

An introduction to today's contributors

John Stephens is currently headteacher of Goosewell Academy, Plymouth which has 34% of its 600 pupils having parents serving, or who have served, in the armed forces - predominantly Royal Navy and Royal Marines. He has been a member of SCISS National Executive for 10 years, currently its chair. He has taken an active role with the Plymouth Local Authority Lead for Service Pupils in supporting school staff to help meet the needs of their service families at a local level. Goosewell Academy was one of the 8 founding member schools of HMS Heroes (now MCK Heroes).

Lisa Thipthorp works alongside Armed Forces Covenant Champions both on RAF units and within local authorities across Central UK, East Anglia and the East Midlands to raise awareness, understanding and implementation of the Armed Forces Covenant. Prior to this role, Lisa managed the RAF Association Storybook Wings project which was developed to mitigate separation anxiety in young children when their parent was deployed.

Bridget Nicholson is a former Royal Navy Logistics Officer, teacher, school governor and tutor for initial teacher training. She has worked extensively with young people and families in education and children's services, providing evidence-based parenting and behaviour support in schools and family settings.

Steph Fawdry has been the Headteacher at RAF Benson Community Primary School since September 2010 and prior to this she worked for Oxfordshire's School Improvement Team and ICT Curriculum teams after moving to Oxfordshire from Birmingham where she taught for a number of years. She also carries out School Inspections as an Ofsted Inspector and is also a member of the SCISS NEAC.

Suzanna Rodulson has been at RAF Benson Community Primary School for over 12 years supporting children, more recently supporting mitigating the effects of mobility and deployment. Sue is also a military wife and brings with her a wealth of experience to supporting children at the school.

Phil Dent worked in industry before re-training as a teacher. He taught (primarily) in secondary schools in Bristol, Manchester and Coventry and led whole-school programmes focused on disadvantaged and vulnerable learners, before switching to higher education as Director for Aimhigher Coventry and Warwickshire. He was a strategy adviser for the Office for Fair Access and led research and practice projects with schools and universities as Chief Executive of The Progression Trust before 'settling down' at the University of Winchester. He leads the SCiP Alliance, the university's community impact strategy, and the set-up of a national charity supporting professionals working with looked-after children and care leavers.

Louise Fetigan founded the charity Little Troopers in 2011. She has also served in the British Army and is a military spouse and mum. In 2017, she launched the project *Little Troopers at School* which is expanding in 2018.

Anna Vrahimi recently took up the new role of SEND Leader for DCYP/MOD Schools having moved from a MOD School in Dhekelia, Cyprus, in December 2017 where she was an Assistant Headteacher for SEND and Inclusion. It is common for the school to have whole regimental change where over 200 children leave and another 200 children join at the same time – so getting SEND and transition right is vital. Anna has also been a Deputy Headteacher in a Wolverhampton school with high levels of social deprivation and mobility. Her experience and passion has always been supporting the most vulnerable groups of children.

Annabel Hall has been working as a Service Pupils' Champion in North Yorkshire for 6 years. This innovative post emerged from a successful bid to the MOD's Education Support Fund and has become an established and well utilised liaison and support role for military families / schools and a bridge for the military across the county. In the last 18 months, an increasing amount of her time has been spent helping families with children with SEND and she is very aware that service lifestyle poses even more challenges for such children. Annabel started her working life as a social worker, bringing this background alongside personal experience of service life herself being married to a military padre.

Martin Lennon is Interim Head of Policy and Public Affairs at the Children's Commissioner's Office (CCO). His primary areas of work are around children's mental health and outcomes for vulnerable children. Prior to joining the CCO, he held a variety of roles in Parliament.

Charlotte Mannix-Pole is a Policy Officer at the Children's Commissioner's Office. She has worked on a range of projects, from the use of social media in Under 13s, to children's experiences in education. Prior to joining the CCO, she worked as an English teacher in an inner city secondary school in the West Midlands.

Grahame Shepherd recently retired from a successful career in education, culminating in the headship of Le Cateau Primary, a large school on Catterick Garrison, North Yorkshire, currently with over 470 pupils on roll of which over 70% come from a military background. Grahame was the SCISS National Executive's Chair for many years and was recently awarded an MBE in the Queen's Honours List for his services to the education of military pupils.

Karl Hobley is the Royal British Legion's Public Affairs and Campaigns Officer for central England. Karl leads the Legion's campaigning and lobbying efforts at community and local government level, whilst also helping to deliver the Legion's national campaigns. Outside of work he is also a local authority councillor.

Phil Bannister is a team leader in Disadvantage Unit at the Department for Education. He is responsible for policy around the Service Pupil Premium and helps co-ordinate the Department's other activities in support of Service Children in State Schools.

Aaron Tillyer has over 6 years' experience within Community Fundraising. Having just joined the RAF Benevolent Fund, he has worked within military charities previously on a national scale, but now focusses more on the regions of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. He has worked closely with a number of organisations including schools, colleges and universities in creating mutually beneficial relationships. These underpin what community fundraising is and have the ability to create longstanding partnerships.

Dr. Alison Baverstock is the founder and director of the Reading Force charity. A former publisher with strong interests in widening participation and reader development, Alison is Course Leader for MA Publishing at Kingston University and the author of many titles on the book business including *Is there a book in you?* and *The Naked Author*. She founded *Well Worth Reading*, a community reading development project for libraries, which won a Business and Arts Award in 1989.

Russell Collier joined the MoD's Directorate for Children & Young People (DCYP) in February 2016 as the Principal Education Officer. His role encompasses many aspects of the educational support that the Directorate provides Service children and their families, with responsibilities including the development of stakeholder engagement and educational transition strategies. He is also responsible for the quality assurance of educational opportunities in 'isolated detachments', as well as scoping new educational provision overseas. Prior to this appointment, he was the Headmaster of a 3 to 18 independent school and has also held the posts of Deputy Head, Director of Sixth Form and Head of Department in a number of state and independent schools in Birmingham.

Stephen Burke is the artistic director of *An Invisible Man* theatre and media arts' company, committed to making work that makes a difference. He has been making socially motivated narrative art works for over 15 years. Beyond making theatre or media for simple passive enjoyment, he creates engaging and interactive works for schools, communities and festivals.

Matt Blyton is a Lead Education Adviser (primary) for North Yorkshire County Council, as well as its strategic lead for service pupils. During a career of almost 30 years in education, as well as a class teaching in a number of schools and a teaching headship, he worked as the Deputy Head teacher at RAF Leeming Primary (during the Gulf War) and spent 4 years working as a teaching and learning consultant for Service Children's Education (now MOD Schools) in Cyprus and Germany. As such, he has first-hand experience of working within military communities. He has been a member of the SCISS Advisory Committee for 10 years and is currently its vice chair.