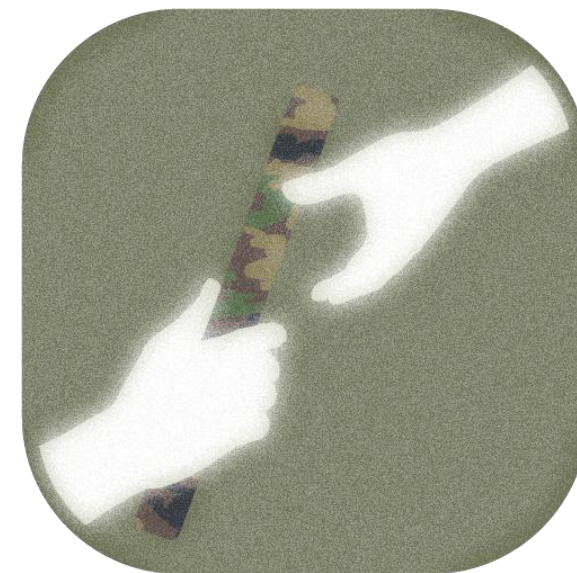




## Improving provision for mobile Service children with additional needs / SEND

*Matt Blyton, Project Lead  
Garrison ASSIST Project (GAP)  
13.11.24*

Assessment, Support & School Inclusivity in SEND Teaching



# Structure of this workshop

1. *What is the current situation for Service children with SEND? (Why the Garrison ASSIST Project.)*
2. *What are the distinctive experiences of Service children with SEND, their families and the schools that support them? (Are there any?)*
3. *What was the GAP approach? (What we did.)*
4. *How has GAP/GAP+ inspired impact? (And has it?)*
5. *How can GAP inspire further impact? (What is key to deploying GAP elsewhere.)*
6. Q&A

Leeming (RAF) Community Primary





Le Cateau Community Primary School

# *1. What is the current situation for Service children with SEND?*

**Why the Garrison ASSIST\* Project (GAP)?**

\* **A**ssessment, **S**upport & **S**chool **I**nclusivity in **S**END **T**eaching



# 'The perfect storm!'

- Increased SEND prevalence
- Increase in complex needs
- Reduced specialise support
- Reduced special school places
- Greater parental expectations
- Post-COVID 19
- Financial pressures
- School variance in support
- Rise in private assessments

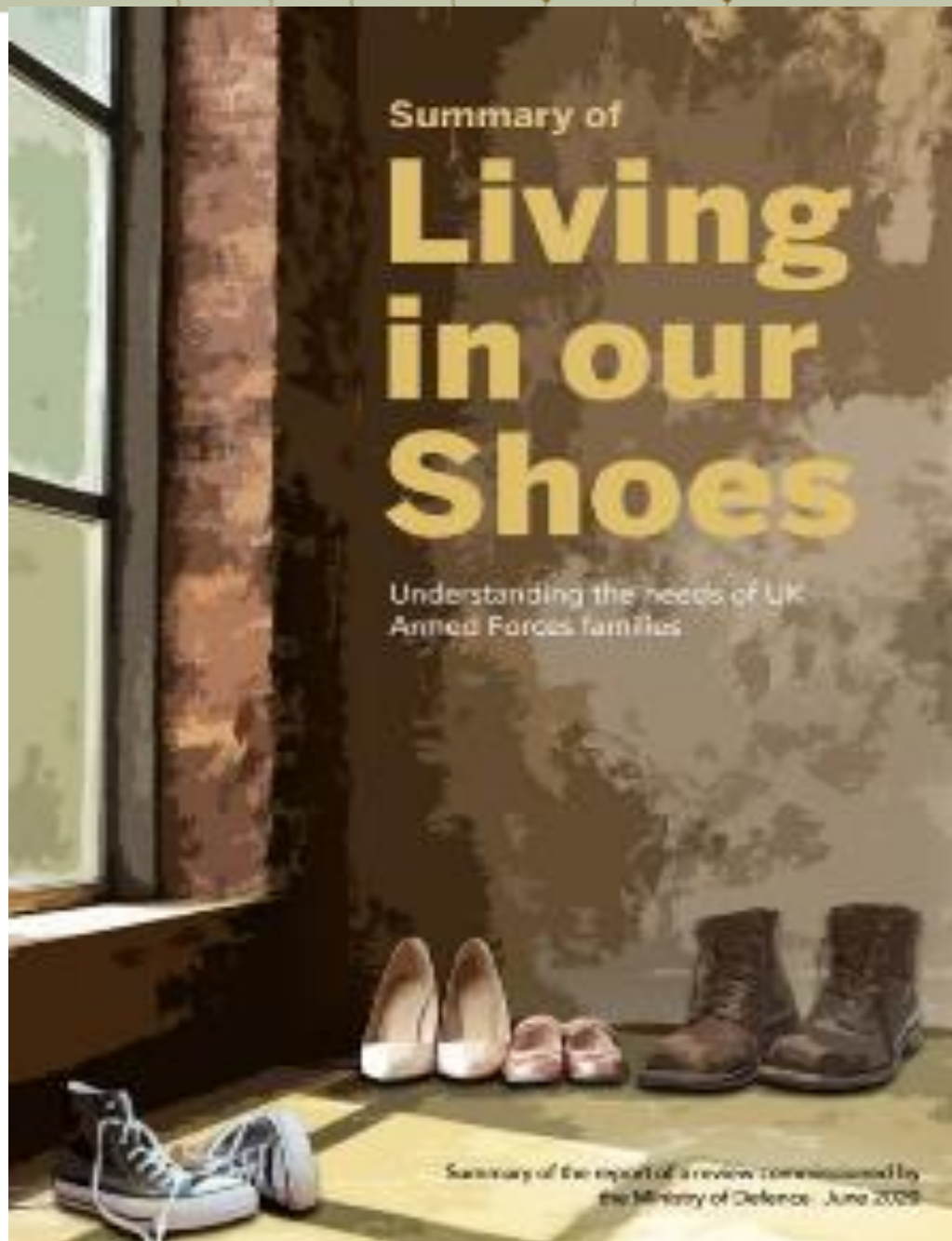
*"Personally, the project, and support network it has provided, couldn't have come at a better point in my SENCo journey. **I've never known it this tough!** It is hard to keep trying to provide answers and support for teachers and families struggling with kids with high needs. So being able to discuss and reflect on this has been incredibly valuable. Ultimately, it has made me feel less alone in my role! Especially when considering the added complexities working with Service children and high mobility brings." (Experienced SENCO)*



