

LINCOLNSHIRE AND EAST MIDLANDS SCIP ALLIANCE HUB

MINUTES OF THE REMOTE MEETING (MS TEAMS) FOR THE LINCOLNSHIRE AND EAST MIDLANDS SCIP ALLIANCE HUB MEETING HELD ON 21ST JANUARY 2021 2-4PM

Present:	<p>Jessica Darnell (Chair) (JD) Terri Moloney (TM) Katy Nevitt (KN) Louise Briggs (LB)</p> <p>Gemma Gazi (GG) Lorraine Breeton (LB2) Benjamin Carter (BC) Niamh (NS) Lewis (LS) Michelle Woolman-Lane (MWL)</p>	<p>Senior Project Officer, LiNCHigher RAF Recruitment and Selection Officer, RAF Business Consultant/ Armed Forces Lead, BGU Policy Advisor (Education and Childcare) RAF Families Federation, RAF Widening Participation Officer, BGU Area Engagement Officer, LiNCHigher Area Engagement Officer, LiNCHigher Student Student Armed Forces Officer, Rutland County Council</p>
Invited:	<p>Gill Angel (GA) Holly Clayton (HC)</p> <p>Ellis Potter (EP) Jonathan Lidster (JL) Chloe Robinson (CR) Rosie Smejika (RS) John Gibbins (JG) Thomas Leech (TL)</p> <p>Caitlin (CS) Lara (L-S)</p>	<p>Community Development Officer, RAF Scampton HE Recruitment and Widening Participation Lead, Lincoln College Senior Area Engagement Officer, LiNCHigher Project Manager, LiNCHigher Area Engagement Officer, LiNCHigher Hub Officer, LiNCHigher Area Engagement Officer, LiNCHigher Senior Marketing and Communications Officer, LiNCHigher Student Student</p>
Minutes Secretary	Jessica Darnell	Senior Project Officer, LiNCHigher

All members agreed to the recording of the meeting.

1. Apologies

1.1 Apologies were received from the following members:

- Helen Janes, WP Officer Access; Participation & Bid Writing Officer, Stamford College – Inspire Education Group - HJ

The Chair welcomed members to the last meeting of the Governance Board for the academic year.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Actions

2.1 To Receive the Minutes of the Governance Board Meeting Held on 8th October 2020
 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 08th October 2020 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

2.2 Matters Arising

2.2.1 Discussion on the hub's role, rationale and operating mechanisms (Refers to action 4)

The Senior Project Officer (JD) noted that they raised a call for action for all members interested in shared leadership of the hub to submit proposals.

JD confirmed the action point would be brought forward to this meeting's actions but noted discussions were taking place with BGU for transfer of the hub in the eventuality of the disbanding or redirection of the Uniconnect programme.

2.2.2 Discussion on barriers/gaps in Lincolnshire (Refers to action 5)

JD noted that this was raised at the last meeting by the Community Development Officer, RAF Scampton, to send through the terms of reference for the Young Peoples Board to JD to request attendance.

JD confirmed the action point would be brought forward to this meeting's actions.

3. New Developments

3.1 Resources

3.1.1 JD asked members to give a status update on any developments since the last meeting. It was noted LB from the RAF Families Federation had sent various resource guides across for publication on the LiNCHigher website and social media pages.

3.1.2 The Business Consultant (KN) noted the barriers created by COVID and working from home. They noted a realistic timeframe would be to start planning after Easter 2021 in line with schools returns.

3.1.3 JD raised the question 'Does any members know if Airplay sessions are still running in any capacity as I know they were running virtually in the first lockdown?'

3.1.4 The Policy Advisor (LB) noted the digital offering of Airplay session was going ahead (largely advertised within numerous defence networks) and the RAF Benevolent Fund were looking to strengthen the virtual access by young people due to COVID. It was noted it had benefits for families who live away from bases and were the Benevolent Fund were looking to build its ability to get advice and information to people.

3.1.5 JD highlighted the information supplied by the Community Development Officer (GA) at the previous meeting where Lincolnshire's Airplay offering had been successful with attendance seeing high levels of engagement. Packs were sent out prior to sessions to ensure inclusivity. It was also noted this could be an aspect the group considers develops to engage secondary school students (13-18 years old) as well as parents.

