as an underrepresented group in higher education, with a participation rate of 24% compared to a national average of 43%<sup>1</sup>.

## Delivery

The dates, venues and attendees for each event are below:

Date	Year	Venue	Numbers	Schools
10 February 22	10	Royal Agricultural University	TOTAL: 24	Carterton CC: 18 John Colet: 3 Commonweal: 1 Wallingford: 2
8 March 22	11	University of Reading	TOTAL: 15	Carterton CC: 12 Wallingford: 3
22 June 22	9	University of Oxford	TOTAL: 11	Carterton CC
		<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	

Note: there was also planned a visit to Buckingham New University for Year 12 students; however this did not go ahead due to a lack of numbers.

## Evaluation

As this is a relatively new cohort for Study Higher, we also decided to use the programme as an opportunity to gather more information from service pupils about their particular needs and the type of activities that they would find helpful. The results are below:

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/effective-practice/children-from-military-families/>



- Students were asked to share their opinion as to whether being from a military background had affected their ability to do school work. Half of learners (49%) felt this had definitively not affected their ability to do school work, while the other half felt this had affected them either occasionally (35%) or definitively (16%).
- Unsurprisingly, the most common words associated with reasons why being from a military service family has ever affected their ability to do school work included 'moving' and feeling 'worried'. Several people mentioned finding it hard to concentrate and feeling worried about what their serving parent was doing or where they were going.
- The factor reported as impacting learners' ability to plan their future most significantly was 'anxiety/worry over what the future holds'. (Selected by 54%).
- More than  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the whole cohort are already aware of in-school support available for service pupils. However there is clearly scope to discuss the kinds of support which would be available to students at sixth form/college, at university, and in an apprenticeship as awareness was much less for these settings.
- The majority of learners (53%) felt they were 'somewhat likely' to get the grades required for the next step in their education; in total 33% felt they were either 'not too likely' or 'not at all likely' to achieve the grades they need. Given that a third of the cohort feel this is a concern, it may be worth exploring approaches to support these specific learners in this regard.
- The vast majority (73.1%) already agreed or strongly agreed that they felt confident they could study at HE level in the future before the intervention.
- When asked what activities/ information they would find most useful, the majority of learners requested information about options at age 16 and 18, fun/leisure activities, time management and subject taster sessions.
- After the event learners were asked to share what they had found most useful from the day. The most popular resultant themes were: information about university (26%); information about uni life and the student experience (22%); careers advice and information about career options (18%).

### Recommendations

- As some students identified 'being worried' as a factor affecting their ability to do school work, the following workshops would be beneficial:
  - ❖ A wellbeing/resilience workshop specifically for students from military families
  - ❖ A session on support available for students from military families attending university or undertaking an apprenticeship
- The majority of students felt confident they could study HE. In order to maintain this level of confidence and incorporate activities they identified as most useful, next year's sessions could include:
  - ❖ workshops on motivation
  - ❖ time management
  - ❖ subject taster sessions
  - ❖ post 16 and post 18 information
- Many students identified that they would be interested in studying an apprenticeship; the programme should therefore include visits to an employer/apprenticeship provider as well as a university
- The results from the different year groups were very similar, it is therefore worthwhile combining year groups together. This will have the benefit of schools not having to staff multiple visits and costs will be reduced.