Catterick Garrison is the largest British Army garrison in the world, with a population of around 13,000 (2017). Many units are based at it, including the Infantry Training Centre. RAF Leeming is 14 miles south via the A1 (both RAF & Army)

GAP is a collaborative project involving schools serving Catterick Garrison, North Yorkshire.





# Aims of GAP

The aims of the project were to:

- upskill school staff, share resources and support systems;
- strengthen support for Service children and their families;
- have an improved consistency of approach; and
- hear and act on the voice of Service families with SEND.





Hipswell CE Primary School

*2. What are the distinctive experiences of Service children with SEND, their families and the schools that support them?*

- Systemic challenges (e.g. SEND/ASL/ALN processes)
- Mobility, 'queues' and different 'offers'
- Discontinuity of support, including key staff
- Parental separation / one-parent challenges
- Schools growing caseloads / 'historic' SEN registers
- Funding, funding and funding!

*"We haven't got 18 months to wait ... for us to find out about and get to know them, put in paperwork, all of that ... we haven't got that time for these children because then they move on again." (Teacher)*



*“We couldn’t keep moving every two years and have three or four different medical needs and then have autism on top.” (Parent)*

...frustrations with the official processes of securing diagnoses and specialist support was a recurring theme, with parents using terms such as ‘battle’ or ‘struggle’, or having to ‘fight’ for the support they felt was needed.





Cambrai Primary School

*3. What was the  
GAP approach?*

What did we do?

2022/23



## The Garrison ASSIST Project



Project lead  
(1 day / week)

Specialist Ed Psych  
(1 day / week)

**+ expert Advisory Panel**

Representative HT

MAT CEO

### *What did we achieve?*

*Over 350 attendees at 5 workshops on autism; emotion coaching; building blocks of learning; executive skills & developmental trauma + whole cluster training day.*

*(All filmed)*

**PROFILE RAISED / PARENTS ENGAGED /  
NETWORKS CREATED**



2023/24



The Garrison  
+ ASSIST Project+

Monthly  
forums



Supporting  
parents

SENCO  
leadership

Developing  
school  
expertise

Research  
&  
evaluation



*Two University of Winchester researchers*

### *What did we achieve?*

- Another school joining
- A series of parental animated films for staff / professionals
- Further training (e.g. SEND funding & the law / Nurture UK)
- SENCO support
- Full evaluation report (academic article to follow)
- National interest

A need to EMBED...  
Year 3 - thanks to the  
Armed Forces  
Education Trust



Carnagill Primary School

4. *How has GAP/GAP+ inspired impact?*

# So, has there been an impact?

*“The...findings from the initial analysis of the research undertaken... have highlighted that there has been an impact on School Development Planning and the continuing professional development around aspects of adaption to the curriculum and high-quality teaching...”*