ALL

GA

- 3.1.6 The RAF Recruitment and Selection Officer (TM) noted that from a personal experience schools (primary) were engaging with parent/carers and offering support packs such as STEM activity bundles. Not being hugely attached to the camp due to work commitments had affected engagements with activities such as Airplay.
- 3.1.7 JD noted it would be beneficial to understand the level of engagement across all camps and what provisions were being implemented.
- 3.1.8 LB noted the offering will vary across different camps and from around the country.
- 3.1.9 JD noted that this information could have identified a gap in support for young people depending on where they were residing and which camp they were linked to. This type of gap is exactly the support that the group could assist with and highlight as a priority.
- 3.1.10 JD gave an update on the work being conducted by LiNCHigher:
- Creation of a students from a military background guide to HE which supports them through the whole year 13 journey including topics such as personal statements, applying, results day and open days.
 - Creation of a series of videos focussing on inspiring stories of current HE students from a military background and their journey to HE.
 - Focus groups were initially planned for Feb 2021 and have now been postponed indefinitely until schools return.

It was agreed JD would distribute LiNCHighers service children's guide to HE once finalised.

- 3.1.11 Student (LS) noted from personal experiences and coming from a non-traditional military background we were fortunate that we did not move around. Engagement with many military experiences such as cadets as did many of my peers and found it semi-normal to use guns etc but when it came to writing a personal statement the experiences didn't come across as transferable skills to, HE. When starting University that when the transferable skills from our military background started to show and the same for family members who went into medicine. Some aspects to consider are:
- Video/workshop to interoperate and discuss the transferable skills acquired by a military child e.g., moving around countries, adapting to gain new friends or new schools.
 - Information guide to highlight facilities and the local offering around each university in terms of military resources e.g. chaplaincy. This supports those individuals that move to a new location to study HE that may consider joining the military after finishing their degree.
 - Support and advice for schools who have older students from a military background who chose to stay with other family members or live alone to avoid moving abroad when parent/carers are deployed. For example, ability to study by yourself, settle into school in the middle of an academic year, transition from an English education system to an international one and vice versa.
 - Information packs for students and staff surrounding military family life alongside specific support for teachers to recognise early warning signs of group exclusions or bullying connected to military family life.

JD

- Cadets supports with connections with other military students and harvest friendship groups.
- Transferring of international academic qualifications for HE if a young person has moved with a deployed parent/care and then returned to the UK. Information guides on the transfer/equivalent of an international qualification to a British qualification to decrease the risks of unsuccessful admissions to HE.

3.1.12 Student (NS) noted a package of information for staff and teachers would assist with transitions and help them understand the difficulties faced. For example as a military child arriving in the UK a month before starting college, being handed three assignments whilst in the midst of unpacking and then to be greeted with the news of a serving parent being deployed. Alongside this you notice the groups of individuals that grew up together, attended school together and now college and as a military child you moved from an international country, don't know any individual but have friends all over the world.

3.1.13 NS also noted the importance of tailoring the webinar delivery style as highlight moving around, moving abroad etc as if that isn't normal lifestyle could be misunderstood. For example, 'as a military child going to school on an Army base was normal to me if people present that lifestyle as not normal to a service child compared to other individuals it is a hard concept to deal with as that is all I have known.'

3.1.14 KN noted the limited teaching hours in teacher training covering the topic of military students. Specifically, in Lincolnshire with the number of military students in schools a module for HE institutions to include learning, question time and considering where their placements are.

It was agreed that KN will initiate a conversation with the relevant academics and course leaders to query the current support on offer to trainee teachers on supporting military students. Thus, also including a scoping exercise to determine the process to incorporate an element into programmes of study.

KN

3.1.15 LB noted the work being conducted by Alison Baverstock through a charity called Reading Force. As a professor at Kings University in London she has developed a module covering an introduction to armed forces life for teacher training programme which is being pushed in many directions.

It was agreed that LB will disseminate the teacher training module information to all members.

LB

3.1.16 LB noted the little guidance sheets available on the SCiP Alliance website covering some of these aspects including quotes from students and ideas about how to make the most of the opportunities and experiences gained. LB also noted the work SCiP Alliance were conducting with UCAS to create a tick box for military students to self-identify is currently on hold.

3.1.17 The Widening Participation Officer (GG) noted that although not specifically targeted military families are one of the many widening participation criteria's the university has developed for individuals to access activities and support. If a student identifies

with that background, then they can join one of the programmes. This also helps when a student identifies at enrolment that they are from a military background as we can reach out to them for projects to act as an ambassador and be willing to support and talk whether that be face to face when possible or support creating resources like videos.

- 3.1.18 KN noted from a business development side one part of the group is tapping into the student and the young people and the other looking at the families and those trends that emerge from coming in and out of county. The development of the two sides pulling together as one central place for all this information and communicating for everyone to access this information. For example, parents are stepping into an area that is unfamiliar and trying to work out where to start and what needs completing. All these elements together including local HIVES will be the key to engaging families especially offering them a welcome back to the area with all the details they need.
- 3.1.19 LB provided an update on the work being conducted by the Families Federation;
- Developing digital packs of things for families to access – in a non COVID world would attend family days on stations and hand out information and offer advice. This was unable to happen in 2020 and is unlikely in 2021. Determining what information families would like to receive and how it would be disseminated. Looking to advertise in around April/May 2021.
 - Themed webinar series for families to access- one already completed on employment and training from the view of military spouses and partners. An education webinar will be a part of this series. Currently scoping out the format and content as well as presenters.
 - The three families federations are working collaboratively with the director of children and young people MOD and SCiP Alliance to create a guide of service life for children. An introductory level to cover a snippet of what armed forces life looks like and what children might experience including strengths and challenges. Once complete it would be useful resources for schools and educators who have little or no experience of working with service children.
- 3.1.20 LB also noted service children's state schools have recently completed a large survey of state schools in England. Report is due for publication however the draft highlights a significant knowledge gap of schools with few numbers of service children not knowing the correct support to provide. Another area highlighted in the findings was mobility and deployment and the support for service children with repeated separation of all types alongside the traditional mobility issues and transition in and out of various schools. The Thriving Lives Toolkit has the potential to support these findings.

4. Explore themes

4.1 Identified themes by SCiP Alliance

- 4.1.1 JD noted the Thriving Lives Toolkit highlighted key principles establishments can adopt to create effective practices. These principles are;
- Our approach is clear
 - Wellbeing is supported
 - Achieved is maximised
 - Transition is effective

- Children are heard
- Parents are engaged
- Staff are well-informed

4.2 Group themes discussion

4.2.1 JD posted the question 'As a group which three themes should be our priorities for this year and what delivery mechanisms will we use?'

4.2.2 GG noted teachers are often the barrier to accessing and delivering to students. Breaking down this barrier by creating training packs and then working with them to support the students.

4.2.3 TM noted the STEM contact – Sarah Duffy could support with school activities for service children. Within the different RAF bases across the county several STEM ambassadors are keen to get experience of delivering activities and adding it to their CV.

It was agreed TM would invite Sarah Duffy to attend the hub meetings or an alternative STEM ambassador.

TM

4.2.4 MWL noted the education team at Rutland County Council have previously operated conferences for schools to gain great awareness of service family life alongside a student conference to engage and develop understanding of their lived experiences.

4.2.5 LS noted the link between children's voices are heard and parents are engaged and added that through experience if parents were not officers, the idea of going to university was completely foreign to our parents, virtually none had been themselves or if they had attended it's been when they were already in the military. Involving parents in the process to support their child to HE is likely to ensure they complete that journey. It is also worth highlight comparisons of degrees to jobs in the military and what it leads to. For example, wanting to complete a degree in gaming and getting parental support when there was no information to put that degree into real life context is hard. Using work experience at an RAF base with the UAE team and various departments put the degree into perspective as they could view it in a real-life situation. They may not have understood what Xbox meant but they understood that it was an accessible job. This all leads to young people's voices being heard by not only parents, but employers too are interested in these real-life experiences.

4.2.6 MWL noted the misunderstanding of finances and funding relating to university which acts as a barrier that has a group we should look to remove.

4.2.7 MWL also noted a barrier to engaging with parents which they have discovered in one of the Rutland schools on camp is the negative school experiences parents themselves have faced. Thus leading to poor engagement with their own child's education/school redefining this aspect of their child's life as a positive rather than the deep rooted negated experience they faced.

4.2.8 KN noted working on business development at the university and targeting service personnel in certain roles to accredit their skills and knowledge is challenges. Many

individuals have had officer training and over 20 years' experience but no accreditation as a teacher. The university offers individuals learning opportunities on campus or lectures can travel to camp and a degree can be completed in various ways incorporating their learning credits. Funding is flagged as a major barrier.

4.2.9 NS noted for students living in international countries there are many elements facing parents such as booking flights or ferries and the prospects of their child studying in a different country and overcoming that hurdle with a flurry of information and processes, they may not understand.