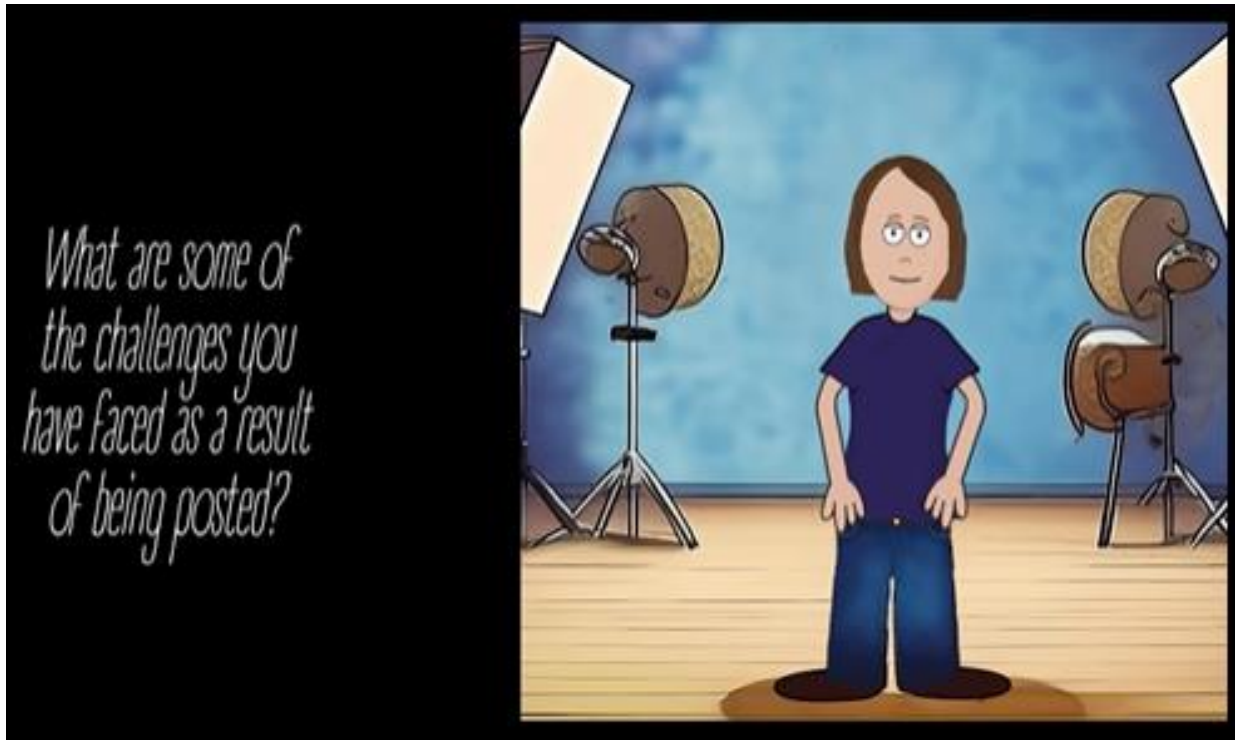
*The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators value the opportunity to network and share good practice. **There is on ongoing issue with securing provision for children and young people with complex needs in the face of a high level of mobility.**”*

Dr Julie Wharton and Dr Michael Hall, University of Winchester, July 2024



1. The upskilling of staff on SEND support & adaptive teaching.
2. Some helpful refocusing on the distinctiveness of Service lifestyle.
3. The encouragement of professional autonomy & collegiality.
4. A strengthened sense of shared endeavour and school to school support.
5. Some training directly supporting children. (e.g. Neurobears)
6. Some parents upskilled and more understanding of school endeavours.
7. Some successful parental engagement. (e.g. animations)

# An introductory film and 5 animations



## The 5 animated films:

- Posting moves
- Relationships
- Parental separation
- Language & labels
- Trauma & burnout

About 75 minutes – ideal for staff training sessions!



Wavell Community Primary School

*5. How can GAP  
inspire further  
impact?*

What is key to deploying GAP  
elsewhere in the UK?



1. Space any training out, spending time on each area to bring about real change.
2. Consider how ALL staff can access training, especially support & p/t staff.
3. Work in partnership with other schools serving a military establishment
4. Actively engage with your Service parents – especially the most disenfranchised.
5. Ensure the views of your Service children are heard – they see improvements.
6. Ensure there are effective lines of communication with your AF community.
7. Access funding grants or pool resources with other schools.



# Some possible points to reflect on...

- Where families have children with complex needs, there needs to be some consideration by Local Authorities and the Services of the impact that mobility can have on families being able to access services and statutory assessment.
- It would be helpful if Local Authority teams responsible for statutory assessment receive advice and guidance on the challenges faced by children and young people with SEND in Service families.
- Schools should create opportunities to listen to the lived experiences of the families they serve and be open to evolving their practice in response.
- Schools should be sensitive to the support needs of parents in the design of their day-to-day processes and communication routes.