4.2.10 LB noted the work being undertaken by the family's federation to engage parents and informing them on current news and changes. Due to COVID there were many families apart over Christmas with internationally deployed service personal stuck aboard as they were unable to match all the quarantine requirements of travelling in and out. Defence is supporting where possible to refund costs incurred by COVID tests and waive requirements in different countries after more countries were added to the no fly list. Children are coming back for boarding school and we will soon have the challenges of getting them home for half term with quarantine regulation ever changing.

5. Roles and Responsibilities of Hub Members

5.1 Hub structure

5.1.1 JD noted the group currently meeting quarterly and the increased number of individuals interested in joining as a member. JD posed the question to members 'Did we want subdivisions within the current group structure such as outreach and delivery, resources and content and evaluation and research?'

5.1.2 LB noted separating the group has a higher chance of communication being disrupted and some of the elements interlink.

5.1.3 KN noted being from different organisations and different counties setting a Teams folder up for individuals to submit documents for all members to review as a central depository.

It was agreed JD would create a Teams group and invite all hub members.

JD

5.1.4 TM noted the RAF have blocks on certain external software but would try to access the group.

5.1.5 MWL noted the shift towards academies becoming separate entities local authority education teams provide guidance on the DfE regulatory pieces which proves challenging as academies tend to operate their own systems.

5.2 Hub members

5.2.1 GG noted the importance to invite school representatives with a larger proportion of Service children to highlight the barriers towards delivering activities and the support needed from a school perspective.

It was agreed JD would review school data to highlight potential high priority schools in Lincolnshire.

JD

- 5.2.2 MWL noted the head teacher at Cottesmore Academy (primary) is engaged in and proactive in supporting service children with more than double the national average in the school.
- 5.2.3

It was agreed MWL would invite the head teacher at Cottesmore academy to join the hub.

MWL

LB noted the regional coordinators for the cadets including combined cadet force and RF cadets in the area may benefit the group at a later stage. MK Heroes also run in Lincolnshire area.

MWL noted Mark Davis or F Muttering has set up the family's forum which could send a representative at a later stage.

JD noted the hope to collaborate and bring on board Pathways Uniconnect as a member as they cover the East Midlands area.

6. 2021 Action Plan

6.1 Group discussion

- 6.1.1 JD noted the importance of deciding key action points to ensure accountability can be placed on tasks. JD also noted LB had previously sent across several resource packs for different topics including Pupil Premium.
- 6.1.2 JD noted the LiNCHigher Virtual delivery platform which could be utilised to host a series of support sessions held by different organisations aimed at parents and teachers.
- 6.1.3 LB noted prerecord content to fit around teaching commitments and family commitments and for individuals to access later would be useful especially once schools return.
- 6.1.4 JD noted the discussions held earlier in the meeting with most organisations concentrating on specific aspects for each of our identified themes for teachers, parents and students which can be fed into the next meeting.
- 6.1.5 MWL noted the videos created by Matt Blyton in Yorkshire that captured powerful messages and shared student's voice. Could look at sharing those as a group.
- 6.1.6 LB noted the family's federation can support with some articles in magazines and sharing across social media platforms to raise awareness about the group's existence both amongst parents but also other individuals looking for support. Lb also noted HIVES and the CDOs have a newsletter which is pushed out to families every month with new information or news which the group to add to as they share the family's federation content.

6.1.7 JD noted once the LiNCHigher Hub is officially launched elements can be housed on the platform as another avenue to filter information and support. This could also offer the capacity to set up a Lincolnshire and East Midlands SCiP Hub newsletter.

It was agreed JD would investigate the implications of a newsletter to be housed on the hub platform and set up of a group main email address.

JD

6.1.8 LS noted the importance of advertising the Unibuddy platform as a way for individuals to speak to current HE students from a military background or designate a named contact for signposting students to.

6.1.9 EWL noted the lack of support for a reservist family and linking though the welfare offices who house the community development workers on bases who share the various messages.

7. Any Other Business

7.1 Chair acknowledged the time individuals had taken to attend the meeting and the value of the input provided for discussions.

8. Date of the Next Meeting

8.1 Meetings will be held quarterly, with the next meeting to be held on Wednesday 17th March 2021, 2-4pm.

Reports Referenced:

Thriving Lives Toolkit - <https://www.scipalliance.org/thriving-lives-toolkit>